

responsibility. Just as bad theory leads to bad policy, good research, driven by good theory, may lead to positive changes. I aspire in my work to make just such a difference. This goal will be achieved if I am effective in three related areas: (1) by doing good research which reveals that social problems emanate from social structure; (2) by engaging in social criticism, which Herbert Gans called for so forcefully in his 1988 Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association (1989, p. 7); and (3) by being a public sociologist, i. e., by being a keen analyst of society who communicates effectively to sociologists, students, and the lay public. I have organized my professional life to accomplish these tasks. In doing so, I am guided by Emily Dickinson's dictum: "Tell all the truth but tell it slant." The work (and I do not consider it work) continues.

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## AFRICA ON MY MIND: ENCOUNTERS IN THE FIELD\*

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### INTRODUCTION

Some years ago Robert Merton (1964, p. 19) observed that our literature on research methods tells us ways in which we ought to think, feel, and act but says precious little about the ways in which we actually do think, feel, and act. The significance of this insight became painfully clear during my most recent research stint in southern Africa. Certainly the tradition of sharing personal reminiscences about research and setting remains, for reasons related to discipline norms, rare among sociologists. Our stress on detachment and the *public persona* ordinarily precludes concern for the interaction between *private person* and the field. There are notable exceptions, of course--one thinks of William Foote Whyte's "disarmingly candid" accounts of his *Street Corner Society* work (1981, 1955), or Renee Fox's essay on her Belgium medical research (1962).<sup>1</sup> But we have little of the richness found in the memoirs of anthropological scholars such as Malinowski (1922), Bohanon (1964), Briggs (1970), Mead (1977), and more recently Ben Reina (1984). They are reports that I have come, quite belatedly, to appreciate in spite of having long internalized sociology's proscriptions.

The fact is that by the time I returned from South Africa two years ago, I felt an urgent need to share something more personal with colleagues than the typical "preliminary findings" or "state of South Africa" report. Following a brief presentation in this vein at a departmental colloquium, colleagues urged me to develop the theme. After some hesitancy--there is professional risk--work is underway,<sup>2</sup> and KU's invitation to send *MARS* something on current research seemed a propitious opportunity to stray from the more traditional chronicling into the "experiential mode." For with me still is the intensity of feeling that South Africa evokes; perhaps my commentary will provoke some rethinking re sociological endeavors.

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Although my early professional work focused on American race and ethnic relations, comparative ethnic stratification has always fascinated me. I remember that as a young undergraduate reading *Cry The Beloved Country* for a course at Washington State University long years ago, Alan Paton captured my imagination and my heart; I knew even then that I would, one day, travel his "lovely road..." to Africa (1947, p. 1). The first professional opportunity came in the mid 1970's when the Centre for Inter-Racial Studies, at what was then the University of Rhodesia, offered me a research scholarship. I arrived in the capital--now Harare, Zimbabwe--in the midst of their war for liberation. The atmosphere, while scary, was also exhilarating, for independence was at hand and my research on ethnicity among an educated elite was fascinating. I returned in 1982 to study post-independence effects and again a few years later to renew ties with land and people.

During the intervening years I had also attended professional conferences that took me elsewhere in southern Africa. Then in early 1984 I was invited to become a Visiting Fellow at the University of Cape Town's Centre for Intergroup Studies, and to conduct research on what was hoped would become a series of joint endeavors on apartheid and social change.<sup>3</sup> By the time the necessary paper work for my departure had been completed on both sides of the ocean, we were well into 1986 and the Republic of South Africa was engulfed in one of its bitterest eras since white intrusion some 338 years ago. Nevertheless, for many it had been a time of hope; surely, majority rule was finally at hand.

Upon arrival at the Cape's Malan Airport I sensed anew the "morbid fascination" this land evokes, this pariah nation of 32 million souls. On our drive to town that first day I asked to take "the road less traveled" across the Cape Flats, skirting the dull resettlement plots of Mitchell Plains for Coloureds, Atholone for Asians, and on past Crossroads for Africans--the three groups who by self-definition are now known collectively as *blacks*. In the sprawling Crossroads areas were the hidden camp-like townships, the crude migrant single-sex barracks, and the pathetic, yet vibrant squatter communities. Clearly, as a contrivance in social engineering, apartheid has been an unholy success, compartmentalizing and scarring all it touches.

And yet...South Africa is a land blessed with great natural beauty, first-rate weather much of the year, and people...people of infinite variety, talent and warmth. However much blacks suffer under the system, they--along with their white brethren--evince an abiding love for this "benighted country," a fact that continually touched and amazed me, as did its hills and valleys "lovely beyond singing" (Paton 1947, p. 1). It would be an idyllic place, were it not for the tragic reality hidden away from the casual white observer's eyes. This was to become the most poignant research experience of my professional career.

## THE RESEARCH FIELD AND SOME INTRUSIVE ISSUES

Time permits the highlighting of but two intersecting lines of thought concerning my South African saga: first, something of the personal--intrusions on project, person, and field; and second, a look at two or three of the issues flowing from the above that have come to vex me.

