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THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL BRANCH

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Address By Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi  
Chief Minister of KwaZulu  
and President Inkatha Freedom Party

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Mr. Master of Ceremonies; Mr. AH Laird Chairman Central Branch  
Committee the South African Institution of Mechanical Engineers and  
members of the Central Branch.

I have been told that members of the South African Institution of  
Mechanical Engineers would be pleased to hear me talk on any topic  
of my choice, but would particularly like me to talk about  
alternative economic strategies to create jobs and to talk about  
the problems of widening the base of a technically literate  
society.

I have pleasure in doing all three things. That of course means  
that I am going to take license to leapfrog over some things,  
emphasise some things and skimp on other things. I choose,  
however, to adopt a broad approach because I think that this is  
what we need in South Africa today.

It is always dangerous to expose one's naivety in things when one  
is talking to experts. I would, however, risk being technically  
wrong in saying that what I hope to achieve tonight is to emulate a  
client of an engineer who will stand before him and with ~ sweeping  
arms talk of a grand design to accomplish great things saying that  
he will leave it to the engineer to attend to the detail.

Before we start talking in detail about technical things relating  
to the devolution of power, or before we begin talking about the  
merits or demerits of proportional representation, we must know  
what kind of South Africa we want, what kind of problems we are  
going to overcome and what kind of democracy will be needed to  
overcome these problems.

In broad perspective then let me talk about that which is heavy on the heart right now before I go on to talk about technical education and the redistribution of wealth that can be achieved through it.

I cannot appear in public at this time without initially talking about" violence; in:spoliticsl If violence does not come under control and continues spreading at the rate at which it has begun to spread, particularly in the Transvaal, we will have no future.

Violence must be brought to an end. It is totally destructive of the negotiating process. It is â\200\230totally destructive of the process of normalising relationships between political Parties. LSS totally destructive for the reconciliation of our country's race groups and it is totally destructive in the process of bridging the chasms in an attempt to de-polarise South Africa.

Twice in recent weeks I have spent hours speaking to the State President and daily in the past two weeks, I have spent hours doing what I can do to generate forces of peace from within lInkatha Freedom Party and from within KwaZulu.

I have never ever made any decision to achieve any political ends through violence. I have opposed the ANC's unilaterally declared armed struggle as a tactic that could not work. I have opposed the ANC's <call to make South Africa ungovernable as something that would be destructive of the very future of our country. I have opposed the punitive isolation of South Africa and I have opposed economic sanctions against our country as destructive of the forces that economic progress generates to strengthen democracy.

At no time has Inkatha Freedom Party on any occasion ever made any decision to use violence for political purposes. The IFP has more to lose than any other political Party as a result of violence. We know that violence is least likely to establish the kind of politics we want, and violence is least likely to establish a democracy lin our country.

I make these points initially because they need to be made clearly in the simplicity in which I make them. It is just not true that the lIFP is the cause of the violence which is besetting politics

today. It lis just not true that the carrying of cultural weapons by Zulu men who would not even dare to appear before their Chief or theirs King: :without theÃ©ir isticks:. and,. cultural paraphernalia,

constitutes a threat to society.

I have not attempted to turn the dramatic upsurge of violence to my own political advantage, as indeed the ANC has attempted to do. When violence most appeared to threaten the politics of negotiation, it was the ANC that sent an Open Letter to the State President on the 5th April adopting a dramatic make-or-break stance.,

It was the ANC that demanded the instant dismissal of Minister Adriaan Vlok and General Magnus Malan and it was the ANC which demanded that unless the Government did something effective about violence before the 9th May, in addition to making the above dismissals, the ANC would withdraw from negotiations and have no further discussions about the constitutional future of South Africa. This amounts to the leaping up to be dramatic at the height of violence.

It was the ANC which attached truly despicable accusations against the IFP in its Open Letter to the State President. It was the ANC which talked about the IFP and KwaZulu attempting to establish a presence in Transvaal townships by killing with the assistance of the police.

Having raised the spectacle of a bad IFP at the height of violence in the drama of the moment created by the Open Letter to the State President and the threats it contained, it was the ANC which then moved in for the kill to call for banning the carrying of cultural weapons by Zulus.

One does not call for the banning of lollipops when you are confronted with serious drug abuse amongst teenagers.

One does not call for the banning of matches when you are campaigning against smoking.

