

COUNCIL OF KWAZULU-NATAL JEWRY

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"THE NEAR FUTURE OF KWAZULU NATAL AS I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT"

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DURBAN JEWISH CLUB : JULY 29, 1995

8 pm

I have been a guest here many times in the last few decades. Coming to the Jewish Club is for me always an opportunity to renew many friendships that I and my family have always enjoyed in the Jewish community of our Province. I can recall many acts of friendship that I and my family have enjoyed with members of the Jewish community. This community has produced many fighters for the liberation struggle which has been waged for so many years in this our still very troubled land. Here in Durban, we have, for example, Rowley Arenstein who was the longest banned person in South Africa. In 1951 as a practising lawyer here in Durban he was prepared to article me in his law firm when it was not something in vogue to article blacks. His daughter and son-in-law are still my lawyers. I can speak of the Zulman family whose home was my home in the dark days when as a black family we could not stay in hotels.

I could speak the whole night about so many members of the Jewish community who over many years extended friendship to us when it was not done to embrace people of colour if one was on the other side of the colour line. They received calls in the dead of night threatening them for having me and my family in their home. From what I have just said you can understand that it is not just a formality for me to say that it is always a very special occasion for me to be here. I welcome our distinguished guests from abroad who are here tonight. Let me add my welcome to the many welcomes that they have received ever since they stepped on our soil.

It gives me great pleasure - and it is indeed an honour - to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering of outstanding members of our community. I am especially pleased by the invitation to speak on the subject of the near future of KwaZulu Natal as I would like to see it, for it can truly be said that KwaZulu Natal is as much a part of me as I am part of the history of this troubled region.

In preparing my address I had little or no difficulty in describing to myself how KwaZulu Natal could grow into the most prosperous, stable and industrious region of this Sub-Saharan continent. It is not difficult to imagine how it would take no more than a few years to establish in KwaZulu Natal that balanced formula of African development which has been

sought after and yet escaped almost all African States which experimented with democracy following their independence from colonialism. I do believe that because of its historical background, this Region has the unique possibility of establishing a truly African and yet truly modern form of government, which harmonises in a common framework of tolerance, freedom and pluralism, traditional African realities and value systems with a westernised and urbanised First World economy.

I often feel that I myself am living proof that that combination is possible and might be successful. For more than 40 years I have operated to bring closer to one another social, cultural and ethnic realities which because of their diversity and separation have been, and unfortunately still are, very far apart.

We have walked together on this path of social, cultural and ethnic harmonisation for many years. You will remember the Buthelezi Commission of 1980 and the KwaZulu Natal Indaba of 1986 as milestones of this process, and the KwaZulu-Natal Joint Executive Authority as the first inter-racial government of South Africa. We are now faced with greater challenges which I think can be successfully conquered because of the investment we have already made. These days it is taboo to acknowledge that I managed to make this Region an oasis of non-racialism during the dark days of apartheid.

You know that I have been outspoken in protecting social diversity and the autonomy of traditional communities as specific models of societal organisation which ought to be respected in their nature and characteristics. The recent controversy about the Remuneration of Traditional Leaders Act is really the tip of an ice-berg, hiding the issue of whether government should take control of civil society. In fact, the intention of this Act is to transform traditional leaders into organs of the State, using a technique similar to the strategy employed by the Natal Governor, Sir Theophilus Shepstone to control otherwise autonomous and self-governing communities so as to use them as a vehicle for indirect central government action. It is unbelievable that this is now being done by a black government to other blacks. This is of course not unique, for man's inhumanity to man is as old as the human race.

I can assure you that the traditional leaders of this Province are today as unwilling to become organs of the central government as they were unwilling to become organs of the Crown at the time of Shepstone, and also during more than 114 years of oppression. However traditional communities not only require that their organisational and social characteristics be respected, but also demand that they be offered opportunities for social and economic reconstruction and development equal to those enjoyed by other regions of our Province.

Accordingly, we have designed a rural government model which harmonises municipalities, rural areas and traditional communities in a common developmental framework which respects the specific characteristics of each of its components. In particular, our local government model would ensure that traditional leaders can continue to perform their essential role of primary local government authority at community level.

