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THE MANUFACTURE OF CHAOS AND COMPROMISE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PATH TO REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dissertation submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Master of Arts by

CHERYL CECELIA RYKLIEF

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SUPERVISED BY PROFESSOR BARRY MUNSLOW

PREFACE

This dissertation is the result of a one year Masters programme in Democratic Theory and Practice at the School of Politics and Communication Studies at the University of Liverpool.

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ABSTRACT

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Author: C.C.RYKLIEF

This dissertation examines the factors leading to the opening of negotiations to majority rule in South Africa. It argues that changes to the socio-economic environment led to the growth of the strategic relevance of the black working class, and also created certain points of collision between the black working class and the policies of the state. These sectoral collisions engendered both the partial reforms of the Botha era as well as the rejection of these reforms by the black majority. The developments that emerged from the ensuing process of reform, resistance and repression in the 1980s weakened both the state and the black opposition sufficiently to allow for the emergence of a consensual solution to the political stalemate.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbewering (Resistance movement)
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BLA	Black Local Authorities
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CP	Conservative Party
CUSA	Council of South African trade unions
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DP	Democratic Party
ECC	End Conscription Campaign
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
HNP	Herstigte (Reformed) Nationale Party
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party

MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NP	National Party
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
RSC	Regional Services Council
SACP	South African Communist Party
TBVC	Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda, Ciskei
UDF	United Democratic Front
UWUSA	United Workers of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The institution of a majority rule political system in South Africa in 1994 has been hailed as a major achievement by international political observers. In the preceding two decades the conflict inherent in the apartheid system has caused South Africa to be touted as one of the most pernicious trouble spots in the world, and political scientists from the entire spectrum of left to right politics predicted that there would be no easy solution to the country's political problems.

Apartheid legally institutionalised a hierarchical, racially divided society, demarcating the South African population into first class (whites), second class (coloureds and Indians) and third class (African) citizens, and awarding full political and economic rights to whites only, whilst denying these in varying degrees to the majority of the population. Segregation of racial groups was legally enforced, and huge numbers of Africans had their citizenship removed and were legally prevented from leaving their apartheid defined 'homelands' in an attempt by the state to create a white South African territory, incorporating only those Africans into white designated areas who serviced the needs of that population.

From its inception in 1948, the National Party's apartheid government was overwhelmingly unpopular to the majority of its citizens. Yet not only did it survive for forty five years, but it successfully ushered in a relatively peaceful transition to

a political system which conforms with internationally accepted liberal democratic mores. The new South Africa is a unitary, constitutional republic, with a Bill of Rights protecting individual liberties and a separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary. What is more, this democratic settlement has been reached through the consent of all the relevant stakeholders in South African society, even those forces whose interests most political scientists in the 1980s would have categorised as being unilaterally in conflict with each other.

At the beginning of 1989, after a decade of mass resistance and state repression, the country was under the grip of the fourth successive year of a national state of emergency. All extra-parliamentary activity was effectively banned, and media reportage restricted. A mere one year later, in February 1990, the newly elected President, F.W. De Klerk, announced the unbanning of all oppositional organisations, the release of political prisoners and the suspension of the death penalty. Declaring that the season of violence was over, his speech at the opening of parliament heralded the end of white political domination and the beginning of a protracted process of negotiation towards constitutional reform. (De Klerk, (1990), pp.160 - 175)

There is general agreement amongst South African political analysts about the unlikeliness of F.W. De Klerk as a reformist visionary. (Gilliomee, H. (1994), p. 132; Schrire, R. (1991) pp.

125 - 127; Welsch, D. (1994), p. 190) He was known to be on the conservative wing of the divide between reformist *(verligte)* and conservative *(verkrampte)* views within the National Party. Analyses of his history in the party display remarkably little indication of individual initiative against party discipline and policy, and do not reveal why the reform process received such a startling boost within a relatively short period after his assumption of leadership.

This dissertation will seek to demonstrate that the answer to the remarkable about-turn in party strategy under F.W. De Klerk lay in the unique combination of conditions that prevailed at the time of his election as leader of the National Party. It will argue that the political struggles of the 1980s were caused by firstly, the rapid development of the black working class in the economic boom period of the 1960s, which led to the growth of sectoral struggles against those aspects of the apartheid system that impeded the socio-economic advancement of the black working class.

Secondly, the integration of state control into all aspects of the black worker's existence, which meant that the link between sectoral struggles and their political solution through the removal of the apartheid system could easily be made. This assisted the rapid politicisation of the black working class.

Thirdly the failure of the National Party's attempt to restructure state control through the introduction of political

reforms. The implementation of these reforms instead served to generalise sectoral struggles and heighten the politicisation of the black working class, causing the growth of overt oppositional organisations.

Fourthly, the fact that although the state was able to control the political uprising, it was not able to resolve the sectoral grievances, and the link in the perceptions of the black working class between these sectoral grievances and the white minority government heralded continued political instability.

Lastly, that the stalemate that arose as a result of the process of reform, resistance and repression weakened both the state and the black opposition movement sufficiently to allow for the reform process to take a completely new path.

Political transitions cannot be adequately explained in isolation from prevailing economic and social conditions. In analysing the relevant factors leading to the reformation of the South African political system, this work will adopt an approach that locates ideological and political developments within the nexus of production relations and class formation. However, although the approach will be structuralist, acknowledgement will be given to the role of ideology in the complex interplay of reform, resistance and change.

Chapter one analyses the consequences of the economic boom period of the 1960s, and charts the first signs of collision with the

apartheid state. Chapter two examines the reforms of the Botha era and the response of the black working class. Chapter three analyses the rise of black political formations, and chapter four assesses the dimensions of the political crisis in the late 1980s.

Finally, it is necessary to reiterate that apartheid policies were responsible for the racial classification of all South Africans. For this reason the writer cannot avoid referring to specific racial categories when analysing political affiliations or agendas. For the purpose of this dissertation the terms white (Caucasian, in apartheid terminology referred to as 'Europeans'), coloured (mixed-race), Indian (of Asian origin) and African (indigenous, previously referred to in apartheid terminology as the 'Bantu' or 'Natives') will be used. The term black will be used to refer to a combination of the coloured, Indian and African categories (previously referred to in apartheid terminology as 'non-whites' or 'non-European'). The term homelands will be used to refer to the apartheid created 'Bantustans' or 'states', also previously called 'native reserves'. By 1980, ten homelands had been demarcated. The independent homelands were Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and the Ciskei, referred to as the TBVC states. The self governing homelands were Lebowa, Gazankulu, Qwaqwa, Kwazulu, KwaNdebele and KaNgwane.

CHAPTER ONE: APARTHEID AND THE ECONOMY

The apartheid state pursued strongly interventionist industrial, labour and social policies which significantly impacted upon the economy. State policies were not only directed at stimulating economic growth, but at channelling industrial development so as to preserve the white hierarchy in general and further Afrikaner interests in particular. State intervention contributed significantly to a boom in the economy in the 1960s. This economic growth however, had two major consequences. Firstly, the features of the boom was such that it had a limited potential for sustainable growth, and secondly, it created conditions which set key forces in the economic environment on a collision course with discriminatory labour policies, specifically job reservation, influx control legislation, and decentralisation policies.

1.1 Preserving the white hierarchy

The National Party (NP), creator of the apartheid state, was voted into power in 1948. The party of the Afrikaner majority in the white electorate, the NP committed itself to the establishment of a position of privilege for whites in general, and Afrikaners in particular. Discriminatory legislation which forced African peasants to seek work on the mines, restricted black freedom of movement and trade, and assured job preference for whites were already in place when the NP came into power.

However, over the next two decades the NP reinforced and expanded these by reversing a loosening of restrictions which had occurred during the previous decade. The embryonic black economic and political advancement, a development which had become apparent in the post war period, was halted in favour of the advancement of the white working class.

The special status of the white working class was ensured through the rigid implementation of job reservation and wage protection, increased education and training opportunities, the development of a legislative industrial framework that protected white workers whilst marginalising African labour, and the creation of employment in state corporations and the civil service.

The state also channelled resources and opportunities into building up Afrikaner capital by awarding contracts to Afrikaner businesses and using Afrikaner finance houses. In the process it demonstrated a definite hostility to English capital, which espoused liberal political policies and had been associated with the United Party, the rival political party defeated by the NP in the 1948 elections, as well as an initial hostility to foreign capital following the flight of foreign capital after the 1948 elections, although this attitude later changed and foreign investment was encouraged. (Lipton, M. (1986), pp 283 - 287)

Measures were implemented to reverse the growing influx of African workers to the cities by tightening and extending the

pass laws restricting labour mobility. This both assisted white farmers in retaining their black workforce despite the attraction of more highly paid jobs in industry, and also entrenched the homelands system and migrant labour against a gravitation of industry to create a more stable, urban workforce. Only Africans with proven jobs were legally entitled to be in the cities, and urban development in the black areas was neglected. Black resistance to these policies in the 1950s was crushed, and the burgeoning political and economic organisations of the African working class were outlawed in the 1960s. The political rights of coloureds in the Western Cape were removed, and legislation was introduced to curb all forms of social mixing, in workplaces, trade unions, professional and cultural organisations, churches and public amenities.

1.2 Creating conditions for economic growth

Between 1960 to 1970, South Africa's growth rate was the second highest in the world, following Japan. Much of this growth was as a result of state policies designed to develop secondary industry. These policies included measures such as tariff protection, trade embargoes and the establishment of public corporations in strategic infra-structural areas.

This strong interventionist role led to the state becoming the largest owner of fixed assets, which is still the case today despite substantial privatisation measures being introduced in

the 1980s. Major state corporations were formed such as the South African Transport Services (SATS, although renamed TRANSNET in the drive to privatisation) which included the railways, harbours, and airways as well as road transport and haulage. The Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) eventually controlled more than 75% of the country's iron and steel production by the early 1980s. The South African Coal, Oil and Gas Corporation (the Afrikaans acronym SASOL is used) was established in 1950 when private capital could not raise the huge investment required to set up a project to develop the country's energy resources. The Armaments Development and Production Corporation (ARMSCOR) was established in 1964 when an arms embargo became apparent. (Davies, R., O'Meara, D. & Dlamini, S. (1984), pp. 96 - 105) With the inclusion of the civil service, the formation of these para-statals made the state a sizeable employer in its own right, which gave it considerable leverage in the implementation of discriminatory labour policies. The size of the public sector allowed for the employment and rapid upward mobility of the white working and middle classes, as well as the training of young Afrikaner entrepreneurs.

