

SUNDAY TRIBUNE - 8 DEC. 1985

House of Delegates seeks R50 000 refund for assisting fugitives

THE Inanda-Phoenix relief fund is to demand to see receipts for "every cent" of an estimated R50 000 the House of Delegates is claiming for expenses it says were incurred during the refugees' stay at a Verulam school.

Mr Y.S. Chinsamy, chairman of the fund, said that before the claim would even be considered "the House of Delegates will have to send detailed accounts with vouchers and statements. I've told them, 'You send details before we give a single cent.'"

He was "fighting like hell" to get more money from the Government for the estimated 1 100 families left homeless in the unrest. So far, homes have been found for only about 200 families.

The House of Delegates launched the fund to provide relief for all those affected by the unrest during August.

Its demand for a refund of money spent at the school has added fuel to the controversy surrounding the fund.

Last week, the Phoenix Child Welfare Society withdrew from the fund. Among the reasons given was that the fund "served as a smokescreen for the House of Delegates". The society also complained that refugees were only given vouchers of R300 to R500 that were redeemable at Game. They could not choose where they could spend the money, and only those for whom housing had been found were allowed the vouchers.

A spokesman for the society said this week that the 800 refugees for whom homes were still needed were "facing severe health hazards".

He accused Amichand Rajbansi, chairman of the Ministers' Council in the House of Delegates, of breaking the promise that all the refugees would be housed by Christmas and that they would receive adequate compensation and relief.

"He is making political capital out of human tragedy."

This week, the Phoenix-Inanda Relief Committee representing refugees decided to go it alone after

being refused a meeting by Dick Naicker, secretary of the fund.

This committee represents those who lost their homes during the unrest in August.

Its acting chairman, Sham Maharaj, said: "We are now looking at ways that we ourselves can offer assistance to the people."

"The bulk of the people who lost their homes are still staying with family and friends. Some are staying in outhouses. In other cases, whole families are staying in a single room."

"After the Laingsburg disaster, the Government gave R82 million. Here, the Government has put in less than half a million, which is totally inadequate."

Mr Maharaj said the committee met various welfare, church and housing organisations this week "to try to get a process going whereby we will get some relief for the people".

Mr Chinsamy said the fund could not allow everyone representation.

"How can they say they represent the refugees? If they want to be represented they must work through child welfare."

Sociologist Professor Fatima Meer said the relief fund should be impartial and independent of political organisations.

"The House of Delegates should not be handling this. They are politicising relief and using the misery of people to promote their own ends."

She said she had not been allowed to visit the refugees while they were housed at the Verulam school. She was repeatedly told she would have to get "permission from the Department of Indian Affairs".

"They became the possessions of agents of the National Party Government — Rajbansi and his group."

Professor Meer said she had a role in the relief provided for the victims of the Tin Town flood in 1976, and not a cent had been charged for their accommodation in community halls and schools. It was "absurd" that the House of Delegates should claim recompense for the refugees' stay at the Verulam school.

LETTERS

Who said Buthelezi brought peace to Natal?

THE sweeping statements by *Spirit of Natal* (Sunday Tribune, November 17) about the role of Chief Buthelezi in bringing "peace" to Natal, presumably through the intervention of Inkatha, cannot be accepted without challenge.

There has been no official inquiry into the disturbances which reached a peak in August, but there is evidence which seriously questions Inkatha's alleged "peace-keeping" role.

For example, recent research by the Institute of Black Research at the University of Natal found that only four percent of the township residents interviewed thought that Inkatha helped stop the riots.

The survey also indicated that there had been a significant decline in support for Inkatha in the townships since the unrest began — from 19,8 percent to 5,3 percent

It is a fallacy to believe that all is peaceful in the Natal townships at present. A black friend recently commented that the situation was, in some respects, worse than it had been at the height of the disturbances because violence was sporadic, flaring unexpectedly.

Certainly, if the results of this, and other research, are anything to go by, I doubt that the call for "Buthelezi as State President" will evoke an enthusiastic response from blacks. For example, only 4,8 percent of those recently polled chose him as South African leader, as opposed to 54,2 percent who chose Mandela.

