

Forward to the election



*Amy Biehl...
the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize...
the last white government...
and the first Transitional Executive
Council meeting.*

The Argus

The Struggle For Peace

"THIS is the breaking of the dawn for a nation wrestling with its soul. No force can stop or delay our emancipation from our shameful racist past, blighted by the ravages of apartheid. It is indeed a wondrous moment of great celebration and joy, made possible only because so many persisted so doggedly to secure the achievement of our dreams. This is the last mile to freedom."

— **Mr Justice Ismael Mohammed, chairman of the negotiation summit conference, announcing agreement on the interim constitution.**

"HE had the courage to admit a terrible wrong had been done to our country and people through the imposition of the system of apartheid. He had the foresight to understand and accept that all the people of South Africa must, through negotiations and as equal participants in the process, together

determine what they want to make of their future."

— **Nelson Mandela praising F W de Klerk at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo.**

"THE compromises we have reached demand sacrifices on all sides. It was not easy for the supporters of Mr Mandela or mine to relinquish the ideals they had cherished for decades. But we did it. And because we did it there is hope."

— **De Klerk at the Nobel Prize ceremony.**

THE appalling irony of her death — given her unwavering commitment to democracy and peace and her love of South Africa and its people — the brutal nature of the killing and the subsequent behaviour of the accused's supporters at the trial outraged the nation and shocked the international community.

American student Amy Biehl was killed by a mob in Guguletu on August 25 1993.

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Joining hands for National Peace Day — but the violence rages on: the slaying of Amy Biehl, the Heidelberg Tavern attack and carnage on the East Rand and in Natal — pages 4 and 5.

Mandela and De Klerk share the Nobel Peace Prize — page 6.

The single ballot and the double-cross; the last sitting of the white-dominated parliament — page 7.

Transfer of power . . . the Transitional Executive Council starts its work — page 8.

DATES WITH DESTINY — part 3

August 3: Bloody violence rocks East Rand townships; 93 die in four days.

August 15: Inkatha vows boycott of multiparty negotiations until plans for constituent assembly are scrapped.

August 25: Amy Biehl, American exchange student, stabbed to death by youths in Guguletu.

September 9: Buthelezi says no point in returning to negotiations in spite of Supreme Court dismissal of KwaZulu government bid to have multiparty talks decisions overturned.

September 16: After marathon bargaining between De Klerk and Mandela agreement to set up committees to continue talks on constitutional obstacles and violence.

September 23: Parliament passes Bill providing for Transitional Executive Council (TEC) to help run

country until elections. CP protests.

October 3: DP congress expresses determination to challenge ANC and NP in aggressive campaign to propagate liberal policies.

October 7: Cosag and Afrikaner Volksfront form Freedom Alliance, meant to be nited negotiating team at future negotiations with other parties.

October 8: SADF kills five young people in raid on Umtata house said to be safe house for Apla cadres.

October 10: Labour Party announces it will play a role under ANC banner.

October 11: De Klerk threatens referendum unless looming negotiations crisis is resolved soon.

October 12: Freedom Alliance says it will press for revamped negotiation process in which leaders' summit will replace multi-

party talks.

October 13: PAC says it will carry on negotiating, but will continue armed activities "just like the regime".

October 15: Mandela and De Klerk win Nobel Peace Prize.

Clive Derby-Lewis and Janusz Walus sentenced to death for assassination of Hani; Gaye Derby-Lewis acquitted.

October 16: Transkei military ruler Bantu Holomisa demands withdrawal of South African ambassador Horace van Rensburg.

October 17: Row between South Africa and Transkei smoothed over when they agree to establish a committee to normalise relations and to replace guards at Umtata embassy.

October 25: Eleven men, including AWB leader Eugene Terre'Blanche and

Orde Boerevolk leader Piet Rudolph found guilty on charges of public violence in sequel to disruption of meeting addressed by De Klerk in Ventersdorp in August '91.

October 28: Government and ANC make progress at a meeting on federalism and limited central government interference.

October 29: De Klerk fails to persuade Freedom Alliance to rejoin multiparty talks.

