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**THE DECLINE OF ZULU NATIONALISM AS A DEFINING  
FEATURE OF IFP POLICY**

**1994-1997**

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Department of Political Studies  
Faculty of Arts, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.**

**August 1998**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis provides an analysis of changes apparent in the ideology and style of the Inkatha Freedom Party's<sup>1</sup> politics since April 1994. The IFP's first three years in power under the new dispensation, as a member of the Government of National Unity and the majority party in KwaZulu-Natal, have witnessed a significant shift away from the militant Zulu nationalism and confrontational tactics that characterised the party from the mid-1980s. Zulu nationalism has been abandoned in favour of a broader appeal, while the brinkmanship employed during negotiations in the early 1990s, the walkouts and threats of violent resistance, have been largely absent in the post-election period. Confrontation since 1994, and especially since 1996, has gradually given way to more accommodatory and cooperative relations with the political opposition, on both the national and provincial levels of government.

To understand why this shift has occurred, it is necessary to examine the nature of Zulu nationalism as espoused by Inkatha. It is my assertion that Inkatha employed Zulu nationalism in an attempt to preserve its institutionalised power base in the KwaZulu-Natal region and exercise a voice on the national level. Nationalist rhetoric became increasingly prevalent as violence escalated in the late 1980s, and peaked in the uncertainty of the political transition as the IFP faced marginalisation on South Africa's emerging political stage. Zulu nationalism acted as the rallying call for party faithful to resist the challenge of the United Democratic Front/African National Congress in the 1980s, and provided justification for Inkatha's confrontational approach and demands for Zulu self-determination in the early 1990s. Indeed, Inkatha's brand of Zulu nationalism has always been about advancing the party interest, rather than defending the integrity of the divided and warring Zulu people. It is in this light that the post-1994 shift in ideological emphasis must be understood.

The April 1994 general election ushered in a new era in South African politics, in which the IFP found its role radically altered. From playing the part of spoiler on the outskirts of formal political structures it now had to adjust to its status as the majority party in the

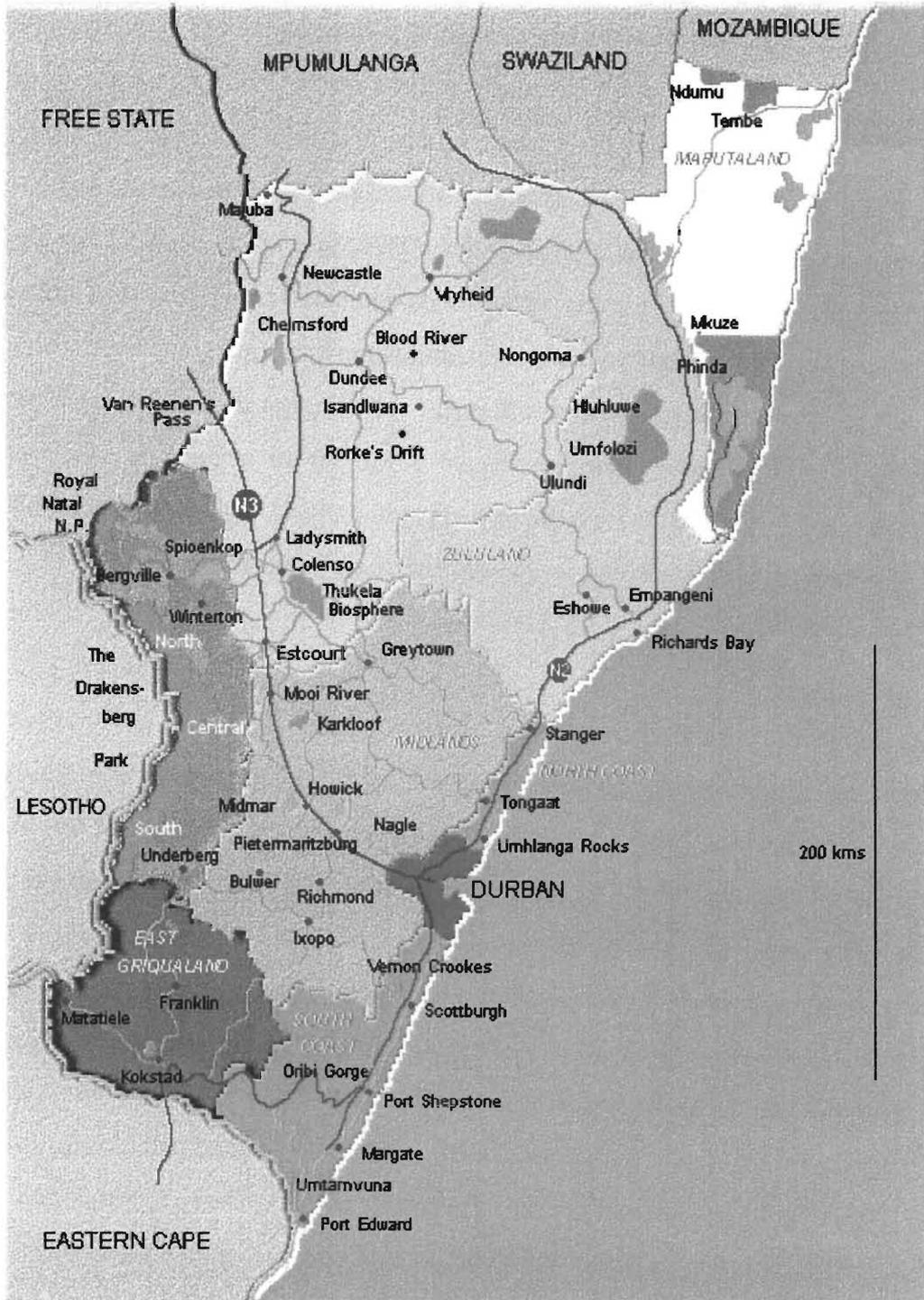
provincial legislature, with Buthelezi in a prominent role in the national cabinet. Under these conditions, the party's interests were advanced by the establishment of a smoothly run provincial administration, under which its regional power could be consolidated. Thus, the new political order created a space for the IFP within the democratic system in which its credibility rested on its ability to govern the province effectively. Further, under these conditions, confrontation was not only less attractive as a means of achieving party objectives, it was also less effective and feasible. This the IFP learnt the hard way, in terms of its disastrous constitution-making experience. Its boycott of negotiations at the national level merely served to deprive the IFP of a role in drawing up the country's final constitution, while a belligerent approach at the provincial level prevented the realisation of a compromise agreement. The IFP was forced to accept that its majority in the provincial legislature was insufficient to allow it to rule unilaterally in the province. The loss of the King's political allegiance, coupled with election results which revealed strong support for the ANC among urban Zulus while the IFP's support was largely confined to traditionalist rural communities, undermined the party's claims to represent the Zulu nation. Furthermore, the gradual return of law and order in the province diminished the IFP's capacity to resort to militarism, thus taking some of the bite out of a confrontational strategy.

In brief, the IFP was both pulled and pushed into the new order, and hence to some extent, a new ideology and political style. By 1996 the Zulu nationalism and belligerence that had characterised the party since the mid-1980s had been replaced with a liberal-conservative platform that sought resonance with the urban electorate, coupled with efforts to improve cooperative relations with the political opposition in the interests of provincial stability.

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<sup>i</sup> The Inkatha Yenkululeku Yesizwe cultural movement, established by Chief Buthelezi in 1975, changed its name to the Inkatha Freedom Party shortly after the unbanning of black opposition political parties in 1990.

## MAP OF KWAZULU-NATAL



This map is an edited version of the map that appears on the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government's 'Tourism and Gambling' website ([www.kzn-deat.gov.za/map.htm](http://www.kzn-deat.gov.za/map.htm))  
(Colours indicate wildlife/ conservation areas)

## Introduction

In early 1994, as South Africans approached the realisation of the country's democratic transition with both expectation and trepidation, concepts such as ethnicity, nationalism and nation building received much prominence in academic and political debate. The atmosphere of uncertainty created by the transition saw the appeal of popular micro-nationalisms intensify, particularly where these were linked to ethnic identities available for mobilisation by political elites. In the context of tension and violent politics thus created, the transformation of South Africa's diverse factions into 'a collective democratic entity of citizens who freely co-exist as a reconciled, developing and growing community whatever their cultural backgrounds,' was the subject of much speculation.<sup>1</sup> In specific terms one might have asked, can the militant Zulu nationalism of the IFP's transitional politics be accommodated in a multicultural democracy, allowing for gradual erosion of ethnic exclusivism, and ultimately the transcendence of Zulu identity by a broader South African national identity?

Commentators on the South African political scene were divided in their prognosis. Lawrence Schlemmer argued that, while ethnic identities existed among the African majority and had social and political consequences, one nonetheless found that Africans across the board tended to 'feel more or less united in protest against the common factors of their exclusion from parliament.' This shared sense of alienation gave rise to a sense of 'inter-ethnic political unity at the grass roots level.'<sup>2</sup> The HSRC similarly admitted that 'the question as to whether the plural community of South Africa is *mainly* an ethnic pluralism, must be answered in the negative.' Ethnic identities are not simply given, nor are they necessarily the primary basis of group affiliation.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, many adherents of liberation ideology dismissed the notion of a strongly defined ethnic identity as a construct of apartheid formulated to create arbitrary divisions among a commonly oppressed black population, divisions that the black majority would shake off in its triumph against authoritarianism.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Kieran O'Malley argued that the dominant political trend toward 'anti-ethnic, majoritarian populism' instilled in ethnic minorities the fear of 'political and economic marginalisation and emasculation,' and thus acted as a major contributor to the country's violence and 'brewing civil war.'<sup>5</sup> Giliomee was equally dubious,

predicting that 'ethnicity as a political factor looks set to surprise all those who view it as a pre-modern phenomenon or as a form of social engineering aimed at perpetuating white rule.'<sup>6</sup> Inkatha's Gavin Woods insisted that 'the global lesson could not be any clearer concerning the will and ability of group interests such as ethnicity and nationalism to resist integration and domination. Nation-building efforts that attempt to impose fundamental changes on the character of a population will invariably fail.'<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Arend Lijhart argued that 'ethnicity and ethnic divisions are facts of life in South Africa...that cannot be wished away.'<sup>8</sup> Clearly, there were those who saw little future for nation building projects in a South Africa cleaved by ethnic divisions.

The turbulence of South Africa's transition in the early 1990's looked likely to prove such misgivings well founded. As the April 1994 general election approached, the militant nationalist rhetoric of the ethnically defined Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) became increasingly intense. The brinkmanship<sup>9</sup> and confrontational tactics employed by the IFP during negotiations threatened to plunge the country into civil war. Until just days before polling opened, the IFP stubbornly refused to participate, on the grounds that pre-election negotiations had failed to accord due import to the sovereignty and specific interests of the Zulu nation. In an ultimatum echoing the nationalist sentiment that was tearing countries such as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union apart, the IFP demanded self-determination for the Zulu nation, threatening provincial secession rather than allow the sovereign Zulu nation to be ruled by an African National Congress (ANC) government.<sup>10</sup> Amidst escalating political violence, fears of civil war and even the breakup of the state seemed justified, conjuring images of tribal warfare and internecine ethnic conflict in the minds of many white South Africans. Indeed, in the uncertainty of the transition, 'the stockpiling of tinned food by thousands of timid citizens, illustrated the fears that there could have been a civil war in KwaZulu-Natal, and that the excitement of the masses could have paralyzed the country.'<sup>11</sup>

Inkatha played upon these fears, capitalising on its potential to disrupt the transition in order to advance the party's objectives.<sup>12</sup> Its confrontational approach, that saw brinkmanship employed to force the party's demands onto the negotiation agenda, arguably allowed the IFP to exercise a voice disproportionate to its limited national support. The urgency of securing a settlement perceived by all South Africans as inclusive, saw the NP and ANC, the dominant players in the process, make significant

concessions in order to bring the party on board and secure the legitimacy and stability of the transition.

Thus, when the elections took place on 24 April 1994, the IFP's name was on the ballot paper, hastily attached in sticker form to accommodate the party's last minute decision to participate. Relying on its close ties with the Zulu monarchy and the *amakhosi*, the IFP marketed itself as the representative of all 'true' Zulus, while political opponents were denounced as traitors to the Zulu nation, to be rooted out and cast aside.<sup>13</sup> Election results saw the IFP winning for itself a 50,3 percent majority in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial legislature and ten percent of the national vote, establishing itself as the dominant political force in the KwaZulu-Natal region and a significant minority on the national stage.

While the results of the election were eventually accepted by all parties and the process described as 'free and fair,' the ANC's presidential spokesman was nonetheless moved to comment that 'the IFP's victory in KwaZulu-Natal was not as a result of better policies that the IFP sold to the voters, but because of the perceived Zuluness of that party. There is a problem with a significant portion of the population, which wants to identify itself separately from the rest of the population. This situation lends itself to manipulation by opportunistic and counter-revolutionary elements.'<sup>14</sup> Clearly, Inkatha was perceived as the 'counter-revolutionary' force in question. The legacy of collaboration with the apartheid government still lingered around the party, and its spoiling tactics and confrontational stance had done nothing to improve its image as an autocratic organisation rooted in traditionalist sentiment and exclusive conceptions of ethnic identity.

Three years after the country's first democratic election, however, the danger of a nationalist inspired challenge to the political order seems much reduced. While the transformation of the country into a consolidated democracy is by no means complete, stability is gradually returning to the political scene as inter-party relations become more predictable and the procedures and structures of democratic governance are formalised. Whether ethnic nationalism is gradually making way for a nation-building project based on multi-culturalism is open to debate. The realisation of a 'collective democratic entity of citizens' remains some way off for South Africa, which is still deeply split by racial,



ethnic and class disparities. Nonetheless, the South African political stage has undergone a fundamental metamorphosis. The change has perhaps been most prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal, which has seen the nationalist logic of its majority party sidelined in the post-election period, creating opportunities for political realignment that were inconceivable in 1994.

Indeed, the IFP's first three years as the majority party in the provincial government have seen it undergo a substantial shift in both ideology and strategy as it adapts to the country's new political climate. The party's 1996 local government election campaign embraced a liberal-conservative platform, with specific appeals to 'Zuluness' largely absent.<sup>15</sup> This shift in ideology was complemented by moves toward a more accommodatory style of politics. The confrontational stance that had characterised Inkatha policy since the 1980's, the party's stubborn refusal to negotiate on any but its own terms, were gradually replaced by a more cooperative approach that acknowledged the need for multi-party negotiation. Since 1996, the IFP has engaged in concerted efforts to promote reconciliation and peace between warring political factions at the grass roots, while Buthelezi appears to have become a trusted and cooperative ally of the ANC at national level. While the IFP's ambitions for greater provincial autonomy have not diminished, its preferred tactics to achieve these objectives have undergone a substantial overhaul.

My objective is to explore how and why this shift in ideology and strategy has occurred. Was Inkatha's Zulu nationalism really about defending the interests of the Zulu nation, or was the primary concern to advance the objectives of the party as defined by the IFP leadership? Assuming the latter, why did the nationalist platform prove ineffective as a means of furthering the party's goals in the post-1994 context? Why has the party moved toward a more cooperative stance in terms of its relations with its political opposition, and what implications may this hold for the future of party politics in this province? These are the questions at the core of this thesis.

## II

The thesis has five parts. Chapter One explores theories of ethnicity and nationalism, analysing the limitations of traditional theoretical approaches, as well as more contemporary theories favouring a contextual approach. The latter is applied to the



specific case of Zulu identity and Zulu nationalism in KwaZulu-Natal, examining the mobilisation of ethnic identity as the basis of Inkatha's political agenda. I argue that, while the vast majority of KwaZulu-Natal's Zulus do express attachment to their ethnic identity, this affiliation is experienced to different degrees and with variable connotations according to different individual contexts. As such, it must be understood that ethnic identity does not necessarily inspire nationalist sentiment, hence the limits inherent in Inkatha's appeal.

The self-aware Zulu 'nation' as conceived by Inkatha is but a part, albeit a large one, of the Zulu-speaking population residing in the KwaZulu-Natal region. Nonetheless, in a context of political uncertainty, Zulu nationalism proved an effective way of mobilising popular support for a party with limited geographical reach and numerical strength, providing a visible and emotional platform from which to draw support. Zulu nationalism was thus employed to serve the interests of the party, rather than of the Zulu nation *per se*. As such, it remained central to IFP policy only so long as it proved useful as a mobilising ideology. In the context of democratic governance established after April 1994, the party's interests have been better served by gradually shedding its nationalist image. The elections ushered in a new political climate, in which the IFP found itself drawn into the new political system, with a vested stake in securing democratic consolidation, particularly in the province under its control. Under these conditions, the limits of a confrontational strategy justified in terms of Zulu nationalism soon became apparent.

The 1994 elections revealed the IFP's support to be greatly confined to the rural areas of the province and to older, poorer and less literate voters in particular.<sup>16</sup> Despite its majority in the provincial legislature, the party could not afford to alienate potential voters with an ethnically exclusive platform if it hoped to consolidate power on the regional level, nor could it claim to represent the Zulu nation when the ANC had clearly scooped the urban Zulu vote. Furthermore, the strength of the opposition parties precluded the IFP functioning as a *de facto* ruling party in the province, despite tendencies in this direction. In this light, Chapter Two examines the limits of confrontation as revealed by the IFP's unsuccessful efforts to challenge the national Constitution. Taking a confrontational stand on the national level, the IFP withdrew from the national constitution-making process in mid-1995, in reaction to its

marginalisation in the Constitutional Assembly. In an attempt to circumvent ANC-NP dominance, the IFP concentrated its energies on formulating a provincial constitution for KwaZulu-Natal, looking to drive the constitution making process by virtue of its majority status in the provincial legislature. Employing nationalist rhetoric that called for Zulu self-determination and implied threats of secession, the IFP sought to lend strength to its campaign for greater provincial autonomy, against the centralism favoured by the ANC at the national level.

The party's confrontational approach toward its political opposition proved counter-productive however. Its unwillingness to compromise in the interests of an inclusive settlement saw the project dragged out over a prolonged period, characterised by acrimony and disruptions that impeded actual progress. The final constitutional draft satisfied no single party, including the IFP. The document was rejected by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that it sought to override the jurisdiction and powers of central government, leaving the IFP with no option but to abide by the national Constitution, in which it had chosen to have no part. In hindsight, the party has been forced to admit that it could perhaps have achieved more had it been prepared to settle for less: a less radical constitution, without the attendant nationalist overtones, may have seen the province's federal powers better advanced.

While the provincial constitution making debacle undoubtedly contributed toward the more moderate approach adopted by the party since 1996, there nonetheless remains a hard-line element within the IFP that refuses to compromise on issues of Zulu 'tradition.' Chapter Three focuses on this defense of tradition, looking in particular at the party's unyielding stand promoting the powers of the *amakhosi*. It will be argued that, while the preservation of a uniquely Zulu/African culture is a legitimate concern, the party's primary motive is party political. The system of traditional authority is defended as a specific means of preserving intact the party's core constituency. The IFP, which through the patronage networks established under the old KwaZulu government is assured of the loyalty of the great majority of KwaZulu-Natal's *amakhosi*, refuses to countenance the introduction of 'western style' democracy in the tribal areas. The ANC on the other hand, seeks to challenge the IFP's hegemony in rural areas, breaking the ties that see IFP-aligned *amakhosi* allegedly shaping the political loyalty of their communities. The status of KwaZulu-Natal's *amakhosi* has yet to be

resolved. While the IFP has secured their role in local government until general elections are held in 1999, their position thereafter remains oblique.

Chapter Four provides an analysis of mass politics, examining the extent to which violence in the province may be understood as a manifestation of nationalist sentiment, in a war between political parties fighting for dominance. I argue that, while the threat of escalating violence was effective in securing recognition of IFP demands in the pre-election period, since 1994 the IFP as the party of provincial government has found violence counter-productive. Indeed, the results of two democratic elections in the province preclude the possibility that one rival might eradicate the other through sustained violence. Instead, high levels of violence have provided central government with reason to intervene in the province's security affairs, impinging on the jurisdiction of the provincial Safety and Security Ministry despite the IFP's protests. Further, the nationalist rhetoric pervading IFP rallies in the early 1990's, rekindling the pride of the Zulu warrior nation with calls for self-determination against central government autocracy, has visibly lapsed in recent years. Since 1996, high profile ANC leaders have increasingly shared the stage with their IFP counterparts, while rallies in recent years have tended to focus on reconciliation rather than violent resistance.

Yet while levels of political violence have decreased significantly since 1994, the death rate still remains unacceptably high and intimidation is rife. Many of the province's politicians, on both sides of the ANC-IFP divide, have consolidated their power within their communities through violence and intimidation, and thus have a considerable interest in continued instability. Nonetheless, faced with a war-weary population seeking economic deliverance from the party in power, the provincial government requires an urgent solution to end lingering violence. Political leaders need to tackle the issues that divide their parties and come up with mutually acceptable compromises, on which a united appeal for peace at the grassroots may be based. For the former antagonists seated across from one another in the provincial parliament, the benefits of closer co-operation between the two majority parties are clear.

Moves toward this end gained momentum in the latter half of 1997, as shall be seen in Chapter Five. Long time political rivals appear to recognise that their best chances of consolidating their power rely on their ability to cooperate in the interests of effective

governance in the province, hence the recent peace talks, and even speculation of a possible merger between the ANC and IFP. The IFP has seen, through the failure of the provincial constitution and the confinement of its support to the rural areas, that it cannot govern the province alone. The ANC has likewise been forced to acknowledge that the IFP holds a legitimate majority in the provincial government, and has a strong following among traditionalists whose demands will not be easily ignored. This mutual recognition of legitimacy has facilitated improved working relations between the two parties. Both parties face serious internal divisions regarding closer relations with their political rivals, however. The ANC has not convinced its SACP and Cosatu allies of the benefits of closer ties with the IFP, while the IFP refuses to discuss the issue publicly except to refute speculation of a merger between the parties. The IFP and ANC have yet to overcome a legacy of acrimony, and it seems likely that improved cooperation is the best option that one may hope for, at least in the short term. Even speculation of a future merger, however, implies a measure of convergence that appeared inconceivable just a few years ago.

### III

In KwaZulu-Natal, the lines of fissure that exist within the Zulu ethnic group precluded the realisation of a coherent, unified Zulu nation actively challenging the boundaries of the South African state. Instead, Zulus found themselves divided along party political lines into two hostile and warring camps. If the IFP's defense of Zulu nationalism was primarily about advancing party interests, it is unlikely that it will resort to this ethnically defined appeal as it attempts to consolidate its power on the provincial level prior to the general elections of 1999. While ethnic chauvinism served to boost the IFP in the early 1990's, the party's credibility, at least in part, now rests on its ability to make the structures of democracy work in the province. The IFP's best interests lie in the expansion of its support-base among a multi-cultural population, and in cooperative relations with its political opposition in the interests of effective governance. In this light it appears likely that ethnic nationalism and confrontational tactics have proven sufficiently limited to be discarded, and that accommodation and cooperation between opposition parties in the provincial legislature will reap benefits for both party and province in the future.

Etherington has noted that ‘reflecting on the deeper causes of nationalist fractures raises warning signals against unthinkingly adopting the proposition that nationalist and cultural fissures are likely to dominate twenty-first century Africa or any part of the globe.’<sup>17</sup> In South Africa, the rainbow nation concept has wide appeal across a multi-cultural population, at least on an ideological level if not always in practice. As the prospect of the 1999 election approaches, the threat of ‘micro-nationalisms’ has been rendered largely insignificant. For parties across the political spectrum, the way forward appears to be through the cooperation and effective participation within the democratic system.

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<sup>1</sup> Liebenberg 1994: 18, in Rhodie and Liebenberg (ed)

<sup>2</sup> Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989: 197, cited in Bekker 1993: 68

<sup>3</sup> HSRC 1985: 63, cited in Bekker 1993: 68

<sup>4</sup> Tutu: 1984, cited in Bekker 1993: 71

<sup>5</sup> O’Malley 1994: 77 in Rhodie and Liebenberg (ed)

<sup>6</sup> Giliomee 1994: 12

<sup>7</sup> Woods 1994: 197, in Rhodie and Liebenberg (ed)

<sup>8</sup> Lijhart 1989: 22, cited in Bekker 1993: 74

<sup>9</sup> The Funk and Wagnall’s dictionary defines ‘brinkmanship’ as ‘the willingness to take major risks to achieve some end’ – Funk and Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary (1980) Vol 1, Lippincott and Crowell: USA.

The IFP’s refusal to take part in the 1994 election until just days before polling opened, and its confrontational approach to constitution-making at both national and provincial level, are indicative of the party’s willingness to employ such brinkmanship tactics in pursuit of its political objectives.

<sup>10</sup> On 14 February 1994 Zwelithini demanded autonomy for the Kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal, threatening secession if the demand was ignored – Maré 1996: 36, in Rich (ed)

<sup>11</sup> Schlemmer 1994: 150, in Giliomee *et al* (ed)

<sup>12</sup> Felgate in Natal Witness 27 August 1997

<sup>13</sup> Maré 1996: 30 in Rich (ed)

<sup>14</sup> Presidential Spokesman Parks Manhlakane cited in the Sunday Independent 11 January 1998

<sup>15</sup> Randall 1996, Piper 1997

<sup>16</sup> Johnson and Schlemmer 1996: 317

<sup>17</sup> Etherington 1996: 272

## Chapter One: Understanding the Politics of Zuluness

To understand the basis on which claims to nationalism arise, one must grapple with the concept of ethnic identity - a concept which has provided the justification for some of the most divisive and violent nationalist movements of modern history. This chapter will examine the salience of ethnicity in the lives of KwaZulu-Natal's African population, arguing for the importance of cultural identity in the day to day lives of many of the province's inhabitants. It will be seen, however, that while the majority of the province's Zulus display an attachment to their unique cultural identity on an individual level, this ethnically defined identity does not necessarily translate into a common political affiliation.

Thus, despite Inkatha's best efforts in the early 1990s, Zulu ethnicity, arising on the basis of a shared cultural identity, has not provided the basis for an all-encompassing nationalism, whereby the Zulu unite behind a common political agenda. The Zulu nationalism that has expressed itself in the region has been a 'top-down' movement, centrally directed by the Inkatha elite in the service of particular political ambitions, rather than a bottom-up grass roots revival. While undoubtedly drawing on genuinely felt ethnic sentiment, the appeal of Inkatha's brand of Zulu nationalism remains limited in its geographical reach precisely because of its party political origins.

### Understanding Ethnic Identity

The origins and significance of ethnic identity remain highly contested after three decades of academic debate. At one extreme, primordialism explains ethnic identity in terms of 'the assumed "givens" of social existence,' that is, 'the "givens" of place, tongue, blood, looks and way of life (that) shape an individual's notion of who, at bottom, he is, and with whom indissolubly, he belongs.'<sup>1</sup> Ethnic groups are assumed to exist on the basis of ancient blood ties among group members, and as such are characterised as extended kinship communities. Other analysts refuse to ascribe such innate and enduring value to

ethnic identity however. Instrumentalism explains ethnic identity and group affiliation in terms of 'strategic efficiency,' providing an effective focus for 'group mobilisation of concrete political ends.'<sup>2</sup> The notion of historical and emotional ties entrenching community solidarity is discredited in favour of explanations based on interest group politics, allowing a prominent role for marginalised elites, who exploit the ethnic platform as a convenient means of securing advantage for a specific interest group based on its distinctive culture. According to this perspective, ethnic ties will be expressed only when capable of serving particular interests.

In reality, both accounts prove overly reductionist and one-sided. Primordialism is unable to accommodate the malleability of ethnic affiliations in relation to changing context, assigning excessive importance to ancient, deeply felt emotive attachments among group members. Instrumentalism, on the other hand, fails to provide a convincing argument as to why ethnic identity proves such an effective rallying call, as opposed to other objective identities such as social class, especially in light of its emphasis on economic self-interest as a motive for group mobilisation. In response to these limitations, contemporary scholars tend to favour a circumstantialist approach, unpacking the construction of identity under particular conditions. In the context of massive socio-political change in KwaZulu-Natal over the last twenty years, primordialism and instrumentalism have shown themselves to be inadequate explanations of ethnic identity,<sup>3</sup> hence my argument in favour of a context-dependent approach as a basis for understanding contemporary conceptions of Zulu identity.

### **The Limitations of Traditional Theoretical Approaches**

According to the primordial approach, ethnic identity derives from 'the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language.... and following particular social practices.' These 'givens,' the 'congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on,' foster

feelings of affiliation among those who share them that extend deeper than mere familiarity or convenience, entrenched ‘at least in great part by some unaccountable import attributed to the very tie itself.’<sup>4</sup> The resultant sense of kinship is reinforced by the shared history, culture and value-standards of the ethnic group, ensuring that the affective bonds of group membership are so deep-rooted within and integral to the individual, that they tend to have ‘an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves.’<sup>5</sup> Thus Harold Isaacs has ethnic identity consisting of ‘the ready-made set of endowments and identifications which every individual shares from the moment of birth by the chance of the family into which he is born at that given time in that given place.’<sup>6</sup> From the ethnic community, the individual inherits a name, the history and origins of a shared cultural past, a language, a religion and value-system, the core components of group membership that ‘shape the only reality in his existence and are made part of him before he has barely any consciousness at all.’<sup>7</sup>

For primordialists then, ethnic identity is not only irrevocably ascribed from the moment of birth, it is also the primary or basic identity of every individual, moulding his personality, lifestyle and socio-economic opportunities. Ethnic identity is rooted in the non-rational and emotive human psyche, providing a sense of security in a shared cultural past, instilling a sense of belonging that evokes the comfort of brotherhood or assumed kinship relations, in a broader social context of individual competition and uncertainty. According to Greely: ‘men will continue to differentiate themselves along ethnic lines, as a sense of separateness fulfils the individual’s need for primordial attachment and also because each group values its cultural style and circle of kinsman above all others.’<sup>8</sup> When one attempts to apply such a theoretical paradigm in the context of the ongoing violence that ravages KwaZulu-Natal’s predominantly Zulu population, however, the flaws of the primordialist argument are clear.

The violence that has raged in the province for over a decade, while conveniently characterised by the apartheid regime as ‘deep-rooted tribal animosity’ harking back to ‘natural’ divisions among primitive African cultures, has largely been a conflict within the Zulu ethnic group. While Geertz insists that ‘one is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbour, one’s fellow believer, *ipso facto*,’<sup>9</sup> since the early 1980’s KwaZulu’s ethnically homogenous black population has been engaged in an unremitting civil war born of conflicting political affiliations. Father has been pitted against son, in circumstances that have seen families and communities torn apart.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, the ‘overpowering’ and ‘coercive’ nature of ethnic affiliation has proved subordinate to divisive political allegiances for many of KwaZulu-Natal’s Zulus, undermining primordialist notions of brotherhood and unity as innate within the ethnic group.

This politics of division was at its peak in the months preceding the 1994 general election. Between January and April 1994 over 1000 people were killed in political violence in the region, at precisely the time that the ‘specific and familiar identifications’ of ethnic affiliation should have brought to the fore by the impending incorporation of the region into ‘an overarching and somewhat alien civil order.’<sup>11</sup> Faced with integration into a multi-cultural population, argues Geertz, individuals risk ‘a loss of definition as an autonomous person, either through absorption into a culturally undifferentiated mass or, what is even worse, through domination by some other rival ethnic, racial or linguistic community.’<sup>12</sup> In these circumstances, ethnic affiliation is supposed to be at its most potent as individuals struggle to hold on to their unique identity. What is clear from both the violence preceding the elections and the election results themselves, is that in the upheaval of South Africa’s political transition, a great many Zulus rejected political allegiances defined by a narrow conception of their ethnic identity, embracing instead the ANC’s multi-ethnic political rhetoric, which Geertz would have them covering from.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the IFP's strong showing in the 1994 general elections was largely a reflection of 'the politics of clientelism in the former self-governing territory of KwaZulu.'<sup>13</sup> Eighty-six percent of the party's national vote was concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal, particularly in the areas that had been under the authority of the KwaZulu bantustan. The ANC nonetheless managed to win thirty-two percent of the provincial vote, garnering much of its support from urban Zulus who showed little inclination to identify with the ethnic platform of the IFP. For these urbanised Zulus, the desire to access state power was better achieved through the mobilisation of a broader African identity. Pre-election surveys showed support as high as eighty-four percent for the ANC in the urban townships of KwaZulu-Natal, particularly among younger, wealthier and more educated Africans.<sup>14</sup> IFP supporters on the other hand tended to be older, 'less literate, more rural and often the poorest electors of all.'<sup>15</sup> The linguistic homogeneity of the region was clearly overlaid by significant socio-political divisions. Indeed, election results in African areas tended to reveal 'a patchwork quilt of unchallengeable (and thus virtually uncontested) territorial redoubts of the IFP or ANC.' It seems that pressure or intimidation to conform to the political profile of one's specific township or rural community greatly clouded the issue of to what extent political affiliations were ethnically determined or otherwise.<sup>16</sup>

The stark divisions revealed within the Zulu ethnic group defy primordial explanation. A discourse that bases group solidarity on perceptions of extended kinship and common origin, allows little room for the urban-rural, inter-generational, traditionalist-modernist rifts evident in contemporary Zulu society. Instead, one is confronted with the potential fluidity of group boundaries, boundaries that may define the group as 'larger or smaller, more or less exclusive... more or less ascriptive in its criteria for membership, more or less acculturated to the norms of some other group, more or less internally cohesive,

and more or less ethnocentric or hostile to other groups,' depending on an individual's particular circumstances.<sup>17</sup>

Thus we may understand Horowitz's finding that resistance to political control by an ethnic group other than one's own, revealed an urban-rural rather than an ethnic divide among black South Africans. Horowitz's case study found that while less than a quarter of urban residents, both Zulu and Xhosa, expressed concern about being ruled by another black ethnic group, nearly half the rural respondents showed insecurity, and among Zulu migrant workers expressions of insecurity were as high as sixty-four percent.<sup>18</sup> Predictably, rural people showed greater concern regarding possible alienation of their land by unsympathetic authorities than did urban dwellers, a concern heightened among migrants owing to their enforced absence from their land for lengthy time periods. This attachment to land allows tribal loyalties to retain a significant hold over many rural South Africans. 'Faction fighting,' originating over competition for land and access to scarce resources, develops into inter-community disputes in which 'blood feuds are developed and the cycle of retribution is endless.'<sup>19</sup> In this context of heightened competition, 'there is nothing to distinguish the people on one side from those on the other. They speak the same language, belong to the same nation, suffer the same deprivations. And yet every now and then, they fight bloody wars against one another.'<sup>20</sup> In such cases, the overarching Zulu identity of antagonists fails to supersede the desperate competition between communities for scarce resources.

This contest over land and resources and who controls them lends itself well to an instrumentalist approach. Understanding the ethnic group as merely one type of interest group, instrumentalists would argue that in ethnically homogenous but desperately poor districts, ethnic identity is unable to function as a mechanism for preferential resource allocation. It is thus disregarded in favour of more specific and effective interest groups, for example those based on

locality. Where the ethnic group finds itself as a disadvantaged minority in a wider social context, however, instrumentalists argue that ethnicity will reassert itself, or be subject to political manipulation that engineers its reassertion. Ethnic identity thus becomes the most effective means of achieving the collective interest - with its implied individual benefits in terms of improved status and access to resources.<sup>21</sup>

The instrumentalist approach distinguishes itself by its unwillingness to emphasise emotive ties, be they to people, tradition or land. According to Vail: 'the mere appeal of, or belief in, a generalised idyllic past and the presumed unity of the ethnic group seem insufficiently definite to explain the relevance to people in specific historical circumstances of the statements that comprise constructed ethnic ideologies.'<sup>22</sup> While he accepts the possibility of people experiencing a need for so-called 'traditional' values when confronted with rapid social change, and consequently embracing the appeal of solidarity under an ethnic banner, Vail contests the sufficiency of this condition in itself to elicit powerful ethnic identities.

Instrumentalism rejects the notion of ethnic identities as 'given' and long-established in favour of the recognition that these identities are 'renewed, modified and remade in each generation. Far from being self-perpetuating, they require creative effort and investment. Claims to ethnic membership arise and change according to situationally variable circumstances and interests.'<sup>23</sup> Consequently it is necessary to note the very time-limited histories that certain ethnic groups can lay claim to, and to recognise also that 'attachment to any group or another, or the intensity of attachment to any group, depends on accidental circumstances.'<sup>24</sup> Hence the need to focus on 'specific and immediate circumstances to explain why groups maintain their identity, why ethnicity becomes a basis for mobilisation, why some situations are peaceful and others filled with conflict.'<sup>25</sup> The core of this argument is that ethnic ties will be salient

only when capable of serving specific interests. Thus the utility of the ethnic platform for the KwaZulu legislature and Inkatha in their efforts to secure political power in the KwaZulu Natal region pre-1994, based on the ethnically concentrated character of the province.

Playing down the innate and affective nature of ethnic bonds and emphasising ethnic identity as a means for social advancement, instrumentalist accounts allow a prominent role for top-down manipulation by political elites. The political or economic elite of an ethnic group, seeking more effective participation in the wider social system, may choose to emphasise its ethnic identity as a means of acquiring status and recognition and thus promoting the development of more stable patterns of social organisation. Brass notes the tendency of political elites to 'select from traditional cultures only those aspects that they think will serve to unite the group and that will be useful in promoting the interests of the group as they define them.'<sup>26</sup> This allows considerable scope for manipulation of 'the self-definition of the group and its boundaries,' often to such an extent that the 'ethnic community or nationality created out of a pre-existing ethnic group may be a very different social formation from its progenitor.'<sup>27</sup> The elite will tend to emphasise certain aspects of a group's culture, attaching these with symbolic significance as the basis for political mobilisation, aiming to defend group interests and create favourable terms of competition with other groups.

