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LABOUR RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA:
A WIDER PERSPECTIVE

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LABOUR RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA:
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L. Schlemmer

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Labour relations in South Africa, particularly as they involve black workers are never likely to be free of a variety of influences from the social and political environment. In industrial relations circles this simple fact is often the subject of speculation but seldom is it included in any systematic debate or analysis. This is understandable because the number of factors involved is so large and the nature of these factors is often so subtle as to make any systematic analysis very difficult indeed. The importance of such an analysis, however, goes almost without saying, and for this reason a brief and very broad orientation to the subject will be attempted in this paper.

1. Industrial Relations in Political Life

Political and community issues among blacks can affect industry in South Africa in at least four different ways:

- 1.1 Any political disturbances on a substantial scale are likely to have an incisive effect on business confidence. Kantor (1982)¹⁾ produces evidence which shows just how seriously the economic cycle was disrupted by the 1976 disturbances, having the effect of deepening the subsequent recession quite markedly.
- 1.2 One must assume that political attitudes and sentiments can affect the industrial commitment of black employees. When black employees as a group are concerned with industrial progress and material advancement one may speak very broadly of industrial commitment. Industrial commitment is not fully developed among all black workers in South African industry. There is still a proportion of black workers, which is shrinking by the year, in which one finds some evidence of a withdrawal of labour in order to enjoy leisure or to pursue rural agricultural commitments. Among a clear majority, however, the commitment to urban or industrial work is a life-long commitment with the goal of individual, material and occupational advancement. This kind of commitment, which is wellnigh universal in industrial society, is a stabilising factor at a very basic level in industrial relations. To put it very simply, it means that labour withdrawal in the form of strikes or stoppages, are reduced

1) Brian Kantor, "Prospects for the South African Economy: A Comparison of Costs and Returns", Mobil Senior Management Seminar 7-9 November, 1982, Cape Town.

to the minimum necessary to secure a concrete objective. Only if any qualitatively different motivation emerges could one expect strikes and stoppages to continue beyond the attainment or possibility of attainment of some fairly specific material or labour relations objective.

It is possible to conceive of a situation in which political sentiments and commitments so influence the attitudes of black industrial workers that the occupational or material commitments of workers become replaced by very much broader and more diffuse political objectives. In such a case then none of the normal "rules" of industrial relations are likely to apply. There is little or no evidence of this having occurred or being likely to occur at the present time but it certainly cannot be regarded as an impossible scenario. This has happened on a fairly large scale in the distant past, when in early Natal one found a great deal of resistance among Zulus to working for whites and there was a similar pattern in the resistance among the Sekhekunes in the Transvaal in the earlier part of this century. Admittedly these were not industrial workers but people living in a tribal economy which was much more viable than any tribal economy is today, but the example at least illustrates the kind of alienation that can occur.

- 1.3 The most immediate and likely effect of political life on industry is likely to be found in the consequences of more specific community grievances. Here one may think of the fairly widespread grievances in regard to transport, housing shortages, hostility to the regimentation by the authorities in the typical township, and the discomforts of hostel life among migrant workers. Such grievances can have a direct effect in the sense of producing a high level of frustration among employees which may make them more sensitive to issues in the workplace than they might otherwise be. There is, however, a less direct but equally meaningful possible affect.

People generally work in order to "translate" the rewards of work

in the form of wages and occupational status into an improved domestic quality of life. Wages and salaries are invested in housing, private transport, recreation, and a variety of home comforts, and the occupational status which an employee enjoys finds an echo in the status which he or she enjoys in the community. If, however, conditions and opportunities in the community are so bad that there is very little scope for an improved quality of life then work benefits cannot be translated into an improved quality of life. Fairly automatically, then, the motivation of employees to improve their occupational rewards is undermined. Perhaps the most serious of these limitations lies in the field of housing. Today there is a shortage of housing which is estimated to be close to 600 000 units in black urban areas. (Schlemmer and Moller, 1982.)¹⁾ This inevitably means a very substantial proportion of black industrial workers may have given up any hope of ever owning a house in a township. The affects of this limitation on their commitment to industrial progress must be very pervasive indeed.