November 18: Main part of new interim constitution ratified at plenary session of multiparty talks.

November 22: Last session of tricameral parliament starts, its main task to approve interim constitution.

December 2: The Kemp-ton Park negotiations end after two years with agreement on an interim constitution.

December 6: First meeting of Transitional Executive Council.

December 10: Mandela and De Klerk receive Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo.

December 30: Four people die and six are injured when a masked gang barges into the Heidelberg Tavern in Observatory and sprays patrons with gunfire.

January 10: Negotiations between government, ANC and Freedom Alliance fail but efforts to reach agreement continue.

January 18: More than 35 000 Zulus gather at the Union Buildings while KIng Goodwill has talks with President De Klerk.

February 13: Nineteen parties register for the election. Inkatha Freedom Party and Volksfront, including the Conservative Party, decide not to register.

On the last lap . . .

A GAINST a background of escalating violence in the latter part of 1993, especially on the East Rand and in Natal, the negotiating parties began the last lap in their effort to reach agreement on a Bill of Rights and an interim constitution.

There was also a parallel process of behind-the-scenes negotiations with the parties which, on October 7, were to form the Freedom Alliance. They were ostensibly parties which had walked out of the World Trade Centre negotiations because of a dispute over whether or not "sufficient consensus" had been reached.

The FA members — the Conservative Party, the Inkatha Freedom Party, the Bophuthatswana government, and the Ciskei government, later joined by the Afrikaner Volksfront — negotiated collectively with the government and the ANC.

There was slow progress in the World Trade Centre talks. Veteran DP parliamentarian Colin Eglin recalled: "In contrast to the earlier talks in Codesa, the government this time did not have a whole group of delegations it could call on. At these talks it was singularly alone.

"In contrast, the ANC still had its patriotic front group led by the ANC and the SACP and they generally, once they had been briefed by the ANC, toed the ANC line."

The style of negotiations was also different, often confusing those familiar with the rules of parliament.

"Parliament is essentially point-scoring, destroying your opponent and trying to capture the headlines," says Eglin. "The negotiations were essentially looking for solutions with less concern for party political point-scoring or looking for publicity.

"It is remarkable that the negotiation process could go on from April to the end of November with the minimum of formal rules and yet on hardly any occasion was a member called to order and on no occasion was a member asked to leave the chamber."

During long months of negotiating, an important principle had been tacitly accepted by most of the parties — that where disagreement arose, the matter would be put to one side and the parties would move on to matters where agreement was possible.

In this way the momentum of success was maintained. And as each agreement was concluded, the remaining obstacles and problems became easier to deal with.

Thus it was that as the wrangling continued over a Bill of Rights and the foundations of an interim constitution, the parties leapfrogged the obstacles and agreed on how the country should be governed before the election.

There would be a Transitional Executive Council, essentially based on the same format as was being used in the World Trade Centre negotiating process, where decisions would be reached by consensus.

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ON September 13 a session of parliament began, with its main purpose being to pass four key Bills, providing for a Transitional Executive Council, an Independent Electoral Commission, an Independent Broadcasting Commission and an Independent Media Commission.



TALKS delegates arriving at the World Trade Centre skirt razor wire coiled along the perimeter of the Kempton Park negotiations venue. Security officials were anxious to avoid a repetition of the right-wing "invasion".

The parties who were to form the Freedom Alliance waged a spirited and implacable fight against all four, sensing that, indeed, they were but an advance guard for passage of the interim constitution which still was being negotiated at the World Trade Centre.

In the high-ceilinged lobby of the old House of Assembly, with paintings of political luminaries of the past lining the walls, parliamentarians who had not been in the multiparty negotiations, or the bilateral talks with the Freedom Alliance, buttonholed their opponents in an effort to win them over and persuade the dissident parties to rejoin the multiparty negotiating process.

On October 11, President De Klerk, sensing massive national support for the process under way at Kempton Park, rose to speak and threatened to call a referendum — a step which, if carried out, would have demonstrated the paltry support for the Freedom Alliance's refusal to take part in the negotiations.