### *The Project and Personal Demographics*

When I was offered in early 1984 the fellowship at Cape Town I suggested using Pretoria's proposed constitutional revisions as a backdrop to test conflicting hypotheses on social change. The first of a series of studies would investigate black urban response to, and involvement in, the newly proposed Tricameral Parliament and Township Councils. By the time I arrived two years later, however, I anticipated some, and suddenly faced other difficulties with the project as originally approved. The dramatically charged socio-political climate, triggered by Pretoria's intemperate constitutional decisions along with rising unemployment and related grievances, had altered the context.<sup>4</sup> Those blacks even seeming to cooperate with the newly installed government structures were being defined as traitors or worse by their communities and anti-apartheid groups.

My initial contacts with "experts" or key informants from outlying communities cautioned that, were we to stick to the project as outlined, we would likely be cut off from a broad spectrum of resistance organizations and spokespersons. Moreover, we were now faced with a host of concepts and topics, long a part of the South African scholarly dialogue, that had become taboo according to one ideological stance or another--e.g., race, reform, minority rights, ethnicity, power sharing, federalism, culture, group interests, free enterprise, pluralism. Government abuses of selected concepts and the burgeoning popularity of Marxist theory among intellectuals made some of this understandable. Yet much of the discord seemed irrational. Later I ran across Peter Berger's commentary on ideologies and "clue concepts" which conjure up a set of specific responses, positive or negative; this helped clarify (1974).

While grappling with the project focus, I was simultaneously faced with dissonance over personal demographics. It wasn't just the initial suspicion social scientists commonly face, or the natural apprehension of people in an authoritarian society. This was different. Various key informants found me suspect because among other things: (1) I was an American; (2) I was an academic who was neither Marxist nor conservative; rather I was a liberal (in the classic European sense, not in the current American right wing usage); (3) I was affiliated with the University of Cape Town's Centre for Intergroup Studies with its Quaker-like commitment to conflict resolution; and of course, (4) I was a woman, an "older woman!" in a highly chauvinistic society.

It was the *level* of anti-American hostility in my initial contacts with "experts," not the fact of it, that caught me flat footed. Gone was the invariable friendliness of earlier African visits. Most were still gracious, yet the change was dramatic, for the Reagan Administration had managed to alienate the

right, the left, *and* the middle.<sup>5</sup> I was asked what I was going to do about sanctions and about U. S. meddling. Some thought I should be boycotting the Republic's academic community. I explained that the American Sociological Association and my section of the International Sociological Association, though strongly anti-apartheid, were nevertheless opposed to scientific boycotts which simply lead to intellectual atrophy. This placated most, but was dismissed by a few as so much sophistry. I listened attentively to much hyperbole about the States,<sup>6</sup> and I suspect I felt as Renee Fox (1962) did when her Belgium colleagues turned their suspicion and anger about the U.S. Congo policy on to her during the 1960s.

The issue of my political bent was a bit more problematic. I tried to keep a low profile, a neutral stance, but this--plus the absence of appropriate buzzwords--gave me away. A couple of friendly, creative contacts were ultimately lost because of my "ideological impurities." Others, while mad at the U. S. government, forgave my being a "Yank," welcoming what they perceived to be my humane understanding of their country's conundrum. Finally, a few damned me before I could say "good morning." They "knew" that my nationality and my political beliefs were inextricably intertwined and would not forgive the "liberal, capitalist, bleeding heart, materialistic" cultural baggage "so typical of you American intellectual types."

Those concerned about my affiliation with the Centre were, I came to realize, reflecting the paranoia that surrounds the country's associational life. Interestingly, the Centre has its own "rainbow coalition," long standing contacts with ANC and Nelson Mandela at one end, and with Dr. Andries Treurnicht, head of the reactionary Conservative Party, at the other. I'm sure that any affiliation would have been suspect to one group or another, and the Centre--an established part of the University's anti-apartheid structure--was able to open many doors for the project. I didn't have to adhere to its non-violent philosophy in toto to appreciate its place in the scheme of things.

I felt adrift, burned the midnight oil and sought counsel with the bright, eager Centre staff. Some thought we should move ahead as originally planned, but others agreed that we must avoid, where possible, partisan schisms and squabbles. Soon, wonder of wonders, a modified proposal rolled off the Xerox machine on "Opposition.Politics as Agents of Social Change." Concerns in the original proposal would still be tapped, but the revision was inclusive, encompassing a wide range of anti-apartheid organizational styles and voices--black and white, legal and extra-legal, left and right. Interview schedules were revised, associational lists compiled, archival materials tracked, and observational opportunities systematized.<sup>7</sup> We were in business!

The early negative vibes were not personal, I found. I had unwittingly stepped into the middle of a society's ideological confusion and rhetorical posturing, an experience that would ultimately lead to new, unanticipated sociological concerns.

