

KwaZulu/Natal

Inkatha's views on co-operation and development in the region

The following is an extract of a paper delivered by Dr Oscar Dhlomo, Secretary-General of Inkatha and KwaZulu Minister of Education and Culture, at a symposium arranged by the Development Society of Southern Africa.

I approach my analysis of this subject as a politician, active in attempting to achieve the aspirations of our supporters in what is a very confusing, complicated and tragic period of our collective history.

I certainly am not going to attempt to provide any ringing answers to our problems. Answers have to be found as a collective exercise of all the parties in our political debate.

In order to make this possible, we have to try and understand what the different parties are saying. My presentation is simply an attempt to assist both these processes, as they apply to the region of KwaZulu/Natal.

Obviously I should start with what I am most closely associated with; the political problems and challenges of our government and our movement.

We are a regional government enjoying some measure of autonomy within the larger polity of the Republic of South Africa. In theory, and at one level of consideration, we would have no particular problems with this position, were it not for the fact that it was imposed on us without consultation, and that it tends to set great store by ethnicity as an immutable principle in political mobilisation in South Africa.

We are happy and determined to be

a component part of the Republic of South Africa because being South Africans is our primary identity and commitment.

We will also not dream of weakening the cause of African nationalism by accepting any form of independence.

We are more than determined to resist any policy which not only fragments our country of birth into so-called independent National States,



Dr Oscar Dhlomo

but also seeks to deny us our birth right as citizens of that country.

While we seek merit in regional autonomy or the decentralisation of power, we are not going to regard this as a substitute for full political participation at the central or the first tier level of government in the Republic of South Africa.

This is the central theme of our political struggle, and to expect us to abandon that central theme is to expect us

to deny our very existence.

We have serious problems at other levels as well. By now the report of the Buthelezi Commission and many other analyses by economists like Nattrass, Spies, Maasdorp and others have convincingly shown that KwaZulu is no historic accident or a collection of areas of indigenous occupation.

It is, in fact, the under-developed residue or margin of the "white"

former colony, of Natal to which our people were consigned politically after a shattering defeat by the British Imperial Might, subsequently confirmed by the policy of separate development which has characterised South African life since 1948.

We have, thus, a serious relative lack of economic infrastructure, of mineral resources, of skilled personnel, of flat arable land, of coastline, of harbour prospects and a serious overload of people and needs.

Analyses by Professor Maasdorp have shown how unlikely it is to expect economic decentralisation to redress the imbalance, particularly since Mkhwanazi and Nattrass have shown just how readily the money earned in KwaZulu leaks back into the commercial markets of Natal, and also how

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readily our most productive and skilled labour is attracted to the industrial magnets of Durban, Pinetown, Pietermaritzburg, Newcastle, Richards Bay and the Transvaal.

In the past the central government has expected us to try to close the development gap, inter alia, by enticing industrialists to our growth points at all costs, by rigidly curbing population growth and by developing a parochial fervour for development within our jurisdiction at the cost of our wider South African loyalties.

One cursory look at the key economic recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission (never implemented by the present government) will show that we have no hope whatsoever of closing the gap in development. Furthermore, if we were to try, some of the singularly ungenerous extra-parliamentary opposition groups that White politics has spawned would try to flay us alive in the Press, and we would be accused even more than we are already of encouraging exploitative wages in KwaZulu in order to attract industry and build infrastructure.

We have refused to follow this path. Instead we attempt what can perhaps be described as an economic "holding operation". We try to attract industry but we are also drawing up a code of conduct for industrialists in KwaZulu.

We refused to implement what is commonly termed birth-control, but encourage sensible family planning. We try to pay as many social pensions as our budgetary constraints and lack of administrative infrastructure will allow, and we have appointed a committee of enquiry to improve the pensions dispensation.

Our development policy, which is based on the "basic needs" approach is directed at spreading our resources for survival to as many poor people in our territory as possible.

We continue to call for free and compulsory education for all citizens, but in the meantime we encourage rural communities to pay for the building of schools in their areas.

The economic development arm of our government, the KwaZulu Finance and Investment Corporation, which is under the

control of the KwaZulu Government, tends to avoid large-scale agro-industrial projects concentrating instead on credit financing to small-scale producers.

