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THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE: EVIDENCE FROM
ATTITUDE SURVEYS IN THE BUTHELEZI
COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE OF
THE KWAZULU-NATAL REGION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Lawrence Schlemmer*
Secretary of the Commission

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DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT.

I. BACKGROUND.

In terms of the present South African government policy of separate development, the "national states" or "homelands" for the various linguistic and ethnic groups among black (African) South Africans are expected or anticipated to move from their present constitutional status of limited self-government to a final stage of sovereign independence. Once independent, the citizens of these territories obviously lose the legitimacy of their claims to full citizenship, franchise rights and associated privileges in the common area of South African society. Given that these areas comprise the least-developed parts of the country, are very small in size relative to the populations expected to live in or identify with them, and can provide employment for only very small proportions of their working-age adults, the prospect of constitutional and civic separation from the developed core of South African society cannot hold much attraction for the people involved, with the exception, perhaps of a small minority of entrepreneurs and civil servants for whom independence can mean enhanced prospects for advancement.

Furthermore, the constitutional dispensation granted to the homeland areas also weakens the claims to full citizenship rights of those blacks who in terms of the policy are associated with an ethnic homeland but who live permanently in the common area of the country. It is among the black people in the major industrial complexes that resistance to the separation of the homelands is most frequently articulated.

The stark reality of the economic interdependence of the white and black areas is countered by the central government policy-makers with proposals for a confederal relationship between the homelands and the central state. The confederal association would provide for consultation and joint decision-making on matters of common concern to the territories. Obviously, however, the basic constitutional mould would have been set and the weaker black states in the confederacy would have little chance of negotiating benefits and rights for their citizens in the core areas of the country; it stands to reason that the central government would not grant rights and privileges which the constitutional separation was designed to avoid in the first place.

Nevertheless, four such homelands have already accepted independence, without any manifest coercion on the part of the South African government. The attractions of full scope for local business and political initiative have proved to be too attractive for the elite groups in some of the areas to withstand. It is also very probable that other homelands will follow suit in due course.

Among the homelands that have not accepted the principle of independence is KwaZulu. KwaZulu has a particular significance. It is the officially designated political home of the largest of the black ethnic groups; the largest single linguistic category in South Africa in fact. It is also the most fragmented of the territories, comprising over 30 blocs of land distributed throughout the Province of Natal. The most far-reaching of the government proposals for consolidation will only reduce it to ten blocs, and that at mammoth expense. The Zulu people are also by tradition the most cohesive and determined, and least tractable group among South Africa's black people. Therefore, the policy of separate development cannot achieve final success without the cooperation of the Zulu people, but with KwaZulu, the policy faces its sternest test.

The Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, is a very different type of leader to those in the other homelands. He does not preside over a small, co-opted or "comprador" elite but, partly outside of his formal status, is President of Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe, the nearly 400 000-strong mobilisation organisation which is the largest organised political body in the history of black politics in South Africa. As such, Inkatha represents an organised constituency which sanctions its leaders; even if Buthelezi were to be tempted by the blandishments of Pretoria his constituency would have at least equal influence on any outcome.

Against this background, and also against a background of rejection by industrial leaders in Natal of government attempts to plan for the consolidation of KwaZulu as a prelude to independence, Chief Buthelezi and his government decided to act in an attempt to resolve the constitutional impasse, by appointing a Commission of Enquiry into KwaZulu and the "white" area so intertwined with it - Natal. The significance of the action was heightened by the government's omission of blacks from its own White, Coloured and Indian constitutional planning body, the President's Council.

The Buthelezi Commission, then, is essentially a black initiative to attempt to give direction to the constitutional debate in South Africa, as it affects one of the most important regions of the country. While a black initiative, the Commission was fully non-racial, with its members appointed for expertise and representativeness. The Chairman was white, Professor Deneys Schreiner, Vice Principal of the University of Natal. The governing National Party refused to serve, however.

The latter fact made it imperative for the Commission to achieve the greatest possible validity and credibility in the evidence which it considered. This was particularly important since there is very little agreement among politicians and observers as to what degree of social, racial and constitutional reform whites are prepared to accept. Similarly, observers disagree widely among each other as to the compatibility of black and white values, political sentiments and current expectations. Only through focused attitude research can one attempt to resolve the contradictory views.

Accordingly, the Buthelezi Commission requested the author to design and contract out research in order to:

- determine the extent of support among blacks and whites for current policies;
- establish the extent to which blacks and whites would be prepared to compromise on their ideal demands on political accommodation in the region;
- assess the extent to which the basic political, social and economic outlooks of the different groups in the region are compatible;
- and to establish in the light of current political and social consciousness among black South Africans, the degree of urgency with which a new dispensation should be sought.

