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Wrong medicine

JUST whose cause will the Mass Democratic Movement be serving if it goes ahead with its planned "peaceful" swamping of white hospitals this week?

It would be extremely naive to believe that such action would meet with a peaceful response from the authorities, especially in the run-up to an election in which the Government is being strongly challenged by the Conservative Party. The Nationalists will be only too eager to demonstrate that they have not lost their touch in firm handling of disaffection.

It requires just as much naivete to believe that those marching on the hospitals would behave with the restraint predicted by MDM leaders. Such occasions are volatile and the history in this country of this type of protest shows that,

all-too-easily, they degenerate into violence and tragedy.

There can be no doubt that there are discriminatory practices and unacceptable inequalities in health services. This has been so for generations. But the situation is changing, however slowly, and is more likely to undergo further change if the forces of renewal in white politics establish themselves at this election.

Campaigning to highlight the injustices of the South African system is one thing; a mass demonstration that could disrupt hospital services is a risky exercise. It could lead to confrontation and public disorder — with all the ugly trappings of quirts, teargas and Casspirs — and would be to the electoral advantage of white conservatism. And that is the wrong political medicine.

Each party has different solution to political logjam

Is the future of SA becoming just talk?

DAILY NEWS - 1 Aug. 1989

BOTH the National Party and Mass Democratic Movement (under whatever name) claim they are the only real movers in the power game in South Africa and both claim they are ready to negotiate but only if...

The NP is attempting to convince the voters that it not only has the will to negotiate but also the ability to do so.

The MDM retorts that predictions of an imminent breakthrough is "a total and dangerous illusion", saying it sees no fundamental change of heart from the NP.

The MDM does, however, acknowledge that internal and international pressures are building up and the NP may soon be forced to start taking steps which could lead to real negotiations.

The National Party, in major newspaper advertisements at the weekend, claimed it was the only party that could get the country out of its current financial and political mess. It carefully avoided explaining how the mess was created in the first place; nor has it spelled out in detail how it proposed achieving the recovery.

In its action plan for the next five years, the NP commits itself to negotiation but then sets a list of conditions of not only with whom it would be prepared to negotiate but also on what terms it would negotiate.

The NP would only talk with those people who were committed to peace and rejected violence as a means to achieve political objectives.

It believed it could not only decide on its negotiating partners but also that it could negotiate an acceptance of the protection of white exclusivity and privilege (called "apartheid" by many and called "own affairs" by the NP).

A contradiction in National Party outlook is that it attempts to dismiss the importance of the Mass Democratic Movement

All the current talk about breaking the political logjam and getting negotiations on the future of South Africa going, increasingly looks like nothing more than talk. Political correspondent **BRUCE CAMERON** reports.

and the African National Congress while at the same time elevating them to the position of prime enemy.

At a conference organised by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa) MDM spokesmen gave the flip side of the National Party conditions.

Firstly, it was made clear that, when negotiations came, there would be two main players, the MDM (and by that they meant the ANC, the UDF, Cosatu, etc.) and the National Party. Everyone else would have to decide on which of these two sides to place their allegiances.

MDM executive member Professor Jerry Coovadia said the Movement was the main engine for change. It had earned this position. Many of its members were dead, in jail or in hiding.

He emphasised the movement was intent on increasing pressure ("isolate the apartheid regime") and would not enter any negotiations that were aimed at entrenching any type of racial exclusivity.

The various MDM spokesmen repeatedly stated they could not be expected to enter initial talks, let alone substantive negotiations, before the National Party made the first move towards lifting restrictions such as those on political organisations and various individuals to allow free political activity.

Dr F van Zyl Slabbert, who established Idasa to find a way to bridge the chasm, says the ball to get negotiations under way was firmly in the National Party's court. He sympathises with the attitude of the MDM

and sees the National Party as the blocking mechanism in the way to talks.

In an interview, he warned that, until people could associate freely, they were going to set tough demands. "If the Government says it wants to negotiate but refuses to create conditions for negotiation it forces the other side into stating conditions. Only the Government can unban people and organisations and release political prisoners. Only the Government can lift the state of emergency. Only the Government can dismantle apartheid structures."

