

The ANC's new leader pays tribute to an African hero with the words of an Irish poet

Thabo Mbeki, the ANC's new president, paid tribute to his predecessor, President Nelson Mandela, at the organisation's 50th conference in Mafikeng last week. This is an edited version of his speech:

Our organisation and our people have travelled a long and difficult road to reach this moment, when the destiny of our country is in the hands of the people as a whole.

Over the centuries, each generation of the oppressed has engaged in struggle to take us closer to this goal. At its passing, each generation of combatants for freedom has handed its spears on to the next.

Of each of these generations we can say, as did the great Irish poet, William Butler Yeats:

*Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream ...
Minute by minute they live.*

The stone is in the midst of all. The day is not far off when the story of each and every one of these generations will be told, in all their great glory and excitement, capturing their feats and their foibles and the spirit of their times.

Perhaps then we will integrate in our permanent and permanently continuing national consciousness, the true heroes and heroines who, driven by one purpose alone, made themselves part of our being: those who made our freedom possible, who sustained the national pride that challenged and obliged a subject people to rise against their condition.

Among these heroes will stand a giant, Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, both in his own name and as a representative of a generation of liberation fighters whose contribution to our freedom is truly extraordinary for its diversity, its defining impact on our movement and country, and its direct relevance to the upbringing of the new generation of revolutionaries.

In this roll call we shall also find such great names as Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo, MG Naicker, Anton Lembede, Braam Fischer, AB Zuma, Moses Kotane, JB Marks, Michael Harmel, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Frances Baard, Joe Slovo and others.

To them we owe this theory and the practice of the engagement of the people in a struggle so that they become their own liberators. To them we owe the great bonding that

brought all the black oppressed together to face a common enemy.

To them we owe the translation into a permanent feature of our struggle the unity of all progressive forces and the art of handling contradictions among these forces. To them we owe that great vision of our struggle spelt out with such love and eloquence in the Freedom Charter.

To them we owe the entrenchment within the consciousness of our movement and the practical expression of the right and duty of the oppressed to rebel against tyranny.

To them we owe the capacity to elaborate a complex strategy which, in dynamic interaction, forces the enemy to surrender.

To them we owe the understanding that to talk to one's enemy is not in itself a betrayal



Thabo Mbeki: 'We know their dream'

of struggle.

They also built on the ancient traditions of our people to affirm that it was an inherent part of the soul of our movement ... that for it to maintain its own nobility, it had to fight hard and honourably to vanquish the enemies of freedom, but in its victory, it had to treat the defeated with dignity, understanding and respect.

Among the salutes of Umkhonto weSizwe is the parade response: "We serve the people of South Africa!"

That, too, speaks to the lesson passed on to us by the founders of this army of liberation, its first general staff and its commanders, who educated us in the knowledge that they and their movement are worthy of respect and support only to the extent that we serve not ourselves but the people of South Africa.

As they confronted the brutal realities of the times - death, to torture, imprisonment, exile, and the arrogant confidence of white racism - the generation of Nelson Mandela would have known what Yeats meant when he wrote in the poem from which we have quoted, composed to celebrate the 1916 Easter uprising of the Irish people against English colonial rule:

Too long a sacrifice

*Can make a stone of the heart
O when may it suffice?*

That is Heaven's part, our part

To murmur name upon name,

As a mother names the child

When sleep at last has come

On limbs that had run wild.

What is it but nightfall?

No, no, not night but death;

Was it needless death after all?

For England may keep faith

For all that is done and said.

We know their dream; enough

To know they dream'd and are dead;

And what if excess of love

Bewildered them till they died?

I write it out in a verse -

MacDonagh and McBride

And Connolly and Pearse

Now and in time to be,

Wherever green is worn,

Are charged, charged utterly:

A terrible beauty is born.

From their personal experience, which included the murder of loved comrades and

friends, Nelson Mandela and his generation would have recognised the martyred hero described by Yeats in these words:

This other ...

Was coming into his force;

He might have won fame in the end,

So sensitive his nature seemed,

So daring and stout his thought.

Despite the enduring pain of the living, occasioned by the sacrifice of the dead who had adorned their living human landscape, they refused [to allow] that sacrifice to make a stone of their hearts.

We of a later time are taking over the spears of combat from the previous generation. We will continue the traditions it has established, in the same way that the previous generation built on what came before it.