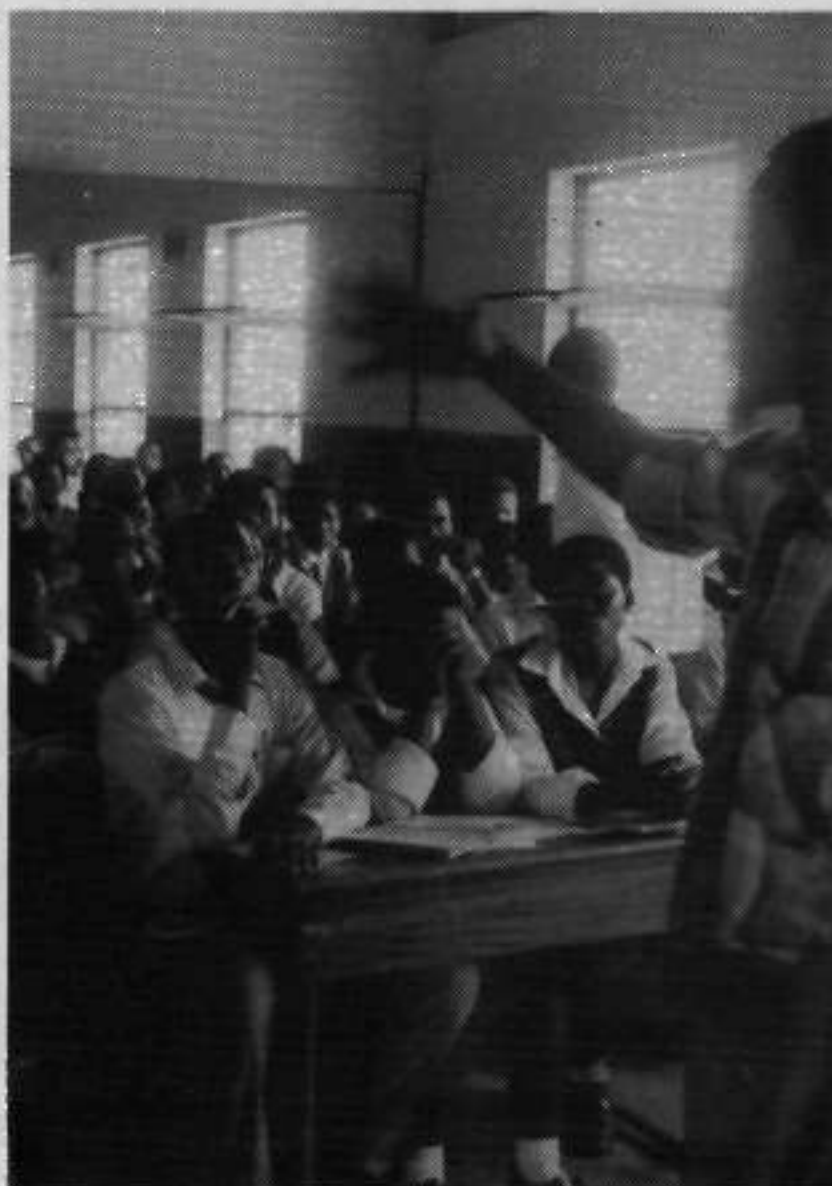
In addition to attempts to attract a larger employment-generating enterprises into our region, it has an active programme of stimulating small-scale Black industry and commerce in the township and rural areas.

There is an urgent need in KwaZulu, as there is in all of Southern Africa, to protect the rural environment and natural resources from the erosive ef-

fects of overpopulation and overgrazing.

We co-operate with the Institute for Natural Resources in this endeavour. We do not, however, resettle rural communities in closer-settlement villages against their will or even exercise any particular pressures on them to do so.

We instead go through an elaborate exercise of consulting with and gaining the co-operation of rural communities before launching rural betterment schemes.



"If we were to attempt to wipe out the housing backlog in KwaZulu, we would have to close down all schools, terminate all pensions and interrupt all development projects for a decade ... there is absolutely no hope of providing State housing to satisfy the demand ..."

As a government we are committed to the general principle of freehold tenure. Because we are mindful of the many pitfalls attendant upon this important development step, we are introducing freehold title on an experimental basis in certain communities and watching the effects very carefully.

