

# Sizwe

-South African News-

Editor, Publisher, Journalist, Office Boy - **Matthew Clarke**  
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79 Boom St, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

## Editorial

I've never liked mass-produced personal newsletters so I'm not going to write one. But I would like to make an impact on the lack of information in Aus about the South African scene. The Australian media gives such scant attention to anything except the most outrageous headlines about this country that it's virtually impossible to form any coherent picture of what is really happening here. That was part of my reason for first visiting South Africa (hereinafter referred to as the party of the first part or simply SA) and I hope I can pass back to you some of what I find.

Since my aim is to let you know what the real nation of SA is like, I have chosen the title "Sizwe" (pronounced sieze-way) - the Zulu word for "nation". This choice is also of personal importance because after my early friendship with some Zulu's I was named Thula Sizwe ("Peace to the Nation").

There is truly a large range of political opinion here and a confusing number of organisations with some political stance or other (in fact it is hard for any organisation not to take some political stance). Pronounceable acronyms like SANSKO, NUSAS, COSATU, CON-TRALESA, COSAS abound -

though white groups tend more towards unpronounceable initials such as NP, CP, AWB, NGK etc. Part of the aim of Sizwe will be to introduce you to all these organisations and explain what they stand for (or for Anne T., "for what it is that they stand", or is it "what it is for which they stand"?).

No comment or part thereof should be construed as the opinion of the editorial committee or resemble in any way events true or imagined unless prior arrangement is made with the written consent of the publishing body. All correspondence will be greatly appreciated and we look forward to the day when The Judge's decision will be final.

## Geography

SA is divided into four provinces - Natal in the south-east, Transvaal to the north, Orange Free State sort of in the middle and the Cape Province in the west. There are also four Independent Homelands (Bantustans) - Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and Venda. These were designed by the white government as self-governing black nations but have never been recognised by the international community. I must point out to critics of Apartheid that these Homelands were a genuine attempt by the gov-

ernment to give autonomy to black racial groups, not to oppress them. The attempt has proved misguided, however, with most of these Homelands experiencing economic failure and repeated military coups.

If you look closely at a map of SA you will note several anomalies. First, there are two countries (Lesotho and Swaziland) which are embedded in South African territory. These should not be confused with the Homelands: they are real independent nations. Second, if you look for Bophuthatswana you will see that this one "country" consists of no less than six geographically separated areas of land!

You'll also notice a small section of land in neighbouring Namibia labelled "Cape Province". What a surprise - the only reasonable sea port in Namibia is actually part of South Africa! So for any of you who wondered how it is that SA can have so many cars on the road when the whole world has an oil embargo against SA and SA has no oil wells of it's own, here's the answer - a lot of oil tankers are blown off course and have to make emergency visits to Namibia for repairs and someone steals the oil and transports it down to SA by road!

## The New SA

Perhaps the most important issue, though not the most discussed, is what process will be used to usher in the New South Africa. In the current climate of F.W. de Klerk's leadership, the New South Africa will come. A new Constitution which provides for greater democracy while maintaining the rights of minority groups will come.

But will the New South Africa be a unitary state (the ANC position) or a federation of states with decentralised power (the Inkatha Freedom Party position)? Will there be one-man-one-vote (ANC) or some form of proportional voting which guarantees positions for every racial group (the ruling National Party)? Will the Constitution be multi-racial (enshrining group rights) or non-racial (in which race is not mentioned)? Will the current governing bodies (including non-white local government such as KwaZulu) decide on the form of the new order, or should there be an interim government (possibly the UN) while an assembly of all political forces debates the Constitution? If each party sends representatives to such an assembly, how will anyone know which people they represent without them being elected? But how can there be an election of representatives without a Constitution?

Maybe we should go along with a university student's bumper sticker - "I go for the two party model - party on Friday, party on Saturday"!!

## Violence

Pietermaritzburg is the capital (though Durban is the major commercial centre) of Natal, and has seen more violence than most of SA in recent years. Between 1987 and 1990 more than 4,500 lives were lost (Indicator SA, v8, #2), mostly in so-called black-on-black violence.

Natal is dominated by English rather than Afrikaans speakers and is correspondingly less conservative than other parts of the country. KwaZulu ("the place of the Zulus") is a local government area within Natal whose head, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi is also the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (a Zulu-based political organisation).

I have often seen Australian papers report that the inter-black violence is a tribal conflict, but this is most misleading. It is much more a conflict between the Inkatha political agenda and the ANC agenda than between Zulu's and other tribes. This is most clearly shown in Natal: even though this is the traditional Zulu homeland, where there are very few people from other black tribes, the inter-black violence has been greater than anywhere else.

A big issue at the moment is that at the Inkatha political rallies, the Zulus often carry spears, shields, axes and knobkerries (walking sticks) and, not surprisingly, violence often erupts at the end of a rally. The government seems close to banning these weapons in response to ANC demands and after several newspapers have

shown pictures of people being killed on the streets by spears.

On the other side, Inkatha claims that these are "cultural weapons" and that such traditional emblems of a proud tribe cannot be abandoned. The Weekly Mail today ran a cartoon with de Klerk on the left surrounded by tanks, handcuffs and the Law Courts; Mandela on the right looking very statesman-like in suit and tie, surrounded by limpet mines, AK47's and foreign political powers; and Buthelezi in the centre, clad only in loin-cloth, holding a spear and asking the reader "Why ME?".

## Aus-Watch

Just to let you know what the SA media reports about our fair land ...

Natal Witness, 30 Jan 91 ran an article on a tuna throwing competition in Port Lincoln, and another claiming that more Australian surfers prefer a ride on a wave than "a frolic between the sheets"!

In a later issue, under the headline "Australia's Athletic Image Lost", a front-page article detailed how overweight we have become.