

& COMMENT & OPINION

NATIONAL:

KwaZulu Chief Minister sees little hope of peaceful change

(Full report on page 4)

Sunday Times

CHIEF GATSHA PLAYS HIS POWER CARD

The game, as they say, is on. And the players are the National Party's Mr John Vorster and Inkatha's Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

This week Chief Buthelezi, armed with the authoritative research of German academics which placed him far ahead of all others as a leader of blacks in South Africa, stepped on to the national political stage to confront the man who is equally dominant in his leadership of whites.

Mr Vorster's adversary was meticulous in preparing the stage for the decisive face-to-face. For years as a homeland leader he lived down charges of being a stooge by the more vogueish revolutionary and black power movements while he carefully constructed his political base from a Government-created platform.

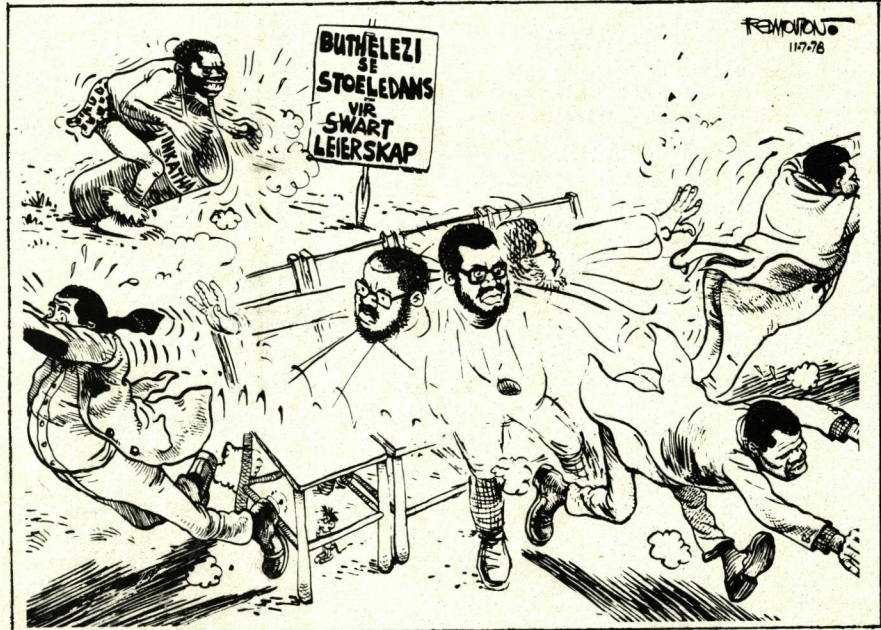
More than the other opponents of apartheid he realised that in politics organisation was crucial so he put together the Inkatha "cultural" movement — which could overnight shed its thin disguise and be converted into a political instrument big and powerful enough to challenge the National Party.

This week he made his move. He was no longer merely a Zulu chieftain. He and Mr Vorster, said Chief Buthelezi, were the two individuals most intimately involved in the country's political struggle.

Earnest

Others may contest this claim — and doubtless will — but for all practical purposes the two men do indeed represent the main forces of conflicting interest in South Africa. They must meet now on a different basis than they have in the past.

Apart from his considerable intellectual and oratorical gifts, Chief Buthelezi is especially well qualified to challenge the validity of existing Government policy. There can be no more dramatic evidence of its failure than the unconsolidated patchwork quilt of land



(On placard: Buthelezi's chair dance for Black leadership)

Die Burger

called KwaZulu which he is supposed to lead to independence.

His critics will have difficulty in branding him a reckless revolutionary. Despite powerful pressures upon him, he has been steadfast in his opposition to economic sanctions from without and to violent methods within.

Chief Buthelezi himself remains committed to a search for peaceful change. But he is pessimistic in this respect, pointing to the slowness of progress being made and to the chilling parallels with Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia, where change was preceded by violence.

He is obviously anxious to engage South Africa's white power structure in debate leading to a negotiated political settlement. His initiative deserves the serious attention of the Government.

Conflicting

It is to be hoped, too, that the earnestness of his intent, combined with the muscle he brings with it, will jolt our rulers out of the paralysis and unwillingness to lead boldly which has recently overcome them as they see their old policy formulas falling apart.

