

THE CITIZEN COMMENT

Ngubane too big for boots

FEW people will believe that Ben Ngubane lost his job as KwaZulu-Natal MEC over the issue of poor matric results.

However, it's not a bad idea. Education in South Africa might be radically improved if senior office bearers were dismissed when matric results were not up to scratch. Sibusiso Bengu and many of his underlings would be long-forgotten bad dreams rather than recurring nightmares.

But there are other forces at work in the shake-up of KwaZulu-Natal IFP politics, and we do not think it all has to do with the so-called casino licence scandal.

According to this theory, Mr Ngubane refused to co-operate in a set-up where the IFP would pack an expanded gambling board with sympathisers in order to secure a casino licence for Mangosuthu Buthelezi's long-time friend and supporter, John Aspinall.

A more likely factor is the continuing rapprochement between Mr Buthelezi and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. Into this equation must be factored Lionel Mtshali, an IFP stalwart who has been an embarrassment as Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. Mr Mtshali will be remembered for ridding the Arts portfolio of an extremely able director-general, Roger Jardine. He has also picked quarrels with US officials about bilateral arrangements.

There have been strong suggestions that Mr Mbeki wanted him removed from the cabinet. Therefore the swap is as much about getting Mr Mtshali out of the national cabinet as it is about "redeploying" Mr Ngubane, who will to get his old job back at Arts, Culture, etc.

The idea that Mr Mtshali can beef up the province's matric results does not make sense. Premiers do not, as a rule, hold sway in education. If any provincial figure does influence education it is the MEC, in this case Vincent Zulu, who does not have a proud track record. Mr Mtshali cuts a very different figure from that of the urbane, intelligent and independent minded Premier Ngubane. We expect his appointment will cost the IFP votes in this year's election.

Mr Mtshali's most distinguishing characteristic is his loyalty to Mr Buthelezi. In addition, because of his bumbling nature, there is absolutely no chance of him attaining much stature in his new position.

By contrast Mr Ngubane was developing a fairly strong public personality. And that has been his downfall.

As Frank Mdlalose, and before him Oscar Dhlomo found out, some parties have room for only one high-profile person. Ben Ngubane was getting too big for his boots.

Moosa mistake

MINISTER Valli Moosa has unnecessarily injected a dose of racism into the election.

He criticises whites for not being part of the new South Africa and not applying for new ID books. This claim has no basis in fact. Large numbers of whites have applied.

