

EMANDLENI-MATLENG PASSING OUT PARADE

ADDRESS BY MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER OF KWAZULU
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COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF EMANDLENI-MATLENG CAMP

EMANDLENI-MATLENG CAMP, ULUNDI : NOVEMBER 26, 1993

Mr Master of Ceremonies; the Chairman and members of the Board of Management of Emandleni-Matleng; Honourable Ministers of KwaZulu; Members of the Royal family present; Amakhosi present; Honourable Deputy Ministers; Members of the Central Committee of Inkatha Freedom Party; Members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly; Mrs Sibeko, the Camp Commander, Mr Phakathi, the Camp Manager; senior KwaZulu officials present, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

The tertiary sector of education is under pressure to respond to South Africa's development needs. Young adults, such as those emerging from Emandleni-Matleng Camp, must be provided with the basic knowledge and skills needed to equip them in their future careers in our modern technological society. In this respect Emandleni-Matleng Camp has played a tremendous role in educating the youth in this area. Every year I stand before the graduates of Emandleni-Matleng, and every year I am amazed at the outstanding progress that has been made by all who have participated in this programme.

I would like to welcome you all here today. It is at this momentous occasion that you will close a fruitful chapter of your lives. You will all leave here today equipped with the skills to take on the challenges of the world. My message to you is: take your knowledge and your skills and recognise the potential within you. South Africa is a fledgling nation. Opportunities for expansion and development in this country abound. Out there in the big world there is room for every one of you.

You must leave here today knowing that you are part of a very small privileged minority. You have been equipped with skills and knowledge denied to many disadvantaged South Africans. It is common cause that educational backlogs are one of the grosser legacies of the apartheid era. Estimates given indicate that at school level, more than a million children of school-going age did not attend school at all this year, and the existing backlog in classes that need to be built range between 45 000 and 50 000. In real terms some 42 percent of the economically active population of both sexes in South Africa have educational levels of only Standard Four or less. Hence, the chances of these children obtaining tertiary education is virtually non-existent.

These figures translate into a major economic handicap for South Africa. And while this bleak scenario lasts, we have no hope whatsoever of becoming a successful newly industrialised country like Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

Given the importance that our society attaches to the education of our younger generation of people, it is not surprising that the formulation, negotiation and implementation of education policy is an intensely contested domain.

The people of KwaZulu have not allowed themselves to get bogged down in disputes of this nature. We are far more concerned with what is practically possible and implementable. Haggling over the merits and de-merits of the present and possible future educational system is no doubt extremely useful in the long term, but we refuse to allow development and progress to be held up by the lack

of consensus in this debate. While our constructive and meaningful contribution to this debate is enormous, we the parents, community residents and leaders of this region, have at the same time taken an active role in shaping our future destinies without national level interference.

Education cannot wait for the policy formulators to agree on a consensus position. We the people of KwaZulu have taken every opportunity to create a workable education policy through our actions. To use the rather hackneyed cliché: 'we put our money where our mouth is'.

It is precisely for this reason that the education results for black students in the KwaZulu region is significantly higher than in other regions in South Africa. For years now we have been forced to endure the intolerable rhetoric of certain political organisations and civic associations, advocating 'liberation now, education later'. I firmly believe that the destructive policies of the ANC are largely responsible for the destruction and chaos so prevalent in our communities today.

The people of KwaZulu have never tolerated the inferior 'Bantu Education' offered to black South Africans, but we have never allowed our rejection of the apartheid system to jeopardise the future of our children by using schools and colleges as the battle-ground for our struggles. I have always stressed my strong commitment to decent education and the need to go to school, and have done everything in my power to address the failings of the present education system by directly engaging in talks with the perpetrators of this system. But we had to make use of what was available at the time, or face the prospect of no education at all.

I rejected the exploitation of the justified anger that caused the Soweto uprisings as an unnecessary price to pay in the tally of human lives for reform in South Africa. What exactly did the ensuing uprisings achieve, other than to wreak havoc and frustration in the lives of black people? The apartheid regime came down harder on the oppressed people, performing atrocities of the worst kind. And as for formal educational reform, this only began to emerge many years later.

Instead of relying on state assistance and griping over the ills of society caused through apartheid policies, thousands of parents, teachers and community dwellers in KwaZulu began to realise the strength and potential of their own action in dealing with the anomalies of the National Party Government's education system. This does not abrogate the state's role and responsibility in the provision of equitable and suitable education for all South Africans. But while the education that is offered to black people is of sub-standard quality, the KwaZulu Government has strongly encouraged parental and community participation at all levels, in an attempt to counter the present deficiencies. Emandleni-Matleng Camp is an outstanding example of this practical experience put into action.