The National Party could not expect people to renounce violence "when the very conditions that led them to consider violence are still being maintained by the Government."

The longer the National Party held out, the more it was going to be eroded from the Left and the Right.

"It is the old classical squeeze of the Left saying the NP was giving too little too late and the Right saying it is giving too much too soon."

Dr Slabbert said there was a very significant difference to the current election in that it was being dominated by the very people with which the Government would not negotiate.

"I have never seen a general election where the Mass Democratic Movement has been as dominant as in this one — from Mandela/Botha tea party, to the MDM defiance campaign, to Mr de Klerk's visit overseas."

Dr Slabbert warned Mr de Klerk that he had a choice of maintaining the Conservative Party as a big fish in a small pond by dealing only in the white arena or of reducing the CP to a small fish in a large pond by entering negotiations with the majority of South Africans.

"It all says just one thing: Mr de Klerk has got a performance crisis on his hands after the September 6 election."

News by B Cameron 85 Field Street Durban

Zach, Slabbert silenced

Wits students prevent campus debate

CITIZEN August 1, 1989

By Marguerite
Moody and Sapa

ABOUT 100 singing, dancing and chanting students yesterday prevented a lunchtime debate at the University of the Witwatersrand at which Democratic Party co-leader, Dr Zach de Beer, Idasa director, Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, and Weekly Mail journalist, Mr Steven Friedman, were to be the speakers.

The subject was to be "Parliamentary politics: Is it relevant?"

The students, most of them belonging to the Black Students' Interim Committee (BSIC), also stamped their feet.

They chanted "We must arm" and sang songs in praise of the banned African National Congress' military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, drowning out amplified requests for them to stop "in the interests of freedom of speech on campus".

Dr De Beer, Dr Slabbert and Mr Friedman sat passively at a table on stage while the furore continued in the university's Great Hall, where about 2 000 students had gathered to listen to the debate.

University security officials attempted to push

the knot of chanting students out of the hall by a side exit and at one stage prevented the throng from advancing down an aisle on to the stage.

When it became clear the chanting students would not stop, the meeting was cancelled.

Dr De Beer said it had been "a great pity so many people have wasted their time. Feelings run strong in these situations".

Dr Slabbert said the disruption of the meeting was "symptomatic of the absurdity of holding a

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Wits students stop debate

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general election for the minority.

"Even under the most repressive circumstances, opportunity for debate and discussion should be used," he added.

"It would be foolish for people to under-estimate the depth of frustration and anger amongst those in the extra-Parliamentary arena who have had their meetings and organisations banned and their peaceful gatherings disrupted."

South Africa could "expect this kind of turbulence" until everyone could "participate legally and peacefully in the political process in a non-racial democratic South Africa".

At a Press conference held by the BSIC after the meeting was cancelled, Mr Lloyd Mogotsi, vice-president of the Black students' organisation, said the meeting was disrupted because of the presence of DP co-leader, Dr Zach de Beer.

"We will not allow a

Parliamentarian to speak on Wits campus. Our position on extra-Parliamentary politics is clear: our future does not lie in Parliament, it lies in the extra-Parliamentary movement. We have very strong feelings towards the tricameral Parliament.

"Dr De Beer is taking part in a racist system, and for this reason we would not allow him to speak. We will not allow any Parliamentarians to speak on campus."

When asked whether the organisation was not violating the principle of freedom of speech, Mr Mogotsi said: "When you talk about freedom of speech, what are you really talking about? It doesn't exist in South Africa today. No person in his right mind can talk about freedom of speech in this country."

"We are aware of the consequences of our actions, but we are prepared to accept these consequences."

The vice-chancellor and principal of the uni-

versity, Professor Robert Charlton, said in a statement he "deplored this gross violation of one of the university's most cherished values, freedom of speech. I apologise on behalf of Wits to our guests."

"Action in terms of university's disciplinary procedures will be taken against the students concerned."