Faced with the dissolution of the KwaZulu bantustan under the new political dispensation, Inkatha sought to use Zulu ethnicity to justify the preservation of its regional power base. Addressing an IFP rally in Durban in September 1990, Buthelezi told the crowd: 'Zulus are here to stay as Zulus. We are proud South Africans because we are proud Zulus. We will be part of the new South Africa as KwaZulu.'<sup>28</sup> Six months later Buthelezi warned that the IFP would 'tear down piece by piece any future' which the ANC and NP tried to conclude in

bilateral talks between themselves, refusing to allow for the 'sovereign Zulu nation to' be dictated to.<sup>29</sup> In April 1991, he called for a 'sane and sensible' system of protecting group rights, emphasising the importance of regionalizing power structures, and warned in his October 1992 Shaka Day speech: 'We are Zulu and we will fight for the preservation of the Zulu nation.'<sup>30</sup> The interrelated goals of promoting Zulu identity and securing greater power for the IFP are clear. Instrumentalists would argue however, that the former is merely a vehicle for the pursuit of power and influence; 'an available tool employed to whip up support, antagonism, suspicion and emotions in the struggle to win access to the state and preside over the collection and allocation of scarce resources.'<sup>31</sup>

Instrumentalism's major flaw lies in the fact that while ethnic identity is undeniably vulnerable to political manipulation, political mobilisation from an ethnic platform is possible only because affective ethnic ties do exist - ties that this approach has a tendency to dismiss as inconsequential. In their case studies of Zulu township residents, Campbell *et al* found that the bonds of ethnic affiliation resonate in the lives and experiences of people who recognise these calls precisely because they invoke aspects of their personal experiences and understandings of themselves and the world.<sup>32</sup> The primacy accorded to such ties may vary according to a rational calculation of interest in particular contexts, however. Masipula Sithole explains: 'It is the masses who respond negatively or positively to tribal ideology, otherwise politicians would not use this resource. The masses calculate that they stand to benefit one way or the other from "our leader" ... in power, or representing "us" in the corridors of power ... the response is not based on simple emotional false-consciousness; the masses do give thought to the promises made and the base of their credibility.'<sup>33</sup> Thus, while rational choice plays a central role when formulating allegiances, the concepts of 'our' and 'us' nonetheless need to be grounded in a genuine group identity. In this light, ethnic identity may be understood to have both an

‘internal’ and ‘external’ aspect. The former is based on an individual sense of belonging; an ‘imagined’ bond derived from a shared culture or common ancestry. The latter, the external aspect, arises from recognition of the strategic advantages of the affiliation, and is ‘invented’ for this purpose.<sup>34</sup>

The task of reconciling the extent to which ethnic communities are both ‘imagined’ and ‘invented’ has been taken up by the contemporary school of situationalists/ circumstantialists who, disillusioned with the ‘nonrational,’ inescapable nature of primordial accounts of ethnicity, yet simultaneously sceptical of a calculated, instrumental approach, have sought to achieve a more holistic, context-dependent conception of ethnic identity. The approach is based on the recognition that the formation and durability of ethnic identity are subject to both internal and external processes, and that it is necessary for these influences to reinforce one another in order for ethnicity to assert itself as an effective motive for collective affiliation.

Epstein explains identity formation as the process by which the individual attempts to reconcile his own conception of himself with his experiences as a member of various social groups, to create a coherent image of himself in society.<sup>35</sup> This process, suggests Epstein, involves both a personal affirmation of one’s self-definition, as well as an acknowledgement of the social identities imposed by society. As the result of ‘the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds with particular others,’ the individual perceives a need to identify himself with a community in order to achieve a stable identity and secure his self-esteem.<sup>36</sup> By identifying his own morals and values with those of the cultural community, he is able to reinforce his own beliefs and simultaneously affiliate himself with individuals who are likely to share these beliefs - individuals with whom he consequently shares an affectional bond. The internally defined process of affiliation, what Lal refers to as a ‘genuine culture,’ is inseparable from the external influence of society, since the goals of

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identification are largely defined by the cultural group itself.<sup>37</sup> As Smith explains: 'The sense of the self is viewed through the prism of symbols and mythologies of the community's heritage.'<sup>38</sup> Thus, when Bell argues for the utility of ethnicity as a mobilising platform in terms of its combination of 'an interest with an effective tie,' we must recognise that to some extent the collective identity itself will define what that interest will be - contrary to the claims of instrumentalism's calculated pursuit of individual self interest.<sup>39</sup>

This complex interaction between the individual and his cultural community, rendering a learned ethnic identity that nonetheless has real relevance to the individual's conception of himself, Lal explains in terms of the 'ethnicity paradox.'<sup>40</sup> An ethnically distinct group, favouring participation in separate, ethnically defined institutions, finds its group cohesion and solidarity enhanced as a result. It is thus better able to compete effectively as a group for resources and status in the wider society, securing an improved level of integration for the group as a whole. The paradox lies in the fact that as a result of individual group members recognising their cultural identity as separate from that of the wider society, they find a means of social integration through the group itself, as it becomes an accepted sub-unit of the social system. ✓

Conceiving identity as an interaction between individual and community, circumstantialism avoids the determinism of primordialism while providing a deeper sense of self than instrumentalism allows. Recognising that humans do express 'an innate need and tendency to form bonds,' it keeps cognisance of the socially constructed nature of these bonds, learned as they are through social interaction and reinforcement within the community.<sup>41</sup> The perception of a shared culture then, both satisfies the individual need to 'belong,' and establishes acceptable parameters of social interaction. In this sense, 'collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations, but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of

population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture.<sup>42</sup>

Thus ethnic identity, while genuinely resonant in the individual's sense of self, is nonetheless malleable according to circumstance. The relevance of particular aspects of one's culture may change over time, just as the boundaries by which the ethnic group is defined may shift. So long as the ethnic identity is genuinely experienced, it is available for manipulation in the service of contextually defined ends, allowing individuals to 'constantly take for granted "natural givens" that they themselves have constituted in an unconscious way.'<sup>43</sup>

### **Ethnic Identity in KwaZulu-Natal**

An understanding of ethnic identity then, requires recognition that any individual is influenced by both emotive, non-rational as well as rational, self-interested motives which combine forces according to particular circumstances to shape his ethnic affiliation. The ascriptive nature of the ethnic tie allows the individual the comfort of belonging without the effort required of voluntary association, particularly since an objectively observable difference, such as language, is usually involved. One nonetheless retains the rational capacity to recognize the moderating effects of time and context, and to modify the primary reference point of individual self-definition accordingly. Nash observes: 'both the durability and the ephemerality of ethnic groups are cultural and social enigmas of the first magnitude.'<sup>44</sup>

Consider for example a 1990 case study conducted by Ari Sitas that found 'Zuluness, as an ethnic self-identification among Black workers in Natal, although common, registers different experiences and comradeships from area to area.' Workers in the Midlands identified with their Zuluness 'in terms of linguistic and cultural characteristics,' but classified themselves politically 'as

part of a broader, dispossessed African nation' based on their concrete experiences of land alienation. Conversely, in former KwaZulu workers understood themselves as constituting 'a separate and distinctive people' requiring its own territory and government. Attitudes differed again in the townships surrounding Durban, where ethnicity was associated with traditionalism, workers expressing a desire to 'return to the moral authority of the past, of patriarchy in the face of collapsing households.' In each case, different historical circumstances have resulted in different conceptions of a Zulu ethnic identity, with different implications in respect of social aspirations and political affiliations.<sup>45</sup>

Just as historical context influences the manner in which ethnicity is experienced, so too do contemporary conditions impact upon the primacy of this identity. In a context of political violence, for example, 'insecurity itself acts as a constraint on inter-ethnic contacts,' since 'if a person is dependent for his security on the voluntary and spontaneous support of his own community, self-identification as a member of the community needs to be explicitly expressed and confirmed.'<sup>46</sup> Political violence among hostel dwellers on the East Rand in the late 1980's, saw people resorting 'to their common identities and backgrounds in the face of a perceived onslaught,' ethnicity becoming 'a defensive, survivalistic identity.'<sup>47</sup> In this context, ethnicity was equated with political allegiance, both as a result of the perception among Zulus that they were being attacked regardless of political affiliation, and owing to Inkatha's readiness to mobilise along ethnic lines.<sup>48</sup>

In contrast, a study conducted by Piper *et al* in 1992, in the predominantly ANC township of Edendale outside Pietermaritzburg, found significant discrepancy between the ethnic affiliation and political orientation of high-school students interviewed.<sup>49</sup> Not only did the majority of students identify themselves as Zulus, ethnicity was perceived in terms of 'subjective' factors such as Zulu

history and customs, in addition to the more 'objective' basis of language. While traditional cultural practices were perceived as relevant to daily life, however, the issues of IFP nationalist rhetoric - the authority of 'traditional leaders' and an independent Zulu territory - received little support, and the majority of students supported the ANC. This divergence between ethnic and political affiliation, notes Piper, indicates the 'role of consent in the construction of identity,' so that 'attempts by elites to redefine the content of Zuluness need not detract from popular affection for the identity.' Respondents were able to express an emotional attachment to their ethnicity that in no way impeded their political affiliation to the ANC.

In sum, I would argue that ethnicity does provide a salient identity, one that is to some extent ascribed, but that is nonetheless malleable according to particular circumstances. Ethnic identity exists as an attachment to one's cultural community, arising from an individual need to belong and reinforced by socialisation within the community. It is available as a basis for differentiating between 'us' and 'them' according to specific, observable criteria, and is salient in certain contexts as an effective basis for collective affiliation. In circumstances where ethnic identity does provide the motivation for group affiliation, we must recognise that such identities vary considerably in terms of what Nash calls the 'action aspect.'<sup>50</sup> This may range from a minimum, of the formal and ceremonial celebration of cultural difference, to a maximum extreme of total domination of social and cultural life by ethnic considerations. It is this aspect that places groups in relation to one another, that asserts a group's 'rightful place' in the social hierarchy, that determines whether inter-ethnic contact occurs in terms of accommodation or conflict, and that, when taken to the extreme, unleashes the power of ethnic nationalism.

## **The Roots of Nationalism**

*'A nation can exist only where there are people who are prepared to die for it... only when its sons believe that their nation is chosen by God and regard their people as his highest creation.'*<sup>51</sup>

**Nationalism**, according to John Hutchinson, is based on the assumption that 'nations are facts of nature that have differentiated humanity into distinctive cultural communities, each of which has its own territorial habitat and capacities for self-government.'<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Smith describes nationalism as having 'a polycentric and dynamic vision of humanity as divided by nature into distinctive communities each with a special role to play in human progress.' Each of these communities is understood as constituting a nation, 'a named population with a set of distinctive features - possession of a consolidated territory, common myths and history, a mass public culture, an integrated economy, common legal rights and a claim to sovereignty.'<sup>53</sup> If we understand the contemporary world as a collection of separate and distinct nations, we may understand nationalism as the force which drives those nations - however they may be constituted - to achieve recognition and sovereignty as unique and coherent entities in the world arena. Nationalism seeks to determine the criteria for 'the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own.'<sup>54</sup> Its basic tenet is that the territory of a specific community must be congruent with the political borders of the nation-state. Thus the 'nation' must have a territorially defined homeland, since 'it is only in and through such possession that the practical business of nation-building can be carried on.'<sup>55</sup>

While 'contemporary nations legitimise themselves by claiming descent from ancient communities,'<sup>56</sup> the extent to which the nation-state is actually the realisation of an historical struggle of ethno-cultural consolidation, rather than a purely modern reaction to processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and bureaucratisation, mirrors the primordialist-instrumentalist debate that surrounds

ethnicity. The former approach sees nations characterised as ‘primordial entities embedded in human nature and history that were objectively identifiable through their distinctive way of life, their attachment to a territorial homeland, and their striving for political autonomy.’<sup>57</sup> The approach intimates an historical progression of cultural/ethnic communities into politically defined nations, based on intense emotional attachment to one’s people arising from primordial notions of common descent and extended kinship. In this vein Fichte asserts that ‘those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself. They understand each other and have the power to make themselves understood more and more clearly; they belong together and are by nature one and inseparable whole’ - a whole ultimately realised in terms of a ‘distinct nation’ requiring recognition of its unique character.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, for van den Berghe, ‘The ease and speed with which these sentiments can be mobilised... the blind ferocity of the conflicts to which these sentiments can lead, the imperviousness of such sentiments to rational arguments, are but a few indicators of their continued vitality and their primordality.’<sup>59</sup>

We have already established however that, while people may well feel an affinity with others of their own ethnic group, this collective identity does not necessarily translate into a common political allegiance, and consequently cannot be taken for granted as the basis for a legitimate political entity. Indeed, argue theorists such as Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson, the concept of the ‘nation’ is an essentially modern one, arising from specific developments such as the expansion of communication and interaction among people in different localities, facilitating economic integration within a defined territory.<sup>60</sup> Far from aspiring to the consolidation of historically defined communities, argues Hobsbawm, ‘nationalism itself is either hostile to the real ways of the past, or arises on its ruins.’<sup>61</sup> This approach tends toward instrumentalism in its dismissal of distinctive national histories and cultures as ‘mythic constructs,’

‘invented in content and form.’ Its focus is on the role of the mobilising intelligentsia, who seek to ‘invent’ nationalisms in order to serve their own goals of socio-political advancement.<sup>62</sup>

Anderson observes the ‘systematic, even Machiavellian instilling of nationalist ideology through the mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations and so forth,’ that fosters the consolidation of a specifically defined ‘national’ identity available for political mobilisation.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, nationalism is invoked in the service of an ‘instrumental political programme, capable of providing new opportunities and a path for political advancement for members and strata often hitherto excluded from political power and privilege.’<sup>64</sup>

On the basis of its cultural and linguistic differentiae, the collective identity of the group is emphasised and enhanced by an elite’s efforts at political engineering, as a means to gain advantage for the particular ethnic group. According to Smith, ‘the implication is that autonomous ethnic control over the homeland resources and budget would restructure the economy to support the interests of, and so preserve intact, the community which otherwise would suffer further decline and assimilation or deprivation.’<sup>65</sup>

As we have seen from our examination of ethnicity however, both primordial and instrumental elements are involved in the formation of an effective collective identity. Indeed, Smith goes on to argue that ‘the return to the golden past by nationalists is motivated not just by ambition but by a quest for identity and direction at times of moral and social crisis created by the erosion of established belief systems and social structures created by modernisation.’<sup>66</sup>

Implicit in the argument is the sense of a genuine cultural community which predates attempts at political mobilisation, and that, in the final analysis, cannot be wholly ‘invented’ without some basis in reality.’ Similarly, Brass notes the salience of ‘attachments in childhood and youth that have deeply emotive significance,’ and that ‘always remain available in the unconscious to be revived

by some appeal that strikes a sympathetic chord.’<sup>67</sup> This latent sense of group solidarity Anderson has termed the ‘imagined community,’ perceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship fostering a powerful sense of fraternity that may be channelled into a fierce loyalty to the ‘nation.’<sup>68</sup> As John Lonsdale notes: ‘only an historical imagination that recalls the lost solidarity with which people once earned their golden past and might hope to win a better future has the power to construe current hardship as removable injustice.’<sup>69</sup> It is the task of nationalist leaders to bring the historical imagination to the fore as the basis for political mobilisation - emphasising and downplaying different aspects of boundary formation according to the political ends the movement is to serve.

The collective identity to which nationalism appeals then, is shaped by shared myths of origin, a sense of common history and way of life, and an attachment to a specific territory or ‘homeland,’ that combine to instil in members a common identity and purpose.<sup>70</sup> Yet while nationalists might agree on common goals of group cohesion and autonomy, sharing the quest to achieve a recognised homeland, there remains great variation in the collective identities that are taken to constitute the nation, and in the motives behind the celebration of difference.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, analysts distinguish between two distinct types of nationalism, arising in different social contexts and with divergent socio-political motivations.

### **‘Cultural’ versus ‘Political’ Nationalism**

Divergent manifestations of nationalism in the contemporary world have prompted analysts to draw a distinction between politically engineered movements, shaped and directed by political elites in circumstances where group cohesion serves a particular purpose, and culturally inspired nationalisms that grow up from the grassroots as an affirmation of cultural pride. The former tends to be based on a ‘civic’ conception of the nation, whereby a community declares its sovereignty by association in a state, while the latter may arise in any politicised ethnic community seeking to assert its right to self-determination.<sup>72</sup>

The case of the IFP's nationalism is somewhat atypical however, in that while it was politically motivated, as a means of securing power for the party, it nonetheless used an ethnic/cultural base on which to stake its claim for sovereignty.

The former, as a political or 'western' nationalism, tends to be territorially based. The people of a specific area, requiring congruence between their territorial and political borders, aim at the establishment of 'a distinctive legal-rational state based on equal citizenship rights,' emphasising popular sovereignty and national identity based on common citizenship.<sup>73</sup> The nation-state as a politically defined territory, by this account, commands the individual citizen's primary allegiance on the basis of a common political culture, while ethno-cultural diversity is accommodated on the grounds of a common humanity. Hutchinson describes political nationalism as aiming at 'a civic polity of educated citizens united by common laws and mores,' sharing a civic culture reproduced by the public education system and mass media and enhanced by active social and political participation on the part of the citizen.<sup>74</sup> The 'nation' is based on a strong sense of the 'homeland' as the repository of common historical memories and traditions.<sup>75</sup>

Lonsdale describes this manifestation of politically informed nationalism among African peoples during the initial period of colonisation. The colonial authorities, and in turn the local rulers, 'built their states partly by formalising divisions between their peoples.' In reaction to this politically devised, top-down division, argues Lonsdale, the subjugated communities 'bent their ambition in the directions indicated by power, forming new societies which matched the structures of states,' 'converting structures of control into avenues of economic and political incorporation.'<sup>76</sup> In the South African context, a similar process of political manipulation of cultural/'tribal' divisions occurred, realised in Verwoed's creation of the Bantustan system in the 1960s. An

ethnically defined political space was created for exploitation by ambitious elites within a regional context. In the case of Buthelezi's Inkatha, this fostered the growth of an ethnic nationalism that intensified as threats to the organisation's power base increased.<sup>77</sup>

This account of nationalism employed for instrumental political ends, consolidating the population of a politically defined area behind common goals as articulated by the nationalist leadership, is in contrast to Eastern or cultural nationalism. The latter arises as a grassroots movement to preserve the unique identity of the ethno-cultural community against external influence. Lonsdale describes the resurgence in 'moral ethnicity' among the newly colonised African peoples as they struggled to formulate a morally based sense of self within the community, as a means to renegotiate inter-personal relations in the changed context of western influence. By focusing on the nation as 'a community of birth and native culture,' based on 'imputed common ancestry,' intra-group solidarity is strengthened against the 'alien' influences of other cultures, allowing for the preservation or revitalisation of the nation's 'distinctive civilisation' in its new context of increased inter-cultural contact.<sup>78</sup>

National identity in this sense is based on distinctive customs and traditions, symbols of national pride rather than vague ties of citizenship. The unique identity of the nation must be respected and cultural homogeneity must be preserved, indeed, states encompassing more than one nation are declared 'unnatural, oppressive, and finally doomed to decay.'<sup>79</sup> In less extreme terms, the force may be a positive one - cultural nationalists act as 'moral innovators,' regenerating the traditional belief systems of their communities in order to facilitate their socio-economic advancement under conditions of modernisation.<sup>80</sup> Traditionalism is remoulded to meet the demands of progress, yet in such a way that the community retains its unique identity and national pride, without necessarily being assimilated to western or universal norms.

Cultural nationalism frames its appeal in terms of the defence of the interests of a homogenous, ascriptively-defined ethnic group, relying on primordial notions of shared blood and common destiny to do so. Despite political nationalism's ability to facilitate multi-culturalism, however, it too runs the risk of reverting to appeals to ethnic identity as a means of achieving solidarity among the population, in the process becoming 'ethnicised and retraditionalised.'<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, one finds that even within a well-established nation-state, there may exist regional or local loyalties. Often based on the concentration of a specific ethnic group in a particular area, these may override the more all-encompassing identity of national citizen, eliciting ethno-nationalist agitation in response to sectional discontent. Thus, in reaction to a perception that a 'definable group has been oppressed and exploited by a central authority,' 'politicised ethnicity answers the need to mobilise across classes. It legitimates and explains present conditions in terms of a past history of conquest and incorporation, and it provides a multitude of readily-available cultural symbols for group formation and exclusion of the other.'<sup>82</sup>

### **Inkatha's Manipulation of Zulu Nationalism**

From the time of its inception in the 1970s, when it was widely regarded as the 'internal arm' of the ANC, Inkatha aspired to assume political leadership of South Africa's oppressed black population. Following the organisation's fall-out with the ANC in 1979 however, and the growing strength of the Congress movement during the turbulence of the 1980s, Inkatha was forced to narrow its focus, reverting to an ethnically based appeal. By marketing itself as the voice of the Zulu nation, the organisation was able to pose a credible alternative to the mass-based, nationally represented Congress movement. This overt ethnic nationalism intensified in the early 1990s as South Africa's transition unfolded. Faced with the delegitimation of its power base and marginalisation in a new

ANC-ruled South Africa, ethnic nationalism presented a means of protecting party political interests.

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Thus, the nationalism embraced by Inkatha must be understood as primarily political rather than cultural in its motivation, a reaction against the erosion of power and patronage within its regional stronghold. This was coupled with an attempt by the party to assert its credibility on the national stage, mobilising as the representative of the 'Zulu nation,' rather than merely as a beleaguered minority party confined to its regional power base.

For nearly two decades the KwaZulu Government (KZG) had provided a bureaucratic system whereby the single-party Inkatha government was able to exert centralised control over its population. The organisation based its rule on the perception of KwaZulu as the historic Zulu homeland, the King as the symbol of Zulu sovereignty, and Buthelezi as the traditional Chief Minister. The Zulu nation was presented as a 'social and political unit existing since time immemorial,' allegiance to which was measured by membership of Inkatha.<sup>83</sup>

The militancy and brinkmanship which characterised Inkatha's nationalism during the pre-election period, had less do with any perceived threat to the culture or customs of the Zulu people than with an urgent desire to retain this institutionalised power base in the face of a new democratic order. Indeed, the Mail and Guardian claimed to have uncovered a plot by the IFP that enlisted the help of the conservative white right 'to ensure the Zulu nationalist party had a military force able to resist the incorporation of KwaZulu into an ANC-ruled South Africa.'<sup>84</sup> While the interests of the Zulu nation were probably a genuine concern for Inkatha strategists in the pre-election period, it was the party political interest of Inkatha itself that primarily shaped the confrontational strategy which the party employed.

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The recourse to an ethnically defined nationalism provided the only means of legitimating the preservation of KwaZulu-Natal as a relatively autonomous region, particularly in reaction to the centralised system of government favoured by the ANC. The latter dismissed ethnicity as an apartheid-manufactured principle of divide-and rule with no place in a majoritarian democracy. As Johnston notes, 'Ethnic concerns became vital to the IFP's negotiation strategies because they gave the party a stronger case against marginalisation. A political party considered purely as a secular compact of interests on the basis of ideology, patronage, and policy program can expect no special treatment if it attracts only a small minority of voters. But it is not prudent to dismiss, purely on the grounds of numbers, a party which represents a sacred compact of blood, kin, history, culture and claims to self-determination.'<sup>85</sup>

In this light, Inkatha's intermittent threats of secession of the province of KwaZulu-Natal should be understood as the confrontational reaction of a political elite, resentful of their marginalisation during negotiations, rather than a generally shared sentiment among Zulus that they should have an ethnically separate state. Indeed, in 1990 Buthelezi himself insisted that 'South Africa is one country and not a nation of minorities,' claiming that his first priority was to reconcile and unite all South Africans and bury apartheid's bitter legacy of division and despair and build a lasting national spirit.' He even went so far as to explicitly 'reject ethnicity as the building blocks of constitutions.'<sup>86</sup> His apparent shift in stance, to a strong sense of the separate and autonomous Zulu nation requiring sovereign status, represents a tactical political move that sought national recognition for a political elite confined within an ethnically based and territorially limited constituency. The cultural revival based on a sense of ethnic difference from the mainstream is at best a secondary motive.

Yet while Gellner might accuse Buthelezi of 'inventing nations where they do not exist,' we have recognised that even the most skilled nationalist leader does

not 'invent' a nation from nothing. Rather, he manipulates an initial loyalty towards and identification with the ethnic group, appealing to a real sense of pride in the collective past, the values and traditions of which must be protected or restored. As is evident from case studies conducted by Sitas, Campbell and Piper, Zulu identity, and its associations with peculiarly Zulu traditions and history, continues to provide an important framework for perceptions of the self among a great many individuals in contemporary KwaZulu Natal.<sup>87</sup> It is only on the basis of this genuinely felt ethnic identity, that appeals to cultural ties of tradition and custom are able serve the ends of political nationalism.

In the context of the transition, Inkatha was able to capitalise on a 'social breakdown occasioned by the collapse in the transmission of traditional values,' that saw the erosion of patriarchy and respect for elders in many urban townships.<sup>88</sup> Appealing to memories of a proud warrior past and resistance to outside rule, to a 'traditional view of men as potent, powerful, proud beings,' Inkatha won much support in a context wherein community elders found their authority and status challenged by the youth.<sup>89</sup> The party's traditionalist appeal did not extend to the highly politicised youth of the townships however, who dismissed the 'ignorant' ways of the past. ANC leader Harry Gwala noted, 'Some people think freedom means going back to the traditional way of life and the great kings. Traditionalists who dream of the past belong to Inkatha. Those who go into the ANC are urban youth and industrial workers.'<sup>90</sup> While the appeal to ethnic identity had genuine resonance in the province, it did not necessarily follow that all Zulus perceived their ethnic identity as a basis on which to define their political affiliation. The socio-political cleavages within the Zulu population ensured that individuals interpreted their ethnic identities in different ways, thus disrupting Inkatha's efforts to nurture an all-inclusive sense of nationhood.

a case may be made about the fact that the IFP strategy seemed to work more for the people in the rural areas and less for people in urban areas regardless of what the motives were behind the use of this strategy by the IFP

In the same manner that an ethnic identity is composed of both primordial and instrumental components then, so too does the appeal of nationalism require both genuinely felt collective identity and a perception that mobilisation of this identity will achieve some kind of tangible benefit. In the negotiation period preceding the 1994 general elections in South Africa, Inkatha, finding itself politically marginalised, chose to mobilise on the basis of the genuinely felt Zulu identity which defined the vast majority of its supporters. The above analysis has sought to show that, mobilised as it was for political ends, the ethnic identity of Zuluness failed to translate into a national Zulu identity capable of spanning schisms between rural and urban, old and young, traditional and progressive Zulu people. Many Zulus did mobilise on Inkatha's terms, turning out in support of Buthelezi and the King at mass gatherings of the Zulu nation, wearing traditional dress and often traditional weapons. However, the violent political conflict that continues to plague the Zulu 'nation' is testament to its disunity and to the long-term futility of the nationalist platform as a means to expand political support. Clearly, the ethnic-linguistic criteria of nationality can not provide the basis for a separatist movement in the Zulu case, despite Inkatha's political manoeuvring toward this end. The cultural affirmation of Zulu pride proved insufficient grounds to promote a politically-driven ethnic nationalism. Instead, the specifically regional and ethnically homogenous nature of Inkatha's power base, while justifying the claims to power of the regional elite, also determined the limits of that power.

### **Post-1994 Provincial Politics**

In recognition of these limits and in reaction to the changed context of a recognisably multi-party, multi-ethnic South African political identity in the context of post-1994 democracy, I will argue that the IFP has noticeably shifted away from its Zulu nationalist stance.<sup>91</sup> The party's 1996 election campaign was launched from a liberal-conservative platform that visibly recognised the party's stake in the democratic system. If the IFP is to repeat its strong showing in the

forthcoming general elections in 1999, it will have to look beyond its major concentration of support within the rural areas and among older, poorer and less literate voters. As the party attempts to extend its appeal to the politicised youth of the townships, and beyond that to non-Zulu voters on a large scale, it must cultivate a more multi-cultural appeal. South Africa's apartheid past has seen the notion of ethnically defined political parties largely discredited. In the run-up to the elections, South Africa's major political parties, the IFP included, are likely to pursue efforts to broaden their appeal beyond their historical ethnically defined constituencies.

Despite this apparent case for optimism however, significant issues of dissent still cloud the prospects of the IFP transcending an ethnic platform in its attempts to achieve party ambitions. The party has had to relinquish many of its more autonomist ambitions over the past three years, but the power struggle between the ANC central government and the IFP provincial government continues to be waged on multiple fronts. The IFP has used its ethnic/traditionalist credentials in its attempts to justify greater provincial powers, to entrench the power of the *amakhosi*, to excuse the proliferation of 'traditional' weapons in the province, even to attempt to relocate the capital city. The following chapter, which examines the party's conduct in respect of the constitution making process, will argue however that that the aggressive Zulu nationalism favoured by the IFP in the recent past, is proving itself defunct as the country moves toward consolidating its new democracy.

<sup>1</sup> Geertz 1973: 277

<sup>2</sup> Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 9

<sup>3</sup> Piper 1998: Chapter 1

<sup>4</sup> Geertz 1973: 259

<sup>5</sup> Ibid: 259

<sup>6</sup> Isaacs in Glazer and Moynihan (ed) 1975: 31

<sup>7</sup> Ibid: 32

<sup>8</sup> Lal 1983: 156 citing Greely 1974: 158

<sup>9</sup> Geertz 1973: 259

<sup>10</sup> Natal Witness March 20 1997

<sup>11</sup> HRC 1994a

<sup>12</sup> Geertz 1973: 259

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds 1994: 190-192

<sup>14</sup> Johnson and Schlemmer 1996: 87

<sup>15</sup> Ibid: 317

<sup>16</sup> Fifty-four percent rural Africans interviewed in KZN believed the inability of certain parties to seek support in certain areas was 'legitimate,' while thirty-eight percent of Africans felt pressurised to vote for parties they did 'not particularly support.' Over half rural Africans admitted that their chief would exercise influence over their vote, as did thirty-one percent of urban Africans. A 1994 survey asked whether KZN Africans would have difficulty disagreeing with their chiefs, fifty percent of urban Africans responded that it would be very difficult, among rural areas the figure was seventy-five percent. (Johnson and Zulu 192-193, 206-208, in Johnson and Schlemmer 1996)

<sup>17</sup> Horowitz in Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 14

<sup>18</sup> Giliomee and Schlemmer in Horowitz 1991: 53

<sup>19</sup> Star 31 May 1989

<sup>20</sup> Malan 1990: 356-360

<sup>21</sup> Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 9

<sup>22</sup> Vail 1989: 6

<sup>23</sup> Eller and Coughlin 1993: 188

<sup>24</sup> Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 45

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 40

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> South African Race Relations Survey 1991/1992: 32

<sup>29</sup> Ibid: 33

<sup>30</sup> Ibid: 79-80

<sup>31</sup> Ihonvbere 1993: 53

<sup>32</sup> Campbell *et al* 1995: 289

<sup>33</sup> Horowitz 1991: 60

<sup>34</sup> Lonsdale 1994: 2

<sup>35</sup> Epstein 1978: 101

<sup>36</sup> Eller and Coughlin 1993: 635, Smith 1986: 14

<sup>37</sup> Lal 1983: 166-169

<sup>38</sup> Smith 1986: 14

<sup>39</sup> Bell in Hutchinson and Smith (ed) 1992: 181

<sup>40</sup> Lal 1983: 166-169

<sup>41</sup> Bowlby 1977 in Eller and Coughlin 1993: 635

<sup>42</sup> Smith 1991: 23

<sup>43</sup> Thornton and Ramaphele in Boonzaier and Sharp (ed) 1988: 38

<sup>44</sup> Nash 1989: 11

<sup>45</sup> Sitas 1990: 270-273

- <sup>46</sup> Barth 1969: 85  
<sup>47</sup> Segal 1991: 221  
<sup>48</sup> Ibid  
<sup>49</sup> Piper *et al* 1997: 19  
<sup>50</sup> Nash 1989: 13  
<sup>51</sup> Moroz 1974 cited in Connor 1994: 382  
<sup>52</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 1  
<sup>53</sup> in Hutchinson 1994: 8  
<sup>54</sup> Kedourie 1960: 1  
<sup>55</sup> Smith 1986: 163  
<sup>56</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 2  
<sup>57</sup> Ibid: 3  
<sup>58</sup> Connor 1994: 377, Fichte in Kedourie 1960: 69  
<sup>59</sup> in Hutchinson and Smith 1995: 98  
<sup>60</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 3  
<sup>61</sup> Hobsbawm 1994: 69  
<sup>62</sup> Hobsbawm in Hutchinson 1994: 28  
<sup>63</sup> Anderson 1991: 114  
<sup>64</sup> Williams 1992: 2  
<sup>65</sup> Smith 1987: 163  
<sup>66</sup> in Hobsbawm 1994: 27  
<sup>67</sup> Brass in Hutchinson and Smith 1995: 83  
<sup>68</sup> Anderson 1991: 21  
<sup>69</sup> Lonsdale 1994: 3  
<sup>70</sup> Smith in Hutchinson 1994: 27  
<sup>71</sup> Ibid  
<sup>72</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 15  
<sup>73</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 127  
<sup>74</sup> Hutchinson and Smith 1995: 122  
<sup>75</sup> Smith 1991: 9  
<sup>76</sup> Lonsdale 1994: 6  
<sup>77</sup> Piper 1998: 259  
<sup>78</sup> Smith 1991: 12  
<sup>79</sup> Herder in Kedourie 1960: 3  
<sup>80</sup> Hutchinson 1994: 127  
<sup>81</sup> Ibid: 122  
<sup>82</sup> Mare 1995: 58-59  
<sup>83</sup> Ibid: 188-190  
<sup>84</sup> Mail and Guardian March 3 1997  
<sup>85</sup> Johnston in Johnson and Schlemmer 1996: 175  
<sup>86</sup> Buthelezi 1990: 12-24  
<sup>87</sup> see endnotes 44-49  
<sup>88</sup> Maake 1992 591-603  
<sup>89</sup> Campbell 1992: 614-621  
<sup>90</sup> Reed 1994: 108  
<sup>91</sup> Piper 1998: Chapter 7

## **Chapter Two: Constitution Making - What Role for Zulu Nationalism?**

Zulu nationalism as embraced by Buthelezi's IFP in the early 1990s arose from the desire of a particular political elite to defend its regional power base and assert its influence on a national level, rather than from a popularly rooted cultural revival. From the beginning of South Africa's transition, it was the ANC and the NP that dominated the negotiating stage, while the IFP, as a provincially based party, was effectively marginalised. Faced with the imminent dissolution of the Inkatha-ruled KwaZulu bantustan, coupled with the ANC's re-emergence as a major political force nationally, the IFP was in real danger of being sidelined in the new political order. The party set about defending at least its provincial control in KwaZulu-Natal by invoking the politics of Zuluness and militancy - presenting itself as the party of the Zulu nation and defender of ethnic autonomy as a means to secure its influence.

Using brinkmanship tactics, the IFP set about raising the costs of its exclusion as an equal partner in the negotiation process. Aggressive nationalist rhetoric and volatile mass rallies, boycotts, ultimatums, even threats of civil war and secession, were employed as means to force recognition of the party as a major player on the emerging political stage.<sup>1</sup> Following the general election of 1994, the confrontational approach was carried over into the constitution-making process, on both the national and provincial level. Unsatisfied with its minor role in the Constitutional Assembly (CA),<sup>2</sup> the IFP chose to absent itself from the national constitution-making process from an early stage. From mid-1995, its energies were concentrated at the provincial level, in an attempt to preempt the national document with a constitution for the province that would force recognition of its demands for greater federal powers.

Both the content of this provincial document and the process by which it evolved, are revealing of the uncompromising and often overtly nationalist tactics employed by the IFP during this period. The party's constitutional efforts reflected its attempt to consolidate its regional power by strengthening the powers of the provincial legislature in

which it enjoyed majority status, thus simultaneously enhancing its national role. Federalist ambitions were framed in terms of self-determination and even ethnic sovereignty, while dissent from the opposition tended to meet with belligerence rather than compromise. The provincial constitutional draft made clear the IFP's intention to maintain maximum political control on the provincial level in the face of ANC centralization. The ANC was equally committed to its centralist vision of the state, however, ensuring that the battle for influence was strenuously fought. As the constitution making process dragged on, the couplet of Zulu nationalism and confrontation was revealed as an increasingly unfavourable means of pursuing political goals, and ultimately failed to achieve the IFP's federalist ambitions. Simply put, the party did not have sufficient power in the provincial legislature to push the legislation through on the strength of its own numbers alone, while its confrontational attitude alienated the opposition parties and prevented the negotiation of a mutually acceptable compromise.