The attitude surveys covered 525 whites, 200 Indians and 100 Coloureds in Natal and 2 629 black people in KwaZulu, Natal and the Witwatersrand. The results compliment the other evidence collected by the Commission in that they collected responses in an atmosphere of neutrality in people's homes away from the atmosphere of the Commission proceedings.

The main fieldwork was conducted by a well-known commercial organisation¹⁾ with a sound reputation for high quality fieldwork using inter-related quota samples based on random interviewing points. People were interviewed at length by well-trained permanent staff who had no particular interest in the Commission's findings. A check on white responses was run through a second well-known polling organisation²⁾ with a reputation for accurate voting forecasts. The Commission accepted the results as sufficiently objective and unbiased to adequately reflect the political climate. If the results err, they would tend to be more *conservative* than what would be expected in a "live" political

1) IMS. S.A. (Pty) Ltd.

2) Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd.

situation, due to the fact that South Africans tend to respond cautiously to controversial questions when they do not have the benefit of guidance from political leadership and public debate. Some of the major findings are summarised below. The results are presented without comment and certain conclusions are drawn at the end of a series of findings. The interview schedule items below are shortened and paraphrased.

II. BLACK POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

2.1 SCALE OF HAPPINESS TO ANGER AND IMPATIENCE WITH LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A five point scale of feelings about "life in South Africa today" with descriptions ranging from "very happy" to "angry and impatient", associated with pictures of faces on a diagram was administered to black respondents in these surveys and also in 1977.¹⁾ The same interviewers and sample design were employed. The percentages of the comparable samples of black people who expressed "Anger and Impatience" with life in South Africa for 1977 and 1981 are as follows:

"Anger and Impatience"

Witwatersrand, All Black Males	1977	39%
	1981	56%
Witwatersrand and KwaZulu, Zulu Men	1977	39%
	1981	53%
Better educated Witwatersrand, and KwaZulu Men	1977	45%
	1981	68%

1) See Theodor Hanf et al. *South Africa: Prospects for Peaceful Change*, London: Rex Collings, 1981.

2.3 POLITICAL CAUTION VS. ACTIVISM IN SENTIMENTS.

A general indication of the extent of militancy of sentiment in the black population appears from the following series of results:

"It is best for black South Africans to be careful in Politics and not get into trouble"

KwaZulu/Natal cities:		49%
Agree	%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%	
		51%
Disagree	%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%	
Witwatersrand:		45%
Agree	%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%	
		54%
Disagree	%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%	

"If the government does not introduce changes for blacks in the next 10 years, which of the following do you expect?"

KwaZulu/Natal cities:

"Definitely Expect"

Blacks will be too frightened by army/ police to act 9%

Many more blacks will leave country for military training 56%

Mass strikes by black workers 65%

(spontaneous addition)

Bloodshed/war/revolution 98%

Witwatersrand:

"definitely expect"
 Blacks will be too
 frightened by army/
 police to act 17%
 %%%%%%%%%%

Many more blacks
 will leave country
 for military 51%
 training %%%%%%%%%%

Mass strikes by
 black workers 64%
 %%%%%%%%%%

(spontaneous addition)
 Bloodshed/war/
 revolution 99%
 %%%%%%%%%%

Rural KwaZulu::

"definitely expect"
 Blacks will be too
 frightened by army/
 police to act 21%
 %%%%%%%%%%

Many more blacks
 will leave country
 for military 44%
 training %%%%%%%%%%

Mass strikes by
 black workers 60%
 %%%%%%%%%%

(spontaneous addition)
 Bloodshed/war/
 revolution 100%
 %%%%%%%%%%

2.4 POTENTIAL FELT SUPPORT FOR CONFRONTATION.

Items which are somewhat closer to attitudinal indices of possible behaviour, and not merely sentiment, are reflected in the following series.

"Would black workers strike for two weeks in response to a call by well-respected black leader?"

All KwaZulu/Natal:

Almost all 20%
 %%%%%%%%%%

Many 49%
 %%%%%%%%%%

Only a few 29%
 %%%%%%%%%%

"If the ANC were to come in secretly asking people to help it and work with it... what would happen?"

(The ANC is a black political organisation banned in South Africa, which operates from an external mission abroad).

All Natal/KwaZulu:

Most would try to help	19%	%%%%%%%%%
Many would help it	29%	%%%%%%%%%
A few	29%	%%%%%%%%%
Nobody/almost nobody	8%	%%%

"Most or many would help the ANC" (first and second categories above)

All KwaZulu/Natal	48%	%%%%%%%%%
Rural	46%	%%%%%%%%%
Youth 18-24 years	56%	%%%%%%%%%
White collar workers	56%	%%%%%%%%%
Skilled/semi-skilled workers	55%	%%%%%%%%%

"Of people who would not help the ANC, would it be because of fear of Police or because they disagreed with the ANC?"