We now have a opportunity to say what we think the tradition is. We have the possibility to indicate what it means for our future.

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We have an obligation to make a commitment about what we, the inheritors of the democratic victory, shall seek to achieve, as we strive to take our country yet another step forward towards the historic objective of the genuine emancipation of all our people.

But as the poet said: "we know their dream, enough to know they dreamed..."

And knowing that dream, we have the possibility and the obligation to use what we have inherited from the accumulated experience of our struggle to transform it into reality. And that surely must be a reality in which:

- No child suffers from deprivation;
- No woman is abused or treated as less than a complete human being and citizen;
- Poverty has ceased to be a defining characteristic of the lives of black folk;
- No South African sees another as superior or inferior because of race, colour or ethnicity;
- We can walk the streets, the plains, the valleys and the mountains of our native land without fear of the violation of our persons and possessions; and
- Our country becomes one country among many, in whose daily actualities blossom a million expressions of the accomplishments of the African dream.

When he assumed the throne of Swaziland, King Sobhuza II was instructed by the Swazi royal house to guard the ANC, in whose establishment the royal house had participated.

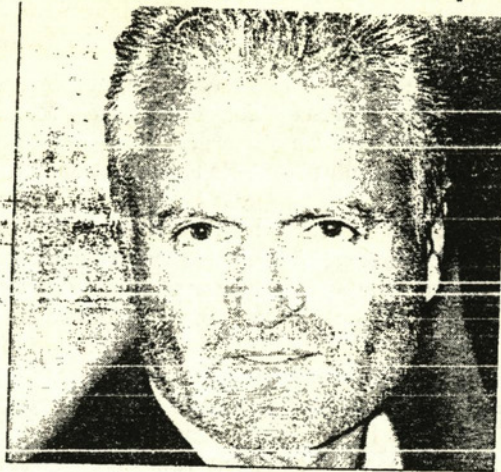
As the king approached his death, he asked to see the then president of the ANC, Comrade Oliver Tambo. When they met, he asked: "What shall I report to those who have gone before me about the condition of the organisation which I was directed to protect?"

King Sobhuza carried with him the message that the ANC lives, the ANC remains the parliament of the people, the ANC continues to organise the people's march to freedom.

Madiba, as you and your comrades, such as Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki, step aside to tend to the cultivation and domestication of the flowers of the veld, we undertake that when you return to ask us the same question, we will answer truthfully: the ANC lives, the ANC remains the parliament of the people, the ANC continues to organise the people's march to freedom.

Now and in time to be, thank you Comrade President, for all you have done!

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ld said farewell to, clockwise from left: Diana, Princess of Wales, Deng Xiaoping, Mobutu Sese Seko, Gianni Versace, Hastings Banda, and Mother Teresa

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

1997

From Diana to Deng, it
was a year of farewells



The year began with Peruvian rebels holding hostages at a diplomat's home and came to a close with yet another fiasco between Iraq and the United States. In between, wars, financial strife and political upheaval were the order of the day.

For all that turmoil, or perhaps in spite of it, 1997 may best be remembered as a year of farewells to leaders and traditions.

Hong Kong bade farewell to the British. China and Zaire lost longtime rulers. Asia's financial markets plunged after years of unprecedented gains. Fashion lovers said goodbye to Gianni Versace. The poorest of the poor grieved over the loss of Mother Teresa.

And the world mourned the death of Princess Diana, the people's princess, who was killed with her lover, Dodi al-Fayed, in a high-speed car crash in Paris. After chastising the paparazzi, investigators determined that her driver, who died in the accident, had been drunk.

Perhaps because Diana had touched so many lives her death prompted mourning beyond Buckingham Palace.

"People want some good to emerge from this," Tony Blair, the British prime minister, said. American evangelist Billy Graham added: "The global village has stopped to reflect - not just on her death, but on our own mortality."

Outpourings of grief shattered British traditions. In death, as in life, Diana challenged the royal way. At her funeral, commoners sat alongside aristocrats as a pop star, Elton John, sang tribute. For a dignified moment, the royals shared their sorrow in public.

When Mother Teresa, angel to the world's outcasts, died less than a week later, India set some of its own traditions aside and gave the beloved nun a state funeral, a tribute usually reserved for heads of government.

