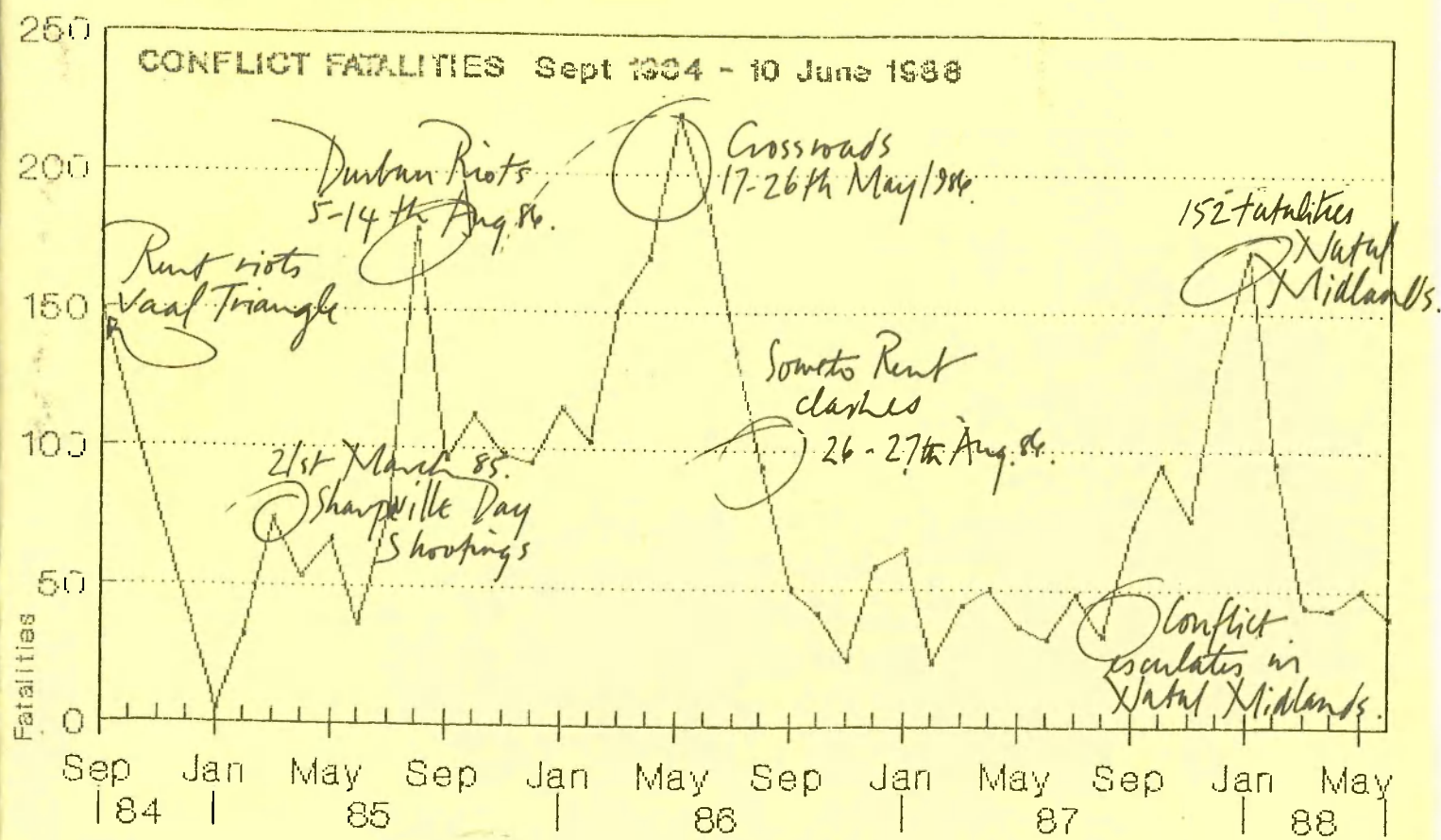


AN OVERVIEW OF "POLITICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Data Trends 1984-1988 " "



DONOR

M E M B E R S

Abbot Laboratories • AECI Ltd • Africa Inst of SA • African Cables • African Oxygen Ltd • Allied Technologies Ltd • Andrew Levy & Assocs (Pty) Ltd • Anglo American & De Beers Chairman's Fund Education Trust • Anglovaal Ltd • Anikem (Pty) Ltd • Anna Starcke Assocs • Bankorp Ltd • Barlow Rand Ltd • Beacon Sweets & Chocolates • BP Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd • Carlton Paper of SA (Pty) Ltd • Chamber of Mines of SA • Checkers SA Ltd • Crown Cork SA (Pty) Ltd • Consolidated Textiles Ltd • Consumer Behaviour (Pty) Ltd • Control Data Corp • Delta Motor Corp • Development Bank of Southern Africa • Dow Chemical USA • Durban Chamber of Commerce • Durban City Council • Durban City Council – Personnel Services • Edward L Bateman Ltd • ESCOM • Everite Ltd • Federated Life Assurance Co • First National Bank of Southern Africa Ltd • Ford Foundation • General Mining Corp Ltd • German Embassy • Gilbeys Distillers & Vintners (Pty) Ltd • Gillette SA Ltd • PG Glass Holdings (Pty) Ltd • Gold Fields Foundation • Grinaker Holdings Ltd • Henred-Fruehauf Trailers (Pty) Ltd • Hewlett Packard SA (Pty) Ltd • ISM SA (Pty) Ltd • Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Co Ltd • Johnson & Johnson • Kangra Holdings (Pty) Ltd • Kellogg Co of SA (Pty) Ltd • Kluk Textile Industries • KwaZulu Finance & Investment Corp • Liberty Life • Malbak Ltd • Mercedes-Benz of SA (Pty) Ltd • Metal Box SA Ltd • Metropolitan Life Ltd • Mitchell Cotts (Pty) Ltd • Mobil Oil Corp • Mobil Oil Foundation of SA • The Natal Witness (Pty) Ltd • NCR Corporation of SA Ltd • Netherlands Embassy • Old Mutual • Otis Elevator Co Ltd • Perm Centenary Trust • Premier Group • Rand Merchant Bank • Richards Bay Minerals • Rio Tinto Management Services SA (Pty) Ltd • Robertsons (Pty) Ltd • Romatex Ltd • SA Clothing Industries Ltd • Saficon Investments Ltd • SA Foundation • Sage Holdings Ltd • Sanlam • SAPPI • SASOL Ltd • SA Sugar Ass • SA Tioxide (Pty) Ltd • SEIFSA • Shell SA (Pty) Ltd • Smith Kline & French Laboratories • South African Breweries Ltd • Southern Life • Standard Bank Investment Corp Ltd • Stellenbosch Farmers Winery Ltd • Suncrush Limited • Sun International Ltd • TEK Corporation • The Tongaat-Hulett Group Ltd • The Urban Foundation • Toyota Marketing Co (Pty) Ltd • Unilever SA (Pty) Ltd • UNISA • USSALEP • Unisys (Pty) Ltd • Volkswagen of SA (Pty) Ltd • PG Wood Industries • Wooltru Ltd • Zenex Oil (Pty) Ltd

AN OVERVIEW OF

“Political Conflict in South Africa Data Trends 1984-1988”

Indicator SA Issue Focus Sequel



March 1989

Indicator Project South Africa

INDICATOR PROJECT SOUTH AFRICA

The Indicator South Africa Quarterly Report and the Indicator South Africa Issue Focus series are published by the Centre for Social and Development Studies at the University of Natal, Durban. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee and should not be taken to represent the policies of companies or organisations who are donor members of the Indicator Project SA.

© Copyright for all material herein is held by Indicator South Africa or individual authors, except in the case of short extracts for review or comment. Sole copyright for all data bases rests with Indicator South Africa. Permission to republish or reproduce any part of this publication must be obtained from the publisher.

Editor:
Graham Howe
Research:
Mark Bennett, Robert Evans, Deborah Quin
Design/Production:
Vijay Makanjee
Liaison:
Myrna Berkowitz
Secretary:
Dorothy Smith

Editorial Committee:
Professors Simon Bekker, Mike McGrath, Valerie Moller, Lawrence Schlemmer, & Indicator SA Project Team

Cover Design: *Graphicos*
Printers: *Multicopy*

ISBN: 0 86980 662 9

We would like to thank Futurewave Technology (Pty) Ltd for donating the Ventura desktop publishing programme used in the design of this publication

**AN OVERVIEW
OF
Political Conflict in South Africa
Data Trends 1984-1988**

Preface		5
 ANALYSES		
Towards New Strategy Guidelines Evaluating Conflict Data Trends	F Van Zyl Slabbert	7
Kamikaze Politics Assessing Non-Collaboration Tactics	Mark Bennett & Deborah Quin	21
Participation Vs Boycott Scenarios Assessing BLA Election Polls	Robert Evans	29
Policy Implications Negotiable & Revolutionary Agendas	Lawrence Schlemmer	33
 DATA TRENDS		
	IPSA Research	
FATALITIES IN POLITICAL CONFLICT:		
Breakdown by Category: Seven Comparative Periods, 1984-1988		6
Breakdown by Region: Seven Comparative Periods, 1984-1988		8
Breakdown by Month: January 1985-December 1988		16/17
 SUMMARY OF STRATEGY & TACTICS:		
ANC Guerilla Activity & Targets		12
Non-Collaboration Initiatives by Period & Region		22
Use of Security Laws & Detentions		22
 SUMMARY OF BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITY (BLA) ELECTION RESULTS:		
BLA Polls by Region, 26 October 1988		28
BLA Polls in Upgraded Townships, 1983-1988		30
BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX, 1985-1988		32

PREFACE

In December 1988 Indicator SA released a major report into political conflict in South Africa during the 1980s. Part of our occasional Issue Focus publication series, the report offered a comprehensive regional analysis of political conflict, using maps of township flashpoints and data indicators of violence levels to monitor the major developments of this period. Region by region, strategy by strategy, top political analysts tracked the course of the intense struggle between the state and its security forces, on the one hand, and the extra-parliamentary opposition and its affiliates, on the other.

The Indicator Project SA has monitored political conflict in South Africa since the outbreak of violence in September 1984, regularly publishing data trends, data indicators, policy analysis and conflict chronologies in our quarterly report. The major aim of producing a special report on the subject was to consolidate the host of indicators and articles published over this five year period, to update the data, and to achieve an overview which would exhaustively document a phase of intense turmoil in the country's political history. It was also hoped that a regional approach to the conflict, within a common analytical framework – using indicators such as organisational levels, socio-economic linkages, conflict triggers, opposition initiatives, state responses, activist counter-responses and the current situation – would lead to an enhanced, more specific

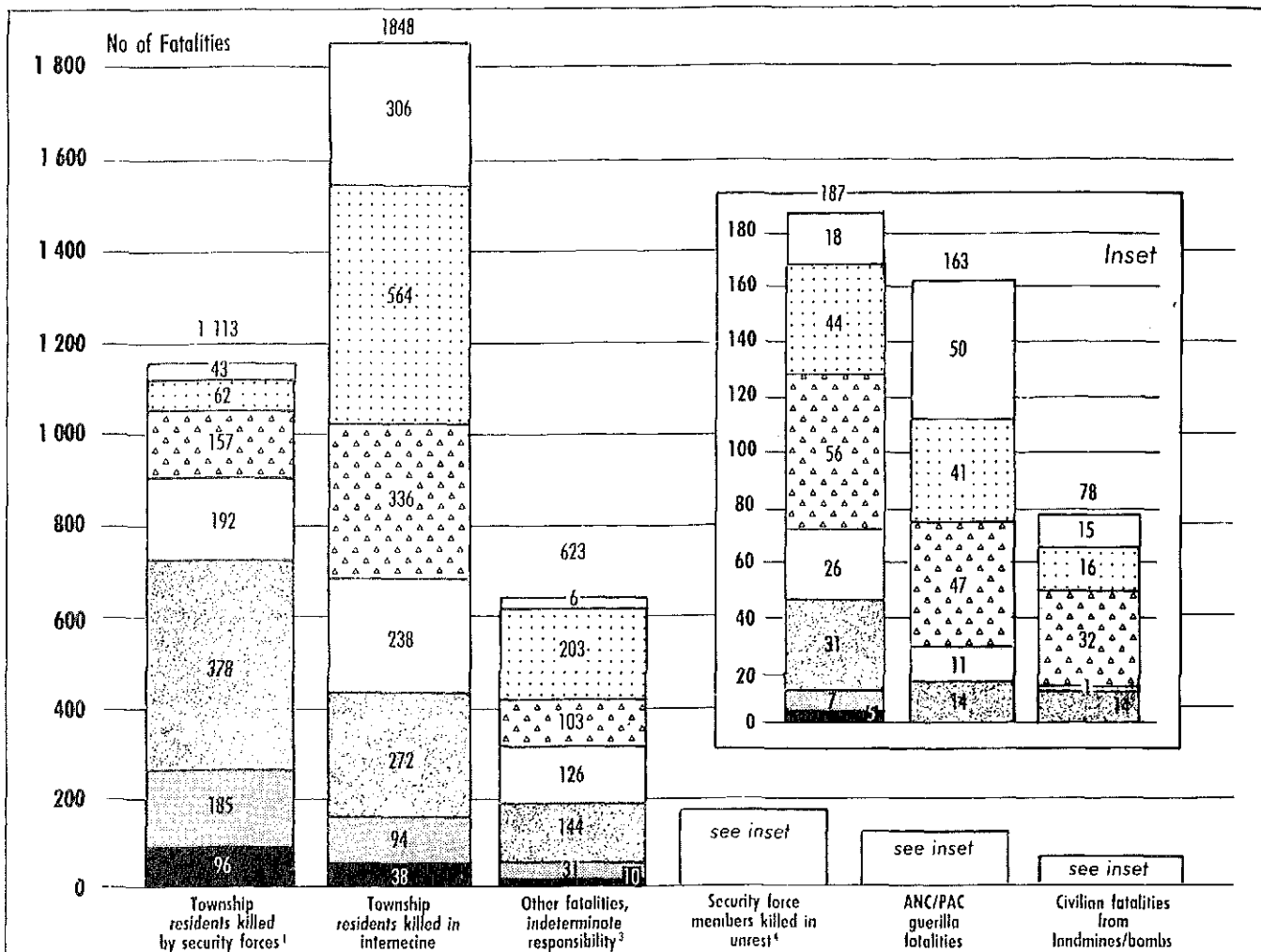
understanding of conflict patterns at the local and regional levels.

As a sequel to the release of the former primary report, Indicator SA herewith publishes an overview or policy guide that attempts to extrapolate our major research findings in terms of the current deadlock reached between the government and its extra-parliamentary opposition. In the following four critiques, contributors Dr van Zyl Slabbert, Mark Bennett & Deborah Quin (IPSA), Robert Evans (IPSA) and Professor Schlemmer review the socio-political strategies and policies applied by the major parties between 1984-1988. The Indicator SA researchers have also updated and summarised data trends on conflict fatalities, 'non-collaboration' tactics (the rent, voter, consumer, worker and transport boycotts), and business confidence.

In publishing this Indicator SA Issue Focus sequel, we hope to render an additional information service to our subscribers, namely, to explain the implications of our published data trends on political conflict and to examine the policy implications thereof. In the pages of this special publication there is provocative but constructive debate of proposed political approaches and strategies that might lead to a less destructive interface between the major protagonists to the South African conflict, and ultimately, to negotiable agendas that might facilitate conflict resolution.

Fatalities in Political Conflict: Breakdown by Category

Seven Comparative Periods, 1 Sept 1984 - 31 Dec 1988



KEY

Period	Period Death Toll
TOTAL DEATH TOLL 1/9/84 - 31/12/88	4012
Seven Unrest Periods	
National State of Emergency No3 11/6/88 - 31/12/88	438
National State of Emergency No2 12/6/87 - 10/6/88	930
National State of Emergency No1 12/6/86 - 11/6/87	731
Post-State of Emergency Phase 8/3/86 - 11/6/86	594
(Regional) State of Emergency 21/7/85 - 7/3/86	853
Build-up of Unrest 1/1/85 - 20/7/85	317
Early Rumblings 1/9/84 - 31/12/84	149

Monitoring Notes

- It has not been possible to provide a breakdown of where, when and how deaths occurred in the period 1 September to 31 December 1984.
- The figures on political violence fatalities are compiled from a combination of daily press, police, Bureau for Information, parliamentary estimates and independent monitors. In mid-1986 the state created the Bureau for Information as the only legal source for 'unrest' data/incidents (or confirmation thereof), a function which has since reverted to the police.
- Official records supplied in parliament and at press conferences tend to differ from independent monitors, and further, cover interim periods that differ from the breakdown used in this table.
- The paucity of detail in official reports and a wide range of media restrictions has made it increasingly difficult to attribute specific responsibility for political violence fatalities. It must be stressed that the fatality count arrived at in this Indicator SA monitoring exercise constitutes a set of provisional figures that are significantly lower than the probable actual fatality count.