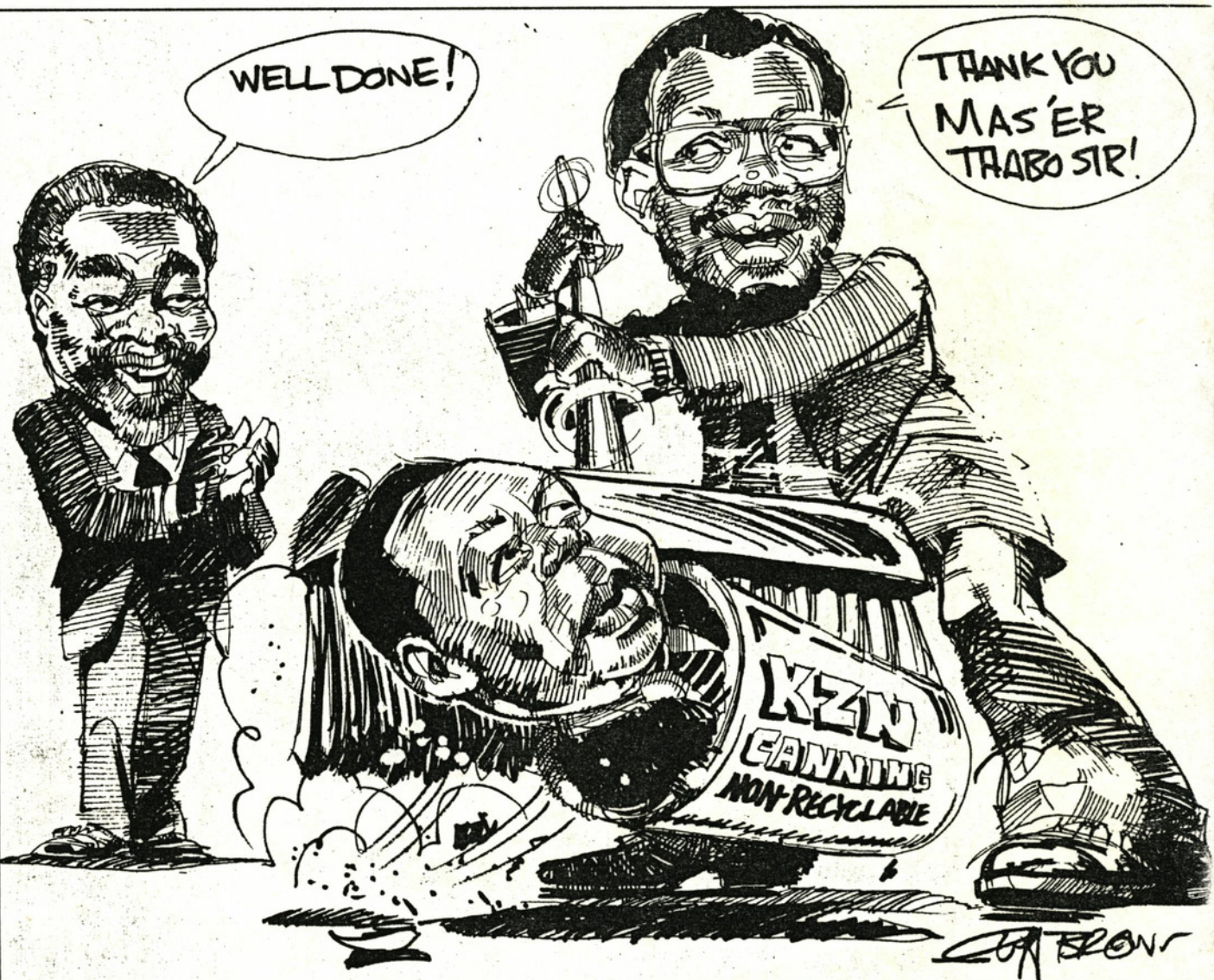
The lack of bar-coded IDs cuts across racial lines, as Acting Independent Electoral Commission Chairperson Brigalia Bam discovered when visiting the Eastern Cape at the weekend. She saw many rural blacks turned away from registration points because they did not have bar-coded IDs. So when the NNP and the DP challenge the bar-code requirement they are not merely serving narrow ethnic interests.

It is no use Mr Moosa trying to blame whites for the parlous state of election preparedness.

Apart from the bar-code mess-up the main problem is apathy. South Africans simply are not registering in sufficient numbers. For this we could blame Mr Moosa's government, which has botched the preparations – and not delivered to its constituents on housing, jobs and crime prevention.

We welcome the extended registration facilities, which should have been in place months ago. Now we look forward to a realistic compromise where the government allows more types of documentation to be used by voters.

Then, perhaps South Africans can at last have a decent election.



UN wrong on Angola

THE United Nations decision to scale down its operations in Angola following the downing of two UN planes in Unita-held territory is unfortunate if not an outright betrayal to efforts to find peace in the trouble-torn region.

While it is accepted that the safety of UN peace officers has for the last few months been threatened by the escalating war between Angolan government forces and Unita rebels, the principle of the UN presence in the area is enough to demonstrate that the international community has not forgotten the lot of ordinary civilians who are caught in the cross-fire.

The problem, which I believe is at the heart also of the UN's failure to influence the warring parties in that country to find a settlement, is the absence of a commitment from the UN's mission to act with a firm hand on the perpetrators of this violence.

It should be remembered that not long ago, elections were held in Angola, which confirmed the present government's legitimacy to continue to rule. The process, monitored by international experts, was declared to be reasonably free and fair.

Jonas Savimbi's Unita, having entered the electoral race expecting nothing else but victory, was thoroughly beaten. Had it been committed to democracy, it should have accepted



By Gugulethu Maqetuka

the eventuality and swapped its battle trenches for those of opposition politics in that country's legislature.

Unita's intransigence has resulted in the current impasse. This much has been recognised by the international community.

What remains unanswered though is the failure by the UN to act in a decisive way against Unita. Is it because Angola is an African country and thus must take a back seat when it comes to world issues? Or is it because some major influential international forces have vested interests in the continuation of this war because of the minerals in that country and the opportunity this gives to marketers of weapons of mass destruction?