Unfortunately, because of what is, at times, highly selective reporting by the local Press, even before the recent clamps (for example, the lack of publicity given to the research mentioned as well as other recently-published research on the Inanda unrest undertaken by University of Natal staff members), most non-blacks are sadly out of touch with what is really happening on their doorsteps.

Facts

Durban



■ BUTHELEZI

among those polled. The researchers note that "Africans saw the unrest largely in political terms, instigated by the police, and by Inkatha".

WRITE TO PO BOX 1090 JOH

SUNDAY TIMES 8 DEC. 1985

Harare hot air pure nonsense

PRIME Minister Robert Mugabe has the audacity to warn that the time will come when the OAU will take economic measures against Britain.

There was a time when Mrs Thatcher allowed herself to be blackmailed by Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, supported by Nigeria and its oil, when he threatened OAU sanctions against Britain if the UK gave recognition to the government of Bishop Muzorewa of Zimbabwe.

The UK Government gave in to these pressures. Today, however, the oil weapon has diminished in strength and Mrs Thatcher has become stronger. Also, Zimbabwe

would have to consider her own economy if there were sanctions against South Africa.

For the sake of the people of Zimbabwe and other neighbouring countries, one can only hope that as chairman-designate of the Non-aligned Movement, Prime Minister Mugabe will come to his senses. — ONLOOKER, Pretoria.

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THERE can no longer be any doubt in people's minds that South Africa is irrevocably committed to rapid and drastic change in both its political and economic composition.

This came about by means

of evolutionary, not revolutionary, pressure.

It is for that reason that we must be very careful as to who will be invited to participate in the final forum which

is to decide the immediate future of a new South Africa.

It is because South Africa is, and must remain, firmly committed to a free Western-style capitalism that we dare

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YOUR Hogarth (Sunday Times November 24) takes Conor Cruise O'Brien to task for suggesting the Irish situation is a "Mickey Mouse" affair compared to South Africa.

In Ireland there have been 2 500 deaths in 17 years — an average of 150 a year. In South Africa it is 1 000 deaths in 15 months — an average of 800 a year. That is more than five times the rate of deaths in South Africa compared to Ireland.

The Irish situation is a "Mickey Mouse" affair compared to the situation in this country. — SIMON LEWIS, Cape Town.

not bring the African National Congress and others who think and act likewise to the negotiation table in their present state of mind.

They chose violence and Marxism as their solution to South Africa's problems and, therefore, must first reject it and unconditionally bind themselves to the Western capitalist system before they can contribute anything of importance to the negotiation process. — W KNOESEN, Graskop, Transvaal.

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I AM concerned at how many white South Africans like Keith Pulvermacher (Sunday

Times December 1) are ill-informed about black aspirations and who are our true leaders.

He refers to a tribal leader like Chief Buthelezi as our mouthpiece with the Government.

We blacks have high esteem for non-tribal leaders such as Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Rev Alan Boesak, the Rev Dr Beyers Naude and many, many others who have been detained and banned.

These misperceptions about our leaders are hampering the process leading to a non-violent and just solution in a democratic South Africa — OBAKENG RELEBELETSE, Kroonstad.

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A warning to white business as the sleeping giant begins to awake



**By
VITA
PALESTRANT**
Consumer Consultant
for Checkers

QUOTE

THIS country tells the world we are a free enterprise system. They are selling a commodity that is not there. Even now there are 500 laws retarding black business.



Dr Motsuenyane

QUOTE

WHITES know their bread is buttered in Soweto and every other township. We must work hard to see that a large share of money comes home to the township.



Ellen Kuzwayo

SUNDAY TRIBUNE
8 DEC. 1985

The REAL

THE black consumer has been the subject of intense market research for well over 10 years. Uppermost in everyone's mind has been the money to be made from this enormous market.

No one predicted boycotts instead of booms.

Now, as boycotts sweep the country, taking in their wake many

white businesses, earlier euphoria over the "sleeping giant" has faded.

By some oversight, none of the analysts predicted that this massive market would use whatever leverage it had politically.

Warning

Last weekend, a gathering of influential black speakers from banking, commerce and academia warned corporate South Africa to take a more active

role in human rights or face relentless boycotts.

