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THE RANDFONTEIN ESTATES GOLD MINING COMPANY (W) LTD

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

RANDFONTEIN ESTATES 26TH JULY 1989  
SPORTS CLUB

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, Mr. K.W. Maxwell President of the Chamber of Mines, Mr. W.J. van der Meulen General Manager and senior officials of the Randfontein Estates Gold Mining Company, other distinguished guests.

I have always valued the role that the Chamber of Mines and the mining houses of South Africa have played in the development of the Black people of South Africa. Nay, I should say in the whole of Southern Africa. We all know that the going has been tough and we all know that for many years rabid racism made life on mines and particularly underground tough for Blacks. We all know that the mines came out of the history of South Africa in which difficult beginnings were made and that the rough stuff of yesteryear still in fact lives on to what really is an alarming extent.

My appreciation therefore of what the mines have done for the development of Black South Africa is not appreciation accompanied by back-slapping and the falsification of racism which so characterised the industry for so long.

I have appreciated the role the mining industry has played in the development of Black South Africa because the mines with their vast scale of employment have not only provided the Black people of South Africa with employment opportunities, but more particularly have supplied Black South Africa with training opportunities.

I am often in a position of having to speak to employers or employees after I have spoken to employees or employers. Whenever I speak to the one I am conscious that I have to speak to the other. I therefore am always at pains never to attempt to speak

out of two sides of my mouth. My message to employers is the same message to employees.

The message to Blacks is that we are man enough to ensure that we are not exploited in our places of employment and it is also that we are man enough to deal honestly and to do everything above board because it is in honesty and above board tactics and strategies that most can be achieved.

I make this point because I am very aware of the extent to which political propagandists among revolutionaries have attempted to stigmatise the capitalist free enterprise system with apartheid and to say that the one must be destroyed with the other. I am aware of the extent to which legitimate grievances of the past continue to ferment anger even after the grievances of today are attended to

tomorrow. The call for the rejection of capitalism does not fall on deaf ears.

The value I place on the role the mining industry has played in the development of Black South Africa would not be what it is if I did not believe that the path along which the vested interests of the mining bosses in directing the mining houses was not convergent with the path that the vested interests of black workers is directing them.

In a post-apartheid . South Africa in which there ' is. 'a real democracy, we could not afford to have the interests of mining houses being divergent from the real interests of workers. I would say that the over-riding need today is for employer and employee to learn to define the good of tomorrow in such terms that they can both subscribe to the definition.

We are all in the same melting pot as apartheid. Every political party and every industrial group is in that melting pot with the rest of South Africa. It is not as though we can scrap apartheid and keep everything else intact. The scrapping of apartheid can only come as we stir the South African pot and see a new South Africa emerging.

I find myself fascinated as I watch the present election campaign unfolding. Across the length and breadth of the Western industrial world governments come and go as parties win and lose elections, and very frequently a relatively small swing in voting patterns can bring about a change in government.

Everywhere where there is this vying for political power and the changing of governments at regular intervals, people see the changes as democracy at work. In South Africa, if there is some kind of vague hope or fear - depending on your point of view - that the National Party will not achieve a commanding majority in the forthcoming election, the fear or hope is expressed in banner headlines.

We have a long way to go before we accept that real democracy means changing governments as a country continues winding its way to a destiny everybody hopes for. We are now in the melting pot and it is my fervent hope that we will emerge from this melting pot with a lot more in common than we shared when we were thrown into it.

As South Africans we forget how far apartheid has actually taken us away from the acceptance of commonplace political thought and political and democratic patterns of action in the world's best democracies. It is this distance from what is common place elsewhere which is leading so many to seek unique solutions for the South African problem.

There is a kind of distrust of the history of the rest of mankind and a down-playing of the great truths about democracy and civilised life that have been won at such great cost over such a protracted period of human strife.

I am fearful sometimes that what are really the minimal changes that have to be made are seen as mountains that have to be overcome.

When I express this thought I am not thinking only of Whites. The same apartheid which has conditioned Whites to believe that democracy is a threat because Blacks in Africa cannot be trusted, has conditioned Blacks to distrust democracy because they believe that Whites cannot be trusted in democracy.

I come back to my image of the melting pot and say that we are in the melting pot whether we like it or not and whether we like it or not, the only escape from the melting pot is to be found in striking out in a new direction for South Africa in which Black can walk with White.

It is when I think of this walking together that I see the mining industry having a very positive role to play. There is in the industry a recognition that racism must go. There is in it a recognition that the very future of the industry depends upon Black and White working together and both Black and White being able to

progress as high as their potentials permit them.

Across the length and breadth of South Africa there is the need to translate economic interdependence into social and political interdependence. The mining industry can play its own very distinctive role in making this possible. It is an industry where there is a great deal at stake and which can least afford to make

errors of judgement. It is therefore an industry which should pay the greatest possible attention to preparing itself for the changes that must be made.

The industry must accept the challenge of being up-front in the business of change. South Africa cannot afford the collapse of the mining industry and both employer and employee must become their

brother's keeper in the pursuit of the good of the industry. A collapse would be just as disastrous whoever was finally responsible for it. Neither must permit the other to bring about

a collapse.

I am concerned that the goodwill that still exists between race groups may be just too suspended between the disbelief on the part of Whites that Blacks can be democrats, and the disbelief on the part of Blacks that Whites can be democrats. When I speak to Whites and when I hear them speaking to each other in political debate and in the media, what is ever noticeable to me is they look at so much of black society with blank eyes and no understanding.

If you take Inkatha's position on constitutional matters, or you take its position on critical issues of an economic nature, or if you take Inkatha's position on issues at the level of international diplomacy, you will find they are fairly sophisticated. They are realistic because we are a market-place force in politics and we are pragmatic. Far too few Whites understand that these positions which Inkatha takes are not the product of a few hand-picked top leaders.

Inkatha's leaders are elected into office and each and every year Inkatha's Annual General Conference reviews policy and holds leaders to account. Inkatha's positions are the positions of Black people in this country. Inkatha's democracy has ensured that Inkatha's leaders emerge with sanity in their statements and realism in the setting of their objectives.

Political adventurism and the hysterical fly-by-night politicians who ride on emotional issues have not been able to put together in this country a mass movement like Inkatha. I am totally committed to confining my leadership to achieve what the people want. I am proud of what they have wanted me to achieve thus far and I know that the best that there is in Inkatha is not imported into it from without. Inkatha is what it is because Inkatha is a mass movement which is membership-based and which has an over-riding internal democratic process.

When I talk about mining bosses and mining labour getting together to define what they want out of the future in such a way that they

can both subscribe to the definition, I am saying that it can be done. I am saying there is a greater need for Black and White to get together and for each to see that the other could subscribe to democratic principles. They need to get together so that both can

see that the other could become a trusted partner in the pursuit of what both want.

It is this idiom of trust being built on risk that the other will not betray the trust that is needed today. It is safer "all institutionalised South Africa which has to make the transition from today to tomorrow. It is not going to be a party political affair. The transition we have to make is a people's transition. It is a transition which the boss and the worker will have to make together.

I know how to find real wisdom in an illiterate peasant. I know how to find real humanity amongst the country's oppressed. I also know how to find wisdom and humanity amongst the country's more privileged classes.

But I cannot be some miraculous catalyst which brings Black and White together. Inkatha can only be a conduit for right thinking which flows in both directions - from Black to White and from White to Black. It is the ordinary people of South Africa who must elevate political parties to do what has to be done. It is not political parties which must prepare the people for what must be done.