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REACTIONS TO POLITICAL PRESSURE IN
SOUTH AFRICA: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY AMONG WHITES

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COMMUNICATIONS OF THE

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

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PREFACE

The brief report and discussion contained in this communication most certainly raises many more questions than it attempts to answer. It reflects many of the inevitable shortcomings of research which has to be undertaken at very short notice virtually without any funds whatsoever.

Yet, we consider that, in the context of the rapidly if not dramatically changing alignment of political forces in Southern Africa, "emergency" research such as that reported in the current study may not only be interesting but very important for an understanding of socio-political processes in the region.

The scope of the study has, of course, one very major shortcoming. The investigations did not cover reactions among Black South Africans. In a society such as ours, research among Black people is a task which has to be undertaken with a great deal of careful preparation and very expert interviewing. The amount of fear and suspicion is very great. Time and funds made such a venture impossible. A study designed partly to assess the reactions of Black South Africans to changes in neighbouring states is, however, being planned at the present time.

As far as the present study is concerned, credit must go to Raphael de Kadt for organising students and members of staff in the University to undertake telephone interviewing on a voluntary basis at very short notice. This enabled the interviewing, which was based on a schedule designed jointly by all three authors, to be completed within a stringent time-limit. Foszia Fisher and I designed the coding and computer analysis (with the former doing the actual coding). Foszia Fisher produced the initial draft report and interpretation on the results of the two telephone surveys. My contribution, aside from my part in the conceptualisation, was to provide an analysis of a third nation-wide empirical study, and to edit and co-ordinate the sections.

Grateful acknowledgement must be made of the financial

assistance provided by the Anglo American Corporation which sponsored the nation-wide investigation among Whites, the study which constitutes the third empirical basis of the present report.

The report is brief and in many ways flimsy, but we feel that it represents a modest attempt at the kind of research enterprise which hopefully will become more frequent in a changing sub-continent.

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Di rector.

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October, 1975.

For many years there has been widespread international condemnation of apartheid and white minority rule in southern Africa. There has also been increasing direct pressure on the white government in South Africa. This has taken two main forms. South Africa has been increasingly isolated in international bodies, and has been expelled from a number of them. At the same time there has been increasing international support for guerilla movements wishing to overthrow white minority governments in southern Africa. These pressures have been clearly aimed at bringing about changes in South Africa's internal racial policies. It is important, therefore, to try to find out how white voters in South Africa see these pressures, and how they are likely to react to them. So far very little attention has been paid to this problem by social scientists in South Africa.

In an attempt to remedy this lack of knowledge we undertook limited studies of white reactions to two crucial events, each of which signalled a qualitative change in outside pressure. The first event was the imposition, by the Arab oil-producing states, of an oil boycott of South Africa. The second, and by far the more important, was the overthrow of the Caetano regime by a military coup in Portugal on the 25th of April, 1974. After each of these events we undertook an opinion survey among whites in Durban. In both cases we used telephone interviews, and our sample was selected randomly from the Durban telephone directory. For the study of reactions to the coup in Portugal we selected the sample in such a way as to ensure an approximately equal number of English and Afrikaans-speaking respondents, since the purely random sample in the first survey produced only 10 Afrikaans-speaking respondents out of a total of 181. We used telephone interviews partly because of lack of funds, and also, in the second case, because it was the only way of conducting a large number of interviews within a short space of time with a limited number of interviewers. It was important to achieve this because the situation was changing daily, and if the interviews had been conducted over too long a period, they would have lost comparability. However, we are aware that there are serious limitations which result from the use of a telephone poll. The most serious is the fact that the sample is biased in a particular direction. Telephone subscribers tend to be more affluent and also older than average. We shall attempt to make allowance for this in analysing the results. All

generalisations made on the basis of results from the two telephone polls should be read as being tentative, due to the bias described above and to the small samples. The results of the first study are much less interesting than those obtained in the second study of reactions to the coup in Portugal which reveals some highly significant facts. We shall devote most of this paper to an analysis of this second case. In the concluding discussion we will also refer to some results of a third, nation-wide study, details of which will be given in due course.

I. THE OIL BOYCOTT.

This study was carried out over a period of several weeks during December 1973. The oil boycott had been imposed in November. At that time the Arab oil-producing states had embargoed the export of oil to a number of states which they believed had favoured Israel during the October Arab-Israeli War. In return for diplomatic support from the African states, they had also agreed to impose a total embargo on the export of oil to Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa. While the general embargo was to last only for the duration of the Middle-East crisis, the southern Africa embargo was intended to last until there had been internal policy changes in the affected states. However, at the time of our interviews, the embargo had not been lifted from any state. In South Africa various fuel-restriction measures were already in force.