We do not apply influx control in KwaZulu. However, we respect the urban rights that Black people may have gained in towns of South Africa where influx control legislation is applied because we realise how valuable people consider these rights to be. Hence as far as it is possible for us to do so we have always insisted that a person coming under the jurisdiction of KwaZulu should not suffer any impediments in rights of access to the job markets in Natal.

We have not always been successful in our attempts but in more recent times we have reason to believe that township residents and commuters from KwaZulu are no longer as severely affected as regards their access to work opportunities in the cities of this region.

Our refusal to apply influx control in KwaZulu and to take steps to prevent many thousands of people from other territories from coming into KwaZulu has meant that we have acquired the largest population of shack dwellers in South Africa, concentrated around Durban-Pinetown and other industrial centres.

Around this city there is a belt of informal and traditional settlements numbering well over one-million people. This has produced one of the most viable informal sector economies in Southern Africa, and we estimate



"We know that informal dwellings and informal jobs, however humble, are a means of survival and our task is to facilitate and upgrade the quality of that survival instead of stifling it ..." Pictured above, a sewing group in Ubombo, a typical example of a self-help group in KwaZulu.

that there may be as many as 4 000 tiny businesses operating in our shack areas.

We are currently, in co-operation with the Inkatha Institute and other bodies, undertaking basic work on the formulation of policies for the stabilisation and development of the informal communities.

In this area we realise that we are walking a tightrope. There is an ever-present tendency among some of our critics to depict the "squatter" communities as the products of neglect and exploitation and we can predict that pious criticism will be directed at us in regard to these communities.

On the other hand, we are not going to bulldoze shacks and we are not going to put pressure on these communities to upgrade themselves beyond their material means to do so.

As in the whole of the Republic of South Africa there is absolutely no hope of providing state housing to satisfy the demand.

If we were to attempt to wipe out the formal housing backlog in KwaZulu we would have to close all schools,

terminate all pensions and interrupt all development projects for a decade.

Therefore we know that informal dwellings and informal jobs, however humble, are a means of survival, and our task is to facilitate and upgrade the quality of that survival instead of stifling it.

These are examples of the type of balance and reconciliation of alternative options that we follow in our development policy in KwaZulu. I have described this as a "holding" operation, and therefore I should now indicate what we are "holding on" for. This brings me to the political challenges we face.

At the regional level we in KwaZulu are convinced that the quality of life and future stability of this region depends on a recognition of the fact that KwaZulu and Natal are a single geographic, economic and political entity.

A fully viable and successful policy of development can only occur in this context and we owe it to the people of KwaZulu and Natal to pursue this strategy as the major thrust in our regional politics.

This is why we appointed the Buthelezi Commission and this is why we have negotiated with the central government and other relevant authorities on this issue.

This is also why we are intending, at an appropriate time, to produce a White Paper on the Buthelezi Commission as a submission to central government on the policies which we consider to be appropriate for this region.

We anticipate that there will be a great deal of debate and negotiation around the recommendations of the Buthelezi Commission in future months.

We only pray that these negotiations should begin as soon as possible before we are engulfed by the forces of destruction that are presently ravaging some parts of our country.

I must however, acknowledge that various developments are occurring in this region which could be of fundamental relevance to the future. I wish to turn to these issues now.

The following developments have occurred since the completion of the

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Buthelezi Commission report which, to a greater or lesser extent, can be seen as consonant with or relevant to the findings of the Commission.

Firstly, there is what is called the Natal-KwaZulu "Accord" in terms of which Natal and KwaZulu are actively seeking ways to institute joint regional and development planning for the combined region of KwaZulu and Natal, and ways of combining resources at the technical, professional and in some cases, perhaps even administrative levels, in order to facilitate the optimal and rational development of the combined region.

The "Accord" consists of various joint committees at various levels, but what is significant about it is that it is under the steerage of a joint KwaZulu Cabinet/Provincial Executive Committee headed co-operatively by our Chief Minister and the Administrator of Natal.

This venture could develop into a partnership in all respects. There is no imposition by one side on the other. It is therefore fully consonant with the spirit of the Buthelezi Commission.

We see this co-operative venture as an important step towards a rational integration of development in the region, and I would like to congratulate the Administrator of Natal and the Provincial Executive on joining with us in this endeavour.

