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INVESTMENT - DIVESTMENT - DISINVESTMENT:  
WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Participants in the debate on investment and disinvestment make fundamentally different assumptions:

- i) Opponents of disinvestment argue that foreign investment contributes to economic growth which facilitates the development of democratic processes. In other words economic growth and apartheid are contradictory phenomena. Some proponents of this view argue that historically it is the middle classes that have successfully challenged oppressive regimes, an African middle class can only come about in a climate of economic growth, and it is this class that will facilitate the dismantling of apartheid. Others argue that economic growth will increase the size of skill and hence the leverage of the black working class and its potential to confront the oppressive regime;
- ii) Those who advocate disinvestment argue that if carried to its full effect disinvestment would cripple the economy. A weak economy would not support the present pillars of oppression and this would render government in its present form extremely problematic. Finally, the ruling elite will have to succumb to pressure and agree to the creation of a truly democratic South Africa.

## 2. FOREIGN INVESTMENT

There is a tendency to define foreign investment in terms of creating jobs in South Africa while job creation might be a by-product of foreign investment, to equate foreign investment with job creation is to oversimplify the argument. Foreign investment comprises the following:

- a) Capital is invested to build new factories or to expand existing factories. In this way jobs are created. However, in the same process mechanisation may be at the expense of workers in which case jobs may be lost. The object of investment is to maximise profits and the best way to do so is to be competitive in both the local and global contexts. If mechanisation is the best means to this end, some aspects of investment might contribute to growth but not create jobs in the immediate instance. Gelb (1985) cites the case of General Motors (S A) where investing in a R40 million retooling of an assembly line did not create a single job, although none was lost in the process.
- b) Foreign investment is used to purchase financial assets in the form of shares in South African companies. Where these shares are purchased for the first time such investment creates jobs since they are part of the capital required to operate a company. However, if this entails transfer of existing shares there are no jobs created. Belg (ibid) estimates that in 1985 alone about R900 million of United States money bought shares in the gold mines. Since no new mines have been opened during this period we can assume that this has not created any new jobs.
- c) Foreign capital comes into South Africa in the form of bank loans and loans to the South African government. It is only when these loans are to finance large capital projects that they create jobs. When these loans are for tightening of the economy in order to turn the foreign deficit, in their repayment, expansion halts, thus affecting growth and this leads to unemployment.

Finally, this makes it clear that to equate foreign investment with the creation of jobs is a fallacy, investment may and does

lead to job creation, but to define it in these terms is to oversimplify the concept and the subsequent arguments.

### 3. DIVESTMENT

Divestment aims at exerting pressure on foreign institutions such as universities, churches and municipalities to sell their shares in companies which invest in South Africa. Here the rationale is to advance a moral cause by implying that those who purchase such shares are less scrupulous thus indirectly forcing the companies investing in South Africa to pull out. Should divestment entail financial transactions only, it has no effect on the job situation in South Africa, all that it achieves is the negative publicity which delegitimises the South African government. It is only when divestment results in disinvestment that its material effects are felt.

### 4. DISINVESTMENT

The primary aims of the disinvestment campaign are twofold:

- i) to delegitimise the South African government in the eyes of the world thus pressurising it to change its policies. Consequently, South Africa has de-emphasised some of its policy aspects or changed some in response to this pressure;
- ii) to pressurise foreign corporations into acceding to demands from both workers and popular forces - again here the various codes of conduct such as the Sullivan and the European Economic Community Codes bear testimony to this claim. Concepts such as black advancement and the recognition of black trade unions by South African industries and commerce emanate from such pressure.

Disinvestment may eventually take one of two courses:

- a) preventing new capital or financial investment from coming into South Africa for productive purposes. This could even mean preventing leases and patents by foreign companies to South Africa. The weakness in this course is that most foreign companies operating in South Africa no longer depend upon the inflow of foreign capital but are ploughing profits generated in South Africa back into expansion projects within the country.
- b) complete withdrawal of foreign companies involving the actual closure of firms and the shipping of machinery back to the countries of origin. This would result in a marked loss of jobs. I shall be attending to this aspect shortly in the following sections. An alternative to shipping the machinery back to the countries of origin would be the sale of foreign subsidiaries to local investors. Before closing this section it should be pointed out that the effects of disinvestment are closely related to the state of the economy at the time of disinvestment. Should this coincide with a downward trend in the economy then job losses would be significant.

## 5. THE MAGNITUDE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The full impact of the arguments for and against foreign investment can only be appreciated against stark objective facts.

The most commonly advanced argument against disinvestment is that the resulting unemployment would harm mostly those whom it is intended to salvage from oppression. First a look at foreign investment and employment.

In 1978 foreign controlled companies employed a total of 380 000 workers of all races in the manufacturing industry. (Rogerson, 1981, p 125.) This accounted for 28 percent of all workers employed in South Africa's manufacturing industries. During the same period foreign controlled banks employed a total of 62 751 workers. There is no racial breakdown of figures in the manufacturing sector, but figures in the banking sector are revealing. A breakdown of the 62 751 employees by race is as follows: \*

RACE	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE
Whites	50 143	80
Africans	7 410	12
Coloureds	3 189	5
Indians	2 009	3
TOTALS	62 751	100

Current figures regarding the operations of foreign-controlled companies are difficult to establish because of the secrecy surrounding the sensitivity of the issue. However, current American figures in manufacturing stand at about 120 000 employed in the manufacturing industry. (The Africa Fund: 1976) Assuming an even growth, in employment , among all foreign investors, and accepting that American figures as presented by Rogerson stood at 95 818 or 25,4 percent of the employees in foreign-controlled companies in 1978, overall current figures for all foreign-controlled companies would stand at 475 000 in the manufacturing industry. Admittedly, numerous developments have taken place in the period between 1978 and 1985, the above case is, therefore, hypothetical. What it seeks to achieve is to provide workable estimates as a basis for the debate. In total, therefore, foreign-controlled companies in the manufacturing and service sectors employ approximately 538 000 workers. This approximates half a million employees of all races.

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\* Source: The U.N. Transnation Corporations in Southern Africa, 1983.

## 6. CONSEQUENCES OF A HYPOTHETICAL DISINVESTMENT

Assuming a 50 percent long term investment boycott by foreign-controlled companies, Spandau (1979, p 140) estimated the consequences for employment and disposable incomes to be as follows for 1976.

	Increase in Unemployment	Decrease in Disposable Income R. Million
Whites	27 344	158,5
Africans	51 789	65,5
Coloureds	9 820	18,3
Indians	1 958	4,7
TOTALS	90 911	247,0

Three possible interpretations can be made from the above table:

- i) that the greatest drop in disposable income would occur among whites;
- ii) that in spite of the superior numbers black disposable income would fall by less than half that of whites. This reflects the income disparities within the racial composition in South Africa;
- iii) that the ratio of job losses for whites would be far higher than the ratio for blacks.

This picture compares favourably with the patterns of employment in foreign-controlled banks drawn earlier.

## 7. FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND BLACK ADVANCEMENT

The relationship between foreign investment and black advancement is not a linear one. For instance the upward mobility of blacks is negatively affected by white immigration. In an analysis of the effects of white immigrants on the opportunities for job

advancement of local workers Nattrass (1981, p 10) states that if white immigration remains at the same level over the period between 1977 and 1987 the effects will be that "white immigrants would be the equivalent of:

- i) twenty six percent of the projected increases in black professional workers;
- ii) one hundred and fifty percent of the increases in black executive and administrative jobs;
- iii) twenty two percent of the clerical jobs;
- iv) twenty six percent of the projected increases in black supervisors and artisans."

Nattrass further states that between 1970 and 1980, white immigrants accounted for 86 508 jobs, all of which were professional, skilled and white collar jobs. These jobs were not necessarily in foreign-controlled companies, the rationale for their inclusion is to demonstrate how white immigration inhibits black upward occupational mobility even assuming that foreign-controlled companies are all out to promote it.

#### 8. ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST FOREIGN INVESTMENT

What I have attempted to sketch above is:

- i) to dispel some of the political myths, in the investment-disinvestment debate, which parade as factual economic analyses;
- ii) to demonstrate that the investment/disinvestment debate is more complicated than appears on the surface and that until some more sensitive material and moral calculations are made, there are no winners in the debate.

### 8.1 The Myths

At an empirical level the following myths should be dispelled:

- i) foreign investment is not job creation; surely any investment will create some jobs but to define foreign investment as job creation is a fallacy;
- ii) it is not necessarily blacks who will suffer most from disinvestment, on the contrary, in terms of relative material suffering, whites will suffer most - but there is no straight forward equation in this; and,
- iii) it is very difficult to measure the material positives and negatives of foreign investment.

### 8.2 Complexities of the Investment - Disinvestment Debate

Berger states that in decision making and consequently in the implementation of policy two major calculi are imperative - the calculus of pain and the calculus of meaning (Berger 1974). In other words whoever makes the decision should go beyond the ordinary cost/benefit analysis.

#### 8.2.1 Policy and the calculus of pain

While the costs-benefits analyses will enable policy makers to measure material costs and rewards, the pains effected on those who will bear the costs raise moral considerations. Proponents of foreign investment argue that besides creating jobs other benefits which accrue from foreign-controlled companies include enlightened labour policies which result in the advancement of blacks into senior and control positions. Two problems immediately emanate from this argument:

- i) the record of black advancement is not that plausible, especially in terms of the size of the black population employed in multinationals. The rate of deracialisation leaves much to be desired;
- ii) it is difficult to measure the present benefits of continued foreign investment against the hypothetical gains of disinvestment, mainly because the end result is very hard to predict.

On the other hand, the same arguments hold for disinvestment. What is factual is that in material terms it is the whites and not the blacks that will suffer most from disinvestment. In addition, the capacity of blacks to endure deprivation is higher than that of whites who are most sensitive to a decline in living standards. Schlemmer (1985, p.41) argues that as sanctions bite deeper "...white South Africans will become increasingly mobilised into a mentality appropriate to a cold war", and continues "Any opposition politician suggesting concessions to appease the external world will be spurned as a turncoat and traitor". This is a position of power which implies that white material suffering will not necessarily empower black morale (assuming a boost in black morale) in spite of the blacks' proven capacity to endure suffering. Indeed, both arguments pose a great dilemma which calls for careful analyses and appraisals of the consequences.

#### 8.2.2 Policy and the calculus of meaning

The investment - disinvestment debate has assumed major political proportions with each side attempting to score points, hence the misplaced definitions. The big questions here are:

- i) to what extent do those who are meant to benefit from either investment or disinvestment perceive the implications from either choice? and,
- ii) what do these implications mean to them?

To claim that investment brings gains to the oppressed black masses is to engage in a moral debate assuming that employment at any cost is better than no employment - even if one laid minimum conditions the assumption is that those conditions constitute the absolutes for the definition of "fairness". Also, the claim assumes that employment in spite of continued oppression is preferable to unemployment with prospects for freedom from oppression "in the last instance". At an empirical level one has to determine:

- i) the benefits of employment;
- ii) the magnitude of oppression;
- iii) when the last instance will come.

Finally, all this has to be translated into meaning for the man in the street. Admittedly, advocates of continued investment benefit from support from both the state, capitalist quarters and a very great proportion of the press whilst proponents of disinvestment not only face diatribe from capitalist sources and a large section of the press but also bring themselves into the firing line from the police and the law. Regrettably, this takes the debate away from the economic and moral spheres into the political terrain and with this, meanings change.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the fundamentally different assumptions by the participants in the investment and disinvestment debate. The first links foreign investment with economic growth and implies that these lead to democracy; the second links disinvestment with a decline in economic growth and implies that in economically adverse conditions the present oppressive regime would not only be faced with a legitimacy crisis but with an operational crisis as well; consequently it will be forced to agree to the creation of democratic processes. What I have tried to do in this paper is to present workable estimates on either side of the debate, and further point out

that any of the two choices has both economic and moral implications. My final note is, in exploring the alternatives policy makers should remember that there is humanity involved in the process.

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## ETHNICITY OR CLASS? MYTHS AND REALITIES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The salience of any attribute or factor is a product of the prevailing ideas at a particular time. In South Africa, the classification of human beings is a problem. This is particularly due to the overriding power dimensions which arise from the political and economic determinants of the divisions. Consequently, problems which arise within organisations are, in essence, structural problems which reflect the relations of power in the broader society. Therefore, one cannot speak of communication problems specific to particular organisations. Such a stance is an attempt to erroneously shift the discussion from the issues located in the broader society to internal specifics of no consequence in the long run.

For instance, a glance through a small sample of the in-house magazines for 1985 was predictably revealing. The contents reflected, in a nutshell, the power relations within the South African society. From another angle, the financial section of the "Sunday Times" - the Business Times carries a page with "people on the move." Again here, the same face is conspicuously displayed. If by any chance Africans feature in these publications, especially the in-house magazines, they do so as recipients of charitable gestures, or as loyal servants who have completed long services with specific companies. At best they appear as the newly promoted "executives" but, indeed, this is a rare commodity - so much for the slant in the publications.

### 2. ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

At the material level both ethnicity and culture serve practical purposes. I shall come to this briefly. At the analytical level man's basis of dividing people into ethnic units rests on the cultural divide. But, the very notion of this divide is a product of man's own construction. Indeed, the salience of any social phenomenon is a product of the existing material relations at a historical point in time. Hence cultural values and symbols reflect the material circumstances of a particular epoch. For instance, people who live in a temperate climate

will seldom have a god of thunder, and if he is there, he is unlikely to be a fierce god. Culture can, therefore, never be an independent variable that can determine ethnicity as a basis for classification. The rationale for classifying people on ethnic lines is the distribution of material goods and not culture.

However, man can, as he creates culture, also create a salient ethnicity as is the case in South Africa. Hence Glass states "Just as the geographical areas of the Bantustans are defined by the history of white farming interests (e.g. the annexation of the best lands for white farms) so are the cultures of the Bantustans defined by the history of white political interests, in particular, the mining interests." (Glass 1980 p 277)

## 2.1 Ethnicity and Practical Purposes

Given the political situation in South Africa, ethnicity can serve as a resource for the powerless. A research colleague gave the following account on women in Tongaland. The majority of women there are ordinary rural folk . They stated that they chose their ethnic tags to suit circumstances. On issues related either to pensions or the annexation of the area to Swaziland they emphasised their Zulu connections, when it came to traditional ceremonials they stressed the Tonga identity. In actual fact, in terms of language, religion and other attributes they felt they were closer to the Mocambiqueans across the border. Even more, how many of us here have a single identity? We elect to be South African, English, Afrikaner, Catholic or Protestant as it suits circumstance and occasion. In spite of the above, politically and at the work place ethnicity has been redefined and revisited for purposes of political and economic domination.

## 2.2 A Common Township and Work Culture

African people in South Africa are predominantly workers and within this context either township or hostel residents. They share these attributes in common more than any so called "traditional" values.

There has been a prolonged proletarianisation process which has come out with its own set of material circumstances. Eskia Mphahlele speaks of police raids, illegal brewing of traditional liquor and arrests for pass "offences" in Marabastad. Tom gives vivid accounts of African workers evading the police, a rush for transport and long queues in the townships. These constitute the township or worker culture. In a similar vein no ethnically - based ceremony, by whatever ethnic leader, has raised the crowds near or equivalent to those raised by the Kaizer Chiefs or the African Wanderers clubs at the soccer fields.

### 3. RACIAL DOMINATION AND CLASS REALITIES

According to the Economic Development Programme for the Republic of South Africa 1978 - 1987 issued by the Economic Planning Branch of the Office of the Prime Minister in 1980, (S.A. Review No. 1 1983 p 194) by 1987 3,286,000 Africans will be employed in the non-agricultural sector. This figure excluded teachers and nurses. Of these, 82,000 or 3 percent will be in semi-professional, professional and managerial jobs. Without using a rigorous definition of class, this means that 97 percent of African employees constitute the working class. A look into popular organisations shows that these organisations which command respect and a large following among African people, espouse a non-ethnic philosophy. The grim performance by ethnically - based organisations as reflected by the low percentage polls at homeland elections is ample evidence of the failure of the politics of ethnicity. Secondly, support for soccer clubs in the professional leagues is along non-ethnic lines. This, together with the issues raised above demonstrates the non-salience of ethnicity in the daily lives of African people.

The racial character of South Africa predicates the economic circumstances of her citizens. As Nolutshungu avers, positions occupied by the various races in the order of domination itself modify the general social effects of the positions they occupy in the relations of production. (Nolutshungu 1982). While the above figures demonstrate the occupational working classness of African employees, Nolutshungu's statement together with the above discourse point to the ideological concomitants of this class position.

#### 4. COMMUNICATION AND WORKERS

At the begining of this paper, emphasis was on the slant, both in the financial magazines and in the business press, towards management-related issues. Since management is predominantly if not entirely white, such communication is a reflection of the economic and power realities in South Africa. One can draw two possible conclusions from these observations:

- i) that such publications completely ignore the workers because the latter do not matter; or
- ii) that if they do matter, the authors are not certain of how to address them.

Assuming the purpose of this gathering is to define a common approach of communicating with workers, then one would advocate that worker-oriented topics be included in the publications. But then, what are worker-oriented issues? The starting point is that workers are people and not objects of production, and as people they have varying interests which centre around their individual and shared experiences. There are numerous developments both in the community and the workplace. If management can be interested in social and political issues pertaining to them, workers should have an interest in such issues but from their own point of view.

For instance, the majority of workers belong to community and worker organisations. They are also members or supporters of sporting clubs, churches and related bodies. If a magazine can cover a rugby or cricket tour there is no logical reason why it can not cover the Mainstay Cup Competition or a thriller in one of the league matches. In a similar vein, what is objectionable in a magazine giving workers some insight into the current consumer boycott in the Eastern Cape, or how workers in Howick drew in organised commerce and industry into their struggle with Sarmcol? These are the realities of life and workers live with them on a daily basis. If any one cries "politics" then the Financial Mail and related publications have no reason to print episodes with Chester Crocker, or the arms talks between Korbachev and Reaga-.

## 5. MYTHS AND REALITIES

Finally, the title of this paper prepares for an examination of the myths and realities in ethnicity.

### 5.1 Language As A Reality

There is no denying that South Africa is a multi-lingua country and that communication is primarily based on language. However, whilst making that admission I wish to stress that when it suits the powers that be to communicate in a specific lingua, they have done this without much ado. The mines have even developed "Fanakalo" as a communication tool. At another empirical level, over 80% of Africans in the Reef townships speak and read English fluently, whilst Zulu and Sesotho are common languages for the Nguni and Sotho speaking groups respectively. At worst we are speaking about four language vehicles and publishing in these would not be that expensive. Many organisations have duplicated material in English and Afrikaans despite the fact that their target audience is sophisticated enough to read English fluently. (Accepting that English is the commercial language).

### 5.2 The Myth of Ethnicity

In conclusion, I wish to examine the concept of ethnicity in the South African context, and thereafter explain why and how it functions. An ethnic group would possess the following:

- i) a common language;
- ii) a common culture; and probably,
- iii) a common geographical place of origin.

In South Africa we are told that there are ten black ethnic groups. A closer examination of these reveals the following:

- i) that the five Nguni ethnic groups share to a very significant extent a common language, a common culture and a common geographical place of origin. The Nguni languages, i.e. Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi are so closely related that communication is effected without the aid of an interpreter.

- ii) what obtains to the Nguni groups equally applies to the three Sotho groups, i.e. Pedi, Tswana and Sesotho.
- iii) both Venda and Tsonga borrow heavily from the two main groups;
- iv) at the religious level, all African ethnic groups in South Africa belonged to the ancestral animal - slaughtering cult to appease and invoke the ancestors, notwithstanding the fact that today the majority of them are Roman Catholics, Methodists, Zionists and even members of the Dutch Reformed Church.
- v) there is a free and normal inter-marriage system among African sub-groupings, even freer than is the case with some white groups who are nevertheless, treated as homogeneous;
- vi) the absurdity of the ethnic divide is clearly demonstrated in the case of the Transkei and Ciskei regions, where cousins find themselves on the opposite sides of the frontier.

Interestingly, white South Africans constitute approximately ten ethnic groups which include an even greater socio-linguistic diversity. Yet we never hear of this in spite of the language differences between Greek and Afrikaner or Portuguese and English, to say nothing of the Chinese or the religious gap between Christians and Jews. Similarity is a definition based on political and not natural criteria since power defines the boundaries.

If then at the socio-cultural level ethnicity is not a salient phenomenon, why is it such an issue? The answer to this question lies at the politico-economic level. Politically, ethnicity serves as a tool for subjugation. Universally, there is a very thin dividing line between the political and the economic. In South Africa because of the visibility of race, and the coincidence between race and economic privileges, ethnicity has been further used as the basis for political co-optation. It therefore serves as a resource for both political and economic power for the ruling class.

