

AP1994-1-1-26

Buthelezi involves king in politics

I noted with dismay, humour and shock your editorial comment of January 20 (King speaks). Your comments smack of utter bias and/or ignorance.

It is amazing how you were so impressed with the "convergence of 35 000 'Zulus' on the Union Buildings," to such an extent that "nothing can detract from the spectacle of so many thousands of 'Zulus' demonstrating".

One death, injury or damage to property is too many in South Africa and yet you were still impressed when an innocent bystander was killed by the "Zulus", a woman hit by a stray bullet from stray "Zulus" and many other incidents associated with the march.

Like a small child who is fascinated by the idea of 6 million toys, you cannot hold your excitement to the idea that there are 6 million or even more Zulus in South Africa.

We are indeed the big-

gest tribe in South Africa. However, contrary to your belief, we are not warlike.

A true Zulu respects his culture and never uses it to frighten off or to kill other people, as stray IFP "Zulus" do.

You are correct when you say the majority of Zulus support the ANC and have their allegiance to King Zwelithini at the same time. However, it hurts when the same king rides in the same political gravy train with our poorer hungry "traditional Prime Minister", whose support base is dwindling day after day.

Our king has been apolitical for a long time and now, because Buthelezi is losing support for his resistance to change, he is involving the king in politics to the extent that IFP and the king are one and the same thing.

We are people of South Africa, Mr Editor, and no one has a right to claim a territory in this land. How, for that matter, can

Buthelezi claim KwaZulu when he does not have support in that area of South Africa.

You also made a blatant statement that "the Zulus will not bow their heads to... especially the Xhosas." Let me explain this to you. We are not at war with the Xhosas or with anyone for that matter. After April 27 we will not take our spears against a democratically elected government, no matter who wins the elections. We will accept that government and work with it.

However, we will point our spears against spoilers whether they come from Natal, Eastern Cape or any other part of South Africa.

Right-wing but wrong-minded Afrikaners tarnish our Zulu pride every time they refer to Zulus as their allies. Please do not add more salt to that wound. Not every Zulu supports the IFP/Zwelithini alliance.

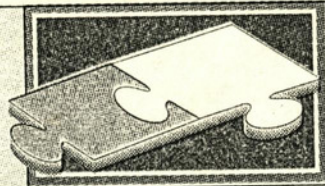
PROUD ZULU

Pretoria

SOUTH COAST MERGER

Residents 'in the dark'

Public meeting called PAGE 3



SEX SURVEY

Smoking, drinking link

'Comprehensive' look at attitudes PAGE 5



Court application a test case for TEC

KZP man 'will be forced' to appear

PRETORIA—An urgent supreme court application would be lodged to force KwaZulu police commissioner Lt-Gen Roy During to appear before the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), it was announced yesterday.

The court application, which is expected to take place before the end of the week, will be a test case for the TEC as it is the first time a dispute concerning the council's powers has been referred to the judicial system.

Mercury Correspondent

The council heard last night that Gen During, under orders from KwaZulu police minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had refused to attend a meeting of the TEC to provide information and documents on the operation of hit squads within his force.

The TEC was told Gen During had been tracked down to a town in the Western Cape where he was on vacation. There he was presented by local SAP officers with a letter from the TEC as well as last week's TEC resolution demanding his presence.

In a faxed response, Gen During said he would not be attending the meeting, "on the instructions of the minister of police".

A TEC official was however despatched into the corridor outside the TEC chamber to officially summon Gen During.

The TEC resolved "to take all appropriate legal steps to make sure Gen During presents himself before the council".

TEC chairman Zam Titus said preparatory work for the case would begin immediately. The TEC would institute a

civil action against Gen During which could result in a prison sentence or a fine.

How soon the case was heard depended on the availability of senior counsel, he said.

Meanwhile President De Klerk stepped into the fray, saying it was the TEC's role to ensure that free political activity could be carried out in all areas including self-governing territories.