Our interviewers made 204 calls. The refusal rate was just over 10%, and 181 successful interviews were processed. Sixty per cent of our sample was in the managerial, professional, semi-professional and entrepreneurial occupational categories; 75% had completed high school or had attained a higher level of education; 70% were over 35, and 55% were men. Thus the sample was heavily biased in the direction of the better-educated middle and upper-middle classes. As already mentioned, it was also overwhelmingly English-speaking.

We wanted to know, firstly, to what extent our respondents realised that the boycott was specifically directed at the South African regime, rather than against support for Israel, and secondly, what they thought should be done about it. Our first question was: "why do you think that

the Arab states are attempting to boycott oil to South Africa?" Sixty-five per cent gave answers which showed that they understood that the boycott was aimed at the internal policies of the South African Government. Only 19% connected it exclusively with the Arab-Israeli dispute, while another 6% saw it as part of a general attempt to raise oil prices. It is interesting, however, that government supporters were least likely to see the boycott as being aimed at the South African Government; the following proportions among supporters of different parties saw the boycott as being directed against South African internal policies:

National Party	55% -
United Party	76%
Progressive Party	70%
All Respondents	65%

Only very tentative conclusions can be drawn from these results, since the proportion of National Party supporters in the sample was very small (n=39).¹⁾

The government reacted fairly optimistically to the boycott, arguing that it would have little effect in the long run. At the same time, as a precautionary measure, an 80 k.p.h. speed limit and a ban on week-end and night petrol sales were imposed. Most respondents shared the official optimism, and did not find the restrictions to be serious inconveniences:

<i>'When will the boycott end?':</i>	6 months	21% ²⁾
	1-2 years	30%
	2-5 years	9%
	5+ indefinite	22%

1) Sample Sizes: NP 39 UP 61 PP 25 All 181 (including non-voters and no answers)

2) Balance making 100% were unable to provide an answer.

4.

'How much inconvenience will it mean to you?'

serious	26%
mild	51%
none	19%

Thus over half the sample believed that the boycott would last for a relatively short time, and 70% believed that it would not cause them any serious personal inconvenience. Government supporters were more worried about possible inconvenience, but also more likely to believe that it would end relatively soon. Business and professional people were slightly more pessimistic on both counts than were blue-collar and lower-status white-collar workers.

Most of the respondents thought that there was no real support inside South Africa for the boycott. While 31% thought that there was some support, all of these gave answers which indicated that they saw such support as being very marginal: 11% referred to agitators, extremists, communists, terrorists or subversives; 8% mentioned Indians or "Arabs" (presumably meaning Muslims); 6% referred in vague terms to anti-government elements; while only 3% said that they thought that South African Blacks in general supported the boycott.

Those who believed that the government should change its policy in order to end the boycott were a clear minority in the sample, as the following responses indicate:

'How could the boycott have been avoided?'

'What should the government do now?'

'What should government do in the longer run?'

	Policies should change	No action was/is possible	Fuel-saving policy	Government should not change	Other responses
<i>'How could the boycott have been avoided?'</i>	17%	63%	n.a.	n.a.	20%
<i>'What should the government do now?'</i>	7%	40%	41%	-	12%
<i>'What should government do in the longer run?'</i>	31%	12%	17%	19%	21%

5.

While nearly one-third of the sample believed that change in internal policy would be necessary in the longer-term, this belief is quite closely correlated with political party preference. It would seem, therefore, that this was not a reaction to the boycott itself, but expressed a more general belief that change is necessary:

	<u>Those mentioning the need for some form of change.</u>	<u>Those specifying no need for change.</u>
National Party	12%	45%
United Party	43%	14%
Progressive Party	85%	4%
All Respondents	31%	19%

Also, there was not much difference in the suggested tactics between those who attributed the boycott to the Arab-Israeli war and those who saw it as being directed against apartheid. These results, together with the previously mentioned correlation between party preference and perception of the boycott as being directed against apartheid, would seem to indicate that the boycott itself was and is probably not a very important determinant of opinions and attitudes. Those who believe that change is necessary to overcome the boycott are those who tend to believe that change is necessary in any case. **Those** who are in favour of the present situation show little sign of changing their attitude as a result of the boycott. How they would react if the boycott were to begin to have a serious effect on life in South Africa is, of course, another question. The response (or lack of response) of Rhodesian whites to post U.D.I. sanctions may be taken as some indication of a likely response among white South Africans. Yet, white South African society is probably more *diversified in ideology and interests than Rhodesian white society, and South Africa would have no powerful neighbouring state to rely on for assistance. The issue remains an open question.

