CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

THE LAND

The Republic of South Africa is the southernmost part of the great African plateau which extends northward into the Sahara. It stretches latitudinally from 22° to 35° S and longitudinally from 17° to 33° E. Total surface area of the country is 1219090 km². The Republic has common boundaries with Namibia in the north-west, the Republic of Botswana on the north, and Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland on the north-east. The kingdom of Lesotho in the south-east is completely surrounded by South Africa. To the west, south and east, the country is surrounded by the Atlantic and southern Indian Ocean respectively. Isolated from the main land, at a distance of 1920 km south-east of Cape Town, lie Prince Edward and Marion islands, annexed by South Africa in 1947.

As a result of geographic changes in remote times South Africa’s main landmass consists of a vast plateau with upwared rims and an escarpment. The escarpment is clearly noticed on the east coast where the Drakensberg range acts as a formidable barrier to human movement as well as the most important watershed in the country. The hard rock of Drakensburg gives way to softer material towards the northern end in KwaZulu-Natal. As the escarpment loses its character, this area forms a natural meeting-place for peoples and cultures.
Towards further north, the coastal plain in Mozambique and the Transvaal lowveld are created as the edge of the plateau recedes into the inland. At the southern part of the Drakensburg the escarpment forms a series of ranges until the Cape where the pattern becomes complicated by the Cape series mountains. The escarpment appears again on the west coast and can be traced further north. The country’s two major rivers are Orange in the west and Limpopo, which drains most of northern province.

THE PEOPLE

A study of South Africa’s history reveals the fact that like many other countries it has also seen movements of people of different origins at different points of time. Although skulls and stone implements show that Bushmen were preceded by people of earlier cultures equivalent to early stone-age cultures of Europe and India, the former group of people are considered to be the earliest inhabitants of the land. Originated somewhere in the eastern part of Central Africa, the Bushmen migrated southwards thousands of years ago.\(^1\) These people lived entirely by hunting and food gathering. There were no real clans and some form of rudimentary chieftainship had existed among them.

The people to come next were the Hottentots who had probably migrated from Central African region. They were pastoral people who subsisted mainly on

---

\(^1\) Leo Marquard, *The Story of South Africa* (London, Memiv), p. 17.
cattle and sheep. But their tribal and clan organisations were more advanced than that of the nomadic Bushmen and had fairly well defined system of chieftainship. By the beginning of seventeenth century, the Hottentots in scattered clans and tribes were occupying the western and southern portions of the Cape region and were in the process of driving the Bushmen out of these areas towards the north and east. This process was assisted by the arrival of Europeans.

The next people to arrive in South Africa were the Bantu or, as they are generally known today, Africans. At present only few thousands Bushmen and pure-bred Hottentots are left in South Africa. These people were either gradually expelled or absorbed by the Bantu people. The original home of Bantu people (they speak different languages having the word-stem ‘ntu’ meaning people) was probably in the areas of east Equatorial Africa, the region of Great Lakes. The impact of slave trade on the east coast by Arab and later Indian traders on socio-economic life and the need for new grazing lands due to drying desert prompted these people for southward migration.

The southern Bantu people as they are normally referred to are divided into four main ethnic groups, i.e. Nguni (consisting of Zulu, Swazi and Xhosa), Sotho (comprising Tswana, Pedi, and Southern Sotho), the Venda and Shangana Tsonga.

---

(Each sub-group consists of many clans. Zulu has about 300 clans, controlled by clan chiefs).

Each of the sub groups consists of numerous tribes and clans. All the southern Bantu had similar social, political, economic and military organisations. There were no extensive Bantu kingdoms and clans were the highest level of political organisations. In course of time, some absorptions of small clans by big ones had taken place, but still hundreds of clans existed in the region. According to one estimate in 1800 there were over 800 clans in Natal alone.³

The coming of Europeans had greatly influenced the southern Bantu people. European contact started as early as sixteenth century, when the Portuguese established their foothold in south-east Africa. But the small size of Portuguese traders could hardly have any impact of substance on the local people.⁴ More profound impact started with the establishment of a provisioning

---

⁴ Omer-Cooper, n. 2, pp. 21-22.
station at the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. But the realisation of Cape’s strategic importance in regard to trade with the East impelled the Dutch to increase its stake by allowing free burgher population to settle in the area. Soon German settlers were welcomed by the Company. In 1688 French protestants (also called Huguenots) came to the Cape after their expulsion by French ruler Louis XIV.

Dutch rule in the Cape came to an end in 1795 when the British, after an agreement with the ousted ruler of Holland, William of Orange, attacked the area and took over its administration. This was however a temporary occupation; the final annexation took place in 1806 (this was confirmed in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna). Abolition of slavery by British parliament in 1833 and removal of restrictions on Hottentots, Griquas and even Bushmen affected the Boer farmers of the Cape. Many Boers, faced with these adverse legislations (from their view point) and also shortage of land due to population growth embarked on a trek towards north in search of a better land. The weakness of the separate trekkers, individual jealousies and Boer’s harsh attitudes towards the

---

5 The Decision to establish this station was taken in December 1651.

6 Besides production needs these people were required to defend the Cape against enemy attacks.

7 For grounds for expulsion of French, see Marquard, n. 1, p. 43-44.

8 In 1794 revolutionary army of France attacked the aristocratic Holland leading to Orange’s expulsion, see ibid, pp. 82-84.

