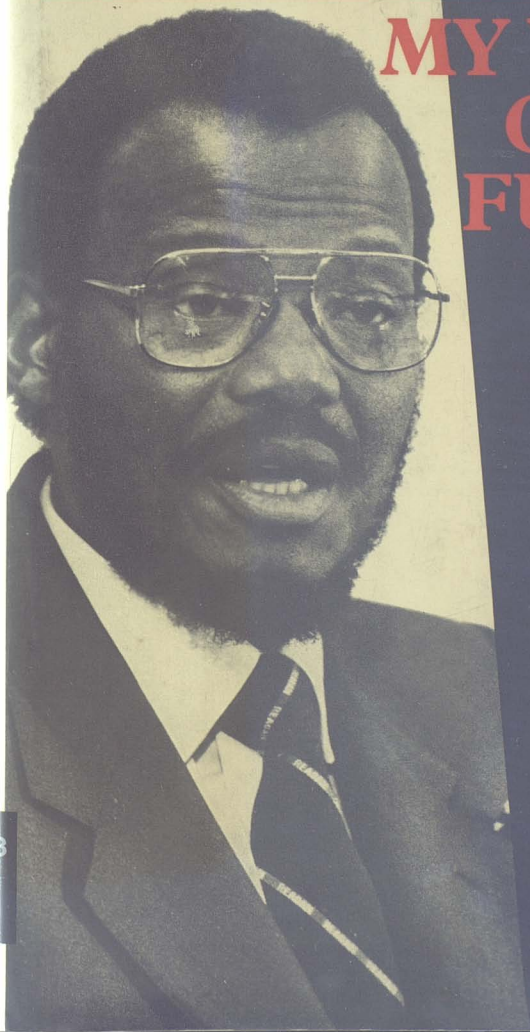


Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi

SOUTH AFRICA

MY VISION
OF THE
FUTURE



This is an intensely personal book by a black South African leader who, when he had the opportunity to remain in his country for peaceful change and negotiation with all race groups, and has continued to do so.

These are the thoughts of Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, a man whose self-sacrifice and personal determination to do what he thought was right in fighting apartheid has lived to see the dawn of a new political era in which, finally, the word he has consistently uttered for so long 'negotiation' is being talked about by black and white as a burgeoning reality and not as a pipe-dream.

The vision of a new South Africa in this book is also the story of a man who sought open platforms within the country to confront his oppressors over and over again with careful words of reason and who quietly but resolutely spelled out what the ultimate consequences of their racism and attempts at white supremacy would be.

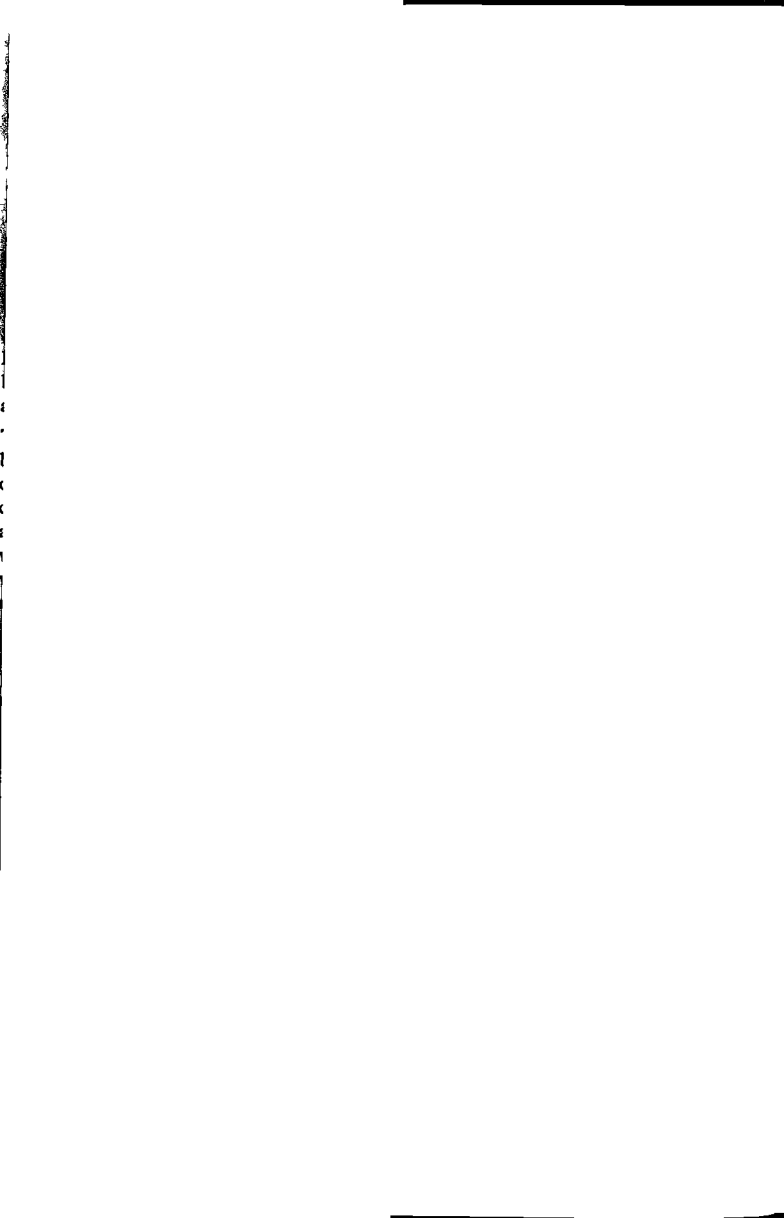
Mangosuthu Buthelezi mobilised and leads Inkatha, the largest membership-based black liberation movement in the history of South Africa. In his more than four decades as a vehement opponent of apartheid, he is credited, more than anybody else, with having blocked successive white South African Government racist plans to Balkanise the country into separate black so-called 'independent' states. As Chief Minister of

