

## CHAPTER 5

### **On the Road to a New Future: The Campaign**

The campaign period began in January 1994 when the major political parties launched their manifestos. Against the historical background of the conflict in South Africa, the political campaign, particularly in its early days, was often marred by violence and intimidation stemming from political intolerance. A Report of the Goldstone Commission also confirmed earlier allegations by the press and other quarters that part of the violence was orchestrated by a 'third force' consisting of elements of the right-wing of South Africa's political spectrum.

For much of the campaign period, the death toll in KwaZulu/Natal, the worst affected province, averaged 150 persons a week. Hundreds of people had to flee their homes for safety to other parts of the province. Eventually, on 31 March 1994, a State of Emergency was declared to stem what was seen as an intolerable level of violence and intimidation which had impeded free political activity in the province. But the State of Emergency only exacerbated the hostilities between the two rival parties in the province, the ANC and the IFP, and failed to reduce the incidence of violence.

It was not until 19 April 1994, when Chief Buthelezi announced that the IFP would participate in the elections, that tensions eased in the province and throughout the rest of the country. The incidence of violence and deaths due to political conflict reduced drastically. Previously 'no-go' areas in IFP strongholds were now open to rival parties and IEC officials. A new mood of optimism and anticipation replaced the fears and uncertainties of the recent past. Political activity in KwaZulu/Natal rose to a feverish pitch and Durban and other urban centres saw intense political campaigning. The leaders of the IFP and the ANC held the final rallies of their campaign in Durban.

It should be pointed out that the violence and intimidation that had prevailed in KwaZulu/Natal were largely confined to the rural areas and some of the townships. In other parts of the province, as in most parts of the country, political parties were able to conduct their campaign in relative freedom and peace.

In many provinces, local peace committees, established under the National Peace Accord, were instrumental in maintaining peace, resolving conflicts or preventing conflicts from escalating into violence by playing a vital mediating role in bringing the opposing sides together. Much credit should go

to these committed peace monitors and negotiators who often stepped in and effectively defused dangerous confrontations.

The adjudication division of the IEC was also able to respond quickly to allegations of unfair tactics which impeded free political activity during the campaign period. Party leaders made an important contribution to peace by calling for restraint and a respect for the right of other parties to propagate their views. Mr Mandela, for example, reprimanded his supporters for their intolerance towards the NP in the townships, saying that the injustices inflicted on the people by the NP could not justify countermeasures that subverted fundamental freedoms and basic democratic values.

Generally, the security forces played a stabilising role in potentially volatile areas. In particular, they seemed to neutralise the right-wing threat. The arrests of alleged ringleaders from the militant right-wing and the seizure of their stockpile of weapons after a spate of bombings in Johannesburg and Pretoria in the last days before polling served to boost voter confidence.

## **Rallies**

The last three weeks before voting day saw a period of intense campaigning across the country. Hundreds of rallies, large and small, were held and we attended many of them. We also observed party workers as they campaigned door-to-door, canvassed by the roadside, ran motorcade 'road shows' through townships and held meetings with target groups of voters such as farm workers, miners, students, the elderly and the disabled.

The rallies held by three of the main parties, the ANC, the IFP and the NP, were often festive occasions and those addressed by their national leaders were mammoth events, typically held in sporting stadiums. In major cities like Johannesburg and Durban, an attendance of over 50,000 was common. Live music, cultural dancing, poetry reading, and choir singing were common features. This inevitably led to dancing, toyi toyi-ing (celebratory dance) and revelry among party supporters as they prepared for the arrival of their leaders.