To enter into the debate on how Africans have rejected the ethnic divide is unnecessary at this gathering. What I wish to clearly emphasise is that a business culture which ignores the political connotations of ethnicity does so only to its own detriment and might be in the process of a suicidal exercise.

"BLACK POLITICAL MOVEMENTS. ORGANISATION  
AND STRATEGIES - A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW"

Paper presented at the  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION:

There is general consensus among political scientists, that conflict is central to political activity. Differences arise on the nature and causes of the conflict. Black politics, in South Africa, adds an additional dimension to the debate in that it is mainly the politics of exclusion. It is a fight by the majority of the population to gain entry into the arena of regulated conflict. However, because of the white resistance to blacks entering the arena, the latter have waged a fight for the transformation of the fundamentals of the socio-political system in the country.

Both classical democratic and marxist theories believe that in a situation of gross inequalities the - - "actions of the dispossessed will serve to counter social inequities." (Craventa: 1980 p3). This implies that political movements which oppose the status quo arise out of the resolve, by the subordinates, to assert their claims to equality and human dignity. I shall come to this point in dealing with the various black political mobilisation movements below.

## 2. THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA:

In terms of the distribution of power and authority within the social, political and economic spheres in the country, whites command total control over blacks. Politically, the creation of the Houses of Representatives (Coloureds), and Delegates (Indians) as well as the homeland administrations, has not diminished the power of the white parliament whose sovereignty resides in the fact that it alone defines the framework of power for all others. Economically, the ownership of the means of production in what the white parliament regards as "white South Africa" is in white hands. Within the social sphere, whites command total hegemony

in the areas of education, art and material possessions. Further, the government, as a representative of the ruling white power bloc does not hesitate to use naked force should this status quo be seriously challenged.

### 3. THE STATES MECHANISMS OF CONTROL

Given the glaring inequalities mentioned above, one might enquire why the disadvantaged have tolerated this relationship for so long. Conventional political theory assumes that ".... victims of injustice in an 'open system' are free to take action upon their concerns ...." (Gaventa: Op Cit p). The arguments in this paper are:

- i) that the South African system is not open;
- ii) that since it is not open, victims of injustice are not free to take action upon their concerns; and
- iii) because they are not free to take actions upon their concerns this has created strains among and within their specific mechanisms of resistance to both domination and exploitation.

This leads us to an examination of the states mechanism of control so as to maintain its domination and exploitative roles since what is taken either as compliance with or resistance to domination is premised on these mechanisms.

#### 3.1 The States Mobilisation of Bias.

In this context the state is used to include not only the legislative and administrative regime, but also those groups which participate in the definition of the rules upon which governance functions.

In political parlance this refers to the "ruling elite" ie: those who have the opportunity to constitute the legislative and administrative regime in the country.

The South African state mobilises bias in two ways:

- i) by excluding from the agenda, or manipulating the issues which pertain to the powerless ie: the black population; and,
- ii) by influencing, shaping or even determining the way in which the subordinate group reacts to their inferior status. This entails the employment of the ideological state apparatus which may even include the use of blatant force.

The formation of black political mobilisation and worker movements is a response to the states mobilisation of bias. I shall proceed to analyse these movements within this framework. Before going into this detail, I wish to point out that domination and exploitation have polarised the South African society, and that there are two forces which control the poles. The Nationalist Party defines the control pole whilst the African National Congress defines the resistance pole. Black organisations, in particular, are judged by their distance from either pole, and this judgement is more in terms of their fundamental philosophies than in terms of strategy.

#### 4. BLACK POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS AND RESISTANCE TO DOMINATION:

In practice black political organisations mobilise on the ticket of resistance to domination. Differences exist with regard to their definition of the social and political situations, and this leads to differences in strategies. To infer that they all share a

common goal and only differ in political strategies is perhaps to over simplify the issue. In the context of the mobilisation of bias, these differences are fundamental hence the state accords them different treatments. This is more evident in the present turmoil caused by the crises in townships administration as well as in education.

#### 4.1 Co-optation and Black Political Organisations.

Co-optation is a subtle and manipulative strategy that the state employs in order to create social and political stability. Erwin and Webster define co-optation as ".... a process whereby the leadership of a conflict group is absorbed into the dominant groups institutions in such a way that no shift in the balance of power takes place. The opposition conflict group is given a platform without an independent power base, and so effective opposition is stifled without having to alter the distribution of power..." (Erwin and Webster in Schlemmer, L and Webster E, 1978 p 100). The foregoing definition limits co-optation to the machinations by the superordinate or ruling group and leave the subordinate or conflict group without any independent source of power.

In the analysis of black political organisations operating within the states framework, the definition of co-optation will be extended and it will be argued that it does not only envisage a unilateral shift in the power positions, but that it is a dialectical process where the state as well as the co-opted elites

make shifts in order to accommodate each other even though from positions of unequal power.

In supporting the institutions which prop up the leadership of the conflict group, the dominant group makes shifts which may eventually undermine its position. It is this shift which is perceived as gain by the beneficiaries from within the subordinate group, and this acts as the sustaining cord in this uneven dialectical process since the dominant group decides upon the framework of operation.

Co-optation is therefore more functional than dysfunctional to domination since;

- i) domination is unevenly felt by the subordinate groups as the state accords favours to the co-opted elites. This drives in a wedge among the various black groupings, consequently they engage in various forms of in fighting. In this context one would therefore argue that the apparent black on black violence which has dominated the political scene over the last two years is fundamentally a manifestation of black anger against the state.
- ii) total transformations seldom, if ever, come from above, hence the dominant group can never define a framework that has the capacity to challenge the basic relations of power since that would be suicidal. To operate within the states' defined framework is thus to accept failure by definition.

However, the above arguments do not necessarily entail a summary dismissal of organisations which operate within the state's defined framework. Politics is a game about power, and to the extent that power both determines and influences the lives of millions of individuals one can not ignore the effects of the gains made in the tactical shifts in the process of co-optation. Hence, co-optation into the Tricameral parliament has given power to the various coloured and Indian ministries to distribute resources albeit on a limited scale. They are responsible for the portfolios of education, housing, health etc within their own affairs and employ massive bureaucracies. Similarly, homeland administrations fare equally well within their geo-political territories. Admittedly, this is far from meeting the aspirations of the people, and judging by the current turmoil in the country the demise of co-optation is at hand. However, there is no denial that the co-opted structures have enhanced their standing in some quarters especially among some sections of the aspirant petty bourgeoisie' some professional and managerial elites whose positions depend upon the existence of such structures, or among the masses in need of social services such as pensioners and workers caught up in the vicious circle of poverty and the absence of shelter.

However, co-opted or within establishment organisations have failed to usher in the expected stability in the black communities for numerous reasons:

- i) black people especially the youth and the more educated blacks perceive them as the brain child of white power and intrigue. What bedevils their negative image is the apparent favouritism towards these organisations and their leadership, by the state and other control institutions such as

employers and the press, including the liberal press. Official and editorial reference to individuals or organisations falling within the co-operation tradition as "moderates" implies that others are extremists. This has alienated many, especially the intellectual elements, from these organisations since they perceive them as moving closer to the Afrikaner Nationalist control pole and further from the resistance pole as defined by the African National Congress.

- ii) on numerous occasions the leadership from these organisations has come out in apposition to the strategies of liberation as defined by the mass of the subordinate people. Such strategies include consumer boycotts, disinvestment, work stayaways and school boycotts. What has aggravated the internal conflicts is not that the leadership from within the establishment organisations has condemned such strategies, but that it has mobilised the same organisations to physically combat the mass of protesters, students and workers alike. In this regard these organisations have aligned themselves more with the state than with the people.
- iii) structurally, organisations which function within the establishment are riddled with contradictions. For instance the homeland administrations as well as the Houses of Delegates and Representatives control departments such as education etc, (even though absolute control rests with the white parliament). School boycotts are thus, in essence, boycotts against these bodies. It would, therefore, be

impossible for them to bring to a halt an apartheid education in practice without bringing themselves to a halt. Hence they perceive the revolt against authority as a revolt against them. It is, therefore, logical that these bodies and organisations have been active in the formation of vigilantes and have been seen to combat black resistance in the townships as well as in rural areas. However, this has had serious implications.

Admittedly, black people abhor the destruction of property and the loss of lives, but to be seen to be siding with the army and the police in fighting protestors against what is regarded nationally and internationally as an unjust system shifts the debate away from the immediate scene of action into the ideological terrain. The consequences are that the victims of state power have perceived intra-establishment organisations and bodies as fulfilling the "dirty-work" of Afrikaner Nationalism.

##### 5. EXTRA-ESTABLISHMENT POLITICS AND RESISTANCE TO DOMINATION:

Up to now this paper has dealt with organisations and bodies which act with the government's blessing. The arguments have been that even though some of them might be apparently working against government policy, in the final analysis, they are functional to the furtherance of that policy since structurally it is very difficult, if not impossible to perform contrary to the policy that nurtures them. The second part of this paper is an attempt at an analysis of those organisations which function outside of the state's created machinery.

Tom Lodge takes 1976 as a watershed in black politics and refers to the subsequent period as "... a political renaissance in the townships of South Africa..." (Lodge 1985: p1) He attributes this renaissance to the development of "... a popular political culture of a highly organised variety..." and declares that "Today in 1985, every sizeable urban settlement accommodates a civic organisation, a student and scholar association and usually a trade union as well." According to Lodge these organisations reflect the particular concerns of their respective constituencies and "Collectively they constitute a radical opposition to the status quo" (Ibid p1)

### 5.1 Basic Philosophical Issues

All extra-establishment organisations share a common social definition of South African society which they perceive in terms of either racial domination or capitalist exploitation or both. Also, extra-establishment organisations share to a large extent a common policy of resistance to domination and exploitation. According to these organisations social relations in South Africa are predicated, in the first instance, on racial domination which ultimately determines the position of blacks in the economic order. Official reforms are perceived by these groupings as manipulative and not designed to effect the basic changes in the nature of South African society hence the principle of non-co-operation with officially-sponsored political and administrative institutions at every level.

### 5.2 Strategies of Resistance to Domination and Exploitation

Extra-establishment organisations are central in most actions of resistance to white domination and exploitation, in the

words of Lodge "... not because of any intentional strategic master-plan" of the leadership (Ibid p.17), but simply because the rationale for their existence is, in the first instance, derived from the oppressive conditions confronting black society in the schools, the townships, and at work. Until recently, extra-establishment organisations like the National Forum and the United Democratic Front have been criticised for being reactive and lacking a programme of action. However, recent developments, the protracted unrest in the townships, the consumers boycott instituted by civic organisations and trade unions as well as the crisis in education have had serious implications in the country's politics and economy. The recent shuffling and re-arrangement of chairs by the government is a response to the politics of confrontation rather than co-operation. The legitimacy crisis in local government has left only 3 out of 34 local authorities which were still operating in 1985 despite the fact that the government had envisaged that by the end of 1984, 104 would be operating fully. (Gelb, Lewis, Swilling and Webster - 1986).

### 5.3 Problems

Extra-establishment organisations have faced mounting obstacles both from the state as well as from organisations and bodies which function from within the establishment. The state has used it's power at it's disposal to cripple and maim the leadership from within these organisations through detentions, bannings and adverse propaganda in the news media. In addition, formation of vigilante groups mostly by bodies which function within the establishment has resulted in serious clashes involving the destruction of property and loss of lives.

What has been disturbing is the allegations from the various communities that where vigilante groups have attacked protesting bands of blacks, or destroyed the property of individuals allegedly belonging to extra-establishment organisations, the police or the army have stood by and watched without taking any action. On the contrary, where protesters have attacked incumbents within government institutions or their property, the police and the army have retaliated with all the force. In numerous instances, the police and soldiers have guarded these officials and their property for considerable varying periods of time.

#### 5.4 In Fighting Within Extra-Establishment Groupings

During the latter half of 1985, the press and the electronic media reported numerous incidents of in-fighting among extra-establishment groupings particularly the United Democratic Front and the National Forum, especially AZAPO.

A look at the basic philosophies of these two organisations reveals the following:

- i) because of it's heterogeneous formation and a heterodox leadership the United Democratic Front adopts a flexible political philosophy and has used the Freedom Charter as the basis of its ideological development. On the other hand, the National Forum adheres to an orthodox black consciousness philosophy and dismisses the role of whites as irrelevant in the struggle for black liberation.

- ii) while the United Democratic Front believes in gradualist socialism the National Forum's programme calls for "The establishment of a democratic anti-racist, worker republic in Azania" (Lodge p 18).
- iii) a look at these principles shows that while there are differences, these are not irreconcilable, especially since both movements accept the unity of South Africa as one country for all who live in it.

Reasons for the outbreak of violence between the two organisations must therefore be sought elsewhere.

- i) Organisational structure: The United Democratic Front, in particular, is a heterogeneous organisation comprising some 600 affiliates ranging from students, community organisations, professional associations to trade unions. Such a structure is riddled with problems of control, discipline and accountability.
- ii) There have been allegations from some quarters that there may be plants within both organisations and that the former have exacerbated the differences between the two in an attempt to discredit both organisations and in the process fragment black resistance as crystallised in the current unrest in the townships.
- iii) The state has constantly harassed, detained and immobilised the leadership from within both organisations. This has had detrimental implications for both the strategy and day to day operations of both organisations.

It is, therefore, not far-fetched to infer that it is the fringe elements, rather than the leadership, who have been responsible for the periodic outbursts of violence which have claimed some lives.

- iv) The structural violence from the state has triggered a counter reaction to respond with violence. However, this has changed direction and instead some elements from within the organisations have chosen their relatively powerless counterparts as the target of their anger and frustration.

## 6. BLACK POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND THE FUTURE:

While blacks have a history of resistance to both domination and exploitation, the eighties have ushered in an unprecedented epoch. Lodge claims "what distinguishes present day Black 'resistance politics' from its forebears is that it is a politics of power" (p 20). One does not have to go too far to seek for explanations:

- i) the level of mass organisation and conscientisation is much higher than at any previous time. The rapid development of a powerful worker constituency has broadened the terrain of the "struggle" from the communities to the factory floor. The current political language in the townships has moved from "domination" to "oppression and exploitation".
- ii) the emergence of a "progressive" union movement has not only consolidated black power but has also brought with it immediately realisable gains. This has had positive psychological implications as blacks have moved away from quiescence to challenge.

Also, blacks have learnt to adopt varying strategies such as employing consumer and worker power. This has made them less vulnerable to the states' power.

- iii) The re-emergence of the African National Congress on the political scene has not only boosted black morale internally, it has resurfaced the international nature of the conflict in South Africa. Further, white pressure groups including big capital have had a rethink on the role of the ANC in South African politics.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, two points need to be stated unequivocally:

1. The present crisis in the country is an ample demonstration of the bankruptcy of the politics of co-optation and reform from the top. The proclamation of the state of emergency in July 1985 was followed by an escalation of violence into Natal and later the Western Cape, both of which had been relatively quiet till then. Admittedly, the detention of the leadership in the civic and student extra-establishment organisations has had a crippling effect, but as Lodge states "the movement may become less easy to identify and anticipate as its more violent fringes assume a central role", and "by the time the authorities are ready to negotiate it may be difficult to find anyone to negotiate with". p 23.
2. It is the extra-establishment and not the within-establishment organisations that have extracted meaningful concessions which have amounted to reforms in the country.

For instance, almost all reforms in education have emanated from Soweto 76 and the subsequent students' protests; reforms in the labour movement were a sequel to the 1973 strikes and finally, the granting of the 99 year lease and the recent announcement of freehold rights for "urban" Africans is a response to pressure exerted by extra-establishment civic organisations in the townships.

3. Finally, extra-establishment organisations such as the National Forum, the United Democratic Front, Progressive Unions and the New Unity Movement will always have an advantage over any structures that emerge from the states' co-optive programme. They will always be the peoples' organisations and as such respond to the peoples' and not the states' needs. Their growth might perhaps vindicate both classical democratic and marxist theories, that "the action of dispossessed will serve to counter social inequities".

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SOUTH AFRICA BEYOND APARTHEID

POLITICAL CONFLICT AND UNREST IN AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS  
THE CASE OF NATAL

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## POLITICAL CONFLICT AND UNREST IN AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS

### THE CASE OF NATAL

#### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Since September 1984 South Africa's black townships have been thrown into a state of political turmoil which has resulted in a series of crises, especially in the areas of local administration, education and transport. In response to the magnitude and scope of the conflict the government deployed first the police and later the defence force into the townships. This only helped increase the violent side of the conflict, as is always the case in South Africa when police and black people come face to face in periods of political conflict. The state's decision to "crush" the "protest movement" has not achieved the desired results as the protest wave increased both in intensity and scope. To this day (almost two years from the outbreak), African townships in particular are still experiencing continual outbreaks of unrest and violence. Table I below demonstrates the magnitude of the political conflict as indicated by the number of people killed and detained as well as the extent of damage to property. The number of people killed by the security forces is also indicative of the extent of the violence which erupts in a confrontation between the police and the people. The figures are by no means exhaustive as compiling statistics in this field is not an easy task. What they are meant to do is to give an indication of the state of unrest in the country, as well as the price that people and the government pay for their efforts either to transform society or to maintain the status quo.

TABLE I

THE MAGNITUDE OF POLITICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

	Total	Sept - Dec 1984	1985	Up to 30 April 1986
Killed	1559	149	879	531
Killed by Security Forces * (1-9-85 - 31-1-86 only)			628	
Detained **	12524	1149	10998	377 To Feb 1986
Political Trials *	-	-	122	31
No. of People in Unrest Trials 1985 Only *	-	-	25000	-
Incidents of Guerilla Activities	255	44	136	75
Damage to Property	R138 million*	-	-	-
Damage to Private Buildings *	-	68	2787	-
Damage to Government Buildings *	-	20	1153	-
Attacks on Police Homes	807	-	-	-
Police Killed in Unrest *	33	-	16	-
Police Injured in Unrest *	584	-	330	-

Sources : The Weekly Mail Unrest Barometer,  
 Responses by the Minister of Justice to Questions  
 in Parliament.

\* Figures Incomplete with regard to the above breakdown.

The huge increase in the figures for 1985 indicates the escalation of the conflict since in 1984 this was localised mainly to the townships in the Vaal Triangle and later the Eastern Cape. The increase in both the intensity and scope of the conflict led to the State President's declaration of the state of emergency on the 21st of July 1985. In spite of this, the confrontation continued as this declaration did not address the root causes of the problem. The conflict increased and engulfed Natal and the Western Cape, including coloured townships. This together with the increased death tolls for 1986 indicates the seriousness of the situation.

2. A BRIEF THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Generally, discontent turns into protest and unrest when the actors in the drama are conscientised into viewing such discontent as having its source in politics. One does not need much research, in South Africa, to prove the political links in the issues of rent, transport and education where apartheid prescribes not only where black people may live and work, but also the education they may have access to. Gurr (1973) postulates that the magnitude of political conflict varies with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation combined with the belief in the justification and utility of engaging in overt strife and the balance between the organisational capacity of the dissidents vis-a vis the repressive capacity of the regime. Since some of the elements in the equation do not lend themselves to exact measurements, this paper will adopt a simplified version of Gurr's theory, and will aver that the magnitude of political conflict varies with:

- a) the intensity and scope of relative deprivation; in combination with,
- b) the collective consciousness; and
- c) the organisational capacity of the conflict group; and
- d) the repressive capacity of the regime.

It must be stated that the magnitude of political conflict is the synergism of the above elements and not the sum total of the constituent parts. Further, relative deprivation refers to the discrepancy between value expectations i.e. the goods and conditions that people feel they are entitled to, and value capabilities i.e. the goods and conditions they are able to attain and retain (Gurr, 1970). Collective consciousness is a function of the community's material situation, their perception of deprivation as well as their willingness to engage in actions designed to improve their lot. Collective consciousness is, therefore, a product of both material and ideological

factors. Gagiano (1979) introduces further preconditions for protest behaviour:

- i) the discontent should have a local context. He quotes Sears and McConahay who found that riot participants are different from non-participants both in being disaffected in general and particularly in being disaffected from local government.
- ii) participants in protest action usually have a history of protest or have been socialised in protest;
- iii) there is generally a crisis in the legitimacy of the government or the group in control.

A common thread runs through both models i.e. Gurr's and Gagiano's. Both argue for:

- i) performance by the group in control;
- ii) relative deprivation where the subjects attribute their lot to political forces;
- iii) collective consciousness emanating from material and ideological factors;
- iv) mobilisation of the group in conflict with the existing status quo.