### **The Politics of Transition: Buthelezi's Exclusion as a Major Player**

President FW De Klerk's landmark address to parliament in February 1990, announcing the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), set South Africa firmly on course toward the realisation of multi-racial democracy after centuries of white minority rule. From the start two key players dominated the process, the governing National Party (NP) and the mass-based ANC. The smaller parties, despite their formal inclusion in the process, often found themselves being carried along by events rather than actively asserting their direction, and sensitive issues tended to be resolved in bilateral agreements between the two major players.<sup>3</sup> This marginalisation of other parties extended to the IFP, which, despite its institutionalized power-base in the KwaZulu-Natal region, could claim only minor support on the national level.<sup>4</sup> The party's exclusion as a major player in the negotiation process provoked great resentment and recalcitrance from its leaders. Consequently, the early 1990s saw the IFP repeatedly withdraw from and return to negotiations, according to a strategy of brinkmanship that sought to secure the party's status as one of the major players in the process.<sup>5</sup>

The IFP's limited influence on the national level saw the party opting for consolidation of its provincial powers as the most effective available means to retain its hold on power in the new order. This was to be achieved through devolution of strong federal powers to the provinces. Indeed, Inkatha's involvement in quasi-federalist initiatives on the provincial level dated back to the late 1970s. The party's institutionalized power base in KwaZulu, and the homeland's economic interdependence with 'white' Natal, had seen Inkatha/the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KZLA) established as a moderate political force with a sympathetic ear among the province's business community and its English-speaking liberal academics.<sup>6</sup> The Buthelezi Commission of the early 1980s, followed by the Indaba in 1986, saw close cooperation between these interest groups, calling for joint decision making and consociational power-sharing in a single provincial entity, to replace the arbitrary division between the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) and the Inkatha-controlled 'homeland.' The initiatives found little favour with the South African government however, which retained its tight hold on central power.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of the early 1990s, faced with a strong ANC insistent on a centralised state with limited devolution of power, the IFP had substantial impetus to affirm the federal option as a strategic defense against the erosion of its regional political clout. The ANC's resistance to federalist arguments, however, saw the IFP withdraw into Zuluness and confrontation in an effort to achieve its ambitions. Just as Zulu identity had provided legitimacy for the KwaZulu government, so it was employed as justification for provincial autonomy under an IFP-led provincial government. The KwaZulu bantustan was declared to have predated apartheid and would survive it in the new order, as an 'expression of Zulu nationhood'.<sup>8</sup>

In September 1992 the IFP's brinkmanship tactics saw the party withdraw from formal negotiations as a result of its effective marginalisation.<sup>9</sup> On 1 December 1992 the party produced its 'Constitution of the State of KwaZulu-Natal,' promoting the document as 'the first step' towards establishing a 'federal Republic of South Africa.'<sup>10</sup> The IFP

declared its intention to hold a regional referendum to determine the degree of support for the document, and, if justified, to pass it into law. Proposals included a provincial appeal court able to override national law, a Central Bank of KwaZulu-Natal and a state militia able to conscript recruits. The federal army was prohibited from entering the state without permission, and taxes were to be provincially controlled. Indeed, 'federalism' was taken to such extremes that analysts De Haas and Zulu described the document as 'designed to entrench Inkatha dominance within the state of KwaZulu Natal, thereby facilitating secession at some unspecified future date.'<sup>11</sup> Friedman *et al* observed similarly that, if the constitution 'was not designed to opt out of the new republic, it made opting in virtually meaningless.'<sup>12</sup> The IFP strenuously denied such criticisms. According to then IFP MP Walter Felgate, 'the intention was *never* secession, to call the proposal secessionist was merely an attempt by the opposition to discredit the IFP's brand of federalism.'<sup>13</sup>

Seeking to consolidate its regional credibility among a multi-cultural population, the IFP defended its proposals in terms of the virtues of federalism. On the basis of 'asymmetry,' i.e. that different provinces could enjoy different degrees of autonomy, the party argued that KwaZulu-Natal had 'gone further than any other region in ... erecting its territory into statehood within the parameters of a federal system.'<sup>14</sup> The argument did not hold water with the strongly centrist ANC however, and even the IFP's traditional business allies within the province proved wary of the party's overtly autonomous position. Despite the document being subsequently shelved, its core proposals were to reappear repeatedly in the IFP's constitutional discourse over the next four years. Whether the proposed constitution had actually sought to constitute a basis for secession, as opposed to being simply a political tactic to force the party's demands onto the national agenda, is doubtful.<sup>15</sup> What it did undoubtedly set out to do, was to protect the political power of the IFP ahead of the dissolution of the homeland institution on which that power was based.<sup>16</sup>

In the climate of uncertainty created by the transition process, the IFP found many allies in its demands for federalism and protection of minority party interests. Negotiations at CODESA (Conference for a Democratic South Africa), the first formal multi-party negotiating forum, saw the IFP forging a loose alliance with the Bophuthatswana and Ciskei homeland governments and the Afrikaner Volksfront. The parties banded together under the label of COSAG, the Concerned South Africans Group, and made their platform the promotion of federalism and guaranteed minority representation in the structures of government. The alliance challenged the ANC-NP agreement that the new constitution would be formulated by a democratically elected interim government acting within the principles of the interim constitution, insisting that the constitution be decided in multi-party negotiations, and that federalism be a guaranteed constitutional principle before an election could take place.<sup>17</sup>

South Africa's black majority was tiring of the slow progress of a negotiated settlement, however. The assassination of popular Communist Party leader Chris Hani in April 1993 prompted outbreaks of massive rioting in black townships across the country. Despite prolonged talks among senior party leaders, the majority of South Africans had yet to see any major changes in the conditions of their existence - patience was clearly wearing thin and negotiations could not be prolonged indefinitely. In response to these developments, the ANC exercised its strength at CODESA to insist that an election date be set for April the following year. Unable to secure its federalist objectives or renegotiate its status as a minor player, the IFP again withdrew from the negotiation process, declaring that 'henceforth there will be no sufficient consensus without the IFP's concurrence.'<sup>18</sup> The party's withdrawal was justified on the grounds that negotiated consensus should take precedence over the transitional time frame - the IFP was not going to allow itself to be rushed toward a political settlement that would see its regional power-base undermined.<sup>19</sup>

From its position on the fringes, the IFP embarked on a campaign of confrontation that was to grow increasingly aggressive as the election date approached.<sup>20</sup> The rhetoric of Zulu nationalism was employed to mobilize support at the grassroots level and project the

party's relevance as defender of the Zulu people. Brinkmanship tactics saw the party calling for ethnic self-determination on the basis of the 'unique history' of the KwaZulu region and its status as home of the Zulu 'Nation.'<sup>21</sup> Political rallies were peppered with dark references to the ethnic victimization of the Zulu people,<sup>22</sup> fuelling political violence in the KwaZulu-Natal region that approached full intensity civil war in many rural areas and African townships. Buthelezi vigorously denied the legitimacy of an NP-ANC dominated transitional settlement, and declared his refusal 'to be responsible for implementing decisions reached behind closed doors' in bilateral discussions.<sup>23</sup> He warned the ANC of the 'war' that would be waged against the new government if it attempted to force a settlement on his party.<sup>24</sup> The KwaZulu police force was told to prepare to defend their 'homeland with their lives,' for there could be 'no honour in seeing KwaZulu fall into the hands of those who do not have the Zulu's interests at heart.'<sup>25</sup> While IFP leaders exhorted their supporters to prepare for the possibility of civil war, political violence and instability escalated to unprecedented heights. In an effort to restore a measure of control in the strife-torn province, the national government imposed a state of emergency on 31 March 1994.

As the election date rapidly approached, without any sign that the IFP might back down from an aggressive renunciation of the negotiated settlement, the possibility of a peaceful, inclusive transition appeared elusive. The IFP's brinkmanship began to yield results: the NP and ANC were forced to recognise the potential for increased instability and violence if the elections were not perceived to be inclusive of the diverse political interests represented by the Freedom Alliance.<sup>26</sup> In February 1994 the ANC and NP agreed to various concessions in respect of greater powers for the regions, in line with the IFP's federalist demands. Provinces were given greater say over their finances, as well as their legislative and executive structures, and the name 'Natal' was modified to 'KwaZulu-Natal' out of respect for the province's large Zulu population. The deadline for registration of parties was extended to 4 March, and a double-ballot was introduced, allowing voters to elect provincial and national candidates separately.<sup>27</sup> The IFP, as a regionally based party, stood to benefit greatly from the mechanism within its KwaZulu-

Natal stronghold. The party nonetheless rejected these concessions, reiterating its opposition to the interim constitution and its demands for exclusive regional powers. It also insisted on autonomy for regional constitutions, as a means to circumvent its limited influence in the proposed CA, postponement of elections and agreement on international mediation to resolve outstanding constitutional issues after the election.<sup>28</sup> The IFP was simply not willing to accept any settlement that would limit its influence in a post-election South Africa.

Brinkmanship was running out of steam as an effective political strategy, however. Within the IFP, moderates and radicals were rumoured to be splitting the party over continued absence from the negotiation process, and the party was losing both international and business support.<sup>29</sup> Progress was finally made on 19 April 1994 with the 'Agreement for Reconciliation and Peace.' The IFP agreed to participate in the elections, on condition that the institution, status and role of the Zulu monarchy and the 'restoration of the kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal' would be provided for in the national and KwaZulu-Natal provincial constitutions. Any outstanding issues in respect of the King and the 1993 interim constitution would be addressed by international mediation following the elections.<sup>30</sup> Elections were subsequently held from 26 to 29 April. While confrontational tactics had officially been put on hold to allow the election to take place, the IFP's insistence on the 'fatally flawed' nature of the interim constitution, and its commitment to a federal system, had not waned.

The ANC's commitment to international mediation dissipated in the wake of its election victory. The Constitutional Assembly had seen no sign of the promised mediation by February 1995. While the IFP threatened not to participate in the October 1995 local government elections if its demands for international mediation were not met,<sup>31</sup> the ANC resisted honouring the agreement, prompting the IFP to withdraw from Parliament and the CA on 21 February 1995. The walkout was described by the IFP as 'a last resort to not being taken seriously as a partner in the GNU, parliament and in the Constitutional Assembly.'<sup>32</sup> It seemed a standard IFP reaction - if the party was not to be given a special

stake in determining the rules of the game, it would choose not to play. The IFP was not wholly unjustified however, since the ANC had reneged on its commitment of April 1994. The IFP rejoined the CA two weeks later, on the condition that international mediation would be implemented by 5 April. The ANC was not swayed however. On 8 April the IFP reluctantly withdrew from the CA, insisting that it would reject any constitution drawn up in its absence, and accusing the ANC of ‘trampling’ over minority parties in its bid to force through a centrist constitution that would derogate from the powers of the provinces.’<sup>33</sup> The ANC merely reiterated its refusal to consent to international mediation.

While perhaps justified in its frustration over broken promises, the IFP’s choice of confrontation at this juncture seemed an ill-conceived tactic in terms of securing its constitutional objectives. By withdrawing from the CA, the party gave up its stake in one of the country’s most important political bodies, and abandoned its potential allies in the battle for greater decentralization of power and protection of minority interests. The ANC’s refusal to honour its commitment had reinforced the IFP’s marginalisation on the national level however. The IFP’s reversion to confrontational tactics was thus attributable in no small part to the ANC’s broken promises and its insistence on a centralized state.<sup>34</sup>

The energies of the IFP were subsequently concentrated at the provincial level. From its position as majority party in the KwaZulu-Natal legislature, the IFP urged its supporters to ‘rise to resist’ attempts to erode provincial power, as the ‘new struggle for freedom, democracy and pluralism’ began.<sup>35</sup> The party renewed its emphasis on ethnic loyalties and threatened mass action, using its strong position at the provincial level as a springboard for the federalist ambitions it hoped to achieve nationally. Acrimony between the main political rivals was reflected in belligerent rhetoric between party leaders and in ongoing violence at ground level.<sup>36</sup> Confrontational politics appeared to be the order of the day as long as IFP demands for provincial autonomy and its relevance on the national stage remained unacknowledged.

### **The Provincial Constitution: The IFP's Bid for Provincial Power**

Clause 160 of the interim constitution provided every province with the right to formulate its own constitution that, once ratified by the Constitutional Court, would be beyond the jurisdiction of central government. The KwaZulu-Natal provincial constitution making process was set in motion in February 1995, as the IFP sought to challenge the centralism of the national constitution and force recognition of its federalist demands, within a forum in which it was the dominant voice. Its mood was defiant: 'We will not recognize the Constitution, and in not recognizing it, we will not be bound by it...We don't recognize the Constitution at all, and we will determine our policy on the basis of that...We write our own constitution here (in KwaZulu-Natal), ignoring the national constitution.'<sup>37</sup> By finalising a provincial constitution, the IFP hoped to return to the CA as the representative of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In this manner, it hoped to circumvent its status as a minority party nationally, thus placing itself in a better position to advance its federalist agenda.<sup>38</sup>

In service of these ambitions, Zulu nationalism was employed to stir support among IFP followers for the party's autonomist demands. While the cultural distinctiveness of the Zulu nation was used as a platform for increased autonomy, the IFP's constituency was no longer that of the ethnically homogenous KwaZulu bantustan. In this light, some effort was made to promote federalism to a multi-cultural electorate, tempering Zulu nationalism with objectives phrased in terms of popular democracy and devolution of power. The party lambasted the 'autocratic, centralized and authoritarian' tendencies of the ANC government,<sup>39</sup> while defending Zulu self-determination as being 'inclusive of everybody who resides within the kingdom.'<sup>40</sup> The ethnic platform remained the party's primary draw-card however, allowing the party to revert to aggressive nationalist rhetoric and threats of secession in the face of opposition. These periodic reversions into the rhetoric of Zulu nationalism allowed the party to demonstrate its visible and aggressive popular support, in an effort to force the ANC to recognize its federalist demands.

Provincial constitution making began tentatively in November 1994, as the various political parties in the provincial legislature gathered to draw up broad proposals toward a multi-party agreement. By mid-1995, however, the process was already floundering in controversy, as the autonomist ambitions of the IFP became apparent. In June 1995, an unnamed IFP member 'leaked' a 20-point proposal for a federal solution for KwaZulu-Natal to the press. The document, a throwback to the 1992 proposal, recommended that the provincial government exercise control over KwaZulu-Natal's trade and commerce, education system and media, and that it develop its own security and protection service - evoking accusations of secessionism from the ANC and the media. While the party defended its proposal as merely a discussion document, Buthelezi reportedly condemned 'white racist' IFP members for 'vilifying him through media leaks,' renewing speculation of tensions between moderates and hard-liners within the party.<sup>41</sup>

Nonetheless, late 1995 saw much progress made by the multi-party constitutional committee under the chairmanship of IFP MPP Arthur Konigkramer. The first Working Document of Constitutional Principles, produced in August 1995 and known as the Fernhill document, represented significant compromise and consensus among all parties to negotiations.<sup>42</sup> The document proposed strong federal powers for KwaZulu-Natal, and recognised the Zulu king's status as constitutional monarch of the whole province. Various 'sunrise clauses' dealing with the powers and functions of the province, to become effective only after further negotiations to allow their compatibility with national constitutional provisions, were also included. The document provided for certain exclusive powers for both the national and provincial governments, and noted that provincial powers would not be less than those determined by the Interim Constitution. The provincial parliament unanimously agreed that the final provincial constitution would be drawn up on the basis of the Fernhill Agreement by the end of 1995, and set about creating a twenty-member multi-party committee to prepare the final draft.<sup>43</sup>

Fernhill's consensus-driven nature was unacceptable to the hard-line elements that comprised the party's central committee however. MP Walter Felgate claimed that

Konigkramer's efforts toward the inclusion of diverse political viewpoints would allow 'the ANC to obstruct the process' if the IFP did not take a firmer hand in directing negotiations. He dismissed the Fernhill document's validity on the grounds that it had not been authorised by either the IFP or the ANC leadership at the national level, and thus represented little more than a provincial wish list.<sup>44</sup> Admittedly, the ANC at the national level would certainly have preferred to see the national constitution finalised before an IFP-directed provincial constitution could be passed. At the provincial level, however, the party had demonstrated something of a commitment to securing consensus around a settlement.<sup>45</sup> Its willingness to compromise was rapidly eroded by subsequent events however, which saw the IFP employing an increasingly confrontational approach.

At the insistence of the IFP central committee the multi-party proposals were largely disregarded in favour of a reworked, IFP-formulated document, the 'Twelve-Point Plan,' that was presented to the provincial parliamentary committee in mid-August. The document, representing a reversion to hard-line, uncompromising tactics, included a large number of sunrise clauses, requiring substantial amendments to the national constitution in order to become effective. The clauses were included within the document to 'express the aspirations of the province to achieve a substantially greater degree of autonomy and self-rule within the parameters of a united South Africa once the national constitutional framework so allows.'<sup>46</sup> The overtly federalist proposals evoked much criticism from the parliamentary opposition. The province's independent constitutional advisors criticised the sunrise clauses as creating a degree of uncertainty 'which would almost give the ruling party in the province carte blanche,' leaving contentious clauses open to subjective interpretation.<sup>47</sup> The 'unproductive and undignified televised mudslinging' that ensued between the rival parties prompted the HRC to predict 'little hope' that consensus would be reached 'in the foreseeable future.'<sup>48</sup>

The IFP however insisted that the document be put to the vote in the provincial assembly. The ANC accused the IFP of attempting 'to hijack and shortcut the drafting process, by substituting all-party submissions with its own proposals,' while the minority parties

objected that contentious constitutional principles ‘were being rushed through without debate.’<sup>49</sup> The IFP responded that the vote was meant only to identify areas of agreement and was not binding, but threatened to call a provincial election if a draft was not concluded by the end of August.

The IFP was fighting a constitutional war on two fronts, using diametrically opposed tactics to justify its stand. At the national level the IFP had withdrawn from the constitution making process on the grounds that the CA should operate according to consensus rather than majoritarianism.<sup>50</sup> On the provincial level however, its efforts were directed at using its own majority to bend the other parties to its will. Threats to call an early provincial election were also ironic, in light of IFP efforts to stall general elections in 1994 until completion of a national constitution. The fact that the party’s parliamentary opposition was voicing much the same caution that the IFP itself had expressed regarding attempts to hurry the progress of the national constitution, was conveniently ignored. While the IFP continued to criticise the autocratic manner of the ANC government at national level, it appeared quite comfortable to exercise the strength of its own majority in the province. Similarly, while the ANC at national level insisted on the need for sufficient consensus as an efficient and speedy means of decision making, at the provincial level the party vehemently insisted that the IFP was out of line in its attempts to hurry the constitution to completion. Both parties appeared willing to use the tactics for which each criticized the other, so long as such tactics were in their own best interests.

Faced with criticism, the IFP’s federalist stand again assumed Zulu nationalist overtones. In August 1995 Buthelezi called a gathering of the Zulu ‘Nation,’ demanding commitment from the 40 000 strong crowd to a ‘covenant’ pledging all Zulus to the battle for an autonomous provincial kingdom wherein their ‘freedom and prosperity’ would be realised.<sup>51</sup> He announced that the *amakhosi* had resolved to demand an early election if, by 1 September, an adequate constitution protecting the ‘freedom and autonomy’ of the Zulu nation had not been secured. Such an election never materialized however. The

province's voter's roll was in a state of organisational chaos, and political violence remained rife. Indeed, it remained doubtful whether the IFP could even hope to improve its majority in such an election – the results of the June 1996 poll indicate that a substantial increase in the party's majority was not in fact likely in late 1995.<sup>52</sup> It appeared that the threatened election was in fact merely another instance of the IFP making threats on which it could not realistically act.

While members of the provincial committee appeared to be making some progress in multi-party negotiations, tensions were increasingly evident within the party. The National Council, taking a hard-line approach, urged provincial MPs to boycott negotiating sessions rather than subject IFP proposals to compromise.<sup>53</sup> According to the ANC's John Jeffrey, left alone with their task, the provincial constitutional committee 'could have quite easily reached agreement on a constitution that probably would have been certified.'<sup>54</sup> Instead, the committee was frustrated in its efforts by disruptions from 'people outside the legislature, in particular Mario Ambrosini'.<sup>55</sup>

This interference from the national level became increasingly pervasive, and saw IFP moderate Arthur Konigkramer removed from chairmanship of the constitutional committee. National hard-liners Felgate and Ambrosini took over the provincial drafting process, and the jobs of the nine IFP constitutional committee members were reported to be hanging in the balance.<sup>56</sup> Mike Tarr was appointed the new constitutional chairman, in a 'unilateral' move that evoked criticism from the opposition parties - the NP accused the National Council of 'gross and unwarranted' interference in the province.<sup>57</sup> While Buthelezi denied rumours of rifts in the party, he also threatened to resign his leadership unless the party started acting 'with unity of intent and purpose, inspired by common goals,' and stressed the need to fight off enemies both within and outside the party.<sup>58</sup> Such tensions between the hard-line central committee and the more moderate provincial negotiators remained a feature of constitution making throughout the process.

Under the direction of Felgate and Ambrosini, the Twelve-Point Plan was extended into a forty-seven page Green Paper that the IFP insisted would be the basis for further discussions. The document was drawn up without multi-party consultation, demanding exclusive powers over all constitutional, legislative, judicial, and financial matters for the provincial government and establishing Ulundi as the capital of the 'Kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal.' The position of Traditional Prime Minister was formalised, while provision was made for the King to be removed from power at the discretion of the House of Traditional Leaders. The kingdom was established as a 'federate province' of the RSA, recognizing its obligations to the Republic only insofar as they did not infringe on the rights and powers of the province, and dual citizenship of province and country was established. A provincial militia was created, while federal armed forces required permission from the provincial government before entering KwaZulu-Natal. Provincial legislation was to take precedence over national law, while provision was also made for constitutional, Appellate and tribal courts on the provincial level. The constitution was established as supreme law of the kingdom, binding on all its citizens.<sup>59</sup> The ANC reacted by dismissing the Green Paper as 'a document of secession'.<sup>60</sup>

The IFP nonetheless insisted that provincial parliament submit the Green Paper to a vote. The move angered the opposition parties, who perceived it as an attempt to bind the constitutional committee to the document's principles.<sup>61</sup> In its efforts to force through its own agenda, the IFP successfully alienated its former allies, notably the NP. By forcing a vote on the document, the IFP dishonored an agreement to postpone the matter until the majority of the NP provincial contingent returned from a caucus meeting in Johannesburg.<sup>62</sup> An NP spokesman complained that his party had 'been stabbed in the back'. It seemed that the NP had in fact been in agreement with about seventy-five percent of the Green Paper's principles, but had favoured an extension of the constitutional deadline to December to allow for further multi-party discussion.<sup>63</sup>

The IFP did not allow much time for multi-party discussion in its efforts to finalise the constitution ahead of the national document however. Felgate stressed: 'We are the

majority party here. We will not be held to ransom by the minority parties'.<sup>64</sup> In a bid to assert greater authority over the process, the IFP proposed a motion to change the number of members on the constitutional committee to ten for the IFP and only two for the province's four minority parties. Thus the minority parties would have their number of votes halved to give one additional vote each to the IFP and ANC. The ANC and the minority parties unanimously rejected the motion as autocratic, undemocratic and divisive.<sup>65</sup> According to the *Mail and Guardian*, it seemed the IFP was 'harking back to the one-party years of the KwaZulu homeland,' 'bending the relevant parliamentary rules to its liking' and 'imposing its will on the province.'<sup>66</sup> While the IFP touted the democratic virtues of federalism, it seemed eager to limit the voice of its parliamentary opposition. The opposition parties collectively refused to vote on the Green Paper and walked out of the parliamentary session.

With the Green Paper as the basis for constitutional discussion, progress seemed unlikely. The document implicitly required that, for citizens of KwaZulu-Natal, primary allegiance should lie with the provincial rather than the national government. The ANC would certainly not agree to proposals that explicitly limited the party's power on the national level. Furthermore, the abrasive manner in which the minority parties had been treated by the IFP made it unlikely that they would choose to side with the latter in the provincial power struggle. It seemed negotiations were back to square one, despite the concessions and agreements reached in multi-party forums under Konigkramer's chairmanship. The IFP merely reiterated its commitment to securing the 'maximum degree of autonomy' for KwaZulu-Natal: 'The more we can do to claim our rights now, the more difficult it will be for the national constitution to take away our powers.'<sup>67</sup>

Thus the province's two majority parties remained worlds apart in terms of their respective constitutional visions for KwaZulu-Natal. The ANC insisted that the provincial constitution must remain subordinate to the national Constitution. It objected to the title of 'Kingdom,' the situation of the capital in Ulundi, and the notion of provincial citizenship. Felgate responded to ANC objections with accusations that the

party was being ‘obstructionist,’ ‘politicking at the expense of progress.’<sup>68</sup> The DP however criticized the IFP for undoing the progress achieved in multi-party talks, and complained that the legitimacy of the federalist cause was being undermined by the ‘bloody-minded attitude of the IFP.’<sup>69</sup> The observation echoed sentiments following the IFP’s withdrawal from the national CA. Indeed, while the IFP claimed to be the ardent defender of federalism, its confrontational approach in effect hindered the development of more amicable inter-party relations that potentially may have allowed for cooperation toward a mutually acceptable balance between federal and central powers.

The party’s unwillingness to compromise had greatly undermined prospects for achieving its constitutional ambitions, since without the support of the minority parties, it stood no chance of achieving the two-thirds majority required to pass a constitution. In this light, the IFP engaged in a series of intensive bilaterals with the opposition parties from mid-September, in tacit recognition of the fact that confrontational tactics had failed to achieve their objective.<sup>70</sup> The minority parties, from their position in the center of the IFP-ANC power struggle, enjoyed significant influence as voices of opposition. The IFP would be forced to grant significant compromises to these parties if it was to gain the numerical support necessary to override ANC objections.

The NP in particular benefited from these concessions, being granted an effective legislative veto by means of the Council of State. The council was to consist of six MPPs, appointed by provincial parliament’s three largest parties on the basis of two members for each party, provided that a refusal of a party to participate would not prevent the council functioning.<sup>71</sup> The council could thus continue to operate even if the ANC, the second largest party in the provincial legislature, chose to have no part in the arrangement. The council would act to ratify decisions by the provincial cabinet regarding legislation concerned with certain specified provincial areas of competence, as defined by the provincial constitution.<sup>72</sup> The ANC, which strongly rejected the proposal, warned of the possibility of ‘greater instability’ if the IFP attempted to push through a constitution that did not take its objections into account. In response, the IFP claimed that the ANC

aimed to destroy KwaZulu-Natal's provincial autonomy,' painting the party as an obstacle to legitimate federalist aspirations.<sup>73</sup>

As 1995 drew to a close, it seemed that KwaZulu-Natal was no closer to deciding on a provincial constitution than it had been at the beginning of the process. Indeed, the legislature was in a constant state of disruption and tension as a result of the constitutional power struggle. The process of provincial governance appeared to be on hold until some solution to the constitutional conundrum was found. The release of a draft national Constitution in December reinforced growing sentiment within the IFP that progress on the provincial level could not occur in the absence of compromise and multi-party inclusion. The party noted that, in terms of the draft, 'few, if any, of our federalist aspirations will survive unless they have already been protected in a provincial document.'<sup>74</sup> Urgently requiring consensus, at least with the minority parties, the party agreed to scrap clauses calling for a separate provincial judiciary, militia and constitutional court. The issue of where the capital was to be situated was removed as a constitutional principle, while the sunrise clauses were recognised as 'aspirations that have to be negotiated at national level in the constitutional assembly to be validated.' It seemed the moderate line was finally beginning to prevail.

The Council of State remained a point of contention, however. As noted by the KwaZulu-Natal Briefing, the council would effectively reduce the provincial legislature to 'a mere chamber of last resort,' allowing a legislative veto for the three strongest provincial parties and excluding minority parties from much of the decision making process.<sup>75</sup> In reaction to the NP's endorsement of the proposal, the ANC accused the NP of 'a betrayal of trust and confidence,' dismissing the council as inherently impractical and undemocratic.<sup>76</sup> The NP and IFP defended the council in terms of ensuring co-representation in decision making and the protection of minority rights. Since the council would effectively override the influence of the minority parties, however, the remaining parties rejected it outright.<sup>77</sup>

Unable to win the minority parties over, the IFP again reverted to confrontation in the face of criticism. It canceled a meeting scheduled for 6 January 1996, at which the minority parties were to have presented their proposals to the party, declaring that it ‘had no mandate to negotiate further.’<sup>78</sup> The party fell back on its call for international mediation on the question of provincial powers and the status of the kingdom, insisting that until the ANC honoured its agreement, no progress could be made.<sup>79</sup> Despite the unresolved status of contested issues such as provincial autonomy and the role of traditional authorities, the Official Draft Constitution for KwaZulu-Natal was published in the Provincial Gazette on 7 February 1996. Amidst high levels of inter-party acrimony, the Constitutional Committee set about reaching its 11 March deadline for final voting and submission of the document to the legislature for ratification. Despite Felgate’s insistence that consensus could be reached if parties were willing to compromise, the IFP showed considerable willingness to exclude the ANC from the final process altogether if necessary.<sup>80</sup>

Owing to the highly contentious issues under discussion, the ANC suggested that only the issues on which broad-based agreement could be reached should be included in the constitution, i.e. those dealing with the legislature, the executive and the monarchy, while the remaining sections required further discussion and negotiation.<sup>81</sup> The other parties accused the ANC of deliberately trying to halt the process of constitution making in the province. As has been noted, the ANC did have a vested interest in seeing the provincial constitution-making process fail, forcing the IFP to recognize the validity of the national document. The IFP insisted that it had ‘done everything in its power to seek an all inclusive settlement,’ using the opportunity to present the ANC as an obstacle to democratic settlement.<sup>82</sup> In an implied reversion to militancy, Buthelezi warned that ‘if the ANC sabotages the adoption of a provincial constitution in KwaZulu-Natal, current problems between the ANC and IFP will pale in comparison to the crisis that will develop.’<sup>83</sup>

With no resolution on outstanding issues, on Tuesday 12 March the Constitutional Committee put the new constitution to the vote. The IFP and National Party voted for, the ANC and DP against, while the PAC and MF abstained. The deadlock necessitated further discussions that collapsed on 13 March when the ANC withdrew from the constitutional committee in objection to IFP demands that a resolution be taken on the basis of simple majority.<sup>84</sup> Various amendments were made in the absence of the ANC, the IFP granting further concessions to the minority parties in the hopes of securing the elusive two thirds majority, including suspension of the contentious Council of State clause. The minority parties however refused to conclude a settlement without the ANC's concurrence. The party was persuaded to return to discussions on 15 March, and conceded the inclusion of various contentious clauses in the final document, with the proviso that it would challenge these issues within the forum of the Constitutional Court, once the general framework had been agreed upon. The final draft was thus approved unanimously on 16 March following an all-night sitting of the legislature. On 19 March the draft was sent to the Constitutional Court for approval.

While the Financial Mail reported the achievement of 'a memorable inclusive constitutional breakthrough,'<sup>85</sup> the Mail and Guardian described the final text as 'so full of "inoperative" holes it looks like the victim of an AK-47 attack.'<sup>86</sup> Felgate emphasized that he was 'not happy with the final outcome,' each party having paid 'a steep price' to conclude a document based on mutual compromises. His reference to the document's value as 'an important benchmark in the future,' left no doubt that the IFP's constitutional ambitions had yet to be fulfilled.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the party expressed its regret that there had been 'insufficient trust and insufficient democratic insight' to allow federalism and pluralism to be properly achieved, but promised to continue the 'constitutional struggle.'<sup>88</sup>

### **Constitutional Court Judgment - The Fate of the Provincial Constitution**

Discussion in the Constitutional Court revealed great skepticism concerning the provincial constitution, particularly in regard to the ambiguous status of the sunrise

clauses.<sup>89</sup> The manipulation of such clauses would theoretically allow an opportunistic government to amend the constitution to declare KwaZulu-Natal a sovereign state. In addition, the clause urging all KwaZulu-Natal residents to ‘defend the territory of the province...from any external enemy and from any threat to the fundamental rights of the residents of the Province’ was questioned as potentially legitimizing ‘armed secession’ against a perceived threat to provincial rights from national government.<sup>90</sup> Such criticism was met with a warning from the IFP that ‘as long as we’re in conflict, we may not be able to succeed to reduce the tension that flares up into acts of violence between us.’<sup>91</sup> It was an often-repeated IFP argument - peace in KwaZulu-Natal was directly dependent on recognition of and cooperation with the party. Furthermore, it reminded the Court that rejection of the document would result in increased political violence at ground level, rather than renewed political debate in the province’s official forums.

On 9 September 1996 the Constitutional Court announced its refusal to certify the constitution, on the grounds that it was ‘not consistent with the interim constitution and the constitutional principles.’<sup>92</sup> Its major flaw was its claim to give powers to the provincial legislature and executive above those allowed by the interim constitution, while references to KwaZulu-Natal as ‘a self-governing province’ seeking ‘greater self-determination within a united federal framework’ were found to undermine national unity.<sup>93</sup> The Court ruled that the constitution ‘seemed to have been passed by the KwaZulu-Natal legislature under the misunderstanding that it enjoys a relationship of co-supremacy with the national legislature, and even the Constitutional Assembly.’<sup>94</sup> Since the IFP had repeatedly declared the illegitimacy of the CA, the judgment seemed an accurate reflection of the IFP’s approach – it was precisely the objective of the provincial constitution to limit the influence of central government within the IFP’s provincial domain. The Court rejected the provincial constitution and referred it back to the legislature for amendment.

While the IFP had been embroiled in its provincial constitution-making efforts, the national Constitution had been passed by the necessary two-thirds majority in parliament

on 8 May 1996 and sent to the Constitutional Court for ratification. The document provided for a traditional monarch in KwaZulu-Natal and protected minority rights. Buthelezi, however, criticised the new Constitution as ‘a recipe for totalitarian autocracy, eliminating any real provincial autonomy.’<sup>95</sup> The document, he declared, ‘revealed the ANC’s hidden contempt for the Zulu nation and their monarch,’ and condemned it as a ‘nightmare constitution which fulfills, and indeed exceeds our most negative predictions which we expressed before the 1994 election.’<sup>96</sup> The party enjoyed some vindication when the Constitutional Court ruled in September that the powers allocated to the provinces were ‘substantially less than and inferior to’ those set out in the interim constitution, allowing ninety days for amendment.<sup>97</sup>

The IFP saw a possible opportunity to push its federalist demands in the national arena by rejoining the CA at this late stage, particularly in light of the failure of the KwaZulu-Natal constitution to secure provincial autonomy. The ANC provisionally welcomed the party back to negotiations, on condition that only those aspects of the national Constitution rejected by the Constitutional Court would be reviewed. The IFP was to find that it remained a minority voice, however. Furthermore, now that constitution making was in its final stages, confrontation was no longer a viable strategy to achieve IFP objectives. The party demanded an extension of the 11 October deadline for completion of amendments, arguing ‘that the constitution was being hurried through’.<sup>98</sup> The irony could not have been lost on the party’s provincial opposition, who had raised the same objection every time the IFP had attempted to force a vote on its provincial draft proposals over the previous year.

Unable to secure its demands, the party withdrew from the CA only a week after rejoining. The IFP’s early withdrawal seemed to contradict its efforts to protect provincial powers. Both the National Party and the Democratic Party had proved themselves committed to protecting some measure of federalism in the final document, and were thus potential allies of the IFP. Rather than reinforcing their federalist position, however, the party once again removed itself from the process. The Financial Mail

reported that the IFP's move had achieved nothing but 'to confirm its image as the petulant delinquent of South African politics which kicks and screams when it cannot get its way. Inkatha cannot seem to reconcile itself to its status as a minority party.'<sup>99</sup> On 11 October, the final amendments to the national Constitution, concluded in the IFP's absence, were approved by the Constitutional Court. The document was signed into law on 10 December 1996. Regarding the IFP's failure to secure its constitutional objectives, Felgate admitted: 'we didn't do our homework, as a result, we weren't successful.'<sup>100</sup>

### **The Aftermath**

The failure of the IFP to embrace consensus as the genuine basis for decision-making ultimately undermined attempts to secure a democratically negotiated settlement capable of promoting the party's federalist ambitions. The IFP overestimated its strength in the legislature without considering the capacity of a united opposition to block its plans. Its attempts to railroad its proposals into law put the minority parties on the defensive and increased existing tensions with the ANC. Interference from hard-liners in the National Council undermined the prospects of compromise and generally soured the mood in which negotiations took place. The IFP conveniently overlooked the irony that, as the majority party in the constitution-making body, it enjoyed the very same position of power that it so vigorously tried to deny the ANC on the national level in the negotiation period preceding the 1994 elections. Indeed, the party's conduct throughout the process indicated a preference for unchallenged provincial power that left little room for consensus. The confrontational approach proved counter-productive however - the provincial constitution-making process ground to an inconclusive halt with the ratification of the national Constitution as supreme law of the land in December 1996.

The IFP's stubborn stand on the provincial constitution, insofar as it was phrased in nationalist discourse at various stages, served a particular party agenda rather than a culturally inspired quest for national sovereignty. The evolution of the constitutional debate, as positions shifted with regard to changing political terrain, alliance shifts and time frames, reveals the inconsistency with which ethnic concerns dominated the party's

agenda. Indeed, even when threats of secession were at their most virulent, they should be understood in terms of confrontational tactics rather than a genuine desire for Zulu autonomy. The provincial constitution-making process was not about protecting a threatened culture or a victimized ethnic group, although it was at times convenient for the IFP to present it as such. Rather, it was an attempt by a political party to exercise maximum powers within its provincial power base, free as possible from the constraints of central government.

In retrospect it seems the IFP would have served its cause better by approaching the provincial process in a spirit of inclusiveness and compromise, that may have succeeded in winning support for its proposals where confrontational tactics failed. Instead, the IFP marginalised itself more than ever. Its actions certainly derived no benefits for the Zulu nationalist cause, and arguably undermined the province's potential to develop its federal powers within a limited framework. The shelving of the constitutional debate has not seen the provincial power-struggle subside, however. The issues on which the constitution floundered remain unresolved, and often provide a contemporary source of friction in many areas of provincial government. Foremost among these points of division are the issues relating to traditional affairs, and in particular, the status of traditional authorities. This will be the focus of the following chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Piper: per comm.

<sup>2</sup> The Constitutional Assembly, set up soon after the general elections of 1994, was a multi-party negotiating forum established for the purpose of finalising South Africa's national Constitution, on the basis of the interim constitution drawn up prior to elections.

<sup>3</sup> Tonkin 1996: 208

<sup>4</sup> The limitations of the IFP's national reach became clear when the results of the general election were tallied.

<sup>5</sup> Friedman 1993: 163; Friedman and Atkinson 1994: 16

<sup>6</sup> Johnston notes the IFP's appeal to whites during the 1980s and early 1990s, who saw 'partnership with a Black political movement as a long-term investment in stability.'

<sup>7</sup> Glaser 1986: 5; De Haas & Zulu 1994: 434

<sup>8</sup> Friedman *et al* 1994: 160

<sup>9</sup> The IFP withdrew from negotiations in reaction to the Record of Understanding, concluded between the ANC and NP. The agreement, among other things, provided for an elected constitution-making body,

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flouting IFP demands for a constitution to be concluded by a multi-party committee prior to a general election.

<sup>10</sup> De Haas & Zulu 1994: 443

<sup>11</sup> Ibid: 445

<sup>12</sup> Friedman *et al* 1994: 159

<sup>13</sup> Walter Felgate, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 7 July 1997

<sup>14</sup> Ibid: 160

<sup>15</sup> Woods 1994: 197

In 1994 Woods stated Inkatha's contention that 'inter-plural reliance and the collective contribution to the country's wealth advocate that all South Africans should have a future together.' Secession, he insisted, was not an option.