II. THE PORTUGUESE COUP.

It is almost impossible to over-estimate the significance for southern Africa of the military coup in Portugal. It is important for two different reasons. Firstly, it has meant that at least one and possibly two of the buffer zones between South Africa and the independent African states have been removed. This means that anti-government South African guerilla movements would at least potentially have direct access to South Africa's borders. Also, Rhodesia, another buffer state, would be rendered highly vulnerable both to increasingly effective economic sanctions, and to more serious guerilla incursions. Thus the coup threatens to change the geo-political balance in southern Africa.

Secondly, it has meant a drastic change in the status of the Mocambique guerilla movement, Frelimo. What was seen by the South African press as a brutal minority terrorist movement has become a responsible governing party, negotiating on friendly and equal terms with the new Portuguese Government. Although the coup in Portugal was aimed also at ridding Portugal of a right-wing dictatorship, it was clear from the beginning that the most important immediate cause was the wish of the Portuguese army to end the colonial war. This involved recognising

- a) that the Portuguese army was not able to defeat the guerillas; and
- b) that the guerillas were legitimate representatives of the indigenous people in the Portuguese colonies.

In any struggle the participants develop particular stereotypes of the enemy, and such stereotypes can play an important part in determining the strategies of the combatants. Thus the changed status of Frelimo might also threaten the legitimising categories in terms of which white South Africans conceptualise the possible outbreak of armed violence in South Africa. The concept of the terrorist has assumed tremendous symbolic importance in popular white South African ideology. What happens when a terrorist becomes the head of an important neighbouring state? In our survey

we tried to find out

- a) how people interpreted the significance of the coup for events in southern Africa;
- b) how they saw the guerilla movements in southern Africa; and,
- c) how they believed that the South African Government should react, both in terms of internal and of external policy.

The survey was carried out on the evenings of the 3rd and 4th June. At this point the first round of public negotiations between the Portuguese Foreign Minister and Frelimo representatives were taking place in Lusaka. This and other developments were widely reported in the week-end and daily press. Apart from the negotiations, which were given front-page treatment by the *Natal Mercury* on the 3rd of June under the headline "*Tough Line by Frelimo Talks Team*", there were also reports on the escape of Portuguese Secret Police from Mocambique, and on developments within Rhodesia. The Rhodesian African National Council had just rejected the Prime Minister Smith's proposals for a constitutional settlement, which was reported on the 4th by the *Daily News* under the page 3 headline "*ANC wants Body, Not Just Hand*". There was also a riot in Rhodesia reported in the *Daily News* on the 4th. The overall position, then, was that, while there was as yet no official cease-fire in Mocambique, the situation seemed to be moving rapidly towards an agreement. In Rhodesia, on the other hand, an impasse had evidently been reached. The newspapers made it clear that an important reason for the ANC rejection of the very limited white Rhodesian offer was that the ANC expected its position to be strengthened as a result of developments in Mocambique. It was against this background that we conducted our interviews.

Presumably because the topic is so controversial, the refusal rate was much higher than in the case of the first study. It verged on 30%, and we were left with a total of 213 successful interviews. In order to balance English with Afrikaans-speaking respondents we selected a name on a random basis from the telephone directory, and then selected the nearest name and address from the other language group (i.e. either an Afrikaans or English

name and directory entry). We ended up with 103 English-speaking respondents, 96 Afrikaans-speaking, 10 bilingual, and 4 others. The refusal rates for the two main groups were very similar. We wanted to make sure that we had an adequate number of Afrikaans respondents because many studies have shown that in South Africa, home language correlates most closely with political stances and opinion differences. However, in this study, with a few notable exceptions, there was not a great deal of difference between English and Afrikaans speakers.

In spite of the then current negotiations with Frelimo, a majority of our respondents considered that the eventual government in Mocambique would be sympathetic to the present regime in South Africa. The alternatives we offered were formulated in general terms. The answer-alternatives and the responses were as follows:

	<u>All Respondents English Afrikaans</u>		
<i>Continued Portuguese control:</i>	19%	13%	24%
<i>Independent multi-racial government friendly to S.A.:</i>	28%	32%	26%
<i>Hostile Black government:</i>	26%	28%	25%
<i>Independent friendly Black government:</i>	8%	8%	8%
<i>Hostile multi-racial government:</i>	7%	5%	7%
<i>Others</i>	5%	7%	3%
<i>Don't Know</i>	7%	7%	7%

Of course it is not possible to be sure what these general categories meant to our respondents. For example Frelimo states that its policy is based on the principle of non-racialism, which means that race will not be considered to be a criterion of status or acceptability. Each individual will have equal rights, and a competent white will have just as good a chance of becoming a cabinet minister as would a competent Black. Would our respondents describe this as a multi-racial government? Also, now that Frelimo has taken over the government in Mocambique, there has been much speculation in the press that, because of Mocambique's economic dependence on South Africa, Frelimo will necessarily have to adopt a conciliatory or friendly posture. Thus one

could conceivably estimate that there would be a friendly multi-racial government, and be referring thereby to a Frelimo Government. However, on the whole this seems unlikely. At the time our interviews were conducted it was more or less taken for granted by the press that a Frelimo Government would be hostile to the present regime in South Africa. Also, it seems possible that when white South Africans think of a "multi-racial government" they mean a government in which power is shared between representatives of the various race groups, rather than a system in which whites as individuals have the same rights as Blacks who would, however, constitute an overwhelming majority. Thus it is probable that "hostile Black government" meant Frelimo, while "friendly multi-racial government" meant a coalition of "moderates" from the two main groups: Whites and Mulattos, on the one hand, and Africans on the other.

