

"Democracy means freedom to choose"

INKATHA

Inkatha Freedom Party
IQembu leNkatha Yenkululeko

CONFIDENTIAL

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

ADDRESS BY
THE PRESIDENT
MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, MP

ULUNDI - OCTOBER 12, 1997

This meeting of our National Co-ordinating Committee takes place after a long hiatus during which we have had meetings of our National Council, our Annual General Conference and the Conference of our Youth Brigade. For this reason we cannot resume where we left off last July, exactly three months ago today, when our last meeting took place. This National Co-ordinating Committee must register what has taken place since our last meeting and prepare the next stage of political activities. In this respect, I also think that we ought to pause to consider how the function of this Committee might have changed because of intervening developments.

The most important development since our last meeting has been the establishment of an Election Management Committee with a rigid schedule of meetings planned from the time of its establishment all the way into the last stages of the election campaign. I understand that this Committee has already met twice. Its work is of the utmost importance to our electoral success. I have not yet received any detailed report on its activities. In future, this National Co-ordinating Committee and the National Council itself shall receive reports from the Election Management Committee.

In fact, I really hope that the Election Management Committee has successfully conquered the challenge of moving away from the realm of discussions, planning and day-dreaming to move into the realm of deeds and programmes which reach out for new constituencies and make visible on-the-ground politics. Therefore, I expect that the type of political issues that arise out of its work may require detailed and sensitive discussions which could be better handled in this smaller committee than in the National Council.

President: The Hon. Prince Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi

I also really hope that today the Election Management Committee will be able to report some tangible results. In fact, we began the process of preparing for the next general elections immediately after the local government elections of 19986. Perhaps with the exception of the establishment of the Office of the Secretary General of Administration, I am not sure whether anything else tangible and identifiable has been achieved in our process of internal transformation and readiness for elections. Undoubtedly, a lot has been achieved in changing the spirit and outlook of the IFP and our Annual General Conference was successful in creating and promoting a positive spirit of electoral victory. However, elections are not won merely on the strength of the right attitude. I still do not know what else has been done from a material viewpoint.

In particular, we still do not have the most basic requirement of an effective election-winning machine, such as an effective and professional media and public relations structure, a fund-raising unit supported and driven by a coherent fund-raising plan and even a preliminary plan of action for our election strategy between now and election day. I still remember that when I began the count-down to election date I pointed out that there were only one thousand days left and that time was running out. Today, there are only 556 days left to the estimated date

of the next elections and I would like members of this committee to tell me why. I should think that today our Party's structures are substantially better off than they were 444 days ago, when I began the count-down. If I sound excessively negative or harsh, I would love to be corrected and proven wrong because nothing would give me greater pleasure than realising that my concerns are unfounded.

I am concerned about the poor attendance of meetings by some of the people whom I have asked to serve on the Election Management Committee. It will be recalled that there was POCOLA and the Management Committee which are no longer there. There is a very serious void which really concerns me and I am wondering whether today we cannot by agreement decide on regular meetings between certain key members of this Council with the General Secretary of Administration and our National Chairman, since both of them have offices in Durban. I imagine that it should be possible, for instance, for consultations to take place between our National Chairman and the General Secretary of Administration on the telephone at least once a day, either in the morning or in the evening. I realise that the National Chairman as Premier has his plate full but if we do not start doing this from this minute then we are already a dead Party as Mr Felgate suggests, even before the electoral fever begins.

I realise that as Premier, our National Chairman Emeritus had already requested that he relinquish his role as National Chairman of the Party owing to the heavy burdens and schedules that he had to cope with as Premier of the Province. However, this could not be done as the two positions go together. Even in the case of the ANC, all the ANC Premiers except one are also Chairmen of the ANC in their particular Provinces. This activity has not only to start but it should intensify in the next three months.