- 1.4 Finally one may argue that the political climate affects industrial relations through its influence on the degree of "trust" which black workers have of this system in which they work. Recently there were widespread "pension strikes" in Natal and the Eastern Cape, and one of the factors underlying these strikes was the lack of trust in the pension funds and a great deal of uncertainty about what the state was doing with the proportion of pension fund money which by law has to be invested in government stock. This is perhaps the most dramatic example available of how a lack of trust can produce repercussions of a serious nature for industry. There are other institutions besides pension funds which could be relevant in this context: unemployment insurance funds, industrial councils, the industrial courts, the machinery for workmens' compensation and a host of other major and minor institutions which can all have an affect on the climate of industrial relations.

1) L. Schlemmer and V. Moller, "Black Housing in South Africa", in *Energos*, 1982 Seven, published for the Public Affairs Department of Mobil Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd by Aviation Publications (Pty) Ltd.

2. POLITICAL EFFECTS IN INDUSTRY - THE UNCERTAINTIES

Moving among businessmen as a collectivity one becomes aware of a great deal of uncertainty about the implications of black political thinking for commerce and industry. Some businessmen, for example, tend to assume that political factors are strongly present in labour disputes and black trade union development. Others again define the major dynamic as being material factors or grievances of a much more specific kind.

It is not uncommon to hear some employers assume that a wide distinction exists between developments in black politics or black community affairs on the one hand, and the sphere of black labour on the other. Certain observations would tend to support this view. One may point, for example, to the fact that during the 1976 disturbances in Soweto and other black townships, the successive calls for stay-away strikes met with a doubtful response from black employees. Reports indicated that while the first three calls for sympathy stay-aways were between 50 and 70 percent successful, later calls for strikes were notably unsuccessful, perhaps because of a tougher attitude to absenteeism on the part of Johannesburg employers. It is broadly true to say that the township disturbances did not spread to or generalise into industrial action on any massive scale. The authorities, furthermore, tended to take the view that the response which did occur was due to coercion of workers and not to willing co-operation with the youthful demonstrators. Widely reported attacks by hostel dwellers on the township youth both in Soweto and Cape Town reinforced this view.

The township disturbances were signal events for all South Africans, and the observations made above give credence to the view that the black employee does not see his labour as a political weapon - that community politics and labour matters are separate spheres.

However, a more careful study of these events during late 1976, as made by Kane-Berman,¹⁾ for example would suggest a much less clear distinction.

1) John Kane-Berman, *Soweto, Black Revolt, White Reaction*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978.

Hostel migrants were among the active promoters of the third stay-away in September 1976, and the authorities themselves had to employ some heavy persuasion to discourage strikers.

Furthermore, calls for a boycott of white shops in Johannesburg were partly successful and reflected another form of impact on business. Kane-Berman reports that the Furniture-Traders Association was quite direct in blaming black "agitators" for the marked slow-down in the Christmas trade for 1976. It is meaningful to be reminded of these events, and one cannot simply assume that the use of labour or consumer-power as a political weapon is no more than a remote possibility.

Then again, other employers seem to over-inject a political factor into the black-white industrial and commercial interface. It is almost as if they see a political shadow darkening every labour dispute, every bus boycott and every tension in the black personnel situation.

These divergent points of view are reinforced by very divergent public views. Some black spokesmen constantly claim or hint at a welling of revolutionary consciousness among black people, including workers. Others, particularly perhaps the spokesmen for the authorities, tend constantly to isolate an agitator or trouble-maker factor in what are presented as otherwise peaceful or contented populations.

The general situation, then, is confusing and the uncertainties of some employers and the divergent views of others are understandable. Publicly reported events can be used to prove all viewpoints. Yet, the issue of the vulnerability of the spheres of commerce and industry to political influence or destabilisation is of such importance in South Africa that it must be explored. An attempt will be made to take this issue a little further in this analysis.