The president pointed out that the TEC had already sent SAP units into KwaZulu in December and emphasised that he was not keen on "storming in with troops".

Two days to cast votes as

'Back door' remains open

ANC asks Bank to waive import duties

PRETORIA — The ANC had asked the Reserve Bank to waive import duties on election materials and for access to finrands to buy a building, the TEC heard last night.

DP delegate Colin Eglin said the application, which was passed on to the TEC's finance subcouncil, favoured one party and should be closely examined.

Even if the waiving of import duties was spread to all political parties, monitoring mechanisms should be put in place to prevent parties "stocking up on capital goods prior to the elections".

ADRIAN HADLAND

A TEC source confirmed that the ANC's treasury department had requested the waiving of duties for the importation of goods including electronic equipment, Land-Rovers and T-shirts.

Eglin said he had serious concerns about the ANC's application for finrands so that it could buy a building in Pretoria to use as party offices.

"I think it is wrong to use the TEC for matters falling under the Reserve Bank and for political parties to use finrands to

purchase commercial buildings

"Securing a commercial building reflects a commercial enterprise of a capital nature," Eglin said.

But one delegate said the move was intended to level the political playing field ahead of the elections.

The TEC agreed to refer the matter to the finance subcouncil, which will investigate whether the ANC request should be approved, whether all parties should be able to claim access to import duty waivers and whether the finrand could be used for electoral purposes.

London papers slam ANC's economic plan

■ BY ALAN ROBINSON

STAR BUREAU

London — The African National Congress's economic blueprint for SA has been savaged as a populist and irresponsible package that will only retard and distort the country's economy.

And ANC leader Nelson Mandela has been condemned for a "failure of statesmanship" in allowing the blueprint to go through.

The remarkably forthright criticism comes from The Times, which urges the ANC not to "run from reality".

In a leading article yesterday, the newspaper describes the projected reconstruction and development programme as a patent misnomer and says the ANC has "failed abjectly" to convince economists that it can pay for its promises of homes, jobs, free health and education for all.

ANC promises that the money can be found without boosting inflation or causing balance of trade difficulties and that there would be no increase in the total tax take, only a rearrangement of tax extraction, "will be a con-

siderable feat if this can be pulled off".

To its discredit, the ANC has struck an ambiguous posture on nationalisation — the dreaded N-word that Mr Mandela is careful not to use when abroad.

This does not inspire confidence, allowing even for the charitable view that the programme be seen only as an election manifesto.

The Times pointedly advises the ANC leader to "strip away false illusions, scale down expectations and avoid lavish promises". It says his support base is probably strong enough to permit him to "tell home truths".

The newspaper says: "The ANC must abandon its populist brew in favour of a plain-speaking commitment to judicious fiscal and trade policies, and to macroeconomic common sense."

And it has a further piece of advice: "Mr Mandela might begin to repair the damage to confidence caused by his party's programme by promising to retain Derek Keys, the current Finance Minister, and Chris Stals, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, after the elections.

"Their retention will be a reassuring antidote to the populist tunes Mandela feels compelled to play on the stump. It will be an antidote, too, to the ANC's flawed programme."

In its coverage the Financial Times says the RDP dodges the hard choices, and should probably better be understood as an election manifesto than an economic plan.

"The financing is at best vague, at worst unrealistic. Nothing is costed, no priorities are set, all options (including the threat of nationalisation) are left open."

A few months in power will probably reveal to the ANC all the contradictions inherent in its plan: It calls for people's power to be exercised at all levels, while simultaneously demanding a high degree of central planning, and it proposes huge spending increases without concomitant rises in revenue.

"Most ANC leaders still pursue a moral approach to economic questions, arguing it must be done, it should be done, therefore it will be done," the paper quotes a SA businessman as saying.

Self-defence units (SDUs) have been at the centre of controversy over their involvement in East Rand violence. Patrick Laurence talks to an SDU leader

ANC has 'nothing to do with SDUs'

The young man smiled as if to imply, politely, that the question was naive. A question which only an outsider could ask.

