

The South African Elections of 1994: the Remaking of a Dominant-Party State

by ROGER SOUTHALL*

THE South African elections of 1994 constituted one of those rare historical moments when humankind made a significant step forward. The peaceful culmination of a liberation struggle, which for years many had feared would end in a bloodbath, registered not only a triumph for the democratic ideal but the resounding defeat of racism as an organising principle of government. If its more recent reference point was the collapse of dictatorial régimes throughout Eastern Europe during 1989–90, it can more distantly be identified as following in the grand tradition of 1789, confirming and extending and elaborating the ‘rights of man’. Yet historical ‘progress’ rarely unfolds in an uncomplicated way, and – however momentous and however much the external world may be willing it to succeed – South Africa’s new democracy, by fairly general agreement, faces daunting tasks.

The threats to a successful and sustained transition away from authoritarian rule are formidable. The democracy so recently achieved may not easily be maintained in face of the disruptive potential of the still white-dominated security forces, the resistance by entrenched bureaucracies to change, the past destruction of the social and political fabric of black life by *apartheid* impositions, the failure of the economy to grow sufficiently quickly to balance white fears against black expectations, and so on. However, the focus of this article is upon an aspect which has not been extensively commented upon: that is, just as the National Party (NP) monopolised and manipulated political institutions following its electoral victory in 1948, so the 1994 elections have provided a base for the reconstitution of South Africa as a dominant-party state. This, it will be argued, poses awkward dilemmas for the making and sustaining of South Africa’s new democracy.

* Professor of Political Studies, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.

THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TRANSITION

The political transition which was inaugurated on 2 February 1990, when President F. W. de Klerk proclaimed the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and other organisations, and committed his NP Government to negotiating a fully inclusive, non-racial, and democratic constitution, set in train complex developments which eventually culminated in the 'liberation' elections of 26–28 April 1994.

The details and considerable difficulties of the negotiations which took place over this period of nearly four years need not concern us here,¹ save to say that their dynamics revolved around two major concerns. These were, first, the attempt by the NP and the ANC, as the central actors in the drama of transition, to forge a constitutional compromise which would marry South Africa's accession to (black) majority rule to the guaranteed protection of (principally white) minority rights; and second, the determined effort to secure support for such a settlement from across the entire political spectrum. This latter ranged through: extra-parliamentary (and paramilitary) organisations of the far-white right; the established parties from the existence tricameral Parliament (organised around separate representation for white, Coloureds, and Indians but excluding blacks); the governments (military and civilian) of the ten African 'homelands', four of which (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, and Venda) were juridically independent (TBCV), along with a number of political movements which were closely associated with their régimes (notably the *Inkatha* Freedom Party (IFP) led by Mangosuthu Buthelezi); and finally those forces which identified with the struggle for liberation, notably the ANC, its close ally the SACP, and the rival – and less influential – PAC.

The first of these objectives was largely achieved by the end of 1993, albeit not without drama and pain, because both the NP and the ANC ultimately appreciated that the costs of not reaching a settlement were too high. They, in turn, attracted to their banner the liberal Democratic Party (DP), as well as former *apartheid* subaltern elements (such as the Coloured Labour Party, and the military rulers of Venda and Transkei) which rapidly came to perceive their future political survival

¹ What follows in this and the subsequent section leans heavily upon the interpretation offered in Roger Southall, 'South Africa's 1994 Election in an African Perspective', in *Africa Insight* (Pretoria), 24, 2, 1994, pp. 86–98.

as dependent upon alignment with the emergent political order (and hence the ANC, widely recognised as likely to win the forthcoming elections).

All these forces coalesced around the creation of transitional structures designed to facilitate the conduct of free and fair elections, and an interim constitution which, *inter alia*, would recognise a division of powers between a central government and nine provinces, would provide for a multi-party government of national unity for five years, and guarantee entrenchment of certain principles in the subsequent adoption of a final constitution by a Constitutional Assembly, which would be composed of the National Assembly and Senate sitting jointly. Importantly, too, this consensus featured agreement around the abandonment of the Westminster-style first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system (whereby previous South African Parliaments had been elected), in favour of the party-list system of proportional representation (PR), which was viewed as guaranteeing a fair representation of minorities. In addition, of particular significance with regard to the forthcoming elections, was the provision that adoption of a new constitution by a Constitutional Assembly would require a two-thirds majority, failing which an amended text would have to be referred back to a Constitutional Court, and thereafter, to a national referendum.

PR was also adopted to serve the second goal, achieving an all-inclusive settlement. However, this proved much more elusive, in large measure because three identifiably distinct elements saw themselves as losing heavily from the introduction of democracy. First, the recalcitrant homeland régimes of Ciskei and Bophuthatswana insisted that their legally sovereign status gave them the right to resist re-incorporation into South Africa, despite the fact that they manifestly lacked popular legitimacy. Second, the unbanning of the ANC had shattered previous claims by *Inkatha* to be a truly national movement, and had forced it back upon an unequivocally Zulu ethnic base, from which Buthelezi launched a campaign for regional power, by now demanding maximum autonomy under a peripheralised federation for the whole of KwaZulu-Natal, which under the interim constitution was to form a separate region. Finally, the white right – under a diversity of hats, but inclusive of the parliamentary opposition Conservative Party (CP), as well as other organisations and groups – proclaimed the right of Afrikaners to their own ethnic self-determination, which they insisted required the demarcation, and constitutional recognition, of a *volkstaat*.

The forging of an alliance of convenience by these three elements, known initially as the Concerned South African Group (Cosag) and from October 1993 as the Freedom Alliance, represented a major threat to the projected settlement. This was because, first, from July 1993, when Cosag walked out of the multi-party negotiating process, it denounced the continuing negotiations as non-inclusive and illegitimate, driven by an unholy alliance of the ANC, the SACP, and the NP. Second, and more significantly, it threatened to disrupt the elections unless its demands were met. Given the dictatorial controls exercised by Lucas Mangope's police within Bophuthatswana (which denied the ANC and other liberation movements access to freely campaign and organise); given the virtual civil war between supporters of the ANC and *Inkatha* in the province known as Pretoria–Witwatersrand–Vereeniging (PWV) and in the rural areas of Natal (which had ripped African communities apart since 1990, and been responsible for the bulk of some 14,000 violent deaths); and given the open war-mongering by the neo-fascist *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB), and the shadowy yet close connections between the right wing and the security forces (which had themselves been heavily implicated in fuelling intra-communal African violence and attacks upon supporters of the ANC): the need to defuse the destructive potential of the Freedom Alliance, if a negotiated transition was to be achieved and elections successfully held, was paramount.

That South Africa subsequently succeeded in holding elections in late April 1994, in a remarkably peaceful fashion, may be ascribed to a number of factors. First and foremost, both the NP Government and the ANC made it plain that the timing of the elections was sacrosanct, and that accordingly the democratic transition would occur whatever obstacles were put in their path. This served to concentrate minds wonderfully, for it suggested that those who did not climb aboard the negotiations bandwagon before the elections would suffer adverse consequences afterwards.