The occasion was the first major conference of the new, but powerful, National Black Consumer Association.

The conference took place a day after the formation of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) in the Carlton Hotel, where President P W Botha, more than six years ago, persuaded the corporate sector to support his reform programme.

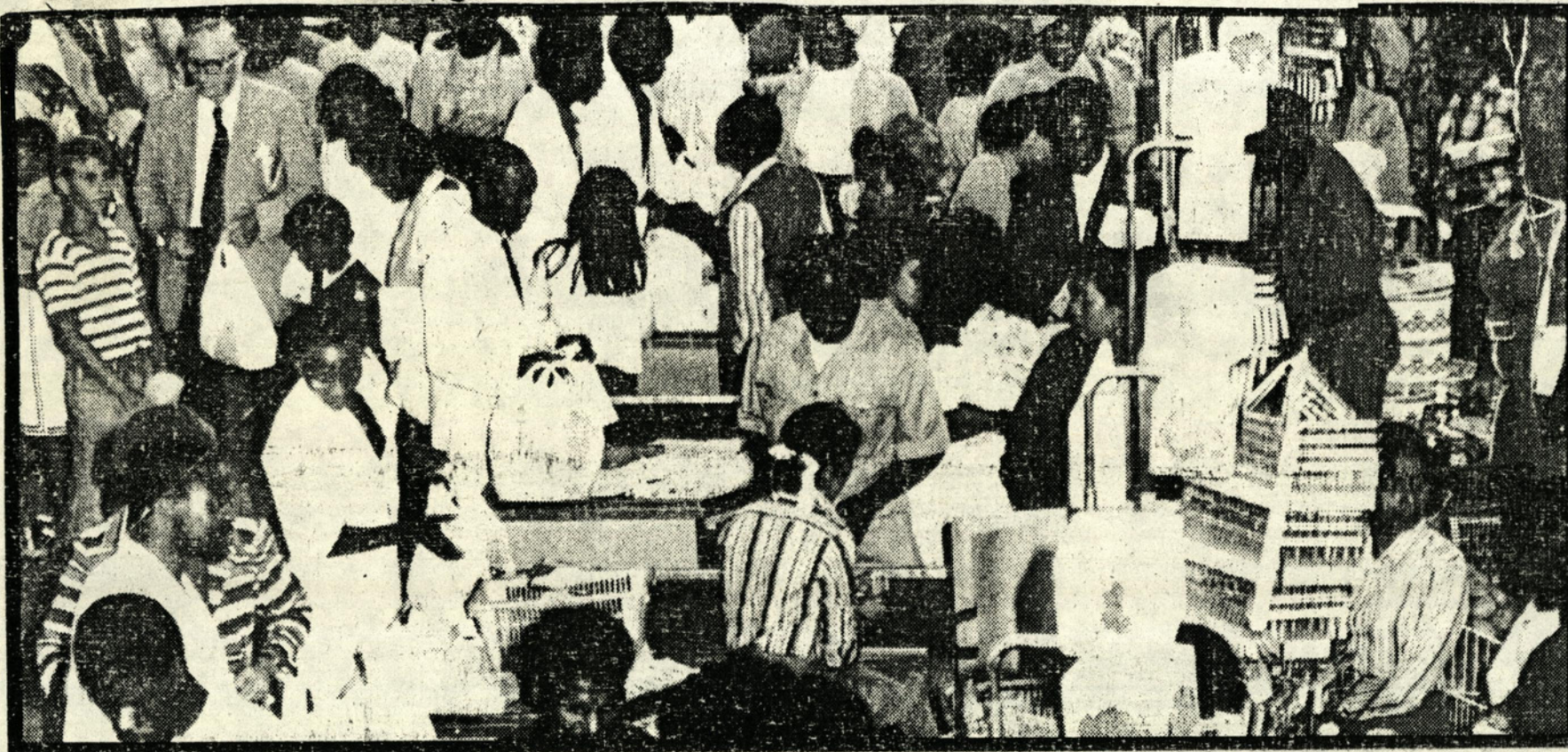
Angry

Now, half a decade on, speaker after speaker denounced apartheid and South Africa's brand of capitalism, their sentiments at times close to those of the angry and bitter township youth.