3. BROAD POLITICAL SENTIMENTS AMONG BLACKS

We have noted that events as reported in the media and in official documentation can prove various points of view. Listings of strikes by black employees and their causes in the Report of the National Manpower Commission would suggest that politically-inspired disturbances are a tiny minority. Yet, any observer knows that at least some labour disturbances develop a dimension in the action which looks and sounds "political". One has to explain why, for example, the incidence of strikes is relatively so high in the Eastern Cape, an area well-known for considerable political mobilisation.

In order to deepen the analysis a little, it is necessary to consider some of the results of research into black attitudes conducted over the past few years. A word of caution is necessary, however. Attitudes and opinions are not predictors of behaviour. Any productivity expert will remind one that an attitude or attitudinal motivation is only one factor in a mix which results in employee behaviour. Rewards, constraints, opportunities, organisation of people and self-confidence all enter the mix.

Attitudes and opinions do, however, reflect the basic inclination to act in one way or another. As such they are important and they must be studied.

Another word of caution is that among rank-and-file black people (as opposed possibly to the middle class or black intelligentsia) attitudes as expressed in research will probably reflect caution. In other words, they could, in reality be more "hostile" to white interests than the research results would suggest. In the results which follow, these cautionary remarks have to be borne in mind.

3.1 Indications of General Political Thinking

By the way of background, we may consider some general political sentiments among black people which have emerged from recent research, including work for the Buthelezi Commission. The results on the next pages, which are presented in very summary form, are evidence of a very divided consciousness among blacks.

Results in Table 1 tend to show that most blacks (in this case in urban and rural Natal-KwaZulu) would expect widespread support for anti-system activity if clear calls were made to this effect. Whether they are correct or not is not the issue. Their sentiments and perceptions are that "many" or "most" people in their environment would respond positively to calls for mass strike action or even to co-operation with insurgents.

Table 1.

BLACK POLITICAL THINKING

"If a well-respected leader of African people wished to show his strength and he were to ask black workers to stay away from work for 2 weeks" (1981, n.300. Natal)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| - almost all would stay away | 20% |
| - many but not all | 49% |
| - only a few would stay away | 29% |

"If the ANC were to come secretly asking people to help it and work with it, which of the following would happen?" (1981, n. 300. Natal)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| - most people would | 19% |
| - many would, not all | 29% |
| - a few would | 29% |
| - almost nobody | 8% |

The next table, Table 2 is perhaps even more dramatic. Majorities of people in most areas go so far as to reject the strong suggestion in the question asked and disagree with the notion that avoidance of trouble and caution is the most appropriate type of political response. The increase in this rejection of the cautious response between 1977 and 1981 is very noteworthy.

Here again, in the second item in this table we note the very widespread expectation of anti-system behaviour if circumstances are appropriate. Over six out of ten would predict a mass-strike. These results all suggest a high level of political militancy.

Table 2

BLACK POLITICAL THINKING

"It is best for black people to be careful in politics and not get into trouble". (1981 n. 1400)

<u>DISAGREE:</u>	(Witwatersrand 1977*)	(30%)
	Witwatersrand	50%
	18-24 years	54%
	Durban-Pietermaritzburg	61%
	Rural	51%
	Squatters	40%

* 1977 sample, same interviewers and sample design

"If government does not bring changes in lives of black people in next 10 years - what from the following will definitely happen?" (1981 n.1400)

	<u>Durban-Pmbg.</u>	<u>Wits.</u>
boycotts of shops	26%	37%
people leave for military training	56%	51%
youth disturbances	57%	59%
mass strikes	65%	64%
lose hope-forget problems	2%	6%
too frightened to take action	9%	17%

In Table 3, however, we see the signs of a dual consciousness. The migrant worker respondents give answers which suggest that they are most frustrated by specific aspects of their lives (money and influx control), a little less frustrated about "life in general", but notably less negative in their feelings concerning their jobs.

