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1. THE BROAD BACKGROUND : CYCLES OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Most observers of South Africa and thinking South Africans have a broad notion that the inequality between black and white in the society and poor conditions in black communities make South Africa vulnerable to massive instability. There have always been predictions of revolution, or of instability in the offing, and these loose predictions continue.

Yet, by world standards, South Africa has not been a particularly unstable country. Most of the assessments of business risk made by international organisations, for example, place South Africa among the twenty more riskfree countries in the world, at least in the short to medium term.

The past few decades have been characterised by the following broad patterns. After the second world war up to the middle fifties, South Africa was a very well-controlled system with blacks very quiescent, although in a far worse material position relative to whites than today. In the late forties, however, radical pressures emerged in the then legal ANC.[1)] Leadership up to then had adopted a basically moderate, Christian stance of moral pressure. Boycott resolutions by the youth wing of the ANC led to the adoption of a *"programme of action"* in 1949, followed in 1951/52 by the well-known "Defiance Campaign" of the fifties, committed to the mobilisation of blacks through mass action of strikes, boycotts, demonstrations and general non-collaboration. An alliance between the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured Peoples Organisation and the S.A. Congress of Democrats, many of whose members were former members of the Communist Party, resulted in political

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1) For an account of the political developments among blacks see Gail Gerhardt, *Black Power in South Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, and Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

thinking among black leaders acquiring a much more radical ideological flavour than previously.

When the more youthful Africanists in the ANC broke away in 1958 to form the Pan African Congress an even more clearly militant and confrontationist leadership emerged among blacks. These developments culminated in what was South Africa's first taste of widespread overt political action from blacks.[1] In the late fifties there were stonings of buses and beerhalls, limited marches or demonstrations in the major cities, but the calls for stay-at-home strikes were generally only partly successful. Where developments appeared dangerous, the authorities quelled the action with determined counteraction and arrests. Still the resistance mounted and finally it reached a peak in March and April of 1960, the time of the Sharpeville killings.

The PAC had prepared for massive nation-wide action, but strictly along the lines of passive resistance. The participation of less-organised youthful elements made the situation unpredictable. While most of the Witwatersrand was quiet, there were massive encounters with the police in Cape Town, the Southern Witwatersrand, where the Sharpeville incident occurred, and in Durban. Elsewhere thousands burned their passes, even in Bloemfontein - a city where blacks had seemed to be particularly passive. A march of 15 000 people to the centre of Cape Town, where the strikes were also well-supported, was perhaps the most threatening to whites.

After a short period of uncertainty, the reaction of the authorities was decisive. An emergency was declared and over 18 000 people were arrested - over 25 percent of the 70 000 formal membership of the PAC and ANC combined.

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1) There had been serious but localised uprisings before that, such as the Bondelzwarts and Bulhoek rebellions.

New legislation was passed to control dissidence and the ANC and the PAC were banned. Subsequent calls by the underground ANC for stay-at-home strikes were largely ignored and blacks started queuing to replace their burned passes. As Gail Gerhardt observes, *"The myth that the African masses were a volcano on the verge of an explosion had itself been exploded".*[1] Two major lessons were learned: firstly, the mass of black people were not prepared to risk their security and meagre privileges in any active political engagement of the authorities, and secondly, the South African state was easily able to control and repress the most determined public dissidence from the radical wings of black society. Following the emergency of 1961, there were some 200 incidents of underground action and insurgency up to the end of 1964, but the police steadily tracked down and destroyed the underground formations responsible.[2]

A period of quiet followed over the rest of the sixties and early seventies. From 1968 onward, however, a new political consciousness began to take form - Black Consciousness. Originating in the United States (although with Africanist roots) the movement first gained momentum among black theology students and among a black student group which broke away from the dominantly white student organisation, NUSAS. A movement dedicated to all black (i.e. non-white) solidarity, by the mid-seventies had produced a fair number of strongly ideological organisations, including the South African Students Organisation (SASO) and Black Peoples Convention (BPC). The political culture of black solidarity and the spirit of independence from, and in part, hostility towards whites held sway over black students and high school leadership groups. From 1972 onwards, there were numerous demonstrations and boycotts on black campuses throughout the country. These tactics established a new pattern of open conflict, which was soon to spread outside the campuses.

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1) Gail Gerhardt, *op.cit*, p.251.

2) See Muriel Horrel, *Action, Reaction and Counter-reaction*, Johannesburg : S.A. Institute of Race Relations, 1971.

In 1976, black and Coloured educational facilities were becoming increasingly over-stressed as a result of the rapid rise in pupil numbers. The independence of the Transkei created insecurity in regard to citizenship status among the very prominent Xhosa-speaking youth leadership on the Witwatersrand. Growth rates in the economy of 2 percent in 1975 and 1976 (compared with 7% in 1974) produced a spurt in black youth unemployment. The imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, despite well-backed warnings from parent-teachers organisations and the South African Institute of Race Relations, created critical anxieties among pupils under stress. This final frustration, against a background of youth political solidarity and mobilised consciousness, resulted in the June, 1976 youth uprisings on the Witwatersrand, which spread to over 160 communities in other parts of the Transvaal, to Coloured and Indian pupils, to university students and even to the Inkatha-dominated Natal township of KwaMashu, although the scope was very limited there.[1)]

These youth uprisings on occasion led to marches by tens of thousands on Johannesburg and into the centre of Cape Town, where large-scale confrontations with the police occurred. Several calls for sympathy stay-away strikes by adult workers were made. The first was partly successful because of coercion by the demonstrators, the second and particularly the third gained the co-operation of adult workers in Johannesburg and were 50 to 70 percent successful. Later calls for strikes were unsuccessful because of a tougher attitude to absenteeism among employers. The disturbances claimed the lives of 575 people (137 in Cape Town, the rest mainly on the Witwatersrand) with an additional 3 900 people injured. The police made nearly 6 000 arrests over the period.

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1) For an account of these disturbances see *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from June 16, 1976 to February 28, 1977 (Cillie Commission)*, Government Printer, 1980, and John Kane-Berman, *Soweto, Black Revolt, White Reaction*, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1978.