9 For details of circumstances leading to Great Trek, see Gailey, n. 3, pp. 65-72.
natives made it easier for Britain to proclaim its sovereignty over the Boer areas—Orange Free State and the Transvaal, in 1848. Although Boer states were restored their sovereign status in 1854, Natal remained under Britain since its annexation in 1843.

However, the rivalry between British and Boer continued to dominate their relationship in later years. The consequences of gold discovery along Witwatersrand in 1886 further aggravated this rivalry. Companies and thousands of Uitlanders—Americans, Australians, Cornishmen, Englishmen and Scotsmen flocked the region in search of wealth. Threatened by these outsiders, Transvaal (in which gold was discovered) soon started imposing restrictions on their activities prompting British to interverse. This led to Boer war in 1899 in which the two Boer republics were defeated. Under the treaty of Vereeniging (May 31, 1902), the Boer republics acknowledged British sovereignty. The Durban convention, while discussing the problems of four republics, drafted a constitution in 1909 for the republics. After it was passed by the British parliament as South Africa Act of 1909, two Boer republics and two British republics (Cape Colony and Natal) came together and the Union of South Africa was formed.

People of Indian origin constitute another race group in South Africa. The first lot of Indians reached in November 1860 as indentured labourers to work in sugar plantations in Natal. The original agreement with Indian authorities was for three years. These labourers after working for five more years were allowed
the option of free passage to home or freedom to stay as free person with some public land. Many decided to stay back and entered other occupation – coalmines, railways, hotels etc. Indians from Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh later arrived as businessmen and also settled down permanently. People of Indian origin are largely concentrated in province of KwaZulu-Natal. The population of 37.9 million, according to October 1996 census, is made up of Africans (76.3 per cent), whites (12.7 per cent), coloured-mixed race (8.5 per cent) and Indians (2.5 per cent).10

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The union of South Africa was formed on 31 May 1910 in terms of the South Africa Act on 1909 which put it under the British Crown. Traces of racial discrimination can be found in this Act as it left the issue of voting of non-whites as they were before, thus refusing them any voting rights, except in the Cape which allowed right to vote to non-whites.

Before this racial discrimination had already taken shape in Natal and Transvaal against the people of Indian origin. When these people entered into business and other activities after expiry of their labour agreement, European shopkeepers felt threatened. Natal imposed an annual tax of £3 on those who failed to reindenture. They were denied voting rights according to law in 1896.

---

In 1897 a law denied licenses to trade unless accounts were maintained in English. Restrictions were also imposed in Cape Colony and the two Dutch Republics. In Orange Free State a ban was imposed on holding fixed property or becoming merchants and farmers. In Transvaal, under law no. 3 of 1855, provisions were made for separate residential locations. Acquisition of property outside these locations was prohibited. These discriminations prompted Mahatma Gandhi to start agitation albeit non-violent one in support of the people of Indian origin.

The first comprehensive measure after the formation of the Union was the Native Land Act of 1913 which demarcated areas on which various groups of Bantu had historic claims. This Act recognised the de facto segregation which already existed. In 1936 the Native Trust and Land Act allowed for the purchase of an additional fifteen million acres of land to be added to the reserves of Bantu people. But population increase soon caused shortage of reserve land for Bantu. People were forced to migrate to cities and other areas having job opportunities. By 1961 about three million Africans were living in the urban centres, thus increasing pressure on housing and other facilities. The Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 empowered local authorities to establish African settlements in areas segregated from white locations. In 1936 the Representation of Natives Act disenfranchised approximately 15,000 qualified

---

11 For details of discrimination against Indian origin people, see Benjamin Sacks, South Africa: An Imperial Dilemma, Non-Europeans and the British Nation – 1902-1914 (USA, 1967), pp. 14-17, 201-221.
Bantu in Cape Colony as they were given special representation different from the common roll. Three special seats were created in the House of Assembly (to be held by whites) to represent Bantu interests. Four senators were chosen to represent the interests of the non-Europeans. Thus in brief, the Bantu majority, long before 1948, were living under conditions of racial discrimination. There were two separate sets of rules governing whites and blacks in all important areas of life. People of Indian origin were also discriminated.

The year 1948 was a watershed in the history of racial discrimination in South Africa. After the elections the National Party (NP) assumed power under the leadership of Daniel Malan and started putting racial discrimination into practice in a more vigorous way. The government had received inputs on theory of exclusion from the professors of Stellenbosch University and SABRA (South African Bureau of Racial Affairs). Apartheid (new name for racial discrimination) became the official policy. According to the policy of apartheid each race and nation was to be kept apart so that each could develop socially, politically, culturally and economically along its own inherent lines. A host of discriminatory statutes were soon passed by the new government. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act of 1949 prohibited marriages across race line. The Suppression of Communism Act (1950) defined communism in a broad manner so that the state could ban any organisation which was even remotely suspected of communist link.
The Population Registration Act (1950) provided for the registration of all persons according to race based upon the 1951 census. It classified population into four racial categories, such as, whites, blacks, Indians and coloureds and an identity certificate was issued in this regard. The Group Areas Act (1950), referred to as the “cornerstone of apartheid” further consolidated residential segregation. No member of one race, could acquire property in areas reserved for another. The aim was to restrict the residence of all persons of one race group to one distinct area, thereby minimising contact between Bantu, Coloured, Indians and Whites. The Bantu Authorities Act (1951) became the basis for the later Bantustan developments. It regularised the older system of indirect rule in the native reserves and gave more powers to tribal chiefs. It envisaged the establishment of ‘territorial authorities’ on ethnic line. Apart from these, several other laws were formulated enforcing racial segregation in public places, trains and buses, post offices, hospitals, parks and even ambulances. By all these laws the Afrikaner government, within few years, made the Union a unique case of racial subjugation by suppressing the majority Bantu population.