"No," he replied. "We won't listen to them. They live in the suburbs. They have nothing to say to us."

Siphiwe was seated in a small house in Katlehong, one of the trio of East Rand townships where 1 200 people have been killed in internecine warfare since May last year.

Two young men sat on the couch next to his chair, listening intently to his replies. They, like Siphiwe, were members of a local self defence unit or SDU.

Siphiwe had been asked whether SDUs would disband if instructed to do so by the national leaders of the African National Congress, some of whom live in Johannesburg's mainly white suburbs.

A member of the ANC who later boasted that the ANC branch in Katlehong was the biggest in South Africa, Siphiwe was not being disloyal. He was simply stating that the decision to disband the SDUs would be taken by the "soldiers" on the ground, not the ANC's leaders who lived away from the war zone.

Siphiwe — a fictional name, used in deference to his request not to identify him — had earlier denied that the ANC had been instrumental in forming the SDUs, thus contradicting an ANC document, "For the Sake of Our Lives", calling for the establishment of SDUs and ascribing a central role in their formation to the ANC guerrilla army, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

"Nothing at all," he said in reply to a question about what role the ANC had played in the formation of SDUs. It was delivered with the same smile that accompanied his answer that SDUs would not dissolve at the behest of the ANC leadership in Johannesburg.

He denied that SDUs in Katlehong had been formed by, or even with the assistance of, the ANC. Like SDUs as a whole, they fell under the aegis of the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco), not the ANC.

"There are people in Sanco who are not members of the ANC," Siphiwe added. "There are members of the PAC and Azapo..." To illustrate his point he identified one of the men on the couch as a PAC member.

An inquiry about where they had obtained their weapons brought another smile to his face.

"We bought them," he said. His comrades on the couch nodded in agreement.

"We tried contacting the ANC. They said that they didn't have weapons. They had signed the Pretoria Minute (of August 1990) suspending armed struggle against apartheid. They didn't help us."

The money to buy arms had been raised by the community, Siphiwe added. Reports that township residents were forced by SDU commanders to contribute to the purchase of weapons, or — more crudely — to pay protection money met with the same emphatic denial.

"They trust us," Siphiwe said as a young woman brought us roofbos tea. "We are their soldiers. We protect them."

SDUs had been formed in response to harassment of residents in Rabede, a section rather than suburb of Katlehong, by Inkatha Freedom Party supporters living in migrant worker hostels, he said.

'Aggression'

Siphiwe pointed to water tanks silhouetted against the skyline. They marked the position of IFP-controlled hostels. He recited the names: Kwaeswine, Buyafuthi, Mazibuko, Ekuphumleni and "Sun City". Some had acquired notoriety in ANC circles as "IFP barracks".

IFP "aggression" had taken two forms: first IFP zealots had tried to force residents to join Inkatha and then, in 1991, "after the taxi war", they had started attacking township folk.

"We were defenceless. People ran away, to Soweto, to Sebokeng, to Vosloorus. Then last year all the youths went to (the neighbouring zone of) Mavimbela to form an SDU."

"We started using guerrilla warfare against Inkatha. We attacked at night. During the day we sent small boys to carry out surveillance of their positions. After two or three weeks we changed our strategy. We decided we must fight them during the day."

In between blowing smoke into the air from his cigarette, Siphiwe related how the IFP was pushed back to hostels on the

horizon.

"We push them," he said. His hand orchestrating his tongue, he exclaimed: "We push them. Push, push."

After two months the Rabede section had been recaptured from the IFP, Siphiwe said. The SDU had not suffered a single casualty against 300 for the IFP, he added. "We made sure we killed them."

Then, as Siphiwe narrated it, the war entered a new phase: the IFP regrouped, receiving reinforcements from Natal and, assisted by policemen from the crack Internal Stability Division, began a new offensive.