Category Notes

- 1 Security forces includes SADF, SAP, SA Railways police, municipal police, kitskonstabels, security guards and homeland-based soldiers or police. Insurgents killed by security forces in township shootouts are not included here (see fifth category).
- 2 The second category includes fatalities in several distinct types of political conflict that are statistically inseparable in most media and police reports, however. All specified reports of burnt bodies, often the victims of 'necklaced' killings (whose political affiliation is unknown), have been included here. The sub-categories include:
 - leading between extra-parliamentary opposition groups, e.g. UDF and Inkatha in KwaZulu/Natal, UDF and Azapo, and between labour groups e.g. Cosatu and Uwuza.
 - left-wing activist attacks on 'collaborators' (black town councillors, Biko singers, informers, etc.), vigilantes and third force groups.
 - right-wing township, shack settlement and homeland vigilante attacks on opposition groups.
- 3 The third category includes many Natal midlands fatalities, white unrest victims (except for security force fatalities), assassinations of leaders by 'death squads', deaths of detainees and prisoners awaiting trial for unrest offences. The deaths of 65 Crossroads (CT) victims from May/June 1986 are included here because specific responsibility cannot be attributed to 'widoeke' (vigilantes), the 'comrades' or security forces.
- 4 The fourth category mostly reflects security force casualties in unrest clashes but includes a few members killed in township or rural shootouts with insurgents.

Towards New Strategy Guidelines

Evaluating Conflict Data Trends

*Dr Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, Co-Director,
Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa*

In December 1988 the Indicator Project South Africa (IPSA) produced a comprehensive research report on *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984-1988*. This provides a very valuable resource base for anyone who wishes to understand the matrix of factors, issues and actors that played the major role in what has undoubtedly been the most turbulent and sustained challenge to government and state policy to date.

The data presented in the report (IPSA 1988) and updated data released in this overview (IPSA 1989) shows that from the implementation of the tricameral constitution in 1984 until December 1988:

- 4 012 people were killed in incidents of civil unrest, the vast majority of them township residents (IPSA 1989:6);
- approximately 45 000 people were detained without trial (IPSA 1988:93), which is considered to be a conservative estimate;
- the number of work stoppages and strikes climbed from 469 in 1984 to 1 148 in 1987 (IPSA 1988:105);
- insurgent actions of various kinds by the ANC increased from 44 in 1984, to 203 in 1986, 183 in 1987 and 209 in 1988 (IPSA 1989:12), i.e. an average escalation of more than four times during the four year period;
- there was a virtual breakdown of, and rebellion against the system of black education, as well as of township/local government structures (IPSA 1988:160/168) in many metropolitan areas;
- even homeland and other rural areas were swept into the turmoil (IPSA 1988:71).

It is no exaggeration to say that most extra-parliamentary community and institutional life was in some way affected or involved in the revolt against state policy.

And yet, in the same Indicator SA report, virtually all the commentators, who without exception are in some way or another

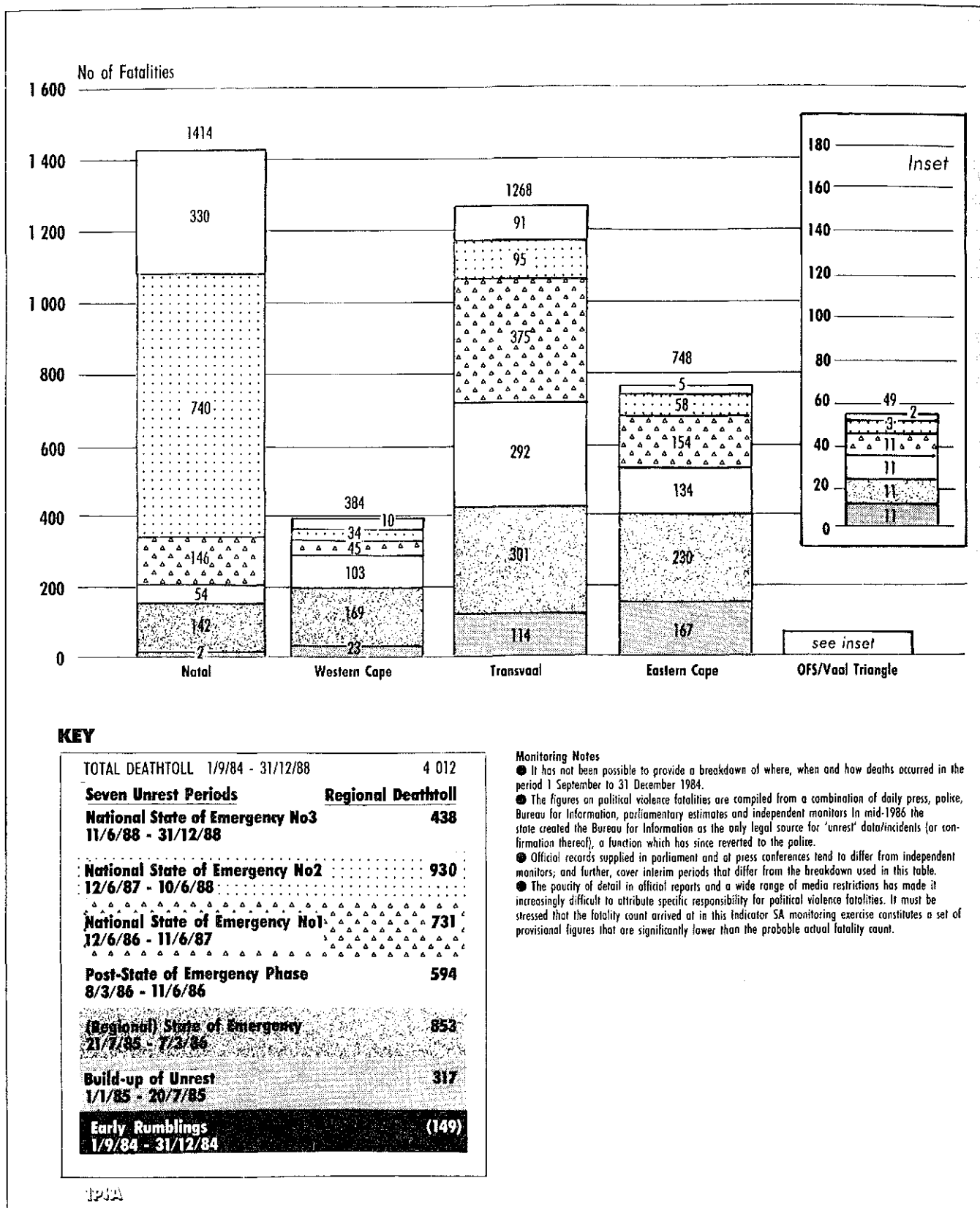
committed to the ideal of a non-racial democratic South Africa, concede that the state has not only successfully contained the revolt, but through sustained and massive repression managed to (temporarily?) debilitate the organisational base of most extra-parliamentary opposition:

- 'The extra-parliamentary opposition, and to a limited extent the labour movement, wilted under the effects of a national emergency. The inability of many of the organisations to withstand the onslaught revealed not only the extent of state power but the failure of the opposition to evolve internal structures that might have enabled them to withstand the crackdown.' (Bennett & Quin 1988:15)
- 'The national state of emergency declared in mid-1986 marked a turning-point in township politics. Severe repression and the tentative introduction of counter revolutionary measures caused widespread organisational paralysis and broke the back of the school boycotts and embryonic structures of "people's power".' (Chaskalson & Seekings 1988:44)
- It is pointed out that in the Eastern Cape, 'Ex-detainees are not necessarily about to take up the struggle where they left off. The rigorous conditions of detention has caused a decline in health in many cases. Demoralised and physically weakened on release, ex-detainees who have lost their jobs face the almost impossible task of finding new employment as branded "politicals" in a region of very high unemployment.' (Palmer 1988:33)
- 'The extent and nature of the state's clampdown on all areas of meaningful political activity within the country has meant that popular organisations have had to reassess their current strengths and weaknesses.' (Phillips 1988:105)

The state has not only contained the revolt of 1984-1988 but debilitated the organisational base of extra parliamentary opposition

Fatalities in Political Conflict: Breakdown by Region

Seven Comparative Periods, 1 Sept 1984 - 31 Dec 1988



Perhaps the most telling measure of the 'success' of the state's counter-revolutionary strategy, (particularly in controlling information), is that despite increasing international isolation during this period, and at the peak of industrial unrest and insurgent ANC activity in 1987-88 (IPSA 1989:12), business confidence climbed from a low ebb to a high in October 1987 (IPSA 1989:32). Some of the indicators used to measure such confidence were: consumer price index, estimated retail sales, new companies registered, number of persons immigrating to and from South Africa, etc. In Morris' words (IPSA 1988:109): 'The restructuring of the relations of power within the state and its ability to demonstrate most effectively that it is by no means unstable has led to a re-appraisal of capital's relationship to the state'.

Critical Distinctions

So what conclusion does one draw from the data and analyses, region by region, strategy by strategy? Has resistance and revolt been finally crushed? Has the 'total strategy' succeeded? Is 'reform' back on track? Such conclusions would reflect a very serious misunderstanding of the nature of political conflict in South Africa. To contain conflict is one thing, to resolve it, a totally different matter. The Indicator SA report repeatedly makes it clear that the underlying structural conditions which provide the backdrop for issues and precipitating events to escalate into open conflict and violence, are as present and unresolved as before.

What then is to be done? It appears that the state and its major opponents are in a position of strategic deadlock, with the initiative of control, manipulation and coercion lying with the state. What do those who are seriously committed to the ideal of a non-racial democratic South Africa do in such a situation? Perhaps they should call for a 'time-out' to take stock of their own strategies, tactics and options. What follows are some of the issues which have to be considered very seriously when a stock-taking of this kind takes place.

Re-evaluation, particularly for those involved deeply and over an extended period in "the struggle", who have suffered personally, can be a painful and even objectionable exercise. Political strategies, despite their expendable means-end logic, are not cheaper by the dozen or easily settled on. They tend to develop a culture of commitment with rituals of dedication and sacrifice that very often demand uncritical loyalty. That is why political strategies run the risk of

becoming ends in themselves or are often elevated into unquestioned matters of principle. But these very characteristics necessitate a re-examination of strategy and tactics in a situation of strategic deadlock. Such re-examination does not inevitably imply a rejection of old tactics and strategies, although this is possible, but it certainly does mean taking a fresh look at priorities, resources and results.

There is an additional dimension in stock-taking of this nature. Very often a strategy or a tactic is a logical part of a particular theory of change. The prior commitment is to the theory rather than to the strategy, but the abandonment of the strategy is then seen as a rejection of the theory. My response to this dilemma is: So what? If the success of a theory of social change is predicated on the inflexible commitment to a particular strategy, it cannot be a particularly useful theory; and if the theory has to explain away all contradictions in order to intellectually prop up a particular strategy, it becomes a useless tautology in any case.

South African politics, again and again, from the left and the right, have been theorised about with the promise of 'glorious inevitable outcomes' that hover like mirages in our arid political desert. It took the National Party government almost forty years to realise that the theory of separate development/apartheid was not going to work. (And now they offer us total onslaught/total strategy in its place — the reader should note the emphasis on strategy). Must those in opposition who are committed to a non-racial democracy repeat this kind of dogmatic folly? Surely in the stock-taking that takes place it is necessary to dust down both strategies and theoretical assumptions. Having thus prefaced this discussion, let us consider some of the issues:

VIOLENCE

In looking at violence as a manifestation of political conflict, the author has no intention of reviewing or taking issue with those theories, whether political or theological, that address the issue of violence as an instrument of political change.

To declare a bias at the outset, the author remains unpersuaded as to the political predictability, utility or moral defensibility of a resort to violence. (This does not mean I am a pacifist. I can easily picture situations in which I can become violent and I certainly can understand how an individual, group or organisation can come to accept that violent means are a last resort to seek political redress. But I find myself unable to accept a

The deadlock between state and major opponents necessitates a major re-think of strategy and tactics by both parties

Political violence is propagandised as 'the terror' (armed struggle) of the ANC versus 'the tyranny' (law and order) of the state

programme for South Africa that sees violence as an absolutely essential component to bring about successful change towards a non-racial democracy.) This does not mean that violence cannot be used to bring about change. Both the state and some of its opponents have used violent means to change the domestic situation. But whether either party has brought us much closer to a non-racial and democratic South Africa is another matter altogether.

The Indicator SA data on political conflict makes it quite clear that between 1 September 1984 and 31 December 1988, a considerable amount of violence took place in South Africa. The updated data released here (1989:6) shows that of the 4 012 people killed over seven unrest periods, 3 584 (89,3%) were township residents – of this subtotal, 1 848 (51,6%) died as a result of internecine warfare inside townships, i.e. in feuding between extra-parliamentary opposition groups, in left-wing activist attacks on collaborators, in vigilante and right-wing attacks, etc; a further 623 (17,4%) died in circumstances of political violence where specific responsibility cannot be attributed; and 1 113 (31%) were killed by the security forces.

Out of the total death toll of 4 012, the other fatalities were security force members, 187 (4,7%); ANC/PAC members, 163 (4%); and civilians, i.e. fatalities from land mines/bombs, 78 (2%).

These statistics on political violence do not reflect the degree of intimidation (on all sides) or excessive use of force, nor what the approximately 45 000 who were detained (IPSA 1988:92/93) experienced during their incarceration. It is fair to assume that a considerable amount of brutalisation was the order of the day. Literally hundreds of unexamined affidavits attest to this fact, almost all of them levelled against the state. But a number of commentators also refer to the alienating effects of violence perpetrated in townships by various elements in the 'democratic movement', civic or youth organisations (cf IPSA 1988 – Bennett & Quin:16; Chaskalson & Seekings:36;41; Palmer:51; Cameron:61; Booth:78).

What the Indicator SA report makes abundantly clear is that it would be a gross misrepresentation to give a body count analysis of the violence by juxtaposing the violence of state repression with the violence of armed struggle by the ANC or PAC. Instead, it is more than apparent that the structural conditions in South Africa are such (economic inequality, atrocious housing conditions, inadequate educational facilities, rampant poverty and hunger, unemployment, totally inadequate channels for political expression or civic administration, deep feelings of relative

deprivation, etc, etc), that many forms of violence are not only possible but it would be surprising if under such conducive circumstances they did not occur. The implicit, if not explicit, analytical framework used by almost all of the report's commentators to give some coherence to the pattern of political violence is precisely to relate precipitating events and issues to these structural circumstances. Even the state (somewhat belatedly) acknowledged the 'legitimacy of grievances' (cf the contributions of Morris & Swilling).

Different Forms

During 1984-88 violence manifested itself in uncontrolled mob aggression, spontaneous anger, feuding, political retribution, thuggery, terror, planned and systematic armed violence etc. To ascribe the same motivation, pre-meditation and execution to all these various forms of violence would be a gross distortion of reality. Yet in a rapidly polarising situation, this is very often what happens. The state bombarded the population with sustained propaganda in which almost any manifestation of violence was ascribed to the 'terrorist activities' of the ANC. Even after the ANC had publicly, and after considerable delay, repudiated 'necklacing' as a means of political retribution, this form of barbarism was presented as part and parcel of the armed struggle of the ANC.

At the same time, it is clear that much of the rhetoric emanating from the ANC mouthpieces, *Sechaba* and *Radio Freedom*, tended to romanticise 'a people's war' and the spontaneous 'revolutionary anger of the masses' during this period. This was grist to the mill for the state propagandists who gave themselves permission to quote selectively from banned ANC literature to try and prove that virtually all forms of violence emanated from one single source. And so over time, between 1984-88, the domestic conflict on a propaganda level became juxtaposed as a struggle between the state and the ANC. The state quite deliberately and calculatingly chose to present the ANC as its major anti-propaganda target. (Surely, this in itself bears some reflection).

