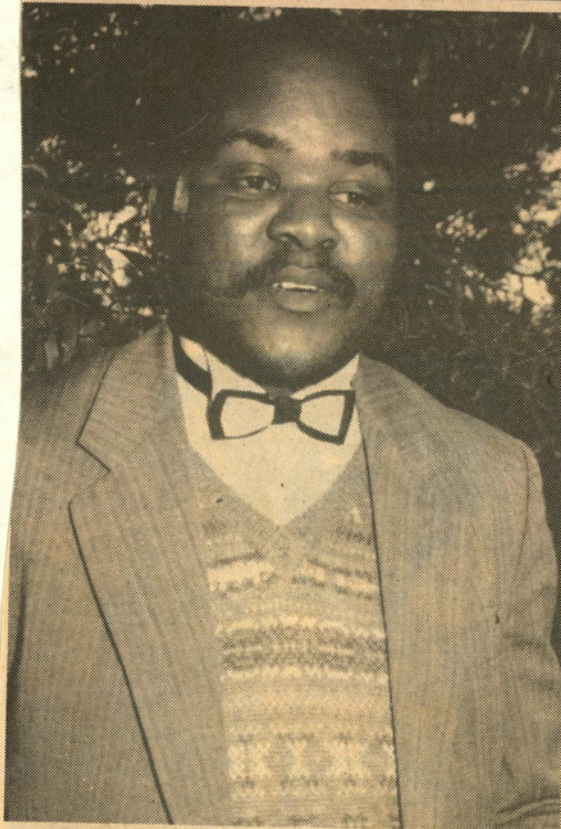


07 OCTOBER 94

'Don't let politics scupper local government talks' says Selby Majola



D S Majola of the Sibongile Residents Association: He is a firm believer in democracy.

THE 'tremendous' progress made by the Local Government Negotiating Forum must not be derailed by trivialities, says DS Majola of the Sibongile Residents Association.

Mr Majola was a central figure at last month's meeting where he refused to say who he was representing.

"That is a trivial matter. Everyone at the forum knows me. I feel that there has been too much emphasis on petty issues."

He rejects accusations that he is 'abrasive and intolerant'.

"Everyone has a unique negotiating style. I like to think I am assertive but never rude or offensive. I have never insulted anyone at forum meetings."

"Democracy goes hand-in-hand with vigorous debate; I believe in that notion."

Mr Majola said he does not go out of his way to be controversial.

"The Sibongile Residents Association was formed in 1993. There is nothing sinister about it. We are not aligned to any political party and are only interested in the social upliftment of our area."

He said the Association is only accountable to the residents.

"We are not interested in broad political issues. The welfare of our community is priority number one."

He further rejected accusations that there is an alliance between himself, SANCO, SACP, and the IFP to eliminate 'white opposition' on the forum.

"There was no alliance. I don't want to exclude any organisation from the process. I believe that everyone should become involved."

"We need collective wisdom."

He is of the opinion that the 'white' Ratepayers Association, Farmers Union, NP, DP and ACDP should form part of the statutory component along with the Dundee and Sibongile Councils.

Despite the dead-lock which led to forum chairman Pastor Derek Batte closing the meeting, Mr Majola is confident all parties can find common ground.

"Political strife must not be allowed to destroy the process - we have too much to lose."

"A Transitional Local Council must be implemented as soon as possible."

Things that irritate ...

Guest columnist **PAT POOVALINGAM**, among other things, wonders why the Natal Indian Congress, which was in the forefront of stringent condemnation of the paypackets and perks of Ministers and MPs, remain utterly silent when its ANC friends do far worse than the whites ever did.



with any important black person in a tin god.

explain why the leaders of the Natal who were in the forefront of stringent paypackets and perks of Ministers remain silent when their ANC friends do whites ever did.

to see nothing wrong with the rampant and corruptive political rewards ANC, wherever it is in power.

some things that irritate. But without chauvinism, there are yet such great immunity that one's pride in it is re-

rs achieved by sheer self-help in the is well recorded. They built 330 and material collected chiefly from communities. Almost in every case

on land donated by a member of that community, and more often than not, the buildings too.

Until 1966, the State only gave niggardly subsidies very reluctantly. It was only after the Afrikaners took over control of Indian education that the State embarked on any meaningful school building programme. This was because of the peculiar ethos of the Afrikaner. Whatever they did, they wanted to do thoroughly.