The disturbances may not have started as a manifestly political event, but after the first clashes with the police, soon took on a markedly rhetorical political flavour. There was clearly organised leadership by students' councils and for a while their leadership was readily replaced after arrests. The focus of violence was generally state property and institutions like liquor stores which the students claimed weakened the political will of the black people.

Perhaps the most important consequence was that many hundreds, if not thousands, of young people fled the country. In June, 1978 the Chief of the Security Police estimated that some 4 000 black South Africans were undergoing insurgency training abroad, and that he expected the number to increase steadily as a result of the *"Soweto"* uprisings.

These disturbances continued, with breaks, into 1979 particularly in the Cape. In 1980 there were once again outbreaks of boycotts and demonstrations among school-going youth, with hundreds of arrests and some violent confrontations with police. The school boycotts in 1980 in Natal brought the youthful demonstrators into conflict with Inkatha, the mass black organisation under the leadership of Chief Buthelezi. The restlessness among black youth subsided during 1981, with the exception of ongoing tensions on black university campuses. The scene today is comparatively calm.

In taking stock of the situation, it seems that as in the early sixties, the black political protest from 1976 onward was no match for the controlling power of the state. Indeed, the police were able to cope relatively easily and the army did not have to become involved in any significant way.

It is important to consider to what extent general support from the mass of black adults existed during the disturbances. Hanf and his team from the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute found in sample

surveys that overall, 57 percent of urban blacks declared themselves to be in sympathy with the Soweto disturbances. While less well-educated workers outside Soweto generally condemned the disturbances (less than 30 percent were in favour), in Soweto itself, even among the lower working class, 62 percent sympathised with the radical youth.[1] Sympathy, however, does not necessarily imply any likelihood of physical support. It is worth noting, however, that not all the participants in the Soweto disturbances were youths. The S.A. Institute of Race Relations estimated that roughly one-third of casualties among the demonstrators were over 26 years of age.[2]

We have seen that some support from workers was forthcoming during the second and third calls for mass strikes. This support does not appear to have been very committed, however, since when the authorities warned the strikers by means of pamphlets, and employers threatened to dismiss people who were absent, the support for the demonstrators seemed to evaporate.

There was a quite considerable response to calls by the demonstrators for a boycott of white shops in Johannesburg. The Furniture Traders Association reported a 40 percent decline in Christmas sales in 1976, largely as a result of political *"agitation"*. This was short-lived, however, and trading soon returned to normal. In Soweto the young peoples' organisation of a demonstration against rent increases in 1976 won them considerable sympathy, but the mass of black adults remained judiciously uninvolved.

It is clear then, that the much feared escalation of mass black political action did not occur, white lives and property were never in danger, and the loss of life, although substantial and tragic, never looked like becoming a bloodbath. Furthermore, serious divisions in black political responses were revealed once again

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1) See, Theodor Hanf *et al. Sudafrika: Friedlicher Wandel?* Munchen/Mainz: Kaiser-Grünewald, 1978, p.335-336.

2) See also Kane-Berman, *op.cit*, Chapter 1.

since in Soweto, Cape Town and Durban, there were instances of violent migrant worker action against the more radical youth.

Two Government Cabinet Ministers were able to claim in late 1976 that only 20 percent or less of Soweto had in any way shown themselves to be active supporters of the disturbances.[1] This, of course, did not take account of widespread hidden sympathies revealed by the attitude research quoted above, but is probably a fair reflection of active and committed support among adults.

At the present time, the situation once more is fairly quiescent. Confrontation of the police is ongoing but isolated and sporadic (just before the time of writing a fairly limited disturbance occurred in Sobantu in Pietermaritzburg). We have seen, then, that two waves of active political resistance have built up since the second world war, neither of which fundamentally threatened the security of the state. Both waves of action revealed a failure to actively mobilise the majority of black adults. Is this history, which has been very briefly outlined, a cause for complacency among whites and the South African government? We turn to this issue below.

2. THE CONDITIONS FOR STABILITY OR VIOLENCE

In order to assess the likelihood of instability, we have to consider the mix of factors which have related to revolution and rebellion in other societies. Much speculation exists as regards the factors producing revolution, but some rigorous attempts to systematise the causal factors have been carried out. It is clear from virtually all analyses that rebellion or instability is virtually never the result of simple deprivation, poverty or inequality.

Ted Gurr has attempted what is perhaps the most comprehensive analysis

1) John Kane-Berman, *op.cit.*, p.6.

of the preconditions and conditions for political violence.[1)] After surveying very many situations of rebellion comparatively, he formulates his hypothesis as follows (the terminology and relations between variables are selected and simplified for presentation in this paper): the magnitude of political violence, results from relative deprivation, acting as an independent factor, and from relative deprivation in interaction with moral and utilitarian justifications for violence, and the balance between the capacity of the dissidents and the authorities to coerce and organise. In this explanation, relative deprivation has a double effect, both independently as a factor and in combined effect with other factors. Relative deprivation creates the discontent crucial to political violence.

Relative deprivation can be defined as the discrepancy between peoples' perception of the goods and conditions to which they are rightfully entitled, and their perception of the goods and conditions they think they are capable of achieving and keeping. Hence, discontent is not the result of the difference between what men want and what they have, but between what they want and what they believe they will be able to get within the system. Discontent is muted if men believe that they could work to achieve their wants.

The expectations and the hope of attaining them, as related to relative deprivation are increased by

1. the stimulation of new wants,
2. successes which other comparable social groups may be attaining,
3. a low level of gratification relative to other groups, particularly of rewards or conditions which are crucial to attaining other rewards of value, (like education, for example),

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1) Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1970; and Ted Gurr and Raymond Duvall, *"Civil Conflicts in the 1960's"*, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 6, July, 1973.