It does not matter how chagrined other extra-parliamentary organisations may be at the 'limelight' that the ANC has enjoyed; it is the flagship of the revolt against state policy *also* because the state wishes the ANC to enjoy that position. Why? Because the ANC has a theory about 'armed struggle', 'people's war' and political violence which suits the state's purposes. It is eminently exploitable for counter-revolutionary propaganda. The ANC

has made it repeatedly clear that its struggle against the state is a multiple strategy one, in fact a four-pronged strategy (cf Phillips, IPSA 1988:97), of which the armed struggle is one facet. In targeting the ANC as its major opponent, the state chooses to focus only on the armed struggle of the ANC to the exclusion of all else: thus we have the 'terror' (armed struggle) of the ANC versus the 'tyranny' (law and order) of the state. This juxtaposition, if sustained by either side must keep the issue of political violence, whether by or against the state, at centre stage. The critical question is: Do those who wish to see a non-racial democracy become a reality in South Africa want this to be the case?

What is quite clear from the Indicator SA report is that credibility is stretched beyond reason if we have to understand that 4 012 fatalities and about 45 000 detentions between 1984-88 is evidence of an armed struggle between the state and its major opponents. If anything, it resembles a one-sided massacre of township residents either by security forces (31%) or through internecine conflict (51,6%) within the townships. It is demonstrable nonsense to claim that all forms of political violence between 1984-88 can be ascribed to either the state or the ANC. Whether the state or the ANC wishes to do so or not, the fact is that the structural conditions in South Africa are such that a variety of forms of violence are likely to occur which cannot simply be romanticised away by juxtaposing the state against the ANC.

The critical question for the ANC is, how does it separate the violence of the armed struggle from the violence that emanates from mob anger, vengeance, thuggery and crime? More important, by doing so, how does it rob the state of the propaganda initiative of lumping all forms of violence into the ANC's armed struggle or 'people's war'? These are not simply rhetorical questions; they are of critical strategic significance. To the extent that they remain unanswered, confusion abounds.

The same confusion was at the heart of the tragedy that was the Delmas trial. The judgment revolved around a simple and simplistic syllogism: the ANC uses violence, the UDF supports the ANC, therefore the UDF supports violence. Nothing could shift the trial from this oversimplification. All that remained for the prosecution to do was to show that wherever violence occurred and the UDF was present, the one was inextricably linked to the other, no matter whether township residents were incensed with appalling living conditions, rent increases, unemployment, hunger or poverty. In fact, to expect justice from a legal decision in these

circumstances was patently unrealistic. The injustice lay outside the court in the absence of political judgement of the circumstances that precipitate violence. Nevertheless, the central issue remained violence as an instrument of political change.

Phillips (IPSA 1988:98) argues in the Indicator SA report that: 'The armed struggle (of the ANC) is not meant to challenge directly the armed might of the state. It is meant more to undermine white confidence and security, to galvanise state opponents with the conviction and evidence of state vulnerability, and to steadily build up a force of better trained cadres who will be better able to take advantage of instances of state retreat'. The report provides very little evidence to give cheer for attaining any or most of these objectives. But more important, implicit in such a statement is a theory about the role of the state in South Africa. This is the next issue which warrants consideration.

THE STATE

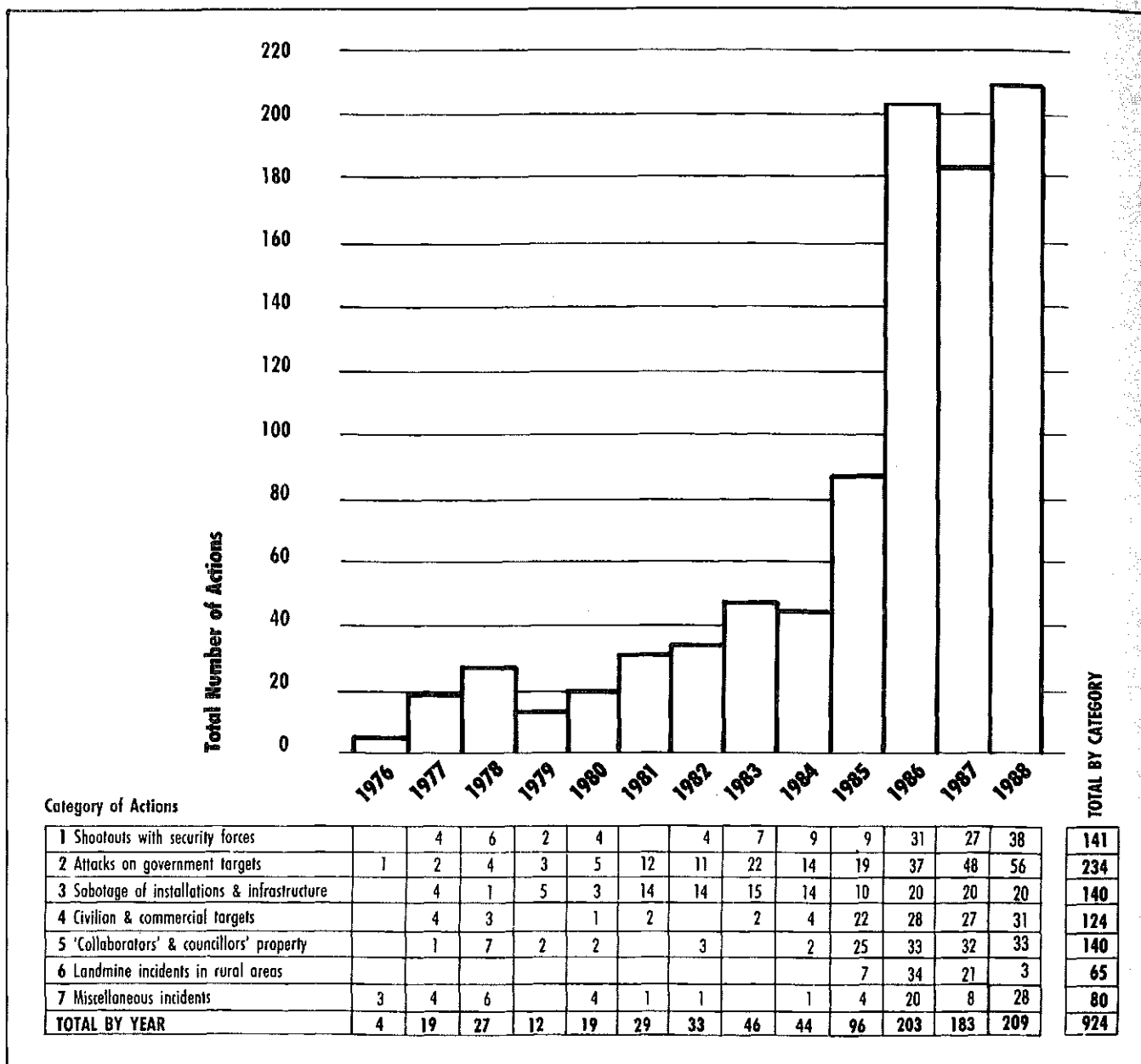
To talk about a theory of the state in this context may be methodologically imprecise; more correctly, one should talk about a set of assumptions concerning the role of the state in political conflict in South Africa. It should be self-evident that any strategy to achieve a non-racial democracy in South Africa must deal with the reality of the state as either an asset or an obstacle towards this goal. In discussions about political change in South Africa, there appear to be three sets of assumptions about the role of the state.

First, the conventional Marxist assumption is that the state is simply an extension of 'capital' in some variation or the other. Therefore, any manifestation of establishment power, i.e. parliament, regional services councils (RSCs), local government councils, etc, is linked to the class interests of those in power. As the contradictions of capitalism 'deepen' or 'ripen', so the state will come under increasing pressure and eventually succumb to the 'historical forces' which will sweep it aside, for a 'new order' to be established. From this perspective one repeatedly heard statements during 1984-88 that the apartheid state was 'crumbling' or was in a 'state of blind panic' etc. As Morris (IPSA 1988:108) correctly points out, nothing was further from the truth, (and he writes as a Marxist scholar).

The second set of assumptions views the state as a kind of neutral arbitrator between the contending political forces – the disinterested servant of whoever happens to govern at the moment. Thus parliamentary

It is nonsense, however, to ascribe all forms of political violence between 1984-88 to either the state or the ANC

Breakdown of ANC Guerilla Activity & Targets



Notes on categories

- 1 Guerilla attacks and shoot-outs in security force raids, both in urban and rural areas. (Excludes sniper attacks in townships unless weapons used are identified as being of foreign origin.)
- 2 Armed attacks directed at police patrols and stations, security force vehicles and property, administration boards, town council property, courts, etc.
- 3 Sabotage of power substations, railway lines and stations, oil depots, pipelines, etc.
- 4 Includes hotels, supermarkets, factories, shopping centres, etc.
- 5 Includes armed attacks on (mostly) township homes of state witnesses, police, councillors, informers, MPs.
- 6 Covers both detonated and defused landmines.
- 7 Accidental explosions involving amateur saboteurs (5), propaganda pamphlet bombs (6), unspecified defused explosives (11), assassinations and some targets unidentified in reports.

Notes on Data

- A few known incidents of defused explosives, perhaps the most underreported aspect of guerilla action, have been included in appropriate categories.
- The number of incidents monitored here reflect armed actions (bullets, bombs and grenades) by both insurgents and locally trained 'comrades', which often became indistinguishable during the widespread unrest of 1984 — 1987.
- Low-level attacks on a similar range of targets during the civil unrest — e.g. crowd attacks involving arson and stone-throwing, even where fatalities result — are explicitly excluded from the above data. See table 3 in *Indicator SA Urban Monitor Vol3/No2: p5*.
- Also excluded are discoveries of arms caches, confiscated firearms, and the number of arrests of ANC members/sympathisers.

politics is seen as functioning according to its own set of rules independent from any state interests. This is the conventional British Westminster or West-European view of the state, and also the official propaganda of the South African state. To bring about change all that has to be done is that a political interest group has to play according to the party-political rules, capture the crucial sites of power, and the state will assist one in bringing about the desired change. Anyone who has read the contributions of Swilling, Phillips, Morris, Zulu and Schlemmer in the Indicator SA report, and still clings to this view of the state in South Africa, simply loves to be deluded. And yet this 'conventional' view of the state is shared by many who declare themselves committed to a non-racial democracy for South Africa.

The third set of assumptions are more implicit than explicit. They basically give no role to the state at all in the process of change – in fact, the state is seen to be irrelevant. This is the case with analyses presented by Dennis Beckett (*Permanent Peace*), Louw & Kendall (*The Solution*), and Clem Sunter (*South Africa in the 1990s*). The common denominator for change in all of these analyses is a fundamental 'if-only' clause which simply sweeps aside the reality of the state. 'If only', 'everyone', 'someone', 'the government', 'whoever will accept 'one-man-one-vote' (Beckett), 'individual liberty' (Louw & Kendall), or 'we' move from the 'low road' to the 'high road', then the central political conflict will be resolved. These exercises in 'scenario-building' are useful to propagate certain values and debate alternatives but they bear no relation to the reality of the South African state or to strategies for change. They have very little to offer in telling us how to get from point A to B.

Report's Assumptions

It should be obvious that the goal of a non-racial, democratic South Africa could quite comfortably fit into any one of these three sets of assumptions about the state. But what should also be equally obvious is that no sensible discussion on strategy to bring about such a South Africa can take place if such widely divergent views of the state are held, particularly when, as I believe, they bear very little relation to the actual state in South Africa. It is inconceivable that much sense can come out of a discussion or re-evaluation on strategy if at the same time the state is seen as either a major obstacle, a major resource and facilitator, or basically irrelevant to achieving a non-racial democracy.

The set of assumptions about the state in South Africa that bear closest approximation to reality are contained in the body of the Indicator SA report. What are they?

Assumption No1: The state is an independent actor

This is not to perpetuate some holistic fallacy regarding 'the state'. The state consists of identifiable groups of people with more or less influence in directing the state's course but with a common set of interests in maintaining the state as an independent actor. The State Security Council and its subsidiary bodies (cf Swilling, IPSA 1988:89), the permanent force of the SADF, the SAP, homeland governments, RSCs, etc, are essentially groups with more or less interest and influence in maintaining the structure of the state intact. The interests of the state may or may not coincide with the interests of the business community, 'the church' or a particular political party.

Assumption No2: Civilian and accountable politics is subservient to the interests of the state.

If anything became abundantly clear between 1984-88 it was this point. Ordinary civilians knew less and less about more and more that was going on, while increasingly there was nothing they could do about it. This is particularly true of the National Party itself. The shift to tricameralism and the extraordinary powers of the Executive saw a fundamental change in the role of the NP caucus in political decisionmaking. Sometimes, even cabinet ministers were unaware of crucial decisions that had been taken and executed.

Assumption No3: Increasingly, South Africa is ruled by the state, not by a political party or an independent government.

When Mankajee says (IPSA 1988:64): 'Homeland administrations have ably succeeded in reproducing Pretoria's (my emphasis) elaborate system of social and political controls, through adopting the same security legislation and extending the national state of emergency. Curfews, emergencies, bannings, union bans, detentions, the suppression of opposition, and activist fatalities have become common features of politics in the homelands'. Who is 'Pretoria'? Who do 'kitskonstabels' work for? Who pays vigilantes? Who intervenes in homeland coups? What are the common interests shared by Bantu Holomisa of the Transkei, Ngxobongwana of Crossroads and General Charles Lloyd, Secretary-General of the State Security Council? In short, to maintain control over the state's power, privilege and patronage.

In other words, the South African government has increasingly become part of the machinery of state and not the other way

Most advocates of a non-racial democracy assume the state to be a major obstacle, a major resource or simply irrelevant

Increasingly, South Africa is ruled by an integrated civilian/security state, not by a political party or an elected government

around. This was brought about largely through the actions of President PW Botha who shifted on two important grounds: he integrated civilian and security management through the State Security Council and he adopted a one nation concept for South Africa which increasingly enables the state to reintegrate the homelands and urban Africans into a common state structure (cf IPSA 1988 – Swilling:91; Morris:113).

Assumption No4: The state has a clearly defined theory about itself.

If one thing shows up quite clearly in the various contributions in the Indicator SA report, it is the fact that most of the organisations involved in the revolt and resistance between 1984-88 refused to come to terms with the fact that the state had been preparing itself for an 'onslaught' since the adoption of the National Security Management System (NSMS) on 16 August 1979. The deployment of the NSMS has been thoroughly documented since then. Even if one does not have a coherent theory of the state it is at least prudent, when devising strategies for a non-racial democratic society, to take note of the state's own theory about itself.

Repeatedly, we have been told that it is the duty of the state to mobilise a 'total strategy' to meet the 'total onslaught'. Defence White Papers were tabled in Parliament to this effect; a diversity of interest groups were systematically briefed about this over an extended period of time, and the SSC gave bureaucratic content from the central to the local level to this ideology/theory. As former spy Craig Williamson put it: 'When the revolt started in 1984, everything was in place. All we had to do was to throw the switch'. No doubt there is a bit of self-indulgent breastbeating in this statement, but it would be foolish to underestimate the underlying significance of it.

The hallmark of the P W Botha era is simply that state security is priority number one and as long as this is not jeopardised, 'reform', 'free enterprise', 'systematic urbanisation', 'liberal press', 'regional peace', etc, will be tolerated (cf Swilling, IPSA 1988:93). Thus the formulators of the state's theory about itself see the state as a counter-revolutionary bulwark against a 'total revolutionary onslaught'. The circular logic the state uses in this regard defines virtually everything and everyone as part of this 'onslaught' who do not form part or co-operate with its 'total strategy'. To this effect, the state is prepared to jettison aspects of separate development/apartheid which hinder the smooth working of its strategy; co-opt clients into its state structure; use kitskonstabels and vigilantes to maintain 'law and order',

'multi-racialise' institutions of government; negotiate with communists to seek regional peace, etc.

Assumption No5: The state is a dynamic and flexible entity.