And now that POCOLA and the Management Committee no longer exist, I wonder

whether the Deputy Chairman, the Chairman and the General Secretary of Administration cannot make a plan today also to meet or be in touch regularly.

have a strong gut feeling that if we do not do this today, then we can forget ever being able to effectively position ourselves for the 1999 elections. I feel strongly that we either take this first step now or never. I realise that this is a rather tall order for those of us who hold ministerial posts. But it is a fact that we owe the Party a segment of our time for after all, it is the Party which put us where we are, and it will be the Party which in assessing our performance on its behalf before the 1999 elections may decide not to put us back on the Party lists for 1999. I feel very strongly that if we do not decide firmly on this today then I will have failed to give guidance to this Party at whose helm this Party put me. I have also to account for myself before the people in 1999. I want to be able when that time comes to list the number of appeals and suggestions that I have made to Party leaders in the last few years.

I realise that I am at a disadvantage for there may well be some amongst my colleagues who do not care whether they are on the Party lists in 1999 or not, in which case what I am saying here makes no difference to them. On the other hand, it could well be that I am too despondent, or that I need to remove the negative lenses of my glasses and don more rosy ones. So please do correct me if you think I am being too pessimistic, but I have to be in the absence of any concrete evidence that what we have put on paper in the last few months is beginning to take shape in very concrete terms.

If in the next 556 days we continue to do just more of the same things, we are not going to be substantially different. We need a qualitative quantum leap on how we operate and go about our political work. Indeed, I am confident that the various components which make up our present political horizon are rapidly changing in favour of the IFP and that day after day greater opportunities are opening for us. I am confident that we now have the opportunity to reap the benefits of the many political investments we have made in the past fifteen years. I know, as well as I know that my name is Mangosuthu Buthelezi, that the time of the IFP is rapidly approaching, but indeed I do not know whether my Party will be ready and able to capture the opportunities finally offered to it. :

For instance, now for the first time people are beginning to realise the importance of our argument in favour of federalism and devolution of powers. For the first time we can credibly go to the majority of the South African people and ask them to vote for the IFP because in doing so they will be voting for their Province. Provincial identities have now consolidated within a framework which is acceptable to everybody and is soliciting the imagination of the majority of the South African people. The time of provincial autonomy and for the provincial argument has finally arrived, and with it the time for the IFP to claim credit for its past political stands. Similarly, the time has arrived for us to claim credit for our consistency and our steadfast advocacy of a culture of discipline, self-help, self-reliance and law and order.

There is no doubt that the issue of crime, law and order is high in the minds of the majority of South Africans. There is also no doubt that the majority of South Africans associate the IFP with social stability, law, order and discipline. The majority of South Africans are also demanding a strong and effective government, which perfectly fits the image that many have of the resolve, courage and

determination of the IFP leadership. We have made very demanding political investments to achieve the type of gains which we should now reap if we have the capacity to seize the day and mobilize like never before, and with enthusiasm and passion.

| am speaking not only on the strength of my opinion and gut instincts. We have seen how the recent poll of IDASA shows that all other political parties are losing support and that only the IFP has made appreciable political gains. The same poll shows that there is at least a 25% of voters seeking a new political home. One does not need to be an expert mathematician to see that these figures create a real possibility for the IFP to become the future government of the country if we just knew how to get our act together and our own house in order. This is what | am pleading for today. We either get our act together today or never.

| really do not know what |, as the leader of the Party, can do for all of you, for our Party and for South Africa. | have tried to motivate through incentives, flattery, threats and sanctions but often results have not been forthcoming. | am really at a loss to know what else | should be expected to do to transform this Party into the future government of the country. | have fought for 40 years and endured sacrifices and anguish, which perhaps no one will ever know, to bring the Party to this point. | have not done this for my sake. | have always felt that those of us who carry the responsibility of leadership must do something that is bigger and vastly more important than our own individual existence.

I have sacrificed my life and my family, working 18 hours a day, 365 days a year because | love this land and my people and | wish to leave them with a country much more prosperous, stable and just than the one into which | was born. To this end, | have tried to bring around me and the leadership of our Party all those who could make a contribution. However, | am at a loss to know what else | can now do to fill the enormous gap which | see between the opportunities which are within our reach and our capacity to capture them.

