

# S. Africa has temporary power shift

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURBAN, South Africa — In an apparent goodwill gesture, President Nelson Mandela turned over his office to his main rival — but only for a day.

Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party, filled in for Mandela Saturday while the president attends the World Economic Forum in

Davos, Switzerland.

"I thank President Mandela for the trust and confidence he has shown in me, even though it is well known that our organizations are in opposition to each other," Buthelezi said after his swearing-in at government offices in Durban.

The move, announced by Mandela last week, appeared to be a conciliatory gesture. Buthelezi has accused Mandela's governing African

National Congress of arrogance and autocratic tactics.

Asked if he planned to make any changes while in office, he said he "would be mad" to do so, the South African Press Association reported.

Buthelezi, who advocates strong powers for provincial governments, will head the country for little more than a day.

Mandela's deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, was due back Monday, when he will take

over from Buthelezi. Mandela, who was to leave early Sunday, planned to return Tuesday.

Inkatha and the ANC fought for control of the traditional Zulu homeland for more than a decade, leaving thousands dead.

The fighting has decreased, but tensions in some areas remain high and Inkatha continues to push for autonomous powers for the region.

# Slave descendants prevent mine opening

By Bert Wilkinson  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GEORGETOWN, Guyana — A small community of African slave descendants is about the only thing keeping one of the biggest gold mines in South America from opening.

Cambior Inc. of Montreal, Canada and Golden Star Resources of Denver, Colo. want to open the mine in the western part of Suriname by mid-year.

Preliminary studies show more than 2 million ounces of gold could be extracted during the life of the mine, a company official said in an interview

this week.

However, some 400 tribal Maroons who live near the mine, about 65 miles west of Paramaribo, fear they'll be forced-out. In the 1970s, the government forced the community to leave its home region of 300 years to make way for the Afobakka hydroelectric dam on the Suriname River.

Maroons are descendants of African slaves who rebelled against their Dutch masters in the 17th century and founded their own communities. They comprise about 10 percent of the South American country's population of

423,000.

Cambior and Golden Star are also major shareholders in Omai Gold Mines Ltd. of Guyana, which operates a highly productive mine in western Guyana.

On Monday, Omai officials will give seven tribal elders and five representatives of Suriname's government a tour of the company's Guyana mining operation to try and allay their fears.

"They don't really have to move because they won't be harmed, but we are bringing them to Guyana to see our operations," said Omai human

resources manager Norman McLean, who is also Guyana's former army chief of staff.

The company gave several senior tribesmen a similar tour last year, but the skepticism remains.

In August 1995, a waste pond at the Omai mine overflowed spilling more than 3.8 million cubic yards of cyanide-tainted mining waste into two rivers.

River drinking water was polluted for several weeks. Dozens of lawsuits by independent miners and river residents are still pending against the company.

# Mississippi bankers' history told in book

By Pamela Berry  
THE CLARION-LEDGER

JACKSON, Miss. — When Arthur James worked at the Mississippi Research and Development Center years ago, he discovered a lot about the state's history.

One of his discoveries inspired James, 57, and his brothers, Robert and Jimmie, all Hattiesburg natives, to write a book called "The Mississippi Black Bankers and Their Institutions."

The brothers say they wanted to fill a void left by other books on banking that failed to recognize the contributions of African Americans.

"I was intrigued that there has always been an effort since Reconstruction in trying to get blacks to be a part of the economic process," he said. "I want people to understand more about our past than what somebody else tells us. We need to research for ourselves."

Sidney King, president of black-owned First American Bank in Jackson, agrees.

"I think from a community standpoint we need to know," King said. "We need to know some of the challenges that we've faced in the past and understand that those things can resurface unless we in the community come together and

support the bank we have."

The Jameses examine the financial structure of black banks and some of the entrepreneurs. Some facts covered in the book:

- Black banking can be traced to General Ulysses Grant appointing his chaplain to take care of former slaves.
- The Knights of Honor Savings Bank, established at Vicksburg in 1892 with the help of a black teen-ager, was the first black-owned and operated bank in Mississippi.
- Many of the black banking entrepreneurs were leaders in numerous civic and professional organizations. They were businessmen, physicians, educators, lawyers, politicians and a ministers.

For example, Dr. Sidney D. Redmond, a successful physician and lawyer, served as president of the American Trust and Savings Bank, which operated in Jackson from 1904-11.

Arthur James, executive director of Yazoo Community Action, Inc., said getting the book completed was a lengthy and difficult process.

"I've always wanted to do something like this with my brothers, but we are all very busy," he said.

One of his brothers, Robert James, 50, is president of black-owned and operated Carver State Bank in Savannah, Ga.

The other, Jimmie James, 58, is chair of the department of music at Jackson State University.

Arthur James said most of their correspondence was done by "phone, faxes or sending stuff overnight ... in some cases entire drafts," he said.

However, Robert James said the end product made the time crunches and his frequent trips to Mississippi worthwhile.

"We have a part of lost history," Robert James said. "It's something for us to be proud of and document so younger children can be proud of and appreciate those efforts as well."

Robert James said he'd like to see the 114-page book used as a reference tool for students.

"I often receive surveys from graduate students attempting to do research on the African American owned banks in the U.S. Except for going directly to the institutions, it is difficult to get this information," he said.

Jimmie James recalled the moment he fully understood the importance of the book.

"We were at one of our book signings in Hattiesburg and one of the persons in the audience stood up and said he had possession of the cornerstones from one of the banks we wrote about."

"I was absolutely astonished that someone felt it was important enough to preserve that piece of history," Jimmie James

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## Video campaign swings into gear



Cassandra Sanders, Charlotte City Council member Ella Scarborough and Save The Seed Founder Ron Leeper met with Lakewood community members recently to show their support for a campaign to raise money for video camera equipment for the neighborhood's police patrol car. A citywide effort to buy camera equipment for police started last month, led by a coalition of African Americans.