■ "Vested interests in this country have twisted the rules of capitalism," said Phil Kumalo of the Wits

Black Power

Pa.
108



"A lot of businesses will be put out of action because there is not enough communication between them and black consumers."

Consumer rights were invariably linked to human rights.

■ Although individual blacks were powerless and poor, as a group they were powerful, said Mr R Khoza, managing director of a marketing company.

Food

"Blacks accounted for 46 percent of all food consumption in 1984, whites for 39 percent, and coloureds and Indians for 15 percent. In the grocery sector, blacks accounted for 55 percent and whites for 32 percent. If you were to bring about consumer pressure, these sectors are where you would lean your weight."

He said those companies that were perceived as being unscrupulous and insensitive of black aspirations would come under pressure. It was no longer a case of "let the buyer beware", but of "let the producer or retailer beware".

Rocky

The conference was closed with *Nkosi Sikelele iAfrika*.

One couldn't help wondering how corporate South Africa, so often poor at listening to its white consumers, would cope with the rocky road ahead.

CONSUMER POWER ... Angry blacks are mobilising their collective buying power to combat apartheid

Business School.

"We must create trust in this system again. Perhaps the next generation will benefit. But now the damage has been done and it can't be easily resolved around a table."

To loud applause from the audience of about 120 representatives of women's groups and trade unions, he said: "All of you in this room are very influential. I was in East London the other day and one till out of 17 was working

in a supermarket chain. That is the meaning of the 'black giant'..."

■ The association's elderly president, Ellen Kuzwayo, dispossessed of her family farm by removals, and once a member of the Committee of 10 and imprisoned, urged her audience to "stand united against the enemy".

"Whites know their bread is buttered in Soweto and every other township in South Africa. We must work hard to see that a large share of money comes

home to the township," she said.

■ Dr Sam Motsuenyane, president of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry and chairman of the African Bank, said black consumers and businessmen were victims of the same vicious socio-political system.

"This country tells the world we are a free enterprise system. They are selling a commodity that is not there. Even now there are 500 laws retarding

black business."

He said political power without economic power was hopeless.

"The black market is worth R7 billion a year. By the turn of the century this will have risen to R22 billion — two thirds of the total buying power of South Africa. We must get more of this money. Without a strong business base, blacks are net exporters of capital."

He said 80 percent of Soweto's buying power was being spent in Johannesburg, "enriching

the rich at the expense of the poor".

He urged black traders to identify with the black community's aspirations and struggle.

Virtually every speaker spoke about the humiliation and degradation of black consumers at the hands of white business.

Most poignant was the account of impoverished blacks who bought children's clothing on lay-by and submissively accepted parcels that contained two shoes for left feet or clothes that were

several sizes too small.

■ Erica Mafuna, managing director of a market research company, predicted a "substantial" increase in boycott pressure, especially on retailers operating in the black market.

"Not even the Government legislates against boycott."

"Consumer clout will be used against businesses with long histories of racial discrimination, poor employment practices, and unsatisfactory customer relations."

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THE REAL BLACK
POWER

Pg. 3 OF 3

Earlier in the day, an anecdote told by Winnie Serobe had raised bitter laughter. "The other day, a township youth said: 'Tell me — why did the big businessmen go to Lusaka to talk to the ANC — why didn't they talk to us?'"

More than 50 invitations had been sent to leading companies. Those that were represented could be counted comfortably on one hand.

■ Write to The Editor, Box 1491, Durban 4000

White Man, YOUR time is coming!

DAILY on the radio stations and in responsible newspapers we discover that people are being shot dead and dozens detained, most of whom happen to be black. Two questions should be asked by broadminded, unselfish South Africans:

■ Why are these people rebelling?

■ Who is shooting them?

The people who are rebelling unfortunately constitute the majority of South Africa's population and are denied a vote or say in moulding their future.

They suffer under the oppressive apartheid laws which have banned and jailed organisations and people who represent their aspirations. They receive an inferior education and hence are denied equal opportunities. They are "dumped" into barren lands and "match-box" homes.

For years they have been fed apartheid and



BLACK ANGER . . . Our letter-writer outlines the feelings of blacks suffering under the apartheid yoke

oppression, and now they cannot take it any longer.