Traditions began toppling earlier in the year. On July 1, the British returned Hong Kong to China, ending 156 years of colonial rule. "The most precious thing for a nation and a people is to be master of their own destiny," said the territory's new ruler, Tung Chee-hwa.

Deng Xiaoping, the patriarch of modern China, never saw the July 1 handover. He died in February, leaving a country with a growing economy - and memories of social and political repression. Within months, his successor, Jiang Zemin, travelled to the United States to mend relations - and meet potential investors.

While Deng opened China to free markets, capitalism took a jolt elsewhere in Asia as speculators targeted many of the region's currencies. The turmoil sent world financial markets plunging.

In southeast Asia, Cambodia's fragile democracy collapsed into civil war as two prime ministers quarrelled. Hun Sen seized power in a brutal coup. Weeks later, the notorious leader of the Khmer Rouge surfaced for the first time since 1979. After a dramatic trial, Pol Pot, sickly at 72, faced a future of house arrest.

With yet more bloodshed, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire was overthrown in May, ending a 32-year reign and leaving a mineral-rich country in shambles. Rebel leader Laurent Kabila renamed the Congo and promised democracy, but then

seized sweeping powers and dodged allegations of massacres. Months later, Mobutu died in exile.

In Peru, a law-and-order president began the year watching leftist rebels release seven hostages from the Japanese ambassador's home. Four months later, commandos ended the standoff with a raid that killed all 14 rebels, two commandos and one hostage.

Other conflicts moved towards more peaceful endings.

Iran elected a president intent on improving relations with the West. Russia signed a peace treaty with its separatist republic of Chechnya. North and South Korea began peace talks. Britain's new Labour government resumed talks with Sinn Féin, the IRA's political ally. After years of civil war, Liberia elected a president.

Digging into the century's deepest abyss, Swiss banks began recovering assets of Holocaust victims. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission tried to examine the wounds of apartheid, including allegations of violence by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's supporters.

But, too often, peace overtures failed.

Egypt claimed victory over its Islamist insurgents, then watched helplessly as militants killed more than 60 foreign tourists in attacks in Cairo and Luxor.

Israel's prime minister proposed negotiations for a final peace settlement with the Palestinians. But talks stalled because of new Israeli settlements, Islamic suicide bombers and an

Israeli assassination attempt on a Hamas leader.

In the remnants of Yugoslavia, protesters targeted strongman Slobodan Milosevic, but faltered. In neighbouring Bosnia, a peace treaty foundered as Serb factions nearly collapsed into civil war. Nearby Albania needed international help to end anarchy after investment schemes went awry.

Elsewhere - in the hills of southern Lebanon, the villages of Algeria, the mountains of Afghanistan, the jungles of Sri Lanka, the forests of Burundi and Rwanda - nothing could stop the bloodshed.

Brinkmanship raised the likelihood of more. Iraq kicked out Americans serving as United Nations weapons inspectors. Yet the United States persisted, sending in hundreds of planes and thousands of troops. The chilling question: is Iraq preparing chemical weapons?

Could there be a happy ending to a year of violence and confrontation?

Concerned about global warming, dozens of nations pledged to reduce emissions. And more than 120 countries banned landmines. "It's a new definition of superpower. It is not one," said Jody Williams, the anti-mines activist who won the Nobel peace prize. "It is everybody. We are the superpower."

And consider a cloned lamb named Dolly. The Earth's best-ever glimpse of Mars. The computer that defeated the best flesh-and-blood chess player. The world's first surviving septuplets.

Amid so many bloody endings, there are beginnings. Welcome, 1998. - Sapa-AP

THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT

SOUTH AFRICA'S QUALITY SUNDAY NEWSPAPER

December 28 1997

When faced with the worst let's learn from the best

Police breakthroughs this week in tracking down leading members of a brutal gang of armed robbers provide a welcome note of encouragement on which to end a troubled year for the criminal justice system.

The men and women of the National Special Investigations Unit (NSIU) under Director Bushie Engelbrecht have shown remarkable dedication and thoroughness over what should have been a time of much-needed rest for them.

But the significance of their efforts goes beyond both laudable individual commitment and a couple of key arrests. It also sets out a model that the rest of the country's police divisions might begin to study and consider following.

The NSIU is an elite unit of well-trained, highly motivated men and women. Some are relative novices but the squad as a whole is led and schooled by senior officers with vast experience.