### *Research and the Police State*

In the above instances one might say that the project and I were intruders on the field. But I also had to come to grips with the way in which the field was intruding on the project and me. I have yet to find a reference to the ways in which social scientists should react to, or behave in, an authoritarian environment, or how such an environment might influence research outcomes. Yet the context of the police state--an important research laboratory--does by its very nature pose constraints upon investigation and investigator.<sup>8</sup> To ignore it, to treat it as a given is at the very least misleading, at most, dishonest.

Good objective research is not precluded, but there is always an underlying tension; I assumed that I was under surveillance, that my phones were tapped and my mail checked. (The Postal Censors held my mail from the States for nearly a month at one point, finally delivering sixteen letters from family and friends in one day.) I had no doubt that the security police knew where I was at all times. At meetings and gatherings I wondered who among the audience were government agents. At other times with the police conspicuously present, I would wonder if this were the time that I would be picked up, deportation notice given. Often my heart raced, and I dreamt of yellow police bakkes (caged trucks)....and sirens!

My conversations were always a bit guarded in casual settings, although pleasant and useful rapport was the norm even with the most reactionary bigot or the most radical firebrand. Appearing concerned (which I was) and non-judgmental (which I sometimes was not) was the key. Empathy with *interview subjects* grew quickly as people from all walks of life responded with great warmth and acceptance. Whether African township dwellers, Coloured grassroots leaders, or Afrikaner Members of Parliament, they were far more willing to "open up" than I had imagined, and there were touching moments of confession, tears, affection...and rage. I fought to remain sympathetic without becoming sentimental. And as the months passed and optimism about change gave way, first to pessimism and then despair, I struggled to keep my own sense of disappointment from intruding into the investigative process.

Leaders of the best known women's resistance group gave good advice, "Never try to be devious." I tried, therefore, to be as open as possible, to hide nothing. Then, one day I realized that I was making my sex and age work to my advantage. After all, "a little old lady in tennis shoes" can go a lot of places, ask a lot of questions, and appear "naive" a lot of the time without arousing suspicion. I believe that more than one security officer ignored my comings and goings for this reason.

Later, restrictions under a new "state of emergency" made work more difficult. I learned that protest could become a seductive game; trying to outwit the authorities after each new set of restraints could--had perhaps--become a way of life for many resisters, risky but exhilarating. Sadly, it seemed to divert energies away from the hard tasks required for confronting and changing the system. What I noticed and came most to regret, however, was the enormous amount of self-policing and self-censorship across racial lines. Acquiescence was the norm.

The most difficult experience for me personally was what we came to call "Crossroads Burning." It included days of project immobility as the Centre staff provided mutual support. I had been in Zimbabwe during some rough times, and I thought I was about as well informed of apartheid's excesses, and as well prepared emotionally as one can be...at a distance. Maybe I was. But I had yet to receive my crash course in deviousness and cruelty, faith and courage in totalitarian societies.

It began on May 19th, a clear, crisp autumn morning. The Cape fairly sparkled following a week of rain; it was one of those days when you wanted to shout to the skies, "God's in [her] Heaven, all's right with the world." The time since my arrival had been fairly calm; the death count had slowed a bit across the country. There was, to be sure, continued sporadic violence throughout the land, but the Western Cape seemed quiet following the intense conflict of 1985 in spite of ongoing incidents. Within the past week the English papers had reported the invasion of jeering, armed police into Coloured classrooms on the Cape Flats, to whip and beat students for alleged rock throwing. And the *Cape Times* had that very morning mentioned a bit of unrest in one of the areas of the Crossroads township. But there were hopeful signs. Emergency regulations placed on major urban centers in late 1985 had been lifted in mid-March and resistance groups were very active again. Further, to enhance its "reform" image, the government was promising an end to the hated forced removal, influx control, and pass laws. And most significantly, the peace negotiations directed by the Commonwealth Countries with Botha's cabinet and with Black leaders seemed to be making real progress.

As I made my way up Main Road toward campus I smiled, for a familiar odor of burning leaves in the air reminded me of the autumn days of youth. A good omen, I thought. But I was wrong.

During the Centre's *morning tea* we learned that the government, thumbing its nose at the Commonwealth and the world, had deliberately scuttled the peace initiatives by bombing the capitals of three African Commonwealth Countries early that morning.

By *afternoon* security forces had invaded the campus to baton-charge, tear-gas, and spray-dye University students holding a peaceful anti-bombing rally on the soccer field. We learned, further, that the Crossroads conflict reported in morning papers was much more serious than first thought, and spreading. What I mistook for burning autumn leaves, was the thatch on thousands of huts being burned to the ground on the Cape Flats!

Before the week ended smoke had blotted out the sun, visibility at nearby Malan airport was practically nil. The homes of some 35,000 Africans in Crossroad's squatter communities had been destroyed, 35 to 40 killed, and thousands wounded. Pretoria called it black-on-black rivalry--older residents against the radical youth. But according to eyewitnesses and volunteers from Cape Town's religious, civic, educational, media, and relief organizations who had moved in at some peril to provide aid to refugees whom the government refused to assist, it was a well executed military-like operation directed and

protected by white troops using black "vigilantes."<sup>9</sup> Sirens punctuated our days and nights as ambulances and the police traversed the road near my flat en route to and from the township.

