

Can South Africa peacefully change?

by Uwe Friesecke

The political conflict in South Africa has reached a decisive phase. Either assistance will be given to the clearly constructive plans in both black and white political camps to bring them to a common breakthrough, or further radicalization

will plunge the country—and with it, the entire region—into chaos, ungovernability, and economic misery. What is particularly important is that the West and the Non-Aligned nations understand who these constructive elements in South African politics are, and under what internal and external conditions they can achieve a common success.

President P. W. Botha and his group of reformers in the National Party, in which high-ranking military figures are also to be included, are seriously following a course with the goal of abolishing the Apartheid system. Chief M. G. Buthelezi, chief minister of the KwaZulu nation and chairman of

Interview: Dr. Oscar Dhlomo

'We will need more and more investment'

EIR interviewed Dr. Dhlomo, the KwaZulu minister of education and culture and secretary general of Inkatha, on May 2, 1986, in Durban, Republic of South Africa.

EIR: Secretary General Dhlomo, could you explain the strategy of Inkatha in terms of the fight against apartheid and the fight for investment?

Dhlomo: We believe that apartheid must be dismantled in this country but we feel that the dismantling of apartheid will only be the beginning of a far richer struggle to set up a structure that will try to redress all the problems that apartheid has brought about. We believe therefore that economic development and foreign investment in this country will be very useful tools in that struggle in the post-apartheid era. That is why we do not support the policy of disinvestment. We feel that we will need more and more investment, a better rate in the economic growth in the country after apartheid has been destroyed.

EIR: How would the call for disinvestment, if it were actually implemented on a large scale in the next months, affect the struggle against apartheid?

Dhlomo: Well, I think that the call for disinvestment would destroy the economy of the country. Admittedly in the process it would destroy the perpetrators of apartheid, but also the victims of apartheid. We therefore feel that in that situation, the people who would be needing more jobs, people who would be needing to be assisted to develop, would suffer if change had come through as a result of disinvestment. The economic base of the country would

be destroyed. We are also worried that in both cases what happens is that under conditions of economic strife there is not any measure of liberalization on the part of the government in power. We see that the government tends to be more reactionary than before, whereas, under conditions of economic growth, the chances for liberalization are enhanced.

EIR: What would be the conditions you would consider essential to then have the ability for successful negotiations with the government? In other words, what would they have to do to prove themselves a worthy negotiating partner for the future of South Africa?

Dhlomo: I would say the first thing they should do is to issue a Statement of Intent which, amongst other things, would include a willingness on the part of the South African government to share political power with all the people of the country regardless of race. We would not even insist how that would be done, just a willingness to do so would be enough. Two, we would ask them to issue a statement to the effect that apartheid was going to be dismantled and coupled to that, we would need an action program with time scales how this would be done. We would also wish that they would devise a way of including all the people in such negotiations, movements that would have to be enabled, to decide if they wanted to be a part of this process or not. Leaders who are imprisoned would also have to be given an opportunity of either accepting or rejecting this offer.

EIR: In terms of what Inkatha has stood for since its founding in 1975, do you think it's possible that if the existing government abandons leadership on the question of economics, that Inkatha now could address the question of an economic policy for South Africa even if you don't have the power yet?

Dhlomo: Well, Inkatha does not have an economic blueprint at the moment. I think it has always been felt that that would need to be left to the people in the post-apartheid era. There are certain elements and guidelines that

the Inkatha Peace Movement, is seeking a practical constitutional solution that, on the one hand, abolishes racial discrimination and, on the other, gives the necessary security guarantees to whites for their future in the country.

Both leaders find themselves in an extremely dangerous domestic change of direction, which is bringing P. W. Botha especially into conflict with the base of his own party. Those politically responsible in the West, as well as those in the Non-Aligned nations of the Third World, who seriously wish to contribute to abolishing the Apartheid system, must understand that the prejudice-ridden attacks on President Both-

a's government, on the one hand, and questioning of Chief Buthelezi's efforts on the other, are the best way to preserve Apartheid and bring about chaos and destruction, by weakening exactly those who are working on a serious solution.

The goal of the strategy for southern Africa formulated in Moscow in 1964 is to pull the military ring tighter and tighter around South Africa from the Front Line States and, simultaneously, to make the country domestically ungovernable through terrorist destabilization and prevent a peaceful, pro-Western solution. Both processes have progressed to a dangerous extent.

Inkatha would subscribe to, for instance Chief Buthelezi has said that he does not see that the present economic system, the free enterprise system, could be totally destroyed and replaced by a new system. At best he would want the system to be reformed and expanded so that the deprived people who have never been part of the system for years, the black people, would be part of it fully. We also had some ideas, as for instance in the Buthelezi Commission report, where people are looking at what they call a mixed economy, providing for a manner of state intervention in order to redress the problems of the past. A policy that promotes economic growth whilst at the same time it aims at eliminating poverty. Other than those basic elements, we have not at Inkatha sat down to draw up a detailed economic policy.

EIR: What is the actual political strength of the Inkatha movement, and how do you judge the influence of ANC-related groups in your country?

Dhlomo: At the moment, Inkatha is the strongest and the largest black political movement in the history of this country, a membership of over 1 million, with branches all over the country in the four provinces. The ANC, of course, is banned in South Africa and it operates in exile. There are no visible ANC formations inside the country because of that reason. There is, however, the UDF, the United Democratic Front, which pursues ANC policies. It is not banned, it operates legally in South Africa. The UDF is a loose federation of different political groupings, most of them ethnically based and coming together in this umbrella organization called the UDF.

Now each strength at the moment I know basically, although they would argue at their launch they registered 600 different organizations of different sizes, but some of those organizations were formed just for the purposes of attending the launch of the UDF, and we have never heard anything about them ever since. The UDF has this terminal weakness, in that, unlike Inkatha, it is not a membership based organization. In other words, the UDF has no direct links with its grass roots because people associate

with it via a loose federation. If you are talking to the leadership of the UDF, you are not talking to the affiliates of the UDF, while, in Inkatha, if you spoke to the president of Inkatha, then you are talking to over 1 million members because we are membership based, they are not. The UDF are not membership based. It is therefore an organization of that nature unable to carry out any effective action program backed by the entire membership.

That is why most UDF action programs are never pursued by the movement in its entirety. In Natal, here, if you talk about the UDF, you talk about one or two strong affiliates of the movement which are the Natal Indian Congress. Even the leadership of the UDF in this area of Natal would come from the Indian community and not from the African community. It's not quite possible to compare Inkatha and UDF because of those differing structures, but there is no doubt that Inkatha itself is enormously powerful. It has a potential to influence the developments in this country far more effectively than the UDF which is, as I mentioned, a loosely arranged and federated organization.

EIR: Now recently [ANC leader] Oliver Tambo in Germany attacked your movement very strongly and said Chief Buthelezi would never be part of a solution. What do you say?

Dhlomo: Well I think that is totally wrong and unfounded. The situation in South Africa is such that we are serious in finding a solution. Chief Buthelezi would be a major element in that solution. We don't say, as Tambo is saying, that the ANC would not be part of this solution. All we are saying is that the ANC should stop deceiving the world and making people believe they are the sole and authentic representative of black people in South Africa because that is wrong. The ANC is part of the solution, but it is not the only solution. The ANC can not liberate this country without the input of Inkatha and Chief Buthelezi. The sooner people like Mr. Tambo recognize that, the better it will be for the liberation struggle in this country.