This does suggest a separation of the job sphere from the sphere of black urban conditions. Of course, wages and material circumstances are part of the work package so the distinction between the occupational and non-occupational is not all that clear.

Table 3

GENERAL DISCONTENT

"Feelings about life in South Africa now" those replying "unhappy" or "angry and impatient"

		<u>UNHAPPY/ANGRY</u>	
		1) 1981	
	MIGRANT WORKERS	2) 1979	1982
Feelings-life-in-general	1)	56%	58%
Feelings about pass laws	2)	71%	76%
Feelings about material circumstances		74%	76%
Feelings about your job - all parts of it		not asked	44%

In Table 4, a different dimension of political thinking emerges to reinforce the notion of a kind of double-consciousness among blacks. The sample reflected in these results were very highly urbanised black people, slightly better-educated than average. On all other issues they had adopted attitudes much like those in Tables 1 to 3, but in these results the responses appear to be remarkably "balanced".

The items in Table 4 refer not to attitudes or sentiments in general, but to political strategy. We note a clear majority opposed to the militant or confrontationist alternative. But, the kind of options that draw them away from this are not fearful or passive but much more deliberate and "strategic". Other items not included in the table suggest a very strong basic emphasis on organisation and unity as a first step in a political process.

Table 4

BLACK POLITICAL THINKING (1979 n. 150 Durban) men only

"Black leader must be patient and work with tools he has

VS

Strong demands now"

PATIENT

61%

"Conditions for blacks getting no better, nothing to be gained by patience"

VS

"Still best for leader to be patient and plan carefully"

PATIENT-PLAN CAREFULLY

81%

"Leader must not forget freedom but first think of jobs and conditions of ordinary people

VS

Leader must work for freedom and power soon"

FIRST THINK OF JOBS AND CONDITIONS

69%

The implications of these patterns are, in a sense, twofold. On the one hand they do not suggest an urban black community of men ripe for disruption and loose confrontation. At the same time, however, the consciousness which exists, while perfectly "responsible" among a majority, reflects certain very serious longer-run implications.

3.2 Migrant Worker Attitudes

What follows is of somewhat closer relevance to industry. Over the past few years we have conducted quite a considerable amount of research among migrant workers. These have been studies of industrial migrants outside of the mining situation, therefore reflecting quite a wide array of employment situations. Here only three aspects of a wide range of findings are discussed, both employment-related.

Before considering the results a very general and very consistent finding, this being that migrant workers tend on average to be less "political" or less militant in their expressed attitudes at the moment than the better-educated permanent urban populations.

In a nation-wide sample of nearly 500 mixed migrants in 1982, we found some 35 percent expressing extreme dissatisfaction with job conditions - "anger and impatience". This was some 10 percent lower than the fully urban groups. (See Table 5.)

In looking for factors associated with job dissatisfaction of this extreme kind, we found that wage-level was the most salient variable of a non-political kind. In Table 5 one can see the variation in job dissatisfaction by income.

Table 5

FACTORS IN VERY HIGH JOB DISSATISFACTION

Sample of 480 mixed black migrant workers - nationwide - 1982

"ANGER AND IMPATIENCE IN JOB"

Sample average	35%
Over R40 per week	32%
Under R40 per week	38%
Angry-life in general	57%
Pass Laws seen as exploitation	58%
ANC seen as important for blacks	48%

However, in Table 5 you also see that the three lower factors, all political perceptions, appear to have a much stronger relationship with extreme job-dissatisfaction even than income level. Certain political perceptions are associated with job-dissatisfaction levels which are very high and which must be a critical factor in the workplace.

Obviously one cannot say which causes the other. The fact that political attitudes and job dissatisfaction go together, however, is sufficient to make the point that political attitudes of black people, even among South Africa's workers with the least bargaining power - migrants - are very relevant to the workplace.