1.3 Features of economic growth

South Africa entered the world economy as a producer of mainly primary products. The country is rich in mineral resources, and its reserves of gold, manganese and chromium are the highest in the world. The top four exports are gold, diamonds, platinum and

coal. The policies of the apartheid state aimed at stimulating the growth of secondary industry met with considerable success. Production in manufacturing outstripped the two other main productive sectors, mining and agriculture, with an average annual growth rate of 11,8% between 1960 - 1974. (Davies,R., O'Meara,D. and Dlamini,S. (1984), p.52)

Despite the extensive growth in secondary industry, the country's foreign earnings still came predominantly from its primary products. This was mainly due to the late development of the manufacturing sector, which thus remained reliant upon imported capital goods and never managed to expand significantly beyond the domestic market except for a small percentage of regional exports. The stimulation of economic growth through protectionist policies meant that the dependence on imports of capital goods could not be reversed, and the manufacturing sector remained a net user of foreign exchange earned from the primary goods sector and from the influx of foreign capital. (Moritz, L. (1994), pp. 13 - 18)

Davies, R., O'Meara, D. & Dlamini, S. ((1984), p. 54) point out that much of the growth in the boom period was as a result of speculative foreign investment. The state also encouraged capital intensive production in industry at the expense of job creation, as it lowered the number of African workers necessary in the urban areas. Thus despite the high rate of growth, the economy remained heavily dependent on capital investment, a major weakness which had serious implications when the impact

of the world recession brought the boom period to an end and led to acute recession between 1974 - 1979.

A slump in profits was followed by an outflow of capital, which was intensified by the first signs of black discontent with the Soweto riots of 1976 and growing trade union activity, (Davies, R., O'Meara, D. & Dlamini, S. (1984), p. 54). Foreign investor confidence was partially restored by severe correctional economic policies of reflation and the repression of the riots. The rise in the gold price in the late 1970s and heavy borrowing by the state rescued the economy by 1979, but this temporary alleviation ended when the price of gold fell sharply by the end of 1981, and was intensified by the slump in world diamond prices and a severe drought which affected agricultural produce.

By the early 1980s the country was experiencing real economic problems. The GDP fell from an average of 3,1% between 1971-1980, to 0.9% between 1981 - 1990, and the economy began registering consistent negative growth rates. (Trade Union Research Project, (1994), p. 20 - 21, figures taken from S.A. Reserve Bank figures for 1946 - 1993) Growth in the manufacturing sector stagnated, with no further increase in employment since the 1980s (Commonwealth Expert Group, (1991), p.12), and the mining sector saw a decline in output of 6% between 1984 - 1993 (Trade Union Research Project, (1994), p.26).

The economic slump led to the spiralling of unemployment. Even during the boom period, the reliance of the economy on capital

intensive goods meant that despite the phenomenal growth of the black labour force, job opportunities could not keep up with demographic growth trends amongst the black population and unemployment rates were already on the rise. (Lipton, M. (1986), p.244) By the 1980s, it was apparent that the problem of structural unemployment had the capacity to create grave social problems. During the years of 1980 to 1992, total employment grew by 3,2%, a total of 241,000 jobs. By contrast, the potential job market (Economically Active Population) grew by 3,5 million for the same period. (Trade Union Research Project (1994), p. 63, quoting from the annual report of the National Manpower Commission, (1993)).

1.4 The first signs of collision: capital

The boom period extended monopoly ownership, already prevalent in the mining industry, to the manufacturing sector as well. Capital ownership became highly concentrated, with extensive interpenetration between the various sectors. By 1972, 10% of operative firms in South Africa controlled 75% of the market. Ownership was less concentrated in the agricultural sector, mainly due to NP policies favouring white small farmers, but agri-business has since grown significantly, accompanied by the penetration of the monopolies into the food sector since the mid seventies. (Davies, R., O'Meara, D. & Dlamini, S. (1984) p.56 - 58)

The significance of this concentrated ownership, which was aided by sale of foreign assets to local capital during disinvestment in the 1980s, (Blumenfeld, J. (1987), p.23), lay in the decrease in what were formerly distinct sectoral interests and differences between Afrikaner, English and foreign capital, or mining, manufacturing and agricultural capital.

A further outflow of the economic boom was that it heralded the beginning of a growing resistance by capital to apartheid policies because of firstly, an increasing need for a larger skilled labour base with the growth of capital intensive manufacturing production, and secondly, the need for a more competitive, and therefore mobile labour force so as to break into export markets by reducing labour costs and expanding the overall level of earnings. This could be achieved by undercutting the high wage levels of the legislatively protected white skills base. The reduction of wage ratios and expansion of earnings would also serve to assist in the stimulation of the domestic market, a necessary requirement because of the low standard of international competitiveness of South African commodities. (Lipton, M. (1986), pp. 7 - 8).

At a time when industry required a larger and more highly skilled labour force, the increasing upward mobility of the white working class was contributing to the shrinking of the protected layer of skilled artisans. The state initiated certain policies to cope with this development. Firstly, it raised the lower levels of the job protection skills bar through

upgrading white workers, allowing black workers to enter into the lesser skilled jobs. Secondly, it encouraged the immigration of white artisans from other countries in an attempt to shore up the skilled white layer, a measure which met with relative success in the 1960s. Lipton, M. (1986, p. 34) points out that there was a net gain of 250,000 white immigrants between the years of 1960 - 1970, compared to a total of 100,000 between 1935 - 1958.

Thirdly, it embarked on concerted drive towards the decentralisation of industry as a means of creating jobs in the impoverished homelands. Financial incentives were offered to employers to channel industrial expansion into homelands areas in an attempt to both limit the number of Africans gravitating to the cities and satisfy employer needs for a larger skilled labour force.

Decentralisation, however, did not offer employers a significant cut in labour costs, as white trade unions had ensured that the legislated wage levels for skilled white artisans were extended to cover all workers, to prevent employers from undercutting white workers by employing black workers at lower rates. There was therefore insufficient incentive for employers to relinquish the infra-structural advantages of the urban industrial areas, and the decentralisation policies failed. (Lipton, M. (1986), pp. 49 - 83)

Thus although the state attempted to accommodate the needs of capital within the apartheid paradigm, it did not significantly

alter the status quo. Restrictions on labour mobility remained, and protective job reservation and high wage levels for skilled white workers were retained. It took the radical black trade union movement to shift the policies of the state in this regard.

1.5 The first signs of collision: black labour

The economic boom led to an average growth of the black labour force by 4% per year between the years 1960 to 1975, and an overall increase of 71% in the black workforce by 1975. (Natrass, J. (1981), pp 288 - 289) Other factors, such as the raising of skills levels and concentration in large factories also contributed to the development of the strategic relevance of the black labour force during this period. (Webster, E. (1988), pp 177 - 178)

The combination of a growing sense of power and the onset of economic depression on a low wage sector fuelled the Durban strikes around wage demands in 1973, and the subsequent growth of the new trade union movement in the ensuing years. The vigour with which black workers demanded changes at the workplace was intensified by the racial inequalities that existed between white and black workers, as this created the perception that the low wages and poor conditions of work they experienced were a result of their lack of political status. This led to rapid radicalisation and organisational growth, a process which was aided by the fact that the black labour force had grown

significantly within a relatively short period, and was not divided by traditional skills differentiation. (Hemson, D. 'Trade unions in the struggle for liberation', in Capital and Class, vol.6, quoted in Webster, E. (1988), p.178)

By the end of the 1970s, the black trade union movement presented a severe challenge to the apartheid state's dualistic industrial relations framework, which did not extend collective bargaining rights to black trade unions. The number of strikes had grown significantly. In the 1960s, less than 10,000 African workers per annum were involved in industrial disputes, whereas between the years 1973 - 1976, the number involved was between 30,000 - 100,000 p.a. (Webster, E. (1988), pp. 178 - 179). A growing number of employers were being forced to deal with the still illegal black trade unions in their attempts to restore normality on the factory floor.

Black labour was also becoming increasingly resistant to apartheid policies, challenging the job reservation policies as well as actively undermined influx controls through the continued gravitation towards jobs in the cities. They were aided in this by the growing subversion of the system by employers, who in their attempts to deal with the high turnover rate of migrant labour and cut through the bureaucratic tangles involved in employing only state sanctioned labour, would often employ 'illegals' whenever they could get away with it. By the 1980s the gravitation to the cities had led to the mushrooming of vast camps of illegal squatters surrounding the main urban industrial

areas.

1.6 Concluding remarks

By the beginning of the 1980s, apartheid policies were becoming a significant barrier to sustained economic stability. Influx legislation as well as the legislative enforcement of a racially stratified labour force were being challenged by both capital and labour, and in the process new problems were being created, the most significant of which was a defiant and increasingly organised labour force, the growth of numbers of Africans in the urban areas, and an expanding pool of unemployed black workers. The following chapter investigates the social impact of the growth of the black labour force and the apartheid state's attempts to adjust its policies to accommodate this changing social weight of black labour.

CHAPTER TWO: ADAPT OR DIE

2.1 The warning signs

The social effect of the boom period was a relative rise in the living standards of the black urban proletariat and the growth of the number of Africans in the black urban townships. This growth in numbers served to expose the weaknesses of state provision in two critical areas: housing and education.

The apartheid state's urban planning policies, centred as they were upon retaining Africans in the homelands areas, proved gravely deficient in coping with the numerical rise of black township residents. Official statistics bore no relation to actual figures of occupancy, because of the illegal status of many township residents. All townships were grossly overcrowded, and the growth of squatter camps on the periphery of the urban townships added to the crisis in provision of township infra-structural services. (Frankel, P. (1988), p.4).

The impact of the relative rise in living standards on the apartheid education system was reflected by the fact that the number of black secondary school students increased by nearly 500% between the years 1965 to 1975, with no concomitant increase in the provision of schools and teachers. (Beinart, W. (1994), p.219).

The first signs of mass revolt outside of the industrial sphere

occurred when the inadequate 'Bantu education' system of the apartheid government exploded with the schools uprising of 1976/1977. This brought the armed might of the apartheid state down on the black townships, leading to pitched battles in the streets between high school students and armed policemen, a scenario that would become all to familiar over the next decade.