All KwaZulu/Natal:

Fear of police	60%	%%%%%%%%%
Disagree with ANC	27%	%%%%%%%%%

2.5 RECOGNITION OF LEADERSHIP.

In KwaZulu-Natal Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha move are dominantly recognised as the legitimate political leadership although the ANC is in a strong second place. On the Witwatersrand, the ANC has greatest recognition, followed by Black Consciousness organisations and then by Inkatha and the Soweto Committee of Ten. As an individual leader,

Chief Buthelezi is ahead of any other figures on the Witwatersrand except "absent" ANC leadership..

2.6 WHAT THESE RESULTS SUGGEST:

These results show a growing verbal militancy, mounting political consciousness and increasing discontent at the political level. Other results not reported, however, show that this growing consciousness has not yet permeated the sphere of labour or trade-union issues for the rank-and-file, although this tendency obviously could develop quite easily from now on, given the apparent intensity of discontent.

The sharpening of the political consciousness is due in part to the fact that by now a large majority of black people actively compare their condition with that of whites, making for strong feelings of *relative deprivation*. The goal of *equality* is supplanting the goal of *reform and progress* for blacks.

The following pattern of answers to one of the items bearing on this topic is illustrative of the trend:

"What would you prefer?":

Percentage choice -
all blacks - KwaZulu/Natal:

Black and white South Africans getting
the same salaries for the same jobs
but everyone getting *very small*
increases ----- 90%

Black and white salaries staying
unequal for some years but
everyone being given *quite large*
regular increases ----- 10%

Despite these trends it is not suggested that there is a pre-revolutionary situation in South Africa. Most of the radical sentiment derives from the symbolic effect of events elsewhere in Africa, particularly Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, there is a substantial minority of roughly one-third of people which appears to be consistently militant and among that group a smaller minority the answers of which suggest militancy with intentions to act. Even if this latter group is no more than 10 percent of the

total, and it could be as high as roughly 20 percent, it represents large numbers of people in absolute terms. It is not to be taken lightly.

Another consequence of the present-day political consciousness among blacks is the fact that popular sentiments increasingly justify, legitimate and encourage militant strategies and undermine internal leadership. It would seem that socio-political reform of such a kind as to increase faith in the possibility of change is urgent. A situation has to be avoided in which only subversion and coercion are recognised as useful strategies by a majority.

III ATTITUDES TO THE SEPARATION AND INDEPENDENCE OF KWAZULU AMONG BLACKS AND WHITES.

3.1 INTERDEPENDENCE OF KWAZULU AND NATAL.

Both blacks and whites recognise the essential interdependence of races and regions in KwaZulu-Natal. Among whites, this can be seen in responses to the following items.

"All races depend on and need each other"

Agreement:

		68%
All whites	%%%%%%%%%	
Afrikaans-speakers	%%%%%%%%%	61%

"Separation of KwaZulu and Natal can last indefinitely"

Agreement:

		15%
All whites	%%%%%%%%%	
Afrikaans-speakers	%%%%%%%%%	52%

3.2 INDEPENDENCE FOR KWAZULU.

In response to an interview item on whether or not "KwaZulu with territory in Natal from Mozambique and Swaziland to Transkei should become independent", the following proportions considered that KwaZulu should become an *independent* country:

All whites	32%
Afrikaners	49%
Afrikaans National Party	59%
English National Party	39%
NRP	20%
Businessmen	25%
Indians	22%
Coloureds	15%
Blacks - all KwaZulu/Natal	27%

Hence it is only among one section of National Party supporters that independence is endorsed. Thus, majorities in all official ethnic groups reject the concept of independence as normally envisaged for National States. Those supporting independence are generally *least* inclined to wish to see additional territory or concessions for KwaZulu. While conservative whites value the segregation implied by Separate Development, the full implications of government policy are not accepted.

IV ALTERNATIVES TO PRESENT POLICIES.

4.1 MODIFIED INDEPENDENCE.

Between 50 percent and 70 percent of blacks are prepared to accept the possibility of independence if either more farming land or towns and cities are added to KwaZulu, or if independence implies the right to live and work outside KwaZulu. This cannot be taken as support for modified versions of Separate Development as a policy, since the modifications are such as to defeat the political goals of independence as conceived by the present government. The real reaction to a separate and autonomous KwaZulu alienated from the common society, is seen in the following result for blacks:

"KwaZulu should not exist - it should be part of Natal and South Africa"

Agreement among blacks:

Natal-KwaZulu cities	82%
KwaZulu rural	72%
Soweto Zulu	73%
Zulu migrants in Transvaal	65%

The factors which encourage black people to endorse a modified "independence" are not connected with the independence as such but the new opportunities suggested - access to farming land, to towns, to cities and the right to work in South Africa.