I must immediately add that the "Accord" is a long way from achieving the desirable integration of resources.

As Prof. Jill Nattrass noted in an Indicator/Extra Mural Studies Symposium on KwaZulu/Natal at the University of Natal, it is only when the joint endeavour has a common budget and, by extension, a pooled personnel and a single-arching administrative structure, that the problems of relative underdevelopment in the region will be able to be adequately addressed.

We are working very enthusiastically in the "Accord" but mindful of the ever-present need for the integration of resources to proceed to a higher level.

The KwaZulu/Natal Planning Council, under Dr Louis Rive, is also a welcome development, but as we understand it, it is a short-term venture which is aimed at

identifying and correcting a few critical and pressing problem areas. We are certain, however, that much of the work done will be a valuable input into the joint work of the longer-run "Accord".

Another development is that a joint planning committee composed of officials from the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning in Pretoria, the KwaZulu Government and the Natal Provincial Administration will be addressing major planning concerns in KwaZulu/Natal, starting with the Richards Bay and Thukela Basin areas.

Once again, we see this as an equitable partnership in planning and



"We have a serious relative lack of economic infrastructure ... and a serious overload of people and needs ... Our development policy is directed at spreading our resources to as many poor people in our territory as possible ..."

The rural youth pictured above are typical of many who forego schooling to assist with tasks such as herding cattle.

welcome it, not only for the results it will hopefully achieve, but also because it underscores the inevitability of a single approach to the problems of the region.

We look forward to a time when it will be realised that joint planning would be greatly facilitated if one integrated authority instead of three (viz. R.S.A., Natal and KwaZulu) were to plan and administer the region of KwaZulu/Natal. We prefer to be optimistic and assume that this is a first step in that direction.

This brings me to another possible aspect of "interaction" between KwaZulu and its adjacent areas which is more problematic. Here I refer to the impending Regional Services Councils.

We are faced with some severe difficulties in regard to the concept of the Regional Services Councils. On the one hand we realise that if KwaZulu is able to join in they will enable a degree of redistribution of resources and expertise to take place from the developed municipalities to the hugely underdeveloped Black townships and shack areas.

We also take note of the fact that the Regional Services Councils will represent one of the few official instances in South Africa in which White, Coloured, Indian and African representatives will serve on single bodies which have a form of representative status, albeit via nomination from lower tier bodies. We in KwaZulu are also painfully aware of the fact that we owe it to our people to take every opportunity to improve their quality of life.

On the other hand, however, we are also very concerned about the following disadvantages of Regional Services Councils. Firstly, they institutionalise ethnic separation even more deeply, since they derive their mandate very explicitly from a dispensation of municipal authorities based on Group Areas and "Homeland" demarcation — not to mention that these Councils are an extension of the new constitutional dispensation to which we are vehemently opposed.

Secondly, the RSC's, by virtue of the fact that representation on them is based on the financial power and fiscal base of the participating municipalities, to some degree translate privilege to



"We are happy and determined to be a component part of the Republic of South Africa because being South Africans is our primary identity and commitment ..."

Pictured above: Veld fires, like the one which swept through the Nkane area last year, cause considerable damage and major setbacks to local development efforts. In this fire 43 homes were destroyed.

to power in a very direct way.

I realise that there are checks on this power — a 50 percent curbing on representation and a requirement of a two-thirds majority for decisions — but nevertheless this institutionalises a principle which democracies throughout the world have been trying to move away from.

A third major difficulty in regard to our participation on the RSC's is that we had no part in their conceptualisation. They have been prepared and presented to us as a possibility by the central government on the basis of the interaction of interests in the White polity and administration, at central and municipal level.

Surely, White politicians should realise by now that our demands as Blacks will become more stringent, not less when we are not involved in the process of developing constitu-

tional reforms.

This becomes even more disheartening when one considers that in this region we have the Buthelezi Commission proposals on the table, which the government has consistently refused to consider in any meaningful way.

I am at this stage unable to comment conclusively on these Regional Services Councils in view of the fact that the General Conference of Inkatha has instructed the Central Committee to examine them closely with a view to recommending to our membership what attitude we will adopt towards them in future.

Finally, at the regional level, I must make mention of the fact that the Provincial Council is to be terminated as an elective body, to be replaced by a body with lesser powers and reduced responsibilities nominated by central government.