Puppets have negotiated for them within the system and achieved nothing. They are seeking liberation from the

shackles of tyranny and torture through mass civil disobedience.

The people who are shooting them, ordering their detentions, happen to be the architects of the

system. Yes, white policemen.

I wonder how these young white men feel in picking up a gun and shooting dead innocent people who are only try-

ing to win what rightfully belongs to them.

Don't you whites have a conscience? Blacks, Indians and coloureds acknowledge that apartheid is your only livelihood and a shield to protect you all. But do you have to kill our brothers and sisters and silence our leaders when all we want is a peaceful, non-racial, democratic South Africa?

When are we going to share this country?

Archaeological evi-

dence has proved that the black-skinned man originated from Africa. Our roots are here.

Yours are in the West.

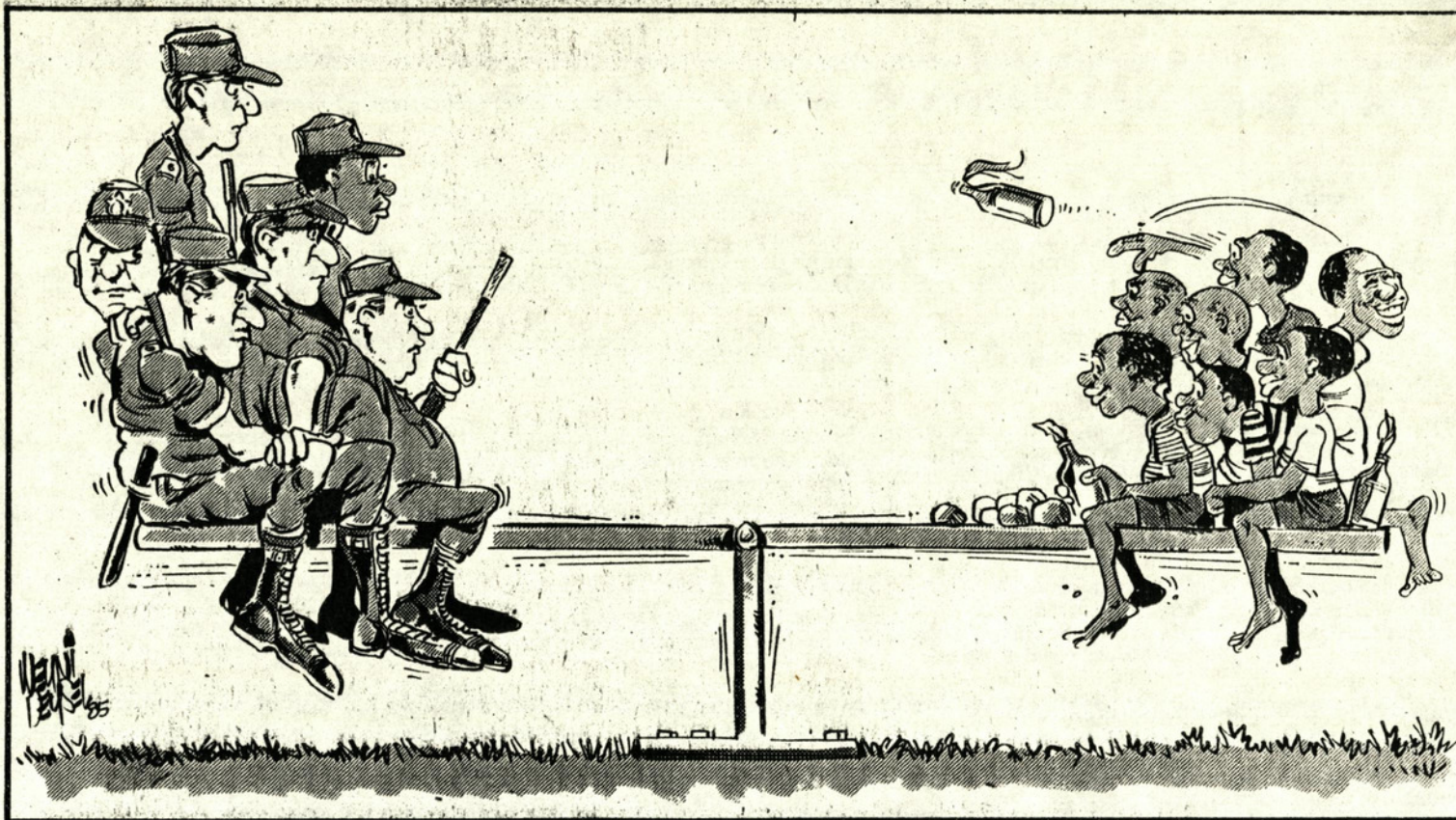
Chief Buthelezi has warned whites that they will be on the receiving end of black anger. For how much longer are you going to dictate to us with a gun?