Among whites and other minorities, the prospect of independence with the kinds of benefits which might persuade blacks to accept it, is unacceptable to majorities:

"If political problems became severe with pressure to grant concessions...would you accept homelands like KwaZulu encouraged into independence with more land, towns and industries"?

Acceptance:

All Natal whites	44%
Afrikaans National Party	44%
English-speaking National Party	47%
Businessmen	38%
Indians	58%
Coloureds	52%

Broadly, however, what blacks desire to make independence acceptable is the negation of reasons for separation in the first place, and the concrete implications of these desires are rejected by slight to substantial minorities of whites.

4.2 "CONSENSUS" ALTERNATIVES.

Our results indicate that there is a very real prospect of sufficient agreement at grass-roots level being achieved on constitutional options for the region to make a devolution of power to a conjoint Natal/KwaZulu

CONSTITUTIONAL CONSENSUS AND DISSENT

PERCENTAGE LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE BY GROUPS
B=Black(Zulu), C=Coloureds, I=Indians, W=Whites

10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Natal and KwaZulu as they are but cooperating more in planning development

(B) est. (C) (I) (W)

CONSENSUS REJECTION

KwaZulu independent along lines of Transkei/Bophuthatswana etc.

(C) (I) (B) (W)

Leaving KwaZulu as it is.

(C) (B) (I) (W)
est.

Natal and KwaZulu one Government under Pretoria - Black Representatives increasing over years until equal in number

(I) (C) (W*) (B-) est.

CONSENSUS ACCEPTANCE
MAJORITIES OR NEAR MAJORITIES

Bringing together KwaZulu/Natal round large cities - multiracial - equal rights for all

(W*) (C) (I) (B-) est.

Natal and KwaZulu unified - full movement for all - multiracial Govt. under Pretoria - Local Power

(I) (W*) (C) (B)

Natal and KwaZulu allowed by Government to unite - power-sharing on 50/50 basis to make many laws for the region.

(W) (I) (C) (B-) est.

KwaZulu and Natal joining with powers to make some laws - central government retaining some power.

(W) (B) (C) (I)

Elected Homeland leaders and White Government sharing decisions on a 50/50 Basis on Governing Council.

(W) (B) (I) (C)

Qualified franchise for Blacks.

(B) (W) (I) (C)

KwaZulu Government, Pretoria and Natal coming together to make decisions for big towns, cities and surrounding areas

(W) (C) (B) (I)

Black Homeland leaders, Black Urban Representatives on a governing council with White Cabinet

(C) (I) (B) (W)

Universal franchise for South Africa with White/Minority veto rights

(W) (B) (C) (I)

One-man-one Vote in a single system for South Africa.

(W) (I) (C) (B)

* Note: Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd. results are used since they had more realistic acceptance categories - "If government supports proposals"

Note: Where figures are estimated (est.) a closely comparable item is taken as a basis.

an achievable political goal for any political party, excluding only the right-wing opposition to the present government. The schedule of "Consensus-Dissent" which follows illustrates this. Among some party-supporters - mainly National Party supporting Afrikaners, considerable leadership will be required to sell the policy, but the majority agreement among whites generally will encourage movement among government supporters. Majority agreement on a political devolution for KwaZulu-Natal may not be immediately forthcoming from National Party supporters but the Commission foresees the possibility of considerable movement with adequate leadership over the next few years.

4.3 COMPATIBILITY OF POLITICAL CULTURES.

Finally the results of the attitude surveys indicate that, despite much popular wisdom in South Africa suggesting that black and white political cultures are incompatible, the black respondents, no matter how they were questioned, revealed basic political values which appear to be remarkably close to those of whites. Considering the distorting effect of great inequality in circumstances, it is surprising that so slight a basic ideological cleavage exists between blacks and whites. The studies show, for example that majorities in all races support the free market economy, the principle of opposition in politics, the protection of civil liberties within the constraints of maintaining law and order and most importantly the need to protect the legitimate interests of minority ethnic groups. The results suggest quite strongly that what divides people in South Africa are social structures more than the sentiments and attitudes of ordinary people. This feature of the results supports the Commission's final proposals for a move toward the unification of KwaZulu and Natal autonomous but not independent of South Africa, with an internal dispensation based on universal franchise, proportional representation in an all-race legislative assembly, constitutional protection for minorities and a racially-balanced executive or cabinet along consociational lines.



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