The president of the university's SRC, Miss Bettina von Lieres, said the outcome of yesterday's meeting was "so predictable that the administration, the organisers and those that disrupted the meeting bear responsibility for their lack of foresight and sensitivity."

"Those who disrupted the meeting failed to explain their actions to students present while their anger at Dr De Beer for his party's participation in the Indian House of Delegates and his echoing of Vlok's smears of democratic organisations over the last week is understandable and shared by

many South Africans and students.

"An explanation for their activities in the meeting is the least that could have been expected."

She said the Debating Union, which had organised the meeting, had behaved "provocatively and manipulatively by single-mindedly trying to further their own political agenda by hiding behind the aura of free speech."

"This included phoning the Press with advance warning that there would be disruptions even prior to negotiation around the meeting being completed."

Mr John Peter, who chaired the meeting, said he "would like to ask the BSIC whether the ANC would have approved of their disrupting of a meeting at which Dr De Beer was to have spoken."

"We will try to reconvene the meeting, with the same speakers, at a later stage before the forthcoming general elections," he said.

Deserters tell of discontent in ANC bases

By Tony Stirling

ANC terrorists who have recently surrendered to police in South Africa have spoken of an overriding fear among members that they will be forced to become involved in the civil wars of other countries after their removal to new bases in North Africa.

According to information given by the Police public relations division, based on questioning of terrorists who recently handed themselves over to the police, this is one of the major reasons behind the reluctance of ANC cadres to shift to the new basis.

Two of the countries to which ANC members being removed from Zambia and Angola are Uganda and Ethiopia, both of which have internal wars.

Questioning of the ANC deserters has revealed that after the experience of ANC members in Angola, where the deserters claimed to know of more than 50 ANC members who had died after being forced to fight with Fapla against Unita, they will again be forced to take part in the wars of other countries.

The resistance to leave Zambia is so great, that special ANC units, assisted by ANC security and elements of the Zambian police, have removed ANC members at gunpoint to the airport. One ANC member was shot

dead while resisting those who had come to ensure his removal.

The deserters outlined a long list of grievances, similar to those recently made by 17 former members of the ANC in Scandinavia.

Not least among the grievances was the shortage of food — largely because supplies of rice from Red China and foodstuffs from Russia have dried up, with Scandinavia now being the only regular outside supplier of food in limited quantities. According to the police some of the ANC deserters who listed these grievances were suffering from malnutrition when they surrendered and had to receive medical and dietary care to restore their health.

The deserters indicated that the food shortages were creating other problems. Clothing for example, had become in pitiful short supply because acres in charge of the clothing allocations were selling it to get money for food.

In recent months, the food situation had become so critical that they had only been receiving a meat ration once every 12 days.

The men also claimed that higher up in the ANC, members were operating big money rackets, such as foreign exchange frauds. One of the

fears expressed by the deserters, was that of betrayal when they were sent to South Africa on terrorist missions. Because of the regular disappearance of members suspected of being South African spies to punishment camps like Quatro, the deserters told the police there was real fear that they would be sold out by agents in their midst.

Other claims made by the deserters was that tri-

balism or nepotism played a significant role in the ANC. Ordinary members were unlikely to be favoured with higher positions or scholarships, unless they had a friend or family member high up in the ANC, while Xhosa appeared particularly favoured in rising to positions of rank in the organisation.

Increasing incidences of Aids was causing problems, a fact which the ANC leadership was trying to conceal, according to the deserters. Deaths from malaria and tropical stomach ailments were also common.

THE CITIZEN COMMENT

Deplorable

WE deplore the fact that singing, dancing and chanting mostly Black students (reports suggest there were around 100 of them, though the university says there were 80) disrupted a debate that was to have involved Dr Zach de Beer, co-leader of the Democratic Party, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, Idasa director, and Mr Steven Friedman, of the Weekly Mail.

The subject was to have been "Parliamentary politics: Is it relevant?"

One might have thought that even radicals could have been prepared to listen to this debate.

