

# 'I call on Mr Heunis to reconsider his words...'

**Chief M G Buthelezi**

After I had sent my letter to influential South Africans and it had been widely talked about, Mr Chris Heunis held a press conference to which he invited not only the media but foreign diplomats as well, where he announced an eight-point plan for a new South Africa. These are the eight points he committed himself to:

1. Commitment to a negotiated search for peaceful solutions
2. The maintenance of democracy
3. Political participation for everybody in all decision-making processes affecting their lives.
4. Determination to prevent domination of one group by another
5. Rejection of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or religion
6. Determination to remove it
7. Endorsement of the principle of sovereignty of law
8. Pursuit of a joint declaration of intent to emerge from negotiations

To the uninitiated, to the naive and to foreigners, these may sound like beautiful words, heralding a new approach by the government, but we here who know the score, read Mr Heunis' position rather differently.

We know that his point 3 which reads: "Political participation for everybody in all decision-making processes affecting their lives" is a classical apartheid statement.

We know that the constitution has enshrined in it the so-called difference between "own" affairs and "general" affairs, and we know that the new constitution renders the words "decision-making processes affecting their lives" as meaning decision-making in what the Government calls "own" affairs.

We know that even without having to argue or justify our position that these words are a clear rejection of power-sharing.

This declaration denudes what the Government is doing by way of bringing about reforms of any real deep meaning for Blacks. This is even seen by the National Party mouthpiece

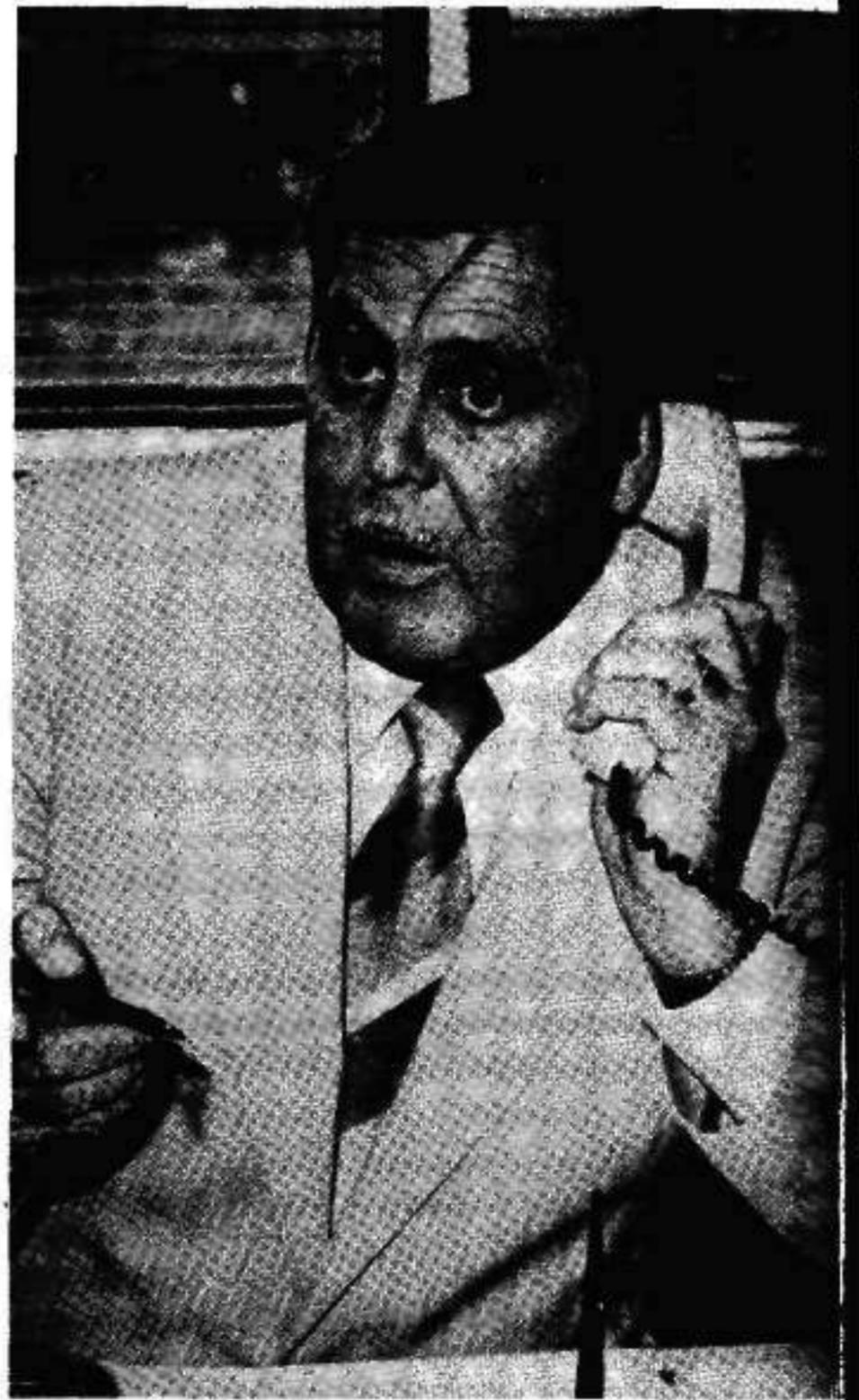
"Rapport". In an editorial yesterday, 26th May 1985, Rapport says this of Mr Heunis:

*"On Friday, Mr Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, made the most clear statement yet about the Government's intention to extend meaningful political rights to all the people in the country. This includes Black people.*

*He explained why a definite statement of intent is not possible at this stage. Whatever may be achieved must be the consequence of negotiation, so it cannot be said that the Government is acting prescriptively.*

*Nevertheless he said the government is bound to the "realisation of democratic ideals" and that the Government's point of departure is that "only progressive democratisation of the South African society ... can ensure honest and lasting peace."*

*With these words he expresses himself more clearly than has hitherto been the case and leads to the question: What is meant by "realisation of*



**Mr Chris Heunis**

*democratic ideals" and the "progressive democratisation of the South African society"?*

*The problem is that most of the peace-seeking Black people must be helped to talk to the Government. Can the quoted statement of Minister Heunis in his press conference mean anything else than Black people must be put on the same footing as others in the decision-making process in the Government of the country?*

*In other words, that methods must be found through negotiation which will give them full participation in the formulation of policy which will be aimed at the greatest opportunities and security for all people?*

*We believe this is the Government's intention. It will eliminate a great deal of suspicion if this was said openly — without being prescriptive."*

Mr Heunis's statements tie my negotiating hands. Mr Heunis say that a joint declaration of intent will only emerge after negotiations. I say to him quite clearly that I am not prepared to

enter negotiations unless I know what I am negotiating about.

The word negotiation has no meaning for me if it is no more than going in blind to talk about I know not what. I am not prepared to enter any negotiations which will legitimise the new constitution which denationalises 72 percent of the population.

I am not prepared to enter into any discussions which could be construed as endorsing White South Africa's right to 87 percent of the country and all its wealth.

I will rather fold my arms and watch the South African Government make failing attempt after failing attempt to do without me and to pursue whatever they are trying to pursue on their own.

I do not say this because I think I am all-important. I say this as the Chief Minister of KwaZulu. With that hat on I say that if the Government thinks it can go ahead regardless of what over six million South Africans, who are Zulus, think, then time will prove them wrong.

And with my Inkatha hat on, I say that if the National Party thinks it can go it alone without the endorsement of the largest democratically rooted Black political constituency ever seen in this country, it simply has its head buried in the sand.

I am simply a peasant and as Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, I am nothing. But let no man trample on me as Chief Minister of KwaZulu and let no man spurn me as President of Inkatha because then they trample on a people with a deep sense of history and a deep commitment, and they trample on an organisation which has vast constituency support. It is beginning to appear as if the Government wants its cake and wants to eat it.