In this operation they have creatively expanded the working team, drawing in expertise and personnel from other units and encouraging inputs from officers and contacts in the field.

The SAPS has said it seeks to create pockets of excellence within its structures, whose experience, expertise and credibility it hopes will inspire higher standards within the force and increased public con-

fidence in the society beyond.

While it might not have the immediate popular appeal of a major crime swoop or the PR value of a uniform change, the slow, steady building up of investigative skills and the forging of links between what have all too often been disparate units and regions holds out the prospect of a much more effective and professional crime-fighting force in the long term.

The key to moving forward with this, though, will be ensuring that units and programmes that succeed are given the resources and the political support necessary to take the fight to the criminals.

To say the police need money isn't new. They've been cash-strapped for years, and low pay has fed corruption, a fact starkly emphasised by the alleged involvement of at least two policemen in the syndicate that Engelbrecht's team has been working to crack.

But while it is undeniable that the conditions of all in the police need to be improved, that has to go hand in hand with a rigorous examination of where money is being wasted and a careful consideration of how best resources can be used. As one senior officer put it earlier this year, let's work smarter, not harder.

The recent successes of the NSIU go a long way towards illustrating the value of that approach.

Several steps down democracy's road and we're doing pretty well

The Sunday Independent December 28 1997

Despite the impatience and disillusionment experienced by many, the South African economy remains robust, apartheid is gone and civil strife and revolution have been averted

BY ADRIAN HADLAND

As 1997 comes to an end and the historic era of the Mandela presidency enters its final lap, two key trends have characterised the infant, post-apartheid democracy that is South Africa this year.

On one hand, the country has enjoyed a quiet satisfaction that all is going relatively well, that state institutions continue to function, that the economy remains robust, that apartheid has been discarded and that the dangers of civil strife and revolution have been safely negotiated.

On the other hand, the soul-searching and intense self-absorption that is natural to a new entity seeking its place in the world has encouraged a general sense of insecurity, underpinned by the gnawing pain and brooding weight of the past.

The result is a kind of national schizophrenia, proud and confident one moment, paranoid and depressed the next.

Certainly, at a grassroots level, the current dispensation has begun to have an impact on the lives of ordinary South Africans. The construction of new houses is closing in on the 500 000 mark, water and electricity

reach more communities than ever, abortions are now legal, educational facilities are being shakily extended, health and welfare provision are gathering pace, local government elections have extended democracy and the dispossessed are moving back on to their land.

But impatience and disillusionment prevail and are, in some cases, being nurtured.

This is fuelled both by the public perception that corruption is alive and thriving at the heart of the state machine and that political representa-

tives have become isolated and unaccountable to their communities.

A survey published earlier this month found that six in ten South Africans believed the government – comprising national and provincial politicians, local government and the police force – was moderately to extensively corrupt. Seven in ten whites and Indians, five in 10 coloureds and slightly under half of blacks thought politicians had become more corrupt in the past four years, according to the AC Nielsen-Market Research Africa survey.

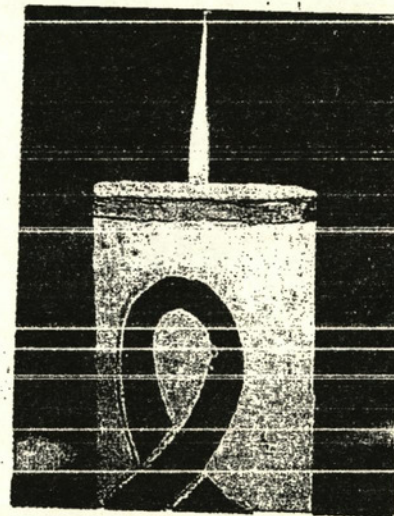
Another survey, by Berlin's Transparency International, found South Africa was the 33rd most corrupt country out of 52 surveyed (compared with 23rd out of 54 last year).

Little wonder Mandela chided the ANC party faithful last week for careerism, "rank indiscipline" and a "desperate desire to accumulate wealth in the shortest period of time".

Mandela hinted too that the party list system, by which politicians are elected according to the proportion of the vote rather than by a specific, geographical constituency, would have to be reviewed as one possible means of improving accountability.

But while corruption and lack of accountability have gained importance in the public consciousness, it is also true that institutions created to prevent them – including the Public Protector, a more accessible parliament, independent auditors and attorneys general – have become more efficient at exposing them.