Furthermore, the participants all had the right credentials — Dr De Beer because his party has links with the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement, Dr Slabbert, because Idasa arranges treks to the ANC, and Mr Friedman, because his newspaper is ultra-liberal.

But nothing mattered.

According to a spokesman of the Black Students' Interim Committee, "our future does not lie in Parliament, it lies in the extra-Parliamentary movement.

"De Beer is taking part in a racist system, and for this reason we did not allow any Parliamentarian to speak on Wits campus.

"In the name of student unity, we decided the meeting should not take place on this campus."

This is not the first time there has been such intolerance at Wits.

In the run-up to the 1987 election, Mrs Helen Suzman was denied the right to speak at her alma mater because of a curb on "electioneering speeches".

She had been invited to take part in a debate on the constitutional issue, organised by Law Society students.

It was suggested that the debate be moved to another venue off campus, but Mrs Suzman quite rightly said: "I'm not interested. I want the right to speak on campus. If I can't have the right, then I won't speak."

The university authorities, reports suggested at the time, were believed to have bowed to pressure from the Black Students' Society, some of whose members were involved in disturbances on the campus the previous year, when a visiting Unita delegation was howled down when it attempted to address a meeting.

Irish academic, onetime chairman of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and academic boycott buster, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, had to cancel a lunchtime meeting at Wits after demonstrating students declared they would not hear his prepared lecture, but would enter into debate on the principles of his visit.

Dr O'Brien, whose meetings had also been disrupted at Cape Town University, abandoned his university lecture tour "to avert serious violence".

Now comes the refusal of the Black Students' Interim Committee to allow the De Beer-Slabbert-Friedman debate to be held.

And this at a university with a great liberal tradition.

What intolerance! What insolence! What disgusting rejection of free speech and academic freedom.

The Vice-Chancellor of the university, Professor R W Charlton, deplores "this gross violation of the university's most cherished value, freedom of speech", and "apologises on behalf of Wits to our guests".

He says action in terms of the university's disciplinary procedures will be taken against the students concerned.

We hope that action will be severe, since the impression outside the university is that its authorities have been far too inclined to lean over backwards to placate the radical students.

There is a lesson in this for the Democratic Party.

In the same way as the Black students denied Dr De Beer and the other two speakers the right to be heard, so the Mass Democratic Movement, through its defiance campaign, is trying to deny voters their democratic right to vote.

Neither the students nor the MDM are democrats by any standard, and the DP should not try to whitewash or excuse them — or have any links with the MDM.

Tuesday 1 August 1989

THE CITIZEN

Maputo shift from Marxism 'seems acceptable'

MAPUTO. — Mozambique's Left-wing leaders have chosen political realism over ideology in a bid to pull the southeast African state out of civil war and economic decline.

The ruling Frelimo Party has shrugged off a tight-fitting jacket of Marxist-Leninist Party ideology, and adopted a looser commitment to socialism intended to give President Joaquim Chissano's administration more leeway to solve the country's chronic problems.

A week-long congress of Frelimo (Mozambique Liberation Front) that ended on Sunday voted overwhelmingly to try to move the party closer to the people and put its policies more in tune with reality.

That reality since Mozambique's independence from Portugal in 1975 has been a crippling internal war that has killed tens of thousands and left the economy on the brink of collapse.

The shift seeks to create a more acceptable, popular image for a party that some congress delegates said had become elitist and out of touch in its 14 years in power.

Frelimo's congress backed bold initiatives by Pres Chissano to end a decade-old revolt by the Right-wing Mozambican National Resistance (MNR).

The initiatives involve the idea of direct peace talks with the rebels — inconceivable a year ago — and a policy of dialogue and co-operation with neighbouring, South Africa, long accused of supporting the MNR.

Pres Chissano's pragmatism has won him increasing support from the West, particularly the United States and Britain.

Pres Chissano told the delegates his government was ready to talk directly to MNR leader Afonso Dhlakama provided the rebels renounced violence.