The above preconditions constitute factors which predispose people to protest behaviour in general. What precipitates specific incidents of protest are definite "fuse" situations which explode as soon as the stimulus is applied to them. In other words, it may be argued that predisposing factors conscientise the conflict group into protest, precipitating factors usher in the crisis in the legitimacy of the group in control, thus preparing the stage for the actors to perform.

### 3. MAPPING OUT THE FORCES OF RESISTANCE

The fundamental issue behind the unrest in African townships concerns the sharing of power within the broader South African context. Participants in the protest movement seek inclusion in the general definition of South Africanism. They view specific issues such as hikes in rents and transport fares as well as problems with schooling as products of their powerlessness and exclusion from the broader community. At an immediate level, there are demands for inclusion in the greater municipal administration, the creation of a single educational system, and the subsidisation of transport since Africans live far away from places of work through government policy. These demands stem from various ideological discourses - non-racialism, liberation and equality as expressed in the charterist, worker and black consciousness movements.

### 4. CONTEMPORARY EXPRESSION

Visible signs of the forces of resistance to domination find contemporary expression in local civic organisations in the townships, trade unions, student movements, the churches, black consciousness, and the United Democratic Front. The campaign is not limited to black organisations only : the Black Sash, for example - an organisation of "progressive" white women is a powerful lobby that has intervened on behalf of the subordinates at critical moments by making use of the "legal" and parliamentary processes. Forms of resistance have moved from passive to proactive strategies, rallies against the new structures in local government, worker stay-aways, school and consumer boycotts.

The present wave of conflict (from September 1984) has included the apparent "black on black violence" directed at both the persons and property of officials in the black local government institutions largely as a result of their role in the rent hikes, and the police as part of the "repressive" state apparatus. This has brought in an added dimension to the conflict - see below. The entry of the police, and later the defence force, into the drama has exacerbated rather than alleviated the conflict. Organisations like the United Democratic

Front (a charterist-oriented movement) and the National Forum (a black consciousness organisation), trade unions and youth congresses which have added symbolic colour to the "struggle for liberation" have borne the brunt of the state and police fury. This is evidenced by the number of activists detained, charges for treason against individuals within these organisations as well as the attacks by armed vigilante's and mafia gangs on activists and property belonging to "agitators" or organisations.

## 5. THE CASE OF NATAL

The above picture is an account of the national scene, and sets out the confrontation in three main areas i.e. local government, transport and education. Although Natal has and still experiences all the three manifestations of the protest movement, the duration of large scale violence has been relatively shorter than has been the case in the rest of the country. Secondly, the intervention of Inkatha has given the resistance movement in Natal a different colour from what so far has taken place elsewhere, except in Bophuthatswana where close parallels can be drawn. Finally, the delay in rioting in the major townships (almost a year from the time when large scale rioting took place in the other provinces) calls for analysis.

To explain the case for Natal, two hypotheses have been advanced:

- i) that the presence of a strong political mobilisation movement i.e. Inkatha exerts a moderating influence in Natal politics, and that it is this moderating force which restrains Natal Africans from engaging in large scale conflict as is the case in other provinces in South Africa. This is the view espoused by the government, Inkatha and some liberal quarters, particularly the liberal press;
- ii) that the relative calm in Natal is not a function of any ideological influences, but is rather a product of different

material conditions. These material conditions not only account for the relative decrease in specific fuse situations, but have also facilitated the development of a third force in the conflict thus dissipating the energy of the protesting group between two powerful forces - the state and Inkatha.

The analysis which follows will seek to explore the above hypotheses within the context of the developments in Natal between September 1984 and the beginning of May 1986, with special emphasis on the period, August 1985 to May 1986, which witnessed an increase in both the intensity and scale of the conflict. The analysis is preceded by a brief look into the material conditions in Natal since the author attributes the existence of this relatively powerful third force to the same conditions.

#### 5.1 METHODOLOGY:

In order to isolate those variables which account for the peculiarities in Natal the following course is necessary:

- i) draw up a profile of Natal's major townships and from this establish the material conditions which account for the differences between Natal and the rest of the provinces;
- ii) document the course and manifestations in Natal and compare this with the developments elsewhere in the country.

The first objective has been met by gathering data on:

- a) the housing situation in KwaMashu and Umlazi and extrapolating from this to other townships which fall within the KwaZulu administration;
- b) the presence and nature of civic, worker and students' groupings existing in the townships as well as their relationship with broadly-based mass mobilisation movements such as the United Democratic Front, the National Forum and Inkatha;

- c) the nature of township administration;
- d) the history of and socialisation in the protest movement in the townships in order to establish the extent of political consciousness.

With regard to the second objective it became necessary to set up a machinery for data gathering on the manifestations of the conflict on a daily basis. The following sources of data were invaluable:

- i) clippings from Natal's newspapers i.e. daily, bi-weekly and weekly publications;
- ii) setting up a network of research assistants at strategic points. Their function was to document and report on any episodes of conflict within their areas as well as to verify and clarify press reports;
- iii) collecting eye witness accounts of reportings made in the press and other sources.
- iv) liaising with organisations which play a significant role in the regulation of the conflict in the area.

The method yielded material which forms the basis of this paper. Hence, while the paper does not purport to offer conclusive explanations on the conflict in the region, it provides an exploration into an intricate subject and offers a tentative analysis which could form the basis for further debate.

## 5.2 MATERIAL CONDITIONS - A PROFILE OF NATAL'S MAJOR TOWNSHIPS - UMLAZI AND KWAMASHU

Umlazi was the first township in the Republic to fall within a homeland administration.

Both Umlazi and KwaMashu fall within the KwaZulu administration.

Actual administration is in the hands of township managers who are civil servants employed by the South African government and seconded to the KwaZulu administration. Both townships have "elected" township councils whose duties are supposedly to formulate policy for the administration of the townships, and to allocate sites for residential, trading and other purposes, subject to the approval of the KwaZulu Department of the Interior. Election polls for members of the township council are usually very low (in the region of 10 percent) and residents do not take them seriously, especially as a political force.

#### 5.2.1 Housing

Since 1960 people in Umlazi have been able to buy and own houses on a deed of grant basis. This entitles an individual to the ownership of the house but not the land on which it stands. Sites cost in the region of R150.00, and finance is provided by the KwaZulu Finance Corporation, formerly the K.D.C. Since 1977 KwaMashu has operated on the same basis as Umlazi. Residents in both townships can either buy existing houses built by the administration, or erect their houses on vacant plots. In both instances, holding a permanent job in Durban qualifies the would-be occupier to buy a house. This, therefore, sidesteps the stringent section 10 qualifications, which stipulate that before a person qualifies for a house in any urban area he should have worked for one employer for at least ten continuous years, or have been working continuously in that urban area for fifteen years even if for different employers.\* Presently 89 percent of the houses in KwaMashu fall under the category of "bought" houses as against 70 percent in Umlazi. In addition, 41 percent of the houses in Umlazi are electrified as against 14 percent in KwaMashu. Both townships have selected sections where people have erected their own houses under the deed of grant basis although some self-owned houses are interspersed with rented dwellings. These selective suburbs have given a middle class appearance to portions of the townships and, inevitably, a middle class culture.

\* The Influx Laws have recently been scrapped. The effects of this have still to be assessed.

### 5.2.2 Political Culture

Because of its unique history, Umlazi has experienced atypical administrative circumstances. The much hated "black jacks" or city police with their notorious night raids to enforce influx laws were never experienced by Umlazi residents. When KwaMashu fell under the KwaZulu administration in 1977, it too experienced the same treatment. The stringent aspects of influx regulations in the buying of houses were not applied and this gave the townships an "exempted status".

These developments served as co-optive measures where township residents suddenly acquired a new "unique" status among townships. The creation of sections of middle class suburbs has served as means towards embourgeoisement as these sections have definitely developed a bourgeois character. One such section in Umlazi has a men's club, organises fun runs, abounds in B.M.X. bikes where children enter for multiracial competitions, has a number of children in multi-racial schools and the bulk of the residents fall into the professional, bureaucratic, managerial and business classes. No doubt residents from this section feel alienated from both the central and local political structures, but such structures, although seriously felt, are not emotive enough to be of immediate concern. This pattern is more observable in a closely knit suburb as this one, and is a strong reminder that people finding themselves in similar circumstances will probably adopt the same world view. There is a safety valve to township frustrations and energy spent in protest action elsewhere is channelled differently. Admittedly, until the riots there had been a few skirmishes such as the stoning of the mayor's house and car, but the magnitude and scale were nowhere near what was taking place elsewhere in the country. Historically, KwaMashu has had more incidents than Umlazi (dating back from the school boycotts in 1980), but then, KwaMashu has only recently achieved the status that Umlazi has enjoyed for twenty five years.

### 5.2.3 Local Politics and Broadly-Based Mass Organisations

None of the broadly based organisations such as the United Democratic Front, the National Forum and Inkatha has been directly involved in local council elections. However, in the Natal townships, candidates in local elections have largely campaigned on an Inkatha ticket. This has complicated the nature of the protest movement in Natal by introducing a third dimension to the relationship between the protesting masses and the structures of power. Inkatha does have a sizeable following, and as targets in the protest movement are generally the incumbents of local government positions, this has brought protesters into a head-on collision with Inkatha. Instead of the usual polarisation between the masses of protesters and the government as represented by the administration and the police, there is an inverted triangle consisting of a mass base and two apexes, the police and Inkatha. This means that the protesters have to contend with two opposing forces. Such a situation is hard to maintain especially against the massive power of the state.

### 5.2.4 Legitimacy of the Township Administration

Factors such as a hike in rent and service charges have precipitated unrest in African townships. Umlazi and KwaMashu, and for that matter, all townships within the KwaZulu administration are relatively immune from these maladies. There is a flat service charge of R3,40 per month, and the average monthly repayments for houses falling within the buying scheme is about R10, whilst those residents who have erected or bought their own houses under the KwaZulu Finance Corporation scheme pay specific bond repayments on an individual basis. There have been no rent increases in the past two years, and rent is only R12,70 per month including service charges. This has distanced the township councils from daily irritations and, consequently removed the immediate stigma. There is more apathy towards than resentment against them. They definitely do not command any significant measure of legitimacy (a recent survey conducted by this author in 1983 clearly demonstrated this point)

but simultaneously, there is no pronounced illegitimacy. At worst people regard them as "clowns" who have entered the business for material personal gain such as access to business sites and transport undertakings in the form of taxis. While this does not by any means signify a gain for them, it surely has been a blunting factor in the protest movement.

#### 5.2.5 Localised Situations of Conflict in Natal - Lamontville and Esikhawini

As early as 1983 to 1984 and through to April 1985 smaller townships in Natal, particularly those falling within the administration of the Natalia Development Board, went through varying degrees of rioting which usually brought in a series of confrontation between residents and the police. Lamontville and Chesterville (Durban), Hambanathi (Tongaat), Sibongile (Dundee), Thembelihle (Glencoe) and Sobantu (Pietermaritzburg) reacted to the proposed increases in rent by first refusing to comply with the new increases and later by taking to the streets. In Lamontville, the murder of a community leader, Harrison Msizi Dube, (the then "mayor" of Lamontville, Moonlight Gasa, was implicated in the murder and was later given a long sentence in prison) coupled with an increase in bus fares precipitated the rioting. The conflict led to the formation of the Joint Rent Action Committee (J.O.R.A.C.) which has become a potent force in Lamontville politics to this day.

Besides the rent and transport issues in the Natalia Development Board townships, in the Lower Umfolozi Region townships falling within the KwaZulu administration were engaged in a conflict of a different kind. An increase in bus fares by the local Empangeni Transport Ltd. resulted in a boycott which lasted for three months (January - April 1985) and involved the townships of Esikhawini, Ngwelezane and Enseleni, all of which supply labour to the Empangeni - Richards Bay growth points.

While the conflict in the Natalia Development Board townships was between township residents and the newly-created local authorities, that in Empangeni represented the struggle between corporate

monopoly capital, the transport corporation, and the masses of proletarianised African workers. At another level, the two episodes were demonstrations of a power struggle within powerlessness. In the former, violence could not be averted as the state, represented by the Natalia Development Board through the Councils could not rescind its decision to increase rents. On the other hand, at Empangeni, the corporation between worker representatives, the councils and the private sector prevented the conflict from escalating into large scale violence - a potential development in many instances.

#### 5.2.6 An Emerging Polarisation In the Black Communities

While there may be differences in emphasis and style of administration, structurally all African townships are subjected to an identical system of "local government" - the council system. The tendency is, therefore, that there is a similar reaction to the council system throughout the country. Local civic organisations opposed to the council system and aligned to the national organisations have emerged in almost all townships. In some instances such as in transport and organised consumer boycotts these organisations have linked up with students' organisations to form a united front in the resistance against the powers that be. On the contrary Inkatha's structural location inhibits its entry into the front. Firstly Inkatha controls the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and as the main area of protest activity is in the educational arena, and the KwaZulu administration "controls" education within its ambit, protests in education become protests against Inkatha. Secondly, the indirect links with the township councillors implicate Inkatha in local government as well, hence protests within this sphere solicit Inkatha's sympathy towards its members. Thus, besides the ideological differences which have become more noticeable as the unrest develops, structural conditions predispose the situation to polarisation where Inkatha is forced to take an opposite position to the protesting masses.

Hence the significance of the conflict in Lamontville is that while the struggle was originally between township residents and the state, it later developed to that between a large section of township residents - the United Democratic Front - and Inkatha, with Inkatha being perceived by the protesting masses to be on the side of the state. The proposed incorporation of Lamontville into KwaZulu increased rather than reduced the divisions. What was experienced on a large scale in Lamontville was also happening although on a lesser scale at Esikhawini. The loose alliance between unionists and Inkatha was showing signs of cleavage. Ideologically, there were commonalities between unionists and extra establishment organisations especially on the attitudes to local government. On the other hand, Inkatha took a different line and towards the end of the bus boycott it became obvious that there were separate agendas. These cleavages resulted in mass meetings being boycotted half way through the boycott, and also in a section of the commuters yielding to pressure to go back to the buses. Informants alleged that KwaZulu did not want a protracted boycott on the guise that the rural communities were suffering more from it. Actually both Enseleni and Ngwelezane had at some stage halfway through the boycott gone back to the buses. It was claimed that this was due to pressure from traditional and establishment authority structures linked to KwaZulu.

Both Lamontville and Esikhawini marked a prelude to what later became commonly known as "black on black violence". While this is a manifestation of the polarisation within the black communities, the "black on black" is apparent and not real, hence the explanation is superficial and fails to address the real issues. This issue will be dealt with later in this paper.

### 5.3 August 1985 Natal

August 1985 signifies the beginnings of large-scale rioting in Durban - a situation unequalled since Cato Manor in 1959.

On the evening of the first of August 1985, a human rights lawyer, Mrs N V Mxenge was shot and killed outside her house in Umlazi.

Mrs Mxenge was an instructing attorney for the defence team in the

treason trial against sixteen members of the United Democratic Front. On the morning of Monday the 5th of August pamphlets printed jointly by the Azanian Students' Organisation (A.Z.A.S.O.) and the Congress of South African Students (C.O.S.A.S.) calling for a week-long stay away from school, were distributed in and around Durban African townships. The stay away would mark an observance of the mourning period for Mrs Mxenge. A group consisting mainly of young people went from school to school distributing these pamphlets and urging school principals to release pupils from school immediately.

Together with the call for a stay away from school, there was an order for the shops in the townships to close business as well. Developments during the week-long unrest took the following course:

- i) firstly, commercial vehicles were looted and burnt, P.U.T.C.O. buses were stoned and burnt;
- ii) young people stood at cross roads, barricaded the streets with old cars, burning tyres, stones and other available objects;
- iii) Young people also stopped people from going to work, with the exception of nurses in uniform;
- iv) administration offices, including those of the KwaZulu administration and the post office at Umlazi, were burnt down;
- v) houses and property belonging to "informers" were burnt down.

This was the order of events between Monday the 5th and Wednesday the 7th of August. Up to this point one could clearly discern a political motive in the rioting.

Later developments were coloured by a mixture of both political and criminal elements:

- i) firstly, bottle stores and shops declared to be owned by corporations, whites or Indians, with Africans operating them as fronts, were looted and burnt;
- ii) shops belonging to African traders declared as unco-operative in community and welfare activities were looted and burnt;
- iii) finally, there was general looting and burning of shops, butcheries, tea rooms and other trading amenities.

The above events marked the final stages of rioting and by then the unrest was on its third day, Friday. (Monday and Tuesday had been relatively calm save for the few incidents of looting of vehicles.)

There are conflicting reports regarding what actually brought the rioting to an end. The police and the army had been active since Wednesday. Eye witness reports of non-uniformed vigilantes in KwaMashu came out on Thursday whilst in Umlazi it was only on Saturday afternoon that the first busloads of Inkatha vigilantes entered the various units in the township. Concentrated rioting had abated by midday on Thursday. However, by the weekend, a combined police, army and Inkatha operation was visible in the streets.

As stated earlier, these developments occurred against a background of relative calm and quiet in the region. Since that disastrous week the province has never been the same as the following accounts will demonstrate. While intense rioting was brief, the material and psychological destruction were to last for a long time thus contradicting allegations that the experience had produced any masters of the situation in Natal. The causes of the rioting lay beyond the ambit of either the police or Inkatha as the two forces whose intervention had apparently brought the rioting to an end. In the long run, events were to prove that the war had produced no winners.

#### 5.4 RESISTANCE AND CONTAINMENT - THE VIGILANTES OR AMABUTHO:

The relationship between town councillors and Inkatha had far-reaching consequences in shaping the pattern of "resistance" and "containment" in the period subsequent to the August unrest as well as in determining the relations between Inkatha and the township youth in particular. At the immediate level the relationship between township councillors and Inkatha contributed to what was referred to above as the third force in the configuration i.e. the protesters on the one side, the state and Inkatha-controlled vigilantes or amabutho on the other.

Further, it must be stated that during the week-long unrest in Durban townships, many shops, butgeries, bottle stores and other business structures as well as township offices were either looted or burned down. The majority of African traders in Natal are either members of Inyanda, an affiliate of Inkatha, or are direct members of Inkatha. And, as many township councillors are members of Inkatha (in fact many of them occupy important branch or regional positions in the organisation) and the majority of the offices gutted belonged to the Inkatha-controlled KwaZulu administration, the stage was set for a direct confrontation. Consequently, in protecting their interests and or avenging their losses, these parties used every power at their disposal including their commanding positions in Inkatha to organise around that base.

Unemployed youth, among whom were known thugs further complicated the relations between the protesting youth and a large segment of the "silent majority". The communication between protesters and the people was weak, fragmented and at times confused, \* and the list of hit targets ranged from "informers", councillors to policemen and their property. Hence both circumstantially and ideologically, this specific conjuncture facilitated co-operation between intra-establishment functionaries and the police "to restore law and order". The state-controlled media had established a long standing vocabulary condemning all forms of protest and equating protest behaviour with crime. Thus

\* The stoning of buses without a prior warning to the commuters not to use them alienated the masses and further gave an opportunity to the mass media to depict the unrest as senseless violence.

by criminalising protest behaviour the protestor was, in the process, redefined as a criminal. Vigilantes thus went into the townships to eradicate "criminals", issues of ideology were left to the "corporals" to sort out.

In introducing the "containment" strategies by the vigilantes, and especially Inkatha-led vigilantes, it must be emphasised that the attendant attacks on persons and property does not reflect that organisations' official policy nor its sanction of the activities. Both the President and Secretary General of Inkatha have been at pains to state this categorically. The same is true of the leadership in the United Democratic Front and the National Forum as articulators of the protest movement. Rather, what has happened is that local corporals within both camps have used their organisations as their power base. Regrettably, none of the parties has been seen to punish their supporters and in the nature of South African politics, the "containment" camp has acted with immunity from the police, as the account in the following paragraphs will demonstrate.

In the beginning amabutho consisted of men recruited from the hostels and the shanty towns bordering on the townships. Within the townships the majority of the men recruited were forced to join. To guard against reprisals from the neighbours whose homes were attacked, township recruits were taken to other units where they could not be identified. This strategy worked for a short time since men soon became tired of performing a role they did not strongly believe in. The next phase was an entirely "bussing in" operation where amabutho were assisted by "gangsters" riding in combis and armed with fire arms. To this day vigilantes in KwaMashu consist largely of men from Lindelani, a nearby shanty town. They are armed with varied weaponry ranging from firearms, spears, axes, and pangas to knobkerries.