4. a perception that the system is inflexible in allocating rewards; limitations on the range of ways in which improvements can be gained,
5. an experience of improvements in the past,
6. an experience of deterioration in current conditions,
7. limitation on the range of options open for the attainment of improvements. These factors will increase the intensity of relative deprivation.
8. If the relative deprivation is felt across a comprehensive range of salient life concerns over a long period, the intensity will also increase.
9. If intensely felt relative deprivation across a comprehensive range of life concerns is present among large proportions of a collectivity; i.e. many people sharing overlapping experiences of deprivation, then a potential for collective violence is created.

These factors are the *"psychological"* variables, which determine ho individuals, collectively perceive their circumstances and the environment. To them we must add the group-related sociological variables that exist in the groups' situation as an entity. These are:

10. the extent to which the political culture of the groups stamps the situation as illegitimate or immoral and therefore justifies violence (normative justifications),
11. the extent to which the group develops a collective belief that violence will have practical benefits (utilitarian justification for violence),
12. the extent to which the dissidents have stocks of rewards which can be used to encourage violence and support for dissidence,
13. the extent to which the dissident group has resources and is organised for confrontation compared with the regime,

14. the degree to which the regime is unable to keep the groups' activities under surveillance,

15. the lack of severity and consistency of controls and sanctions exerted by the regime,

16. the amount of loyalty to the dissident cause among regime forces, and

17. the relative size of the population group supportive of or included in the dissenting organisations.

Gurr adds that where the relative deprivation is more or less limited to elites, the form of political action will be that of *"conspiracy"*, whereas if the relative deprivation is a mass phenomenon only, then the form of action will more likely be disorganised turmoil. If both elites and the masses are involved, internal civil war could result, if a number of his other conditions are met.

Edward Muller[1] has tested some of the hypotheses put forward by Gurr and simultaneously attempted to verify his own theory of potential for Aggressive Political Participation. In considering Muller's exposition, we must bear in mind that he tested his theoretical formulations in a large German sample which, in terms of mean levels of affluence, the extent of political alienation and a host of other variables is markedly different from South African society. However, his methods were rigorous and we must at least assess Gurr's propositions in the light of his findings.

Muller measured Aggressive Political Participation in terms of the declared willingness of his 2 500 subjects to take part in illegal strikes, rent and tax boycotts, seizure of buildings, confrontations with the police and in the use of violence against the government.

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1) Edward N. Muller, *Aggressive Political Participation*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1979. Muller bases his theory on the more general behaviour theories of Martin Fishbein, "Attitude and the Prediction of Behaviour" in Ed. M. Fishbein, *Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement*, New York : Wiley, 1967, pp 477 - 492.

Once again stated very simply and briefly, his tested propositions, which he terms the Expectancy-Value-Norms Theory suggest that political aggression is the outcome of interaction between:

1. the extent of a person's belief that political aggression has produced benefits and that he or she has the capacity to act influentially in political confrontation (Muller terms this Utilitarian Justification for Aggression),
2. the extent of a person's alienation from the political system and the degree of his/her radical commitment (Normative Justification for Aggression), amounting to the extent that a person regards political aggression as justifiable,
3. the degree of a person's exposure to social norms favourable to aggression (Facilitative Social Norms), as for example when a person exists in a left-leaning radical university community,
4. the extent to which a person is available for aggressive political behaviour in terms of age, lack of dependents, unemployed, etc.

These variables in Muller's results had the effect of not only acting in combination, but adding to each others effect (an additivity - amplification process).

In addition, Muller takes account of certain factors which operate indirectly to increase (2) above (Normative Justification for Aggression), like

- relative deprivation defined as a belief that one is being deprived of one's just deserts,
- dissatisfaction with political policy at the post-material level (i.e. considerations other than material security),
- dissatisfaction with political treatment by the regime,

all three of the above factors being influenced by Rank-Disequilibrium, i.e. most simply stated as the condition in which say, a person of high educational status is accorded a lower social and occupational status.

Muller then posits certain factors in the macro socio-political environment which affect the likelihood of political violence actually occurring, namely:

5. the weakness of repressive sanctions (repression might exacerbate violence in the short run but will suppress it in the medium to longer term),
6. lack of consistency and scope in the limitation of freedoms to act and communicate (he terms this the Communist regime variable since these governments are seen by him to be most effectively totalitarian in policy),
7. the extent of collective or group discrimination or the proportion of people excluded from effective political participation.
8. membership and strength of radical organisations,
9. lack of economic growth or expansion in opportunity (Muller concludes it to be a minor variable), and
10. the lack of effectiveness, flexibility and quality of government administration - mainly seen as a lack of capacity to deal effectively with threats of political aggression.

Neither Gurr's theory nor Muller's have been tested in South Africa. Given the fact that any society has a unique composition, which although not contradicting general rules of behaviour, certainly might indicate that relationships between factors inducing political violence vary from society to society, we cannot assume that either theory precisely specifies what may happen in South Africa. Therefore, it is wisest to consider the relevance of all the factors deemed important by Muller, and not to accept Muller's rejection of the

key importance of Gurr's relative deprivation as necessarily applicable to South Africa. It seems appropriate to take account of all the major possible factors enumerated above by both Gurr and Muller.

3. INDICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

In considering the prospects for widespread or serious political upheaval in South Africa, we are faced with the difficulty that empirical evidence is relatively limited. Where possible we will draw on survey research (accepted by both Muller and Gurr as constituting valid data) but elsewhere it will be necessary to draw tentative conclusions on the basis of impressions. In the section which follows we will attempt to combine the list of factors of Gurr and Muller, using changed terminology in some cases. All the factors enumerated above are included.