Constant attack

We have seen how without doubt the UN, with the United States, as the self-appointed police of the world, have acted decisively in Iraq and now in troubled Kosovo, where native Albanians are under constant attack from Serbian forces.

Nato, which for me remains another arm of

international law enforcement, has been pains to demonstrate to Serbian leader Milosovic how serious they are about pullout of Serbian forces from the region.

I believe the UN should take this firm stand against Savimbi, and his army of bandits. Before the mineral-rich country lies in the grip of Angola's civil war has caused such tremendous destruction in the last two decades a return to arms is too ghastly to contemplate.

If the UN purports to be the protector of human rights across the world, then it must show this in Angola as well.

This biased prioritisation of world issues begs for the serious review of the restructuring of the Security Council. Its current representation cannot give confidence that African issues are taken seriously. African countries such as Angola are not given the opportunity to make a fresh start, which I believe should be done in the UN.

Surely, I again ask, is it not time for Angola to have permanent member status in the Security Council? Would this not provide solutions to problems such as the war in the Great Lakes region, the ever increasing foreign debt and other issues that have characterised this great continent for time immemorial.

● Gugulethu Maqetuka is Managing Director of Matigari Communications.

Letter

Just who is the Third Force?

THIS is an open letter to President Mandela:

AFTER the renewed killings in Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal, you were quoted as having blamed the so-called Third Force for these dastardly deeds.

Historically, the previous government was blamed for the existence of such a Third Force. Judge Richard Goldstone, however, found that no such force existed.

The new government has been in power since 1994 and has continued to blame this elusive "third force" in all unsolved incidents

of violent crime and murder.

Would you, Sir, therefore, please share your thoughts on the following:

● Who constitutes this so-called Third Force?

● Who is in command of this so-called Third Force?

● Where does the so-called Third Force operate from?

● Why has this so-called Third Force never been infiltrated by the intelligence services or if it has, what are the findings and recommendations? Were these, if any, acted upon?

● Why has this so-called Third Force been identified and stopped?

● Why would this so-called Third Force mostly target the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, the only two provinces, which are identically (or otherwise) not under the control of the ANC/SACP/Cosatu alliance?

If you do have information, which I am sure you have, about your blaming a Third Force, the past, present and future victims, ie, the nation, would be taken into your confidence.

B ADAMS

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HIRING AND FIRING: JUST WHAT IS GOING ON?

Daily News 2/2/99

Consider national interests first

Any peace effort in this country is doomed to failure unless it gets a lot of help from those in positions of authority - high authority, writes JOE LATAGOMO.

KWAZULU-NATAL was in mourning at the weekend, with the burial of 11 victims of what is generally believed to be a revenge attack following the assassination of United Democratic Movement leader Sifiso Nkabinde, who was himself buried at the weekend.

Inkatha Freedom Party leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi announced that Premier Ben Ngubane had been replaced as premier by Lionel Mtshali, ostensibly because of the poor matric results in the province.

Mr Ngubane's education MEC, Vincent Zulu, was also relieved of his position. Finance MEC Peter Miller was reportedly also facing the chop.

In the Western Cape, the bombings that have plagued the region for the past several months go on in spite of a special task force to combat what is termed urban terrorism in the region. Late last week, a pipe bomb was lobbed under a police vehicle in front of a police station, where it exploded.

And, at the weekend, the country went back to the drawing boards to boost the number of registered voters, following the poor showing last time round. It did not help much, and even with preliminary figures, only about 12 million of South Africa's estimated 25 million prospective voters have registered.

Buthelezi warns of resurgence in violence ahead of elections

CAPE TOWN — Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said yesterday he feared a resurgence of violence in SA, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, ahead of this year's elections.

He noted that IFP leaders were already being targeted. At a news briefing in Cape Town, Buthelezi said the IFP had uncovered a plot to assassinate certain party leaders in KwaZulu-Natal.

He said he had briefed Deputy President Thabo Mbeki about claims that three weeks ago a security company, whose owner he named — had supplied arms to African National Congress people in the province to be used to attack IFP leaders.

The IFP leader said: "Our greatest threat remains political violence. We are once again under the onslaught of political violence." Buthelezi urged South Africans to work together to ensure violence did not again become part of the country's political process.