<sup>16</sup> De Haas & Zulu 1994: 446

<sup>17</sup> Tonkin 1996: 147

<sup>18</sup> The Star 19 July 1993

<sup>19</sup> Woods 1994: 193

<sup>20</sup> Piper 1998: Chapter 4

<sup>21</sup> De Haas & Zulu 1994: 161

<sup>22</sup> Friedman & Atkinson 1994: 16

<sup>23</sup> Buthelezi 1994e: 75-76, in Tonkin 1996: 208

<sup>24</sup> Maré 1996: 35 in Rich (ed.)

<sup>25</sup> Buthelezi 1994a:9, in Tonkin 1996: 217

<sup>26</sup> Ciskei and Bophuthatswana returned to negotiations in February and March respectively, while the IFP proved more recalcitrant.

<sup>27</sup> Tonkin 1996: 149

<sup>28</sup> Tonkin 1996: 216

<sup>29</sup> Tonkin 1996: 225

<sup>30</sup> Agreement for Reconciliation and Peace 19 April 1994

<sup>31</sup> Financial Mail 17 February 1995

<sup>32</sup> Weekly Mail & Guardian 23 February 1995

<sup>33</sup> Keesings Record of World Events 1995: April; Financial Mail 14 March 1995: 38

<sup>34</sup> Financial Mail 28 March: 20

<sup>35</sup> Cape Argus 27 May 1995

<sup>36</sup> Financial Mail 5 May 1995: 39

<sup>37</sup> Peter Smith 1995: 31-34

<sup>38</sup> John Jeffrey, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 13 June 1997

<sup>39</sup> Buthelezi 1995: 6, in Tonkin 1996: 236

<sup>40</sup> Peter Smith 1995: 31-34

<sup>41</sup> Financial Mail 2 June 1994: 41

<sup>42</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing No 1 March 1996: 3

<sup>43</sup> Apelgren 1995: 6

<sup>44</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing No 1 March 1996: 3

<sup>45</sup> John Jeffrey, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 13 June 1997

<sup>46</sup> Natal Witness 17 August 1995

<sup>47</sup> Natal Witness 26 August 1995

<sup>48</sup> HRC Monthly Report October 1995

<sup>49</sup> Natal Witness 19 August 1995

<sup>50</sup> Buthelezi, The Star 18 April 1994

<sup>51</sup> Financial Mail 25 August 1995: 48

<sup>52</sup> Nicholas Claude, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 11 June 1997

<sup>53</sup> Mail & Guardian 15 September 1995; Natal Witness 6 September 1995, 19 September 1995

<sup>54</sup> John Jeffrey, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 13 June 1997

<sup>55</sup> Ibid (Mario Ambrosini was one of Buthelezi's primary political advisors at the time).

<sup>56</sup> Natal Witness 22 September 1995

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- <sup>57</sup> NP MPP Val Volker, Natal Witness 19 September 1995
- <sup>58</sup> Financial Mail 22 September 1995: 48
- <sup>59</sup> Green Paper: Constitutional Principles adopted by the KwaZulu-Natal legislature on 3rd October 1995
- <sup>60</sup> Mail & Guardian 15 September 1995
- <sup>61</sup> Natal Witness 4 October 1995
- <sup>62</sup> Mail & Guardian 6 October 1995
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid
- <sup>64</sup> Mail and Guardian 6 October 1995
- <sup>65</sup> Natal Witness 5 October 1995
- <sup>66</sup> Mail and Guardian 6 October 1995
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid
- <sup>68</sup> Natal Witness 15 November 1995
- <sup>69</sup> Natal Witness 16 November 1995
- <sup>70</sup> Natal Witness 17 November 1995
- <sup>71</sup> The ANC would be unlikely to partake in the pact, hence the clause allowing the IFP and NP to operate collectively without the ANC's consent.
- <sup>72</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing March 1996
- <sup>73</sup> Natal Witness 17 November 1995
- <sup>74</sup> Financial Mail 15 December 1995: 44
- <sup>75</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing March 1996: 6
- <sup>76</sup> John Jeffrey, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 13 June 1997
- <sup>77</sup> Natal Witness 14 December 1995
- <sup>78</sup> Natal Witness 6 January 1996
- <sup>79</sup> The New Nation 26 January 1996
- <sup>80</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing March 1996: 8
- <sup>81</sup> Financial Mail 15 March 1996: 48
- <sup>82</sup> Natal Witness 11 March 1996
- <sup>83</sup> Natal Witness 4 March 1996
- <sup>84</sup> Natal Witness 14 March 1996
- <sup>85</sup> Financial Mail 22 March 1996: 42
- <sup>86</sup> Mail and Guardian 10 May 1996
- <sup>87</sup> Jung 1996: 51-54
- <sup>88</sup> Citizen 18 March 1996
- <sup>89</sup> Natal Witness 1 June 1996
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid
- <sup>91</sup> Mail & Guardian 28 June 1996
- <sup>92</sup> Natal Witness 10 September 1996
- <sup>93</sup> Natal Witness 10 September 1996
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid
- <sup>95</sup> Mercury 13 May 1996
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid
- <sup>97</sup> Keesings 1996: September
- <sup>98</sup> New Nation 27 September 1996
- <sup>99</sup> Financial Mail 11 October 1996: 2
- <sup>100</sup> Walter Felgate, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 7 July 1997

### Chapter Three: Inkatha as the Defender of Tradition?

The dispute over the role of traditional authorities under the new democratic government provides a clear example of the manipulation of tradition in the service of party political interests. In the ANC-IFP contest for political influence among the rural constituency of KwaZulu-Natal, the IFP has used the cause of Zulu nationalism to great effect to protect the patronage relationship that it has enjoyed with the *amakhosi* since the early 1970s. In recent years however, the ANC has stepped up efforts to broaden its support in rural areas, and has challenged the IFP's interpretation of Zulu cultural identity in the process.<sup>1</sup> While the ANC has made repeated attempts to loosen the bonds of patronage that bind the *amakhosi* so closely to the IFP, even managing to win the Zulu monarch over to its cause, the IFP has fought strenuously to defend what was previously its monopoly on traditional politics in KwaZulu-Natal.

In this contest for influence between political rivals, the Zulu monarchy and the *amakhosi* find themselves acting as both pawns and players. In the face of central government efforts to reduce their power and remove them from politics, the *amakhosi* have a political champion in the IFP, which defends the system of traditional authority in terms of its unique African/Zulu heritage. In turn, the IFP enjoys strong support among the subject communities of the *amakhosi*. The following chapter considers the IFP's defense of 'tradition,' and suggests that the preservation of traditional authority is motivated primarily by political concerns. I will argue that the IFP's brand of Zulu nationalism is as much about maintaining a system of patronage that excludes competition from rival political parties, as it is about protecting a traditional way of life. While the ANC-IFP power struggle continues, the authenticity of traditional authority remains contested and local government structures are yet to be finalised in African rural areas. Until a compromise between western and traditional forms of democracy, capable of transcending party politics, is found, a solution to the dispute will remain elusive.

### **Historical Manipulation of Traditional Authorities**

The independent Zulu kingdom endured only sixty years, from the conquests of King Shaka in 1816 to Cetshwayo's defeat by the British in 1879. Under Shaka's rule, power was centred in the person of the King as an executive monarch, and devolved downward among the *amakhosi*/chiefs and their *izinduna*/headman.<sup>2</sup> Decision-making occurred according to a policy of consensus, based on a strong sense of the unity of the tribe.<sup>3</sup> When the British colonized Natal in the 1840s, the system of traditional authority was co-opted by the colonial government to serve as a form of indirect rule in the rural areas. The Governor-General, the embodiment of imposed white authority, replaced the Zulu King at the apex of the power hierarchy, assuming the title of 'Supreme Chief.' Administrative and judicial powers were bestowed upon the *amakhosi*, who effectively became the instruments of the colonial state at the level of rural African local government.<sup>4</sup>

Following the Union of South Africa and the exit of the British colonial powers, the South African State President claimed the title of 'Supreme Chief' in terms of the 1927 Native Authorities Act. Like the Governor-General before him, the President adopted the authority to appoint and depose *amakhosi*. The *amakhosi* were deprived of both executive powers and an independent revenue base, rendering them subordinate to the white minority government - they had to toe the government line if they hoped to remain in office.<sup>5</sup> A tradition of resistance persisted however, focused on the institution of the monarchy. This sentiment gave rise to an alliance between the urbanised, mission-educated *amakholwa*, and the conservative *amakhosi* and Zulu monarchy in the rural areas. The movement, aimed at restoring Zulu national unity, bridging class cleavages and protecting tribal rights to land,<sup>6</sup> found resonance among peasants and migrant workers, who turned to the King for protection against exploitation.<sup>7</sup> The first Inkatha movement was thus established in the early 1920s, and functioned to mobilise nationalist sentiment around the figure of the Zulu King. While the initiative proved short-lived, the notion of a proud and defiant Zulu nation united under the symbol of the King was to prove appealing to Chief Buthelezi fifty years later.

The genesis of apartheid in 1948 saw the National Party further manipulate traditional authority in the service of white rule, installing compliant *amakhosi* as agents of the state within the bantustan structures. Such authorities operated according to the dictates of the National Party government, upon which their power and access to resources were dependent. The apartheid system saw the *amakhosi* 'cast in a role that was neither traditional nor democratic.'<sup>8</sup> While certain *amakhosi* did resist this manipulation of their power and retained the popular support of their communities by doing so, their authority tended not to be recognised by the government in power. Indeed, the *amakhosi* who proved resistant were often deprived of their inherited position, allowing more malleable leaders to be appointed in their place.<sup>9</sup>

The system of 'Grand Apartheid' required that the bantustans evolve towards the status of 'independent' homelands, wherein the country's black population would be formally segregated from 'white' South Africa. To this end, the Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970 made it compulsory for every African to become a citizen of one of the designated homelands. The homelands were subsequently granted 'self-governing' status, which saw the formation of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KZLA) in 1972, with Chief Minister Buthelezi empowered to recognize, appoint and depose traditional authorities. Under this arrangement, decisions affecting local government tended to be taken at cabinet level, allowing little consultation with traditional authorities and precluding the formation of an efficient and accountable system of local government.<sup>10</sup> With limited state funding and little capacity to raise funds locally, the *amakhosi* found their legitimacy undermined by their inability to meet the demands of service delivery and development in their communities. In consequence, 'the system encouraged traditional leaders to seek political authority outside their areas, by participating in the party political arena and by becoming members of the KZLA.'<sup>11</sup>

The KZLA thus came to be dominated by *amakhosi* holding appointed seats. The formation of Buthelezi's Inkatha as a national cultural movement in 1975, however, saw the increasing ascendancy of the political over the traditional elite, to the extent that membership of the KZLA became effectively dependent on loyalty to Inkatha.<sup>12</sup> As

Inkatha consolidated its single party dominance over the legislature, it was Buthelezi and his party who increasingly defined the interests of both the *amakhosi* and the KwaZulu government.<sup>13</sup> Traditional leaders, rather than being accountable to their communities or their King, became increasingly dependent on the patronage of Inkatha. The *amakhosi*, paid and empowered directly by Inkatha, in turn used their influence within their communities to entrench support for the party. This relationship of patronage extended to the monarchy as well. Buthelezi ensured that Zwelithini was forced to give up his claims to executive powers, and in return provided the King with a very comfortable lifestyle paid for by the KwaZulu government.<sup>14</sup>

The politicization of traditional authority came into stark relief during the 1980s, which saw low-intensity civil war waged between the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Inkatha, backed by the KwaZulu police with frequent support from the South African state and military.<sup>15</sup> The UDF denounced the *amakhosi* and Inkatha, who participated in the structures of the apartheid-inspired bantustans, as collaborating with the white oppressor. Violence between UDF and Inkatha affiliates reached unprecedented heights in the late 1980s. Many *amakhosi* became ‘warlords,’ many were murdered, and the cleavages wrought between urban and rural communities, young and old, continue to fuel violence in the province at present.<sup>16</sup>

The transition to democracy and dissolution of the bantustans has seen the IFP’s monopoly on traditional politics challenged by the ANC, on both the national and provincial level. Furthermore, past manipulations of the system of traditional authority by the apartheid state and bantustan elite are being continuously exposed as those *amakhosi* who were deposed or exiled by the former government attempt to reclaim their titles, resulting in bitter battles between contenders for power.<sup>17</sup> According to sceptics, ‘many of those laying claim to the status of “traditional” leaders are nothing more than a former bantustan petty bourgeoisie, hoping to further their own careers in the new dispensation by exploiting tradition.’<sup>18</sup> The authenticity of a large number of traditional authorities is open to debate, as are the powers to which some would lay claim. The institution has a long history of manipulation for political ends, raising questions

regarding its relevance and legitimacy in contemporary South Africa. It is for these reasons that Inkatha's defense of 'tradition' under the new dispensation requires critical examination.

### **Traditional Authority and Democracy**

Despite the association of the system of traditional authority with white oppression, political manipulation and patronage politics, it remains the primary form of social organization in the lives of many rural black South Africans. The *amakhosi* control land allocation and administer local justice and certain welfare services in their areas of jurisdiction. They exercise substantial influence over their subjects and provide a durable and stable system of authority. Traditional leaders continue to 'enjoy the support and respect of a large majority of their subjects,' a situation that is unlikely to change as a result of constitutional provisions which seek to decrease the powers of such community authorities.<sup>19</sup> Efforts to introduce western style democracy in such communities are fraught with difficulties, not least of which is the lack of experience with the workings of the system and party competition. The system of traditional authority cannot simply be discarded over-night. If rural areas are to democratise, the first stumbling block will be to secure the support of the *amakhosi*.

The control exercised by the *amakhosi* over their communities often translates into a blanket political affiliation determined by the particular chief, making the political loyalty of the *amakhosi* a much sought after prize.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the issue of whether or not *amakhosi* should have an automatic and direct say in local government has major political implications for rival parties in the province. The vast majority of KwaZulu-Natal's approximately 300 *amakhosi* remain firmly affiliated to the IFP. Since the early 1990s the ANC has engaged in various efforts to challenge this IFP hegemony and to establish its own Zulu credentials in hope of amongst other things, gaining a foothold in the rural constituency.<sup>21</sup> Since 1994 these efforts have included defending the Zulu King in his disputes with Buthelezi, transferring responsibility for remuneration of traditional authorities to central government, and challenging the IFP's efforts to secure political power for the *amakhosi*. Yet while the ANC has had to recognize the *amakhosi* as a

potent interest group, the system remains incompatible with the party's conception of popular democracy. Furthermore, as long as the majority of the *amakhosi* remain loyal to the IFP, the ANC is unlikely to grant them real political power. The party insists that *amakhosi* be removed from elected assemblies, and that their role in local government be no more than a consultative one. In short, the ANC seeks to separate traditional authority and representative politics, placing the government in a position to 'preside benignly over the decline of the *amakhosi* into dignified and subsidised impotence.'<sup>22</sup>

The IFP on the other hand insists that the *amakhosi* have 'always' constituted the legitimate form of local government for tribal areas, and that any effort to separate traditional authority and political power is a misguided attempt to impose western norms on African culture.<sup>23</sup> The party demands the right of *amakhosi* to sit as primary local government in rural areas and to be included in national and provincial assemblies. According to the IFP, the efforts of the ANC to remove political power from the *amakhosi* stem from party political considerations alone, and have nothing to do with 'the intrinsic value or otherwise of the institution.' Because the ANC 'does not have the support of the traditional leaders, they want to strip them of political power, that is a party political ploy.'<sup>24</sup> These conflicting visions have resulted in disputes over almost every aspect of traditional authority, from the status of the monarch to the location of the capital city.

While the IFP has consistently presented itself as the defender of traditional interests, the nationalism espoused by the party in defense of Zulu culture nonetheless serves its own political interest. Political analysts note the 'distinct lack of ethnic or traditionalist rhetoric or particularly focused attention on the role of "traditional leaders" in local government' prior to the general elections of 1994, when political power was very much centralised in the KZG.<sup>25</sup> As noted above, the ascension of Inkatha after 1975 saw the autonomy of both the legislature and the *amakhosi* subordinated to the party's rule. Inkatha's uncontested dominance in the legislature allowed the party to indulge in the politics of patronage, while the *amakhosi* were expected to deliver the political loyalty of their communities to Inkatha. The infiltration of the UDF and later the ANC into the

urban areas of the province, however, saw Inkatha's authority challenged, hence the party's increased reliance on traditional leaders as a bulwark against the erosion of its political influence at the local level. As the dissolution of the bantustan system and hence the KZLA became imminent, Inkatha sought to entrench its provincial power by boosting its influence at the local level. Thus, the *amakhosi* presented an obvious foundation on which to build a post-apartheid power base for the party.<sup>26</sup>

The protection of traditional authority is thus very much part of a party agenda, rather than a purely nationalist concern. Buthelezi's reverence for the institution of traditional authority and its relevance under the new dispensation is no doubt genuine.<sup>27</sup> It is however a very specific form of traditional authority that the IFP espouses, with Buthelezi at the apex of a Zulu nation loyal to the IFP. While the *amakhosi* remain firmly aligned to the party, it remains in the IFP's interests to protect their position of authority, thus securing the rural constituency.

### **The King as a Pawn in the Contest for Authenticity**

Central to the ANC-IFP power struggle is the dispute over the status of the Zulu monarch. While the ANC insists that the King traditionally enjoyed a position of power over the *amakhosi*, the IFP insists that the King's status is limited to that of a figurehead, bound by the decisions of the *amakhosi*. The British defeat of the Zulu in 1879 saw the monarchy deprived of executive powers and relegated to a position of impotence. The situation persisted through the years, and the formation of the KwaZulu bantustan saw King Zwelithini's authority subordinated to the KZLA, following intense power struggles between Buthelezi and the monarchy. During the civil conflict of the 1980s however, the King provided a strong cultural asset for Inkatha. Through Zwelithini, Inkatha was able to appeal to the 'Zulu nation' in the service of its own political agenda. This campaign was carried over into the 1990s, when the monarch, as head of the Zulu nation, was used to great effect to advance the IFP's autonomist cause.<sup>28</sup>

Since 1994, the party's vision of the King's role in politics has changed substantially. The fact that the IFP's re-evaluation of Zwelithini's status coincided with his perceived

realignment with the ANC opens the IFP to accusations of political opportunism. When Zwelithini was seen to be firmly in Buthelezi's pocket, 'basically going around reading Buthelezi's speeches,'<sup>29</sup> the IFP demanded his full recognition as leader of the Zulu nation and a place at Codesa as representative of the Zulu people on the national stage. Following the elections and the ANC's national victory however, the relationship between the IFP and the Zulu King visibly soured.

The reasons underlying the split between Zwelithini and Buthelezi had much to do with the King's attempts to assert himself as an independent actor on the political stage, against Buthelezi's wishes. Arrangements for the King to receive his salary from central government, the establishment of a royal advisory council excluding Buthelezi, and replacement of the KwaZulu Police with SANDF members as security for the monarchy, saw Buthelezi's control over Zwelithini greatly diminished.<sup>30</sup> The bond of patronage was broken, freeing Zwelithini from his role as an Inkatha mouthpiece. As the King set about distancing himself from IFP control, Buthelezi accused the ANC of 'trying to worm its way into the King's confidence,' using members of the royal house to sow discord between himself and Zwelithini.<sup>31</sup> The rift was evident in the public fall-out over the 1994 Shaka Day rally. When Buthelezi and certain IFP-aligned *amakhosi* objected to Zwelithini's invitation to President Mandela to attend the celebrations, the King responded by cancelling the occasion altogether. Buthelezi however upstaged the King by holding the celebrations in his absence, presiding over the affair in his capacity as 'traditional Prime Minister.'<sup>32</sup> The fact that the majority of *amakhosi* did attend the event, despite Zwelithini's express disapproval, served to boost Buthelezi's status while undermining the King's authority, a precedent that was repeated time and again over the coming months. Buthelezi's popularity as a traditionalist political leader, combined with his patronage power over the *amakhosi*, ensured that it was his lead that they would follow.

Zwelithini responded by 'severing all links with Buthelezi' and denouncing his claim to be traditional Prime Minister.<sup>33</sup> In a show of one-upmanship, Buthelezi convened an *imbizo*, a gathering of the Zulu nation, without the King's approval. At the gathering,

held in late 1994, the *amakhosi* expressed their support for Buthelezi's call to boycott the local government elections and preserve traditional authority in the rural areas.<sup>34</sup> They called upon Zwelithini to affirm his views on the role and status of the *amakhosi* and declare his preparedness to recommit himself 'to the struggle for the restoration of the kingdom of KwaZulu as a constitutional monarchy.'<sup>35</sup> Zwelithini was effectively being told to choose between the traditionalist IFP and his new political sponsors, the ANC, who sought to decrease the powers of the *amakhosi*. The King chose the latter. The ANC offered him generous remuneration to be paid out by central government, a deal that included the freedom from Buthelezi and the increased sense of personal independence that he had previously been denied. In reaction, the IFP publicly accused Zwelithini of joining forces with the ANC in order to satisfy his own lust for power.<sup>36</sup>

King Zwelithini reacted by declaring his freedom from party politics and political manipulation, and insisted that the province's traditional leaders should become similarly non-partisan.<sup>37</sup> For the IFP, whose nationalist defense of Zulu culture and tradition sought to protect the party's political interests, Zwelithini's self-removal from the political arena represented a symbolic loss. Here was a political party claiming to defend the system of traditional authority, while the symbolic head of that system, the King himself, had distanced himself from the cause. Buthelezi bemoaned the political manipulation of Zwelithini by the 'dark forces of central government' that had sent him into 'spiritual exile.' He urged Zwelithini to return to 'his father's people' as their constitutional monarch, leading the fight for the restoration of the Zulu Kingdom.<sup>38</sup> The Zulu royal house insisted on its disassociation from the IFP, however, and rejected the party's efforts to 'decide on the fate of the whole nation without consultation and the involvement of other subjects and political parties in the province.'<sup>39</sup>

This rift between the King and the IFP resulted in a schism between the monarchy and the majority of the *amakhosi*, who remained loyal to the IFP. While the ANC applauded Zwelithini for shaking off his subordination to the dictates of Buthelezi and Inkatha, the IFP condemned the ANC for alienating the monarch from his people and seeking to use him for political ends. The IFP insisted that the King had compromised his credibility as

spokesman for the Zulu nation, and that the ANC, in its attempts to gain a foothold in traditional politics by manipulating the King, made a great mistake in failing to recognize this. According to Arthur Konigkramer, the Zulu people and the *amakhosi* recognized the King as having been 'bought' by the ANC, and were thus alienated from him.<sup>40</sup> Thus, while the IFP continued to uphold the institution of the monarchy as important, Zwelithini's credibility as an individual was dismissed. Walter Felgate described the King as 'suffering from a huge confusion of vision, a limited ability to grasp political realities around him. His personal ambition prevents him accepting his position as constitutional monarch, with no authority to act outside the confines of what cabinet approves for him.'<sup>41</sup>

Having lost Zwelithini's political allegiance, the IFP was unable to use him as a mobilising symbol for its Zulu nationalism. Indeed, the interests of the party were vested in 'sidelining the monarch as politically irrelevant.'<sup>42</sup> Since 1994 the provincial government has embarked on a number of legislative initiatives to minimise Zwelithini's role and power. Such moves were supported by many *amakhosi*. An IFP source claimed that 'there is actually a groundswell of support to say that the King must vacate his throne.'<sup>43</sup> Buthelezi however continued to insist on his loyalty and servitude to the King, reasserting his role as the King's traditional Prime Minister, claiming that Zwelithini himself had proclaimed him as such.<sup>44</sup> He also reiterated the sovereignty of the Zulu nation, noting its 'history as a nation with a King, which everybody admits is a Kingdom.'<sup>45</sup> While Zwelithini had lost much of his utility to the party by proclaiming his neutrality, there nonetheless remained a strong traditionalist element within the IFP that refused to see the monarch discredited and continued to hope for his return to the fold.

The institution of a Zulu royal house and constitutional monarch remains central to the IFP's conception of a sovereign Zulu nation with special rights to regional autonomy. The door has been left open for reconciliation between the party and the King, as soon as Zwelithini agrees to resubmit to Buthelezi's authority. Although such a scenario seems unlikely at present, the events of the past four years show that the King has lost credibility in the eyes of KwaZulu-Natal's rural constituency, while the IFP retains its

prominence as representative of traditional interests. In addition, there are some indications that the King is dissatisfied with his treatment by the ANC, which regards him as just one among several traditional monarchs in the country. The reverence for Zulu culture among traditionalist IFP supporters, may yet see Zwelithini lured back to the fold.<sup>46</sup>

While the preceding section has shown that the IFP has clearly manipulated traditional politics in pursuit of its own agenda, the ANC too has found use for the monarch in serving its political interest, enthusiastically backing Zwelithini's call for neutrality among the *amakhosi*. The NP notes that the King has become a political "playball" between the IFP and the ANC, compromising his role as a 'unifying personality,' and thus undermining his credibility in the realm of traditional politics.<sup>47</sup>

### **Conflicts Surrounding the Amakhosi**

The King's disputed position in traditional politics has been played out in the controversy surrounding the House of Traditional Leaders, the provincial legislature's seventy-seven member upper house of parliament. The IFP promotes the House as a means of broadening narrow 'westernized ideas of democracy' in order to give traditional authorities 'the recognition they deserve.' The House, claims the IFP, gives the *amakhosi* 'a platform to promote indigenous law and customs' while sending 'a message to the grassroots that the land has really returned to its rightful owners if their traditional leaders are being recognized and listened to.'<sup>48</sup> The provincial House of Traditional Leaders formalised the position of traditional authorities in provincial government, guaranteeing their autonomy as administrators and primary local government in the sphere of indigenous and customary law, with powers to advise the provincial government on matters relating to customary law.

The KwaZulu House of Traditional Leaders Act, 1994, allows the House to suspend, withdraw or modify the powers, duties and authority of any chief, including the King. While the provision was supported by a two-thirds majority in the House, it was angrily rejected by the ANC and the Zulu royal house.<sup>49</sup> The ANC walked out of the legislature

while the Act was being passed, accusing the IFP of seeking to consolidate its political power through manipulation of traditional politics. It dismissed Buthelezi's claim to the position of 'traditional Prime Minister' and insisted that the King was not being accorded his proper status and authority.<sup>50</sup> The royal house similarly criticized the Act as an attempt to 'drag the *amakhosi* away from the King' and detract from the status and powers of the monarchy.<sup>51</sup>

The minority parties supported the Act however, while a media report dismissed the ANC's opposition as a reaction against the exposure of its 'newly acquired asset,' King Zwelithini, as 'a monarch without a crown, out of touch with his chiefs.'<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the ANC did appear to have undergone a major transformation in respect of its attitude towards the monarchy – prior to the elections it had taken the threat of civil war to convince the ANC to regard the constitutional status of the Zulu monarch in a serious light.<sup>53</sup> On 9 January 1995 Buthelezi was elected President of the House. The ANC and King Zwelithini subsequently applied to the Supreme Court to nullify the legislation. They claimed that the Act overrode the national constitution by granting provincial government exclusive powers over legislation affecting traditional authorities, that the King had not been adequately consulted on the content of the legislation, and that Buthelezi's position of traditional Prime Minister was in dispute. Buthelezi dismissed the allegations and insisted that the majority of the *amakhosi* supported the Act.<sup>54</sup> This was the first of a number of disputes which would find the IFP and the *amakhosi* ranged against the ANC and the Zulu King in the arena of the Constitutional Court.

The second of these courtroom confrontations revolved around the contested issue of the remuneration of traditional authorities. The IFP's defense of a political role for the *amakhosi* was phrased in terms of the preservation of African traditions and culture in the face of Western conceptions of democracy.<sup>55</sup> The argument has resonance in light of trends in other African states, 'of a popular swing back in favour of traditional forms of local government as modern, post-independence systems buckle under the weight of inefficient bureaucracies and corruption.'<sup>56</sup> The counter argument, that the traditional system has been corrupted by political patronage and eroded of its neutrality, is equally

convincing, however. The close relationship between the IFP and the *amakhosi*, carried over from the KwaZulu bantustan, severely restricted free political activity in many tribal areas. Thus the demands of the ANC camp that the *amakhosi* distance themselves from party politics. In mid-1995, amidst allegations that the *amakhosi* in KwaZulu-Natal were being used to promote IFP resistance to the national Constitution-making process, the ANC proposed the Remuneration of Traditional Leaders Bill.<sup>57</sup>

The ANC claimed that the bill, aimed at centralizing and standardizing the payment of traditional authorities, sought to free the *amakhosi* from the 'bondage' that saw them pledging allegiance to 'a particular political party.'<sup>58</sup> KwaZulu-Natal was the only province to oppose the bill, the provincial government criticizing it as an attempt by the ANC to 'buy, bribe and adulterate the institution of traditional leaders in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal.'<sup>59</sup> The IFP's objections were echoed by the provincial National Party, who insisted that, in terms of the interim constitution, payment of traditional leaders fell to the provincial legislature, and that President Mandela displayed 'arrogance' in his attempts to dictate to the province's *amakhosi*.<sup>60</sup> KwaZulu-Natal's Democratic Party joined in criticism of the bill, describing it as 'an expensive form of political patronage designed to allow ANC pipers to call the tune for recalcitrant traditional leaders.'<sup>61</sup>

The ANC had been calling for an independent fund for the King and *amakhosi* since 1992, in order to protect their political independence. When the appeal was first made, it had been both the manipulations of the homeland and the central government from which the ANC sought to protect traditional leaders.<sup>62</sup> Now that the ANC itself held central power, however, it too was open to accusations of attempts to manipulate the *amakhosi* by control of their purse strings. The ANC nonetheless insisted that by rationalising the system of payment the status of *amakhosi* would be enhanced and their antagonism to development initiatives diminished.<sup>63</sup> King Zwelithini endorsed the ANC plan, and claimed credit for suggesting it as a means of freeing the *amakhosi* from political manipulation at the provincial level.<sup>64</sup> The ANC faced accusations of unconstitutionality regarding the passing of the Bill, however. The legislation had been rushed through

Parliament, despite the constitutional requirement that it be referred to the National Council of Traditional Leaders for approval - a body which had not yet been created. In the interim, the IFP, NP and DP agreed that, in terms of the constitution, the administration of the *amakhosi* should be recognized as a provincial competency.<sup>65</sup>

In reaction to these developments, the IFP provincial government passed legislation in July 1995 declaring the province responsible for remuneration of *amakhosi*, who risked fines or suspension should they accept funds from any other source. The national Remuneration of Traditional Leaders Act was dismissed as 'both symptomatic of ANC willingness, in the name of streamlined uniformity, to ride roughshod over provincial rights, and a deliberate attempt to drive a wedge between Inkatha and the *amakhosi*.'<sup>66</sup> The IFP insisted that local authorities and traditional affairs were provincial competencies, and that ANC efforts to centralise payment constituted a ploy to increase the party's political control in the province. 'The ANC want to see the *amakhosi* confined to traditional ritual and symbolic roles, with elected councillors running tribal affairs... Over time, the fact that you're being paid by the national government will be politically persuasive - then the ANC drives in its wedge.'<sup>67</sup>

While the parties vied for their loyalty, KwaZulu-Natal's IFP-aligned *amakhosi* rejected efforts to centralise their payment and called on the provincial government to 'resist the crushing of the constitutional autonomy of the Kingdom.'<sup>68</sup> Buthelezi accused central government of being 'hell-bent' on breaking essential ties between traditional leaders and their communities, thereby undermining the position of the *amakhosi* through the legislature.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the ANC's efforts to exert greater influence over the country's traditional authorities effectively united *amakhosi* of conflicting political persuasions against attempts to curb their powers. Following a meeting of both Contralesa and IFP-aligned traditional leaders in September 1995, delegates announced their unanimous commitment to the principle of unity among all traditional leaders, 'in light of current trends that are set to undermine the institution of traditional leaders and their communities.'<sup>70</sup> Leaders from across the political spectrum 'combined forces to petition Mandela to refrain from his high-handed treatment of *amakhosi*.'

The ANC's KwaZulu-Natal leader, Jacob Zuma, responded by reiterating the party's argument that the contemporary structures of traditional authority were not traditional structures but 'a creation of apartheid.' The centralization of payment was defended as liberating the *amakhosi* 'from certain undue pressures, influences and manipulation by different structures that were put in place before the democratic state was born.'<sup>71</sup> Clearly, the IFP was being challenged for the moral high ground in terms of its interpretation and defense of tradition. The Constitutional Court upheld the ANC's point of view, ruling in November 1995 that the President would retain authority over remuneration of the *amakhosi*, in the interests of standardising rates of remuneration. The decision was reaffirmed in May 1996 following a second hearing in the Constitutional Court.

Political neutrality among the *amakhosi* remained an elusive ideal however, and Zwelithini's efforts in this regard served mainly to alienate him from the majority of the *amakhosi*. At an IFP gathering in Ulundi in early 1995, he was accused of deserting his people, jeered at and told to *hamba* (go).<sup>72</sup> Zwelithini's close relations with Mandela and his support of the ANC in various disputes over traditional politics against the IFP, put him firmly in the camp of those who sought to diminish the powers of the *amakhosi*. So long as the IFP continued to protect the *amakhosi*'s political interests, the King seemed to have little hope of exerting much influence over his erstwhile subjects. His demands that Buthelezi choose between the traditional premiership and the IFP presidency, so as not to 'taint the image of the monarchy with party political activity,' also went unheeded.<sup>73</sup>

Recognising that the majority of the *amakhosi* remained avowedly IFP-aligned, in January 1996 Mandela convened a meeting with the *amakhosi* in an effort to bridge the gap between central government and traditional leaders seeking to protect their powers and status. The talks were to be followed by an *imbizo*, a gathering together of politicians and *amakhosi* across the board, together with the Zulu royal house, in a symbolic gesture of the unity of the Zulu nation in its quest for peace. Preparations for the talks got off to a turbulent start however, the IFP and royal house accusing each other of politicizing the

initiative to the other's detriment.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, while plans for the *imbizo* seemed to promise reconciliation between the ANC and IFP, the parties remained fundamentally divided regarding the proper role of traditional authorities in a democratic system. The continuing dispute over the House of Traditional Leaders, Buthelezi's status as traditional Prime Minister and the contested role of the *amakhosi* in local government, did not lend themselves to an easy solution in a mass forum.

Instead of rapprochement between the *amakhosi* and the central government, January 1996 saw the emergence of a new legislative dispute that further divided the opposing camps. Central government's long awaited Council of Traditional Leaders Bill received a hostile reception from KwaZulu-Natal's traditionalists. Not only did the Bill provide for representation of only three nominees from each province - despite the fact that KwaZulu-Natal had far more traditional leaders than the other provinces, it also precluded any council member from involvement in any elected political structure. Buthelezi, who held both a cabinet seat as the minister of Home Affairs and the chairmanship of the KwaZulu-Natal House of Traditional leaders, was thus in contravention of the bill.<sup>75</sup>

While the ANC had long argued that traditional authorities should separate themselves from party politics, the clause precluding politicians from Council membership was widely regarded as expressly 'anti-Buthelezi' and was criticised by the IFP, NP and DP as such.<sup>76</sup> The KwaZulu-Natal *amakhosi* expressed their resentment of central government interference regarding their traditional powers, and warned of the potential for instability with national repercussions, warnings echoed by the IFP. The latter accused the ANC of trying to reduce traditional leaders to 'mere figure-head leaders with symbolic powers only,' and of blatantly trying to subjugate the Zulu nation 'to the party political dictates of the ANC.'<sup>77</sup> The ANC's action was indeed provocative, and ignored the political reality that of the large number of traditional authorities directly involved in party politics, a significant portion were ANC-aligned. The ANC's message was clear – Buthelezi was effectively being told to choose between his position as spokesperson for the *amakhosi* and his seat in the national cabinet.

In this atmosphere of political rivalry, the pre-*imbizo* meeting between Mandela, Zwelithini, Buthelezi and the *amakhosi* took place in early March. Despite Zwelithini's call for 'unconditional reconciliation,'<sup>78</sup> the likelihood of the *amakhosi* and the ANC finding common ground remained slight. Indeed, many *amakhosi* appeared to have been 'dragged unwillingly' into the peace talks.<sup>79</sup> Mandela accused certain headman attending the pre-*imbizo* meeting of 'behaving like animals,' while he was subjected to heckling by the traditional leaders. The President's appeals to the *amakhosi* not to elevate Buthelezi's status above the King fell on deaf ears - perhaps not surprising in light of the fact that the meeting witnessed the King's first public address to the *amakhosi* since the elections of April 1994.

Buthelezi again called on Zwelithini to reconcile himself with the *amakhosi* and return to the fold.<sup>80</sup> Traditionalists within the IFP continued to regard the institution of the monarchy, if not Zwelithini himself, with high respect, and reconciliation between the IFP and Zwelithini would represent a symbolic coup for the party, reinforcing its claim to represent the Zulu nation. Thus Buthelezi's public criticism of Zwelithini was framed in terms of the influence of the Zulu royal council and the ANC who had divided the King from his people and obscured his perception of where his loyalties lay. Buthelezi was effectively telling Zwelithini that he could not be reconciled with his nation until he acknowledged Buthelezi's influence as traditional Prime Minister and publicly disassociated himself from the ANC and its efforts to depoliticise the *amakhosi*. The Financial Mail noted that 'the hatchet is far from buried and it will take more than wheeling out King Goodwill Zwelithini to split the Inkatha/traditional leader alliance.'<sup>81</sup>

As preparations for the *imbizo* floundered, the IFP insisted that further talks could not be held until the central government acknowledged the basic principles of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial constitution. The IFP insisted that it was merely holding off the *imbizo* 'until the majority of the *amakhosi* agreed that it was time to hold one.' Felgate defended the IFP's subsequent withdrawal from the process: 'You don't hold an *imbizo* as a political tool, it's beyond politics, it emerges only in times of national crisis when there is

a national will to go forward and do the right thing, it is not a problem solving mechanism. *Imbizos* are there to gather national strength for something that has already been decided and just needs to actually be done. It's a way forward after consensus, and something that very rarely happens.'<sup>82</sup> In the politically contested terrain of KwaZulu-Natal traditional politics, that consensus was sorely lacking. While the ANC and IFP remained at odds over the role of traditional authorities in local government, there could be no reconciliation between rival factions in the province. Media reports in late May noted that the planned *imbizo* was no longer seen as a priority, and urged that 'more security measures that will bring peace to the region' be pursued instead.<sup>83</sup>

### **Local Government Elections – the contested status of the *amakhosi*<sup>84</sup>**

The dispute over the role of traditional leaders in politics, played out in 'authenticity contests' such as the Shaka Day sagas and the conflict over remuneration or the status of the King, has proved particularly contentious in terms of how to accommodate the *amakhosi* in rural local government. While the IFP demands the preservation of tradition, the ANC insists that the *amakhosi* must stand for election according to democratic practice. The IFP's attempts to secure a special arrangement for local government in the rural areas, argues the ANC, constitute a colonial type approach whereby African communities are denied a choice in how they are represented. In contrast, the IFP argues that '*amakhosi* are born leaders, they will never stand for elections, no one can force them to take part.'<sup>85</sup>

The vague provision of the interim Constitution for a system of democratically elected local government that recognized traditional leaders in *ex-officio* capacity, has been the subject of conflicting interpretations since its formulation.<sup>86</sup> No clarity exists concerning the role of traditional authorities in relation to elected local government, resulting in ongoing disputes over where responsibility for such essential functions as land allocation and service delivery should lie.<sup>87</sup> While the 1994 Local Government Transition Act provided for *ex-officio* status for traditional leaders, KwaZulu-Natal's *amakhosi*, backed by the IFP, threatened to boycott local elections unless their status as primary local government was recognised.<sup>88</sup> The ANC's efforts to subject the *amakhosi* to election

were berated by the IFP as an affront to Zulu culture. The party insisted that elections could not proceed until 'the issue of local government became the prerogative of the Kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal.'<sup>89</sup> The ANC however gave short shrift to the IFP's defense of 'tradition,' claiming that so long as rural communities delivered their votes in line with IFP-supporting *amakhosi*, the IFP had no interest in extending democracy to these areas.

