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# Talk by Prexy Nesbitt to Operation PUSH

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**Talk by Prexy Nesbitt to Operation PUSH  
February 9, 1991**

Greetings to the Reverend Barrow, Reverend Riddick and the entire PUSH family.

We, the following Chicago based anti-apartheid and African solidarity organizations, wish to salute the February 8, 1991 historic decision of PUSH to uninvite Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi from speaking at the PUSH forum:

The CCISSA  
The Chicago Chapter of TransAfrica  
Clergy and Laity Concerned  
Synapses  
The Mozambique Support Network  
Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid  
The Free South Africa Movement  
and the All Chicago Anti-Apartheid Coalition.

We urged PUSH to make this decision and were joined in so urging by various national organizations and figures such as the American Committee on Africa, the Washington Office on Africa, the Episcopal Church People for a Free South Africa, the Rev. William Howard, Randall Robinson, Congressman Charles Hayes and various representatives of Frontline States.

We urged this decision be taken because while we recognize and encourage the recent efforts at rapprochement between the ANC and Inkatha and other organizations like the PAC; while we eagerly await the day when the violence will be ended so all energy will be focused in decisively ending apartheid and transforming South Africa;

- 1.) The reality remains that the violence with which the Gatsha Buthelezi-led Inkatha is associated has not in any way stopped;
- 2.) Inkatha and its leader, South African government-salaried chief, Gatsha Buthelezi has been and remains an opponent of international sanctions and corporate disinvestment campaigns;<sup>1</sup>
- 3.) Giving a platform to Gatsha Buthelezi would undermine Chicago's growing and increasingly unified anti-apartheid movement while unnecessarily legitimizing Gatha Buthelezi.

The situation in South Africa today demands our rigorous attention and study. We must go beyond the 'black on black' violence labeling procession of a generally insensitive and uninformed U.S. press to see the conflict as being essentially between those associated with the apartheid system and its structures and those opposing the

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<sup>1</sup>The American Committee on Africa recently pointed out that: "His links to the apartheid state are easier to document than his record of opposition. Last year direct South African subsidies to Buthelezi's Kwazulu administration were \$600 million - about three fourths of the total budget. Alone among the leaders of the non-independent bantustans, Pretoria allowed Buthelezi to create a separate tribal police force, the Kwazulu Police, in 1980, under the command of Jae Buchner, a 23-year veteran of the South African security police. Buchner told reporters his job had been to "disrupt the ANC in any way I could and spoil their attempts to bring South Africa down." (ACOA's "Apartheid's Hidden Hand," page 3.)



apartheid system. As with the killing of Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton in Chicago in 1969, when black functionaries played such a decisive role, what has emerged in South Africa today is a situation where the governing apartheid regime has subcontracted the dirty business of killing apartheid's regimes to surrogate forces - most of them black.

According to the South African Institute of Race Relations' report of November 19, 1990, between September, 1984 and November, 1990 8,577 people died in political violence in South Africa. In 1990 an average of 10 people were killed every day in South Africa - a total of 3,038 in the first 10 months.

The primary source of the violence in South Africa today, as with the destabilization wars going on in the neighboring countries, is the South African government and its various security structures ranging from the army, police and constables to vigilantes and surrogate armed gangs.

Various independent observers and hundreds of legal affidavits have come up with the following conclusions:

- Almost all large-scale attacks have been initiated by organized groups of armed Inkatha warriors against individuals and communities who declined to join Inkatha. (e.g., of 200 violent incidents in Natal from January - April 1990, 195 were attributed to Inkatha.)
- Prominent Inkatha members, as well as members of the KwaZulu police, which is recruited and directed by Buthelezi's administration, have been involved in the attacks.
- With only a few exceptions, neither KwaZulu police nor the South African police have taken action against Inkatha gangs, nor have perpetrators been charged despite affidavits naming specific individuals and killings.
- Retaliatory actions by township 'comrades' have been largely spontaneous, not organized by leaders of the ANC, COSATU or UDF. Nevertheless, police action after clashes has included raids to disarm township residents and repeated detentions of anti-apartheid leaders. (Taken from Washington office on Africa "Natal/KwaZulu Buthelezi on the ANC: What's Behind the Violence, November, 1990.)

and a recent report by African Watch indicates the following patterns by the South African security structures in the following basic stance assumed by the US government:

#### **The Role of the Security Forces in the Natal Conflict**

- The South African Police (SAP) and KwaZulu Police (ZP) have repeatedly joined with Inkatha in their attacks on UDF supporters. In these attacks, the SAP have transported Inkatha vigilantes in police vehicles; shot and killed unarmed residents, burned and looted homes, and used teargas and bullets to prevent residents from defending themselves against Inkatha assailants;



- The SAP and kitskonstabels (or "instant" constables who are given a mere six weeks of training) have searched, harassed and threatened UDF-aligned residents and handed them over to members of Inkatha;
- The SAP have refused requests for police intervention to disarm Inkatha groups and to prevent and halt Inkatha attacks;
- The ZP have been particularly guilty of incidents of wild shooting and killing. Applicants for restraining orders against the ZP include officers of the SAP, who have been victims of indiscriminate attacks by the ZP;
- The South African Defence Forces (SADF), although not as consistently implicated as the other forces, have harassed and physically abused UDF-aligned township residents and destroyed their property.

#### **The Role of the Security Forces in the Transvaal Township Violence.**

- The SAP have repeatedly transported and accompanied armed Inkatha members and vigilantes and stood idle during attacks;
- The Sap have used teargas and bullets to disperse township residents attempting to defend themselves from Inkatha attacks;
- The SAP have assaulted township residents and looted their homes when conducting weapons raids;
- The SAP have refused request by township residents to disperse Inkatha attackers;
- The South African government has refused to respond adequately to evidence of security force involvement in the violence.

#### **The US Role**

- The US government has consistently refrained from raising publicly the issues of security force involvement in the violence in Natal and the Transvaal townships;
- In its public statements of the issue of "black on black" violence in South Africa, the <sup>USA</sup>UD has underemphasized the governments' responsibility to protect the lives of it's citizens.<sup>2</sup>

Further, we wish to bring to the attention of this meeting that recent information shows that professional killers previously linked to South Africa's surrogate armies in Mozambique (RENAMO) and Angola (UNITA) are now increasingly active in the killing going on in South Africa. Also more and more automatic and heavy weaponry originally from South Africa previously used in Mozambique is now being re-introduced into the South African killing patterns. This trend is called the RENAMOIZATION of South Africa.

In conclusion, friends...

Despite the recent talks between the honorable Nelson Mandela and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the violence has not stopped in South Africa. Further, that numerous

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<sup>2</sup> Africa Wach, The Killings in South Africa: The Role of the Security Forces and the Response of the State, January 24, 1991.



independent and authoritative sources have identified the Gatsha Buthelezi-led Inkatha organization as the key source of the violence in South Africa that has already killed more than the strife in Beirut or in Northern Ireland. It must be recalled that as recently as April this year while chief Buthelezi was publicly declaring his 'peace aspirations' he privately told his chiefs:

"As for now we should place ourselves on a war footing. We must now declare ourselves to be at war with those developments which wish to threaten us and the people who lead it. *Going to war against that which threatens us is something which we as Zulu leaders understand and it is something which brings out the best in us.*" (Emphasis added).<sup>3</sup>

We would remind you that a renewed call for continued international sanctions came as recently as this past week from:

- Nelson Mandela, deputy President of the ANC and
- The Frontline States.

While recognizing that the ANC is in dialogue with the Inkatha (as it is in dialogue with the government) this is not the time for anti-apartheid groups to initiate or emulate such dialogue - unless requested to do so by the national liberation movement.

We Chicago-based organizations, while maintaining our organizational autonomy and integrity, have also always coordinated our decisions with the ANC and its political allies and have never attempted to pre-empt them.

There is a lesson in this episode, i.e., the necessity for us all to be a unified and coordinated force in Chicago. We must be consistent and clear in our anti-apartheid and pro-Africa work.

This was what we were attempting to consolidate. All the groups mentioned above joined 150 people in a major updating on Southern Africa at Malcom X in January of this year. We urge that PUSH join us more closely with this effort to be a unified and coordinated anti-apartheid force in Chicago. We urge further that PUSH and student organizations like the ACM close ranks with us to maintain the sanctions against South Africa. We urge the ACM colleges and other schools to continue their struggles for divestment.

We thank you, PUSH, for being on the cutting edge - to this PUSH forum have come members of FRELIMO, ZANU, SWAPO and the esteemed Oliver Tambo.

We hope to some day welcome Nelson Mandela and others as leaders of the new South Africa.

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<sup>3</sup> Weekly Mail, Johannesburg, April 12, 1990