"The IFP can only be severely damaged by the re-emergence of political violence," he said. "If we are to empower a government capable of governing South Africa, the next elections must be peace-

ful and the product of co-operation."

On President Nelson Mandela's departure from government and political life, Buthelezi said this might create a further deterioration in the moral fibre of communities.

He said Mandela had become a symbol of unity and hope, and this had provided strength and morality in society.

"His departure from the scene may be construed by some communities, or some people, as a licence to engage in disruptive activities and the beginning of an open season for all and every type of action," he said.

There was a need for a government capable of inspiring moral leadership, economic leadership through the liberalisation of market forces, and courageous leadership in cutting off the dead wood and corruption in government. "We need a government with a strong IFP presence," he said.

Approached after the briefing, officials refused to divulge details of the alleged assassination plot, saying: "We are seriously concerned about this situation. We have now placed it on the table of the highest authority in the land." — Sapa.

position of the MEC for finance, Peter Miller.

Both Chief Buthelezi and Dr Ngubane — who described it as "preposterous" — have denied this speculation.

Whatever the real reason for the action against Dr Ngubane, its impact on the political scene in the region will be serious. It was Dr Ngubane who, often against the wishes of his leadership, engaged the African National Congress in peace talks and sought solutions to the violence in the province.

For Lionel Mtshali, the task to take the peace process further will be a difficult one. He needs to engage Jacob Zuma and his team and take the process further. And yet, Mr Mtshali, coming as he does from a national cabinet post, does have the credentials to make it work. He has a reputation as a strict disciplinarian, but while he was effective at leadership level, he has had spats with several of his operational colleagues.

There must be questions asked, though, about the timing of this action, with elections due no later than May, and the possibility of changes in the nature and structure of the provincial government, why was there the urgency of taking this action? Does something need to be done before the elections that Dr Ngubane was not willing, or prepared, to do?

Many believe that it is possible for the IFP to lose the province to the ANC. There is much speculation about what outcome the election will bring the province this time round, including the appointment of Chief Buthelezi as Deputy President — seen as the sweetener that might be necessary to lower tensions in the region in the event the ANC won the province.

In the Western Cape, the challenge to return the province to normality continues. One of the key concepts in the liberation struggle, years ago, was to make the country ungovernable. This entailed deliberate lawlessness, which included attacks on police stations and other government installations or institutions.

At the time, it was argued that it was in the broader interests of the country rather than the interests of the few, unintended victims of the programme, to make the country ungovernable. There seems to be a similar argument in the Western Cape, where those who feel aggrieved think they have to respond through a campaign of terror.

Whatever the motivation for the acts, however, this country cannot afford them. The time has come for all South Africans to reflect on what is in the interest of the country, and get out of our provincial or sectional interests.

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — Government would be prepared to postpone the election by a year if necessary, senior counsel for the state told the Cape High Court yesterday.

Advocate Ishmael Semanya said government would seek a postponement under "exceptional circumstances" such as a court challenge.

He was appearing in the case brought by the New National Party (NNP) against government's insistence that only those with bar-coded identity documents would be able to vote, and the question of the independence of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC).

It should not be assumed that government's intention to hold the election between May 18-27 was "rigid", Semanya said. While it remained government's "serious intent" to stick to its proposed election date, it would not hesitate — "in the public's interest" — to seek a constitutional amendment so as to postpone the election, he said. New litigation would create time pressures.

A constitutional amendment would require a two-thirds vote in the National Assembly in favour of changing the stipulation that the election must be held within 90 days of the fifth anniversary of the previous election. This requires an election by late July.

Mojanku Gumbi, legal adviser to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, was present, but said afterwards that Semanya's comments on the election date had been "unmandated" and "speculative", and she wished to "correct" them. Semanya comments were "not his instructions".

The three-day hearing before Judge President Edwin King, his deputy Judge John Hope and Judge Deon van Zyl ended yesterday. Judgment was reserved.

Semanya said the NNP's claim that about 4-million eligible voters had been

denied the opportunity to vote because they did not possess bar-coded documents was premature: "No one has been excluded until such time as the voters' roll is closed (on March 7 after the third round of registration)". The figure of 4-million was also unproven.

