CHAPTER – 2
INKATHA AND THE POLITICS OF COEXISTENCE
(1975-1980)

Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, as discussed in the last chapter, was central to the formation of Inkatha. From his traditional position as chief of Buthelezi clan he rose to become an important actor in the politics of the country. Even before the establishment of Inkatha, Buthelezi had already acquired the status of a prominent leader both within the country and abroad due to his outspoken criticism of apartheid. In 1972 he was voted ‘Newsmaker of the Year’ by the South African Society of Journalists.1 According to a survey conducted in Soweto township in 1973 Buthelezi was rated as the most popular leader followed by Nelson Mandela.2 In 1974, editor of the Rand Daily Mail newspaper Mr. Laurance Gandar described Buthelezi as the man whose internationally recognised stature had given black people generally a new sense of dignity and a new sense of identity and worth’.3

What made him famous was not only his strong disapproval of apartheid

policy but also his and Inkatha’s diametrically opposite approach vis-à-vis the ANC and others to achieve liberation. This aspect shall be discussed in subsequent section on Inkatha-ANC relationship. It is important to note in this context that Buthelezi’s criticism of apartheid, as noted earlier, preceded the formation of Inkatha. He had already been into politics since the year he assumed the leadership of Buthelezi clan. In fact the approach that Inkatha adopted to achieve liberation from apartheid state, in its view, was the result of a careful and pragmatic assessment of the political and economic circumstances of the day. On the one hand, oppressive state power was at its peak since Sharpeville massacre resulting in impotence of militant and radical organisations and, on the other, harsh economic realities of the people (particularly Zulus) in the face of ‘high unemployment, soil erosion, drought, even starvation’ put them in a very miserable condition. This, in the opinion of Buthelezi, called for a practical approach devoid of rhetoric and romanticism which could effectively challenge the state as well as poverty of the masses. By the time Inkatha was established, he had developed a basic premise that liberation could be achieved by exerting incremental leverage on the apartheid state.

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INKATHA'S MULTI-STRATEGY APPROACH

As a result Inkatha adopted a multi-strategy approach towards the attainment of liberation. A careful examination of various aspects of this approach would help in comprehending later actions of the organisation. The first and most important aspect of this was a forthright denial of one of the basic objectives of apartheid - homeland independence. Being the largest and most unified of South Africa's ethnic groups, acceptance of independence by KwaZulu homeland would have given credibility to the grand apartheid design of Pretoria. Pretoria was trying assiduously to realise this objective since 1960s as international pressure against racial discrimination intensified.

The idea behind the denial was not only to ensure African participation in national political institutions but also retention of South African citizenship. As told by Buthelezi, one of the aims of his acceptance of the chief ministership of KwaZulu was to prevent the homeland becoming independent. Emphasising this aspect he told some black Americans in 1978:

Apartheid cannot be brought to its logical conclusion unless South African government brings all the so-called homelands to the point where they voluntarily opt for Pretoria-style independence. If every homeland other than KwaZulu opted for independence, the blacks who remain in a common South Africa - the Zulus alone - will still outnumber the whites.  

This, in his view, would compel the Afrikanerdum to look for constitutional

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alternative paving eventually for establishment of a non-racial South Africa.

The second aspect of multi-strategy approach was to avoid, as long as possible, violence and armed struggle against the state. This opposition to violence emanated from both historical as well as pragmatic understanding of South African situation. In an interview with Wessel De Kock, Buthelezi had noted the historical reasons for his pursuance of non-violence in liberation struggle. In his view Zulu history was full of oppression in the hands of Afrikaners and British settlers. Dinizulu’s imprisonment was a testimony to this. Non-violence was needed now since Zulus had shed lot of blood in the past.\(^6\)

Drawing lessons from history since the days of king Shaka, Oscar Dhlomo, a former secretary-general of Inkatha once said:

You talk about the armed struggle or violence or whatever, Zulus have been through it. Real violence, not just throwing petrol bombs. During this period of wars, they lost kings, their kings were disgraced, they were exiled, they lost their land ... They started with a huge chunk of land stretching from Mozambique to Transkei. Today they are left with bits and pieces all over the

\(^6\) He said: As a South African of Zulu extraction, I know there have been wars in this country, there has been bloodshed. There has been bloodshed between Zulus and Afrikaners, the Zulus and English, the last armed struggle in South Africa was staged by the Zulus in the rebellion of 1906. My grandfather was charged with treason, the king of the Zulus, Dinizulu, and he was whisked way. He was first given life imprisonment like Nelson Mandela and then when Louis Botha, his friend became prime minister, he had him released and sent to the farm “Uitkyk”. My mother used to tell me about all these things. I knew the founder of the ANC Dr. Seme, my uncle by marriage, and I also knew Chief Luthuli intimately...

These are my roots, that’s why I have pursued non-violence... lot of blood has been shed in this country. I don’t see why more blood should be shed...Ibid, p. 39.
province of Natal. The armed struggle didn’t help the Zulus.\(^7\)

Coming to pragmatic understanding of South African situation, it acted at two different levels - economic and military. Economic justification for following a non-violent course of action was rooted in miseries of the blacks in the country in general and KwaZulu in particular. Blacks in KwaZulu were perpetually affected by poverty, lack of employment opportunities, low level of education and many other economic handicaps in comparison to their other racial counterparts.

Inkatha leadership argued that economic development (which was urgently needed) could only be possible under conditions of peace. Delivering a lecture to a group of visiting Americans in October 1976, Buthelezi said, “we blacks cannot afford to precipitate a holocaust in our country... Change that destroys the base of future development would be self-defeating. My people have been abused beyond the point of human endurance. They can no longer tolerate their insufferable position....”\(^8\)

Military justification as argued by Inkatha has to be seen from the point of feasibility of such an exercise. Inkatha believed that the military power of

\(^7\) Ibid, p. 59.

apartheid state was too strong to be challenged by the blacks. In its view, violence in South Africa would 'turn the people into cannon fodder', thus the success of such action was bleak. The leadership of Inkatha felt that the 'tactics of hot pursuit across borders would be used against the marauding freedom fighters' by the government. Hence a non-violent strategy which had chances of reconciliation would be the right kind of strategy to attain liberation.

Impact of religion and morality has also been evident in regard to the adoption of non-violence. "I have, for moral and Christian reasons as well as pragmatic reasons, chosen the path of peaceful change," said Buthelezi. Christianity, to him, 'offers the only possibility for reconciliation' in a divided society such as South Africa.

The third aspect, a logical derivation from the second one, of Inkatha's approach was its adherence to negotiated settlement of apartheid, rather than armed struggle. Unlike other political organisations Inkatha went beyond the confines of protest politics by proposing several constitutional and political

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9 Quoting a London magazine entitled African Development (April 1976), Buthelezi once said 'South Africa has an army of 38,000 (31,000 conscripts), and 138,000 in the active reserve (citizen force); reservists served 19 days annually for five years. Navy: 4000(1400 conscripts), reserves 10,400. Air Force: 8,500 (3000 conscripts), 3000, reservists, and 75,000 territorial commandos'. Besides this, main weaponry of the defence force included 140 tanks, 20 comet medium tanks, about 1400 armoured cars and a variety of light and medium artillery including combat aircraft, light bombers etc. Ibid, p. 4.


11 Ibid, p. 4.
reform initiatives as well as forging unity among the blacks.

The final aspect of multi-strategy approach was Inkatha's fight against poverty which became all the more important in a homeland like KwaZulu. Notwithstanding the significance of political liberation, Inkatha put prime emphasis on upliftment of masses. The view propounded by Inkatha and its president Buthelezi in this regard was different from the one supported not only by political formations in South Africa but also by other African countries. The doctrine of 'seeking political freedom first' was unacceptable to Inkatha president, who opined that 'wrestling with ... social problems could not be delayed until the day of political liberation'. The shackles of poverty, hunger and disease, in his view, needed to be cut off as they could preclude the success of liberation struggle. He said, "... it is too simplistic to imagine that mere destruction of apartheid system would automatically spells out the birth of a just society ... it is quite conceivable that the gap between the "Haves" and "Have-nots" might even widen...." Hence efforts should be made to provide employment avenues to the poor which would not only contribute to the success of struggle, but also give them back their 'dignity that conquest and oppression had taken away ... and abject poverty continued to deny'.

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12 Kane-Burman, n. 4, p. 161.
13 Buthelezi, n. 8, p. 75.
14 Kane-Burman, n. 4, p. 162.
Applications of Multi-Strategy Approach

So far the discussion was limited to a theoretical level. Inkatha's politics in the period of anti-apartheid struggles can be said to be the application of multi-strategy approach. In fact, it was the base on which the edifice of struggle was constructed. The discussion below focuses on the ways Inkatha tried to apply multi-strategy approach to further anti-apartheid struggles. Hence it reflects primarily the viewpoints of the organisation. Although the period is limited to 1975-80, in all subsequent chapters the application of the approach will be looked into as it is considered to be basic to an understanding of Inkatha.

Inkatha and Issue of Homeland Independence

Opposition to homeland independence was already on the agenda even before the formation of Inkatha. Buthelezi not only consistently refused independence for KwaZulu, but also dissuaded other homeland leaders from doing so thereby delivering a serious blow to the grand apartheid design of Pretoria government. Attending a conference of chief executive officers of homelands administration in Umtata, capital of Transkei on November 10, 1973, he made a powerful plea for an alternative to the independent homelands. The ideal of the Federal Union of the Autonomous states in Southern Africa as an alternative to apartheid was adopted at this meeting.
He was highly critical of the homelands accepting independence as in his opinion this gave the regime a breathing space and further prolonged the suffering of blacks. He said:

… blacks in this country have one homeland which they all share together: South Africa... "South Africa will never be divided into a number of black mini-states dominated by a sprawling white monster-state. This is a figment of the white man’s mind, which is more a symptom of his political megalomania than of political reality". 16

Buthelezi even declined to participate in the independence celebration of Transkei, which, in his opinion, stripped the blacks of their birth right as South Africans. Inkatha considered ‘separate development’ (as the homeland system was otherwise called by whites) as nothing more than white baasskep (domination).

