

# 'This is not an Inkatha union...'



**CHIEF M G BUTHELEZI** Kings Park, May 1

**I**n his inauguration address at UWUSA's launch, Chief M G Buthelezi asked the 80 000 present to stand up if they opposed disinvestment and sanctions. Everybody stood up.

Chief Buthelezi said that on his numerous visits abroad he met the Heads of State of various countries.

"Shall I tell them that you now want disinvestment and sanctions imposed on South Africa?" he asked.

The reply: "NO".

"Shall I tell them that you are now ready to suffer even more deprivations than you are suffering already ...?"

The reply: "NO".

Chief Buthelezi said that they had all come to inaugurate a "workers union ...". It was not a tool of Inkatha.

"The United Workers Union consists of black people who abhor apartheid for the scourge that it is, as much as any other opponent of apartheid," he said.

"While members believe in negotiations on the factory floor, and also in a negotiated future, they are as impatient and as angry as anyone of us ... as a result of the continuing existence of apartheid and oppressive rule in South Africa."

Chief Buthelezi added that COSATU and its "pals" in the national and international media had tagged UWUSA a "Capitalist Union".

"This is, of course, a lot of balderdash," he said.

"They have aligned me with UWUSA and described me in the same denigratory terms. I

have volumes of speeches I have delivered in the last two decades ... I have stated many times to Captains of industry in South Africa that the free enterprise system as it operates in South Africa has thrived on the exploitation of black labour ...

"This has been more the case in the past than is the case at present. I have stated and restated, over the years, that unless blacks are given entry into the free enterprise system that it can have no future in a liberated South Africa.

"I have, however, stated that despite the handicaps it has, I know of no other economic system devised by man, which can create jobs as much as it creates. I have, for example, expressed concern that with the birthrate of three percent per annum amongst blacks, we have vast needs for the black population ... half of which consists of people who are only 15 years and younger."

Chief Buthelezi is a recipient of the George Meany International Human Rights Award, bestowed on him by the American Federation of Labour and the Congress of Industrial Organisations in the United States. He was the second holder of this American trade union award after Nobel Peace Prize winner, Lech Walesa, of Poland.

He told the UWUSA launch that he would always "stand by workers to the bitter end ..." and added that this was shown when he and the KwaZulu Government supported the 1973 strike of black workers in Natal.

"I accept that the right to strike is the workers' prerogative," he said. "The strikes in 1973 were described



of their children's children ..."

He said Inkatha had kept its hand of brotherhood stretched out — which it extended to all who wished to hold it. Inkatha realised how important it was for black organisations to be united and it knew that there could be no solution for South Africa's problems without that unity.

At the moment UWUSA was a young Trade Union and still had a long way to go to consolidate its position as a Trade Union. It needed to concentrate on this aspect rather than be preoccupied with political "one-upmanship" games which had cost so

without uniformity as a price for such united action," he emphasised.

"Inkatha does not believe in using our young people as cannon fodder in order to catapult its adult leadership to political eminence. We do not believe in hiding behind our children.

"We believe that the struggle for liberation is our struggle, and that is all of us — the young as well as the old. We realise that this disease of using school children as battering rams in fighting apartheid — which has been endemic in South Africa since 1976 — is now creeping to the

had appeared in the media since UWUSA had emerged.

One paper had even suggested that because UWUSA did not reject the free enterprise system in toto that it was "incongruous" that it had chosen May Day for its launch.

This implied that May Day was the property of Socialist countries. May Day had, in fact, originated in a country (the USA in 1886) where the free enterprise system was more developed than any other country in the world.

May Day had become an international holiday on which workers in all free countries expressed their solidarity to each other's struggles.

"So May Day has acquired the status of a day on which workers and the poorest of the poor in our country also protest against oppression,

exploitation, white racism and the fact that we are voteless and therefore voiceless," he said.

Chief Buthelezi said Inkatha had never "wooed" black trade unions to affiliate to it.

"I felt very strongly, as I do even now, that Trade Unions have a very important task to perform for black workers, which can only be done by Trade Unions," he said.

"I encouraged our Inkatha members to join Trade Unions ... I never tried to tell them what Trade Union they should join ...

"It has taken me a long time to realise that my attitude was politically inept as almost all other political organisations did not show just a passing interest in Trade Unions but they, in fact, poached membership of Trade Unions ...

"Inkatha is the fastest growing political movement in the history of South Africa and I therefore did not need to do what other political organisations, both inside and in exile, were doing ...

"There has been no need for me to substitute the back-breaking job of organising black people with political poaching of membership of Trade Unions. To me this is political piracy!"



*"... I have no intention of interfering in UWUSA's affairs*

*"... I have made sure that this is the case by ensuring that those members of Inkatha who hold office in Inkatha resign their positions ...*

*"I do not want Inkatha to be accused of breathing down the necks of UWUSA's leadership ...*

*"I would like to stick to the principle that Inkatha should not interfere in the affairs of the workers Trade Union ..."*

many black lives.

More than 500 blacks had so far died at the hands of other blacks. This was tragic and sad and it did not augur well for the future of the country.

"Inkatha still pursues its strategy of non-violence and negotiation. Inkatha believes that we can join hands as black organisations in the interests of our struggle,

region of Natal/KwaZulu ..."

Chief Buthelezi said he had inaugurated many unions over the years and the fact that he was the leader of the KwaZulu Government and President of Inkatha had made no difference ... nobody had ever accused him of interfering in Trade Unions.

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