There is a God and He knows who is right.

The day is coming . . .

Never Silenced
Chatsworth

Signs
that
give
me
hope
in
this
state
of



VIOLENT BALANCE

SUNDAY TIMES - 8 DEC. 1985

By **JOHN KANE-BERMAN**

Director of the SA Institute of Race Relations

SOUTH AFRICA is not on the brink of revolution, or of black/white civil war.

The violence that has racked black townships, claiming more than 900 lives since it began in September last year, is unquestionably the most serious in modern South African history.

Unfortunately, South Africa's "riot control" methods have often proved to be both counter-productive and profoundly damaging to race relations — not to mention the incalculable harm they have

inflicted on the country's international standing, and therefore on its potential to attract the foreign investment capital it needs.

Since the disturbances in Soweto and elsewhere in 1976, South Africa has been in a state of violent equilibrium — the authorities are not able to prevent sporadic or even sustained outbreaks of

political violence, but nor are organisations using violence able to overthrow the Government.

The question that has arisen in the past year is whether this ugly, but fundamentally stable, state of violent equilibrium has been upset. My view is that it has not, and that equilibrium can in fact exist at a higher level of political violence than was the case in 1976.

The state of emergency has led, according to a monitor kept by the South African Institute of Race Relations, to a drastic decrease in the daily fatality rate in areas where the emergency is in force. The most obviously measurable price has been the detention of some 6 000 people.

There is a reasonable chance that protest violence will be curtailed in the next few months — provided the security forces do not unleash wanton violence themselves.

The conditions for revolution in the foreseeable future do not exist.

Despite the fatalities that have occurred, the State has used only a fraction of the extensive violent power that it could — and would — muster, regardless of international cost, should a serious challenge to the stability of the Government ever present itself.

White South Africa has been taken aback by the depth of hatred of apartheid that the disturbances have revealed, but the Government shows no sign of losing its will and ability to rule.

On the opposite side, the

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VIOLENCE BALANCE

chances of a major insurrectionary war being waged from neighbouring states are slim, while the prospects of internally-based revolution are also minimal because no group committed to such action has had the organisational and logistical base that it requires.

Internecine strife between black political groups is also a factor militating against the successful launch of major revolutionary action.

Inkatha and the ANC held a meeting in London in 1979 to discuss a possible modus operandi which would have given Inkatha the international legitimacy which the ANC has, and the ANC the internal organisation that Inkatha has. The meeting was a failure and since then the two organisations have been at loggerheads.

If there is an incipient civil war in South Africa, its seeds are possibly germinating here.

The ANC and some groups with ANC leanings are trying to make the country ungovernable and the economy unworkable.

However, making the black townships ungovernable — even if this can succeed on a large scale for a sustained period, which is doubtful — is a problematic strategy in that it causes massive disruption to the lives of ordinary township residents, who have sometimes been the victims of coercion and violence.

Where is South Africa headed? The best scenario quite obviously would be a peaceful transition to a fully democratic state governed under a constitution acceptable to the majority of all population groups within the country. That must be the goal, but at this stage it would be over-optimistic to suppose that it is in sight. It can only

be achieved by genuine negotiation.

I believe that the Government now recognises that need to talk to major black leaders, but I doubt whether, after nearly 40 years of unilateral action, it is yet capable of real negotiation.

There is nevertheless no question that apartheid is crumbling.

The problem is that Pretoria does not know what to replace political apartheid with, and has a deep fear that to embark on a process of real political negotiation would involve the eventual surrender of whites to black majority rule.