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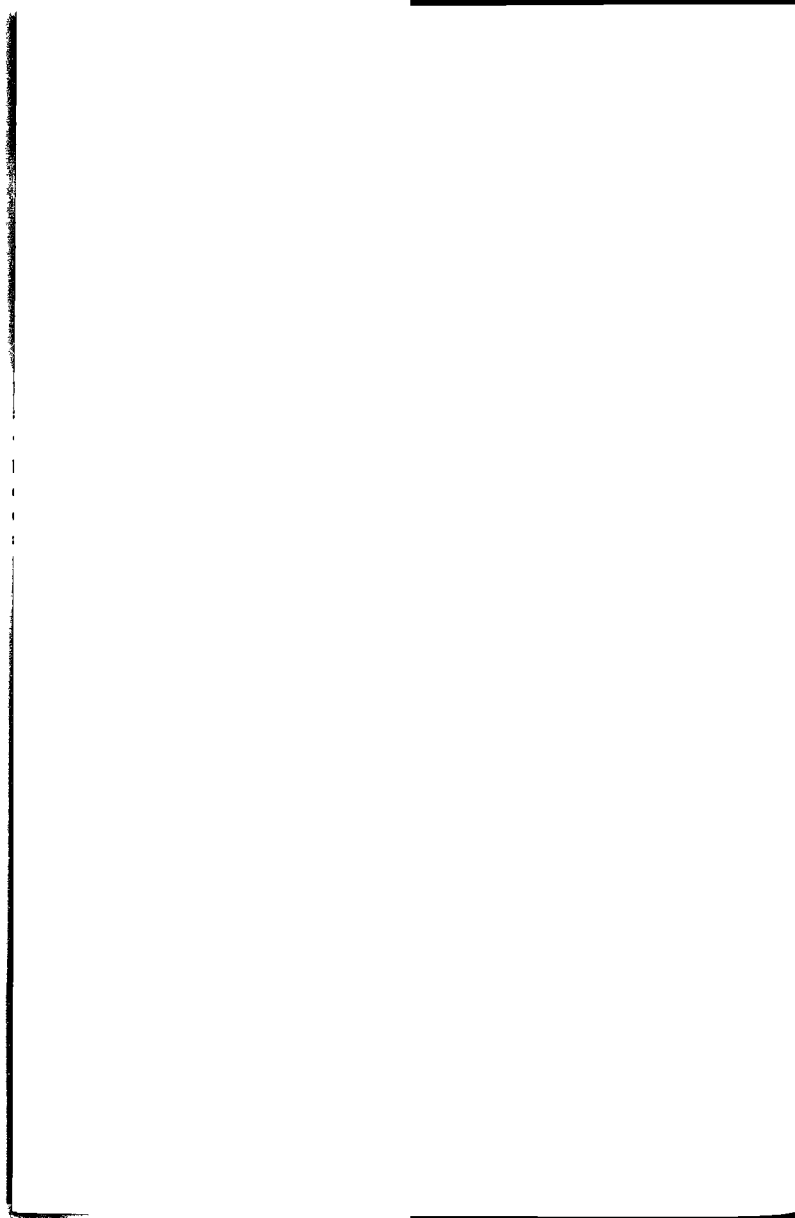
With 8 pages of black-and-white photographs

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*South Africa
My Vision of the Future*



SOUTH AFRICA
My Vision of the Future

Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi

WEIDENFELD AND NICOLSON · LONDON

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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Foreword

I was asked to write this personal volume to set out my thinking, as it stands at present, on South Africa and its future.

It is not meant to be an in-depth treatise but rather my general views as they have developed in more than four decades as a participant in black political opposition to apartheid.