Again, according to Siphiwe, the SDUs proved more than a match for the IFP and their allies. "We killed seven of them," he said nonchalantly, referring to the policemen who allegedly helped the IFP by ferrying them to and from the hostels in armoured vehicles.

"We pushed them from Mngadi section back to the hostels," he said of the IFP. "They only have four bases left."

His response to the question of whether he and his comrades had tried to talk to the IFP men in the hostel brought another incredulous smile to his face.

"We can't go there," he said, pointing to the water tanks standing like sentinels on the afternoon skyline. "We tried to go there on Peace Day last September. They fired at us."

He categorically dismissed persistent reports of warfare between rival SDUs in Katlehong and its neighbouring townships, including the "execution" of young men who late last year were found with bullet holes in the backs of their heads and their hands bound behind their backs. "There is no such thing," Siphiwe declared.

"Gangsters" from outside the area had taken control of a part of Mavimbela and launched an attack on an SDU in Ncala, another section in the trio of troubled townships, he said. They killed an SDU commander over the New Year but the murder was not political, he insisted.

The problem had since been sorted out, Siphiwe said. His comrades on the couch agreed. "We disarmed the gangsters. They fled back to the townships where they came from."

The sooner the SACP campaigns under its own manifesto and stands or falls under its own banner, the better for South Africa.

KZP chief will be compelled to face TEC

■ BY ESTHER WAUGH
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

KwaZulu Police (KZP) Commissioner Lieutenant-General Roy During failed to appear before a full sitting of the Transitional Executive Council yesterday.

The council then decided to take legal steps to compel his attendance. TEC chairman Zam Titus said a court order could be served on any official instructing him to appear before the TEC.

The TEC earlier asked During for information on the Goldstone Commission's finding that a hit squad operated within KZP ranks. During was, however, prohibited by KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi from co-operating with the TEC.

The TEC also appointed a three-member task group — consisting of lawyers Fink Haysom and Howard Varney and the SAP's Colonel Ivor Human — to investigate the existence of hit squads in Natal/KwaZulu.

A peace plan for the East Rand is to be announced within the next two days. The TEC agreed that its executive secretaries — Government constitutional adviser Fanie van der Merwe and the ANC's Mac Maharaj — should continue to co-ordinate a strategy to end violence.

It was also decided last night that the TEC management committee would discuss South Africa's role regarding the Lesotho conflict. Titus said the Government had turned down a request by Lesotho to send a peacekeeping force to the country.

**Swazi threat
on April poll**

The Swazi government has warned thousands of South African refugees who hold dual citizenship that action would be taken against those who voted in South Africa's April election. — Star Africa Service.

Alexandra killing spree

■ STAFF REPORTERS

Three men, including a prominent ANC leader, have been killed in Alexandra, north of Johannesburg, since Saturday.

Local ANC leader Mandla Maseko was shot eight times in a drive-by attack on Saturday. He is in hospital in a critical condition.

Maseko, a former MK

soldier and representative of the Alexandra Returnees Committee, was involved with peace negotiations. He recently started a security company to patrol the industrial areas of Marlboro, Wynberg and Kew.

Patrick Mtshali (19), thought to have been abducted from his home on Sunday, was found in a

sewer on Monday, shot in the head.

Khosi Ngidi (29) was found with gunshot wounds in his chest yesterday.

According to police, at least six people have been killed in the township since Thursday, following simmering unrest since the death of IFP general secretary Simon Mlambo on January 14.

BY ESTHER WAUGH

South Africans will go to the polls for three days — on April 27, 28 and 29 — instead of just on the 27th.

The Transitional Executive Council yesterday agreed to recommend to the President that the election take place

Election will be held over three days

over those three days.

President de Klerk is to proclaim the election in the Government Gazette on Friday.

Special votes will be cast on April 27. Ordinary votes will be

cast on April 28 and 29, with the last day being proclaimed a public holiday.

Voters will be able to go to the polls between 7 am and 9 pm on these days.