Once again this matter has become a source of another major institutional crisis between the IFP in government in KwaZulu Natal and the ANC, which has utilised the central government's power to bring about a local government revolution which is forcing the

modernisation of traditional communities, and undermining with elections the local functions of traditional leaders. I can predict that in the next few weeks this conflict will grow and will also come to the fore.

In the formulation of a true modern and yet true African State along the lines of pluralism, the issue of redressing social imbalances also comes to the fore. Our Province - and indeed our country - will not be able to ensure long-term prosperity for anyone unless the great majority of our people have confidence that they are walking on a path which will emancipate them from the great plagues of poverty, ignorance, disease, malnutrition, lack of education, lack of sanitation and lack of primary health care.

I know that in addressing these portentous problems, authoritarian and centralistic solutions will not work in our country as they have not worked across the African continent. For years I have been voicing the need to develop a true culture of self-help and self-reliance which brings together the essential westernised element of freemarket enterprise with a peculiarly African ethos and sense of solidarity.

The Jewish people are the best exponents of the technique of self-help and self-reliance over many centuries. Just a few days ago, I was interviewed by one journalist and amongst questions she asked me was whether any visit or event stands out in my memory. I told her without much thought that my visit to Israel in 1985 was such a unique experience for me, because not only is it the country of 'the Book' which had an effect on me, but also because of the unique achievement of the people of Israel in making the desert blossom! When I was received so warmly by Prime Minister Shimon Peres, I found it difficult to fight a tear in my eyes as he said to me: "As far as suffering is concerned we are Brothers."

I do not believe that socialist and communist adventures will deliver prosperity to South Africa, given that they have caused untold human suffering in all other countries which endured them. And yet communism is the true spectre moving behind many of the central government's policies. The government of this country has a debt of 250 billion rands which is being serviced every year with an amount of 28 billion from the fiscus. It is quite obvious that our achieving liberation from apartheid does not mean that we also qualify for manna from heaven. We have to work hard to get ourselves out of the dire straits in which we find ourselves. Thus my vivid memory of what the Jewish people achieved in extremely difficult circumstances in Israel without the enormous resources that we have in our country.

You may be aware of the fact that the Inkatha Freedom Party was the only Party which so far rejects the Labour Relations Bill which we consider to be one of the most ill-conceived and potentially disastrous pieces of legislation ever drafted. Its underlining philosophy is that of a command economy which echoes corporatist experiences sealed by an unholy alliance between large business interests and the major trade unions at the expense of the South African economy. In fact, I am sure that you are as aware as I am that this Bill will very heavily burden small and medium businesses, while penalising all workers and small and free trade unions. This country could go very far, if it wasn't for poverty and some of the things which do not seem to attract the investors that we need so desperately.

A salient characteristic of this Bill is that the old system of government control in labour relations will be maintained and expanded on to the point that trade unions will increasingly

assume the status of quasi organs of the State. Indeed, I fear that as we move ahead on this socialist path, NEDLAC could easily also lead to transforming major sectors of our economy into implementers of government policies, and quasi organs of the State. I am not being a pessimist when I talk as I do. I express a concern that whereas our country has such a potential for economic development, we seem to be our own worst enemies.

Once again an open vision of economic pluralism is necessary to do away with the legacy of the command economy of the past in order to promote the true liberalisation of the economic sector. In KwaZulu Natal we have historically developed an attitude of government which does not believe in a command economy. It is our political philosophy that government should be as little involved as possible in economic affairs, even if it should promote social economic reconstruction and development. In fact I am sure that history will prove that the KwaZulu Finance and Investment Corporation has done more to uplift the social conditions of the disadvantaged communities of our region than any other grandiose schemes we can come up with.