They were, in the main, peaceful and well-organised. We noticed too that the ANC and the IFP had their own party marshals who were impressive in maintaining control of the crowds of party supporters as they marched towards rally venues and at the venues themselves. COMSA experts in crowd control had trained about 2,000 party marshals and the results were evident. At Mr Mandela's final Johannesburg rally on 23 April 1994, thousands of young party supporters walked and jogged the 3-kilometre route between Soweto and the stadium where the rally was held. Party marshals linked arms to keep groups of supporters within a single lane to enable normal traffic to pass through on the other lanes. On the field too, marshals directed guests, performers, observers and the press to designated areas and linked arms to prevent the crush of photographers, cameramen and journalists from surging forward towards the main stage. In Durban, the last IFP march through town



*South Africans took to campaigning with enthusiasm ... here supporters of the ANC crowd into a stadium in Soweto to hear Nelson Mandela and other leaders speak.*



*Once it had agreed to participate in the elections, the Inkatha Freedom Party quickly organised rallies and printed posters. Its followers were also quick to come out to demonstrate their support.*



*Open show of support for the party of choice ... here members of the South African Communist Party march through the streets urging support for their party.*



*Members of the South African Defence Force at one of the party rallies.*

on 23 April 1994 was also well-marshalled. Marshals not only contained the crowds of party supporters in organised groups, but also assured nervous shopkeepers and onlookers along the march route that there would be no threat to their life or property.

Party officials also used such gatherings and rallies to conduct voter education, describing to the crowds the voting procedure, where to put their crosses and urging them to vote for the same party at both national and provincial levels. At Chief Buthelezi's last rally in Johannesburg on 24 April 1994, IFP workers distributed thousands of party posters, stickers and flags to party supporters in the stadium stands. At Mr Mandela's rally, two giant banners representing the ANC row on the ballot paper with a cross next to Mr Mandela's picture were unfurled on either side of the field.

### **Access to 'No-Go' Areas**

During our meetings with political parties at the provincial and district levels, we received many reports about the prevalence of 'no-go' areas where rival parties were denied access. The most dangerous of these areas were the result of tensions between the IFP and the ANC, especially before the former's decision to participate in the elections. There were also complaints from the NP and the DP that they were not able to enter black townships dominated by the ANC. The vast tracts of white-owned farms in the Northern and Western Cape and in the Orange Free State were 'no-go' areas for the ANC and other black parties. In the former 'independent homelands' of Bophuthatswana and Ciskei, which had initially boycotted the elections, free political activity could not be held until the governments fell and new interim administrations were set up. In Transkei, the IEC successfully mediated a dispute between the NP and the Transkei Government which had refused to allow the NP to open offices in its territory.

The parties adopted various measures to get around these problems of access. In Northern Cape and the Orange Free State, ANC officials trying to reach farm workers distributed party campaign literature and conducted voter education among schoolchildren and instructed them to pass on the knowledge and information to their parents. Activists also joined the work-force on the farms and visiting priests were used to conduct voter education. Despite the difficulties the NP experienced in penetrating black areas, the party held several rallies and 'road shows' in places like Soweto, adapting its campaign to appeal to a multiracial electorate. The party used liberation movement slogans like *viva* and ended its rallies by singing *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God Bless Africa).

An interesting and unique feature of the campaign was Operation Access, launched by the IEC to facilitate free access for political parties to campaign and conduct voter education in 'no-go' areas. Each party was entitled to take 10 supporters to the meetings in transport provided by the IEC. Each party spokesperson was given 10 minutes to speak, with the order decided by a draw.

At an Operation Access event in the black township of Khayelitsha in Cape Town we joined a convoy of 11 IEC vans, monitors from the Regional Peace Secretariat, other international observers and the press as it inched its way into the ANC-dominated township. In some cases, Operation Access failed to get off the ground. For example in the East Rand squatter camp of Phola Park – an ANC stronghold – residents drove away an Operation Access vehicle, claiming that the IEC was trying to split the community by introducing new political parties to the area.

The parties we spoke to were enthusiastic about this operation, but the response from communities visited was mixed. Since they were entering the strongholds of particular parties, there was usually a lukewarm response to their presence. Often, crowds would only begin to gather when their favourite party spokesperson was speaking and drift away when others spoke.