#### 5.4.1 Umlazi

Open hostilities between Inkatha and the activists broke out when

three members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly who were also Inkatha officials were seen with a group of armed men who, it is alleged, harassed and beat up mourners at the funerals of unrest victims ("The Daily News" : 26.8.85 and "City Press" : 30.8.85). This was followed by the burning of the house belonging to the Chairman of the Umlazi Residents' Association, by a group of amabutho who, informants alleged, were the same group that had harassed mourners at the funerals. (There was no mention made of the three K L A members in the attack at the house.) These episodes followed an attack on mourners at Victoria Mxenge's memorial service on the 10th of August 1985 where it was widely alleged that Inkatha-led amabutho were responsible.

These deteriorating relationships were further exacerbated widely publicised announcement by Mr W Sabelo, the Umlazi K L A member and Inkatha official on the 28th of August 1985

- i) by the weekend, all cars in the township should bear an Umlazi registration number;
- ii) all members of the United Democratic Front and their supporters should leave the township by the end of the same week;
- iii) lawyers and doctors should also leave Umlazi as they too, supported the United Democratic Front (Natal Mercury: 28.8.85).

Further, the statement went, should the above conditions not be met, those responsible would suffer the consequences. The statement was widely criticised, especially by the Progressive Federal Party as undemocratic and an assault on the liberty of individuals. Later, Dr Dlomo, the secretary general of Inkatha, repudiated Mr Sabelo, saying that he had no mandate to make such a statement as the township was administered by the Umlazi Town Council, and also that such a statement was against Inkatha policy.

The whole month of September marked a reign of terror by vigilantes or armed amabutho in Umlazi. They patrolled the township streets, concentrating on the sections suspected to harbour activists. The township lived in fear as the patrols were not without incidents as Amabutho sniffed out and attacked specific houses allegedly belonging to members of the United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Students or unionists. Indeed, both the S A B C and Inkatha had equated all the violence of that dreadful week in August with the United Democratic Front. Although amabutho were allegedly responsible for the major share in the violence in September, the protesting youths or even the thug elements had their share in the selective violence that terrorised the township. The following table illustrates the extent of the damage inflicted upon persons and or property allegedly by both contesting parties.

TABLE 2: UMLAZI  
RESISTANCE AND CONTAINMENT:  
PEOPLE KILLED AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY \* 12.08.85 - 30.04.86

People Killed -	11
Houses Damaged -	22
Shops & Businesses Damaged -	1
Damage to Buses:	
Total written off (1985) -	2
Total damaged (1985) -	186

- \* Figures include only verified information - Sources -  
i) The Press  
ii) Crisis Committees  
iii) Transport Companies.

The tragedy of the above account is that in the process lieutenants from both camps lost control and the violence developed a momentum and relative autonomy of its own. Incidents of violence from the Inkatha-led camp increased partly because Inkatha was better organised at the time and mainly because amabutho enjoyed an immunity from the

police and in many instances obtained active support. Immediately after the week-long violence amabutho, mainly from the hostels and the surrounding shanty towns came in PUTCO buses each accompanied by two caspirs and a police van. This was a daily scene for almost three weeks. During the regular night raids, police vans accompanied PUTCO buses carrying amabutho to their destinations. However, more tragic was the fact that victims of attacks from both camps were suspects through rumours and their involvement in acts of violence, terror or otherwise was not legally proven. From the activists' side the same story can be told. There were incidents of people set alight, and in one instance in Umlazi M section a man carrying two sticks was set alight by a mob on the suspicion that he was an Inkatha ibutho.

#### 5.4.2 KwaMashu

In KwaMashu the intensity and scale of "internecine" violence was aggravated by the visibility of activists and the existence of a more organised youth force, the KwaMashu Youth Club, which is an affiliate of the United Democratic Front. Also, it is in KwaMashu that Inkatha has experienced leadership strains and internal conflicts. The development of a youth club independent of or against Inkatha is a function of the experiences in 1980 when Inkatha attacked the youth when they were protesting against the educational system. This cost Inkatha not only the youth constituency, but also alienated parents who felt their children had a case against the educational system. The violence in KwaMashu thus assumed two forms:

- i) the attacks by Inkatha-led vigilantes on activists and their property and vice versa; and
- ii) the attack by Inkatha on Inkatha.

Hence, both forms of violence not only prolonged the state of terror and intimidation, but also increased the scale of attacks and counter attacks.

The following table gives an account and extent of the damage resulting from the clashes.

TABLE 3: KWAMASHU  
RESISTANCE AND CONTAINMENT - PEOPLE KILLED  
AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY: \* 12.08.85 - 30.04.86

People Killed	- 15
Houses Damaged	- 38
Shops & Businesses Damaged	- 4
Damage to Buses: (1985)	
Total written off	-
Total damaged	- 100

\* Figures include only verified information. Sources:

- i) The Press
- ii) Crisis Committees
- iii) Transport Companies

What has complicated the issue in KwaMashu has been the internal feud within the shanty towns adjoining the township where areas each claiming allegiance to Inkatha have occasionally been at each other's throat. At the basis of these fights is the relative deprivation arising from lack of access to resources and manifesting itself in area groupings. Such was the issue at Inanda Newtown and later the battle between Richmond Farm and Lindelani - both shanty towns. The latter claimed eight lives and also resulted in the death of a local KwaZulu member of the Legislative Assembly by armed amabutho who petrol bombed his house and shot him dead. This was an indication of violence within Inkatha.

#### 5.4.3 Lamontville

The conflict and the violence in Lamontville raises some fundamental questions on the structural role of intra-establishment organisations and how these can function to the fulfilment of the wishes of the sponsor rather than the people they purport to serve. By August 1985 the Lamontville Community Council remained only in name. Of the four members constituting the Council, one was in jail and the others had disappeared. However, the Lamontville Community Council is part of the Ningizimu Community Council which includes representatives from Chesterville as well as from the five Natalia Development Board hostels in Durban. Hence to the extent that representatives from the hostels had not resigned, the Ningizimu Community Council was still a viable body.

The centre of the conflict in Lamontville was the struggle for control between the "defunct" council and the Residents Association, where the Council used its links with the nearby S J Smith hostel in an attempt to establish its hegemony. For a number of months, armed amabutho crossed the bridge into Lamontville and attacked residents, who retaliated with all the force at their disposal. Church buildings, used by the residents for meetings when the administration board refused to let them use the township hall, became the targets of petrol bombings. This battle came to an end when an Inkatha-led attack by about 600 men from the King Shaka's Day celebrations was repulsed by the residents on the 28th September 1985. Nine people died: six Inkatha members and three residents. This was Inkatha's second major setback in Lamontville, the first being when two bus loads of amabutho were beaten back at Dubes' unveiling ceremony in March 1985.

This last setback set men in the hostel thinking. Evidence from some hostel men indicated that the setback divided the men into two camps with a strong contingent condemning the attack on Lamontville and refusing to be a party to further future attacks.

#### 5.4.4 Chesterville

The origins and organisation of a vigilants group known as the A-Team in Chesterville is still a riddle. Firstly, it is the only known vigilante group, within the Durban townships, which operates without any external sources such as the hostels or shanty towns as recruitment centres. Secondly, there are no proven links with any conventional power base such as Inkatha. Notwithstanding these "limitations" the A-Team has been reported to have used sophisticated weapons such as revolvers during its operations of "terror". And, as in the case with other vigilante groups, events demonstrate that the A-Team operates with relative immunity from the police.

Reports of local vigilante activity date back to September 1985 and it emerged as a "citizens force" "to combat crime in the township". By the end of the year there was an ongoing open battle between members of the A-Team and the protesting youths - the "Comrades".

TABLE 4.

#### LAMONTVILLE AND CHESTERVILLE

#### RESISTANCE AND CONTAINMENT - PEOPLE KILLED AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY \* 12.08.85 - 30.04.86

People Killed -	24
Houses Damaged -	44
Shops or Businesses Damaged -	
Damage to Buses:	
Completely destroyed -	5
Damaged -	

\* Figures include only verified information - Sources  
i) The Press  
ii) Crisis Committees

The height of resentment against the A team was marked by a gathering of about 900 residents from Chesterville on the 20th of April at the local Roman Catholic church after they were tear gassed when they attempted a march to the police station demanding that police take action against the A team.

The meeting resolved:

- i) that the residents seek intervention by local white politicians especially the Progressive Federal Party;
- ii) to physically remove the A team members from the township by the 22nd of April 1985.

Further, residents through the Chesterville Crisis Committee despatched a telex to the Minister of Law and Order demanding the removal, from the township, of both the A team members and the police. Police connivance with the A team came out when residents claimed that known A team members are seen in police vans and that some of them carry rifles identical to those used by the police. Also, following a police raid into Chesterville on the 17th of April 1986, 21 members of the A team were "apparently arrested" only to be seen in the streets the following day (Chesterville Crisis Committee meeting 21.4.86). Residents alleged that the "apparent arrest" was a fake designed to demonstrate impartiality of the police force.

#### 5.4.5 The Spread of Vigilante Activity

Vigilante or amabutho activity has extended from the townships around Durban into Pietermaritzburg, Newcastle, Vryheid and Empangeni districts. Further, the targets of their attacks include protesting groups from all walks of life, in education, transport and labour including the trade union movement. Also, in all recorded instances in Natal, amabutho use Inkatha as their power base. Thus in Pietermaritzburg, Inkatha-led vigilantes have been in a constant battle with protesting pupils. In Vryheid, Newcastle and Empangeni, they have allegedly assaulted members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

(see below) and in Durban the national organiser of the Inkatha Youth Brigade is facing two charges of attempted murder, two of malicious damage to property, and one of arson. These charges follow attacks on the person and property of a unionist at Intuzuma - a township adjacent to KwaMashu.

#### 5.4.6 An Overall Picture for Natal

The following table will demonstrate the magnitude of unrest in the major metropolitan areas in Natal between August 1985 and April 1986. The figures reflect only deaths and incidents reported in the press as well as by the various crisis committees and verified by the researchers. The actual deaths as well as damage to property could thus be much higher. Also, no figures were available with regard to the damage to property in the townships outside of Durban. The records exclude those injured.

TABLE 5.

THE MAGNITUDE OF POLITICAL CONFLICT IN  
NATAL. AUGUST 1985 - APRIL 30, 1986.  
GREATER DURBAN AREA (DURBAN, PINETOWN, HAMMERSDALE)

People Killed -	141
Houses Damaged -	110
Shops or Businesses Damaged -	80
Buses completely destroyed (12.8.85 - 30.4.86) -	14 **
Buses damaged (12.8.85 - 30.4.86) -	1054 (Only Putco buses) **

OTHER TOWNSHIPS: (PIETERMARITZBURG, NEWCASTLE, EMPANGENI)

People Killed -	13
Houses damaged -	8
No information on damage to vehicles and business premises	
Duration of Consumer Boycott in Pietermaritzburg - 6 weeks.	

\* These figures include only verified information - Sources  
i) The Press    ii) Crisis Committees    iii) Putco.

\*\* Figures exclude buses damaged or destroyed during the week-long unrest.

The following section deals with the conflict in the various spheres i.e. education, transport and local government, especially during 1986.

#### 5.5 PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION

The week-long rioting had brought all schooling in Durban to a virtual standstill. Subsequent to that week schools went through a period of turbulence and turmoil, a situation which varied with the degree of counter action exerted by the police together with the vigilante groups, mostly under the leadership of local Inkatha corporals. Where pupils returned to schools, continual anonymous telephone messages to school principals forced the latter to send pupils home during the early hours of the day. Consequently pupils stayed away from school, thus increasing the drop in attendance by disenchanted pupils and those of them who actively wanted to boycott until their grievances were met. This brought in a period of chaos in schools in the region until, in response, principals, school committees and officials from the KwaZulu Department of Education met and resolved that KwaZulu schools should reopen on the 4th September. When pupils did not return on the 4th of September, more meetings were held by officials together with members of school committees. Events subsequent to these meetings proved the futility of an exercise where decisions are made without the participation of the main actors in the drama. Some of the major events were:

- i) by the end of September 5 schools had been petrol bombed in Durban - the total was 11 by the end of December;
- ii) more than 1000 pupils from several schools in KwaMashu marched through the township demanding the unbanning of the Congress of South African Students (C.O.S.A.S.) as well as the release of detained students (The Natal Mercury: 11.9.85);
- iii) no senior schools in KwaMashu were functioning until the 22nd of September 1985;

- iv) pupils from Lamontville in Durban and Imbali in Pietermaritzburg boycotted schools until the 2nd October 1985;
- v) in Chesterville, Durban, pupils boycotted classes up to the end of September;
- vi) a meeting between the Minister of Education, Dr Viljoen, and 300 school inspectors at the end of September in Durban, failed to resolve the education crisis in spite of the minister's declaration that Students' Representative Councils were permitted;
- vii) a meeting between parents, education officials and pupils in KwaMashu on the 22nd of September had no effect on the boycott by secondary school pupils, in spite of the agreement among the parties that schools would be guarded by non-politically affiliated vigilantes;
- viii) subsequent to the September meeting, three high schools in KwaMashu were petrol-bombed and the damage was estimated at R57,000.
- ix) the theological seminary at Imbali, Pietermaritzburg had to close following attacks by alleged Inkatha men. This led to an interdict on Pakkies, the mayor of Imbali and a local Inkatha official, restraining him from interfering with the seminary;
- x) a pamphlet issued by the Chesterville Students Representative Council in mid-September alleged that between August and September 19 pupils from Chesterville, 45 from Lamontville, 25 from Clermont, 54 from KwaMashu and 38 from Umlazi had been detained by the police in various demonstrations against the problems in education.

To the end of September, townships in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg regions went through an unprecedented period of disrupted schooling or no schooling at all. This prompted the Inkatha Youth Brigade to march through the streets in Umlazi on the 8th October

demanding their rights to normal schooling. Meanwhile, following the burning of an inspector's car in Chesterville, the Department of Education and Training declared that schools in that township would close indefinitely. This led to an intensification of the boycott in Lamontville, a boycott which resulted in pupils from both townships not writing their end-of-year examinations.

Although schools falling within the KwaZulu Department of Education did have the end-of-year examinations, results in the Junior Certificate classes were indicative of the extent of the damage: a mere 26% passed - figure below even the low matric norm of about 35%.

As 1985 drew to a close, neither party had won the "battle" in education. What was achieved was a serious enmity between the youth and Inkatha on the one side and the youth and the police on the other.

#### THE FIRST NATIONAL EDUCATION CRISIS COMMITTEE 28-29 DECEMBER 1985

The crisis in education in Natal was a microcosm of the national crisis. A conference was convened by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee, and was attended by several hundred people from all over South Africa, who met at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Resolutions passed and the conference itself were to have far reaching consequences on the crisis in education in Natal. Among the resolutions were the following:

- i) statutory school committees were agents of the state and therefore parents should not be members of statutory parents committees; instead,
- ii) progressive parent-teacher-student structures should be formed at all schools to facilitate a sound relationship among the three parties and also to enable interaction among different schools in order to develop the educational struggle to higher levels;

- iii) that the role of teachers should include the facilitation of communication between teachers, parents and students, and also that teachers work actively with students towards the formation of democratically elected students' representative councils;
- iv) the call for "an immediate and unconditional release of all students, parents and teachers detained in their struggle for peoples' education in our land";
- v) that since there was a recession and many "of our people were unemployed" while the national resources were geared towards the South African Defence Force "occupying our townships" parents should "refuse to pay school fees in 1986";
- vi) a demand for the provision of free textbooks and other educational materials for "our students in all schools";
- vii) a demand to unban the Congress of South African Students (C.O.S.A.S.)
- viii) a National Education Crisis Committee should be formed;
- ix) there should be the broad definition of a people's education which prepared people for participation in a non-racial, socialist oriented, and democratic South Africa;
- x) finally the Conference resolved that all students return to school on the 25th January 1986, and that the government be given three months in which to meet the above demands. If by the end of March 1986 the demands were not met, another conference would be convened to consider what action to take.

In January 1986, the Minister of National Education announced that all schools falling within the Department of Education and Training would immediately receive free books and stationery.

Further grants were allocated to the education departments in the

"National States". KwaZulu received R5,7 million. This development was to shape the conflict which raged for four months. In Natal the turmoil was felt in schools falling within both educational administrations i.e. the Department of Education and Training, and the Department of Education and Culture which falls within the KwaZulu administration.

#### 5.5.1 Problems in the Department of Education and Culture:

Basically, two issues led to the problems encountered by schools within the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture:

- i) the question of school fees; and
- ii) the supply of free books and stationery.

The situation was further aggravated by the poor results in the Junior Certificate examination. The D.E.C.'s response was to announce that the promotional mark into the matriculation classes would be set at 30% instead of the usual 40% mark. This decision led to chaos as pupils in the Pietermaritzburg region promoted themselves into matric classes. However, this phase was short lived as this was soon resolved.

The issue of free school books and stationery, compounded by a measure of confusion on the part of both pupils and parents as to what constituted "school fees" further complicated the problems. Firstly, the R5,7 million was inadequate when taking into account the total enrolment in KwaZulu schools. At best it would have amounted to a distribution of just under R5,00 per pupil - an unrealistically low figure. However, the uneven system of payment in D.E.C. schools, especially since some school receipts do not clearly indicate the various items for which payment is allocated, further caused the situation to deteriorate. In one school in Umlazi, for example, pupils were made to pay R174,00 for books when the average cost is between R69,00 and R88,00 depending on the pupils curriculum. The delay by the

department in announcing how the R5,7 million was to be used led to further confusion and prepared the ground for revolt.

#### 5.5.1.1 KwaMashu:

In KwaMashu 5 senior schools either totally boycotted classes or pupils came without any books or stationery. The argument by the pupils was that the D.E.C. could not seek excuses in the inadequacy of the R5,7 million since they had a running budget besides this sum. Hence on the 16th of February, three weeks after a period of disrupted or no schooling, about 3000 pupils from senior schools marched to the local regional educational office demanding free books and stationery. Police arrested 4 pupils after dispersing the crowd with teargas.

Attempts to break the stalemate included the dispatch of a delegation to Ulundi and a meeting at the stadium attended by almost 5000 parents, pupils and educational officials. Both attempts failed to resolve the problem and the "resistance" punctuated with sporadic boycotts continued. In one instance, pupils burnt 5 KwaZulu cars parked at the local poly-clinic, alleging that KwaZulu spent more money on cars than on education.

#### 5.5.1.2 Pietermaritzburg:

In Pietermaritzburg senior schools experienced boycotts and pupils refused to pay fees or to buy books and stationery. The situation lasted to the end of March 1986. In one instance there was a bloody clash between Inkatha-led vigilantes and pupils from one senior school, Zibukezulu, when the former tried to break the "resistance" by pupils.

#### 5.5.1.3 Umlazi:

The situation in Umlazi was not very different from that obtaining in the other regions save that there were schools which operated without incidence. It was clear that the calibre of the school had much to do with the lack of disturbance as those schools which had particularly good results the previous year operated without problems.

#### 5.5.1.4 Clermont:

The crisis in Clermont was partly a response to the failure by the D.E.C. to make the same announcement regarding the issue of free books and stationery as the Department of Education and Training, and partly to a drive by pupils for a total transformation in education - the introduction of a "peoples' education". Hence after a meeting of the students' representative councils from senior schools in early February, pupils decided to boycott schools until free books and stationery were supplied. Only one high school continued to operate and even here, a skirmish on the 16th February resulted in an expulsion of the headmaster by the pupils and in the renaming of the school as the Oliver Thambo High School. Further, pupils demanded that regulations which barred any organisations save Inkatha, The Students Christian Movement, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides' be scrapped to allow for free association and organisations. The boycotts continued to the end of March 1986.

The first quarter of 1986, therefore, ended with only a few schools in Umlazi operating without interruptions. The rest of the schools in Durban and Pietermaritzburg faced boycotts, violence and, at times, total chaos as the battle for control raged between pupils and representatives of the Department, Inkatha and vigilantes, and at times the police and the defence force.

#### 5.5.2 Schools in the Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.)

Schools falling under the Department of Education and Training were confronted with a different set of material circumstances:

- i) the council system in the Durban townships had collapsed, hence the confrontation between the pupils and the police was direct;
- ii) the collapse of the council system facilitated, on the part of the pupils, an organisational machinery which could forge direct

links with the National Education Crisis Committee, therefore protest action was less fragmented within this sector.

In response to the call by the National Education Crisis Committee (N.E.C.C.) in December 1985, that all pupils return to school on the 25th January 1986, schools under the D.E.T. in Durban and Pietermaritzburg recorded less than 50% attendance between the 16th and 28th of January. From the 28th attendance rose dramatically to exceed the 90% mark. However, the heavy presence of the police in the townships marred the situation as pupils alleged that they felt intimidated and that the police presence was contrary to the resolution passed by the N.E.C.C.