There is a risk that some of the Government's policy initiatives — such as the new regional services councils, due to be launched next year — will be counter-productive. In addition, a formidable task faces the country in undoing the grave damage to race relations inflicted by the introduction of the new tricameral parliament

system in September 1983.

South Africa seems to make political progress only by marching up all possible dead-ends first. This is not for want of warning signs, but for want of willingness to read them.

Despite this, there is reason to be very cautiously optimistic about the next few years.

● Whites have not reacted with a siege mentality to the township violence. Instead of a massive rightwing backlash, the disturbances have unleashed unprecedented demands from organised business and others for change.

● Where change has been introduced — for example, de-segregation in the social sphere — whites have adjusted to it without difficulty, suggesting that they are capable of even greater adjustment than the Government recognises.

● In the single area in which major reform has taken place —

industrial relations — white and black workers, management and Government have settled down to a new nonracial system with remarkable ease.

● Despite the absence of political negotiation about power-sharing between national organisations and the Government, a certain amount of negotiation has been taking place this year at local level.

Negotiation is also beginning to take place at regional level in Natal between the KwaZulu Administration and the Natal Provincial Administration.

A key point about these discussions is that none of the blacks involved can be dismissed as "spokesmen" hand-picked by the Government.

Some of the groups involved on the black side have political leanings or affiliations to national groupings opposed to entering the Government's constitutional discussion forum.

One or two swallows do not make a summer. The negotiations that are beginning to take place are a fragile plant. Whether they are fruitful and multiply depends, not only on the willingness of the

parties involved to reach compromises, but also on a number of extraneous factors: continued willingness of the Government to sanction talks outside official structures; the ability of the police to desist from detaining black leaders at precisely the moment when they are involved in talks; and the willingness of national political organisations to allow this process to continue without feeling that leadership at the national level is threatened or compromised.

Above all, of course, negotiation will have to be seen to be delivering concrete political gains to blacks. In no other way can confidence in negotiation as a legitimate policy tool be built up.

South Africans will also have to break the tradition whereby violence, schools or consumer boycotts, or any other such action, somehow always seems to have to occur before the talking starts.

If South Africa can learn to talk first so as to avoid shooting afterwards — rather than shoot first and talk afterwards — there is some hope for a peaceful reform.

ANC SUNDAY would invite HNP if they had an indaba

By Graham Ferreira

THE ANC say they would invite everybody, including the HNP and Inkatha, if they ever ran a national convention, but the chances of their accepting Dr Oscar Dhlomo's invitation to join a Natal/KwaZulu indaba are small.

This week Dr Dhlomo said he would invite the ANC to the indaba which is to be called early next year to discuss a future joint legislative body for Natal/KwaZulu. Proposals for the joint body were finalised this week and are to be presented to the Government soon.

Said Dr Dhlomo: "We will invite the ANC. They will decide whether to accept or not, not us."

According to the ANC Press Liaison Officer in Lusaka, Tom Sabina, the ANC consider the move a continuation of the ethnic system whereby Natal would "hive off" from the rest of the country as some kind of "super Bantustan."

"The whole thing smells like another Biafra to me," said Mr Sabina.

"We would reject any attempt to hive off any part of the country. What we believe in is a unified South Africa — a united and just democracy.

"In any event, under the present system most of our leaders could not go to South Africa because they would be arrested, so I don't see the point of issuing an invitation to the ANC unless it is to score political points."

Dr Dhlomo told the Tribune that he hoped to begin the indaba by March or April.

"We hope to achieve the final phase, that of a single elected legislative body by the end of 1986 if possible."

INKATHA MAN'S SUSPECTED ROLE IN UNREST BLAMED FOR INANDA NEEDY'S RELUCTANCE TO SEEK AID

Refugees fear relief fund officer's 'bias'

SOME victims of township violence in Durban have been too afraid to apply for aid from the Inanda-Phoenix Relief Fund because, it has been alleged, at least one of the members of the executive committee is partisan.

He is the Umlazi representative of the fund, Winnington Sabelo, a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. He is alleged to have been active during the unrest.