In 1979, Inkatha issued one lakh pamphlets in Soweto and other townships on the Reef, urging blacks not to sell their birth-right as South Africans. "Inkatha had been extensively advertising for non-Zulu to apply for citizenship of KwaZulu to ensure their South African citizenship", told Mr. Arthur J. Konigkramer, a member of Inkatha’s National Council and its Treasurer General, in a personal interview. 17 Buthelezi had even warned that


16 M.G. Buthelezi, n. 8, p. 2.

17 Based on interview with Mr. A.J. Konigkramer. Durban, October 20, 1998.
Inkatha would resort to arms if Pretoria were to force KwaZulu into accepting independence. The organisation’s unambiguous stand on homeland independence issue made the state not to pursue any further action in this regard, rather the focus got shifted to reforms in apartheid in 1980s and attempt to get Inkatha’s support as moderate black force.

Inkatha and Strategy of Non-violence

For the reasons mentioned above Inkatha followed non-violence as a strategy to attain liberation. It is significant to note that at a time when Buthelezi was becoming stronger in national politics by his open criticism of apartheid and the strength of Inkatha; Black Consciousness movement (SASO and BPC) was also drawing attention of people, particularly the youths in the urban areas. Under this circumstance, in order to divert the anger and energy of youth into more constructive activities (not in line of BC) Inkatha established the Inkatha Youth Brigade (IYB) in 1997. Members of IYB were exhorted to work for rural poor and participate in the struggle for liberation in a peaceful way. The Inkatha Women’s Brigade (IWB) was also entrusted with the role of ensuring that the young people were brought up properly in accordance with defined ideology, besides its own contribution to non-violent struggle.

Few more aspects of Inkatha’s non-violent strategy need to be explained. Peaceful change or non-violence was seen in the context of white intransigence, which manifested on many occasions. The president of Inkatha on many
platforms expressed the leadership’s frustration at white regime’s obduracy that might lead to violent confrontation with the state. Pointing out at such a possibility Buthelezi once said in the course of an interview:

... there will come a time when people debate the question of war, and I have said that although I pursue non-violence ferociously, my people’s options are my options ... if my people want violence, then, however reluctantly, it is my job to lead them through those dark waters. God forbid, because violence in this country will have no victors....”

Referring to his meeting with prime minister Mr. John Vorster on October 08, 1976, Buthelezi said to a group of visiting journalists: that the chances of a peaceful change seemed more and more remote, due to Mr. Vorster’s clear intransigence. He predicted holocaust, if the government failed to ‘exploit opportunities for effecting such a peaceful change”.

At a meeting of homeland leaders with Mr. Vorster in Cape Town on 22 January 1975, Buthelezi warned that unless blacks were given their share in power, unrest and possible civil disobedience would be inevitable. On another occasion he did forecast a “bloody revolution” and in 1979 predicted that there would be more Sharpevilles and Sowetos because Mozambique and Angola had given violence credibility.

These warnings often created consternation in the

18 De Kock, n. 5, p. 39.
government circles as they thought them to be threats of violence. But Buthelezi argued that violence could be warded off as a result of his warnings. Due to Inkatha's organisational strength emanating from huge membership and discipline and planning, these warnings would act as a pressure tactic on the government, or at least in the minds of apartheid ideologues. Thus, Inkatha emphasised on the role of 'democratic opposition within the existing institutions' which, in its opinion would form the very basis of future society.  

Another crucial aspect of this analysis is that though Inkatha's approach was non-violence, it claimed to have not harboured any animosity towards organisations which followed armed struggle as a strategy for change. In a speech addressed to the Canadian Anglican National Executive council in November 1975 Buthelezi said, "... I well understand what drives those of my brothers (meaning ANC and PAC cadres) who now resort to violence to do so. I respect their decision because quite clearly it must be a decision they have not reached lightheartedly...." The difference was one of strategy or techniques rather than goal.

21 Buthelezi, n. 18, p. 75.

22 Ibid, p. 74.
Inkatha and Politics of Negotiation

Inkatha since its inception espoused the principle that change can be brought about by negotiations. Towards a negotiated settlement of apartheid and framing of a new constitution Buthelezi sought to prepare the ground for a national convention which would include all black leaders, including the exiled and imprisoned ones. Addressing a gathering in Soweto in March 1976, Buthelezi pointed out the need for holding series of national conventions on matters such as economy, homeland independence and foreign policy. As early as 1973, he openly called for the release of Nelson Mandela and other Robben Island prisoners and granting of immunity to Oliver Tambo to facilitate his return from exile; so that these leaders could participate in the national convention. Again at his first meeting with Prime Minister Mr. B.J. Vorster the issue of the release of Mandela and others was raised very strongly. At a time when the ANC was virtually non-existent within the country, Buthelezi, by using Inkatha and also by publicly supporting the role of the ANC, kept alive the memory of the banned organisation. “We owe it to the founding fathers of the ANC, now banned, and their successors, some deceased, some exiled, and some incarcerated, to uphold the tradition of this titanic struggle for liberation”. Buthelezi, with the power of Inkatha by his side, not only

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23 Ibid, pp.29-30.

24 Quoted in De Kock, n. 5, 104.
proposed a peaceful and realistic alternative to armed struggle in the form of national convention, but also made it impossible for the government to ignore the exiled liberation organisations from any such future dispensation.

Inkatha was also engaged in talks with the whites both in the government and the opposition, especially in post-Soweto period. It held discussions with the Progressive Reform Party (PRP) with a view to forming a 'meaningful structure of opposition'. In 1980 Inkatha and Progressive Federal Party (the successor of PRP) decided to set up a steering committee between them for the purpose of liaising.\(^{25}\) The organisation also entered into talks with the Pretoria regime. Buthelezi had several rounds of talks with many Afrikaner leaders such as Gerrit Viljoen, Chairman of Broederbond; Dr Piet Kornhof, Minister of Cooperation and Development and other National Party MPs. On the other hand Inkatha Youth Brigade entered into dialogues with the Afrikanese Student Bond (ASB) which was a training ground for future apartheid leaders and a source of recruitment to South African Defence Force (SADF).

In all these talks Inkatha tried to act as a bridge-builder between the Nationalists and the ANC. Besides highlighting the evils of apartheid, it argued in favour of composite dialogue between blacks and white. Emphasis was put

on the need for establishing contacts with the banned organisations. In regard to IYB’s talks with ASB, Musa Zondi, a former chairperson of IYB and its present chairperson Emeritus (honorary), said that in their dialogue with the ASB they had ‘espoused a very clear and consistent message that apartheid was evil and had to be discarded in its entirety’. These dialogues were later expanded, as told by Zondi, to include other conservative Afrikaner students’ organisations and pressure was mounted on them to realise the value of a non-racial society.

Closely linked to the politics of negotiation was the issue of black unity which Inkatha espoused with all seriousness and vigour. The drive for black unity was a result of black men’s desire to see the world beyond institutionalised discrimination, restore a sense of dignity and decency of life and more importantly lead a life based as fraternal values in relation to other race groups. In the opinion of Inkatha black people in South Africa had a common destiny, notwithstanding their differences, when it comes to the question of liberation. Delivering the policy speech to KwaZulu legislative assembly Buthelezi said:

... The fact that the Nationalist regime uses our ethnicity to divide us, should not make us go to the other extreme, and pretend that there is no Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Shangaan, Pedi, Tswana or Zulu Languages and such cultures ... our ethnic backgrounds are not necessarily contrary to the promotion of the large Bunto-Botho

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26 Based on interview with Musa Zondi, Ulundi, October 24, 1998.
ideal. In fact their cross pollination makes our black culture rich. \textsuperscript{27}

Criticising the homeland leaders who opted for independence and also emphasising the need of black unity, he said, “The problem that bedevils the situations is the lack of black unity which has guaranteed the continuation of apartheid”. \textsuperscript{28}

Despite setbacks to homeland independence issue, Buthelezi tried to frustrate the plan by appealing to the leaders and convincing them its evil impact. Along this line of thinking Inkatha was a party to the formation of Black Unity Front (BUF) in 1976 which was seen as a basis for black common strategy both to achieve liberation and also to avoid confrontation in post-liberation period. But this solidarity attempt could not take off in face of mass arrests and oppressive government actions.

The next effort to achieve black unity was the formation of South African Black Alliance (SABA) on 11 January 1978 with the coming together of Inkatha, (coloured) Labour Party of the Reverend Allen Hendrickse, the (Indian) Reform Party and later, the leaders of two other homelands, QwaQwa and KaNgwane. Buthelezi was elected chairman of SABA. Clarifying the aims and objectives of the SABA Buthelezi said:


\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, p. 89.
... one of the aims of the Alliance is liaison between the constituent members of the Alliance and other organisations and one of the main objectives is to arrange to hold a national convention, in which people of all races and different political persuasions will be represented... There is a lot of work that needs to be done in this respect".29

Despite its clearly stated objectives SABA could not produce the desired results. In the opinion of apartheid mass media this was seen as a "ganging up" against whites.30 On the other hand, non-inclusion of other homeland leaders except the two mentioned above, who viewed SABA as an instrument of 'Zulu domination', contributed to its weakness.31 The final straw came in 1984 when Hendrickse of Labour Party defected to join newly created tricameral legislature and KaNgwane leader Enos Mabuza changed allegiance to the ANC. Though SABA got disintegrated, Inkatha’s efforts at black unity, as will be seen later, continued in the 1980s.

**Inkatha and the Fight Against Poverty**

As mentioned in previous discussions, the driving force behind Inkatha’s economic policy was the organisation and its leaders’ concern for poverty in KwaZulu. Guided by this realisation Inkatha supported foreign investment albeit conditional and also opposed to imposition of sanctions. On both these

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29 Ibid., p. 120.