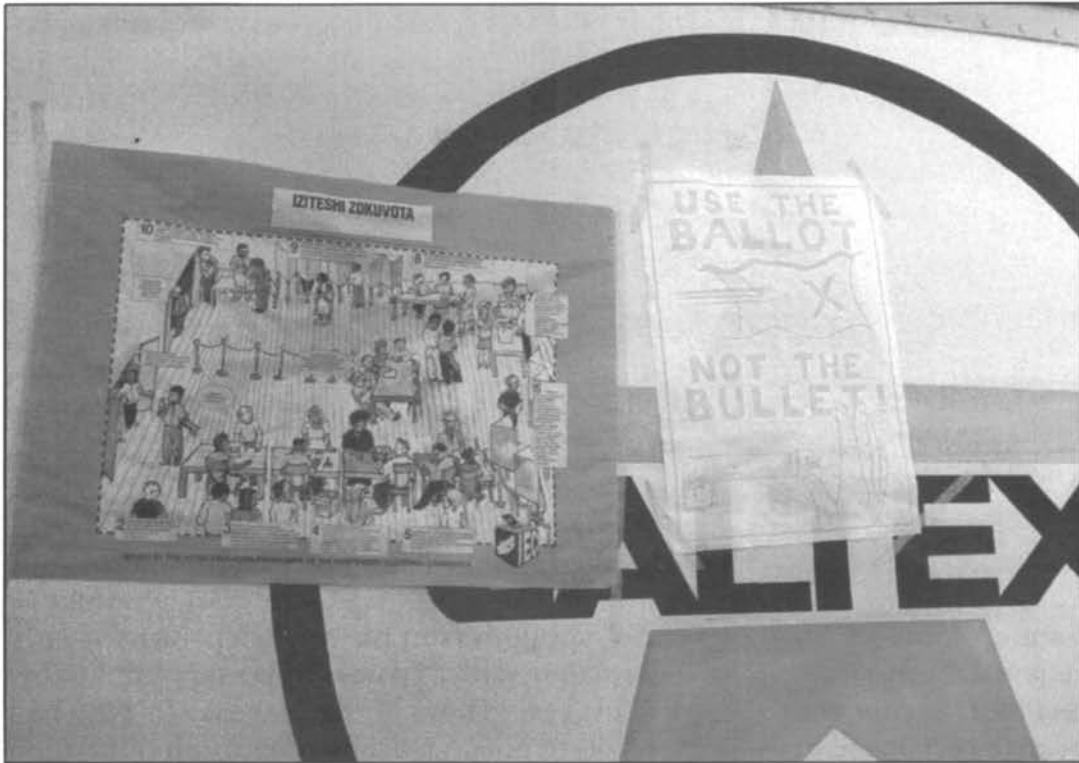
However we felt that it was important that parties taking part in the elections should be heard by the voting public and also for the voters to be exposed to the practice of freedom of speech in a democratic society.

### **IFP Entry into the Electoral Process**

The momentous decision of the IFP to join the process on Tuesday 19 April 1994, just a week before polling day, saw a dramatic change in the conduct and atmosphere of the campaign. Immediately, IFP party workers were feverishly hanging campaign posters throughout KwaZulu/Natal, the Orange Free State and the PWV. An earlier poster urging people to vote IFP *When the Time Comes* was pasted over with stickers saying *The Time has Come*. The IFP moved quickly to take advantage of its position on the bottom of the ballot paper and adapted the erstwhile campaign slogan of the NP (formerly at the bottom) which had urged voters, *To be top, vote at the bottom*. The IFP ran newspaper advertisements urging people to *Put your cross in the last block and come first*, and quoted from the Bible (Matthew 20:16), *So the last shall be first....* The NP, whose action in conceding the bottom spot to the IFP had facilitated the latter's entry into the process, changed its campaign slogan to *To be top, vote second from the bottom*.

In Port Shepstone, party activists who had taken extensive measures to enforce the boycott by blocking roads with huge boulders to prevent people from leaving the hinterlands to vote in urban communities, now summoned bulldozers to move those boulders to provide access. In Ulundi, a rally of thousands who had turned out on 19 April 1994 to protest against the elections suddenly became a celebration of participation when it was announced to them that the IFP had reached an agreement to take part in the elections.