This point follows logically from the previous one. The most stupid thing to do is to regard the South African state as some paralysed bullfrog, confronted by a hungry python awaiting its inevitable 'historical destiny'. If the gold price could rise ten dollars an ounce for every time the demise of the South African state has been predicted over the last twenty years, South Africa would be awash with enough money to more than adequately finance every conceivable political fantasy from the 'left' or the 'right'. The point is that the state has shifted and changed to meet new developments. If this flexibility is met with a strategic inflexibility by the state's opposition, then disappointment and frustration is inevitable.

Political Implications

To sum up: The South African state is an independent political entity with definable interests, a huge bureaucracy, and a definite ideology or theory about itself, that may or may not, depending on the particular circumstances, coincide with the interests of business, labour, church, educational or other political interest groups. Although it is reasonably flexible in deploying its policy, it is subject to tensions and divisions within its own ranks.

Any strategy which hopes to promote a non-racial democracy must do so in relation to this reality of the South African state. For example, a conventional revolutionary agenda is tailor-made for the 'total strategy' of the South African state, if for no other reason than that it is so crushingly predictable. Surely it makes sense to conclude that a state that has geared most of its resources to meet some 'revolutionary onslaught', real or imagined, has also burnt the midnight oil brushing up on counter-revolutionary strategies all over the world, (particularly in Latin America).

The above view of the state is not a novel one. In fact, in most countries where civilian and accountable politics has been made subservient to state interests, this form of 'Statism' is present. Thus, in South Africa and most of Africa, to the extent that electoral or civilian participation in politics is tolerated, it serves to provide the state with executive personnel with varying degrees of popular legitimation, rather than to change the government or to present the whole adult population with 'genuine' political alternatives. The shift to tricameralism in 1984 in South

Africa was a major step towards ritualising this kind of state politics here as well; although in pure white politics, particularly from the right, state interests may still have a limited vulnerability.

Given this growing reality of the South African state, opposition strategies such as protest, boycotts, strikes, non-participation, etc, take on a different dimension than say in the USA, UK or Western Europe where supporting institutions and constitutions can become involved in the deployment of strategy. In our context, it is a much tougher and longer haul for the simple reason that should a non-racial democracy become a reality, the very structure of the South African state would have undergone a fundamental transformation. Against this background, let us focus on another issue of strategic significance.

NON-PARTICIPATION

The underlying issue in this juxtaposition is of course the issue of participation versus non-collaboration in state structures. This issue should consistently be discussed as a matter of strategy and not of principle. Surely the reasons which have motivated non-participation or non-collaboration over a period of forty years bear some re-investigation and debate? The circumstances bearing on these reasons have undergone important shifts. For example, now the state wishes to integrate whites, coloureds, Indians and Africans (albeit on its own terms) into a common state structure, a kind of 'multi-racial' government, whereas previously the National Party government wanted to jettison segregated structures so that they would mature into 'separate governments'. There is more than ample evidence that the state will find enough clients for the former rather than the latter approach (cf Morris, Swilling and Zulu in the Indicator SA Report).

One argument against participation is that this 'legitimises' state structures. There is an element of truth in this, but the argument does not have the same force it used to have. The legitimacy of the tricameral system is formally rejected by most of its own participants, and its fiercest participatory opponents, the CP, blatantly state that they do so for strategic reasons only. The key question is: What purpose does participation serve for the state? I do not believe legitimacy is the major concern.

Civilian participation for the state at all levels of government serves an organisational as well as a control purpose: 'It needs customers to do the job'. This is a contradiction that deserves strategic

consideration. By participation, one does not mean participation only in overt political structures, i.e. parliament, RSCs, local government, etc; there is also participation in any state controlled/supported structures, e.g., education, labour, homeland institutions, etc. The state's theory of total onslaught has 'politicised' almost all institutions of society, as part of its 'total strategy' to create a multi-racial state structure for South Africa. Should those who work for a non-racial democratic South Africa not take a new and serious look at different forms of participation, as a counter-strategy?

The author is well aware of the considerable organisational, logistical and (not least) ideological problems that cluster around this issue. On a relatively minor scale this is evident in the trials and tribulations experienced in forming one united, democratic-oriented opposition in the white House of Parliament. The critical underlying issue is, 'Does a new party seek white support at the cost of extra-parliamentary legitimacy or vice versa, or is a strategy possible where both can be achieved?' The issue of participation is riddled with far more serious problems in extra-parliamentary politics. But perhaps the time has come to look at this issue precisely because of recent experiences and changes.

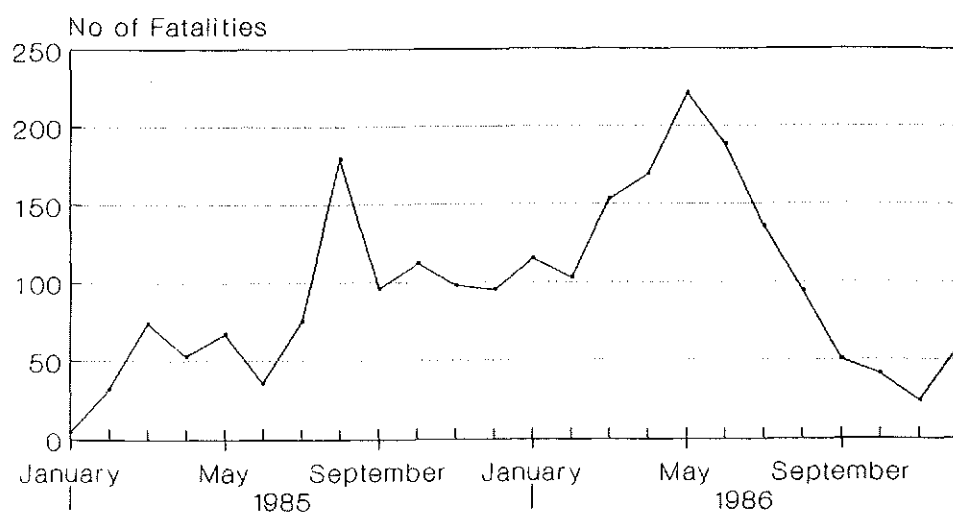
In the Indicator SA report, Palmer (1988:53) makes his sobering comment: 'The "struggle" seems to have been replaced by a struggle for existence as economic conditions continue to worsen... Among the formerly politically active, the subtraction, for months, of more than a thousand members was highly disruptive of extra-parliamentary organisation; after release, hundreds of ex-detainees, having lost their jobs, not only contributed to the unemployment problem in certain occupational categories, but also experience such difficulties of re-adjustment that there is little time and energy or motivation to re-organise. Under these difficult circumstances the siren-song of co-optation is, for many hard-pressed individuals, irresistible'. Palmer is talking mainly of the Eastern Cape region, but especially there, the point is well-taken. What alternative of strategic consequence is there for those activists he refers to?

Popular Protest

The period 1984-88 saw a great many instances of mass protest meetings. Given the nature of the grievances, as well as state reaction to popular responses, this is understandable. The Indicator SA report demonstrates clearly how different occasions,

Opponents of the changing South African 'state' must show strategic flexibility to cope with new developments

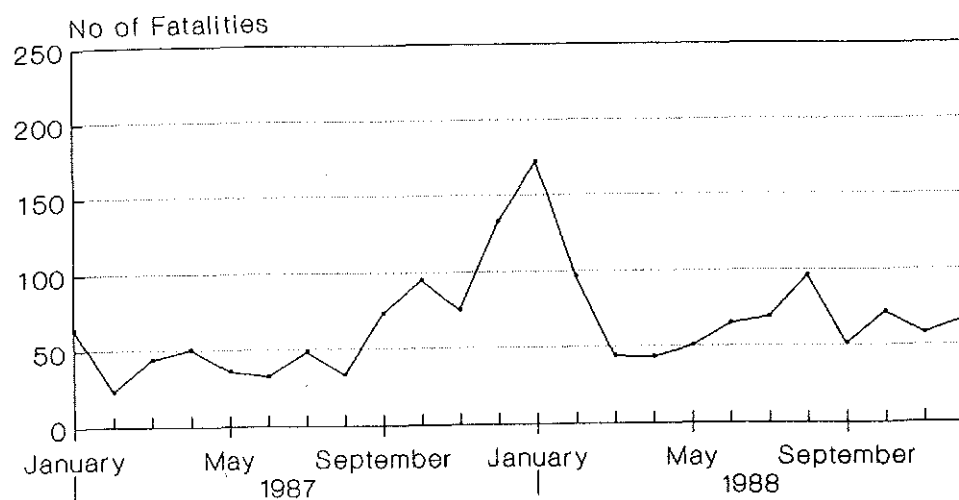
Fatalities in Political Conflict January 1985 - December 1986



Monthly Fatalities: January 1985 - December 1986

	TOTAL MONTHLY DEATH TOLL
1984	
Sept -Dec	149
1985	
January	5
February	32
March	74
April	53
May	67
June	36
July	75
August	179
September	96
October	112
November	98
December	95
1986	
January	115
February	103
March	153
April	169
May	221
June	188
July	136
August	94
September	50
October	41
November	24
December	58

Breakdown by Month January 1987 - December 1988



1987	
January	64
February	23
March	44
April	50
May	36
June	32
July	48
August	33
September	73
October	95
November	75
December	133

1988	
January	172
February	96
March	44
April	43
May	50
June	65
July	69
August	96
September	51
October	72
November	58
December	67

ANNUAL DEATH TOLL in SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL CONFLICT

Sept - Dec 1984	149
1985	922
1986	1 352
1987	706
1988	883
TOTAL DEATHTOLL	4 012

Mobilisation means more than mass or protest politics - it must involve grassroots organisation and consolidation

e.g. funerals, release/banning of detainees, etc, were used for such protests, and in particular, it shows the state's increasingly coercive and suppressive reaction to such meetings. It is difficult, however, not to conclude that a great deal of the energy for mobilisation politics went into the organisation of such meetings, and that the perceived success of mobilisation politics ultimately depended on the turnout and frequency of such meetings. This is a serious mistake.

Protest meetings may serve the useful purpose of popularising grievances or developing a common political awareness, but if this is done through excessive sloganeering (in which the curses and blessings of Providence are invoked for support), or the promises of political salvation are in direct contradiction to their prospects of being realised, then such meetings must be of questionable strategic value. This is particularly so if they also serve the purpose of promoting the attempts of 'agent provocateurs' while enabling the state to use the extravagant rhetoric as proof of its 'total onslaught', thus facilitating the identification and elimination of valuable community leadership.

Mobilisation politics is much more than mass or protest politics. It involves grassroots organisation and consolidation behind a clearly defined strategy in order to achieve a particular objective. If the objective is unrealistic or obscured by romantic and extravagant rhetoric at mass protest meetings, then such meetings become ends in themselves and the point of mobilisation politics is lost. A lot of people may get all fired up, but they are not quite sure what to do next. It is in such an atmosphere that different forms of spontaneous and uncontrolled behaviour thrive, which is, of course, grist to the mill in the state's 'counter-revolutionary' strategy.

How often has one not read of a similar account during the period 1984-88 (Chaskalson & Seekings, IPSA 1988:31)? 'On Sunday, 15 July 1984, Tumahole residents staged a peaceful protest march. Police shadowed the marchers, ordered them to disperse and then fired teargas before the allotted time was up. In the subsequent anger and confusion some residents burnt down a councillor's supermarket/cafe, looted his butchery and also the OVBD bottlestore. Barricades were constructed. One resident who was arrested by the police died in their custody'.

In no way must these remarks be seen as a dismissal of protest or mass meetings. To the extent that the state will allow or tolerate them, they could serve a useful purpose. But it is wrong to equate mobilisation politics with protest or mass meetings, and if the one is

denied, it is naturally assumed that the other is impossible. The important prior question must be: mobilisation for what?

State Contradictions

Based on the data and analyses presented in the Indicator SA report, the one reasonably well-documented conclusion that can be reached is that, to the extent that extra-parliamentary opposition resources, energy and planning are devoted to confrontational, violent, protest and mass strategies, the initiative and advantages are heavily loaded in favour of the state. This is also so because the state's conception of its own role is defined precisely to counter any overt threat to its own security. In other words, a considerable part of the resources, planning and energy of the state is devoted to crushing confrontational, violent, protest and mass strategies aimed against it. In short, the South African state is least vulnerable when its coercive power base is directly challenged, and no amount of revolutionary rhetoric can argue away this fact.

But as the Indicator SA report also points out, the state is certainly not invulnerable. There are a number of contradictions with which it is confronted that are certainly worth exploring for strategic initiatives to promote the goal of a non-racial democracy.

Swilling (IPSA 1988:94) makes the point that the state does not have a purely repressive strategy. The flipside of repression is reform. Whether the immediate manifestation of reform is socio-economic upgrading and the elimination of 'legitimate grievances', the long-term goal is undoubtedly to induce a sufficient number of compliant, co-operative, 'good', 'moderate' blacks into the state structure to assist in the administration of a multi-racial autocracy. By administration, one refers especially to the control of patronage and privilege. This is usually the defining characteristic of states in general and state control of a society.

The *first* contradiction that is obvious from such an objective is that a white-dominated state increasingly will depend on blacks to maintain white control. The simple demographic evolution of South Africa underscores this contradiction. There is no self-evident reason why the state should not succeed in co-opting black participants — particularly if those who are concerned about a democratic alternative sit on their strategic hands and allow this to happen by default. Even under the much more racist period of old-style apartheid/separate development the NP government managed to find enough

customers to let its deeply flawed 'independent states' policy run.

The *second* contradiction is pointed out by Schlemmer (IPSA 1988:123) when he says: 'One message, the broadest perhaps, is that the most active, aspiring section of the country's black youth are fundamentally estranged, not only from the present mode of government but also from its possible future trajectory... More specifically, for every year that South Africa's economy grows less than 4,5 to 5,5 percent per annum, youth unemployment and alienation will increase. This is a critical "political" problem for a white-controlled government because it cannot be seen to be acting on behalf of black communities'. Again, there is no obvious reason why the alienation of black youth from a white-controlled state will automatically translate into a concentrated political commitment for a non-racial democratic alternative. This is a problem of strategic commitment. There appears to be minimal attention given to how urbanised, alienated black youth drift into crime, homelessness and revolt.

A *third* contradiction is that although the state in many important respects exercise unaccountable power, it does depend on civilian participation to recruit executive personnel at different levels of government. It even allows a considerable degree of racially controlled, popular electoral participation to determine a pool of potential co-optive clients. This does pose problems for the state that can be exploited by those who are opposed to its politics. This is true not only for the CP, a 'left' white political party, or a non-compliant House of Representatives or Delegates, but also in homeland governments, RSCs or black local governments. This is the area where participation as a strategy has to be considered.

A *fourth* contradiction lies in the area of a state strategy where the hallmark is control being undermined by socio-economic forces beyond the state's control. The pattern and tempo of urbanisation epitomises this dilemma. The number of black people being born in, and streaming towards the major metropolitan areas increasingly undermines state control of housing, education, transport and employment. At the same time, these developments pose major challenges to those organisations concerned with democratic politics who wish to play a constructive role in grassroots and community organisation. If new and innovative strategies are not forthcoming the threat of war-lordism, gangsterism, vigilante action etc, becomes a very real possibility. Already the state has found willing allies in squatter communities to assist it in

maintaining 'law and order' (cf IPSA 1988 — Palmer:52; Cameron:61).

A *fifth* contradiction is that the more that the state has politicised virtually all sections of South African society through its 'total strategy', the more it has had to incorporate sections who do not share this ideology. Obvious areas where this is the case would include black education, labour and certain sections of business and the churches. Given proper strategic and even long-term planning, these are areas where the state could increasingly be confronted with democratic and non-racial alternatives.

No doubt other contradictions can be found which can further highlight the vulnerability of the state's 'reform' policy. But pointing out a contradiction is not the same as formulating a strategy. It serves to identify opportunities for exploring strategic alternatives. And once this is done, the difficult and back-breaking work of mobilisation begins. Let me conclude by formulating some strategic guidelines in terms of the foregoing analysis, which I believe to be important for promoting a non-racial, democratic political culture.