Within a fortnight there was a second prolonged attack on Crossroads. The temporary tent housing, relief kitchens, and medical clinics set up earlier by Cape Town agencies were first burned to the ground. Then, the vigilantes, with protection of armored security personnel, moved into the areas the government wished destroyed. The shooting, burning, beating, slashing went on for five days and nights. An additional 35,000 to 40,000 people were left homeless, 40 more were killed. Four white journalists were shot, and a fifth hacked to death as police stood by. The meaning was clear! The Minister of Law and Order congratulated white troops for their restraint in handling the "black unrest." The white, liberal PFP party<sup>10</sup> used the floor of Parliament to condemn the Afrikaner regime for bragging to the world a month before that they were ending forced removal and influx control only to develop a new "influx control technique," i.e., burning down Crossroads.... And out in Mitchell Plains young blacks, in hopeless rage, beat to death yet another fellow black alleged to have been a police informant.

Before the month was out Botha reinstated the National Emergency, this one more oppressive than anything experienced since the infamous Sharpeville era of 1960.<sup>11</sup> News sources were silenced, ten thousand--many we knew--were rounded up and detained those first weeks, usually in the middle of the night. Some 30,000 men, women and children were incarcerated by the end of the year.<sup>12</sup> Everywhere meetings were forbidden, offices and homes broken into and trashed, black townships terrorized. I saw riot police terrorize those (whites) leaving a rally at City Hall for the PFP opposition party, was videotaped as I left a noon meeting on human rights in St. George Anglican Cathedral next door to Parliament, and watched helplessly as University colleagues were clubbed and whipped for standing in quiet vigil while leaders petitioned the state President. I and other parishioners were given "one minute to disperse" by riot police in gas masks as we left a memorial service at my community Congregational Church, while out on the Cape Flats the mosque of my young Malaysian colleague was being tear gassed and sprayed with gunfire, and down the road the entire Coloured congregation (200 plus people) was detained for having a church service honoring Soweto's dead.

Lines from a turn of the century South African writer captured my own incredulity and sorrow immediately following those May days: "I can tell you the things that happened as I saw them, and what the rest was about only Africa knows" (Boseman 1947).

#### NEW QUESTIONS FROM FIELD AND DATA

A common textbook notion of social inquiry is that one forms hypotheses, then gathers data to confirm or negate them (Bellah 1962). But in the real world the challenge is to know when to abandon a hypothesis, refine a concept, pose a new question, and to know that the same data often contains

multiple studies (Davis 1962). Our project was focused on conflict and change strategies/goals to end apartheid. As significant and appealing as these issues were, and are, others began to nag, e.g., Afrikaner staying power, a quarrelsome resistance movement. What apart from coercion enables this infamous system to function? What integrative mechanisms hold it together? And in Joseph Lelyveld's words, "Why do blacks with all of their numbers endure what we find unendurable" (1986, p. 185)? Distance from the field has not dimmed the compelling nature of these questions. I find myself wrestling still. And it is these I wish to highlight in this section.

#### *Legitimacy, Ideology, and Illegitimacy*

South Africa seems to defy political sociology's most cherished propositions. We see *legitimacy* of the system as central to analysis of state control, thanks to Weber. Further, we know that for the exercise of power by the *few* to be legitimate, an effective *ideology* is required. Marx taught us that a society's "dominant ideology" is a means to mask elite class interests and to justify their privilege. The popular "elite manipulation" concept (Marxists speak of "engineering of consent") assumes a general acceptance by both rulers and masses that inequities are somehow just, natural, or beneficial (see Huber and Form 1973).

Afrikaner Nationalism has been the guiding ideology of South Africa's ruling elite (although there is less certitude among today's adherents). A belief in self-determination, in the *volk*, a sense of divine mission, and racial/ethnic exclusivism are at its core. But it is *not* a dominant ideology. It has been the exclusive province of the small Afrikaner populace, used to forge an ethnic whole in the decades following the Anglo-Boer Wars and to bar, not incorporate, others--black and white English-speakers alike.<sup>13</sup> The Nationalist government has never been legitimated in the eyes of its major constituency; internal legitimacy has rested solely with the small enfranchised white population. (External legitimacy is, of course, another matter.)

If a dominant ideology to undergird internal legitimacy is absent, then what of *illegitimacy* which is central to theory on social revolution? The prevalent voluntaristic position is that revolution occurs when state agencies fail to ensure basic loyalty, are deemed unjust, or run counter to emergent class interests (Johnson 1966; Brinton 1938; Gurr 1971). Therefore, serious observers have been predicting the imminent overthrow of South Africa's regime for decades. Pierre van den Berghe's observation, made a quarter of a century ago, is typical: "The likelihood of revolution seems high. Mounting internal strains and external pressures doom white supremacy within the near future" (1965, p. 262).