In April 1995 the IFP aligned *amakhosi* and the provincial department of Traditional Affairs were persuaded to modify their outright rejection of elected bodies in tribal areas, to allow for fifty percent representation of both traditional and elected authorities. The ANC nonetheless continued to insist that the *amakhosi* stand for election if they wished to exercise local government functions. The IFP accused the ANC of 'evil attempts to diminish the role of traditional leaders' and destroy the autonomy of traditional communities, thus securing greater control for central government over all levels of government throughout the country.<sup>90</sup>

Amidst these recriminations, the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) noted that efforts to empower traditional authorities as local government failed to take into account the lack of capacity in rural communities. The *amakhosi* lacked both the resources and skills to adequately coordinate transition and development policies, or to make any provision for individual land tenure rights and democratic decision making.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, many *amakhosi*, deriving power and legitimacy from their land allocation functions, proved resistant to development initiatives in their areas that were perceived as threatening their status within their communities.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, while the IFP was able to provide a legitimate defense of traditional authorities as providing a system of secure, affordable and equitable access to land, limitations inherent in the system made their elevation to the status of primary local government problematic. While the IFP emphasised community accountability and consultation as the underlying values of the traditional authority system, critics noted trends among certain communities wherein the *amakhosi*, desperate for funds, sold communal land to developers as if it were their personal property.<sup>93</sup> The question of the legitimate status and powers of the

*amakhosi* thus remained vexed. Furthermore, politicization of the issue distorted efforts to come up with developmentally oriented solutions.

By mid-1995, the dispute between the two parties had escalated to the point of ‘an all fronts war’ waged verbally between leaders of the two parties. Media reports noted that the ‘cursory commitments of both parties to dialogue’ were in reality undermined by the ‘tit for tat exchanges between Mandela and Buthelezi’ as each leader played to his constituency within the province.<sup>94</sup> Conflict over the contested status of the *amakhosi* was compounded by an inter-party dispute regarding the proper demarcation of tribal areas. While the ANC insisted that areas of traditional authority should be incorporated into their neighbouring local or metropolitan councils, the IFP insisted that such areas be preserved as separate entities in keeping with ‘tradition.’ The dispute threw election preparations into logistical chaos. A special electoral court eventually ruled that the majority of the tribal areas in question should be excluded from the urban councils, in light of the fact that the *amakhosi* had not been adequately consulted in the matter.<sup>95</sup>

The status of the *amakhosi* remained unresolved, while the demarcation dispute had contributed to the postponement of local government elections, scheduled for November 1995, until 27 March 1996. The IFP continued to insist that tribal areas should be excluded from the local councils unless otherwise specified by the relevant chief. While the mechanism effectively allowed the IFP to protect its unchallenged hold in the rural areas through its patronage links with the *amakhosi*, it also entrenched the rural-urban divide that separated IFP and ANC supporters and fuelled the province’s political tension.

In an effort to establish a solution to the *impasse*, in February 1996 the province was divided into seven regions and one metropolitan council. Transitional local councils were established in the urban areas, from which representatives would be elected to sit on the regional councils. Owing to the failure to reach consensus over the role of the *amakhosi*, the rural areas would have no primary local government, but would be represented at the regional level on the aforementioned councils.<sup>96</sup>

The accommodatory approach of the Provincial Local Government MEC, Peter Miller, won no favour among the party leadership at national level, however. Buthelezi berated Miller for his ‘racist attitude, on account of his efforts to limit the powers of the *amakhosi* and his supposed attempt to override the opinions of black IFP members.’<sup>97</sup> Miller’s Bill, the culmination of nine months of multi-party talks, was substantially redrafted under the direction of National Council members Felgate and Mario Ambrosini. The regional councils that Miller had constructed to be service providers with the power to pass by-laws were bestowed with extensive legislative and executive powers. The new arrangement granted the unelected *amakhosi* political powers that rivalled those of their elected counter-parts in the TLCs, and re-established the party’s hard-line approach at the expense of more inclusive negotiations. The opposition parties reacted angrily to this unilateral action, which effectively entrenched IFP patronage in rural areas.<sup>98</sup>

Continued acrimony over contested arrangements and logistical problems saw elections again postponed, until 29 May 1996. Under a new agreement, seventy percent of the regional council seats would go to elected candidates, twenty percent would be reserved for traditional authorities and the remaining ten percent for women’s groups and commercial farmers. The ANC objected that the majority of unelected/ appointed councillors would be IFP-aligned, and accused the IFP of being ‘desperate to find ways to achieve victory without winning fair and square at the polls.’<sup>99</sup> The objections were echoed by the South African Human Rights Commission, which warned that the ‘automatic elevation of *amakhosi* onto local government structures without voting disturbs both the freedom and fairness of the elections from the outset.’<sup>100</sup>

The IFP, presenting itself as a liberal-conservative movement committed to protecting the rights of a particular community to observe its cultural tradition, assumed the moral high ground and criticised central government’s ‘authoritarian’ attitude. Buthelezi asserted that, should traditional leadership succumb to the manipulations of central government power, ‘no one will be able to prevent our country from precipitating down the slippery slope towards a totalitarian state.’<sup>101</sup> The IFP’s argument coupled the defense of Zulu

tradition with the protection of free choice in the face of centralization.<sup>102</sup> In this light, the local elections were hailed as ‘a great referendum’ requiring a choice between ‘ANC autocracy and the IFP’s call for freedom, self-determination and autonomy.’<sup>103</sup>

The decision to include all the *amakhosi* on the regional councils was beset with logistical problems, however. Since the *amakhosi* were allowed to constitute only twenty percent of any regional council, the large concentration of *amakhosi* in certain areas required that some regional councils would have as many as 250 members. The immense size of these bodies posed significant problems in terms of dealing with substantive issues of local government. The IFP accused the ANC of wanting the regional councils to be ‘extraordinarily large beyond any reasonableness, merely to ensure that the *amakhosi* become insignificant.’<sup>104</sup> Unable to reach a compromise, the rival parties sent the dispute to the Constitutional Court for resolution. Local elections proceeded in the interim with all 300 *amakhosi* included, *ex-officio*, in the regional councils.

### **The Constitutional Status of the *Amakhosi***

While the dispute continued at provincial level, the national Constitution sent for ratification in May 1996 denied *ex-officio* status to traditional leaders on local government structures. Buthelezi accused the ANC of ‘planning the dismantling of the Zulu nation’ and substantially diminishing the protection of traditional leaders and indigenous law.<sup>105</sup> Falling back on the traditionalist line of defense, Buthelezi warned against attempts to build the new South Africa ‘from an attitude of regarding African realities as inferior.’<sup>106</sup> The IFP was able to demonstrate significant popular support for its position, as traditional leaders across the political spectrum converged in Durban to offer resistance against the erosion of their powers.<sup>107</sup> In October 1996 the CA conceded that the *amakhosi* were constitutionally entitled to *ex-officio* status on local government structures until 30 April 1999. The ANC hailed the decision as a reflection of the seriousness with which it had striven to address the IFP concerns over the issue.<sup>108</sup> The stubborn refusal of the IFP to negotiate its stand had succeeded in gaining the *amakhosi* at least a temporary reprieve.

Despite continued objections from the ANC,<sup>109</sup> in January 1997 the Supreme Court ruled that the *amakhosi* were constitutionally entitled to *ex-officio* status on Regional Councils by right of their office as traditional leaders.<sup>110</sup> The ruling meant that the ANC stood little fighting chance of securing a majority on any regional council without greatly increasing its support among the rural constituency. The IFP, despite absenting itself from the Constitutional Assembly and failing to secure a provincial constitution, had nonetheless used extra-parliamentary forums to the maximum advantage to safeguard the interests of the *amakhosi*, thus preserving its core constituency.

The IFP effectively forced its political opposition to accept ‘the reality that traditional leadership is there and it is not going to go away.’<sup>111</sup> The ANC has modified its original position in order to accommodate a cooperative relationship between elected local government officials and a parallel system of traditional leaders, who perform customary and ceremonial duties, and are represented in *ex-officio* capacity on elected structures. However, so long as the ANC finds itself marginalised in tribal areas by IFP-affiliated traditional leaders, the possibility of the central government condoning politicised *amakhosi* remains implausible. Indeed, July 1997 saw the ANC return to the Constitutional Court, appealing against the ruling upholding the *amakhosi*’s *ex-officio* representation on regional councils.<sup>112</sup>

The inauguration of the National Council of Traditional Leaders in February 1997, however, revealed central government’s recognition of traditional leadership as a legitimate political reality in African politics, requiring accommodation if it is to be subject to any form of democratic control.<sup>113</sup> The Council is competent to advise and make recommendations to organs of state on the roles of traditional leadership, authorities and customary laws, acting as ‘the custodian of African culture’ and promoting cooperation between the provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders in matters of common concern.<sup>114</sup> The ANC expressed confidence that the council would assert ‘the Africanness of our new democracy,’ praising its compatibility with western conceptions of democracy, as government based on the will of the people and in the interests of the

people.<sup>115</sup> The ANC's willingness to accommodate traditionalist sentiment remains limited however - the council is vested with no more than advisory powers.

Three years after the country's first democratic elections, the political power of the *amakhosi* remains the subject of heated dispute among rival parties on the provincial and national level. The political agendas of the respective parties ensure that any solution that sees the influence of one party substantially diminished is inherently unattractive. Thus, the IFP continues to insist on the 'democratic right (of traditional communities) to continue to function and live in terms of their traditional styles.'<sup>116</sup> The IFP's defense of the role of the *amakhosi* in rural local government has been described by one critic as dropping 'the mask of tradition' over 'a system of power and patronage which forms the backbone of social control in rural areas.'<sup>117</sup> Myers notes that to 'label something as "traditional" is to scrub it clean of the dirty fingerprints of human history,' irrespective of the fact that the 'structures and relations' now termed 'traditional,' have been manipulated and manufactured by the organs of the state.'<sup>118</sup> Yet the ANC is also not beyond reproach, its willingness to defend and sponsor the monarchy in its efforts to free Zwelithini from Buthelezi's tutelage, was motivated at least in part by its desire to extend its influence in the domain of traditionalist politics. While political neutrality of the *amakhosi* is a legitimate cause, it nonetheless remains true that the politicisation of the institution operates in favour of the IFP and thus at the ANC's expense.

### **Using Tradition Toward Symbolic Ends**

Having examined the politicization of the *amakhosi*, it should be noted that the manipulation of tradition for political purposes does not end with disputes over the monarchy and local government. The IFP's defense of Zulu culture has extended into more symbolic realms, where multiparty consensus has been sidelined in order to achieve party objectives. Thus the need to consider the motivation behind the party's defense of 'traditional' weapons, as well as its efforts to establish Ulundi, political center of the former KwaZulu bantustan, as the provincial capital.

The dispute between central government and the IFP over the issue of traditional weapons began even prior to the first general election of April 1994. As early as 1991 the ANC had demanded legislative action to outlaw the carrying of traditional weapons often used in township violence. The call was met with a rebuttal from Buthelezi, who insisted that the weapons were part of Zulu national heritage. In the month preceding the election, as violence spiralled to new heights, the NP government announced a ban on all dangerous weapons, including those regarded as traditional, from public places. The IFP vehemently opposed the ban despite many incidents of violence associated with mass rallies, insisting that no-one could stop the Zulus carrying 'cultural accoutrements.' In 1995 the party criticised Mandela's 'strong-arm tactics' in his attempts to enforce the ban,<sup>119</sup> and warned of the potential for violence in the run-up to local elections as a result of such tactics.<sup>120</sup> It seemed that the interests of peace were second to the need to boost nationalist sentiment among IFP supporters. The IFP had not entirely abandoned the confrontational tactics of the transitional phase, and if pushed too far by the central government, it was likely to condone decidedly undemocratic tactics in order to achieve its aims. The prospects for peaceful political rallies remained poor in the province, as long as the crowds drinking in emotive rhetoric were laden with spears and knobkerries.

A similarly confrontational campaign has been waged over the elevation of Ulundi to the status of provincial capital, based on its traditionalist credentials.<sup>121</sup> Despite Pietermaritzberg's institutional capacity and accessibility, massive building plans were undertaken in Ulundi in an effort to elevate the city to capital status. The IFP insisted that it was merely providing essential infrastructure and services in the former bantustan capital, provisions that included a R40 million proposal for a House of Traditional Leaders.<sup>122</sup> Media criticism of the building plans was dismissed as an attempt to impede sound administration in the province, while journalists were accused of inciting resistance and waging war against the development of necessary government administration facilities. According to Premier Ben Ngubane, 'denying Ulundi necessary office infrastructure which serves the needs and aspirations of the people reflects a type of confrontational politics whose time has passed.'<sup>123</sup>

The Natal Witness, a Pietermaritzburg-based newspaper, criticised the IFP's promotion of Ulundi as an attempt to 'pander to party political interests,' which ignored considerations that an efficiently run province requires that 'the seat of power be centrally placed, not tucked away in the Zulu heartland.'<sup>124</sup> The Witness accused the IFP of attempting 'to pour as much money as possible into areas where it has strong support, in order to consolidate its constituency,' thus 'dashing any ANC hopes of winning the province's *amakhosi* over before the 1999 election.' The cost of Ulundi's administrative development was estimated at R180 million in April 1997.<sup>125</sup> According to the KwaZulu-Natal Briefing, such vast expense to satisfy the IFP's desire to respect history and tradition was 'repellent to whites and Indians who saw it as revealing the IFP as an incorrigibly tribal movement, captive to a backward and irrational Zulu nationalism.'<sup>126</sup> To date, the question of the proper location of the provincial capital remains contentious, and provincial parliamentarians currently travel between Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg as a compromise arrangement.

### **The Contest Continues**

While the status of traditional leaders remains unresolved, consistent pressure from the *amakhosi*, the IFP and traditionalists within its own ranks has forced the ANC to substantially modify its position on the issue. June 1997 saw Deputy President Thabo Mbeki meeting on friendly terms with the *amakhosi*, who reiterated their refusal to be replaced by elected authorities.<sup>127</sup> They also sought to retain responsibility for land allocation functions, rejecting government initiatives to transform the indigenous law system into freehold title as interfering with 'the traditional way of life based on communalism and social solidarity.' In a rare display of cooperation between the national and provincial governments, Mbeki and Buthelezi agreed that the demands of the *amakhosi* required redress at national level, in light of their implications for traditional leaders throughout South Africa. The laying aside of political rivalries in favour of resolution of ongoing disputes finally seemed a real possibility, prompting the *amakhosi* to express 'great hope' that Mbeki would help to resolve some of the differences between the provincial and central government.<sup>128</sup>

The IFP's strong base in the rural areas ensures that it will continue to promote traditionalist interests in the run-up to the 1999 elections. July 1997 saw the National Council reiterate demands that the ANC recognize the *amakhosi* as the primary level of local government and that Ulundi be declared the provincial capital.<sup>129</sup> Buthelezi also rejected repeated calls from the ANC to step down from his position as chair of the provincial House of Traditional Leaders, flouting efforts to separate traditional authority and politics. While the question of the *amakhosi*'s status resurfaced periodically during peace negotiations during the latter part of 1997, the uncompromising IFP line seems to have taken something of a back seat in recent months, and both parties appear willing to postpone further debate on the issue until after 1999.

### **Traditionalism Persists**

Despite the inter-party struggles that continue to disrupt the realm of traditionalist politics, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, the resilience of the traditional leadership has already been proved in countries across the African continent.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, evidence suggests that such structures tend to be 'more deeply imbedded in the social fabric of African communities than their detractors would care to admit.'<sup>131</sup> As the ANC moves toward a more accommodatory stance on traditional authority, it seems hopeful that a genuine respect for cultural tradition might emerge from the politicking that has plagued the issue in the past. In practical terms however, the celebration of common heritage, while certainly a positive step toward reconciliation in the province, is not enough to put an end to the decades of civil strife that have divided political rivals.

While the politicisation of tradition continues to serve party objectives, and rival parties manipulate the loyalties of the *amakhosi* to secure their own power, inter-party tensions are likely to resurface.<sup>132</sup> While Buthelezi describes ongoing conflict as a clash 'between imposed norms and value systems derived from the west, and traditional African values which are under threat,' it seems that the IFP has made little progress in encouraging the development of 'African-type' democracy.<sup>133</sup> A Western system should not be imposed on tribal communities with little knowledge or experience of its functioning - all party consensus on this at least seems to have been reached since 1994. So long as the IFP

relies on the *amakhosi* to deliver the rural constituency, however, the patronage relationship will continue to be nurtured and the institution will remain politicised. This bodes ill for efforts toward promoting free political activity in rural areas, hindering reconciliation between long hostile political rivals.

The following chapter considers the manifestation of this hostility at the grass roots, looking at the causes of and trends in ongoing political violence in the province since 1994. It considers the role of nationalist rhetoric in fuelling such violence, and analyses the extent to which the IFP's virulent defense of the Zulu nation has in fact disguised a political agenda that relies to some degree on the threat of violence and intimidation.

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<sup>1</sup> Piper 1998: 259

<sup>2</sup> Cope 1993: 1

<sup>3</sup> Zungu 1996: 33

<sup>4</sup> Rutsch 1995: 35-38

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Myers 1996: 30-46

<sup>6</sup> Cope 1993: 95

<sup>7</sup> Giliomee 1994: 3

<sup>8</sup> Tapscott, 1996: 15

<sup>9</sup> Such *amakhosi* did provide a focal point for resistance against apartheid, indeed, many of the Congress Movement's founding members had strong traditionalist credentials (Ibid: 17).

<sup>10</sup> Guy 1989 unpublished

<sup>11</sup> McIntosh *et al* 1996: 8

<sup>12</sup> Piper 1997: 114

<sup>13</sup> Myers 1996: 30

<sup>14</sup> Piper 1997: 110

<sup>15</sup> See chapter four for details of Operation Marion, training of paramilitaries in the Caprivi Strip, hit squad activities etc.

<sup>16</sup> Mail and Guardian 7 April 1995, Aitchison 1996

<sup>17</sup> Negotiation News July 1994: 6

<sup>18</sup> Maloka 1995: 35

<sup>19</sup> Rutsch 1995: 35-38

<sup>20</sup> Cross and Rutsch 1995: 23-28

<sup>21</sup> Johnston in Gutteridge and Spence 1997: 95

<sup>22</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 1996, No 1: 15

<sup>23</sup> Mail and Guardian 3 February 1995

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Konigkramer, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 18 June 1997

<sup>25</sup> Myers 1996: 38

<sup>26</sup> Ibid: 39

<sup>27</sup> Mare and Hamilton 1987: 89

<sup>28</sup> In February 1994 King Zwelithini demanded that President De Klerk recognise the 'exclusive and independent sovereignty' of the KwaZulu-Natal (Sowetan 21 February 1994).

<sup>29</sup> John Jeffrey interviewed by Kerri Hampton 13 June 1997

<sup>30</sup> Mail and Guardian 17 June 1994

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- <sup>31</sup> Ibid
- <sup>32</sup> Keesings: September 1994
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid
- <sup>34</sup> Natal Witness: 18 October 1994
- <sup>35</sup> Indicator, 13, 2, 1996: 52
- <sup>36</sup> Business Day 12 September 1994
- <sup>37</sup> Business Day 18 January 1995, Natal Witness 6 February 1995
- <sup>38</sup> Financial Mail 17 April 1995: 59
- <sup>39</sup> Natal Witness 17 March 1995
- <sup>40</sup> Arthur Konigkramer interviewed by Kerri Hampton 18 June 1997
- <sup>41</sup> Walter Felgate interviewed by Kerri Hampton 7 July 1997
- <sup>42</sup> Financial Mail 17 April 1995: 60
- <sup>43</sup> Mail and Guardian 10 March 1995
- <sup>44</sup> Qwelane Interview in Tribute, June 1995: 43-45
- <sup>45</sup> Natal Witness 5 June 1995
- <sup>46</sup> Business Day 20 February 1997
- <sup>47</sup> Val Volker, NP MPP (Financial Mail 23 August 1995: 48)
- <sup>48</sup> Natal Witness: 26 July 1994
- <sup>49</sup> Financial Mail 4 November 1994: 49
- <sup>50</sup> Natal Witness 31 October 1994
- <sup>51</sup> Natal Witness 11 November 1994
- <sup>52</sup> Mail and Guardian 2 December 1994
- <sup>53</sup> See chapter 2 for a description of transitional negotiations between the ANC/NP and IFP in this regard.
- <sup>54</sup> Natal Witness 10 January 1995
- <sup>55</sup> Natal Witness 3 March 1995
- <sup>56</sup> Mail and Guardian 7 April 1995
- <sup>57</sup> Mercury 5 June 1995
- <sup>58</sup> Mail and Guardian 30 June 1995, Tapscott, C. 1996: 13, French, C. 1994: 21
- <sup>59</sup> Natal Witness 16 June 1995
- <sup>60</sup> Natal Witness 15 June 1995
- <sup>61</sup> Mail and Guardian 23 June 1995
- <sup>62</sup> Natal Witness 5 December 1992
- <sup>63</sup> Mail and Guardian 23 June 1995
- <sup>64</sup> Mercury 29 March 1996
- <sup>65</sup> Natal Witness 29 June 1995, 14 July 1994
- <sup>66</sup> Financial Mail 21 July 1995: 44
- <sup>67</sup> Walter Felgate interviewed by Kerri Hampton 7 July 1997
- <sup>68</sup> Mail and Guardian 8 August 1995
- <sup>69</sup> Natal Witness 6 August 1995
- <sup>70</sup> Financial Mail 22 September 1995
- <sup>71</sup> Natal Witness 6 November 1995
- <sup>72</sup> Financial Mail 5 April 1996: 38
- <sup>73</sup> New Nation 26 May 1996
- <sup>74</sup> Financial Mail 26 January 1996: 33-34
- <sup>75</sup> Natal Witness 29 January 1996
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid
- <sup>78</sup> Citizen 13 March 1996
- <sup>79</sup> Sowetan 18 March 1996
- <sup>80</sup> Sowetan 18 March 1996, New Nation 22 March 1996
- <sup>81</sup> Financial Mail 22 March 1996: 42-44
- <sup>82</sup> Walter Felgate interviewed by Kerri Hampton 7 July 1997
- <sup>83</sup> New Nation 26 May 1996
- <sup>84</sup> Market Research Africa found that nearly seventy percent of South Africans regard the role of

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traditional leaders as important, sixty percent of blacks interviewed felt that traditional leaders should serve on local government structures (Natal Witness 15 May 1995).

An IDASA survey found that forty percent of people polled nationally felt traditional leaders should automatically get seats on local government bodies, thirty-six percent felt they should stand for election, and twenty-three percent felt they had no role to play (IDASA POS Report February 1998).

<sup>85</sup> MEC for Traditional Affairs, Chief Ngubane (Natal Witness 24 November 1994).

<sup>86</sup> Despite the finalisation of the national Constitution, the issue still remains clouded.

Tapscott (1996: 20) notes that 'ambivalence in the final Constitution creates space for provinces to promulgate legislation that specifies a clear role for traditional leaders.'

<sup>87</sup> AFRA News April/May 1994: 15

<sup>88</sup> AFRA Annual Report January-December 1994: 13

<sup>89</sup> Mail and Guardian 3 February 1995

<sup>90</sup> Citizen 22 March 1996

<sup>91</sup> AFRA News April/May 1994: 15; October 1996: 4, Tapscott 1996: 16

<sup>92</sup> McIntosh 1990: 28

<sup>93</sup> Cross and Rutsch 1995: 26

<sup>94</sup> Sowetan 16 May 1995

<sup>95</sup> Piper 1997: 231

<sup>96</sup> HRC Report 1995

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> Financial Mail 1 March 1996: 47

<sup>100</sup> New Nation 3 March 1996

<sup>101</sup> Business Day 11 October 1996

<sup>102</sup> Mail and Guardian 12 April 1996, Business Day 11 October 1996

<sup>103</sup> Sowetan 25 March 1996

<sup>104</sup> Citizen 22 March 1996

<sup>105</sup> Natal Witness 13 May 1996

<sup>106</sup> Natal Witness 3 October 1996

<sup>107</sup> The Star 14 October 1996

<sup>108</sup> Natal Witness 11 October 1996

<sup>109</sup> Natal Witness 28 November 1996

<sup>110</sup> Natal Witness 28 January 1997

<sup>111</sup> Arthur Konigkramer interviewed by Kerri Hampton 18 June 1997

<sup>112</sup> Natal Witness 3 July 1997

The ANC challenge was subsequently dismissed, the Court ruling allowing traditional leaders membership of local councils ensured continuity and avoided dislocation during the transitional period. The status of the *amakhosi* after the 1999 elections remains unresolved as yet (Business Day 26 March 1998).

<sup>113</sup> Natal Witness 26 April 1997

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup> Natal Witness 14 May 1997

<sup>117</sup> Myers 1996: 42

<sup>118</sup> Ibid: 43

<sup>119</sup> Natal Witness 13 February 1996

<sup>120</sup> Citizen 22 March 1996

<sup>121</sup> Natal Witness 2 February 1997

<sup>122</sup> Natal Witness 29 January 1997, editorial

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Natal Witness 29 January Editorial

<sup>125</sup> Natal Witness 30 April 1997

<sup>126</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing August 1996: 19

<sup>127</sup> Natal Witness 29 July 1997

<sup>128</sup> Business Day 30 June 1997

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<sup>129</sup> Southscan 4 July 1997: 191

<sup>130</sup> Tapscott 1996: 13

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Mail and Guardian 18 July 1997

<sup>133</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing Number 6 1997: 18

## **Chapter Four: Zulu Nationalism and Political Violence**

This chapter considers the extent to which Zulu nationalism has been used to incite violence in the service of particular political ends. While the causes of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal are varied and complex, it will be clear that the conflict is primarily a political one, fought between ANC and IFP rivals in a contest for popular support. Finding its power challenged by a militant UDF during the 1980s, Inkatha resorted to Zulu nationalism as a means of reinforcing its legitimacy in the contested terrain of resistance politics. Both levels of violence and the IFP's invocation of nationalism peaked in the early 1990s as South Africa's transition gained momentum. Using its claim to represent the Zulu nation, coupled with the threat of potential violence, the IFP managed to win significant concessions in the run-up to the elections. Since the establishment of multi-party democracy in 1994, however, the IFP's overtly adversarial relationship with its political opposition has proved counter-productive. As the majority party in KwaZulu-Natal, the IFP's credibility relies on its ability to secure order in the troubled province. Continuing violence and instability undermine its ability to deliver - hence a general shift in political priorities in the post election period. This trend away from violence has been particularly significant since the local government elections of 1996, as both the IFP and ANC provincial leadership have been forced to recognise their political co-dependence and their common interest in securing peace. Thus the militancy that characterised the IFP prior to 1994 has waned markedly in recent years, despite recurrent moments of violence in the period under study.

While the conflict has tended to be one of contested political loyalties, it will take more than reconciliatory words between rival politicians to assuage the tensions that have developed over fifteen years of animosity. While the IFP and ANC provincial leadership have finally recognised each other's legitimacy and endurance, they have yet to find enough common ground to formulate a comprehensive political solution that transcends party differences. Indeed, the link between what leaders decide at national or provincial level and the manner in which party differences are played out at the grass roots is often tenuous, as conflict becomes localised and the culture of violence lingers. The legacy of KwaZulu-Natal's long-running civil war thus remains

a seemingly intractable problem – tensions persist and lives continue to be lost in sporadic inter-party clashes.

### **Predisposing Factors**

A decade of low scale civil war in the Natal region has prompted a myriad of competing explanations that seek to unearth the underlying roots of the conflict.<sup>1</sup> At the outset, it is important to note that the KwaZulu-Natal conflict, while apparently similar to the civil strife plaguing Northern Ireland, or to recent war situations in Croatia or Bosnia, is fundamentally different in one crucial respect. The former, often dismissed in the 1980s by the state and media reports as ‘black on black violence’ or Zulus versus Xhosas, is not an ethnic war. While white South Africans have been prone to ascribe the violence to a long history of animosity between ‘tribal’ groups, the conflict in Natal has been played out largely within the Zulu ethnic group.<sup>2</sup> Inkatha has explicitly played the ethnic card in order to rally supporters to its banner, relying largely on the King and the *amakhosi* to inspire the loyalty of Zulu traditionalists to its cause. The lines that have divided the warring factions within the KwaZulu-Natal region since the early 1980s, however, are politically rather than ethnically defined. In a context made ripe for violence by the factors outlined below, political rivalry has erupted into widespread and enduring physical conflict. As violence has escalated and more blood been spilt, divisions have become entrenched and families and communities have been torn apart on the basis of political affiliation.

Contemporary efforts to conceptualise the violence, while recognising political competition between rival parties as the primary cause of conflict, also acknowledge factors such as material deprivation, social dislocation and the collapse of tradition as predisposing factors that allow the culture of violence to take root.<sup>3</sup> Under apartheid, South Africa’s blacks were confined to the lowest classes of society, crowded into overburdened rural areas or densely populated townships and informal settlements, where they were forced to engage in intense competition for scarce resources such as land, services, water and jobs.<sup>4</sup> Social dislocation arising from mass urbanization resulted in fragmentation of communities, entailing a breakdown of family life and traditional values.<sup>5</sup> The desperate poverty of township residents and squatters, coupled with high unemployment, saw social norms eroded and alternative social structures, such as gangs and warlords, become increasingly attractive in the urban

areas. Recourse to crime and violence thus presented itself as an alternative means of securing survival.<sup>6</sup>

The rural areas were similarly impoverished and underdeveloped. Here, faction fighting was an enduring source of conflict and division, as communities under rival chiefs or *iziduna* clashed, often over access to scarce resources. In the Msinga district for example, disputes over land developed over generations into bitter animosity between rival communities.<sup>7</sup> Conflict fostered revenge attacks that spread far afield, drawing migrant workers in hostels on the reef into extensions of these rural disputes.<sup>8</sup> The apartheid government allowed such violence to continue largely unchecked. Indeed, state security forces often played an active part in stoking the conflict and partook in acts of violence against black communities.<sup>9</sup>

Yet while socio-economic deprivation and the legacy of apartheid undoubtedly contributed to the culture of violence, they are not a sufficient explanation, even if only because all groups involved suffered the same deprivations.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, despite the widespread poverty of the African population throughout the country, it is only in KwaZulu-Natal that the conflict has taken on such a large-scale and sustained character. Thus, in order to understand the violence endemic in this province, one must understand the lines of severance that cut across families and communities, dividing the population into warring factions based on opposing political affiliations.

In 1983 the apartheid government introduced the Tricameral Parliament as a tentative step towards establishing a limited political space for South Africa's Indian and Coloured populations. This legislation perpetuated the exclusion of black South Africans from legitimate political forums. Political rights for urban Africans were confined to a minor say in township affairs through the mechanism of the Black Local Authorities, introduced in the early 1980s. These structures were unilaterally imposed by the state but expected to be financially self sufficient, and became rapidly unpopular as they attempted to extract increased rents and service charges from the impoverished township communities. Rather than placating the black population, the state's half-hearted effort toward reform prompted nation-wide rebellion and successive States of Emergency throughout the 1980s. The United Democratic Front (UDF) emerged as the vanguard of the collective action campaign, and gained much

support among black urban communities despite the state's concerted efforts at repression.<sup>11</sup>

The activities of the UDF inside the country were implicitly associated with the exiled ANC's goal to render South Africa 'ungovernable,' destabilising the country through violence and armed attacks on state institutions and those perceived as collaborating with the apartheid government.<sup>12</sup> Among the frustrated youth of Natal's townships and squatter camps, militancy became increasingly attractive as a means of achieving liberation, and brutal attacks on policemen, councillors and alleged opponents of the struggle were carried out with increasing frequency from 1984. The cooperative relationship between Buthelezi's Inkatha as a ruling bantustan party and the South African State saw many Inkatha supporters and leaders targeted as collaborators by militant UDF members in the townships. The UDF's revival of mass politics was antithetical to the moderate path chosen by Inkatha, which claimed to challenge the system while simultaneously working within it.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, under apartheid, the power and authority of traditional leaders, Buthelezi included, rested on the fact that they did not pursue a strategy of overt confrontation with the state. Buthelezi chose a 'third way' politics,<sup>14</sup> between willing cooperation and open confrontation, which was challenged by the ANC/UDF's militancy.

While the UDF won massive support in urban areas and among the black youth, Inkatha's call for a cultural revival, its invocation of a proud warrior past, offered a powerful source of dignity and identity to the rural poor and the older generation of urban workers to whom traditional structures of authority and respect still held much resonance.<sup>15</sup> As the young urban activists of the UDF increasingly challenged the 'traditional values' of the older generation, Inkatha found a sympathetic ear among those who clung to the status quo. Zulu nationalism provided an effective defense of party interests – 'to criticise Inkatha and its leadership was to meddle in the legitimate struggle of the Zulu nation.'<sup>16</sup> Competition between the UDF and Inkatha saw the schism between urban and rural, young and old, radical and traditional, become increasingly pronounced. Political tensions and rivalry within the townships and rural areas was reflected in violence on a massive scale, stoked by agents of the state. Recognising a mutual opponent in the UDF, Inkatha benefited from covert state backing in the form of arms and organisational support, as both the national and

bantustan governments sought to reassert control against increasing black radicalism.<sup>17</sup> ‘By the late 1980’s, the cycle of attack, revenge, retaliation and retribution, of killing, looting and arson, was part of the social fabric.’ It seemed that the province’s political violence would end only when one of the opposing sides ‘had been annihilated or exhausted.’<sup>18</sup>

The UDF’s growing support in the urban areas of Natal saw Inkatha increasingly turning to informal settlements and rural areas to bolster its strength. In these areas, the scarcity of resources and the need to defend the community from rival groups saw the ascendancy of a great number of warlords. These powerful leaders, who tended to be *iziduna* or *amakhosi*, manipulated their control of the land in order to establish a complex system of patronage that, coupled with intimidation, secured their authority.<sup>19</sup> While communities relied on these local leaders for security, the latter looked to Inkatha and the KwaZulu authorities to uphold their rights to land and to consolidate their control. In return, Inkatha was assured of their political support.<sup>20</sup>

In the townships, on the other hand, UDF-aligned youths were formed into civic defense organisations, acting as armed units and effectively existing as a law unto themselves. These units were formalised into Self-Defense Units (SDUs) in the late 1980s, mobilised to ‘protect’ their communities against possible attack by Inkatha hostel dwellers, vigilantes and security forces.<sup>21</sup> While welcomed in many communities as protection against external aggressors, SDU’s also employed a considerable degree of intimidation and acted with relative impunity, beyond the effective control of the ANC. The authority of warlords and SDU’s within strife-torn African communities had entrenched the culture of violence and intimidation by 1990, despite movements toward negotiations. Indeed, in many cases these politically motivated groups had degenerated into criminal syndicates with a vested interest in perpetuating the climate of violence.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Early 1990s**

Chronic levels of violence during the 1980s escalated still further in the early 1990s as negotiations toward a post-apartheid political order began. Conflict was concentrated in Natal and the townships of the Reef, and was overtly between the ANC and the IFP as each strove to assert its political hegemony. The state itself also played a crucial

role, however, prompting the ANC and Human Rights Commission to accuse it of political bias in favour of Inkatha. The HRC cited the actions of the security forces and particularly of the KwaZulu Police as ‘an important factor in the increase of violence to present proportions,’<sup>23</sup> while the ANC insisted that the violence reflected a pattern of State/ Inkatha collaboration, aimed at paralysing the ANC and killing ANC members.<sup>24</sup>

The SAP was criticised for its failure to prevent attacks on communities, to apprehend attackers or to act against policemen charged with misconduct. As violence intensified during negotiations, the ANC accused the security forces of political bias in favour of the IFP, and of direct involvement in attacks against ANC supporters, both alone and in conjunction with the KZP.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, De Klerk’s government, while firmly on route to ending minority rule through negotiation, nonetheless sought to maintain maximum influence over the negotiation process. With many high ranking members of the security forces ideologically opposed to reform and hostile to the ANC, the SAP and SADF remained in a position to undermine the ANC and limit its organisational capacity through acts of repression, despite the transition that was tentatively underway.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, the KwaZulu Police force was blatantly biased toward the IFP. As the security force of the KwaZulu Government, the KZP was effectively available for mobilisation as Inkatha’s private army, ‘acting as the vanguard of the struggle against the ANC and its surrogates in the townships.’<sup>27</sup> In 1991 it was reported that the KZP was ‘so deeply involved in the political conflict on the side of Inkatha that there seems little hope of rescuing the situation. There is no prospect in the foreseeable future of the force as it is presently composed playing an impartial role.’<sup>28</sup> Efforts by both the South African state and the IFP to present themselves as impartial negotiators were convincingly discredited in July 1991, when it was revealed that the security police had given Inkatha’s United Worker’s Union of South Africa (UWUSA) R1,5 million in funds over a four year period.<sup>29</sup> More damaging still, the state had paid out R250 000 to Inkatha to fund anti-ANC rallies in the period immediately following Mandela’s release from prison.<sup>30</sup> The scandal, coined Inkathagate, saw the Ministers of Law and Order and of Defense removed from their cabinet posts. De Klerk and

Buthelezi had already lost any hope of claiming the moral high ground in negotiations however.