During the TEC debate, ANC negotiator Moe Maharaj said the management committee had considered the Independent Electoral Commission's recommendation that the elec-

tion take place from April 26 to April 28.

Democratic Party negotiator Colin Eglin noted that the public would be confused if the election began on April 26 in-

stead of the already announced April 27.

Maharaj said it was important that the first election day be used for casting special votes, because this would

speed up the process of counting the votes and announcing the results.

Maharaj said the majority of voters would be working people who would not be able to vote during working hours. The management committee also took violence and instability

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Election will be held over three days, TEC decides

◀ From Page 1

ity into account when deciding on the hours of voting.

Kalzer Nyatumba reports that De Klerk expressed the hope yesterday that an inclusive deal could still be reached in negotiations with the Freedom Alliance. But he warned that time was fast running out for amendments to be made to the Interim Constitution.

At a Pretoria press conference, De Klerk revealed that the

Cabinet had held "an extraordinary short meeting" yesterday morning to review the trilateral talks involving the Government, the ANC and the FA. "If an agreement is reached, then a short parliamentary session can still take place next week, but there are time constraints. Such agreements will have to be reached now," he said.

Last night the deadline for finding an inclusive negotiated settlement was postponed for a third time this week. Talks be-

tween the Government, ANC and FA will continue tomorrow when the ANC will submit written proposals to the alliance.

FA negotiator Rowan Cronje said last night "I don't have a lot of hope we will find a settlement, but I am prepared to give it a last chance."

The deadline for agreeing on amendments to the Interim Constitution was first set for Monday night, and was then postponed until last night.

The Government has been in-

sisting that agreements should be reached before the proclamation of the election.

Cronje said the ANC had done a "complete back flip" yesterday, and the FA felt there was no point in continuing negotiations. The FA was told its demand for two ballot papers was unacceptable. It, in turn, refused to accept that the powers of the nine provinces be expanded on condition that "framework legislation" by the central government be accepted.

ANC negotiator Valli Moosa said his organisation's written proposals, to be submitted tomorrow, had emerged from the past two days' talks.

Constitutional Development Minister Roel Meyer said there were another two days for negotiations before the proclamation of the election. If tomorrow's talks result in an agreement, amendments could still be made to the Interim Constitution.

But if there was "sufficient reason", talks could continue

even after Friday, and the agreement could still be included in the constitution after the April election, he said.

The Government, ANC and Afrikaner Volksfront — an FA member — continue negotiations today. Earlier this week it was proposed that a body representing Afrikaners be set up to discuss a white homeland with a constitution-making body.

FA negotiators said last night an agreement with the AVF alone was not possible.

FW seeks democracy pledge

■ BY KAIZER NYATSUMBA
POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

National Party leaders have publicly pledged to take disciplinary action against any members involved in "anti-democratic activities", and challenged ANC leaders to do the same.

Launching the NP's "Declaration on Fair and Free Elections" in Pre-

toria yesterday, NP leader President de Klerk said members of his party had been subjected to massive intimidation in townships across the country, and most of the culprits appeared to be ANC members.

NP members had been threatened and physically harassed, the party's offices and billboards had been defaced and its meetings disrupted. He had had to cancel sche-

duled walkabouts in some townships because "ANC reception committees" had been waiting for him.

De Klerk said threats to a free and fair election also came from the Right and violence. The Government, he said, would do everything in its power to ensure free political activity anywhere in the country, including in KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana.

Blacks buy Sowetan

■ BY SVEN LUNSCHÉ

A group of prominent black businessmen, headed by Dr Nthatho Motlana, has acquired control of the country's largest daily newspaper, The Sowetan, from the Argus Group.

The deal places control of an influential newspaper with the black business sector just three months before the April elections.

The Argus Group said in a statement yesterday it had agreed in principle to relinquish control of the Sowetan to the Prosper Africa Group, whose directors include Motlana, Dr Sam Motsuenyane, Franklin Sonn and Dr Enos

Mabuza.

