

Natal education: the challenge

Arduous task ahead for the Indaba, says Dhlomo

By Dr Oscar Dhlomo, co-convenor of the KwaZulu Natal Indaba and chairman of the joint executive authority. Extracts of an address delivered to the Natal African Inspectors' Association conference at the Umbumbulu College of Education, Amanzimtoti, today.

THE task that lies ahead of the Indaba in rationalising education in KwaZulu/Natal is arduous and challenging.

It is the task of uniting no less than six fragmented and compartmentalised civil service departments and some 1,8-million pupils into a single cohesive unit — a single education department which, from its inception, will be the largest in Southern Africa and indeed the Southern Hemisphere.

It is the challenge of correcting and balancing a faulty system which produces wasteful surpluses of staff and facilities.

It is the burden of providing and funding a massive upgrading exercise to lift the average standard of education to that currently enjoyed by white pupils, an effort that requires hundreds of millions of rands, thousands of new teachers and scores of new schools.

It was matters of this weight and import which were addressed by the Indaba's Education Committee which met over a period of eight months during 1986 to plan its policy and draw up an education blueprint for the region, a blueprint which will be honed by a special im-

plementation analysis team.

The Indaba education philosophy identifies its primary objective as the provision of open-ended, non-racial public education for all, a common system which respects and protects the language and cultural rights of all.

The proposals place a high priority on the achievement of equal provision of, and access to, education of the highest quality to enable all learners to achieve their full potential. They envisage the establishment of a single Department of Education at second-tier or Provincial level as part of the Provincial Administration responsible to the Legislature.

Logistics

At the same time, the logistics of managing an education department catering for more than 1,8-million pupils demand that control be devolved to the lowest appropriate level of authority. This realisation is reflected in powers which will be vested in elected school committees and regional co-ordinating committees.

The statement of principle that "the Province shall respect the rights of parents to ensure education for their children in conformity with their religious, cultural and philosophical convictions" finds practical expression in the control by the school committees over the "ethos of



Dr Oscar Dhlomo: "The task that lies ahead of the Indaba . . . is arduous and challenging."

the school" and the appointment of staff. They also have considerable powers in matters such as language-medium of instruction and curricula.

Not only does the Indaba envisage that many more educational decisions will in future be taken by the school committees, it is also committed to greater democratic control of the provision of education at all levels.

It is also proposed that legislation should provide for a Provincial Educational Council, representative of the entire "education community". This would comprise elected representatives of school committees, departmental nominees and other members representing teachers' and parents' organisations, religious and cultural interests and local government.

The Council would advise the Provincial Minister of Education, co-ordinate and monitor education planning and play a watchdog role in maintaining standards.

At another level of decentralisation, Regional Co-ordinating Committees will administer education on a regional and district basis, advise the regional administration on policy matters and provide an essential link between the Provincial Education Council and the school committees.

Race will cease to be a criterion for admission to a public school, with the only appropri-

ate criteria being appropriate residential, age and academic qualifications. This does not necessarily mean that all schools will automatically be integrated — they will continue to serve the needs of their particular geographic community.

While the short to medium-term prognosis is likely to be that many schools will become fully integrated, others will remain predominantly or completely white, black, coloured or Indian, as demographic circumstances dictate.

Instruction will be provided through the medium of Afrikaans and/or English and/or Zulu, with all pupils having the fundamental right to be educated in the medium of their choice. The study of a second official language will be compulsory and curricula will also make provision for the teaching of additional languages, particularly those related to the cultural and religious interests of the communities.

Values

The system of education will be pupil-centred, providing for the preservation of cultural identities yet consciously seeking to promote positive universal values, as well as develop the pupils' interests, aptitudes and abilities. It will be relevant to his effective participation in the life and future of his community and the South African

society of his time and age.

Non-formal education, as a supplement to the formal system, will be recognised and encouraged. At the same time, being well aware of their contribution to education, the Province will also continue to provide assistance to private schools.

While guaranteeing the right of public education and charging the Province to provide it, the Indaba's Bill of Rights neither specifies the duration of such public education nor states that it should be provided without cost. The importance of the right to public education lies in the fact that the right will be the same for all learners. The duration of the compulsory provision will depend on the capacity of the State to finance it.

Who will fund the implementation of the Indaba's education proposals? Who will provide the hundreds of millions of rand necessary to upgrade education for all in the Province to the level currently enjoyed by whites?

