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We can't afford to lose the expertise

FOR A country which hopes to be the engine-room of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's much-talked-about African Renaissance, South Africa does not appear to be doing a good job of nurturing and holding on to those who have the skill and expertise to help it ensure that this re-awakening begins here at home.

As we reported in this paper last week, the South African Police Services has been losing some of its experienced personnel to the private sector, where they have risen to top managerial positions or run their own security companies. This, of course, happens at a time when the country is battling to contain our very serious crime problem, which impacts directly on our attractiveness as a destination for foreign investment.

At the same time, as we report on the front page today, South Africa has been losing a number of doctors, some of them top specialists in their fields, to countries like New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada, to mention a few. Although they cite different reasons for their decision to turn their backs on the country of their birth, the one most often adduced is, predictably, our very high crime rate.

A young democracy such as ours, which needs the support of all its citizens, simply cannot afford to lose as many doctors as we are losing now. To start with, South Africa does not have enough doctors, and most of those that we have, all trained at a high cost to the tax-payer, are to be found in our big cities and not in the small towns, villages and rural areas where they are needed most. That, for instance, was why Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma struck the deal to bring Cuban doctors to South Africa to work in public hospitals in the rural areas, and that is why she also introduced the compulsory, year-long public service which began this year for newly-qualified doctors.

The medical practitioners who find themselves forced by circumstances to make such a painful decision to emigrate may not be employed in public hospitals or based in the rural areas where the need is greater, but they certainly have the kind of expertise which has won SA a reputation as a country with a medical service of a high standard, and which saw ours become the first country in the world to perform a heart transplant. We should do everything possible to keep that expertise here, and that means we should win the war against crime.

There's no substance to these allegations

THE INDEPENDENT ON SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 20 1999

I HAVE consistently stated my total opposition to corruption in public life. I have consistently investigated each and every serious allegation that was brought before me pertaining to improper conduct in the Mpumalanga provincial administration. In the process of cleaning up some of the most unthinkable self-enrichment, nepotism, thievery and criminality, I stepped on the toes of very nervous people. Some of them can at best be described as thieves and thugs.

They are now, with the help of a number of mischievous politicians, waging a smear campaign against me. In all of this they are playing into the hands of malicious gossip-mongers who swallow each and every word that is said, written, broadcast or repeated in well-organised private meetings.

It is a fact of life that when dubious people are exposed and discredited in public, their immediate response is to attack those who have exposed them. I accepted a long time ago that my crusade against corruption would inevitably lead to vicious personal attacks against me and those dedicated men and women who work tirelessly with me to attempt permanently to rid government of these corrupt elements. It is a robust and unfortunate reality of political life.

Not a single charge has been brought against me that carries any substance or credibility. I would now like to address each individual allegation.

The property in Tekwane, which I rent from the State, has become the focal point of my detractors. Everyone conveniently forgets that it is not my property but that of the State. How convenient such lapses of memory are. If the truth is conveyed that the house belongs to a structure of the State a good story falls away, however false and malicious it may be.

That is not in the interest of those people now under public scrutiny and spreading these stories, because the facts should never interfere with a good story.

I did, through my office, request evaluations by independent valuers of the improvements which I made at the rented property. I made it clear that my request was that the issue should be settled in a transparent way that is fully acceptable to all parties.

More than a hundred charges of alleged

It is unacceptable and revolting that public funds should be siphoned into secret accounts and political office bearers corrupted, argues **MATHEWS PHOSA**



improper conduct have now been served on the suspended chief executive officer of the Mpumalanga Parks Board. This includes allegations regarding unauthorised or undisclosed work done at the Tekwane property that I rent.

Transparent

I fully support the newly-appointed Mpumalanga Parks Board in establishing such a transparent process. I would not be surprised if a number of deliberate irregularities are found as is the case with other transactions where the suspended chief executive officer of the Mpumalanga Parks Board and some of his associates are involved.

The second set of allegations refers to the Dolphin negotiations. Let me state categorically that I did not receive one cent from Dolphin for my own personal use. I did not benefit at all from the negotiations regarding Dolphin's possible involvement in our province, nor do I hold shares in the company, as was suggested.

I did meet with Mr Somaia at his request and

I did introduce him to colleagues of mine such as the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise.

I wish to state clearly, however, that nothing improper was discussed or happened during any of the meetings. I welcomed Mr Somaia to Mpumalanga as I would any potential investor to our province. I did not promote any venture of his to anyone, and that includes the so-called arms deal which, to the best of my knowledge, came to nothing.