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES:

- (1) Do not dissipate popular or mass support in confronting the state where it is strongest.
- (2) Do not weaken the forces for a democratic alternative. According to Morris (IPSA 1988:111): 'Disinvestment as a strategy has led to the opposite political result, however. Instead of increasing forces for positive change within South Africa, it has led to a decrease in such power'. If an unreflective and unselective blanket sanctions campaign has this result, then it is simple political lunacy to adhere to such a strategy.
- (3) Never promise what cannot be realistically delivered. There is a tendency amongst certain spokesmen to believe that the more extravagant or unrealistic the prediction about change, the more likely that some 'miracle' or 'magic' will bring it about. Particularly those with public influence and support should refrain from whipping up emotions that will inevitably be frustrated. More important, it neutralises many people who might undertake more mundane and necessary strategic tasks, but refrain from doing so because of the belief that some political 'miracle' is around the corner.
- (4) Take an immediate, principled and clear view on all forms of uncontrolled, irrational and/or authoritarian violence. In

Extra parliamentary strategies which involve violent confrontation and mass protest make a coercive state least vulnerable

Applying a non-racial democratic strategy means to mobilise, penetrate and consolidate every site of institutional activity

Schlemmer's words (IPSA 1988:129):
'...township violence, no matter how compelling its causes and how justified the sentiments associated with it, is pushing up against immovable resistance at this stage. As it increases in intensity, so the sentiments of whites and even many blacks, turn against it. Almost inevitably, political violence will exhaust itself and in the end undermine its own organisation, leaving the security agencies better informed and more sophisticated, with the economy and job creation severely weakened'.

(5) Identify tensions/divisions within the state structure and *engage* those favourable for democratic politics. It is a mistake to treat the whole state apparatus as a hegemonic/monolithic entity or as an uncritical extension of National Party thinking. My own view is that even those hostile to democratic politics should be engaged in workshops, seminars or conferences, to put and defend their viewpoints. Very often, their views thrive in an insulated, sycophantic and uncritical environment which they then interpret as proof of validity of their views.

(6) Seek out business interests that are amenable and sympathetic to democratic politics. There is no doubt that there are businessmen who conform to the conventional Marxist stereotype of the 'capitalist exploiter'. At the same time, there are many businessmen who are committed to the reconstruction of a prosperous and more just South Africa. There is no reason why they cannot play a significant role in promoting new employment opportunities and becoming involved in co-operative economic ventures towards a post-apartheid South Africa.

(7) Concentrate on grassroots mobilisation and community organisation in new housing areas, especially where the state is active in socio-economic upgrading. This is a challenge to black communities in particular. It is in this context that the appeal for 'nation-building' of Aggrey Klaaste and Sam Mabe of *the Sowetan* has to be understood.

(8) Focus as much energy as possible on black and white youth *and* their interaction with one another. White Afrikaner youth in particular are the political life-blood of the state's policy of control. Nothing on the 'democratic' scene matches the intensity of indoctrination that they have been subjected to. Deliberately seek out opportunities to break down the dialogue barriers that the state wishes to maintain between divergent groups inside and outside South Africa.

(9) Do not give priority to external factors to bring about internal change. The international situation is dynamic and changing; e.g. relations between the USSR and USA in

1988. External pressure can be a contributing factor but not a primary cause of adequate domestic change. Too much faith/hope placed on the external factor paralyses domestic initiative. The 'outside world' is not going to save South Africa.

(10) The key to a successful non-racial democracy in South Africa lies with the extra-parliamentary majority. Any strategic initiative which ignores this fact is wasting time and energy. I do not say this because I am infatuated with 'mass' or 'people's' politics. On the contrary, we have had enough intellectual cowboys promising us 'instant' democracies and 'quick fix' solutions in the period between 1984-88. When I maintain that the key to a democratic future lies with the majority, it is simply a logical inference drawn from what a democratic culture is all about. No democracy can be sustained without organised and institutionalised support coming from the majority of the citizens in a society. That is why it is futile for those in white politics to play racially entrenched 'democratic' games with one another, while they put the rest of society on 'hold' as it were.

Democratic Alternative

It should be obvious that these strategic guidelines are formulated on the assumption that the transformation of South African society to a non-racial democracy will be a negotiated, bargained one. Furthermore, that such negotiations cannot begin until the circumstances conducive to negotiations exist. At present, South Africa is not even in the pre-negotiation phase. To get there, those concerned with achieving a non-racial democracy would have to penetrate, mobilise and consolidate every available site of organisational and institutional activity, and demonstrate that they can be controlled for democratic politics.

This process will have to be reflected in educational, business, community and cultural spheres. Increasingly, these will be the spheres where a state bent on authoritarian management will lose control. To the extent that a democratic alternative can be established successfully, the state will have no option but to take it seriously in bargaining the future for itself and for South Africa. Loss of control for the state does not automatically mean the growth of a democratic alternative. There are enough historical precedents to show that we too can drift into a prolonged period of unresolved violent, evolution in which a poverty of culture, morality and quality of life becomes the accepted inevitability.

Kamikaze Politics

Assessing Non-Collaboration Strategies & Tactics

Mark Bennett & Deborah Quin, Indicator SA Researchers

In 1988 a participant in a union-organised workshop assessing the current strengths and weaknesses of the black opposition, likened its leadership to the Japanese fighter pilots of World War II who staged suicidal attacks on enemy targets, irrespective of the consequences. He claimed that a form of 'kamikaze politics' had emerged in South Africa. At the same meeting another worker criticised the persistent and uncritical use of the non-collaboration strategy (IPSA 1988:130/68) – rent, consumer, transport, education, election and work boycotts – which for decades had been the unquestioned lodestar of anti-apartheid forces.

Underlying both of these observations was the realisation that after four years of intense struggle (circa 1984-88) involving a range of strategies and tactics – from violent confrontation to the politics of non-collaboration – the major components of the broadly defined extra-parliamentary opposition had been immobilised. Pretoria, although severely jolted by the scale and intensity of opposition, had managed to roll-back the 'gains' made by various national extra-parliamentary organisations and regional civic groups, and restore the balance of power firmly in the state's favour.

REVOLUTIONARY MYTHS

While the South African state's ability to contain the widespread rebellion of 1984-1988 has lain in a superior security apparatus and control of extensive socio-economic resources, a large measure of its success is to be found in the tactical and strategic errors made by its extra-parliamentary opposition. Indeed, it could be argued that precisely because of these errors the state has been able to

out-manoeuvre and eventually crush its militant opposition. Liberation groups, instead of exploiting the government's commitment to political and socio-economic reform, thereby winning incremental victories and consolidating their own precarious position, committed themselves to an all-or-nothing assault on the state.

The collapse of opposition in the period 1986-1988 must in some way be attributed to an over-estimation by the broadly defined extra-parliamentary opposition (national political movements; regional civic organisations; women, youth, student/educational, worker, health, religious, sporting and human rights groups) of their own strengths, and their belief in the vulnerability of the National Party government. The entrenchment of certain 'revolutionary myths' resulted in opposition groupings committing themselves to mass struggle on the expectation that the apartheid state would crumble in the immediate future.

The potential damage to organisation or the loss of some of the gains made by activists at the local level from a probable rout or protracted struggle, were never considered. The only losses that the opposition expected to make were those in the short-term.

The apparent indecisiveness of the state in dealing with escalating discontent in the nation's townships in many ways influenced various opposition movements, in the period 1984-86, to believe that the apartheid state was in imminent danger of collapse. A general strategic assumption by many activists that they were in a far stronger position than the state resulted in euphoric debates centering on whether liberation would take place before Christmas 1985 or immediately thereafter.

In this expectant spirit, all the 'constituent forces' of the extra-parliamentary opposition were required to mobilise and contribute directly to the 'struggle'. Most visible signs of

The extra parliamentary collapse in 1986-1988 must in some way be attributed to an over-estimation of their own strengths

DATA BASE

OPPOSITION INITIATIVES 1984-1988

Table 1
INITIATION of NON-COLLABORATION TACTICS

Boycott	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total
Consumer	4	44	5	-	1	54
Transport	9	9	5	1	2	26
Work	4	21	33	7	5	70
Rent/Service	13	10	30	2	-	55
Total	30	84	73	10	8	205

Table 2
APPLICATION of NON-COLLABORATION TACTICS in SELECTED REGIONS

Regions	Vaal Triangle & OFS	Pretoria/Witwaters-rand	Rest of Transvaal	Eastern Cape/Karoo	Western/Northern Cape	Natal/KwaZulu	National	Total
Boycotts								
Consumer	4	8	6	25	7	1	3	54
Transport	1	11	7	2	1	4	-	26
Work	4	28	10	11	1	2	14	70
Rent/Service	11	10	12	12	8	2	-	55
Total	20	57	35	50	17	9	17	205

Note

The data in table 1 & 2 reflects only the number of new boycotts initiated in any particular year. It does not show the total number of boycotts in effect each year, ie that is where boycotts were sustained, suspended or resumed into a second or even a third year.

STATE RESPONSES 1984-1988

Table 3
APPLICATION of SECURITY LAWS

Legislation	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total
Internal Security Act	7	16	7	6	8	44
State of Emergency	-	21	49	58	80	208
Other	1	2	-	-	-	3
Total	8	39	56	64	88	255

Table 4
USE of DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL

REGION	1984	1985	1986	1987
Security Legislation	1 149	3 637	2 840	694
Emergency Regulations	0	7 361	+ -20 631	+ -8 500
Total	1 491	10 998	+ -23 471	+ -9 194

Note

O In table 3 the number of security laws under which regulation/orders were gazetted excludes those implemented in the independent homelands. All homeland detentions are reflected in table 4, however.

state authority — policemen, township councillors, alleged informers and collaborators, as well as government buildings and vehicles — became the targets of marauding comrades. Almost on a daily basis youthful anti-apartheid activists battled with security force personnel — albeit only within their own townships (IPSA 1988:55,63,79). In other areas, cadres belonging to the African National Congress' military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, carried on their sabotage campaign (IPSA 1988:96). The labour movement was expected to contribute by taking the struggle into commerce and industry in the form of strike and stayaway action (IPSA 1988:130/33).

The full-scale, all-or-nothing frontal assault on the state had an opposite effect. The internal liberation movement was straitjacketed and virtually crushed, through a combination of security force actions and legislative proscription (IPSA 1989:22). Opposition groups appeared to have forgotten that the South African government exercised state power and controlled a sophisticated military machine — one of the most effective on the continent of Africa. While the ferocity of township dissent had certainly extended the country's security apparatus, at no time had it ever threatened its military might.

The subsequent success of the security forces was in the main determined by their high degree of sophistication and in their ability to contain the violence in black residential areas. Although many of the strategies and tactics of the opposition directly and indirectly did affect 'white' sectors/areas (e.g. through the sanctions and disinvestment campaigns, consumer boycotts, stayaway actions, business disconfidence and general white apprehension), the violence never really threatened national white security. Despite the lessons of activists in previous high-points of resistance (in 1960, 1976-77 and in the early 1980s), it appears that South African opposition groupings still have to learn that the use of violence as a major strategy for political change has little utility.

Reform

Implicit within the extra-parliamentary opposition's belief that the 'revolution' was imminent, was the assumption that the transformation from an apartheid society to a post-apartheid order would occur at a single historical conjuncture. Transformations of this nature are extremely rare. This principled position that nothing between apartheid and a more-or-less negotiated hand-over of power will be sufficient, is one that gained increasing

currency within South Africa (Schlemmer 1988). The assumption that abdication or some kind of massive moral conversion on the part of the ruling group could occur, must be rejected outright. The government will only concede to pressure from any quarter if they believe that their intrinsic interests are not jeopardised or threatened. Logically, this means that change will only result from a continuing process of struggle, most likely involving negotiation.

There was, and remains so today, little realisation on the part of opposition groups that the National Party government's programme of constitutional and socio-economic reform could be used to their short and medium-term advantages. A growing consensus has begun to emerge, mainly through the work of academics, that the reforms implemented in the 1980s have had a series of unexpected consequences — both for the state and particularly the opposition.

The reform programme was never intended to allow a complete liberalisation of state control; at best it merely attempted to 'de-racialise' certain aspects of political life, 'redistribute' selective social resources and offer a limited 'democratisation' of political life (Morris 1988:108). The government was merely wishing to move away from Verwoerdian-style apartheid while at the same time wanting to formalise and regulate 'realities that had emerged despite government policy', e.g. the erosion of job reservation, unchecked black urbanisation, the desegregation of sport and sporting facilities, etc. (Friedman 1988:168).

Some of the reforms were also a result of pressures exerted upon the government and parts of the local state by various black constituencies. For example, the extension of trade union rights to African workers, the abolition of permits for African students to attend white universities, etc.

A senior civil servant has claimed that the National Party has a series of 'core' and 'marginal' interests (ibid:172). The government, he said, would be prepared to concede 'marginal' interests in the face of pressure, but never 'core' issues — even in the face of extreme pressure. The government's non-negotiable 'ideological lodestar' is its insistence on race group-based political, social and economic rights. Around this 'core', like the layers of an onion, there exist a series of (increasingly more marginal) socio-economic and political policies which it is prepared to negotiate over.

Sections of the extra-parliamentary opposition have correctly argued that reforms have been implemented in an effort to modify racial and economic barriers, with the ultimate

The potential damage to organisation and the loss of local level gains in a protracted struggle was never considered

The initial protest strategies adopted by activists in 1984-85 were not revolutionary in character, intent or organisation

aim of delaying fundamental socio-economic and political change. As such, they have argued that the apartheid system cannot be reformed – it has to be replaced (ibid:168). Ironically, however, extra-parliamentary organisations have failed to acknowledge that it was precisely the reforms of 1979-84 that created 'space' for the evolution of the UDF, the National Forum and various regional civic bodies.

Notwithstanding this irony, there appears to have been little understanding that the reform programme per se could offer the 'oppressed' any tangible benefits. As Morris succinctly notes, 'instead of attempting to separate out, at least for their own purposes, those elements of reform such as democratisation and de-racialisation, that were integral to their own struggles and required defending, they lumped all these elements together and declared that the whole process of reform was merely apartheid in drag' (op cit:108).

TRIGGERS & TACTICS

At the macro-level, the precise triggers of the recent wave of violence that affected South Africa are not easy to isolate, for in different areas particular events and day-to-day grievances sparked off discontent. The structural conditions for prolonged and severe political conflict have been evident in South Africa for a number of decades. Slabbert (1986:6) identified these as:

- a political system which at an executive and a legislative level gives nominal constitutional powers to 'coloured' and Indian groups but no powers to an African majority;
- the constant intervention of the state in the economy so as to ensure that the factors of production continue to bolster white privilege and inhibit black mobility;
- the disproportionate racial allocation of land, whereby the fastest growing population group is confined to the smallest residential areas.

Commenting on the political violence of 1984-88, Swilling (1988:3) has pointed out that many township residents (acting outside of the sphere of formal organisation) initially did not use local grievances to 'whip up mass resistance' but rather attempted to use negotiation in order to avoid conflict. Negotiations were initiated with various interested parties – education authorities, township development boards, transportation managements, industrialists, etc. As not all of these initial contacts successfully resolved conflicts, township residents then resorted to

the use of various pressure/demonstration strategies – consumer, rent, transport, work, and school boycotts – in order to voice their concern and demand official action.

The organisation of these boycotts, which began in earnest towards the end of 1984, became the task of nascent community organisations and national extra-parliamentary movements which had been formed a year previously. The barrier from the initial phase of petition protest-politics to grievance-based demonstration politics was broken at this juncture.

In their primary forms the protest strategies adopted by activists only questioned certain elements of the apartheid state. They were not revolutionary in character, in intent, nor in organisation. Township residents merely wished to draw attention to the specific day-to-day problems that most affected them. However, no sooner had township activists begun to implement a range of boycott strategies, than did the scope of demands associated with each particular strategy grow. Demands expanded to such an extent that it became increasingly difficult in many cases for bargaining opponents to concede and/or negotiate: they became unrealistic, too far removed from the initial grievances, and specific demands required the involvement of exogenous state agencies.

New (secondary) demands – for the release from detention of activists and long-term political prisoners, the non-intervention of the police in community affairs, the resignation of town councillors, reduction of rents, etc – were often tabled in such a way that they would have had to have been resolved prior to any further negotiation on initial demands.

Collectively, the many demands made by local and national opposition activists began to challenge the non-negotiable 'core' of state ideology. A negotiation log-jam developed, and the state's security forces began to assume direct control when it became clear that demonstration politics had been transformed into a third phase of opposition activity, that of 'insurrectionary' politics.