This led, second, to the effective implosion of the Freedom Alliance. Senior army officers, who feared exclusion from a new South African defence force compelled the Ciskei leader, Oupa Gqozo, to quit the Alliance in early January. Two months later Bophuthatswana collapsed following a popular uprising, loss of control over his security forces by President Mangope, the ignominious defeat of an AWB invasion force which came to his aid, and the re-establishment of public order and the replacement of his administration by the South African Defence Force (SADF). Then, crucially, a last-minute bid by the ANC to secure all-

inclusive participation in the elections divided the right wing. Whilst the CP declined all blandishments unless the interim constitution be amended to guarantee a *volkstaat* before the elections, the so-called Freedom Front (FF) under Constandt Viljoen, a former Defence Chief, agreed to take part in the national vote following acceptance of key concessions by the ANC, which included the admission of constitutional mechanisms for consideration of a *volkstaat* after the elections, and the acceptance of a double ballot for national and regional levels.

The final, and most important factor, which facilitated the holding of the elections in peace was the announcement by Buthelezi, just one week before the vote, that the IFP would take part. This was crucial because violence in Natal had reached new heights in the run-up to the poll,² and the resultant prospect that it would prove impossible to conduct a free and fair contest throughout large parts of the province threatened to de-legitimise the result of the entire elections. Yet Buthelezi, pressured by opinion polling which suggested that the IFP would do well to obtain more than ten per cent of the vote nationally and might even lose Natal in a free vote, held out for yet further concessions, denouncing the interim constitution as insufficiently federal and, more dangerously, as representing an attack upon the status of King Goodwill Zwelethini, and an assault upon the identity of Zulus as a nation. Issuing dire hints of Zulu secession, Buthelezi's brinkmanship threatened to carry the civil war in Natal over into the new South Africa.

Why, then, did Buthelezi agree at the last moment to participate? The immediate answer is that the ANC made face-saving concessions concerning a special status for the Zulu King. Furthermore, as emerged after the elections, President de Klerk secretly agreed to transfer control over all land in KwaZulu from the Bantustan government to the King, a move apparently designed to deny future control over the Zulu heartland to any possible post-election, ANC regional government. However, more to the point, there was widespread concern within the IFP that if it boycotted the elections, the ANC would win control over the region unchallenged, and that the re-incorporation of the Kwazulu

² There were 2,450 fatalities from political violence between September 1984 and December 1988, at the height of a period of intense popular mobilisation against *apartheid*. In contrast, there were as many as 3,400 such deaths in 1990, 2,580 in 1991, 3,446 in 1992, and 4,398 in 1993, most as the outcome of fighting between supporters of the ANC and *Inkatha* in the PWV province and Natal. Violence then surged even higher in early 1994, when deaths in Natal ran at a level double the 1993 monthly average. See G. Howe, 'The Trojan Horse: Natal's civil war, 1987-1993', in *Indicator South Africa* (Durban), 10, 2, 1993, pp. 35-40; Human Rights Commission, *Human Rights Review: South Africa, 1993* (Braamfontein, 1993); and *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 5 June 1994.

administrative apparatus into new regional structures would thereafter deprive *Inkatha* of the means of patronage upon which its local hegemony had long been based. Hence it was that Buthelezi's announcement was greeted with widespread relief, and more importantly, it was followed by a dramatic and instant reduction in the incidence of violence.

Yet the IFP's immediate and expensive media blitz suggests that participation had been planned all along. Late entry had not only served to focus national attention upon Buthelezi (allowing him to offset his image as a 'spoiler' by a more noble profile as a determined fighter for federalism and constitutional integrity), but had also allowed the IFP to prevent voter education and ANC campaigning throughout KwaZulu. Furthermore, it worked to obstruct the adequate implementation of neutral electoral structures and – as will be argued below – enabled Buthelezi to swing the elections in KwaZulu-Natal in favour of the IFP.

THE FRAMEWORK AND OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS

A Transitional Executive Council (TEC), composed of representatives of political parties which had settled upon a draft constitution in December 1993, came into being in January 1994, charged with preparing the way for democracy, and in particular for promoting the conditions for free elections. To perform these tasks, it was allocated various supervisory powers over de Klerk's Government, which remained formally in office, and was assisted, *inter alia*, by the appointment of an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)

The degree to which these arrangements succeeded in 'levelling the playing fields' remains another story, save to note that the IEC – which was responsible for both administering and monitoring the elections – was subsequently to become the butt of considerable criticism.³ Significantly, however, whilst its competence was to come under severe fire, its neutrality was not. One undoubted result was that, despite some major administrative mishaps on the days of the poll (for special categories, such as the aged and infirm, on 26 April, for others on the

³ For a taste of the controversy, see 'Free-ish and Fair-ish, despite the IEC', Editorial, *The Weekly Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg), 24 April–5 May 1994: 'Despite hundreds of millions of rands, lavish salaries and massive popular support, they have messed it up through sheer incompetence. It has been a gravy train without wheels'. For a response, see Yunus Mahomed, Deputy Director of Administration, IEC, 'The IEC: Inexperienced, yes. Inept, no', in *ibid.* 10–16 June 1994.

TABLE I
Parliamentary Seats in South Africa, 1994

Provinces	Senate	National Assembly		Provincial Legislatures
		National	Regional	
PWV	10	—	43	86
KwaZulu-Natal	10	—	40	81
Eastern Cape	10	—	28	56
Western Cape	10	—	21	42
Northern Transvaal	10	—	20	40
North-West	10	—	15	30
Orange Free State	10	—	15	30
Eastern Transvaal	10	—	14	30
Northern Cape	10	—	4	30
Total seats	90	200	+ 200	425

Source: South African Council of Churches, *South Africa: the transition to democracy* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 25.

next two days), the *overall* fairness of the actual voting process – except in KwaZulu-Natal – was not to be seriously questioned.

Under the interim constitution, which provided for the full legal re-incorporation of the homelands and for the re-division of the country into nine new regions, voting would take place, in accordance with the new PR electoral system, by means of two separate ballots:

1. For the 400 members of the National Assembly, 200 would be drawn from regional party lists, each region being allocated a proportionate number of seats against presumed size of population; and 200 from national party lists, or also from the regional lists where the former were not submitted.

2. For the 425 members of the nine Provincial Legislatures, the number of seats in each would also be proportionate to the number of voters in each province.

Following the elections, the Senate (or national upper house) would be drawn from the nine provinces, each of which would provide ten members, nominated by political parties on a proportionate basis according to their relative strength in the Provincial Legislatures. The overall picture was therefore as shown in Table 1.