The next set of allegations relates to the Mpumalanga Parks Board. I find despicable the activities of the Mpumalanga Parks Board and, specifically, its former chief executive Mr Alan Gray, in discrediting our province. I am ashamed of the damage it has done to our credibility. No organisation should ever again be allowed to undermine public confidence in the structures of government in the way that he and his accomplices did at the Mpumalanga Parks Board.

I agree with all the people out there that find it totally unacceptable and revolting that public funds should be siphoned into secret accounts, that political office bearers and party structures should be corrupted and that all rules of accountability should deliberately be ignored.

It is for these reasons that I have referred the issue of the promissory notes, the Auditor General's Special Report on the management of the Mpumalanga Parks Board, and a number of other cases such as payments to Mr Eugene Nyati to the Health Special Investigative Unit for investigation and possible recovery.

This kind of reckless and uncaring management of taxpayers' money cannot be tolerated. I await action both by Judge Heath and the South African Police Services in the near future in addition to the recent charges brought forward by the Mpumalanga Parks Board against its suspended chief executive officer.

There has been much speculation about a number of black empowerment companies that were formed in Mpumalanga shortly before and after the 1994 election. I find aspects of this debate cynical, with some very disturbing racist undertones. My view is that there is nothing wrong with black entrepreneurs (or white entrepreneurs) forming *bona fide* commercial entities with the aim of empowering people and seeking legitimate

business opportunities. There is a hint of old-style discrimination to the view that black people, some of them belonging to the ANC, cannot seek, in a transparent fashion, business opportunities. I see nothing wrong with that at all and I fully support the formation of such ventures by, among others, structures in the ANC movement.

I do not support, however, the misuse of such ventures by opportunistic fly-by-nights. It is inexcusable when persons without conscience hijack such ventures for personal gain through dubious methods. Let me add: at no time did I or any member of my family hold shares in such ventures.

I wish to appeal to all the people of our province with any information on improper behaviour by any politician or official to forward it to Judge Heath, the Public Protector or the SAPS. In addition, I wish to emphasise that I appeal to anyone with incriminating information about me to forward it immediately to the above institutions. I wish to be held accountable for what I do with public trust.

Back-stabbing

In the context of the above, I have had free and well-meaning advice to resign, in some instances from very interesting and amusing quarters. Instead of heeding that advice, I wish to request all of those who have been part of this shameless back-stabbing to reconsider their own positions in their different organisations. Our province will be richer for their absence.

As a serious politician, I have a job to do and two fresh mandates from my party to do it to the best of my ability. I appeal to the good intentions of each person to support me in achieving the dreams of all the people of our province.

We, as the multi-party collective in this legislature, also have the interest of innocent voters to serve. Let us not be diverted by pettiness in our honest quest to improve the lives of the people we should selflessly serve.

Mathews Phosa is the Premier of Mpumalanga. This is an edited version of a speech he delivered when he opened the final session of the Mpumalanga legislature.

Buthelezi's time as IFP leader is up

IF A CAT has nine lives, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi has more. He is a true political survivor by almost all accounts. I have grown to admire him not for his leadership qualities, but for enriching South Africa's political lexicon over the years he has been a public figure. It is an irrefutable historical fact that his role in this country's political life, which I will not detail due to a lack of space, is irreplaceable.

What is debatable, though, is whether his continued role in South Africa's politics does the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), of which he is leader, more good than harm.

As the old millennium draws to a close, Buthelezi only needs two words of advice on his public life: "quit now", or wait to see the IFP being rendered a party of yesterday.

I am yet to take off my hat to a brave man or woman in the IFP who would dare suggest this advice without being sent off for an early shower. Mr Walter Felgate left the IFP and joined the ANC before he could make this call.

Brave

Once among the "big three" at the Kempton Park talks, along with ex-president Mr FW De Klerk and then ANC president Mr Nelson Mandela in the early 1990s, Buthelezi has been a key actor during this country's transitional phase, to the point that it is almost inconceivable just what SA would have turned into with the IFP out of the Government of National Unity. We are lucky to have had Shenge around in the first five years of a democratic SA, but I'm afraid his time is up.

While the country still needs the IFP for multi-party democracy to thrive, few would



For the sake of his own party, Buthelezi must go now if the IFP hopes to keep its future survival chances alive, argues **XOLISA VAPI**

dispute that Buthelezi's departure from the political scene on the eve of, or shortly after, the mid-year elections could be a blessing in disguise for the IFP.

If the myth of him being appointed SA's next deputy president becomes a reality at all, he would be better advised to step down with dignity during his tenure in that capacity. I say this because history tends to be merciless in judging those leaders who over-stay their welcome in political life.