One of our more creative departments this year has been correctional services. They have proposed the use of mine-shafts, prison ships, the C-Max ultra-security jail and even the Ponte tower in Johannesburg as ways of dealing with the better policing,



Timebomb: sub-Saharan Africa is headed for a real Aids crisis

tightened bail laws and stiffer sentences that have led to an expanding prison population.

Prisoners have themselves been pretty creative in 1997, managing to escape from virtually every jail and police station in the country.

Surprisingly, fewer prisoners have in fact taken flight this year (937) compared with last year's 1 345.

Crooks also seem to have become more adept and audacious in their craft. An automatic teller machine containing about R22 000 was stolen from police headquarters in Pretoria during the year. Rightwinger Willem Ratte and friends managed to break into the Pomfret military base. The National Intelligence Service's computers were stolen and thieves raided Actonville police station in February making off with 50 firearms, including 10 shotguns.

The heists of cash-in-transit convoys and execution of any security guards in attendance has become a multi-million rand industry.

But the cops have got better, too. Crime in most serious categories is down – with the notable exception of rape – and warlords responsible for mass murders in Shobashobane and Richmond in KwaZulu-Natal were brought to book. South Africa's most dangerous criminal, Moses Sithole, was jailed for 2410 years after being found guilty of 38 murders, 40 rapes and six robberies. Mandela told the ANC conference that 85 percent of murders committed against farmers in the Free State had been solved and the suspects prosecuted.

Overarching a legal system battling to get its act together has been the Constitutional Court, which has made important rulings. It has served to bolster the new rights given to South Africans in 1994 and has placed the country on a constitutional path that is the envy of many nations.

1997 was also a key year for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Thousands of people appeared before it to confess their abuses or tell of how they were abused in the past. The business community, churches, the legal profession, journalists, state institutions, political parties, former security force members and individuals from across the political spectrum also testified about their role in apartheid.

The highest-profile event was the special hearing into the Mandela United Football Club and examination of the role of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in human rights abuses.

Entirely unconnected was Typhoon Winnie, which caused mayhem in Asia this year. Almost 300 people died in the wake of the world's worst storm, which ravaged China, Taiwan and the Philippines.

While the truth commission was hearing evidence and considering



Families of Richmond murder victims – arrests have been made

amnesty applications, it was also working on how to acknowledge the victims of three decades of violence. A fund of R3 billion is expected to be created to assist in this.

The story of the truth commission, though, is far from told. In the next six months we can expect to see former state president PW Botha called to account, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging brought to the witness box and a host of other ugly incidents exposed.

Though staggered by the plummeting gold price and buffeted by floundering international markets, the economy has held up relatively well over the year. The growth rate is down, but so is the level of industrial action which, at 510 000 man-days lost, is the lowest since 1990.

The government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy remains the subject of intense debate and the Employment Equity Bill also sparked serious controversy.

But a sign that we are at least

doing something right, Trevor Manuel was this year voted the best minister of finance in Africa by the influential *Eurromoney* magazine.

Concerns, too, about the flight of capital following the lifting of some exchange control mechanisms proved unfounded.

Politically, it has been an interesting year. The National Party lost its leader, FW De Klerk, and heir apparent Roelf Meyer. It then lost five by-elections in a row and, under its new leader, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, looks to be struggling to maintain its mainly white support base.

This, to a large extent, has been taken up by the Democratic Party which continues to annoy the ruling party, now the ANC, by its carrier-like determination to expose and criticise. The DP turned down an offer by Mandela to join the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party in cabinet, although – surprisingly – it said yes to an offer to join the NP-led provincial government in the Western Cape.

The Pan Africanist Congress was racked by internal dissent and is currently taking legal action against its former president, Clarence Makwetu. It appears unlikely to make any substantial gains even with the assistance of grassroots disillusionment.

More willing and perhaps better placed to take advantage of this is the new United Democratic Movement, founded by Meyer and Bantu Holomisa this year, which could yet cause an electoral upset in the Eastern Cape.

The ANC alliance continues to hold its broad church together. It faces difficult challenges ahead, both from within and without the party. The party's 50th conference in Mafikeng last week provided a powerful barometer of the state of the or-

ganisation and the tensions and dynamics with which it is attempting to deal. The party is still a shoo-in for the 1999 elections, the build-up for which begins in earnest next year.