All four directors are members, but not office bearers, of the ANC. Motlana stressed however that the Sowetan's editorial independence would adhere to the paper's Editorial Charter. Editor Aggrey Klaaste and senior management will retain their posts, he added.

The Argus Group has rejected offers by the ANC to acquire the Sowetan, in line with its guidelines that a potential buyer guarantee the editorial independence and commercial viability of its newspapers.

Media Workers Association of SA acting president, Mathatha Tsedu, who is also political editor of the paper, said:

"As a union we welcome black business participation in the paper, but there is some concern about where the paper will move politically."

Argus chief executive Doug Band described the move as a commercial venture that would "empower black business and place control of the Sowetan in black community hands".

In terms of the deal, a complicated pyramid structure will leave Argus with about 43 per cent of a newly formed company that owns the Sowetan. Prosper Africa will control 52 per cent and five per cent will be held by staff.

► Plan afoot to expand Sowetan - Page 16

FAX NO. 0358-202070

28TH. JANUARY 1994.

TO DR. M.G. BUTHELEZI

WITH REFERENCE TO PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE, I AM SENDING A COPY OF MY LETTER PUBLISHED BY THE MERCURY ON THE 26TH. INSTANT. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD VOTE AGAINST THE ANC - COMMUNISTS. OUR AIM IS TO GUIDE THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA, AS STATED IN THIS LETTER. MAY GOD GUIDE YOU ACCORDINGLY.

OZZIE & LOUISE KNOX
MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.
P.O. BOX 48, UMKOMAS 4170.
TEL. & FAX NO. 031-3044543.

Vote of Confidence

ADVERTISEMENT SUPPLEMENT TO THE NATAL MERCURY, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1994

An open letter to all South Africans

There are many people who do not know for whom they should vote or whether they should vote at all in the forthcoming election.

This applies to many elderly people and others who feel that there is absolutely no hope for those who do not support the ANC/SACP alliance.

The media, in quoting the results of various polls which have been taken and in their editorials, have given the impression that the alliance is going to take over absolute control of South Africa after April 27.

I believe this is not going to happen as they must obtain a two thirds majority to do so and there are millions of people who do not support the alliance, even though they are silent at

Mr Ozzie Knox is a minister of the Gospel who works with all denominations and groups. He has a law degree and studied law with prominent people such as Harry Schwartz (our ambassador in Washington, US), Nelson Mandela and the late Seretsi Khama at Wits University after the war. He has addressed this open letter to all South Africans.

present for various reasons.

South Africa is a Christian orientated country and according to statistics quoted, 70 to 80 percent of the population are Christians.

These people would certainly not agree to this country being converted into a one party communist state as has been done in most of the countries up north. I am sure that many others would not like to see this happen to South Africa.

The answer to those who are in doubt and who may even be thinking of not casting their votes or considering not participating in the election, is to be determined to cast their votes against the ANC/SACP alliance as any vote not cast means two votes for the alliance.

Those who are against this alliance must stand together and vote for any party which is against communism. To do otherwise would be

disastrous as our beautiful country would probably be converted into a one party state and we may never have the opportunity to vote again.

I urge all Christians to vote as we do not want a communist Anti-Christ state for South Africa.

■ Mr O Knox turns 80 next month and is still very active in keeping up to date with the current affairs of South Africa

He has a long South African history and has a great concern for the people of South Africa. He is the great grandson of Captain Carl von Brandis, who was the first magistrate of Johannesburg during the time that the goldfields were established

Slams poll

YOU have earned bizarre reports of the "HSRC" saying the ANC will win over 70 percent of the likely votes in the coming election. As the HSRC politicians in all their published reports, including the private "Update" series, openly do not cover large parts of South Africa properly including the TBVC states, they cannot possibly claim such a thing with credibility.