Table 6 speaks for itself. Here the migrant worker respondents show quite clearly that their attitudes to employers and management, in general terms, are cynical, critical and negative. The strongest positive factor is the role of capitalism in providing work (69%). Where the migrants are highly politicised, as with those declaring sympathy or support for the ANC, this perception is weakened, dropping from a perception of nearly 70 percent to less than 50 percent.

Table 6.

ATTITUDES TO SOUTH AFRICAN INDUSTRY

IMAGE OF CAPITALISTS
(sample of 676 migrant workers - 1982)

"Which of the following do you think are true of most (described) owners of factories and work places where people like you work?"

- | | |
|---|-----|
| - try to help blacks by appealing to govt. | 10% |
| - pay as much as possible without losing profit | 38% |
| - help blacks by providing work | 69% |
| - work with and support govt. | 78% |
| - replace blacks with machines | 83% |
| - do not allow blacks to show ability | 83% |
| - call for police help in disputes | 90% |
| - get as much for as little pay | 91% |
| - favour Indians and coloureds | 94% |

Note: strongest positive factor is providing work 69%
among ANC supporters (45%) this drops to 49%

In Table 7 we see that among the migrants there are pockets of highly political people. One association we found is that those who are unhappy with the single-quarter hostel situation are very significantly more "political" than others. The relationship is undoubtedly more complex than the table shows, but suffice it to say that the official condition of living for migrant contract workers may be aggravating a very serious kind of discontent among those who do not like it

Table 7

MIGRANT WORKERS: RESIDENTIAL SITUATION AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Proportions rejecting the statement:

"It is best to be careful in politics and not risk getting into trouble".

	<u>DISAGREEMENT</u>
- Control group	36%
- Private lodgers	27%
- Shack-dwellers	29%
- Hostel-dwellers attempting to find other accommodation	47%

Before leaving the migrant workers' account must be taken of the rural resources of the migrant. It is the rural resources of these workers which are assumed to give a "sheet-anchor" of security, as Phillip Mayer once described it. These rural resources are assumed to be the compensation for lack of rights and residential opportunities in the urban areas.

In Table 8 we present a profile of the resources of a very large sample of agricultural migrants in Natal.

It is clearly apparent that increasing land density, agricultural planning and even resettlement of people in the homelands have destroyed the basis of the rural security of a small landholding, crops and cattle.

Table 8

THE MIGRANT LABOUR SITUATION

RURAL RESOURCES - 860
MIGRANTS IN NATAL

31%	Have their <u>own</u> land
46%	Have no land at all - owned or shared
45%	Will have adequate land on retirement
24%	Will have no land at all on retirement
35%	Feel absolutely secure about keeping land for retirement
75%	Do not own larger cattle
25%	Who own cattle have average of 3 beasts

Without this security, it is inevitable that the younger migrant contract worker will start redirecting his aspirations to the city and to the workplace. Given the size of the migrant contract work-force, the implications of this for the future are serious.

4. SPECIFIC ECONOMIC ATTITUDES AND ATTITUDES TO DISINVESTMENT

Here an array of findings of more specific interest to industrialists is presented. In Table 9 the answers to items on economic ideology are presented. These show that while huge majorities of blacks are in favour of "welfare capitalism", the urban people are far from being socialists, even in the context of black government control. (The items were presented in hypothetical terms, set in a context of a black African country, in order to prevent attitudes to race relations in South Africa from affecting responses.)

However, the migrant workers are least inclined to support the private business ethic. This is the group which the "system" rejects most effectively, who are most alienated from the commercial and industrial milieu of the city.