30 De Kock, n. 5, p. 106.

issues it had serious differences with other organisations such as the ANC, PAC, BPC and others. On a visit to Canada in 1975 Buthelezi said that industrial development was vital to the economic development of South Africa and disinvestment would accentuate poverty while not necessarily leading to political change.\textsuperscript{32} In his view alleviation of poverty could be possible by foreign investment, hence the two are inter-linked. Buthelezi said:

If my people have to remain in South Africa, they must eat, they must buy clothes, they must educate their children. They need work. I am not speaking for white South Africa. But I do speak for black South Africa. Any drying up to the stream of foreign investments in a country still so dependent on them would impede economic growth of the country generally, injure those economic activities which have been the largest absorbers of foreign capital, such as the mines and secondary industries, and so cause a decline in the volume of employment.\textsuperscript{33}

Inkatha in order to counter the exploitative nature of foreign capital rejected blanket acceptance of investment in the name of providing jobs. Foreign investment in the past had only benefited the whites and perpetuated inequalities among people. Explaining the disadvantages of capital, Buthelezi said that it (foreign capital) enabled ‘the central government to finance programmes of separate development or apartheid’, besides propping up white military might.\textsuperscript{34} Echoing the position of Inkatha, he explained, ‘… some form

\textsuperscript{32} Temkin, n. 2, p. 339.

\textsuperscript{33} Buthelezi, n. 8, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{34} For detail discussion on disadvantages of foreign capital see, Ibid, pp. 76-77, and Kane-Burman, n. 4, p. 168.
of a free enterprise system in which the private sector is permitted to play a
creative role would be best option for South Africa. But I would argue, on the
other hand, against unrestrained capitalism in which the dependency of South
African economy would be perpetuated”.35 The investment must aim at
economic empowerment of the deprived sections of society-blacks and give
them equal opportunities to compete with the privileged whites.

While rejecting ‘unfettered capitalism’, Inkatha followed, what
Buthelezi called, ‘African communalism’, a form of socialism derived from
Tanzania and Zambia. This system had promoted private enterprises and
protected the interests of people through state-owned organisations which, in
the ultimate analysis, acted as insulators for the evils of capitalism (dividing
people into rich and poor).36 In other words, this was an attempt at making
capitalism of the western kind suitable to the African (or South African)
condition by clipping its exploitative wings.

A new agency, KwaZulu Development Corporation, was established in
1978 with the purpose of implementing African Communalism. The board of
the Corporation had members nominated by KwaZulu Government and the
Ministry of Cooperation and Development and its capital was fully provided by
the Republic. KwaZulu government under the leadership of Buthelezi

35 Buthelezi, n. 8, p. 140.

Section), September 21, 1975.
conceived the idea of tripartnership companies under which (white and foreign) capital was allowed in the homelands in the partnership with the KDC and blacks as shareholders.\textsuperscript{37} The business initiatives, besides encouraging black investments, promoted competitive market attitudes among the business community and made available to people things at competitive prices.\textsuperscript{38}

But Inkatha had to face strong opposition from Inyanda (a body of local traders and petty businessmen) which perceived this arrangement as threat to local African business interests. On this ground the establishment of Checkers supermarket chain in partnership with KDC and some Zulu traders in Madadani (KwaZulu) was resisted by Inyanda. It soon aligned with the Inala Party and the king and a campaign of sort was launched on this issue. This conflict was finally resolved after an apology was tendered by Inyanda to the KwaZulu government and both sides agreeing to establish a wholesale joint venture (Khulani Holdings Ltd.).\textsuperscript{39} By early 1980 investment under tripartnership venture reached a total of R9 million with the possibility of some more ventures in the pipeline.\textsuperscript{40}

Rejection of unfettered capitalism and the attempt to bridge the gap

\textsuperscript{37} \emph{Natal Mercury}, June 25, 1975.

\textsuperscript{38} For objectives of tripartnership business. see the address by M.G. Buthelezi at the opening of Multi-Market-Checkers-KwaZulu. \emph{Madadeni}. (Thursday), November 24, 1977.

\textsuperscript{39} For a discussion of this conflict, see Ibid Also See Southall, n. 25, pp. 465-6.

\textsuperscript{40} \emph{Post}, April 17, 1980.
between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ led Inkatha to support labour issues. In order to regulate the companies working against the interest of workers and to impose some sort of sanction, such as consumer boycott on them, Inkatha resolved to monitor labour practices in 1978 in both local and foreign companies. As a guide it used various employment codes such as the Sullivan, EEC, Canadian and South African Urban Foundation employment codes practiced during the period.

Wage disputes concerning African workers was a major issue that Inkatha had taken up. Even before its formation, during Durban strikes in February 1973, Mr. Barney Dladla, a member of KwaZulu cabinet responsible for labour affairs, was involved in negotiation for striking workers at the Alusaf aluminium smelter in Richards Bay. Buthelezi had also called upon the workers at several points of time to mobilise their worker and consumer power so that the armed might of the apartheid state would not be able to prevail against their unity. The KwaZulu government also supported the cause of black workers at a time when trade unions were not recognised by the government.

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41 This is a set of principles authored by Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, Director, General Motors Corporation; governing the US companies in South Africa in their employment practices and other related issues.


43 For Inkatha’s position vis-a-vis workers, see Natal Weekly, September 6, 1973; Post, July 18, 1978; Financial Mail, August 11, 1978; Star, April 15, 1980.
For the reasons noted earlier, Inkatha also resisted imposition of sanctions against South Africa on the ground that this would affect blacks more than whites,\textsuperscript{44} because blacks were at the receiving end. Economic sanction would mean end of investment by foreign capital which was undesirable for Inkatha considering KwaZulu's poor economic condition, unemployment and poverty.

Evaluation of Multi-Strategy Approach

Despite the positive aspects mentioned above, both at theoretical level as well as in application as seen in the period under discussion, multi-strategy suffers from many shortcomings. The views propounded by the radical school which generally supports the line of thinking of the ANC, SACP and others shall also be touched upon in this evaluation.

The issue of homeland independence, one of the important aspects of Inkatha's approach, can be evaluated from two different angles. The logic behind creation of homeland, as discussed in previous chapter, was two fold – political and economic. So far as the political side was concerned KwaZulu's non-acceptance of independence was a major blow to the apartheid state. It stopped balkanisation of South Africa into several black ethnic states. KwaZulu, the homeland of more than seven million Zulus, if became

\textsuperscript{44} Natal Mercury, January 30, 1978.
independent would have meant that the system was working. So the grand apartheid design of permanent separation of blacks from South Africa could not reach its logical height. But to what extent Inkatha was successful in fighting the system by working within the parameters of government policy, was doubtful so far as the economic aspect of homeland system was concerned. Homelands were created with a view to establishing cheap (black) labour reserves for white-run industries. Except the people whose labour was required, all others (old, women, children and others) remained in the confines of homelands. Even the African labour force was defined as 'temporary sojourners' in white South Africa and divided into unskilled migrants and few semi-skilled urban dwellers. These migrants were the responsibility of homelands, whereas the semi-skilled labourers were confined to strictly controlled townships in the urban peripheries. Influx control laws defining movement, occupation and residence regulated African access to urban industrial areas controlled by whites. Homeland system along with influx control laws helped the state to control black labour force and restrict black population in urban areas, hence strengthened the economic basis of apartheid. The issue is, did the denial of independence by KwaZulu in anyway affect the economic aspect discussed above. Although it remained within the South African state KwaZulu was essentially a homeland. Zulus from the area were working as labourers in townships on the Reef and other areas and the left out population were mainly women, old and children. So far as economics of
apartheid was concerned KwaZulu served the intended purpose. It is difficult to derive any impact of Inkatha's homeland policy on the weakening of apartheid state in this context. In fact economically the organisation could hardly put any pressure on the state for change.

This shall be further examined in the evaluation of Inkatha's policy of fighting poverty and its economic policy. It is important to note that Inkatha's policy in this regard was a major source of dissatisfaction among the rival organisations as they considered the homeland a source of Inkatha as well as Buthelezi's prominence. In their view Inkatha used the political leverage that accrued from homeland to suppress its opponents thereby strengthening the position of apartheid state.

However the criticism of Inkatha by ANC on this issue has to be seen from different angle. ANC's hostility was a result of clash of strategies and independent line of struggle followed by Buthelezi (see section on ANC and Inkatha relationship), rather than strong disapproval of homeland system. Had Buthelezi accepted ANC's leadership in struggles, perhaps it would not have criticised Inkatha in the way it did in 1980s.

Secondly, Inkatha's strategy of non-violence was more due to pragmatic reasons as mentioned earlier, rather than faith in pacifist belief. Buthelezi had said many times that if all the options were closed, violence could be the only alternative. In an interview he said, "It is sometimes difficult to maintain this opposition (by peaceful protest). My stand on violence is not ideological in the
sense of being a pacifist. If a person were to hit me I would hit back. My adherence to my stand is mainly for pragmatic reasons...". This aspect will be dealt in more detail in the analysis of violence in the 1980s and 1990s. This apart, Inkatha’s opposition to protest politics such as boycott, stayaway etc. was criticised by radical organisations as collaborative, hence ineffective for struggles. These organisations rejected the politics of coexistence as followed by Inkatha. They show in it an expansionist design of Inkatha by misleading people.46

Thirdly, Inkatha’s policy of change through negotiation was also subject to criticisms from radical organisations. They attached its approach to its association with homeland. It was argued that since Inkatha was working within the structures laid down by the government it was not in a position to fight apartheid except by means of negotiation. ANC/SACP alliance, PAC and other organisations which supported armed struggle to overthrow apartheid were not willing to enter into any kind of negotiation without abrogation of apartheid laws.47

Inkatha on its part remained committed to the politics of negotiation and

45 The Star, August 19, 1980.


47 For a discussion ANC/SACP strategy, see Anthea J. Jeffrey, The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict (Johannesburg, 1997), pp. 15-21.
ruled out violence and even protest actions such as boycott, stayaways etc. It can be said that it was neither feasible nor desirable on Inkatha’s part to accept something other than negotiation as a means of change.

This was because the organisation’s main activities and support were linked to KwaZulu homeland (whose development was on its agenda) which was a creation of apartheid, any radical stand against Pretoria would have adversely affected the organisation. Pretoria was a major source of revenue and investment in the homeland. Notwithstanding the traditional position of Buthelezi as King’s prime minister (Buthelezi clan had traditionally acted as King’s prime ministers), the position of KwaZulu’s chief minister cannot be entirely delinked from the homeland system. Because it gave a modern meaning to an otherwise traditional position. Buthelezi had to maintain a balance between his position as chief minister of KwaZulu and president of Inkatha on the one hand and a critic of apartheid on the other. Quitting one at the cost of another was politically not desirable. This was the core issue behind the policy of negotiated change, because it suited both the purposes.