Starting in the Transvaal around the issue of the teaching of lessons in Afrikaans, the crisis in the schools spread to other parts of the country, as well as to some coloured schools of the Western Cape. Although the first schools uprising was quelled in 1977, a new wave of struggles erupted again in 1979 and carried on into 1980. This wave proved more widespread and racially inclusive than the previous one, and displayed better co-ordination and clearer demands.

By the early 1980s, on both the labour and education fronts, struggles and organisations had begun bridging the divide between Africans, Indians and coloureds, a tendency that became more pronounced as national organisations were formed later in the decade. Community support for protest activity in these sectors become widespread, fuelled by the harsh response of the state to militant activities.

2.2 The need for reform

The South African government was not impervious to the ominous political indicators that accompanied the changes to the

economy and the growing social weight of the black working class. By the time P.W.Botha was elected as Prime minister in 1978, the need to both redefine state policies as well as to restructure certain aspects of state control had become critically necessary, hence his adoption of the slogan 'adapt or die' when addressing the NP conference in 1979, one year after being elected as party leader.

Under Botha's leadership, the NP proceeded to execute economic and political reforms with caution, testing the response of both their traditional constituency and the black majority. For this reason their policy changes had of necessity a fair amount of fluidity, both in terms of formulation and execution, with frequent appeals to the white plebiscite (an election in 1981, a referendum in 1983, another election in 1987 and again in 1989) to ensure white majority support.

The main strategy of these reforms was to maintain white rule over the centre of government, which could be achieved only through the continued exclusion of Africans from political power. The homelands policies were therefore retained, but the de facto existence of urban Africans in white South Africa was acknowledged, and local and regional government was redefined so as to stabilise this layer by increasing black participation, thereby creating an insulating layer of middle class black conservative leadership.

This change was accompanied by the removal of discriminatory

legislation against coloureds and Indians, who were sufficiently insignificant numerically not to alter the balance of power even though incorporated into a restructured central government. It was hoped that these measures would serve to detach them from the growing tendency, apparent during the 1970s by the growth of black consciousness amongst the student movement, of identifying with the black oppositional movement, and also allow state control to be retained without the old, inflammatory racial associations. However, before the government could begin to implement reforms, it had first to ensure that its constituency would accept the necessary changes.

2.3 The NP constituency

The new NP leader faced a daunting task. The Afrikaners were the majority in the white electorate, a factor which had guaranteed the NP the unchallenged status of the ruling party for decades. The identity of the NP was inextricably tied to the ideological formulations of white superiority in general and Afrikaner unity and interests in particular. To make the necessary economic and political changes, the government would have to uncouple the link between the Afrikaner identity and white political hegemony. Economic factors were also requiring it to sacrifice its protection of some sectors of the Afrikaner community, notably the working class and small farmers, and convince the majority of Afrikaners that the

continuation of their privileged existence lay in securing their interests through the formulation of new forms of control, some of which might require a radical departure from the old.

Thirty years of NP rule had changed the social composition of the party's predominantly Afrikaner constituency considerably. Firstly, the homogenisation of capital which accompanied the growth of monopolies meant that Afrikaner capital no longer needed governmental intervention to consolidate its position vis a vis English and foreign capital as much as to control the rising radicalisation of the black working class.

Secondly, the majority of Afrikaners had moved upward on the social scale, and were now comfortably middle class. As a result, they had absorbed more progressive political attitudes, a change which was fuelled by the rise of black resistance and international moral condemnation of apartheid ideology. This development left a numerically small, though extremely vocal, Afrikaner working class, mostly employed in the public sector and the lower rungs of the civil service. The protected position of privilege of this layer was already considerably under threat from the black trade unions, and it was becoming clear that the NP was faced with the choice between the continued protection of this layer versus the maintenance of overall economic and political stability.

Thirdly, NP policies had underpinned the existence of a

sizeable layer of Afrikaner small farmers through labour policies, state subsidies and price controls. The welfare of this layer was severely undermined by the economic pressure of agri-business for the state to reduce price protection, and state fiscal necessity to reduce financial support.

Due to the link between the position of privilege of these workers and small farmers and their identity as Afrikaners, they were the sector that would most likely respond unfavourably to political and ideological change. In order to cope with this response, P.W. Botha and his supporters required a certain level of insulation from party, bureaucratic and parliamentary control, the structures in which any revolt of Afrikaanerdom would be registered.

2.4 The rise of the 'strong man'

> *(since 1948) ... prime ministers... were not strong in the sense of possessing an ability to command or the freedom to strike in new directions.* (Seegers, A. (1994), p 56)

As soon as he assumed power, P.W. Botha moved swiftly to consolidate his position as leader of the party and to strengthen the power of the executive. He extended the Prime Minister's office, restructured the cabinet, and established a cabinet secretariat in order to streamline the decision

making structures. Tighter political control was established over the civil service through restructuring, reduction of tenure for senior positions, and the introduction of outside advisers into the policy making processes. (Schrire, R. (1991), pp 37 - 40)

Botha had been the Minister of Defence during the 1970s when the frontline states won independence, Angola and Mozambique to Marxist style governments, and later Zimbabwe to a radical national liberation movement. He had built up a sophisticated and powerful military machine in the campaign to neutralise the threat of the frontline states through the military destabilisation of these countries.[1] Through a number of inner party and cabinet manoeuvres the influence of the military was strengthened, by integrating military and security forces into the newly restructured government machinery so as to tighten and extend internal state security measures. (Schrire, R. (1991), pp. 37- 40) The State Security Council (the only statutory cabinet committee) and below it the new National Security Management System, stretched from the cabinet down through every level of government through a series of hierarchical interlinking structures.

Once control over the government structures had been established, Botha moved on to introduce plans for

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[1] See Geldenhuys, D, (1985) The diplomacy of isolation: South African foreign policy making, Johannesburg: Macmillan, and Davies, R & O'Meara, D. (1985), Total strategy in Southern Africa, in JOSAS, vol.11, no.2, pp. 183 - 211, for accounts of S.A.'s destabilisation activities in the frontline states.

constitutional reform which would further consolidate the power of the executive. The proposed new constitution gave considerable powers to the presidency and significantly reduced the influence of the cabinet. (Boulle, L. (1994), pp. 22 - 27)

Despite Botha's caution, the proposal to change the constitution and extend the franchise to coloureds and Indians split the NP in 1982, with the leader of the Transvaal caucus, Andries Treurnicht, leading disaffected followers away to form the Conservative Party before the proposal was put to a white plebiscite in 1983.

2.5 White reforms

The proposed tri-cameral constitutional system would give coloureds and Indians parliamentary representation and decision making powers over limited issues, designated 'own affairs', but retained white control over national issues, designated 'general affairs'. The structure of the new parliament ensured that the white party could override coloured and Indian opposition if necessary. (Schrire, R. (1991), p. 65)

The 1984 referendum was boycotted by both the white liberal Progressive Federal Party, because of the exclusion of Africans, and by the parties of the Afrikaner right, viz. the

newly formed Conservative Party and the Herstigte (Reformed) National Party, a small party that split from the NP in 1969, because of the inclusion of coloureds and Indians. Despite the boycott, the referendum received a 70% turnout and produced a two thirds yes vote for the constitutional changes. Elections for the coloured and Indian Houses, however, were not as enthusiastically supported. In the 1984 tri-cameral elections, the overall voter turnout for the coloured house was 19,6% of the eligible vote, and for the Indian house 16,3% of the eligible vote. (Schrire, R. (1991), p.63) Coloured and Indian politicians who participated in the new parliament were widely discredited, and remained marginal to the political developments that shook the country later in the decade.

The introduction of the tri-cameral system generated considerable anger amongst the African population at their exclusion , and was resoundingly rejected by the majority of coloured and Indian voters. In general, the Botha reforms were met with extreme suspicion by the black population, because they remained tied to racial identities, excluded Africans from exercising political power and perpetuated the hated homelands system. From 1979 onwards the Botha government introduced a series of structural reforms on a backdrop of rising black resistance.

Firstly, they incorporated black trade unions into the industrial relations legislation in 1979, in an attempt to

channel the growing mobilisation of black workers into an institutional framework. The reformed labour legislation was met with initial suspicion by the new black trade unions, and a heated discourse ensued amongst the leadership over the pro's and con's of black workers participating within a legislative industrial relations framework in a state where political rights were denied. Those who argued against registration warned of the state's intention of co-opting trade unions, those who argued for pointed to the advantages registration and legislation provided for increasing organisational capacity and strength. Webster, E. (1988), points out that this disagreement was largely tactical, and was settled by practise, when the overwhelming majority of black trade unions did register, and yet became ever more politicised during the turbulent 1980s. (Webster, E. (1988), p.180)

Through the prompting of the trade unions, the government steadily improved labour legislation to cover African workers throughout the 1980s, and job reservation was completely removed by 1987. Even in the public sector hierarchical privileges were loosened and promotional opportunities became available for blacks, as did a move towards the equalisation of salaries and conditions of service. (Schrire, R. (1991), p. 49) Far from taming the trade unions, the reforms assisted in improving their organisational capacity, and were astutely used by the trade union leadership to win further changes to the legislature.

Secondly, the government increased state expenditure on African education from R68. 84 per capita in 1978 to R237 per capital in 1985 (Schrire, R. (1991), p. 49). Between 1982 and 1987 alone, the per capita expenditure increased by 73,49%. Restrictions on African students on a tertiary educational level were lifted through the abolishment of the permit system in 1984, which restricted the number of black students at white universities, and African students at coloured and Indian universities, and tertiary education was gradually desegregated. However, despite these considerable improvements, the black departments of the racially divided education system still remained grossly under resourced, and by the end of the decade the government was still spending 4 times more for every white student than for an African. (Schrire, R. (1991), p.15)

Thirdly, the government attempted the consolidation and extension of influx control measures, through the introduction of the Koornhoff bills in 1980 and again in 1982, although both attempts were met with a public outcry and were never legislated. It stepped up activities such as forced removals of Africans from the urban areas and farmlands to the homelands, and the clearing of 'black spots'.[2] Influx control measures were met with increasing organised resistance and received overwhelming condemnation nationally and internationally. In 1985 the government announced that it had

[2] Note, for a detailed account of forced removals, see Walker, C & Platzky, L. (1985), The surplus people, Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

abandoned the system, and abolished the pass laws one year later. However, Platsky points out in 1986 that even after this announcement removals continued in those areas where people were disorganised or divided, and that relocation sites in homelands areas were still being prepared. (Platsky, L. (1986), p.389 - 390). Also, even after the pass laws were abolished, citizens of the independent homelands could still incur penalties for being in South Africa illegally under the Aliens act.

