

Nganani Enos John Mabuza, a man who travels widely and has met both Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, does not indulge in verbal overkill.

Rather, the chill factor of what he says is generated by quietly enunciated verities. Without making an inventory of apartheid's calamitous potential, he underscores with relentless intensity the level of anger and frustration that runs like a serpent through the black community.

Mabuza and a 21-man delegation recently met the ANC in Lusaka. As chairman of the Inyandza National Movement, he was given a mandate to meet the leadership of the ANC. Pivotal to the discussions were the current, unrest situation and the future of this country.

The ANC violently rejects homeland leaders, whom they perceive as SA government puppets. Why, I ask Mabuza, did the ANC talk to him for three days? What was the common ground that made him acceptable?

"You would have to ask them," he says. "But the common ground is a nonracial, democratic society in SA. However, we remain committed to peaceful change. The ANC remains committed to the arms struggle until such time as government releases political prisoners, unbans political organisations, dismantles apartheid and negotiates with credible leaders in the country."

What has he done to change ANC entrenched perceptions and attitudes towards homeland leaders?

Mabuza: "I think they recognise we are striving for a democratic, nonracial society within the legal precincts. They accept our *bona fides* in that regard. We have expressed our belief that homelands are not a political solution for our country."

Then why does Mabuza align himself with the homeland system which he rejects? At this stage he is going along with it, he affirms. "But I am sure conditions will arise which may require that I resign or that I step down."

He does not hesitate to air his view on homelands. "The homelands were not created on the basis of a decision by the majority of blacks in this country. Government designed the plan and all we had to do was fit into the plan, be it in pendular or triangular or sectional form. Blacks didn't decide on it."

"If the Indian Council or the Coloured Representative Council could be dismantled, the homelands can also be dismantled. We should look for a new dispensation which would be acceptable to the majority of blacks. Homelands are not."

Currently he sees himself as working towards an objective in the homelands. What is it?

"Look, we have a train here. It's careering to an abyss, probably driven by some lunatic who doesn't care what happens when the train falls into such an abyss. If one is capable of applying brakes and stopping or reversing it... I think that is my duty in the homelands junction called KaNgwane."

"At least I can bring to a halt to KaNgwane becoming an independent state, which is the logical conclusion of the policy and thereby de-nationalising 1 million SA born South

Mabuza on black unity, white fears

19 MAR 1986

Hellouise Truswell talking to KaNgwane Chief Minister **ENOS MABUZA**

Is he a member of the ANC? He laughs: "The ANC is not a legal organisation in SA. Categorically, I am not a member of the ANC. I am a member and leader of my Inyandza National Movement."

"But what I would like to say is that it appears as if government and many of the whites are oblivious of the obvious support of the ANC in the country. Nobody can quantify support because no-one can say I am a paid-up member of the ANC. From my assessment of the situation and in my own territory, and especially among the young people, there is overwhelming support for the ANC."

I ask him whether Nelson Mandela has become a token figurehead who is irrelevant in current black politics? "He was relevant when he was imprisoned and I believe he is still relevant today. If he would be irrelevant that is a question that would be decided by his supporters in an open political marketplace."

"I have reason to assume he is still very relevant until the contrary is proved. The contrary will be proved by his leadership if he were to be released and the relationship of that leadership with the masses."

What is the view of Mabuza — an honours psychology graduate who is the author of several text books — on the subject of violence? "Violence can only be an option by the people if they are forced into it."

What are regarded as legitimate forces to allow violence to be an option? "If the people were driven to a state where all options for peaceful opposition to the policies of the country were unavailable, especially the denial of political rights and the relegation of blacks to socio-economic subservency. If the state brought all its might to ensure and perpetuate that..."

How does he see the present situation? "There are legitimate grievances in the townships to be addressed. Beyond that there are the aspirations of blacks to elect their own leaders to represent them in the highest political institutions of the country."

How does he feel about the latest round of reform proposals. "I think here it is a question of whether apartheid is being dismantled or reformed."

Blacks want to see dismantling of apartheid. For example, says Mabuza: "If passes are going to be removed and you are going to have a common identity book, it won't work



□ MABUZA ... common destiny

which immediately declare them white. I will have a different serial number and the computer will say black. Go and look for him where he stays. As the state president has said, apartheid is outmoded. It should be dismantled, not reformed. Let's remove these outmoded structures. That will be real reform."

Is he optimistic about concrete changes? "I have heard about it. My people have heard about it. But they haven't experienced it. They haven't felt it. There is a vast difference between hearing and feeling and experiencing..."

The rejection of educational disciplines for what they are worth at the moment must have an enormously deleterious effect on the future of youth. What is his view of this?

"Most of these youngsters openly support the ANC. And the ANC is a banned organisation. Their leaders are in exile. Their leaders are in prison."

"Now how do you expect thousands if not millions of young people who believe in leaders who are in prison or in exile, to have appropriate direction in the absence of those leaders?"

I think this should drive sense into the minds of government to release political prisoners unconditionally and to unban the ANC. I have no doubt that if these leaders come to the country and are invited to the conference table, there will be co-ordinated action and reaction by the young people."

The goal, he stresses, is a non-racial, democratic society. Is it also

that I'm not in favour of a federal system, and I believe that most of our people aren't, either."

What about participating in the new statutory body suggested in Parliament? "The blacks have said they are prepared to negotiate. But before they do so they would like to see political prisoners released. And they would like to see political organisations unbanned."

"Personally, I believe that in spite of whatever strategies they might have used, these political prisoners were imprisoned because of what I believe in: a democratic country where every South African regardless of race, colour and creed will have the right to vote for his or her leaders. They believed in that. My view personally is that it would be sacrilege, political sacrilege on my part, to negotiate behind their backs..."

He refuses to divulge any matters which were discussed with the ANC because it is a banned organisation and may not be quoted. What he is prepared to say is that one important factor emerged: the necessity of unity amongst blacks especially, but also of all the people of this country in opposing apartheid.

"I think we should join forces. The message is loud and clear that in doing so there are no touchables and untouchables. If we all join forces we can bring about the correct pressure to bear upon government to drive the message home. Then we have a chance of averting disaster in the country."

When it comes to pressure, how does he see the role of trade unions?

"I think they will use their worker power quite efficiently in the future. But they can't elect a leader to go to Parliament to speak about their rights. That is why trade unions have no option but to practice politics on the factory floor and to use their muscle there to bargain for political rights."

There are no easy solutions, he admits. But time is short and government needs to be bold, especially in overcoming white attitudes.

Mabuza: "Frankly, I think the problem in our country is that whilst many whites want to see peaceful change, they are very suspicious. I understand that suspicion and mistrust and I sympathise with them because I think they know that blacks have been under the boot of oppression for many generations."

"There is that fear that if blacks are treated as equals, the boot will be on the other foot and they will find themselves under it. I'm presently aware of whites who are highly suspicious of my visits to Lusaka in the interests of my country and my people. My heart bleeds when I note this suspicion and mistrust."

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