**Homeland System**

Creation of separate homelands for the country’s majority was the ultimate act of apartheid to execute permanent separation. This was the grand apartheid design of reducing the majority into minority on the basis of ethnic
identity, whereas ignoring ethnic divisions among the whites. The basis for creation of homeland already existed before 1948 in the form of native reserves under 1913 and 1936 Native Land Acts. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 increased the powers of traditional authorities in preparation for self-government. It provided for the establishment of a three-tiered structure of tribal, regional and territorial authorities for the Africans. These authorities had varying degree of administrative, judicial and advisory functions. Tribal chiefs, headmen, elders and some government appointed people were in charge of these authorities. The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 demarcated the Africans into eight ethnic groups and provided the legislative basis for future homelands.¹² These groups were to exercise their political rights in their own areas and not in the larger South Africa. The following were the eight demarcated African ethnic groups: Tswana, Venda, Zulu, Tsonga, Sotho, Pedi, Xhosa and Swazi. On this basis ten separate homelands were created – KwaZulu, Bophuthatswana, QwaQwa, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, Lebowa, Ciskei, Transkei, Gazankulu and Venda.

The homelands were allowed to have legislative assemblies but were given limited powers. The government envisaged that at a later stage these homelands would be granted full independence and become sovereign states. This would have meant thousands of blacks losing their South African citizenships. Four homelands, Bophuthatswana, Transkei, Venda and Ciskei,

Absorption of bantustans into provinces

KwaZulu-Natal – All of KwaZulu
Free State – Districts of Bophuthatswana plus QwaQwa
Mpumalanga – Districts of Bophuthatswana, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele and Lebowa
North-West – Most districts of Bophuthatswana
Eastern Cape – All of Ciskei and Transkei
Northern Province – All of Gazankulu and Venda, and a district of Lebowa
opted for independence resulting in many losing their South African citizenship.

These homelands, besides isolating the blacks politically, emboldened the ethnic divisions among the blacks much to the benefit of the apartheid regime. At the core of the homeland policy remained the long term apartheid goal of permanently reducing the majority (blacks) into minority thereby reaching at the logical conclusion of apartheid – permanent separation of blacks. Homelands also served as cheap labour reserves for white run industries and at the same time home to extra black labour who were not allowed to stay in cities.

THE ZULU PEOPLE

Since the focus of the present research is the role of Inkatha in anti-apartheid struggles, this requires an analysis of the rise of Zulus as an ethnic entity in an historical perspective. Because, as will be seen in subsequent discussions, Zulus have always played a crucial role in Inkatha, hence integral to an understanding of the organisation. The objective is to locate Zulu within the Bantu community or more specifically the Nguni branch of the Bantu and in the broader context of South Africa. The southern Bantu settlements developed in different parts of the country. The Nguni branch settled on the east coast which covers present KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Eastern Cape. The Sotho entered South Africa through Bechuanaland (present Botswana) and
spread towards east and south right up to Orange river. The Venda people settled in northern Transvaal (present Northern Province) and the Tsonga in eastern Transvaal. Though their languages are related, a Nguni will not understand a Sotho or Venda and vice versa. Even within a subgroup the differences exist, a Zulu will not understand a Swazi or Xhosa and vice versa. Differences also exist at the level of culture and tradition. Notwithstanding their commonness of origin, differences as mentioned above and a sense of belonging to a particular group (often organised politically) helped them claim distinct ethnic identity.

Table – II. Black population of South Africa 1970.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Population (000s)</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>4026</td>
<td>26.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>3930</td>
<td>26.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td>1719</td>
<td>11.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sotho</td>
<td>1603</td>
<td>10.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sotho</td>
<td>1453</td>
<td>9.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangaan</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swazi</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South ndebele</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North ndebele</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15058</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total population in 1970 – 21,794,328.
Of all the ethno-linguistic groups among blacks, Zulu population is the largest. The Xhosa comes next. According to a survey conducted in early 1990s, South Africa had around 8.48 million Zulu-speaking people. The Xhosa-speakers were about 6.58 million, north and south Sothos 6.3 million, and Tswana 3.3 million. 5.8 million were Afrikaners and the English-speakers were 3.5 million.13 Zulus are mostly concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal where 80 per cent people speak Zulu language.14 Although not all Zulu-speaking people are members of Zulu tribe, this percentage certainly points to their majority status. Because language, along with other factors, has always been decisive in ethnic identification. It is the medium through which ethnic symbols and relevant aspects of history are transmitted. Apart from KwaZulu-Natal a good number of Zulus live in Gauteng (18 per cent Zulu-speaking) and Mpumalanga (24 percent Zulu-speaking).15 During apartheid time Zulus from KwaZulu homeland migrated to the Rand and settled in townships near Johannesburg. Some of the important townships with Zulu population are Soweto, Tokoza, Katlehong, Vosloorus, Boipatong and Sebokeng. In late 1980s and during transition period of 1990s these townships became places of intense violence and killing. The Xhosas are mainly concentrated in Eastern Cape (82.6 per cent Xhosa-speaking), Western Cape (15.3 per cent) and

15 Ibid., pp. 14, 16.
Northern Cape (6 per cent Xhosa – speaking).  

Another important aspect, which has bearing on the present study, is the status of white population in KwaZulu-Natal. Majority of the whites in the province are English speaking British descendants. This is significant in the sense that the responsibility for apartheid goes to the Afrikaners, not the British. Although Zulu and British have a bitter history in the Natal region in 19th century, their relationship during anti-apartheid struggles was by and large cordial. Whites in KwaZulu-Natal are mainly concentrated in Durban and other city areas. Whereas the Zulus have their traditional stronghold in north of Tugela river. This was the reason for Inkatha’s strong support in north rather then south of Tugela during struggles.