With the home affairs department able to issue temporary identity certificates and temporary registration certificates, it was confident that anyone who wanted to vote would be able to.

As for the NNP charge of government interference with the financial and administrative independence of the IEC, Semanya said the IEC had turned down a proposal by government to treat the commission as a separate "state department".

He denied that the IEC was prevented from communicating directly with state expenditure, as argued by the NNP, and produced six letters to support this.

Semanya said the IEC had also not exercised its legal right to publish a report informing government that it was unable to perform its job due to budgetary constraints, despite the fact that former IEC head Judge Johann Kriegler had stated he would not hesitate to do so.

At the start of proceedings yesterday, the IEC was reprimanded by the court for failing to appear as requested on Monday.

The IEC was requested to confirm whether it stood by Kriegler's affidavit — used extensively by the NNP to argue its case. Among other things, Kriegler said problems would arise if South Africans without bar-coded documents were excluded from voting.

IEC senior counsel Jeremy Gauntlett said the IEC was absent as it did not wish to become involved in the proceedings. King said this was in defiance of the court's wishes. After lunch Gauntlett said he had conveyed the message to the IEC. However, the commissioners were unable to meet at such short notice.

Ngubane will be a sad loss for KZN

ALTHOUGH we accept that it is the prerogative of political parties to deploy their leaders as they fit, we would also expect them to be a little more responsible and take more than just their own selfish interests into consideration before they make such decisions. After all, not only were they placed in the elected positions they hold by the general public, but some — if not most — of their actions actually impact on that very public.

Sadly, KwaZulu-Natal now looks set to become the only one of the country's nine provinces which will have had three premiers in its first five years. The Free State, Gauteng and the Western Cape have all had their problems and subsequent changes of premiers, but none appears likely to change premiers again before the elections.

The likeable Dr Ben Ngubane, who has worked hard to win the confidence of the business and political communities, will be replaced with the lesser known Mr Lionel Mtshali, whose strongest point appears to be his unswerving loyalty to IFP leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. So yet again, KwaZulu-Natal must begin to get to know a new premier and, depending on the outcome of elections, we might have to welcome another one in a matter of months.

As Buthelezi should know, this can hardly inspire business and investor confidence in the province. We wish Ngubane well in his new position, although no tears will be shed for outgoing education MEC Vincent Zulu. We hope his successor will prove to be a better appointment.

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Orlando residents marched as a community to the Eskom offices in Diepkloof yesterday. They claim that electricity rates are excessive and that homes in the area have been without power since Sunday.

PIC: PETER M

DP concerned about new KZN Premier

Sowetan 2/2/99

By Jimmy Seepe

THE Democratic Party has reacted with extreme concern to the announcement by the Inkatha Freedom Party that Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Mr Lionel Mtshali is to become the new Premier of KwaZulu-Natal.

The DP comment differed from the more cautious approach that the African National Congress in the province has taken about the announcement of Mtshali's appointment.

DP KwaZulu-Natal leader Mr Roger Burrows told *Sowetan* yesterday that the party was concerned about Mtshali's appointment, given his background.

"We are not hopeful about Mtshali's appointment. He has a reputation for being a hardliner who is not given to flexibility in his dealing with opposition parties," said Burrows.

The DP's concern follows Sunday's announcement by IFP leader and Home Affairs Minister Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi that Mtshali was to replace Dr Ben Ngubane as premier.

Buthelezi further announced that current education MEC Mr Vincent Zulu, and not MEC for Health Dr Zweli Mkhize, as incorrectly stated in yesterday's *Sowetan*, would be replaced by Eem kaNkosi-Shandu.

Both Ngubane and Zulu were removed from office as a result of the province's poor matric results.

Burrows said as a result of Mtshali's hard-line attitude towards opposition parties it remains to be seen whether he would be able to work with the extremely diverse political and

cultural population of the province.

His first responsibility would be to ensure that there was no suggestion of IFP involvement in the distribution of casino licences.

On Sunday ANC spokesman Mr Dumisa Makhaye said: "It is shocking that the IFP premiers (Ngubane and Dr Frank Mdlalose) lost their positions allegedly for their refusal to involve themselves in shady casino deals."

Makhaye also blamed Ngubane's removal on rightwing IFP members, saying the outgoing premier had refused to "dance to the tune of the extreme rightwing white coterie within the IFP".

