

FREE SUPPLEMENT INSIDE: WOMEN'S RIGHTS & THE '94 ELECTION

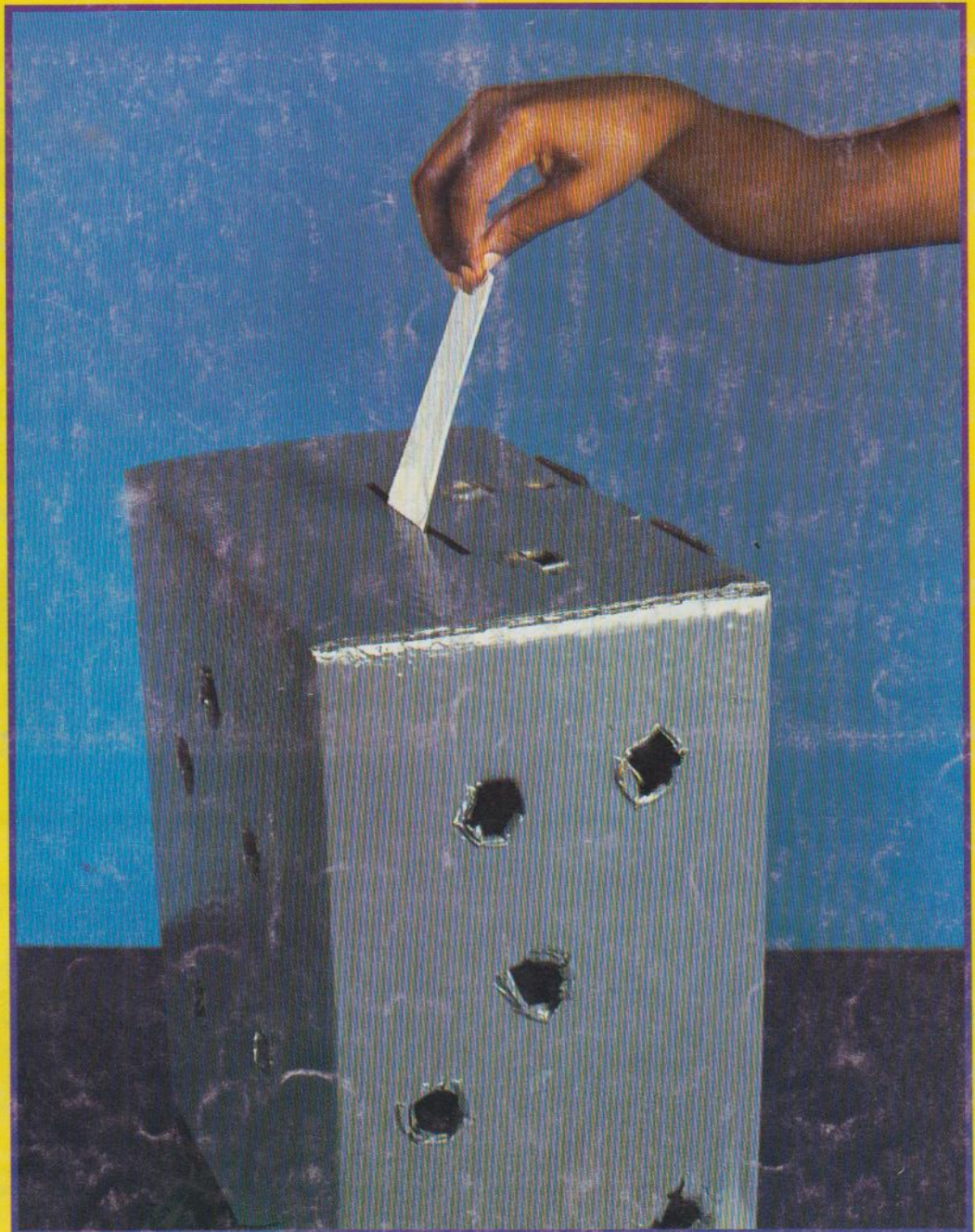
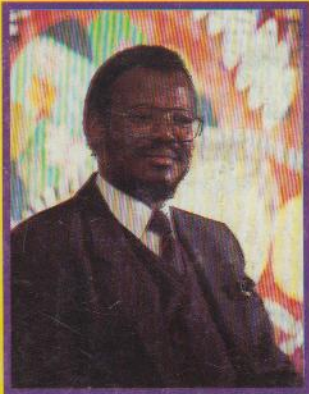
R4,50

WORK IN

WIP 96 • APRIL/MAY 1994

PROGRESS

THE SPOILERS



**Have they
got what it
takes to
derail
democracy?**



■ SHYING AWAY FROM THE POLITICAL PROCESS: Buthelezi's objective is to preserve his own power-base

Avoiding democracy at

Inkatha has done more than most to derail the democratic process.