But it was to no avail, and the four "preliminary" Bills setting up the structures for an election and the interim administration of the country, were pushed through by big majorities — but with the dissident parties still adamantly opposed.

As obstacles still dogged negotiations in Kempton Park on the interim constitution, the major parties decided to try a recipe that had worked before when deadlock had been reached — they withdrew to a secret location, away from the media and the public.

From October 25 to October 27, ANC and government groups led by ANC secretary general Cyril Ramaphosa and the NP's chief negotiator, Roelf Meyer, met at Dnyala, near Ellisras in the far Western Transvaal. They had been flown to a nearby base in military planes and driven to the simple but comfortable rest camp by car.

Dnyala is a conference centre

in an idyllic private-game reserve run by the Transvaal Provincial Administration. It was here, too, that the Cabinet occasionally had held "bosberaads".

As the sun set over the landscape of flat-topped trees and bush, they went for drives through the game reserve. At night they gathered informally in shorts and T-shirts for drinks, followed by braaivleis. Later, they chatted, listened to music and some played cards.

On one drive through the reserve ANC-SACP negotiators Mac Maharaj and Valli Moosa were fascinated by a group of white rhino ambling through the veld. There were sightings of other game, but it was the massive and dignified rhino which were the highlights for them.

Trust between the two groups grew in the sequestered calm of the reserve, but agreement remained elusive.

From November 2 to 4 the government also met a delegation from the Freedom Alliance at Dnyala, where it was hoped the charm of the reserve and the absence of the media would work its magic and induce some agreement.

But little progress was made. Increasingly the alliance was giving indications that it did not really want to settle and that it was adding to and refining its demands as talks with the government and the ANC went on.

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BACK at the World Trade Centre, on November 10, after bilateral negotiations had dragged on behind closed doors for days on end, the ANC and NP delegates tabled a draft Bill of Rights at 10.30 pm.

Delegates were exhausted. "Isn't sleep deprivation a form of torture?" asked the DP's Ken Andrew, only half in jest. "Do you intend pursuing this until after midnight?" asked Sheila Camerer, deputy minister of justice, with faint alarm. "Isn't it cruelty to animals?"

But the debate on the Bill of Rights went on, like an unstoppable steamroller, resuming in ensuing days shortly before midnight on three separate occasions.

The first sign of trouble came when the government delegation expressed strong opposition to the proposal that discrimination on the grounds of "sexual orientation" be outlawed in the Bill of Rights.

The clause, introduced by the ANC and SACP after strong lobbying by gay organisations in South Africa and abroad, was criticised on the grounds that it would encourage "bestiality" and "paedophilia".

But the SACP's Halton Cheadle rebutted this with scorn. He asked, sarcastically, whether, based on the government's arguments, "florafilia, or the deflowering of flowers" might not soon become a cause of angst in their ranks, and said their opposition to the "sexual orientation" clause was "nothing more than homophobia".

Most government delegates appeared never to have heard of this malady. "What's homophobia?" one asked. Whispered exchanges took place. After much handwringing, opposition to the clause was dropped and South Africa became the first country in Africa to outlaw discrimination against homosexuals.

Next came a battle to secure equal rights for women. Heading the side against equality were the tribal chiefs.

There were four delegations of chiefs, one from each province. This came about because Chief Buthelezi had insisted on the Zulu king being present. In the end neither he nor the king attended the negotiations.

The representation of the chiefs was anomalous, as all the other delegations represented political parties or existing administrations.

Main spokesman for the chiefs was Chief Mweliso Nonkonyana of the Cape traditional leaders.

One of the few women MPs at the talks, Dene Smuts, MP for Grootes Schuur, recalls: "I'll never forget the reaction of the chief when I first raised the issue of equality. A kind of consternation was written on his face. At subsequent sessions he challenged the idea of equality. This did not exist as far as he was concerned.

"It was obviously the case that in communities living under traditional leadership and traditional law there is no democracy among people or equality between men and women."

Chief Nonkonyana insisted that the concept of equality of women was "foreign". He asked plaintively: "Who must lobola to whom if we are all equal? If we say 'all are equal' then the custom of lobola is threatened."