At its first meeting, the National Assembly would elect one of its members as President, who would thereupon vacate his or her seat,

whilst every party obtaining 80 seats (or the two largest parties, if the smaller of the two failed to obtain that number) would be entitled to elect an executive Deputy President. The President would then head a Government of National Unity, which would be centred on a Cabinet consisting of the President, the Deputy Presidents, and no more than 27 Ministers. These latter would be drawn from parties which, having obtained at least 20 seats, would be entitled to be allocated portfolios on a proportionate basis, relative to the strength of other parties participating in the Cabinet. Any appointment of Deputy Ministers would be according to the same formula. Meanwhile, Provincial Premiers would be similarly elected by the Provincial Legislatures, with ten other members of provincial executives chosen in proportion to party strength from parties which succeeded in securing at least ten per cent of the vote provincially.

Of the 19 organisations that contested the elections at the national level, 13 were recognised as minor parties. One of these, the African Moderates Congress (or AMC as it unsuccessfully sought to register), was self-evidently designed to draw illiterate votes away from the ANC. But most were newly created in the hope that proportional representation would see them attain a presence in the National Assembly to promote their special interests. These latter ranged from political survival in the case of homeland-based parties, such as Gqozo's African Democratic Movement (ADM) and the Dikwankwetla Party (from QwaQwa), through to those promoting religious, ideological, gender, or other concerns, such as the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the Africa Muslim Party, the (Trotskyist) Workers' List Party, and the Women's Rights Peace Party. The principal focus of pre-election speculation about the performance of these parties centred on the proportion of the vote they would take away from the major players, and whether any of them would obtain national representation.

With no past experience of democratic elections to go on, the prospects for the larger players were primarily assessed according to opinion polls, whose reliability in the new conditions of a fully enfranchised South Africa was highly suspect, and upon the basis of the racial distribution of the electorate, both nationally and provincially. Meanwhile, prognostication was made even more difficult because the number of eligible voters could only be approximated: the *apartheid* heritage made it impossible to draw up an electoral register, nor in any case was there time to do so. Consequently, as for common-roll voters in the 1979 and 1980 elections in Zimbabwe, which were also based on

the party list system of proportional representation,⁴ the electorate was composed of all those who were 18 years or older, and in this case, who were also South African citizens or permanent residents, and who possessed one of five types of 'voter eligibility documents'. The presumed size of the electorate, based on figures adjusted from the 1985 census for South Africa and the TBCV states, was estimated by the IEC as some 22,709, 152 potential voters.⁵ Of these, some 72 per cent (16.35 million) were reckoned to be African, 16 per cent (3.63 million) white, 9 per cent (2.04 million) Coloured, and 3 per cent (0.68 million) Indian.⁶

A study of the methodologies, motivations, shortcomings, and results of the various opinion polls which were undertaken between 1990 and 1994, and how they affected party strategies in the negotiation process, would make fascinating reading. Not many such efforts could legitimately claim to have overcome the numerous difficulties associated with polling the majority African segment of the electorate, such as the general lack of telephones, the inaccessibility of substantial communities because of political violence, and the sheer remoteness of rural populations, all of which added up to the polling results being generally regarded as little better than sophisticated 'guesstimates'. Polls were also suspect because they could say little about the likely turn-out by African voters, and more particularly, about how many would be deterred by the threat of violence during the actual elections. None the less, the most constant feature of the polls was the substantial lead they gave to the ANC.

A few instances will suffice. In contrast to a mid-1991 Markinor poll which predicted that the 'ANC would sweep to election win',⁷ the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) suggested in late 1992, on the basis of a then-presumed 20.8 million electorate, that national support for the ANC would reach only 40–45 per cent, with the NP claiming 25–30 per cent, *Inkatha* 10–15 per cent, the CP 2–5 per cent, and Others 5–7 per cent. This would seem to have been about the lowest level of support for the ANC ever predicted (and some observers reportedly linked it to the organisation's adoption of mass action at around that time, in order to re-build its image as a liberator amongst

⁴ Masipula Sithole, 'The General Elections, 1979–85', in Ibbo Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: the political economy of transition, 1980–86* (Harare, 1987), pp. 75–98.

⁵ Independent Electoral Commission, *Communications – Information and Issues* (Johannesburg), Document 6, 'Voters and Seats per Province'.

⁶ *Work in Progress* (Braamfontein), 96, April–May 1994.

⁷ *Sunday Times*, 16 June 1991. Voting intentions were given only by race (71 per cent of urban Africans were reported as favouring the ANC and 58 per cent of whites the NP).

the masses, whose support it had allegedly lost as a result of its engagement in negotiations and compromise with the NP Government).⁸ However, by late 1993, when the date of the elections was fixed and negotiations were moving to a close, the ANC had emerged as a clear winner. An unnamed poll was cited as indicating that the ANC could expect 57.8 per cent of the overall vote against 12.8 per cent for the NP, 7.8 per cent for the IFP, and 2.2 per cent and 2.4 per cent for the DP and PAC, respectively.⁹ Against this, a further HSRC survey (exclusive of the TBCV states) reported that the ANC was favoured by 67 per cent of voters, the NP by 17 per cent, the IFP by 6 per cent, the PAC 2 per cent, the DP 2 per cent, and right-wing parties 4 per cent. Were the TBCV states included, the researchers estimated that support for the ANC would increase to 70 per cent, whilst that for the NP would decrease to 15.5 per cent and that for the IFP to 4.5 per cent.¹⁰

If the latest HSRC poll were to prove correct, then the ANC would achieve the two-thirds majority which would enable it, in theory at least, to itself re-write the constitution, albeit in accord with enshrined constitutional principles. However, at the end of the day, the extent of the ANC's victory, and how strongly the NP would emerge as the second party, was left very much open. None the less, what had emerged from the polling data was that, whilst the Coloured and Indian vote would split, albeit in favour of the devil they knew, voting by Africans (overwhelmingly for the ANC, save perhaps in KwaZulu-Natal) and whites (predominantly for the NP) was going to take place very much along racial lines.¹¹ From this it was implied further that party prospects in the regions (save in KwaZulu-Natal) could very largely be predicted according to the racial distribution of population around the country. This suggested, as indicated by Table 2, that apart from KwaZulu-Natal (whose fate was rendered uncertain by IFP/ANC rivalry) it was only the two regions with non-African majorities, Western and Northern Cape, which might escape capture by the ANC.

Inkatha's late entry caused many delays in the voting process, not least because it necessitated the rushed printing and addition of IFP stickers to ballot papers, and indeed, voting was extended to 29 April in the most underdeveloped areas of the country. It was the counting, however, which took much longer than expected (even though this was

⁸ John Lesage, 'Can the ANC Win?', in *New African* (London), December 1992.

⁹ *Weekly Mail & Guardian*, 17-22 December 1993.

¹⁰ *Daily Dispatch* (East London), 11 and 19 January 1994.

¹¹ See various surveys reported by the HSRC's *Information Update* (Pretoria), Vols. 1 (1991) to 3 (1993).

