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# Doors are closing on this committee

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Political Reporter

Recently the Rev Sam Buti, a moderate leader with a rare degree of credibility in the Alexandra community he serves as mayor, called on black leaders to snub the Cabinet committee investigating the constitutional future of urban blacks. This could be the kiss of death for any proposals which may emerge.

The committee, chaired by the Minister of Constitutional Development, Mr Chris Heunis, has been rejected out of hand by organisations such as the Azanian People's Organisation and the United Democratic Front. Their plans for black constitutional rights demand a full democratic vote in a unitary state.

Although some "independent" and self-governing homeland leaders held talks with the committee, it was boycotted by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of In-

that left leaders in the black political centre - men such as Mr Buti - to give the commit-

tee, and any proposals it might make, some credibility. Now the only people likely to talk to Mr Heunis's committee are black local authority councillors whose credibility is at an all-time low.

To make the situation worse about 20 of these councillors have resigned in the past few months.

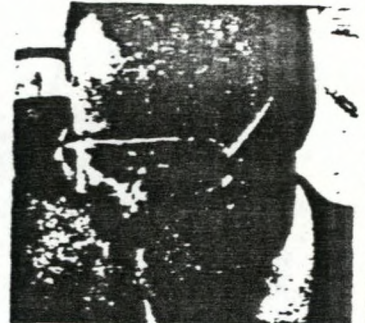
It all adds up to a Cabinet committee with no one to talk to and leaves a vital aspect of the Government's "reform" plans floundering.

The participation by blacks in discussion concerning the constitutional plan for urban blacks will be a definite betrayal of established struggles by those men and women who have been banished, exiled or even imprisoned by the South African racist regime," Mr Buti said in his statement.

He added that history had proved that very little ever came out of such committees and reiterated that the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and various banned Black Consciousness organisations be unbanned.



The Rev Sam Buti



Chief Gatsha Buthelezi

The Cabinet committee was born of a Government realisation that the non-homeland urban black was here to stay and that somehow, without giving him a full vote, a method had to be found whereby he could have some representation.

The Government has been treating the committee as evidence that it is taking the urban black question seriously as a part of a "reform" package that included the extension of a limited franchise to the coloured and Indian population groups.

The urban blacks are excluded from both the first (Parliament) and second (Regional Councils) tiers of Government. Their only slender link to the decision-making process is the third-tier local authorities, which are in serious trouble.

During unrest in the Vaal Triangle the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr FW de Klerk, told a Press conference at Vereeniging that the black local authorities were the voice of the urban black and the Government would listen to them - despite the fact that some were elected on a five percent poll.

The Cabinet committee is likely to find a willing ear only among local authority councils, whose credibility is almost nil.

But, according to Mr de Klerk, they are the voice of the urban black and their suggestions and proposals will be heeded by the Government.

The end result of that will be committee recommendations on the constitutional future of urban blacks that will solve little and be acceptable to very few.

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