

INKATHA YENKULULEKO YESIZWE  
KGARE YA TOKOLOHO YA SETJHABA  
NATIONAL CULTURAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S BRIGADE OF THE BUTHELEZI AREA

Address by Mangosuthu Buthelezi  
Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha

MAHLABATHINI. 4TH JULY 1990

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I am very pleased to have this opportunity of saying just a few words to the women of the Mahlabathini district before Inkatha's Annual General Conference takes place in just over a week's time. We live in very challenging days and face the task of turning momentous upheavals into action for the future.

The first thing I want to say is that as a black leader I am deeply aware that real political sovereignty actually resides in people. You hear terms like the 'sovereign state' or a 'sovereign government' but it is only the people who are really sovereign.

What happens in South Africa must happen because the people want it to happen the way it does happen. I have never myself been ideologically inclined and Inkatha has not been ideologically inclined. I think this can be traced to the fact that Inkatha is a grass-roots organisation which actually rests on members who act with each other through the democratic structures of Inkatha.

This makes Inkatha's interests bread and butter interests, it makes Inkatha's interests interests which the people themselves evolve in their difficult circumstances. Inkatha is not an organisation which tells people what to think and what to say. Inkatha is a product of what the people think and what the people say. Inkatha's policies are determined by the people who are ordinary members. Inkatha's Annual General Conference is the movement's supreme authority.

The Annual General Conference appoints its leaders every five years and each year Inkatha's Annual General Conference listens to what its leaders have done and makes pronouncements on Inkatha's policies and its tactics and strategies. Inkatha therefore



changes with the times and constantly updates itself and re-directs itself.

This year's Annual General Conference of Inkatha will be critically important and I would like to take the opportunity in addressing you today to make one or two points about this year's Conference which will be held on the 13th, 14th and 15th July.

When Mr. F.W. de Klerk made his famous speech to Parliament on the 2nd February this year, the whole political ball-game in South Africa was dramatically changed. One could I think say that for the first time in the history of the Black struggle the time-honoured objectives of the struggle were suddenly placed in the grasp of Blacks.

Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, who founded the African National Congress with his fellow leaders, would have been overjoyed by what Mr. de Klerk said on the 2nd February and what he has done since. There were many times over the years that the black leadership sought opportunities to talk to Heads of South African Governments without any success.

Representations were made to the British Government before and after the Act of Union to include Blacks in the decision-making process of South Africa and deputations were sent to the South African Government of the day and even to the British Government of the day when such hideous Acts as the Land Act of 1913 was passed. It became clear that a new South Africa would be evolving in which Blacks would have no say and about which Blacks would not be consulted.

The history of the struggle is the history of reasonable demands being rejected and the history of the struggle could also be written in terms of reasonable demands being made more insistently and with more reason being met only with ever-harsher rejection and action. Despite everything, however, and above everything, the struggle remained a struggle to employ noble means to achieve noble ends and the struggle remained a struggle in which the real commitment was to gain Black acceptance in all the country's institutions through the employment of non-violent means.

Some became impatient it is true. Others turned into revolutionaries, it is true. Others took the law into their own hands and used violence for political purposes, it is true. But the great historic truth remains that Black South Africans struggled for their freedom in the land of their birth through non-violent means and are now faced with the fruits of that struggle and the prospects of bringing about change more efficiently through negotiation than could ever be imagined through the politics of violence.



All the founding fathers of the ANC wanted was for Blacks to be received by Whites and to hear what they had to say and to involve them in the development of the country.

Mr. de Klerk has I think taken a bold step forward in the history of South Africa by himself being prepared to listen to what Blacks have to say and by himself being prepared to walk into the future with Blacks as participants in the development of South Africa.

For a great many decades the old ANC's tactics and strategies were dominated by the pursuit of the objectives of the Movement to gain Black acceptance in all structures of the land through non-violent tactics and strategies.

Right through the struggle and right up to Chief Albert Lutuli everyone in the struggle would have stopped to dance for joy at the announcements of a South African Head of State who said and did what Mr. F.W. de Klerk has said and done.

The first thing therefore that this year's Annual General Conference of Inkatha should note is that Black South Africans have now already been thrust into the political phase for which the whole of the Black struggle up to now was focussed.

Those who do not see this to be the case are abandoning thinking which has been hallowed by the passing of time in the struggle. Those who now see the struggle doing something other than giving Blacks the right to be equal and free in the land of their birth, are bringing something new and something dangerous into the struggle.

