

DINNER HOSTED BY MR. CONRAD BLACK

FOR MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, PRESIDENT INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY
SOUTH AFRICA

TORONTO. 12TH NOVEMBER 1990

~ A FEW REMARKS

By Mangosuthu Buthelezi

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Mr. Black, honoured guests, friends, ladies and gentlemen. I feel particularly honoured to be hosted to a dinner such as this in Canada. Canada has always been a place filled with strange ambiguities for me. There are people like you with a sane, moral and pragmatic approach to politics and who express these qualities in their actions towards South Africa. I have the highest respect for Canadian society. You represent modern democracy at work in a world where your example is so very important.

All this and all the other fine traditions and decency that Canada represents and yet successive Canadian Governments have been in the forefront of seeking to establish international action against South Africa which really has hurt my people and made the poorest of the poor who are the victims of apartheid, pay the costs of faulty analyses.

I do not believe that the Canadian Government would have advocated the action against South Africa that they had advocated, had the ANC not presented apartheid being beyond reform and needing to be destroyed. It was the urgency of their "last-resort" propaganda that I am sure led to Canada leading in the Commonwealth to advocate sanctions and favour the isolation of South Africa.

A great many decent people in the world even succumbed to the advocacy of violence by revolutionaries because they were led to believe that reform in South Africa was not possible, and that the only way to destroy the monolithic power of the apartheid regime was to literally go to war against it.

It has now been nine months since President de Klerk made an address to Parliament which all this thinking would have predicted as being totally impossible. In that nine months evidence has piled up on evidence that Mr. de Klerk is serious about what he is doing. Evidence has also piled up that apartheid is now doomed and will now be eradicated for the scourge that it is, and that it will be eradicated by South Africans.

The fact that apartheid is doomed, however, does not mean that we can now rest because democracy will come. We must, I believe, heed the lessons of history and we must be aware that there are awesome dangers that situations could be produced in South Africa which would make those produced by UNITA in Angola and Renamo in Mocambique appear like child's play by comparison.

If the present situation of flux and change ended up leading only to a white government being imposed on Blacks who did not want it, there would be a terrible backlash which few could accurately predict would be as awesome as it would be. Expectations are now so heightened that the imposition of another dictatorial white government would result in a veritable blood-bath.

Conversely, it is just as true that if we had a dictatorial black government imposed on us in South Africa, there would be a backlash by a highly military-trained, strategically placed and very mobile white population which could wreck awesome havoc in what would be a relatively short space of time.

If the politics of negotiation go wrong we could head into either one of these two most undesirable situations. We must be intensely aware of the need to finally eradicate apartheid and to introduce a democracy in such a way that a true national will emerges to introduce it and to maintain it thereafter. Without racial reconciliation being achieved between Black and White during this final phase of eradicating apartheid, that national will will be out of political reach.

Inkatha Freedom Party is intensely aware of the need that there is to put all political proposals, and all political action, to the acid test of how it contributes to racial reconciliation.

As hideous as apartheid has been, there is a lot going for South Africa and there is so much worth preserving that could be preserved by South Africans acting in common cause which runs across race groups that we just have to employ the tactic of doing so.

Apartheid has been far more hideous in fact than most of the severe critics of apartheid in the West can ever believe. But the fight against apartheid has produced a quality among South Africans which can only come from having waged a struggle against the devil and emerged in triumph. We want the democracy we have struggled for. We want the democratic values that the struggle for liberation has scorched into our souls. We want a society in which racism is abhorred. We want a just society and we want a society in which there will be total equality before the law and the constitution.

As a black leader, I read history - and the history of Africa in particular - teaching us that economic systems are the counterside to constitutional coins. We have seen democracy being destroyed time after time because political victories have been won at the cost of the destruction of economies. Mass spreading poverty really is a mortal enemy of democracy and we in South Africa must be aware of this.

Inkatha Freedom Party therefore struggles to ensure that reform in South Africa will lead to racial reconciliation and will lay the foundations for a vibrant and growing economy.

