

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

THE INDABA FOUNDATION

ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY KING ZWELITHINI GOODWILL KA BHEKUZULU
KING OF THE ZULUS

TO BE READ BY PRINCE GIDEON KA MNYAYIZA

ROB ROY HOTEL : BOTHA'S HILL

1ST AUGUST 1987

Professor Desmond Clarence, Dr. Alan Paton, Dr. Doalat Bagwandeem, ladies and gentlemen. When I was invited to attend this evening's function I accepted with a lot of enthusiasm. Here we are gathered together as a multi-racial group to talk about Zulu history and culture. I was excited because our subject has tap roots right down through the generations into the very beginnings of history in this part of Africa. It as though all that history has worked to make an event like tonight possible. We are the product of that history and in a very real sense this meeting is one of the great achievements of that history. It is so very tragic that there is so little recorded history about what actually went on in Natal and KwaZulu. During those very crucial years generations acted out their own history which is the history that has produced tonight's gathering of very important people.

I come here as King of the Zulus but history has made our own Dr. Alan Paton a true son of Africa who stands next to me as a White as one of the first modern White Africans. Then there is Professor Clarence also the product of history and also a White African. He and Dr. Paton symbolise so much of such great value. The three of us are joined by Dr. van Wyk, another prime actor in today's history who follows in the footsteps of his elders like Dr. Paton and Professor Clarence. And then we have another son of Africa, Dr. Doalat Bagwandeem who too is a product of history and who also stands with us as an Indian African.

Once you start reading a role of honour there is no end to it. Each and every one of us present here tonight is greatly distinguished. That is why we are here. We gather not only as the products of history but the products of history who are distinguished. My problem only begins to emerge when I have to draw a line and not mention each and everyone here by name and by distinguished background. I thought of this evening's event and I remembered how Dr. Paton made so many ordinary people great South Africans in the vast literature which has flowed from his timeless

talent. I thought of Professor Clarence and all those who must have passed through his life and benefited from who he is and what he is. He too has made great South Africans too many to mention. As King of the Zulus I come across great South Africans who are the products of history amongst KwaZulu farmers and peasants, and amongst KwaZulu labourers. It is the quality of the people that makes them great South Africans. It is the quality of the people that has made the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba such a vital exploration of what can be done through the politics of negotiation. It is the quality of the people which justifies us gathering together tonight. We gather as the tip of the iceberg of that great quality of people which history has produced.

I say again that it is truly tragic that the greatness of South Africans emerging in KwaZulu and Natal can only inadequately be traced to its historic origins. So pitifully little is recorded about where this greatness actually originated in history. It is being said today that there are probably no more documents to be unearthed about the century of history between 1750 and 1850. It was that century from which everything we know today sprung. It is into that century that our tap roots go. The sword then was mightier than the word and vital knowledge with people slain by the sword. All I know is that bitter roots cannot bring forth sweet fruit. The quality of what we are today as South Africans is a quality which was sown by our ancestors in their daily lives.

We as a Zulu people utterly reject racialism. It is not a new-fangled modern moral objection. It is a rejection we have shown from the very beginnings of our history. My own great ancestor King Shaka, the founding father of KwaZulu as it has been known for the last century of history, opened KwaZulu's doors to Whites. At any time during his reign he could have marched to Durban and wiped them off the face of the earth. At any time he could have eliminated every White man, woman and child from the soil of KwaZulu. That would have been racism. To him the colour of skin was nothing.

King Shaka gave Whites land and he let them live as they wished to live. It was the benevolence of King Shaka which ploughed the fields of White avarice. It was the humanity and kindness of King Shaka towards Whites which gave them the footholds they needed eventually to mount a great British force to conquer the Zulus at the Battle of Ulundi. That is history. That is my history. That is your history. What is there then in history which has made us all great South Africans with true qualities which distinguish us as a people who now can achieve noble ends through noble means.

I would say that there are two things running together that make for our greatness. It is as though there was a Black tributary and a White tributary merging and becoming one river. On the Black side that greatness of human quality which has contributed to our worthwhile South Africanism is the fact that we were conquered but

never crushed. We were conquered but we never lost our sense of dignity. We were conquered but we never accepted a slave mentality. That pride, ladies and gentlemen, sustained us as a people and kept us walking tall even though we were dragooned into chain-gangs for White gain.

Ours is a pride of a people with warrior blood in them; a pride of a people who never turned into bitter racists because they were conquered by White racism. It is deep in our history. From King Shaka's day onwards no Zulu army ever conquered in order to subjugate. People were conquered. It was the age of conquest across the length and breadth of the world. We as Zulu people, however, conquered in order to include the conquered in the greatness of KwaZulu. We did not conquer to annihilate. and no area that was conquered was worse off after conquest than before conquest. It was totally alien to so regard the God-given value of being human that you conquered to subjugate; that you conquered to enslave and that you conquered to humiliate. This spirit of Zulu humanism has made us walk tall since the beginning of time. We walk tall today because of it. That is the tributary of Blackness which is flowing into the river.

When I speak about a White tributary I can only speak about it as a Black man but I do speak of it as a Black South African. I believe that the tributary of White greatness which flows into the river to mingle with the great Blackness which flows into the river, is that sustained search for human decency which has again and again and again challenged despotic racist authority. Bishop Colenso is our Bishop. Dr. Alan Paton is our hero and between Bishop Colenso and Dr. Alan Paton there is a very very long line of distinguished White sons and daughters of Africa who form a line of continuity of White decency. Whites have struggled to overthrow their racist tendencies amongst their peers. White missionaries have always challenged brutal governments. We have learnt from the great White South Africans who joined hands to form a continuous line of people down through our history. We have learnt that every White is equal in the eyes of God as being capable of matching Black decency. Decency, ladies and gentlemen, more than anything else in all the world knows no colour barriers. Decency spreads across every colour line. It grows stronger when it is challenged. It fights fiercely when it is threatened and that is what so distinguishes those who have been invited to gather at this distinguished occasion tonight. We gather around the need to bolster decency in politics.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am now going to relax with you and to be with you being glad I am here.

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