On a lighter note, a number of new records and achievements were claimed in South Africa during 1997.

South Africans were ranked the world's third best lovers, after the French and Americans, in a survey conducted by *Durex*. The Economist Intelligence Unit rated South Africa the cheapest of 27 countries in which to run a business and the number of international visitors to South Africa continued to climb new heights, up a full 15 percent over last year.

One of these visitors to the Johannesburg International airport set a new record of his own in 1997: he swallowed 99 condoms full of cocaine, uncomfortably breaking the previous mark of 90.

The year also marked the first time South Africa has participated in a Nato military exercise. Our two hapless, part-time representatives underwent combat and survival training in Norway.

A parting note should, however, be made about the Aids epidemic. The World Health Organisation reported this year that sub-Saharan Africa had only 3 percent of the world's Aids population, yet 55 percent of its HIV-positive cases. We are heading toward a real crisis in this regard, the discovery of the flawed Viridene by South African scientists notwithstanding.

Overall, while transformation is slow and many obstacles remain, South Africa is now several steps down democracy road. It is a journey few now regret, but one which will provide considerable challenges in the year ahead.

ANC look more to what the people want – not Cosatu

Sunday Independent, December 27, 1997



Magoba: 'not really in the game'

The coming year will be marked by rhetoric, grandstanding and possibly even regrouping as the government and its opponents prepare for the elections to be held early in 1999, writes **John MacLennan**

All eyes will also be on new African National Congress president Thabo Mbeki as he begins increasingly to show his hand

This is because he is an enigma to many, seen as a master tactician who has succeeded in being everything to everybody.

UCT's Robert Schrire says he would not be surprised if tension develops between President Nelson Mandela and Mbeki. "Mbeki is now Mandela's party boss and Mandela is his boss as president of the country. It

is quite possible he will become irritated if Mandela does his thing and makes it more difficult for him to do his job."

He predicts a lot of jockeying within the ANC about who will eventually succeed Mbeki as deputy president of the country. "I am not sure Jacob Zuma (recently elected deputy president of the ANC) is the man.

"They needed an ethnic balance, but the ANC deputy president will be viewed as almost our president-elect after Mbeki goes. Zuma makes sense as a No 2, but for the presidency you need someone with more sophistication, education and worldliness than Zuma has.

"Thabo's challenge is to put in place a deputy that would have the confidence of the country and the world."

He and other experts predict ongoing tension in the ANC alliance.

The problem of the left, however, is that they don't have policies of their own, nor do they have candidates for the top job.

Willie Breytenbach of Stellenbosch University says Mbeki's support for a more effective state machine could lead to many redundancies and this could trigger mass action among teachers and public servants. This could fuel tension in the government if they start organising through Cosatu. He believes the ANC will make no more concessions to labour. "What came out strongly at Mafikeng was that the African people are saying that they are bearing the brunt of unemployment in South Africa and they are demanding more jobs.

The ANC are now looking more and more at what the people want rather than what Cosatu wants. Next year will be the beginning of the end

of relationship between the two.

Historians are predicting the alliance will certainly collapse after the 1999 elections.

He believes people will become more aggressive in looking after their own interests and farmers and language groups might start taking the law into their own hands.

The coming year will also see the end of the Botha saga as well as the TRC. Its final report is sure to be controversial and divisive as it attempts to come up with an authorised and politically correct version of our past.

In opposition politics the Democratic Party, the National Party and the United Democratic Movement and perhaps even the Freedom Front will be trying to reach some understanding on means to oppose the ANC, but mergers are unlikely.

There will be continued attempts to co-opt the Inkatha Freedom Party

by the ANC and by this time next year there will be clarity on whether IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi becomes the next deputy president of the country.

Themba Sono of Pretoria University says all attention will focus on the ANC this year in the run-up to the election as pundits attempt to gauge the alliance's electoral support. "They will still win, but not by the same huge majority. We will also see whether the ANC overtures to the IFP costs Inkatha votes."

The professor believes the UDM will pick up support in the former Transkei and the DP will continue to make inroads, especially among former NP supporters. He believes the NP will continue to be a factor only in the Western and Northern Cape.

The Pan Africanist Congress, in his view, has good opportunities because it has no way to go but up.



Buthelezi: the next deputy president?

