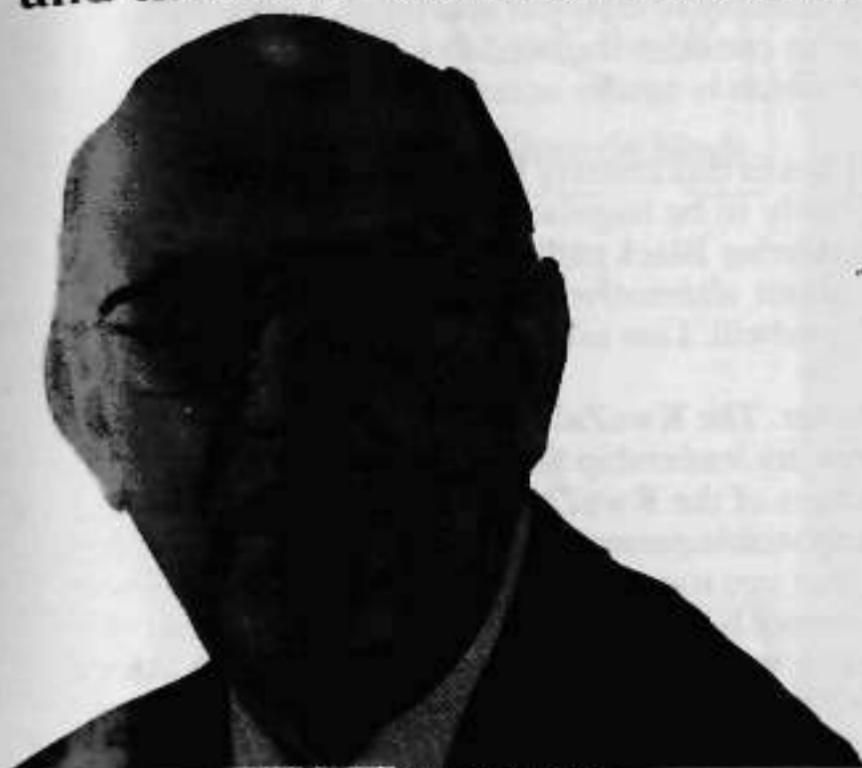
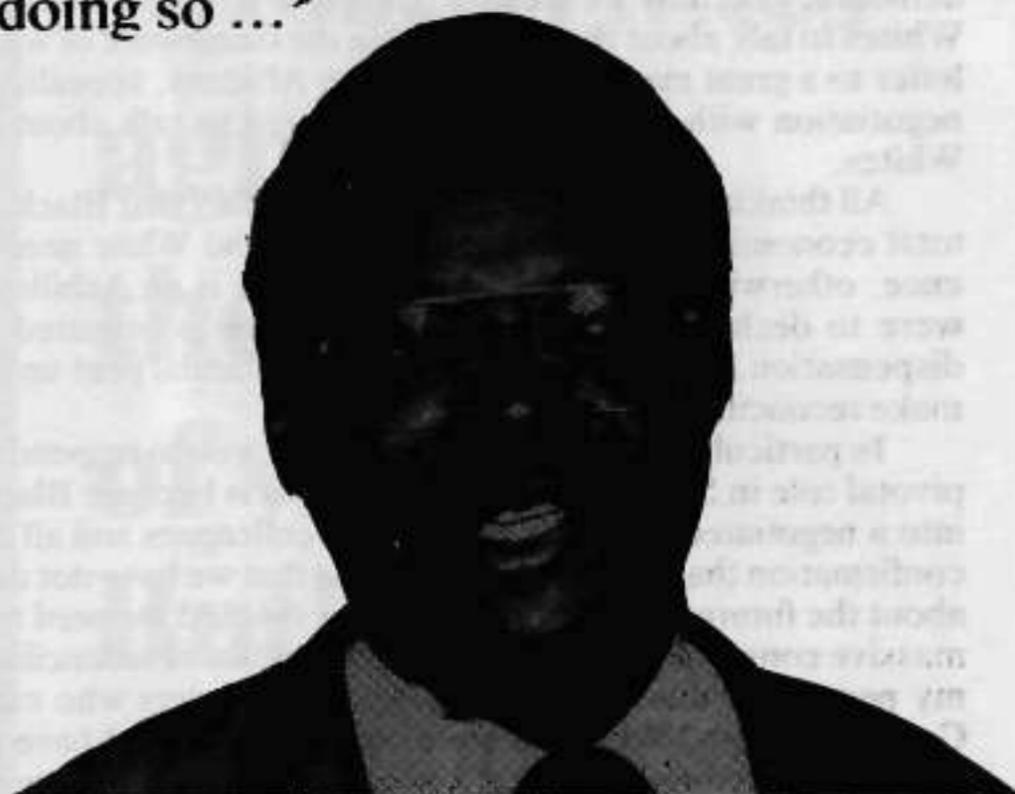


‘The crucial question of Black/White power-sharing needs to be tabled and the State President has avoided doing so ...’



President P.W. Botha



Chief M.G. Buthelezi

Because I know how each one of you shares my burden and bears the same cross that I bear; because I know how each one of you is reviled at times because you are true South Africans standing tall in your commitment to non-violent tactics and strategies in democratic opposition to apartheid, I wrote to something like 5 000 influential South Africans asking them for an expression of appreciation of what we are doing as patriots.