Despite reservations reflecting widespread popular abhorrence for MNR's often brutal methods, the congress backed Pres Chissano's plan for "peace through consensus" but urged him not to make a gift to terrorism.

"It's like talking with the devil but it's gone so public that it would be very difficult to back-pedal now," one Western diplomat commented.

Pres Chissano's determination to negotiate without a military capitulation is reflected by a big army offensive against MNR bases in central Mozambique.

Security sources said government troops and their Zimbabwean allies had put a tight military squeeze on Dhlakama's headquarters at Gorongosa, capturing a string of rebel bases.

But the peace initiative involves risks, notably how far the government can go in meeting the rebel demands.

Dhlakama has called for a joint government of Frelimo and MNR, changes in the constitution, elections and the restoration of power to local

chiefs.

Pres Chissano will not accept MNR as a political party but is ready to discuss the future — if the violence ends.

On the economic front, the Frelimo congress appeared to move even further away from its previous Marxist concept of

centralised state direction.

The congress stressed the importance of a mixed economic system and individual contributions to growth, particularly by peasant farmers, who form the mainstay of the economy. — Sapa-Reuter.

'Violation of a cherished value'

De Beer talk BUSINESS DAY August 1 derailed by 1989 Wits students

MORE than 100 chanting black students yesterday disrupted a Wits University debate because they objected to DP co-leader Zach de Beer being allowed to speak on campus.

They vowed to prevent any MP from speaking at Wits again and called on the DP to pull out of Parliament and join the ANC.

Also billed to take part in the debate were Idasa's Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Steven Friedman of the Institute of Race Relations.

The disruption of the meeting is likely to result in a major confrontation between the Wits administration and the students concerned, as they were warned before the debate that they would face disciplinary action if they attempted to prevent a speaker from delivering his address.

University vice-chancellor and principal Robert Charlton said the disruption was a

SIPHO NGCOBO and
MIKE ROBERTSON

down by "apartheid" courts.

De Beer said it was the "greatest pity" that students who had come to listen to a political debate were prevented from doing so. More than 1 000 students attended.

Shortly before the debate was scheduled to start, some students began chanting ANC slogans and singing songs in praise of the organisation's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Repeated reminders by meeting chairman John Peter that the students were violating the university's freedom of speech values failed to have any effect.

SRC president Bettina von Lieres tried to address the meeting but was ignored.

The incident nearly turned violent when security officials tried to force the demonstrating students out of the hall.

Peter later called on a spokesman for the protesting students to address the meeting, but was still ignored. After about 25 minutes he called the meeting off and De Beer, Slabbert and Friedman were whisked away by university authorities.

BSIC co-ordinator Nepo Kekana then began speaking, to initial jeers from white students in the hall.

"The battle lines have been drawn. No National Party nor Democratic Party leaders will make speeches here for as long as we are on this campus. What you are seeing today is just the beginning," said Kekana.

Those who accused the BSIC of violating the freedom of speech values on campus should remember that the ANC and other student and community organisations were banned, and that leaders like ANC

● Picture: Page 3

● What De Beer intended to say: Page 4

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"gross violation of one of the university's most cherished values, freedom of speech". He apologised to guests and said action in terms of the university's disciplinary procedures would be taken against the students concerned.

Deputy vice-chancellor in charge of student affairs Prof Mervyn Shear said no student was above the university's disciplinary code.

A spokesman for the Black Students' Interim Committee (BSIC) said students knew the consequences of disrupting the meeting and were prepared to face them. They would regard any action taken against them as akin to sentences handed

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Wits students

President Oliver Tambo and Communist Party chairman Joe Slovo were in exile and — in terms of the country's laws — could not come back and speak on Wits campus.

Parliament in SA represented Nazism and the DP was no different, he said.

"The DP represents Nazism. Their leadership is no different from the Nazi generals of the past. They are no different from people like Klaus Barbie."

Sapa reports that Slabbert said the disruption was "symptomatic of the absurdity of holding a general election for the minority".

However, even under the most repressive circumstances, opportunity for debate and discussion should be used, he said.