Yesterday Makhaye said he was hopeful that Mtshali would be able to continue with the policy of rapprochement that his organisation has pursued with the ANC.

He also said the ANC was hoping that the new premier would not be dissuaded from doing so by rightwing members of his party.

Cooperation

Makhaye said: "If he follows the policies of the IFP, which says the IFP was not created to oppose the ANC, and that there is a need for better relationships and cooperation between us, he will enjoy our cooperation."

Pan Africanist Congress KwaZulu-Natal spokesman Mr Joe Mkwana said his organisation was hopeful that Mtshali would continue to nurture the warm cooperation that his party had enjoyed with Ngubane.

However, Mkwana said he was concerned about the timing of the announcement as it could trigger instability in the ranks of IFP members in the province.

Witness just cannot remember

By Mokgadi Pela

A WITNESS in the robbery trial of "the Poet" Mzwakhe Mbuli and two other Pretoria Magistrate's Court she could not remember the people involved in the incident.

Ms Elona Adendorf, a cash loans officer at the Waverley branch of First National Bank, which was robbed on October 29, was testifying before Mr FJ Pool yesterday.

Mbuli, Happy Shikwambane and Masiso are alleged to have robbed the bank of R15 000. They have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Adendorf reiterated her statement that the police made hours after the incident that she did not see the alleged robbers properly.

"I cannot even describe them. All I remember was that one of the robbers was wearing a white overall while the other was dressed in a dark shirt and dirty shirt. The person in a white shirt was tall," she said.

She denied that witnesses at the trial parade which took place at Adendorff Police Station on October 29, 1998, could remember the case in the waiting room during the parade.

"We were asked by Inspector C. van Zyl not to talk about the robbery," she said.

She confirmed that Van Zyl had asked her to keep the witnesses from morning the day to ensure they did not remember the ruling.

"I can't even remember what the witnesses in the waiting room talked about," she said. The trial continues today.

Black worried by 'racial polarisation' in S

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He said Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's recent observations about South Africa comprising two nations - one rich, white and insensitive; and the other poor, black and angry - should be taken seriously.

"His comments signal growing racial polarisation and black criticism of minority attitudes and approaches," he said.

De Klerk said some whites tended

to withdraw again from the challenges of Africa. They were being tempted to live on islands of well-being, isolating themselves behind security walls and electric fences from the poverty around them.

"There is an inclination to abandon the political terrain to the overwhelming majority and to sit somewhat apathetically on the sidelines and criticise the Government."

De Klerk called for a commitment by all South Africans to make the new dispensation work.

"Our privileged groups should know that their future is interwoven with that of disadvantaged communities."

On his newly released autobiography, entitled "The Last Trek - A New Beginning", De Klerk said the book was an attempt to counter what

he described as the demon of the former Afrikaner government.

He rejected the notion of government heads of government were that they had been driven to power. They, instead, strove for justice for all.

"I don't deny that our political journey, in the end, led to a morally upright situation which has brought many people." - Sapa.

UNIONS Federations call on members to donate a day's wages on March 3

From 52/26a

Labour aims to raise R100m for jobs

FRANK NXUMALO

LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — The three biggest trade union federations in the country hoped to raise more than R100 million for a Job Creation Trust Fund on March 3 when their 3 million members contribute a day's wages towards job creation.