Let me now turn to the nature of Emandleni-Matleng Camp, in order to provide you with an understanding of many of the programmes that have been undertaken over the past years. A serious shortcoming characteristic of South Africa's education system is that while many young people may acquire formal school and tertiary education, this training does not, to a large degree, allow for informal skill acquisition. This pushes down the quality and productivity of South Africa's potential labour force far below that of developed industrialised nations. This lack of a critical mass of highly qualified individuals in our working population has very serious economic implications indeed. A history of low learning has perpetuating effects. Due to the crisis of education in South Africa today, long lags must be expected before increases in educational provision yield better organisation of production and higher productivity.

Another negative result of South Africa's crisis in education, is that the low and poor quality of inputs at early stages of schooling lead to high drop-out rates and the need for remedial resources further

up the education scale in high schools, technikons, universities, and learning institutions like Emandleni-Matleng Camp.

What South Africa needs is a labour force with general education, as well as training that fosters flexibility and learning-by-doing. Thus, active efforts by trained and skilled technicians are required for the adaptation, recombination and fresh application of new methods in the context of our receiving economy. Emandleni-Matleng Camp has the potential ingenuity and energy required for this process of technological acquisition.

The type of education offered at Emandleni-Matleng Camp is that kind of learning that feeds on itself, providing young adults with both the preparation and the incentive for training, retraining and adaptation throughout their working lives. Emandleni-Matleng upholds the philosophy of 'learning-by-doing'. The founders of this establishment realised that throwing money into education would not raise the pace of South African development. Resources in monetary terms must be coupled with effective educational policies that enable the user to put his or her knowledge into action. Educational investment put to good use is probably the single most important instrument of integration and social mobility that we have available.

It is often only those who have been denied access to decent, practical education, who can measure the cost of this denial in resource terms. Education is the primary determinant of our living standards in the long term: there is no escaping the present constraints by means other than increasing education and training resources within an integrated, well-organised programme.

For the benefit of the distinguished guests among us here today, let me briefly outline what educational opportunities Emandleni-Matleng Camp has offered to the youth in this region in 1993. The curricula is rich in diversity, ranging from courses such as communication skills and public speaking, to youth leadership, community development techniques and primary health education. Other courses included agriculture, housecraft, bricklaying, motor vehicle maintenance, office administration and typing, first-aid instruction and blockmaking. Courses with additional certificates covered areas such as cookery, sewing, poultry management and secretarial training.

You can see for yourselves: Emandleni-Matleng Camp does justice to the term 'learning-by-doing'. And while every effort is made to pass on practical and useful skills to the students at Emandleni-Matleng, the curricula itself is closely interwoven into community life and the development of the region.

We believe that education is intricately linked to the restructuring of society at large. Within the existing formal education system, curricula are largely academic, content-driven and unrelated to the everyday context in which students find themselves. Education systems change slowly - in decades, rather than years. But they do change, and by understanding the weaknesses of the present system, we will be better equipped to change it. One of the key areas of change, will be linking the future education system to the community it serves.

The biggest stumbling block South Africa inherited from the Western education system, is its inherent failure to link schools and colleges to the wider social process, thereby failing to take into consideration the particular nature of society and its people. The effects of educational reform must extend beyond the classroom or lecture theatre. The school and college should be seen as part of the community and should be responsible to that community. Education should remain sensitive to the demands of its environment, respecting proper standards and realigning curricula, syllabi and teaching methods with genuine community needs.

This does not mean the standards of formal education must be dropped. Rather, there should be an integration of our institutes of learning into the community, taking into account the historical, cultural, political, racial and ethnic diversities of our society. The children of today must be shaped for the futures of tomorrow.

Emandleni-Matleng Camp is deeply involved in projects at community level. Students have played an active role in the national and cultural celebrations of the region, carrying out all the necessary preparations and background duties required to ensure the success of these celebrations. Community demand for food and items made by students who acquired housecraft skills has grown tremendously this year. I also need to commend those students who persevered in the cultivation of the Amabutho vegetable garden. Notwithstanding the lack of progress in this project due to the severe drought in this region, the skills acquired in this process can be put to good use in the future. The installation of a bore hole at the Camp will help our students increase the production capacity of the vegetable garden and citrus plantation.

Mention must be given to the Bhekimpilo Project, which has taken a step further this year by building a kitchen and dining room for disabled children. Congratulations! Not only did these students acquire the necessary building skills, but their efforts were channelled into an extremely noble cause. I would also like to extend my praise to those trainees in Inkosi Zungu's constituency who started building two classrooms at Mhawukelwa Primary School. Your contribution to the community will be felt for many years to come.

The programme for our camp next year also holds great promises for the surrounding community. In addition to acquiring self-reliance skills, Amabutho will become involved in job creation programmes. In this regard Emandleni-Matleng Camp will be offering a few new and exciting courses such as project management and marketing, to provide our students with the skills necessary to start up small business enterprises of their own. The acquisition of job creation skills will give students the confidence and know-how to apply the practical trades they have learned. For example, the introduction of spinning and weaving as part of the house-craft course, could provide wonderful avenues for self-employment.