Fourthly, despite increasing difficulties with their influx control policies, the Botha government was not yet prepared to jettison the idea of the homelands. It continued with its attempts to remove the citizenship of Africans through the redefining of borders under the homelands policy. An attempt was made to transfer lands originally allocated to KwaZulu and KaNgwane, both of which refused independence and therefore remained self governing territories of South Africa, to Swaziland in 1982, thereby removing South African citizenship from 800,000 people. The intended transfer was stopped by the courts. (Schrire, R. (1991), p. 54)

Having failed in attempts at decentralisation, the NP modified its plan and devised the policy of 'deconcentration', targeting industrial growth points on the periphery of the metropolitan areas in the commuter townships that had sprung up in the boom period, all of which had been allocated to the various homelands. (Cobbett, W. et al. (1988), p.29) The

attempts to situate these mushrooming townships into homelands territories led to fantastic border adjustments, with some homelands having two to three spatially dispersed sections. The consolidation of the homelands of KwaNdebele, Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu cut across existing mixed communities, and led to ethnic conflict. (Platzky,L. (1986), p. 391)

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) was set up in 1983, taking over the functions of both the Department of Co-operation and Development, which administered support to the self governing territories, and the Department of Foreign affairs, which did the same for the independent homelands, to channel vast amounts of state funding into financial incentives for industrial dispersal policies in the homelands. Within one year of opening, the DBSA had funded the establishment of industries and infra-structural initiatives in Ciskei, KwaZulu and Qwaqwa. Independent homelands were given autonomous status on the DBSA's governing structure to decide on the allocation of funds, whereas self governing homelands were represented by South Africa, another measure to encourage independence. (Hirsch, A. (1986), pp. 372 - 380)

Fifthly, administration in the African urban areas was de-racialised, and the African areas were incorporated into a unitary regional government system through the Regional Services Councils in 1985, although the councils were structured in a way that prevented black townships draining

resources from the white areas. The attempt to extend participation in administrative structures through the setting up Black Local Authorities (BLAs) in 1982, shifting the burden of provision of services to elected leadership in the African townships, was resoundingly rejected by the black communities. The official overall turnout for the BLA elections was 21% of registered voters, but official figures of registered voters did not account for the vast numbers of illegal urban residents and non registered voters. (Schrire, R. (1991), p.79)

Lastly, the government finally awarded South African citizenship and freehold rights to urban Africans who could prove permanent residency and job incumbency in the urban areas in 1987. This covered those Africans who had previously been categorised as citizens of the independent homelands, even though they had been living and working in the urban areas. (Schrire, R. (1991), pp. 70 - 72)

2.6 Black resistance

The implementation of the Botha reforms was accompanied by widespread and sustained political protests throughout the 1980s. It would be incorrect to contribute this solely to the introduction of political reforms, although both the implementation of the reforms and their inability to address the needs and aspirations of the black population undoubtedly

contributed towards the intensification of resistance. The reforms were an acknowledgement of the growing social weight of the black working class. The awareness of this new dimension was not only restricted to the ruling bloc, but had permeated into the perceptions of the black population as well.

A new mood of defiance spread to the black urban townships, primarily to the drastically under-resourced African areas in the Transvaal, but also to some coloured and to a lesser extend Indian areas as well. Struggles in the black townships stemmed from the inability of the new administrative structures to rectify the degenerating conditions caused by years of under provision and growth of numbers. In the African townships in the Transvaal, the new system of electing community councillors to the BLAs was never popular from its inception. Attempts by the BLAs to firstly, increase revenues by raising rents and service charges, and secondly, control the escalating growth of the squatter areas, led to increasing resistance, which was further fuelled by widespread corruption of community councillors.

The convergence of civic and schools struggles, in addition to the ever increasing numbers of unemployed youth in the townships with little prospects of employment because of the recession, provided conditions for sustained mobilisation. The vicious response of the security forces both heightened and generalised this growing radicalisation, and intensified

the political content of the struggles. (Seekings, (1988), pp. 209 - 216) Within a relatively short period of time, civil government in the African townships collapsed, and a state of 'ungovernability', a popular call from mass organisations, prevailed.

As these sporadic struggles intensified they began to coalesce, and a plethora of organisations sprang up spanning almost every aspect of existence of the black proletariat, viz. schools, parents, tertiary students, youth, women, civic etc., often leading to formation of national organisations. Between 1984 to 1986 South Africa experienced a level of insurrection never witnessed before, and the depth and spread of resistance shook the state considerably.

2.7 State Repression

The state responded by reversing the process of reform and imposed a partial state of emergency in July 1985, restricting political activity in 36 magisterial districts and allowing the police extensive powers which enabled them to detain activists, ban gatherings, impose curfews and censor the press. (Omond, R. (1985), p. 211 - 213)

Within eight months 8,000 people were detained without charges and a further 22,000 charged. Widespread unrest continued, and in 1986 the state of emergency was extended to cover the

whole country and a further 26,000 people were detained. (Beinart, W. (1994), p.246)

Over the next three years, the state acted ruthlessly to restore control over the black urban areas. Troops were sent into the townships to maintain order, the state of emergency was extended and renewed annually, the activities of organisations were restricted and their leadership detained, prominent leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) were charged and tried for treason, and the mainstream press was effectively cowed by legislation, fear of financial penalties and lengthy trials. Shady death squads, with obvious links to the police, preyed on well known activists, and buildings housing mass organisations were bombed or set alight.

It was soon apparent by the relative ease with which the state was able to re-establish control that it was in no immediate danger of being overthrown. The main advantage of the apartheid state was that it had never been reliant on majority consent. State structures of control, viz. the legislature, judiciary and armed forces, were firmly in the hands of the privileged white minority, and directed against an onslaught from below, although rule of law gave the judiciary a certain level of independence which was occasionally used against apartheid excesses.

Furthermore, the state could rely on the absolute loyalty of the army and security forces. As noted by Callinicos, A.

(1988, p.52), the link between white supremacy, maintenance of privileges and a white monopoly of the repressive machinery has always been clear. All adult white males were conscripted to the South African Defence Force. The state possessed an extremely sophisticated security service, which had received additional funding and stature through the upgrading of the National Security Management System in the 1980s. The entire upper echelon and all higher ranking officers of the army and police force were white, and the prevailing psychology and culture in the armed forces was one of an embattled white minority protecting its continued existence against attack from the black majority.

State control proved extremely effective, and the phase of ungovernability receded, but an uneasy calm reigned, which was continually broken by sporadic flares on several fronts which gave promise of problems to come.

In the African schools the infra-structural problems remained critical, despite an increase in state expenditure. The continued lack of facilities and teachers led to many schools operating on the 'platoon' system, running morning and afternoon sessions to cope with the numbers of students. The overcrowding of classrooms, and the psychological effects of a series of students uprisings (in 1976-7, 1977-9, 1980-81 and 1984-5) led to a complete breakdown of authority in the schools, and a situation of near anarchy.

On the labour front mobilisation escalated. The biggest strike wave occurred in 1987, with the National Union of Mineworkers leading its members out on the largest strike the country had ever experienced. The NP attempted to quell the trade unions by introducing legislation which would curb political activity, a move that was resolutely opposed by the labour movement, which led the country out on the biggest ever three day stayaway in June 1988 in protest. An estimated 1,6 million workers participated in the stayaway, which was accompanied by class boycotts at schools, colleges and universities. (International Defence and Aid Fund (1988), p.19) Despite trade union resistance the government pushed the controversial Labour Relations Amendment bill through parliament, but later conceded to open talks with the trade union federations and employer bodies to try and reach agreement on labour legislation.

Civic struggles receded with the presence of troops in the townships, but resistance to township administration through rents and service-charges boycotts continued, and authority for local government was never restored.

By the late 1980s, the mood of defiance was beginning to spread to the homelands. A popular uprising, and a joint alliance between various interest groups, including white farmers, led to the refusal of independence by the KwaNdebele homeland in 1986. The leading, state sanctioned party in KaNgwane opened up negotiations with the African National

Congress (ANC). Popular struggles and organisations emerged and spread in Venda and Lebowa in the north. In the Transkei, rising political dissatisfaction led to a military coup in 1987, with the new military leader, General Bantu Holomisa, declaring his support for the ANC. A coup also occurred Bophutatswana in 1988, although the South African government intervened to restore the leadership, and in the Ciskei in 1990.

In 1989 a slight lifting of restrictions so as to allow for elections elicited renewed organisation against racist government structures. The Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) was formed, and a defiance campaign against emergency legislation restricting political activity was launched. Despite the obvious might of the state and the relative ease with which it could maintain control, the mass movement remained unbowed.

2.8 Concluding remarks

The NP and its tri-cameral parliament was faced with serious challenges to the continued maintenance of control over the state. The party had weathered the split in its constituency, but its reforms had failed to co-opt credible black leaders into the structures of government. Instead, state authority on the education, labour, civil and homelands government level had been severely undermined, and the wave of popular struggles had ushered in a new set of conditions that would

prove to be extremely damaging to continued state control. These conditions were: the heightened politicisation of the black population; the linking of the resolution of diverse struggles with the overthrow of the apartheid system; and the regeneration of oppositional political formations. The following chapter explores these new developments.

CHAPTER THREE: THE BLACK OPPOSITION

The turn of the decade and the early 1980s witnessed the growing politicisation of the black population, the coalescing and politicisation of black sectoral organisations, and the re-launching of overt political organisations in the country. This chapter analyses the growth of political consciousness in the black mass movement, and the nature of the oppositional organisations that emerged.

3.1 The hydra emerges

The political struggles of the 1970s and 1980s were a direct outflow of the growth of economic and social weight of the black working class during the economic boom period. This is reflected in the fact that the most intense points of struggle, and hence of organisational growth, were located in the sectors where apartheid policies collided with this development, ie. wages and conditions of employment, labour mobility, education, and housing and urban infrastructure.