When it was bad, like the Group Areas removals, they were ruthless. When it was good, like providing schools, they worked on it systematically, even though they only got brickbats. Before that, the flashback to Frank Maharaj, of Flash Clothing, and scores of helpers personally building a school in Verulam was evocative of what their numerous predecessors had done.

I mentioned removals under Group Areas legislation. More than 350 000 members of the Indian community were kicked out of their ancestral homes

Many bought land from a private developer in a township called Kharwastan. And, having lost their homes in Hillary, Bellair, Sea View, Cato Manor, Riverside and other suburbs, they re-established themselves.

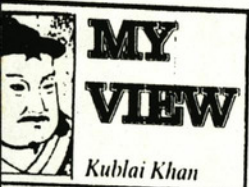
Hindus were able to worship in an old wood and iron temple built in 1924 in Quail Street. That became decrepit and was reconstructed in 1940 in Erica Avenue. But in 1975, the temple committee bought a larger piece of land in Oak Avenue. And there they built an exciting new temple.

No State subsidy at all. The money came solely from the public. There was not enough money, so committee members mortgaged their own houses to raise funds. And they provided "package weddings" in which the families provided only the young couple and the jewellery.

The money thus raised has fully paid for the hall and the temple.

People like these make us proud to be IndoSaficans.

For the NIC to take its final bow?



fter those who advocated participation Indian Council — a creature of — were defeated, the NIC vigorous- elections for the SAIC. The NIC credit for the unanimous rejection who participated in that discredited

In 1983 the tricameral parliament became a reality after a whites-only referendum approved it. Once again the NIC machinery went into top gear. Hundreds of people, mainly youths, took to the field, urging people not to vote. The NIC leadership took to the platforms to tell large gatherings that a vote for participation in the sham elections was a vote for further oppression.

The fruits of that labour were to be found in the election results. The percentage polls were dismally low everywhere. The people showed their rejection of the system and those who supported it.

In the second general election for the tricameral parliament those participating did not fare much better. And again this was because of the work done by the NIC and its allies in the United Democratic Front.

a Saturday in town

l, though, if you're lucky enough to meeting friends and sharing pleasing the buzz while you wait for the buying a little more than just this

course, leave you cold. Like I was this young, energetic group, mak- movements to pulsating music. n to go, so they all boarded their bus.

w nice to have happiness in the air. e from the bus as it drove off: "You I have had that derogatory term me before.

Of course, not all people take things lying down. As I set out for the city on Saturday, I saw the driver of a Mercedes looking menacingly across the other lane at some minibuses.

Out flashed a gun from the Wabenzi's passenger, and before you could say Tokyo, the Merc had come across the other lanes to halt the traffic.

Sanity prevailed, thank God, and no shooting took place. As for me, I accelerated into the spring morning.

Guns ... good or bad? I still ponder each time the issue comes up.

And I hope that people learn not to level racial insults

Now that the struggle for democracy has been fought and won, the question currently being asked is whether the NIC has outlived its usefulness. There are many like the stalwart JN Singh, who believe it has. They argue that the NIC, during the dark days of the ANC's banning, was in fact carrying on the work of the ANC.

There are those who argue that there is a need for the NIC to continue to exist in its present form. The main reasons appear to be that ethnicity is firmly entrenched in the psyche of South Africans and therefore it would be self-defeating to deny it. The other reason given is that the NIC can still play a meaningful role as a conduit through which to channel Indian votes to the ANC.

The first reason, in my view, is flawed because the ANC is a non-racial organisation. To argue that there is a need for an organisation to articulate the needs of one component of its membership is to argue that the ANC is in fact not a non-racial organisation. This argument militates against nation-building. Ethnicity has no place in a democratic South Africa.

To perpetuate this is to perpetuate divisions, which is what the NIC fought against throughout its proud history.

Can the NIC really facilitate the movement of Indians into the ranks of the ANC? After the April election I would think not. In Chatsworth and in Phoenix, two areas where the NIC had enjoyed tremendous support in the past, people voted overwhelmingly in favour of the National Party.

When the debate about the NIC's continuing existence surfaced shortly after the ANC's unbanning, it was strongly argued that there was a need for the NIC to continue to exist. The need was for the NIC to bring Indians in the fold of the ANC. The April election results showed in no uncertain terms that the NIC failed.

In my view the NIC played a sterling role in the