The period between February and the end of March 1986 was characterised by several incidents of conflict in Lamontville and Chesterville. In Chesterville the presence of the A-Team vigilante group further complicated the conflict, especially when residents alleged collusion between this group and the police. In Lamontville, besides the interrupted schooling, at least four major incidents of confrontation took place before the end of March 1986.

- i) On the 16th of March police opened fire on pupils leaving the church hall after a meeting to discuss the problems in school. A man was killed and five elderly women were injured by police when they tried to administer first aid to the man.
- ii) the intensity and duration of the intermittent boycott which culminated in a week-long stayaway led to the decision by the D.E.T. to withdraw 8 teachers employed on a temporary basis. The regional office of the D.E.T. argued that the reduction in school figures did not justify further employment of those teachers;
- iii) on the 21st of March about 1000 pupils from Lamontville High School were teargassed by the police while trying to board buses to the regional office of the D.E.T. to protest against the dismissal of the eight teachers;

- iv) constant clashes between the A-Team and the youth in Chesterville resulted in interruptions and disorder at the local high school. There was no normal schooling till the end of March 1986.

#### THE SECOND NATIONAL EDUCATION CRISIS COMMITTEE IN DURBAN

The second National Education Crisis Committee met in Durban over the Easter weekend (March 28-31) to review progress in education and the government response to the demands made at the first conference.

The conference made further resolutions, among which was that pupils should go back to school on the understanding that "they do so as part of the strategy for the implementation of the people's education programme to be introduced, and that there should be a three month limit for tangible progress to be evident." (Daily News: 31.1.86) Further, "The delegates agreed that the government did not properly respond to demands made three months ago, and that it was necessary for them to take control and develop an education system which would give every child a fair chance" (Ibid). The conference also resolved that:

- i) pupils returned to classes, and schools which are closed should be opened, and that they demand the right to education as part of a strategy in obtaining an alternate people's education programme
- ii) all people to stay away on June 16, 17 and 18 and that June 16 be declared a National Youth Day;
- iii) the Congress of South African Students be unbanned;
- iv) all political prisioners be freed, exiles allowed to return home and organisations such as the African National Congress be unbanned;
- v) foreign investors withdraw from South Africa.

- vi) the Ad Hoc Commission of People's Education work out a people's education system;
- vii) all communities and organisations should launch rent, consumers and other boycotts.

The National Forum boycotted the conference, and no representatives from Inkatha were invited. An alleged Inkatha-led attack in which two vigilantes were killed and several people, mostly vigilantes, were injured almost disrupted the conference. Inkatha, through its president, denied organising the attack claiming that it was "the wrath of the people". However, he was at pains to state that if Inkatha officials were there, as the Putco company alleged that Inkatha had hired the buses which ferried the vigilantes, this was not sanctioned from above. This attack further aggravated the already hostile relations between the townships youth and Inkatha.

## 5.6 The Aftermath - April 1986

Following upon the resolution to go back to school, taken at the conference, Durban papers reported an 80-100% attendance in African schools except in KwaMashu where attendance was reported around 50%. (The Natal Mercury: 4th April 1986) Specific circumstances merit a division of events into those which took place in the D.E.C. and D.E.T. schools respectively.

### 5.6.1 Schools under D.E.C. control

The tense situation arising from the alleged attack by Inkatha-led vigilantes on the delegates attending the National Education Crisis Committee conference in Durban prepared the ground for more conflict in the townships.

#### 5.6.1.1 KwaMashu

Besides the books and stationery issues, pupils, angered by the role of the Putco bus company in ferrying vigilantes who attacked delegates

at the N.E.C.C., stoned Putco buses forcing them to halt operations in the townships on the 4th of April 1986. Other major incidents which followed were:

- i) a rumoured counter-attack on pupils by Inkatha forced about 12,000 pupils to stay away from school on the 7th of April 1986;
- ii) later developments included the alleged abduction of 30 pupils by township councillors and businessmen known to be Inkatha supporters - a scene which was punctuated by a supreme court interdict against three councillors and a former KwaZulu legislative assembly M.P., restraining them from interfering with a school teacher and four other persons alleged to be activists in the United Democratic Front.
- iii) a pupil at Vuyiswa Mtolo school was killed by armed vigilantes who also wounded a number of other pupils;
- iv) subsequent to this episode the school was set on fire;
- v) consequent to the murder of the pupil, 5 houses four of which belonged to councillors while the fifth belonged to a known Inkatha supporter, were petrol bombed and razed to the ground by a group of youth returning from the murdered pupil's funeral. (Daily News: 28.4.86) A garage belonging to a known Inkatha member was also petrol bombed and burnt, whilst 3 cars, one a KwaZulu registered truck were burnt down by the same group.

#### 5.6.1.2 Umlazi:

In Umlazi, the educational conflict centred around the issue of free books and stationery, and even then, did not involve all senior schools. What protracted the conflict was that earlier meetings to solve the schooling problem had not involved the whole community. Rather, a few of the "conservatives" had heeded the call by Mr W Sabelo, the

local KwaZulu member of parliament, to attend a meeting at the local stadium in February. However, the resolutions taken there came to no avail. The new school term in April started with a 90% attendance in the schools in the region. In addition, the following major recorded events occurred:

- i) Following a sports day meeting at the local stadium, pupils burnt a KwaZulu administration truck and stoned buses. A pupil was badly injured in the process when he refused to take part in the stoning of buses (The Natal Mercury: 7.4.86)
- ii) Pupils boycotted classes in three schools demanding a refund of the money they had contributed towards school fees. In one of the schools a serious physical clash ensued between pupils and vigilantes brought in by the local Inkatha leadership. (The Natal Mercury: 8.4.86)
- iii) Following upon these incidents Mr. W Sabelo, the local KwaZulu M.P. announced that joint action by the "township mayor" and the council "will stamp out unrest in the township" (The Natal Mercury: 9.4.86)
- iv) For two weeks following the clash between Inkatha-led vigilantes and the pupils, two local high schools boycotted classes;
- v) About 500 students at the local technikon demanded the dismissal of the registrar. One of the counts against him was that he had ordered the removal of "political posters", including photographs of some members of the A.N.C. in exile, from students rooms. The conflict culminated in the boycott which saw all students sent home by the administration. The college was closed for two weeks.

However, unlike in the other townships in this region, disruptions in Umlazi did not reach major proportions. There were wounds and irritations inflicted upon the education process, but in the majority of schools life went on normally.

#### 5.6.1.3 Hammarsdale:

Hammarsdale is a traditional Inkatha stronghold, and the power of the organisation was demonstrated during the turbulent week in August when Inkatha virtually took over the policing in the township and the week passed without any major incident of unrest. However, the issue of free books and stationery affected even this "conservative" quarter. For instance:

- i) classes were disrupted for two days in April 1986 when pupils from one of the local high schools (PheZulu) associated themselves with the National Education Crisis Committee. This led to clashes with the local Inkatha Youth Brigade. (The Natal Mercury 6.4.86)
- ii) Four hundred pupils at the nearby Inchange high school went on strike demanding:
  - a) a refund for school fees and
  - b) delivery of free books and stationery.Pupils also tried to burn an effigy of Chief Buthelezi and demanded that it be replaced by a picture of Oliver Tambo, leader of the African National Congress in exile.

#### 5.6.2 Schools Falling Within the Department of Education And Training:

##### 5.6.2.1 Lamontville:

Pupils from D.E.T. schools cited two sources of disaffection:

- i) in spite of the promise of free books and stationery at the beginning of the year, by the 8th of April these had either not arrived or were insufficient;
- ii) the longer history of protest in the townships where the D.E.T. operates has meant that the police and the defence force have kept an almost permanent presence. Pupils

alleged that the presence of these forces was contrary to the resolution passed by the National Education Crisis Committee. When schools re-opened after the Easter recess the police turned away 850 students at the Lamontville high school, stating that the department had suspended classes until the 11th of April 1986.

The Lamontville Education Crisis Committee took the schooling issue up with the D.E.T. Meetings between the two bodies finally resolved that schools re-open on the 21st of April 1986, and that in future there should be joint consultations between the two bodies. This apparently cordial rapprochement was marred by subsequent events.

- i) On the 8th of April 1986 students at the local primary school confronted the headmaster demanding the promised refund for school fees. Police arrived and shot dead a 13 year old girl and injured, with bird shot, seven others aged between seven and eleven years of age.(The Sunday Tribune; 13.4.86)
- ii) On the 16th of April 1986 700 members of the police and defence forces entered Lamontville township at 2 o'clock in the morning and conducted a house to house search. They claimed to have been invited by the township's "defunct" mayor "in the name of the township residents to stamp out crime".
- iii) Two days after the killing of the 13 year old girl, the office of the headmaster at the school was set alight by arsonists.
- iv) Security forces "occupied" the township for eight days, and were only withdrawn on the 24th of April 1986. However a few still remain in the township.

#### 5.6.2.2 Chesterville and Hambanathi:

In Chesterville pupils fought the battle on two fronts:

- i) against the Department of Education and Training together with the police; and

ii) against a vigilante group called the A Team.

Continual clashes between the two sides resulted in:

- i) the alleged killing of an A Team member by the youth, and injury to two others; (The Natal Mercury: 16.4.86)
- ii) the alleged shooting and killing of a 14 year old pupil by A Team members. (The Natal Mercury 21 and 23.4.86)

The above conflict resulted in disturbed schooling in Chesterville where there were no "normal" classes until the week beginning the 28th April 1986, i.e. a month of disrupted schooling. In Hambanathi there was one major incident on the 22nd of April when pupils at the local high school went on a one day boycott.

## 5.7 TRANSPORT:

The conflict and the consequent unrest over transport sprang from two problem areas:

- i) the periodic hikes in bus fares affecting a predominantly working class population;
- ii) the role played by P.U.T.C.O. buses, after the week-long unrest in Durban, in ferrying Inkatha-led vigilantes through the townships of KwaMashu and Umlazi.

In both instances buses became the targets of stoning and petrol bombings. The attack on P.U.T.C.O. buses, in particular, was so intense that in Umlazi one or two buses were either destroyed completely or stoned almost every day during the month of September 1985. In one instance 4 buses were completely destroyed over a period of four days, (30.9 to 3.10.85) prompting P.U.T.C.O to suspend all bus operations in Umlazi and to withdraw the entire fleet from the Umlazi depot. This attack on P.U.T.C.O reached a climax when a bomb went off at the Umlazi depot on the 17th of December 1985, completely destroying one bus and seriously damaging six others. Damage was estimated at R200,000.

The attacks on buses belonging to the Durban Transport Management Board were, in many instances, related to an increase in bus fares. Following a 10 percent uniform increase in busfares by companies in the Durban-Pietermaritzburg regions, a total of 9 buses belonging to the Durban Transport Management Board were burnt down in the period October 1985 to January 1986. This figure excludes 5 buses burnt down in Clermont in various incidents of unrest in October 1985.

The conflict in transport had its mark on the relations within the township communities themselves. For instance cleavages between the established residents and migrants from the hostels appeared

when the latter refused to join in the bus boycotts in October 1985. The latter mobilised forces and attacked the youth in Clermont, an incident which saw one man killed on the 11th October 1985. A repetition of the confrontation almost occurred in February 1986 when rumours spread that hostel dwellers had given the Durban Transport Management Board an undertaking that they would protect the buses.

The second sphere of internal conflict was between taximen and P.U.T.C.O. busdrivers in Umlazi and between the former and hostel dwellers in Clermont. In both instances, taximen were blamed for instigating the boycotts and stoning of buses in order to make financial gains. The looming feud between buses and taxis was not new, as in many instances, when commuters went on bus boycotts, taxis became the alternative source of transport. Thus when buses were burnt in Clermont in October 1985, hostel men from the nearby Kranskloof hostel attacked and killed a taximan alleging that it was the taximen that instigated the youth into burning buses. On the contrary in the feud between P.U.T.C.O. bus drivers and taximen at KwaMakhutha near Durban, commuters joined hands with taximen and started stoning buses (The Natal Mercury: 10.1.86).

The most recent conflict in transport arose over the announcement by the bus companies that fares would rise by an average of 15% on the 10th of February 1986. This led to an immediate stoning of the buses in Clermont on the 2nd of February 1986. The Durban Transport Management Board had to withdraw the bus service to the area for a week. The Edendale bus service in Pietermaritzburg had to be withdrawn for the same reasons. Stoning and burning of buses continued in Clermont up to the end of March 1986. At the discussions at the National Education Crisis Committee delegates expressed strong feelings about pupils burning and stoning buses carrying their parents and workers. This seems to have had an effect, as the attacks on buses ceased especially in Clermont. The attack on P.U.T.C.O. buses on the 12th of April 1986 was apparently a retaliation by pupils against P.U.T.C.O.'s role in ferrying vigilantes who attacked delegates at the National Education Crisis Committee. One recorded incident of an attack on buses in Lamontville happened on the 8th of April 1986.

## 5.8 CO-OPERATION BETWEEN WORKER, STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS:

The success of the consumer boycott in the Eastern Cape introduced a new dimension in the combined strategies of resistance to domination. The consumer boycott per se was no new strategy. What was new was the intensity and scale of its application, together with the consequent publicity that it elicited. In Natal, the Metal and Allied Workers Union, an affiliate of the then Federation of South African Trade Unions (F O S A T U) instituted a six week consumer boycott against white owned retail businesses in Pietermaritzburg and Howick in an attempt to apply pressure to the S A R M C O L B T R management who had fired 1000 workers after a strike over wages. Although this did not lead to a change of heart in S A R M C O L management, retail business in both towns dropped by about 60 to 70 percent.

Following upon the "success" of the boycott call in Pietermaritzburg as measured by the concern it aroused from the white Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce, F O S A T U unionists together with youth groupings convened a meeting in Clermont towards the end of August 1985. A Consumer Boycott committee comprising representatives from F O S A T U, black businessmen, students' organisations and the community through the Clermont Advisory Council called for a boycott of white retail business in Pinetown and New Germany. Inkatha declined the invitation to serve on the committee. Demands laid down by the committee were:

- i) withdrawal of troops from the townships;
- ii) lifting of the state of emergency;
- iii) release of political detainees.

The boycott by Clermont residents started on the 1st of September 1985 and lasted until the 26th of September 1985. The call for the boycott to extend into the other townships i.e. Umlazi, KwaMashu, Lamontville

and Chesterville, did not succeed as most shops in those areas had been destroyed in the August unrest and residents would encounter problems as very few shopping outlets were available in these townships. Meetings called to investigate the possibility of the boycott could not reach any agreements especially as Inkatha-affiliated traders and officials refused to co-operate. In spite of this, the boycott of white retail businesses in the centre of Durban was declared on the 1st of September 1985. A measure of support came from the conscientised groups, both black and white, but on the whole the effects were minimal.

Meanwhile strong opposition to the boycott came from Inyanda, the Natal African Chamber of Commerce, through its president who appealed to the "Zulu people" to halt the boycott charging that F O S A T U was "intimidating consumers" and "challenging the authority of Chief Buthelezi" in the region. Unwilling to engage in a confrontation, F O S A T U called off the boycott in Natal.

A further area of co-operation between "progressive" unions and the community was in the labour scene. On realising the deteriorating situation in the townships, church leaders in the National Institute for Reconciliation (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and other church leaders) called for a national prayer day on the 9th October 1985. Inkatha accepted the idea in principle but wanted the date postponed, claiming that the time was not ripe for concerted action as the day might be used as a springboard for "black on black" violence. Notwithstanding these objections the day of prayer was observed without incident.

#### 5.9 THE CONFLICT ON THE SHOP FLOOR. INKATHA VS THE ESTABLISHED UNION MOVEMENT

The debate over the involvement by organised labour in community politics was seemingly resolved when in November 1984 the Azanian Peoples Organisation, the United Democratic Front, the Congress

of South African Students and the Federation of South African Trade Unions co-operated in organising a successful worker stayaway in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area in an attempt to force the government to withdraw the police and the defence force from the townships. From then on there has been a close co-operation between community-based extra-establishment organisations and the unions. When the largest trade union federation in South Africa's history, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (C O S A T U) was launched in November 1985, among the resolutions passed were:

- i) opposing the state of emergency;
- ii) rejecting bantustans and federalism as solutions to the country's problems and
- iii) a commitment to ensuring that the social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa whilst supporting the call for disinvestment as a lever for change.

The last two resolutions set the stage for conflict with Inkatha. In January Chief Buthelezi came out strongly against C O S A T U calling the federation a "front for the A N C" and spelling out the intention of setting up an Inkatha union by establishing Inkatha branches at every factory. Soon a co-ordinating committee was formed with Mr Gumedze, an ex organiser of the Metal and Allied Workers Union , as its chairman (Daily News: 13.1.86).

At a meeting of workers at Esikhawini near Empangeni on the 23rd of January 1986 , a decision was taken to form the United Workers Union of South Africa. The union was to be based on the principles of continued foreign investment and free enterprise.

The ensuing rivalry between Inkatha and C O S A T U led to diatribe between the two parties. What further bedevilled the scene was the

consequent attacks on persons and property. In Newcastle 10 C O S A T U union officials alleged that they were being harassed by the KwaZulu police, and that one of them had been arrested purportedly for being a member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. (City Press: 6.4.86) At a meeting attended by about 1000 residents at Madadeni near Newcastle, the following allegations were made:

- i) one of the unionists had positively identified the "mayor" of Madadeni as one of the attackers; the "mayor" who was at the meeting denied this and threatened to close the meeting;
- ii) 5 unionists belonging to the Textile Workers Union had been arrested by the KwaZulu police for "disturbing the peace" and had been made to pay R30,00 bail. (City Press 13.4.86)

The formation of the Inkatha based union was condemned by the International Union of Food and Allied Workers as "seeking to substitute loyalty to tribal politics" whereas workers owed loyalty to their "class and to the labour movement." (City Press I3.4.86). The confrontation between Inkatha and C O S A T U was further exacerbated by the alleged attacks on members belonging to either side. For instance:

- i) In Northern Natal the house of Ntuli, a shop steward in the Metal and Allied Workers Union was razed to the ground. (City Press: 27.4.86)
- ii) At Esikhawini armed men shot and injured Vilani, a Metal and Allied Workers Union president on the 24th of April 1986. His house was gutted whilst his brother who was injured is in hospital. (City Press: 27.4.86)
- iii) A man distributing U W U S A pamphlets was manhandled at Congella - a strong C O S A T U area. (City Press: 27.4.86)

- iv) Gunmen in a kombi attacked the house of a C O S A T U official in KwaMashu. After burning two cars parked outside they fled. They were caught outside Umlazi and two of them were alleged to be members of the KwaZulu police force.

On the 1st of May U W U S A was launched by about 70,000 people at Kings Park Stadium, whilst C O S A T U organised almost 40,000 workers in five separate rallies in Natal, two of which were already banned by the district magistrates. The composition of the crowd in the U W U S A launch is a debatable point as research workers reported that almost half the crowd was definitely non-workers, mostly elderly people, women and school children. Moreover, chiefs from the rural districts had been painfully organising, including compelling rural residents to attend the rally. Free transport was provided. \* In the final analysis, control on the shop floor will be decided by members on either side. At its launch in December C O S A T U had a signed up membership of 565,000 in 33 member unions whilst 430,000 were paid up. By then, there was one Inkatha affiliated union, even then with serious internal strains, and a general secretary who is facing cases of fraud.

\* Information collected by the Labour Monitoring Group.

## 6. AN APPRAISAL OF THE HYPOTHESES

Up to the time when rioting broke out in the major townships in Durban claims, especially from the government and some liberal quarters were that Natal had been quiet because of the strong Inkatha presence, and that Inkatha was a moderating force in the region. The evidence submitted in this paper is that not only has the intensity and scope of unrest and the consequent violence been a cause for great alarm, but also, that the apparent "black on black" violence has put into question the ideology of non-violence as espoused by Inkatha. While the influence of Inkatha on the politics of this region can not be refuted, claims of a "moderate influencing force" do not hold. The influence has been more at the level of force than ideology. The nature and course of black politics in Natal must, therefore, be sought elsewhere.

The second hypothesis sought an explanation in the "unique" material conditions in Natal. The argument was that not only do these material conditions account for the relatively few specific fuse situations, they also facilitate the development of a third force in the configuration i.e. Inkatha. Hence the conflict has been between the mass of protesters and the state on one side and the protesters and Inkatha on the other. This has tended to dissipate the energy of the protesters and it is on this second explanation that the analysis should focus.