The struggle has never been about any ideological end. It has never been about the establishment of a Communist Party government. It has never been about the establishment of a one-Party State. It has never been about making one black political Party a dominant Party which thrashes all other black political Parties.

The real genuine Black South African struggle for liberation has only been about the liberation of the Black people from racism and that liberation was always expressed in terms of the freedom of the Black man and woman in the land of their birth. The real struggle for liberation has always been about the achievement of equality for all before the law and the constitution, regardless of race, colour or creed.



The real struggle even in recent times has been about these objectives. The ordinary people of South Africa in their millions want a South Africa in which they are free and equal; they want a South Africa in which they can improve their own lot and improve the lot of their families. The black people of this country want a democracy that works and they want an economy that will provide jobs. Those are the bottom line demands and that is really what the people want.

Inkatha has struggled for these objectives on behalf of the people. What Inkatha wants must be synonymous with what the people want because it is the people who make Inkatha what it is, and it is the people who decide both what Inkatha's objectives are and what its tactics and strategies should be.

The people's demands on Inkatha are that Inkatha should now prepare itself to carry the voice of the people into the politics of negotiation which lies ahead. Now there is talk about talk; there is talk about stumbling blocks to negotiation. The day must come in which Black, White, Indian and Coloured sit down around a table and begin talking about the constitutional future of South Africa.

The people want two things from Inkatha. They want Inkatha to prepare for full involvement in the politics of negotiation and they want Inkatha to hasten the day of negotiation. They want Inkatha to bring that day nearer. They want Inkatha to get on with the job of establishing the politics of negotiation so that politics from the far right and from the far left are left behind by the rapid progress that negotiations can make.

My sisters, I as President of Inkatha will not let the people down. I will go to the negotiating table to speak with the voice of the people. I will now manoeuvre and I will now pressurise the Government and I will now oppose delays to get the politics of negotiation off the ground as soon as possible. Once I am at the negotiating table I will speak with the voice of the people.

Because there is now a new job to be done there will have to be a new Inkatha to do that job. Every political organisation in South Africa has been dumped into one big political melting pot. All organisations will have to change and adapt to new circumstances. Inkatha will certainly not lag behind in this South African demand on political organisations.

Whereas before Inkatha was a liberation movement fighting apartheid on the ground and fighting one ruling National Party Government after another ruling National Party Government, Inkatha will now have to transform itself into a political Party which will represent a very wide cross-section of South African opinion which cuts across all race groups. Inkatha will have to become a



negotiating political Party and an election-winning political Party after negotiations.

South Africa is moving from one era into an entirely different era in which Blacks as the majority of people in the country will have a majority say in the governing of the country. We in Inkatha are the most advantageously placed to negotiate how there can be a one-man-one-vote system of government and how the majority of this country can have a determining say in the constitutional future of South Africa without ramming that future down White, Indian and Coloured throats with the barrel of a gun, and without having very ugly White, Indian and Coloured political backlashes which would make the problems Frelimo faces in dealing with Renamo, and the problems the MPLA face in dealing with UNITA, look like child's play by comparison.

We in Inkatha are the most advantageously placed to ensure that a one-man-one-vote system of government produces a united Black, White, Indian and Coloured South Africa which has the national will both to establish a democracy and to run it thereafter. Inkatha must become both a political Party which operates at the national level and a major force of reconciliation between race groups.

Inkatha will go to the negotiating table aiming at peace and stability and aiming at a normalised South Africa in which the economic interdependence which there has now long been is translated into political interdependence for the future.

My message to the black women of South Africa today is firstly that all political groups need to make the transition Inkatha intends to make. All political groups should now pursue political objectives with the same feeling that Inkatha has and attempt to achieve the same reconciled South Africa which Inkatha aims to achieve.

It is for me very important that my message about the new South Africa needing a new Inkatha which will pave the way for a new political system in which there will be total equality for all before the law and the constitution, is conveyed to every black household in the country.

Every black household should have a woman in it who holds up the ideal of peace and stability to every member of her family. Women as mothers shape the moral future of South Africa as they teach their children from their knee onwards what is right and what is wrong and what is good and what is foul in dealing with others. The women of South Africa must bring a whole new generation of children into existence who will become peace-loving and democracy-supporting adults of the future.