TABLE 2
Racial Distribution of Voters by Provinces, 1994

Provinces	African %	White %	Coloured %	Indian %	All million
PWV	69	26.0	4.0	1.0	4.86
KwaZulu-Natal	76	10.0	1.6	13.0	4.59
Eastern Cape	84	8.2	7.5	0.3	3.18
Western Cape	19	55.0	25.0	1.0	2.41
Northern Transvaal	96	3.7	0.2	0.1	2.29
North-West	85	12.0	3.0	0.3	1.73
Orange Free State	82	15.0	3.0	0.0	1.64
Eastern Transvaal	83	16.0	1.0	0.5	1.59
Northern Cape	31	18.0	51.0	0.2	0.44
National	72	16.0	9.0	3.0	22.70

Source: *Work in Progress*, 96, April-May 1994.

TABLE 3
National Results by Parties, 1994

	Votes	Percentage	Seats
ANC	12,237,655	62.6	252
NP	3,983,690	20.4	82
IFP	2,058,294	10.4	43
FF	424,555	2.2	9
DP	338,426	1.7	7
PAC	243,478	1.2	5
ACDP	88,104	0.5	2
Other parties	159,296	0.9	0
Votes rejected	193,081	100.0	400
Total	19,726,579	87.7 voter turn-out	

Source: *Sunday Times*, 8 May 1994.

officially completed three days prior to the statutory deadline of 9 May).¹² Eventually, however, the results were declared as in Tables 3 and 4.

The further outcome was the appointment by Mandela, soon elected President by the new Parliament, of two Deputy Presidents (Thabo

¹² For an official elaboration of the reasons, see Mahomed, loc. cit.

TABLE 4
Provincial Results by Parties, 1994

	ANC %	NP %	IFP %	FF %	DP %	ACDP %	PAC %	Others %
PWV	57.6	23.9	3.7	6.2	5.3	0.6	1.5	1.2
KwaZulu-Natal	32.3	11.2	50.3	0.5	2.2	0.7	0.7	0.9
Eastern Cape	84.4	9.8	0.2	0.8	2.1	0.5	2.0	0.2
Western Cape	33.0	53.2	0.3	2.1	6.6	1.2	1.1	2.5
Northern Transvaal	91.6	3.4	0.1	2.1	0.2	0.4	1.3	1.0
North-West	83.3	8.8	0.4	4.6	0.5	0.4	1.7	0.3
Orange Free State	76.6	12.6	0.5	6.0	0.6	0.4	1.8	1.5
Eastern Transvaal	80.7	9.0	1.5	5.7	0.6	0.5	1.6	0.4
Northern Cape	49.7	40.5	0.4	6.0	1.9	0.4	0.9	0.2

Source: *ibid.*

Mbeki of the ANC and de Klerk of the NP), and a Cabinet composed of 18 members drawn from the ANC, 6 from the NP, and 3 from the IFP.

The fundamental feature of these results was, of course, that the ANC had won a decisive majority, even though it had not achieved the two-thirds vote which would have enabled it to re-write the constitution on its own. Furthermore, it had won six provinces outright, and had missed winning the Northern Cape only by a whisker.

Secondly, as predicted by the opinion polls, African and white voters had overwhelmingly followed racial lines, with the ANC and the NP emerging as the major beneficiaries. Meanwhile, of course, the important Coloured vote split, apparently mainly between the two major parties. Hence if we assume that in the Western Cape the FF, DP, and ACDP total vote of 10 per cent came very largely from whites, then it would seem that of the NP's 53 per cent majority, up to 45 per cent was drawn from whites, and 8 per cent or somewhat more from Coloureds. In contrast, around 14 per cent of the ANC's 33 per cent vote would seem to have come from Coloureds. In the Northern Cape, meanwhile, the ANC's effective majority of 50 per cent would seem to have drawn perhaps just over 33 per cent of the vote of the Coloured electorate.

The third feature of note was that, despite the adoption of proportional representation, the smaller parties had performed extremely poorly. Of the new, special interest organisations, only the ACDP – which appealed to white and Coloured evangelicals – gained

a foothold in Parliament. For its part, the Freedom Front – seeking an Afrikaner mandate for a *volkstaat* – was disappointed to obtain fewer votes than had the CP when, in March 1992, it had polled a 31 per cent ‘No’ vote in the exclusively white referendum called by de Klerk to seek approval for his negotiation initiatives.¹³ Many voters of the right, who had overwhelmingly rejected the CP’s plea to boycott the elections, had clearly responded to what might be described as ‘the homing call’ emitted by the NP against the ANC. This factor similarly worked to slaughter the DP, whose leader was so disappointed by the result that he resigned immediately. However, perhaps of most historical significance was the dismal showing of the PAC, whose ineffective and divided history as a liberation movement in exile had translated into a petulant and ambivalent attitude towards both the negotiation process and the elections. If the latter left it with a future, it was scarcely as a genuinely popular counter to the ANC.

Taking only a total of 6.5 per cent of the national vote, the smaller parties were collectively outperformed by the IFP, whose result accorded it a significant minority voice in the Cabinet (Buthelezi was to accept the important post of Minister of Home Affairs) and in Parliament, and of course, a bare victory in its home province of KwaZulu-Natal. None of this was particularly out of line with pre-election expectations, except in so far, perhaps, that it discounted speculation that the IFP might actually be out-polled by the ANC in Natal. None the less, it was in KwaZulu-Natal that the Independent Electoral Commission met its greatest challenge.

The IFP’s late entry into the election, and the pervasive political violence which afflicted African communities, meant that the registration of voters, and the extensive education programmes and campaigning by parties which had taken place elsewhere, had all been severely inhibited in African areas in KwaZulu-Natal, as had preparations for the vote by the IEC. Consequently, despite few reports of violence during the elections, there were widespread rumours of abuses in rural areas, with the KwaZulu police in particular allegedly coercing people into voting for the IFP. All this was perhaps to be expected. However, it was when it came to the counting that major questions came to be posed about the veracity of the results.

It was not only that televised chaos at Durban’s major counting centre (complete with shots of unsupervised mountains of ballot boxes

¹³ Johann van Rooyen, *Hard Right: the new white power in South Africa* (London, 1994), pp. 149–55.

and, at one point, striking staff) undercut claims by the IEC to have the process under control. It was rather that independent voters reported widespread irregularities. Hence a confidential report submitted to the IEC by European Union observers (but leaked to the press) complained of, *inter alia*, the establishment in *Inkatha*-controlled areas of so-called 'pirate' polling stations; the stuffing of ballot boxes with bogus votes in favour of the IFP; the forced removal of IEC officials and ANC agents from counting stations in KwaZulu; the issuing of voter cards to under-18-year-olds; and the removal of complete voting stations from their designated positions to areas under the control of the IFP.¹⁴

As the results for the province started coming in, the IFP established an early lead (at one point tipping 68 per cent). But these came largely from the rural areas, and once the count progressed in Durban, *Inkatha's* lead began a steady decline. It was then that the news dried up, and the horse-trading began.