Rejecting voluntaristic views of revolution, Theda Skocpol (1980) suggests that even without legitimacy a state can remain stable, invulnerable to internal challenges, "especially if its coercive organizations remain coherent and effective,"--and there are no major outside threats.<sup>14</sup> So one common answer to questions regarding the ongoing survival of totalitarian regimes such as South Africa's is that *coercion* maintains the necessary functional

interdependence (Marger 1985, p. 211; van den Berghe 1965; cf. Cell 1982, p. 246).<sup>15</sup> Rich resources have certainly enabled Pretoria to develop extraordinary security might, safe in the hands of those committed to Afrikanerdom. There is little chance of their disaffection and a great will to survive. Despite high but tolerable illegitimacy costs, acceptance matters primarily for cohesion within the Afrikaner community, say many of the "compliance through coercion" school. Only as *it* experiences growing fragmentation will crises arise (cf. Adam and Moodley 1986, pp. 41-44).

Other scholars argue, however, that coerced compliance is but one piece of the puzzle. The use of raw force as *the* compliance mechanism is not sufficient over long periods of time (Marger 1981). Societies relying primarily on force are always precarious, and Pretoria is not yet demonstrably precarious. It may well be that in this system of rigid control the limits of tolerance are constantly being tested and "renegotiated" (Cell 1982; Butler, Elphick and Welsh 1987).

#### *Fostering Compliance*

What seems apparent at this juncture is that Pretoria's survival through time has been based on the regime's gaining a pragmatic acquiescence--"compliance without consent" in Heribert Adam's terms (1986)--in part by means less direct than raw coercion. The so-called "reform" policies of the Botha government illustrate not only coldly efficient political policing but a successful manipulative capacity to foster compliance through a variety of integrative techniques. Questions growing out of the field experience alerted me to three phenomena that beg further study: contrived legitimacy, resistance movement destabilization, and dependency and co-optation.

*Contrived Legitimacy.* States attempt to create legitimacy in a variety of ways. I found the South African preoccupation with the "rule by law"--seen by many as synonymous with "rule of law"--to be one of the most intriguing examples of a kind of artificial legitimation.<sup>16</sup> From its initial rise to power over forty years ago the Afrikaner regime has--unlike most totalitarian states that ignore the law--secured statutory authority to enforce apartheid. The conscientious use of law to deny human rights means that they have deliberately deprecated the humanistic assumptions of justice attached to the Western notion of "rule of law." "Legality becomes a substitute for *legitimacy*" and laws "enthroned the system of lawlessness" (see Adam and Moodley 1986; Westcott 1988; Butler, Elphick and Welsh 1987).

Many interviewees could not comprehend that "rule of law" is brought into disrepute when, divorced from universal values, it is used to deny basic freedoms. To them "law is law," used to obtain order (cf. Davenport 1987 pp. 576-578). Informants assured me that their current judicial system worked honorably because judges made sure the laws, whatever their content, were followed; spokesmen from both the political right and left viewed our Bill of Rights with skepticism. For many, the excessive liberty is a threat to "civilization," to stability, hence--it would seem--the self-policing.

*Resistance Movement Destabilization.* I was, of course, familiar with the history of the country's resistance movement and the historic splits in African Nationalism<sup>17</sup> (see Leatt, Kneifel, and Nurnberger 1986). But I arrived in South Africa with the widely shared assumption that common purpose and growing unity now characterized activist organizations (cf. Martin 1988), and I was unprepared for the thinly masked discord, the ideological disputes, and not infrequent violence that punctuated much movement interaction. The black-white conflict that erupted in late 1984, while helping to unify many like-minded groups within one coordinating body or another (UDF and NF being the best known), seemed, nevertheless, to resurrect stale debates, spawn new factionalism, and heighten rhetoric between and among *dozens* of competing camps. In spite of the current push for freedom old cleavages were not in check.

The best known, and only viable external nationalist organization today, is, of course, the African National Congress. But ANC is still banned and in exile after nearly thirty years; its Charter provides an important ideological guide for a great many, but by no means a majority of *urban* blacks according to reliable data (Orkin 1986).<sup>18</sup> It was founded 77 years ago, almost a decade before the Chinese Communist Party and three years before the Afrikaner Nationalist Party now governing the country. When compared with other liberation movements it has realized relatively few successes, periodic news releases notwithstanding. The realities are that the ANC "threat" has been, and continues to be, exaggerated by both sides for propaganda purposes. Further, informants who have met with ANC leaders in exile over the past three years find them to be as bewildered as anyone regarding ways to dislodge the Afrikaner regime. Nor is there any sign that they have addressed their failures or seek new strategies (Adam 1988). ANC's problems reflect the weaknesses of the broader protest movement.

Why the seeming failure after so many years? The obvious answer is the Government's success in isolating, intimidating, and destabilizing leaders and organizations within the liberation movement thereby sapping energies and resources. To be sure, resistance groups are skilled in establishing new leadership and organizational structures to replace those banned, but it takes time; fatigue sets in--and fatalism. Resistance becomes a way of life, an end in itself as leaders become isolated from the masses.

