

Mrs Coretta Scott King

Widow of slain US civil rights leader used by Archbishop Tutu and the Rev Allan Boesak in divisive black political feud.

Chief M G Buthelezi has apologised — on behalf of black South Africa — to Mrs Coretta Scott King for the shameful manner in which she was politically manipulated during her visit to the country by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Dr Allan Boesak.

Mrs King personally telephoned Chief Buthelezi to apologise for having to cancel a meeting she had requested with him. Chief Buthelezi is well-known to the King family and has visited Atlanta and met with the late Dr King's father.

Political pressures placed on her had obviously been intolerable and Chief Buthelezi said his "heart bled" for Mrs King for being subjected to this. Mrs King had also previously cancelled a scheduled meeting with the State President, Mr P W Botha, as Dr Boesak and Mrs Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned ANC leader Dr Nelson Mandela, had made it clear in Press reports that they would not see her if she met Mr Botha. Dr Boesak confirmed to the Press that he had

"pressured" Mrs King. He described Chief Buthelezi's statement as "not worthy of comment". Archbishop Tutu, when told of her cancellation of the meetings, laughed and remarked: "Wonderful."

Mrs King visited South Africa in September as a guest of Archbishop Tutu to attend his enthronement as Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. Chief Buthelezi said in a statement following his



Mrs Coretta Scott King, widow of slain US civil rights leader, Dr Martin Luther King,

telephone conversation with Mrs King that it was "tragic" that some black South Africans were using the memory of Dr Martin Luther King as a "political weapon" to pursue their advantages in political feuding which divided black South Africa.

People like Archbishop Tutu did not want Mrs King to be part of the process of recon-

ciliation between black and white and black and black. The widow of such an illustrious son of America could have shown that black Americans could rise above internecine party political feuding which "so lamentably characterises black South African politics." "As a black leader I apologise to Mrs King for the indignity which the pressures which have

been exerted on her must have made her experience," Chief Buthelezi added.

"I must say as an Anglican, that I am shamed by an Archbishop who can stoop so low in being divisive in the black community. His action is party political as is that of Dr Allan Boesak. Both of them are patrons of the United Democratic Front and they acted as such in exerting pressure on Mrs King.

"As Mrs King spoke to me over the 'phone to apologise for not seeing me, my heart bled for her as the widow of a figure we

Chief Buthelezi said Mrs King had clearly intended to "rise above strife-torn black politics" in South Africa.

He had on his book shelves the book "Stride Towards Freedom" authored by Dr Martin Luther King — which Mrs King had autographed and sent to him. In his book "Where Do We Go From Here", Dr King talked about his continued commitment to non-violence. In a meeting with Stokely Carmichael, Cleveland Sellers and Floyd McKissick, who wanted to add violence to the

South African struggle for liberation are deeply offended by those who have persuaded Mrs King neither to see the State President nor myself," he added.

"The life and the martyrdom of Martin Luther King is belittled by blacks in South Africa who want to make party political use out of Mrs King.

Dr King had also written: "The American racial revolution has been a revolution to 'get in' rather than to overthrow. We want to share in the American economy, the housing market,



Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

revere — Dr Martin Luther King. My heart bled for her for being subjected to these kind of dirty political pressures and to be forced to do what Dr King would not have ever agreed to do.

"To take advantage of her position for the sake of petty political games in South Africa amounts to political rape. It is hideous and despicable.

"My respect for Mrs Coretta Scott King as the widow of Dr Martin Luther King will not be diminished by these sordid political games, which are evidence of despicable and demeaning pettiness.

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"Hers was an invidious position as the guest of those who twisted her arm. How mean and how unbecoming of men of the cloth . . . My respect for Mrs Coretta Scott King, as the widow of Dr Martin Luther King, will not be diminished by these sordid clerical political games, which are evidence of despicable and demeaning pettiness . . ." Chief M G Buthelezi.

American Negro protest movement, Dr King faced the need to defend his non-violent approach and wrote:

"As I listened to all these comments, the words fell on my ears like strange music from a foreign land. My hearing was not attuned to the sound of such bitterness." He went on to write:

"I tried to make it clear that besides opposing violence on principle, I could imagine nothing more impractical and disastrous than for any of us, through misguided judgement, to precipitate a violent confrontation in Mississippi. We had neither the resources nor the techniques to win."

Chief Buthelezi said Dr Martin Luther King was fired by Christian principles but he was also fired by a pragmatism which made him a true leader. He refused to lead his people into failure.

"The principles and the pragmatism which I serve in the



Dr Allan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

the educational system and the social opportunities. This goal itself indicates that a social change in America must be non-violent. If one is in search of a better job, it does not help to burn down the factory. If one needs more adequate education, shooting the principal will not help. If housing is the goal, only building and construction will produce that end. To destroy anything, person or property, cannot bring us closer to the goal that we seek."

Chief Buthelezi said that "millions of black South Africans" endorsed every word of this statement. People like Archbishop Tutu, however, did not want Mrs King to be part of the process of reconciliation between black and white and black and black.