Evidence that came to light in the early 1990s proved conclusively that Inkatha, aided and abetted by the South African state, engaged the ANC/UDF in an offensive capacity in KwaZulu-Natal, despite Buthelezi's protestations to the contrary.<sup>31</sup> Investigations into third force activity reported in September 1994 that there was 'sufficient evidence to prove murder and conspiracy by members of the military and Inkatha beyond a doubt.'<sup>32</sup> The trial of General Magnus Malan, the former Minister of Defense, saw Buthelezi himself referred to in relation to the planning of a politically motivated attack on an ANC supporting community. Other senior IFP members were alleged to have played central roles in the secret training of Inkatha paramilitary forces in the Caprivi Strip in 1986. Investigations revealed that the offensive nature of the training was sanctioned by the highest levels of the state and Inkatha leadership. Indeed, the project, code-named Operation Marion, had been carried out with state-sponsorship - hence the accountability of both NP and IFP leaders for the 'atrocities that flowed from the project.'<sup>33</sup> Malan and his co-accused were nonetheless found not guilty, while Buthelezi and the other IFP members whose names came to light during proceedings, escaped further investigation and were never subjected to questioning. The manner in which the trial was conducted prompted much consternation from the legal fraternity and general public. Both the ANC and a number of lawyers accused Attorney-General Tim McNally of mishandling the case in order to protect members of the old apartheid order.<sup>34</sup>

Neither the ANC nor the IFP could legitimately present itself as a victim of the conflict in KwaZulu-Natal. Indeed, 'rivalry between, and the fight for territory and control thereof by the ANC and IFP,' were cited by the Goldstone Commission of Inquiry as the major cause of the violence. According to the Commission's report: 'both sides resort to violence and intimidation in their attempt to gain control over geographic areas.'<sup>35</sup> The report noted that the situation was exacerbated by the development of a culture of violence and political intolerance, fueled by the ready availability of firearms. Other aggravating factors included a history of faction fighting, the absence of effective law enforcement in African areas, and the

government's failure to prevent criminality among the security forces and homeland police.<sup>36</sup>

While the violence in the province was clearly politically motivated, however, the complexity of the conflict precludes the assumption of a simple link between the policies of the political leadership and the manifestation of violence at ground level. Specific socio-economic conditions, exacerbated by a general climate of lawlessness, wherein the activities of criminals and warlords often took place under the guise of political conflict, allowed a culture of violence to take root. Taylor and Shaw noted that, 'apart from the fact that it is difficult to see how the conflict is in the interests of either Inkatha or the ANC, much violence has not been carefully organised, but has assumed a spontaneous form.'<sup>37</sup>

Many of those involved in the violence did not initially see themselves as politically aligned, or were at least unable to articulate the ideologies and structures of their respective organisations. It was only during the course of conflict that firmly articulated political identification took place, emerging as a result of collective action.<sup>38</sup> In that the conflict was played out as a war for popular support, political neutrality ceased to exist as an option for those residing in contested areas. An individual's political affiliation became defined according to his immediate local reality, hence the creation of unchallenged strongholds and no-go areas across the province. In a situation of enduring conflict, individuals were drawn into opposing camps according to the township, rural settlement or hostel in which they lived, whether or not their political convictions were particularly strong initially. After ten years of civil conflict however, these political identities had become a salient part of community and individual identity. To this extent, violence served as a powerful political tool – defining and entrenching political affiliation within a divided population.

## General Elections

*'Where serious inter and intra-societal animosities exist, where the power stakes for winners and losers are high, and where there is a deep-seated mistrust between them, divisions are inevitably exacerbated. This often makes for conflict and even war.'*

*- Gavin Woods, IFP MP, 1994.<sup>39</sup>*

The political motivation underlying the violence was clear in the run-up to the 1994 general elections. Unwilling to be sidelined by a numerically stronger ANC, the IFP relied heavily on brinkmanship tactics to force its demands onto the negotiation agenda. As a minority party at the national level, the IFP fell back on a credible threat of force and a public image openly associated with the potential to disrupt and destabilise the transition, in order to make its voice heard. Indeed, the two months preceding the April election saw violence in KwaZulu-Natal climb to unprecedented levels.<sup>40</sup> The HRC accused the IFP of a 'planned, coordinated strategy by anti-election elements... bent on destabilising the region.'<sup>41</sup> Of 600 deaths reported in March and April 1994, over 200 victims were identified as ANC members, against the IFP's fifty-five. Spear wielding Zulu warriors attacked ANC communities, election officials were murdered and no-go zones entrenched.<sup>42</sup>

The IFP's mobilisation of Zulu nationalism to advance its cause became increasingly intense as the transition neared its realisation. King Zwelithini and Buthelezi together called upon the Zulu nation to resist being dictated to by the ANC-NP alliance, and full scale civil war in KwaZulu-Natal looked a real possibility as the election date drew closer and Buthelezi refused to bring the IFP on board the democratic process. The culture of patronage nourished under the KwaZulu administration provided an ample base with which to fund Inkatha's paramilitary activities, supplemented with generous backing from the South African State. Indeed, in January 1996 the Auditor-General reported that over R10 million in state funds had been illegally used to fund a training project for IFP paramilitary recruits, run at the Mlaba camp under Senator Philip Powell. Over 5000 Self Protection Unit members had received training between September 1993 and March 1994,<sup>43</sup> reinforcing accusations that the IFP planned to destabilise the transition and disrupt the 1994 general elections.<sup>44</sup> In the final weeks before the election, over 1000 of these recruits were temporarily

incorporated into the KwaZulu Police force – a body long recognised as being openly partisan toward Inkatha.<sup>45</sup>

Following Buthelezi's announcement on 19 April that the IFP would contest the election, incidents of violence declined dramatically, and only seven deaths were reported over the election period.<sup>46</sup> While the average monthly death rate remained relatively high in the months following the election, there has been a steady decline in levels of political violence since late 1994, and particularly since 1996. Incidents of conflict have continued, however, prompting the IFP to accuse the ANC and a partisan police force of attempts to discredit the provincial government, in an attempt to enforce ANC hegemony in the province. The ANC's strategy, according to the IFP, is to sustain violence in the province in an effort to demonstrate that the IFP is incapable of bringing political and economic stability to KwaZulu-Natal, and is thus unfit to govern the province.<sup>47</sup> Hence the ANC's calls for a renewed State of Emergency, whereby central government will assert its control over law and order thus emasculating the IFP government.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the IFP accuses the ANC of targeting IFP leaders for attack, raising the costs of belonging to the party so high that people are afraid to be affiliated.<sup>49</sup>

The ANC on the other hand insists that the IFP and 'Third Force' are responsible for ongoing conflict. The HRC likewise blames ongoing violence on the IFP's efforts to exert control over local and regional government.<sup>50</sup> The organisation has accused senior IFP members in regional and national government and high ranking KZP officers of engaging 'in deliberate efforts to promote violence... aimed at maintaining control over regional and local government structures.' While mutual recriminations have contributed to the perpetuation of conflict in the province, however, it has become increasingly clear since 1994 that political instability serves neither party's objectives in the post-apartheid order. The following analysis of general trends in the violence since 1994 attempts to shed light on the validity of conflicting explanations of violence, while simultaneously revealing a trend away from violent political conflict in the province.

## General Trends 1994-1997

*'In South Africa, a future civil war might be a long lasting and low intensity affair, with irregular flashpoints, bombings, aggressive confrontations and resistance. Whatever form it may take, it is unlikely to produce winners in an environment that is conducive to a new nationhood.'*

- Gavin Woods, IFP MP, 1994<sup>51</sup>

An overview of general trends in political violence since 1994 reveals a complex interweaving of the political contest for popular support, contested visions of traditional authority, intra-party power struggles, and ongoing faction fighting between communities in many rural areas. Long after the 1994 election results had been tallied, armed crowds continued to disrupt opposition meetings, no-go areas persisted, a number of party leaders were murdered and forced recruitment drives secured party support through intimidation in many areas.<sup>52</sup> The training of paramilitary forces continued and animosity among political rivals persisted. Despite ongoing incidents of conflict, however, the mass-based, orchestrated violence that had characterised provincial politics during South Africa's political transition was largely absent in the post-election period. While incidents of localised tension continued to flare into sporadic outbreaks of violence, general levels of violence decreased significantly, particularly after 1996.<sup>53</sup>

While the battle for political ascendancy between the ANC and the IFP accounts for much of the continuing conflict since 1994, the pervasive 'culture of impunity' encouraged the manipulation of violence by individuals, security forces and criminals intent on serving their own particular agendas. The distinction between criminal and political violence became blurred, while an emerging trend toward criminalism was identified among certain party members. The failure of both the IFP and ANC to develop adequate strategies to accommodate the 10 000 former SDU and SPU paramilitary personnel requiring demobilisation, resulted in their large-scale decline into gangsterism and crime.<sup>54</sup> Attempts to integrate former SDU and *Umkhonto we sizwe*<sup>55</sup> members into the SANDF met with much resentment from the IFP, who accused the ANC of creating a partisan national security force. The KZP, on the other hand, continued to act with relative impunity, Buthelezi insisting that any national investigation into its activities would risk 'souring relations between the ANC and

IFP.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the IFP threatened to withdraw from the Government of National Unity over the issue.

Adding to the instability in the province was the general lack of faith in the justice system owing to the breakdown of law and order in the province over the past decade. This was compounded by a history of police complicity in violence, while the presence of 500 000 displaced people constituted an additional threat to stability.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the State of Emergency, imposed in the province during the turbulent weeks preceding the April election, provided another source of enduring tension. The fact that the emergency remained in place in the latter half of 1994, despite a decline in levels of violence, was perceived by the IFP as an attempt by the ANC to undermine the provincial government, prompting the party to threaten mass action. In addition, the schism between Buthelezi and King Zwelithini caused some division within the IFP's traditional constituency. Media reports speculated that certain members of the royal family who had tried to distance themselves from the IFP had become targets of intimidation by the KZP.<sup>58</sup>

By the end of 1994 the number of politically related deaths continued at an average of 133 per month, and intimidation of communities remained rife.<sup>59</sup> Despite a relatively peaceful transition to democracy in the province, the legacy of a decade of civil war was not easily resolved into peaceful co-existence among divided communities. Distrust and antagonism lingered between the ANC and IFP, both at the grass roots level and in the corridors of power. Communities continued to play out the conflicts of the recent past, while party leaders remained disgruntled regarding the election results and refused to recognise the legitimacy of one another's popular support. In a context in which the culture of violence had long been entrenched, intimidation, distrust and aggression, rather than democratic negotiation, continued to define inter-party rivalry in KwaZulu-Natal.

Early 1995 saw little decline in this inter-party acrimony. Escalating conflict prompted Mandela to deploy additional troops and police from the national level to various trouble spots, as part of a government crackdown on crime, political violence and lawlessness. In response, the IFP accused the ANC of intensifying violent attacks against it, 'using state resources to harm the IFP' with a view to toppling the

provincial administration.<sup>60</sup> The party accused the ANC of preparing a major military offensive, using *Umkhonto* cadres, ‘designed to create violence, confusion and anarchy and thus give the government the excuse to declare a state of emergency.’<sup>61</sup> The IFP was to voice similar objections to every subsequent intervention by the national government into the security affairs of the province.

In response to national government’s initiative, Buthelezi called on IFP followers to ‘safeguard Zulu self-determination in the face of central government arrogance.’ A reversion to Zulu nationalism in defense of the party’s provincial power base remained a strategic option for the IFP.<sup>62</sup> Buthelezi reiterated the IFP’s victim status with regard acts of violence, insisting that violence reflected attempts to ‘to penalise, punish and intimidate Inkatha into submission when it seems unwilling to toe the line drawn by arrogance and prevarication of an undemocratic system of autocratic power.’<sup>63</sup> The ANC, he stated, was ‘hell bent’ on destroying anything standing in the way of its consolidation of power in the country, hence the attacks on IFP members and efforts to undermine the provincial government.<sup>64</sup>

In contrast, the ANC insisted that violence in the province was part of the IFP’s ‘well calculated strategy to undermine democratic government,’ and insulate the rural areas from free political activity.<sup>65</sup> As both parties continued to vie for popular support, each sought to use the ongoing violence as a means to undermine its opponent’s credibility.<sup>66</sup> When massacres took place, the injured party was quick to declare the evil intentions of its rival, turning localised incidents into evidence of broad strategies to usurp power. For example, following a weekend of intense violence in May 1995 in which 21 people were killed, Mandela stated in parliament that the violence was a direct result of a call from Buthelezi for Zulus to ‘rise up against’ the central government.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, when twenty-five ANC supporters were killed in two massacres on the South Coast in late 1995, the ANC accused Inkatha of a deliberate effort to destabilise the province in order to secure support for its provincial constitution through intimidation. Such accusations prompted further recriminations and acrimony between the parties.<sup>68</sup> The HRC reported that, in light of continuing violence, the commitment of national, provincial and local leaders to peace appeared to be more about words than action.<sup>69</sup>

In an effort to root out the perpetrators of violence in the province, the National Safety and Security Ministry set up the Investigative Task Unit (ITU), aimed at uncovering hit squad activities. Buthelezi however accused the ITU of conducting a witch-hunt against Inkatha and the KwaZulu administration, insisting that certain members of the Unit were ANC-aligned and thus unable to conduct an impartial investigation. The party also accused the SANDF of direct involvement in the killing of IFP members and of supporting the ANC in conflict areas.<sup>70</sup> Buthelezi noted that ‘the unit’s zeal in placing Inkatha members under scrutiny is sadly unmatched by a similar enthusiasm for probing the phantom hand behind the serial murders of nearly 400 Inkatha leaders and the more than 10000 Inkatha members killed in political violence since 1985.’<sup>71</sup> The great majority of people arrested were indeed members of the former KwaZulu police, while there appeared little indication that ANC paramilitary units had been subjected to similar investigation.<sup>72</sup>

In this light, the IFP established a parallel initiative under the provincial department of Safety and Security, to ‘get to the roots of all the past killings in the province.’<sup>73</sup> The ANC refused to participate, claiming that the investigation would cost the taxpayer millions while serving merely to cover up IFP involvement in hit squad activities. The IFP countered with a warning that the frequent arrest of IFP supporters might create a ‘climate conducive to violence.’<sup>74</sup> This provocative statement was borne out by subsequent IFP marches demanding the release of certain high profile IFP leaders, such as James Zulu, arrested in connection with political violence and murders. Meanwhile IFP leaders continued to fall victim to attack, prompting the party to accuse the ANC of attempting to win the forthcoming elections by creating a dearth of IFP candidates.<sup>75</sup> Peace in the province remained elusive so long as the rival parties refused to cooperate in order to bring the perpetrators of violence to book.

While levels of violence had decreased significantly since 1994, the approaching local government elections threatened an increase of tension in the province, as each party anticipated another chance to assert its dominance. In an aggressive display of warrior might not witnessed since the 1994 elections, on 25 December 1995 a 2000-strong IFP *impi* attacked Shobashobane, an ANC enclave in a predominantly IFP area of the South coast, leaving eighteen people dead and many more wounded and homeless. According to the ANC, the attack illustrated the IFP’s efforts to flush out its political

opposition from the rural areas through a campaign of terror.<sup>76</sup> ‘As we approach the period of serious campaigning for the local government elections, the IFP and some elements within the security forces, may try again their dirty tricks against the ANC.’<sup>77</sup> The IFP leadership denied responsibility for the attack however, and disputed the characterisation of the massacre as a politically motivated act of aggression. Indeed, the party sought to shift the blame onto its political rival, claiming that ANC refugees, who had moved into the area at the end of 1994, invading the land of the long established IFP community, had created a volatile situation.<sup>78</sup> Reports of the attack abounded with allegations of police complicity, renewing fears of a third force conspiracy and IFP-right wing collusion, although no formal charges were subsequently laid.<sup>79</sup> The alleged involvement of prominent local IFP leaders suggested a stark political motive however. The Court’s final judgment found thirteen men, including two high-profile local IFP leaders, guilty of murder. The judge ruled that the attack was clearly politically motivated, the IFP seeking to purge the ANC from the area.<sup>80</sup>

As elections approached, the possibility that intimidation might feature strongly as a means of securing party loyalty appeared very real. In many areas, political intolerance between ANC and IFP factions and the involvement of local politicians in acts of violence persisted. South Coast Regional IFP Chair James Zulu, for example, was accused by the ITU of subjecting many communities to a ‘reign of terror,’ and was implicated in the planning of the Shobashobane massacre.<sup>81</sup> Zulu was later arrested for his involvement in another massacre, near Margate, in which eight ANC members were killed. The State’s case placed him in a right-wing group in the area, consisting of IFP and AWB members, reinforcing ANC accusations of continued IFP involvement in ‘third force activities.’<sup>82</sup> Despite fears of a surge in violence as elections approached, the arrests of local warlords such as Zulu, coupled with ongoing ITU investigations, yielded a measured decline in violence at ground level by early 1996.<sup>83</sup> In a context in which local initiatives tended to be severely politically compromised, the ITU proved effective as an externally based means of enforcing law and order in the turbulent province. The unit remained a source of acrimony nonetheless. Apart from the IFP’s enduring resentment towards what it perceived as unjustified interference by central government in provincial affairs, the nature of

investigations also ensured that both parties remained ‘locked in a war of allegations’ regarding their respective involvement in hit squad activities and organised violence.<sup>84</sup>

### **Local Government Elections**

As discussed in the previous chapter, while the rest of the country (excluding the Western Cape) went to the polls for local government elections in November 1995, unresolved demarcation disputes and the contested status of the *amakhosi* saw KwaZulu-Natal’s elections postponed until 27 March 1997. In February 1996 the ANC accused the IFP of ‘using spoiling tactics as the countdown to elections begins,’ echoing accusations leveled against the party prior to the 1994 elections.<sup>85</sup> The ANC insisted that in a ‘normal political climate’ it would be assured of electoral victory in the province, but that the IFP, under the illusion of being the dominant party in KwaZulu-Natal, was unlikely to accept defeat at the polls. The rhetoric reflected the lingering dissatisfaction of the provincial caucus with the election results of 1994. Many ANC MPPs believed that the IFP had been allowed a stage-managed election victory in KwaZulu-Natal in order to smooth the way to an ANC win on the national level. This perception was the basis for much resentment of IFP dominance in the provincial legislature.<sup>86</sup>

Consequently, the election stakes were high - both parties looked to this second round of voting to either confirm or refute the 1994 results. However, while 1996 saw the province’s parties actively campaigning for the forthcoming elections, free voter choice remained elusive for much of KwaZulu-Natal’s population, notably in the rural areas, where no-go zones persisted. February 1996 saw an upsurge of ANC-IFP violence in the Midlands as electioneering activities turned hostile.<sup>87</sup> Five ANC supporters were killed at Impendle, following confrontation between the two parties at an ANC election rally. IFP MPP and ‘warlord’ David Ntombela warned of a bloodbath if the ANC again attempted to hold a meeting in the IFP-supporting area. Similar tensions emerged in Durban, where the IFP’s attempt to launch a local government election campaign sparked conflict in ANC-supporting Umlazi. As local government elections approached, rival parties accused each other of intimidation as a means of asserting their political hegemony and entrenching no-go zones.<sup>88</sup>

At the level of provincial government, however, escalating violence was increasingly recognised as undermining the credibility of the parties of the legislature, who seemed unable to assert any control over their supporters, and were unable to deliver as government in a context of ongoing violence and instability. Recognising the urgent need for a peaceful election to reestablish their legitimacy in the eyes of a disillusioned electorate, the provincial IFP and ANC leadership agreed on a code of conduct in late February. The arrangement aimed to guarantee free political activity in KwaZulu-Natal, in the hope of circumventing the proliferation of no-go areas in the province.<sup>89</sup> As part of the agreement, the ANC demanded that chiefs should not exercise their power to prevent the holding of meetings, and that the carrying of weapons should be banned at political rallies. The IFP however side-stepped both issues, agreeing only to vague consultation in terms of the former and protesting against the latter on the grounds of Zulu tradition. The party simply refused to compromise its support base by dictating to the *amakhosi* or denying its grassroots supporters their cultural accoutrements. Zulu nationalism, while sidelined as an overt mobilisation strategy in the 1996 election campaign, nonetheless persisted to the extent of defending the IFP's interpretation of 'tradition,' where this was in the party interest.<sup>90</sup>

The agreement thus achieved little - no-go zones remained a reality in both rural and urban areas. Media reports noted that political violence would 'make it virtually impossible for parties to campaign in some parts of the province,' while in others the holding of elections themselves would be jeopardized. Attempts to campaign in opposition areas for the most part only increased existing tensions and conflicts.<sup>91</sup> The ANC named Impendle in the Midlands, Nongoma in the North, and Izingolweni on the South Coast as no-go zones for its members, while the IFP claimed it was excluded from the areas of Lamontville, Chesterville and KwaDabeke in the greater Durban area. As the elections approached, candidates from both the ANC and IFP were targets of assassinations and death threats, and the elections themselves looked in danger of further postponement.<sup>92</sup>

Following a weekend of intense violence in early March, in which sixty deaths were reported, ANC provincial leader Jacob Zuma renewed his party's call for central government intervention in the province, and the deployment of additional troops and

police throughout the province. He also called for a staggered election poll in those areas worst affected by violence, as the only way to avoid a massive loss of life.<sup>93</sup> Despite continued violence and uncertainty surrounding whether elections would actually be held however, the IFP maintained its resistance to both the ban on traditional weapons and to national intervention.<sup>94</sup> The party seemed reluctant to take any steps to quell the violence that might involve bowing to central government pressure or yielding any measure of provincial control.

The unresolved status of the *amakhosi*, allegations of widespread voter fraud and continuing incidents of violence, saw the March election date shifted to 29 May 1996. The ANC however insisted that there would be insufficient time to deal with problems of voter registration and electoral fraud, and demanded that the date be set back an additional three months. The party threatened to boycott the poll and institute a campaign of rolling mass action if its demands were not met, in an ironic reversion to the tactics employed by the IFP in the run-up to the 1994 election.

The ANC based its demands for election postponement on the claim that as much as thirty to forty percent of the voter's roll could be rigged in the IFP's favour.<sup>95</sup> Media reports speculated however that poor organisation and weak leadership were the real reasons behind the party's calls for more time.<sup>96</sup> The ANC had little support in the rural areas, wherein up to sixty percent of the province's population resided and which remained for the most part staunchly IFP. Neither violence nor electoral fraud was so pervasive that elections could not have gone ahead. Violence levels, though still unacceptably high, had remained more or less stable during the first half of 1996, and were far below 1994 levels when general elections had been held. Voter's roll problems had also been experienced on a similar scale in the other provinces, without derailing the process.<sup>97</sup> Miller insisted that fraud allegations were grossly exaggerated, citing the margin of error in the voter's rolls as less than one percent.<sup>98</sup> For the IFP in the province, another delay would further undermine the provincial government's credibility. The party threatened to withdraw from the Government of National Unity if polling did not go ahead on schedule.

Events in late March illustrated the violent repercussions of attempts to challenge no-go areas. The massacre of eleven people, many of them women and children, at

Donnybrook in the Midlands raised political tensions to new heights. This attack on ANC supporters prompted further recriminations against the IFP, the ANC accusing the party of employing intimidatory tactics to secure its support.<sup>99</sup> ANC MP Bheki Cele declared that the IFP depended on violence to sustain itself: ‘The ANC has begun to make serious inroads into the rural areas and the IFP feels that if it can’t wipe them out politically, then it must do so physically.’<sup>100</sup> The ANC’s Steve Tshwete blamed KwaZulu-Natal’s problems on the ‘frustrated ambitions’ of Buthelezi, who would ‘do practically anything to frustrate every drive of the government to bring relief to the South African people.’<sup>101</sup> Once again, an instance of political violence allowed party rivals an opportunity to indulge in emotive rhetoric – vilifying their opponents while boosting their own status among the victimised community.

Survivors of the massacre claimed IFP members from an adjoining Inkatha-supporting tribal area were responsible for the attack. Donnybrook had been targeted, they claimed, because it was home to ANC refugees who fled the IFP tribal area earlier in the year to escape political violence there. The problem of displacees was indeed a prevalent one, as conflict erupted between people seeking to return home and the political rivals who had established themselves in any particular area. The IFP however condemned the attack and denied responsibility. The party capitalised on a shooting incident following the funeral of the Donnybrooke victims to criticise the ANC for inciting its supporters with ‘inflammatory statements.’<sup>102</sup> This mudslinging between party leaders reflected attempts by both sides to use violence at the grass roots as a means to direct criticism at political opponents. The refusal by either party to admit its own culpability further undermined prospects for a climate of free political activity in the province – neither party could hope to exercise control over its supporters if it refused to acknowledge that such control was needed.

As the proposed 29 May election date drew closer, 3000 additional defence force troops were deployed in KwaZulu-Natal to ensure peaceful polling. Levels of violence and intimidation remained high however. The task group appointed by the President to investigate whether free and fair elections could be held in the province reported in April that elections should go ahead as planned. An attack on the Zulu royal family later in the month, however, raised the stakes to an unacceptable level.

Ten men attacked the royal home, injuring one of Zwelithini's wives and several of her daughters. The body of another princess was found the following day. The ANC accused IFP supporters of responsibility for the attack, claiming that the IFP's image as the defender of Zulu culture and tradition had been fatally compromised. The ANC declared that 'a spear had been planted in the belly of the Zulu nation,' and called for a mass action campaign in protest.<sup>103</sup> The IFP denied responsibility for the attack. The fact that the case against the seven IFP supporters arrested in connection with the incident had to be dropped, following the murders of four of the state's five witnesses, indicated a well-coordinated and sinister plot to ensure the facts of the matter did not come to light.

Attacks on election candidates and party leaders continued as elections drew closer. The ANC insisted that elections in the province should be postponed, claiming that intimidation was preventing people from registering and candidates from standing.<sup>104</sup> On central government's initiative, four specialised investigation units were deployed to the province in an effort to root out local perpetrators of the conflict. The initiative met with objections from the IFP, who perceived the units as usurping provincial control of Safety and Security. The IFP rejected the initiative as merely another attempt by the ANC central government to retain as much power as possible against the party.<sup>105</sup> It appeared that tensions between the parties on national level would continue to obstruct the development of a unified political strategy to deal with the violence in the province.

Nonetheless, the culmination of the conflict-riddled provincial constitution making process in mid-1996 had forced the IFP's provincial caucus to acknowledge its inability to rule unilaterally in the province. Recourse to provincial self-determination had been revealed as a nonviable option in the post-1994 context. Furthermore, the provincial leadership of both the IFP and the ANC was suffering as a result of their apparent inability to address the violence that plagued the province. The credibility of provincial government relied on its ability to conduct a free and fair election in KwaZulu-Natal, thus confirming or refuting the IFP's dominance in the legislature and the ANC's status as a major opposition party. Both parties were forced to recognise that some measure of cooperation was essential in order for elections to take place.<sup>106</sup>

A meeting toward this end took place in Durban in late in May. A cooperation pact was subsequently produced, in the interests of securing 'free and fair' elections, and a new election date was set for 26 June 1996. Recognised warlords David Ntombela, an IFP *induna* with strong following in the Midlands, and Sifiso Nkabinde, an ANC MPP who effectively controlled Richmond, donned the mantle of peace and agreed to pay reciprocal visits to each other's strongholds in order to canvass votes for the forthcoming elections.<sup>107</sup> Symbolically, the ANC agreed to officially acknowledge the IFP's role in South Africa's liberation struggle, laying the ideological foundations on which future peace initiatives and cooperative agreements could be made. In addition, the ANC admitted that the status of the *amakhosi* and the monarch had yet to be adequately addressed.<sup>108</sup> Provincial peace initiatives, it seemed, were finally making headway. Media reports noted however, that while elections had supposedly been postponed in order to give peace a chance, political parties had undertaken 'no bold or imaginative new initiatives to make it happen.'<sup>109</sup> The increased security force presence in the province made no impression on the long term goal of securing free political association, while the code of conduct was likely to have limited impact 'in a climate where political zealots canvass support with guns, knives and pangas.'<sup>110</sup>

At national level, Buthelezi remained suspicious of ANC attempts to erode the IFP's provincial power through central government intervention in provincial affairs - safety and security in particular. Buthelezi insisted that the peace process would remain an 'empty shell' so long as the ANC 'continue(d) to do everything in its power to crush IFP structures and undermine actions of governance in KwaZulu-Natal.'<sup>111</sup> How could there be 'governance,' he remonstrated, if the provincial government could not even take responsibility for maintaining law and order.<sup>112</sup> Reconciliation between the two parties at national level remained unlikely as long as provincial powers were in dispute. Buthelezi insisted that peace in the province would remain an elusive goal as long as the new Constitution transformed provincial governments 'into mere implementers of policies adopted at central level.'<sup>113</sup>

At the provincial level however, the imperative of holding a successful local election drove both parties to ensure that cooperation agreements remained in place. Ballots were finally cast at the end of June, amidst a strong security force presence in the

province. Despite fears of a renewed escalation of violence, the week of polling was one of the quietest experienced all year and no instances of political violence were reported on the election day.<sup>114</sup> There were inevitably problems - it was alleged that partisan *amakhosi* presided over certain voting stations, and that political parties were openly campaigning and even harassing voters at certain polling points. Provincial politicians nonetheless appeared for the most part to be committed to abiding by the electoral code of conduct, and pledged themselves to accept the election results.<sup>115</sup>

The election results<sup>116</sup> confirmed the IFP's legislative majority, but did little to challenge the existence of no-go areas and served to entrench the marked ANC-IFP urban-rural divide. While violence levels remained relatively low in the wake of the election, certain areas were considered potentially volatile. Despite a dramatic decrease in troop levels, security force officials speculated that fighting would reignite in these areas if they withdrew completely.<sup>117</sup> Paramilitary forces on both sides remained mobilised and arms and ammunition were still readily available, while criminal elements and warlords retained a vested interest in a continued state of lawlessness.<sup>118</sup>

Despite periodic instances of conflict, however, levels of violence continued to decline in the post-election period. Recriminations between party leaders nonetheless continued to decorate news headlines. The coincidence of an upsurge in violence in late 1996 and national government's security crackdown, allowed the IFP to condemn national 'interference' in the affairs of the province, which had 'unleashed a groundswell of anger and rejection among IFP supporters.' The IFP continued to vehemently resist national government's interventions in the province, and accused the police and army of being partisan towards the ANC.<sup>119</sup> While central government interventions had seen a significant decline in political violence, the IFP insisted that provincial control over safety and security should be restored. For the strongly federalist party, a solution to the violence that relied on ceding power to the national level could not be condoned. By the same token however, the party had to be perceived as capable of securing peace on the provincial level. Hence an increased propensity toward cooperation in the KwaZulu-Natal legislature in the aftermath of the 1996 election.

## **The Post-Election Period**

The parties of the provincial legislature were increasingly forced to acknowledge that, if KwaZulu-Natal was to be governed effectively, the provincial leadership of the ANC and IFP would have to cooperate with one another in the forums of government. To this end, January 1997 saw provincial leaders engaged in renewed peace initiatives, and a code of conduct, regulating the actions of party supporters and leaders and making them subject to disciplinary action, was mutually agreed upon.<sup>120</sup>

The role of the security forces and 'third force' elements came under renewed scrutiny during the year, as evidence of hit squads and warlord activities saw members of the police criticised for incompetence and failure to intervene to prevent acts of political violence.<sup>121</sup> These accusations were compounded by TRC revelations of police complicity in gross human rights violations, and involvement in crime and corruption. In addition, in conflict points such as Richmond, allegations of political interference in the work of the police force, and close relations between the police and politicians, muddied the waters even further.<sup>122</sup> Efforts toward transformation in the security forces did yield some success however, gradually reducing levels of corruption and incompetence. In addition, ongoing investigations saw elements of the former apartheid state, Inkatha and the KZP slowly brought to book for their involvement in political violence.

In spite of a general decline in political violence however, no-go areas, intra-party disputes and power struggles continued, and individuals continued to stir up their communities with talk of war.<sup>123</sup> The provincial leadership reaffirmed its commitment to achieving peace among warring ANC and IFP supporters in February 1997, but specific party members, particularly of the IFP, remained prone to using public platforms to stir aggressive sentiment among their supporters at the expense of reconciliatory initiatives.<sup>124</sup> Warlords Ntombela and Nkabinde also continued their respective reigns of intimidation, with apparently little threat of arrest or prosecution despite reports linking both to hit squad activity during the apartheid era.<sup>125</sup> According to one ANC source, the peace initiative was effectively being 'held to ransom by the prospect that these warlords who have ingratiated themselves into the peace process could renew their paramilitary activity.'<sup>126</sup> Indeed, following Nkabinde's expulsion from the ANC, Richmond rapidly degenerated into a war zone,

where the ANC and an aggrieved breakaway faction sympathetic to Nkabinde have clashed violently since April 1997.<sup>127</sup>

While peace initiatives appeared to be making some progress at the provincial level, localised incidents of conflict continued to claim lives. In March 1997 it was reported that increasingly high levels of intolerance had provoked a series of attacks in the Midlands, which aimed at driving political opponents out of particular communities. In Richmond, rival factions accused each other of intimidation. The ANC blamed violence in the area on ‘third force elements,’ ‘extreme right wing groups ... associated with IFP people.’<sup>128</sup> ANC-IFP violence also escalated in Umlazi, where fifteen were reported to have died in clashes. Furthermore, a number of armed groups remained active in parts of the province, working under warlords who had turned to various forms of underground crime to retain their power and privilege under the new dispensation.<sup>129</sup>

### **Peace Proposals**

While conflict continued on a sporadic and localised basis, political violence had exhausted itself as a strategy for advancing party objectives. In the post election context, continued violence impeded delivery and undermined the credibility of the provincial government. For both major parties at the provincial level, continued electoral support relied on establishing stability in the province. In addition, the gradual return of law and order as a result of national security measures, had made confrontation a less feasible strategy to achieve party objectives.<sup>130</sup> The legacy of conflict ensured that negotiating the terms of peace was a process fraught with mutual suspicion however.

Johnston noted the ‘enormous psychological barrier’ faced by both parties to the conflict, who, while seeking to end the war, were unwilling to fully acknowledge their role in waging it. While political leaders continued to publicly deny the culpability of themselves and their supporters in acts of political violence, rapprochement remained elusive. For either side to actually disclose a comprehensive account of its activities, however, risked the image of ‘responsible parties of government’ that each strove to present.<sup>131</sup> Thus the provincial ANC’s eagerness to pass over the disclosure processes integral to Truth and Reconciliation hearings in the rest of the country, and the IFP’s

refusal to cooperate at all with what it perceived as an ANC dominated Commission. In respect of KwaZulu-Natal, the ANC preferred to let its skeletons stay in the closet, while the IFP insisted on presenting as fact its own interpretation of the regional conflict, with Inkatha painted as the victim of ANC/UDF violence.<sup>132</sup>

Despite continuing negotiations among provincial leaders, the death of forty-nine people in political violence in June 1997 cast a shadow over peace initiatives, especially in light of the fact that the killings were particularly brutal.<sup>133</sup> Conflict was centered in Umlazi, where ANC and IFP factions continued to clash, and KwaMashu, where an intra-ANC dispute had degenerated into criminalised violence between rival gangs. ANC-IFP tensions in the Midlands also remained high, with both sides accusing the local police and army of political bias.<sup>134</sup>

In Richmond, political killings and intimidation remained rife, despite the arrests of Nkabinde and two others identified as the main perpetrators of the conflict.<sup>135</sup> Third force allegations abounded, the ANC claiming that the 'precision and regularity with which these killings are carried out can only imply support from forces that have both financial and material support to sustain terrorism of this kind.' The party condemned the violence as part of 'a broader conspiracy to thwart local development and peace,' while Nkabinde's supporters claimed harassment and intimidation by the police.<sup>136</sup> While ANC - IFP rivalry was not a direct factor in this conflict the ANC made clear its suspicion of IFP involvement in third force activity in the area.

While negotiations continued between the rival parties at provincial level, the IFP reiterated its demand that the national constitution be amended to place policing under provincial control. The party based its call on the localised nature of most crime, and on the provincial government's capacity to organise, establish and direct its own police force.<sup>137</sup> According to Buthelezi, the national government had proved its inability to deliver - hence the need to enhance the powers and autonomy of provincial and local government.<sup>138</sup> This attempt by the IFP to assert provincial control over safety and security proved as unfruitful as its predecessors, however, and served to stall progress yet again.

By December 1997, the monthly average of deaths had declined considerably. Even so, conflict in Durban's townships continued to claim lives as parties attempted to launch branches in opposition strongholds, while the Midlands provided the scene for over half the province's incidents of violence.<sup>139</sup> On the South Coast, violence flared in early November, when eight people, mainly women and children, were murdered in an apparent attempt to silence certain state witnesses in ongoing police investigations into political violence in the area.<sup>140</sup> Community cooperation with the police remained minimal in most African areas, while house burnings, deaths and intimidation continued in certain conflict zones.<sup>141</sup>

Continuing incidents of localised violence, despite the stated commitment of both national and provincial ANC and IFP leaders to peace, are indicative of the extent to which conflict has become self-perpetuating in certain communities in the province. While both parties have been seen to abandon violence as a political tactic, antagonisms at the grassroots level are likely to linger long after peace talks have yielded concrete proposals. The legacy of a decade of violent conflict will not simply be eradicated by mutual agreements among the party leadership.