According to the investigative *Weekly Mail & Guardian*, the ANC was faced by three unpalatable options. First, to insist that the elections in KwaZulu-Natal be declared unfair, thereby risking a renewal of bloodshed and throwing doubt upon the legitimacy of the elections as a whole; second, conceding the province to Buthelezi, thereby granting the IFP a power base beyond its former homeland boundaries; and third, striking a deal that gave neither party a majority, leaving the balance of power in the hands of the NP. Even after agreement about the validity of some 500,000 votes cast in the greater Durban area, some 7 per cent of votes reportedly remained in contention, enough allegedly to make the difference between victory and defeat for the ANC.¹⁵

That the outlines of this interpretation of events were correct seemed confirmed by the IEC Chairman's endorsement of such horse-trading as legitimate.¹⁶ More fundamentally, it would seem to confirm that the IFP's attainment of its bare majority at provincial level was a fix, even though there were those in the ANC who were prepared to admit that *Inkatha* had in reality done considerably better than they had expected. This, in turn, may be taken as indicating that the ANC's concession of KwaZulu-Natal was offered in exchange for Buthelezi's willingness to

¹⁴ *Weekly Mail & Guardian*, 6–12 May 1994.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Challenged on the legality of horse-trading, the IEC Chairman, Judge Johann Kriegler, said: 'Come now, let's not get purist, let's not be overly squeamish. They [the ANC and IFP] are in a power game with one another and if they want to settle... that is fine. There is nothing wrong ethically or legally.' *Ibid.*

participate in, and signal his acceptance of, the Government of National Unity.

The IEC's subsequent dictum, that the elections were flawed yet more or less accurately reflected national opinion, was quietly based on the view that what the ANC lost on the swings of Natal, it won on the roundabouts elsewhere – in other words, that its supporters around the country were not themselves blameless in garnering a favourable vote. Yet the further implication of the Natal horse-trading is that the national voting figures, as provided in Table 3, are themselves at best an approximation. They may well indicate, too, that in striking a deal with Buthelezi, the ANC national leadership was happy to settle for the level of its victory: not so little as to endanger its new hegemony, yet not so much as to worry the international community that it would now ride roughshod over the interim constitution, and launch itself upon a disruptively radical political and economic offensive.

The 1994 elections thus saw the ANC transform itself from a movement of liberation into the predominant party of power. In other words, for all the reasonable expectations that South Africa will retain its status as a democracy, as a system of government where the people retain the constitutional right to change their rulers via free elections at regularly prescribed periods, the ANC is set to become the dominant party of government for the foreseeable future. This pre-eminence will rest upon the likely consolidation of its electoral dominance at both national and provincial levels.

THE ANC AS THE ELECTORALLY DOMINANT PARTY AT NATIONAL LEVEL

South Africa has experienced a change of government as a result of elections only twice before 1994. The first occasion was in 1924, when – following the suppression by Jan Smuts of the white mine-workers' Rand revolt in 1922 – an electoral pact between J. B. M. Hertzog's Nationalists and the Labour Party saw the displacement of the South African Party; and the second was in 1948, when the United Party Government led by Smuts was narrowly defeated by an alliance between D. F. Malan's National Party and the small Afrikaner Party. Thereafter, of course, the NP systematically consolidated its rule, not only by mobilising support for a mix of ethnic and white racial agendas, but also by changing the electoral rules of the game to ensure that it should never lose an election again, namely: by granting six seats to

whites in South West Africa (despite the fact that it was not part of South Africa), by removing Coloureds from the common-voters' roll in 1956, by abolishing the minimal representation of Africans (by whites) in Parliament in 1959, and by maintaining the 'loading' of urban seats (whereby more votes were needed to win seats in urban constituencies where opposition parties stood a better chance of winning than in agricultural areas where the NP was predominant).¹⁷

The significance of this past electoral history is quite simply that NP enthusiasm for proportional representation at the negotiation process was based on a sound appreciation of its own history, because the Westminster electoral system had allowed it to win a majority of seats with a substantial minority of votes, and thereafter to rig the outcome in its favour.¹⁸ In addition, in the light of the 1994 results, it seems unlikely, even were the ANC to prove sufficiently unscrupulous to reload the electoral dice in its favour for the purpose of winning a majority, that it would need to do so for the foreseeable future.

The ANC's 62.7 per cent vote placed it electorally way ahead of the NP, its nearest competitor, whose ability to improve its performance in future would seem to be inherently constrained by its minimal capacity to attract African votes. Were it to contest the next elections, presumably in 1999, as a separate entity, it might well make further inroads into the Coloured community, yet – as the one-time party of *apartheid* – it is inconceivable that it could capture sufficient African votes to challenge the ANC's hegemony, even though it would doubtless build upon the concerted media efforts made in 1994 to project itself as a non-racial party.¹⁹

Nor does it seem likely that an attempt to build a centrist coalition around two or more of the NP, DP, IFP, and ACDP (if they deemed themselves mutually compatible), would manage more than the total vote (33 per cent) that they obtained in 1994. Prior to the elections, it

¹⁷ For the 1924 and 1948 elections, see T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: a modern history* (London and Basingstoke, 1977), pp. 192–8 and 251–4, and Newell M. Stultz, *The Nationalists in Opposition, 1934–1948* (Cape Town and Pretoria, 1974), pp. 1–22 and 131–59.

¹⁸ The successful NP–Afrikaner Party alliance in 1948 obtained only 443,719 votes (41 per cent of those cast) to the UP's 525,230. Even in the 1953 elections, a United Front alliance composed of the UP, the Labour Party, and the Torch Commandos (a war veterans' organisation opposed to the NP's constitutional manipulations), obtained 50 per cent of the votes but only 62 seats, as against the NP's 49 per cent of the vote and 94 seats. See Davenport, *op. cit.* Table 2, and Anthony Lemon, *Apartheid in Transition* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT, 1987), pp. 82–112, who provides a valuable synopsis of white voting behaviour from 1948 to 1982.

¹⁹ Hermann Giliomee, 'The National Party's Campaign for a Liberation Election', in Andrew Reynolds (ed.), *Election '94 South Africa: the campaigns, results and future prospects* (London, 1994), pp. 43–72.

was plausible to speculate upon such an alliance being constructed around a platform favouring 'capitalism, free market enterprise and federalism/confederalism',²⁰ after the elections, and following the ANC's acceptance of regionalism and its virtual abandonment of nationalisation of key industries as a major strategy, this seems far less credible. Furthermore, as the leading element of the Government of National Unity and therefore in effective control of state resources, the ANC would in any case seem as likely to attract as to repel support from the political centre over the course of the next few years.