The first thing women must do therefore is ensure that motherhood is charged with the responsibility of bringing a new quality of life into politics by maintaining high moral standards to which she must direct her children.

The second message that I have for the black women of South Africa is that they must now rise up as one and say together that enough is enough and hideous violence for political purposes must now be shamed out of existence. Let the women of South Africa now stand up for democracy. Let them shame undemocratic practises out of existence. Let them occupy the high moral ground on which politics should operate and let them demand that their sons, their brothers and their husbands and their fathers, their uncles and nephews, should beat all swords into ploughshares. Let them demand action for peace.

My third message to the black women of South Africa is that you the women of South Africa have borne the brunt of the struggle. Whenever there has been a price to be paid for a tactic and strategy that has failed it is the black women of South Africa who paid most of that price. When there was an onslaught against all decency as wave after wave of black children were fed into the struggle as cannon fodder by black leaders who were brutally selfish, it was the black mothers who again paid a price.

The failed armed struggle and the totally discredited attempts to make South Africa ungovernable by spreading violence as far and as wide and as fiercely as possible; the boycott action, stay-at-home action and strike action which never transformed anything and never bred anything which could succeed, all added up to create an almost inhuman burden for black mothers.

My message to the black women of South Africa is that not only must they ensure that motherhood instills good and lasting values in the hearts and minds of their children, and not only must they outlaw and shame violence amongst their menfolk, but they must also stand up as equal citizens of this country and move into the new political era as full partners of the menfolk around them.

In modern life women are not only the salt of the earth they have always been, but they are also the campaigners and the upholders on which all decency depends.

We have seen so many times before that it is the mother and the wife who is left holding a final responsibility. In English there is a saying which is very insightful. When you talk about people who hold the final responsibility or who are the people who are left with a problem when others have failed, you say so-and-so has "been left holding the baby." How true that is. How often has it not been that when men fail, the woman is left carrying sole responsibility with what has to be done.



One of the things that so bedevils Black politics today is the hideous poverty of the people which is measured in part by the high rate of unemployment in black society. A man who has no job and can make no contribution to his family, has too little to lose and is too easily persuaded to risk the nothing that he has for something some wild-eyed political extremist promises him if he acts violently. So many of our sons have too little to lose because they have completed their schooling and have no jobs to go to. It is the womenfolk of South Africa who have always got too much to lose because they are left holding the baby and they are left with the final responsibility of keeping the family and the community together.

Thus my sisters when I say that there must be a new South Africa and there must be a new Inkatha which will bring about a new democracy, I also say that there must be a new reliance on the women of South Africa to play a vital role. This vital role is not only in the transformation from apartheid to democracy, but also in the maintenance of democracy thereafter.

Somewhere, sometime in the future there will be a somebody writing history about today's politics and the politics to come in the next few years. When that history is written I am sure it will be a history in which the ordinary people of South Africa rose up to produce a whole new brand of heroes and heroines who did the real job of putting democracy in place and making it work.

That history will - amongst many other things - be about some lady from some place, like this Mahlabathini district, who rose up and beckoned the women of South Africa to follow her into a new national organisation of women who helped salvage South Africa - and Black South Africa in particular - from the aftermath of revolution and internicine Black-on-Black confrontations which are coming so perilously close to destroying the soul of the nation. That history will be about a black lady, probably an ordinary black lady from a district like this, who went forth into the rest of South Africa to establish a common sisterhood for democracy amongst the women of South Africa. There will be from among the ladies living today the emergence of what one can perhaps call a political Florence Nightingale or a political Mother Theresa who combine care and love with an ability to establish organisations and mobilise people.

The new South Africa that we must build is not something that will be built out there by the government and political Parties. It is a new South Africa which the ordinary people of this country will have to build. It is the people who are sovereign. It is the people who are the members of democratic organisations. It is the people who will vote one by one. It is the people who will determine the destiny of South Africa. Each one of you here is a



person amongst those people. The struggle must be personalised by you. You must play your role wherever you are and let history and God determine the future of your country through your action and your commitment to decency.

My sisters, I am very proud of the women of this district. It is a district which has always played a very important role in the life of the nation and indeed in the development of South Africa. An historic responsibility rests on the shoulder of every lady in this district to uphold the time-honoured values of the nation and South Africa and to ensure that in this final phase of the struggle, reconciliation comes to those who finally dismantle apartheid and establish a new democratic South Africa.

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