South Africans are now at a loss for leadership and are desperately seeking a glimmer of hope. There is widespread dissatisfaction and uncertainty about whom to turn to. | just hope that after four decades of political struggle | will not have to endure the anguish of seeing my Party failing to catch the opportunity of providing the leadership and hope that South Africans are now demanding, leaving this opportunity to the likes of the Holomisas and Roelf Meyers of this world. | really hope that God will spare me this disappointment. | do not mind if we do not catch the existing opportunity of winning the elections if we fail after we have tried everything. | do not mind losing a battle if we have fought with valour and honour, but I really hope that | will be spared the humiliation of losing the battle which we have not fought. | think that it would be the worst experience of my life if we were to lose this battle by mere default. We must go to the people of South Africa. We must reach out for them physically and tangibly, becoming part and parcel of their communities. We must be where they are in a visible and tangible form. We must hear them and show that we are there willing to listen to them.

In my recent public addresses, I have often referred to the idea of the IFP becoming the catalyst of a â200\234revolution of goodwillâ200\235 which brings together the majority of

South Africans willing to dedicate themselves to rebuilding the country. We should transform this slogan into a living reality carried out by our structures. The majority of South Africans are people who believe in values and morality and, in my opinion, they will identify with the need to promote a national culture of discipline, dedication to work and to their communities and law and order to make an investment in the future. However, it seems to me that whilst I go across the country preaching this philosophy of commitment, goodwill and dedication, a different approach seems to be prevailing within my own Party.

For instance you will all remember that on several occasions in our National Council we heard reports about the political situation in Durban and we have identified Durban as the top priority item on our agenda for mobilisation. A special committee was established by our National Council to develop a plan of IFP political action in Durban so that we may begin re-conquering the hearts and minds of the majority of the people there. I have not received any such plan nor have I heard of any tangible political action on the side of the IFP having taken place in Durban at grass root and mass levels. I have only been informed that the - Committee that we established did meet. If this is how we are handling our most sensitive constituency which is the crucial point of our electoral success in the only Province we control, I really wonder who is going to give me hope that our Party will be able to conquer the hearts and minds of all the rural masses and of the people of the major urban centres alike.

I really hope that the report of the Election Management Committee will be able to prove that my concerns are unfounded and that our Party has made a qualitative jump from the old-styled establishment of committees and sub-committees and the mere holding of meetings and moved into the realm of actual deeds and programmes. :

During this meeting of the National Co-ordinating Committee we will also need to deal with other outstanding issues which require political direction. Some of them are very important as they affect the governance of this country and the future of its people. Unfortunately we also have to focus on a vulgar matter which is rising to importance even though it remains in my eyes a vile distraction from our real objectives and matters of concern. I refer to the ongoing Felgate saga. You might have seen the press reports about a speech that Felgate delivered to the Institute for Race Relations. It is clear that Felgate has set himself on a mission to destroy the IFP and to undermine my personal credibility. He seems to be obsessed with his sense of self-importance and is now trying to convince South Africa that he was the essential component of our twenty-five year struggle for liberation and that now that he has chosen to jump ships, the IFP no longer has a future or a role to play in politics. He is basically saying that we are all a bunch of morons and he was the brain and soul of our Party.

I think that in a letter that he wrote to the Sunday Independent, our National Chairman, Dr BS Ngubane, being the good physician he is, has correctly characterised what may be happening in the mind of this self-deluded creature. The problem is that I am now expected to provide some sort of reply to the various

statements Mr Felgate has been making. You will find copies of the relevant newspaper articles in the package of information prepared for this meeting. When this matter was discussed at the parliamentary Caucus in Cape Town it was agreed that this N.C.C. meeting would provide guidance on how the Party should be dealing with the Felgate saga.

Amongst other matters of importance which ought to receive our attention is the ongoing confrontation with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As you may know, our National Chairman has filed a complaint against the TRC with the Public Protector documenting how the TRC has acted with bias against us and is abysmally failing its statutory obligation to promote reconciliation among the parties previously engaged in the conflicts of the past. They have also subpoenaed Mr Philip Powell who is in the process of challenging the validity of such subpoena and the fact that he, as an accused, is called before an organ of the State to answer very serious allegations in a venue in which he is provided with none of his constitutional rights, including that of cross-examining his accusers and the right to elect to remain silent.