3.1 Deprivation : Stimulation of Expectations

Certain of Gurr's variables bearing on relative deprivation can be grouped together under the broad heading of the stimulation of expectations. Here we have no direct empirical data, but we must take account of the following among blacks:

> the South African economy has experienced quite marked cycles of growth. The growth cycles ending in 1974/75 and 1982 were periods of rapid absorption of blacks into better-paid and more varied and responsible occupations. Black wages have grown more rapidly than those of whites.[1] In a broad sense these developments must stimulate new wants and expectations;

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1) See for example, latest trends discussed by Jill Nattrass, "Social Change and the South African Economy", in *Indicator S.A.*, Durban : Centre for Applied Social Sciences, February, 1983.

furthermore the effect of the pressure of world opinion on the S.A. government is to some extent to induce a *"legitimacy crisis"*, causing various spokesmen from time to time to make vague but sweeping promises of reform and development. Here we think of the Prime Minister's statement at the top-level and well known *"Carlton"* and *"Good Hope"* conferences as an example. These types of statements also appear to produce raised expectations. Empirical evidence among a sample of black women has pointed to a sensitivity to government statements[1];

more generally, we must bear in mind that the government's policy of separate development is not based on a total negation of black political aspirations, but attempts to deflect them into the semi-autonomous and marginal institutions of the *"homelands"*. Therefore, the <u>forms</u> of political participation are offered without the <u>substance</u> of political access to the central decision-making process. This in itself is likely to stimulate black political awareness. Generally, the environment of South Africa must be seen to stimulate political aspirations and wants.

3.2 <u>Deprivation : Policy Dissatisfaction and Political Alienation</u>

Here evidence is available from the large scale attitude research undertaken by the Buthelezi Commission.[2] The

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1) This effect is implicit in some of the data of the firm Markinor, discussed in L. Schlemmer *et al.*, *Black Urban Communities, Socio-Political Reform and the Future*, Durban: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, 1980.

2) *The Buthelezi Commission*, a commission of enquiry into the political future of KwaZulu and Natal, KwaZulu Government, March, 1982 (published by H and H Publications, Durban 1982. (See Vol. 1.) An overall sample of 2 630 blacks formed the basis of this report.

level of expressed *"anger and impatience"* or *"Dissatisfaction"* with *"life in South Africa"* among blacks is clearly very high, and increased rapidly over the five years from 1977 to 1981. (The findings in the Buthelezi Commission research are compared with strictly comparable results for 1977 obtained from the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute.)[1] The results below are for the most extreme expression of dissatisfaction - *"anger and impatience"*.

"Anger and Impatience" with *"Life in South Africa Today"*
(based on responses to a 5 point verbal cum pictorial scale)

Witwatersrand, All Black Males	1977	39%
	1981	56%
Witwatersrand and KwaZulu, Zulu Men	1977	39%
	1981	53%
Better educated Witwatersrand and KwaZulu Men	1977	45%
	1981	68%

These results tend to speak for themselves. In an earlier study, also nation-wide, it appeared that levels of dissatisfaction with specifically political and legal conditions and circumstances were relatively higher among all groups than dissatisfaction with a range of non-political aspects of life, excluding the specific issue of incomes[2]. In the results of the research for the Buthelezi Commission it was clear that the dissatisfaction was widespread across social classes and urban and rural regions.

A rough index of political alienation can be obtained from the extent of support for available political institutions. In a

1) Theodor Hanf *et al. op.cit.* Similar samples and the same fieldwork team were used.

2) L. Schlemmer, Research Appendix to the report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Ciskei, *The Quail Report*, Feb. 1980, Pretoria, Conference Associates, 1980.

pre-independence referendum held among blacks of Ciskeian affiliation, roughly one-third of the total number of people who theoretically could have participated did so. In Soweto, the percentage polls in elections for the Urban Councils dropped from 32 percent in 1968 to 14 percent in 1978. The only regions where formal political participation is reasonably high are either strictly within the homelands (although the latest elections in Bophuthatswana had a low poll) or in Natal-KwaZulu, where the political formation of Inkatha, under Chief Buthelezi, has created fairly considerable political legitimacy.

In another exploration of political alienation, a full range of newspapers for the past year have been perused in order to identify statements from black spokesmen that would indicate political alienation or loyalty and identification with the system. An insignificant number of quotations or reports came to hand which indicated positive support for the system, no matter how subtly. All statements indicated either highly particularistic commitments, protest, or a complete negation of the system. Generally, this aspect of deprivation must be counted as indicative of potential instability.

3.3 Relative Deprivation or *"Just Deserts"* Frustration

In 1972, in a very detailed, semi-depth survey of black attitudes in Durban (n 300) qualitative responses were classified for evidence of *"just deserts"* frustration. Among blue-collar blacks 39 percent spontaneously provided evidence of this particular kind of frustration, and among better-educated white-collar blacks the proportion was 45 percent.[1] In response to more specific items on *"just deserts"* frustration the proportions with this attitudinal

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1) L. Schlemmer. "Political Adaptation and Reaction among Urban Africans in South Africa", *Social Dynamics*, Vol. 2 No 1, 1976, pp 3-18.

set rose to between 55 and 60 percent. Hence this type of relative deprivation is widespread and has quite probably increased since 1972.

For example, in the research for the Buthelezi Commission in 1981 more than 90 percent of respondents indicated that aspirations to equality with whites were more salient than aspirations simply for progress and improvement.

3.4 Deprivation : low level of Satisfaction of Key rewards and Benefits

The Buthelezi Commission research probed desires for reform and perceived needs for reform in some detail. Education emerged consistently as one of the top three most highly valued benefits and also as one of the services most basic to other achievements. The demand for improvement in education was also up among the three most salient requirements.

Objectively, however, education is one of the most problematic of issues among the spectrum of reforms. Firstly, the ratio of expenditure on black versus white education is so wide ($\pm$ 1:7) that decades will pass before fiscal equality is reached. Secondly, black education suffers from a vicious circle of deficiencies which mean that improvements in quality will be as slow or slower than funding improvements. Prospects in this area are negative, despite attempts by the government to improve the situation.

3.5 Deprivation : the Scope and Sharing of Salient Perceived Deficiencies

In a study in 1979 of *"Quality of Life"* among whites, Indians, and Blacks in Durban, it has been found that the scope of perceived deprivation among blacks compared to other groups is dramatically more widespread than the objective differences

in material circumstances would suggest. A certain threshold of perceived deprivation on salient issues was taken as standard for the three groups. Among blacks the life-concerns above this threshold numbered 22, compared with 9 among Indians and 3 among whites. The form of the questioning reduced the effects of a *"complaining ethic"* and hence the results are quite disturbing.[1] Needless to say,the distribution of the results among blacks indicates a considerable degree of shared consciousness on this issue.

