

Progress on reform in South Africa

During recent weeks, there has been a public outcry over ongoing events in South Africa. But the Western press evidently lacks the honesty to report the facts about the changes taking place inside the country. The press is neglecting to mention that Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, chief minister of KwaZulu and head of the largest black-liberation organization in the country, Inkatha, has very successfully initiated a discussion in the province of KwaZulu/Natal for establishing a non-ethnic government. The body within which this discussion takes place is called Indaba and was formed at the beginning of 1986.

We publish here Indaba's May 30 formal declaration, showing how the moderates of all population groups are involved in negotiating a way out of the current crisis.

KwaZulu/Natal Indaba Progress Report of May 30, 1986

The text of the formal declaration, as we received it from South Africa, begins here:

The KwaZulu/Natal Indaba began on 3 April 1986 with representatives of over 30 organizations committed to reaching consensus (or as near consensus as possible) regarding the formulation of proposals to be put to the government of the Republic of South Africa regarding the creation of a single legislative body to govern the combined area of Natal and KwaZulu.

At a very early stage, the Indaba was able to agree upon the following six basic points of departure, which have since guided discussion:

1) The Indaba accepts that the KwaZulu/Natal region is a single unit and that its second-tier government should reflect this reality in its political structure.

2) This Indaba, aware of the economic and strategic interdependence between the KwaZulu/Natal region and the rest of South Africa, and aware of the patriotism of its people to its fatherland, South Africa, has no desire to be sovereignly independent of South Africa.

3) All people of the region should have a right to full political participation and effective representation.

4) This Indaba accepts the democratic principles of freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, and access to the law. Legislation based on racial discrimination must be abolished.

5) Society in Natal/KwaZulu must be founded upon a free economic system and the provision of equal opportunities for all people. Provision must also be made for the protection of

the rights of individuals and groups.

6) Legislative and administrative power should be devolved as much as possible.

The major task of the Indaba is to design a constitution for the province which would give substance to the above principles and provide appropriate protection for the rights of the region's inhabitants. The Indaba is being advised on these matters by a committee of legal experts, who are now working on various constitutional options and a draft bill of rights.

The administration of the enlarged province also requires a lot of thought. Once the Indaba had decided on the powers of the provincial legislature, a committee of senior officials from the Natal provincial administration and the KwaZulu government was asked to recommend to the Indaba how the administration should be structured. The first proposals have been considered by the Indaba and the committee is now working on its second draft.

A committee of educators from all communities in the region is now being formed to consider the implications of a provincial constitution on education—both philosophically and practically. The Indaba recognizes that the issue of education has a very high focus in our society.

The Indaba continues in the spirit in which it began, with a willingness by all delegates to listen to the other person's point of view, recognizing that in South Africa we all need each other, and being determined to negotiate a peaceful way forward. The progress that has been made to date bodes well for the future of our land.

Indaba meets at the City Hall of Durban about two days in the week. The extremist organizations like ANC [African National Congress] and UDF [United Democratic Front] to the left and HNP [Purified National Party] and CP [Conservative Party] to the right have refused to participate despite invitations to do so. The following organizations are participating:

Afrikaanse Handelsinstitute (Natal); Black Allied Workers Union; Durban City Council; Durban Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce; Durbanese Afrikaanse Sakekamer; Inkatha; Inyanda Chamber of Commerce; Islamic Council; Kwa Loga; KwaZulu Cane Growers Association; KwaZulu Government; Labour Party; Natal Agricultural Union; Natal Association of Lac's; Natal Chamber of Industries; Natal Municipal Association; Natal Consultative Adhoc Committee; Natal Provincial Council; National Party of Natal (observer only).

New Republican Party; Peoples Congress Party; Progressive Federal Party; Pietermaritzburg City Council; Reform Party of South Africa; Regional Development Advisory Committee (Region E) SA; Hindu Maha Sabha; SA Sugar Association; Solidarity; National Council of African Women; Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce; Metrocom; Natal Law Society; National Peoples Party; TUCSA (observer only).