KwaZulu-Natal is the only province in South Africa which has two capitals – Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg. The former is also the seat of Zulu king and headquarters of Inkatha. Ulundi was also the capital of KwaZulu homeland.

**Historical Dominance of Zulu**

The Zulu clan or the amaZulu (the people of heavens) had settled near the White Umpholozi river since the late seventeenth century, with a population of not more than 1500.  

They were at that time ruled by Chief Senzangakona. The

---

16 Ibid., pp. 7, 5, 10.

17 Gailey, n. 3, p. 74.
rise of Zulu kingdom goes to the credit of the famous warrior king Shaka, the son of Senzangakona. Shaka’s service in Dingiswayo’s army (Dingiswayo was the chief of Mtetwa clan under which Zulus were ruled at that time) helped him evolve new military concepts which made his armies invincible in later years. He favoured a short stabbing spear, a large shield, and close combat tactics based on precision drill and utter ruthlessness while fighting his enemies.\textsuperscript{18} By dint of his superior military techniques he could establish Zulu hegemony over entire Natal region by 1820. The military tradition created by Shaka was, in later years, followed by successive Zulu kings and became part of Zulu culture.

The supremacy of Zulus in Natal was threatened due to the coming of Boers (Dutch farmers) from Cape province since 1836 and also the annexation of Natal by Britain in 1843. Internecine warfare among various clan chiefs within Zulu was another reason for gradual decline of Zulu power. The British conquest of Zululand in 1879 after the defeat of king Cetshwayo at battle of Isandhlwana (Zulu King had won initially but was defeated in the second encounter) marked the end of Zulu supremacy. Although Britain did not annex the territory immediately, its division into eleven chieftaincies seriously undermined the monarchy. Dinizulu, who succeeded with the help of Boer volunteers, was too weak. Concerned over the possible eastward expansion of Transvaal, Britain finally took over the territory in 1877. But Dinizulu was not recognised as Zulu king and was in exile in St. Helena. His son Solomon had a

\textsuperscript{18} For Shaka’s new military techniques, see. Omer-Cooper, n. 2, pp. 30-31.
tough time getting recognition in 1917 as Chief of Usuthu section of the Zulu. In this way Zulu royal house lost its significance. King Cyprian, the successor of Solomon was also weak. The present king Goodwill Zwelithini assumed throne in 1971. His position is constitutional and is confirmed by the present constitution.

**Construction of Zulu Nation**

The question that requires immediate attention is – is Zulu a nation or a nationality? A nationality is primarily an ethnical and cultural term. Factors such as geographical unity, common race, common culture, religion, language, common history and customs and traditions make a people a nationality. Presence of at least some factors is essential to claim this status. Whereas, a nation is a self-governing nationality. So the difference between nation and nationality is one of political organisation. Keeping this in mind, Zulu was a nation since the formation of Zulu kingdom by Shaka till 1990, except the period when the area was under the control of British. This was because monarchy satisfied the political requirement of a nation. The homeland system, under which KwaZulu was a self-governing area of Zulus, also to certain extent served the meaning of nation, though it was never independent of South Africa. Since 1994 when the homeland system was abolished with the inauguration of non-racial government Zulu has became a nationality, not a nation. Because South Africa’s present constitution provides no independent political structure
for any of the ethnic groups to satisfy their status as nation.

An examination of Zulu as a nation is rooted in the people’s history and factors influencing them. This calls for an analysis of Zulu history (more particularly history of monarchy) and the role of whites (British and Boer included) in shaping this process. Though Senzangakona was the first Zulu ruler, the credit for laying the foundation of Zulu as a nation goes to King Shaka. He not only established an empire but also gave his people a distinct identity and culture derived out of his invented military techniques. The image of Zulus as ‘warrior people’ emanated from Shaka’s time because quite efficiently he expanded the frontiers of Zulu Kingdom by defeating other tribal Kings. Thus he gave three most significant ingredients of a nation, such as geographical unity, distinct cultural identity and more importantly political unity. Successive Zulu kings continued the tradition established by Shaka.

The coming of whites with the purpose of trade and commerce further emboldened Zulu nation-building process. Zulu kings fought several wars with the whites, such as the battle of Blood river between Boer and king Dingane, battle of Isandhlwana between British and King Cetshwayo. As mentioned earlier British occupation of Zululand was a major cause for the downfall of the Zulu monarchy. Involvement of whites in Zulu affairs should be seen in the context of capitalist expansion. By suppressing Zulu monarchy the whites tried to release resources and manpower (under Zulu control) for capitalist exploitation. White farming in the region expanded considerably over the years
especially in response to world demand for tropical commodities such as sugar and cotton. This had negative repercussions for the African peasant. Large scale evictions from land caused discontent among the native people. When king Solomon was trying for recognition from British, this native discontent helped him to some extent. For the Zulu, the king represented unity of the community, its father and redistributor. This attachment to monarchy especially in a time of crisis caused due to white expansion into black areas made Solomon’s claim more profound. Thus the formation of Zulu nation was an outcome of a long historical process which involved Zulu royal house as well as the white capitalist expansion. Besides the tradition and culture that came to be associated with the royal house, the aggressive and exploitative nature of whites made Zulu people increasingly oriented towards the institution of monarchy.