Remember how the late Zairean messiah-turned despot, Mr Mobutu Sese Seko, who liberated his country from French colonial rule, ignominiously fell from grace for the

simple reason that nothing seemed to ring a bell to him that his time was up.

De Klerk himself bowed out of politics with honour in a calculated move for which he will remain remembered. He left with a smile and a sense of contentment, elated to be the National Party president under whose leadership apartheid was dismantled. Long before De Klerk's departure, President Mandela had already stated his intention not to seek re-election, hence in 1997 he handed over the presidency of the ANC to the country's current president-designate, Mr Thabo Mbeki. As Mbeki looks more and more comfortable in his seat, Mandela will retire confident of his successor's ability to take the country into the new millennium.

Test

This leaves Buthelezi with no choice but to follow in his counterparts' foot-steps, thus allowing a new generation of IFP leaders to stand the test of time. Chances are that the IFP may not keep its head above the political waters of the next century with Buthelezi still at the party's driving seat. Aged 71 this year, he will battle to cope with the political intricacies of the new century.

The longer he stays, it appears, the larger the vacuum becomes for the man or woman who will succeed him when he eventually relinquishes the IFP's throne.

The recent leadership shake-up in the party, which saw Buthelezi's most likely successor, Dr Ben Ngubane, lose the IFP's chairmanship, has made the vacuum much bigger and increased the unpredictability of the party's succession patterns.

It further demonstrated just how futile an exercise it is to groom a leader for a party whose president has never faced a leadership challenge before.

The sarcastic acquiescence with which most IFP leaders received Ngubane's replacement with Mr Lionel Mtshali at both party and Government levels – apparently without the knowledge of some members of the haphazardly-elected national council, regarded as the party's highest decision-making body – has also exposed the IFP as a potential threat, not only to the nurturing of new leadership for the party, but also for the sustaining of democracy.

With the leadership shake-up seen in certain quarters as a build-up to Buthelezi's formal hand-over of power, the IFP should prepare for what appears to be a disorderly transition.

It would be unreasonable to expect a political party which appears to be firmly rooted in fundamental flaws, claiming to subscribe to the values of liberal democracy while, in fact, practising the worst forms of Stalinism, to play a meaningful role in a democratic society.

If the IFP hopes to be taken seriously as a reliable partner in the next government and play a significant role in the politics of the 21st century, its way of doing things will have to be tailor-made for the country's democratic ends.

In my opinion, the party's top structure requires serious re-examination, and its method of electing leaders should be balanced with the need to groom low-level leaders, while attracting people of unquestionable integrity from other political parties, and not the other way round.

The sooner this happens, the better for the legacy of Buthelezi, the future survival of the IFP and the consolidation of democracy in SA.

Meyer Kahn upbeat about fight on crime

Five-year plan 'achievable'

ARGOS
20/2/99

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Durban

Outgoing South African Police Services (SAPS) chief executive officer Meyer Kahn likens the process of transforming the crime-fighting agency to pushing a wheelbarrow.

"The minute you stop pushing," he says, "things simply stand still."

And, according to the man given the task of creating an effective, implementable five-year plan for restructuring the SAPS into a leaner, more efficient and properly equipped crime-fighting agency, the wheelbarrow has already been pushed.

What is needed – and what he believes will be forthcoming from top-flight police management – is the will and the capacity to carry on pushing the "barrow".

Mr Kahn is convinced that the plan he and top police executives have drawn up during the first 17 months of his tenure and have begun to implement is workable.

He dismisses criticism from police unions and some opposition parties on the basis of their skewed understanding of his brief.

In becoming non-executive director of South African Breweries' London-based operations, Mr Kahn will not be leaving South Africa despite claims to the contrary by some of his critics.

The move will see him making history: he will be the first director of a UK Footsie (the index of Britain's top 100 companies) who is not resident in the UK.

"I have never quit anything in my life and I'm not going to start doing so now," he said, squashing rumours that he was "abandoning" South Africa.

"I'll still be here on the last second of the last minute of the last day of my job. People do not understand the mandate. I was seconded from South African Breweries for a two-year period which expires at the end of July.

"My brief centred on developing a programme to transform the service into a manageable and financially more effective

organisation."

He said this plan, which focused on cutting down on personnel expenditure and re-allocating funds for equipment and training, had been approved by Parliament's safety and security portfolio committee, Commissioner George Fivaz, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, the Cabinet and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

The SAPS salary bill had taken up 84% of its budget in 1997. This had been pruned to 80% for the last financial year and would be reduced in steps until it reached the more acceptable target of 75% in 2001.

He said this level of expenditure would leave more money for vehicles, forensic and finger-printing equipment and other resources needed for effective crime-fighting.

