

LETTERS

Address your letters to: The Editor, Democracy in Action, 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray 7700.

Radical mouthpiece shows true colours

YOUR propaganda writers must surely be congratulated for their excellent command of the written word in order to manipulate people's thoughts and thinking.

I refer to the article "A banner is a banner", under your Ja-Nee column which says the following:

"At the recent beach protest in Durban a racist bully assaulted a middle-aged white woman carrying a banner. It said nothing nasty about the AWB, CP or racism. Its simple message was 'Jesus is Alive'. Even more astounding: 'Policemen, ever vigilant in their defence of Christian values, helped the man remove the banner.'"

Analysis proves the following speculative, inaccurate guesswork. Why should the man have been a racist? If he was then he must have been black, or Indian, or maybe the woman was an Italian and the man an Aborigine. (Refer to the Oxford dictionary for a definition of race and racism.)

Granted the banner said nothing about the AWB or the CP, but neither did it say anything about Margaret Thatcher, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Pol Pot, the DP, Idasa or the SACP. Your writer takes the facts and turns them so that it seems that the man who is called a "racist", based on no facts at all, is a racist because he is a member of the CP or the AWB which is based on the surmise that the assaulting bully is a "white" racist attacking a white woman which is impossible and which is in turn based on no fact at all.

How you manage to pervert facts based on total unknowns astounds me. Why you intend to create divisions in a country already divided astounds me. Why you don't rather spend your money and energy on seeking solutions astounds me. Why you don't rather start development activities amongst the "lesser privileged" astounds me. How come you take South Africans for "bloody fools" astounds me.

If Idasa truly stands for democratic alternatives in South Africa I would expect them to be more tolerant and appeasing and rather seek "alternatives" than incite hate and division.

Obviously it is not your policy to publish nameless letters but even if I did give you my name you would not have seen fit to publish this letter for it shows you for what you are.

A change-committed true South African

(Letter shortened)

(The person in question formed part of a right-wing group that interfered with a protest against beach apartheid. In our book that makes him a racist. - Editor)

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cans in particular to find some way of joining in discussion and in debate with their fellow black South Africans. There is room in the creation of a climate of reconciliation for organisations to use their resources, their expertise, their opportunities to build bridges so as to enable people who have been so long divided to come together.

The Paris conference is one example of providing an opportunity for leading South Africans to talk honestly and openly with each other about their aspirations and their fears and hopes for a new South Africa. But clearly this must happen not only at leadership level but at grass roots as well.

Contradictions

Certainly it is the experience of Idasa that the demands for such opportunities are almost impossible to meet. Whilst the facilitating role has produced encouraging results, we must redouble our efforts in this fragile and hazardous pre-negotiation period. Therefore part of the breaking down of walls and the building of bridges must also include the highlighting of those events and practices which maintain our divisions and make the building of bridges difficult. We must identify openly and honestly the contradictions which still exist. It is not being bloody-minded to remind gov-

ernment that every time one person is detained without trial, this inflames a society and prevents reconciliation; that every time a school seeks to be opened to all children irrespective of race but is frustrated by legislation and bureaucracy, it is one further brick in the wall rather than the breaking down of the barrier. To remind government that there are at least 50 statutes which are based on race is not to be cynical or even uncaring about reforms which have already been introduced. It is simply a desire to speed up the process so that genuine formal negotiations can take place sooner rather than later.

There are of course reservations and fears among many who watch the accelerating changes take place, not only in Eastern Europe but in South Africa. Changes which are being welcomed by many cast long shadows in the minds of the fearful. But these are yesterday's people and tomorrow belongs to those who want to see the end of repression, of discrimination and the fundamental denial of basic human rights. Tomorrow belongs to those who are prepared to break down walls and build bridges today.

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

proses.

-Dalk is daar nou 'n tjekkie in die pos vir Swapo.

Praatkoors

Op dieselfde dag dat President F W de Klerk vir die AWB-leier, Eugene Terre'Blanche, te woord staan, sien Mandela 'n pas vrygelate PAC-leier vir 'n paar ure.

- Die droewe en wyde land in perspektief.

Strand toe met julle

Wees nie bevrees nie, die strande is nou oop en Rapport merk op dat Suid-Afrikaners wat

vir soveel jare uiteen gehou is, die somer mekaar op die strande kan begin vind.

- 'n Mens wil nou nie lugkastele op sandkastele begin bou nie, maar alle bietjies help seker.

Superbright

Dr Van Zyl Slabbert - along with other South African luminaries like Ken Owen and Alex Jay - made Style magazine's list of the country's 100 brightest people. How did Idasa's director of policy and planning qualify for this exceptional accolade? Too astute for parliament, said the magazine.

- A minor achievement, some would say.