I wrote to South Africans of all race groups, and I think it is important that I read into the record of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, the wording of this letter. This is the letter I wrote, Mr Speaker:

In his opening address to Parliament this year the State President took a definite step towards national reconciliation. He accepted that the question of South African citizenship had to be settled, although he still needs to be encouraged to think of citizenship in terms of a country with one kind of passport for all its people. The State President accepts the permanency and desirability of Blacks in so-called White areas and he intends giving expression to this recognition that Blacks are a permanent part of White South Africa by introducing freehold title rights, and by increasing the mobility of workers between one area and another without them losing Section 10 rights by which they are entitled to remain in urban areas. He also announced the establishment of new structures which will give urban Black communities a collective say in what he regards as their own affairs. Most important of all, he now recognises that Black political aspirations simply cannot be accommodated in what had hitherto been a rigid homeland policy. The State President went further than any of his predecessors in recognising the need to normalise our society.

I find myself, however, in a position in which I have to reject the State President's invitation to Black leaders to discuss matters of mutual concern in an informal non-statutory forum. It seems tragic to me that at this time of greatly heightened Black unrest, (leading to the dangers of reaction and over-reaction as we saw in Uitenhage) Blacks and Whites cannot find each other. Blacks and Whites are as yet unable to reach out to each other across the political chasm which racial fears and prejudices have established.

This letter to you is in part a statement of my position and in part an appeal to you to respond to the growing demands for reconciliatory politics. I enclose an excerpt from my Policy Speech to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly in which I discuss the role of KwaZulu and the need for the South African Government to make the kind of *declaration of intent which would have the effect of joining Blacks and Whites together in a determined effort to eradicate violence in our midst and to move purposefully into a new future.*

I founded Inkatha on principles that all civilised Western industrialised countries respect. All my life I have stood for the politics of negotiation and for bringing about change through non-violence. A massive Black force is amassing itself behind me in support of these principles and in support of my non-violent, democratic tactics and strategies. Inkatha has now nearly a million paid-up members and I enjoy very substantial support beyond those who have actually taken out membership cards. I have a track record of having mobilised Black South Africa to employ democratic decency in facing our problems, and I am writing to you as a fellow South African who is concerned that both Blacks and Whites will under-achieve and participate in a very tragic degeneration of goodwill in this country.

Sometimes when one is so near an important goal the vital last step is so difficult to take. I believe the State President has difficulty in taking the one step which would mobilise vast goodwill. That is the step of making a declaration of intent together with Black leaders who really do matter. The State President needs to go beyond addressing the converted, so to speak. He needs to go beyond a forum in which Blacks have to undertake to talk about the future in terms which are totally unacceptable to the vast majority of ordinary Africans. The crucial question of Black/White power-sharing needs to be tabled and the State President has avoided doing so in his address to Parliament.

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We in KwaZulu and Inkatha accept one-man, one-vote in a unitary state as an ideal and we share this ideal with many millions of Blacks. But for the sake of reconciliation we are prepared to think about alternative forms of democracy because we see how dangerous it is not to start where a start can be made. I think it is just as dangerous for Whites to talk about the future within the framework of what really amounts to classical apartheid. I am sending this letter to a great many influential South Africans, appealing to them to consider the need to establish the politics of negotiation with leaders who are prepared to talk about a future which is totally acceptable to both Blacks and Whites.

All thinking South Africans accept the fact that Blacks and Whites in this country have a common destiny. The total economic interdependence of Black and White needs desperately to be translated into political interdependence, otherwise economic interdependence is an Achilles heel favouring Black radicalism. If the State President were to declare with Black leaders that he is prepared to talk about alternatives to the present constitutional dispensation, he would liberate a very substantial pent-up force of goodwill. I am asking you to use your influence to make reconciliatory politics a reality.

In particular I am writing to you to ask you to respond to this letter. The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly plays a pivotal role in South African politics. This is because Blacks accept my leadership and accept that I will lead them into a negotiated future. I, my Cabinet colleagues and all the members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly need confirmation that our role is valued and that we have not defined impossible parameters for the discussions we need about the future. We need to hear from you and we need to know that you too understand that if I have mobilised a massive constituency in support of the politics of reconciliation, I cannot be expected to stand empty-handed before my people for much longer. Blacks want leaders who can negotiate with the State President, the South African Government and Whites. I am supported because I have promised to do so. The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly needs to be assured that what we have achieved has not gone unnoticed.

We may well be at a crossroads right now and the appeal I am making must be seen against this realisation. It must also be seen against the efforts I have made to defuse Black on Black confrontations on the Reef. It will be recalled that on the 25th November 1984 I had to go to Soweto to appeal for calm. There was a rapid de-escalation of violence there after the mass meeting I held. It will also be recalled that I had to go to Soweto in August 1976 to put an end to violent Black on Black confrontations. And also that it was I who got the Transvaal children to go back to school in January 1978.

There is a great deal of unrest around us and I can no longer guarantee that in this situation of escalating violence we see before us that my pleas for calm will be heeded in future, unless there is a definite statement of intent about power-sharing between Blacks and Whites in South Africa.