We must also consider how the IFP is presenting itself within the parliamentary arena in Cape Town in respect of some of the many issues which are now forming part of the national debate, such as health, welfare, justice and education, just to mention a few. What is our policy profile in these debates? What do we stand for and what is the meaning of our presence in Cape Town? We should prepare this debate for our National Council.

More importantly, I think that we would need to hear how the IFP in KwaZulu Natal intends to project its action of government in the next year. Next year is going to be crucial to the formation of the perception of the electorate about the IFP in government. What is the plan for the KwaZulu Natal Government in 1998? What are our key initiatives which will characterise our governance and capture the imagination of the people? Is there a plan for the IFP in the KwaZulu Natal Government during 1998 and 1999 and, if not, have steps been taken to develop such a plan between now and the end of the year?

If we are talking about a revolution of goodwill we must begin from our own government to show how we can coagulate around our Premier all the constructive forces in the Province. We must take the initiative to promote our government and our governance. I am quite convinced that if we succeed in this effort, we will allow peace to triumph in this Province even if the peace talks were not to succeed. In fact, peace and reconciliation come from within the communities working together under the leadership of a driving vision.

Our government ought to rise to the challenge of providing this vision, for which purpose it ought to begin reaching out into the various communities to empower them with own powers and initiatives, so that each community can promote its own initiatives along the lines of our culture of self-help and self-reliance. By doing so we could tangibly prove that our revolution of goodwill works and is based on the empowerment of families and communities which are enabled by government assistance and incentives to take charge of initiatives which can better their conditions of life.

The case in point as far as I am concerned is the plight of our IFP members in Tin Town in Entshangwe. As you may remember, I actually went there on the 23rd of August to see people in order to encourage them. I also went there to carry out an inspection in loco to see the damage that has been done by members of the ANC as a result of their attacks. I found that there was no transport available for IFP members of Tin Town. Taxis were no longer operating in the IFP section of Tin Town. I found that children in our section of Tin Town no longer attend school. I did report about all this. I was later informed that our Minister of Housing had halted a housing scheme in the area.

Now you can just imagine how our people feel when up to now nothing has happened to relieve all the sufferings they are going through when we as a Party are in charge of the Province of KwaZulu Natal. I am not apportioning blame, but this is a cry of desperation on my part as the leader of the Party who is in charge in this Province. These people in Tin Town were ANC members who joined us. Can you imagine how they must feel when nothing is happening in three months after my visit. They know that as the leader of this Party I am aware of their sufferings. They do not all understand that I do not have the institutional base to take practical steps to help them out of their sufferings. I feel extremely frustrated.

I know that bringing about this type of vision, and this type of attitude is very difficult when operating with institutions of government. Having been in government for so many years I often share the feeling once expressed by President JF Kennedy when he said that dealing with government is like punching a soft pillow; your fist goes in without resistance but as you retract it, it leaves no permanent impression. Nevertheless we must try. We must try as hard as we can, and as best as we can, and we must let the people know we are trying. In our trying we must give an example which shows and gives hope and direction to all South Africans at this time of uncertainty.

Finally, we might need to consider any input we wish to make in the forthcoming Conference of the Women's Brigade. The support of women will win or lose the elections, and I fear that we must be honest with ourselves and admit that the IFP has not yet formulated a clear message for women. We are the depository of family values and we should draw from our commitment to family values a vision and a message which helps women to enter the third millennium as protagonists of a modern future, both as free and liberated individuals as well as members of their communities and families. I also wish to know how from an organisational viewpoint, the next Conference of the Women's Brigade is going to be different, and how it is going to fit into our election strategy and impact on new constituencies. I am sure that the Election Management Committee has given thought to this important forthcoming appointment of our Party.

I hope that this National Co-ordinating Committee will be able to tackle some of these important issues even within the few hours allocated to our meeting today.

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