This argument can be extended to the multi-strategy approach as a whole. The rationale was that this approach served the twin purposes as mentioned above. It secured the position of Inkatha leadership without being marginalised or branded as outright collaborators like the independent homeland leaders and at the same time made Inkatha a vocal critic of apartheid albeit moderate one. An alternative approach (of the radical school) would have
meant not only marginalisation of the leadership before ANC/SACP alliance leaders (who had international acceptability) but also the organisation itself. Multi-strategy approach provided an independent line of actions.

Finally, Inkatha's fight against poverty through its economic policy can also be criticised from various angles. This is, however, not to underestimate the sound principles on which this policy was based such as opposition to exploitative capital, need of investment for economic empowerment etc. as discussed in previous section. ANC and others who supported disinvestment and economic sanctions to exert pressure on apartheid state for change found the policy of Inkatha detrimental to the cause of struggles. This of course reflects the impact of Marxism on ANC/SACP alliance due to Soviet patronage. In their view whilst Inkatha was against 'unbridled capitalism', its flexibility in applying labour laws in KwaZulu undoubtedly put the interests of investors before those of workers.\(^48\) On similar ground, these organisations including Azanian Peoples Organisation AZAPO and in later years trade unions such as Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) were against foreign investment.

Inkatha's justification of its economic policy as noted in previous section, if seen in the context of anti-apartheid struggles, suffers from certain

ambiguities. This was noticed not at the theoretical level as foreign investment had the potential for improving the poverty-stricken economy, but at the level of practice. There was nothing wrong in seeking foreign investment, but the way investment had to be channelised was faulty in case of Inkatha’s policy. The point in question was the role of apartheid state in investment in KwaZulu. The system of tripartnership companies as started by KwaZulu allowed the white capital a definite place in the economy. Even the KDC that was established to look after investment matters was financially supported by the Pretoria government. Notwithstanding the benefits of these investments, the predominance of Pretoria upon KwaZulu (or more correctly dependence of the latter on apartheid state) gave the former an economic edge at a time when disinvestment campaign was gaining momentum. So Inkatha’s policy in this regard proved beneficial for the regime, hence detrimental to anti-apartheid struggles. The case would have been different had the organisation sought direct foreign investment without associating with the apartheid state.

The claim that investment would help alleviating poverty in the homeland was not correct considering the high level of poverty that existed in KwaZulu during Inkatha’s rule. The government was incapable of providing subsistence for the vast majority of its inhabitants who were mostly women, children and old people. Drain of able-bodied and energetic work force from rural areas to white-controlled industrial and mining locations adversely affected the homeland economy. Whereas, whites got the benefits of cheap
black labour. Poverty and unemployment were the highest in KwaZulu. Although natural calamities did play a role, responsibility of rulers cannot be ignored.

It can be discerned from the above analysis that multi-strategy approach, despite its ability to put pressure on apartheid state for change and many positive aspects, went in favour of the government to some extent. Particularly important in this regard, as mentioned above, was economic aspect of the strategy. This strategy also reflects the dual roles that Inkatha leadership tried to perform. On the one hand it had a role within the homeland structure (due to its large support base in it which was difficult to ignore) and on the other it tried to take a position in anti-apartheid struggles which transcended the boundary of homeland. Although Inkatha was able to accomplish the dual roles to an extent by putting pressure on government for reform, opening up dialogue with the government and other acts; the shortcomings noted above were due to this duality of roles. This also provides a significant justification for multi-strategy approach. Only a moderate and middle-of-the-road approach like this can perform the roles that Inkatha tried to play. Alternative would be either outright collaboration with the government like Trankei homeland or a radical approach of the ANC and others. None suited Inkatha’s roles. It can be said that Inkatha’s approach was an outcome of the political milieu in which the organisation came into being and the roles that it tried to perform. In subsequent chapters multi-strategy approach will be discussed in the light of
THE SOWETO REVOLT AND INKATHA

Considering its magnitude and impact the Soweto revolt can rightly be considered as one of the most important events in the history of anti-apartheid struggles. Understanding of the revolt requires a note on the Black Consciousness Movement that arose towards the end of 1960s, as it provided the ideological underpinning for the uprising. The movement put prime emphasis on the freedom of black man's mind from an imposed sense of inferiority concretised in terms of race, culture and history. Although the BC organisations could never develop into mass movements, their impact on the people was enormous. The manifestation of the impact of black consciousness occurred in Soweto on 16 June 1976 when black students rose in revolt in protest against the imposition of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in schools. On the first day of revolt a 13-year old school boy and several other youngsters were killed when police opened fire at the marching children without warning. Thereafter the students went on rampage attacking and burning the symbols of apartheid such as police vehicles, government offices, post offices, vehicles and officials of the Administration Board (established in

49 Despite its 41 branches, the BPC membership probably, did not exceed that of SASO, which had 4000 subscribers to its newspapers. See Jeffery, n57, p. 27.
1971 to administer black townships) etc. The revolt continued till the end of 1977 as skirmishes between students and police continued unabated. Within two months since the beginning of the revolt about 80 black communities from different parts of the country came out in support of it; this number rose to become 160 within four months, pointing to the magnitude of the event.\(^{50}\)

Though the police had strongly denied its critical role in the revolt,\(^{51}\) it was widely believed that police brutality was largely responsible for most of the killings. The Cillie Commission report (Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and elsewhere from June 16, 1976 to February 28, 1977, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Cillie) came out with the finding that 451 of the 575 people killed during the said period died as a result of police action.\(^{52}\) By October 1977, some 95 people had died in police action.\(^{53}\)

But Soweto revolt was not just about students fighting the police and defying state authority and presence; it had in it the young militants' desire to enforce their plan of action on those who had chosen a different path altogether. The manifestation of this coercive action first happened in August 1976 when the student leaders gave a stayaway call to workers and vehicles were attacked

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\(^{51}\) Minister of Police Mr. Jimmy Kruger observed that the police had shown the greatest measure of patience in the face of the greatest measure of provocation'. See Ibid, p. 31.

\(^{52}\) This report was published in 1980. For details, see *Race Relations Survey, 1980*, pp. 234-6.

by students; forcing people to go back. The worst event happened during the
second stayaway call given few days later which was defied by the hostel
dwellers who were totally unwilling to participate in the action and a tragic turn
at the Mzimhlope hostel in Soweto where the hostellers were Zulus. A rumour
was spread among the hostel residents by the students that their fellow
hostellers were attacked at the station on their way back from work. When the
Zulu hostel workers went to the rescue of their colleagues, the hostel was set on
fire.\(^{54}\) In retaliation the hostellers attacked neighbouring Meadowlands and
Orlando; houses were robbed, properties destroyed and at the end leaving 70
people dead. Similar attacks had taken place in Cape Town towards the end of
1976. The clash between youngsters and hostel residents in Nyanga township
left some 35 people dead and about 500 homeless who took sanctuary in other
townships and white suburbs.\(^{55}\)

Inkatha’s appeal for peace and normalcy ‘\(\text{was}\)’ criticised by some
scholars as they considered it lied ‘an unholy alliance with the authorities to
snuff out continuing protest’.\(^{56}\) But its response should be seen in the light of
multi-strategy approach and especially the organisation’s stated position on the
issue of violence and armed struggle. It is important to note here that even

\(^{54}\) For discussion of Mzimhlo incident see Ibid. p. 49; Jeffery, n. 47, p. 29; and Stephen

\(^{55}\) Kane-Burman, n. 53, p. 49, also see Jeffery, n. 47, p. 29.

\(^{56}\) For this line of argument, see Southall, n. 25, pp. 469-70.
before the outbreak of Soweto revolt, Inkatha president had warned about possible eruptions of violence on many earlier occasions with an intention that these could be avoided. He viewed the revolt as a tragic loss of innocent lives who were more guided by powerful rhetorics than by realism. Commenting on the nature of revolt the president said, “... the remarkable heroism of black youth lacked political content in that it was not rooted in a farsighted strategy, nor backed by political alliances making for a black unity able to compel whites to recognise blacks as equals.” He also held the press responsible for publishing sensational news based on assumptions that apartheid was about to be destroyed by the revolt, thereby making the students more spirited in their acts of violence.

Nearly four months after the first outbreak of protest, on 8 October 1976 Buthelezi presented a memorandum at a meeting with the Prime Minister Mr. B. J. Vorster. Besides outlining the need for talks, it said, “... the present unrest is nothing other than a mass rejection of apartheid and white privilege. As much, the unrest must not be seen as a temporary or passing problem. It indicates a chronic state of affairs...”

57 Kane-Burman, n. 4, p. 151.

58 This meeting, convened at the request of Inkatha president, was also attended by minister of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education, and chief ministers of Gazunkulu and Ciskei, the two homelands.

59 Buthelezi, n. 8, p. 85.
Hence the call for peace and order was not meant to help the government (allegation of ‘unholy alliance’ should be seen in this light), rather it stemmed from a realisation that change could be possible by peaceful protest and meaningful black unity rather than by fiery rhetoric of revolt and violent action against a powerful state. In the aftermath of Soweto, Buthelezi sent a clear signal that Inkatha would not ‘convey to the people the illusion that by burning down schools, or posturing in cathedrals, or supporting bragging journalists, or making symbolic gestures at international forums, we can topple Pretoria tomorrow.’\(^{60}\) In fact, at the peak of revolt at Mzimhlope, Buthelezi had visited the area and by meeting the migrant Zulu hostellers and students could manage to restore peace for some time.

In regard to police complicity, it was reported that during Mzimhlope incident police had instigated the hostellers to attack the students.\(^ {61}\) This in the opinion of critics demonstrated the collusion of Inkatha and police to curb the rebellion. But, more importantly even Buthelezi alleged that he had tape-recordings which showed police complicity in inciting violence between the black people.\(^ {62}\) Hence, in stead of seeing violence as a collusion of Inkatha and police (this also explains partly the ‘unholy alliance’ argument), rather it should

\(^{60}\) Kane-Burman, n. 4, p. 152.


\(^{62}\) Kane-Burman, n. 50, p. 113.
be treated as a case of police taking advantage of a volatile situation (with the intention to curb revolt by making divisions within the black community). Moreover the important aspect of this episode was the imposition of a stayaway call on the hostellers by force, which was the root cause of Mzimhlope violence.