Also the HSRC is notorious for producing polls where there are up to, or over, 50 percent don't know/won't say in key groups, including its latest set, for this current claim, casting doubt on its sampling or interviewing techniques.

There is no proof that the ANC has anything more than about 61 percent of current voters — quite an achievement — and if it does get 67 percent or more it will be despite the HSRC and its polls.

DONALD SIMPSON
Houghton

Talks

□ From Page 1

between government and the Zulu king would not be resolved by the weekend.

But the alliance leaders attacked the ANC, singling it out as the major stumbling block to reaching an agreement.

Alliance chairman Rowan Cronje said: "We have exhausted all possible attempts at reaching a compromise and there was no point in continuing negotiations." He accused the ANC of reneging on deals made last week. However, ANC chairman Thabo Mbeki had offered to put in writing a compromise deal and the alliance would study this tomorrow.

Cronje said there was little hope for a settlement "and we feel there is no real sense in going on. We are being held on a string. But Thursday is the last chance."

Inkatha negotiator Walter Felgate said: "The ANC called the shots and was reluctant to make concessions even when government put forward compromises on the powers and functions of provinces."

Cronje and Felgate said ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa had been totally uncompromising on the double ballot de-

mand, stating that it was non-negotiable.

"Both government and the ANC admitted this was not democratic and prejudiced smaller parties and those wanting to contest only regional elections, but they would not budge," Cronje said.

He said while progress had been made on regions' constitutions, powers and functions, and autonomy in levying taxes, government and the ANC had reneged on these deals late yesterday. This had left the alliance in the position where it had to accept the constitution as it was, with the ballotting system not even being discussed.

Sapa reports that alliance adviser Mario Ambrossini said he doubted that the ANC would produce anything tomorrow that warranted optimism. "The talking is over," he said.

But government chief negotiator Roelf Meyer remained optimistic that a settlement was still possible. "The door should always remain open," he said.

And Mbeki said the talks had not broken down completely as there was still room to build on what had transpired.

Volksfront 'may take part in poll'

Talks with Alliance end in acrimony

FREEDOM Alliance talks with the ANC and government ended in acrimony, and with no agreement, last night but negotiators agreed to meet again tomorrow to consider a written proposal from the ANC.

However, the Afrikaner Volksfront, the CP and the Inkatha Freedom Party indicated that they might be prepared to take part in the elections, even if a final settlement had not been reached.

In a bid to take the pressure off achieving such a settlement President FW de Klerk offered the option of incorporating deals in "binding party agreements", instead of legislating amendments to the interim constitution. And the TEC's declaration of the election dates means the Freedom Alliance has until February 7, by when parties will have to register, to decide whether to take part in the elections.

De Klerk told a news conference that agreement with the alliance was still possible before it became impossible to legislate constitutional changes. But at an extraordinary Cabinet meeting yesterday it had been agreed that if this was not achieved, binding party agreements could be signed and the constitution could be amended after the elections.

This would obviate the need for the short parliamentary session that had been planned for next week.

De Klerk said negotiations would not end, even if agreement was impossible before the elections.

At a news conference in the Bophutha-

BILLY PADDOCK
and TIM COHEN

tswana embassy in Pretoria last night, Volksfront leader Gen Constand Viljoen indicated that the CP and the Volksfront were prepared to take part in the elections, even though a volkstaat had not been guaranteed. He would not say what the bottom line was on the issue.

But a senior CP source reinforced the view that the CP was conceding ground, saying the party would probably be happy with an added constitutional principle on self-determination. This had been offered by the ANC and negotiations could continue after the elections, he said.

The news conference was attended by Inkatha president Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Bophuthatswana President Lucas Mangope, CP leader Ferdi Hartzenberg, and the Volksfront's Viljoen and Gen Tienie Groenewald. The alliance leaders warned of an increase in violence if an unrepresentative election went ahead, and said members would make their own decisions on the elections by the end of the week.