Even friends can't agree on whether the IFP and ANC should merge

BY LUNGILE MADYWABE

Nana Khoza's Christmas holidays have never been the same since the gruesome murder of her husband in KwaZulu-Natal ten years ago.

This Christmas Eve, she is to be found with her longstanding friend Petros Hlongwane, with whom she shares many things. Both are faithful supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party, both come from KwaZulu-Natal and both have lived for more than 10 years in the Dube hostel in Soweto, home to mainly Zulu-speaking people.

Between them they have seen countless friends killed or disabled in the violence that has divided their party and the African National Congress. Both are keen to discuss what President Nelson Mandela could have meant when he extended the hand of friendship to the IFP at last week's ANC congress.

Could he mean a merger between the two parties? And, if so, would it be a good idea?

Khoza believes in the IFP; she says she believes in its principles. But she is delighted at the idea that the two parties may become one. Sitting on the edge of a cement table chopping carrots, she says the amalgamation of the two longstanding foes will help heal the wounds and bridge the divide between the two.

She says her new optimism has much to do with the future of her three children, who lost their father when a group of gunmen mowed him down while he was on his way to a shop. Khoza, who was 21 at the time, says: "I tried to find out about his death but I haven't been able to get the truth from the people who knew him."

Dropping the knife in her hands she says: "Bapheli'e abafowethu, ingane zethu azinabo'baba [many of our brothers are dead and our kids are fatherless]. It is a nice thing that they are thinking of coming together. The people who talk politics and disagree on these matters are the leaders, but we are the people who are being killed."

However, Hlongwane, 34, a security guard at the local government offices in Dube, was not impressed

with the utterances of his friend. Looking at her with shock, he bellows in a heavy voice: "Ca, no, no, no. Angeke kulunge loko [that won't be right]. The ANC has long killed our brothers and now they want to be one with us. It was the ANC that said we were government stooges. They must first retract publicly their insults of

unintwana [Mangosuthu Buthelezi] - calling him a government stooge. Several of my friends died because of the ANC, they must come forward and tell us what happened. There is a lot that must be done before we can talk of a merger. Their supporters killed us and they get amnesty without fully disclosing what they did and

who instructed them. But when the IFP members ask for amnesty they are grilled."

It is not long before Hlongwane is shouted down. Khoza's sentiments seem to have struck a chord with another four women in the small communal kitchen.

"Who dies in the violence? Mandela or Buthelezi? Or is it us, our husbands and kids? Don't talk shit, Hlongwane," they cry.

In several interviews conducted by *The Sunday Independent* it was the women who tended to be in favour of a merger and men who were against it. It is this gender pattern of willingness to forgive and reconcile that has

been noticed, too, by officials of the truth commission.

Cumisa Ntsebeza, the head of the commission's investigative unit, says: "Despite the fact that most of the people who suffered through the atrocities were women, it has been women, certainly black women, who are willing to forgive."

He cites as an example the mother of one of the Guguletu Seven, who were all murdered. She saw a police video of her son's body being dragged by police with a rope.

"She lost her cool and cried," says Ntsebeza, "but when the opportunity was made for her to meet one of the policemen involved in the killing she was the first to embrace him. She said 'I forgive you and accept your request [for forgiveness]'."

But men seem less willing to reconcile - certainly at Dube hostel.

One male resident, who has been a member of the IFP since his school days in Bergville, sides with Hlongwane: "Has the ANC fulfilled its pre-election agreement on international mediation? They are probably trying to pull the wool over Buthelezi's ace."

"If he agrees, that will be the end of the IFP. They have been trying to destroy it for a long time anyway."

Although some critics may argue that the merger between the two parties is a political ploy to move towards a one-party state, for many women in the hostel it is more than that. For them, it is intricately linked to day-to-day survival in a hostile environment where, as Khoza says, "we can't even wear our party T-shirts".

Freddie Reiter, an ANC supporter who lives with his family in a house in Mofolo, takes the opposite view from most of the men interviewed. A merger, he says, "will stop the IFP from killing us. There are a lot of people who have died already and for me there is no other alternative".

If a merger, or even an alliance, were to take place, what would be its effect in KwaZulu-Natal, which has borne the brunt of political violence?

One possibility is that it might resuscitate talk about a special amnesty deal between the IFP and the ANC.