The role of Inkatha president needs to be discussed a bit more. It was largely due to his appeal and influence through Inkatha, that the revolt could be prevented in large measure in Natal and to some extent in Soweto. He refused to resign his KwaZulu role and give support to the forces of armed liberation, in spite of the call from people who had no faith in his strategy. Discounting critics he claimed that rather than being destroyed Inkatha’s membership doubled in the year after June 1976 and redoubled the year after that. This, in his opinion, was due to people’s realisation that armed protest would fail to bring change in the existing order.63

One important aspect which requires to be explained was the impact of Soweto revolt on the ANC. As a result of police brutality thousands of young students left the country. Though estimates vary, by 1980 about 7000 to 10000 blacks had become refugees in neighbouring countries.64 These radical black people, mostly from black consciousness background, could easily be recruited

63 Kane-Burman, n. 4, p. 155.
into the ANC by SACP leaders in Mozambique, Swaziland and Botswana which contributed to the strengthening of *Umkhonto*. In the opinion of Professor Gerhard Mare, the exodus of young people and their subsequent joining of the ANC made ‘it a big movement in exile’.\(^65\) As will be seen later this had sufficient bearing on the future political development.

**INKATHA AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT**

Buthelezi had actually addressed the meeting which launched the BPC in 1972. But instead of a cordial relationship, the two soon became enemies immediately after its (BPC) formation when in July 1972 Temba Sono, the president of SASO, was expelled from the organisation for proposing cooperation with homeland leaders.

The movement, shares some objectives with Inkatha. Both believed that class divisions within the black society should be made subservient to black struggle and black emancipation could be possible by promoting black self-sufficiency rather than depending on outside world or the whites.\(^66\) This apart, the two had some fundamental differences in regard to strategy. BC movement was outrightly against any kind of cooperation with the white regime and had

\(^{65}\) Excerpt from interview with Dr. Gerhard Mare’, University of Natal, Durban, November 1, 1998.

\(^{66}\) For details of similarities between the two see, Southall, n. 25, pp. 468-9; and De Kock, n. 5, p. 146.
strongly rejected Buthelezi and Inkatha for serving the people within the framework of policy led down by white regime.\textsuperscript{67} Inkatha’s approach of peaceful protest was also not upto the liking of BC.

Replying to SASO’s criticism of his homeland role, Buthelezi said in 1972, “We are doing no more than attempting to exploit the limited political expression within the framework of (government) policy, for what is worth ... (and) I am working within the system without accepting it”.\textsuperscript{68}

Two events are particularly worth mentioning in this context which show the bitter relationship between the two organisations. The first event took place in 1976 at the University of Zululand where Buthelezi had gone to receive an honorary degree. Students owing allegiance to SASO disrupted the ceremony, though the degree was awarded. The next event happened on 22 March 1978. Before this 19 black consciousness organisations including BPC and SASO were banned in October 1977 in the aftermath of Soweto revolt. Upon invitation of PAC Buthelezi had gone to Graaff-Reinet to attend the funeral of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, the founder of PAC. The funeral soon turned violent when some of the people present (obviously supporters of the banned BC organisations) started making verbal attacks on Buthelezi by calling

\textsuperscript{67} For further details, see Baruch Hirson. \textit{Year of Fire, Year of Ash-The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution?} (Zed Press, 1979), pp. 107-20; also for critical comment on BC position on homeland and particularly on Inkatha, see pp. 303-6.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, p. 115.
him "traitor", "sell-out" etc. Soon they were close to attack him physically (about to be stabbed at the back) but narrowly saved by the help of his secretary.

The events mentioned above proved the level of intolerance among BC supporters. Also the relationship between BC and Inkatha never improved in future. Commenting on its relation with BC movement, Buthelezi said, "... I have always tried to work very closely with them (BC), but they are the ones who turn around and denigrate me... It is a tragedy which makes me very sad indeed...."\textsuperscript{69}

**INKATHA AND THE GOVERNMENT**

Inkatha's opposition to apartheid government had been very vocal since its formation. Analysis of pre-1975 events show that Buthelezi had emerged as a forthright and effective critic of apartheid on the 1960s in the absence of any black political organisations the to bannings. He exploited every opportunity to denigrate the image of the government both inside the country and overseas. In the previous section events related to anti-apartheid postures have already been discussed. Some more events before the formation of Inkatha would better elucidate the situation.

\textsuperscript{69} Excerpt from interview of Buthelezi by Ameen Akhalwaya. See *Rand Daily Mail*, November 27, 1979.

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An angry scene was created at Johannesburgs' John Smuts Airport in April 1971 when Buthelezi refused to use the VIP lounge for a press conference. He instead asked for a private lounge for this purpose which were also occupied, one, by Lady Ruth Khama,\textsuperscript{70} and the other by a South African Railway Official. But he kept an demanding till his departure to the USA.\textsuperscript{71}

Similarly he took strong exception to a remark by a Natal ethnologist in a speech at the South Bureau of Racial Affairs, who said that the Zulus had not yet reached the full stage of civilisation. Buthelezi remarked, “There is much in our culture that the white man could adopt. One strong attribute of our culture is humanism. Another is patience”\textsuperscript{72}

On many other occasions he had demonstrated his disapproval of the apartheid system. He expressed happiness when Mozambique got freedom from Portugal under Samora Machel’s Frelimo. Blacks in South Africa soon came to see him less as a homeland leader than an outspoken critic of apartheid. White liberals like Alan Paton, the author, and Helen Suzman, the MP,\textsuperscript{73} became his friends. Alarmed by his anti-apartheid activities, the government cancelled his passport from 1966 to 1971.

\textsuperscript{70} Lady Ruth Khama was the white British-born wife of Sir Seretse Khama, the president of Botswana.

\textsuperscript{71} De Kock, n. 5, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid

\textsuperscript{73} Helen Suzman was the member of Progressive Party – the white opposition party in the legislature. PP became Progressive Federal Party (PFP) on the eve of 1977 elections.
The formation of Inkatha provided the much needed organisational support to these activities. Apart from his activities inside the country, Buthelezi also visited many Western and African countries to apprise them of the situation in the country. On his trips abroad he met leaders like Jimmy Carter, the president of the US; Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of Britain; Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of West Germany; Julius Nyerere, the President of Tanzania; Kenneth Kaunda, the President Zambia and many other world leaders. He also established contact with exiled leaders such as Tambo, Mr. Potlako Leballo (PAC) and others in a bid to forge unity and also to avoid misunderstanding about each others activities.

As noted earlier, the inspiration for forming Inkatha came from president Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. After meeting president Nyerere he was convinced that he had adopted the right strategy to face the (apartheid) state. As said by Buthelezi “He (Nyerere) told me that no African State, or combination of African States, could take on South Africa militarily”.

His meeting with president carter was a successful one. Although criticised by state and pro-apartheid press, in the opinion of Buthelezi, he could effectively convey the suffering and abuse of human rights in South Africa to the American President.

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74 Quoted in Taylor, n. 54, p. 343.

75 For details of this meeting, see Buthelezi, n. 8, pp. 97-99.
Buthelezi was however critical of the west for its, at times, callous attitude towards South Africa. According to him these were many things which west could do for South Africa but not doing earnestly. In this respect, emphasising the need for assistance in the field of education, he said:

... people overseas say that they cannot help blacks in education because the South African government can do it .... But the South African Government is not doing it. Must we the victims of apartheid suffer because the racist regime does not do it for us? Must we be deprived of whatever valuable assistance is available in order that people may aim for ideological puritanism....

The criticism of the west came also for its double standard regarding arms embargo against South Africa. The west was responsible for arming the South African Government. But it did not assist the liberation movement in their armed struggle. Though Buthelezi did not question the position in this regard (not assisting radical blacks) he was however critical for lack of assistance from western countries to forces of change that were working within the country (i.e. Inkatha).

Contrary to common knowledge and the criticisms of radical organisations for helping the government, Inkatha’s relationship with the apartheid regime was marked by intimidation and harassment by security forces and other agencies of the state. Soweto uprising and death of Steve Biko—the leader of the BC in police custody in September 1976, on the one hand and

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77 Ibid, pp. 142-43.
the growing popularity of Inkatha, on the other, were causes of concern in the government circle. In August 1977 a cabinet proposal for reforms while intended to give representation to coloureds and Indians in the central government, it provided no such provision for blacks. The November 1977 elections (the government won 134 out of 165 parliamentary seats, the largest margin ever) further reaffirmed white intransigence and their propensity for status quo.

As discussed in the last chapter, in its efforts to broaden Inkatha’s base, the organisation gradually but definitely opened up its membership to include all blacks, not just Zulu people, causing discomfort in the government. A belief was growing in the government circle, as seen from public pronouncements of ministry of justice, police and prisons, Jimmy Kruger and deputy minister of the interior and of information, Louis le Grange, that blacks were ganging up against the whites,\(^78\) in an obvious reference to Inkatha’s growing membership. The Department of Bantu Administration started an investigation into the role of Walter Felgate, the research officer of Buthelezi.\(^79\) Inkatha Central Committee had appointed Felgate as managing director of the Inkatha Publishing Company, Isizwe Sechaba. He had visited London with Buthelezi in early 1976 to negotiate a newspaper project with certain church agencies. The

\(^78\) See De Kock, n. 5, pp. 88-89.

\(^79\) Ibid.
government became suspicious over Buthelezi’s speeches that he had given to Felgate for publication in an Inkatha Journal. In September 1976 the security police questioned the official regarding the contents of speeches under the Communism Act. However nothing came out of this investigation. In another incident the government refused permission to Miss. Kathi Hartmann, a trained secretary of the churches in Switzerland, to visit South Africa to train, Buthelezi’s personal staff. Similarly Mr. Andrew Clark, an expert on community development from Oxfam, was denied visa to visit KwaZulu. In October the first news bulletin of Inkatha was banned by the publications board of the government. This bulletin had a statement made by Buthelezi to Henry Kissinger, former American Secretary of state, when he was on a visit to South Africa. It outlined the need for America to establish contact with the banned ANC and PAC. The fact that the government was increasingly concerned about Inkatha’s growing membership and the non-Zulus joining the organisation, came to light at the meeting between minister Jimmy Krugger and Buthelezi at the Union Buildings in Pretoria in September 1977.

