
INKATHA — UDF CRISIS

On the 10th November last year, Chief Buthelezi, President of Inkatha, wrote a letter to Mr Archie Gumede, President of the United Democratic Front — inviting him to come to Ulundi and to address the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, either in Caucus or in an open session. Chief Buthelezi's letter stressed the need to explore every possible avenue of deepening Black Unity in South Africa. In that letter to Mr Gumede, Chief Buthelezi pointed out that INKATHA did not need any alliances with groups like the UDF for its own sake. He (Chief Buthelezi) further pointed out that Black South Africa demands unity in the struggle. Mr Gumede has now at last responded. On the 16th May, Chief Buthelezi received a copy of the letter from Mr Gumede, which reads as follows:-

With reference to your letter of the 10th November 1983 wherein the National Executive Committee of the United Democratic Front and I were invited to address the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, be informed that all the regions of the UDF have now considered its contents and have instructed me to reply as follows:

Firstly, the call for unity is not only significant but it has been recognised as such by our people for a considerable while already. History records that it was in deference to the call for unity that our forebearers converged on Bloemfontein on 8th January 1912 to establish the South African Native National Congress (later African National Congress) as the premier liberation organisation of Africans in this country. By the forties the drive for unity across racial lines was placed on an irreversible path with the signing of the Dadoo-Xuma-Naicker Pact. This led directly to the Congress of the People which brought together South Africans of all races and from every social strata.

Indeed, the very formation of the United Democratic Front, a Non-racial alliance of hundreds of the people's organisations against the present constitutional amendments, was inspired and is based on our Apartheid, oppression and exploitation. It is in this light that we view your call for unity and credit it with our support.

Secondly, your condemnation of the Nationalist Party's present constitutional machinations and the results of the White referendum

as ploys designed to denationalise millions of other South African citizens is in consonance with the spirit of the UDF. We make bold to add, however, that the whole exercise is intended to draw our so-called Indian and Coloured compatriots into the white laager as junior accomplices in the crime of Apartheid. Be assured that we have already exposed and are now actively opposing these discriminatory measures.

But your letter also raises questions of a fundamental and even contentious nature. And, with measured frankness, these must also be carefully considered before acceptance or rejection of the invitation.

You have invited us to address the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, an institution which was created without consultation with the people and one which was imposed on a section of the population in total disregard of the people's pronounced and demonstrated opposition. Such a body cannot by any stretch of the imagination be viewed as democratic; it is, in fact, an instrument of coercion. On the other hand, we believe that the unity we need to liberate our country and people must, *inter alia*, rest on an uncompromisingly democratic organisation and practice. The UDF prides itself on its democratic foundations and workings and will not risk jeopardising either. In the circumstances, association with the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly has the potential of compromising the democratic projection and character of this Front.

We must hasten to add that this is not directed against you and your colleagues in your personal capacities. We are constrained to remark, however, that for members of an oppressed and coerced community to voluntarily man and daily keep institutions of oppression serviced to grind the defenceless masses under the yoke of oppression is suicidal and untenable. Such programmes as land consolidation and, especially, the incorporation of certain settlements and townships into homelands daily denationalises our people and causes them untold suffering and misery. Your direct and indirect roles in such programmes and schemes is a matter of deep concern to many of us.

Furthermore, this invitation must be viewed against the backdrop of recent events between Inkatha and yourself as its head on the one hand, and the UDF and its affiliates on the other.

The public utterances and actions of some representatives and members of Inkatha have created an atmosphere not conducive to a constructive and fruitful meeting. For instance, the fatal assaults on students and AZASO members — an affiliate of the UDF — at the University of Zululand in which five people were brutally killed remains a source of grave concern and dissatisfaction to us. In this regard, your own public pronouncements *vis a vis* those regrettable events have left us variously shocked, dismayed and angry.

Circumstances have been exacer-

bated by your unsubstantiated allegations that the UDF is a front for the ANC and that it has prepared a hit list of Inkatha members of which you claim to be the number one target. Not only is this allegation unfounded but it appears to be a cleverly orchestrated campaign to incite the South African security police to act against the UDF by projecting it as a front of a violent nature. The allegation that the UDF is a facade of the ANC was first made by the NATS and the confluence between yours and their allegation is unsettling in the least. We find it difficult to reconcile these actions with your calls for unity and overtures to us.

Such incidents as the Mpumalanga affair in which various members of Inkatha, including some who are highly placed, took the law into their own hands, ter-

rorised our members and damaged property cannot but arouse anger and invite condemnation by all those who strive for unity of the people of South Africa in their struggle against the systematic and institutionalised violence of the Apartheid state. Finally, we must add that the continuing exclusion of the Congress of South Africa Students (COSAS) and the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO) — both active affiliates of the UDF from the University of Zululand, schools and colleges under the control of the KwaZulu Government Services daily continues to frustrate your own pursuits for unity.