Buthelezi appeared to back down from his refusal to take part in elections unless the alliance's six demands were met. Referring to this weekend's Inkatha general conference, where a decision on the elections is due to be taken, he said: "I would not call a conference if I was not prepared to listen to the people."

It was likely that the conference's decision would be conditional, as negotiations

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Volksfront, CP set to take part in poll

THE CP and the Afrikaner Volksfront were prepared to participate in the April elections even though a volkstaat was not guaranteed. Volksfront leader Gen Constand Viljoen indicated last night.

But chances of a political settlement being reached in talks between the Freedom Alliance, the ANC and government looked slim, even though the parties decided to push the deadline forward by two days.

At a news conference after talks ended last night, alliance leaders said individual parties would make their own independent decisions at the end of the week on whether they would take part in the elections.

Viljoen said he could not state the bottom line on the Volksfront's demand for a volkstaat. A senior CP source reinforced the view that it was conceding ground on this issue, saying the CP would probably be happy with an added constitutional principle on self-determination. This had been offered by the ANC and negotiations could continue after the elections.

They alliance's leaders attacked the ANC, singling it out as the major stumbling block to reaching agreement, even when government was prepared to compromise.

Chairman Rowan Cronje said: "We have exhausted all possible attempts at reaching a compromise and by this afternoon we said there was no point in continuing with negotiations as there was no chance of a

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settlement after the ANC reneged on last week's gains. But then (ANC foreign affairs director) Thabo Mbeki said he believed there was a basis for agreement and promised us that the ANC would put forward, in writing, their compromise position."

The alliance would study the document on Thursday and make a final decision.

Cronje said there was little hope "and we feel there is no real sense in going on if we are being held on a string. But Thursday is the last chance."

Inkatha Freedom Party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi also did an about-turn on his recent statements that Inkatha would "not participate in the elections if our six demands are not met". Referring to this weekend's conference where a decision on the elections is due to be taken, he said: "I would not call a conference if I was not prepared to listen to the people." He said he would not even make a recommendation to the conference.

He indicated that the decision was likely to be a conditional "yes" to taking part in the elections, as negotiations between government and the Zulu king were still in progress and would not be resolved by the weekend.

Inkatha negotiator at last night's talks, Walter Felgate, said: "The ANC called the shots and were reluctant to make concessions even when government put forward

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compromises on the powers and functions of provinces."

ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa was also totally uncompromising on the double ballot demand, stating that it was non-negotiable. Cronje and Felgate said.

"Both government and the ANC admitted and acknowledged that this was not democratic and that it did prejudice smaller parties and those that wanted to contest the elections on a regional basis only, but they would not budge," Cronje said.

They admitted there had been progress on the powers and functions of regions, the autonomy of regions to levy taxes, and regional constitutions.

TIM COHEN reports that negotiators have effectively removed the deadline on talks, saying agreed changes to the constitution could take the form of "binding party agreements" rather than legislation.

At a news conference yesterday, President FW de Klerk said there was still a possibility that an agreement with the Freedom Alliance could be achieved before legislating the changes became impossible.

But even if this were not the case, any agreement forged with the alliance could still take the form of binding party agreements and the constitution could be

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amended after the election. This decision was taken at an extraordinary Cabinet meeting yesterday, which was considered the last possible date for agreements to be achieved and still allow time for a short parliamentary session next week to pass legislation on the changes.

ANC, government and alliance negotiators agreed last year that Monday would be a deadline for the end of their negotiations, but De Klerk's decision yesterday effectively removes that deadline.

The decision places a question mark over whether the scheduled short session of Parliament, due to take place next week, will go ahead.

De Klerk said if a situation was reached where it would be impossible to arrive at agreements which could result in amendments to the constitution before the election, negotiations would still not come to an end.

He said he understood the promulgation of the election had to take place between 60 and 90 days before the election, and once this had taken place no further changes to the constitution would be possible until after the election.

The election is due to take place in 91 days.

De Klerk undertook to promulgate the election as soon as negotiations made it possible.

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