



**De Klerk, ANC begin historic election talks**

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — President F.W. de Klerk's government and the ANC are to begin three days of private talks today to try to set a timetable for elections that will include blacks for the first time.

The African National Congress, the leading black group, wants elections for a multiracial interim government in the latter half of 1993, while de Klerk has proposed polls in early 1994.

"The main purpose of that meeting is to set the date for the installation of an interim government," ANC leader Nelson Mandela said Monday.

But de Klerk has cautioned that much hard bargaining remains.

The government, the ANC and other opposition groups must reach a series of agreements and curb political violence before an election.

De Klerk has dismantled the major apartheid laws since he took power in 1989. Now he seeks to negotiate a new constitution that would usher in black-white power sharing and allow the 30 million blacks to vote.

A successful ANC-government meeting could help prod resumption of talks to end white minority rule. Talks broke down in June over political violence in black townships. If the ANC and the government fail to agree, there is virtually no hope of political progress.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, the country's second-strongest black group, has been upset at his exclusion from the talks.

Buthelezi has hinted that the KwaZulu black homeland, which he governs, might secede from South Africa if he is not satisfied with the new political system now being negotiated.

**Senate begins inquiry into Packwood charges**

WASHINGTON — The Senate Ethics Committee, under heavy pressure from women's groups and congressional leaders, said Tuesday that it had begun a preliminary inquiry into sexual harassment charges against Republican U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood of Oregon.

Committee Chairman U.S. Sen. Terry Sanford, D-N.C., and Vice Chairman U.S. Sen. Warren B. Rudman, R-N.H., both leaving Congress in January, said in a written statement that they had instructed the panel's staff to gather information as quickly as possible.

The inquiry results will be presented to the full six-member committee, which then will determine whether to proceed with a formal investigation. Packwood, 60, who has checked into an undisclosed alcohol treatment program, has agreed to cooperate.

Julie Williamson, 53, one of Packwood's accusers, said in an interview Tuesday, before the announcement, that she feared a setback for victims of sexual harassment everywhere if Packwood went unpunished.

She was among 10 women — former Packwood staff members or lobbyists — who The Washington Post reported had accused him of uninvited and unwanted sexual advances.

Elaine Franklin, Packwood's chief of staff, has said the senator won't consider resigning and has hired a Washington attorney, James Fitzpatrick, to represent him.

He has not acknowledged any specific improper conduct but has said in a statement distributed by aides that he was sorry for any problems he might have caused his accusers.

**Rep. Kennedy discusses violence with Germans**

BONN, Germany — Saying "the eyes of the world are on Germany," U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy met with government officials Tuesday to discuss plans for quelling neo-Nazi violence.

"This is a nation that has a history that when people see ... Nazi flags and skinheads, it scares people," Kennedy told reporters after talks with officials in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's office and the Interior Ministry. "I think there's a real concern about the implications of what is taking place here in Germany."

Kennedy, a member of the House Banking Committee, said there was also "a sense that somehow the economic policies of the government have perhaps reinforced some of the dissent."

Kennedy, D-Mass., brought with him on his three-day visit Leonard Zakim, director of the New England B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League.

Both expressed concerns after meeting with Bernd Schmidbauer, an aide to Kohl, that the government did not appear to have a clear plan for combating right-wing extremism or a recognition of the extent of the problem.

Zakim said he and Kennedy discussed with German officials the possibility of sharing information and experience from U.S. police in combating civil rights violators, adding "there appears to be some interest."

Kennedy said he was not ready to draw conclusions about Germany's approach to the problems but said he was "very hopeful the German government will be able to get on top of the situation."

—The Associated Press

**Mississippi governor's religious remarks draw ire**

By Tara Duncan  
Staff Writer

Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice has garnered state and national criticism from the Jewish community because of his Nov. 17 statement that America is a Christian nation.

"The less we emphasize the Christian religion, the further we fall into the abyss of poor character and chaos in the United States of America," said Fordice at a Republican governors' meeting in Fontana, Wis.

Although Fordice adamantly declared that his statement was not intended to exclude Jews, his words angered Jews in Mississippi and throughout the United States. Fordice also has been questioned about his remarks and his decisions regarding more funding to the state's historically black colleges.

"Unfortunately, Governor Fordice has yet to learn that America is not a country that is defined in terms of religion or race," said Kent Schiner, president of B'nai B'rith International, in a statement released Nov. 18.

Members of B'nai B'rith International, which is the world's largest Jewish organization, and most Americans

should find this kind of divisive rhetoric offensive, Schiner said. "The United States is a pluralistic society, as any high school civics course could have taught Fordice," he said.

Fordice offered a defense of his statements Nov. 18 when the question was raised during a press conference. Fordice said he simply made a clear statement of truth at the governors' convention.