More than anything I want to convey hope and, conversely, sound warnings of dangers as I see them. I want to say that this black South African really believes that finally the time is near when we will be able to chart a new destiny for this country. My plea is for all those who call this land home, all those who truly care, here and abroad, to start now building bridges of national and international unity and reconciliation.

Our liberty to come must be a universal freedom that is nurtured, loved, respected and enjoyed by all. We must be prepared *now* to work at how we will soon create and maintain good government and continuously exercise the highest ideals of democracy. We must take a hard look at ourselves and at each other.

Much has been written about South Africa and there are many worthy books which offer far broader perspectives than I am attempting at this time. I would not like to be judged on what I have left out. Rather, as I have already indicated, I would prefer that my effort be seen as a highly personal explanation of my thoughts and why I have spent my life working for something tangibly better for all South Africans and, in particular, my black brothers and sisters who have suffered so much for so long.

I have incorporated, in some parts, views that I have specifically and consistently expressed in speeches and in writing over the years. The core of my message now is no different to what I have

been saying for many years. South Africa is changing but basic black political attitudes and formal positions have remained constant.

It is my view that both black and white people in this country need to be liberated from apartheid.

I write of my hardships and of those I love who have shared my life, my work and my fears with me. I write of why we came to the conclusions we did at the times we did and why we sometimes stood alone in spite of pressures to adopt other stances. I write of the choices we had and the gut fear in our bellies as we trudged on, hoping against hope that, with all our imperfections, we were playing an honest part in the struggle and faithfully representing all those who looked to us to act on their behalf.

Through all this we were encouraged by a multitude of truly remarkable people who believed in us and supported us with all they had to offer.

Without them we would never have been able to have continued and to have been convinced, as we are today, that we too have something positive to contribute and a constituency to back this up. Politics is, after all, primarily about power and the will of the people to choose their own leaders and promote organisations who present platforms they wish to support.

This book, then, is also a simple tribute to all those who contributed to and shared our vision and determination that non-violence and negotiation were and still are worthy aims and aspirations and who kept the faith in spite of unbelievable pressures.

As I look back I can feel, see and taste the tears of our anguish when, then and even now, all that we have tried to do has been presented by some as being worthless and self-serving or, at best, too moderate for the political palates of the so-called progressive forces. Politicians cry too and there have been bitter heartaches along the way.

I write about the realities around us, the lessons that Africa has taught us over the years, and the kind of future that we believe could offer us genuine peace and prosperity, with human worth paramount in building a society based on all that is universally accepted as decent and compatible with the dignity and rights of all men, women and children.

Today no black South African of my generation could ever conceive of the clock turning back to the time of our youth when,

even compared to the evils of racism as they are practised today, we experienced the most appalling deprivation and humiliation because of the colour of our skin.

No black, however humble, stopped striving for decency to prevail in such a way that there was hope for the future.

We all did what we could do and made decisions during times when choices were few and mobility (politically, economically and otherwise) almost non-existent. I accept that I personally will be judged on my decisions and will defend them if need be. We tried, dear God we tried. We walked some very lonely roads and, finally, there is a real chance that in this lifetime our dreams may well be realised.

There will be no overnight Utopia but the black struggle for liberation has always been to gain full inclusion as equals in South Africa and to work alongside others in eradicating racism and ensuring equality of all before the law and equality in a constitution representing the wishes of the majority.

South Africa is finally entering the first phase of transitional politics towards this goal and now all of us – more than ever before – are on a very perilous path.

The decisions made now will affect governments and generations to come and slowly we are moving forward to meet our fate, whatever it turns out to be.

One of the reasons I have taken the limited time I now have at this juncture to try to encapsulate many of my thoughts in one document, is that I believe it to be crucial that we progress, one positive step at a time, understanding and accepting all that was good and bad in our past while, in a multiplicity of effort, we project what I call a multi-strategy approach and put South Africa first.

This is a call for us to unite as never before; to have trust and faith in each other; to heed the dictates of all our religions because I know of not one that does not prescribe love and respect and reconciliation between all mankind. I want to make the point that I do not believe God has turned His back on South Africa and that He is with us all.

Every South African needs to believe that they can make a difference; that they have a role to play in changing this country for the better.

We now need a multiracial response to a multiracial problem. This should not be seen as a black/white issue (although

regrettably it is at the moment) but, rather, a point in our history when the time has come for momentous change.

It is vitally important that the divisions that have been created between us are buried, once and for all, and that blacks and whites come together and recognise that we *all* have a right and a duty to author our new beginning and to equally share in the subsequent construction of our future.

We desperately need debate, dialogue and compassion. There will be no quick fix and if there is, it won't last. We need to formulate long-term positions and strategies that will work here and which will create a national will to succeed. Nobody, myself and Inkatha – the organisation I represent – should be projected as paramount. There is too much at stake.