### **Prospects for Reconciliation**

The low scale civil war that has been waged in KwaZulu-Natal since the early 1980s has been primarily motivated by the contest between party rivals for political power and territorial control. As each party sought to define and expand its support base, political tensions erupted into violence, communities suffered intimidation, political opponents were purged and no-go zones entrenched. Rival political parties sought to impose loyalty on particular communities through a campaign of violence and intimidation. Employing intimidatory tactics, a party would assert its control in a particular area by purging it of political opponents, co-opting the structures of authority and imposing an homogenous political identity on the community in question.<sup>142</sup> This pattern of violence persisted in the post-1994 period, but on a generally declining scale.

While political competition has been the primary cause of conflict, however, a multitude of contributory factors also exists. The high rate of unemployment, criminal activity, poor law enforcement and a culture of violence arising from the

long-running nature of the conflict fuel tensions and insecurity at the grass roots level. Accusations of police partisanship and evidence of continuing third force activities cast a shadow over the security forces, who lack credibility as a neutral peace keeping force in the province and in many instances continue to be directly associated with acts of violence. The self-perpetuating nature of the violence in certain conflict zones, such as Richmond, starkly reveal the state's lack of capacity to resolve localised conflicts. Furthermore, the failure of the justice system to bring perpetrators to book has seen warlords continue their campaigns of intimidation, while many politicians tainted by accusations of paramilitary activity have yet to be called to account.

In the post-1994 context however, rival parties have been forced to recognise that the consolidation of their power in the provincial legislature is dependent on their ability to cooperate with one another and find solutions to the problems facing the province. The peace agreements hastily negotiated in the run-up to the local government elections, coupled with the verification of support for both parties as reflected in the 1996 election results, have ushered in an encouraging trend toward inter-party cooperation in the province. Each side has been forced to recognise the permanency of its rival - neither party is likely to be rooted out of power by sustained physical attack. Furthermore, the entrenched rural-urban divide between ANC and IFP support reflects the relative stability of each side's core constituency, rendering violent sorties into rival territories ineffective as a means of asserting political control.

In this context, violence has exhausted its potential as a tool to be manipulated for political ends. For both parties, the consolidation of power rests on their ability to deliver to their constituencies, a condition that requires peace and reconstruction at its base. A noticeable trend toward generally declining levels of violence has been evident since 1994, and particularly since the local government elections of 1996. The militant rhetoric of the early 1990s has been rendered largely redundant, making way for negotiations and compromises aimed at securing peace. The provincial leadership has indicated an emerging willingness to play out their power struggles within the confines of debate in the legislative assembly, rather than incite violent conflict at the grass roots. In addition, the activities of the National Investigative Task Force have made much progress in breaking the cycle of impunity, and in curbing police and army complicity in violence, despite continued Third Force allegations.

Efforts by provincial leaders to secure peace in the interests of effective governance remain vulnerable however. The question of provincial powers, particularly in regard to safety and security, remains vexed. In addition, the localisation of conflict in particular areas may introduce new complexities that will not necessarily be resolved by grand political solutions. The fact that both parties urgently require a peaceful settlement if they are to govern the province effectively, however, bodes well for the possibilities of a compromise settlement. Progress toward this end is examined in the following chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of which will be referred to in the course of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Morris and Hindson 1991: 153

<sup>3</sup> Meer 1994:373, Maré 1996: 30

<sup>4</sup> Ibid: 155

<sup>5</sup> Adam and Moodley 1992: 487

<sup>6</sup> Sisk 1991: 116, Mare 1996: 30

<sup>7</sup> Star 31 May 1989

<sup>8</sup> Natal Witness 6 December 1996 - example of faction fighting in Greytown area

<sup>9</sup> See Varney, H 1996, and findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Aitchinson 1996: 229

<sup>11</sup> Swilling 1989: 64-65

<sup>12</sup> Jeffery 1997: 146-149

<sup>13</sup> Piper 1997: 12

<sup>14</sup> Piper 1998: 159

<sup>15</sup> Adam and Moodley 1992: 501

<sup>16</sup> Maré 1992: 148

<sup>17</sup> Work in Progress April/May 1994

<sup>18</sup> Financial Mail 15 October 1995: 40

<sup>19</sup> Wentzel 1995: 240

<sup>20</sup> Morris and Hindson 1991: 162

<sup>21</sup> An ANC document released in 1991 called for the formation of armed units in response to continuing violence, members of Umkhonto were to play an important role in creating and training these groups (Jeffery 1997: 338).

<sup>22</sup> Financial Mail 22 July 1994, Jeffery 1997: 381 'The alliance acknowledged that SDUs had created a reign of terror in some townships.'

<sup>23</sup> Aitchinson 1996: 153

<sup>24</sup> Haysom 1992: 32, citing an open letter from the ANC to President FW De Klerk, April 1991.

<sup>25</sup> Sisk 1991: 121

<sup>26</sup> Nathan and Phillips 1991: 112

<sup>27</sup> Maré 1996: 27

<sup>28</sup> Ibid: 119, citing HRC Annual Report 1991

<sup>29</sup> A government funded Inkatha rally held on 25 March 1990 sparked an intense outbreak of violence in the Pietermaritzburg area, that came to be called the Seven Day War (Jeffery 1997: 251).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Sowetan 13 March 1996

<sup>32</sup> Varney, H. 1996: 9

<sup>33</sup> Neither Buthelezi nor any other high-ranking IFP leaders were brought trial, however, and Malan was subsequently acquitted. The ANC accused the Attorney-General of being unwilling to break from the 'old South African' mindset, and insisted on the need to reform such recalcitrant

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- institutions, so that the Third Force might finally be eradicated (HRC Report March 1997).
- <sup>34</sup> Human Rights Report March 1997, Mail and Guardian 4 August 1995 ‘Lawyers accuse KZN Attorney-General Tim McNally of willfully avoiding uncovering the truth behind hit squad activities.’
- <sup>35</sup> Jeffrey 1992: 4; Wentzel 1995: 254
- <sup>36</sup> Wentzel 1995: 254; Jeffrey 1992: 8
- <sup>37</sup> Taylor and Shaw 1994: 37
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid
- <sup>39</sup> Woods 1994: 193
- <sup>40</sup> According to the HRC Report: 311 deaths in March, 338 in April 1994
- <sup>41</sup> Natal Focus 23 June 1994
- <sup>42</sup> HRC Monthly Report June 1996
- <sup>43</sup> SPU’s were the IFP’s equivalent of the ANC’s SDUs.
- <sup>44</sup> New Nation 22 January 1996
- <sup>45</sup> Mail and Guardian 7 March 1997
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid
- <sup>47</sup> Jeffrey 1997:499
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid: 512
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid: 514
- <sup>50</sup> HRC May 1995 Report
- <sup>51</sup> Woods 1994: 203
- <sup>52</sup> Johnston in Gutteridge and Spence 1997: 82
- <sup>53</sup> Violent deaths in the first half of 1995 declined by 18% from 1994, political killings were at their lowest in several years (Financial Mail 13 October 1995).
- <sup>54</sup> New Nation 10 November 1995
- <sup>55</sup> The ANC’s armed wing, established during the armed struggle in 1961.
- <sup>56</sup> Africa Confidential September 1994: 5
- <sup>57</sup> Human Rights Report March 1997
- <sup>58</sup> Africa Confidential September 1994: 7
- <sup>59</sup> Keesings January 1995
- <sup>60</sup> Jeffrey 1997: 550
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid: 634
- <sup>62</sup> Conflict Monitor April 1995
- <sup>63</sup> Business Day 9 May 1995
- <sup>64</sup> Jeffrey 1997: 638
- <sup>65</sup> Keesings 3 May 1995
- <sup>66</sup> HRC Monthly Report June 1995
- <sup>67</sup> Business Day 5 May 1995
- <sup>68</sup> Keesings September 1995
- <sup>69</sup> HRC Monthly Report July 1995
- <sup>70</sup> New Nation 10 November 1995
- <sup>71</sup> Financial Mail 22 September 1995
- <sup>72</sup> Johnston in Spence and Gutteridge 1997: 100
- <sup>73</sup> Financial Mail 15 December 1995
- <sup>74</sup> Natal Witness 21 February 1996
- <sup>75</sup> HRC Monthly Report November 1995
- <sup>76</sup> Jeffrey 1997: 560
- <sup>77</sup> New Nation 4 May 1996
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid
- <sup>79</sup> Business Day 1 July 1998 ‘Shobashobane massacre planned by army and police – reporting on new evidence coming to light at the TRC hearings’.
- <sup>80</sup> Natal Witness 27 April 1997
- <sup>81</sup> Citizen 22 February
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid
- <sup>83</sup> Jeffrey 1997: 780
- <sup>84</sup> Star 23 February 1996
- <sup>85</sup> Natal Witness 19 February 1996
- <sup>86</sup> Many ANC regional leaders initially rejected the outcome of elections in KZN, but conceded the result under apparent pressure from the National Committee and moderates within the province. (African Affairs 94: 47, Maré 1996: 4)
- <sup>87</sup> Sowetan 21 February 1996

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- <sup>88</sup> Citizen 27 February 1996, Jeffrey 1997: 629
- <sup>89</sup> Business Day 27 February 1996
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid
- <sup>91</sup> New Nation 3 March 1996
- <sup>92</sup> New Nation 4 March 1996
- <sup>93</sup> Citizen 6 March 1996
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid
- <sup>95</sup> Financial Mail 19 April 1996: 42
- <sup>96</sup> Business Day 18 May 1995
- <sup>97</sup> Mail and Guardian 19 April 1996
- <sup>98</sup> New Nation 10 May 1996
- <sup>99</sup> Citizen 23 March 1996
- <sup>100</sup> Star, Citizen 1 April 1996
- <sup>101</sup> Star, Citizen 1 April 1996
- <sup>102</sup> Cape Times 2 April 1996
- <sup>103</sup> Natal Witness 26 April 1996
- <sup>104</sup> New Nation 19 May 1996
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid
- <sup>106</sup> Piper 1997: 397
- <sup>107</sup> Sunday Times 13 April 1997
- <sup>108</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 4, October 1996: 12
- <sup>109</sup> Financial Mail 17 May 1996: 45
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid
- <sup>111</sup> Jeffrey 1997: 659
- <sup>112</sup> Sunday Times 7 July 1996
- <sup>113</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 4, October 1996: 14
- <sup>114</sup> Financial Mail 21 June 1996: 46
- <sup>115</sup> Human Rights Report February 1997
- <sup>116</sup> see Chapter 5
- <sup>117</sup> Mail and Guardian 28 July 1996
- <sup>118</sup> Financial Mail October 1996
- <sup>119</sup> Jeffrey 1997: 664
- <sup>120</sup> Financial Mail 3 January 1997: 27
- <sup>121</sup> The National Independent Monitor accused the Public Order Policing Unit of counter-insurgency activities against the ANC on the North Coast (Human Rights Report February 1997).
- <sup>122</sup> Financial Mail 10 January 1997: 28
- <sup>123</sup> The ANC attributed the upsurge of violence in Inchanga since 1996 to the actions of IFP warlord David Ntombela. The police however reported the possibility of violence being associated with intra-ANC power struggles (Human Rights Report February 1997).
- <sup>124</sup> The IFP's Blessed Gwala, for example, declared that as long as the *amakhosi's* role, the kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal and the status of the king were not enshrined in the constitution, the king and the Zulu nation were not free and would continue to fight for their freedom (HRC Report February 1997).
- <sup>125</sup> Mail and Guardian 14 March 1997
- <sup>126</sup> Mail and Guardian 14 March 1997
- <sup>127</sup> Following his acquittal on 16 counts of murder in April 1998, Nkabinde joined the United Democratic Movement, rising quickly through the ranks to become KZN chair and national general secretary.
- <sup>128</sup> South Scan: 6 June 1997
- <sup>129</sup> Mail and Guardian 6 June 1997
- <sup>130</sup> Piper 1997: 227
- <sup>131</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 7, May 1997
- <sup>132</sup> See Buthelezi's statement in The Star, 9 January 1997
- <sup>133</sup> Natal Witness 10 June 1997
- <sup>134</sup> Human Rights Report June 1997
- <sup>135</sup> Nkabinde was subsequently acquitted on all counts against him.  
The ANC expressed 'strong reservations' about the way in which the Attorney-General, Tim McNalley, had handled the case, and called for a thorough overhauling of the provincial judiciary (City Press 3 May 1998) .
- <sup>136</sup> Sowetan 10 October 1997, Natal Witness Echo 23 October 1997
- <sup>137</sup> Natal Witness 7 July 1997

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid

<sup>139</sup> Six IFP members were killed in two separate incidents at branch launches in townships outside Durban (Sowetan 18 November 1997).

<sup>140</sup> Sunday Tribune 2 November 1997

<sup>141</sup> HRC Monthly Report October 1997

<sup>142</sup> Financial Mail 13 October 1995: 42

## Chapter Five - Changing Trends in Governance

The following chapter examines changing inter-party relations in KwaZulu-Natal's provincial legislature. The IFP that came to power in 1994 in the province did so on a Zulu nationalist ticket, relying on confrontational tactics. By the time of the 1996 local government election, however, the Zulu nationalist cause had ceased to be the focal point of IFP politics, while the party's attitude toward its opposition was increasingly accommodatory.<sup>1</sup> While traditionalists remain strong within the IFP ranks, nationalist sentiment has proved to have little appeal outside rural communities and has been increasingly jettisoned in recent years. The IFP has shown increasing awareness that its interests are better served by operating within the democratic system, rather than rallying against it as it did during transitional negotiations. This chapter will look more specifically at the challenges facing the provincial legislature, in an effort to understand the dynamics of inter-party relations in the province, looking ahead to what a post 1999 KwaZulu-Natal might look like.

As the governing party of the KwaZulu bantustan during the 1980s and early 1990s, Inkatha employed a confrontational style of politics that tolerated no opposition.<sup>2</sup> The KwaZulu police force was widely recognised as acting on the party's direction, and, with the covert backing of the apartheid state Inkatha enjoyed considerable coercive capacity.<sup>3</sup> Zulu nationalism provided the justification for Inkatha's unchallenged power - to question Inkatha policy was to challenge the unity of the Zulu nation.<sup>4</sup> Thus the party's militant struggle to hold on to its hegemony in the face of UDF competition in the 1980s was framed as a defense of the Zulu nation against erosion by outside influences. Similarly, the brinkmanship tactics employed by the party to force its demands onto the negotiations agenda during South Africa's transition, were justified in terms of protecting the interests of the Zulu nation.

As argued in chapter four, this confrontational style proved effective as long as Inkatha was able to rely on a credible threat of disruption and violence. Since the general elections however, the rules of the political game have changed. The partisanship of the KwaZulu Police has been widely criticised, while investigations into paramilitary activities have seen both the ANC and the IFP constrained in the use of intimidatory tactics or violence to achieve political ends. The new Constitution

defines and protects principles of liberal political conduct, ensuring that individuals and parties are offered protection of rights such as freedom of speech and association. In KwaZulu-Natal's multi-party legislature, the IFP faces a strong political opposition that is able to restrict and challenge its exercise of power, in a manner inconceivable under the one-party system of the KwaZulu bantustan.

The party's autocratic tendencies are thus constrained, while the new dispensation has simultaneously created incentives that encourage the IFP to operate within the parameters of provincial government, rather than compromise its credibility with confrontational tactics. As the majority party in the provincial legislature, the IFP stands to boost its own credibility if it can be seen to bring stability and peace to the province. Thus the need to curb violence and promote economic development. With only a slim majority in the legislature, the party requires the cooperation of its political opposition, and the ANC in particular, if such goals are to be realised.

The shift toward a more moderate and accommodatory approach has seen a related move away from the militant Zulu nationalism that characterised Inkatha politics during the decade preceding the election. The limited appeal of the Zulu nationalist platform has seen the IFP's constituency confined mainly to the rural areas of the province, where a history of patronage still allows traditional leaders significant influence in shaping the political allegiance of their communities. The party has little support in the more economically productive urban areas, where the ANC is dominant. While the IFP remains heavily reliant on the traditional rural constituency, it needs to expand its support beyond this limited base.<sup>5</sup> This is especially true in light of the fact that the ANC, since the early 1990s, has actively engaged in an effort to improve its own Zulu credentials in the province, thus undermining the IFP's claims to represent the Zulu nation and challenging its monopoly on traditionalist politics.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the nationalist rhetoric that characterised IFP rallies in the early 1990s appears increasingly retrogressive in the face of central government efforts to build a national culture celebrating a common South African identity. Since 1996, the IFP has jettisoned the ethnically exclusive, nationalist approach in favour of a more broad-based, moderate appeal. Internal party divisions between traditionalists and modernists, hard-liners and moderates, have obscured the emergence of a clear

alternative vision to guide IFP policy under these changed conditions, however, while the vestiges of ethnic exclusivism have not been entirely erased.

### **Inauspicious beginnings**

KwaZulu-Natal's IFP-led legislature was officially inaugurated in May 1994. The new provincial government got off to a poor start, despite the optimism that surrounded the long-awaited realisation of democracy in the country. After a decade of civil war in the province, the primary antagonists in the conflict, the IFP and ANC, now sat across from one another in the provincial legislature and were expected to govern the province together. However, neither party fully accepted the validity of the election results, each remaining convinced that its own majority was in fact larger than the results stated. Each party thus disputed the legitimacy of the opposition's representation in provincial government, and acrimony continued to characterise inter-party relations.<sup>7</sup> Predictably, 1994 saw little constructive activity in the provincial legislature. Legislative sittings were infrequent, and were characterised by in-fighting and 'bickering' which allowed little chance for legislation to be passed or for issues of delivery and economic development to be addressed.<sup>8</sup>

The government's second year in office showed little improvement. Sittings of the legislature had to be repeatedly postponed because scheduled legislation was not ready for discussion, and democratic debate frequently degenerated into mudslinging between parties. Legislative sessions were characterised by walkouts, disruptions and poor behaviour from MPs, while the legislative buildings were besieged by protesters on a number of occasions. The Human Rights 1995 Review noted that 'virtually every session of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature was characterised by mayhem and chaos.'<sup>9</sup>

By September 1995, only four months into the second year, the full annual budget had already been spent.<sup>10</sup> Opposition parties laid the blame on the millions of rands that the IFP had allegedly drawn from public funds to pay Self-Protection Units in the province, releasing a flood of counter-accusations from the IFP that did nothing to improve inter-party relations.<sup>11</sup> The final legislative sitting of the year saw the IFP overriding objections from the opposition parties regarding the constitutionality of a number of its legislative proposals. While the opposition parties refused to vote on

several bills under discussion, on the grounds that they required review by the Constitutional Court, the IFP insisted that voting go ahead and passed the bills into law on the strength of its own vote alone. The party's confrontational style was still very much in evidence, fueling the antagonism that characterised relations within the provincial government.<sup>12</sup>

As local government elections approached, opinion polls indicated the electorate's declining confidence in the provincial government.<sup>13</sup> The IFP's strongly federalist principles found little appeal beyond the traditionalist constituency when linked to the ambiguous notions of self-determination and Zulu nationalism prevalent in the 1994 election campaign.<sup>14</sup> By late 1995, popular support for the IFP's insistence on asymmetrical powers for the province was low - only a third of survey respondents indicated that provincial powers should be increased, while the majority displayed limited faith in the capacity of the provincial government to exercise greater powers.<sup>15</sup> Faced with unemployment, rapid urbanisation and political instability, voters tended to be disillusioned and frustrated - surveys found that the vast majority had little hope for the province's political future and rated the performance of both the provincial government and the *amakhosi* poorly.<sup>16</sup> If the IFP were to extend its support beyond its traditional constituency, it would have to be seen to be running the province far more effectively.

### **Local Government Elections - Learning from the Results?**

When local government elections were finally held in KwaZulu-Natal in June 1996, results yielded a forty-four point five percent majority for the IFP, down from fifty-two percent in 1994. The party's support was overwhelmingly concentrated in the rural areas of the province - it won all seven of the province's regional Councils with large majorities, but did very poorly in the urban areas - thus reinforcing its image as the party of rural traditionalists.<sup>17</sup> The ANC strengthened its position to win thirty-three percent of the vote, and gained all thirteen of the province's metropolitan councils, garnering the large majority of the urban vote.<sup>18</sup> The results effectively confirmed the accuracy of the 1994 poll, forcing both parties to recognise the durability of one another's electoral support and the legitimacy of each one's authority in the provincial government.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, the ANC could no longer afford to dismiss the IFP as a creation of apartheid that would wither away when exposed to a popular

mandate. The IFP on the other hand, was forced to concede that its hopes of ruling a provincial administration insulated from the ANC central government were ill-founded with only a bare legislative majority.<sup>20</sup>

Faced with a strong parliamentary opposition, the IFP had to acknowledge the need to consult with and accommodate the diverse range of interests represented in the provincial legislature. If the party continued to pursue confrontational tactics, negotiations would most likely end in stalemate, as had happened repeatedly during the provincial constitution-making process. According to one analyst, the confrontational stance that in '1994 was seen as a courageous IFP stand against the evils of communism, nationalism and centrist policies' had been effectively discredited as 'a destabilising obsession impairing good governance and threatening peace, growth and job creation.'<sup>21</sup> The election results brought home the reality that confrontation was no longer reaping benefits for the party.

At the level of local government, the results had more immediate implications. The ANC's strength in the urban areas forced the IFP to seek a cooperative relationship with its political opposition if it hoped to exercise a voice in the running of the province's metropolitan and transitional local councils. The ANC's convincing victories in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Richards Bay, Newcastle and Ladysmith saw the party secure political control over KwaZulu-Natal's major areas of economic activity. The Durban metropolitan council alone commands an annual budget of R4, 6 billion, while the Pietermaritzburg-Durban corridor is responsible for as much as fifty-five percent of the province's total economic output.<sup>22</sup> Political control of these areas of concentrated economic wealth gave the provincial ANC great advantage in terms of implementing development initiatives in the areas under its jurisdiction, particularly in light of new national legislation granting substantial autonomy to local governments.<sup>23</sup> The party was in a strong position to be seen to deliver at the local level – thus further boosting its strong support among the urban electorate.<sup>24</sup>

The IFP on the other hand, had little by way of localised resources in the poorer rural wards. Control of the regional councils gave the party an annual budget of only R30 million, so that at the level of local government, the IFP's ability to provide its constituency with tangible benefits - thus boosting its credibility - was greatly

constrained. In addition, much of the white and Indian support which the party had won in 1994 as a moderate alternative to the ANC, had also been lost as a result of the poor performance of the provincial government and the party's focus on traditionalist, ethnically defined interests.<sup>25</sup> The Financial Mail noted that, as the forces of urbanisation and modernisation eroded the patronage powers of the *amakhosi*, the IFP would have to accept that it would 'be tossed aside by historical forces unless it changed radically and rapidly.'<sup>26</sup>

While this summation was perhaps premature, it remained true that the IFP could not afford to limit its appeal to the rural areas if it hoped to secure its majority in the provincial legislature in 1999. Indeed, *ex officio* status for the *amakhosi* in local government is no longer guaranteed after the next general election. If the *amakhosi* are made to stand for election, thus disrupting the patronage relationship existing between the party, the *amakhosi*, and the rural constituencies, the IFP will likely find its hegemony in the rural areas broken. This possibility, coupled with the party's poor showing in the urban areas, could well see the IFP lose its majority position in the legislature. Both the 1994 and 1996 election results have proved conclusively that there are a great many Zulus in KwaZulu-Natal who simply do not identify with the IFP as the party of the Zulu nation. Hence the need for the party to prove that it has something to offer beyond its ethnic heritage.

### **Internal Party Divisions**

The results of the June elections thus ushered in a 'prolonged period of self-criticism and internal wrangling' for the IFP.<sup>27</sup> In order to make any inroads into the urban constituency before the 1999 elections, the party would have to drastically revise its strategy and appeal. Certain hard-liners within the party continued to favour the confrontational style, advocating a return to Zulu nationalism and the destabilising and intimidatory tactics that had won the party victory in 1994.<sup>28</sup> The confinement of the IFP's support to the rural areas undermined the utility of such an approach, however. The party could not hope to dictate the course of provincial politics while its scope of control was largely limited to its support base in areas of traditional authority and a slim majority in the legislature. Furthermore, the appeal of Zulu nationalism as defined by the IFP did not extend much beyond this rural support base, and as such could not be relied upon to secure support among the urban electorate.

In practical terms, the party's best interests lay in securing strategic alliances with its political opposition, particularly the ANC. This more moderate approach was favoured by younger, modernising elements within the party, led by secretary-general Ziba Jiyane, who sought to transform the IFP into a national black opposition party that forfeited any special claim to Zuluness or notions of cultural tradition.<sup>29</sup> Internal problems seriously threatened the party's coherence however. The media reported tensions between traditionalists and modernists within the party, resulting in 'frequent internecine battles' that 'shattered the party's public image and diminished its hopes of becoming a potent political force.'<sup>30</sup> National Council meetings were described as being 'frequently dominated by back stabbing confrontations which had spawned a series of divisions along racial, ideological and geographic lines.'<sup>31</sup> Younger party members publicly criticised Buthelezi's autocratic leadership style and called for democratisation of party structures.<sup>32</sup>

Jiyane's plans to devolve power and make MPs more accountable to the grassroots membership met with little success however.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, democratisation initiatives seemed unlikely to make any headway while strong patronage relations between Buthelezi and certain traditionalist MPs continued to exist. The MECs for Welfare and Public Works, for example, continued to hold secure seats in government despite facing allegations of hit squad and paramilitary activity, on the grounds of the reverence they inspired as repositories of Zulu culture and history.<sup>34</sup> In addition, party unity was disrupted by resurgent racial tensions, which saw black and white IFP MPs engaged in mutual mud slinging, accusing one another of racially motivated behavior.<sup>35</sup> While the party struggled to contain such 'internal distractions,' its ability to be a 'reliable and confident partner' in provincial negotiations with its political opposition was severely compromised.<sup>36</sup>

Plagued by internal divisions, the IFP was furthermore confronted with primary responsibility for a provincial government beset by allegations of fraud, corruption and crime syndicates. By late 1996, hundreds of thousands of rands in public funds remained unaccounted for, while development funds remained unspent and projects unrealised.<sup>37</sup> Problems of corruption and non-delivery were compounded by the difficulties of amalgamating the separate and widely disparate administrations of the

Natal province and the KwaZulu bantustan. The highly centralised, single party administration inherited from the KwaZulu Government did not translate easily into a democratic multi-party context, while local government records were in a state of disarray, with expenditure recorded erratically and finances in confusion.<sup>38</sup> Many former employees of the KZG resisted incorporation into the provincial system of local government authorities, preferring to retain the old arrangement whereby they were accountable only to the Inkatha government in Ulundi. Media reports noted that ‘several hundred provincial government staff,’ drawn from the old KwaZulu government and black local authorities, were ‘refusing to work’ or were ‘tardy in their performance.’ These individuals ‘refused to take instructions from council officials,’ who in turn lacked any authority to act against non-performers.<sup>39</sup>

Reports suggested that the majority of provincial departments tended to be characterised by uncertainty and frustration, and allegations of involvement in crime and violence hung over many officials and parliamentarians. In the lower echelons of power, the integrity of officials was very much in doubt - more than 700 of the province’s civil servants had disciplinary cases, ranging from fraud and theft to murder and child molestation, pending against them.<sup>40</sup> In addition, a tradition of corruption among local officials and poor quality or non-delivery of services had fostered a culture of non-payment among township residents that was not going to dissipate simply because a democratic election had been held. The government’s embattled attempts at delivery were thus further undermined by a shortage of incoming funds.<sup>41</sup>

In an attempt to address the dire situation of the KwaZulu-Natal administration, the provincial government launched an ‘anti-fraud blitz’ in mid-1997. The initiative sought to encourage individual departments to investigate and root out corruption and inefficiency in the areas under their jurisdiction, in the interests of promoting ‘good governance’ in the province. While such efforts went some way toward boosting the image of the provincial administration, they simultaneously reflected the efforts of the provincial IFP to enhance its image as a party of effective governance in the run-up to the 1999 elections. To the extent that it involved an attempt by the party to root out the ‘dead wood’ within its organisational structures, the exercise appeared to be a significant victory for the modernists within the party.

## **Inter-party Relations**

While local election preparations had seen the ANC and IFP engage in protracted negotiations and reach agreement on specific codes of conduct, acrimony remained a defining feature of inter-party relations at both the provincial and national level. An NP MPP noted that, so long as tensions between the two rival parties continued to disrupt the consolidation of democratic governance in the province, the IFP's calls for greater provincial powers and competencies were rendered indefensible.<sup>42</sup> The problem was reflected at the national level, where the future of the Government of National Unity looked uncertain. Tensions between Buthelezi and President Mandela prompted the former to announce in late 1996 that the IFP was considering pulling out of the arrangement in order to establish itself as an effective opposition.<sup>43</sup> The prospect cast a shadow over efforts by party moderates on both sides to promote closer cooperation between the parties in the interests of more effective governance at the provincial level.

As noted, however, the election results had driven home the fact that no single party could hope to govern the province alone, lending a renewed imperative to negotiations aimed at improving relations within the provincial legislature. Talks between the parties at the provincial level received a boost with the involvement of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in July 1996. Media reports credited him with brokering 'miracle deals' between the opposition parties in the provincial legislature, as well as making great progress in 'lowering the political temperature' between the two parties nationally.<sup>44</sup> Mbeki's endorsement of the initiative at the national level facilitated efforts by provincial leaders Ziba Jiyane and Jacob Zuma to begin laying the basis for rapprochement between their respective parties.<sup>45</sup> Their efforts appeared to win some success in the provincial legislature, which was reported, 'for the first time in its history,' to be 'conducting its affairs in a more reconciliatory fashion.'<sup>46</sup>

Media speculation that the two parties might entertain a merger was rejected however. Jiyane insisted that negotiations were limited to the creation of 'stronger alliances,' while at the national level, both Mandela and Buthelezi continued to express reservations regarding the provincial initiative.<sup>47</sup> The negotiators restricted themselves to a limited mandate, keeping negotiations on a relatively superficial level,

avoiding outstanding constitutional disputes and the contested issue of international mediation - both major stumbling blocks to improved ANC-IFP relations.<sup>48</sup> Much progress was made at the level of local government however, where the IFP was drawn into the ceremonial and management structures of the ANC controlled TLCs, even securing a deputy mayor's post in the Durban metropolitan council.<sup>49</sup> Thus, at least at the primary level of government, rival politicians were finally seen to be formally cooperating, in an effort to improve governance and delivery for their local communities.

In the provincial legislature, inter-party relations appeared to be improving by January 1997. Media reports speculated that the IFP, realising that the ANC could no longer be intimidated by threats of destabilisation, had accepted that its best strategy lay in playing by the rules, building efficiency and working alliances within the provincial government.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, former hard-liner Walter Felgate was reported to be visibly trying to steer the IFP away from extreme positions, in recognition of the need to engage constructively with the ANC at both provincial and national level.<sup>51</sup> While talks with the ANC continued, however, tensions within the IFP escalated. At a National Council meeting in January Buthelezi berated certain members, as 'indolents who expect political success to fall into their laps,' and accused them of creating party divisions and 'working against the party and their colleagues.'<sup>52</sup>

The party's general conference at the end of the month witnessed an unprecedented purge of moderates, boding ill for initiatives toward closer cooperation with the ANC. KwaZulu-Natal premier Frank Mdlalose, secretary-general Ziba Jiyane and Gauteng legislature leader Musa Myeni all resigned their posts, allegedly under pressure from Buthelezi and hard-liners within the party.<sup>53</sup> The three were reported to be the first victims of a purge to which Buthelezi had long alluded. Their approach as 'pragmatists willing to cooperate with the ANC on a range of issues,' coupled with their attempts to modernise and democratise the party, saw them clash with party hard-liners who retained a dominant position, particularly at the national level. Indeed, one National Council member reportedly complained that the party's biggest mistake had been not to limit parliamentary membership to the former members of the KZLA: 'they always attended the meetings, did what they were told and never questioned the authority of the leader.'<sup>54</sup>

The resignations prompted fears of an impending ‘witch-hunt,’ ‘targeted primarily at whites and moderates.’ According to one national councillor, ‘only praise singers of the leader are likely to remain in office...questioning of authority or even debate is completely unacceptable...there is no such thing as democracy within the party. That is why there is no secondary leadership layer or even any remote indication as to who would replace Buthelezi if he suddenly disappeared.’<sup>55</sup> Clearly, a degree of authoritarianism still lingered about the IFP. Reports speculated that an internal purge was imminent as the party sought to tighten its structure in preparation for the 1999 campaign. It seemed likely that, while the position of traditionalists with popular support in the rural constituencies remained relatively secure, younger members who had been seen to question Buthelezi’s authority, as Jiyane had, were likely to be on their way out.<sup>56</sup>

This ascendancy of traditionalists within the party was affirmed with the appointment of a new provincial cabinet in early 1997. While MEC Ben Ngubane, a recognised moderate, was appointed the new provincial Premier, it was Buthelezi who decided the composition of the new provincial cabinet, which saw traditionalists featured strongly in the upper levels of power.<sup>57</sup> The MEC of traditional affairs, Chief Nyanga Ngubane, was appointed Safety and Security MEC, despite being named in a SANDF intelligence report in connection with paramilitary training activities, and ‘underachievers’ such as Education and Culture MEC Prince Vincent Zulu retained their positions.<sup>58</sup> Loyalty, both to the party and to Buthelezi, coupled with strong traditionalist credentials, appeared to be the major determining factors in such appointments.

Media reports speculated that Ngubane, a relatively young and moderate leader, had been chosen for the post of Premier precisely because he did not appear to pose a threat to Buthelezi’s personal power. The subordinate position of the provincial administration was clearly a non-negotiable point for the IFP national leadership – Buthelezi continued to maintain a very tight grip on the reigns of party power, while National Council members played a substantial role in provincial affairs.<sup>59</sup> An IFP leader described the IFP’s provincial council as dormant: ‘All decisions affecting KwaZulu-Natal are taken in our National Council, where the Cape-Town based

leadership takes decisions aimed at meeting their own national objectives.<sup>60</sup> The space in which provincial leaders were able to take their own initiative and act with a measure of independence was severely limited.

While the IFP remained troubled by internal party divisions and a general lack of coherence and vision during 1997, the party's relations with its political opposition continued to improve. The mud slinging between Buthelezi and the ANC national leadership, that had decorated news headlines since the early 1990s, became more infrequent as the year progressed. Indeed, by the latter half of the year, Mandela felt confident enough to leave the country in Buthelezi's care – if only for a day or two every now and then!<sup>61</sup> At the provincial level, peace negotiations remained on track, and efforts to improve working relationships within the provincial legislature were also increasingly evident during the year.

March 1997 saw the provincial government announce R200 million RDP-based community development plan, designed to reward communities and develop the talents of individuals seen as contributing to the peace process. Funds were channeled toward infrastructural development, education and the development of conflict resolution skills in 'deserving communities.' The plan reflected a joint effort by the ANC and IFP in the province to address the problem of ongoing violence and simultaneously promote economic development. The allocations were decided jointly by Zuma and Ngubane in line with efforts to promote closer working relations between the two parties. The deal was criticised by the DP however, as a 'politically self-serving compromise between the IFP and ANC,' mutually boosting one another's popularity in particular areas at the taxpayer's expense.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, as relations between the ANC and IFP improved, the voice of opposition in the provincial legislature was increasingly that of the minority parties, who stood to be marginalised by a strong ANC-IFP alliance. This shift in inter-party relations saw the DP emerge as an increasingly vocal critic of the provincial government. Regarding the province's 1997/8 budget for example, the party raised strong objections to the R260 million languishing in unallocated 'slush funds,' R158 million to be allocated to projects according to the Premier's preference, and R177 million earmarked for government buildings in Ulundi.<sup>63</sup> The DP criticised the IFP for omitting to address

shortages in service provision, and concluded that the ‘R180 million splurge on buildings for traditional leaders and government in Ulundi’ could rightly be termed ‘immoral’ in light of serious shortfalls in more pressing areas.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the party’s criticisms echoed those raised by IFP chief whip Mike Tarr six months previously, when he had unsuccessfully urged the provincial cabinet to adopt a ‘logical and rational’ approach, rather than pursuing an extravagant project with limited utility.<sup>65</sup>

### **Towards Good Governance?**

Improved relations between the ANC and IFP saw the ANC provincial leadership present the IFP with a peace package in May 1997, with ‘far reaching power-sharing implications beyond 1999.’ ANC proposals included a power-sharing deal in provincial government beyond 1999, with an extra portfolio for the ANC in the interests of stability, as well as a top-level national position for Buthelezi, rumoured to be a deputy presidency, and possible formal reinstatement as the King’s traditional Prime Minister.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, the ANC would drop its court action against the KwaZulu-Natal House of Traditional Leaders, create an *in camera* amnesty process with an extended cut-off date specifically for KwaZulu-Natal, and explicitly recognise the IFP as a legitimate political force whose interests had to be addressed.<sup>67</sup> ANC provincial leader Jacob Zuma was clearly committed to securing reconciliation with the IFP. Indeed, a successful settlement would prove a great boost to his personal credibility, enhancing his prospects as a strong candidate for the deputy presidency in 1999.<sup>68</sup>

Buthelezi praised the provincial initiative for its efforts to bring peace to KwaZulu-Natal and end the bloody conflict, and commended Zuma for his commitment to the resolution of differences between parties.<sup>69</sup> He nonetheless insisted that certain issues, ‘stepping stones to real reconciliation’ which remained central to the process, had yet to be addressed. These included the grievances of the *amakhosi* about central government plans to ‘undermine the autonomy and integrity’ of the kingdom of KwaZulu, Buthelezi’s disputed position as chair of the House of Traditional Leaders, as well as the issues of international mediation and enhanced federal powers. The IFP also insisted that the national constitution be amended to recognise the status of King Zwelithini, and that Ulundi be developed as the provincial capital. Amnesty, the party insisted, could not even be discussed until these core issues had been dealt with, that

is, until the interests of the IFP's traditionalist constituency had been secured and the party's long-standing demands had been met.<sup>70</sup>

Frustrated by the IFP's reluctance to give any ground on these issues, which had time and again proved the stumbling block during such negotiations, the ANC sought to mobilise public opinion behind its proposals by going public with its recommendations, despite the supposedly secret nature of negotiations. It appeared that the ANC hoped to pressure the IFP into accepting the terms of its settlement, by publicizing the issues before the IFP had finalised its own negotiation agenda. The IFP's Arthur Konigkramer dismissed as 'naive in the extreme' the ANC's efforts to negotiate through media pressure, while Buthelezi similarly refused to allow the IFP to conduct 'delicate and important negotiations' through the media.<sup>71</sup> Nonetheless, the urgency of securing a settlement that would allow the provincial government to carry out its mandate effectively ensured that, in spite of lingering one-upmanship, neither party could afford for negotiations to be derailed. The ambiguity was a reflection of the situation in which the parties found themselves – their rivalry and indeed animosity persisted, yet their status as the two largest parties in the provincial government had rendered them mutually dependent.