Not all movement failure can be laid directly to state tyranny, however. Evidence suggests that the opposition has allowed its potential strength to be dissipated. To criticize is to give comfort to the enemy and my guilt level is high, for one soon learns that the spirit of the movement must be maintained, the people encouraged to fight on. Yet there is a desperate need to move from failed visions to workable solutions. Battles over diverse strategies, myriad Marxist interpretations, or "purity" of belief have fragmented, quite apart from official attempts to do so. Above all, activists have developed a morbid fear of *appearing* compromised by apartheid that haunts the movement. It is a fear that has voided most political efforts (see Lelyveld 1986); the vast majority of leaders have opted for a "politics of abstention,"

boycotting co-operative efforts between or among disparate anti-apartheid groups, and precluding all interventionist techniques. Infiltration of basic institutions--a common sense, not to mention Leninist, tactic--has been viewed as "selling out." Only the black trade unions have been granted legitimacy in their use of "the system" (Van Zyl Slabbert 1987; Evans 1987; Adam and Moodley 1986).<sup>19</sup>

Absence of a unifying ideology, lack of political confrontation or boring from within, detachment from the masses, erosion of will, unreasoned fear of co-optation--all of these seem to affect and to be affected by Pretoria's direct and indirect techniques of destabilization and compliance.

*Dependency and Co-optation.* This is the issue that is, I believe, potentially the most damaging for the anti-apartheid movement. In spite of rigid migration laws, unwanted growth of the country's urban black population during the past fifteen years and the consequent escalation of unrest, has led Pretoria to look increasingly at *dependency* as an integrative mechanism (*South African Race Relations Survey* 1985, 1986). Marxists speak of a "dull compulsion of circumstances" and the creation of false consciousness among the masses. But Barrington Moore (1966) has provided a more telling analysis for South Africa's condition by stressing the importance of daily habit and conditioning in the acceptance of injustice. The drudgery of the daily rounds and struggles for survival elicit acquiescence independent of any legitimating ideology (Cell 1982, p. 246; Adam and Moodley 1986).

President Botha's so-called reform policies have used black dependency to foster compliance through the use of patronage, access to state-controlled services, and media orchestration to create a desire for consumer goods and life in the "Western" mode.<sup>20</sup> An insidious outgrowth of this dependency syndrome is the potential for *co-optation*, an ever-present danger in societies with great inequities. The gradual growth of the Afrikaner elite's perceived need for black confederates is an intriguing phenomenon; since the early 1980's the state has excellerated attempts to provide stability via the recruitment of collaborators.

The earliest black collaborators of consequence were, of course, the cadres Pretoria placed in control of the *rural* bantustans starting in 1951. Given "self-governing" status in 1961, these bureaucrats are authoritarian patron-clients par excellence. But apart from police informants, the government apparently saw little need for wooing an *urban* black stratum until the end of the 1970's when local pundits began talking of an African bourgeoisie ripe for incorporation. Aside from an incipient black business sector, the black middle class consists largely of professional and white collar workers who are, more often than not, in the forefront of the resistance. They are not co-optible and have rejected suggestions of preferential treatment in return for their political neutrality. By the early 1980's reports circulated that Pretoria was really interested in an elite working class who could become urban black "insiders" (a few million, at most) willing to keep competing rural Africans out of the townships. But Pretoria's intent to target a labor aristocracy--skilled, industrial workers with the most secure job and housing

rights--also seemed doomed. They were up against a burgeoning union movement whose organizational skills and political awareness have increased immeasurably in recent years. (see *The Christian Science Monitor* 1988; *Washington Post National Weekly* 1987) Data suggest that by late 1985 trade unionists were among the strongest opponents of the white regime (Orkin 1986, pp. 14-17.)

Further, the state's simultaneous attempts at co-opting Asians and Coloureds was but marginally more successful. In late 1984 over four-fifths of them led by middle class protesters, reacted with violence, refusing to participate in the new elections or to recognize those who did. Only a small group in each community elected to take part in the Tricameral Parliament as "junior partners," Pretoria's deracialization pretence. With the intense hostility and fragmentation their involvement engendered, they too have become "collaborators"--unrepresentative, isolated from and threatened by, their own people.

Pretoria's real success in enlisting a black urban faction finally came in 1986 and "Crossroads Burning" provided a bird's-eye view of this official technique in the making. To quell unrest, to be rid of unwanted blacks, to suppress community spirit and mobilization, to exploit community division, to punish protesters, and to institute or restore the township council authority as called for under Botha's new constitution, the government turned to the so-called vigilante groups (usually with Council ties) that had emerged across the land sometime in 1985. The protracted use of surrogate forces came to be called the "Crossroads Option" since it was there that use was formalized on a massive scale, and I watched the birth of what I perceive to be the most damaging of collaborationist efforts for the future of South Africa.

Within the multiform townships the dependency levels of many residents make them ripe for patron-client alliances, and the nucleus of vigilante organizations in Crossroads and elsewhere consisted of a desultory group. At first they were extra-legal, then administrative authorities gradually began to exploit the tensions as township factions attacked one another. Vigilantes brutalized and killed; they were brutalized and killed in return (see endnote 9). With the infamous Crossroads incident the informal and non-legal status of the vigilantes changed. They became part of carefully planned operations directed by police and defense forces, as my interviewees confirmed.