A launch of a left-wing alternative which would be capable of challenging the ANC's electoral hegemony seems similarly unlikely despite recent debates about such a possibility. On the one hand, it has been argued that once the ANC (a coalition of oppressed national classes) has achieved state power, the initial objective (national democracy) for which the Tripartite Alliance between the ANC, the SACP, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) was established will have been achieved, and that a reformed SACP should reassert its status as a workers' party struggling for socialism.²¹ For the moment, however, any such option would seem to have been foreclosed, because having decided to merge its identity with the ANC before the elections (its own chosen members running as ANC candidates on that party's various lists), the SACP has gone on to participate (on a similar basis) in the Government of National Unity.

More to the point, even were the SACP at some time down the road to pull out of the Government, whether in protest against policy or by simple choice to plough its own path, it would have to do so against a background of its inability to command much support independent of its alliance with the ANC.²² Significantly, a recent national survey of the political attitudes of members of Cosatu indicates the overwhelming reluctance of such workers to disentangle their class interests from their commitment to nation-building politics as expressed by the Tripartite

²⁰ Lesage, loc. cit. p. 11.

²¹ For example, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, 'The SACP: a basis for socialist unity', in *South African Labour Bulletin* (Durban), 15, 3, 1990, pp. 28-30. This publication has subsequently provided the forum for a related, important debate about the relevance of social democracy for South Africa. See especially 17, 6, 1992 and 18, 2, 1993.

²² Opinion polls rarely distinguished between support for the SACP and ANC separately in the run-up to the elections. However, the Markinor poll of urban Africans cited earlier indicated only 12 per cent of the sample plumping for the SACP as their *second preference*. A regional survey, conducted in mid-1993, subsequently indicated only 0.9 per cent African support for the SACP compared to 76.7 per cent for the ANC. See Jan K. Coetzee and Geoffrey T. Wood, 'How the Vote will Go: a survey of African potential voters in the Eastern Cape', in *Politikon: the South African Journal of Political Science* (Florida, nr. Johannesburg), 20, 2, 1993, pp. 25-45.

Alliance. Whilst their attachment to a vision of participatory democracy is at potential odds with the model of parliamentary democracy promoted by the new constitution, workers appear to remain wedded to the idea of their particular concerns being represented by a strong presence of trade unionists *within* the parliamentary caucus of the ANC.²³

A counter argument has proposed that the SACP's authoritarian, Stalinist past has ineradicably stained its character, and that the trade union movement, which needs to retain its autonomy from government, should provide the basis for a revolutionary socialist party of the future.²⁴ However, whilst there remains substantial support amongst workers and union officials for the idea of trade unions retaining substantial autonomy from government,²⁵ the derisory 4,159 national votes obtained by the Workers' List Party in 1994 suggests that such a left-wing alternative has no significant electoral future unless it can actually come to embody the organic link to workers' movements to which they aspire. At the very least, this would imply an ideological contestation with the SACP which would be as likely to fracture the left as to provide the basis for a new unity.

More threatening to ANC dominance than an explicitly ideologically centred and motivated socialist alternative might be a populist aggregation able to reap the rewards of a failure by the new Government to meet heightened mass expectations. Prior to the elections, this would have seemed a natural rôle for the PAC, whose ambiguity towards the negotiation process, and its reluctance to distance itself from continuation of the 'armed struggle' by its military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army, reflected its fear of being left out of a settlement, and its simultaneous rejection of any such compromise with the *apartheid* state as a 'selling out' of African majority interests. However, despite pre-election survey findings that the PAC enjoyed second-preference status amongst African ANC voters,²⁶ its actual electoral performance (only 1.2 per cent of the national vote), following a campaign of remarkable incompetence,²⁷

²³ Janet Cherry, David Ginsberg, Richard Haines, Gilton Klerck, Johan Marée, Roger Southall, Eddie Webster, and Geoffrey Wood, 'Taking Democracy Seriously: Cosatu workers and South Africa's liberation election of 1994', Grahamstown.

²⁴ For example, A. Habib and M. Andrews, 'Disinheriting the Heritage of Stalinism', in *South African Labour Bulletin*, 15, 3, 1990, pp. 86-93.

²⁵ Cherry et al. op. cit.

²⁶ Wood and Coetzee, op. cit., record that the PAC was deemed the only party, apart from the ANC, which the majority of African voters in the Eastern Cape felt had a right to campaign in their areas.

²⁷ Saths Cooper, 'The PAC and AZAPO', in Reynolds (ed.), op. cit. pp. 117-20.

raises the question of whether there is any way back to political significance for an apparently inherently fractious party which history seems to have left behind.

Just as the PAC itself broke away from the ANC in 1959, so its populist mantle may be inherited by a new breakaway movement if the mainstream nationalist coalition fails to deliver the expected benefits. However, as Edgar Tekere, the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (Zanu–PF) rebel discovered during the 1990 elections – when he challenged Robert Mugabe for the Presidency, and his newly formed Zimbabwe Unity Movement (Zum) confronted the ruling party on a militant, anti-corruption programme – even an effective campaign may prove insufficient to mobilise the marginalised to vote the incumbents out of state power.²⁸

In retrospect, given the particular concentrations of its vote in the Western Cape, PWV, and Northern Cape which would have translated into blocs of seats under first-past-the-post, the NP may wonder whether the change to proportional representation significantly altered the level of its membership in the National Assembly. Indeed, early indications after the elections are that it may support a likely ANC initiative favouring a partial return under a final constitution to the constituency-based electoral system, presumably by mixing a PR-based vote for 200 national MPs with an FPTP-based system for the remaining 200 who were elected in 1994 as representatives of their regions.²⁹ Whereas the ANC is stressing the need to forge a clear link between MPs and those who elected them, the NP may for its part calculate that such a change would exert greater pressure upon minority parties, and hence propel their voters into its own arms as the only alternative to the ANC with significant levels of support throughout the entire country. It would, in other words, tend to confirm the broad outcome of the 1994 elections, rendering the possibility of securing national representation that much harder for the existent minor parties or future movements of protest. Consequently, whilst an agreed reform along these lines by a Constituent Assembly in time for the next elections would be manifestly different from the self-serving constitutional manipulations implemented by the NP after

²⁸ Jonathan N. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy: electoral politics in Zimbabwe* (Harare, 1992), especially pp. 36–42 and 189–201.

²⁹ Cyril Ramaphosa, Secretary-General of the ANC, indicated a few weeks after the elections that both national and regional MPs would be allocated specific geographic responsibilities in order to keep the party in touch with the masses. In the same week de Klerk announced that the NP favoured a mix of proportional representation and the constituency system ‘as operated in Germany’. *Eastern Province Herald* (Port Elizabeth), 24 June 1994.

1948, it would similarly serve to reinforce the electoral dominance of the ANC at national level.

In contrast, neither the ANC nor the NP would seem likely to endorse any shift away from PR at provincial level, where a return to FPTP would bring less certain benefits to both, and change the nature of the federalism that seems set to emerge.