Some scholars, however argue that image of Zulu ‘as a conquering warrior race’ is loosely based upon historical reality and is created and perpetuated by whites to serve their interests.\(^\text{19}\) The whites who were mainly traders, settlers and missionaries thought to serve their material and religious interests by fabricating a ‘myth’ regarding Zulu military tradition. The traders and settlers justified domination of the native population on the ground that they were barbaric and bellicose by nature. Similarly when the missionaries

faced opposition to their activities from Zulu Chiefs, who considered it as a threat to their position, they (missionaries) justified action against them on similar ground. In the opinion of these scholars, the white settlers in their bid to control and exploit the region, carefully orchestrated myths about Zulu culture and history.

This line of argument however does not explain the true nature of Zulus. As history has shown Zulu battles with the whites were always imposed by the latter in its bid to extract benefits. Successive Zulu kings restrained themselves from a direct confrontation with the whites. Even Cetshwayo was forced into war by the British. But once into war Zulus have shown their bravery and discipline. In fact the unity and fighting spirit created by Shaka had never been destroyed by the whites. Zulu as a people always survived. It is manifested in history that more than anything else Zulu assertion has always been dear to them. The rise of minor chief Bambata in 1906 against the whites over imposition of discriminatory tax, was the last armed Zulu uprising against whites. Though this could be suppressed, it demonstrated the fighting spirit of Zulus. The sense of Zulu identity as a nation remained intact. Their past exploitation, their victories as well as defeats and elements of tradition are still alive in the form of songs and stories. It can be said that culture of Zulus which is deeply rooted in their land was a major uniting factor of the people as a nation.
OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID PRIOR TO INKATHA

Long before Inkatha was established many other organisations were already active in the political arena of South Africa. The inception of protest against white domination was led by Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi when he was fighting against discrimination of his country men in Natal. His techniques of non-violence and passive resistance greatly influenced the natives (blacks) in their attempts to organise people against the whites. The South African native National Congress later the African National Congress (ANC) which was founded on 8 January 1912 was the first organisational manifestation of black protest. At its foundation, the ANC was primarily devoted to protecting the interests of professional African middle class, such as doctors, lawyers, businessmen and others. It opposed racial discrimination and tribalism and followed non-violence as a method of protest. Closely aligned to the ANC was the South African Communist Party founded in 1921. At the instance of Communist International (Comintern) the SACP started aligning with the ANC since 1928. The two soon started agitation on a common platform, ANC’s national executive was also came to be occupied by the communist.\(^{20}\)

One of the earliest protest campaign of ANC was against 1913 Land Act. This was however unsuccessful. By the 1940’s, the ANC appealed to the masses and the formation of Youth League in 1943 which followed radical

\(^{20}\) They also aligned with other political formations. The SACP, ANC, South African Indian Congress, Coloured People’s Congress, Congress of Democrats and the South African Congress of Trade Unions formed a loose coalition known as Congress Alliance in 1955.
methods like strikes and boycotts helped in broadening the organisation’s base.

The Defiance Campaign which began in Port Elizabeth and the Reef (on the outskirts of Johannesburg) in June 1952 was a major movement involving deliberate disobedience of segregationist laws. The Campaign was suppressed by the government. In June 1955 the Freedom Charter was adopted by the Congress of People at Kliptown near Johannesburg which pledged to give socio-economic and political rights to the people. But the Africanists within ANC rejected the key provisions of the charter and formed a separate organisation – the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). It favoured more militant strategies for liberation and resented the control of ANC by the communists whom it considered as ‘un-African’. In December 1959 the ANC and the PAC decided to launch their campaigns against the pass laws. In March 1960, the PAC started its campaign in the east Rand and southern Transvaal, especially in Sharpeville. Terrified by the huge crowd near Sharpeville police station, the police opened fire without orders, killing 69 people and injuring 180 in the process.\textsuperscript{21} The ANC gave the call for a stayaway on March 28 to express its protest and it received overwhelming response. The government responded quickly by imposing a state of emergency and banning both the ANC and the PAC under the Unlawful Organisations Act.\textsuperscript{22} Two days before this ban Mr.

\textsuperscript{21} Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, 1983), pp. 201-210.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Unlawful Organisations Act No. 34 of 1960}. For further details, see \textit{Race Relations Survey 1960} (Johannesburg, 1960). pp. 69-79.
Oliver Tambo, the secretary general of the ANC, left the country to establish an external mission, while other leaders of ANC went underground to avoid government repression.

In December 1960 the South African Communist Party (SACP) decided to launch an economic sabotage campaign. At the ‘All-in Conference’ in Pietermaritzburg in March 1961 Nelson Mandela, then honorary secretary of the ANC, called for a three day strike coinciding with the declaration of republican status by government on May 31 (this was to be the day of the strike). Perceiving failure the strike was called off on its second day. It was realised in the ANC/SACP circle that non-violent tactics no longer provided solution to the South African crisis. The need for an armed struggle for liberation was felt.