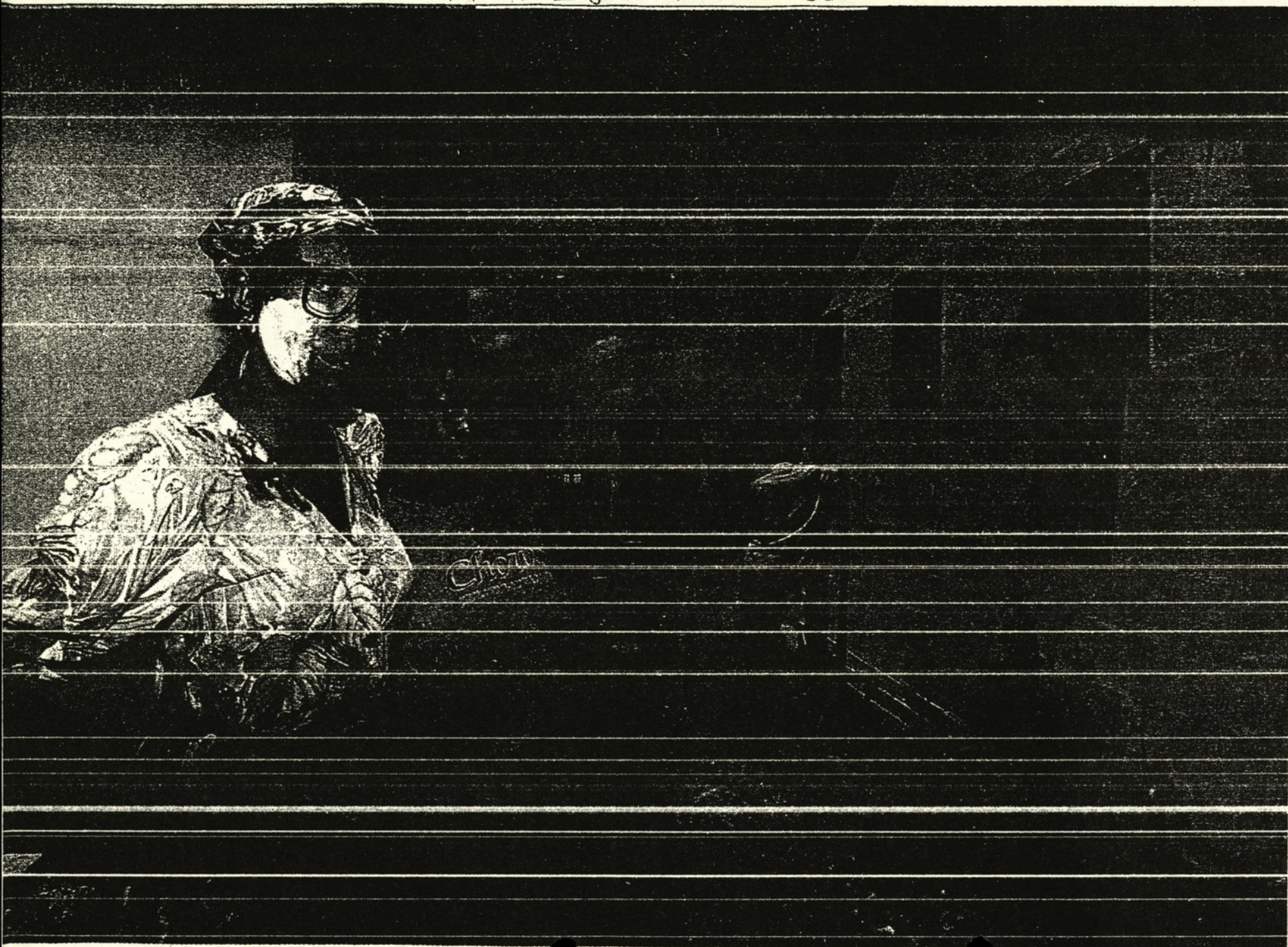
But KwaZulu-Natal truth commissioner Richard Lyster dismisses such speculation. "There is no possibility of extending the cutoff date [for amnesty] unless parliament changes the law, but it is highly unlikely."

"There has been talk of a special amnesty deal, but neither of the two parties have consulted us," he says.

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ters — mostly women — say the marriage would help heal the wounds of the past, but most of the men are unwilling to forgive and

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oane, far right, who opposes a merger, refused to be photographed. But women in the hostels are more ready to forgive

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HOGG