ANC DOMINANCE AND NATIONAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Although federalism was considered as an option for bringing about political unification in 1910, and found particular support in Natal, unitary government was adopted as a device for promoting national unity and holding the new country together. The four elective provincial councils which emerged in the Cape, the Orange Free State, Natal, and the Transvaal constituted, therefore, a regional tier of government, rather than possessing autonomous powers in the spheres in which they operated.

Despite their limited authority, the provincial councils provided a locus for resistance to the NP Government after 1948 under the rubric of the established (white) political parties. Their abolition under the 1983 constitution, and the assumption of their functions by appointed bodies, simultaneously removed the irritation of opposition control of Natal, and its prospect elsewhere, whilst providing for a greater centralisation of authority in a period of mounting popular challenge.³⁰ Subsequently, whilst its immediate liberal predecessors and, from 1989, the new DP, all espoused federalism, the NP remained resolutely opposed to it until after 1990, at which time it came face to face with the prospect of losing central power. It then underwent a remarkable conversion, discovering in federalism guarantees for both individual and minority rights. Together with an array of both liberal (the DP) and conservative forces (notably the IFP and FF), it therefore made a new allocation of powers between central government and nine new provinces its major price for settlement. For its part, the ANC – which had always regarded federalism as a recipe for preserving privilege – proved willing to meet that cost, along with concession of a constitutional court, a set of constitutional principles, and various other attributes associated with the federal model.

The immediate outcome of the elections was, of course, that the NP

³⁰ At the time of their dissolution, the New Republic Party controlled the Natal provincial council, and the NP stood in danger of losing ground to a combination of the CP and the *Herstigte Nasionale Party* in the Orange Free State and Transvaal.

won control of the Western Cape, and the IFP of KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, whereas first-past-the-post might have seen the elimination of the NP in some provinces, proportional representation also ensured that it secured second-party status in every provincial legislature outside the Western Cape, except in KwaZulu-Natal, and it also secured minority representation in the governments of the PWV, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, the Orange Free State, and the Northern Cape. For the ANC meanwhile, whilst proportional representation provided effective control of seven provinces, it limited what it perceived as the damage inflicted by its failure to also capture the other two.

The limited prospects of the ANC losing control of its seven provinces in subsequent elections have been discussed elsewhere in terms of the predominantly racial character of South Africa's new voting pattern. Suffice it to say that, although class factors will undoubtedly come into play, the overwhelming majority of African voters in seven out of the nine provinces are likely to underwrite this continued ANC electoral hegemony, except in the Western Cape (where, in contrast to the Northern Cape, the Coloured vote split in the NP's favour) and in KwaZulu-Natal, where IFP dominance will certainly be hotly contested. It is important to extend this argument, however, by proposing that the ANC's status as the dominant party at provincial level is set to be extended by two closely related factors.

The first is that, within the context of its sharing power within the Government of National Unity, the ANC is set to assume guiding control of the state apparatus. This will reverberate at second-tier level in terms of the heavy financial dependence of the new provincial authorities upon the national government in accordance with the 1993 constitution.

Despite the centrality of the creation of the new provinces to the negotiation process, it is by no means unambiguously clear that the current constitution can be categorised as federal, if by that is meant that the provinces are required to enjoy distinct spheres of jurisdiction and functions that can be changed only with the consent of all interested parties. Indeed, given the ANC's historic distaste for federalism, there seems to be an unwritten agreement amongst politicians of all stripes and the media to avoid explicit use of that term, whilst the problems of re-incorporating the homelands and forging new provincial structures out of previously diverse racial administrations have taken precedence over any debate about the extent and nature of provincial powers.

However, although the constitution provides for the legislative competence of provinces over a wide array of spheres, from agriculture through health and police to welfare services, it simultaneously lists these powers as concurrent with Parliament and as subject to uniform norms and standards that may need to be applied throughout the Republic. It also makes provincial taxation capacity dependent upon approval by Parliament, as well as providing for the latter to determine what 'equitable' share of national revenues, and other special financial allocations, provinces should receive.³¹

The reality is that immediately after the elections the new provincial governments possessed no financial resources whatsoever. It was administratively too late for them to prepare budgets for 1994-5, so their attentions were directed by the Government of National Unity to worrying about those for 1995-6. In the interim, they were rendered entirely dependent upon handouts from central government, and whatever resources they could claim from the still existing provincial and homeland administrations (which they were yet to absorb). It was also announced that the final powers and functions of the various provinces would be decided by a Commission on Provincial Government, chaired by Thozamile Botha of the ANC, but only after the provinces had applied to 'reclaim' functions from central government, some of which the economically weaker ones might not be able to assume.³²

Whilst each provincial majority party is likely to seek to boost its future electoral prospects by using its regional power base to confer benefits upon its supporters, the high level of financial dependence of the provinces upon the national government will serve to raise the costs of provincial electorates voting for the opposition. South Africa may well be the most industrialised economy in Africa, yet it is far from being a wealthy state, and it seems not unrealistic to assume that, as elsewhere in the continent, the newly democratic politics will come to revolve around a struggle for resources. In such a context, the ANC is more than a little likely to use its control of the state machinery to enhance its support throughout the regions.

In those provinces in which the ANC has already emerged as indisputably dominant, the struggle for resources may be conducted along largely non-party lines, and their allocation will be directed

³¹ See paras. 126 and 155-9, and Schedule 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 200 of 1993, in *Government Gazette* (Pretoria), Vol. 343, No. 15466.

³² *Weekly Mail & Guardian*, 3-9 June 1994.

towards consolidating its electoral support. However, in the four provinces (PWV, KwaZulu-Natal, Western, and Northern Cape) where politics is characterised by a party battle, the ANC's control of the national exchequer is likely to be deployed to the disadvantage of its competitors.

The ANC's financial hold over the provinces in terms of the constitution is going to be enhanced by its commitment to, and promotion of, its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Having been 'drawn up by the ANC-led alliance in consultation with other key mass organisations', the RDP is promoted as an 'integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework' designed to mobilise support and resources towards 'the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future'. Its central motivation is that of meeting the basic needs of the mass of the population by radically restructuring and upgrading the provision of housing, water, and sanitation, energy and electrification, telecommunications, transport, nutrition, health care, and social services, all linked to a programme of reform providing easier and more secure access to land for the millions of impoverished blacks who dwell in rural areas. Envisaging 'neither a commandist central planning system nor an unfettered free market system', the RDP is none the less committed to a co-ordinated national public works programme, which will marry 'the leading and enabling role of the state' to 'a thriving private sector, and active involvement by all sectors of civil society'.³³

Early accusations that it is trying to be all things to all people already suggest that the implementation of the RDP will become a highly contested process. Yet of more relevance here is the further implication that the ANC's high-level commitment to the programme will enhance the weight of the central government relative to that of the provinces. Precisely because it will be seeking to provide certain minimum levels of service throughout the country, the ANC will use its powers under the new constitution to require provincial authorities to perform in specified areas up to a minimum standard; and when, in turn, they indicate that the provision of such services and facilities requires resources they do not possess, provincial governments will of course turn to the national exchequer for assistance.

