

Dhlomo looks into future

The third phase would consist of actual constitutional talks which, all being well,

THOSE interested in a new socio-political order need to

begin working now to entrench the values of multi-party democracy and to promote national reconciliation, according to Dr Oscar Dhlomo, former secretary general of Inkatha and Minister of Education in KwaZulu.

Speaking to Durban business people at an Idasa "Future Forum" lunch in August, Dr Dhlomo outlined the questions that would need answering as South Africa made its way along the path of constitutional restructuring.

Dr Dhlomo, who is soon to launch the Institute for a Multi-Party Democracy, said the conclusion of the Pretoria Minute marked the end of the first phase of the restructuring process: removing obstacles to negotiation. South Africans could now look forward to the next phase - discussions about the negotiation process itself.

would lead to the drawing up of a new constitution. This, said Dr Dhlomo, was likely to be the most difficult of all the phases.

This phase should, among other things, attempt to reconcile the political aspirations of the black majority with the political concerns and fears of the white minority.

A unitary or federal state, proportional representation, the creation of electoral constituencies and debate over economic policy would all fall into this stage.

The final phase would be democratic elections and the installation of a new government which would "hopefully rule in terms of the socio-political structures agreed upon in phase three," said Dr Dhlomo.

New warnings from Eastern Europe

THE European Nuclear Disarmament (END) annual convention opened on July 3 with a clear reminder of the astonishing year the world has just seen. As an Italian delegate, Raffaella Bollini, remarked: "For the first time, there are no empty chairs for our friends from the East."

To reaffirm the extent to which the political landscape of Europe has changed almost beyond recognition in less than 12 months may be superfluous. Yet in many ways it is only when one comes face to face with individuals and groups most touched by the recent revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe that one comprehends to some extent the enormity of these events.

To witness many of the Romanians, Soviets and Hungarians preferring to go shopping in downtown Helsinki rather than attending some of the fascinating discussions or plenary sessions, was to see right-wing propaganda come alive before your eyes.

What's more, there was no shame about such behaviour. "Our people are sick and tired of control by bureaucrats, we need space to breathe," said Mare Arnaas, one of the Estonian delegates and a former member of the Soviet Union's Communist Party.

END was formed in 1982 around the crisis of human rights and nuclear proliferation worldwide. Amid the celebration and general spirit of liberation that characterised this year's convention, newer, albeit different, warning signals were exposed.

Romanian journalist William Totok said: "The aims of the December revolution have already been subverted. Members of the opposition are seen as the enemy and must be annihilated."

In Czechoslovakia and East Germany too, individuals who have played the role of justice and peace activists for decades have now been drawn into mainstream political life, literally overnight. Those who marched and sang during mass action in November and December last year are now themselves seated in the chairs of their former authoritarian masters.

A question that was asked time and time again during the conference was how these movements will cope with the complex responsibilities of national and international politics and economics, security, peace and justice as they become the legislators and

What happens when traditional peace activists or freedom fighters take over the reins of power? This was one of the key issues among a myriad of others raised at the European Nuclear Disarmament convention hosted jointly by Finland and Estonia in July. MARK BEHR attended the events in Finland.

administrators?

Sadly time did not permit the 1 300 delegates to debate the likely scenarios thoroughly.

The conference also scrutinised the changing situation of East European women. Many delegates criticised especially the Western media and politicians for their crude portrayal of changes and the democratisation of Europe as a victory for capitalism. Serious concern exists that millions of women will lose employment and maternity benefits which were guaranteed under some of the socialist systems.

American delegates pointed out that in the US, which touts itself as the world's largest democracy, only five percent of Congress members are women and that US child-care legislation and maternity benefits are way below Western European standards.

QUOTING Esther Kingston-Mann, an American professor of Russian history, one speaker said: "Soviet women possess rights to employment, health care and education which a South Bronx teenage mother or an unemployed steelworker in West Virginia would give much for."

Towards the end of the convention, a women's caucus called for at least one day at the 1991 Convention to be reserved for women's perspectives on democracy and peace. In a statement distributed to delegates, the group called for a plenary session on "World Violence - A Women's Perspective

on the Nuclear, Military and Industrial Complex's Effects on Civil Society and the Environment".

Much focus was placed on issues relating to world armament and the continuation of regional conflicts, especially also on so-called super-toxins and hormone weapons which continue to be produced in lavishly-funded yet unpublicised research laboratories in a number of countries.

Speaking on the future of biological warfare, American author Charles Piller reinforced the warning that "biology has become a dangerous, potentially destabilising wild card in superpower politics and regional conflicts".

Also linked inevitably to the question of the continuing militarisation and testing of nuclear weapons in Europe was the issue of impending German unification and its role amidst the bargaining between Nato and the Warsaw Pact.

AS AN African, amidst the excitement and debate, one could not but notice the extent to which the Third World has slid somewhat lower in the priorities list of the European peace movement. Confronted with the realities of massive social turmoil in their own countries these movements cannot but become more Eurocentric than in the past.

While Eastern Europe dominated the greater part of the convention programme, leaving one with a clear understanding of why perceptions of threat based on bloc confrontation are fast fading away, it also became clear that Europe and the world is facing an even greater challenge that will urge us to common action.

As Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pertti Paasio put it in his greeting to the convention: "Environmental issues have become crucial and it is clear that these cannot be solved without intensified co-operation between East and West as well as between North and South. When discussing security in today's world, we should place the ecology high on the agenda together with disarmament. Ecological problems are so severe that we cannot rely solely on international cooperation between states: we need to work for an overall change in our way of thinking."

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