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MIKE SAUNDERS, a
visiting British writer,
samples Natal's recipe for
a new political brew

INDABA in Zulu means a de-
bate, a council or a weighty
matter. It is a word that is
being uttered with increasing
urgency and weight in Natal,
and with increasing unease
by the South African Govern-
ment.

~ The Indaba's first objec-

tive was reached on July 10
when the Bill of Rights was
adopted. Its 15 detailed

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clauses sweep away the en-
tire fabric of apartheid of
both the petit and grand mal
genres. Among other things,
equal treatment before the
law and the right of everyone
to own and occupy property
anywhere regardless of race
are guaranteed.

The latter would wipe out
that bastion of separatism,
the Group Areas Act. The In-

daba has further proclaimed
that the Bill of Rights will be
part of the constitution of the
new Province of Natal.

If all this seems a little
unrealistic from a body with-
out any legal standing, one
must bear in mind not only
the widespread support that
the Indaba has gathered
gathered from the people of
the region, but also the ethnic

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and demolish\201aphic realities -
that underlie this support.

Politically, the picture is
somewhat less crystalline.
The extreme Afrikaner
has naturally rejected the
daba on the grounds that
even to discuss power-shar-
ing is heresy and could lead
to the fragmentation of the
country.

More importantly, the
ANC and its currently lawful

| shadow, the UDF (United
Democratic Front), has simi-
larly condemned the Indaba
for being divisive of both
country and the cause of
African nationalism.

Why, if ANC and Inkath
are both committed to the
transfer of power to the Afri-
g:n majority, are they divid-

Bishop Zulu, Speaker of the
KwaZulu Legislative Assem-â\200\231
bly, claims it is because of
the ANCâ\200\231s diversion into
Marxism. Dr Oscar Dhlomo,
secretary-general of Inkatha,

, but adds that person-
ality conflicts between the
main leaders and tribal fac-
tors have exacerbated the
situation.

Opposed

There is no doubt that the
Indaba is aiming to produce a
constitution founded on some
form of universal suff
Dhlomo, while acknowledg-
ing that minorities may need
protection, is totally opposed
to any thinking based on
group politics.

It is apparent from
National Party utterances so
far that the Government will
be torn between pressures
from Natal and those from-
the Afrikaner right. Many-
see an autonomous Natal as
the first step on the road to
the Balkanisation of South
Africa. -

â\200\234On the other hand, the Gov-
ernment seems tempted to

view a multiracial Natal as a means of placating international opinion. There are advantages, too, in experimenting with power-sharing well away from the Transvaal/Orange Free State heartland of Afrikanerdom.

The most probable outcome from these conflicting forces is stasis. President Botha is likely to stall.

The Indaba is gaining momentum as a groundswell of public opinion â\200\224 at least among the whites â\200\224 gathers

sway.

As Oscar Dhomo said with a smile â\200\234Itâ\200\231s the only show in town.â\200\235

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| Sunday Tribune

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PWâ\200\231s blow
to Bill of
Rights-

NAMIBIAâ\200\231S Democratic Turnhalle
ance is not one of democracyâ\200\231s g
success stories. Its claim to be a
â\200\234â\200\234government of national unityâ\200\235 is be-
lied by a glaring disunity. Petty apart-
heid of the â\200\234Blankes Alleenlikâ\200\235 kind
has been done away with, but schools
are not integrated and racism is rife.
In Namibia they do have a Bill of
Fundamental Rights though, and this
may be part of the attraction of the
DTA for the members of the Kwa-
Zulu-Natal Indaba visiting Windhoek.
However, their visit coincides with
the near-nullification of this charter.
Just as it held out the possibility of
real protection of peopleâ\200\231s rights in
Namibia, President Botha has felt
compelled to intervene. He has issued
a retrospective decree which effec-
tively prevents the courts from adju-
dicating any challenges, through it, to
existing South African legislation.
This intervention is a reminder of the
essentially subordinate nature of the
DTA and of the limited role of any bill
of rights under such circumstances.
â\200\230The circumstances of Natal and
KwaZulu are similar in some ways to
those of Namibia, especially if the de-
gree of regional independence con-
templated by the Indaba becomes a
reality. There are two lessons that
members of the Indaba could well

learn from their visit. One is that a

regional bill of rights would be an
- empty document without the en-

- dorsement of Pretoria. Even if a bill of

rights were introduced nationally it
would need to be free of the rule by
decree and-veto which is allowed by

the present Constitution. :

The other is that national unity and the elimination of racism are difficult to achieve under any circumstances let alone against a history of inherited and manipulated divisiveness and racial stereotyping as is the case in Na-

-mibia and KwaZulu-Natal.

Against such a background, the best hope for a legislature or government aiming for unity is that it starts with a legitimacy that only the most rigorous and widespread democracy can offer. For this reason it would be a sad thing if Indaba members perceived the DTA as a role model for the province's future. ; :

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Timely though it is, the Government's acceptance yesterday of the need for a bill of human rights seems cynical in light of its behaviour towards Namibia and under an emergency which, by its very nature, curbs and violates human rights.