The ANC's call for the banning of cultural weapons is of this order.

Reliable research shows that over 80 per cent of all deaths in the current violence result from gun power and gun powder power. Over 80 per cent of all deaths are due to AK 47's, pistols and other weaponry. Of the remaining 20 per cent the spear is negligible in single percentile measures.

It is the ANC which is now confronting the State President with the twofold demand of dismissing two Ministers and banning the carrying of cultural weapons. The ANC cynically knows that it is putting tremendous pressure on the State President who will have to decide whether to placate the ANC by banning traditional weapons and getting the ANC to lift its call for the sacking of Mr. Vlok and General Malan.

If the State President does neither of these things, he will have to decide between confronting the ANC or confronting the IFP.

This is a hideous Hobson's choice we have not imposed on the State President. The ANC must live with the consequences of what they are doing.

on occasion after occasion, it is the ANC which sought to gain politically by dramatising the violence problem and doing so in their own favour. I have never once sought to gain politically by exploiting the emotions that outbreaks of violence create amongst people.

The IFP's point of view is clearly and very simply put by saying that we were astounded, but did not kick up dust when the State President sought to do what could be done by accepting the ANC's willingness to suspend the armed struggle. We did not kick up dust when that meant the ANC's right to retain the arms caches it already has in the country, and its right not only to retain Umkhonto we Sizwe private army in the waiting while the truce lasted, but also had the right to continue recruiting and training our young people for employment by Umkhonto.

We understood the political dilemma of the State President and sought also to bring about reconciliation and the normalisation of politics by not kicking up dust about the ANC hanging on to its apparatus of war, revolution and killing. We thought that progress would be dramatic enough and fast enough to make this behaviour by the ANC obsolete in short order.

We were wrong. We are now saying that it is weapons of killing that must be addressed. It is the AK 47's and it is the kind of weapons that the ANC holds in stocks outside our country and in caches inside South Africa that are the killing weapons. The ANC must now surrender them or hang on to them while the rest of South Africa surges ahead to make progress in preparing for negotiations proper.

The depth of the atrocity that violence is, of course, is seen with every human death. That final dastardly brutalising of a person's dignity in the form of a dismembered, a disembowelled or incinerated body is utterly horrible.

The atrocity, however, goes beyond the individual level and it lies against the background of what we need to do in this country to stage the recovery that we now need to stage in all humanity, that the true national catastrophe of violence must be seen.

Violence lies the destroyer of normality and the destroyer of progress. Pause to think about the following statements.

91.7 per cent of South Africa's Black population have educational level of less than Standard 8.

70 per cent have less than Standard 4.

These statistics are sobering indeed. Something approaching three quarters of all Black South Africans are as literate and learned as your White 10 year-olds.

When it comes to mathematics there are hideous drop-out rates which have vast implications for a future technology-driven society. In KwaZulu/Natal 99 per cent of Standard 6, 7 and 8 students took mathematics as a subject in 1987. By Standard 10 the percentage dropped to 36 and the shocking statistic is that only 16 per cent of that 36 per cent passed the subject.

Science subjects show similar trends. 76 per cent of Standards 6, 7 and 8 students took science subjects in 1987. Of those in Standard 10 only 15 per cent took science subjects. Of that 15 per cent only 34 per cent passed the subject.

You as mechanical engineers would know that these statistics have vast implications for future technological developments.

Quite clearly we are going to have to innovate to overcome the implications of these kind of statistics. There will be no real redistribution of wealth if these kind of statistics dominate the scenes of tomorrow and the day after. Without the redistribution of wealth there will be no political stability. We will have to redistribute wealth to achieve stability.

We cannot redistribute wealth simply by taking from the haves and giving to the have-nots. That will make everybody poor. We can only redistribute wealth by redistributing opportunity and making quite sure that Black people are equipped to take advantage of equal opportunity. Â»

Blacks will either kill to survive or advance to survive. We have got to make it possible for Blacks to advance to survive. If there are no advances, Blacks in South Africa will do what human beings all over the Third World have done. Wherever spreading mass poverty has bred final disillusionment, no government has been able to stand. Spreading mass poverty is the mortal enemy of democracy. Hopelessness and despair are always spiritually and psychologically crippling. Where hopelessness and despair are accompanied by the kind of personal and community deprivation which really can be said to be indescribable, reaction generates injustice in the name of fighting for justice.