The answer, to a large extent, is obviously Central Government, which has already committed itself, regardless of the implementation or otherwise of the Indaba proposals, to closing the gap in educational standards over a period of 10 years. This will mean that enormous funding transfers will have to be made to correct the backlog in

spending on schools currently administered by KwaZulu and, to a lesser extent, the backlog in spending on black schools in Natal, as well as Indian and coloured schools.

In this regard, it is perhaps worth noting that Government has already begun addressing the problem. In his most recent Budget, the Minister of Finance made provision for a 40 percent increase in spending on black education as against some 20 percent on national education.

The Indaba plans to accelerate and assist this process of equalisation of education by rationalising and streamlining administration. One Education Department will replace the six at present operating in the region, obviously with substantial administrative savings.

At the same time, the Indaba believes that the acceptance of its proposals will trigger an accelerated flow of investment capital into the region, generating increased prosperity and creating a new tax base which will assist not only the Province but the whole country to achieve its goal of equal health, education and other services.

Income

In addition, the Indaba may also seek additional sources of income to help foot the education bill. In this context it may be worthy of mention that several major multi-national corporations have already pledged substantial contributions should the proposals be implemented.

Unfortunately, the problem of low standards cannot, however, be solved by finance alone. Manpower may, in the short-term, prove to be a more significant constraint than finance. Vast numbers of additional teachers must be trained. It will, therefore, be imperative that the under-utilisation of existing school and teacher-training facilities be addressed immediately. Retrenched white and Asian teachers should be re-employed to ensure that every available human resource is utilised to the full. In addition it will be necessary to introduce advancement programmes to upgrade teachers already in service.

There can be no undue haste in the implementation of the new education system. The importance of the "phasing-in period" must be recognised. However, excessive delay caused by the protection of group interests could also result in their rejection by the majority.

'New realism' is significantly altering the SA scene

FILE STAR. *13 JAN 88*

A year after the imposition of sanctions by the United States and the EEC, and six months after a general election which saw the National Party returned to Parliament with a commanding majority, I discern a new wave of realism permeating all manner of thinking about the South African political scene.

This new realism is evident within the hot debate that characterises white politics in South Africa; it is evident within black politics; it is evident among business leaders; and one sees telltale signs in the attitudes of some politicians and business people in the US and Europe.

This "new realism" is manifesting itself in several fields of action and thought. I would like to highlight six of these areas, the first being revolution.

The new realism I discern is that no radical believes anymore that the revolution is imminent; but neither do the Nationalists believe that "all's right with the world". And from the realistic, new assumptions that both sides are making right now, new perspectives are emerging, such as; for

'Business cannot avoid political involvement'

instance, the popular conception about the power and clout of business leaders.

Perspectives have changed somewhat concerning the extent of political change that business can and should bring about in South Africa. First of all, through the years — and more particularly during the recent years of turmoil — those business leaders in South Africa who had thought that they had better "stick to their knitting" and steer clear of political involvement, were drawn — albeit reluctantly — into the political process, if only because they had to deal with increasingly politicised trade unions. Business can no longer avoid political involvement.

The "new realism" that I'm talking about seems to be favouring those business leaders who decided against political rhetoric, and who chose political action, in a practical and meaningful way, instead.

A third area in which the new realism is manifesting itself is that of constitutional politics. More than ever before, the "South African issue" has become a political/ideological one, rather than an emotional one.

As far as the man in the street, whether white or black, is concerned, much of the emotion has been taken out of the apartheid debate with the removal of apartheid's more emotional pillars. Legislation on mixed marriages, sexual liaison between black and white, influx control, the carrying of "passbooks" and the ownership of property by blacks in "white" South Africa, has been either abolished or

If we could help South Africa regain its economic momentum and make its political peace with Africa, I believe we will have found the key to solving the African dilemma, writes Dr Walter Hasselkus, managing director of BMW (SA)

substantially modified.

The results are remarkable. A representative of one of the country's largest home building construction firms has told me of an unprecedented boom in the construction of houses in the urban black townships. No less a figure than Foreign Minister Pik Botha himself has declared that an estimated 40 000 blacks now live in Hillbrow.

These were issues for which people took to the streets not so long ago. They are issues no longer. The central political issue now is the question of power. Who will control South Africa eventually: black or white? Or will some form of power-sharing come into being? This is the central and curiously also the least emotional, of the apartheid issues still remaining.

A fourth new realism I discern concerns the attitude of whites towards Africa, and vice versa. There was a time when white South Africans — and here I mean Afrikaners and those English-speakers who had been here for several generations — thought of themselves first and foremost as people with European roots.