"It would be foolish for people to underestimate the depth of frustration and anger among those in the extra-parliamentary arena who have had their meetings and organisations banned and their peaceful

gatherings disrupted."

Slabbert added that SA could "expect this kind of turbulence" until everyone could "participate legally and peacefully in the political process in a non-racial, democratic South Africa".

Meanwhile, the SRC blamed the university administration, the organisers and the BSIC for lack of foresight and sensitivity in holding a meeting they knew would divide the students on campus.

Veteran DP MP Helen Suzman, who was prevented from speaking at Wits in 1987, said principles of democracy demanded that everybody should be allowed to put their point of view. Although she could appreciate the depth of frustration felt by those who did not have the vote, it was counter-productive to prevent those people who were advancing the cause of non-racialism from putting their views.

Report by Siphon Ngcobo and Mike Robertson, 11 Diagonal St. Johannesburg.

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Slabbert, De Beer not allowed to speak

Student demo

STAR - 1 Aug. 1989

forces end to

Wits debate

By Esmaré van der Merwe,
Political Reporter

Tension between the Mass Democratic Movement and the Democratic Party flared yesterday when about 200 University of the Witwatersrand students disrupted a meeting on the campus at which DP co-leader Dr Zach de Beer was to speak on the relevance of parliamentary politics.

About 2 000 students who packed the Great Hall to listen to a debate between Dr de Beer, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, co-director of Idasa (Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa) and *Weekly Mail* columnist Steven Friedman, looked on as the group, mostly blacks, sang freedom songs and chanted anti-apartheid slogans.

Their cries of "Parliament down" and "don't vote" were followed by songs praising the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe, its military wing.

The students, representing the Black Students' Interim Committee, ignored repeated requests by the organisers to address — rather than disrupt — the meeting, "in the interests of free speech".

A scuffle broke out when Wits security personnel tried to push some chanting students out of the hall by a side exit.

In an attempt to restore order, Mr John Peter of the Wits Debating Union called Dr Slabbert to the rostrum. But he was also not able to speak.

No police present

The meeting was cancelled after 45 minutes.

No-one was injured and police were not called.

Dr Slabbert told scores of local and foreign pressmen: "Unless a situation is reached where people can effectively channel their political aspirations, this kind of thing is bound to happen. We are trapped in a very tragic situation."

Dr de Beer, who left the stage hastily after the meeting was called off, said it was a great pity that nearly 2 000 people had been robbed of the chance to listen to the speakers.

"The infringement of free speech involved is a serious one and cannot be condoned in any way. Having said that, we have to realise that we are plucking some of the bitter fruits of the policy of racial division deliberately pursued by the Government for more than 40 years.

"This episode further strengthens the case for a DP government at the earliest possible time. The DP will continue its agenda of seeking interaction with all political participants."

Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor R W Charlton deplored the disruption as a "gross violation of one of the university's most cherished values — freedom of speech".

He said action would be taken against the students under the university's disciplinary procedures.

At a gathering in the Great Hall foyer, student leader Mr Nepo Kekana called upon students to join the MDM's defiance campaign which starts this week.

Protest stayaway

He told white students: "Join the democratic masses, or it is going to be difficult for us to tolerate you."

Reiterating the MDM's stand that the defiance campaign against the election in September would be peaceful, he said: "This meeting is the beginning. It lays the basis of the defiance campaign."

He said students refused to allow members of "this racist Parliament" on campus, and repeated criticism of the DP's decision to field a number of candidates for the House of Delegates.

Mr Kekana said the Black Students' Interim Committee was not violating the principle of freedom of speech — because they could not be addressed by many of their leaders who had been forced into exile, jailed or restricted.

Responding to a Wits Debating Union claim that Transvaal Indian Congress leader Mr Cassim Saloojee had been invited to share the platform, but later withdrew, Mr Kekana said Mr Saloojee had done so in protest over the presence of Dr de Beer.

● Before the 1987 general election, former Progressive Federal Party MP Mrs Helen Suzman was barred from speaking at Wits after a ban on "electioneering activities" by

the university authorities. Last year, the authorities adopted a "freedom of speech on campus" rule in terms of which all politicians are allowed to air their views.