I was the Minister of Economic Affairs in the old KwaZulu Government and the KwaZulu Finance and Investment Corporation was the economic arm of my government. This corporation still exists under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Tourism and I do believe that it can deliver more than it did in the past for all the people of KwaZulu Natal, if there are no efforts to cramp its style in the interests of economic experimentation. I was concerned a few months back when there were rumours that its very able Executive Director, Dr Marius Spies, was leaving. He is one of the most outstanding economists I know, and I do congratulate the Department of Economic Affairs, if he is still at the helm, as far as the KwaZulu Finance and Investment Corporation is concerned. I am just relieved that he did not suffer the fate of people who worked closely with me as is customary when there are changes in leadership in many situations in the world.

We are therefore in a situation where I feel that our Province has the potential to grow into the capital region of Southern Africa and also has the political philosophy, history and the right alchemy, to take full advantage of, and bring to fruition, its potential.

If we consider that the Region of Gauteng has probably plateaued its economic potentials and now has to come to terms with constantly redressing the social imbalances which have thus far fuelled and sustained its economic growth, we can see how the success of this Province of KwaZulu Natal is within reach of a cat's whisker. However, it must be realised that unless and until the fundamental issue of the autonomy of this Province is resolved, we are doomed to follow the ANC's suicidal authoritarian, centralistic and autocratic policies.

It must be realised that at present our Province has no degree of autonomy whatsoever with respect to any significant matter of policy making. It is true that our provincial government is exercising a broad range of administrative activities, but it has been given no power to make any policy decisions, due to the flaws of the process of rationalisation of powers between the national and provincial levels of government. According to the central Government, our Province can not even decide how to staff our hospitals, or what books should be used in our schools.

We are faced with very detailed national health policies, national housing policies, national welfare policies, national education policies and many other national policies which make a mockery of the recognition of provincial legislative functions in these subject matters. Moreover, the central Government has refused outright to recognise provincial competence in matters such as environment, trade and commerce, provincial public media, forestry, land affairs, water affairs, consumer protection and even abattoirs which in terms of the interim Constitution ought to be functional areas of provincial competence.

We are therefore faced with the most outrageous systematic violation of the interim Constitution and we are left only with the alternative between yielding to the establishment of a unitary State or resisting it. The ANC has put forward final constitutional proposals which make clear its intention to transform provinces into purely administrative bodies with no power of policy formulations. This means that in South Africa there will be only one centre of political power at central level, while Provinces will become puppets of the centre.

I have given notice to the central Government that I, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, can not walk that road because I believe that this Province can not walk that road, and because I believe that people such as yourselves can not walk that road. We in this Province can take care of our problems as we understand and respect one another. For as long as we as KwaZulu Natalians can decide by ourselves on our educational policies, curricula and syllabi, there is no doubt that private schools, and for instance schools specifically aimed at the teaching of Jewish culture, will be saved and protected.

It must be realised that we are not claiming our autonomy merely to protect the interests of this Province. In fact, for the past 12 months I have constantly said that what is good for KwaZulu Natal is good for South Africa, and that if we in this Province have the power to diversify our policy, this will create a healthy dynamic which will establish a check and balance to counteract demagoguery, populism and socialist adventures in the rest of the country.

It is no coincidence that federal systems have constantly shown a greater ability than unitary States to resist autocratic and socialist involutions. The beauty about the federal system is that it segments government and policy formulation without dividing or fracturing the economic continuum, as can clearly be seen in countries such as the United States, Germany and Switzerland which have an extremely integrated economy in spite of the fact that they enjoy maximum devolution of powers.

The fact is that a huge amount of propaganda has been employed in our country to discredit the federal solution merely because the establishment of a federation of provinces would preempt the majority party from gaining total control over all aspects of social, economic and cultural life. I think no one should indulge in delusions that today the ruling Party is anything different from what it used to be five or ten years ago, as it is still pursuing the same plan of seizing the totality of power.

For somebody like myself who has been involved in government and has exercised power for over 30 years, power is no longer the aphrodisiac which it might be to some leaders within the ruling Party. I have long learned that the greatest success a politician may achieve in his career is to be instrumental in promoting the self-governance and natural growth of

civil society. It is not a new discovery that politics really boils down to a fundamental division between those who see themselves as servants of their constituency, and those who feel that they have the power to tell their constituency what they ought to want, need and aspire to.

