

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - ISILILO

WOMEN'S GUILD CONFERENCE - NATAL REGION

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

ULUNDI 8TH JUNE 1989

Mrs. Dlamini President of the Women's Guild;; the Secretary Mrs. E. Dladla and Chaplain and other Pastors present here today, my sisters.

I wish to say that as a Christian I always feel so much at home amongst other Christians and particularly amongst Christian women,

who are the back-bone of the Church in our communities. My mother's own commitment to Christianity has throughout life been a great inspiration to me. This 'a Christian.*faitihâ\200\231s Wwhich â\200\230â\200\230has inspired many a Black mother to strive to educate us in this country. In more than 80 per cent of the stories about a poor boy or poor girl who made it in education, vyou will always find that

the mother invariably is the Heroine of each such epic.

The United Congregational Church has a very special place in my heart. For four years of my formative years, I was a student at Adams College where â\200\230I did both my Junior Certificate and matriculation under the predominant influence of Ministers of the Congregational Church. I therefore thank you Madam President for inviting me to be here today to welcome you all to Ulundi, the capital of KwaZulu, not merely as Chief Minister but also as vyour brother in Christ.

I address many meetings during the course of any year and a large percentage of them are important meetings. They are meetings about fundamental political problems; they are meetings about tactics and strategies lin the struggle for liberation; they are meetings in which I gather support for the struggle for liberation; they are meetings in which unity is sought and the strength that comes from unity lis sought. They are meetings with national leaders in this country as well as Prime Ministers, Presidents, Foreign Ministers and other Cabinet Ministers of leading nations in the world. They are meetings at which governments from right around the world - including First World and Third World governments - send delegates to deliberate together.

Yet my sisters, I can regard none of these as more important than my meeting with you today. You are the mothers and the sisters of the nation; you are the wives in the nation. You are playing out a God-given role which none can play for you. You are doubly burdened in this role. Firstly we as Black South Africans have a political job to do that none can do for us because we are the most oppressed. The only way those who are oppressed today can walk tall tomorrow is to do something about their oppression.

None can cross our borders to do what we have to do on the ground. Nobody in South Africa will or could do what we have to do. Ours is the responsibility to salvage the country from the hideously destructive system of apartheid which divides. It is we who are divided who must bind ourselves together to form a new South Africa. The strength of the South African nation will ultimately depend upon the strength with which Black hand holds Black hand. If I reach out for my brother and sister and my grasp is weak, the nation will be weak and South Africa will be weak.

You my sisters as Blacks share this overall Black burden. Yet if all people know that the struggle for liberation is not a Party polivbica's thing. It is not politics only that will save our country. The struggle for liberation is a struggle to join Black to Black. It is a struggle to locate the Black people of South Africa in the influential positions where Black bargaining power can be strengthened. It is a struggle to give every man, woman and child a rightful place in all the social, economic and political institutions of this country. It is a struggle for 'a' whole birthright which covers everything.

It is a struggle which involves all black institutions; that involves workers and their trade unions; that involves black employers and their associations; that involves professional associations; it involves civic associations and right at the top of the list - more important than anything else, more important than major political groupings in fact - it involves the churches of this country.

Not only are you as the black women involved in this total Black attack on apartheid - this nationwide endeavour to claim our birthright and to establish the kind of decency that goes with a birthright authored by God Almighty - you are also involved in your own way as women of South Africa.

My sisters, I am deeply aware that when any tragedy strikes about the poverty-stricken black population it is the women, the mothers, who are battered most. It is they who suffer most. It is they

who lose most and it is upon them that the nation relies on to do the most to recover.

LR i R e

Your great calling in life is not a calling to be an under-dog; it is not a calling to play a second-class citizens role. Your calling is to stand up as women, to walk tall as women and to do that which only the women of the nation can do.

My sisters, when poverty strikes and home life is disrupted and when community life starts disintegrating, it is the women of South Africa who are burdened with the real burden of poverty. All Black South Africa suffers but the women suffer most of all.

When there is war or revolution or faction fighting, or when there is violence in our townships, it is the women who suffer most. When there is a degeneration of human relationships and human

beings start snapping and snarling like some demented cur, the bite and the tearing are one thing. But the aftermath is something altogether different, something altogether worse, and it is

something which settles so heavily on the women of South Africa.

But then, Glory be to God, the counterpart of all this is also true. With this great burden comes great privileges. It is the women who are privileged to be defenders of the faith in adversity. It is the women who are privileged to fight the rearguard action to salvage the best and to let the worst fall away into the past. When change comes, those who suffered most, will benefit most. For them the change will be the greatest.

My sisters, when I have been visiting the United States in recent years, I have heard the phrase "Black empowerment" being used more and more frequently. When I hear this phrase I think that only the black women of South Africa can be the real empowerers of Black South Africa. It is women who must support the best that men can do. And I am not saying anything about men playing a primary role which women must just support. I am saying that nothing can succeed unless women back it. Neither war, nor peace, nor trial and tribulation, can be made meaningful to the nation unless women back it. \

Every revolutionary leader right around the world in every continent, in every country, where revolution has succeeded, knows that women had to be mobilised before success could be achieved. When it comes to freedom fighters, it is the women who stand up to be counted.