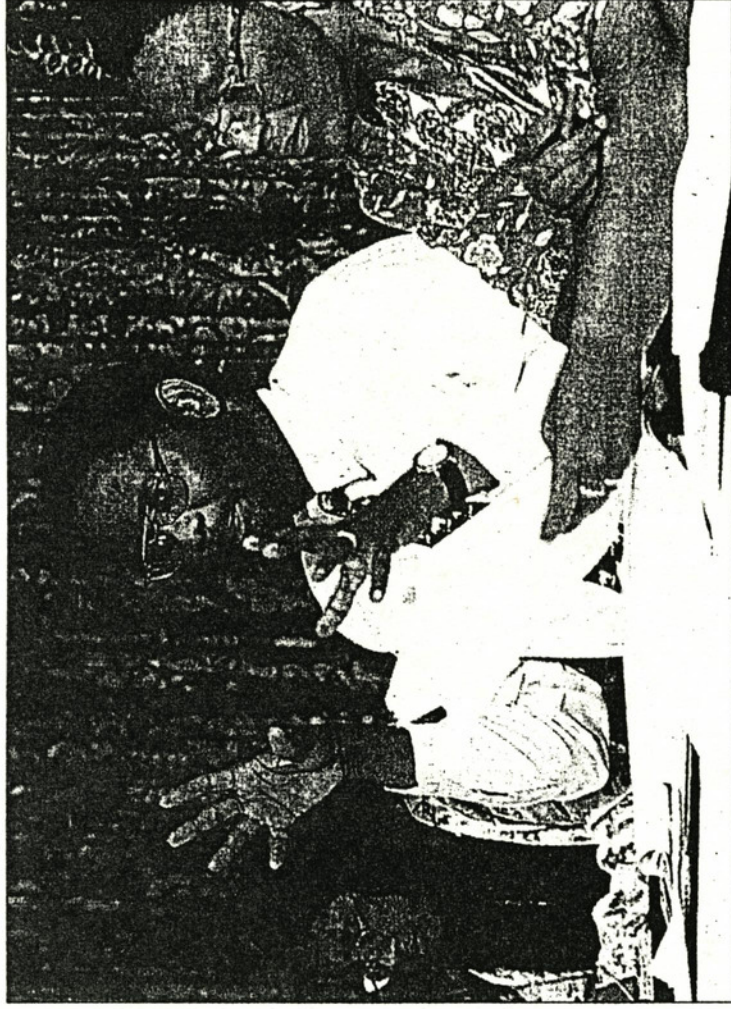
The federations are Cosatu, the National Council of Trade Unions and the Federation of Unions of South Africa.

"It is clear that the unemployment crisis in our country is not getting any better and that no sector on its own can solve this problem," Zwelinzima Vavi, Cosatu's deputy general secretary, told a media conference yesterday. He urged all working South Africa to donate a day's salary.

"We believe it is in the interest of our country to do whatever it takes to create jobs, especially targeting the youth; we further call on the business community to donate their profits on March 3 to this fund."

If business comes to the party the fund could end up netting R2 billion.

"Business cannot afford an impression that the only people concerned about job creation are the workers," Vavi said. But



IN OUR HANDS At a media conference yesterday to outline plans for the job creation fund are (from left) Connie September, the first vice-president of Cosatu; Zwelinzima Vavi, Cosatu's deputy general secretary; and Mary Maletle, the president of Fedhasa

PHOTO: SEIWIN DAT

he welcomed the separate initiative by business to raise up to R1 billion for job creation.

A board of trustees for the fund was unveiled at the press conference. Its members in-

clude Mary Maletle, Andre Venter, John Maqhekeni, John Gomomo, Amnon Ntuli, William Madisha, Petrus Mashishi, Mvumelwano Dandala, Rabbi Cyril Harris, Albertina Sisulu,

Bayers Naude and Mahlomola Skosana.

The trust will hold its first meeting next week, when it will elect a chairman and appoint a full-time manager.

8Day 18/12/98 Small but successful

SEVERAL lessons can be drawn from the story, in yesterday's Business Day, of how dozens of small KwaZulu-Natal shoe manufacturers are eating away at the market share of Conshu, the industry's troubled giant.

Many of the budding entrepreneurs used to work for Conshu and other big manufacturers before slowing demand and competition from imports (legal and otherwise) put them on the street. Now, as owners of small — in many cases, family — businesses, they have gained new freedom, agility and monetary incentive. That translates into lower overheads, quicker decisions and higher productivity. As Shan Pillay, head of a group of small footwear manufacturers, puts it: "By the time the big companies tool up, we are sold out". Use of low-cost, non-union labour obviously helps.

Government shows encouraging signs of recognising the importance of such businesses to job creation. The mayor of Maritzburg has been a catalyst for the burgeoning footwear makers. Central government is mulling a range of proposals to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit.

A good starting point is to accept that the needs of big and small businesses do not always coincide. The latter, for instance, typically require workers with multiple skills, who are willing to be more flexible in their working practices. Yet sectoral labour agreements are all too often negotiated by the behemoths of an industry, with their own interests in mind. The whole gamut of regulations affecting business needs to be scrutinised to ensure that, while maintaining standards, they do not stifle nimble and innovative entrepreneurs.