He then lectured delegates on the evil influence of Western society. "We are in Africa and we remain in Africa and we are not prepared to give up or sacrifice our Africanism," he declared.

But sacrifice it they did when the equality of men and women was enshrined in the Bill of Rights and special provision for traditional law and leaders was excluded.

Later, in the agreement on the interim constitution, however, some provision was made for the role of traditional leaders.

After days of wrangling, on November 10 exhausted delegates departed for the night. But the next day tempers flared again when Cosatu demanded the deletion of a clause permitting employers to lock out striking workers.

During a brief adjournment, Ramaphosa had what an ANC delegate described as "a rather firm discussion" with Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa.

Miffed, Shilowa failed to show up for the rest of the debate on the clause, and Ramaphosa's compromise, which offered employers rights which Cosatu wanted scrapped, was approved.

Tribute to Nobel-men

ON October 15, newspapers and radio and television news bulletins were dominated by the sombre conclusion of the Chris Hani assassination saga when Conservative Party MP Clive Derby-Lewis and a Polish immigrant, Janusz Waluz, were sentenced to death in the Rand Supreme Court for the killing. Mrs Gaye Derby-Lewis was acquitted.

But that evening, the grim political news made way for an announcement which had been widely speculated on — President De Klerk and ANC president Nelson Mandela had jointly won the Nobel Prize for peace.

Earlier in the day both were telephoned from Oslo, the Norwegian capital, by Nobel committee chairman Francis Sejersted, and formally asked whether they would be willing to accept the prize jointly. Both agreed.

Congratulatory calls came flooding in from all over the country and the world, within minutes of the brief formal announcement being made in Oslo, although some ANC members expressed resentment at the award having to be shared with a leader they claimed represented the old apartheid order against which they had waged a battle for so many years.

The two South Africans travelled separately to the glittering award ceremony in Oslo on December 10. President De Klerk flew first to London where, on a rainy December 8, he and his wife, Marike, were received by Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace.

It was the first time a British monarch had granted an audience to a South African head of state in 32 years. The De Klerks were briefed on royal protocol a few hours before the audience — allow the queen to lead the conversation, and to indicate the conclusion of the audience, and stick to generalities without broaching controversial political issues.

The audience lasted just over 15 minutes, and was a warm and convivial affair, with the queen showing a keen interest in developments in South Africa. Afterwards the De Klerks posed with the queen for photographs outside the private audience chamber. Then, in pouring rain, Mr De Klerk was driven through London's crowded streets to a meeting with Prime Minister John Major at 10 Downing Street.

In the sub-Arctic gloom of Oslo, Mr Mandela arrived a day earlier than Mr De Klerk and caused a stir by telling a press conference that most members of the South African government were "political criminals". A ripple of concern went through the small army of Norwegians who had organised the award ceremony — the two South African laureates, they feared, might be at one another's throats before they even received their medals.

But the next day, before the ceremony began in Oslo's imposing city hall, De Klerk and Mandela shook hands — and smilingly kept on shaking hands, for 75 full seconds, as flash bulbs popped and television cameras whirred. Their good personal rapport continued inside the hall as they sat listening intently through earphones to the English translation of Mr Sejersted's eulogy in Norwegian on behalf of the four-man Nobel committee.

After the presentations, the



PEACE PRIZE: ANC president Nelson Mandela raises his fist while President De Klerk applauds with president of the Nobel Prize committee Francis Sejersted during the award ceremony in Oslo on December 10.



LONDON VISIT: De Klerk saw British Prime Minister John Major in London on his way to Oslo.



REEL FREEDOM: Mandela and a singer dance for freedom at a rally on his arrival in Glasgow on October 9.

harmonious singing of Ladismith Black Mambazo entertained the audience of 2 000, which included Norwegian King Harald V and the royal family, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, and former laureates. Then Mandela rose to respond.

He praised De Klerk: "He had the courage to admit a terrible wrong had been done to our country and people through the imposition of the system of apartheid. He had the foresight to understand and accept that all the people of South Africa must, through negotiations and as equal participants in the process, together determine what they want to make of their future."