But of all the responsibilities that rest on the shoulders of women, the moral responsibility of saying yes when yes is needed and saying no when no is needed, is the greatest of all. The black women of South Africa say no, no and no yet again to revolution and to the violence with which some are attempting to bring about radical change.

I am a political leader in the midst of the South African violence which has so blighted the image of our black struggle for

liberation. I do not talk about political violence theoretically. My sisters, you know that those who bury their dead talk about violence at first hand and talk about it most meaningfully. As a black leader, I know that there is a great cry in South Africa for the cessation of violence.

Wherever violence strikes most - as it has been striking in the

Greater Pietermaritzburg Area and spreading further afield over the last year and a half to two years - there is reaction after reaction opposing violence. The people who are most affected by violence, most deplore it. They deplore it most because they are battered into violent conflict. They are intimidated into violent conflict. It is not a case of two sides in a violent conflict

desiring violence at the grass root level and coming together to form opposing groups who will fight it out willingly because that is what they want to do.

No, my sisters, violence creeps in at night as though it is brought

in by some kind of hyenas. It starts working its evil thing and more and more individuals and then more and more groups and ultimately more and more localities are battered by it

Individuals, groups and communities are actually dragged into violence. Circumstances develop around them in which they are enveloped in violence.

We know as a black people the desire for full participation in the affairs of the nation is the great desire which is written in the hearts and minds of the people. It is the struggle for liberation which has written that desire there. It is the struggle for liberation which has confirmed our claim to the great liberties that God has created in His scheme of things for people.

Our struggle for liberation in this country has written indelibly in the hearts and minds of Black South Africa that we are struggling for a fair and just society. We are struggling for a society in which there will be equality before the law and the constitution. We are struggling for a society in which there will be equality of opportunity for all. And we are struggling for a society in which race, colour and creed will no longer be the deciding factors of who has the most, who has the least and who is favoured by the State. :

Our black struggle for liberation was not only founded on the ideals which are there in the great scheme of things that God has created for the improvement of mankind, but it is also founded on noble means of achieving noble objectives.

The struggle for liberation has been a struggle for the noble things and a struggle against evil ways of achieving them. It has been a struggle against temptation so to hit out in anger that you destroy the goals you are aspiring to. That, my sisters, is what political violence does.

When you look at any violent tactic and strategy, or you look at any confrontation designed to produce violent conflict, you will inevitably and always observe that intimidation has to be used to soften up the people before they become participants. The struggle for liberation demands the best in us. It does not demand the worst in us.

It is the women of South Africa - the black women of South Africa - who have to stand up and be counted when violence tries to rub out

that which the history of the struggle has written in the hearts and minds of people. It is the women who say no, a thousand times no, to the burning, maiming and killing around them. It is only the women who can actually legitimise the violence that erupts around them. It is in the power of women to say yeah or to say nay more effectively than it is in the power of any black political organisation to say yeah or nay to violence.

Calling for violence is easy; standing up and shouting slogans and using rhetoric is easy; It is something that anybody can actually learn. Making violence a people's violence, violence supported by and desired by the people, is on the other hand only something that

the people themselves can do. It is something that history must do

beyond the ability of any political organisation to say yeah or nay. The voice of the women of South Africa in a very real sense is the voice of history declaring its opposition to political violence.

We have had hideous Black-on-Black confrontations in the Greater Pietermaritzburg Area and we have had violence which has spread from that area to other areas. Whole communities are reeling under the onslaught of violence. Communities are being torn apart by violence erupting in them. There is now a great cry that enough is enough and all the people are saying let there be peace.

In April this year I finalised plans for a peace initiative and ever since then I have been working on the ground to establish peace between Black and Black. Nothing mars the image of the struggle for liberation and nothing saps the potency of black political power as much as the violence of Black against Black does. There is no justification for it under any circumstances.

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Even those who claim that they are fighting a just war against apartheid are wrong. They are wrong firstly because there is no such thing as a just war in South Africa while there are alternatives to violence which have not yet been really properly pursued.

Secondly, however, political violence must be doubly condemned not only because it is not justified because there are other things that can be done, but it must also be condemned because it has taken the turn of using violence in black internecine black conflict. Those who claim that violence is justified are damned to hell when they use violence against the victims of apartheid and

not against the pillars of apartheid. They are damned yet again and even more deeply than the violence they use for the indiscriminate violence of bombs in market places, in places of entertainment and in public walk-ways.

The great peace initiative that I have announced and that I have begun implementing is a peace initiative which all decent citizens should call for. My sisters, if any one man in South Africa could be more excused for wanting violence than any other man, it would probably be Dr. Nelson Mandela. The hideousness of the violence that has erupted in the Greater Pietermaritzburg Area and that has spread elsewhere since, has made Dr. Nelson Mandela cry out from jail - let there be peace between Blacks.

