

# *The South African liberation movement*

# INKATHA

**I**n the maelstrom of South African politics much is written and claimed about the national cultural liberation movement, Inkatha. Some is fact. A great deal is fiction. Which is which?

**T**he reality is that 1,3 million members and a great many other supporters believe that Inkatha personifies the black tradition of resistance to racism in the struggle for liberation. They believe that Inkatha has inherited the mantle of the true aims and objectives of the African National Congress as founded in 1912: non-violence, peaceful change, national negotiation and reconciliation in a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The founding of Inkatha in 1975 heralded the formation of the largest membership-based mass political movement (black or white) in the history of the country.

It emerged, along with the Black Consciousness Movement, to fill the vacuum in black politics left by the ANC in South Africa following its banning and the failure then, after nearly 20 years, of the External Mission of the ANC to achieve any tangible victories in the armed struggle for liberation.

Inkatha's strength now is such that it has become an integral part of the South African political scene and it cannot be ignored or manipulated (as some would like to do) into obscurity.

Politics is primarily about power. It is, as Prince Otto Von Bismarck (1815-1898) said: "... not an exact science." What stood then still stands today and there are few, if any, who can and do interpret a clear picture of black politics in South Africa today.

Even the predictions of astute observers more often than not fall into the realm of fantasy when one looks back at the "South Africa is burning . . . the Government

cannot hold on . . ." stories — printed a decade ago when the June 16, 1976 Soweto riots erupted.

There is one truth, however, which is constant: apartheid and the racist policies of the South African Government are evil.

It is equally true that the black people of South Africa will one day be free. Nobody knows when and how but there are groups who have already decided on their modus operandi to try to achieve this end. Inkatha is one of them.

Present and future tactics and strategies are key components when looking at liberation politics in South Africa. A question rarely asked, however, is: what kind of South Africa will emerge in a post-apartheid society?

This issue contains the story of Inkatha. Why it was founded and what it stands for — now and in the time to come. Who its leaders are and the people who support them.



*Inkatha rally — Durban.*

A simple handbook on Inkatha has become necessary because black (as well as white) politics in South Africa has become polarised in an arena in which *denial of political rights, hypocrisy and distortion* abounds — within the country and abroad.

The national and international media has, to a large extent, given exceptional coverage to appalling acts of violence and the aims of so-called "radicals" as well as to the "armed struggle" of the External Mission of the ANC. It has, in many ways,

international campaign to isolate Inkatha from the mainstream of South African politics.

They have also managed to persuade a great many people that Inkatha does *not* have the same licence to defend itself and dispute *their* tactics and strategies.

In the end, of course, it is a cherished dream of all black South Africans who desire decency and democracy that they will, by right, have the opportunity to stand up and be counted and to elect the leaders and organisations of their choice into



*Inkatha conference — Ulundi.*

shown a woeful inability to investigate and impartially analyse the political forces at play.

In the United States and Europe, various church groups, other organisations and political parties have more often than not become ruthlessly biased and their divisiveness has become a crucial impediment to black unity.

In the Western world democracy allows — and protects — freedom of speech and association. What is so ironic is that this very platform of democracy is now being used by some to cry out and deny Inkatha and other organisations the right to exist.

The External Mission of the ANC (with offices in 39 countries and recognition in the UN and the OAU) receives arms and ammunition to pursue political power from the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc and has committed Communists on its executive.

Together with its allies, including the World Council of Churches, the External Mission of the ANC is waging an intensive

power.

Inkatha is an organisation which does not deny others the freedom to organise and mobilise, as they see fit, in a multi-strategy approach towards bringing about this ideal. And this includes, among others, the External Mission of the ANC, the PAC, the UDF and AZAPO.

Whether they believe that Inkatha has a right to exist is, as has been noted, another issue.

The *real* story of Inkatha is about ordinary men and women, not an elitist group, who have banded together to fight.

Their fight is about negotiation, about the right of all South Africans to share power regardless of colour, ethnicity or religion. Their weapons are not AK 47 rifles, hand grenades, limpet mines and the barbaric "necklace", but time-honoured values enshrined in internationally accepted methods of democratic opposition.

**— THE EDITOR —**