In June 1961 Mandela appealed to the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC to sanction the use of violence. The NEC gave its conditional consent.\textsuperscript{23} In November 1961 \textit{Umkhonto we Sizwe} (the Spear of the Nation) was founded as an armed wing of the ANC. The PAC established its armed wing known as \textit{Pogo} (We Alone). With military help coming from the USSR and East European countries, \textit{Umkhonto} (popularly known as MK) formally commenced armed operations on 16 December 1961 by attacking key

\textsuperscript{23} The condition was that the ANC itself would not change its official non-violent standpoint, but those members who involved themselves in (this) would not be restrained. Lodge, n. 21, p. 233.
symbols of apartheid. The SACP also planned national revolution and armed struggle against state by using guerrillas.

Police action against insurgent activities culminated in the famous Rivonia Trial in 1964 in which Mandela and other ANC and SACP leaders were charged with, *inter alia*, committing sabotage and promoting revolutionary activities. The accused including Mandela were sentenced to imprisonment for life. This was a serious blow to the armed struggle. The organisations, particularly Umkhonto, became weak due to internal dissension, compelling them to engage in strengthening their structures. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the ANC/SACP alliance, they remained largely moribund in the post-Rivonia period till late 1970s.

It was in this political milieu two diametrically opposite organisations came up in South Africa such as the Black Consciousness movement and

---

24 The targets of attacks were the Bantu Administration Department’s Durban office and the Bantu Affairs Commissioners offices in Johannesburg and other government offices. A series of over 200 attacks took place within 18 months since December in different parts of the country. Ibid, pp. 235-38; S. Ellis and T. Sechaba. *Comrades Against Apartheid; the ANC and South African Communist Party in Exile* (London. 1992), pp. 33-34.

25 In 1962 the SACP adopted a new programme called *The Road to South African Freedom* in which it characterised the country’s situation ‘colonialism of a special type’. It re-emphasised on a two-stage process of change. Accordingly national revolution would precede socialist one and the commitment to armed struggle was reaffirmed. A document entitled *Operation Mayibuye* further revealed plans for insurgency activities by trained guerrillas. Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg, 1997), p. 19.

26 For details of internal dissension in Umkhonto, and efforts at strengthening ANC/SACP alliance, see Ellis and Sechaba, n. 24. pp. 47-72.

27 Its origin can be traced to the establishment of South African Students’ Organisation (SASO) in 1969 by the black students who had broken away from the white-dominated National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). Black Consciousness got a fillip in July
Inkatha Yesizwe. The former was a radical opponent of apartheid in Africanist tradition and rejected the ANC. The credit for radicalising black politics in this period goes to the ideology and activities of Black Consciousness organisations rather than the ANC/SACP alliance. Whereas, the latter followed a non-violent strategy to attain liberation and claimed to be within the tradition of the ANC. The organisation referred to the non-violent tradition of the ANC before 1960. It drew inspiration from Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Albert Luthuli and other ANC veterans of the past. Both the origin and development of Inkatha should be seen in the political context of South Africa. Besides this national political scenario, the dynamics of KwaZulu homeland politics (where Inkatha originated) has also to be understood in this regard.

KWAZULU HOMELAND AND ORIGIN OF INKATHA

Located in geographic proximity with the then Natal province, KwaZulu homeland of ethnic Zulus consisting of 48 principal blocks of scattered land came into being in 1970 when Zulu Territorial Authority was established. In the formation of homeland and later Inkatha movement the most crucial role was played by Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi in his capacity as traditional advisor (also called prime minister) to Zulu King and the Chief of Buthelezi clan. From the Chief of Buthelezi clan in 1953, he became an

1972 when SASO along with several African religious and educational bodies formed the Black Peoples’ Convention (BPC).
important political figure by 1970. Tribal authority, the bottom tier of the Bantu authorities structure, was established for the Mahlabatini area in 1965 under the Bantu Authorities Act (1951). In 1968 Buthelezi became head of regional authority (middle tier) in this district. The top tier of the homeland was created in 1970 with the establishment of Zulu Territorial Authority. This was replaced by the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) in 1972. An executive council headed by Buthelezi was also created. In 1977 more powers were given to the KwaZulu homeland. Buthelezi became the head of the cabinet which had responsibilities for finance, police, justice, education, the interior, public works and health. Buthelezi had initially opposed the introduction of homeland although Zulu king Cyprian expressed his willingness to accept the government plan. But once the government made it clear that it would impose self government, he accepted the plan on the ground that alternative would be revolution which was out of question. He had the support of Zulu people when he took homeland’s leadership.

In this period Buthelezi faced many challenges to his position as he tried to consolidate power in the homeland. Prince Israel Mcwayizeni who succeeded Cyprian after his death in 1968, was a strong supporter of a Zulu state and opposed to Buthelezi for his rise to power. With tacit support of Pretoria, the Zulu National Party of Lloyed Ndaba and Shaka’s Spear founded by Chief Charles Hlengwa challenged the authority of Buthelezi. The Pretoria government tried to give real power in the form of legislative veto to King
Goodwill Zwelithini which Buthelezi opposed. His support to the jailed ANC leaders like Nelson Mandela was mainly responsible for the strained relationship with the government. It can be argued that in the face of these challenges the need for an organisation to mobilise support among the masses was quite logical one.

