

MOBIL OIL CORPORATION

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A FEW REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF A LUNCHEON WITH MOBIL OIL  
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INKATHA AND CHAIRMAN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE  
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It is ironic that government in the order of things created by God is an institution of sacred trust as the American constitution recognises, but that so often across the experience of both First World and Third World countries, people aspire to power and gain power for the love of power. Black South Africans are people among people and among their number there are those who use what really is a sacred struggle for liberation as an arena for power-mongering. The temptation to wield and abuse power, even in small groups, is recognised by the Western civilised world and Western democracies have evolved a very wide range of usages and practices, and they have evolved traditions upheld by sanctions to limit the abuse of power. Constitutionalism, whether in voluntary associations or at the level of the state, is part and parcel of the Western idiom.

Westerners sometimes fail to pause and consider what their own society would be like if moral and religious sanctions and law enforcement agencies were not there to curb the activities of those who are prone to seek power and to abuse positions of power. The fact that Black South Africans have been precluded from the parliamentary process for over three generations, and the fact that power is there to be sought in unchartered political arenas, gives rise to situations in which political conflicts among the country's Black leadership are in danger of becoming endemic.

We have on the one hand the African National Congress' Mission in Exile who claim to be the sole representatives of Black South Africans and regard themselves as a government in exile and dream of one day returning like President Machel or Prime Minister Mugabe to a conquered land to establish their rule. The ANC Mission in Exile's literature is dotted with the phrase: "The struggle for liberation as led by the ANC." On the other hand there are internally based organisations dabbling in Black political power, and sometimes even participating in it, who also claim to be the true and authentic leaders of the people. Both these leaders and my brothers and sisters in the ANC's Mission in Exile reach out for power over the heads of ordinary people, wheel and deal on their behalf, proclaim in their name and are often given the credibility of being authentic in the West.

If a businessmen came to you from South Africa boasting of his business prowess and claiming to be one of the country's top business leaders without bringing with him evidence of real and sustained success, you would not entertain signing contracts with him or dealing with him seriously. And yet when Black so-called

leaders come to this country with no gathered constituency behind them, with no track record of having achieved political ends, Americans deal with them as though they do not need to establish their authenticity.

When the ANC and PAC were banned in 1961, a political vacuum developed in Black South Africa, and when in the early and mid seventies this vacuum began to fill with various political groups and organisations, many of which were extravagant and foolhardy in their misassessment of South African police brutality, the notion arose that constituency politics was dispensable because it was vulnerable to police action. The notion arose that membership-based organisations could not be formed for the same reason, and I want to draw the analogy that political leaders who claimed this could be likened unto businessmen who attempted to do business with no market place infrastructure, and even with no markets.

I set about founding Inkatha in part as a corrective to these mistaken notions. I had the intuitive realisation even then that the armed struggle would fail in the short and medium term; that the West would not come to the aid of Black South Africa; that the ANC Mission in Exile would not come across our borders to deliver us from apartheid, and that the politics of naive confrontation played into the hands of the National Party and its harsh agencies of apartheid enforcement. I realised that if the politics of negotiation were to be embarked upon, Black South Africans would have to build up negotiating bases and this could not be done outside establishing durable, tough Black political organisations capable of surviving the harsh climate in South Africa. I also realised that meaningful negotiation only takes place between groups which have counter-balancing power advantages. I saw the absolute necessity of establishing a Black political organisation which was constituency-based; which was membership-based and which had an eradicable presence in the South African body politic.

I also had at that stage another intuitive insight into our situation. It was that real power inhered in the people. I had witnessed ideological demagogues rise and fall and I witnessed fly-by-night politicians who hit the headlines today and were gone tomorrow. I recognise that power needed at negotiating tables to balance advantages was power which would have to be sought from mass backing by the people. This led me to add the dimension of democracy to the dimensions of constituency politics and the membership base of Inkatha.