## 7. THE MODEL FOR POLITICAL CONFLICT - A CRITIQUE:

In discussing the nature and course of political conflict in Natal's African townships, the application of Gurr's model of political conflict merits a closer analysis. Briefly, there are four elements in the model, which need individual analysis.

### 7.1 Relative Deprivation:

Empirical evidence as espoused in this paper suggests the presence

of relative deprivation among residents in Natal's African townships. Responses to deprivation in education such as has been the case with the non-supply of free books and stationery, the hikes in transport fares and performance by incumbents in local government point to the salience of relative deprivation of a political nature. There have been numerous incidents of confrontation between the protesting masses and the state or representatives of the state over the same issues. What needs to be explained is why the magnitude of political conflict has not matched that obtaining in the Eastern Cape or in Alexandra, for instance.

#### 7.2 Collective Consciousness:

Collective consciousness arises out of material conditions combined with the effectiveness of the political and ideological superstructures. To the extent that collective consciousness would facilitate peoples' willingness to enter into overt political conflict and at times in acts of violence, it becomes a crucial variable in the analysis. Material conditions of township life among Africans in Natal can be roughly divided into three depending on the administrative authority:

- i) townships falling within the KwaZulu administration;
- ii) townships falling under the Natalia Development Board;
- iii) shanty towns or informal settlements.

The unevenness of conditions in these three categories has contributed to a fragmented social consciousness where the relatively better off in the townships within the KwaZulu administration are relatively less radicalised those in the Natalia Development Board townships are relatively politicised, whilst residents in shanty towns become easy tools in the political ball game depending on whatever group holds out the best promises.

Structurally, the close link between Inkatha and the KwaZulu administration have made the former a strong resource base. The KwaZulu

administration controls the majority of the townships in Natal and can effectively mediate in the lives of the people residing in shanty towns. This becomes a source of power for Inkatha and enables it to "distribute" resources no matter how limited this "distribution" is. This has given Inkatha a strong organisational base since it can temper its ideological message with material items. On the contrary, extra-establishment organisations such as the United Democratic Front and the National Forum can only thrive on the discontent of the people since they have no material benefits as a source of power. Conscientisation of the people in Natal thus stems from two structurally diverse forces, the intra-establishment and extra-establishment groups, and is further complicated by the material gains that each makes from its structural position. The ideological state apparatus has not been idle in condemning all forms of protest and thus, criminalising protest action as well as the protestor. This has had a tremendous effect on the willingness of the residents to embark upon protest action.

### 7.3 Organisational Ability of the Discontented:

The existence of the two camps described above does not imply differences in discontent among residents in either camp. What it indicates is that the expression of discontent differs in line with the ideological leanings in the camps. This in turn affects the organisational capacity of the discontented and consequently the thrust of protest action. Protest and confrontation emanate mainly from students and youth groupings who, in turn, mobilise the residents. Inkatha is also a strong mobilising force especially given its structural position which places it in favourable light from the state. Given the psychological instinct of self preservation which induces fear on the part of humans to engage in "dangerous" ventures, protest-oriented organisations face an arduous task in mobilising the masses. The organisational capacity of "dissident" groupings is, therefore, tremendously constrained especially where they have to contend with an opposing group from within the townships.

#### 7.4 The Repressive Capacity of the Regime:

The South African state has at its disposal an armoury of strategies to contain opposition and challenge to its hegemony. Adam lists three important areas where the state employs its "power" to contain dissidence.

- i) symbolic alternatives manifested in the apartheid utopia;
- ii) effective police control;
- iii) economic integration and improvement in living standards of blacks.

In containing the magnitude of political conflict in the townships, the state has selectively employed the above three conditions to the detriment of the "dissidents". In Natal, the employment of brutal police force has been tempered with the activities of the amabutho or vigilantes thus rendering the police ostensibly distant from the conflict. The state-controlled media has diligently echoed the theme of "black on black" violence and constantly lambasted the "agitators" and "troublemakers" for their role. It is now common knowledge in the townships that amabutho or vigilantes enjoy immunity from the police. This serves two purposes.

- i) the state can stand at a distance and escape international condemnation for "brutally oppressing black people";
- ii) divisions among black people weaken their thrust on the state and dissipate the strength of the resistance.

In instances where the threat becomes imminent, the state does not hesitate to move in the police and the army to "restore law and order". Even here, the state is careful to emphasise "at the request of the communities themselves", where "community" refers to the councillors, support notwithstanding. Many activists have been detained and

there have been a number of allegations of ill treatment and physical assaults on detainees. Some of these have been upheld in courts of law.

The apartheid utopia has created massive bureaucracies thus giving opportunities to a sizeable section of the black population. This has resulted in a measure of integration of the civil service where the co-optation of the homelands as agents of the state has further created a "forced" constituency. This contrived solidarity has been a factor in weakening the "resistance" by the masses, as has been the case in education where inspectors have not hesitated to call in the police to suppress even peaceful marches by the pupils.

#### 8. CONCLUSION.

In conclusion it might be argued that both the material and ideological conditions which exist in Natal's African townships also exist in townships in the other provinces. This is true, but what is missing in the other provinces is the presence of a strong counter-revolutionary organisational base with a populist appeal. Inkatha is more than a homeland party whose function is the mobilisation of voters for local elections. Inkatha's appeal is that it has its own ideology and a material base with a stake in the system. In the present context Inkatha offers the alternative to going into the streets and getting shot - that this alternative "change through peaceful means" is no more than a slogan does not matter. The atmosphere in the townships is charged with slogans from both sides. Admittedly, the politics of "resistance" has yielded some "visible fruits": the very process of reform that the country is going through is ample proof of that.

The accuracy of Gurr's model as a predictive instrument in measuring the magnitude of political conflict lies in the selective weighting

of the variables to match specific conjunctures at any given time. In the present situation in Natal, it is the organisational capacity of the "dissidents" vis a vis the repressive capacity of the regime combined with the states co-optive power as manifested in Inkatha that have maintained the existing precarious balance.

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**SOUTH AFRICA'S REFORM PROCESS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE****1. INTRODUCTION**

Perhaps nowhere in the world has the term "reform" acquired as much current usage as is the case in South Africa. The term emanates from:

- i) the great disparities in the power relations (political and economic) in South Africa;
- ii) the fact that these disparities coincide with the racial divisions; and
- iii) the realisation that this coincidence is no accident of history and space, but rather a result of a conscious effort by man.

The controversy with regard to reform in South Africa is not over the process per se but rather its meaning to, and impact on, those in and out of power. By definition reform is a unilateral response to a dialectical process, an attempt, by those in power, to contain challenges to the existing power relations. It is because of the centrality of this unilateral attribute that the property "fundamental" can not be associated with the reform process. A social system can be overhauled but this leaves the fundamental parts intact. The question therefore, with regard to the South African socio-political system is: are the current reforms sufficient to persuade the subordinates that their lot will improve? A look into what the subordinates perceive as an ideal society might shed some light on this issue.

**2. AFRICAN CONCEPTIONS OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY**

In South Africa political and economic power relations mean white power and black powerlessness. Of the black subdivisions Africans are not only the descendants of the indigenous occupants of this country, they also constitute an overwhelming majority of approximately 75 percent of the country's population. Further, in terms of both political and economic stratification, they are at the bottom of the social ladder. This social deprivation has given rise

to a militant consciousness and an aggressive nationalism championed by an exiled nationalist movement - the African National Congress, with tremendous symbolic appeal and significant power through its guerilla operations. Armed with this moral weight and an international recognition the African National Congress has personified "the struggle against oppression" and therefore championed the call for the total transformation of South African society. This brings the African to the centre of the conflict and consequently of the reform process. As the wronged party in the dispute, he can sit in judgement and pronounce on the validity of a process that seeks to redress the wrongs that have been carried out for generations. It is this argument that makes African conceptions of an ideal society a sine qua non in an analysis of the reform process in the country.

## 2.1 Indications from previous research findings

Findings drawn from previous research projects indicate that:

- i) Africans perceive their lot to have become worse over the past 10 years in terms of economic and political capabilities; (Zulu 1984 and 1986);
- ii) they attribute their lot to their political and economic powerlessness (Zulu, 1984 and 1986);
- iii) their conception of an ideal society is that of a non-racial democracy based on a universal franchise. Their preference of an economic system varies from a mixed economy to a purely socialist model (Zulu, 1981; 1986). Only organisations such as Inkatha which operate within the government's framework espouse the free enterprise solution but even they emphasise that it should be non-racial.

The above findings are an indication of what Africans perceive as their current position within South African society. What is significant about them is that the main indicators of deprivation are the political and the economic. They thus focus at the centre of power. As reform becomes meaningful to the extent that it addresses

the central issues, an examination of the reform process within this context will shed some light on the effectiveness of the reforms undertaken over the past 10 years.

A significant observation to make is that the majority of the reforms over the past 10 years have been a response to intense and at times violent internal resistance to some aspects of government policy. This in turn has brought a significant amount of internal as well as international pressure to bear on the South African political and economic systems. Most reforms mainly by the government and to an extent by the private sector have sought to address the symptoms rather than the causes of the disease. It is when one views the reform process in this context that one finds that the concept of "fundamental structural reform" can not exist within the problematic of power relations in South Africa.

### **3. THE RESURGENCE OF BLACK RESISTANCE**

From 1948 onwards specific legislation drew the lines of white control over blacks more clearly than had been the case hitherto. The key Acts were the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and the Bantu Education Act of 1954. Combined with the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 these three laid the foundation for future challenges as the seventies were to demonstrate, first in production, then in education and finally in local government.

#### **3.1 Resistance on the shop floor - the 1973 strikes**

The Durban strikes in 1973 shifted the balance of power in the sphere of production, and the subsequent changes in labour relations had their origins in them. The 1973 strikes involved 100 000 workers in Durban alone and basically concerned wages. Their impact was however more far-reaching. They were an active demonstration to the world and to black people in particular that the lull of the sixties was over. The subsequent appointment of the Wiehahn Commission in 1977 had its beginnings in the 1973 strikes.

### 3.2 Soweto seventy six

Soweto 76 was a watershed in the history of black resistance to white domination. However, what was even more significant is that it introduced a new dimension in South African politics:

- i) big capital realised that the challenge was not only limited to the political sphere but that the entire social formation was at stake. On its own the government was structurally incapable of coping with the challenges and it was perceived that both industry and commerce had a role to play in structuring South African society. The 1973 strikes had introduced a measure of deracialisation in South African capital by drastically increasing the number of Africans in the professional and managerial ranks within industry and commerce. However, reforms in the sphere of production were on their own insufficient: the arena of reproduction, i.e. housing, education and recreational amenities needed a face lift as well. The Urban Foundation, initiated by Rembrandt's Rupert and Anglo-American's Oppenheimer, came into being to redress this imbalance. The new "middle class", which "deracialisation" in industry and commerce had created, needed "space" in the overcrowded townships.
- ii) Following the political turbulence of 1976, the exodus by the youth from the country increased the numerical strength of the African National Congress and a few years later the ANC's internal presence resurfaced dramatically.
- iii) Both the government and the captains of industry came to realise that gains made by Africans on the shopfloor could not be reversed. From its side the government sought to isolate the politics of production from global politics. It therefore contemplated the statutory recognition of African trade unions, but at the same time curbed any fusion between shop floor and community or national politics. Wiehahn was later to declare that unregistered unions were out of the system of controls and to effect this control it was essential that African unions register.

- iv) Finally, in one drastic move school children had unilaterally "abolished" the Bantu Education Act of 1954. But, more than that, a new phase of the "children's war" had entered the South African national conflict. To date children are in the vanguard in the struggle for power and control on the one side, and for freedom and assertiveness on the other.

#### **4. THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND REFORM**

The reform process in South Africa needs to be seen as a reaction to internal and external pressures on both the political and economic systems. It stems from the realisation, by the government and private capital, that South Africa cannot achieve political and economic stability in the face of

- i) mounting internal resistance and the consequent unrest; and
- ii) increasing international isolation and the threat of economic sanctions.

While the above realisation exists, the state still commands ample resources to pursue a policy of containment by:

- i) co-opting a significant segment of the elites from within the subordinate groupings, thus ensuring a semblance of rule by consent;
- ii) relaxing some of the laws which have triggered unrest;
- iii) coercion i.e. using the police and the army to achieve a measure of compliance and ensure that there is at least sufficient stability to enable the economy to function.

##### **4.1 Some key structural reforms since 1975.**

###### **4.1.1 Reforms in labour relations**

The report by the Wiehahn Commission in 1979 ushered in a new phase in labour relations as well as in community politics in the African townships. The recognition of African trade unions brought with it significant developments:

- i) on the part of both employers and the state union activity could be contained, since recognition brought with it the willingness if not the commitment on the part of the unions to work within mutually defined rules - the power relations notwithstanding;
- ii) it empowered African employees who could legally bargain for better conditions of service, wages and promotional opportunities in employment. This brought in a measure of deracialisation in the work place, some of which had a significant symbolic impact on race relations;
- iii) shopfloor democracy could be transferred into the African communities and civic organisations. While the law forbade formal association between registered unions and political organisations, in practice it is difficult to abstract a unionist who is also a member of the community, a commuter and a rent payer;
- iv) workers used their power to effect a shift in the economic and ideological positions. For instance, the national calendar will never be the same after the workers' definition of May 1 and June 16 as public holidays. Further, the position of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the Azanian Congress of Trade Unions and the Council of Unions of South Africa vis a vis community and national politics has demonstrated the effectiveness of an empowered worker constituency.

While reforms in labour relations have had a significant positive impact, the periodic and especially most recent harassment of unionists by the state through detentions and intimidation is a demonstration by the state of its unwillingness to allow any serious challenge to its hegemony. The state's intentions in this sphere are to control reform and prevent any attempts at transforming social relations. It will be interesting to observe what the state's reaction to the United Workers Union of South Africa will be: UWUSA is a reformist organisation with strong links to Inkatha. As a counter to COSATU, UWUSA could fulfil the state's anti-transformation objectives more efficiently under the guise of a black initiative.

That it is functioning without any official curbs in spite of the state of emergency, also that some sections within the private sector are giving it preferential treatment over COSATU, is an embryonic demonstration of the direction.

#### 4.1.2 Reforms in education

Since Soweto 76, schooling within the black sector in general and the African sector in particular has verged on the chaotic. Soweto 76 was followed by a wave of boycotts and demonstrations over racial schooling and particularly inferior education given to blacks. The national school disturbances of 1979 and 1980 further demonstrated that the educational house was on fire. The de Lange Commission's report of 1981 was a sequel to these developments, but the state's response to its recommendations underpinned the inadequacy of reform against the demands for a total transformation in education. For instance:

- i) the Commission's recommendation for a single ministry of education met with rejection from the state;
- ii) in the state's acceptance of equal but separate education the "equal" was geared towards solving the manpower problem while the "separate" maintained the ideological power relations;
- iii) in spite of an increase in spending on black education the lion's share of the education budget is still allocated to white education. "In the 1983/84 financial year 52,8 percent of the total education budget was allocated to white education (16% of the pupils enrolled at educational institutions)" African pupils who comprise, 70,1 percent of the pupils received 19,9 percent of the budget, (Work in Progress No 42 p19).

Admittedly, reforms in education have created space for marked improvements. There have been attempts at compulsory education in some areas although linking this to the Community Council system was like sounding a death-knell for the effort. Also in 1986 there has

been an attempt to supply free books and stationery in all African schools but again bureaucratic bungling in this sphere has brought in chaos and disturbances. What can be hailed as success is that the principle of compulsory and free education has at last partially triumphed - free only in financial terms since the struggle for control is still waging furiously. The current unrest in education is a constant reminder of the inadequacy of the reform initiative when pitted against a growing consciousness and mobilisation for transformation.

#### 4.1.3 Deracialising politics - the new constitution

South African politics, especially the politics of Afrikaner nationalism, has been characterised by a strong corporate group identity which has in reality meant unchallenged white power and black powerlessness. This position has left the ruling elite vulnerable to attack especially at a moral level:

- i) it could be accused of racism and racial oppression;
- ii) in spite of the ruling power bloc's rationale for a plural society, it could not justify the attendant vertical inequalities made more visible by the racial divide.

The beginning of the eighties witnessed a qualitative shift in the vocabulary of government, especially from some senior members of the National Party, from rigid plural divisions to some form of race federation. Some of the holy cows of apartheid were desanctified in the name of a "common South Africanism". The Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts were to be later sacrificed. They started losing their sanctity at this stage. Following upon this preparation for a change in attitude the government announced its New Constitution - the formation of a Tricameral Legislature, one for whites, one for coloureds and one for Indians. According to this new reform initiative Africans were already accommodated in their homelands and "urban Africans" i.e. those residing in what is called "common South Africa" were to be represented at local level through the formation of Town Councils and at national level through their respective national states. The question is why had this new arrangement to take the

form it did?

- i) The Coloured Persons Representative Council had collapsed. The Labour Party's policy of "wrecking from within" had brought in first an impasse culminating in the government's sacking of the chairman of the Council and the subsequent appointment of Alathea Jansen who was not even an "elected" member of the Council.
- ii) The South African Indian Council existed in name only - support from the Indian population was negligible.
- iii) The policy of "working from within" by the leadership in the African homelands had produced four "independent" homelands and the rest were functioning bureaucracies which could be trusted not to wreck the social order. Hence at most the homeland policy had yielded total compliance in "independence"; at least, it yielded functional accommodation, thus averting a crisis in the legitimacy of the existing order.
- iv) The numerical strength of Africans rendered the government's formula for ensuring white hegemony unworkable. The 4: 2: 1 ratio which guaranteed a white veto in "general affairs" could be justified in terms of the existing racial strengths. Including Africans in this arrangement would have revealed naked white baasskap.

The positive impact of this reform measure is difficult to estimate. The government could afford to "accommodate" coloureds and Indians whilst by virtue of their numbers it was difficult to "accommodate" Africans. Besides, the homelands had provided a geo-political space for control and thus relieved the government of this unwholesome burden. While it created a psychological space by bringing in "Peoples of colour" to the "holy shrines" in Cape Town the objective power relations have not changed in spite of the shifts in position. The recent failure of the Houses of Representatives and of Delegates to prevent the passing of the Internal Security Act testify to the futility of effectiveness within co-optation. The National Party still rules South Africa.

At the level of challenge to the status quo, the new political dispensation brought the subordinate groups closer together. The Freedom Charter of the Congress Alliance of the fifties was resurrected and the United Democratic Front revived the creed of non-racialism. That this was an unintended effect is evidenced by the harassment and intimidation of the leadership of the United Democratic Front by both the government and homeland authorities.

#### 4.1.4 Reforms in African urbanisation

##### 4.1.4.1 Developments in black local government

Historically Africans have never had true local government. The various bodies which have been officially referred to as local government institutions have always functioned either in an advisory capacity or as fronts for government authorities. This has been due to their lack of both an economic and a political base. Hence from Advisory Boards to Urban Bantu Councils, later Community Councils and finally Town and Village Councils - the main objection by Africans to these bodies has been that they are dummy institutions created to further the "state's oppressive objectives". Earlier bodies such as the Advisory Boards and Urban Bantu Councils had been premised on the state's belief that Africans were temporary sojourners in urban areas. The ideological shifts which followed Soweto 76 brought in acceptance by the state that African urbanisation was a reality that could not be wished away. From 1977 the government tried to introduce reforms in African local government - the Riekert Commission's report in 1979 was an attempt to resolve the status of Africans in urban areas. It recommended that urban Africans be given the right to live permanently in urban areas, and that this entailed rights of ownership of property. However, it emphasised that African political rights be exercised through the homelands. The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 crystallised these recommendations:

- i) Africans were to have fully elected municipal organs;
- ii) The new Local Authorities were empowered to raise their own funds to support local development programmes;

- iii) Control of urban Africans would pass from the Administrative Boards (renamed Development Boards) on to the new Local Authorities.

The Act brought to the surface the contradictions enshrined in the new policy. While many welcomed the government's acceptance of the permanence of Africans in urban areas together with the attendant right of ownership of property, the load passed on to the new Local Authorities precipitated a fiscal crisis which culminated in their demise. Urban infrastructure such as housing, schools, recreational facilities, electrification and transport networks had been ignored for far too long and the new Local Authorites had no viable tax base, since there are neither industries nor commercial bases in the townships. This precipitated a fiscal crises as the town councils increased rents and levies in garbage collection in an attempt to generate revenue. The 1984 township riots were a sequel to this. At present there are less than 10 fully functioning Local Authorities in the whole country whereas the government had intended that by the end of 1984, 104 would be functioning.

