

MEMORANDUM FOR PRESENTATION AT A MEETING WITH HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR  
OF VRYHEID COUNCILLOR BJ PIENAAR, THE DEPUTY MAYOR COUNCILLOR  
HA BOTHA AND THE TOWN CLERK MR G OLCKERS  
BY MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU AND  
PRESIDENT INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY

ULUNDI. 27TH NOVEMBER 1990

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Mr. Mayor, Mr. Deputy Mayor and Mr. Town Clerk, I am delighted to be able to welcome you to Ulundi. Ulundi and Vryheid are neighbours, so to speak, and as neighbours I welcome this opportunity in standing in what we can conceive of as joined neighbourhoods to look out at the world together.

Mr. Pienaar, your Council is setting an example which I sincerely hope others will follow. The whole question of the role of Local Authorities and their meaning to people is going to become an ever-increasingly hot political issue.

The ANC has made it its job to threaten, bruise, bash and destroy black Local Authorities out of existence, and they are going to make it their business to march on Metropolitan areas with the intention of breaking them up and redistributing Local Authority power in wider ranging areas.

This has put the Local Authority issue on the agenda as a political agenda which must now be dealt with. I will deal with the Local Authority issue the way I have always dealt with it. Wherever people are, whatever their politics, whatever the degree of oppression they suffer, a minimum degree of normality in life must be maintained if we are ever going to negotiate ourselves out of deep political trouble.

I have vehemently opposed apartheid. I have vehemently rejected past National Party Governments' assertions that I must seek my political fortunes in black Town Councils and in black so-called homelands. My rejection to this insult to democracy has been sustained and it has been rejection which has actually hurt Government progress in its attempt to apply apartheid.

It is on my track record of opposing the whole homeland philosophy and policy of past Governments and it is on my track record of opposing every attempt to make Blacks voluntarily endorse apartheid, that I stand. I would have nothing to do with the President's Advisory Council which was set up when the President's Council was formulating its hideous Tricameral parliamentary proposals.



I would have nothing to do with Mr. P.W. Botha's Special Cabinet Committee. I never attended one of its meetings. I would have nothing to do with Mr. Botha's Non-statutory Negotiating Forum and finally, I said to Mr. Botha that I would only consider having something to do with his National Council if he boldly announced the death sentence of apartheid and set the Council the task of doing what Mr. F.W. de Klerk is now doing.

It is against this background of my total opposition to apartheid that I have looked at Local Authorities. The people in any Local Authority area, I said, are the people who must look after their own well-being and security and as far as possible generate the kind of responses to their circumstances in which they can maintain the minimal degree of normality which would enable us to continue with a wholesome, moral, non-violent struggle against apartheid.

Those who screamed boycott had to ride on apartheid trains to get to work every day of their lives. Those who screamed destruction to all who participated in the system as they called it, themselves lived in apartheid-created Sowetos and Guguletus and other places. Those who screamed against Black education and who had led most in it had most of the education that they deplored.

When it came to black Town Councils, however, they were great holier-than-thou cries of treachery. I said the people must decide if they want to stand as Councillors. That is an individual choice that must be made. If a man wanted to stand as a Councillor, the residents in the area must decide whether they want to vote for him, not vote for him or abstain. I left the local community in the hands of the local community.

I do that today. Black local Councillors have the democratic right to use the vehicle of the Council as a mechanism for doing something for their people. If they fail, it will be a failure to take away the suffering of the people which then would be there with or without them.

I reject the bruising, bashing politics of the ANC which is so unnecessary today. Any black organisation could go to a local Council, sit down and talk with the Councillors to play a way forward with them. The problem which I am beginning to see emerging is that the ANC wants to bash more than the success it claims it is seeking. It wants the image of mass mobilisation, whether results are achieved or not. I believe comment that mass mobilisation tactics are smokescreens for terrible underachievement from their point of view in the recruitment of members for the ANC are justified.

It is from this point of view of the necessity of there being local government and the right of local communities to have a say in how they are governed at that level, and who should govern them at that level, that I develop about my whole approach to Local Authorities.



It is because I have this philosophy and policy of the importance of individual choice at Local Authority level, and it is because I am leaving communities to make community choices at Local Authority level, that I said an absolute no to Regional Services Councils. No black leader was consulted about them. It was a Whites-only decision and a Whites-only majority in Parliament rammed the provisions made for Regional Services Councils down black throats. This throat never swallowed them.

In thinking about Local Authority structures in the future and relationships between communities, I find myself emphasising realising that there is a need never again to have the kind of unbelievably concentrated central power that successive National Party Governments have gathered around themselves.

I as a black man shudder to think of what black politics gone wrong could do with such power. Lord Acton's saying that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely, always has been true and always will be true. Negotiations must, I believe, give central attention to devolution mechanisms which produce the checks and balances not only to ensure democracy in Local Authority politics, in Regional Authority politics and in National politics, but also checks and balances between levels of government.

KwaZulu will be at the negotiating table as KwaZulu. It was not created by apartheid and it has its own contribution to make in the establishment of a new democracy. I will be at the negotiating table as President of Inkatha Freedom Party because it is the major political Parties in this country which, in the end, will have to come together to formulate the kind of consensus politics which majorities across all race groups could accept.

I seek the politics of reconciliation and somehow there is in the KwaZulu/Natal political air historically greater hope for Black/White reconciliation than there is perhaps elsewhere. Blacks and Whites in other Provinces can talk about reconciliation but when we talk about it, historic feelings start creeping in. For us it is a matter of unfinished business - not a matter of new business.

The Buthelezi Commission Reports clearly stated our position. It was not anti-White, it was not anti anybody. It rejected racist divisions and emphasised common cause politics that Black, White, Indian and Coloured in this region of South Africa should undertake to make sense of economic planning.

Our involvement in the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba was motivated by the need to have an all-race, all-Party formula which could put the interests of KwaZulu/Natal above Party political interests. In its constitutional proposals we actually phased out KwaZulu Government structures as they are today.



In the negotiations we had and in the final success we achieved in the establishment of a Joint Executive Authority, we broke away from the traditional division of authority based on skin colour. In fact the establishment of the Joint Executive Authority was by agreement all round between ourselves and the then Natal Provincial Administration that its establishment was only a first step and it would be followed by the establishment of a Joint Legislative Authority for the region.

Now that we have come to this historically important negotiation phase of South African history, it is vital that Whites and Blacks talk about these things. Mr. Pienaar, gentlemen, we must not only talk, we must relate to each other about these things. We must move towards feeling together about these things.

You on your side, and I on my side, must develop great capacities to talk, relate and feel about things together in such a way that we can make the proceeds of our coming together infectious for the white people on your side Mr. Pienaar, and the black people on my side. We must develop an excitement in this region about the merits of a shared future.

There will be a shared future. It is simply a matter of whether it is an exciting shared future we all climb into to acclaim in deeds of achievement for democracy. It is either that kind of shared future, or the kind of future we share across trenches. There is no other alternative. Division has utterly failed as a mechanism for reconciliation.

When therefore, Mr. Mayor, I read the letter from your Town Clerk in which he stated that your Council has selected you and your Deputy Mayor as ambassadors who will make contact with a wide spectrum of community leaders in KwaZulu, I was greatly pleased.

Friendship shared between two always becomes friendship shared between four and four becomes eight and eight becomes sixteen and so friendship shared grows exponentially. If I make a friend in you, I do more than establish a relationship between you and I. Each friend that you make is given an added capacity to make friends with others. It is an idiom that wants to take off wherever it is planted.

Of course so is violence an idiom that wants to spread wherever it is planted. Let us race violence to the post. Let us begin now.

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