Table 9

BLACK ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY

THINK OF AFRICAN COUNTRY RULED BY AFRICANS TO THE NORTH...		
	DURBAN 1981	MIGRANT 1982
Business should be owned by private black-men working hard	77%	52%
OR		
Business owned by black government	22%	48%
Factories managed by black elected govt.	25%	32%
Factories managed by private businessmen of any race	58%	38%
Factories managed by businessmen and workers	17%	31%
Govt. which is mainly concerned with care of poor, unemployed	73%	59%
OR		
Govt. mainly concerned with growth, with many wealthy people and many jobs	26%	39%

Table 10 shows what has been noted in numerous other studies. The relationship between existing wage levels and the levels aspired to is much the same as it is among blue-collar employees of other groups and in Europe. In this and in other studies it is difficult to find evidence of totally unrealistic wage expectations among our black employee respondents. The picture emerging from wage negotiations in some cases may be different, but there the strategy is inevitably to maximise demands.

Table 10

BLACK VIEWS ON WAGES AND REWARDS

1982 migrant worker sample 676

B L U E C O L L A R

Weekly wage	R44	1.0
What migrants feel it should be in relation to work and skills	R75	1.7
What it should be to buy the things they desire	R105	2.4

M O N T H L Y P A I D

Monthly salary	R154	1.0
What it should be in relation to work and skills	R254	1.7
What it should be to buy the things they desire	R318	2.1

1981 General sample desired wage/salary of 3 times existing wage

Table 11 goes back to some evidence from the Buthelezi Commission. Whatever black employees may do in practice, their sentiments today are for wage equality - rather than for wage reform. Compared with earlier studies conducted a decade ago by this author, these results reflect a very meaningful shift.

Table 11

WAGE EQUALITY

1981 Natal-KwaZulu Sample n.300

"If you were working with a white person doing the same work

- white R300 pm

- you R250 pm"

1 What would you prefer - you get R50 increase so both get R300 88%

You and white get increase at R75 pm.
White R375 and you R325 12%

2 What would you prefer?
Black and white same salary but all getting small increases 90%

OR

Black and white unequal for a time but everyone getting large regular increases 10%

Table 12 is drawn from preliminary results of a study being made of the "pensions disturbances" which recently swept Natal and the Eastern Cape. The low levels of trust in certain crucial public and private institutions, as well as in employers, reveals the extreme vulnerability of the legitimacy of our production system. Very broadly, effective communication with the black working class is impossible with such low levels of trust in major institutions which affect his working life.

Table 12

T R U S T

BLACK FACTORY WORKERS - DURBAN

PROPORTIONS EXPRESSING FULL
TRUST IN ORGANISATIONS

Banks	75%
Trade union	48%
KwaZulu Govt.	44%
Insurance Co.	35%
White employers	29%
Pension funds	29%
White Govt.	15%

C O M M E R C E ?

Table 13 once again, reveals the pragmatism of blacks on economic issues, despite all the frustrations and the political consciousness revealed in results presented above. There was relatively little support in the Durban region for a disinvestment or boycott strategy, in 1979 at any rate

Table 13

ATTITUDES TO SOUTH AFRICAN INDUSTRY

EXTERNAL INVESTMENT
(Study of 150 Africans, Durban, 1979)

- 1 *"Overseas companies that build factories in South Africa"*
- | | |
|--|-----|
| - help African people to progress | 29% |
| - help the whites | 23% |
| - help the South African government | 34% |
| - help all | 10% |
| - help Africans - Buthelezi supporters | 36% |
| - 35 years plus | 38% |
- 2 *"Some people say that overseas companies must stop buying South African goods and stop sending money to build factories so as to frighten S.A. government....Others say that they should continue because it makes jobs for all people in S.A."*
- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| - stop (boycott) | 20% |
| - continue trading/investing | 75% |
| - don't know | 5% |
| Pro-Boycott - males | 26% |
| - 16-34 years | 23% |
| - black consciousness | 33% |

As regards attitudes among black workers to the functions of trade unions one finds evidence of a quite considerable separation of issues. In 1981, among a sample of roughly 700 blacks nationwide, an open question was asked about *"What trade unions can do for blacks?"* Many of the very militant political responses referred to in earlier tables were drawn from this sample of 700, which was part of the sample of subjects interviewed in the study conducted for the Buthelezi Commission. In spontaneous response to this question, however, less than 5 percent of the black respondents mentioned a political function or goal for trade unions.