I established Inkatha in 1975 and set about the hard, grinding work of organising people and structuring Inkatha into a disciplined force which could be directed towards aims and objectives. I found that people yearned to be organised. They longed for a political home which was not vulnerable to internal strife and external disruption. And I soon found that many thousands of people, ordinary people, ordinary peasants and workers, began working hard

with me to make Inkatha a political reality. Inkatha with its feet on the ground set about its business of vowing not to attempt the impossible; of vowing not to lead the people up the garden path; of vowing not to attempt tactics and strategies which were bound to fail and which would in failing involve ordinary people in paying mindless prices. The hard grinding work of day by day, locality by locality, month by month and region by region establishing Inkatha as a reality, began paying dividends. Black South Africans have now got Inkatha as a political organisation at the very heart of the South African political centre of gravity. It is a disciplined organisation, it is democratic, it is dominated by its own constitutional procedures and it is now the largest Black political constituency ever to have emerged in the history of the country.

When I travel abroad I speak with the authority of one who has nearly a million paid-up members backing him. Whatever I say abroad has the authority of having been tested against the hearts and minds of these nearly one million members and against a very wide throng of supporters beyond them. When I return from trips abroad, I return to report to Inkatha in committee meetings, in its Central Committee meetings, in its National Conference and as it gathers in mass meetings attended by people in their tens of thousands.

And yet when I come to the United States or go to other Western countries, I find the voice of my people trampled upon as media representatives clamour to amplify the voices of the darlings of the press, created by the press, as some kind of Black South African myth Western audiences like to hear about. I find Westerners confused by conflicting signals from Black South Africa and I find them so frequently incapable of making discerning judgments about what voices to heed, and what voices to discount.

In today's heightened American debate about disinvestment and about President Reagan's constructive engagement policy, Black South African names are bandied back and forth and Black views with no real grass root South African authenticity are utilised to further arguments and to validate positions being adopted.

I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that the majority of Black South Africans, and a vast majority at that, seek the vote because they want inclusion in the existing State; seek increased foreign investment because they want the circumstances to improve their lot; and support free enterprise as a system because it provides jobs and creates the wealth which is so desperately needed for essential services. The majority of Black South Africans want more Western involvement in the process of change - they do not want less.

The majority of Black South Africans reject the armed struggle in the here and now and they reject the use of violence for political

seen the futility of pursuing ideological dreams and themselves paying the price for the media prominence which symbolic politics has so often produced for so many.

For me as a leader sitting on the top of a mountain as it were, able to see down both sides, I endorse my people's views because history teaches me to do so, and because all the acquired theoretical insights I have teaches me to do so. I know that the free enterprise system is the most potent tool of development available to us. I espouse it in the here and now knowing that workers and consumers in South Africa are quite capable of dealing with any abuses of it. I see the utter futility of achieving political objectives at the expense of paying unexpectedly high economic prices. I see the desperate need to increase the rate of growth of the South African economy to provide jobs for the millions who are now unemployed or under-employed, and to prepare for the coming population bulge which is being created by the fact that 50 per cent of all Black South Africans are 15 years old and younger. Beyond these South African realities I see wider realities. I see neighbouring States and States as far afield as Zambia ultimately being dependent upon Black South Africans liberating their country from political oppression without destroying its economic foundations.

In terms of the current political process, I also see the need for continuous foreign investment and for an enhanced role for foreign investors. If we are to avoid bloodshed in South Africa we must turn to the negotiating tables. Black bargaining power rises in times of economic upsurges and wanes in times of economic depression. I see the dependency of White upon Black and Black upon White as creating the circumstances for negotiation and I see economic growth as propitious for the development of those circumstances. Tactically and strategically, in the short term and in the long term, whether we be thinking about South Africa or Southern Africa or Africa beyond, big business in America can be quite sure that they are welcome in South Africa among Black South Africans. We need their presence and it is my plea that big business enters more fully into the current rising levels of public debate in the United States to defend their right to invest in South Africa. It is also my plea that they stand firm against pressures to disinvest knowing that it makes both economic and moral sense to do so. It is also my plea that big business does whatever it can in every possible attempt to make the policy of constructive engagement meaningful and not just an empty gesture.

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