

FLAGS FLY OVER GRAVE AS TRIBUTE PAID TO ANC FOUNDER

THE family of Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, founder of the African Nationalist Congress, unveiled his tombstone at a moving ceremony at the Croesus Cemetery in Soweto on September 15.

Inkatha youth silently held flags bearing the identical colours of the ANC and Inkatha over his grave as the Seme family, members of the Zulu Royal family, old friends, colleagues and admirers paid tribute to this great son of Africa who passed away in June 1951.

Dr Seme married Princess Phikisile Harriet, eldest daughter of King Dinuzulu ka Cetshwayo and sister to the mother of Prince M G Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha.

Dr Seme was described as a peasant child who "broke through every barrier to reach out for the stars themselves and succeeded by the sheer weight of his personality, his intellect and his vision..."

Speeches at the unveiling of his tombstone were made by the former President of the Inkatha Youth League, Mr G M Pitje, former ANC Youth League member, Dr N Motlana, and a former colleague, Mr S Z Conco, now Chief Whip of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly.

Chief Buthelezi, who was also an ANC Youth League member, gave the main address.

He said Dr Seme's brilliance was spotted early when, as a peasant child, he was sent to the Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts by an American Congregationalist missionary, S. Pixley.

He so distinguished himself that he gained entry to Columbia University where he obtained his BA degree in 1906. He then gained entry to Jesus College at Oxford University where he studied law. He was admitted to the Bar at the Middle Temple in London.

Chief Buthelezi said that what would never be forgotten was that, with the world at his feet, Dr Seme returned to South Africa to be with his



people and dedicated his life to serving them.

Among all the men who had influenced his life, it was Dr Seme who had affected him the most profoundly, the Chief added.

"He was one of the first Black men of South Africa who grasped the reality that the harsh hand of colonial conquest and oppression joined every African in this country into but one single nation with a new country to shape and a new destiny to face together..."

"He was the principle founder of the African National Congress (ANC) which drew together virtually the entire existing leadership of this country.

"It was he who made the vision of

black unity an obtainable goal.

"It was he who delivered the keynote address at the inaugural meeting of the African National Congress in January 1912 in Bloemfontein."

He said Blacks today would have given Dr Seme a standing ovation for a statement he made in 1911 when he said:

"The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa Fingo feud, the animosity which exists between the Zulus and the Tongas, between the Basothos and every other native must be buried and forgotten; it has shed sufficient blood! We are one people. These divisions, these jealousies, are the cause of all our woes and the cause of all our backwardness and ignorance today."

Chief Buthelezi said Dr Seme, today, "would stand aghast" at the spectacle of the kind of Black/Black political feuding which was damaging the cause for liberation.

He believed Dr Seme would endorse Inkatha's view that unity began with uniting individual with individual and that there was a fundamental wisdom in adopting a multi-strategy approach which would give everybody the opportunity to do what he or she could to make a contribution to the struggle.

"The viciousness of some elements in modern Black politics would be foreign to this great son of Africa," Chief Buthelezi added.

He was "quite convinced" that Dr Seme would disagree violently with those in the ANC abroad today who thought they could direct the people's struggle from distant countries.

"He himself returned to be with his people and he remained with them until the day he died."

Chief Buthelezi went on to say that Dr Seme had seen the limitations to Blacks of having to operate through media controlled by Whites and had established a Black newspaper called Abanto-Batho.

The paper folded because of "the perennial problem faced by Blacks" lack of money. Dr Seme had hoped for black newspapers owned and run by Black people themselves.

There is the same problem today in 1984 and this present generation had not come close to Dr Seme's goal. Whites today owned all the major White and so-called Black papers. There was much to be done by those who revered all that the founding father of the ANC stood for.