3.6 Relative Deprivation : the Success of Groups with which Blacks can identify

A few brief points in this regard are sufficient. Blacks would.tend to relate themselves particularly to other "non-white" groups and to blacks in neighbouring territories. Nattrass's analysis[2] referred to earlier gives some idea of the relatively greater socio-economic advances being made by coloureds and particularly Indians than blacks. The present constitutional proposals for coloureds and Indians are also very salient. Furthermore, the *"liberation"* achieved by successive neighbour communities in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and, in the not too distant future, Namibia, would suggest that rising political aspirations are quite dramatic in our situation. In fact the Buthelezi Commission research established that 80 percent or more of blacks sampled had a strong, affective identification with events in Zimbabwe. Whether these effects will increase, be maintained or decrease over time is difficult to say.

3.7 Utilitarian Justification for Aggressive Political Participation

This aspect has not been adequately covered in the research

1) Valerie Møller and Lawrence Schlemmer, "Quality of Life in South Africa", *Social Indicators Research*, forthcoming.

2) Jill Nattrass, *op, cit.*

results to hand. Here again, however, the utilitarian demonstration-effect of the effects of insurgency in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Mozambique are important. Furthermore, the fact that the government has not been able to disguise the fact that it has re-oriented some of its policies for black urban areas since the 1976-77 disturbances is relevant. There are thus, some very broad indications that utilitarian justifications for political aggression may exist.

3.8 Moral Justifications for Political Aggression

Here we will simply take the results of attitude surveys conducted for the Buthelezi Commission as indicative of a climate of normative views. A general indication of the extent of militancy of sentiment in the black population appears from the following series of results:

A statement presented to respondents read as follows:

"It is best for black South Africans to be careful in Politics and not get into trouble" (n 2 600)

KwaZulu/Natal cities:

Agree	49%
Disagree	51%

Witwatersrand:

Agree	45%
Disagree	54%

Another item was as follows:

"If the Government does not introduce changes for blacks in the next 10 years, which of the following do you expect?" (n,2 600+)

	Rural KwaZulu	KwaZulu Natal Cities	Witwatersrand
"Definitely Expect"			
Blacks will be too frightened by army/ police to act	21%	9%	17%
Many more blacks will leave country for military training	44%	56%	51%
Mass strikes by black workers	60%	65%	64%
Bloodshed/war/revolution (spontaneous addition)	80+%	80+%	80+%

(note: the remarkable figure of 80+ percent in reference to bloodshed above must be seen in a context of the build-up of suggestion in the previous items.)

Items which are somewhat closer to attitudinal indices of possible behaviour, and not merely sentiment, are reflected in the following series.

Paraphrased versions of items used are as follows:

"Would black workers strike for two weeks in response to a call by a well respected black leader?" (n, 300)

All KwaZulu/Natal:

Almost all	20%
Many	49%
Only a few	29%

"If the ANC (insurgents) *were to come in secretly asking people to help it and work with it.... what would happen?"* (n, 300)

All Natal/KwaZulu:

Most would try to help	19%
Many would help it	29%
A few	29%
Nobody/almost nobody	8%

"Most or many would help the ANC" (first and second categories above. (n, 300)

All Natal/KwaZulu	48%
Rural	46%
Youth: 18-24 yrs	56%
White collar workers	56%
Skilled/semi-skilled workers	55%

"Of people who would not help the ANC, would it be because of fear of police or because they disagreed with the ANC?" (n, 300)

All Natal/KwaZulu:

Fear of police	60%
Disagree with ANC	27%

These results speak for themselves. There is an abundance of attitudinal sentiment supportive of confrontation and political aggression. Quite clearly also, the "system" has very little legitimacy at the present time and there is a clear orientation to an alternative order.

3.9 Availability for Aggressive Political Participation

The pattern of unrest in 1976 and subsequently has shown that there is a great number of young adults "available", by virtue of urban youth unemployment and not infrequent school boycotts for public demonstrations or more serious encounters. With the current downturn in the economy, the relative numbers will increase sharply over the next 18 - 24 months.

Counter-indications are available for the settled labour force, however. Although South Africa's incidence of labour-time lost through strikes has increased rapidly in recent years,[1)] the short duration and nature of strikes makes it seem that working adults are not "available" at this stage for prolonged withdrawal from gainful employment.

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1) *Report of the National Manpower Commission*, Government Printer, 1981.

This will be discussed in greater detail presently. It needs simply to be noted, however, that in a rapidly-growing population, the proportion of more "available" black youths is relatively very high.

3.10 Summary to this point

So far every indicator chosen has broadly suggested a potential for political aggression or violence. The criteria of Muller and Gurr not yet discussed all refer to structural and environmental factors which can potentially inhibit the manifestation of such aggression. These will, finally, be discussed as a group, since the political environment in South Africa contains a number of overlapping and mutually reinforcing features.

3.11 Inhibitions in the Environment

A number of points which cluster round this theme will be made. The black organisations likely to espouse and mobilise for potential aggression have all been banned and are now located externally. The opportunities for mass-mobilisation in South Africa are limited. In the current situation most of the insurgency which does occur is externally planned and organised. In 1979, according to S.A. Broadcasting Corporation reports, there were 12 cases of violent insurgency. By 1981 there were 55, but in 1982 the number appeared to have dropped to roughly 30 instances,[1)] although final records are still not available. This is what Gurr would refer to as *"conspiracy"*.

The correlations with education in the survey data quoted above all suggest, in Gurr's terms, a relatively greater discontent among the black *"elites"*, and therefore a pre-condition for conspiracy exists.

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1) See Peter Randal (Ed.) *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations, 1983, p.230.

However, here again a strong inhibitor exists at the present time. Police statements over SABC suggest that over 90 percent of underground insurgents who have participated in some act of sabotage are tracked down.