The success in the Cape Town area and elsewhere led to the next step, the institutionalization of vigilantes. Advertising for "black community guards" was followed by government announcement in September, 1986, that "municipal constables" were being recruited throughout the urban centers. These untrained "forces," between 10,000 and 20,000 by the end of 1987, were not under the police, but rather, under the new local black Council members and ultimately Pretoria's Department of Constitutional Development (*SASH* 1987, p. 5-9).

Some may be tempted to label the vigilantes and their "uniformed cousins" a nascent middle class phenomenon, but this is, I believe, inaccurate and misleading. Class is, of course, difficult to isolate given the great diversity

within township labor pools and "legal" residence groupings. But with notable exceptions those recently co-opted appear to be (like those now serving on the township councils) an amalgam of the older, more traditional, less educated and their unemployed adult children, low status State service workers, non-union laborers, some "hole-in-the-wall" shop-keepers; and members of the lumpenproletariat including hooligans, thugs, and illegal hangers-on--all groups for whom economic stability is uncertain, life marginal (Haysom 1986).

During the past two years this black "constabulary," along with the growing township administrative bureaucracies, has forced an uneasy and brutal truce upon the urban centers in return for jobs, perks, and power over their fellow townsmen.<sup>21</sup> While the dialectics of co-optation discredit the co-opted once patronage is accepted, such enlistment has served to strengthen Pretoria's hegemony (see Adam 1988). Further solidification of these collaborationist efforts was revealed in a brief government announcement as reported in the U.S. by National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" on May 16, 1989. A national organization of township councillors was being formed to work with white administrative officials in establishing black participation in a "State President's Council,"<sup>22</sup> something liberation activists have adamantly refused to do.

Thus the Afrikaner elite has, at least for now, succeeded in suppressing community grassroots mobilization by pitting black against black (*SASH* 1987b). But urban residents are a different breed than are the "governed" in the homelands. In addition to learning just how the new sector of co-opted urban blacks differs from their fellow townsmen, it is, therefore, crucial to learn whether or not they are actually becoming a more dangerous urban version of the hated, all powerful bantustan administrative satraps. These questions are central to the future of anti-apartheid resistance.

## CONCLUSION

I am sensitized to the hazards of prophecy where South Africa's future is concerned (Burgess 1983). Not a single activist leader I spoke with after mid-1986 felt that there would be an end to apartheid in the foreseeable future. They spoke of long, dark days and protracted struggles, of life on Pretoria's terms. Few offered new thoughts on tactics or goals, although the movement spirit burned on. And yet, there are always signs of hope--the burgeoning and vital black labor movement that inevitably increases the number of informed politicized blacks; tentative moves toward ending movement dissonance as a variety of activist organizations have sought co-operative efforts within the past 18 months; ever-widening cracks in the once monolithic Afrikaner community that makes white rule increasingly vulnerable.

But hope for an "early" solution must be tempered by reality. The resilience of Pretoria and its sophistication in manipulating compliance via indirect mechanisms, as well as by coercion, is impressive.<sup>23</sup> Success in use of such techniques may well mean that the government can pre-empt the need to negotiate with authentic black liberation groups via its incorporation of

competing black factions into its system. White manipulation of an acquiescing black strata outside the resistance movement allows Pretoria to control the direction and speed of change. This appears to be the Nationalist Party's interim--if not long term--"solution" as the State moves from an ethnic oligarchy to an emergent "multi-racial autocracy" (cf. Van Zyl Slabbert 1988). Change for the foreseeable future would seem to come "not with a bang, but a whimper."

In his 1988 Presidential address to the American Sociological Association, Herbert Gans pointed to a growing number of problems facing our discipline (1989). One observation seemed especially salient; with our increasing reliance on easily quantifiable secondary data, too many of us "learn about society" without ever leaving our offices. And we rationalize this by suggesting that this is somehow more scientific and meaningful than is intensive, on site investigation (Gans 1989, p. 11).<sup>24</sup> I am convinced, however, that "being there" is *one* way we sociologists--and our work--can be taken more seriously by the growing numbers who question our purpose.

That my most recent time in South Africa became an affair both of the *heart* and the *head*, was, I now feel, an unanticipated bonus. It is "an affair" I am ready to rekindle; there is much for this sociologist to learn. *Nkosi Sikelel' i Afrika!*