"In this day and age, you can't be a good detective without access to on-line finger-printing facilities, DNA testing and other forensic equipment. That is what we are freeing up money for in terms of the five-year plan."

Absenteeism, which he described as the "cancer" of the SAPS, had been reduced by 21% by last September while sick leave was down by 27%.

Crime, he said, was still at a totally unacceptable level.

"No South African can say crime levels are acceptable but I am comfortable with the strategic approach we have adopted. It is doable and achievable.

"We still have a helluva high hill to climb but I'm bullish that we are going upwards."

He described his secondment to the SAPS as "the toughest call of my life. I'd never expected it to be easy but my work has been made easier by the team I had with me."

Highly placed sources in the ministry are also upbeat about his contribution and have also played down the fact that his contract is not being renewed.

"The reality is that Meyer Kahn was brought in for a specific task over a specific period and we believe he has gone a long way towards getting it right," the source said.

Heady start to job creation fund

Argus 20/2/89

FRANK NXUMALO

LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — Organised labour's Job Creation Fund got off to a heady start yesterday with more than R1,6 million raised in less than two hours of national determination to do something about the scourge of unemployment ravaging the country.

The seniority and public standing of the national dignitaries and institutions gracing the launch — including President-designate Thabo Mbeki; Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane; Beyers Naude; the Rev Hawu Mbatha, the SABC's chief executive officer; Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris; the Development Bank of Southern Africa; Sanlam; Standard Bank; M-Net and the South Africa Foundation — produced a momentum and patronage beyond organised labour's wildest expectations.

The campaign, conceived by the country's three main labour federations — the Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu), the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) and the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) — during the long walk to the presidential jobs summit last October, is aimed at raising at least R100 million during a one-day wage contribution on March 3 by working South Africa, especially the federations' estimated 3 million members.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, the keynote speaker at the launch, handed over a cheque for R1 750 as his day's gross wages contribution.

President Nelson Mandela, the first leader to contribute to the fund, handed his cheque to the federation leadership for R1 914 (his day's gross wages) about one week ago.

Mbeki said the unions had not only made the nation proud

but their initiative was significant coming as it did from the poorest sectors of our economy.

"I am quite sure this initiative will make a critical difference to the challenge that faces ... our country," he said.

Donations also came from affiliates and their investment companies. Cosatu's Kopano Ke Matla pledged R250 000 within the next six months.

The Development Bank of Southern Africa will be project managers while Deloitte & Touche have been appointed auditors.

M-Net, the pay television channel, pledged R100 000 to the fund and also promised free airtime, as did the SABC, in addition to a day's pay contribution by its staff.

The Job Creation Fund has opened an account at the Standard Bank in Braamfontein, branch code 48-05 and cheque account number is 20-261-431-1 to which donations can be made.

Flexible market debate heats up

Reneé Grawitzky

BDAY 23/2/89

THE debate on the benefits or otherwise of labour market flexibility in SA is gaining momentum as government is set to investigate the effect of labour legislation on rising unemployment and the economy as a whole.

A UK academic said this week that it was impossible to have an open discussion on labour market regulation without arguments presented either for or against. This was compounded by the fact that labour market flexibility meant different things in different places. Despite these claims, he said, by international standards the SA labour market was flexible and, if anything, too flexible.

The University of Manchester's Prof Jamie Peck said the flexible labour market in the UK had been a dismal failure with the country facing rising unemployment, wage differentials and growing levels of social exclusion.

Speaking at a workshop organised by Wits University's sociology of work unit, Peck said the notion of flexible labour markets and their potential benefits had become distorted. Labour market regulation was not everything nor was labour market policy the key determinant of economic success or failure.

Despite this claim, Peck argued that the UK economy had become much more unstable since the policies pur-

sued by former prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Peck said deregulated labour markets in the UK led to an explosion of wage differentials and regional differences with rising poverty in the northern and western regions. Unemployment, he said, was higher than when the labour market was considered to be rigid.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, he said, was determined to tackle the unemployment problem. Peck said the Blair government would leave in place the major changes made to the labour market in the 1980s.

Peck argued that since the introduction of a deregulated labour market, the country had faced two recessions in less than a 10-year period. He conceded, though, that there was an economic boom in the US despite the fact it too had a deregulated labour market.

Peck said the difference between the UK and US model was based on the fact that the UK deliberately adopted a policy in the 1980s to make the labour market more flexible while the US government did not have a direct policy to interfere in the highly flexible labour market.

The US labour market, he said, was characterised by high levels of atypical workers with low levels of formal skills. The US market took advantage of the feeble education system, which left large numbers of youth functionally illiterate, and immigrants with low skills levels.