This step is a critically severe setback to the hope for a representative joint government for the combined region. I do not believe I have to add much more than this to indicate our dismay and total rejection in principle of what is planned.

Once again, this is being done regardless of the fact that we have our own proposals we would have liked to table for discussion with the Central Government.

Indeed, given the clear charter provided by the Buthelezi Commission and its manifestly strong support among all the groups in this joint region, the Central Government has displayed a remarkable insensitivity and callous disregard for a growing momentum of opinion in making their decision on second tier government applicable to Natal.

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How many more golden opportunities for inter-racial harmony and co-operation in this country are we going to miss, how much more goodwill from responsible Black political leaders like Chief M.G. Buthelezi are we going to squander before coming to terms with the reality of our political situation?

As far as I am concerned, I regard the new nominated Provincial Executive as a body with little more than one political utility; this being to form the Natal nucleus of a negotiating body to consider the regional constitutional future of the combined area, and to thereafter join us in making representation for its own demise in favour of elected government for the combined region.

If it is not prepared to play this role then it will be seen by us as a step backwards, undermining not only our interests as Black people but also eliminating the one working example of devolution that our country had in the White political sphere.

Having attempted to clarify political issues from the KwaZulu point of view at regional level, I must now turn to an issue which was not fully developed in the Buthelezi Commission because its terms of reference did not extend that far.

This is an issue of African representation at central level and more particularly that of representation of the African people of KwaZulu/Natal at the parliamentary level.

By now political observers and the Central Government in South Africa must have come to realise that the political legitimacy and effectiveness of Black representatives in the lower tiers of government is highly problematic.

The Black local council system has undergone a rapid disintegration in other parts of the country. There is turmoil which challenges the very nature of Black lower-tier representation that is presently available.

Political opportunists are taking advantage of this turmoil to enforce their dubious political agendas on defenceless urban communities.

We in Inkatha did warn when the local councils were established, that unless they were afforded a reliable financial base they would expose Black councillors to the wrath of township resi-

who cannot afford to cope with regular rent increases.

Inkatha has an exceptional position in the sense that it has been able to retain a base of support outside the region of KwaZulu/Natal by virtue of the spread of its constituency — the branches and divisions of Inkatha spread all over the Transvaal, the Free State and even parts of the Cape.

I have absolutely no doubt that the reason why Inkatha has been able to maintain its coherence and legitimacy amid the storms of alienation and turmoil in Black communities is because of its commitment to and unceasing work towards the establishment of the right of all Africans to be full citizens of the Republic of South Africa.

I must therefore reiterate what I

noted at the beginning of this report, that while we have unflinching commitments to power-sharing at the local and regional level, our capacity and strength to act at the regional level requires that we have a broader claim to legitimacy.

We cannot and will not, therefore, allow our demands for representation at central level to abate, no matter what developments occur in the region. If we do, we will be of no use to the region.

We believe in the basic right of African people to a dispensation involving universal franchise in a single political system.

We reject totally a racially-based confederal model in which separate and constitutional autonomous units

choose to co-operate with one another through bilateral or multi-lateral agreements. This offers us no more responsibility, assistance and co-operation that the central government is willing to extend.

We are, however, mindful of the fact that the white minority has deeply ingrained anxieties regarding the possibility of political domination, and therefore we are open to negotiation on this issue, possibly around a Federal model of constitutional development.

The details of our position are beyond the scope of this summary. The relevance of the issue of a central constitutional dispensation lies in the fact that unless we can reasonably expect some progress in the near future towards representation at the centre, we will progressively lose both our interest in and support and legitimacy for co-operation and co-participation in the affairs of the region. In that conviction we are unshakeable.

Just as many Whites who love Natal and want a devolution of powers to Natal would lose interest immediately if they felt it were to mean a loss of their rights as South Africans, so we in this region would lose our commitments to a regional devolution and power-sharing unless it both safeguarded and strengthened our rights as South African citizens with full representation at the centre.

We trust that the Central Government will, sooner than later, find it possible to begin talks with Black political leaders to work out the details of an acceptable political solution for our country.



“There is an urgent need in KwaZulu ... to protect the rural environment from the erosive effects of overpopulation and overgrazing ...”