The inspiration to establish Inkatha came from President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia who advised the Chief to consolidate people into a cohesive force.\(^{28}\) Because of this, the original constitution of Inkatha was based on the constitution of United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia. The ANC had also not been averse to the idea of formation of Inkatha. Since it was banned, the ANC thought the struggle could be made active through a legal organisation. Mr. Oliver Tambo, the exiled ANC leader, had supported Buthelezi in this regard.

Before Inkatha was formed, an organisation called Ubhoko\(^{29}\) headed by Bishop Alphaeus Zulu was already working as a discussion group in KwaZulu. At time when the ANC, SACP and other organisations were banned, Ubhoko acted as a forum for discussion of national and other issues concerning people. Formation of Inkatha in 1975 was partly influenced by the activities of this organisation.


\(^{29}\) Ubhokho means a sharpened stick which was part of the traditional armoury of the Zulu male. It was used to feel one’s way or test the depth of water in a stream or river.
Under these circumstances, the Chief decided to establish *Inkatha Yenkuleko Yesizwe* (also called Inkatha Yesizwe or in short Inkatha) – a National Cultural Liberation movement. The last two words refer to "for the freedom of the nation". The first is a grass coil wore by a women on her head to help her bear a heavy burden. The name chosen, as such, implies the movement's historical root (as it adopted the name of a 1920s Zulu organisation) and its goal to take up national burden. Its objectives were to: foster unity among blacks, abolish exploitation of man by man, promote customs and cultures, eradicate racialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism; and strive for the attainment of African Unity and national independence.\(^{30}\) It is important to note here that some scholars\(^ {31}\) wrongly argue that Buthelezi had 'revived' *Inkatha Ka Zulu* of 1920s,\(^ {32}\) an organisation established by Zulu King Solomon.\(^ {33}\) In fact it was correctly not a revival. Only the old name was retained because it was known among the people and it also helped in quick mobilisation.\(^ {34}\) As the transition process started in 1990, it was renamed as

\(^{30}\) See Appendix III for details of objectives.


\(^{32}\) This organisation was set up in 1922-23.

\(^{33}\) Solomon's purpose for establishing Inkatha was to rally people in his favour as he had at that time only responsibilities, no authority. It was also an answer to the social tension in the area due to capitalist expansion.

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) on July 14, 1990 and the membership was opened to all races. Other races were precluded from joining the organisation previously due to Prohibition of Political Interference Act 1968.\textsuperscript{35}

The constitution of Inkatha as proclaimed in 1975 provided the details of structural and functional arrangements of the movement.\textsuperscript{36} The General Conference which was to be held once in every year was empowered to ‘consider, review or change’ any policy of the movement. Delegates to the General Conference included all members of National Council (NC), members from provinces, trade unions and organisations affiliated to the movement. The NC was the apex policy-making body of the movement. It consisted of members of the Central Committee (CC), the Legislative Body of the Government, Executive Committees of the Youth Brigade and Women’s Brigade and different branches of the movement including Trade Unions and affiliated organisations.

Below National Council existed the Central Committee of not less than twenty-five members. This body was primarily entrusted with the task of programming and implementing the policies as formulated by the National Council. Besides this, it had complete control over the functioning of the movement on a day to day basis. The CC consisted of the President of the movement, the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, twenty

\textsuperscript{35} Prohibition of Political Interference Act No. 51 of 1968.

\textsuperscript{36} For details of structural and functional aspects of Inkatha, see Appendix III (Constitution).
members elected by the General Conference and some nominated members by the president.

The president had a crucial role to play in the movement. Being the principal officer, he had the power to give instructions on matters affecting the interests of Inkatha. He had discretionary power in regard to the agenda for discussion in the Central Committee and the National Council. He was also given the power to take disciplinary action against members on the grounds of misbehaviour. The Secretary-General, who was like a deputy of the president, was the chief administrative officer of the movement looking after day to day functioning. The Central Committee was assisted in its functioning by seven sub-committees and one standing sub-committee known as Disciplinary Investigative and Advisory Sub-Committee (see Appendix 5).

A reading of Inkatha constitution reveals two provisions which, in the opinion of critics, were objectionable. As per Article 8(4)(i) a member in order to be qualified for the office of president must also be qualified to be the head of the government which the movement might get opportunity to form. In other words, the president of Inkatha would automatically be the head of government (KwaZulu government in this context). The second provision in this regard was Article 29(1)(b) which made all members of the Government automatically the members of National Council. By linking up head of the government with head of the movement Inkatha tried to capture the government of KwaZulu homeland. Due to this reason all members of KwaZulu Legislative Assembly
(KLA) were members of Inkatha. In the process the distinction between government and the movement (Inkatha) got blurred. This also restricted voices of dissent within the legislature.

Social and Ethnic Base of Inkatha

Delivering a speech at Tongaat in Natal in August 1993, the IFP president Mangosuthu Buthelezi said that ‘over two million South Africans have put their hands in their pockets to take out subscription fees ... for their membership of the IFP’.\(^{37}\) From a membership of 30,000 in 1976, Inkatha’s rise has been phenomenal.\(^{38}\) Till 1990, the movement was dominated by Zulus even if membership was opened to all Africans in 1977. This is, however, not to deny the fact that some of its supporters were whites opposed to the ANC. Also a small section of non-Zulu tribes such as Sotho, Pondo and Tswana were members of the organisation. Now the IFP has members from all races and tribes. This can be observed from the composition of members of the party in national parliament, provincial parliament and the composition of other party forums.\(^{39}\) Predominance of Zulus does not mean that Inkatha was an


\(^{38}\) Membership figures were 120,000 in 1977; 150,000 in 1978; 250,000 in 1979; 300,000 in 1980; 411,000 in 1982; 750,000 in 1983; 984,000 in 1984; and 1,155,000 in 1985. See Collen McGaul, “The Wild Card: Inkatha and Contemporary Black Politics”, in Philip Frankel and others, ed., State, Resistance and Change in South Africa (London, 1988), pp. 146-73.