## ENDNOTES

1. The essays in *Sociologists at Work* (Hammond 1962) include some fine analyses of methodological and conceptual decision-making but they are, with one or two exceptions, fairly "no-nonsense" impersonal accounts.
2. An expansion of this theme will appear in a future edition of *Sociological Spectrum*.
3. The Centre Director, a fellow sociologist whom I had met at various professional conferences in Africa and the United States, became a valued colleague and my favorite oxymoron--an Afrikaner Quaker, imbued with all of the complexities and contradictions which that strange combination conjures up.
4. I have come to empathize with South African Journalist (*Newsweek*) Peter Youngusband who contends that he has yet to read a work on African politics that isn't out of date by the time it is published (1986).
5. In addition, our country's extreme rightists have enjoyed touring South Africa to see "how it is done" and they give new meaning to the "ugly American" syndrome.
6. For example, a reporter from one of the major newspapers told me over lunch one day that the U. S. "Senate is the most undemocratic body in the world;" A law professor informed a group I was in that the American Bill of Rights mainly protects private property; and an activist leader quoted in a Sunday paper informed his readers that "The CIA was responsible for Nelson Mandela's capture and imprisonment in 1961" (*Sunday Star* 1986).
7. For background purposes I had been attending as many rallies, lectures, governance sessions, demonstrations, and meetings as I could manage--something I had found extremely useful in Zimbabwe during their war for liberation.
8. One can hope that some of the American social scientists doing research in China during the pro-democracy protests and subsequent crack-down will address aspects of this issue.
9. Township governance structures were in disarray throughout much of the country by early 1985 as grass-roots resistance groups challenged the newly constituted township councils, held rent boycotts, etc. At the same time conservative anti-activist elements also arose to vie for township control, and soon came to be known as "vigilantes," (along with a variety of other nicknames--"Whitedoekes" in Crossroads, for the white headbands they wore when on the rampage).
10. The PFP joined with two small splinter groups on February 11, 1989, to form a new "multi-racial" Democratic Party.
11. It is also by far the longest "Emergency." Put into effect on June 12, 1986, it was renewed for the fourth time on June 10, 1989.
12. One should keep in mind that this is a country of *only* 32 million people (compared to China's one billion plus, for example).
13. Given forty years of Afrikaner educational and media control, many of the values and myths have filtered into the thinking of the English community, although the 18th/19th century liberal tradition of individual freedoms, "free enterprise," and human rights remains a consistent competitor within the educated elite. But, with some exceptions, it has not influenced blacks. Exceptions do exist: As recently as late 1985 Orkin found that 8% of the black urban populace still "preferred" white rule (1986). (Data on rural blacks is lacking.) In addition, there is a common belief among blacks that Afrikaners, but not English-speakers, having no place else to go, do belong in Africa. This is an important plank within Afrikaner ideology. And there are some black apostolic religious groups who seem to accept white rule "as ordained."
14. An over-extension of military activity in Angola, Namibia and Mozambique may have begun to pose such an "outside threat." South



- Africa's willingness--at long last--to reach a settlement re Namibia's independence may signal an awareness of potential danger.
15. One debate now raging among activists and intellectuals concerns capitalism's role in racial coercion. Is apartheid extrinsic or intrinsic to capitalism, an impediment or a servant of South African business? Contrary to posturing on both sides, there is not yet a definitive answer; it remains a key issue for probing re conflict and change.
  16. This technique has had success both within and without the country's borders. *Apologists* often cite South African "rule of law" to distinguish it from other authoritarian systems (e.g., DuBuisson 1989).
  17. During the 1950's the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) broke from the African National Congress (ANC) over the ANC Charter position of land ownership by *all* as opposed to PAC's "African only" stance. There was also the popular Black Consciousness Movement of 1967-77 that broke with and eclipsed, ANC, as did Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha in the 1970's. There were, in addition, numerous lesser divisions.
  18. In late 1985 Mark Orkin found that Nelson Mandela or ANC were preferred by just under one-third of the nation's *urban* blacks. When ANC surrogate--the UDF--was included, nearly two-fifths preferred the ANC political thrust (1986, pp. 35-40). In addition to such firm support there is evidence of additional "soft support." For example in Chief Buthelezi's Durban stronghold nearly 56% said blacks would try to help ANC if asked by them to do so (*Indicator South Africa* 1984, p. 6). We have little or no data on the preferences of roughly half of the African population who reside in the rural hinterland, however.
  19. The black labor movement may come to hold the key to liberation strategies of the future, thereby providing the needed breakthrough for ending apartheid.
  20. The message is relentless: Happy blacks own TV's, get bargains at "OK Bazaars," avoid political troublemakers, enjoy a harmonious "Morning In South Africa" life. The message is proclaimed each day over black radio and TV in Twsana, Zulu, Sotho, or Xhosa.
  21. Numerous murders at the hands of these large, undisciplined cadres have been reported during the past two years (*SASH* 1987b).
  22. The report said the new organization was to be called the "National Forum," a name stolen directly from one of the current legitimate liberation (pro-PAC) coordinating bodies.

23. Its continued ability to manipulate the Western Powers is also impressive. President Bush's invitation to Mr. de Klerk (the new head of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party) to meet with him in Washington is the most recent case in point. The invitation breaks a long standing tradition of denying this form of official recognition.
24. Perhaps this is why Gans and incoming (1989) ASA President, Joan Huber, are concerned about the amount of "trivia" being churned out by today's sociologists. Huber's address before the Southern Sociological Society's annual meeting, April 1989, underscored the "relevance issue."

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