#### 4.1.4.2 "Orderly urbanisation"

If there is any single Act, in the South African statute book, that has attained unparalleled notoriety, it is the Black Urban Areas Act of 1945. The Act had far-reaching implications:

- i) It prescribed for and limited the movement of Africans, both rural and urban, in and out of the urban areas. This, therefore, affected both their residential and employment capabilities, limiting them to objects of the law rather than individuals with choices to make.
- ii) The passbooks (the dompas) used to ensure that the law was enforceable became symbols of "terror and oppression" as the number of Africans arrested for pass offences was astronomical.

unfortunate aspect is that the government has been half-hearted in their promulgation and implementation thus undermining the very process it sought to encourage. On the positive side the reforms have included:

- i) the introduction of the 99 year lease in 1976. This granted urban Africans the right to lease property in the townships. The government meant to use this as an attraction to Africans to acquire homeland citizenship and duly tied the leasehold to the latter. It was only after vehement protests that it withdrew the homeland citizenship clause.
- ii) the acceptance by the government of the principle of freehold rights for urban Africans. Going together with this has been the relaxation in the Group Areas Act for trading purposes where some central business districts have been opened up in some cities.
- iii) the setting up of the Private Sector Council on urbanisation with a view to developing an urban policy based on the removal of influx control. There are even attempts to modify the Group Areas Act. This was an initiative from the private sector in an attempt to promote "orderly urbanisation" with corresponding rural development programmes. It is too early to comment on the "success" of the move.

#### 4.1.5 Common identity documents

Identity documents for Africans (the reference book or "dompas") served two main purposes:

- i) identification, and
- ii) influx control.

This tied the pass or reference book closely to the problems encountered by Africans in employment and urbanisation so much that the "dompas" became a "symbol of oppression". In April 1986 the State President announced that as from July 1986 all South Africans would carry a single identity document, and also that the Black Urban

would carry a single identity document, and also that the Black Urban Areas Act would be repealed, thus scrapping the provisions for influx control. These announcements met with euphoria from the reformist camps especially the government, the private sector and the homeland authorities. The effects of these reforms have not been noticed yet but there does not seem to be much fuss in the townships about this "new release" in spite of the heavy advertisements on SATV.

A look into the reforms on passes and influx control gives an impression that what they have achieved is to transform control through coercion into control through legitimization. While Africans can seek work anywhere without fear of prosecution, the capacity to provide one's own accommodation within the stipulated health regulations will render the reforms hollow in the face of the economic realities facing rural African people. While "control" remains, the blame will be shifted from the government as the onus will be on the individual to furnish himself with "approved accommodation".

## 5. THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S ROLE IN PROMOTING STRUCTURAL REFORM

Some analysts, notably structuralists, see a collusion of interests between racial domination and economic exploitation (Legassick 1974, Wolpe 1976 and Nolutshungu 1983). The opposing view notably by Adam and James (Adam 1971, 79 and 85; James 1984) is that racism and capital accumulation are incompatible and therefore in order to achieve a healthy economic growth rate, South African capital needs to deracialise, and is indeed deracialising. It is by locating the private sector within this latter view that its role in the reform process can be properly evaluated. Most notably the private sector has been in the vanguard in:

- i) the formation of the Urban Foundation in 1976. The Foundation has played a pioneering role in the psychological battle for African urbanisation thus paving the way for the government's acceptance of this move in principle;
- ii). the provision of housing and housing loans to Africans in the townships. This has even extended to the mining houses

- where mining villages have been established;
- iii) the setting up of the Private Sector Council on Urbanisation in an attempt to "normalise" urbanisation through balancing programmes on rural development. Even before the formation of this body, a number of rural development programmes have been under way. The Anglo-American Chairman's Fund is one of the examples of the involvement by the private sector in the field of development;
  - iv) the attempt to bring together the main contestants in the South African political drama - the government and the African National Congress. The mission to Lusaka led by Anglo-American Corporation's Gavin Relly paved the way for subsequent trips of a similar nature by other bodies. This legitimated the African National Congress among many white South Africans -a significant psychological shift.
  - v) the drive for the recognition of African trade unions, perhaps the most significant and the only change that can be termed "fundamental" so far. This has had the most far-reaching consequences in the lives of Africans as economic bargaining power is probably the only potential weapon they have.

Present attempts at deracialising the South African economy have, however, not been very successful. There has been some measure of reform in the attempts to create equal opportunities for employment but the marginality of these measures in the face of an incremental relative deprivation justifies the view that the private sector is only interested in the emergence of an African middle class whose function is to provide a buffer against white capital. Further, Africans regard most of these improvements as "tokenism" thus taking off the sails from the ships of reform.

## 6. POSSIBILITIES FOR STRUCTURAL REFORM IN THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS

One of the fundamental characteristics of the South African politico-economic systems is that in the dialectic between resistance and reform, the reform process has always been reactive. This has meant

that reforms have amounted to shifts by precedence as long as such shifts do not challenge fundamental political and economic power relations. There is fear among some analysts and politicians that as pressures mount the government might resort to a laager situation and even possibly reactionary rule. This school of thinking cites the growing challenge from the right as the beginnings of this process which might even entail a siege economy (see Schlemmer 1985 and numerous speeches by Chief M G Buthelezi, as well as the reaction by the State President to the Eminent Persons Group and to Sir Geoffrey Howe's visit). However, Adam refutes this view as he states "contrary to conventional wisdom, increased pressure does not necessarily mean a threatened group will close ranks in intransigent defiance" (Adam 1979 p301).

Two developments remain crucial in determining the magnitude and tempo of the reform process in South Africa:

- i) the cohesiveness and consequently the organisational capacity of the internal resistance movement; and
- ii) the effectiveness of guerilla activities by the African National Congress.

The unrest in the African townships since September 1984 have brought in some significant developments:

- i) African Local Government has virtually collapsed.
- ii) There has been a closing of the ranks among the populist community organisations and trade unions. This has resulted in concerted efforts at organising against both capital and the state. Further this has brought in contradictions on the part of capital as in some instances captains of industry and commerce have had to side with the resistance movement in an attempt to isolate the economic from the political. This quasi-rapprochement has isolated the state thus giving a measure of legitimacy to the forces of resistance. Thus:
- a) The Federated Chamber of Industries has had to declare its concern about the current state of emergency in general and

- its effects on industrial relations in particular;
- b) Individual companies have called upon the state to release unionists held in detention;
  - c) There is growing concern among private companies, and especially the multinationals, about the restrictive effects of the Group Areas Act on the provision of housing and recreational amenities for Africans;
  - d) From its side the government has responded to the pressure to demonstrate the bona fides of the "free enterprise" ideology by opening up some central business districts in some cities for trading by Africans or all race groups.

The above developments constitute the positive side of the reform coin. On the negative side efforts at containing resistance to domination have come from both the state and the extensions of the state's political and administrative apparatus - i.e. the homelands, the town councils and the police. For instance, there are claims of very strong links between the army of vigilantes, who constitute the counter-insurgency groups in the townships, and the town councillors or functionaries within the homeland system. Additional assertions that vigilantes commit their acts of terror with the police looking on add more weight to the state's involvement, if not by commission then by omission. The increasing use of state power includes the proclamation of states of emergency, detentions, bannings and the deployment of the police and defence forces in the townships. These moves question the sincerity of reforms especially when the latter largely addresses the symptoms rather than the causes of the problems.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The tempo of the reform processes in the next five to ten years will largely be determined by the dialectic between resistance and containment, with reform as a technique or by-product of the containment strategy. History has demonstrated that the co-optation strategy is meeting with increasing challenges:

- i) at the political level the co-opted elites are increasingly being rejected as they fail to deliver the expected goods. This has resulted in increased militancy and radicalisation especially of the youth. In an attempt to re-establish their authority both these structures and the government have had to resort to more coercive measures. The demise of the town councils and problems in KwaNdebele provide a few highlights in these developments. The situation in other similar institutions is in a state of flux;
- ii) within the economic sphere the strategy of co-opting a segment of the work force into the dominant ethos is meeting with increasing problems. Firstly the growing strength in unionisation and the consequent worker consciousness within a racial capitalist environment polarises the situation on a racial basis. Secondly the growth of an economic middle class without the corresponding social titles draws the beneficiaries on to the side of the masses thus undermining the basis of its own creation;
- iii) finally, the basic issue in South Africa is self-determination. Reforms, however significant, can not address this.

In conclusion, the success of reform lies in its capacity to achieve stability and thus to create space for fundamental changes to take place without effecting trauma on society. Prospects for the South African reform initiatives to achieve this do not look very bright.

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## **MARKETING, MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION AND THE "AFRICAN CONSUMER": THE SOCIAL MISCONSTRUCTION OF REALITY.**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In South Africa, the political determinants of market opportunities coincide with race. Ironically, marketing experts have uncritically followed this artificial division and based their market segmentation on race. This racial separation has given rise to what has become popularly known as the "black market" implying that there is something intrinsically or inherently black in the consumption of goods and services. Premised on cultural pluralism which is a politically laden concept, a culturally-determined market would imply:

- i) that there are products or product categories whose consumption follows cultural lines; and
- ii) that in communicating the product benefits the marketer has to appeal to the culturally specific.

This paper seeks to explore the efficacy of the current basis of market segmentation within two contexts:

- i) the cultural; and
- ii) the socio-political, especially in view of current developments which impinge upon consumer behaviour.

No doubt this is a positional paper since through both empirical research and theoretical reflection I have developed a particular position on the subject. The thrust of my argument in this paper is that consumption is a function of economic status, and therefore the

culture to which this consumption is attributed is an epiphenomenon deriving from the material circumstances of the consumer.

## 2. CULTURE AND CONSUMPTION

In explaining human phenomena, the cardinal error is to take that which needs to be explained as an explanation. In so doing the apparent becomes reality. Culture is a mode of adaptation to the material circumstances that man finds himself surrounded with. This mode of adaptation pervades man's lifestyle, his religion, ideology and expression. As the material environment changes man makes new adaptations which might in turn bring about a shift in his value system. In this way man's culture changes thus creating a new social reality. The determining impact of the environment on man's culture is evidenced in the socio-religious system. For instance, in the list of deities among inhabitants in the desert the goddess of floods is conspicuously absent, and so too are boats as a mode of transport.

### 2.1 Are there culturally specific products?

While there is no denying that elements of a culture do impinge upon habit, product choice and inclination, I would argue that:

- i) the so-called culturally based products are an insignificant minority within the universe of marketable products; and
- ii) that access in terms of money and exposure creates a product culture which is basically a response to the economic circumstances of the consumer.

Besides saris, African prints, turn-up trousers, dookies for headwear,

curry and rice and a few other food items which may be designated as "cultural", there is very little of culture in the consumption of material goods. Admittedly, there is a proliferation of sub-cultures in the townships and one may associate these with particular fashions. However, a critical examination of these sub-cultures reveals a marked correlation between their emergence and social deprivation originating either from economic or political exclusion. Very few people worry about, and no marketing or advertising expert bothers to examine, the effects of status deprivation among the various subcultures in the townships. Little is known about dress as a form of compensatory behaviour for economic and political powerlessness. The pantsula in the township youth is a given target market. I am not appealing to moral conscience: this is a game about power and influence and in such situations moral appeals are irrelevant. All that I want to stress is that the discovery of the boycott weapon has meant that market analysis is no longer the prerogative of marketing policy makers: it has to be negotiated.

## 2.2 Consumer behaviour, marketing and culture

As fields of study, both consumer behaviour and marketing start with the givens as natural. At best they manufacture consumers through advertising and promotional strategies; at worst, they reinforce the existential situation of consumers. For instance in the absence of electrification, people in Soweto use coal as their source of fuel. They inevitably become consumers of coal stoves and paraffin or gas refrigerators. Also, climatic conditions demand that the kitchen

forms the assembly point during the cold winter evenings. A "typical" advertisement designed for this reconstituted market would thus portray a family eating in the kitchen or a husband and wife window-shopping for coal stoves since this represents "African culture in the townships"!

### 2.3 Class and culture

Irrespective of the definition of class one may adopt (e.g. historical materialist or traditional bourgeoisie) consumption patterns are a function of income. Consumers thus adapt their purchases to their pockets, since this is the one variable that they can juggle with. The central feature in class is that the social relations determine both capacity and access: The working class suffers from limitations both in terms of buying capacity and access to opportunities including access to the media. This in turn narrows their choices and creates a working class culture. It is an accepted truism that the vast majority of Africans in South Africa falls within the working class. Therefore, their consumption is geared towards low cost products including foodstuffs. Workers cannot afford bacon and eggs for breakfast since their economic circumstances deny them these luxuries. Yet it is interesting to note how while the African has been characterised as a traditional consumer of pap and phuthu, little is said about pap and vleis as a staple food for the rural Afrikaner prior to Hertzog's white labour preference policy.

Contrary to working class culture, which is man-made, middle class consumption patterns (also man-made) differ from those of the working

class. This is not because of any inherent attributes, but simply because of their economic means. However, in spite of this universal truism, the determining factor of race in South Africa mediates between consumption and access. If Africans spend relatively more on furniture, clothing and perhaps cars, i.e. conspicuous consumption, and Indians live in extended family housing and operate family businesses, the explanation is not in the culture of the two races but rather in the laws which constrain their access to and opportunities for investment. What we therefore find in South Africa is that lifestyle and consumption among the disenfranchised constitutes, in the main, a mode of adaptation to both apartheid and exploitation. In spite of this evidence the situation becomes justified by its definition.

The sprawling townships around the affluent industrial centres have developed a township culture, a mode of adaptation to the Urban Areas Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act and the Group Areas Act, to name a few. This adaptation has become midwife to the shebeens, kitchens cum dining rooms cum bedrooms, imijondolo (shacks) stock-fares, burial societies, amapantsula and flashy cars. Seen uncritically, this has become township culture, but in the context of the social relations in the country, this is African culture reconstituted and redefined by racial capitalism. Material conditions have thus constructed an artificial consumer body where appearances have become reality. Marketing communication has for decades been fascinated by this reality, the black market, and in the process has helped reproduce and sustain the same reality through ideological consumerism.

## 2.4 Culture and communication

Communication based on culture presupposes:

- i) shared symbols and shared meanings; and
- ii) a set of material circumstances common to the audience, e.g. purchasing capacity and preference for specific goods.

Underlying both assumptions there is the affective or emotional appeal in the product. Shared symbols are meant to command universal appeal to the recipients of the message. Recently, I was personally involved in three research projects which sought to elicit African perceptions of financial and industrial corporations. All three projects entailed in-depth group discussions with members of the so-called "African middle class" in the major metropolitan areas in the four provinces in the Republic. I shall draw out a few salient observations which I consider very significant for both marketing and marketing communication.

- i) Activities by financial corporations have assumed an increasing political dimension in the eyes of Africans, who locate such activities within the problematic of the South African situation.
- ii) Marketing experts can no longer hope to act purely within what they define as an economic sphere limited to promotion and consumption. For instance in one of the projects African respondents read political messages in the

- sponsoring of sport by some corporations.
- iii) Africans deplore racially or ethnically-based advertising and see it as political manipulation.
  - iv) There is very little identification with capitalism and the so-called "free enterprise system" within a racially-based society. Hence any marketing communication perceived to be furthering racial exploitation will inevitably elicit a negative response.

Practically, the position is that outside of the few "culturally-influenced goods" any "culturally-based symbols" are likely to become either negative or a non-issue in the face of the "political messages" that they carry. Understandably, therefore, there is very little identification with the man in the Induna mealie meal advert in spite of the "traditional status" of pap or phuthu. On the contrary, it is the exploited relationship that places the testimonee in his position. Further, that the testimonee is an "induna" either locates African occupational aspirations at induna level, or directly appeals to the working class to accept their exploited position. The argument here is not that Africans look down upon an induna but that within the political context of exclusion the ad simply says "that is your place". Finally on this point, ethnic appeals make no impact on the youth as the market of the present and the future, and the "middle classes" shun ethnically or racially-based symbols as discriminatory.

### 3. THE SOCIAL MISCONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Up to now I have argued in this paper that reality as is constructed in South Africa is no more than an expression of the dominant political ideology rationalising its position through its own constituted culture. The problem with this misconstruction is that it is not only political, but also reductionist and overlooks the situational. Man operates selectively according to the particular situation in which he finds himself. Thus, while skin lighteners were once popular in the fifties and sixties, they are greatly resented in the eighties for two reasons:

- i) the emergence of black consciousness as a political ideology; and
- ii) the harm they caused on the skins of users.

The same situational response arose in the case of a brand of baby food called "Incumbe". The name positioned it as an African foodsuff since very few whites could understand it. It had no appeal to Africans as they perceived it to be of inferior quality. Consequently it had to be replaced. The reality of marketing is that it is fast becoming a negotiated practice where the dialogue starts in the marketer's consciousness of the environment within which he operates, but must increasingly take into account the consumer's definition of the environment.

This brings us to the distinction between myth and reality.

- i) The concept of a black market as a natural and separate entity is a myth: rather, there is a market consisting of the economically and politically disadvantaged sector of South African society. This sector shares in common with all disadvantaged societies all the attributes attendant upon their situation.
- ii) The reality is that the same analytical categories used to investigate attitudes, perceptions and expectations of whites should be used to explore the same attributes among Africans. In the main, African culture has been moulded by modern industry, apartheid and exploitation.

The above observations have serious implications for marketing communication. Insensitivity to the aspirations and perceptions of consumers may have damaging effects not only on the product image, but on the image of the corporation as well. South Africa is going through a political crisis which is a challenge to the legitimacy of the state. While the state has monopoly of physical power, financial corporations are vulnerable in that:

- i) there is room for choice. Consumers can afford to boycott x's products and patronise y's;
- ii) Financial corporations cannot resort to physical coercion and continue to exist - by definition they exist on the goodwill of consumers.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion I would like to reiterate that the main purpose of this paper was to start debate in a new direction. My position is that there have been mistakes, some of which were committed in good faith. What we need to realise is that it takes both parties to communicate effectively, and to achieve this the golden rule is "hear the other side". Up to now only one side has had its say.

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THE MANAGERIAL CLOSED SHOP : FROM EXCLUSION  
TO CONTROLLED ENTRY

Paul Zulu

**1 INTRODUCTION:**

In a situation where market forces operate, economic growth implies a corresponding growth in opportunities and life chances for the citizens. In South Africa power relations have limited the growth in managerial and professional opportunities and life chances to the white population. Blacks have sat on the sidelines watching the managerial closed shop develop from exclusion to controlled entry. African aspirations for entry to the world of computer technology can therefore not be discussed outside of racial capitalism and the consequent culture of resistance to domination and exploitation.

**2 THE NATURE OF HUMAN ASPIRATIONS:**

In explaining the aspirations of men one has to adopt one of two approaches:

- i) the voluntaristic approach to human actions or
- ii) locate human aspirations within the opportunities offered and constraints imposed by the environment

**2.1 The voluntaristic theory of human action:**

The voluntaristic theory of human action states that human beings make choices about and decide between "different goals and means to achieve them" (Craib 1984 p40). This implies that man is in control over his environment and can, therefore, make decisions with regard to the way in which he interacts with that environment. While this is difficult to attain in any situation, the power relations in the South African context make it worse for Africans. Rather, structural inequalities predicate access in terms of the capacity to make choices and the actual entry into arenas of choice.

## 2.2 The impact of the environment on Human Aspirations:

In contrast to the voluntaristic theory there are those who argue that human choices are not made in a vacuum. Rather, the environment acts as both a stimulus and brake to the choices that a man makes. With regard to African aspirations for participation in computer technology the following environmental factors either determine or greatly influence choice:

- i) Socially both the townships and rural villages lack the physical and ideological apparatus for socialisation into the technological and computer worlds. Computer technology both relies on and creates a democratic creativity. This is negated by the political and economic climates in African areas. At the material level conditions of poverty and deprivation relegate the bulk of African children to mediocrity in terms of access to and the range of aspirations. Practically there is no interaction with computers and electronics at the formative stages of growth and this limits the capacity to aspire to computer technology. The world of dreams revolves around the possible, represented by the desire to escape from the spiral of poverty. At best professional dreams are limited to teaching, nursing, medicine and law.

Ideological conditions impose further and even greater constraints on democratic creativity. Political conditions in South Africa leave Africans with very few opportunities for self realisation. The authoritarian and bureaucratic control in both the townships and rural villages is not compatible with the spirit of creativity. The state and the state-controlled media are quick to criminalise any form of challenge to the officially-designed control thus promoting an enforced quiescence among the mass of African people. The policing of behaviour from an early age is not conducive to any form of creativity -

the docile citizen becomes the ideal. Nurtured in authoritarianism and enforced compliance, African creativity is at best directed at developing mechanisms of political resistance. Consequently, there is very little time for computer - oriented dreams, more so when the computer does not have a physical presence.