We as black South Africans have suffered so much over so many decades, as various white racist regimes which have been in power since our conquest have always claimed to know what is good for we blacks. It is unreal to us that with the overcentralisation that is looming on the horizon that there are prospects now that we will continue to have those at the helm telling us what is good for us. What is ironic is that this will now be done to our own people by a black-led government.

Autonomy for Provinces, for communities, for social, economic and cultural formations, are the true fundamental and yet unaddressed and unresolved issues of South Africa. Unless we develop a true philosophy which makes us capable of dealing with our diversity in a system of territorial and collective autonomies, I believe that our country will not survive the many tensions and conflicts which are now emerging. The lessons of Eastern Europe and the breakdown of the U.S.S.R. do not seem to have any message for us here.

It is for this reason that I could no longer delay doing what needs to be done to ensure the right to self-determination and home rule of this Province within the parameters of a unified and broader South Africa. The restoration of our Kingdom as a constitutional Monarchy in which all powers remain with the democratically elected government, is the vehicle through which we can ensure the just and fair self-determination of all the people of our Province, irrespective of race, colour and creed.

We are left with but a small window of opportunity to secure this vital objective for our freedom and for the freedom and democracy of our country due to the fact that in less than 12 months the ANC, in cahoots with its subservient National Party, will have secured a centralistic constitution and an autocratic form of government. The ANC has given notice that they will stop at nothing in order to achieve this result, as is attested by the breach of the fundamental Agreement for Reconciliation and Peace calling for the resumption of international mediation which *inter alia* should have looked at the issue of the autonomy of this Province as a Kingdom. The dishonouring of this fundamental Agreement has not been isolated. It has been followed by the systematic violation of the interim Constitution during the process of rationalisation which forced our Premier to withdraw from the Intergovernmental Forum.

The breach of this Agreement has no doubt raised tensions between my Party, the Inkatha Freedom Party, and the African National Congress. The endemic low intensity civil war that has been going on here since 1985, does not seem to abate, clearly because these betrayals do not lower the temperature.

You have seen for yourselves that this is God's country, blessed with natural and human resources and that it has prospects of becoming the economic power of this continent. Under normal conditions there is no reason for KwaZulu Natal not to become the Ruhr of South Africa.

For this reason it is absolutely necessary that we finalise a constitution for this Province which at least secures the little amount of autonomy and home rule which we can claim in terms of the interim Constitution, also setting the premises for a claim to greater autonomy within the parameters of a unified South Africa.

The Annual General Conference of the IFP has taken cognisance of the difficulties in adopting this Constitution and of the enormous importance of the issue of autonomy, not only for our Province but for all Provinces. Our Conference has given a clear mandate to the IFP to resort to a fresh mandate from the people of KwaZulu Natal if our present majority does not enable us to secure the autonomy of this Province. It is the autonomy of this Province which will make or break the whole of South Africa.

The leader of the ANC in KwaZulu Natal, Mr Jacob Zuma, who is the Minister of Economic Affairs and Tourism in the KwaZulu Natal Government of Provincial Unity has thrown the gauntlet down at the IFP and called for an election. It is quite extraordinary that when we have responded as the IFP to this challenge that if there is no agreement we are also ready to resort to early provincial elections to test the will of the people of this Province, the ANC and the media have turned round to accuse us of being confrontational. All we have done is to respond to Mr Zuma's call but sections of our media play such a propagandistic role that they are turning things around to accuse us of destabilising this Province, when it is our partners in the Government of Provincial Unity who are actually destabilising the Province. As you know, my Party is the majority political Party in this Province. For what reason would we want to destabilise a Province where we are in charge. This does not make sense, but that is what our political opponents in the media are trumpeting in order to put us in as bad a light as possible.

We are ready to resort to early provincial elections to test the will of the people of this Province, as suggested by Mr Zuma, so that they can decide between authoritarianism, centralism and autocracy on the one hand, and federalism, pluralism and liberty on the other.

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