Generally, then, the degree of regime surveillance, control, action against radical organisations as well as its motivation (its white leadership and substantial white personnel ensures loyalty) is sufficient to discourage any organised attempts to confront the system. It seems that a build-up of youth dissidence and dissident leadership can occur, but here again, the regime organisations can contain and ultimately inhibit it. This important issue will be discussed further below, but one must consider the prospects of unorganised action of a kind difficult to control.

3.11.1 Political Worker Action

One looks, then, at the prospects of what Gurr called *"turmoil"* or disorganised, leaderless violence. A particular focus of interest here is that of the potential for labour disturbances.

The comments already made above on labour disturbances do not suggest a strong tendency to violent confrontation among black workers, who would be required to support the youth if turmoil were to take on threatening proportions. Some people consider that the high levels of labour unrest show a tendency in this direction. The earlier comments on labour unrest patterns would counter-indicate this.

In 1981, the number of man-days lost in strikes was roughly 190 per 1 000 black employees.[1] Comparing this with other countries for 1979, shows that the black strike incidence in South Africa is well below the incidence in the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, Italy, Isreal and other countries in which the economy is highly strike prone.[2]

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1) *Report of the National Manpower Commission, op.cit.*

2) See *1980 Yearbook on Labour Statistics*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva.

The pattern for the first six months of 1982, as given by the Minister of Manpower in parliament, shows a slight increase in numbers in 1982 but a decrease in the time taken to resolve strikes.[1)]

The pattern of black strike activity over the past years appears worth noting. After years of very low activity there was a sharp increase in 1973 and 1974, in response to inflation, declining real income and poor communication in industry. The ensuing years from 1975 to 1979 once again represented a period of very low labour unrest. In 1980, after the new labour legislation had led to a spurt in union activity and worker mobilisation, strike action increased once again quite sharply until 1982. It was then probably slightly above the average levels for 1973 and 1974. This year, (1983) the general impression is that it has declined again quite sharply in response to the economic recession.

One must conclude that strike activity tends to be cyclical in response to organisational, legislative and economic factors. There does not seem to be any burgeoning of labour instability as a consequence of political factors of a direct kind. The official classification of causes of strike activity bear this out - political causes are not mentioned at all.

There are a few considerations in regard to the effect of politics on labour instability which deserve mention, however. An analysis of regional patterns of labour unrest shows that the Eastern Cape is dramatically over-represented as regards labour unrest relative to employment numbers.[2)]

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1) See Randall, *op. cit.*, p.184.

2) National Manpower Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

There is no logical reason for this other than the well-known fact that blacks in the Eastern Cape tend to exhibit a higher degree of political militancy than elsewhere. It would seem that political consciousness interacts with other factors in labour relations (grievances, wage rates, etc.) - possibly as a catalyst - in determining the level of strike-proneness, without the strikers necessarily having overt political objectives.

Secondly, the wave of strikes about pensions in late 1982, reflected among other factors a lack of trust in government and its intentions as regards the handling of workers' pension contributions and benefits.[1] Here, one may argue, is a case of the low political legitimacy of the key institutions in the system inducing a heightened instability among members of the black labour force.

We appear to have evidence, then, of a political factor in labour unrest. However, this does not represent political unrest in the black labour force as such. There is still little or no activity on the labour front which Gurr would regard as signs of incipient turmoil.

Black attitudes to trade unionism seem to support the conclusion above. When asked what trade unions could do for blacks, fewer than 5 percent of respondents mentioned a political function or goal (n, 700, 1981). Labour is not seen in a political light. Blacks may be relatively highly politicised and have quite well-developed militant sentiments, but there is still a very clear tendency for the political and labour spheres to be separated in the collective thinking of the black labour force.

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1) L. Schlemmer and L. van Schalkwyk, *The Pensions Strikes*, Durban, Centre for Applied Social Sciences, (forthcoming).

One can argue that this separation of spheres may not continue. Apart from the examples of interaction between political and labour action given above, there are also examples of boycotts of products in solidarity with aggrieved workers. The well-known Fattis and Monis boycott and the meat boycotts of a few years ago were cases in point.

These consumer-boycotts reflected a new development of some import which deserves further analysis, but they cannot be classified as the kind of political action which Gurr is referring to, and therefore do not seem to add up to a "*political destabilisation*" of the labour force.

There is thus very little direct indication of a growth of directly politically inspired activism in the mass of black labour. This, as we see, is in large measure due to the separation of employment and political issues. If ever the separation of spheres were to be bridged, it would introduce political activism right into a domain where blacks have real bargaining power, with quite dramatic consequences.

3.11.2 Coercion and Fear

In part the caution exhibited by blacks which is clear from the preceding section, is a fear reaction. The security apparatus in South Africa and its activities have a powerful "*demonstration*" effect on people. It is well-known inside and outside South Africa that thousands of people over the years have been detained without trial in terms of security legislation. Furthermore, the occurrence of deaths in detention are well-publicised and quite understandably create a climate of fear among would-be political activists.

The pattern of security action over the years is difficult to monitor since information is often inconsistent or unsystematic. Generally-speaking, however, it would not seem that there is a

current increase in the numbers of people affected by security action. If one takes political <u>detentions</u>, with or without trials, as one index, the following pattern emerges, based on statistics kept by the South African Institute of Race Relations and the South African Council of Churches.[1)]

1980 (up to November)	956 people
1981 (up to November)	630 people
1982 (up to November)	264-310* people

(* Figures given by the Minister of Police were higher.)

The apparent decline in security action does not necessarily reflect a more tolerant approach, nor does it necessarily show less politically-motivated discontent. The lower figures for 1982 could be the result of the affect of previous detentions and deaths in detention.

By the standards of totalitarian regimes, the figures for political detentions are not high in a population of 25 million people. Possibly, however, the fear of detention and its consequences and the image of <u>efficiency</u> which the South African regime probably enjoys (relative to the regimes of less-developed totalitarian societies) may have the effect of inducing great caution. Nevertheless, the level of security control is not such as to suggest that it is the only factor constraining the black population of South Africa.