(Report by E van der Merwe, 47 Sauer Street, Johannesburg.)

● See Page 3 and Page 6.

Student demo forces end to Wits debate FROM Pg 1



Tension runs high ... a scuffle broke out yesterday afternoon when students at the University of the Witwatersrand prevented a public debate on

the relevance of parliamentary politics. Professor Mervyn Shear, deputy vice-chancellor, is on the left in the grey suit. ● Picture by Ken Oosterbroek.

Beat of law and order drum has spell on whites

In any political analysis of the South African situation, there is a juxtaposition of white fear and black aspirations and anger.

Let it be said immediately that what often takes the form of expressed fear by some whites is simply an excuse for greed, the maintenance of the status quo and the holding on to white privilege.

This attitude must be exposed for what it is and must be challenged as strongly as possible.

However, there can be no doubt that many whites have genuine fears which cannot be ignored and must be respected. The causes of these deep-seated fears are legion.

They include ignorance of their black countrymen and here apartheid has succeeded in its rigid policy of separation. Whites and blacks for the most part live in different worlds and isolation breeds ignorance and ignorance brings with it fear.

Secondly, it should be admitted openly that the independence trail in Africa has often been accompanied by economic chaos and infrastructure breakdown. While there are many reasons for this, it is perceived by the majority of whites in South Africa that when blacks enter the corridors of power, it brings with it dire consequences.

Thirdly, many whites are consumed with guilt and believe that if blacks share power, they will use this leverage to wreak revenge for past injustices. The propaganda machine of the State has become highly sophisticated and through its electronic media as well as the majority of newspapers, the myth is propa-

DR ALEX BORAINÉ, executive director of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa and **DR WELI MAZAMISA**, lecturer in religion at the University of Cape Town (below), write in the Idasa publication on white fears and black aspirations.

gated that any desertion from the National Party will bring disastrous consequences, especially for whites.

Many whites worry about the lowering of standards particularly in the fields of health services and education. The fact that blacks have had inferior health services and pathetic education facilities for so long escapes most of us.

In particular, it is our experience that many quite decent and fair-minded whites are concerned about their personal safety, if there should be a settlement in South Africa bringing about the end of white minority control. In our workshops and seminars, when whites are freed to talk openly and freely, they use phrases like: "Will I be able to walk on the streets safely? Will I still be able to keep my own home, my own job?"

Real fears

It simply does not help to condemn these fears out of hand because tragically they are very real for the people concerned. We have to take these fears seriously and try to deal with them.

If we accept that we cannot ignore these fears, how can we address this central problem? It is a problem which is filled with urgency because unless we do this, the majority of whites will cling to their prejudices, to their fears and to the

established order which they see as unworkable and even undesirable, but which gives them a measure of protection.

The loud beating of the drum of law and order has whites in its spell.

One way of trying to deal honestly and seriously with this phenomenon is to expose the basic ignorance which feeds fear. We have tried to do this by encouraging and enabling whites to move into black townships so that they can experience for themselves something of the conditions under which the vast majority of South Africans live.

We have tried also to break down stereotypes and myths so as to provide a climate of trust where whites, with blacks, can discuss and acknowledge these fears.

In all our workshops, our seminars and our conferences, in large gatherings and small, people have been encouraged to express these fears so that we can look at them together and build up the beginnings of a common commitment to a new South Africa free from fear. We have been enormously encouraged by the changing attitudes of so many of those who have participated in these events, whether they have been inside or outside of the country.

One overwhelming conviction is



Dr Alex Boraine . . . "many whites have genuine fears".

that you cannot deal with white fear in a vacuum, but that you can deal effectively with these fears when whites and blacks meet together.

It would appear that white leadership on its own cannot convince whites that their fears are largely without foundation; but when they meet their black counterparts and listen to something of their aspirations, their anger and their readiness to include all South Africans who are committed to non-racialism and a future democracy, then the miracle can and does take place.