To a suggestion of Mr. Kruger that Inkatha should guard against

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80 Buthelezi, n. 8, p. 48.
81 De Kock, n. 5, p. 107. Also see Ibid. p. 95.
82 Buthelezi was accompanied by C.J. Mtetwa, minister of justice in KwaZulu government and Gibson Thula, his principal urban representative. Kruger was assisted by chief of the security police, General Gert Prinsloo. For details of this meeting, see Ibid. pp. 89-103.
infiltration of ANC members into it (as the government felt this would fuel violence), Buthelezi expressed his inability to do so. For him there was no need to do it when violence had already become an issue in South African politics particularly after Soweto revolt. Buthelezi also rejected the minister’s viewpoint that he should confine his activities to Zulus alone. For him he was a "South African of Zulu extraction". In the course of this meeting Buthelezi not only rejected apartheid version of ethnic independence (or delinking Zulu independence from African independence), but also made Inkatha’s aims and objectives in regard to liberation clear. It is important to note that this meeting took place one month before the government banned the black consciousness organisations. Notwithstanding Kruger’s warning, the central committee of Inkatha decided, shortly after this meeting, to open up the membership to all Africans and at the same time would not allow itself to be intimidated by Kruger.

It is evident from the above discussion that Inkatha slowly discarded its tag of national cultural organisation and towards the end of 1970s emerged as a critic of apartheid by entering into political affairs. In the process chief Buthelezi emerged as a strong critic of the system. As explained by a political Journalist Ms. Jean le May in the *Sunday Express*, in November 1979:

(Chief Buthelezi) breaks the law of defiantly quoting Nelson Mandela at a public meeting... Nothing happens. He says things about the government and the system that have other black leaders banned and worse. Nothing happens... Chief Buthelezi walks a tightrope. His Inkatha Journal has been banned eight
times. He has been hauled over the coals by cabinet Ministers for allegedly becoming involved in trade unions and non-black politics. He has refused independence for KwaZulu; an Inkatha pamphlet advised people not to take out Transkei or Bophuthatswana citizenship and was banned. But in fact Chief Buthelezi gets away with it again and again. An explanation for that is Inkatha.\textsuperscript{83}

Notwithstanding this, Inkatha faced many political challenges in this period from the ANC and the Soweto Committee of Ten. The discussion below shall concentrate on these two aspects.

\textbf{INKATHA AND SOWETO COMMITTEE OF TEN}

The Soweto Urban Bantu Council – the body responsible for urban affairs of the township, collapsed in 1977 as it was wholly undermined by the extent of support for the Soweto Students Representative Council. In June, an unofficial body called Soweto Local Authority Interim Committee (also known as the Committee of Ten) was formed by some prominent individuals as a substitute to the Urban Bantu Council (UBC). Led by Dr Ntatho Motlana of the Black People’s Alliance, the Committee was loosely associated with the BPC, and hence, rejected collaboration with the apartheid state. It had formulated elaborate plans to make Soweto an autonomous city with an elected council and a budget of R5000 million for a five year period. The government soon came down heavily on the committee of ten and all its members were detained under

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid, p. 109.}
the Internal Security Act in October 1977. The UBCs were later replaced by Community Councils which would work under the direct authority of the minister of Bantu Administration and Development. Following this change in structures, the government announced that elections would be held in February 1978 for a Soweto Community Council.\(^4\)

This announcement widened the gulf between Inkatha and the Committee of Ten which had already been there because of their different political background (the committee was linked to Black Consciousness movement, whereas Inkatha was opposed to it). Inkatha decided to boycott the election despite its strong support base in the region.\(^5\) Also around this time the popularity of the Committee of Ten was increasing due to their imprisonment and the independent initiative taken by them in regard to administration of urban affairs. Any participation in election when the Committee members were in jail would have yielded negative results for Inkatha. But some members of the organisation, notably David Thebahali, the former chairman of the defunct UBC, broke away to contest community council election.\(^6\) But the election was an unsuccessful one due to Inkatha's boycott and also non-participation


\(^5\) Inkatha had 22 branches in the region and a large number of following around this time.

\(^6\) *Rand Daily Mail*, 9 February 1978. Thebahali was elected chairman of the Soweto Community Council and later joined Inkatha.
committee members, as only 5.6 percent polling was reported in the contested seats. The government was forced to announce bye-election and to avoid boycott some members of the committee of Ten were released. Inkatha position was that unless all the members were released including Motlana it would not participate in election. M.S. Nyembezi, the chairman of Soweto Region of Inkatha, who was approached by Connie Mulder, the minister of Bantu Administration and Development for a negotiation on the boycott issue, put forward the conditions that Soweto be given full municipal autonomy, freehold rights to its residents and the release of Motlana. Motlana was released immediately leaving the other conditions unfilled, as a result Nyembezi declared that Inkatha members might take part in bye-election in their individual capacity. Motlana too indicated that his committee might participate if all its members were released. But he denied of any pact with Inkatha for his release, and the relationship between the two deteriorated thereafter. In the subsequent elections a 6 percent voting was recorded in a fourteen word contest.

It is significant to note here that despite ambiguities in its position, the

87 Out of 29 candidates who contested for community council election 16 were disqualified for infringements of the government Act. Finally only 13 candidates were left in all words, reducing the contested seats to two. See Race Relations Survey, 1978 (Johannesburg, 1978), p. 341.

88 The proposed budget of R500 million prepared by the Committee of Ten was to be financed by central government besides local taxation. This was a negation of non-collaboration policy. The committee had also agreed to participate in community council
Committee of Ten could manage to draw popular support in its favour. Whereas Inkatha had demanded the release of all the committee members from the beginning, though it favoured individual participation on the eve of bye-election. This could be interpreted as a softening of stand at local level, as Inkatha central committee had decided against participation till all the imprisoned leaders were released. Buthelezi noted that the people of Soweto should decide whether individuals should contest in their own right. So Inkatha’s position in regard to elections was to some extent matched by that of Committee of Ten as both had decided in favour of conditional participation. But as indicated in some survey results, the popularity of Inkatha, not the Committee of Ten, decreased in this period.89

This diminishing popularity should be seen in the broader context of South African politics. The general popular sentiment was in favour of radicalism in politics, especially after the Soweto uprising. The Committee of Ten, despite ambiguities in its position (which was perhaps beyond the comprehension of township people), was considered as a radical alternative and a solution to township problems. This posed problem for Inkatha. The unity talks organised by reverend Jesse Jackson of the USA between Buthelezi, elections if all its members were released. This was ambiguous considering the above noted policy.

89 An early 1980 survey reported 69 per cent support for committee of ten (from the sample) and 9 percent for Inkatha. Another poll found Motlana getting more support among Soweto Zulus than Buthelezi (79 percent to 69 percent). See Southall, n. 25, p. 476-7.
Motlana and Bishop Desmond Tutu in August 1979 could not yield any result. The situation so worsened that towards the end of 1979 Motlana accused Buthelezi as a traitor for his association with white government, though he later apologised. The president of Inkatha too accused Motlana of trying to project himself as the only black voice in the country. These differences continued to persist in the early period of 1980, when Motlana and his Committee’s importance at the national level began to subside as United Democratic Front (UDF) rose in importance.

INKATHA AND THE ANC

Inkatha’s relationship with the ANC evolved from initial optimism in both the organisations when Inkatha was formed to increasing differences and finally a complete break up towards the end of 1970s. The ANC was not averse to the formation of Inkatha at a time when it had hardly any presence in the country due to its banned status. The idea was that Inkatha with its organisational strength would provide a sort of internal cushion to the ANC and carry forward its goals and objectives as well as strategy. Inkatha, on its part, had upheld the cause of the banned organisation and its jailed as well as exiled leaders on several occasions as discussed in the previous sections. However the adoption of multi-strategy approach in opposition to armed struggle of the ANC was causing concern in the latter. Inkatha’s approach, as claimed by it, was more in consonance with the ideals of the founding fathers of the ANC and the
stalwarts like Albert Luthuli who was ANC’s president when it was banned.\textsuperscript{90} The differences in approach and the way of perceiving the apartheid state made the organisations parted ways in coming years.

Closely connected to Inkatha-ANC relationship was the Soweto revolt and more particularly its impact on black politics of the country. In the aftermath of the revolt two contradictory tendencies grew up in the ANC circle. As noted earlier, the swelling of ANC/SACP ranks in the post-Soweto period due to large exodus of blacks contributed to the growing strength of these organisations. In 1977 \textit{Umkhonto} guerrillas, long dormant, started their operations inside the country. Detention of members of ‘sabotage cells’ in Soweto and Graff Reinet, the warehouse attack in Goch Street, Johannesburg and newspaper reports on increasing incidents of violence were manifestations of the militant operations.\textsuperscript{91} The revolt of 1976 was interpreted in the ANC/SACP alliance as a vindication of its revolutionary ideology and it ‘represented the greatest upsurge against white domination since the Union was formed in 1910’.\textsuperscript{92} The realisation came that the situation was ripe for a full-

\textsuperscript{90} Buthelezi was a member of ANC’s Youth League at the University College of Fort Hare and in 1952 he was expelled from the University for his activities in it. Pixley L.K. Seme, a founding father of the ANC was his uncle and he was closely associated with Albert Luthuli till his death in 1967. So Buthelezi had long association with the banned organisation and had personal acquaintance with leaders like Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and others.


\textsuperscript{92} Z. Nkosi, “The Lessons of Soweto”, \textit{The African Communist}, no.68 (First Quarter, 1977), pp. 18-33.
scale countrywide revolution involving people, especially the youth who were ready to bear the arms in the struggle for liberation. In other words Soweto revolt injected a sense of optimism in the alliance so far as feasibility and popular acceptance of armed struggle were concerned.

This optimism can be said to be the outcome of a coincidence that the course of revolt matched the revolutionary ideology and militant struggle of the ANC/SACP alliance, which it had long propounded but unable to implement. But so far as the origin of the revolt was concerned the alliance had not played any significant role. This unwelcome realisation, contrary to initial optimism, forced the alliance to acknowledge that 'few of those who took to the streets in Soweto ... had more than the most rudimentary awareness of organisations such as the ANC, the PAC and the Communist Party'. According to Murphy Morobe, one of the activists, the students at that time had the belief that they were the first people to fight government and had no idea about the Defiance Campaign and the school boycotts in the 1950s.