(1) School Boycotts (see Bot 1985:37/53)

Pressures from within the black educational system have been a persistent feature of South African society ever since Soweto scholars rebelled over the planned introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and 'Bantu Education' in 1976. In late 1983 and early 1984 a number of problems related to a whole range of classroom issues re-emerged. Common student protests and demands centered on:

- a need for a revision of the prefect system and for elected Student Representative Councils (SRCs)
- a scrapping of age limit regulations
- an end to the sexual abuse of pupils and of corporal punishment
- the provision of sufficient educational stationary
- the limited use of unqualified teachers.

While the educational authorities refused to negotiate over all student demands, there was official recognition that real and widespread grievances existed (Bot 1985:2). For example, the Minister of National Education announced in May 1984 that students would be allowed to establish Pupil Representative Councils (PRCs). By rejecting the concession offered, students failed to realise they had won an important victory which they should have consolidated and defended.

By September 1984, with more than 150 schools affected by boycotts nationwide, the education authorities refused and/or began to find it increasingly difficult to negotiate as more non-educational demands were placed on the table. These demands included pleas for the:

- release of all detained pupils
- withdrawal of police and military from townships
- reduction of rentals
- resignation of community councillors.

The inability of the education authorities to deal with exogenous demands resulted in 'principled' stands being taken by national student organisations. The boycott rapidly became a permanent feature as students went for the jugular by pressing for the right to determine the school syllabus. Activist demands for 'People's Education', then 'Liberation before Education', became a direct attack on 'core' state policy of ideological control over the education system.

In many ways, the sustained school boycott could be described as one of lost opportunities and unnecessary sacrifices by black scholars. The prolonged nature of the boycott resulted in many students losing more than an entire year of education. The massive losses of this boycott could have been avoided and further concessions extracted from the state if principled and unrealistic bargaining positions had not been adopted from late 1984 onwards.

(2) Consumer Boycotts (IPSA:134/41)

The first community-organised consumer boycotts (aside from those initiated in support of unionised workers) occurred in the latter part of 1984 in Cradock and in some Vaal Triangle townships, where protests were directed against 'collaborator' black storekeepers. The majority of the consumer

boycotts that affected the white business sector began in mid-1985, and aimed to pressurise the white business lobby to intercede on behalf of the grievances of black township residents.

The boycotts were particularly favoured as they potentially:

- exposed protesting African communities to relatively few risks
- took the 'struggle' out of the townships and into white areas
- provided rightless African communities with a method to negotiate with white authorities over a range of local and national issues
- acted as catalysts for general political mobilisation.

The demands made by the various consumer boycott committees can be divided into two distinct categories. Firstly, there were those demands which called for improvement of the quality of the social and physical infrastructure in black townships (Black 1986:33). It was in support of these types of problems that community activists had the greatest successes. The boycotts, which in many instances virtually crippled white-owned businesses, made businessmen acutely aware of the day-to-day problems encountered by their black customers. Many of these problem areas were then addressed, for example, in certain towns the Central Business Districts were opened to all races; while in others, many forms of petty apartheid were scrapped.

The second category of demands, which revolved around national issues and concerns, created intractable problems for white business groups (IPSA 1988:110) and local authorities. Common demands included calls for the release of detained activists (particularly those involved in the organisation of the boycotts); the release of long-term political prisoners; the termination of the state of emergency; the withdrawal of security forces from townships; the unbanning of organisations, etc. These demands were impossible for local-level negotiating partners to fulfil, particularly as they concerned 'core' state security issues. As a result, many of the boycotts continued until about the end of 1986 but achieved very little.

Reasons underpinning the dismal performance of consumer boycotts must be linked to:

- the unrealistic demands made by the boycott committees – particularly in their expectations of the influence of the white business community in determining state policy;
- the belief that all sections of the white business community supported all their demands;

Local demonstration politics slowly grew into an insurrectionary strategy, directly challenging the national state

The twinning of negotiable, regional with unrealistic, national demands in boycott actions has resulted in little success

- the authoritarian nature in which many of the boycotts were called and then enforced by activists had the effect of alienating many black shoppers. For example, there was dissatisfaction over the way in which children forced adults (who in many cases objected to the unrealistic aims of boycotts or simply could not afford to pay the high prices for goods charged by black storekeepers) to comply with the boycotts;
- worker concerns that sustained boycotts eventually could have resulted in their losing jobs as their employer's profit margin declined.

(3) Rent Boycotts (IPSA 1988:148/52)

The state's plan, in the early 1980s, to make Black Local Authorities financially autonomous resulted in many African councils having to increase rents and service charges in order to make ends meet. In turn, this resulted in many black tenants further questioning the already poor political credibility of African councillors and refusing to pay rentals. The first recorded rent/service charge boycotts were those implemented by African tenants in Cradock and Durban townships in 1983, who were later joined by residents from the Vaal Triangle. By September 1986, it was estimated that more than 650 000 households from about 54 townships owed approximately R480m in arrears.

The early boycotts had little revolutionary content. Householders objected to paying high rents for dilapidated dwellings which they considered they had already paid for many times over, while many other tenants simply could not afford the increases. Negotiations between authorities and delegations of tenants attempted to resolve the crisis. However, while some talks were successful, others were not; when residents turned on local councillors whom they held responsible for the increases, they attacked a 'core' component of state policy.

The rent boycott, which continues in a number of townships, has been one of the more durable strategies employed by opposition groups. Underlying the significant decline in the use of the strategy from mid-1988 onwards, is the fact that after prolonged use the high risks attached to it begin to catch up with residents. These risks cause a great deal of uncertainty among township householders as well as severe personal discomfort. For example, the local state eventually has begun to have greater legal success in evicting defaulters, impounding their property until arrears are paid off, while there has been widespread disconnection of basic services e.g. electricity, water, sewerage, refuse removal, and no access to other basic municipal services such as burial sites.

Furthermore, the need to prolong the boycott has come under increasing scrutiny, as many rent hikes have been declared illegal through court actions initiated by township residents. The chance of being able to buy their homes, as a result of the government's plan to sell off its housing stock, rules out residents who have not paid their rents. In many of the rent boycotts the principled decision of not talking to authorities, adopted by activists during other strategies, appears not to have been taken. Almost throughout the boycotts many resident associations have attempted to negotiate a variety of deals with local authority representatives. Negotiations are still continuing today.

(4) Work Stayaways (IPSA 1988:130/33)

The work stayaway, intermittently implemented in previous resistance epochs, has been extensively used by trade unions, local civic organisations and national extra-parliamentary groups in the 1980s (IPSA 1988:10). As with consumer boycotts, the work stayaway tactic has attempted to force employers to pressurise the state (at either the local or national levels) to implement socio-economic and political change. A significant number of stayaway actions have carried no demands whatsoever – they merely served to commemorate the deaths of victims of political conflict, to allow township residents to attend funerals and protest meetings, or to protest racial elections (IPSA 1988:130/133).

While in many instances stayaway actions achieved a measure of success (measured in terms of worker participation and/or the amount of turnover lost by employers), most achieved little in terms of concessions made or specific demands met. At best, stayaway actions sent important signals of discontent and concern to the employer lobby and government. Probably one of the most significant concessions ever gained by the black working class in South Africa – most likely as a result of union co-ordinated stayaway action over the past five years – has been the government's implicit recognition of May Day. (The government initially declared the first Friday, and subsequently the first Monday of May, as Workers' Day.)

As with other non-collaborationist strategies, the twinning of both national and regional issues has resulted in many of the stayaway actions having limited success. The organisational initiative behind many stayaways also presented some problems and may have contributed towards their lack of success. There was a visible tendency by certain groups (mainly UDF affiliates) to organise larger numbers of stayaways of increasing duration, the ultimate aim being to

organise a sustained 'general strike', which (in theory) would incapacitate industry and eventually force the government to capitulate.

Black workers, already caught in the vice-grip of a recessionary economy, are aware that for each stayaway in which they participate, they lose wages (most employers have adopted the 'no-work no-pay' principle) and they run the risk of dismissal. The less frequent use of the stay-at-home in 1987 and 1988 may be attributed to many trade unions' demanding to be consulted prior to any stayaway call. Concomitantly, it has been those stayaways with union involvement and organisation that have been the most successful.

(5) Transport Boycotts (IPSA 1988:144/47)

Although a number of transport boycotts (bus, train and taxi) have affected South Africa over the past five years, few of them have had any relationship to the current political turmoil. This is surprising considering that transport has a direct political content for most black South Africans, who are forced to reside in areas distant from their places of work (i.e. settlement patterns are determined by group areas legislation, the legacy of influx controls, resettlement and homeland policies).

However, in those transport boycotts that have had overt political overtones — in Mdantsane-East London (1983-85); in West Rand townships (1986); in Duduza-Nigel (1986) — it is instructive to note that the introduction of broader political demands resulted in the boycotts being enforced for a long period of time, without producing any further gains.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

To conclude, in the rebellion of 1984-1988 opposition groupings lost many valuable opportunities from which to win concessions and further reforms from the state. Even though many of the reforms they could have gained might have seemed 'marginal' in nature, they nonetheless would have been important. But instead of defending or consolidating hard-won ground, the opposition launched an all-out assault on 'core' state policy between 1985-1986. Popular movements demanded 'people's power'.

The desire on the part of many activists to make the country 'ungovernable' was a strategy which state decision-makers would never have been prepared to countenance. The government responded by unleashing all the resources and powers at its disposal to deal with the extra-parliamentary opposition. A large security apparatus was brought into

operation, the reform programme was suspended, and many of the gains made by various opposition groups were systematically rolled-back.

Within a short space of time state security planners (IPSA 1988:88) — the 'securocrats' — gained the upper-hand. It is now abundantly clear that while the process of constitutional reform will continue, it will only do so under the carefully managed tutelage of the State Security Council. The SSC will ensure that the 'spaces' which allowed black opposition movements to emerge in the early 1980s will be narrowed, through the constant use of state of emergency and other security legislation.

Note:

Except where otherwise stated, all data references are to be found in *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data trends 1984-1988*. (eds. Bennett M & Quin D.) University of Natal: Indicator Project South Africa {IPSA}, December 1988. See p3-4 for data directory.

Sources

Black P. 'Boycott Strategies in the Eastern Cape', in *South Africa International* Vol17/No1: July 1986.

Bot M. *School Boycotts 1984: The crisis in African education*. Indicator SA Issue Focus. University of Natal: Indicator Project SA, April 1985.

Friedman S. 'Understanding Reform', in *South Africa International* Vol18/No3: January 1988.
Morris M. 'Redistributive Reform', in *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data trends 1984-1988*. (eds. Bennett M & D Quin.), Indicator SA Issue Focus. University of Natal: IPSA, December 1988.

Schlemmer L. 'Beyond Protest: Thoughts on change strategies in South Africa', *Policy Issues and Actors*. University of the Witwatersrand: Center for Policy Studies, 1988.
Slabbert F van Zyl. 'South Africa Beyond 1984: The dynamics of violent evolution', in *Indicator SA (Political Monitor)* Vol4/No4: Autumn 1986.

Swilling M. 'Beyond Ungovernability: Township politics and local level negotiations', *Policy Issues and Actors*. University of the Witwatersrand: CPS, 1988.

Instead of winning short-term concessions and consolidating hard-won ground, activists launched a people's war

Black Local Authority Election Results (26/10/88)

Province	No of towns that held elections*	Total No Registered Voters	Total No of Votes Polled	Percentage Poll	Councillor Resignations (to mid-1985)
Transvaal					
E. Rand	12 (13)	253 456	49 390	19,49	
N. Tvl	5 (5)	5 131	3 531	68,88	
W. Rand	9 (10)	447 521	70 167	15,70	
Central	3 (4)	129 978	31 777	24,44	
E. Tvl	20 (29)	163 481	48 048	29,41	
W. Tvl	19 (19)	52 386	24 926	47,58	
Total	68 (80)	1 020 453	222 383	21,79(ave)	47
Cape					
E. Cape	19 (49)	176 159	25 988	14,75	
W. Cape	7 (18)	77 515	33 085	42,68	
N. Cape	18 (25)	17 973	9 496	52,83	
Total	44 (92)	483 824	68 569	14,17(ave)	179
OFS	58 (70)	205 837	80 743	39,22(ave)	34
Natal	10 (18)	40 512	7 592	18,74(ave)	14
TOTAL	180 (260)	1 750 626	379 287	21,66(ave)	274

* Figures in brackets indicate the total number of BLAs in the region

Cape Province

0 Four townships returned no candidates, one had the election postponed, while a further 39 seats were left vacant in various councils.

0 Of the 44 towns that held elections in the Cape, 20 had populations lower than 2 000 adults.

0 The average percentage polls according to township populations is as follows:

Town with a population over:	Percentage Poll
50 000	26,3
10 000	30,8
2 000	48,8

Transvaal

0 Elections were not held in 12 townships: four had the entire council elected unopposed, while the balance had insufficient candidates for an election.

0 The average percentage poll for townships in which councillor resignations occurred (to mid-1985) was 29,9%.

0 The average percentage polls according to township populations is as follows:

Town with a population over:	Percentage Poll
100 000	16,4
50 000	18,4
20 000	22,5
10 000	26,1
2 000	39,6

Orange Free State

0 The average percentage polls according to township populations is as follows:

Town with a population over:	Percentage Poll
10 000	36,6
2 000	47,1

Natal

0 Of the 107 available seats, 49 had candidates elected unopposed and a further 19 attracted no candidates.

0 Two townships, Sobantu and Klaarwater, fielded no candidates and are now run by an administrator.

Participation vs Boycott Scenarios

Assessing BLA Election Data

Rob Evans, Indicator SA Researcher

Following the municipal elections of October 1988 and government claims of unprecedented successes in the Black Local Authority (BLA) elections, there are a few questions that beg asking. Why the voter polls were quite substantial (the national BLA average of 21,7% compares with most electoral polls worldwide) is a major dilemma for those who were expecting a higher boycott incidence, though most of the organisations that would have organised on an anti-election ticket were restricted by the Emergency regulations of June 1988. For the central government, however, the polls are seen as a go-ahead for the Regional Services Council (RSC) and National Council initiatives.

The election results released in the Indicator SA report, *Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984-1988*, cover BLA polls for the period 1978-88 (IPSA 1988:160/68). The government has claimed the October 1988 results as an overwhelming victory for the process of reform of African local government, although polls have remained fairly constant at a (crude) national average of 24,2% in 1978 and 21,1% in 1983. This interpretation needs examination. Reform, amongst other things, has included the upgrading of 'oilspots' or townships where extensive civil unrest has occurred. Several million rands have been spent on street lighting, upgrading of roads and sewerage systems, and in some cases, infrastructural development. The initiatives often emanated from the National Security Management System, with money being channeled through the local authority or the RSC. (There is an ongoing process of upgrading and maintenance by the respective Provincial Administrations, but the upgrading referred to here is based on the counter-revolutionary strategy of 'winning hearts and minds').

The accompanying box illustrates the extent to which the township upgrading programme may have influenced the election

results, since according to the state's security strategy, this process was intended to foster trust and empathy between township residents and the local authorities. By channeling substantial funds through the local authorities, the state could show that BLAs could indeed 'deliver the goods'. Comparative poll data available for eight townships, including some major areas upgraded through the security system, suggest that upgrading has not substantially advanced the image of the BLAs (measured in terms of increased voter turn-out).

Comparative poll data for eight township 'oilspots' suggests that upgrading has not improved the images of BLAs

Poll Factors

The official results pose a number of questions, both in terms of methodology and validity. Official results are simply, and quite correctly, calculated as a percentage of voter returns (both prior and on the day) over the number of registered voters in the contested ward concerned. Some analysts use total votes and total township population figures to make the calculation, yet others extrapolate their own township figures to update census figures. The latter forms of calculation do not deliver actual percentage polls and are not very accurate or useful, except to point out that the number of registered voters does not approximate the number of eligible voters.