GERHARD MARÉ and
GEORGINA HAMILTON

explain why, and look at why Inkatha is so opposed to any election which would destroy its power-base

S EVEN YEARS AGO, WE CONCLUDED our book on Inkatha, *An appetite for power*, with the following words: "While some care has been taken in the past to balance the clearly ethnic 'Zulu' appeals, the dramatically more prominent role that King Goodwill Zwelithini is being allowed to play on the Natal political stage has swung the balance towards regional and 'Zulu' consolidation. In some of his pro-

nouncements, King Goodwill has displayed a level of antagonism towards non-'Zulus' that cannot but inflame even further tensions created and maintained by apartheid ... [This] does not bode well for the future."

That future has arrived. There is no reason to retract any but the most inconsequential points we made in 1987. As we said in the preface to our book: "At a time when organisations



all costs

striving for a democratic SA struggle to overcome the racial and ethnic divisions that have served apartheid SA so well, Inkatha continues to exploit those differences and mobilise under ethnic calls.”

These references to earlier work are given to alert analysts to the continuities in the project undertaken by chief minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi and other leaders of Inkatha and the

KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA).

From its formation in 1975 as the Inkatha Cultural Liberation Movement (with its membership initially limited to “Zulus”) Inkatha leaders have appealed to an ethnically-exclusive constituency. Initially there was some ambiguity in the call as the claim to be the resurrected ANC of the “founding fathers” also featured in Inkatha’s mobilising appeals.

The Natal hegemony

Inkatha’s actions in the 1980s, however, left the regional population with little doubt about the movement’s thrust. It was to consolidate political power in the region, rather than just within the bantustan. This was to be achieved through research on the inter-relationship of the economy and the people of Natal/KwaZulu (the Buthelezi commission and its two-volume report); through constitutional negotiations (the Natal/KwaZulu indaba), which bore remarkable similarities with the process followed some six years later at Kempton Park; and through setting in place regional administrative and service structures (such as the Joint Executive Authority and Joint Services Boards).

In addition, the thrust towards regional consolidation rested firmly on the legitimacy that King Goodwill gave to it, and to Buthelezi as “traditional prime minister to the Zulu nation”.

The legitimacy was based on the continuities of a “Zulu nation” that had claim to the region, and that had its own “traditional” power structures. “Tradition”, in the Inkatha version, has always meant loyalty to chiefs, to Buthelezi himself, and to the king. Zwelithini’s role was to define who could be admitted to membership of the Zulu nation, to determine the conditions of such membership, and to identify those who are to be demonised as traitors or as the ethnic foreigner.

Alien nation

Within this view of the world, bodies like the UDF, Cosatu and the ANC were portrayed as bodies led by non-Zulus. In other words, all organisations that had a national thrust to their politics were located outside the ethnic fold. This was necessary because they under-

mined both ethnic mobilisation and related regional projects of Inkatha.

The issues that have become flash-points in politics since 1973 are exactly the issues which have come under Inkatha’s control as governing party within a bantustan. After 1976, housing, education, policing, township administration etc became points of struggle. The growth of unions contradicted both the economic and political positions advanced by Inkatha, especially after the formation of Cosatu in 1985.

In the late 1970s, when KwaZulu moved to the next stage of self-government, control was extended over police and education. In both these areas Inkatha moved swiftly to initiate and reinforce its own interpretation of the world and the locus of the enemy. Speeches made by Buthelezi, as minister of police, to KwaZulu Police passing-out parades illustrate this well — as do the contents of what was initially called the “Inkatha syllabus” followed in KwaZulu schools.

