

***Power for power's sake or power for all people?***

# NEGOTIATIONS

## *Who wants what?*

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**"Blacks want the same things that whites want. The two groups have far more in common than the world realises. Political consensus is possible but it will have to be achieved in full consciousness of the fact that blunders will have awesome consequences..."**

***Dr Mangosuthu G Buthelezi, speech, Toronto, Canada***

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**"We want the democracy we have struggled for and the democratic values that the struggle for liberation has scorched into our souls. We want a just society in which racism is abhorred."**

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**W**hat will be the essential ingredients of the process of multi-party negotiations – now imminent – about the political, social and economic future of South Africa?

Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi says he believes it is critical that the reform programme will lead to racial reconciliation and national unity. Only then will it be possible to lay the foundations for a lasting democracy and a vibrant and growing economy.

The majority of South Africans, across all colour lines, wanted a multi-party democracy, with the rule of law ensured by an independent judiciary, and all the great freedoms characterised in European and North American democracies.

They also wanted an enterprise-driven economy because they now knew of the extent to which socialist experiments had

failed in Africa and in Eastern Europe.

In meetings with South African leaders and in addresses to his own constituency as well as business and community organisations, Dr Buthelezi, President of the Inkatha Freedom Party, has constantly repeated that, in the end, the "right policies" were going to count more than anything else in forthcoming negotiations.

Compromises were going to have to be made in order to ensure orderly progress towards a multi-party democracy. Only the principles of democracy should never be compromised.

Policies, personalities, image and opportunity would all play a role for those who would be participants and who would be manoeuvring and manipulating to gain political advantage.

***Dr Buthelezi has stated that the time has now come for all political parties to tell the country the direction in which they think South Africa should go.***

Baseline positions should be spelled out very clearly. The general public had a right to know *precisely* where parties stood.

The Inkatha Freedom Party wanted South Africa to rapidly emerge as a modern, Western-type industrial, multi-party democracy resting on an enterprise-driven economy. Inkatha wanted to assist in producing the circumstances in which future governments could *not* usurp the rule of law for the sake of party political gain.

Inkatha shunned Communist tactics and strategies, would strenuously oppose the

# **"Democratic objectives can only be achieved through democratic means"**

imposition of a one-party State, and eschewed socialist economic doctrines.

In essence Inkatha wanted South Africa to be a sovereign nation with a political system in which consensus would determine who would govern and who would oppose. It would have to be made possible for the people of the country to place and remove governments democratically. It did *not* want to see a repetition of the kind of monolithic State apparatus now in place.

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**"As we prepare for negotiations we need to study the history of Africa as a whole and countries elsewhere in the world. Time after time democracy has been destroyed because political victories have been won at the cost of the destruction of economies. South Africans have to be aware that mass spreading poverty is the mortal enemy of democracy. Economic systems are the counterside to constitutional coins..."**

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Whatever system of government finally negotiated, Inkatha wanted to see it spreading reconciliation in what was now an extremely polarised society.

Dr Buthelezi says he believes there will have to be devolution of power in the new south Africa and that individual rights must be protected and entrenched in a Bill of Rights placed beyond party political manipulation or by abuse by the party in power.

There was a truism in politics that democratic objectives could only be achieved through democratic means. For the sake of South Africa no party or organisation should have hidden agendas in which the prospect of violence and the use of concealed weaponry was kept in reserve

as an ultimate winner-takes-all resort.

The good of the State should always be put before the good of the Party. Unless tactics and strategies were non-violent and democratic, no set of leaders had the right to claim that they represented people in the politics of negotiation or in any future government.

The people of South Africa had a right to have mandated leaders pursuing aims and objectives their constituencies approved of. Leaders needed to be free to constantly consult with their constituencies – without interference – and to receive endorsement for their actions.

For this to happen the country needed normalised relationships between political parties.

There were the "harsh over-riding" realities of political violence in South Africa at present which every political party had to face.

Dr Buthelezi told foreign journalists recently that "this violence which breaks out, and the background poverty factor of which violence is in part a concomitant, gives dimensions to politics which cannot be ignored."

Relationships between groups and between political parties were distorted by the "hideous effects" that past apartheid had had on South African society and politics.

The fight against apartheid had, however, produced a quality among ordinary South Africans which could only come from having waged a "struggle against the devil and emerging in triumph," Dr Buthelezi told leading Canadians in Toronto recently.

There were now various parties throughout the country striving to put their messages to the people and there were "raging battles for minds" going on.

The present was a time of tenuous politics; these were early days in the politics of transition. Many delicate things were finely poised and balanced. The country, says Dr Buthelezi, *must* have a multi-party democracy. "But we could have a disastrous one-party State."