- ii) African education is a further inhibiting factor in the development of specialised professional and managerial aspirations. It is basically a pedagogy of control where instruction is largely by rote learning and pupils are allowed very little chance to develop creative thinking. The impoverished material and intellectual environment combined with authoritarian practices designed to produce servants of apartheid impose further constraints on creativity. On average African schools offer a limited curriculum, even then by poorly qualified teachers. The absence of vocational guidance is an additional limit to the life chances of individuals. According to Kuper "Bantu Education defines the boundaries of aspirations for Africans ("Kuper 1963 p173).

The foregoing discourse brings us to the key question. When we talk of African aspirations are we implying that there is something inherently African in aspiring or are we seeking to understand how people caught in a specific existential situation react?

Before attempting to answer this question a closer look into the nature of black advancement programmes as applied in some of the major corporations will shed some light.

### **3.1 Managing the process:**

Whereas the entry of personnel into positions is a function of the operation of market forces, the recruitment of Africans into managerial positions is like allocating numbers into objective spaces. Faced with demands for "deracialisation" from parent companies overseas or from local pressure, a number of corporations adopt a

fixed quota system where x number of managers by year y should be black.

This practice serves two purposes:

- i) to appease both foreign and local pressure groups by demonstrating some visible deracialisation;
- ii) to avert the crisis of displacement. By controlling the numbers the recalcitrant elements within white management are assured of the continuation of their positions, and at the same time management can make informed estimates of the "black threat".

In some instances this makes one wonder if the criteria for selecting the candidates are based purely on merit or on some measures of convenience for the corporations.

### **3.2 Organisational culture and climate:**

In a situation where entry into positions is controlled by "political" factors rather than by the operation of market forces, entrants into "select" occupations are placed in a weak position. They can either consider themselves lucky to have "made it" and to a degree feel indebted to the corporations that gave them this "glorious opportunity", or they feel alienated from a situation in which they are strangers. Where management adopts a paternalistic attitude, as is often the case, this only helps to aggravate the incumbents' position. It has now become common talk among corporate executives that Africans shun away from making decisions, in other words, that they do not make managers. Further, this situation is blamed on African culture and very little attempt is made to understand how the network of forces external to the individual have shaped his response to a situation that is actively inhibiting.

What heightens alienation in an already unsatisfactory situation is the presence of a conservative element within the lower echelons of management. This segment feels threatened by the entry of blacks into

a field that has been the monopoly of whites. In most instances members from within this group make life very difficult for the estranged new entrants thus further constraining their creativity.

#### **4 SOME EXCERPTS FROM RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Over the past two years I have been involved in research projects which sought to elicit African responses to issues such as black advancement, corporate social responsibility and corporate image. Results from the above projects indicate that:

- i) Africans have come to distrust efforts at deracialisation by the private sector. Programmes such as black advancement are seen as an effort to create an African middle class solely to diffuse black resistance to domination and exploitation. Members of the African elites in particular feel that in many ostensibly equal opportunity corporations, Africans do not proceed beyond middle management levels. Further, even within the middle management positions they do not have access to decision making in the same way that their white counterparts do. Observations like these tend to tarnish the image of the corporations.
- ii) There is a general tendency among the youth to shift from a civil rights to a socialist stance. Whereas in the past the main obstacle to progress has been racism, there is now a growing belief that the problem lies in capitalism. Thus even projects that the private sector sponsors within black communities have come to occupy an ambiguous position among the African youth.

The above observations have far-reaching implications for the recipients of black advancement programmes.

- i) While they are not fully accepted by their white counterparts and the organisations that seek to develop them, they occupy an ambiguous position within their own

communities. This marginalises them and forces a rephrasing of the questions. Thus instead of seeking to establish African aspirations for inclusion into the technological world of computers, the enquiry should be directed at finding how people who have been marginalised by external factors react to controlled entry into foreign territory.

- ii) The negation of capitalist values implies the negation of the yardsticks for measuring performance within the system as a whole. This politicises the relationship between mentor and ward, thereby challenging the corner stone of black advancement programmes.

## 5 CAN CORPORATIONS MAKE ANY POSITIVE INTERVENTION?

In response to this question one needs to relate the major issues which corporations, that participate in black advancement programmes as a means to "deracialise" their organisations, should take into consideration.

- i) There are no specifically African or black aspirations. This implies that any programmes based on the premise that aspirations follow some ethnic or cultural attributes are destined to fail since this specific quality has no empirical existence. Aspirations come from exposure and the possibility of access. For instance children of middle class parentage aspire to professional managerial and specialist positions. Similarly children from working class families wish to do better than their parents. This is a universal phenomenon. The question therefore is, why should Africans be different? What corporations need to address are environmental and intra-organisational constraints and not culture.
- ii) There are specific areas of deprivation which interfere with both the socialisation into and the performance in a highly technological and computer-oriented environment. These limitations are, however, not inherent in any ethnic specificity but are prevalent in all deprived societies. To

redress them, corporations should address the environmental causes. In the South African context it is the political environment that corporations should direct their energy to. This becomes more critical since the recipients of corporate programmes attribute their problems to political forces.

- iii) There are practical ways in which corporations can mediate effectively to facilitate a favourable environment and thus broaden the base for recruiting personnel into the high technology occupations. Here I am referring to means which are within reach of any party that encourages positive intervention.
  - a) Adopting schools from the substandards: This would entail not just donating equipment to the schools but taking over the administration and curriculum building, i.e. running the schools as private institutions. Often corporations donate buildings and equipment to the communities but this has marginal benefits since they are still left within the inefficient administration of the present structures.
  - b) Improving the quality of life in disadvantaged communities. Here corporations can improve community life by setting up community centres and equipping them with appropriate materials. These centres could be geared towards a technological inclination, and provide early socialisation into the high technology environment.
  - c) Providing a climate that is conducive to positive identification with the corporations. This is an issue which is internal to the enterprises themselves and no doubt a sensitive and political one. How the various enterprises address it will be a political and economic choice that only they can make. All that this says is that a number of recruits into black advancement programmes are alienated and that this alienation is a symptom of the conditions which prevail within the organisations.

## 6 CONCLUSION

I need to emphasise that the problem of successfully integrating Africans into the high technological environment of computers is much more complex than meets the eye. It is not located either in individuals or in their culture but rather has roots in the social, economic and educational bases which have given rise to a complex culture. Internal practises within organisations reinforce rather than improve this culture of deprivation thus alienating individuals caught up in this vicious cycle. Consequently, the problem manifests in what apparently presents as lack of creativity. Creativity depends on democratic conditions which allow for the right to question, the right to explore and access to information. These conditions are denied to the African, in the townships, at school and to a large measure at work as well.

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**FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO SOCIALISM - A PROFILE OF THE  
AFRICAN YOUTH IN THE TOWNSHIPS**

by

**Bonginkosi Nzimande & Paulus Zulu**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Conventional wisdom dictates that it is the prerogative of "mature Citizens" to shape and direct the affairs of society. Although some "significant others" may make contributions, in the order of merits, their voices play a secondary role. Contrary to accepted conventions, the past ten years in South Africa have witnessed the entry and consolidation of a new social force into the socio-political terrain - the black youth. The latter have not only shaped township politics, but have further given the country's politics a distinct character.

**2. THE TERRAIN**

Perhaps not unexpectedly, the terrain of the struggle for political influence has been the schools, especially within the urban ghettos. What gives the schools this distinct power is the socio-political character of black education. Hence, unlike in Europe where the struggle for power and influence had its terrain in the universities (France 1968 etc.), the South African social formation is atypical in the international sense but fitting in the local geo-political space. But, like Europe in a historical sense, the post 76 struggle in South Africa had its roots in a philosophy which developed from the universities - the philosophy of black consciousness. Hence the schools became the focal point because:

- i) Black consciousness was active in the educational sphere, Education had come under close scrutiny as the central means by the state to produce servants of apartheid - a tool for control;

- ii) The fact that black consciousness had developed more as a philosophy than a set of political structures and that it was more active in educational institutions rendered the schools a necessary medium. That bantu education was a symbol of oppression and an object of attack facilitated mobilisation around the schools. The Afrikaans issue in 1976 precipitated the conflict around an issue which had been politicised enough to catch the fires of African anger.
- iii) Since the thrust of black consciousness was the restoration of land to blacks, and Afrikaans was seen as the language of the dispossessor, the enforcement of Afrikaans in African schools was seen as a further assault on the black skin.
- iv) The above factors radically changed the terrain of the educational struggle from the universities to the schools thus bringing in a new force in South African politics - a force that was to significantly change the terrain of the struggle in the ensuing ten years.

While the school was the focal point of the struggle, the youth in general became increasingly restive. The late sixties to the early seventies were the years of economic boom in South Africa. Economic growth had demonstrated the need for more skills at an incremental scale. This in turn necessitated investment in education, particularly in African education. Ironically, the increase in numbers in African schools further revealed the contradictions in a racist society. When the recession of the late seventies set in, the lumpen proletariat was young, better schooled and more politicised. Conservative provisions of the 60's could not contain the consolidated fury of the mid to late seventies.

### 3. FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO NON-RACIALISM

The thrust by the black consciousness movement was on equality approximating the mode of the civil rights movement in the United States.

Besides the demand for the restoration of the land - an understandable development, the rest of the demands made in 1976 were in many respects "civil rights" in content. For instance:

- i) equality in education - i.e. free and compulsory education
- ii) scrapping of bantu education; i.e. the whole package which "restricted Africans to servant status".
- iii) granting of political rights to Africans.

As the struggle progressed, further demands included:

- i) release of prisoners on Robben Island;
- ii) an education which prepared Africans for entry into the job market.

The above demands demonstrate the philosophy of black consciousness as a mass psychological transformation of blacks from inferiority to equality as captured by the slogan "black is beautiful". Further black consciousness broadened the socio-geographical boundaries of the struggle by redefining the oppressed constituency to include all blacks ("non-whites").

The appeal of the black consciousness movement was directed at all the oppressed. It also provided an ideology around which the youth could unite. However, unfolding events were to expose the limitations of black consciousness.

- i) It had no grass-roots organisational structures but was rather a philosophical movement operating at the top from an elitist-base. It was this realisation, after the explosions of 1976, which partly accounted for a shift from orthodox black consciousness to non racialism.
- ii) The central thrust of black consciousness was racial oppression. A struggle conceived in racial terms fell within the parameters as defined by the ruling class. To be effective,

therefore, black consciousness had to challenge the basic definitions of South African society. In order for the struggle to advance it had to transcend race as a means through which inequalities were expressed. In so doing the economic base of racial domination had to be exposed. Born out of black consciousness and racial exploitation, it was the very same youth that had to carry out this transformation from black consciousness to non-racialism. Black consciousness was egalitarian in ideology but operated within racially defined parameters. This created the contradiction of eradicating racism through a racially-constituted struggle. By its own momentum black-consciousness could not contain this contradiction for long.

- iii) Apart from the internal contradictions within black consciousness it had precipitated the following historical factors which further precipitated its transformation.
  - a) The ideology of black consciousness had been confined to the South African geo-political space. The mass exodus of the youth following upon Soweto 76 brought the former into contact with a different ideology, mainly from the African National Congress. Upon their return in 78/79 they introduced a marked ideological shift - non-racialism of the Congress Movement. This was to lay the foundations for the re-emergence of the A.N.C. as a political force inside the country together with its legitimacy.
  - b) The re-emergence of unions, in particular, community unions in anticipation of the recognition of African Unions through Wiehahn e.g. the South African Allied Workers Union further strengthened congress politics and non-racialism.

- c) The reconstitution of the youth after the banning of the black consciousness organisations took place within the context of this new wave. Hence when the Congress of South African Students (C.O.S.A.S) as a major youth movement was formed in 1979, it adopted non-racialism as its political and ideological thrust.
- d) This era coincided with the release of many ex-A.N.C./S.A.C.T.U. activists who were to play a leading role in the community struggles of the early 80's, e.g. the campaign against the 21st birthday celebrations of the Republic.

#### 4. POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY

The beginning of the eighties ushered in a radical shift in the politics and ideology of the youth. Factors which accounted for these developments were:

- i) Reactions from the top especially the state and big business: On its part the state embarked upon an intensified reform programme changing from coercion to repressive tolerance. This shift necessitated looking for allies within the oppressed groupings. Through co-optation the state apparatus was extended both in magnitude and in scale thereby further delegating some of the states repressive functions to client bodies. The new structures were manned by a rural and an urban civil petit bourgeoisie. On the other hand the private sector embarked upon an aggressive promotion of the black middle class and a black labour aristocracy. For instance, the Urban Foundation and the Small Business Development Corporation came up with programmes of urban and class upliftment. Up to this point developments culminating in non-racialism had not questioned the economic component. By encouraging class divisions

within the subordinates both the state and capital significantly undermined the historically multi-class nature of black resistance. This immediately revealed the capitalist character of South African society. Capitalism came under sharp political scrutiny.

- ii) The Growth of the Labour Movement: The emergence of a labour movement whose membership had gone through intensified conditions of exploitation in the 60's brought about a radical challenge to capitalism.

#### 4.1 SOCIAL COMPOSITION

Although there are no reliable statistics in this regard, the social composition of the youth consists of three distinct strata:

- i) school children
- ii) the unemployed and
- iii) the working youth.

While in 1976 the major force behind the youth were the school children, the growing unemployment has seen a steady rise of the unemployed youth. Although these different strata are located in different spheres of South African Society there are common factors that bring them together such that they act as a relatively homogeneous social movement. Some of these factors include:

- a) the crisis in black education and the high rate of school dropouts which severely limits the chances of employment,
- b) the rising unemployment and the accompanying disillusionment about their future - a factor which unites all the strata of the youth even more:
  - the school children do not have a hope of getting jobs
  - the unemployed are caught in permanent structural unemployment,
  - the working youth is haunted by the reality of retrenchment and factory shut-downs.

Admittedly, there are ideological differences within the youth. These are mainly between the adherents of black consciousness and those of the Freedom Charter. But the latter grouping is much bigger and the most active of the two, hence our concentration on it.

#### 4.2 EXCERPTS FROM RESEARCH FINDINGS

From the latter half of 1985 to date the authors of this document have been conducting research among the various African groupings in the country where the youth formed a large constituent of the participants. Issues ranged from politics to economics and emphasis was placed on strategic logic encompassing:

- i) conception of the world
- ii) definition of the self
- iii) vision for the future; and
- iv) political economic and educational choices.

The enquiry also included questions of strategy and tactics. However, due to the highly sensitive political situation the general consensus, on the part of participants and researchers alike, was that these be not discussed since it would be difficult to give honest responses to such probes. Hence where mention of this is made, the conclusions are inferential and are derived from an analysis and direction of activities rather than from utterances by the respondents.

##### 4.2.1 Conception of the World:

Respondents saw the world as a place for all to inhabit. They saw material extractions from the land as belonging to all thus rendering individual accumulation both exploitative and undesirable. This immediately discredited the free enterprise concept particularly in the South African context where it represented white exploitation of black labour. An ideal society was, therefore, one that was free of exploitation, domination and oppression. The ruling sector of South African society was, therefore, a negation of the basic ethical values in that it was both exploitative and oppressive.

#### 4.2.2 Definition of the Self:

Respondents felt that they were first and foremost, members of the human race. Although a number of them identified with the various youth groupings, they rejected any allegations of representativeness, since "the people need no representation". They have to participate themselves in the running of their affairs. Born into oppression they were determined to transform the nature of South African society from "racist oppression" to a society of equals. To this end, they needed organisation and the fact that they organised around the schools and the streets was a function of their specific conjuncture "...just as workers organise around the factory floor". They expressed strong convictions that "the struggle carries on wherever you are" and that "one can not isolate and fragment oppression". The struggle in the schools was not a product of youth pathology but a political and an educational statement as "confronting one apartheid structure means confronting the entire system of domination".

#### 4.2.3 Vision for the Future:

If the present "racial and oppressive" system was the cause of the current turmoil, it is because the youth is imbued with a sense of "one human family". The ideal expressed was the "realisation of a democratic non-racial" South Africa where "all would share in the wealth of the land". The Freedom Charter has become a strong spiritual inspiration as well as a political programme among the township youth. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the respondents quoted freely from it or paraphrased it with ease, "the land shall return to the people" and "all people shall have free access to the wealth of the country".

#### 4.2.4 Goals:

##### a) Political:-

Political visions revealed the existential anguish of young

people caught between the ideals of democracy, love and justice and the realities of apartheid - vengeance, hate and powerlessness. Respondents expressed the ideals of democracy and justice but felt compelled to pursue non-democratic and at times unjust acts because "the system allows you no room to organise. Some of us are in detention and in hiding and in this situation how can we organise democratically?" Further, respondents described the future political dispensation as that of majority rule. Since Africans were a de facto majority and South African racism had forcefully taught people to think in racial pockets, majority rule implied an African majority government, "but that does not deny the whites and others opportunities to take part in that government". While the necklace was "deplorable" there were times when those who "collaborate in the oppression of the people" and refuse to repent by "abandoning their role" have to pay for their iniquities. The political struggles waged by the youth have been concretised in the area of local government with significant effects. For instance over the past 10 years the youth has almost single-handedly destroyed Urban Bantu Councils, Advisory Boards, Community and Town Councils.

b) Economic:-

Experiences with capitalism and particularly racial capitalism had demonstrated that it can neither be free nor distributive. Discussions revealed that if the youth has opted for socialism it is because materially and ideologically capitalism had failed them. The socialist options ranged from social democracy, mixed economy to a purely socialist economy. Capitalism was utterly rejected as "exploitative, oppressive 'and at times' racist". Largely, however, the youth believed that it could not prescribe to the people what economic system should hold - "the people shall decide this for themselves". The close co-operation between the youth and the unions (e.g. in stayaways and

consumer boycotts) reinforce strong socialist orientations as the latter have on many occasions, made socialist pronouncements.

c) Education:-

The eighties have witnessed a strong shift from compulsory, free and equal education to people's education for people's power. The youth sees education not only as a source of credentials but as a tool for altering the fundamental social relations in South Africa. The argument is that in South Africa politics pervades all aspects of life. Education, therefore, does not stand alone as an isolated issue since bantu education is by definition political.

The ideological shift is demonstrated in the following:

- i) Content: Education should be rooted in the people's experiences since it is these experiences which give it shape, magnitude and direction. For instance, isolating the curriculum and performance from issues of exploitation, housing, rent and transport is a fallacy since they determine both the quality of the pupil and his "marketability". Situating education within this context enables pupils to engage in a process of constructive self evaluation. Further, current distortions particularly in history and the social sciences need rectification as they are products of historical power relations.
- ii) Organisation: Access to education by blacks is currently riddled with problems. For instance, besides the poverty base from which Africans operate, resources in the school situation are woefully inadequate, large classes, poorly qualified teachers, poor and inadequate equipment and the absence of free books and stationery (notwithstanding official promises at the beginning of the year). It is

further "both unfree and non-compulsory" and is designed to produce "a cheap and docile labour force". People's education should be organised such that all and sundry should have access irrespective of social position.

iii) Control: The youth is emphatic that control of education should be vested in the people. Practically, structures such as the parent, teacher and pupil committees are ideal for setting up a workable machinery. It is they who should design the curricula, appoint teachers and draw up disciplinary and administrative codes "... and not the S.A.D.F." and "... since apartheid knows no justice". Further education should take cognisance of the future needs of the country as seen by the people and not as defined by the captains of capital within parameters of reproducing the current social relations.

## 5. CONCLUSION

All the above issues reflect the central role that has been played by the youth in the struggle for democracy in South Africa. But more significantly they reflect a radical change from the politics of protest to the politics of transformation, i.e. the emphasis is now on building alternative structures in anticipation of the inevitable political changes in the country. For instance, in 1976 when the Urban Bantu Councils were destroyed, there were no alternative structures organically evolving from the masses. Presently the youth has played a prominent role in building street committees and civic organizations as democratic alternatives to the defunct community and town councils. In the sameway, the educational struggles of 1976 were around the demand for equal education, but now the emphasis is on building a new educational system as called for by people's education. What is also worth noting is the fact that the more the

crisis deepens inside the country, and the more the state responds by repression, the more the youth resolves to continue with the struggle. It is also clear that the growing unemployment, coupled with the state of semi-paralysis of black education, will contribute further to the politicization and radicalization of a youth that is determined to see a just, democratic and peaceful South Africa in their lifetime.



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