3.11.3 <u>Dual Consciousness</u>

There is, in addition to the fear-coercion factor, considerable evidence of certain kinds of political ambivalence among the black people of South Africa.

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1) See *Annual Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, 1980, 1981, 1982, Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations. Figures include the independent homelands.

The research for the Buthelezi Commission and the Quail Commission, referred to earlier, have shown that, despite the high levels of militancy, discontent and frustration evidenced in the findings, the minimum political demands, in policy-terms, of a wide cross-section of blacks are surprisingly moderate. Broadly, one can say that 60 to 70 percent of blacks declare themselves prepared to accept socio-political arrangements which amount to substantial compromises with white interests. In particular, majorities of blacks are willing to accept *"consociational"* arrangements in which whites would have <u>equal</u> power with blacks in a future dispensation.

More pertinent to this topic, however, are the following results of a separate study among 150 black adults in Durban in 1979, which in part was devoted to an explanation of more *"rational"* considerations of strategy. The following examples are relevant:

<u>Percentage endorsement of alternative-choice statements relating to black political strategy</u> (Zulu men, n 150).
(Statements are paraphrased, uncertain responses omitted.)

"A leader must act strongly to win support	22%
vs	
He should wait in order to form a strong organisation."	76%
"A black leader should never co-operate with the government	11%
vs	
He should criticise, but co-operate where beneficial."	85%
"Being patient does not help, a leader must make strong demands now	30%
vs	
He must be patient and work with the tools he has."	61%
"There is no longer anything to be gained by being patient	19%
vs	
It still pays to be patient and plan carefully	81%

"Some people say that overseas companies should stop buying South African goods and stop sending money to build factories so as to frighten the South African government into getting rid of apartheid. Others say they should continue because it makes jobs for all people in South Africa."

- Stop (boycott/disinvestment) 20%
- Continue trading/investing 75%
- Dont know 5%

Even among the most militant-group of *"black consciousness"* supporters, no more than 33 percent of respondents advocated the disinvestment strategy.

If we add to these results the fact that the Buthelezi Commission findings showed that 70 percent or more blacks not only would oppose discrimination against whites, but also indicated that they valued white participation in South African society,[1] then a complex picture emerges, along broadly the following lines.

Blacks are highly discontented, with an attitudinal potential for political aggression. At the same time the consistency and pervasiveness of the web of white control inhibits this orientation from coming to the fore. This inhibition is also secured by the constraints on leadership.

At the same time, however, it is clear that certain advantages are recognised in living with the system. Clearly, the capacity of the South African economy to generate employment and to create expanding material prospects is one important factor emerging from these results.[2]

Furthermore, the attitudenal results seem to indicate that the *"system"* may not be perceived as totally inflexible. There appears to be a feeling that patience, negotiation and the building-up of bargaining power will lead to reforms and concessions granted peacefully.

) *The Buthelezi Commission*, vol. 1. *op. cit.*

) The figures of Jill Nattrass given earlier on the increasing share of income enjoyed by blacks are relevant here.

In other words, substantial proportions of black rank-and-file people seem to feel able to maintain a practical approach to political behaviour.

Furthermore, the responses of whites in the system are also sufficiently varied to prevent a rigid stereotyping of the *"enemy"*. There is also (from results not quoted) some indication among blacks of an appreciation of the value of white technological expertise.

What is perhaps most important among these factors, is that despite the government's determination not to yield to pressures for black constitutional reform, a perception seems to exist among blacks that not all non-violent options are closed. This attitude is very closely related to one of the conditions which Gurr mentions as counter-acting the effects of relative deprivation - the perception of opportunities for incremental gains.

Therefore, there appears to be a dual-consciousness among blacks of a kind which counteracts the attitudes of discontent and concepts of violent political strategy which so many observers of South African society would expect.

4. CONCLUSIONS: THE UNLIKELIHOOD OF DRAMATIC CHANGE OR CONFLICT

What has been referred to as a dual-consciousness is probably the most important factor bearing upon the relative stability at the present time. However, this consciousness is the outcome, in part, of a particular configuration of structures and forms of organisation in South African society, It is these structures which have to be appreciated in order to understand the failure of violent revolution in the society.

We have seen that in terms of both Gurr's and Muller's attitudinal and normative factors, virtually all the preconditions for an escalation of political violence appear to exist. The implications of the results on various indexes given in this paper are obvious and need not be summarised here.

On the other hand, Gurr's structural and organisational criteria for revolution or for *"turmoil"*, *"civil war"* or effective *"conspiracy"* among political leader figures inside South Africa are not met.

In the past two-and-a-half decades two successive waves of political violence have failed to fully extend the forces of law and order, let alone threaten the survival of the regime. While there have been responses to the violence in the form of policy adaptations and reform, the efforts have been sluggish or unhurried and the effects undramatic. The *"Soweto"* disturbances have yielded certain improvements in conditions for blacks in urban areas (the 99 year leasehold system, giving security of housing tenure; an increase in the rate of building of classrooms) but these effects fall far short of what could be called structural change. Hence, a collective and widespread belief that violence will have practical benefits simply has not developed. This is one of Gurr's major criteria.

Turning to Gurr's other collective criteria, we may note that there is also no loyalty to the dissident cause among regime forces, that security and surveillance controls are very consistent and have demonstrated their severity, particularly in past years, and that virtually no internal dissident organisation capable of operating sufficiently openly to sanction, reward or encourage violence exists or is able to exist for very long. Here we have to take account of a particularly complex and multi-facetted set of controls over political communication and over the activities of organisations and their funding. Inkatha[1)] has the organisation perhaps, but does not support violence.

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1) Inkatha now has membership of some 750 000 and is therefore the largest black political organisation.

The picture, broadly, is consistent with the propositions of Gurr and with predictions which could be made on the basis of his propositions. The general conclusion would be that political discontent among blacks is constrained by coercion and control (or by the consequences of coercion) and that as a consequence a certain degree of pragmatism is forced upon the black population.