While tentative progress was being made toward reaching agreement with the ANC, the IFP simultaneously pursued negotiations regarding closer cooperation with the minority parties in the provincial legislature. In June 1997 the media reported that cooperation between the IFP and DP was to be enhanced at national, provincial and local government levels, based on a common vision of federalism and multi-party democracy as essential to provide 'vigorous and principled alternatives for the electorate.'<sup>72</sup> Similar meetings were also held with the NP, regarding common provincial and national constitutional interests, with a view to enhancing the principles of federalism and empowering the provinces by redrafting national constitutional legislation.<sup>73</sup>

While these discussions generated much media publicity however, relations with the ANC remained the IFP's primary concern. Buthelezi was cited as describing unity between the ANC and IFP as 'an ideal thing' that could very likely transpire - reinforcing the notion that the best prospects for provincial government entailed a

close working relationship between the former rivals. He nevertheless remained firm that the ANC would, however, have to recognise the ‘paramount role’ of IFP in the ‘kingdom’ of KwaZulu-Natal. It was the IFP’s standard approach to negotiations – talks would proceed only on the IFP’s own terms, with the latter playing the dominant role in any future working relationship.<sup>74</sup>

By the end of June, both parties had formulated a comprehensive list of proposals for discussion. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) remained a problematic issue, however. The IFP objected to the TRC being included at all in the special amnesty process, and demanded recognition from the ANC that the TRC had failed its mandate in KwaZulu-Natal and had proved biased and incapable of objective judgment. The party claimed that the TRC itself threatened efforts toward reconciliation, and accused it of ‘propogandistic efforts’ designed to show the IFP in a bad light.<sup>75</sup> Reconciliation could not occur, insisted the IFP, until the murderers of IFP leaders were identified and brought to justice. The party demanded that the ANC acknowledge Inkatha’s role in the national liberation struggle, and that it apologise for targeting Inkatha in its armed struggle during the 1980s and for vilifying Buthelezi as a government collaborator. While the IFP was prepared to pursue cooperation with the ANC in the interests of peace, it insisted that both its role in the liberation struggle and its victim status in political violence was acknowledged.

The issues of the status of the *amakhosi*, the development of Ulundi as the provincial capital, international mediation and reconsideration of the provincial constitution also remained high on the IFP’s agenda.<sup>76</sup> The party refused to negotiate any settlement that would not serve to secure its power base and limit central government’s influence in the province. Buthelezi remained adamant that the ANC had still to honour its 1994 pre-election pledge to allow international mediation on the powers of the provinces – the IFP refused to allow its federalist vision to fall by the wayside. In addition, the image of Ulundi as a sparkling new provincial capital was one that the traditionalist base of the party clung to. For its part, the ANC made clear its refusal to revisit the capital issue or the question of international mediation, and continued to contest the provincial constitution in court. While the imperative of cooperation in the provincial legislature required that the parties secure reconciliation, the national-

provincial power struggle, the contested status of provincial powers and the IFP's efforts to preserve its traditional constituency intact remained core areas of contention.

ANC-IFP relations suffered a temporary breakdown in July 1997, when the IFP withdrew from the TRC following revelations incriminating top IFP leaders, including Buthelezi, in political violence. Buthelezi accused the Commission of sowing the seeds of hatred and distrust in the province, while failing to foster reconciliation or promote transparency.<sup>77</sup> The TRC, claimed the party, had embarked on a witch-hunt against specific political interests, repeatedly emphasising the role of Inkatha in violence in KwaZulu-Natal, while the ANC/UDF was 'almost totally ignored.'<sup>78</sup> Amidst much bitterness from the IFP, the negotiations ran aground once again.

The urgency of securing an end to the violence ensured that the parties returned to the table however, and by mid-August negotiations regarding the role of the TRC in the peace process had resumed. The IFP refused to continue its bilateral talks with the ANC, however, prompting long-time IFP stalwart Walter Felgate to abandon the party and seek a new political home in the ANC. Felgate explained his frustration in terms of Buthelezi's interference in the provincial process and his reluctance to accommodate reconciliation between the rival parties. Felgate had been the first white member to join the IFP, and was a long-time confidant of Buthelezi. He now accused Buthelezi of being undemocratic, and claimed that he had led the IFP into a 'political wilderness,' wherein the party was effectively a spent force.<sup>79</sup> Felgate blamed Buthelezi's failure on his underestimation of ANC strength, pointing out that, based on the ANC's unchallenged electoral strength nationally, cooperation would have achieved the IFP's goals far more effectively than a confrontational course. Felgate lamented that the IFP had not 'taken up its position as an opposition party that could expand its domains by addressing issues the voting public wanted addressed' during final constitutional negotiations. Instead, argued Felgate, Buthelezi had chosen 'confrontationalism,' rendering the IFP ineffective as a national opposition party.<sup>80</sup> Such statements appeared ironic in light of the fact that Felgate himself had been considered a hard-liner within the IFP inner circle.

Shifts and tensions within the party continued to threaten its coherence in late 1997.<sup>81</sup> IFP chief whip Mike Tarr, who openly advocated Pietermaritzburg as the preferred

seat for parliament, and provincial caucus chairman Vincent Ngema, were both asked to resign their posts by end of the 1997 legislative session. While Ngubane explained the decision in terms of whip cracking of under-performers, media speculation had it that the two were out of favour with Buthelezi and party traditionalists, for their tendency to question party policy. Correctional Services MEC Siphon Mzimela looked set to suffer a similar fate by the end of the year. Long regarded with a certain level of mistrust owing to his close relations with President Mandela on the national level, Mzimela found himself in ill-favour in mid-December following his call for a merger between his party and the ANC.<sup>82</sup> It seemed that an aura of unchallenged power continued to emanate from the upper echelons of the party. This autocratic style continued to create dissent from within the party, particularly among the youth, who took issue with the IFP leadership, objecting to Buthelezi's allegedly dictatorial powers of appointment to high office in particular.<sup>83</sup> The IFP's life-long president showed no signs of relaxing his grip on the reigns of party power, however.

By late 1997, media reports indicated that the IFP was in such a state of disorganisation and internal dissent that the ANC was likely to reconsider the need to even continue peace negotiations with the apparently crumbling party.<sup>84</sup> The reality of the party's durable traditionalist appeal in the rural areas, however, indicated unequivocally that it remained a force to be reckoned with, while Buthelezi's high profile position nationally bolstered the party's appeal despite its internal problems. Indeed, in late November it was reported that a major peace summit, to be jointly chaired by Mbeki and Buthelezi and aimed at finalising peace and amnesty talks between the ANC and IFP, would soon be held.<sup>85</sup> Mbeki and Buthelezi were reported to be in daily contact, while provincial negotiators were also closely involved in preparing for the summit. The ANC's Sbu Ndebele reported that negotiators were working on an 'enforceable' code of conduct for political parties and traditional leaders to secure freedom of association in rural and urban areas. The code would provide 'external and internal methods for sanctioning those who refuse access in no-go areas, to prevent the problems of the past from recurring.' According to Ndebele, the province has moved from 'a position of war to a position of non-peace. What we need now is to go the extra distance to secure an environment of real and lasting peace.'<sup>86</sup>

## **A Change in Style?**

As the 1999 general elections approach, the shape of the province's political future remains opaque. In light of the 1994 and 1996 election results it seems highly unlikely that either the ANC or IFP is capable of winning an absolute majority and governing unilaterally in the province. One option may have seen the IFP, NP and DP forming a coalition, based on a common commitment to federalism and free market principles, effectively overriding the ANC opposition in the provincial legislature. As seen in chapter two, however, the provincial constitution making process revealed this tactic to be fatally flawed. The minority parties proved unwilling to act without the ANC, not least owing to the party's prominence on the national level and its direct hand in development initiatives in the province. Furthermore, the June 1996 elections established the ANC as the ruling party in most major urban wards, with control of a large local government budget. In this light, the IFP could not afford to alienate its primary political opposition.

When power struggles and a legacy of distrust are put aside, it seems clear that the party with whom the IFP has the most in common in terms of policy issues and general support base is in fact the ANC itself. Thus the repeated references from leaders on both sides to the 'historical reality' that the IFP came out of the ANC originally. Now that the questions of violence as a means toward liberation and indeed even socialism versus capitalism are no longer of any significant import in terms of party policy, goes the argument, there seems little reason politically that the parties should remain so fundamentally at odds with one another.<sup>87</sup> ANC sources would indeed argue that, 'other than the non-antagonistic pronouncements about the role of traditional leaders and provincial powers, there are no fundamental policy or ideological differences between the IFP and the ANC. There is nothing in the IFP outlook which cannot be accommodated in the ANC.'<sup>88</sup> It seems that the moderate line looks set to triumph in both parties. In the words of IFP moderate Arthur Konigkramer: 'it is ultimately a question of strategy - when you start ganging up against people, politics doesn't work. You need to sit down and compromise in order to move forward.'<sup>89</sup>

Clearly, since the general elections of 1994, the IFP's ideology and strategy has undergone substantial changes as the party has adapted to a new political climate. The

confrontational style of politics employed in the 1980s and early 1990s, has gradually been replaced with a more moderate, accommodatory approach as the party finds its objectives better achieved within the democratic forums of government.

The IFP retains a somewhat authoritarian structure however, and efforts toward closer cooperation with the ANC at provincial level are still vulnerable to interference by the National Council, and Buthelezi in particular. The National Council's ascendancy during the provincial constitution making process is reflected in Buthelezi's criticism of current negotiations. Provincial initiatives will not succeed without Buthelezi's endorsement, which is unlikely to be forthcoming until the constitutional issues of provincial autonomy and traditional authority are addressed at the national level, and Buthelezi is satisfied that the ANC has acknowledged that the violence in KwaZulu-Natal is 'a by-product of the armed struggle.'<sup>90</sup>

Nonetheless, as argued above, the present reality in the province, whereby the ANC and IFP are mutually dependent on one another's co-operation in order to govern effectively, requires that the parties reach a settlement as soon as possible. In this light it appears that the IFP, instead of 'chasing after white and Indian votes and a mythical rainbow movement for provincial autonomy,' is increasingly attracted to the possibility of an ANC-IFP coalition provincial government, which may well become a reality after the 1999 elections.<sup>91</sup> Zuma and Ngubane have established a 'cordial working relationship' at the provincial level, and according to President Mandela, both the national and provincial governments are 'working well without any serious tensions, regardless of the differences that exist, in a joint effort to consolidate peace and encourage a culture of tolerance and non-violent competition.'<sup>92</sup> It seems the growing sentiment at the national level, in the ANC camp in particular, is to formalise this new relationship through a coalition in the interests of peace and stability in both the province and the country.<sup>93</sup> While there are those within both parties who resist such initiatives - relations between the two sides are tainted by years of bitter political rivalry<sup>94</sup> - the possibility of closer relations between the erstwhile rivals is no longer inconceivable. Indeed, President Mandela has welcomed the possibility as a means of ensuring stability and strengthening national unity in the country.<sup>95</sup>

For the moment, deals and negotiations remain in the pipeline, both sides expressing optimism and reservation. Buthelezi has dismissed the possibility of a merger at the current time as ‘jumping the gun,’ but has invited President Mandela to make his party a formal offer on the subject. Premier Ben Ngubane has denied that any discussion on this issue has taken place between the two parties, and claims that the IFP is ‘confused and surprised’ by media speculation in this regard.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, Ngubane even went so far as to accuse the ANC of using the merger issue ‘as an electoral gimmick to discredit the IFP in the eyes of its present and potential constituency and create confusion among IFP members.’ He insisted that ‘the IFP does not wish to be assimilated into the ANC, nor does it agree with ANC policies, but aspires to be able to dissent and play an opposition role without witnessing its members being murdered.’<sup>97</sup> While statements such as this clearly reflect a large measure of political rhetoric for the benefit of loyal IFP supporters, they may well obscure more intense behind-the-scenes negotiations as each party attempts to secure a settlement that will maximise its own advantage when the electorate again goes to the polls in 1999.

As the 1999 general elections approach, the possibility of the ANC and IFP formalising closer political relations in terms of a merger or joint list remains slight, the IFP insisting that the differences between the two parties ‘are too great.’ Nonetheless, the IFP readily acknowledges the need for the IFP and ANC to ‘work together to lower tension and increase tolerance. This is essential not only for the sake of peace but in order to achieve the delivery of services and development at local level.’<sup>98</sup> In this light, one may yet hope that the rivalries that have characterised IFP-ANC relations for the past two decades will increasingly be debated in reconciliatory rather than confrontational tones. At the very least, a reversion to Zulu nationalism that champions the mechanisms of violent protest and confrontation to advance IFP interests, appears a very unlikely option.

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- <sup>1</sup> Piper 1998: 232
- <sup>2</sup> Membership of Inkatha was required for any form of public office in KwaZulu. Public servants were required to take an oath of allegiance to the organisation, ensuring that Inkatha's monopoly of support in the KZLA was unchallenged.
- <sup>3</sup> See chapter four regarding allegations against the KZP, third force activities, and Inkatha-State collusion in violence.
- <sup>4</sup> Maré 1992: 148, Maré 1995: 188
- <sup>5</sup> Johnston 1994: 5
- <sup>6</sup> Kaarsholm 1995: 186-7
- <sup>7</sup> See chapter four
- <sup>8</sup> Sunday Times 25 September 1994
- <sup>9</sup> HRC Review 1995
- <sup>10</sup> HRC Monthly Report: September 1995
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid
- <sup>12</sup> Financial Mail 1 December 1995: 45
- <sup>13</sup> HRC Monthly Report: October 1995
- <sup>14</sup> Johnston 1997 in Cass (ed)
- <sup>15</sup> Business Day 20 June 1996
- <sup>16</sup> An IDASA Public Opinion Survey reported that thirty-five percent of blacks, twenty-four percent of whites and twelve percent of Indians described themselves as 'hopeful,' while seventy-five percent of respondents rated the provincial government's performance as 'poor' or 'just fair'. (Business Day 18 April 1995).
- <sup>17</sup> The IFP polled over sixty percent in rural areas in the South and up to ninety-five percent in the North. Within the TLCs, the ANC won forty-seven percent of the total vote, the NP twenty-two point three percent, and the IFP just eighteen point one percent. (KwaZulu-Natal Briefing August 1996)
- <sup>18</sup> Keesings June 1996
- <sup>19</sup> Piper 1998: Chapter 8
- <sup>20</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing June 1996
- <sup>21</sup> Financial Mail 7 June 1996: 50
- <sup>22</sup> Mail and Guardian 21 July 1996
- <sup>23</sup> Mail and Guardian 13 September 1996
- <sup>24</sup> The ANC in fact engaged its opposition parties, including the IFP, in coalition arrangements in several of the local councils under its control, thus boosting both the profile and accountability of the other parties in the process.
- <sup>25</sup> Sowetan 3 July 1996
- <sup>26</sup> Financial Mail 5 July 1996: 19
- <sup>27</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 9
- <sup>28</sup> Africa Confidential 5 July 1996, KwaZulu Natal Briefing July 1996: 15
- <sup>29</sup> Africa Confidential 5 July 1996
- <sup>30</sup> Mail and Guardian 26 July 1996
- <sup>31</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing August 1996
- <sup>32</sup> Natal Witness 26 July 1996
- <sup>33</sup> Mail and Guardian 2 August 1996
- <sup>34</sup> Gideon Zulu and Celani Mthetwa respectively (Mail and Guardian 4 April 1997).
- <sup>35</sup> Financial Mail 3 January 1997: 29, Financial Mail 23 May 1997: 41, Mail and Guardian 2 August 1996
- <sup>36</sup> Financial Mail 23 May 1997: 41
- <sup>37</sup> Natal Witness 31 October 1996
- <sup>38</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 2 May 1996: 7-9
- <sup>39</sup> Mercury 12 March 1997
- <sup>40</sup> Natal Witness 3 April 1997
- <sup>41</sup> Ben Ngubane speaking at the annual Masekane awards ceremony said that non-payment for services had become one of the most difficult issues facing the provincial government (Sowetan 11 December 1997).
- <sup>42</sup> Provincial NP leader Danie Schutte (Natal Witness 4 December 1996).
- <sup>43</sup> Financial Mail 28 June 1996
- <sup>44</sup> Mail and Guardian 12 July 1996
- <sup>45</sup> The IFP lost a great deal of white and Indian support between the 1994 and 1996 elections (Piper 1998: Chapter 6).
- <sup>46</sup> Mail and Guardian 28 July 1996

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- <sup>47</sup> City Press 14 July 1996
- <sup>48</sup> Financial Mail 12 July 1996: 43
- <sup>49</sup> Natal Witness 26 July 1996
- <sup>50</sup> Business Day 8 January 1997
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid
- <sup>52</sup> Financial Mail 3 January 1997: 29
- <sup>53</sup> Financial Mail 31 January 1997: 36
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid: 37
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid
- <sup>57</sup> Mail and Guardian 27 March 1997
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid
- <sup>59</sup> Ambrosini and Felgate, for example, were primarily responsible for the drafting of the proposed provincial constitution, and both were involved in the 1997 negotiations regarding the provincial peace process (prior to Felgate's resignation from the party in the midst of negotiations).
- <sup>60</sup> Business Day 31 January 1998
- <sup>61</sup> Buthelezi stood in for Mandela as acting president on numerous occasions in late 1997.
- <sup>62</sup> Financial Mail 21 March 1997: 52
- <sup>63</sup> Natal Witness 1 May 1997
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid
- <sup>65</sup> Business Day 5 December 1996
- <sup>66</sup> Natal Witness 13 May 1997
- <sup>67</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing July 1997: 1-7
- <sup>68</sup> Mail and Guardian 24 October 1997
- <sup>69</sup> Citizen 4 June 1997
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid
- <sup>71</sup> Arthur Konigkramer, interviewed by Kerri Hampton, 18 June 1997
- <sup>72</sup> Citizen 4 June 1997
- <sup>73</sup> Natal Witness 5 June 1997
- <sup>74</sup> Mail and Guardian 6 June 1997
- <sup>75</sup> Natal Witness 9 June 1997
- <sup>76</sup> Natal Witness 23 June 1997
- <sup>77</sup> Natal Witness 15 August 1997
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid
- <sup>79</sup> Natal Witness 9 October 1997
- <sup>80</sup> Mercury 9 October 1997
- <sup>81</sup> Natal Witness 27 August 1997
- <sup>82</sup> The Saturday Paper 13 December 1997  
Mzimela resigned his position as national deputy chairperson in April 1998, the IFP cited poor health as his reason for stepping down, although media consensus seemed to be that he had been fired (Business Day 2 April 1998).
- <sup>83</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Briefing 9
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid
- <sup>85</sup> Sunday Tribune 23 November 1997
- <sup>86</sup> Sowetan 24 November 1997
- <sup>87</sup> Walter Felgate, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 7 July 1997
- <sup>88</sup> Parks Manhlakane, Sunday Independent 11 January 1998
- <sup>89</sup> Arthur Konigkramer, interviewed by Kerri Hampton 18 June 1997
- <sup>90</sup> Sunday Times 14 June 1998
- <sup>91</sup> Piper 1997: 398
- <sup>92</sup> Daily News 17 December 1997
- <sup>93</sup> Sunday Independent 11 January 1998
- <sup>94</sup> An IFP MP claimed that, 'until the ANC fully explains the rationale and shows genuine remorse for its role in violence, mergers and the like remain cheap political propoganda, if not cunning subterfuge' (Finance Week 26 February – 4 March 1998).
- <sup>95</sup> Natal Witness 15 December 1997, Daily News 17 December 1997
- <sup>96</sup> Sunday Independent 18 January 1998
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid
- <sup>98</sup> Ben Ngubane (Citizen 22 April 1998)

## Conclusion

*'The politics of cultural weapons and the monarchy has served well-enough through periods of high political tension and low level civil war. However they do not make a stable base for government of an ethnically diverse and politically divided population in a partly modernised economy. On the other hand, it would be dangerous for the IFP to de-emphasise ethnic pieties altogether and turn itself into a completely secular party of federalism, free enterprise and investment opportunities, since this would risk it becoming remote from its popular support base.'*<sup>1</sup>

The ideology and style that characterised Inkatha, and subsequently the IFP, before and during South Africa's transition to democracy, have undergone a fundamental change in the post-1994 era. The Zulu nationalism and confrontational approach that characterised Inkatha during the 1980s, peaking in the early 1990s as the transition gained momentum, was largely absent by the end of 1997. The militant nationalist rhetoric and brinkmanship tactics employed by the party during negotiations prior to the general election, are now largely absent. Indeed, 1997 saw the IFP promoting itself as a broad-based, liberal party, committed to achieving accommodation with its political opposition on both the provincial and national level. This immense shift in strategy and ideology has occurred because, for Inkatha, Zulu nationalism has always been primarily about advancing the party's political agenda. When nationalism and confrontational tactics proved counter-productive under the new democratic dispensation, they ceased to be useful to the party and were thus jettisoned.

Presiding as a one-party government over an the ethnically homogenous KwaZulu bantustan during the apartheid era, Inkatha sought to consolidate its political power by claiming to speak on behalf of the Zulu nation. While a sense of ethnic identity had genuine resonance among Zulus in the region, this was an identity expressed in terms of shared culture and customs that did not necessarily translate into a politically expressed nationalism. Inkatha's nationalist project sought to impose a common sense of nationhood on its Zulu constituency,<sup>2</sup> relying on a strong emphasis on self-determination,

traditional authority and memories of a proud warrior nation to do so. The top-down imposition of nationalist sentiment proved to have limited reach, however. Zulu ethnic identity did not translate directly into political loyalty to Inkatha. While nationalist sentiment was strong in many rural communities, particularly within tribal authority areas and among migrant workers, its appeal in urban areas was minimal.

Inkatha's reliance on Zulu nationalism escalated in tandem with challenges to its political influence. Competition with the Congress movement for control of internal resistance politics intensified with the growth of the United Democratic Front during the 1980s, eliciting an increasingly militant nationalist reaction from Inkatha. This recourse to nationalism intensified as the organisation's institutionalised power base faced dissolution during the period of political transition in the early 1990s. In a context of violence and uncertainty, Inkatha presented itself as the defender of Zulu nationhood, seeking to secure its own political survival by framing support for the party as the only means by which the Zulu 'nation' would secure its own preservation. Simultaneously, the party's image as the representative of this potentially volatile 'nation' won it more recognition than it would otherwise have enjoyed as a minority party on the emerging political stage.

Thus, the platform on which the IFP based its 1994 election campaign was that of a Zulu nationalist party set on a course of confrontation with the political opposition. Inkatha framed its demands for federalism and provincial autonomy in terms of Zulu self-determination. Opposition parties who dared ignore such concerns risked antagonizing this ethnically defined and geographically concentrated 'nation,' precipitating anything from armed revolt to secession of KwaZulu from South Africa. While the IFP achieved significant success with this militant nationalist strategy, the approach nonetheless had its limits.

In the post-1994 context, the politics of ethnic nationalism was widely discredited by the ANC government's 'Rainbow Nation' appeal and its promise of unity in diversity as advocated by the slogan: 'many cultures, one nation.' Militant rhetoric seeking to restore

the unity and strength of the once mighty Zulu 'nation' appeared retrogressive in the face of efforts to consolidate the country's fledgling democracy. The results of the elections had already proven that the IFP's support beyond its traditionalist rural constituency in KwaZulu-Natal was in fact rather limited, and certainly did not extend to all those who counted themselves as Zulus. The loss of King Zwelithini's loyalty dealt a further blow to the party's claim as defender of Zulu nationhood. The King, who Buthelezi had conveniently paraded as the symbolic figurehead of Zulu 'national unity' in the pre-election period, not only denounced all political ties with Inkatha shortly after the election, but was also seen to be increasingly close to the ANC. Zwelithini's shift in allegiance opened rifts within the Zulu traditionalist constituency, and ties between Inkatha and the royal house suffered rapid decline. The majority of the *amakhosi* remained loyal to Buthelezi and Inkatha, but the façade of Zulu nationhood and unity suffered considerable damage.

While the nationalist formula was showing its limitations, confrontational tactics had also lost their edge. The rules of the political game were now more firmly established, and the party learnt the hard way that brinkmanship in the post-transitional period simply did not yield the same persuasive force as it had in the run-up to elections. The lesson was evident in the constitution-making processes on both the national and provincial level. Nationally the IFP was forced to recognise that it no longer exercised the power to disrupt and delay negotiations. The party's absence from the CA simply saw the national constitution negotiated and concluded in its absence. At the provincial level, the IFP's initial failure to pursue inclusive negotiations saw the opposition parties alienated by attempts to impose unilaterally decided proposals. Strong opposition in the provincial legislature drove home the point that the IFP could no longer regard itself as the sole ruling party in the province. The grudging compromises eventually conceded by the party in effect proved too little too late. The final document's attempt to assert maximum provincial powers, coupled with IFP nationalist posturing that invited speculation of secessionist ambitions, saw the Constitutional Court reject the provincial constitution. Had the party employed a more cooperative approach, seeking to pacify rather than override its political opposition, its quest for greater provincial powers might have been

better served. Since the ratification of the national Constitution, the utility of a provincial document has been rendered largely redundant.

Thus, as the structures and procedures of democratic governance become increasingly consolidated within the province, the IFP had to adjust its political strategy accordingly. While nationalist politics has been sidelined, however, retaining the loyalty of the traditionalist constituency remains a central concern for the party. The close relationship shared between Inkatha and the *amakhosi* since the 1970s remains a crucial bulwark of the IFP's support. Hence the IFP's insistence on political powers for the *amakhosi*. While the ANC has engaged in efforts to challenge Inkatha's interpretation of tradition and expand its own support in the rural areas, the vast majority of the province's *amakhosi*, and thus many of their subjects, remain loyal to Inkatha. The ability of the *amakhosi* to exercise local government powers in the areas under their jurisdiction has crucial implications for the preservation of Inkatha's rural support. In this sense, rural politics provides a clear example of an arena in which the party continues to mobilise traditionalist sentiment in the cause of its political interests. While the recourse to nationalist discourse in terms of the protection of traditional ethnic culture remains available to the IFP in this sphere, however, the need to preserve political hegemony in the rural areas is counter-balanced by the danger of further alienating urban voters with a tribalist/ feudal image. Indeed, the IFP's stubborn insistence on political powers for the *amakhosi* was one of the factors contributing to local government elections being twice delayed in the province. As the IFP and ANC move toward closer cooperation and enhanced working relationships in the run-up to the 1999 elections, it appears that both parties are willing to leave the issue on a back burner until a mutually acceptable compromise is found.

KwaZulu-Natal's provincial legislature inherited both a legacy of violence and a corrupt and inefficient system of government from the apartheid era. As the majority party in the provincial government, the IFP stood to lose electoral support if it was not seen to be dealing effectively with such problems. Both confrontational tactics and an association with continuing political violence promised to undermine the party's credibility. In the

democratic context of the post-election period, the recourse to authoritarianism and intimidation was not as readily available as it had been in the KwaZulu bantustan. Initiatives at both national and provincial level had begun to restore law and order in the province, while the advent of democracy demanded greater transparency and accountability from both the security forces and the government. The KwaZulu Police, which had functioned as Inkatha's private army during the 1980s, was now subjected to close scrutiny from the ITU, while a strong parliamentary opposition placed a curb on the IFP's power. In addition, militancy and continued instability had little appeal for the majority of the war-weary population. The communities that had voted the IFP into power now sought delivery, rather than ideological rhetoric, from the provincial government. Continued political violence impeded good governance and delivery and, while intimidation may have proved an effective means of securing support under the old order, the route to power now depended largely on electoral support.

The failure of confrontational tactics forced the party to recognise that it had to play within the new rules. Thus, as the majority party in the provincial legislature, it was in the IFP's best interests to ensure a successfully functioning provincial government. Negotiations and peace initiatives between the rival parties have seen a steady decline in violence since 1994. High levels of crime, competition for scarce resources and a legacy of hostility and distrust remain prevalent however, undermining efforts to resolve the conflict through political solutions formulated at the national or provincial level. In addition, the ongoing dispute between the national and provincial governments regarding jurisdiction of safety and security impedes the formulation of a united, coherent initiative to stem the violence. Indeed, while violence has ceased to be useful as a political strategy in the province, neither side is willing to admit the extent of its own culpability in the decade of civil war. Witness the IFP's refusal to acknowledge the authority of the TRC, and the ANC's unwillingness to admit to the targeting of Inkatha during the liberation struggle. Thus, a firm basis for reconciliation has yet to be laid. Nonetheless, the political repercussions of continued instability are of no benefit to either party. Efforts to stem the violence are likely to become increasingly urgent as the 1999 election approaches.

Since 1996 the IFP has engaged in a credible effort to make a success of provincial government from its position within the democratic system, promoting itself as a liberal-conservative party with broad-based appeal. Hence the attempts to ‘normalise’ relations with the political opposition in the interests of establishing peace and good governance in the province. This shift toward a more accommodatory and cooperative style has fostered improved working relations at both provincial and national level, which have seen former antagonists sharing common platforms at mass rallies, addressing historically strife-torn communities with messages of reconciliation. Both parties appear to have recognised that cooperation is the most logical and mutually beneficial way forward, and prospects for improved stability look promising in this light.

In spite of improved inter-party relations at both national and provincial level, however, the IFP remains internally divided and lacks a clear vision to carry the party forward into the next century. Repeated tensions between moderates and hard-liners, modernists and traditionalists,<sup>3</sup> have seen the party divided in its approach to constitution making (chapter two), the role of traditional authorities (chapter three) and rapprochement with the ANC (chapter four). Members who have been seen to question established lines of authority find themselves politically undermined, while under-performers retain their positions by virtue of their traditionalist credentials. Furthermore, the tendency to equate the party with the leader, apparent since Inkatha’s inception in the 1970s, has not been diminished by Buthelezi’s reluctance to nurture any individual as a possible successor. Ziba Jiyane, who looked set to establish considerable stature within the party while introducing long needed structural reform, was rapidly sidelined when his democratising efforts were seen to challenge Buthelezi’s authoritarian leadership style.<sup>4</sup> Siphon Mzimela, formerly a high-profile IFP member with considerable status in national politics, was similarly ousted when he spoke out of turn. Thus, the IFP remains vulnerable to lingering perceptions of autocracy and stubbornness, characteristics that have historically defined Buthelezi the man as much as Inkatha the party.

Despite the assurances of both Buthelezi and Ngubane that the IFP remains strong and vibrant,<sup>5</sup> the party has had little success recruiting new young leaders,<sup>6</sup> and is likely to rely more, rather than less, on the traditionalist, rural-based vote in the 1999 general elections. The future of the party thereafter is opaque, and it remains to be seen whether there is yet time for a successor to emerge and take the reins that will guide the IFP forward, pulling together disparate and mutinous elements.

While the party clings to its core demands of respect for traditional politics and enhanced provincial powers, it is seen as becoming increasingly close to the ANC, which rejects both concerns.<sup>7</sup> How the IFP will reconcile such disparities remains to be seen. Much of the party's support relies on the preservation of close relations with the *amakhosi*, but no opposition party, least of all the ANC, is likely to be convinced by arguments couched in traditionalist or nationalist terms. Furthermore, the province's legacy of violence, in which Buthelezi himself is implicated,<sup>8</sup> is yet to play itself out to any predictable conclusion. The repercussions of the TRC's ruling on the IFP's collusion in political violence may yet disrupt the party's rapprochement with the ANC. The party continues to insist that it was a primarily a victim in the conflict and adopts a defensive stance when its interpretation is challenged. Nonetheless, negotiations for a possible blanket amnesty for all perpetrators of violence in KwaZulu-Natal, from the high profile leaders to foot soldiers, may yet find a way to keep the skeletons in the closet and Buthelezi's dignity assuaged. In the interim, free political activity remains elusive in certain historically African areas of the province, and the extent to which intimidation may remain a significant determinant of political support in the forthcoming general elections deserves attention.

South Africa's second general election will take place in 1999. In the intervening months, KwaZulu-Natal's political terrain is likely to undergo substantial shifts and changes. 1997 drew to a close amidst speculation of cooperation alliances and even a possible merger between the IFP and ANC. These parties came to power in 1994 from a position as bitter antagonists in a long-running civil war. They were thrown together with a mandate to share governance of the province, along with smaller parties in the

provincial legislature, in an arrangement that initially bred much acrimony and mud-slinging between parties. Since 1994, however, the parties have shown an increasing propensity to move toward common ground. Inter-party relations since mid-1996 have become less strained and more accommodatory as ideological differences have narrowed and common ground has emerged. Both parties openly advocate closer cooperation and improved working relations and the IFP's place in the GNU appears secure after 1999. Buthelezi continues to refute talk of merger in the strongest terms however.

While a merger would very likely spell a loss of identity for the IFP, the ANC would stand to win control over an additional province while ridding the political arena of a significant rival. Hence the ANC's call for initiatives to 'consolidate our unity, peace and stability (and) strive for a new national identity built on a common South African-ness.' According to the ANC, 'the common good of the people, stability and national cohesion, are better served by the unity of the two organisations.'<sup>9</sup> While both the ANC and IFP have had to renegotiate their terms of interaction in order to reach this point of cooperation, however, it is nonetheless the style and ideology of the IFP that has undergone the most significant change in the past three years.

In summary then, the Zulu nationalism that was embraced so zealously by Inkatha in the late 1980s and early 1990s as it sought to protect its power base and assert a leading influence in resistance politics,<sup>10</sup> was a politically-motivated, top-down movement. Inkatha sought to impose a sense of Zulu 'nationhood' on what was in reality a socially and politically divided ethnic community, in an effort to increase the organisation's claim to power. This nationalism proved inappropriate as a means of furthering the party's aims under the democratic dispensation however. The rules of the political game had changed, and the IFP found itself both forced and enticed into operating as a part of the democratic government. In this new context, party objectives were better met by operating within, rather than against, the system. Thus, in the post-1994 era, the twin strategies of nationalism and confrontationalism were gradually abandoned, to be almost entirely absent from the party's electioneering platform by June 1996. While the traditionalist constituency remains a core party concern, nationalism is unlikely to make a

return in the run-up to the 1999 elections, as the IFP strives to reestablish credibility as a business friendly, multi-cultural centrally positioned political party.

### ***Postscript***

*The IFP's annual national conference in July 1998 showed the extent to which the IFP and ANC had narrowed the chasm dividing the parties since 1979. For the first time in the history of Inkatha, a senior ANC figure, one no less prominent than party president Thabo Mbeki, was received as a guest of honour at the conference. Both Mbeki and Buthelezi used the conference to encourage greater cooperation and accommodation between the two parties, at national and provincial level. While Buthelezi continued to refute suggestions that the ANC and IFP should consider merging their organisations, he nonetheless stressed that talks regarding closer cooperation would continue, even after 1999, and that there was no reason why the parties should not work together and reach agreements, without entertaining the possibility of a merger. Buthelezi justified his position in terms of the values of democratic competition: 'For many years I have been the promoter of reconciliation between the IFP and the ANC and I have called for unity of intent of all South Africans and of all the major political parties representing them. I believe in this unity of intent, but not in the weakening of democratic dialectics.'*<sup>11</sup>

*Despite Buthelezi's insistence that the parties will not merge, the ANC does seem to be edging ideologically closer to the IFP, at least in terms of economic policy, than it is to either of its alliance partners.<sup>12</sup> The position of the IFP in the Government of National Unity beyond 1999 also appears to be secure. Buthelezi assured delegates to the conference that it would be 'absurd to think that the party of the people of goodwill (i.e. the IFP) should be in opposition to the government of the country.'<sup>13</sup> It seemed that both parties were finally ready to openly acknowledge that mutual cooperation would prove beneficial to the country and particularly the province.<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Johnston 1994: 5

<sup>2</sup> Piper 1998: 259

<sup>3</sup> In an ANC Press Statement (23 July 1995) Dumisani Makhaye claimed that ‘The divisions within the IFP were clearly evident in the (IFP National) Conference. Buthelezi’s vicious attack on the IFP-led provincial government is a thin disguise for Buthelezi’s distaste of Premier Dr Mdlalose. Chief Buthelezi would want a situation where his Italian mentor, Mario Ambrosinin, would have absolute power over Mdlalose’s government.’

<sup>4</sup> Mail and Guardian 2 August 1996 ‘(Jiyane’s) modernising efforts were deemed insulting largely because the co-product of his modus operandi would be a far-reaching democratisation that would threaten the powers behind the party’s throne.’

<sup>5</sup> Star 22 July 1998, Star 3 August 1998

<sup>6</sup> Piper 1998: 262

<sup>7</sup> The ANC has however shown a significant commitment toward accommodating the concerns of traditionalists, not least those within its own organisation. In this light, that party has softened its stance on the *amakhosi*, although it stops short at granting them political power.

<sup>8</sup> The TRC did not call Buthelezi as a witness or as a defendant in its prolonged investigation of political violence in South Africa. Nonetheless, Buthelezi’s culpability in certain acts of violence is widely speculated upon in the media as well as in academic and legal circles. The ANC’s reluctance to alienate the IFP with provocative accusations, however, makes a blanket amnesty, shielding Buthelezi from any investigation, a strong possibility (Mail and Guardian 6 November 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Sunday Independent 11 January 1998

<sup>10</sup> Piper 1998: per com

<sup>11</sup> Business Day 22 July 1998

<sup>12</sup> Cosatu and the South African Communist Party have both publicly stated their rejection of the ANC’s macro-economic strategy, GEAR, on a number of occasions.

<sup>13</sup> Business Day 22 July 1998

<sup>14</sup> Star 21 July 1998

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