Referring to the future, Mandela said: "At the southern tip of Africa a rich reward is in the making, an invaluable gift is in the preparation, for those who suffered in the name of all humanity when they sacrificed everything for liberty, peace, hu-

man dignity and human fulfilment."

Ladismith Black Mambazo took to the stage again. De Klerk sat nervously glancing at his speech, trying at the same time to show the rapt attention to the black troupe which Mandela was displaying. And then it was De Klerk's turn. He praised Mandela as "an extraordinary man" who despite his years in prison was "free of bitterness".

"The compromises we have reached demand sacrifices on all sides. It was not easy for the supporters of Mr Mandela or mine to relinquish the ideals they had cherished for decades. But we did it. And because we did it there is hope," De Klerk said. Mandela rose to shake De Klerk's hand, to additional applause from the audience.

The ceremony was followed by a gala dinner for 250 guests at Oslo's Grand Hotel. There, Norwegians and South Africans enjoyed some of South Africa's

most stunning wines — KVV Cathedral Cellar Chardonnay (1991) with the Baltic salmon, followed by a 1989 Rust en Vrede Merlot with a sumptuous meat course, and KVV Van Der Hum and 10-year-old KVV brandy after the dessert.

A day later De Klerk and Mandela were in the Swedish capital, Stockholm, where both met King Carl Gustav and Prime Minister Carl Bildt.

But the conviviality that was shown at the Nobel ceremony was shortlived. The early stages of the election campaign had already begun in South Africa, where Mandela's description of members of the South African government as "political criminals" had caused an indignant response from NP spokesmen.

NP officials sent urgent faxes to De Klerk's entourage, seeking out master tactician Pik Botha, followed by telephone calls, telling them bluntly that the Man-

dela remark could not go unanswered. It had caused too much offence. The reaction at home to the Mandela remark had also been conveyed in the daily media briefings which South African embassies in Europe receive, briefings which were passed on to the president's entourage.

And so, in Rome a day later, De Klerk — in the Italian capital to see government leaders and for an audience with Pope John Paul II — snapped back, saying the ANC needed forgiveness for wrongdoing, including the necklacing of children.

Later, when a triumphant De Klerk returned to a hero's welcome at DF Malan airport from a crowd of about 500 made up largely of people of colour, he censured Mandela for "irresponsible behaviour" in Oslo.

There was silence from Mandela as he returned home to start a strenuous series of election rallies.



AN historic ending ... the "whites-only" House of Assembly sits for the last time.

The double-cross . . .

AS the country waited tensely for the interim constitution, the talks at the World Trade Centre dragged on without producing a final document. What chiefly held matters up was disagreement over deadlock-breaking mechanisms in the envisaged government of national unity. A plenary session of the negotiators, to approve the interim constitution, had been set for noon.

MK cadres in their windbreakers and Raybans slouched wearily in the corridors outside, some yawning. The bodyguards, in business suits, a few in track-suits, looked bored.

Inside a suite of offices at the World Trade Centre, Ramaphosa and Meyer had been talking for hours in an effort to break the impasse. They had also been making phone calls to their leaders and to others in their parties. Some of their aides came in, then left — Joe Slovo, looking drawn, Dawie de Villiers, Dullah Omar.

The negotiators were on edge, mindful of the failure of Codesa 2 when, at the last minute, talks between the ANC and the NP had failed. This could not be allowed to happen again.

There were anxious phone calls from parliamentarians, waiting in Cape Town for a signal that would spell the end of the negotiating battle and the start of the third session of parliament where the interim constitution would be approved.

The minutes left before the scheduled start of the plenary to ratify the draft constitution ticked by on the wall clocks, the secretaries sat chatting quietly in their offices, some flirting with the MK cadres, others sipping tea and reading magazines.

But everywhere there was tension; the tension of waiting

for success — or, dare they say it, failure. The plenary was set for noon. The appointed hour came — and went. Delegates from smaller parties milled outside the offices where Ramaphosa and Meyer were still closeted, anxiously asking the waiting journalists for any word. An hour after the noon deadline passed, then another hour.

