

What KwaZulu and Inkatha have been saying for years

“WE WANT AN AGENDA FOR NEGOTIATIONS”

In referring to Government attempts to get him to participate in the National Council (and various forerunners to it), Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi often uses the following analogy:

“What they are doing is like asking me to board a train. The trouble is, I don’t know its destination, what the fare will cost, where it is going to stop along the way, how long it is going to take, who it is going to pick up, or whether the conductor is going to kick me or any other passengers off at any time.”

In an address discussing the National Council Bill, Dr Buthelezi said: “I and a wide range of other black, white, Indian and Coloured political leaders who are implacably opposed to apartheid and any form of racism in our constitution, would be willing participants in the workings of the Council if we were convinced that there were real prospects of succeeding in establishing a new constitutional dispensation in which there would be “. . . the granting to black South African citizens a voice in the process of

government . . .”

He added: “I and a great many other black leaders will find it impossible to join the National Council if we have to extract ourselves from the black South African body politic in order to do so. I do what I now do politically with a massive black backing. I have gathered that backing. I know how to do it and I know what cannot be done . . .

“I cannot tell my black constituencies that the National Council will negotiate a new constitution radically different from the present constitution . . .

“The new constitutional dispensation which the Bill talks

about will be a myth unless categorical statements are now made about the scope of the South African Government’s willingness to reconstitute South Africa.

“We endorse (the Chief Minister’s) insistence that compromises we were prepared to support be met with compromises by the South African Government which we can accept. We endorse the Chief Minister’s view that these balancing compromises have not been forthcoming and state in the strongest possible terms that the achievement of a political solution through the politics of negotiation depends upon the Government being willing to accept that in all reality there is a black majority in South Africa.” —

RESOLUTION, SIXTH SESSION OF THE FOURTH KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1988

"I do not lay down preconditions when I say that negotiations will only get off the ground when the present tricameral parliament is scrapped. When I demand the scrapping of the present constitution I am doing no more than demanding the minimum conditions under which real negotiations can take place. Blacks cannot and will not negotiate within the framework of the present constitution . . . The State President must now attend to locating the National Council outside the tricameral parliament and giving it an agenda which includes finding an alternative constitution." —

DR MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, speech to the University of Pretoria SRC, February 1988.

"It is altogether insufficient for the South African Government to say that these kind of questions are the kind of questions that the Council will have to consider. (Speech, October 29, 1987)

Dr Buthelezi has stressed time and again that it is crucial that *all* black leaders must be free to choose to participate in constitutional developments.

"While Dr Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners remain incarcerated in jail they do not have this freedom. Their lack of freedom curtails my freedom and the freedom of every black leader."

The era of "political prescription" in which whites could dictate to blacks had passed. (Press statement, April 1988)

As far as Dr Buthelezi, Inkatha and the KwaZulu Government are concerned, the Government must issue a Statement of Intent — or an agenda — spelling out its intentions.

The fact that the Government has refused to do so has, in effect, excluded Dr Buthelezi from participating in any negotiations.

"I am excluded from negotiation because the State President and his Cabinet colleagues still persist in regarding South Africa as a country of minorities," says Dr Buthelezi.

"They refuse to entertain any constitutional concepts, whether they belong to the constitution of a unitary state, a federal state or a state with one or another form of canton system. They only want to discuss group representation.

"I cannot discuss group representation where groups are racial groups. Racism can form no part of future constitutional-building in South Africa.

"I cannot discuss group representation in circumstances in which South Africa's white minority continues to dominate over 87 percent of the surface area of the country and have a rigged minority group interest which gives them total control over the army, the police, the civil service, the economy and in fact everything that makes for domestic and foreign policy."

Reform, adds Dr Buthelezi, must simply mean bold steps in negotiation towards a parliamentary democracy and the enfranchisement of blacks. Anything other than this would not amount to negotiation.

He says he has "lost hope" that the National Council will become a meaningful forum for negotiation and the South African Government has "no reason" to believe that he can be drawn into the kind of negotiations they envisage for the National Council. (Press Statement, November 1988.)

"I find it so terribly tragic that I have to say that real negotiations seem to be quite out of sight. The National Party is still rushing ahead with the prescriptive approach as far as black leaders are concerned.

"Democracy is not about amorphous electorates. Democracy is about the formation of groups which are identifiable and about the election of leaders who can act as legitimate spokesmen for groups.

"The National Council . . . will operate outside the broader process of democratic development which the black struggle for liberation is committed to uphold . . ."

(Dr M G Buthelezi, Press statement, June, 1988)