Under the constitution, the provinces are entitled to an 'equitable' share of revenue collected nationally, this consisting of a percentage of

³³ Quotations have been taken from the African National Congress, *The Reconstruction and Development Programme* (Johannesburg, 1994), pp. 1, 16, 18, and 78-9.

TABLE 5
Estimated Provincial Product and Incomes, 1991

	Real Gross Geographic Product (GGP) ^a Million Rand	% of Gross Domestic Product	Personal Income <i>per capita</i> ^b Rand
PWV	44,634	36.9	4,992
KwaZulu-Natal	17,550	14.7	1,910
Eastern Cape	8,938	7.5	1,358
Western Cape	15,722	13.2	4,188
Northern Transvaal	3,788	3.1	725
North-West	8,649	6.9	1,789
Orange Free State	8,699	7.1	2,419
Eastern Transvaal	10,086	8.3	2,164
Northern Cape	2,726	2.2	2,865
National	R120,763	100.0	R2,556

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa, *South Africa's Nine Provinces: a human development profile* (Pretoria, 1994), Table 1, ch. 3. Notes: ^a At constant 1985 prices. ^b 1991 nominal figures.

income and sales taxes collected within their territory, as well as other 'conditional or unconditional' allocations. However, although the constitution further specifies that a financial commission, inclusive of provincial representation, shall make recommendations concerning the level of these allocations to Parliament, it seems clear that the decisive say will rest with the national government. This indicates, further, that rather than the equalisation transfers between provinces which are characteristic of federations being made according to some relatively neutral formula, the national government will play the key rôle in devising a revenue system which will allow fiscal redistribution away from the richer to the poorer provinces.

An early estimate of the economic capacities of the new provinces is given in Table 5. The data are basic, yet imply that moves to equalise standards of national services will require some redistribution of resources away from the PWV and the Western Cape in particular. They suggest, too, that whilst the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal is likely to take up the IFP's long-held complaint that the province has hitherto unfairly subsidised national government,³⁴ rectification of any such injustice may become dependent upon the return of an ANC government at the next provincial elections. Most fundamentally,

³⁴ Richard Humphries, 'The Politics of Regional Finance in South Africa', in Theunis Roux (ed.), *Regional Fiscal Equalisation in a Future South Africa* (Cape Town, 1993), pp. 66-73.

however, it endorses the view that whilst provincial battles over the allocation of resources seem inevitable, the enormously skewed pattern of economic development inherited from the past will inevitably enhance the patronage rôle of the central government if the RDP's commitment to job creation and equalisation of services is to be achieved nationally.

Finally, it needs to be noted that the RDP envisages a major restructuring of the public sector, not only in terms of the integration of the existent diverse administrations, but also with regard to rendering it reflective of South African society, including race, class and gender. Such major changes, notably via an extensive programme of affirmative action recruitment, will apply as much at provincial as at national level, and given the new Government's guarantee of continued employment for current public employees, implies a substantial increase in the overall size of the public service. All this suggests that, as for ruling parties in most other African countries, its control over public employment possibilities will be central to the ANC's ability to shape the political arena, not least in those provinces which it does not directly control.

The burden of this argument, in sum, is that although much has been made of the ANC's concession to federalism, national-provincial relations in South Africa will turn out to be very much like those which obtained under the constitution of 1910, despite the fact that the newly created provincial governments may seek to entrench and extend their authority. Electoral trends are therefore likely to be dictated by national rather than provincial government performance, and even where provinces are lost to the ANC, their lack of effective autonomy and their financial dependence upon the centre will do little to dent the capacity of the latter to implement its national programmes.

THE REMAKING OF SOUTH AFRICA AS A DOMINANT-PARTY STATE

An early review of the dilemmas which faced the ANC on its legal return to South Africa after 1990 noted that the capture of power by liberation movements in Africa normally gave rise to single-party systems rather than pluralist democracies. This was not because new régimes were deliberately malevolent, but because the demands of their new situation were different from those of the old. As explained by Marina Ottaway:

Transition from *apartheid* or decolonisation encourages, or even requires, the maintenance of an all-encompassing, broadly representative front. Transition to democracy requires the break-up of that movement into a variety of organisations, representing the different interests and conflicts of a real country rather than of an idealised 'oppressed nation'.³⁵

For all that South Africa possesses a much wider array of movements and organisations of civil society than other African states, Ottaway therefore warned that a transition to a new authoritarianism under ANC hegemony constituted a serious possibility, replaying the past political behaviour of the NP nationally and of the IFP in KwaZulu, both of which blurred the distinction between party and state within their domain.

Given that the ANC seems set to dominate at both national and provincial levels of government, rather than break up into competing interests, are we about to witness the re-emergence of an authoritarian political system? Such a conclusion would be premature, for South Africa may prove able to combine the ANC's assumption of dominant-party status with a retention of democracy.

Democratic theory registers no objection to a majority of voters continuing to support a particular party if they want to, so long as other basic freedoms are maintained and elections are conducted freely. It is clearly the ultimate ability of an electorate to change its government, not the fact that it chooses not to do so, which is one of the key indicators of a democracy. Yet what follows, also, is that in the South African case, the maintenance of democracy must not be mistaken for the elaboration of federalism under a constitution whose small print throws its weight behind the central government. Instead, it depends rather upon the other protections against the abuse of democratic liberties which the constitution outlines: the preservation and promotion of listed fundamental rights by the Constitutional Court and a new Human Rights Commission, the establishment of an effective Public Protector charged with investigating administrative impropriety or corruption, the relaunch of the Public Service Commission as a non-partisan body, and so on.

The 1994 elections have seen the remaking of South Africa as a dominant-party state, and in that, as many would agree, lies the danger of a new authoritarianism. Yet there is also in that situation ground for much hope, not only because the ANC's very dominance may render it willing to accept challenges as lawful rather than as

³⁵ Marina Ottaway, 'Liberation Movements and Transition to Democracy: the case of the A.N.C.', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (Cambridge), 29, 1, March 1991, p. 82.

threats to its existence, but also because the immediate outcome of the transition process has been wonderfully beneficent: the election of a government with popular legitimacy, the avoidance of civil war, the guaranteed representation of minority parties via the agreed electoral system, and the constitutional entrenchment of almost more individual rights than the state under *apartheid* had the imagination to abuse. All these gains must be closely guarded when the time comes to draw up South Africa's final constitution.

In short, for democracy to survive, there will be a need in the new South Africa, as there was in the old, for democrats within and beyond Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures to keep alive that vision of a genuine liberation which guided the ANC to eventual triumph throughout the many years of its struggle for political freedom for all.