Inside, the wrangling went on, as the two leaders, in shirt-sleeves, their ties loosened, argued and bargained, and went into separate offices to make their calls and consult their colleagues. The big problem they both saw was that the deal they were about to strike would infuriate the smaller parties. Another hour went by, the secretaries took calls. Two went into the inner sanctum, one with a dictation pad. Expectations surged.

Then, at 3pm on the crucial Wednesday, Ramaphosa and Meyer emerged, exhausted, but with their jackets back on, their ties straightened, to announce their six-point package deal.

To make their solidarity on the agreement apparent, and to deter smaller parties from hoping for a split in the ranks of the big two, Meyer and Ramaphosa took it in turns to announce the package, each of them explaining three of the six points.

One point — the deadlock-breaking mechanism in the cabinet of the government of national unity that would be elected in April — they had failed to fully agree on. Instead, they had decided that consensus — the driving force behind all the talks since Codesa 2 — would be the basis on which all decisions by the future cabinet would be made, and that a simple majority would be sufficient in the event of the "spirit of consensus" eluding members of the cabinet.

Probably the most important element of the package was one announced by Ramaphosa — a government of national unity would remain in office for five years after the April election, no matter which party won the ballot, unless the cabinet was voted out by a majority of the new legislature.

Thus, there would be no national elections under the final constitution to be drawn up by the constituent assembly elected in April, until 1999 at the earliest.

Ironically, it was the SACP's Joe Slovo, so often cited as a radical communist revolutionary by the far right, and even some in the NP, who had suggested the government of national unity compromise.

Journalists dived for telephones, for it was a momentous concession by the ANC which was widely expected to win enough votes to run the country as it deemed fit without the other parties.

To demonstrate their commitment to federalism, Ramaphosa and Meyer had made another important agreement — the boundaries, powers and functions of the regions would not be changed without the prior approval of the regional governments, and any changes to these boundaries, powers and functions in the final constitution would need the approval of two-thirds of the senate.

In the event of a deadlock, it was agreed, a 60 percent majority in the senate would be accepted.

In another reinforcement of the federal elements of the draft constitution, it was agreed that provincial legislatures would be free to write their own constitutions, but these would have to be consistent with the principles of

the interim constitution, and also consistent with the final constitution once it was drafted. The arbitrator in disputes or deadlocks over regional constitutions would be the constitutional court.

But there was some bad news for the smaller parties. The big two had agreed there would be a single ballot paper in the April election.

Ramaphosa had argued with Meyer on this issue for hours behind closed doors. Meyer had consulted the rest of his delegation, and had even made a call to F W de Klerk. The NP was opposed to the one ballot idea but was willing to compromise if Ramaphosa gave concessions on the powers of regions.

Reluctantly, Meyer accepted the one-ballot plea by Ramaphosa. Ostensibly the ANC's position was that in the first non-racial election there would be millions of voters who had never cast a ballot before, and it was widely feared they would be confused by more than one ballot paper.

But, as the smaller parties led by the Democratic Party argued, the single ballot would give a huge and unfair advantage to the bigger parties, would effectively deny millions of voters the right to back one party in the national election and another in the regional elections, and would thus diminish the degree of democracy the country would enjoy.

BEFORE argument could begin over the package deal negotiated by the big two, Ramaphosa and Meyer deftly suggested that delegates break for tea. Warily they parted and went to offices and cafeterias for the first refreshment they had had since early that morning.

During the break, the negotiating style of Ramaphosa was starkly revealed. The DP's Tony Leon had insisted that in addition to a double ballot, the ANC-NP proposal that the ruling party appoint the majority of judges to the constitutional court be changed.

"We must rescue the constitutional court from the politicians," Leon declared.

The ANC's Dullah Omar argued that the DP was trying to subject the court to "law barons" and asserted that the South African judiciary was "a creature that had colluded with apartheid".

