

INKATHA'S STANDPOINT ON NEGOTIATIONS

By Oscar Dhlomo

Now that we have reached the pre-negotiation stage in South Africa, it is important for us to state clearly and unambiguously how we see the way forward.

We have already informed the South African Government that Inkatha cannot begin to negotiate until obstacles impeding negotiations have been identified and addressed. Consequently we have recently emerged from nine months of discussions with representatives of the South African Government. Our sole task in these discussions was to identify and address obstacles impeding negotiations in South Africa.

For the record I think it is important to once again summarize these obstacles as follows:

- (a) *The unconditional release of Dr Nelson Mandela and other Rivonia trialists.*
- (b) *The release of other political prisoners.*
- (c) *The unbanning of banned Organisations.*
- (d) *The unconditional return of political exiles.*
- (e) *The lifting of the State of Emergency.*
- (f) *The abolition of discriminatory laws such as the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Separate Amenities Act. Coupled with this, is a demand for an assurance from the Government that the two Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 would also be abolished during or after negotiations.*
- (g) *The scrapping of the Tricameral Parliament.*



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We have reached consensus with the Government on the release of Dr Mandela and the Rivonia trialists. Eight have been released. We were not party to the negotiations pertaining to the delayed release of Dr Mandela.

We have also reached consensus on the view that negotiations will have to be inclusive and not exclusive. No one must be excluded from the process of shaping a new and democratic South Africa, and this includes banned organisations as well as imprisoned and exiled leaders. We further agreed that violence as a political strategy was counter-productive and should be abandoned.

On the other obstacles we identified, we gained the impression that the Government, while not denying that these could be obstacles, nevertheless expected them to be discussed at the

negotiating table. I pray that Government negotiators do not stick to this view because if they do no one will come forward to negotiate. No credible black leader will sit at the negotiation table and argue about whether or not apartheid should be abolished. Black leaders will sit at the table to argue about elements of a new democratic constitution for South Africa. I personally feel this is one axiom Government negotiators still have to accept.

Once the above obstacles have been removed Inkatha will then negotiate. It is also important to note that Inkatha has not said it will negotiate only if Mr Mandela, the ANC, the PAC and others also agree to negotiate. All we are asking from Government is that these leaders and organisations must be afforded a democratic right to choose as free agents

between negotiation and revolution. Once they have been afforded this right we will respect their choice and continue in pursuit of our strategy of negotiation.

We can also reassure the Government that we shall not move the goalposts and invent new obstacles once those we have identified have been addressed. We are not career freedom fighters and we derive no material benefits from overseas Foundations in our struggle against apartheid. The struggle for liberation is therefore no income generating industry for us and we have no interest in unreasonably prolonging it and derailing the process of negotiation. When the climate is right we will be first at the negotiating table.

mass protests is perhaps the clearest demonstration of this shift. The fact that the Government sought relief from the Courts and not from the might of the security forces or the police in order to stop what was regarded as an illegal protest march by women in Pretoria, also demonstrates this apparent shift.

For the majority of blacks, however, President de Klerk must still translate his positive political statements into positive political action leading to negotiations. If he fails to do this, the consequences would perhaps be far more ghastly than what we witnessed after P W Botha's "Rubicon speech" in Durban.

For negotiations to be productive once they start, we believe that the

French, Jewish, Italian, Portuguese, German and Spanish South Africans as belonging to one white nation, in spite of obvious cultural differences, it denies that Zulus, Xhosas, Tswanas, Swazis, Shangaans and Ndebeles belong to one black nation, and the argument used is that these ethnic groups are culturally different!

There is also what I would call "a historical reason" why black South Africans would reject any race-based or ethnic constitution.

Throughout the constitutional history of South Africa all race-based or ethnic constitutional arrangements have tended to work against the socio-political interests of the black majority and in favour of the socio-political interests of the white minority.



