

BLACK DISUNITY

Divisions in the struggle for liberation

Black disunity is highlighted in numerous addresses made by the Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

In constant appeals for a "multi-strategy approach" to the black struggle for liberation, Dr Buthelezi insists that Inkatha sees itself as a part of the struggle and does not hold the view that any one organisation can claim to be the sole and authentic voice of black liberation. Individuals and organisations should each contribute, as they can, to dismantling apartheid and creating a united and non-racial South Africa with a multi-party democracy.

The following is an excerpt from a speech he delivered to the annual general conference of Inkatha in July this year which again emphasises his concern at the divisions within the black body politic.

It is so tragic that black disunity is now worse than it has ever been before — at a time when white politics is developing its own white political impasse in white society.

Whites are at each other's throats, politically speaking. The Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging is spreading its vicious message of brutal white racism in ever widening circles in South Africa.

The Conservative Party is confronting the National Party wherever possible.

Inside the National Party there is division and debate to the right and to the left of it.

Opposition parties are evidencing growing discord. Never before has there been such white disunity and never before have there been such deep divisions in white politics.

These divisions should have been tremendously advantageous for the black struggle for liberation

but any benefit that the struggle could have derived from them is lost because of black disunity.

There is black disunity between the ANC and the PAC; there is black disunity between AZAPO and the UDF; there is black disunity between AZAPO and the National forum. There is black disunity in South Africa's church life. There is conflict in black South Africa's trade union life.

At the local level there is disunity between local groups of

comrades and local communities they are trying to batter into submission.

Across the length and breadth of the country the number of Inkatha members who are actually battered violently pale into insignificance against the total number of blacks who suffer violent onslaughts.

Disunity is a terrible thing that is stalking the land to sap black political energy and to strip the struggle of a lot of its power.

When we talk about the need for the ANC to think, pause and then to act in the interests of the struggle and of South Africa, we are looking at a totality in South Africa and we are looking at the disunity which they are causing at the national level.

Everywhere they attempt to extend their influence, they do so by setting black against black in the politics of intimidation in which they rely.

We in Inkatha know that the fundamental problem in black politics can be traced to the fact that the ANC is not struggling to liberate black South Africa. It is struggling to conquer black South Africa, to control it and to direct it. Their priority is not black liberation per se, but it is a return to South Africa as a Government returned from exile.

What our struggle is all about

‘As far as Inkatha is concerned, the political freedom we struggle for is the freedom within which a multi-party democracy is possible.

We in Inkatha are not struggling to establish ourselves as supreme. We are not struggling to become dictators. We are not struggling to eclipse all other political groupings. We struggle for freedom and we struggle for the kind of freedom in which people are free to disagree with us and to do what they think best. We ourselves demand that freedom and we cannot deny it to anybody else.’

Spirit of hate against Inkatha

‘From what the ANC is saying in recent times and from the positions they are adopting, it is becoming quite clear that the ANC is not seeking any kind of reconciliation with Inkatha.

It is spurning the hand of friendship being held out to it and as Dr Francis Meli (the Editor of *Sechaba*, the official organ of the ANC) admits, the ANC is out to “destroy” Inkatha.

It is the ANC which is declaring a war unto death. That is so tragic for black South Africa because it so destroys the prospects of real unity.

This spirit of hate against Inkatha has been breathed into the life of the UDF and certain trade unions by the ANC. It is no secret that they are working partners of the ANC. It is no secret that they share platforms with the ANC abroad and it is no secret that the ANC is using the UDF and certain trade unions as weapons against Inkatha.

The divisiveness which the ANC has introduced into black politics in opposing Inkatha is now being multiplied and spread like some dangerously contagious political disease.

We saw the horrible results of this connivance to destroy Inkatha in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area over the last year.’



Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha.

I REPEAT, ONCE AGAIN, THAT INKATHA'S LEADERSHIP DOES NOT CONTROL OR DIRECT OR HAVE ANY INPUT WHATSOEVER WITH REGARD TO THE ACTIVITIES OF MEN, WOMEN AND YOUTH (IN PIETERMARITZBURG) WHO TAKE IT UPON THEMSELVES TO CHALLENGE THE ACTIVITIES OF THOSE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES WHOM THEY BELIEVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOMENTING VIOLENCE OR ANY OTHER ACTIVITY THEY CONSIDER TO BE UNDESIRABLE. WHATEVER THESE PEOPLE DO, WHETHER THEY ARE RANK-AND-FILE INKATHA SUPPORTERS OR NOT, THEY ACT ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE. INKATHA HAS 1.5 MILLION MEMBERS AND THERE IS NO WAY IN WHICH ITS LEADERSHIP CAN ULTIMATELY CIRCUMSCRIBE THEIR BEHAVIOUR — AS MR ARCHIE GUMEDE CAN NO DOUBT ATTEST TO WITH REGARD TO THE UDF . . . INKATHA DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO MOB RULE AND INTIMIDATION . . . WE ARE TOTALLY COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL CHANGE AND NEGOTIATION . . .

Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, extract from a letter to the Sunday Tribune, August, 1988.