There are a variety of other issues related to the actual election process that affect the calculation, and the validity, of the percentage poll. In most townships the major proportion of votes polled were cast in the week for prior votes. In fact, prior votes averaged 70 percent of all votes cast in the BLA elections. What were the reasons for this? The most apparent reason is that early voting allowed people to avoid the possibility of intimidation or victimisation by boycott activists on the actual voting day, 26 October. That intimidation,

BLA Polls in Upgraded Townships 1983 -88

Township	BLA % Poll 1983*	1988#
Alexandra	no data	1 vacancy
Bekkersdal	no data	21,1 %
Crossroads	no data	1 vacancy
Diepmeadow	14,6 %	11,8 %
Dobsonville	23,5 %	37,4 %
Evaton	5,9 %	unopposed
Ibaya (New Brighton, Walmer)	11,0 %	9,2 %
Kagiso	36,6 %	40,5 %
Katlehong	22,7 %	21,1 %
Lingilile	15,6 %	no candidates
Mamelodi	27,8 %	27,5 %
Mbekweni	no data	unopposed
Mohlakeng	no data	22,3 %
Rini	26,0 %	2 vacancies
Soweto	10,7 %	11,4 %
Thokoza	16,7 %	6,2 %

Note *In most instances where no data exists for the 1983 results, elections did not take place.
#Where vacancies are reported above, other candidates are elected unopposed.

BLA voting procedures are open to several forms of corruption which cast doubt on the validity of the results

however, relates only to those who freely intended to vote.

There were also many allegations of coercion of voters through a variety of methods, including food parcels, bussing voters to the polls, eviction threats and unrealistic campaign promises (e.g. reduction of rents or promises of housing). Particular target groups were pensioners and the unemployed. The Human Rights Commission (1988) reported that pensioners 'in some areas were led to believe that payment of their pensions depended on their participation in the elections'. Unemployed people were offered temporary jobs, or food and alcohol, if they cast a vote. Trade unions also reported that some employers were using coercive means to force people to register (Human Rights Commission, 1988).

On the other hand, intimidation from anti-election quarters could have occasioned a two-fold effect; keeping potential voters away from the polls, but creating a counter-reaction that prompted ordinarily apathetic people into voting (perhaps through prior votes). The state's advertising drive played a role in increasing the interest of these people, as did the disinformation campaign in certain areas. One pamphlet claimed that the release of Nelson Mandela rested on people voting in the elections, playing further on religious feelings as a God-given priority to vote.

A question that remains unanswered is whether all those township residents who cast prior votes were indeed entitled to do so. There does not appear to have been a check on whether those voting were listed in wards for which there were elections, or simply listed as a registered voter in the township concerned. Another curiosity is where, in a number of instances, voters arrived at the polls to find that their names had already been crossed off the list, or that they were not registered at all.

Yet other voters were registered without knowledge of the fact, as in many cases township registers were used to compile the lists. Although township registers are notoriously out of date, in most places the voter registers included 'illegal' lodgers and backyard dwellers. Lastly, identification was called for at the polls, but a third person was permitted to personally identify the voter. The only criterion was that the name of a voter should appear on the register, and on that basis anyone could have claimed to be that person. The system was thus open to several forms of corruption.

Tactical Implications

Taken together, the dubious nature of the election results (i.e. voter participation may be even lower than 21,7%) and the apparent lack of impact of the upgrading programme, suggest that the state's option of autonomous 'city-states' is unlikely to elicit the extensive political participation of urban African communities. In the period of political conflict between 1984-88, there are several scenarios that could have arisen in election time, given the prevailing circumstances. The first is that anti-election groups could have used their street-level networks to occasion a high boycott incidence, something that could have been achieved despite the security clampdown. If this was indeed the case, these networks did not appear to have achieved their goal.

The BLA poll results do not differ significantly from those in 1983. Although the data for the 1983 elections is incomplete, some comparisons can be made. There was marginal improvement in some townships in the Transvaal, notably Atteridgeville and Soweto, but townships such as Diepmeadow, Mamelodi, Tembisa and Thokosa all returned polls lower than 1983. In the Cape, most townships for which 1983 results are available either returned lower polls or fielded insufficient candidates to hold an election. Of significance here is Lingelihle, where there were no candidates, and Ibhayi, where the poll was lower, both sites of conflict in the Eastern Cape. In fact, all the areas above experienced some form of civil unrest in the period 1984-88.

A second scenario is that candidates and participating parties could have mobilised greater support, and using the protection provided by the security forces at the polls, raised the percentage poll. Again, this was not the case. Despite vociferous campaigns by the Sofasonke Party in Soweto and the Zamukulungisa Party in Ibhayi, they in fact lost support in the elections.

A third scenario, which would push voters both for and against participation, is that the continued political unrest polarises communities around an issue like elections. Since a large degree of conflict ranged around the inability of BLAs to provide the material returns expected by communities, election of these bodies necessarily carries a greater degree of political awareness within the communities. When the material conditions of residents are depressed, they seek an entity to blame, in this case the BLA. This should occasion a political awareness, either in terms of a boycott, or support in the hope of improved conditions. Yet only a quarter of the electorate in most communities went to the polls, with larger communities and places

where political unrest was particularly severe, returning lower polls (see data base: 28).

What are the implications of this? Do township residents see participation as futile, or does their lack of interest simply reflect political apathy? In any case, the objective factors are that BLA campaign promises are rarely met. Conditions in the townships do not improve. Political aspirations remain confined to the local level. The state remains adamant that the election results are an affirmation of their reform process. The structural constraints inherent in the Black Local Authority system, and the non-participation of the majority of African people in that system, belie the state's claims of meeting African political aspirations and winning over their increased participation at local and regional level.

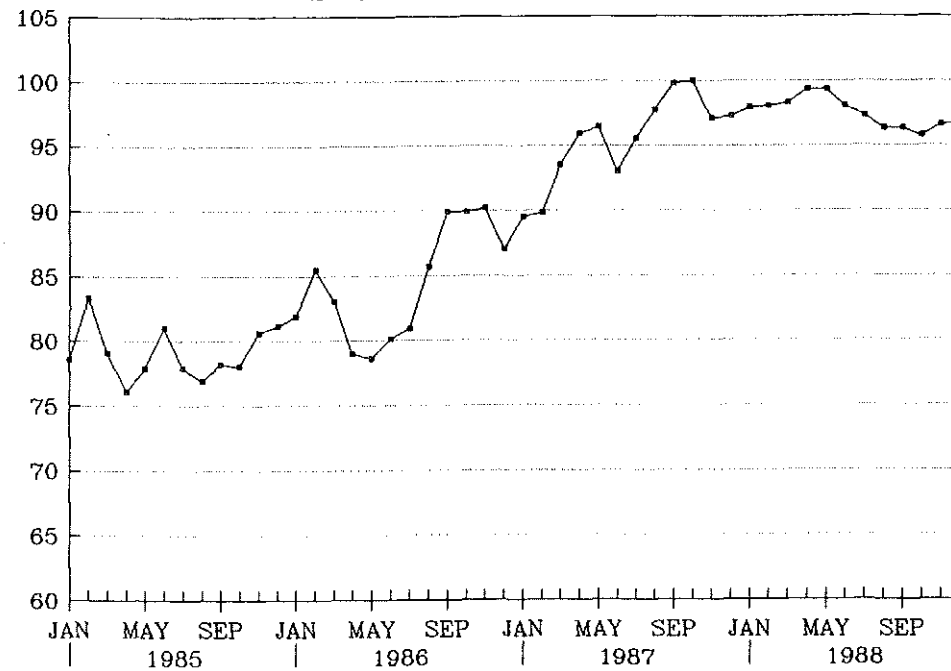
BLA structural constraints and majority non participation belie state claims of meeting African aspirations

Reference

Human Rights Commission 1988 A Free Choice? Memorandum on Repression and the Municipal Elections. Special Report SR-1

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Assocom Index 1985 - December 1988



ASSOCOM Business Confidence Index 1985 - December 1988

	1985	1986	1987	1988
January	78,6	81,9	89,5	98,0
February	83,3	85,5	89,8	98,1
March	79,1	83,0	93,5	98,3
April	76,1	79,0	95,9	99,3
May	77,9	78,6	96,4	99,3
June	81,0	80,1	93,0	98,1
July	77,9	80,9	95,5	97,3
August	76,9	85,7	97,8	96,3
September	78,2	89,9	99,8	96,3
October	78,0	89,9	100,0	95,7
November	80,6	90,2	97,1	96,6
December	81,1	87,0	97,3	96,7
Year average	79,1	84,3	95,5	97,5

Note

1) The Assocom Business Confidence Index (BCI) endeavours to measure business confidence via the movements of 15 economic indicators which have the greatest bearing on the business mood. The 15 inputs are:

- dollar price of gold-in London
- Rand-Dollar exchange rate (commercial and financial Rand)
- merchandise imports (in real terms)
- Consumer Price Index
- Johannesburg Stock Exchange All Market Index
- three months' Bankers Acceptance Rate
- prime lending rate of commercial banks
- motor car sales
- estimated retail sales (in real terms)
- number of insolvencies of individuals and partnerships
- unemployment among all races
- new companies registered
- number of persons migrating to and from South Africa
- volume of manufacturing production
- value of building plans passed

2) Although the BCI base year is 1983, figures were only published from 1985 onwards.

Source

Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry. 'Business Confidence Index' 1989.

Policy Implications

Negotiable vs Revolutionary Agendas

*Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, Director, Centre for Policy Studies,
Wits Graduate School of Business*

History may well record that the political violence of 1984 to 1986/88 was the backdrop for the most significant set of events in shifting South Africa into a phase of transition. Among the outcomes of this episode, documented in the Indicator SA (1988) report on political conflict, were:

- the ANC was catapulted into international prominence as the pre-eminent organisation representing black people in South Africa;
- the sanctions campaign was hugely boosted by the media coverage of the civil unrest abroad;
- the South African government was placed under pressure to concede, much more clearly than before, that a resolution of South Africa's conflict could only be achieved once Africans were accorded full political participation and franchise rights;
- whites in general were left under no illusion that the present structure of South African society is illegitimate and offers them no permanent security.

Counting the Costs

At the same time, compelling questions arise as to why events of such tragic and socially corrosive dimensions are necessary to drive essential political lessons home. The political violence, and the government's reactions to it, have been exceedingly costly on all sides, quite apart from the tragic loss of life. The costs include:

- the severe destruction of community leadership caused by the first and second states of emergency;
 - the very considerable inter-factional violence within the black communities.
- Even if one separates conflict between the UDF and Inkatha, or between 'comrades' and their equivalents and vigilante groups, there is no gainsaying the fact that highly

destructive and lethal violence occurred between UDF and black-consciousness linked groupings in the Eastern Cape and parts of the Transvaal;

- the school boycotts set back educational achievements in black communities very severely, and persisting effects are still seen in the relatively very low pass-rates in Soweto schools, for example;
- it is commonly acknowledged that the economy suffered severe setbacks and that the downswing in the business cycle of 1984-1985 was deepened by the violence. Business confidence was eroded, the exchange value of the Rand fell dramatically, and South Africa was plunged into an international debt crisis;
- it is also possible that, to a degree, the electoral losses suffered by the white liberal opposition party and the gains enjoyed by the Conservative Party opposition in 1987 were due to white insecurity engendered by the political violence;
- the rise in the priority of security issues over the period has shaped a popular perception that the South African government has become 'militarised' to the detriment of political decision-making.

These and other destructive consequences of the political violence point to the issue of policy in the interplay between the state and resistance groupings; both the security policy of government and the protest strategies of the extra-parliamentary forces. Possibly one of the most useful contributions which can be made is to comment on these two sets of policies within the context of the broader political conflict being played out in South Africa.

The destructive violence of 1984-88 points to the interplay between security policy and opposition strategy

Did a coercive state reaction to the initial protests lead activists to mobilise and demonstrate community power?

VIOLENCE AND COUNTER-VIOLENCE

One cannot evaluate a policy or strategy unless there is some clarity as to what that policy or strategy may be. Important questions arise both as regards the resistance strategy and government policy in the period 1984-1988.

On the side of the resistance movements or the township formations involved in the process, the most fundamental question is whether or not the strategy and the action was revolutionary or not. If it was revolutionary, one has to concede that any state will act first to attempt to quell the revolutionary threat before giving primary attention to other civic issues.

The British political scientist, Simon Baynham, sums up the views of the South African authorities during the unrest as follows :

'In short, a panoply of instruments and strategies are perceived as gnawing into the Republic's vital organs. Boycotts, the activities of the UDF's constituent affiliates, industrial disputes, confrontations with the security services and sabotage are all putatively linked in a single grand design: a concerted anti-South Africa offensive waged through a mix of political, military, economic, social and psychological modes ... Woven into this interpretation is the ... view that riotous behaviour is engineered by extremist agitators who foster discontent and intimidate in order to subvert the system of government.'
(1987:122)

Very recently, Mark Swilling of the Centre for Policy Studies has proffered an analysis (1988) which appears to have had as its aim precisely the kind of explanation of the turmoil which might stimulate initiatives for resolution. Basing his analysis broadly on a variety of hitherto confidential reports commissioned by the Urban Foundation, he argues that the most salient underlying dynamic in the unrest was not, as is often assumed, a revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary aim of making the black areas ungovernable in order to install alternative authority in 'liberated' areas. He argues, rather, that the turmoil was a reaction of community leaders to the fact that all their earlier attempts to inform or negotiate with officials about a range of serious community grievances had been ignored or rejected and later met with various coercive responses by the state.

In other words, the initial sentiments which carried the protests were unaddressed daily grievances and had no guiding revolutionary agenda. Swilling goes on to say that the reaction by the authorities stimulated a drive

to mobilise, establish and demonstrate community power. The effects of continuing security action and detention of community leaders were to weaken the authority of the more mature and responsible leadership. The action in the townships thus increasingly became dominated by poorly disciplined, youthful militants augmented by criminal elements.

Swilling, therefore, sees the protests and resulting turmoil as due to negative official responses to grievance-based mobilisation. This interpretation shifts any revolutionary agenda or structured political dissent to a secondary position. More broadly, his analysis implies that the authorities should overlook or at least not react to the political rhetoric in such protests but seek to meet with the 'activist' leaders to negotiate redress.

A conception of the violence as revolutionary in nature would, of course, not exclude the component of community grievances and a number of other factors which Swilling notes. It can be argued that grievances were exploited by some inner core of activists and pushed beyond the initial grassroots motivation in an attempt to create ungovernability. Within this framework, the activists attempted through street committees to introduce order into their activities because the very consequence of ungovernability was a vacuum of authority. Their concern would not have been to restore the communities' agenda but to attempt to regain control of revolutionary endeavour which was becoming fragmented, counter-productive and unduly vulnerable to both vigilante counter-reaction and security action. Within this framework, community grievances were no more than a launch pad for a sustained attempt to stimulate general insurrection.

Obviously, it is vital that these opposing views be rigorously assessed as a basis for more rational policies on both sides in any future recurrence of such events.

TWO INTERPRETATIONS

The question boils down to whether the political violence on the part of township community groups was fundamentally grievance-based and largely spontaneous, or whether it was guided by a systematic revolutionary agenda. There are, of course, other explanations as well, notably economics, since virtually all episodes of civil unrest in South Africa have co-incided with sharp downturns in the business-cycle (IPSA 1988:122/127). For present purposes, however,

this explanation can be taken as part of the non-revolutionary thesis.

There is persuasive, suggestive support and possibly evidence for both the revolutionary and the non-revolutionary interpretations. On the revolutionary paradigm, it is difficult to overlook an intention expressed in *Sechaba*, the ANC journal, as early as January 1985, that 'the ANC should march in the vanguard of semi-spontaneous mass upsurges' and help them to form 'revolutionary organs of self government' (quoted by Hough 1986:4). The analyst Stephen Gelb argues that, 'the culmination of the phase between 1984 and 1986 reflected a new transitional strategy of "ungovernability" or popular insurrection' (1988). There are many other similar views that can be quoted but the two above are illustrative.

Steve Mufson, a well-informed foreign correspondent who was ordered to leave the country by the authorities, in an interesting article gives the position outlined by Swilling, as well as the ungovernability thesis, some support. He concedes that 'the UDF pushed the school boycott too far'; that 'so-called people's courts' in Langa, run by the UDF officials, meted out harsh punishment to ... people who declined to join the (consumer) boycott'; and that 'the UDF was sometimes equivocal about violence directed at black collaborators'. He is also firm in his view that 'the street committees were in part designed to break up the squads of militant youths and force them to work with older and more moderate residents' (1987:18/19).

