

PLEA FOR BLACK UNITY

White political recalcitrance and the inability of the National Party Government to get meaningful constitutional changes off the ground, must necessarily have the final effect of driving blacks together, Dr M G Buthelezi told the Inkatha conference.

"It would be totally tragic if that only happened when it was too late and the black unity which was then produced was ineffective to establish a government for the people which would govern the way the people want to be governed," he said.

"Why must we wait until the house actually burns down over our heads before we turn to work with each other to put out the fire? That is precisely what the position is right now.

"Black unity is a matter of national urgency and I appeal yet again for all black organisations to recognise the need for unity within a framework of a multi-strategy approach.

"Let us not tear each other apart like a pack of dogs over a meatless bone; fighting over who will take Mr P W Botha's seat, before we have won the race. It is so stupid to count our chickens before they are hatched."

Dr Buthelezi added that the strength of what each organisation could do best in its own circumstances must be joined so that they formed an "invincible political unity."

No one black organisation would ever win the South African struggle for liberation.

"It is time this is recognised," he said.

"People are dying in the vain hope of some that their organisation could end up the only organisation on the day of victory.

"Just look in particular in those parts of

Southern Africa where the armed struggle was used to liberate some of the countries. The divisions between black organisations have outlasted the toppling of oppressive regimes in those countries even after liberation.

"Look at the wars that are going on in Angola and Mocambique between black organisations long after liberation was achieved in those countries . . .

"We in Inkatha have never been aggressors even though friends of other organisations in the media twist facts and put us in a bad light. We have resisted intimidation by the South African regime for more than a decade now. We will resist to the last member any efforts to intimidate us.

"I, however, make the appeal to black organisations to smoke the pipe of peace from a position of formidable strength which Inkatha has demonstrated again and again."

Dr Buthelezi said he was making this plea in the interests of all the people of South Africa.

"How can we hope to negotiate successfully with whites, if we are incapable of burying the hatchet as black brothers and sisters and start negotiating amongst ourselves?

"The black struggle for liberation in South Africa has always been about the liberation of all its people and all its groups. We will eventually move together. Why not start now?

"You will see that it will be the white-owned Press or white-established Press that will pooh-poo this appeal I make in earnest for peace among black forces for change.

"If blacks do not learn that threats to their unity come equally from the left as much as the right within the white establishment, we will never get anywhere in achieving any black unity."

Inkatha's membership soars

In his annual report to conference, the Secretary-General of Inkatha, Dr Oscar Dhlomo, revealed that Inkatha's membership has risen from 1.3 million to more than 1.5 million paid-up members.

"The rate of growth in our membership has been phenomenal," he said.

The movement now has a

total of 1 544 609 paid-up members and remains the largest membership-based movement in South Africa.

Membership is comprised of the following:

YOUTH BRIGADE:	586 951
WOMENS BRIGADE:	556 060
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP:	401 598