The organisational formations that developed in this period reflected this. Trade unions, student, civic and squatter organisations flourished, and given that they were involved in pitched battles with employers, education and local authorities and the security forces, demonstrated a sophisticated level of internal organisation and strategic

coherence. (Cobbett, W. & Cohen, R. (1988), p.17)

Four factors served to instill on overtly political solution to these sectoral and therefore, by nature, dispersed struggles. Firstly, state control was so integrated into the daily existence and identity of the African worker that the connection between social and economic difficulties and the political source, viz. apartheid policies, could easily made. (Wolpe, H. (1988), p.77) As demonstrated in chapters one and two, the structural barriers to the economic and social advancement of the black working class were visibly tied to the apartheid state. The solution to these sectoral struggles thus became the overthrow of apartheid.

Secondly, the fact that state responded to these spontaneous sectoral struggles with partial reforms demonstrated that, on the one hand, the state could be moved through radical action, whilst on the other, its strategy still revolved around the exclusion of Africans from the political process. This increased the black population's rejection of these reforms, as well as their confidence in the ability of mass organisations to effect meaningful political change. The biggest wave of popular struggles followed the state's initiative to implement constitutional reform in 1983/1984.

Thirdly, the state's violent and repressive response to the heightened mobilisation in the various sectors both generalised the radicalisation of struggles and intensified

their political content. In their analyses of the various sectoral struggles, Seekings, J. (1988, pp. 215 - 216) points to this effect with regard to the struggles in the Vaal urban townships from 1984 to 1986, and Webster, E. (1988, p.192), makes the same point with regards to the politicisation of the black trade unions. The biggest wave of labour struggles in 1987 followed the state's concerted clampdown after the imposition of nation-wide State of Emergency.

Fourthly, black South Africans had a strong tradition of struggles against apartheid, and, more recently, of linking various sectoral struggles towards a political resolution, a legacy of the black political and labour movement in the 1950s which resulted in the alliance between the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the African National Congress (ANC). Political strategies, organisations and leaders from the 1950s were still relatively fresh in the memory of the black working class. Wolpe, H. (1988, p.78) points to the resuscitation of dormant organisations of the 1950s such as the regional Indian Congresses, and many veterans of the 1950s struggles became active again in the 1980s, and were swiftly awarded leadership positions, such as Oscar Mpetha in Western Cape and Albertina Sisulu and Winnie Mandela in the Transvaal. Within a relatively short period of time the main black oppositional organisation, the ANC, was able to gain widespread support and legitimacy, despite the fact that it had been declared illegal for over two decades.

Two distinct forms of national organisation emerged, the sectoral organisations such as the trade unions, the South African Students Congress, The National Education Crisis Committee etc., and overt political formations such as the United Democratic Front, the Azanian People's Organisation, Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSiswe etc. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed analysis of the multitude of organisations that emerged from the black resistance movement of the 1980s. This chapter will focus only on the largest and most organised formations. It is however, important to note that the trend towards national co-ordination of diverse sectoral organisations contributed towards the generalisation and heightening of political awareness amongst the black population. By far the largest and most organised of these sectoral organisations, was the black trade unions.

3.2 The black trade unions

By the beginning of the 1980s black workers had access to legal protection and procedures on a level they had never experienced before. In the ensuing years the black trade unions grew rapidly. Unionisation doubled by 1983, trade union representation for black workers spread to most workplaces in the manufacturing sector, and company level bargaining increased significantly. (Smith, R. (1987), p.92)

The onset of what was to prove another severe recession in 1982, set against a background of growing dissatisfaction with township conditions and the heavy handed response of the state to student militancy, contributed to an sharp increase in the radicalisation of the trade unions. Work days lost through strikes grew by 200% from 1983-1984, and despite retrenchments, membership continued to increase.

With the launch of both the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the smaller rival federation, the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) in 1985, trade unions were beginning to consolidate their power on the industrial level. Mergers towards the formation of sectoral unions followed the launch of the both federations, and bargaining strategies became increasingly sophisticated.

The size, level and capacity of organisation, and strategic economic relevance of the trade unions also gave them considerable powers of mobilisation on the political level. The introduction of political reforms excluding Africans from central government in 1984, and the growth of organisations against township and education authorities provided the final impetus for the politicisation of the black trade unions. Webster,E. (1988, pp 186-7) outlines the details of black general 'work stay-aways' (the South African term for a one or two day demonstrative general strike) during 1984 - 1986, demonstrating that the majority of demands were for non production issues, and involved a range of organisations

besides the trade unions.

Trade union organisation spread from the factory floor to the townships feeding the industrial areas through the growth of local shop steward councils, which cut across individual trade unions, and were initiated as a strategic means of reaching unorganised factories. Trade unions began organising in the townships as well as in the factories. Furthermore, the organisational experience and heightened political awareness of trade union activists made them the natural leaders of township organisations, and many trade unionists participated in the civil and political organisations in the townships as well. (Lambert, R. & Webster, E. (1988), p.38)

As the struggles began to coalesce during the mid to late 1980s, trade union participation in mass political activity increased. Co-ordination between political organisations and trade unions around demonstrative actions such as mass marches, rallies, mass funerals and stay-aways became commonplace. Within a relatively short period of time, the black trade union movement had become a significant economic and political force. The industrial relations environment was completely transformed, legislative protection for black workers had grown phenomenally, the unions were openly demanding political change, and an alignment of the trade unions and the burgeoning black oppositional movement had been established.

The black oppositional movement developed along two distinct parallels. By far the largest of these was the black left opposition, which espoused democratic principles of organisation, although the level of democratic participation of rank and file members varied widely between organisations. The black right opposition ostensibly organised along systems of patronage and drew strongly on tribal traditions, although leaders of such organisations (eg. Inkatha) frequently denied this, and claimed that their organisations were also democratic.

3.3 The black left opposition

Despite the general division between organisations falling within the broad left black opposition and black right wing forces, the overtly political dimension to heightened mass struggles led to the growth of a number of rival ideological strains in the left opposition itself, which although mainly the preoccupation of the leadership often filtered down into grassroots organisations, and led to rivalry and sometimes hostility within and between various organisations. Ideological differences revolved around the relevance accorded to race, class and nationality, as well as the eventual political outcome of mass struggles, and led to the growth of rival political formations.

The Pan African Congress, although dormant since its banning in the 1960s, had established a tradition of Africanism when it broke away from the ANC. This tradition was revived by the black consciousness movement in the 1970s. Closely connected ideologically to the black power movement in America, black consciousness flourished amongst the student intelligentsia, and although its influence receded in the 1980s, it retained some support, and developed a strong leftward orientation. Black consciousness organisations stressed the need for the leadership of the black working class and for a socialist resolution to mass struggles, and condemned class or race alliances. The Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), which later became the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) in 1985 after the failure of merger talks towards the formation of one trade union federation, were the organisational strongholds of the black consciousness movement.

The so called 'populist' or 'charterist' movement identified strongly with the position of the ANC, calling for national liberation as the focal point of struggle. Although the ANC's banned programmatic document, the Freedom Charter, called for the nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industry, these phrases were open to either socialist or nationalist interpretation. The ANC leadership were always at pains to stress that organisation's main aim was the establishment of a non-racial, democratic and unified South Africa. Thus Nelson Mandela would say to the Eminent Person's Group sent by

the Commonwealth in 1986:

> *... the charter embodied principles of democracy and human rights, and ... it was not a blueprint for socialism.* (Mandela, N. (1994), p. 517)

The responsibility of ensuring the eventual socialist outcome to the struggles of the South African people lay, according to the ANC, with the South African Communist Party (SACP), which had formed a close alliance with the ANC since the 1950s, an alliance which was strengthened during the years in exile. The party's formulation of the theory of internal colonialism,[3] called for the initial formation of a multi-class front under the organisational umbrella of the ANC so as to establish a national democratic state, which it categorised as the necessary first stage of a revolutionary progression towards socialism.

A third ideological strain within the anti apartheid movement were the non SACP Marxists, who disagreed with the two stage theory of the SACP and called for, firstly, independent working class organisations, although they differed markedly on how these independent organisations should be built and structured, and secondly, a socialist programme for the anti-apartheid movement. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to investigate the variations of Marxist

[3] See: the SACP programme The Road to South African Freedom (1962), and Wolpe, pp 28 - 35 for a an analysis of varying interpretations of this theory.

strategies in the 1980s. The most significant strain, in terms of its impact on black working class organisation, were the so called 'workerists' who were responsible for a strong current in the trade union movement emphasising trade union independence from political organisations, a sentiment that led to the refusal of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) to affiliate to the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the early 1980s.

The turn of the decade and the early 1980s witnessed the re-launching of overt political organisations, such as the AZAPO, the UDF, and the National Forum, a smaller, predominantly black consciousness left rival to the UDF.
The UDF, from its formation, established a direct ideological link with the African National Congress through the election of ANC stalwarts such as Nelson Mandela, and Walter and Albertina Sisulu, amongst others, as patrons of the organisation, and a rhetorical (because of the illegal status of the ANC) adherence to the Freedom Charter. Essentially populist in its orientation, the UDF avoided the tight formulation of ideological policies so as to accommodate a diversity of organisations under its umbrella. (Collinge, J. (1986), p.257)

The front articulated its opposition to apartheid and called for the creation of a non-racial democracy in South Africa. Its campaigns contributed to the withdrawal of the Koornhoff bills and the low results in the tri-cameral parliament and

BLA elections. Its joint call with the trade union federations in November 1984 led to the biggest work stay-away the country had experienced in thirty five years.

Within two years the UDF had acquired 600 affiliates, which covered religious, cultural, student, youth, civic organisations. (Callinicos, A. (1988), p. 63) Although the main trade union federations chose to maintain their organisational autonomy, some independent trade unions affiliated to the UDF. By the mid 1980s the UDF was immensely popular, and its leaders were subjected to consistent harassment, detentions, arrests and trials by the state. The political activities of the organisation and many of its affiliates were banned in 1988.

As the decade progressed, the outcome of the war of ideologies was settled by the growing popularisation of the ANC. Despite the fact that the ANC had maintained organisational coherence in exile, it had been effectively obliterated inside South Africa by 1970, its presence confined to sporadic guerilla activities. Yet by the late 1980s, it had succeeded in welding the anti-apartheid movement under its ideological identity and political tradition, both within the country and externally.

