

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR AC NKABINDE RECTOR AND  
VICE-CHANCELLOR UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND, DR BS NGUBANE AND  
THE REV DR ES SIKAKANE  
BY MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU AND  
PRESIDENT OF INKATHA  
IN THE PRESENCE OF SOME MEMBERS OF CABINET  
ULUNDI 17TH NOVEMBER 1989

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Professor Nkabinde, I am very pleased to have this opportunity of talking to you. You have been carried here by love and concern and I am quite sure that when you leave this place you will feel relieved of heart and Dr. Sikakane and Dr. Ngubane will leave with a real sense of quiet.

As I receive you, I want to make some very clear statements. I love you as a brother. I have never developed any antipathy to you as a person. I respect your integrity and I would describe my feelings to you as warm. I do not feel that a cold and distant relationship exists between us. It is a warm relationship and it is a relationship based on things that run deep.

When I have had occasion to address issues relating to campus life and the role the University of Zululand is playing in the broader community, I have had to put my personal feelings aside and grasp thorny nettles.

I thank God that human beings are not automated somethings which either go or do not go and you bring some kind of mechanic in when they do not go. Things in which people are involved go wrong despite the fact that good people are involved. Goodness itself is no guarantor that mistakes will not be made and that misjudgements will not cloud issues.

I could now even list many things about which you, Professor Nkabinde, and myself have differences of opinion. I have always hoped that the underlying respect and warmth that there is between us would have enabled us to reason with each other and to dispute with each other if necessary without either of us taking things personally.

Quite clearly I must say that I am deeply affronted by situations in which your University, Professor, - controlled by you and your staff, guided by you and your Council - permits, or at the very least is tolerant of, dastardly action by sections of the student body.



We can stand aside and object to the way we look at the world around us as you did in the report to the Council at its Special Meeting held on the 24th August this year. We can stand aside, as I say, and look at the world objectively without even addressing the question of our own responsibility.

In your report to Council you locate the University of Zululand in the wider South African situation in which you say that even the full might of the South African Government cannot eliminate violence and intimidation. You make it natural that violence and intimidation also takes place on the University campus.

You paint a picture of Universities being part of the wider society and being in idiom at one with wider society. Yes, I say, I understand this but I will not say that because the Government has ruled by might, oppressed by might and because revolutionaries strive violently to overthrow the might of the State, I must accept violence in Inkatha's tactics and strategies.

You, Professor, and I stand condemned by the violence of our black brothers and sisters whom we do not stop in their violent attack on decency. We stand condemned both in terms of a collective moral judgement in which all Black South Africa must be held responsible for what any part of Black South Africa does. We also stand condemned individually because we have not yet won the good race that we are running. We are as yet ineffective.

Let us stand at this point together. We can share the view that we live in an imperfect world and all institutions in South Africa will be tainted with the imperfections of our apartheid society. We can stand together and say that violence must be condemned but as we stand together in this place, I must turn to you and ask you, Professor, what you did in your circumstances to add your weight to the good fight against violence and intimidation?

You, of course, must ask the same of me and we must stand judged by our track record. My concern this year, as I wrote to Professor Wiehan, is that there may be violence in the future on the campus which is now building up. If you look at what actually happened on 29th October 1983 and ask yourself who would have predicted it the week before or the month before or the year before, you would find that it is only those who were spoiling for that day and were certain that they would bring it about, who would have predicted it.

That which did happen did not happen on the spur of any historic moment. There was a build-up. There were long months and even long years of developing the kind of base emotions which went into that confrontation.



As Chancellor of the University and, I might add as President of Inkatha who buries his dead after Black-on-Black confrontations, I am quite right and justified in laying your University problems at your feet because you are the Rector. I obviously do not hold you solely responsible for everything that goes on and I do understand your point about what really can be expected in our abnormal society. But it is still your University and I can still say that ugly things happen in it and still ask what, Professor, did you do to avoid the ugliness?

In writing to Professor Wiehan on the 5th July, I did present the problems in the context of the despairing thought that we might have to petition for your removal as Rector of the University of Zululand. This was not a personal statement. It was not a personal attack. It was simply saying there is something wrong and that it must be fixed. It was saying this in the context that anything and everything should be done to rectify matters, including if necessary looking at alternatives in the University's key people.

I really am sorry if your feelings were in any way hurt. I had no intention of hurting your feelings. I cannot afford to get hurt feelings whenever somebody says I should be removed from office and you can be really, really sure that more people say that about me than about you. I only judge you as you should judge yourself. If horrible things are happening and I cannot avoid them or stop them, then I must ask myself whether I should make room for somebody else who may be able to stop them. The ultimate test is, of course, whether stepping aside is reneging on responsibility or being graceful about relying on someone to succeed where one has failed.

We could today sit down and talk about this very thing - my suitability for what I am doing and your power and effectiveness in what you are doing. As black brothers we can sit down with each other and agonise about these things with the last thing on our minds being the condemnation of one by the other.

I remain deeply concerned about the University. The Commission of Enquiry that I called for, and which the Council agreed to, has not got off the ground. No enquiry has yet commenced and it cannot be because I had reservations about Professor Clarence being a key person in the enquiry. Putting aside the very natural expectation that I as Chancellor would have been involved in any University decision about who should be included in the Commission of Enquiry, there was too little thought put into the matter.