The first shots

Violence flared up regularly from the mid-1980s, undoubtedly aided directly and indirectly by organs established by the central state to fight off the “total onslaught”. The pattern had been set. The cooperative structures between central government and the bantustans had been set in place.

The UDF in Natal, based to a large extent in urban areas and with a significant Indian leadership, never seemed to have the strategy that would undermine Inkatha’s control over areas and people — nor a clear alternative to its ethnic mobilisation. Instead, violent confrontation — and an often equally exclusionary control over territory — carried the day. This was reinforced by the frequent destabilisation of attack and counter-attack, and the involvement of the youth, swept on a tide of revolutionary rhetoric and total rejection of the “system” and a commitment to “ungovernability”.

This ongoing violence, which has led to more than 10 000 deaths in the region over the past decade, has also created a steady refugee problem, hidden to a large extent because of the

shifting and informally-housed "natural" population growth around the cities and major towns.

So what is Buthelezi after?

That is the larger context within which to ask the question: "What does Buthelezi want?" At the most general level it is an easy question to answer: He wants to maintain and extend power. The more difficult question is to say how he is going to achieve it when every opinion poll shows support for Buthelezi personally (and for the IFP generally) is a considerable way off achieving that goal. In addition, he and those around him seem hell-bent on staying out of the elections.

We should, however, note the very unpredictable status of opinion polls in these elections, and the undoubted effect that people's real and imagined fears of intimidation and persecution will have. Already it has been pointed out that with the IFP and the Zulu king calling for an election boycott and with the political intolerance that characterises the political culture in the region, every person who walks into a polling booth in certain "Inkatha areas" will not have cast a secret vote, but a vote against the boycott position.

A foggy crystal ball

To offer a possible explanation of the route being followed by Buthelezi, the king and the IFP, we have again to trace certain continuities — with the clear warning that to attempt predictions in this time of flux is even more hazardous than usual.

Buthelezi has relied fairly consistently on structures which have been dominated by chiefs. That is what the bantustan system amounted to — a creation of apartheid to allow "tradition" to dominate all political processes.

These "traditional" roles — now supported, along with democracy, by every party that has pronounced on the issue — do not depend for their existence and claims to power on the popular will. They are, furthermore, male-dominated, apply only to part of the population, discriminate against people living in rural areas, and are highly inefficient and frequently corrupt.

What better form of government

to retain when it is clear that you are going to lose an election — a form that will exist whether elections go against you or not; a system that is undemocratic, if not anti-democratic.

And yet, in some form or other, it carries the stated support of all the major parties (including the ANC-led alliance). Just this month, the king once again pronounced that Buthelezi was his "traditional prime minister".

Avoiding democracy

It does, however, still leave the question as to how Buthelezi hopes to achieve the establishment of such a level of government when the major structures agreed upon in negotiations will undoubtedly be democratically-elected.

The strategy is that of arguing for

minister to the king and the Zulu nation. He said he would not participate until the political claims of those elements had been acknowledged.

The second, and related, part of the strategy was to call for a single-stage process of drawing up a constitution, in which all parties present would have a say, and in which it was hoped that the major elements of the IFP and "Zulu nation" demands would be included. The two-stage process that was accepted, with the prior election of a constituent assembly, that would serve as a test of popular support (and hence the demotion of certain parties who did not carry such support), meant that the part played by Inkatha and its minor allies would carry less weight.

Inkatha and its spokespersons have not, however, stayed out of nego-



PHOTO: THE ARGUS

■ IN DEFENCE OF THE REALM: Inkatha support has been mobilised against any "foreign" threat

the legitimate existence, and recreation, of the "Zulu kingdom", based on the prior existence and the colonial destruction of such a polity. Within this argument the role of the king is central, along with the undefined (but generally accepted) notion of the "Zulu nation", and a "government to the Zulu nation", namely the KwaZulu government and KLA.

From the start of the negotiations process Buthelezi stayed out, not only in his personal capacity, but as prime

tiations — they have just not followed the central route through the World Trade Centre. Through bluster, through ultimatums, through stalling and delaying, and through the threat of violence, Inkatha has gained considerable concessions.

Except, that is, the most important one — acceptance of the political package that hinges around the "Zulu nation", the king, a territory, and a government, the KwaZulu government, dominated by chiefs. ■