Fordice's comments came when he was asked whether efforts by moderates to temper the GOP's opposition to abortion would alienate members of the religious right.

"Christianity was being attacked, and the governor defended it," said Larry Daniel, Fordice's press secretary. "He explained to Jewish leaders that if it had been Jews that were under attack he would have defended them. He didn't mean any offense towards Jews."

Members of B'nai B'rith contend that Fordice's remarks were inappropriate and that his defense was less than they had hoped for, but they willingly accepted his apology rather than criticizing him, said Buzzy Gordon, director of press relations for B'nai B'rith.

"Hopefully out of this can come new awareness about how a pluralistic soci-

ety should exist in the United States," Gordon said. "Concerns have been expressed and obviously Fordice heard the message."

The issue of Christianity is not the only sore spot for the Mississippi governor who began his term in January.

When Fordice first entered the governor's office, he said he would call out the National Guard to fight any court-ordered tax increase to equalize funding at Mississippi's nearly all-white and all-black universities.

Fordice vetoed a \$23.7 million bill that would have given additional funding for historically black colleges.

"He vetoed the bill because of the money," Daniel said.

Some state legislatures do not agree that the lack of funding was the reason for Fordice's decision. "He is not being viewed in a positive light ... not by what he has said, but by his actions," said Ed Blackmon, a Mississippi legislator from Canton. "There is a real deficit against him among blacks."

Black legislators were angered when, in his veto of the bill, Fordice proclaimed that the bill "had grown like Topsy," a black child in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Blackmon argues that the poor conditions of black state-supported colleges were still the same and that state government still favored the larger white universities. "Fordice is not sympathetic to the needs of blacks," he said. "Things could be easier on his office if he would be more open with his views."

A group of black legislators in Mississippi are bonding together to create a new budget proposal for the black institutions. "Instead of lessening the problem, we want to eliminate it," he said.

State legislators realize they must act quickly because of a state Supreme Court case that has ruled that there must be integration of higher universities, he said.

The Ayers case was a suit filed 17 years ago and, now that a ruling has been made, Mississippi must make its laws comply, Blackmon said.

"The Court held that higher universities violated racial rules, but they didn't tell how to integrate them," said George Cochran, a professor at the University of Mississippi's Law School.

Daniel said the courts also posed the proposition that Mississippi possibly had too many state-supported schools. To eradicate this problem, a state com-

mission appointed by Fordice suggested closing the state-supported school with the lowest enrollment and highest costs.

The commission suggested merging Alcorn State University, an all-black school, with another all-black university, Mississippi Valley State.

The black community staunchly opposed the plan and took their case to federal court, where the judge sent it back to the governor's commission to work out a solution.

"We realize that the courts have power over legislation," Blackmon said. "Time is of the essence in the legislature now."

As budget-approval time comes around the corner, Fordice might continue to face animosity among the black and Jewish communities in Mississippi.

Daniel said the Jewish community was content after Fordice's apology, but Gordon said only time would tell if the governor's apology remedied his comments.

"If he's come this far in public life and isn't aware of how race and religion work in America, it is pretty sad," Gordon said. "Unfortunately, he isn't going to get his social consciousness raised overnight."

**AIDS**

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AIDS issues. McCarthy said that she was looking forward to working with the Hunt administration but that ACT-UP disagreed with the governor-elect's desire to eliminate anonymous AIDS testing.

"We are confident that this is only the beginning of a very productive dialogue with our new state leader," McCarthy said.

Kent asked the crowd to encourage elected officials to step up the battle against AIDS and declare a state of emergency and criticized the government's inactivity on AIDS-related issues.

"It can work if people let them know we're demanding it," he said. "I am a victim, as are all of you. We are a victim of the government that for 12 long years

has refused to acknowledge the fact that we are in the middle of a national health emergency."

Many crowd members said they had been involved personally with victims of the disease.

"I'm here to show support for the people I know who have died of AIDS," said Joey Barnes, a participant in the rally.

Steven Harris, ACT-UP facilitator and an organizer of the demonstration, said he hoped the rally would encourage others to get involved in the fight against AIDS. He said he had a personal interest in the battle.

"I've lost friends. I've lost patients. I've lost loved ones," Harris said. "I am more aware of how fragile human life is."

**Art**

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that the exhibit was a good and appropriate gesture."

But some of the visitors to Union Gallery Tuesday missed the message committee members were trying to send.

"I come in here almost every day to read, drink coffee and look at the art work," said Gene Palka, a Ph.D. student from Pittsburgh. "Today my original thought was that there was going to be work done in here and the paintings were covered for protection. Artwork makes a significant contribution to us all. It's a shame not to have seen it today."

Karren Skuba, a senior from New York City, agreed, saying, "The idea would have been better if someone had just hung black canvasses instead of covering someone else's work."

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