This task in itself was not particularly difficult. The main contributory factor was the immense popularity and political impact of the UDF, and its close identification with the ANC.

Other factors were the enormous advantages the ANC held because of firstly, its stature and reputation as the oldest, largest, and most consistent anti-apartheid organisation, secondly, widespread international recognition, and thirdly, a coherent organisational existence in exile which could initiate contact with and strategise for the burgeoning movement within the country from the early emergence of mass struggle.

Activists who fled the country to avoid state harassment and detention were incorporated into the ANC's structures from the time of the 1976 school riots. By the mid 1980s the size of the exiled organisation had grown significantly. Guerilla activity was stepped up during the 1980s until the South African state clamped down on the tacit and sometimes overt support the organisation received from the frontline states, through the signing of the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique, agreements with the Swazi and Botswana governments to halt all ANC activity in their countries, and the military invasion of Angola.

The ANC's broad church aspect contributed towards the organisation's appeal to diverse sectors of the population. Whilst resolutely remaining national, multi-racial and multi-class, its alliance with the South African Communist Party also attracted the radicalised elements within the mass movement by demonstrating that it clearly identified with an eventual socialist outcome to the inequalities of South

African society. By the end of the 1980s the majority of mass organisations openly subscribed to the Freedom Charter despite its banned status. This included COSATU, which adopted the Charter at its second congress in 1987.

However, the hegemony of the ANC in the black working class movement did not go unchallenged. The apartheid system had created a layer of conservative black leadership, who although a minority, were to become a concerted destabilising force within the black working class.

3.4 The black right opposition

> *...ethnicity informed the actions of South Africans for many years because it seemed to make sense of the everyday world. That 'sense' led to frequent clashes over scarce resources being expressed in ethnic terms.* (Mare, G. (1993), p.54)

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, large sections of the African population have been racked with internecine violence, impersonally termed, by the apartheid state, 'black on black violence'. Black vigilante groups first appeared in 1985. Vigilantes were organised through a system of patronage, frequently drawing on tribal and militaristic traditions. Attached to African squatter lords, small land

and business owners, community councillors or homelands officials, they were the followers of a conservative element in African communities who were attracted to the advantages offered by the apartheid state.

The new radicalisation, democratic forms of organisation and youthfulness of the activists of township and squatter communities threatened both the existing conditions of state patronage and the incipient increase of power the Botha reforms offered to conservative elements in the black middle classes. They also offended tribal traditions of youth submitting to the authority of elders.[4]

The earliest manifestation of the cleavages that were to come occurred when migrant workers in the hostels of the Transvaal attacked rebellious students towards the latter part of the 1976/7 student riots. From the mid 1980s onwards, tacit and later overt support from the police and security forces led to the escalation of violent clashes between vigilante groups and township communities. (Catholic Institute for International Relations (1985), p.28)

Although material advantages, access to scarce resources, radical versus traditional forms of organisation and political differences were the underlying reasons for the rise of vigilantism, the overt rationale and style of organisation was

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[4] For an analysis of this development, see Haysom, N. (1986) in Mabalanga, the rise of right wing vigilantes in S.A. , CALS, University of Wits, JHB.

ethnic, drawing strongly on tribal traditions. The most prominent African organisation that utilised the ethnic draw card, and frequently employed vigilante activity, was Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSiswe, later to become the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Inkatha was formed in 1975 as a Zulu movement, and although it changed its constitution in 1977 to allow for general African membership, its use of the Zulu identity as its prime mobilisation mechanism has always gravitated against this. It initially articulated a closeness to the ANC, although the ANC's relationship with its leader, Mangosothu Buthelezi, became increasingly hostile, and the organisation publicly denounced him in 1980. (Davies, R., O'Meara, D. & Dlamini, S. (1984), p.391) By the 1980s Inkatha had consolidated its control of the KwaZulu bureaucracy, and won the support of black land and small business owners in the Kwazulu homeland. It demonstrated obvious mass mobilisation potential through its rallies and marches, and had a large youth and womens' brigade. (McCaul, C. (1988), p.150) Its conservative leadership and ethnically based style of organisation brought it into direct conflict with the UDF and trade unions. (Mare, G. (1986), pp.58 - 60) Although the organisation remained largely confined to Kwazulu, it managed to penetrate into Transvaal Reef through the migrant hostels.

Buthelezi, the dominant ideologue in Inkatha, had always had an uneasy relationship with the apartheid state. He refused

independence for Kwazulu, denounced the 1984 constitutional reforms because it excluded Africans, and espoused a pluralist programme of constitutional change for South Africa. However, he was also dependent on the apartheid state both for his initial appointment as chief Minister of Kwazulu in 1972, and for continued financial and political support for the Kwazulu bureaucracy. (Davies, R., O'Meara, D. & Dlamini, S. (1984), pp. 388 - 389) Both Buthelezi and his organisation successfully managed to straddled the divide between opposition to and collaboration with the apartheid state.

Dominated by middle class officials of the Kwazulu bureaucracy, Inkatha openly espoused support for the free enterprise system in a period when the mass movement was becoming increasingly enradicalised, and responded viciously to the rising militancy of youth in schools and tertiary institutions in the Kwazulu area.

Inkatha demonstrated extreme hostility to the radical trade unions as well, and launched its rival trade union federation, the United Workers of South Africa (UWUSA) in 1986. UWUSA adopted a policy in support of a harmonious relationship between workers and employers and declared itself against any destabilisation of industry. After its formation, occasional factory floor battles between UWUSA and COSATU members ensued. (Mc Caul, C. (1988), pp. 162 - 164)

Inkatha viewed the meteoric rise of the UDF as a threat to

its control of Kwazulu, and after a number of acrimonious verbal attacks on the organisation by the Inkatha leadership, violence erupted in 1984, and intensified in the ensuing years as armed groups of men attacked areas where UDF organisations thrived, and activists in these communities retaliated, (McCaul, C. (1988), pp 166 - 169). This violence eventually spread to the hostels housing Zulu migrants in the Transvaal as well. At the end of the decade death tolls in the homeland had risen alarmingly, and anti-government protests had largely subsided. Through violence and division Inkatha had consolidated its power as a force in the region and substantially weakened its main opposition, thereby successfully ensured a role for itself in any future political dispensation.

3.5 Concluding remarks

At the end of the decade black extra-parliamentary organisations had completely transformed the South African political terrain. The link between sectoral demands and the demise of apartheid in the perceptions of the black working class had been clearly demonstrated by the overwhelming popularity of the UDF and ANC. Trade unions had matured and become increasingly politicised and the ANC and Inkatha had emerged as the dominant black political structures in the country. However, the separate identities and agendas of the above mentioned organisations had an important effect on the

black mass movement as a whole, as the analysis of the mass revolt in the following chapter will demonstrate.

CHAPTER FOUR: DIMENSIONS OF THE CRISIS

The rise of black oppositional political formations clearly demonstrated the growth of political power of the black mass movement. This power did not mature to the point where it could overthrow the apartheid state, which was able to contain the mass uprising. However, the process of reform, resistance and repression had two profound effects, the combination of which created an unstable equilibrium in the country.

Firstly, political power had shifted to diverse loci, the most significant of which were the black mass movement and its organisations, (including the trade unions), and capital. This chapter will demonstrate that the black mass movement, although subdued and stratified, still remained highly politicised and defiant, and that this development caused local and international capital to question the ability of the apartheid state to provide the stable political conditions that would normalise relations of production, a concern which led to capital becoming increasingly vocal in calling for political change.

Secondly, the dialectic of reform, resistance and repression created a serious problem of legitimacy for the state, which affected the government's ability to rule. The moral illegitimacy and overwhelming unpopularity of the apartheid state had been exposed to the entire population. This

exposure revealed glaring weaknesses with regard to maintaining the continued allegiance of the security forces and the white constituency to the government, and also gave considerable legitimacy to the black forces of opposition.

4.1 The mass revolt: success through failure

Despite the depth and spread of the mass uprising, it had failed to impose the will of the black majority on the ruling minority. Although the main reason for this failure can be attributed to the strength of the apartheid state, it is important to acknowledge that the level of repression that was required to quell the uprising, although brutal in its execution, stopped far short of employing the full capacity of the repressive forces of the state. The fact that the state did not need to resort to the complete obliteration of mass organisation or more severely, to generalised military engagement with its civilians indicated that the black revolt, although a clear demonstration of the depth of the cleavages in South African society, had a number of strategic weaknesses.

Firstly, as mentioned earlier, the path of mass struggles moved from diverse sectoral activity to overt political demands. Despite the development of a political head to the movement under the banner of the UDF, its broad front aspect meant that a clear programmatic formulation to link the

diverse organisational forms which arose from these struggles into a movement strong enough to challenge the might of the state was difficult to achieve. The ideological and class distinctions between its various affiliates reduced the front to devising a strategy around what was essentially the lowest common denominator, namely, the call for the eradication of apartheid.

Secondly, the relative sizes and organisational capacities of the various affiliates differed markedly, causing the front to formulate its calls around demonstrative forms of action such as rallies, marches and stay-aways, which utilised its main strength, viz. its general popularity. The predominance of this form of action limited the actual power of the front to sustain mobilisation at its lowest levels and replace second and third tier leadership once it came under attack from the onslaught of state. Although the UDF accrued enormous popular support and stature, mass organisations never matured to the point where they provided alternatives to the structures of the state. (Booysen, S. (1990), p.45) The uprising was capable of subverting the state, but not of replacing it.

Thirdly the trade unions, although politicised, remained organisationally detached from the political organisations, and also limited their overt political activity to demonstrative measures. Callinicos, A. (1988, p.132), points to the fact that the trade unions in South Africa never

reached the levels of political activity comparable to that in Poland in 1980, where the organised working class actively challenged the ruling power. Despite the clarity of the relationship between economic grievances and their political solution in South Africa, the ideological differences in the black left opposition as well as the swift action of capital and the state to legitimise trade union activity as long as it confined itself to the economic terrain served to contain union activity.

Lastly, although the state's reforms did not succeed in co-opting credible leaders from the black opposition, they did succeed in stratifying the black opposition along horizontal divides. Although clearly a minority in the forces of opposition as a whole, the threat to existing relations of patronage, the scarcity of resources and available power bases for the black middle class, the ethnic component which generated a mass following, and covert assistance from the security forces made the conservative wing of the black opposition a particularly vicious destabilising factor, causing black communities to direct their frustration and anger inwards against each other instead of outwards, against the state.