In Dr. Mandela's first ever communication to the public of South Africa in the 26 years that he has been in jail, he wrote to me

calling for a cessation of Black-on-Black conflicts in Natal and KwazZulu. This is what he wrote:

1335/88: NELSON MANDELA. Victor Verster Prison
Private Bag X6005
Paarl South, 7624

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Dear Shenge,

I thank you for the warm and well-considered telex message you sent me on behalf of King Zwelithini and Inkatha on the occasion of my seventieth birthday. I also received your letter of 26 August 1988 in which you wished me a speedy recovery from illness, and in which you outlined your efforts both locally and abroad to secure the release of prisoners in South Africa.

Apart from your telex and a telegram from Mrs. Helen Suzman, hundreds of similar messages came from well-wishers in the country and in different parts of the world. It is partly the unswerving support of such men and women, and partly the achievements made by |

our organisation within and outside the country which have given prisoners so much strength and hope.

You will readily accept that it is not at all easy from my present quarters to comment fully and freely on the sentiments you so eloquently expressed in the above correspondence. It is sufficient to state that your persistent demand for the unconditional release of prisoners before negotiation can start, is a stand which I have always welcomed as a positive contribution to the search for lasting peace in this country.

Obviously, my present hope is to see, in due course, the restoration of the cordial relations which existed between you and O.R., and between the two organisations in the seventies.

The most challenging task facing the leadership today is that of national wunity. At no other time in our history has it become so crucial for our people to speak with one voice, and to pool their efforts. Any act or statement, from whatever source, which tends to create or worsen divisions is, in the existing political situation, a fatal error which ought to be avoided at all costs.

Far more information than I possess at the moment is required before I can blame any of the parties involved in the deplorable conflicts now taking place in Natal. All the same, I consider it a serious indictment against all of us that we are still unable to combine forces to stop the slaughter of so many innocent lives. The struggle is our life and, even though the realisation of our fondest dreams may not be at hand, we can nevertheless make that struggle immensely enriching or absolutely disastrous.

In my entire political career few things have distressed me as to see our people killing one another as is now happening. As you know, the entire fabric of community life in some of the affected areas has been seriously disrupted, leaving behind a legacy of hatred and bitterness which may haunt us for years to come. It is a matter which requires the urgent attention of all people in this country. Nothing will please me more than to know that my concern and appeal have not fallen on deaf ears.

Once again, thank you, the King and Inkatha for your inspiring message. My best wishes to you and Mndlunkulu.

Yours sincerely,

MADIBA

My sisters, I am totally committed to do whatever I can do to bring about peace. I know that it is no good sitting around in lofty meetings in five-star hotels talking about violence. If anybody is really interested in stopping violence, then that somebody must walk with me to the places where the stopping must be put into practice. They must walk with me into the communities where violence has most erupted.

On Sunday the 26th May I went to KwaMakhuta which you all know is a place where violence has erupted so hideously and where people have been so battered by it. I had a mass meeting there in which there was a really fantastic grass-root support for my call for peace. There is a great crying out by the victims of violence that violence must now cease.

On the 18th June I will go to KwaMashu to have another peace prayer rally against violence and on the 26th June I will go to Edendale. On the 16th July I will have another mass rally but at Imbali this time. Then again on the 23rd July, I will go to Taylor's Halt for

a mass prayer rally for peace. You, my sisters, who suffer the consequences of violence know that it is these very localities where that which is most hideous has struck the hardest. I go ' to

them to bring the message of peace to the people and to demand the reconciliation of Black to Black.

I need your prayers in this pursuit of peace for the people. I do it because I love them; I do it because I serve them; I do it because all the martyrs and heroes of our struggle both present and past, demand that Black now ceases battering Black.

There is an additional reason why you and I, as Christians, have no alternative but to support the peace initiative. We are the followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace. He implores us in his gospels to be one as much as He and His Father are one. We owe this to our children and their children's children. If we develop a culture of violence as a black community, what future do our children and their children's children have? How can we negotiate peace with Whites who oppress us, if we cannot establish peace amongst ourselves? How can we credibly condemn violence if we ourselves have been its perpetrators?

My sisters, it is you, the women of South Africa, who are needed to back the moves that your political leaders make to bring peace between Black and Black. I make the call not only as a political leader but I do so also as a Christian. It is you who is needed to back the call for Black unity. Ultimately it is the women of South Africa who will be the deciding factor in how the struggle for liberation is finally won. None of us doubt that it will be won.

S T R L O R S Y P O N e l e i k e T A O e T O

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It is simply a question of when and how. The how will determine what kind of society we will have in the future. In this sense, the women of South Africa have the future of our country in the palms of their hands. Hold it gently, my sisters; nurture the future. It is all we have got. Your children will inherit what you now do in the struggle for liberation.

I have talked for some time now about the power of women in the struggle for liberation. The most important thing of all, however, has now to be said. Be the daughters of God in all you do. Walk with Christ in everything you do. Let the Holy Spirit empower you in whatever you do. Be faithful to the Gospel. Purify the power of your womanhood in Christ. Employ the power of your womanhood so that our prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is heaven' is made meaningful in our acts of faith.

You have come together as the women of the United Congregational Church to labour here, to debate here and to decide on issues. May your deliberations be inspired and may you work tirelessly during these days of your Conference to discover the great truths of the Gospel and to apply them to your circumstances. My sisters, may God be with you. z

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