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OUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

The change of leadership in the National Party, coupled with the results of the recent elections did arouse expectations and re-kindled hopes in various sectors of South African society. Some sections of the South African press have described the de Klerk era that has just begun as South Africa's version of Pretoriastroika.

It is true that the new State President has made positive statements about change and negotiations in South Africa. It is also true that he has apparently shifted slightly from the tendency of slavishly using security as the basis for policy formulation. His flexible attitude on the question of

National Party would need to seriously re-assess its position on the following issues:

THE GROUP CONCEPT

It appears that the National Party is still wedded to the idea that the basis for meaningful political participation is pre-determined groups. These groups are furthermore defined on the basis of race or ethnicity. It is still ideologically difficult for the National Party to imagine groups forming on the basis of common ideology or common interests which have little or nothing to do with race or ethnicity.

This standpoint on groups poses a serious problem for the majority of South Africans for a number of reasons. One obvious reason is that the standpoint is neither honest nor consistent. While the National Party accepts Afrikaner, English,

The South Africa Act of 1909 which established the Union of South Africa excluded blacks from political participation. The two Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 allotted 87% of the land surface of South Africa to the white minority and only 13% to the black majority which constitutes over 70% of the total population. The Black Authorities Act of 1951 and the Black States Constitution Act of 1971 denied blacks political rights over the whole of South Africa and confined black political participation to so-called black homelands. The Act of 1983 which established the Tricameral parliament excluded the black majority from political participation and co-opted Indians and Coloureds as junior partners. Successive Governments in South Africa have consistently abused race and ethnicity to undermine and erode black civil and political

rights whilst simultaneously entrenching white political rights and privileges in the process.

It is against this background that the National Party must understand black rejection of any

wrongly claimed that this development is identical to the provision in the KwaZulu-Natal Indaba where a similarly open "South African Background Group" is provided for. However,

the negotiating table.

BLACK PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

There was a time during the term of office of former President Mr P W Botha when the National Party hoped that blacks were perhaps interested in participating in the present Government. Consequently arrangements were made for the appointment of a black cabinet minister and rumours were rife that blacks would also be nominated as members of the President's Council. It is gratifying to note that the new President Mr de Klerk did not appoint any black minister and no blacks were nominated as members of the President's Council.

The fact of the matter is that blacks want the present tricameral parliament entirely scrapped in favour of a new non-racial democratic system of government. It would therefore be futile to attempt to lure blacks into the very same tricameral parliament they want scrapped. In other words, Blacks do not want inclusion or co-option into the existing race-based political structures. On the contrary, they want full and equal participation in the new political structures that will result from negotiations.

Prospects for constitutional negotiations in South Africa are exceedingly promising. The responsibility of all South Africans in general and the leaders of the National Party in particular is to create and nurture a positive climate in preparation for such negotiations. It is only when such a climate has been created that mutual trust will replace mutual suspicion and the political aspirations of the majority will be reconciled with the political concerns of the minority.



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race-based constitutional arrangements. The Party must also understand that this rejection is deep seated and is not mere political posturing.

Therefore, it is our view that as long as the National Party uses race and ethnicity as building blocs for a new South African constitution, consensus at the negotiating table will be well nigh impossible.

THE CONCEPT OF AN OPEN GROUP:

In its recently published five-year plan the National Party makes provision for what it calls an "open group" to which people who do not favour racial or ethnic categorization can affiliate. Many political commentators have

the vital difference between the two proposals is that while the National Party regards an open society as the exception rather than the rule, the Indaba regards an open society as the rule rather than the exception. We understand the National Party to be saying "The name of the game is race based on ethnic politics and those who want freedom of association can opt out through a small backdoor and affiliate with an open group". On the other hand, we understand the Indaba to be saying:

"The name of the game is freedom of association and those who do not like it can opt out through a small back door and affiliate with an ethnic or racial group."

I believe this is another issue which will make it almost impossible to achieve consensus at

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