Mr Sabelo, however, describes himself as "a man of peace" and says he will take legal action against anyone who makes allegations against him.

Although most of the victims whose homes were burned down were associated with United Democratic Front (UDF) affiliates, certain of the fund's township representatives have been perceived as Inkatha supporters.

Mr Sabelo is a member of Inkatha's Central Committee. As a member of the Inanda-Phoenix Relief Fund's executive committee, he helps screen those who apply for aid.

An attorney at the Legal Resources Centre, Richard Lyster, who is acting for some of the victims, said:

"It is most odd that a man who so openly and provocatively associated himself with anti-UDF township activity should be in charge of that sort of resource and say how aid should be distributed.

"It is improper for someone with that kind of background to be given that sort of discretion."

In August, Mr Sabelo was photographed with an impi of Inkatha supporters who soon afterwards attacked mourners at the funerals of victims of the unrest. The Inkatha leadership disowned the impi.

A few days later, a row erupted when Mr Sabelo warned UDF sympathisers to get out of Umlazi by that weekend or face the consequences.

Paddy Kearney, secretary of the Crisis Committee, said Umla-



■ Winnington Sabelo

Reports by Linda Vergnani

zi and KwaMashu residents whose homes had been razed were supposed to apply to the fund's local representatives for help. However, many township residents were afraid of dealing with them because "they are not seen as impartial".

He said the Crisis

Committee had written to the relief fund asking if applications could be presented to it "without people having to apply through the fund's contacts in the townships".

If this request was refused, the committee would bring the matter to the attention of the Durban City Council which had given the fund R100 000 with the condition that it should be administered impartially.

Mr Sabelo has denied the allegations against him. "I never threatened anyone."

He said he had not led the impi at the funeral. He was passing in his car when he saw photographers from a local newspaper taking pictures of the impi.

He had got out of his car and told the photographers they were taking propaganda pictures to send overseas. It was while he was remonstrating with them that they had taken a photograph of him with the impi behind him.

"If it wasn't for me there would still be trouble here. If I did not stop this nonsense here it would have spread into Isipingo and into Durban. That is why they hate me. Only the UDF say that. They label me with all sorts of nonsense."

Mr Sabelo said he was the local representative of the relief fund

and people had approached him for help. However, the fund had not paid anyone in his area. Only Inkatha, the Red Cross and the local community had assisted the destitute families.

Although he was a man of peace, "I will defend myself if attacked."

Mr Y S Chinsamy, chairman of the Inanda-Phoenix Relief Fund, said he had not

been aware that people were afraid to approach the fund.

"We know about 100 families in the townships were affected. We asked for the details about two months ago, but we haven't been able to get the information. Our organisation is non-political, and I did not realise there was a reluctance to approach the fund."

He suggested those in need should approach the fund through their local welfare organisations. "We must see to it that the families are resettled properly."

Dr Oscar Dhlomo, secretary-general of Inkatha, said the allegations against Mr Sabelo and the presence of Inkatha members on the fund's committee were separate questions.

"I don't think it will help to try to hound Inkatha members off the committee. It will provoke exactly the kind of hostility we are trying to prevent."

Another SUNDAY TRIBUNE step forward

8 DEC. 1985
PEACE being the priority, we commend the meeting in Lusaka of leading churchmen and leading members of the African National Congress. It was an opportunity Archbishop Philip Russell (Anglican Metropolitan), Archbishop George Daniel (Catholic), and Methodist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran leaders would have been wrong to pass up.

No matter how strongly each of those churchmen deplores violence and the violence which is part of the ANC's liberation struggle, the ANC is a factor in this country's political equation. That being so, nothing could be better than that the ANC leadership should face men whose commitment, body and soul, is to peace.

Each time representative South Africans meet representatives of the ANC, as have business leaders, the PFP, and now leading churchmen, the prospect of establishing eventual dialogue is heightened.

It is proper that they should meet when they can. That President Botha and Deputy Minister Louis Nel disapprove is of no consequence. They have no right to determine who talks to whom. Much less do they inspire confidence that they are equal to the grave challenges facing the nation today. All South Africans have a duty to contribute to public life in some degree, but never more than when its government is floundering as is ours in the present crisis.