Basic technical education is virtually non-existent in black schools in South Africa. Electronic, electrical, building, motor, metal and welding training exist only in isolated institutions, whereas they are required in every village, in every town and in every City. We live even already by the Grace not of God but by

those who have acquired the ability to mend motor cars and to erect buildings and to construct pipe-lines without the technical education that is really needed. There is an amazing amount of innovation and make-do and using of whatever skills are available. We are getting by now maybe simply because we are living through deepening depression.

When politics triumphs and diplomacy makes the break-throughs that we really need, we will lag behind because we will not be able to generate the wealth that prospects of political advancement demands.

Whatever we now do to remedy the situation I am talking about will bear fruit in a decade and more to come. We need to build class-rooms which will take us some years. We need to equip those class-rooms with the technical paraphernalia that goes with technical education. We will need to man those class-rooms with qualified teachers of science and mathematics.

However, before we can build the class-rooms we will have to generate the artisans to do so. Before we can equip the class-rooms with the technical paraphernalia that is needed, we will have to generate the wealth with which to do so. And before we can man those class-rooms with the science and mathematical teachers who will be needed, we will have to develop them.

Before we can develop those teachers, we will have to have the class-rooms and the teachers and the training colleges and the lecturers with whom to do so.

Then while we are facing this kind of harsh reality, we are facing escalating violence which does not even permit a beginning to be made in the remedies which are going to be demanding super-human responses.

We are going through an economic cycle in which there is a decline in the demand for the 16 most popular trades which dropped by five per cent between 1985 and 1987. The short-fall, however, was still four per cent because the supply to meet the demands of the 16 most popular trades, rose only by nine per cent.

These specific statistics have very ugly implications for the future.

Before we can have real social and political stability, we must have economic advancement. We cannot have economic advancement because the political past has left us with a legacy we are just not coping with.

Friends, hear with me while I take you even further into the gloom. Statistics available show trends in which the strongly emerging historic tendency for white school-leavers to seek white <collar jobs in preference to blue collar jobs, and the lack of training for blue collar jobs, has created a situation in which the average artisan's age is increasing to the extent that attrition due to supernumeration is going to make big inroads into the supply of artisans.

In a sentence, white artisans are dying out and they are not being replaced by the new generation and black artisans have not been trained. The crisis will worsen.

In 1953 Dr. Verwoerd said: "When I have control of native education I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them." In 1954 the same Dr. Verwoerd said: "There is no place for him [a black person] in the European community above certain forms of labours .. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the greener pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze. This attitude is not only uneconomic because money is spent for "an education which has no specific aim, but it is also dishonest to continue it"

White industrialists and employers walked this Verwoerdian road for quite some time before they were forced to start defying the Physical Planning Act and before they were forced to train Black technically and before they were forced to use technically competent Blacks who did not have the formal qualifications which the Apprenticeship Act provided for. Government and employer moved together to try and make apartheid work.

I am not saying this in any sense of recrimination. I . . am .not saying this in any attempt to point at guilty partners. When there was a first move away from apartheid, I applauded. When Mr. P.W. Botha first became Prime Minister, I pleaded with the world not to judge him by his predecessors but to give him the opportunity of proving his own leadership.

When finally a National Party Head of State turned his back on apartheid, I was there to work with him and I am there now to work with him. 200\230

When industrialists started moving away from apartheid, I was there to support them. I am there to support them now.

I am not pointing to the past to lay blame. I am simply saying that we have a legacy today and I have given that legacy an origin. That origin spells out for me the ingredients of a remedy.

We will just have to concentrate on developing appropriate responses. For people who have dropped out of the inappropriate school system it will be necessary to complete certain skills training to give them marketable skills to compete in the job market. A massive intensified adult training campaign will have to be launched. It will have to be launched not only in the above fields, but also in home-crafts, home economics, commercial and business fields to equip people with appropriate skills to find employment. This training will also have to be given to people to enable them to start businesses to integrate them into the business environment in preparing for a post-apartheid, integrated new economic system in South Africa.

Non-formal education is seen only as one tool to assist Black economic empowerment. It is part of the process that must lead to Black people becoming part of the mainstream economy. It is part of the process that will have to be initiated to make black people in post-apartheid South Africa, owners of and shareholders in, large multi-million rand companies as directors and executors.

I had occasion recently to formally open the new tarred road between Ulundi and Nongoma. It is an area I know and I have watched the progress in the building of that road. I have been an observer and I have observed that it is black men who built that road.