Mr Vorster is a skilled negotiator and he can enter the argument in the

knowledge that he, too, has considerable legions supporting his position as well as just claims that racial minorities dare not negotiate away their future security. Indeed, after the many years of "phoney war," South Africa would benefit from a frank, hard-nosed debate on the real issues of peaceful accommodation versus conflict between two men who wield real power.

But we offer this admonition to Chief Buthelezi: Serious debate has scant hope of success if the language used lacks temperance. While his prognosis is not without validity, some of his personal remarks about Mr Vorster this week were counter-productive to sensible discussion. They can lead only to retaliation in kind and to a white backlash.

Hard hearts we already have in abundance. It is cool heads we need at this critical hour.

Johannesburg

E — July 9

LANGUAGE CODE

For those readers who are not familiar with South Africa's news media, the code indicates whether editorials originally appeared in English-language or Afrikaans-language newspapers. An A or E preceding the date of publication — at the end of each editorial — denotes Afrikaans or English. E/A denotes English and Afrikaans, as in the case of radio commentary broadcast in both languages.

Beeld

IT DOES NOT HELP

When one analyses an address like that of Chief Minister Gatsha Buthelezi at the Road Ahead congress in Grahamstown, two factors especially must not be lost sight of.

The first is that Chief Buthelezi is most probably quite correct when he says that he and the Prime Minister are the two individuals most intimately involved with the general political struggle in the country.

Indeed a census by German academics indicated that he has much wider support among Blacks than any other Black leader, and he has important political allies among the Coloureds and Indians.

Furthermore, he is, in the political spectrum of Black people, considered a moderate, even when he says what he does.

Taking this into account, we can only disapprove of the tone in which he attacked the Prime Minister personally.

No one expects that he would intone hymns of praise for National Party policy and actions, not after the "consolidation" that left him a country of ten shreds. He can also justifiably name other points of criticism.

But if he believes, as he has indicated, that the road to the future leads via negotiation, then he is wrecking his own aspirations with such personal reproaches.

He says, for instance, that he does not need a bodyguard, but that the Prime Minister cannot venture into the management of Black affairs without a "bodyguard" of emergency powers. As head of a government he should have a better understanding of such matters; he himself has used such emergency powers against rioters in Kwazulu. And when he went to Graaff-Reinet recently without sufficient protection he was nearly killed by militant Blacks who disparaged him as an instrument of the Government.

We have an explosive situation in South Africa. The present dispensation is highly unsatisfactory and the Government realises that we must move away from it.

We can appreciate the problems Chief Buthelezi has to face as a leader who wants to ensure a better future for his people, and respect his firm

stance against violence and against economic sanctions from outside.

He has a duty to his electorate who recently completely endorsed his leadership. But he must consider the influence of his words on other voters, those that made Mr Vorster so inviolably strong in White politics.

South Africa is changing. If he is disappointed with its tempo and direction, he must not air it in reproaches on such a level. With reasoned arguments one can achieve much; not so with personal attacks.

Johannesburg

A — July 8

The Friend

OVERSTATING THE CASE

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, South Africa's most influential Black leader, sounded a grim warning in an address at The Road Ahead conference in Grahamstown yesterday.

There was little chance that meaningful change would occur in South Africa without a "rapid escalation of violence," he said. Constitutional development would be a "by-product of bullets and power." White power was entrenched by legislation "unknown in the annals of civilised man."

Chief Buthelezi is obviously concerned at what he sees as the consequences of a too-little too-late approach to change on the part of the Government. There is in all probability

a great deal of truth in many of the points he makes.

But Chief Buthelezi was acting irresponsibly in couching his warnings in the terms in which he did, considering that his remarks were destined to be published far beyond the confines of the academically orientated conference assembly in Grahamstown.

There can be few South Africans of any race who are not mindful of the possibilities of a violent racial confrontation, so that in one respect Chief Buthelezi was merely voicing a common concern.

But the great danger in this country lies in giving momentum to any drift into violence, in enunciating prophetic statements which could become self-fulfilling.

We do not question Chief Buthelezi's motives. He is a man of undoubted political perception and he is on record as a committed opponent of a violent approach to the solution of this country's problems. He also treads a narrow path between rational orderliness and the emotional appeal of the radicals who would like to usurp his leadership.

Chief Buthelezi obviously believes that the urgency of the situation calls for urgent measures, and that the only way his message of change is likely to be taken note of is by delivering it straight between the eyes.

Possibly even in this he is correct.



Prof. Guy Butler: "Say, Gatsha, ain't we having a grand time potting away at these Boers."

Beeld