IFP rallies and marches, which had hitherto focused on boycotting the elections, overnight became joyful celebrations. The IFP march through Durban on Saturday 23 April 1994 was peaceful and well-organised. It was obvious to us that many among the IFP supporters wanted to be a part of this historic process. The change in mood was palpable. In many parts of KwaZulu, former



*Voter education posters in Soweto.*



*Poster 'tree' at Cape Town University.*



*How to recognise the National Party.*

'no-go' areas became accessible. KwaZulu officials who had been unco-operative and hostile were now friendly and helpful to electoral officials and observers. Our observers in Port Shepstone, who the day before had been advised not to wear Commonwealth colours because of possible hostility from IFP supporters, were by 20 April universally welcomed in their blue shirts as they visited the area in a car marked with Commonwealth insignia and flag. In Ndwedwe, north of Durban, there was a visible easing of tension; day by day, more and more people were seen to be going about their daily business and became increasingly welcoming to our team of observers.

In the PWV area where thousands of Zulu migrant workers live in hostels amidst ANC-dominated townships, the jubilant mood was also evident. Many of the hostels which were controlled by IFP supporters and had been 'no-go' areas to outsiders were suddenly open to township residents and observers. We visited the Nancefield hostel in Soweto and were welcomed by the residents who all smiled broadly when asked whether they were going to vote. Those without any identity cards or TVCs pressed us to arrange a mobile issuing station in the hostel. ANC supporters in the townships were clearly relieved. Turnout would be higher, they said, as party supporters would now feel more secure when casting their vote. Those living near hostels who had been uncertain about whether to vote or not for fear of violence or intimidation now said they would participate.

### **Violence and Intimidation**

The last stretch of the campaign period was remarkable for the distinct downturn in violence and deaths, following the IFP's decision of 19 April 1994. There was, however, an increase in bomb attacks in the PWV and other isolated parts of the country allegedly by right-wing elements. The worst was in central Johannesburg when nine people were killed and at least 92 injured in a car bomb explosion on 23 April 1994. Six more bombs exploded in Johannesburg and Pretoria which resulted in 12 more deaths and 81 injured. The killing of two ANC agents canvassing in Ulundi and another one within hours, in the presence of Chief Buthelezi, on 23 April rekindled something of the uncertainty which had plagued KwaZulu/Natal before the IFP participation.

There were also many allegations of intimidation and harassment which sometimes led to clashes. In KwaZulu/Natal, the ANC lodged complaints with the IEC after IFP supporters occupied the venues of ANC rallies in Umlazi and KwaMashu, prompting bloody clashes. The ANC was fined (Rand) R100,000 by the Electoral Tribunal for disrupting an NP meeting in Venda in Northern Transvaal.

However, what was obvious to us was the determination shown by the parties and their leaders to ensure that the elections would proceed smoothly and peacefully. At the 23 April ANC rally, an angry Mr Mandela chastised those in the crowd for firing gunshots in the air 'celebrating' his arrival. He told them that criminals had no place in the party and he publicly reprimanded

ANC security officials for not having properly searched those entering the stadium for weapons. Chief Buthelezi interrupted his campaign tour of the Orange Free State to rush to Ulundi following the killing of the two ANC workers. The bombings in Johannesburg and other parts of the country were promptly condemned by President de Klerk and General Viljoen.

At several ANC rallies we attended, ANC speakers exhorted those present to respect other political parties and their right to campaign. At an Operation Access rally in Bloemfontein, we saw ANC marshals reprimanding party supporters for heckling other speakers. One was eventually escorted away for continuing to be unruly. In the North-West, the Local Peace Committee in the right-wing town of Schweizer-Reneke hastily arranged a meeting between the ANC and the IEC following the killing of an ANC youth league leader, allegedly by an IEC monitor. They issued a joint statement appealing for calm and, the next day, the ANC held a rally to explain the incident to its supporters. A reconciliatory meeting was also held between the ANC, NP, IEC and other groups to help calm the situation. A prominent ANC leader in the Western Cape was scathing in his criticism of university students in Cape Town who prevented DP candidate Tony Leon from addressing a rally. At the final NP rally in Cape Town, President de Klerk appealed to his supporters not to harm a heckler, asserting that the NP was a party of peace.

Such actions demonstrated to us the commitment to peace and stability by the leaders of the various political parties at the national, provincial and district levels, and their determination to ensure that nothing should derail the elections.