There is a critical need to improve the adult literacy problem in South Africa. Emandleni-Matleng Camp aims to do just that. Next year a course in Adult Literacy will be offered to students enabling them to assist in community literacy programmes throughout the country. Sharing is part of our philosophy at Emandleni-Matleng. We strongly believe that the benefits we derive from society must be filtered back into society, in order to perpetuate a cycle of ongoing reciprocity and reconstruction. It is amazing what can be achieved through the few resources at our disposal. The success of our future in South Africa will depend on the dedication of our people to help and guide one another during this difficult period of transition.

For education to play a stronger role in regional development, it must be treated as a major priority by the future government of South Africa. The future constitution for our country must make distinct provision for a minimum of education to be regarded as a basic human right. It will therefore be the financial and organisational responsibility of the State to ensure that all steps are taken to ensure that this right to decent education is accessible to all.

This brings me to my final point. I know there are many of you sitting in the audience today who harbour deep fears concerning the outcome of the constitutional process. This is particularly so for the people of KwaZulu, given that the KwaZulu Government is in the direct firing line of both the National Party Government and the ANC.

As the Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Government, it is my strongest intention to assuage your fears, but I cannot deny that there are forces out there that are intent on breaking this region apart. I am referring to the devious antics that have taken place at multi-party negotiations at Kempton Park. Under the guise of a 'commitment to democracy' our major rivals, the South African Government and the ANC/SACP alliance, have jointly negotiated a 'compromised' settlement whereby the ANC will take over the reins of power from the all-powerful National Party Government. In return for this gain, the present Afrikaner government has secured a power-sharing role in a five-year interim government.

Our region of KwaZulu has been subjected to the tyranny of central government rule for decades. KwaZulu has been financially and politically emasculated by the Pretoria regime, worsening the poverty and unemployment that exists. But instead of looking to dismantle these repressive structures, there are serious moves afoot to keep them firmly in place. The ANC is doing everything in its power to further consolidate and strengthen central government power, to ensure that its future domination over South Africa will be absolute.

Part of this devised process to remove all threat of resistance will be through the dismantling of the KwaZulu Government, the government of the Zulu nation. His Majesty, the King of the Zulu's position is not clear at all. And judging by how they equated him with other traditional leaders and blocked his representation at CODESA, the future is not very bright. You will recall that I preferred not to be present at CODESA if the position of His Majesty the King was ignored by the ANC/SACP alliance who, with the South African Government's connivance, blocked the King's representation at CODESA.

During the September sitting of Parliament the Transitional Executive Council was legislated into place, despite the vehement objections of the KwaZulu Government and the IFP. This Council is to establish a number of Sub-Councils, one of which is the Sub-Council on Local and Regional Government. It is the powers conferred to this Sub-Council which will effectively attempt to obliterate KwaZulu as a political force. The powers of this Sub-Council include the following:

- * to review regional and local government matters administered by any government, including the KwaZulu Government;
- * to amend, repeal or enact any regional or local government's laws, including those of the KwaZulu Government;
- * to decide on regional and local government's financial budgets, powers and functions, as well as transitional government measures and demarcation - this function will be carried out in consultation with the Local Government Negotiating Forum, which comprises the South African Government and the ANC-allied civic organisation, SANCO, alone.

In short the powers given to the Transitional Executive Council allow this body to take charge of everything that is owned and governed by the KwaZulu Government. It will try to strip the KwaZulu Government of its public administration and its police force, and subjugate this region to the control of an ANC-dominated central government.

The assurance I give to you, is the assurance of our unity. In a united voice we must say NO to the ANC, and NO to the 27 April elections! We must not buckle under the impending threat of an ANC take-over by giving legitimacy to an election process we had no part in! The ANC must not test the strength and conviction of the Zulu people. No matter what attempts are made, either through force

or through negotiated settlements reached without the KwaZulu Government and the IFP, the people of KwaZulu must stand by our King and rally to protect our territory and national heritage.

It is on this concluding note that I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the time and effort taken by all concerned to make this passing-out parade the success it has been. Thank you to the management of Emandleni-Matleng Camp, especially to the Camp Manager, Mr Phakathi, and the Camp Commander, Mrs Sibeko, for the unswerving dedication you have given to this educational training programme. In this regard I am also indebted to my trusted colleague, the Honourable MM September, the Chairman of the Board, and every member of the Board.

To the students of Emandleni-Matleng: go out into the new South Africa, armed with your newly acquired skills and knowledge, and make a meaningful contribution towards the future prosperity of our nation. Your shining, enlightened faces are justification enough for the hard work that has been put into your training by the committed staff of Emandleni-Matleng Camp. My God go with you.

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