It is actually the black man who now mines our gold. It is the black man who keeps our factories going. Those roads, those factories and those mines I am talking about are kept going by the black man because somewhere above him and beyond him there are white technicians, white engineers and white technocrats.

I want to move towards concluding my address by saying that if we are going to have a multi-racial democracy in the future, we will have to have a multi-racial government. We will only have a multi-racial democracy and a multi-racial government if our politics becomes increasingly race-free and we have a multi-racial electorate.

We will have none of these things if we do not have a multi-racial technocratic establishment in South Africa. We will not have these things if we do not have a multi-racial middle-class in South Africa. We will not have these things if we do not have a multi-racial management force in this country. We will not have a multi-racial management force, a multi-racial supervisory force, a multi-racial artisan force if we do not have the guts now to acknowledge that the past was wrong and it will cost us to make the present right. 230

Mechanical engineers are really a rarity in South African society. I want to venture the opinion that they are approaching becoming an endangered species. Their future depends upon they themselves acting in self-preservation. It depends on the extent to which they can persuade other engineers and the entrepreneurs who employ them to break down restrictive political barbed wire which so confines them that their very survival is threatened.

Friends, I grapple with these problems. I am aware that the kind of South Africa we had in the past was part of the problem and not part of the solution. I must, however, say that the South Africa we have today is also not part of the solution. We simply must make the South Africa of tomorrow part of the solution. We will not do this by violence. We will not do this by confrontationism. We will only do this by making South Africa a place in which a national will can evolve to put first things first and to put the good of the State before the good of any Party.

Inkatha Freedom Party is attempting to grapple with the base cause things which will have to be attended to if we are going to have the kind of future which you, the mechanical engineers of the country, want. You want a future South Africa in which there is stability and there is economic progress and there is racial harmony.

We in the IFP have committed ourselves to bring about this future which you want and which we want, and indeed which the vast majority of all South Africans want. We are committed to pursue four great tasks to achieve our ideals. These are:

TASK 1. To establish an open, free, non-racial, equality opportunity, reconciled society with democratic safeguards for all people.

TASK 2. To harness the great resources of the country to fight the real enemies of the people, namely: poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, ignorance, insecurity, homelessness and moral decay. :

TASK - 3% To re-distribute the wealth of the country for the benefit of all people, and to establish political and economic structures that encourage enterprise and create the wealth all governments of the future will need.

TASK 4. To ensure the maintenance of a stable, peaceful society in which all people can pursue their happiness, and realise their potential, without fear or favour.

None of these can be achieved through violence and all of them are threatened by violence. We want an immediate move towards establishing the kind of consensus which will lead to negotiations proper really getting off the ground. To date there have only been talks about talks. That is not good enough. We need talks proper and we need them now.

First we must move away from violence and the politics of intimidation which produces violence. Secondly, we must move away from powerful tendencies towards monopoly political control which raises spectres of Blacks dominating Whites the way Whites dominated Blacks. We must move away from quid pro quo future domination to balance past domination.

We must move away from the kind of all-or-nothing politics which the ANC -envisages in its Harare Declaration. This Declaration foretells of politics in which somebody emerges supreme in winner-takes-all politics in all-or-nothing political battles. That is not me. That is not Inkatha Freedom Party.

It is the ANC which is committing itself to ensure that it at last has the chance of becoming an all-powerful dominating political force which lis for them the logical end of all revolutionary activity.

Everywhere in the world revolutionaries are not prone to struggle for and die in fights to enable others to form governments. Revolutionaries struggle to create the circumstances in which they become governments in waiting and then go on to become the government of the day.

Dr. Mandela himself talks about the ANC as a government in waiting and only in the last couple of days he has talked about "When the ANC becomes the government". There is no if in his mind. It lis only for him a question of when.

Friends, we have a society that must be put right. We have wrongs that must be eliminated. We have consequences of the past which must be coped with. Let us do it the IFP way. Let us do it lin harmony. Let us do it by relying on market-fuelled excursions into the future. Let us do it in the give. Let us make sure that our country will never again have a monolithic government immune from democratic challenge.

Let us go forward together as South Africans to attend to the fundamentals llike education which I have been talking about this evening. Let us go forward together as South Africans to put first things first. Let us today do what what we have to do today so that tomorrow will be better.

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