I understand that Mr. Justice Leon has declined the invitation to head the Commission but now I only live on rumour because I really do not know what is happening in this matter. This is just not right. I as Chancellor call for an Enquiry; the Council agrees that an Enquiry should be made and then nothing happens.



I must therefore say to you, my dear brother, what are you doing about it? I must ask this because something is not happening which should be happening, just as on other occasions I must ask questions about what is happening when something that should not happen, does happen.

In your address to Council on the 24th August, you indicated to Council that I might be part of the problem. You posed the question to Council of whether or not student unrest could be attributed to the fact that the University has a political leader as its Chancellor. I am quite entitled to be indignant about this question. I was a political leader when I was invited to accept the Chancellorship of the University. Why suddenly is it now different? Why should I not be Chancellor because the University is facing problems? Was Mr. J.B. Vorster not a political leader while he was the Chancellor of Stellenbosch University? Was Mr. P.W. Botha not a political leader when he became Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch? Did the fact that the University of Stellenbosch had a political leader as Chancellor lead to unrest on campus?

The answer obviously is no. Why therefore speculate about my political role and its effect on my Chancellorship? I really could not understand this and even more jarring was your question of whether or not unrest and tension on the campus would be reduced if the Rector became a member of Inkatha. I never asked to be elected Chancellor of the University on the two occasions that I have been elected. Why now blame me as if I aspire to be Chancellor.

On this point, Professor, you will remember that at the Caucus discussion which you attended, it was actually after formal proceedings had ended that the Reverend Mtetwa asked a question why some Professors at the University who were previously members of the Inkatha Central Committee, dropped away from it. It is accurate to say that no one in the Caucus suggested that you, Professor, or any member of staff, should join Inkatha. This kind of distortion relayed to the Council of the University really upset me.

You also asked whether it would not be to the advantage of the University as a whole if I was seen on campus more often. Within this question, you singled our graduation day luncheons as a function I should attend. When I come to Graduation Ceremonies at the University, as you know, I always step across the campus boundary and address the people in the immediate vicinity of the University. That outreach is very important and I certainly do not avoid having luncheon at the University to play marbles under a tree somewhere.



The people whose leader I am come to Graduation Ceremonies with me as this is a National event in KwaZulu, and some do in order to be with me when I perform the important task of capping young black Graduands. Once we are through with the graduation ceremony these people accompany me to KwaDlangezwa in the neighbourhood of the University where I address them. Some few members of staff join us later each year, although I do not remember even once you doing so.

One of the reasons for this function is to make arrangements for feeding these hundreds of people after graduation. The local AmaKhosi, Inkatha leaders and members of Inkatha make arrangements each year to feed them. How would you feel if you were to lunch in comfort while these people are milling outside waiting for me only to leave without getting even as much as a slice of bread.

I just cannot do that and it would be an embarrassment to all of us as a community if these people departed after each graduation ceremony without being fed. Even here we spare the University some embarrassment. You know that there have been occasions when I have stayed for lunch and then still gone to KwaDlangezwa to attend this function often getting home late at night. After the last graduation ceremony we had to entertain Dr. and Mrs. Marzullo and give him gifts. I still left without having food with the Marzulllos for Durban, in order to attend their dinner that night. I could not stay for lunch after I had spoken and handed over gifts to the Marzulllos and yet you blame me for not staying at the University for lunch.

I am serving a second term as Chancellor of the University. If I have not identified with the University to this extent don't you think you were irresponsible in not suggesting that I should not be re-elected for the second term. I take it as a serious accusation that I do not identify with the University because I do not attend the lunch after Graduation. If you did not feel so strongly about it you would not have mentioned it in Council as one of my major failings as Chancellor of the University.

In your address to Council, you also asked the question whether the University should maintain its impartiality in the present political climate of the country. This is a very loaded statement and I respond immediately by saying God help the University if it remains impartial. The University should be passionate about justice, about truth and about freedom. How can it be impartial to oppression? It should be passionate about supporting anything in any political Party, whatever that political Party is and whoever controls it, that seeks to further the University's dignity, further guarantee its academic freedom and relates the University to its social environment.



So-called impartiality is in South Africa today all too frequently an act of disowning something or other without having the courage to disown it. Has there ever been any clear-cut University statement that anything worthwhile is in Inkatha? Has there ever been a University statement praising Inkatha's commitment to non-violence?

I am not asking for such statements. I am merely pointing out that the University is unnecessarily impartial where partiality would be really good and that it has not told the student body that Inkatha is worthwhile, good and wholesome and should be treated with respect.

You are well aware that Inkatha speakers are not welcome on the campus of your University and yet those who support the ANC/UDF/COSATU alliance are welcome. Does this partiality not worry you. Is it in keeping with academic freedom. Dr. Ngubane's car was stoned at the University because he is a member of Inkatha, although he is a member of Council. All my colleagues and associates who have been to the University were either harassed or prevented from addressing those who had invited them. Is this not something which goes against academic freedom. Does it not bother you my brother. Is there nothing you can do about it.

Professor, I am reaching out to hold your hand and I am being honest to my Zulu traditions and convictions that you do not break bread with your enemy. Let us above all else be honest. When I clasp you to my bosom I do so as an act of friendship. It would be a hypocritical act if I could not say the things to you that I have said this morning, or if I had not said these kind of things to you and about you on previous occasions. Accept my statements and questions as things that need to be said and asked so that we can sit down as brothers to talk about problems.

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