

# Questions the Catholic Church should answer

***Does the Catholic Church believe that there are alternatives to violence in bringing about radical change?***

**Has the Catholic Church come to conclude that non-violent tactics and strategies have been by-passed by historical realities?**

**Does the Catholic Church view blacks committed to violence and the armed struggle — to bring about change in SA — as waging a just war?**

***Is the Kairos document correct in calling for a confessional church which sides with the African National Congress (ANC) and elements in the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of SA Trade Unions (COSATU) as well as other black groups which deny that reform is possible?***

**Does the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) afford the national cultural liberation movement, Inkatha, the right to exist and to pursue its aims and objectives? Does the Catholic Church grant Chief M G Buthelezi the democratic right to hold different views from the External Mission of the ANC, UDF, COSATU and AZAPO? If so, will bodies such as the SACBC do anything to defend that right to exist and express itself?**

***Does the Catholic Church believe that revolutionary organisations, like the External Mission of the ANC, can demand subservience and obedience and that this dictacted unity is morally legitimate?***

## BISHOPS AND INKATHA MEET

**T**hese and other questions were raised at a recent meeting in Ulundi, the capital of KwaZulu, between the leaders of Inkatha and a delegation from the SA Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC).

They have yet to be answered. The Catholic delegation, led SACBC chairman, the Archbishop of Durban, the Most Rev Denis Hurley, were seeking information about Inkatha. Chief M G Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha, told the group he hoped the meeting would make its own contribution towards "understanding and reconciliation" — not only between Inkatha and the SACBC but between black

groups.

Both groups, he said, disagreed with each other about issues "central to the reasons why people are killing each other in South Africa . . ." From Inkatha's side, it was necessary to pose a number of questions. "We do not pose them as political rhetoric or superciliously or facetiously — they are simply questions which we believe need to be answered."

Inkatha was aware, Chief Buthelezi said, that churches in South Africa were still groping towards an understanding of what was taking place. Inter-church and infra-church consensus had not yet been reached.

"We would, however, like to

know where the weight of opinion lies in the South African Bishops' Conference." There were some Catholic activist priests, like Father Mkhathshwa, the Secretary of the Bishops' Conference, who clearly had taken sides against Inkatha.

There were in fact, clerics who went so far in their opposition of Inkatha to deny its right to exist.

Chief Buthelezi told Archbishop Hurley: "Your Grace, you of all people must be aware of the great complexity of human emotion and the deep tragedy that follows upon the political conflict between black group and black group in this country.

"We pose questions (above) . . .



Chief M G Buthelezi

because we need to know whether this delegation from the SACBC affords us the right to exist and to pursue our aims and objectives. If we do have that right, then we asked whether bodies such as the SACBC have done anything to defend our right to exist." Inkatha did not claim "political sainthood" and Inkatha did not regard itself as "the sole saviours" of South Africa. "We see the need for the co-existence of a multiplicity of black organisations. We see the need for that unity which can be woven around the pursuit of coinciding objectives wherever they exist. "We in Inkatha reject any dictated unity based on total subservience to aims and objectives of revolutionary organisations." Chief Buthelezi added that the External Mission of the ANC claimed to be the "sole representative of black South Africa" at the United Nations and at the OAU. It claimed to be the vanguard movement in South Africa and

**"We will not have a democratic parliamentary system if we do not have democratic political groups vying for the right to control Parliament . . ."**  
Chief M G Buthelezi.

**"Given the limitations of our day and age and national environment, Inkatha could not be more democratic than it is . . . is there a black group in South Africa which is more democratic than Inkatha?"**

**"As priests you all know that human nature and human frailty being what it is, Inkatha's members will be drawn into the violence which dominates most of our townships. It is totally impossible for me to discipline every single member of Inkatha into pacifist behaviour in a climate in which violence has been so vigorously stimulated . . ."**

**"What black political organisation in South Africa is to be exempt from the criticisms levelled against Inkatha? UDF kills AZAPO, AZAPO kills UDF. The UDF kills Inkatha . . . The ANC officially and actively pursues civil war in this country . . . these are the realities within which Inkatha pursues its commitment to democracy and to non-violent tactics and strategies . . ."**



Archbishop Denis Hurley

it had no tolerance to opposition amongst its rank and file members and it did not tolerate opposition to its aims and objectives among ordinary South Africans. "They themselves have created a situation in which you are either for them or against them," he said. "They seek the kind of unity which we cannot subscribe to. "It would seem to us that the Catholic Church must either hold that a just war is being waged and in Bishop Tutu's words there can be a time when evil means must be used to fight evil — and that the dictated unity of the kind the ANC Mission in Exile is insisting on is morally legitimate — or that the Catholic Church must hold the view that we are not fighting a just war because there are alternatives to violence in bringing about radical change." The question therefore had to be asked as the whether or not the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference had come

to conclude that non-violent tactics and strategies had been by-passed by historical realities.