The exiled leaders such as Tambo had no inkling about Soweto revolt. This isolation of the exiled organisations from ground realities, led Tom Lodge, a political scientist, to pose the vital question whether in its subsequent calls to make townships 'ungovernable', the ANC was taking a lead or, rather, trying to

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94 Ibid.

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be in touch with the militancy on the Rand.\textsuperscript{95} Notwithstanding the optimism, the Soweto revolt posed a vital challenge to the exiled organisations, namely the need for bridging the gap between them and ground realities. They came to realise that if they had to survive in black politics their isolation from political developments inside the country had to be ended. Inkatha with its grassroots support and legal status proved to be useful in this regard. By attempting to bring Inkatha onto its side the ANC thought to promote armed struggle inside the country easily as well as counter Buthelezi’s criticisms of armed resistance and economic sanctions – two key aspects of its strategy.

**Inkatha in late 1970s**

The position of Inkatha in this period has to be discussed in the context of the prevailing political situation in the country. The Soweto revolt had contributed to the rise of radicalism in black politics. It came to light that despite repression by government, people had the capability to fight against the state. It was during this time the issue of Soweto Committee of Ten came up and Nthato Motlana, despite ambiguous position, was seen as a more forthright critic of apartheid than Buthelezi. KwaZulu homeland’s elections in February 1978\textsuperscript{96} and acquisition of additional powers of police, justice, finance etc. were

\textsuperscript{95} Taylor, n. 54, p. 349.

\textsuperscript{96} This was the Homeland’s first general elections. All the 65 elected members of the legislative assembly were members of Inkatha.
seen by people as collaborative postures of Inkatha. Under this circumstance, Inkatha’s growth had slowed towards the end of 1970s. Some opinion polls conducted during this period testify this.97

It could be noticed from the activities of Inkatha that the organisation was trying to become more close to the ANC in this period than before. This is however not to deny Buthelezi’s call for release of jailed ANC leaders, return of exiled leaders and unity among anti-apartheid organisations all through 1970s and especially since the formation of Inkatha. What was distinct in this period (towards end of 1970s) was the organisation’s open identification with the banned liberation movement. Arguing that the ANC was a significant actor in the liberation struggle, Buthelezi in 1978 publicly identified Inkatha with ‘the objectives but not the strategy’ of the banned organisation (the ANC) because of the latter’s repudiation of homeland system.98 Clarifying the relationship between the two organisations he said on October 21, 1979 at Jabulani Amphitheatre, Soweto:

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97 A 1977 West German study found the Chief the most accepted political leader in parts of Natal and Transvaal. But another study by professor Lawrence Schlemmer, conducted for a commission set-up by Buthelezi, came out with some new observations. The areas of the study were Natal, where Zulus were in majority and Transvaal, but not Eastern Cape – an ANC stronghold. Though majority of Africans in Natal favoured Inkatha, it was found that ANC had considerably increased its support base since 1976. As said by Schlemmer, popular recognition of the ANC had climbed very rapidly since 1976 and might still be rising. Thomas G. Karis, “Revolution in the Making: Black Politics in South Africa”, Foreign Affairs, 62(2). (Winter 1983/84), pp. 378-406. Also see Jeffery, n. 47, p. 32.

“... Ours is the voice of the masses. Inkatha is the largest black organisation this country has ever seen. It has taken up the struggle where the ANC left it, after it was forced into exiled position ... From jail I hear a message from Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu telling me to go on doing what I am doing on behalf of the millions of black people”.  

99 Showing its closeness to the banned organisation, towards the end of 1979 Inkatha 'openly hoisted the colours of the ANC (black, green and gold) at the opening of its legislative assembly in Ulundi in the presence of a senior white cabinet member, Dr. Connie Mulder.  

100 By this open identification with the ANC, Inkatha sought to achieve two purposes. On the one hand, it proved embarrassing for the regime, thus strengthening the organisation's anti-apartheid credentials as well as its popularity in this period. Secondly, it was aimed to counter the criticisms of Motlana and others regarding its association with homeland system. The aim was to gain political leverage out of its stand vis-à-vis the ANC. Considering the political developments in this period in regard to Inkatha, it can be argued that public endorsement of its non-violent strategy by the ANC would be desirable for the organisation.  

The London Meeting  

It can be discerned from the above discussion that towards the end of 1970s both the ANC and Inkatha needed each other for their respective reasons. Since 1975 Inkatha representatives had several rounds of overseas talks with  


100 De Kock, n. 5, p. 109.
the ANC members on the issue of cooperation in liberation struggles.\footnote{Inkatha tried to convince the ANC the merits of multi-strategy approach and offered cooperation on issues where their ‘aims and objectives’ coincided and ‘tactics and strategies’ were non-contradictory. \textit{Evidence Presented by Buthelezi to The British Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee}, January 20, 1986. Quoted in De Kock, n. 5, p. 167.} The first top level meeting took place in Stockholm in the early part of 1979, which was a sort of preparatory meeting for another submit meeting. This was the meeting held at London on October 30, 1979. Inkatha was represented by a sixteen-member delegation headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi. ANC delegation was led by Oliver Tambo. Instead of unity, the meeting widened the gulf between the two organisations considerably. Till this meeting the differences were at a dormant stage, but now it became open and more importantly violent in the years to come. Considering Inkatha’s standing inside the country (due to its membership) and the ANC’s international acceptance (recognition of the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its activities in many important countries, including India, world over), an understanding between the two would have been disastrous for the apartheid regime. But as will be seen in subsequent discussions Inkatha-ANC rivalry in post-1980 period became a major issue in black politics. Failure of the organisations to bridge their differences at the London meeting caused more harm to liberation struggle than to the regime. Due to its significance, a further discussion of this rift needs to be done in detail.

Both ANC and Inkatha had different reasons for this rift. According to
the ANC, Inkatha, instead of accepting its (ANC) primacy, pursued an independent line and collaborated with the apartheid state. Mzala, a member of SACP, told that Chief Buthelezi diverted Inkatha from its intended revolutionary role which was envisioned by the ANC. A senior leader of ANC in Midlands region of Natal told:

when the ANC played a role in the formation of Inkatha, ... it did so wanting to keep the ANC alive in the hearts and minds of the people. The understanding was that Inkatha would work within the liberation movement, as led by the ANC. Ultimate political authority must rest in one centre, in broad agreed fashion....

Secondly, Inkatha refused to accept armed struggle and economic sanctions as followed by the ANC. Its growing hostility towards the militant politics of Umkhonto was a cause for concern in the ANC. A senior ANC official told, "... There was an understanding that Inkatha operated differently. But the ANC also stressed that the strategy of armed struggle should not be criticised. Also regarding sanctions, it was not advisable that Inkatha should criticise the strategy followed by the ANC". Chief Buthelezi's open defiance of ANC's strategies forced it to part ways. Finally, by leaking the news about the London meeting to the press, Buthelezi breached a promise of confidentiality in the opinion of ANC. ANC viewed this as an attempt by

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102 Mzala, n. 1, p. 123.
103 Quoted in Jeffery, n. 47, p. 33.
104 Quoted in Ibid, p. 34.
Inkatha president to project its endorsement of his non-violent strategy. It considered the meeting a mere dialogue and affirmed that it had not changed its attitude on the issue of armed struggle and sanction. Soon Inkatha had to face vehement criticism from Tambo, Alfred Nzo and other exiled ANC leaders.

Inkatha, on its part cited the following reasons for the rift. According to it, the meeting was held at the request of ANC in order to ensure Inkatha’s acceptance of the strategy of armed struggle and economic sanctions. This would also have established ANC’s claim as the sole representative of blacks in the struggle. Pointing out the real reason for the rift a spokesman of Inkatha noted:

... Buthelezi went to London with a proposal that the ANC/SACP alliance and Inkatha agree on a ‘multi-strategy approach’. Each should seek in its own way, with the resources at its disposal, to fight apartheid as best as it could. Inkatha understood the reasons the ANC had embarked on the armed struggle, but it could not assist because it founded on the principle of non-violence.

In stead Buthelezi was told that the ANC was the sole authentic representative of blacks in the country. He was told to toe the line and take instructions. He said ‘No’....

Clarifying Inkatha’s position in the meeting, Buthelezi told, “Inkatha’s non-acceptance of armed struggle & economic sanctions as propounded by the ANC was responsible for the break up between the two organisations. It also refused to be a surrogate organisation of the external mission of the ANC”.

105 Quoted in Ibid, pp. 35-36.

On the issue of breach of confidentiality, Inkatha president denied any mistake on his part. "It was a lie", he told.\textsuperscript{107} Rather the news of the meeting was leaked to the press by ANC's own representative in London. This can be substantiated from the revelation by Suzanne Vos (who is presently an IFP MP), the then London based journalist of South African newspaper \textit{Sunday Times}, who was the first to break the news of the meeting to press.\textsuperscript{108}

This journalist got the opportunity to disclose all these details in January 1991 on the eve of ANC-Inkatha meeting at Royal Hotel in Durban, which resulted in the Royal Hotel Accord. By then a senior member of the IFP, the journalist told that the issue of ANC's attack on Inkatha through Radio Freedom (run by the former) was raised by Buthelezi during this meeting. In reply, Thabo Mbeki of ANC raised the so called 'breach of confidentiality'

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{108} In an interview Vos told: When I was posted to London I kept in contact with Buthelezi as this was part of my job. I also had the job of getting into contact with the exiled leaders, especially in the PAC and ANC. One day, I was having lunch with the ANC's representative, who knew that I was a big admirer of Buthelezi and Inkatha. I had never kept this a secret. At that time there was regular contact between the two organisations. He said, 'I suppose you will be seeing Buthelezi when he comes over with Inkatha to meet the ANC'.

I nearly fell off my chair. But I did not show my surprise. I knew nothing about the planned visit. He tipped me off. Then I used all my journalistic skills to track Buthelezi down. When they arrived, I told the \textit{Sunday Times} it was happening... The \textit{Sunday Times} splashed 'ANC-Inkatha in secret talks in London'. Percy Qoboza [then editor of \textit{Post and Weekend Post}] was told by the ANC to publish that it had never happened, that I had just made it all up...