It must however, be noted that some of the factors which contributed to the inability of the mass uprising to overthrow the state also held promise of not only continued subversion, but also of a long term potential to resolve themselves in

favour of a fundamental challenge to state authority.

Firstly, the diverse nature of the struggles of the 1980s, although a weakness in terms of presenting a challenge to state supremacy, represented a continuous threat to long term political stability. The spread of mass resistance and the grassroots style of organisation made the threat of regroupment an ever impending possibility, not only on the sectoral level, but also nationally. The formation of the Mass Democratic Movement in 1989, as soon as political restrictions were slightly lifted, demonstrated this capacity for regroupment.

Secondly, the economic constraints on the state meant that a fundamental alteration to the economic and social conditions of the black majority remained unattainable in the foreseeable future. Yet the uprising had entrenched not only the link between economic and social grievances and white political rule in the perceptions of the black population, but also a faith in the capacity of mass organisation and struggle as a means of effecting change on all levels of working class existence. Without a visible separation of the political realm from the economic and social, the diversity of struggles and the inability of the state to resolve economic and social grievances would not only continuously threaten political control, but held the potential of the black working class resolving the political crisis through profoundly revolutionary means.

Thirdly, the labour movement remained organisationally coherent and highly politicised, and had ably demonstrated that it had both the political will and economic capacity to resist any attempts by the state to constrain its power. The state was resolute in its attempts to ensure that trade union activity did not become overtly political, hence the initial labour reforms and later, during the period of repression, the amendments to the Labour Relations Act which restricted political strikes and solidarity activity.

Aware of the threat intensified state repression presented to organisational capacity, the trade union leadership in general were quite reluctant to entering the overtly political sphere. Even the radical COSATU restricted its political activity to the adoption of the Freedom Charter and frequent calls for the removal of restrictions and the freeing of political activity. By the end of the decade, a tacit compromise had been reached. The state would not openly attack the trade unions organisationally and thereby risk the destabilisation this could precipitate, as long as the trade unions observed the divide between economic and political activities. However, the unresolved political issues, the interdependence of trade union and political activists, and the organisational might of the trade unions made this situation tenuous at best.

Lastly, the uprising had ensured the ANC's hegemony as the popular political head of the black mass movement. Although still banned in the country and therefore unable to organise

in name, the adoption of the Freedom Charter, open displays of the colours and symbols of the ANC, and even the use of the term 'congress' in the naming of sectoral organisations ie. South African Congress (SAYCO) or the South African Students Congress (SASCO), became increasingly popular throughout the decade.

In the dialectic of reform and resistance the government had lost its sole prerogative to political power, and the black opposition movement, although divided and repressed politically, had emerged as a rival political force. Although the state was able to contain mass resistance, the process of reform, resistance and repression had created a stalemate. The black mass movement had been repressed, but remained highly politicised and demonstrated occasional indicators that it was still prepared to struggle. The state retained control but its authority had been considerably undermined and its legitimacy destroyed. The resultant deadlock held no short term potential for a solution in favour of either the mass movement nor the apartheid state, only the prospect of continuing cycles of mass violence and state repression. However, there were other forces besides the black opposition which were also increasingly exerting pressure on the government to settle the political crisis that had arisen. The following section investigates these developments.

4.2 International capital and the state

The political uprising in the 1980s was followed by a concerted flight of foreign capital. Fixed investment in the country dropped by 30% between 1981-1989. (Commonwealth Expert Group, (1991), p.17). Capital flight was accompanied by an investment embargo and economic sanctions as the state's ruthless attempts to re-establish control intensified international outrage. After the declaration of the first State of Emergency in 1985, foreign banks called in short term loans. The South African state responded by declaring a moratorium on debts, but the exchange rate tumbled, thereby increasing the size of the debt, and interest rates soared as the state was forced to implement crisis management measures. (Blumenfeld, J. (1987), p. 17 - 21 ; Catholic Institute for International Relations, (1985), p.6)

Large companies scaled down their investments in South African corporations, selective import bans were imposed on coal, iron and steel and agricultural produce, and an international ban on the export of certain products such as nuclear and computer equipment to South Africa was implemented. (Blumenfeld, J. (1987), p. 22) Financial sanctions led to problems with the balance of payment as the state tried to service its foreign debt. (Moritz, L. (1994), p.17) In response to the tumbling exchange rate, the state introduced a two tier currency to control the flow of capital out of the country. (Blumenfeld, J. (1987),

p. 21)

Despite the obvious economic difficulties the state was experiencing, most observers agree that the financial sanctions had a limited overall effect. The low exchange rate advantaged certain industries, (Catholic Institute fr International Relations (1985), p.8) especially gold and platinum, both big foreign exchange earners. The state also had a certain amount of leverage with regard to the calling in of debt, as whatever measures were imposed could not be of the degree to actually jeopardise future repayment. An initial concession was won to reschedule the debt and eventually, to have time period extended. (Blumenfeld, J. (1987), pp 26 - 27)

Furthermore, the isolation imposed by this focus of world attention on South Africa served to make the ruling bloc more obdurate, as demonstrated by the ideological rationale which fuelled the state's switch to a 'siege economy' in the 1980's.[5] However, despite the obduracy of the government and state bureaucracy, the economy's dependence on the sale of raw materials enforced a continued reliance on the world market, and a full scale siege economy could not be effected. (Callinicos, A. (1988), pp. 166 - 167) The additional dependence on capital investment also exerted a powerful impetus for the state to produce

[5] Note - this is born out by survey done by Van Wyk (1988), which demonstrates a hardening of attitudes by state officials and NP members.

political and social conditions which could revive flagging investor confidence. The pressure of this necessity also led to increasing vocal resistance to state obduracy by local capital, as outlined in the next section.

4.3 Local capital and the state

By the 1980s the depth of political dissatisfaction demonstrated by the insurrection and the relative instability which followed had seriously eroded the faith of local capital in the ability of the apartheid state to restore conditions which could guarantee returns on investment.

Pressure from capital for controlled reforms to the apartheid system first arose in the 1970s, and liberal capital set up the Urban Foundation in 1976 to demonstrate both their commitment to black advancement and their dissatisfaction with the racial policies of the state. The Afrikaner houses remained outside of the Urban Foundation, but capital in general gave overwhelming support to the Botha reforms, with the exception only of those business houses which had traditional links to liberal politics. This was ably demonstrated by the fact that the Progressive Federal Party, which campaigned against the changes, was hard pressed to find financial support for its campaign. (Schrire,R. (1991), pp.60 - 62)

The onset of repression, the growing international isolation and the downward trend of the economy caused considerable alarm in the business community. By the mid 1980s all the main employer organisations were united in their demands for political change. Anxious to isolate capital from the increasingly unpopular state, they issued a flurry of declarations such as the South African Federated Chamber of Industry's business charter in 1986 calling for the equal social, economic and political rights (Pretorius, L. (1994), p. 234), and the Associated Chambers of Commerce's constitutional proposals in 1985, calling for the creation of a non-racial, federal state with a strong emphasis on individual rights. (Greenberg, S. (1987), p.183)

The entry of capital into the constitutional debate was engendered by the sophisticated level of the economy and the industrial power of the black labour force. State control through repression alone, although clearly possible, was highly likely to lead to further black resistance and the continued destabilisation of the economy. Adam, H. & Moodley, K. (1986, p. 256), also point to the fact that major local capital investments were tied to sectors such as mining and agriculture, which ruled out extensive relocation. Capital therefore sought to assure the black opposition movement that their problems lay not with capital itself, but with a recalcitrant state clinging to an outmoded political system, and proceeded to search

for a constitutional alternative that would satisfy black political aspirations whilst at the same time leave both the economic system and capital ownership intact.

Further encouragement for the potential success of such a solution was given by the fact that the two opposition parties with proven mass support, the ANC and IFP, both openly, although to markedly varying degrees, proclaimed that they were not socialist. (Adam, H. & Moodley, K. (1986), p. 248)

Capital also applied considerable pressure on the state to disengage political rule from the industrial sphere, and was increasingly adopting a corporate approach in its dealings with the trade unions. Certain employers denounced the government's handling of the Labour Relations Amendment bill, and supported the trade union call for tri-partite negotiations around labour legislation. This growing corporatist approach led to the eventual renegotiating of draft legislation between COSATU, NACTU, the South African Consultative Committee on Labour Affairs (SACCOLA) and the government, and the reaching of a consensual agreement in 1990.

By the end of the decade it was clear that capital intended to assert its right to limit the state's influence in industrial issues, as well as to contribute towards a political solution of the crisis by pressuring the state to

look beyond its current strategies towards a long term, non- racial solution that had the potential to permanently depoliticise the labour movement.

A more subtle, but nonetheless significant form of pressure came from indicators pointing to changes within the armed forces, the main force underpinning continued repressive state control.

4.4 The threat from within: The armed forces

Although the politicisation of the 1980s did not manage to weaken the loyalty of the armed forces to the apartheid state, it did lead to the formation of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), which, however, remained small and predominantly supported by middle class, English speaking elements. In 1987 the South African Defence Force suffered a defeat at Cuito Carnavale in Angola, which led to the loss of white lives and a mutiny by black frontline troops. (International Defence and Aid Fund (1988), p.8) The End Conscription Campaign stepped up their propaganda about the loss of South African lives through apartheid's destabilising activities in the frontline states, a call that was supported by liberal capital. The South African state, feeling the fiscal drain of a continuation of the war in a period of economic crisis and sensing a shift in popular opinion, acceded willingly to negotiations towards

joint withdrawal of Cuban and South African forces from Angola and the implement of the United Nations resolution 435, which called for the withdrawal of South African governance from Namibia.

A more disturbing development however, in terms of long term instability, was the fact that demographic factors, the growth of the external frontline threat and internal instability drove the state to recruit its armed forces more heavily from the black population. Callinicos, A. (1988), pp.188 - 189), points to the fact that by the early 1980s 40% of the South African Defence Force were black, and the number of black recruits in the police force, often with minimal training, was steadily increasing.