Ironically, it was discernible even in the way apartheid used to be administered in the petty sense of the word, separation signs at stations, bus stops or post office entrances used to read "Europeans" and "Non-whites". No more. Admittedly, the signs are disappearing anyway, but so have

'Whites will not be driven out'

the sentiments. With the exception of those whites who are relative newcomers to South Africa, I have come across none who comfortably or confidently contemplate living in Europe or America should whites be forced out of South Africa.

But significantly, neither do blacks anymore contemplate the idea of driving out the "white colonialists". In fact, some of the most voluble opponents of South Africa among the black leaders of Africa have described the presence of white South Africans as permanent.

In the fifth place I would like to highlight stability. The new realism recognises that although Government's security forces and services were severely tried and tested in recent years by ANC bombings and civil unrest, all of these forces are



Dr Hasselkus

unscathed and intact. Government is in complete control, even though it has had to effect unpopular and morally questionable emergency measures to stay in control.

I believe that the question of political power — or power-sharing — will not be pursued by politicised blacks in future via attempts at a public uprising, but that the black trades unions will be used increasingly as a vehicle for political expression. The mining strike and the eastern Cape labour strikes in recent months, are ominous forerunners of political action via labour which we may see increasingly in South Africa in the near future.

As a businessman, I would like to conclude by returning to a field of exceptional importance to me: the economy. One of the idealistic views of recent years was that the combination of internal and external political and economic pressures being exerted on South Africa would bring the economy to its knees, thus paving the way for political collapse.

As it turned out, the recession was the worst ever in South Africa's history, causing enormous damage to companies large and small, and creating massive unemployment. But the South African Government stands stronger than ever! Also from this exercise derives a new realism, a new insight: the South African economy is more resilient than many crit-

ics had hoped. As so often in the past, gold has come to the rescue.

With political stability has come increased business and consumer confidence. Everyone concerned is recognising the reality of the current level of political and economic stability. This is a good basis on which to plan a new future. I would suggest that the role multinational business can play in bringing about this new future should move in two directions: locally and abroad.

In South Africa, we can integrate blacks into the industrial society by extensive and intensive training, and thus prepare the environment in which the political and economic emancipation of blacks becomes practical and realistic. This, more than anything, is our social responsibility towards South Africa.

But the upliftment of the black community *per se* would be meaningless unless we give that community a worthwhile future to aspire to. This makes it imperative that we in business should also appeal to Gov-

'An exciting challenge for the multinationals'

ernment to finalise the dismantling of apartheid with renewed vigour.

In Europe and elsewhere, we ought to use our influence abroad not merely to minimise the effects of sanctions and disinvestment, but in fact to reverse the trend.

The economic rescue of Africa poses an exciting challenge to the multinationals. We are South Africa's links to the technological know-how of the First World. We are in a position to increase the level of sophistication that exists in research and development, and in manufacturing in this country. We, along with our overseas parent companies and their associates in Europe and America, could help to reverse the boycott trend, and become the initiators of a new industrial revolution that will bring about the tempo of economic growth which South Africa — and Africa as a whole — needs.

If we could help South Africa regain its economic momentum, and make its political peace with Africa, I believe we will have found the key to solving the African dilemma.

● This is a condensed version of an article written for Leadership magazine.

Black turf battles raise specter of S. Africa's 'Lebanonization'

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1988

By Lynda Schuster

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

It has been a tough night for vigilantes, so Stumo and two other "commanders" are out checking their troops.

Stumo (not his real name) spots a house burning about a quarter-mile away, and they drive closer to take a look. Suddenly, gunshots ring out. Everyone freezes. The car's lights illuminate someone leaping through

nearby bush. Then more gunfire. Stumo yells at the driver to get them out of there.

"They're going to pay for this," he vows, fists clenched. "They can't do this to us on our own territory."

So goes another night of violence in the black townships of this once drowsy little city. The battle pits members of Inkatha, a Zulu nationalist group, against backers such as Stumo of the United Democratic Front (UDF), an anti-apartheid coalition. The violence has taken a terrible toll — about 300 people died here in the last five months of 1987, another 35 so far this year.

At the leadership level, the conflict is ideological. Conservative Inkatha chiefs see the UDF as a front for the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), which is committed to violent overthrow of the white government. The UDF, meanwhile, rejects Inkatha's claim to be part

of the liberation struggle and views its president, Mangosuthu Buthe, as a sellout.