\(^{39}\) Out of 43 members in National Assembly as per 1994 elections, 7 are people of Indian origin, 13 whites, one coloured and the rest are blacks. Similarly in the provincial parliament
exclusively Zulu organisation before 1990. In fact it had never been so since its inception days. When Inkatha was formed it was projected as a Zulu cultural organisation to avoid banning by the government. Once its membership became big enough to be challenged, the veil of ethnicity/tribal identity was removed to include members of other tribes. But so far as decision-making in the organisation was concerned Zulus had always been decisive. Because no organisation can ignore its largest constituency.

That Inkatha was not exclusively Zulu based, was proved in September 19, 1977 when Jimmy Kruger, Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons questioned Buthelezi regarding the organisation's expanding frontiers. The Chief refused to make Inkatha an exclusively Zulu cultural organisation and at the same time upheld the cause of black liberation by peaceful means following the footsteps of old ANC (not the radical/militant ANC of post-1960 period). The chief aim was 'fostering the spirit of unity among the people of KwaZulu throughout southern Africa, and between them and all their African brothers'.

Moreover ethnic composition of KwaZulu, as mentioned earlier, was largely responsible for predominance of Zulus in Inkatha. When Inkatha was formed, this constituency was the immediate one to be mobilised. This is

of KwaZulu-Natal 4 Indian origin people and 9 whites are members. In Gauteng one white got elected. Information supplied by IFP Office, Durban.

40 Excerpts from interview with M.G. Buthelezi. n. 28.

however not to deny other factors which helped in mobilising people. Inkatha's appeal to Zulu identity at different points of time, mobilisation through branches (constituencies) and above all Buthelezi's own image as a charismatic leader (his connection with Zulu royal house helped here) and a critic of apartheid contributed to the rise of Inkatha.

In Natal, many old ANC members joined Inkatha, as that organisation was banned then. There was also a marked aversion of many towards Black Consciousness movement for its radicalism and rejection of ANC. Notable among them were Selby Msimang, one of the founding fathers of ANC, Jordan Ngubane, co-founder of the Youth League who had broken with the ANC over its communist links and Alphaeus Zulu, the much-loved Bishop of Zululand and a long time ANC sympathiser. Also some former Robben Island detainees came to be associated with the new movement.

Inkatha had a considerable support in rural areas of Kwazulu. In 1980, out of 1000 branches, 36 existed outside Natal and 203 in urban areas, while the rest were located in rural areas. This was mainly due to the patronage Inkatha gave to the poor and illiterate people. The poor economy of homeland often compelled the labour force to migrate to industrial areas leaving the women, children and old people in the rural areas. The movement's network of tribal chiefs could effectively mobilise these vulnerable sections by giving jobs, facilities for agriculture and access to government machineries.

In the urban areas Inkatha supporters were traders, businessmen,
teachers and civil servants who supported it for economic gains. It also acted as a social security agent by providing economic help to unemployed youths and businessmen. The Youth Brigade membership had grown from 1000 in 1976 to half a million in 1986.\textsuperscript{42} Majority of the Youth Brigade members were recruited from KwaZulu schools during pre-1990 days. The Inkatha Women’s Brigade was also a powerful wing of the movement involved in mobilising women and youths in the struggle for freedom. Besides this the Zulu migrant hostel dwellers in the townships around Pretoria, Johannesburg and on the Reef also supported the movement. Many functional associations such as the Witwatersrand Taxi Association, the Natal branch (Inyanda) of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce, the Kwazulu [School] Inspectors’ Association and the Natal African Teachers’ Union have all at various times pledged allegiance to Inkatha.

It is argued by some that the formation of Inkatha was basically a petty bourgeoisie attempt to serve their narrow interests. Petty bourgeoisie here included chiefs, politicians, civil servants and businessmen who, due to their material interests, found it profitable to work in alliance with Pretoria through homeland structure.\textsuperscript{43} But analysing Inkatha in class terms, although helpful, has limitations in a socio-economic milieu such as KwaZulu. Since the population was predominantly poor, class divisions were less distinct in the

\textsuperscript{42} Frankel and others, ed., n. 38, pp. 146-73.

\textsuperscript{43} Roger Southall. n31. p. 454-461.
region. For example, chiefs in KwaZulu and South Africa in general, are seen more as a traditional social institution rather elements of petty bourgeoisie. They are treated with reverence and hence are socially and traditionally relevant. Similarly, instead of criticising businessmen, they should be considered as agents of economic development. As will be seen in later discussions, poverty-stricken people used to get benefits of investment and other economic activities. Besides this, KwaZulu's poor economy was not solely the making of its administration or a result of petty bourgeoisie exploitation. Non-availability of adequate funds from central government, repeated natural calamities such as drought and cyclone were some of the cause – responsible for this. So the formation of Inkatha was not entirely a petty bourgeoisie exercise, rather it should also be seen as an assertion of Zulu people (one of their predominance) in particular and South Africans in general in the face of a hostile state power trying to marginalise them. It was more of a reaction of the ruling elite to changing situation.