The rising number of black members in the armed forces raised the question of the strength of their allegiance to the white state. The tenuous ideological commitment of black members of the armed forces to their employers was demonstrated by the mutiny of black troops in Angola, and in a pitched battle between members of the South African Municipal Police Force and the riot squad of the South African Police Force in the Vaal Triangle in 1987. The public condemnation by Gregory Rockford, a lieutenant at the local police station in Mitchell's Plain, (a coloured suburb in Cape Town), to the viciousness displayed by the riot squad of the South African Police

Force when dispersing a gathering of high school students during the 1989 defiance campaign, brought the potential of divided allegiances to the forefront again.

A further concern was the role of the military in the heightened political instability of the independent homelands, and the danger of a shift in their allegiances, such as occurred when the leader of the Transkei coup, General Bantu Holomisa, publicly announced his support for the ANC. These occurrences, although easily contained, served as significant indicators of future fissures in the South African security monolith.

Fissures were also being revealed in the ruling minority bloc, as can be demonstrated by a closer look at the government's white constituency.

4.5 The white constituency

The process of reform, resistance and repression had a considerable impact upon the white electorate. Firstly, the ideological construct of the racial unity of the Afrikaner *"volk"* (people) under the banner of the NP had been shattered in the reform period. The NP's abandonment of certain sectors of the Afrikaner population, both economically and politically, had irrevocably altered its constituency. Afrikaners were split between the NP, the Conservative Party (CP), and a number of extra-

parliamentary right-wing groupings, such as the para-military Afrikaner *Weerstandsbewering* (Resistance Movement, known as the AWB).

Although the 1987 white elections showed that the NP was still firmly in control, it also demonstrated that half of the Afrikaner population had deserted the NP for the CP, which became the main opposition party in parliament, and that the gains the NP had made by increasing its parliamentary seats from 117 to 123 were as a result of its ability to quell the mass uprising, and came about through a desertion of supporters from the liberal Progressive Federal Party (PFP), the party of English speaking whites. (Schrire, R. (1991), pp.99 - 100)

Secondly, the large yes vote in the 1983 white referendum demonstrated that the majority of whites accepted that parliamentary representation could no longer be a solely white prerogative. Yet the introduction of the new constitutional system, and its rejection by the vast majority of the black population, led to further moral and political dilemmas for the government and the white constituency. They raised not only the question of the continued exclusion of Africans, but also the question of real versus nominal power, given that the particular structure of the tri-cameral parliament excluded coloureds and Indians from central decision making.

Once the threat of mass uprising receded, the English support for the NP receded as well. In the 1989 white elections the liberal English political electorate regrouped around the new formation of the Democratic Party in April 1989, which won 70% of the English vote. The Conservative Party retained its status as the main opposition party, and gained a larger spread of national support (in the previous election its support had been confined to the Transvaal), thereby increased its seats in parliament. (Schrire, R. (1991), p. 127 - 130) The NP had lost its traditional support base and after the threat of internal revolt had subsided, the pressure to continue the reform process became critical to the rebuilding of a new constituency.

The loss of the NP's support base was intensified by the government's inability to co-opt credible black leaders. Instead the leaders of the black mass movement remained resolutely opposed to any racially defined political dispensation, and were gaining increasing legitimisation amongst a broader social base than had been possible before the uprising, as will be demonstrated in the next section.

4.6 The legitimisation of the opposition

Despite the turn to repression, the mid 1980's also witnessed increasing recognition being awarded to the ANC by diverse forces inside and outside South Africa. The popularity of the ANC in the black opposition movement engendered a growing recognition from other influential interest groups as well. Visits to the exiled ANC leadership in the mid 1980s by delegations from the Anglo-American Corporation, newspaper editors, the Federated Chamber of Commerce and the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce (the black employers' federation) challenged the prevailing official attitude, endemic amongst the white population and conservative sections of the coloured and Indian population, and fostered through years of state propaganda and the banning of all ANC literature and statements, that the ANC was a communist inspired, illegal 'terrorist' organisation, falling outside the parameters of legitimate political activity.

These visits were widely reported in the press. Although President Botha attacked the visits for contributing towards the legitimisation of a 'terrorist' organisation, an attack which led to the withdrawal of two leading Afrikaner businessmen, the government took no further action against business. (Adam, H. & Moodley, K. (1986), p.118) Amongst other organisations which visited the ANC in exile were the Progressive Federal Party, a delegation

from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), the white tertiary student organisation, and delegations from the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, the English and Afrikaans white universities in the Western Cape.

The Botha government itself also opened up overtures to the ANC through Botha's call for the Nelson Mandela to denounce violence and become a free man in parliament in 1985. Nelson Mandela's response, delivered by his daughter to a UDF rally in Soweto, that only with the unbanning of the ANC, the freeing of all political prisoners and the granting of free political activity, would he accept freedom, put the ball squarely back in the NP's court. Although there were rumours that the government itself had held secret meetings with the ANC in exile, this has not been confirmed. However, a report on the future political prospects for the country, released in 1985 by the one of the government's primary think tanks, the Human Sciences Research Council, recommended secret talks between the government and the ANC, (Human Sciences Research Council (1985), pp.139 - 140), and Nelson Mandela in his biography outlines the changes to his conditions in prison since 1895, and the beginning of talks with representatives of the Botha government since 1986. (Mandela, N. (1994), pp. 512 -548).

The fact that the worst treatment received by business and

white liberal forces was a tongue lashing by Botha, and that widely publicised meetings by COSATU and other opposition groupings with the ANC in exile were taking place with the full knowledge of the government, gave testimony to the state's increasing inability to deny the centrality of the ANC to South African politics.

The growing legitimacy of the ANC inside the country was accompanied by an increase in its stature abroad. A fairly sophisticated diplomatic wing had always maintained international recognition, but the growth of world opinion around the anti-apartheid struggles in the country had led to renewed interest and further legitimisation. The ANC had developed good links with anti-apartheid organisations, specifically in the United States, Western Europe and Australia, and strove, with some success, to increase its stature amongst the Western governments who were applying sanctions to South Africa. (Lodge, T. (1988), p.241)

The state's defeat of the mass uprising as well as its closing of guerilla access to the country through the agreements it made with the frontline states served to intensify the ANC's concentration on the path of negotiations as a way out of the political stalemate. The growth of national and international recognition increased the confidence of the leadership in the potential success of this strategy. Public statements by the ANC leadership sought to reassure international governments and capital

that the main objective of the ANC was to force the South African state to the negotiating table to discuss the mutual goal of a non racial democracy.

Attempts by both national capital and the Botha regime to obtain a commitment from the ANC to distance itself from the SACP met with little success because of the long history of co-operation between the two organisations. However the ANC's leadership gave repeated public and private assurances that it was the hegemonic organisation in this alliance, that the focus of its activities was the achievement of majority rule in a unitary state, that it was not and never had been programmatically bound to a socialist resolution to the country's problems, and that despite the nationalisation clauses in the Freedom Charter the organisation was committed to a mixed economy, with the exact level of private ownership being open to negotiation. (Lodge, T. (1988), pp. 237 - 245)

Evidence of the ANC's growing awareness of its centrality to a future political solution in South Africa is born out by the adoption of the ANC's basic constitutional principles and guidelines towards negotiations by the Organisation of African Unity in 1989, a document which became known as the Harare Declaration and later served as the model for instituting the prerequisites for the forthcoming negotiations.

4.7 Concluding remarks

By the end of the decade the NP was presiding over a steadily disintegrating state. All vestiges of legitimacy had been lost, the economy was on a downward slump, and indicators were demonstrating that the armed forces were no longer an impenetrable safeguard against black resistance. The traditional constituency of the party was irretrievably split, leading to a loss of supporters to both the left and the right.

The black mass movement remained defiant, and its leading organisation, the ANC, was gaining both legitimacy and confidence, and presenting indications that it had the potential of becoming a viable partner in resolving the political stalemate.

Yet despite the cracks in the apartheid edifice, the NP government still held considerable advantages. It was strongly in control of both parliament and the state apparatus. Furthermore, all significant power blocs were providing positive indicators of a preparedness to address the political crisis in a manner that would not significantly alter either capital relations or ownership.

CONCLUSION: THE INTERNAL LOGIC OF REFORM

> *It is not too farfetched to imagine that white leaders, under siege from below, could concede common citizenship and universal franchise, though circumscribed by South Africa's material reality and new fragmenting political structures.*
> (Greenberg, S. (1987), p. 5)

Although Botha's attempts to increase legitimacy and stability through reforms had floundered in the face of massive black resistance, it had, (as it eventually emerged, despite Botha) succeeded in making the process of change irreversible.

The removal of influx control and the accommodation of urban Africans were premised on the acceptance that the black majority, with the exception of the TBVC states, were legitimate South African citizens. This placed the requirement of real political representation for Africans on the agenda. It also called into question the continued denial of South African citizenship for TBVC residents, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the bureaucracies in the independent homelands vis a vis the dissatisfied, impoverished population they were supposed to be ruling.

The overwhelming internal and external response to the exclusion of Africans from the 1984 constitution made it

clear that the issue of political rights for Africans was essential for any satisfactory political solution to the country's problems. The tradition of a Westminster styled, parliamentary democracy for whites, the exposure of the power deficits of the coloured and Indian tiers of the tri-cameral parliament and the level of radicalisation of the black population meant that no credible black leader would accept a nominal, racially based political resolution for fear of losing whatever support base he/she might have. The trajectory of reform would therefore have to move beyond any ethnic limitations to gain credibility with the black majority. By the end of the decade, conditions had ripened for a change of such profound proportions.

The ANC, the leading organisation of the masses, had demonstrated not only a willingness to negotiate but had also repeatedly issued public assurances of its intention to maintain a capitalist economic system in South Africa.

The presence of Inkatha, a black mass organisation which would unswervingly support conservative political and economic policies, strengthened the NP government by diluting the ANC's claim to sole credible representation of the black opposition.

Capital had demonstrated overwhelming evidence of its support for further reform, and of its confidence in the ANC as a partner in effecting the dangerous transition to

a restructured government.

A majority of the white constituency had proven by their support for the Botha reforms and the voting patterns of the 1989 elections that they had the capacity to distinguish between the necessary reconstruction of political control and the continued protection of their interests.

The scene was set for the momentous step that President F.W. de Klerk was to take in 1990, when he declared that country had been placed irrevocably on the road of drastic change, and that the time for negotiation had arrived. (DeKlerk. F.W. (1990), pp. 160-175)

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