Mr Heunis' press conference and his eight point plan for South Africa, must be seen in the context of his other statements. He has said in Parliament that he is not prepared to talk about a federal solution. Federalism is one alternative to a one-man-one-vote unitary state and in refusing to talk about federalism, Mr Heunis is writing the agenda for the negotiation table in advance. I do not say that that is the only thing we can talk about, but it is certainly one of the things I insist we talk about.

It appears that he just does not realise the extent to which Black and White South Africans are alienated from each other and this is tragic in the face of the tremendous problems which beset our country. These problems are such that they demand a

national response in which all the population groups of the country can join in.

The problems we face, both inside the country and abroad are insoluble for Whites acting on their own, just as they would be insoluble if Blacks adopted a go-it-alone attitude.

The statements made by the State President about reform call on all South Africans to join hands in making this country a place of progress and a country in which civilised standards can be maintained while we put our house in order.

That we need to do so is patently clear to everybody and that the present constitution, which denationalises 72 percent of the population makes it impossible, it is also clear to everybody. In his opening speech to Parliament this year, the State President clearly stated that there would have to be constitutional reforms and constitutional developments for Black South Africa and this necessitated making consultation and negotiation one of the country's highest priorities.

Mr Heunis' statement that a classical federation could never work in South Africa because majorities would only increase and swamp minorities, throws a spanner in the constitutional works. Whether or not we end up with a federation of one kind or another, or whether or not we end up with a constitutional model, negotiations cannot even begin if the government rules out discussions about the merits of a federal formula.

I have not adopted this formula as an ideal, and no Black leader of any repute that I know of has adopted this formula as an ideal.

But I amongst a great many others are quite convinced that if we are to avoid bloodshed we need to make compromises both on the Black side and on the White side.

I am prepared to look at a federal model as providing a possible formula for compromise politics.

I do not know what Mr Heunis regards as a "classical federation." There may be classical federal principles, but the American model of federalism is vastly different to the German model, or to the Nigerian model, or say the Russian model. There is no such thing as a "classical federation" and for Mr Heunis to rule out federal principles as having any relevance to our negotiations is short-sighted in the extreme. It is more. It is outright provocation.

Mr Heunis must think very seriously about the implications of what he has

said. Black South Africans read the statement as one which says that after the White baas has told us what to think and after the White baas has decided what can and cannot be done, the White baas is prepared to negotiate with us to gain an agreement for what he has said as the White baas.

There is a desperate need for us all to be flexible and as the Cabinet structure makes Mr Heunis a key figure in any political negotiations, he more than anybody else needs to give evidence of flexibility. I call on Mr Heunis to reconsider his words and to give us the assurance that the word negotiation really does have meaning. Without that assurance a great many Blacks who could be key actors in the politics of reconciliation will remain alienated from the political process and will exercise their leadership qualities elsewhere.

I have a deep sense of history in what I am saying today. The refusal of the Government to say simply that it is prepared to talk about power-sharing is tragic. The inability of the Government to say to me that because I have taken the first step towards reconciliatory politics by expressing a willingness to talk about alternatives to a one-man-one-vote system of government in a unitary state, it is prepared to take its own step towards negotiation, is also tragic.

The refusal of the government to take a meaningful step towards negotiation and the refusal of the government to recognise that negotiation must be about meaningful power-sharing, throws a gauntlet down before us and challenges us to show whether or not we are serious in what we say. It is the wrong time to throw down gauntlets.

I could not have been simpler and clearer about the real kernel issues which confront our country than I have been now for a considerable period of time. But lest there be any possibility that I have been misconstrued or not understood, I feel that I should table a first draft of the kind of Declaration of Intent about which I am talking.

I do this very reluctantly, and I emphasise that I am only giving an example of the kind of Declaration of Intent I have been talking about now for many months.

There are Whites who are misled about what Black South Africans demands. We do not demand to dominate as Blacks over Whites. We seek only to share in a way in which Whites can join in. If we cannot do this, then what is there to do?