5. DRAWING THE EVIDENCE TOGETHER

Very briefly, what these results show is that industry and commerce is in a very ambiguous situation vis-a-vis blacks and black political thinking. In the results which have been described there is very clear evidence of a dual consciousness among blacks. On the one hand they are highly political, highly critical of capitalism and its performance, and also evince very low levels of trust in crucial organisations and institutions responsible for communication, welfare and services.

On the other hand, however, the mass of the black rank-and-file is not inclined to reject the system on grounds of any kind of popular socialist ideology. The preceptions of strategy among blacks also seem to be constrained by very pragmatic considerations and what seems like a careful assessment of the costs of destabilisation of industry. There is very little evidence of a self-consciously political view of the trade union movement.

Of note is the fact that the very substantial migrant contract labour force is least inclined to give basic ideological support to the free-market system. Their exclusion from the core of urban benefits and services is relevant here. Influx control appears to be maintaining or creating a considerable ideological distance between the values of capitalism and a substantial proportion of its labour. This labour force is also particularly vulnerable to instability because its rural security appears to be crumbling very rapidly.

Broadly, then, the situation seems to be "in the balance", perhaps in rather delicate balance. The need for careful ongoing study of the situation is crucial.

6. ADDITIONAL BROADER CONCLUSIONS

This situation of what seems to be a delicate balance is cause for considerable concern if looked at very carefully. On the one hand the divided consciousness among blacks must be due in some measure to the lack of an organised political leadership throughout the country. (The presence of Inkatha in KwaZulu-Natal makes that region somewhat of an exception.) If a more consistent political leadership were to emerge and organise effectively at grass-roots level then at least some of the "dualism" in black political thinking is likely to diminish. The effects are unlikely to make blacks more conservative, as it were, but the effective outcomes are impossible to predict.

Some people may hope for a continuation of the present position, but there are disadvantages in the present situation for industry. The lack of a political leadership means that there are no strong mediating figures who could negotiate to bring stability in times of widespread unrest. A good example of this could be seen in the "pensions strikes" which took on fairly serious proportions and lasted longer than they might otherwise have done because of no mediating figures of high credibility. (In this instance Chief Buthelezi did not intervene in any way, making the Natal situation what it would theoretically have been in the rest of the country had the strikes occurred there.)

There are thus some very negative aspects to the uncertainties in black politics.

A final question has to be asked? How long is the divided consciousness likely to continue, with or without more directive political leadership? Any clear answer is, of course, impossible to provide. One possible pointer is worth considering, however.

From a variety of different sponsored studies undertaken among industrial labour forces for specific companies it would seem that some 55 to 60 percent of unskilled and semi-skilled workers are generally satisfied in their job situations. The figure would seem to be slightly higher among the semi-skilled than among the unskilled groups, as one would expect, but the general pattern of a balance of satisfactions over dissatisfactions seems to be fairly typical. This of course does not mean that there are not very sharp specific grievances - one is talking here of an overall sentiment. Given the centrality of the job in the working-class black's life, this balance of job satisfactions over dissatisfactions is probably an important stabilising factor in the urban-industrial situation.

There is, however, one category of employees which seems to show a consistently more negative pattern of job-attitude - the better-educated workers within the lower job-grades. In general they can be as much as half less-satisfied than the average employee in a grade. The implications of this might be that as general educational levels improve and more and more better-educated workers feel trapped at low levels of work in industry, the positive balance could shift to the negative.

This kind of pattern places a great deal of responsibility on industry to make sure that everything is done to open channels of advancement for this category of employees in industry, with in-company training schemes and even job enrichment programmes where possible. Obviously the quality of supervision must also improve.

In the future industry will have to acquaint itself much more fully with the balance of factors which operate in the black labour force, and act creatively to protect what basic stability exists in the system.



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