But during the tea-break Ramaphosa came up to the DP delegates and said: "I'm willing to do a deal with you. If you will go along with the single ballot proposal, I will go along with your request that the Judicial Service Commission should vet appointments to the court."

Mindful of the collapse of Codesa 2 and not wishing to interrupt the momentum of the negotiations, the DP agreed — not realising that Ramaphosa had already concluded a pact with the NP on the single ballot election. He was selling to them merchandise he had already sold. "We were tricked," said DP delegate Dene Smuts afterwards. "It made us very wary of agreeing to anything else."

The double-cross came shortly before midnight as exhausted delegates reached "sufficient consensus", though with many issues still outstanding.

Most delegates were too tired to celebrate, and at five minutes to midnight they walked across the corridor, passing the MK cadres in their windbreakers and sunglasses, to the plenary cham-

(Continued on next page)

'The last mile to freedom'

(From previous page)

ber where the chairman, Mr Justice Ismael Mohammed delivered an imposing speech to the bleary-eyed gathering.

"This is the breaking of the dawn for a nation wrestling with its soul," he declared. "No force can stop or delay our emancipation from our shameful racist past, blighted by the ravages of apartheid. It is indeed a wondrous moment of great celebration and joy, made possible only because so many persisted so doggedly to secure the achievement of our dreams. This is the last mile to freedom."

History was made on November 18 when the plenary session of the negotiating council formally passed the interim constitution. Exhausted delegates congratulated one another, and mingled with the Press and the small army of observers who had assembled as the tension of waiting for the final document had gathered momentum.

As Meyer returned to his Pretoria home, his children were leaving for school and a pale dawn had made way for a sunny morning.

On November 22 the third session of parliament, which was to continue for a month, started. Its primary purpose: to ratify the interim constitution against angry Freedom Alliance resistance.

President De Klerk launched the debate, which was to be the last of the white-dominated parliament, with a reasoned appeal to the alliance to accept that there had been sufficient consensus reached on the constitution.

The debate took place in the post-modernist Great Hall of the new tricameral parliamentary extension, with its African hues and motifs. On the first day, in the public gallery, Ramaphosa sat quietly watching the proceedings and listening to a diatribe against the ANC-SACP alliance from the Conservative Party and Inkatha Freedom Party speakers.

Occasionally he shook his head in apparent disbelief. A short while later, MPs began filtering up to the public gallery to greet him, prominent among them MPs of the Labour Party, which had not yet disbanded but which had announced that it would fight the election under the banner of the ANC alliance.

The tirade from the CP, which constituted the official Opposition, raged unabated, but little was said that had not been said a thousand times before.

The interim constitution was a betrayal of the whites, declared CP speakers. It was nothing more than a sharing out of power between the ANC and the NP, declared the IFP. It was a recipe for war, the two dissenting parties warned. The government had capitulated to communists like Joe Slovo, they declared.

A blizzard of CP interjections greeted speeches by government spokesmen. Insults were hurled, and CP members were ordered out of the chamber for unparliamentary behaviour.

On the final day of the final debate of the final white-dominated parliament, the great historic moment was lost as an undignified and apparently organised far right protest began on the public gallery in unison with the CP's fervent opposition on the floor of the chamber.

Protesters were removed by security guards, and in spite of all the sound and fury, South Africa's first non-racial constitution was approved by a big majority.

Transfer of power



IN a neat political irony, the old President's Council building in Cape Town is chosen for the first meeting of the multi-party Transitional Executive Council.

On the road to first democratic election — with trepidation but also with resolve

AS MPs left the parliamentary buildings, most for the last time, the new order in South Africa began to emerge. On December 7, the first session of the new Transitional Executive Council was held in the old President's Council debating chamber in Cape Town.

It was an historic moment, for power was being transferred for the first time to a body which included parties which had not been elected and had once been banned.

Foreign ambassadors, MPs and ministers arrived in official cars, pennants fluttering, at the elegant old building to witness the event. Inside, space was so limited that almost as many people — including most of the media — saw the proceedings on closed circuit television in an adjoining briefing hall. At long last the transition to a new democratic system was on track. But problems arose almost immediately.