But among youngsters doing the fighting, the battle has gone beyond ideology to sheer territorialism. For many observers, this descent into street-gang combat portends a frightening trend for the future. With the government reportedly unable to restore law and order, they see the rise of local black militias, each loyal to its own leader, each set to protect its own turf.

"I fear a kind of Lebanonization of black areas in this country," says a political analyst who did not want to be identified, "which would have awful implications for any future power-sharing among blacks."

To be sure, the police say they are determined to control the violence, and recently they have beefed up patrols in Pietermaritzburg's townships. Besides, the UDF-Inkatha rivalry is particularly impassioned here in Natal Province, because that is where most Inkatha supporters live.

The trouble dates back to the UDF's founding in 1983 and its subsequent push into traditional Inkatha territory. The UDF's focus on bread-and-butter issues — housing, transportation, water — quickly caused a mushrooming of community organizations. Not to be outdone, Inkatha stepped up its recruitment program. Things turned ugly soon after. Tensions mounted and acts of violence and retribution increased until last August when UDF supporters murdered 13 Inkatha youths — and the place went berserk.

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The war is fought mostly at night in the maze of townships scattered throughout the lush hillsides southwest of Pietermaritzburg. The night, explains Stumo the commander, is when the "comrades" - as UDF/ANC youth are called - gather. Stumo claims to control about 200 comrades, ranging in ages from 12 to 30 years. They are divided into smaller groups of about 50, of which his buddies command two.

The groups meet every evening to decide what action they should take. If it is a small action - such as burning down a house - Stumo is generally not consulted. Major assaults require his consent. Their ammunition, he says, is crude: stones; slingshots; knives; homemade pistols; and bombs of gasoline, matches, and soil. Occasionally he has discipline problems with his troops. When that happens, a people's court is convened and punishment decided: either beating or "nude modeling" - where the transgressor is made to strip and parade naked before his comrades.

By day, the youngsters' handiwork is apparent in the burned-out houses that dot the hillsides. One is Julia Mdlatose's. Mrs. Mdlatose, who is an Inkatha member, says a group of about 100 youths showed up on the night of Sept. 27, chanting anti-Inkatha slogans and throwing stones, bricks, and gasoline-soaked blankets. She and her three children managed to escape, but her husband was beaten to death by the mob.

Stories of attacks by Inkatha youths are equally horrific. Themba Henry Ngcobo's house in Mpumaza was burned earlier this month by 20 youngsters yelling that they didn't want comrades living in the area. (Mr. Ngcobo's daughter works for a UDF-affiliated union.)

All this has reduced the once lively townships to somber places where people hurry home before dark. A nurse who works at Edendale Hospital explains: "The comrades could get me because I work at Edendale [Inkatha territory]. Inkatha could get me because I live in Caluza [UDF turf]. And the *tsotsis* [hooligans] could get me because they want my purse."

But there is little safety even behind locked doors. The Rev. Ben Nsimbi, a Methodist minister, tells of a woman parishioner who objected to her 17-year-old daughter's activities as a comrade. Soon after, a mob of youngsters gathered outside her home. The daughter explained that if the woman were not going to be part of the "struggle," she could not protect her. The woman fled to Mr. Nsimbi's house.

Many observers say the problem here has been exacerbated by police favoring Inkatha - at least tacitly. Natal courts have issued 13 injunctions, brought by a Congress of South African Trade Unions legal team, against Inkatha leaders. (The trade union congress is a UDF affiliate.) Police have yet to press criminal charges.

Inkatha, for its part, says the South African police side with the UDF. Brig. Jan Kotze, division commander of the South African police, dismisses all accusations of favoritism. "Each side alleges the police is on the side of the other," he explains. "It's not true. Once you're out there, you get that sort of allegation anywhere in the world."

Inkatha and UDF leaders have tried talking. Two rounds of peace negotiations were held last year, but to no avail. And Inkatha leaders say they will not try again. "The UDF is not sincere," asserts Vitus Mvelase, an Inkatha central committee member. "If they truly are nonviolent, they must repudiate the ANC. Anyway, since they believe in socialism and we believe in capitalism, I don't know how there ever can be peace."

It is highly unlikely the UDF would repudiate the ANC. Even if both sides agreed on a peace treaty, however, many question the UDF's ability to enforce it. With most leaders detained under the 18-month old state of emergency, the few UDF activists still free admit they have problems controlling members.

Just ask Stumo. "I would have a hard time calling off my men," he says. "The comrades want to go on fighting to eliminate Buthelezi and Inkatha. There will be no peace in our townships until we are rid of them."

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