Chief Buthelezi said it was his belief that democratic opposition to apartheid has a very major role to play in normalising South Africa as a modern Western industrial-type democracy.

It was a cardinal truth in politics that means cannot be divorced from ends. "Violent revolution is a means which will produce a future one-party state in this country."

Throughout Europe and North America and in many other parts of the world, millions of lay Catholics, many thousands of priests and many hundreds of Bishops, saw no incompatibility between the industrialised democracies of Europe and North America and the Gospel.

"I see no incompatibility between a future industrialised democracy in South Africa and the Gospel. On balance, I see the greatest alleviation of desperate human suffering in this country being achieved through the maximum development of the free enterprise system. This is not an ideological statement. It is a humanitarian statement.

"When, therefore, I think about means to ends in South African politics, I think about democratic opposition as being the most moral choice, given our circumstances."

Democracy was more than an idiom or an ideal. Democracy could only be expressed in democratic behaviour and truly democratic behaviour could only be safeguarded by democratic constitutions for organisations.

"We will not have a democratic parliamentary system if we do not have democratic political groups vying for the right to control Parliament."

Chief Buthelezi said that "given the limitations of our day and age and national environment," Inkatha could not be more democratic than it is.

Inkatha's Annual General Conference was the supreme body of the movement.

Inkatha's leaders were elected

by it and it not only determined the aims and objectives of the movement but, also, tactics and strategies.

"It is a conference which represents over 1,3 million members. Inkatha's leaders are accountable to this conference each and every year."

***"Inkatha members have been hacked to death, they have been 'necklaced', their houses have been burnt to the ground. Faced with what amounts to butchery of Inkatha members, one can only expect violent reaction to violent onslaught . . ."***

***"We in Inkatha are as adamantly committed to the eradication of apartheid as any other black group in this country. We are not committed to a socialist future and this is the distinguishing factor between us and the ANC Mission in Exile. Does the Catholic Church think this is a crime?"***

Inkatha had been accused of being undemocratic. It had been accused of coercing ordinary workers and peasants into becoming members. It had been accused of being hypocritical and actually using violence in a way which denied its democratic commitment to non-violence.

Chief Buthelezi asked the SACBC delegation: "All I say is: is there a black group in South Africa which is more democratic than Inkatha?"

Inkatha members had been hacked to death, they had been "necklaced", their houses had been burnt to the ground. Faced with what amounted to butchery of Inkatha members, one could only expect violent reaction to

violent onslaught.

"What Black political organisation in South Africa is to be exempt from the criticisms levelled against Inkatha?" asked Chief Buthelezi.

AZAPO killed UDF, UDF killed AZAPO and the ANC actively pursued civil war in SA. The ANC exploded bombs in shopping centres, hotels, street corners and planted land mines on farm roads — knowing full well that ordinary blacks would be the victims of their bloody onslaught.

The ANC urged the assassination of black town councillors. The ANC had ordered his assassination and they urged the whole of black South Africa to annihilate Inkatha.

"These are the realities within which Inkatha pursues its commitment to democracy and to non-violent tactics and strategies," he said.

The External Mission of the ANC and, "in their wake", the UDF and COSATU had raised the question of non-participation to the status of being a hallowed principle in the black struggle for liberation.

"It is not my principle, it is not Inkatha's principle, it is not a Christian principle. It is dictated as a principle by those who are not committed to democracy in practice now while we struggle for our liberation."

The question had to be asked: "Does the Catholic Church grant me the democratic right to hold different views from the ANC Mission in Exile, UDF and COSATU and from AZAPO in the pursuit of Inkatha's aim and objectives?"

Inkatha was adamantly committed to the eradication of apartheid but it was not committed to a socialist future and this was the distinguishing factor between Inkatha and the ANC Mission in Exile.

"Does the Catholic Church think that this is a crime? Does the Catholic Church exhort black South Africans to use aims and objectives more suitable to the establishment of a one-party socialist state, than they are suitable for the eventual outcome of a multi-party democracy?"