In conclusion we reiterate the commitment of the UDF to all people of South Africa including those presently under the control of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly.

We are prepared at all times to avail ourselves of an opportunity to address ourselves to them and to problems peculiar to their specific area but not through those institutions which perpetuate their unfree status. For the present, the struggle must be aimed at the establishment of democratic institutions which will be under the control and guidance of the people they will be serving.

This letter has been written with frankness, honesty and sincerity and we hope that it will be received in the same spirit and attitude.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,

A.J. GUMEDE
UDF President

Dr M.G. Buthelezi, President of Inkatha responded to this letter, and pointed out that for the United Democratic Front our invitation to them to come and talk with us was a momentous affair. Mr Gumede could not answer my letter within his capacity as President of the UDF because he thought the issue was so momentous that it had to be referred to all the UDF's regions. Each region had to consider my letter. My simple letter was turned into the National event for the UDF. The reason why Mr Gumede circulated the letter is inherent in the structure of the UDF. Chief Buthelezi continued that "it is not as though my letter asked Mr Gumede to make any kind of commitment or to take any kind of stand, or to enter into any kind of alliance. It was a straight forward little letter asking Mr Gumede to come here and address the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. The letter did not ask him to address us on any specific subject. It was a simple little invitation. I did not write to them because they were important. I wrote to Mr Gumede and extended the kind of invitation which I extended to numerous other people."

The contents of Mr Gumede's letter

can be summarised as follows:

"But your letter also raises questions of a fundamental and even contentious nature. And with measured frankness, these must also be carefully considered before acceptance or rejection of the invitation."

He then goes on to make the following kind of points:-

- 1) The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly "cannot by any stretch of imagination be viewed as democratic."
- 2) The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly is "an instrument of coercion."
- 3) Any UDF Association with the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly "has the potential of compromising the democratic projection and character" of the UDF.
- 4) That I and all those involved in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly "daily, keep institutions of oppression serviced to grind the defenceless masses under the yoke of oppression".
- 5) My direct and indirect role which "daily denationalises our people and causes them untold suffering and misery" when I am involved in "land consolidation

and, especially, the incorporation of certain settlements and townships into homelands" is "a matter of deep concern to many of us."

Mr Gumede then goes on to say:-

"Furthermore, this invitation must be viewed against the backdrop of recent events between Inkatha and yourself as its head on the one hand, and the UDF and its affiliates on the other."

"This is the tirade we suffer because we simply asked Mr Gumede to come here and to say to us anything he wanted to say. Mr Gumede's letter is no more than political posturing and blustering. When I extended an invitation to Mr Gumede, I knew who he was and I extended an invitation to him knowing the kind of disruptive role which UDF is playing in Black South Africa. He could have come here to say what he wanted to say, and I would have held his hand and I would have conducted him in and out of the Assembly, and I would have taken him home to make sure that his stupid utterances did not result in one hair on his head being hurt. It is the kind of utterances which this

letter contains which we wanted to talk about. We wanted to take him as a brother.

As I said in my letter to him, Inkatha does not need the United Democratic Front. Far from needing them, we would have been prepared to carry them as a burden to protect them from themselves and somehow manage to give them a role in the struggle for liberation. We would have done this because they are now misleading some Black organisations. A simple invitation triggered off yet another splurge of poison and has shown us yet again just how far removed the UDF's leadership is from the struggle itself."

Mr Gumede, like so many others who pretend to be leaders, think

they can hide under bushes and have secret associations with our brothers and sisters in exile as though this is at all possible in South Africa. Does Mr Gumede really think that the Security Police need Chief Buthelezi to tell them what Mr Gumede is doing?

The UDF will come and go like so many others before it. It will be misrepresented and given a false aura of importance by some elements in the mass media and by the ANC's Mission in exile. In itself it is not significant, but as a vehicle being used by the ANC's Mission in exile, it cannot be ignored.

It is tragic, said Chief Buthelezi that "the UDF in dancing to the

tunes of others is misleading some Black Organisations in the country. The Mission in exile is intent only upon seeking power for itself and will sacrifice everything and everybody in an attempt to establish its supremacy. It is now using the UDF as a vehicle for attack upon Inkatha because it is the largest Black constituency which our country has ever seen. Political storms will rage around us and political cyclones will sweep across the whole of Southern Africa, but in the end, the people of South Africa in South Africa will weather the storms and survive onslaughts from wherever they come and go on to bring about the just society which all those before us have so valiantly striven for."

DONATIONS FLOW TO KWAZULU GOVERNMENT

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