There is so much going for South Africa that we really are convinced that we can succeed. South Africa has vast mineral resources; it has the developed technologies and the management that is needed to make them work. The economic infrastructure needed to expand South Africa's mining, industrial, commercial and banking undertakings have already been developed.

Apartheid has not destroyed this infrastructure and neither have revolutionaries. We also have the advantage that the spirit of contract which goes with enterprise-driven economies and multi-Party democracies, is certainly not alien to South Africans. We want the rule of law and we can have the rule of law because stripped of racist legislation, South Africa's judicial system will stand unequalled in Africa.

We have a Civil Service which can service economic expansion in a way which will also stand unparalleled in the whole of Africa. In the same idiom, we have an educational system which will be unparalleled in Africa if it was stripped of its racism.

We know that we will not be fighting a hopeless losing battle to ally sound economic development with sound democratic developments.

We must, however, be sure that we are heading towards a multi-Party democracy and we must be sure that we are working for reconciliation in every reform move that we make. I draw together the notion that there is so much to be salvaged in South Africa, and so much to be preserved as we go about eradicating apartheid, that an approach to politics in which we seek to normalise South Africa as a modern, Western-type, race-free, industrial democracy, will necessarily be reconciliatory.

Blacks want the same things that Whites want. Black and White have far more in common than the world actually believes. Political consensus is possible. We just have to go about achieving it very conscious of the fact that blunders will have awesome consequences.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has set itself four great tasks. They are:

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

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.

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.

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.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has the political clout that makes the tackling of these tasks realistic. Over 1.8 million Black South Africans have actually become card-carrying members of the Inkatha Freedom Party since it first came into existence in 1975. That is not old history. Last year alone more than 77 000 Black South Africans joined the Inkatha Freedom Party. The significance of that number must be judged against the fact that last year was probably the most difficult year Inkatha Freedom Party has ever experienced. Despite these difficulties, and despite the very tough politics which has attempted to denigrate the Inkatha Freedom Party, it remains a centre-stage political force of considerable significance.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has very substantial support in the Transvaal as was proved by a march of well over 60 000 people down the main street of Johannesburg on Saturday 27th October. Everywhere in South Africa there is a resurgence of commitment to Inkatha Freedom Party and its policies. The Inkatha Freedom Party has the political base from which to tackle the four great tasks I enumerated.

This makes us inordinately aware of the fact that somehow we just have to find the money to service the Inkatha Freedom Party branches and activity which are going to be needed to keep the Inkatha Freedom Party in a political market-place, where the money game really counts in campaigns.

We can do our bit. We can play our role. We can make our contribution but it will have to be a contribution made in partnership with others. The numbers game always frightens me. We estimate that for us really to be effective in the politics we espouse, we need 35 regional organising offices strategically placed across South Africa. The ideals we espouse are supportable everywhere, and we should be campaigning everywhere for their dominance over the frightening winner-takes-all approaches of some other Parties.

Even if one talks in minimum terms, one is talking of computers, office tables and chairs, telephones, facsimile machines, electric light bills, telephone bills, organisers's salaries, secretarial salaries, transport costs, printing costs, information dissemination costs, supervision costs and one is talking of all these capital and running costs multiplied by 35 times. One is talking in terms of millions of rands, knowing that Inkatha Freedom Party's budget cannot even afford to establish one such office.

I complete my introduction to what I hope will become a really worthwhile question and answer session with an appeal that Westerners must hear me when I say that the impoverished Third World needs the democracy South Africa can bring to the whole of Southern Africa. I appeal strongly for substantial financial support for Inkatha Freedom Party not because I want to be assured of Party political victories. I really am fighting for the right of any political Party to form a government in the democracy we will establish.

I really am waging a struggle in South Africa to form the kind of democracy and to develop the kind of economy which will contribute to the final liberation of the whole of Southern Africa - liberation from poverty, ignorance and disease.

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