There is also a great deal of evidence on sharp community grievances but such evidence has been documented at many periods other than prior to the 1984-1986 turmoil, i.e., community grievances have been there all the time. What may be more pertinent is the aggravation of such grievances by the economic downturn and the fiscal crisis which beset black local authorities in the early 1980s, when rentals were raised to compensate for the loss of revenue from beer sales after the breakdown of sorghum beer marketing in many townships.

Some observers have been struck by the close resemblance between the political violence of the mid-1980s and the model of urban revolution expounded by the Brazilian revolutionary, Marighella. Key to his strategy was the establishment of an urban 'people's army'. He stresses that revolutionaries should adopt popular causes and community grievances and that all attempts at reform by the state should be rejected. Interim success is achieved when the action forces a militarisation of government. He warns against accepting the 'farce' of elections and political

solutions which are likely to be supported by political opportunists and anti-revolutionary forces (Hough 1986:1-19).

Interplay of Forces

Critical questions arise in attempting to reconcile the two interpretations:

- How should the role of the ANC be understood? In 1985 there were pamphlets, reputedly from ANC sources, which encouraged youth cadres to make the country ungovernable. The ANC issued a statement in April 1985 to the same effect (SAIRR 1985:19). The essential question is whether the influence from the ANC structured the violence or whether the ANC largely attempted to take credit for events which had spontaneous origins.
- What form did early attempts by community leaders to raise grievance with the authorities take? Did the authorities receive signals to which responsible officials could have been expected to respond?
- How does one reconcile claims that community leaders brought their grievances to authorities without success, when such a powerful tradition of non-participation and non-involvement with authorities re-emerged soon after? According to Swilling, the new debate around the possibilities of negotiation has arisen because of the 'stalemate' in the wake of the state of emergency (Swilling:op cit). How are both of these factors to be reconciled with negotiations between UDF activists and local businessmen in some areas? Were these attempts to achieve redress of community grievances and hardship or were these attempts to enter into alliances to isolate the government?
- If the turmoil was predominantly based on community grievances, how must one explain the high-key confrontations which took place between UDF and Azapo (black consciousness) militants, which at one point was marked by an attack by some 1 000 UDF-linked militants on Azapo strongholds? Does this not suggest power-oriented political mobilisation?
- Some senior UDF activists did refer to the goal of revolutionary ungovernability. Mr Thami Mali, Chairman of the Transvaal Regional Stay-away Committee was perhaps incautious when he said 'we have the power in our hands... we can bring the machinery of this country to a standstill', but his line of argument was not entirely unrepresentative. How does this fit in with the basic questions - revolutionary or frustration-based turmoil?

Or were local grievances exploited by an inner core of activists in a revolutionary attempt to create ungovernability?

Events were shaped by an interplay of spontaneous grievances, revolutionary influences, state counter-violence and popular reaction

- Did the UDF, (or the ANC) have the coherence and degree of organisation within the country to orchestrate revolutionary insurrection in literally scores of townships, some of which areas were remote from the core leadership of the UDF? (What was particularly striking in the unrest was the active response of relatively unpoliticised townships in small town areas).

These questions, and the fairly obvious trends and evidence on which they are based clearly suggest that the dynamics of the violence were complex and multi-faceted. There is no single explanation. The events probably were shaped by an interplay of popular and spontaneous grievances, specific and systematic revolutionary influences, and a popular revolutionary consciousness which arose as a consequence of counter-violence by the authorities but which was quite possibly fairly shallow. If the revolutionary aspects are being downplayed at the moment it is conceivably due to the fact that the revolutionary part of the collective agenda has been unsuccessful. We all tend to rewrite our own histories.

Security Perceptions

On the side of government the critical question is whether or not it could reasonably have been expected to respond less destructively to the black resistance groupings at an early stage in the political violence or in the period immediately before it. The issue is complex and made more complex by some of the tactics and the rhetoric employed by UDF spokespeople prior to the violence (see above). One particular response on the part of the government can be identified as particularly negative in the situation preceding the violence, however.

Early in 1984, elections were held for the coloured and Indian houses in the tricameral parliament which had just been formally established. Not only the UDF but virtually all other black organisations, including Inkatha, mobilised against these constitutional developments, most specifically because Africans were totally excluded from the new dispensation. It would have been wise, to say the least, for the government at that stage to have conceded the legitimacy of the protests and to have delayed the implementation of the new system pending negotiation with African interest groups. Mr P W Botha and Mr Pik Botha had said that they were interested in negotiation with all black formations not committed to violence, yet no sustained attempt appears to have been made to engage the UDF, the National Forum or Inkatha,

(none of which organisations had a markedly violent strategy early in 1984), in discussions about the inclusion of Africans simultaneously with Indian and coloured people. President Botha offered no more than the promise of urban African participation in a confederal structure between South Africa and the homelands.

The fact that the government has subsequently shifted its position to recognise the right of Africans in the common area to participate directly in the central government confirms the complete inappropriateness of the stance taken on African rights in 1983 and early 1984. The failure to detect a core of very understandable anger and frustration in the formation of and subsequent mobilisation by the UDF was either a critical mistake or reflected a callous disregard for African aspirations at that point of time. The 'partial' reforms in the 1983 constitution could conceivably even have been implemented as an interim measure without stimulating violence and confrontation had genuine attempts been made to simultaneously begin a constitutional debate with all representative African-oriented parties and groupings.

The local-level negotiations between UDF activists and business interests in a few towns following on the consumer boycotts, and the response of government to these negotiations are often taken as indications of underlying strategic intentions. These events are extremely difficult to interpret, however.

On the one hand, the demands of the activists involved in the negotiations did not reflect what one may term a power agenda. They did not seem to want to use the negotiations to assert control in local areas. The demands were most frequently a mixture of unrealistic national objectives (i.e. lifting the state of emergency, releasing detainees, etc) and specific issues relating to local grievances. The local or short-term demands reflected a desire for redress or participation rather than control. Hence one may argue that the demands were not insurrectionary and that the security forces need not have acted against activists at the time of negotiations.

On the other hand, the demands, as said above, were preceded by mobilisation and boycott activity accompanied by rhetoric, suggesting a national strategy to force the state into concessions. The specific local grievances did not appear to be signalled in advance of actual negotiations. Hence the security authorities could have thought that local level negotiations were a ploy to reinforce the ungovernability strategy by winning local concessions (*SAIRR Survey 1984;1985*).

Firm generalisations about the exact nature and motivations of both state and resistance

strategies are impossible to make. It seems most appropriate to assume that both were mixed phenomena, containing revolutionary and counter-revolutionary elements, as well as motives based on grievances which rose in salience with the new constitution in 1983. The launch and early activity of the UDF in 1983 produced various statements of goals which were far from specific and protested the need for a complete transformation of South African society. The government also tended to signal comprehensive opposition to the organisation, and made relatively little attempt to engage resistance movements constructively on their specific political and community grievances. Mutual perceptions, amounting to demonisation of each other, pushed the strategies of both the resistance movements and the government beyond a level at which it was feasible to negotiate or resolve differences in a pragmatic way.

STRATEGY & POLICY

If one considers the success of labour mobilisation by the independent trade union movement, despite severe hostility and sanction from government in the early and mid-seventies, then one can envisage a similar order of achievement for black community organisations given the appropriate strategies. In this context there may be a stark lesson to the effect that the revolutionary dimensions to the political protests from 1984-1986 caused an opportunity to be missed.

While revolutionary optimism may have been inevitable for an exiled movement like the ANC, which enjoys little scope for internal manoeuvre, a similar goal set for internal resistance movements and the intellectuals in sympathy with them was fanciful. It set the progress toward internal negotiation politics back quite considerably, and may still be doing so to some extent.

The alternatives for the internal resistance movements lie in the areas of the mobilisation of protests around specific issues which are fairly precisely signalled to the authorities, and in the preparation to negotiate around these issues. If continued over time a process like this will lead to a more rapid transfer of influence than any revolutionary or semi-revolutionary confrontation could achieve under current and foreseeable conditions. At the same time, it is vital that community organisations be seen to be acting with domain-integrity; i.e. seeking to advance goals which relate to verifiable community needs and support from community constituencies.

In this regard the question about participation in official electoral or political structures arises. While there is the prospect of enormous leverage in such participation (witness the pressure exerted on government by the House of Representatives at the present time), not all community organisations have the resources or the confidence to take this route without fear of being undermined by the blandishments of full participation. There is, however, a well-tryed and effective alternative role for lobbies and pressure groups in local civic affairs.

On the side of government the obligations are equally clear-cut. Just as extra-parliamentary organisations should not over-reach themselves by being sucked into the transformatory agendas of revolutionary organisations, so also the government should not over-reach itself and pay heed only to protests or lobbies which are part of its own framework of institutions. There is great scope for negotiation with informal extra-parliamentary groups, particularly now that the negotiations around the Soweto rent boycott have set a precedent whereby black local authorities can be included in negotiations. In other words, the price of negotiation need not be the delegitimation or undermining of black political groups which participate in government structures.

Crucial in this process is the clear and appropriate signalling of intentions. Just as extra-parliamentary groups should by now realise the futility of trying to signal constructive intentions in the midst of revolutionary or transformatory rhetoric, so the government should state clearly and publicly what it would regard as acceptable protest and mobilisation *and* be prepared to debate its criteria both internally and abroad. If it then acts consistently in terms of those criteria, the government could avoid the accusation so often hurled its way that it has tried to destroy all extra-parliamentary opposition.

A review body to assess government security action and, within limits of freedom of disclosure, to present its analysis in public, could achieve a great deal to counter the fruitless accusations and counter-accusations which characterise the present state of emergency.

Furthermore, the government should seriously consider establishing an 'ombudsman' function in relation to community issues. This should be a channel of communication and redress independent of the public service but with full access to government decision-making. Such a body should have the right and duty to investigate issues as well as receive complaints and

Extra-parliamentary groups should mobilise around specific issues and signal precise demands to government

The government, in turn, should go beyond institutional lobbies and enter into informal negotiations with opposition groups

representations from community organisations and lobbies.

At the root of all the problems discussed, however, is the issue of African participation in the central political process. The government states that it is willing to negotiate with all black organisations which are not involved in violence. On the side of the extra-parliamentary organisations there is also a broad commitment to negotiated political solutions. Both groups have reservations which are perceived to exclude the other. What is needed most crucially is a public debate on conditions for negotiation. This is perhaps an appropriate role for the press at this stage. Perhaps a prominent South African newspaper should establish an ongoing serious forum for this issue to be debated in the light of interviews with government and extra-parliamentary groups. It will take a long time but there are few other issues as deserving of priority attention today.

SOURCES:

- Baynham S. 'Political Violence and the Security Response' in J Blumenfeld (ed), *South African Crisis*. Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987.
- Swilling M. *Beyond Ungovernability*. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies, Policy Issues and Actors series, 1988.
- Schlemmer L. 'Political options: Countering cycles of violence in *Political Conflict in South Africa*, Indicator SA Issue Focus. Durban: Indicator Project SA, December 1988.
- Hough M. quote from *Sechaba* in 'Revolutionary Warfare in the RSA'. University of Pretoria: *ISSUP Strategic Review*, May 1986.
- Gelb S. 'Out of Tune' in *Sanctions*. Cape Town: Leadership Publications, 1988.
- Mufson S. 'The Fall of the Front', *New Republic*: 1987.
- Cooper C et al. *Race Relations Survey 1984, 1985*. Johannesburg: SA Institute of Race Relations, 1985 and 1986.

STILL AVAILABLE

INDICATOR SA ISSUE FOCUS SERIES

**“POLITICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA
Data Trends 1984-1988”**

Released in December 1988, this comprehensive 225 page special report contains the most exhaustive data and information on political violence in South Africa made available to date. The report synthesises analyses from the country's top political analysts with the ongoing research into political conflict monitored and published in the Indicator SA Quarterly Report between 1984-1988.

An essential source of information for all decision-makers and commentators on South African politics, the report offers 125 pages of analyses by conflict region with a 100 page appendix of data by political strategy and by unrest period. The report also contains updated data on:

- consumer, election, and transport boycotts
 - worker, community and school stayaways
 - fatalities in political conflict by region/month
 - targets of political activists between 1976-1988
 - ANC guerilla activities and targets
 - security mechanisms, detentions and arrests
 - economic indicators of political conflict
 - black and white attitudes to political violence;
- plus maps of major conflict regions/township 'trouble-spots'.

PUBLICATION ORDERS

Political Conflict in South Africa: Data Trends 1984-1988 is still available at R50 per copy (local subscribers) or US \$50 per copy (overseas subscribers: includes airmail postage):

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ORDER FORM BELOW AND POST TOGETHER WITH YOUR REMITTANCE TO:
INDICATOR PROJECT SOUTH AFRICA, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban, South Africa,
4001

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please send me by return of post:
POLITICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA: Data Trends 1984-1988

NUMBER OF COPIES: _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____
(R50 or US \$50, incl postage)

**Indicator Project South Africa.
Contributing to informed debate among South
African decision makers of all persuasions.
Will you join them?**

In this climate of change and reform, access to facts behind the emotive issues is essential. This is the rationale behind Indicator SA — to bring the South African debate into the open. To provide a forum where all sides can be heard. To provide data analysis, trend diagnosis and policy prognosis.

The result is a quarterly journal divided into five monitors:
political, economic, rural & regional, urban and industrial.

Indicator SA is available by subscription and from selected bookshops.

Free — by subscription only

As part of our service to subscribers, you will receive at least two major reports on conflict issues in addition to your four Indicator SA editions during your subscription year.

These reports are definitive studies of restricted circulation and are highly prized.

As a subscriber you receive them free!

Rates

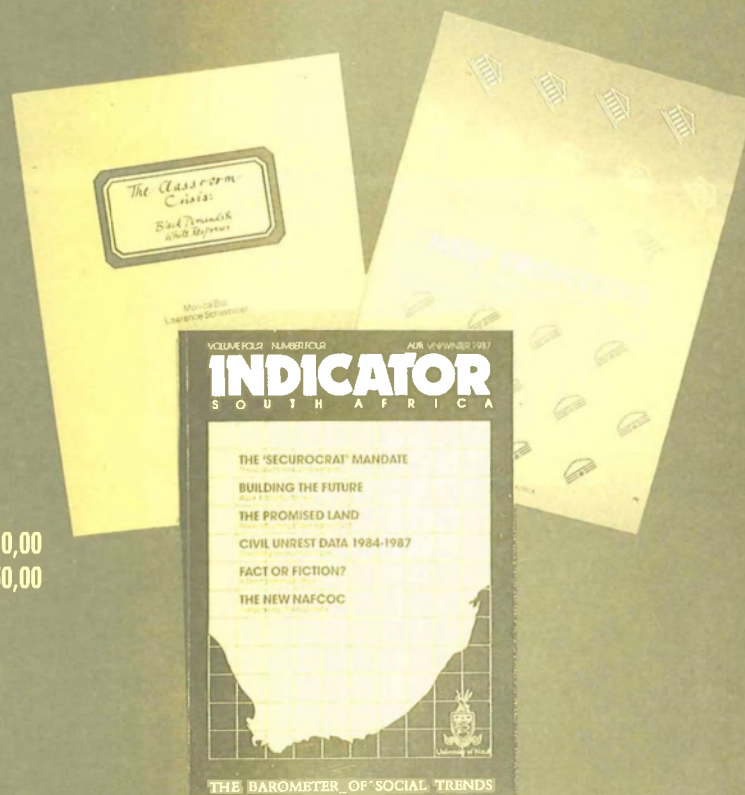
Individual, institute, practice, other	R150,00
Overseas - non-corporate (add \$50 for airmail postage.)	\$150,00

For information on corporate/donor subscription rates and advertising facilities, please contact:
Indicator Project South Africa
Centre for Social & Development Studies
University of Natal
King George V Ave
Durban, 4001
South Africa

or contact the Liaison Officer at (031) 816 2525/2369.

Subscribe now

If you are committed to South Africa, as an individual or in a corporate environment, Indicator SA makes essential reading.





INDICATOR PROJECT SOUTH AFRICA

Centre for Social & Development Studies
University of Natal • King George V Ave • Durban • 4001 • South Africa • Tel. 816 2525 or 816 2369

This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons
Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 Licence.

To view a copy of the licence please see:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>