The obstacles are enormous. It is going to be tough. Our youth are, for the most part, angry and impatient. They want freedom and they want it now. Who can dispute this? It is tragic that many will never really understand the anger and impatience of the generations before them and too often belittle the sacrifices that were made, the virtue in the patience that was displayed, and the circumstances in which decisions were made.

I will write a lot about anger, and about fear, because that is the legacy that apartheid has left us.

I was an angry young man and to this day I am angry at what my family and I have had to endure and the terrible pain we have had to witness. I have had to learn to channel that anger positively and to try to teach that to others.

We have watched a once prosperous and respected country all but crippled financially and the mere mention of its name become an international signal for derision. Worst of all we have seen lives destroyed and families torn apart, not only by government action but by the fierce will of people to oppose apartheid as they saw fit.

It has been a unique civil war all of its own and both black and white have experienced families and communities bitterly divided. We have all buried our dead and lived with our heartache – and our prejudices.

There is not a South African who hasn't been touched by apartheid in some way or another but the black majority has been humiliated beyond belief by it. We are now snarling at each other, killing each other. At the same time we have seen ever-increasing numbers of well-intentioned anti-apartheid activists. In their own minds they have skilfully taken sides on issues to further the cause

of peaceful co-existence. In reality they have proceeded to further exacerbate tensions by highlighting divisions instead of consolidating black and white opposition to all that is hateful and wrong.

There are many forces at play and numerous agendas and yet, miraculously, I have no doubt that the vast majority of black South Africans still put the achievement of reconciliation through negotiation as the country's highest priority. There is now evidence that ever-increasing numbers of white South Africans want this too.

The revolutionaries abroad, many of whom have waged an unsuccessful armed struggle for more than twenty five years, are also angry and impatient. Their dream of returning as a government from exile is slowly but surely fading away as national imperatives take hold within the country. Any role they will play will be according to what they have to constructively offer a post-apartheid South Africa. Their scenarios for the future will be scrutinised along with all the other political options which will one day be placed on a negotiating table.

The time is ripe for democracy to emerge on South Africa's political centre stage. We also run the risk of the country falling prey to strategies that will fail; of ruthless manoeuvring that will be the downfall of us all.

Nobody can predict the future, least of all I. Our destiny is uncertain as the momentum for change intensifies and the country is faced with varying political, social and economic options. In the end, the people will decide and I have great faith in the people of South Africa.

White extremists and black extremists are being shunted into the obscurity they deserve and what better sign can there be?

I am in awe of the men, women and children of black South Africa who have, step-by-step, in a veritable tidal wave of determination and necessity, broken down the barriers of apartheid. The victory to come will be significantly theirs and deservedly so because, for the most part, they have met their objectives with dignity and without the kind of hideous violence (advocated by some) which would truly have torn the country asunder.

They should be an inspiration for *all* the people of South Africa and an international example of how the poorest of the poor can resolutely overcome injustice without having to indulge in despair and destruction.

The authors of apartheid and their successors and supporters are staring failure in the face. You can smell the rotting carcass of this vile and evil legislation throughout the country, from Cape Town to Pretoria, from Boksburg to Carletonville.

Now we have to come to terms with our past and prepare for the future while acknowledging that although many have had the strength to withstand the assault that apartheid has had on the souls of so many, others have been grievously wounded.

I think that in many ways there was an element of forgiveness and compromise inherent in the political rationales of previous generations of black (and white) activists that is rapidly becoming extinct within the breasts of today's young radicals. Some have already lost these precious human qualities.

In setting out my thoughts and feelings, again and again the subject of the unity of the nation became paramount. It is for this reason that I have, for the most part, deliberately avoided attempts to score points against and highlight individuals and organisations which have declared themselves my adversaries for one reason or another and to dredge up the rights and wrongs of our unhappy past associations, whatever they may have been or continue to be. I have had to make various observations regarding some but I have attempted to make them in the context that nobody should be excluded from being involved in authoring a new South Africa. If I am criticised for this, so be it. The time has come for us to bury our differences as much as we can and I would not like this book to be used as yet another launching pad for bitter recriminations and retaliatory unconstructive argument.

It is enough for me to say that the nature of human experience since time began has been about diversity of opinion and the right of all men and women to freely express themselves as they see fit. South Africa needs all voices to be heard and my point of view is a part of this whole.

If I have one particular prayer it is that the once revered spirit of African humanism – Ubuntu/Botho – experiences a rebirth throughout this continent in order that there be true reconciliation between all and that we learn to love and to share with fervour and to agree to disagree with intelligence and humility. There has been too much hate, too much distrust, too much betrayal. It has tainted us all and it is time we moved on.