This conclusion is valid, but it is not the whole picture, as it were. Muller includes among his organisational factors one which can be elaborated to provide a particular insight into black responses in South Africa.

Muller speaks of the effectiveness, quality and flexibility of administration as a factor discouraging the build-up of political aggression. This factor can be broadened, and seen as a generalised responsiveness (apparent or real) in the system. In South Africa this has various components.

Firstly, we have noted the capacity of the economy to generate incremental rewards, and to respond to pressures of various kinds for an improvement in levels of material welfare. Not only are Nattrass's figures relevant again, but various (very recent) government attempts to improve housing provision and educational services for blacks are also relevant, as are steady, albeit cautious, moves towards the desegregation of more and more facilities.

Secondly, in part as a consequence of the policy of separate development and the decentralisation of functions to marginal (black) authorities, a very large number of better-educated black people are absorbed into senior bureaucratic and administrative positions in the state system. Even in the police force, there are over 75 black commissioned officers. If one adds all these positions together, it would amount to the effective co-optation of thousands of better-educated blacks. If one adds to these the numbers of black incumbents at similar levels in the private sector, it is clear that there is a

considerable drain of talent away from the revolutionary cause, as it were.

One can make this point notwithstanding the fact that there is still massive inequality in the relative occupational advancement of blacks and whites. All that is suggested here is that the system is seen to generate occupational opportunity.

A third factor in this regard is the fact that the administration of black affairs is becoming more and more sophisticated. Particularly since the 1976 disturbances, administrators of high quality have been put in charge of the larger black urban communities. Currently, although there is legislation pending which may make influx control to the cities and in the cities more rigid, there is also new legislation to create, and fund, a much more legitimate system of black local government.[1)] It is not claimed here that all the myriad frustrations and restrictions for black people in South Africa are being removed. What is happening is simply that changes and shifts do occur, and while they are inadequate in objective, quantitative terms, they create the impression of flexibility or impending change in the system.

Finally in this regard, South Africa has one characteristic which most authoritarian regimes do not have — a fairly intense debate about social change in the mass media. This probably has a double effect in raising hopes and expectations but at the same time creating a running impression of the potential for change and reform in the system. Whatever the real flexibility of the system may or may not be, the mass media and public debates certainly create an impression of possibilities.

This real or apparent system responsiveness, coupled with effective security controls and an emasculation of counter-system organisation, is likely to continue to protect the established regime functions, at least in the short term.

) Black Local Authorities Act no. 102 of 1982. Details of funding are not yet known but the Minister of Cooperation and Development has indicated that it will be a substantial improvement on present funding.

5. THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

Does this conclusion mean that South Africa will be a peaceful society in the longer-term as the 20th century draws to an end? Not at all. It will probably be a relatively stable order, but the stability of its production and administrative systems is likely to co-exist with a level of contained violence emanating from expatriate organisations like the ANC, and sporadic popular disturbances.

The reasons for this contradiction lie in the fact that South Afri is as yet far from being a fully-developed society, and large num of black people will not be included in the economic system and in the network of services and facilities. Here one thinks particul of the unemployed youth, whose educational level is rapidly increa along with their expectations and aspirations.[1] Furthermore, a youthful migrant workers who are unemployed, the rapidly increasin density of settlement in the black rural areas means that more and more are deprived of the alternative security of subsistence agriculture on small allotments in traditional areas.[2]

It is from these categories of people that one may expect a steady stream of economic, if not political, *"refugees"* to leave South Af to receive insurgency training abroad. The current and likely fu ability of South African forces to destroy insurgent bases in neighbourhood territories will probably curtail the ease of return of the trained insurgents, but the current pattern of regular but limited sabotage will continue. As the technology of insurgency and the levels of training improve, the sabotage is likely to beco more serious in its effects. We must bear in mind, however, tha many societies have demonstrated a capacity to accommodate fairly high levels of sabotage and insurgency for long periods. Sabotag in itself does not topple governments.

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1) Sixty percent of black unemployment is among people under 30 years of age: The current Population Survey of Department of Statistics, 1982.

2) See *The Buthelezi Commission*, *op. cit.*, p. 235 for details of rura resources of samples of blacks in KwaZulu.

The effects of sustained or moderately increased sabotage will be complex. On the one hand, sabotage probably has a politicising and morale-boasting effect on substantial proportions of the black community. Given the system of control and the dual consciousness of the mass of economically active blacks, however, it is unlikely to encourage open action. It may even be perceived as an excuse for non-involvement in political activity inside South Africa. The effects on whites, provided it does not reduce confidence in the economy, which it has not done up to now, will probably be to increase solidarity and to rally support for the government.

These speculations presuppose that insurgency will be contained below a certain threshold of effect on the economy and costs of containment. In a very real sense, the future of South Africa is dependent on the contest between insurgency action and the capacity of the state to contain it below a critical threshold. The nature of the overall political system as it has been analysed in this paper would suggest that, apart from counter-insurgency techniques and strategies, a solution to the problem of black youth unemployment is the most critical factor. The government is certainly aware of this and new schemes for the training of unemployed blacks have recently been launched. The task is daunting, however, since the economy has developed a tendency to capital intensity.

One uncertainty relates to the possibility of a politicisation of labour action (or related consumer action). The scenario above has been sketched on the assumption that blacks will continue to separate the political from the labour and consumer spheres. If not, investor confidence will be affected, and this confidence is the key to South Africa's stability. A breakdown in business confidence will produce a vicious cycle of declining capacity to cope with problems — increased recruitment for insurgency (through increased youth unemployment), lessened capacity to deal with it, leading to even lower business confidence, and so on. There is, at this stage, however, no indication of such a process occurring.

Given the constellation of factors outlined in this paper, and provided the assumptions and observations in the analysis are valid, the best future for the current regime in South Africa is likely to be one of cycles of black youth unrest and a persisting level of insurgency and sabotage. The former will be contained, as before. The latter factor, the level of insurgency, defies prediction.