The first TEC session had a detailed report from the Goldstone Commission in which the finding had been made that a hit squad existed within the KwaZulu police, a hit squad which apparently had been responsible for killing at least nine people who opposed the KwaZulu government.

The SACP's Joe Slovo insisted that the TEC take up the matter immediately. Security and the operation of the security forces, he argued in private meetings with other members of the TEC, were matters of crucial importance to the future stability of the country. As a result, the head of the KwaZulu police, Major General Roy Doring, who had provided information on the hit

squad to the Goldstone Commission, and who had initiated an investigation into the matter, was called on to provide fuller details to the TEC.

He refused, saying he had been ordered to do so by the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who is also the homeland's minister of police and the leader of the IFP.

In faxes, letters and telephone calls General Doring was informed of his legal status, and that of the KwaZulu government and, belatedly, he gave evidence last week to the TEC's sub-council on security.

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MEANWHILE negotiations with the Freedom Alliance continued, with deadlines being reached, and exceeded, without producing results. At first there were secret meetings between the ANC and the Afrikaner Volksfront, which initially showed great promise. Then, as news of these was disclosed, the meetings were held openly — but with far less success.

The Freedom Alliance had widely divergent views and objectives, a fact demonstrated when the Ciskei government broke away early in the new year and decided to join the TEC.

But there was agreement among them on three fundamental issues — the demand for a sovereign "volkstaat" for "Boer-eafrikaners"; an insistence on the part of the IFP for the autonomy of KwaZulu Natal, and a two-ballot election.

All through the turbulent sessions of parliament, where the Bill of Rights and the interim constitution were approved by

big majorities, the bilateral discussions between the FA and the ANC went on, especially the contacts between the ANC and the AVF.

Slowly tension built up. Would they, or would they not, reach an accord. There were persistent rumours of agreement on a volkstaat, but they turned out to be premature. There were rumours of a Cabinet split under the pressure of trying to negotiate with the FA, but this turned out to have been a story planted on a few unsuspecting journalists by MPs of the ANC, including MP for Simon's Town Jannie Momborg.

Last month, as an exercise aimed at demonstrating Zulu power and cohesion, Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini requested a meeting with President De Klerk in Pretoria — and the order was given, through IFP branches around the country — for a massive show of force by traditional Zulus.

Trains to Pretoria filled up from early that morning, buses left from the heartland of KwaZulu ferrying supporters to Pretoria. Minibus taxis were hijacked and driven to the Union Buildings filled with Zulus, many wearing IFP T-shirts or insignia. In the end 40 000 traditional Zulus marched to the capital and encamped on the grounds of the Union Buildings as King Zwelithini, accompanied by KwaZulu officials, including Chief Buthelezi, negotiated inside.

The king demanded what would have amounted to autonomy for a separate Zulu kingdom, something which had not existed for more than a century. De Klerk was appalled, but diplomatically said the government would study the demands. Like those for a white "volkstaat",

however, they were impossible to agree to.

With growing threats of violence from the FA if they did not get what they wanted, tension rose with each new deadline. But always the deadlines came — and went. Finally, at midnight on Saturday, what appeared to be a final deadline came — it was the time and the date by which political parties were required to register for the April election.

And the FA parties had not signed. Indeed, the far right had already made it clear that they would have nothing to do with voting in the election, and they announced the formation of their own "interim" administration. Chief Buthelezi, meanwhile, warned of violence as he, too, made it clear that the IFP would boycott the ballot.

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BUT by now the election campaign was in full swing. De Klerk and Mandela were addressing huge rallies around the country, the DP and other participating parties were busily recruiting support (in the case of the DP spending more than five times as much as the small party had ever spent on an election before) and voter education campaigns were being conducted in every corner of the land.

The TEC had confirmed that voting would take place over three days — on April 26 for special votes only, and on April 27 and 28 for general voting — and 19 parties registered for the ballot, including the largest.

For better or for worse, South Africa was irrevocably on the road to its first non-racial, democratic election, filled with trepidation, uncertainty and fear, but resolute nevertheless.