Immediately Buthelezi was blamed for leaking the story to me. Buthelezi said that he had not given any interviews... I denied that he had leaked the story to me. No one even listened to me. They were all intent on the accusation that Buthelezi had leaked it to me....” Interview with Anthea Jeffery, quoted in Jeffery, n. 47, p. 35.
allegation in 1979. At this point of time the journalist revealed that the ANC’s own representative in London, not Buthelezi, had provided the information about the meeting.  

“Mandela, Tambo, etc. nearly fell off their chairs. Mandela said it was a pity this had not come out before. It could have alleviated a lot of pain and suffering. But Mandela could have chosen to believe Buthelezi and he could have communicated with him. The dispute between the ANC and Inkatha arose for other reasons. It did not stem from the fact that I kept my source confidential”.  

An ANC member who was present at the Royal Hotel meeting, when asked to comment on IFP’s stand, admitted that the issue was raised but could not recall the response of the ANC. He did say that Mandela was against going back to history. It could be possible that the party ‘did not respond at all’.

Thus the meeting, which could have strengthened anti-apartheid struggles, ended up in a break up. However two issues regarding this acrimony became clear from the above discussion. The root cause of this break up was not the ‘breach of confidentiality’ as it was made out to be, rather the differences in the strategies adopted for liberation. Both wanted their strategies


\[110\] Ibid.

\[111\] Ibid.
to be appreciated by each other. The question is—was it possible at that point of
time? Seeing the matter from ANC’s side, the period under discussion was not
too well for the organisation. Besides the challenges mentioned above, during
this time it was facing the danger of being eclipsed politically by more radical
groups such as the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO), Congress of South
African Students (COSAS) and others. It was thought in the ANC circle that
any compromise on the strategy of armed struggle would put the organisation in
a bad light before others and undermine its long-term political goal. Hence
acceptance of the role of Inkatha in anti-apartheid struggles or endorsing its
strategy was ruled out.

From Inkatha side the matter was equally grave. Buthelezi had all along
supported non-violence as a strategy. Inkatha’s large membership and the
support it received was seen by its leadership as a vindication of this strategy.
Public criticism of armed struggle and economic sanctions should be seen in
this light. Acceptance of ANC’s strategy or its primacy for that matter was not
possible on Inkatha’s part. Rowley Arenstein, a close white friend of Buthelezi
said, “he (Buthelezi) simply could not have acceded to ANC requests for help
with the armed struggle. Inkatha would have been destroyed”. 112

It is clear from the above discussion that the failure of London meeting
was not surprising. Considering the compelling circumstances of the time, it

112 Taylor, n. 54, p. 352.
was rather inevitable, something which was even beyond the control of leadership of the two organisations. The issue at stake was one of survival rather than unity. The second issue that came out in the open was a logical derivation from the challenges faced by ANC. ANC’s unhappiness over the rise of Inkatha and its attempt to see itself as the dominant anti-apartheid force was quite evident during the meeting. As analysed by late Chris Hani, refusal of Chief Buthelezi to accept the primacy of ANC was the principal reason for the break up. He said:

In 1979 the London meeting took place... Differences emerged. The ANC had looked on Buthelezi and Inkatha as creating a broad basis for continued struggle against white domination, with the ANC playing the dominant role. This was not acceptable to Buthelezi. The war of words started between the ANC and Inkatha.\(^{113}\)

The motive of ANC was to adjust with the prevailing radicalism in politics. Inkatha’s approach was seen as detrimental to the interests of the organisation. In the process one important ideal of democracy was sacrificed, namely, plurality in politics. The end of London meeting, practically speaking, was also an end of any kind of rapprochement between the two organisations. Since 1980 their relationship was marked more by conflict and violence rather than cooperation.

\(^{113}\) Interview by Anthea Jeffery, quoted in Jeffery, n. 47, p. 34.
CHALLENGES TO INKATHA

In previous discussions Inkatha’s relation with various black political forces as well as the government have been looked into. It came to light that the organisation’s role in anti-apartheid struggles during the period under discussion was not unchallenged. In fact towards the end of 1970s a political polarisation had taken place in the country – Inkatha on the one hand and the radical political forces such as ANC, SACP, AZAPO and others on the other. Despite the ascendancy of radicalism, Inkatha continued to work along the lines of its multi-strategy approach. It has already been noted that it had opened up dialogue with the apartheid state with a view to find solution to the crisis (see application of multi-strategy approach). Besides this, some of the organisation’s decisions after its break up with the ANC served to reinforce the politics of negotiation. Inkatha expressed its willingness to participate in Community Council elections. Buthelezi opined that he could ‘see blacks pouring their strength into the Community Council system of South Africa and so joining one Council to another, so that the very structures of division, are turned into a mechanism of unity’. 115 Roger Southall noted that Buthelezi had also indicated his willingness to consider the constitutional proposals for separate parliaments for whites, coloureds and Indians, with ‘Africans continuing to be relegated to

114 Community Councils set up in 1977 were systems of black municipal self-government for black townships.

115 Quoted in Southall, n. 25, p. 476.
their black states' (Buthelezi later opposed this system strongly). All these gestures of Inkatha prompted P.W. Botha to remark that Buthalezi posed no threat to the government because he was 'a product of the policies made possible by his government'\textsuperscript{116}

At a time when black politics was getting radicalised, Inkatha's conciliatory gestures posed problems for other organisations. But the importance lies in the approach that it had adopted to achieve liberation. The challenges faced by it can be discussed from two different angles: (i) it weakened internal organisation due to increasing feuds and (ii) popularity diminished considerably among the blacks, especially the youths.

Inkatha's internal trouble started in May 1979 when it accepted the invitation of Dr. Piet Kornhof, Minister of Cooperation and Development, to serve on the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging Regional Committee. This provoked Msuthu Madlala to resign from the organisation's Soweto committee and in October representative from Kornhof's Durban-Pietermaritzburg committee resigned in similar fashion.\textsuperscript{117} A bitter feud between contending factions broke out within Inkatha over the control of the movement's Ulundi region in early 1980 and around same time an Inkatha activist was assassinated under mysterious circumstances. The problems became more complicated after

\textsuperscript{116} Frederikse, n. 97, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{117} Race Relations Survey 1977, (Johannesburg 1977), p. 44.
violent encounter between Inkatha and students of the University of Zululand, which, Buthelezi alleged, was instigated by a former Secretary General of the movement, S.M. Bhengu. In 1980, a Soweto-like situation arose in KwaMashu (in KwaZulu) when students organised school boycotts (to be discussed in next chapter in detail) as a part of the student’s strike all over the country. Even the Bhekuzulu college for sons of chiefs in Nongoma was to be closed because of students boycott. ANC and its allies alleged that Inkatha was responsible for attacks on protesting students. The beginning of school boycotts can be said to be the starting point of violent protest politics in the 1980s. These activities posed challenges to Inkatha, as its strategy was different. The second adverse impact of Inkatha’s conciliatory policies was also equally damaging. When the movement was preparing to convert Soweto its stronghold, its importance in the political arena decreased considerably. This aspect has already been discussed in previous sections.

A discussion of the impact of apartheid state on blacks is essential to comprehend and set the politics of Inkatha in the context of the development of South African politics. During 1950s and 1960s, the apartheid state had systematically imposed its grip on the black population which resulted in rapid

118 Professor S.M. Bhengu was relieved of his position in October 1978. He later alleged that it was not Inkatha Central Committee but Buthelezi had dismissed him. See De Kock, n. 5, p. 111.

119 Southall, n. 25, p. 477.
accumulation of capital. Whilst only a section of black population was allowed to settle in urban areas whose labour was required, majority of them were confined to impoverished rural bantustans (homelands). Influx control Laws (i.e., Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 and the Bantu Labour Act of 1964) were tightened, so that black population in white areas would remain limited. These laws provided for repatriation of redundant and surplus labour to Bantustans, and withdrawal of leasehold and other property rights and the reduction of expenditure on urban service. By mid-1970s, as stated by March Swilling, the township were facing a crisis of reproduction: overcrowding, inadequate urban services, rising unemployment as a result of world recession, and declining real wage levels as inflation rose. As a result the period witnessed workers strikes, students unrest (1976) and other militant form of protests against the state. In the changing situation besides resorting to repression, the government also tried to forge link with ‘responsible’ black leaders to gain wider acceptability. Buthelezi proved to be an asset in this regard.

Drawing inference from previous discussions it can be said that there exists definite link between Buthelezi’s multi-strategy approach and the social

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interests Inkatha represent. This can be analysed from two different viewpoints. One explanation argues that the aim to achieve a de-racialised, capitalist political economy by employing peaceful methods (hence, relatively cost-free), was in accord with the interests of KwaZulu petty bourgeoisie which saw future in a cordial relationship with its urban counterpart. But, as noted in the last chapter this explanation is limited in scope. The economic interests did play a role in adopting multi-strategy approach. But the more important factor was the duality of roles that homeland political elite tried to perform. It had a base (among Zulus) in KwaZulu upon whose mobilisation depended its strength and at the same time it tried to perform a role in anti-apartheid struggles. For its role in homeland Inkatha had to depend on Pretoria government. But to project the image of an anti-apartheid organisation it had to criticise the government. Multi-strategy approach was primarily designed to serve this dual roles of Inkatha.

In other words, Inkatha was trying to combine Zulu traditionalism and African nationalism, a difficult task indeed. But as shown in the discussions, it was able to perform this task efficiently for some time by playing a mediatory role between the government on the one hand and other opponents of apartheid, on the other. While president of Inkatha was vocal in criticising the regime, he also had differences with the parties like ANC, SASO, BPC and others, thereby posing a dilemma for the regime concerning his reliability as a collaborative partner.
Notwithstanding this, the challenges that Inkatha faced from radical organisations coupled with some internal dissensions were not only responsible for squeezing of its support both in urban and rural areas including among the radical youths, but also undermined the potential as a mediating force. But the organisation continued with its policy of reforms either proposing conditional support to government proposals or devising its own reform measures within the parameter of multi-strategy approach in the period to come. These aspects shall be discussed in great detail in the next chapter.