From the Table it can be seen that although Afrikaans respondents were more likely to expect continued Portuguese control, the percentage difference between English and Afrikaners expecting some form of friendly government is not very large. Of greater significance was newspaper readership. We asked all respondents whether they had read anything in the newspaper about the situation either on that day or during the previous week. Only 10% of those who had read something that day expected continued Portuguese control, while 41% expected a friendly multi-racial government. This does not necessarily mean that the contents of that day's newspaper had such a great influence. It probably reflects the difference between regular newspaper readers and other, less-informed members of the public.

The answer to the above question of course determines the answers to the following set of questions, dealing with the implications of the situation for Mocambique Whites, for Rhodesia, and for South Africa.

^a Mocambique Whites.

Most of our respondents thought that the Whites in Mocambique should remain in the country, and 27% of the sample stressed that the Whites should co-operate with the new authorities. However, as the

following Table indicates, the judgement depended very much on who they thought that those authorities would be:

<i>Whites should:1)</i>	Government Expected in Mocambique		
	Portuguese (n=41)	Friendly Multi-racial (n=60)	Hostile Black (n=56)
- <i>co-operate</i>	12%	43%	14%
- <i>stay</i>	31%	33%	16%
- <i>get out</i>	10%	10%	34%
- <i>fight, declare UDI</i>	24%	7%	21%
- <i>other</i>	10%	3%	9%
- <i>don't know</i>	12%	3%	5%

Thus three-quarters of the sample believed that whites should remain in Mocambique under a multi-racial government, and nearly half of the small number who believed that there would be a Black government of the kind that would be friendly towards South Africa also referred to the necessity of co-operation (not shown in Table due to small numbers). On the other hand just over half the sample believed that, in the case of the kind of Black government which would be hostile to South Africa, the whites should either get out or attempt to fight. To the extent that these answers reveal the respondents' own attitudes, these answers would seem to indicate that they are willing to consider living in a society where Blacks have some power or a conciliatory attitude towards white interests, but not in a society with the full implications of majority rule. Only 30% believe that whites should be willing to stay under majority rule with its implication of hostility towards white privilege. However, the answers do not differentiate between those who fear racial discrimination under a Black government, and those who fear the loss of economic privilege under a democratic government. On the other hand it is

probable that many white South Africans do not distinguish clearly between these two aspects of white interests.

b) Rhodesia.

Most respondents seemed to understand the relation between events in Mocambique and the future of Rhodesia. While 61% of those who foresaw continued Portuguese control predicted no unfavourable effects on the present regime in Rhodesia, the proportion falls to 5% for those who think that there will be a hostile Black government in Mocambique. But even among those who foresee some form of friendly non-Portuguese Government, 42% think that there will be further trouble for Rhodesia. To some extent these answers would seem to indicate a general belief in the instability of the Rhodesian regime, as well as specific predictions about the consequences of changes in Mocambique.

c) South Africa.

We asked two questions about the consequences for South Africa, one in general terms: "*What can South Africa expect?*"; and one specifically dealing with the possibility of guerilla incursions. The answers to the first question were as follows:

"What can South Africa expect?"

- <i>No answer, too early to tell</i>	23%
- <i>No change in relations</i>	22%
- <i>Improved relations</i>	4%
- <i>Trouble, terrorism, etc.</i>	43%
- <i>Other</i>	8%

Thus the majority of those who were willing to express an opinion judged that South Africa could expect trouble of some kind, which is an interesting contrast to the fact that the majority of those who expressed

1. Answers do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

an opinion on the likely nature of the government expected it to be friendly. This apparent contradiction is slightly accentuated among members of the Afrikaans sample, who are more likely than English-speakers to expect a friendly government, but also more likely to predict trouble of some kind. It is, however, only an apparent contradiction, since it is not unreasonable to judge that the situation in Southern Africa is so delicately balanced that any major change in one territory might have unfortunate consequences for another.

The answer to the question: "What is the likelihood of terrorist attacks on South Africa's borders?", is very much dependent on predictions for Mocambique:

Terrorism is:	Government expected :			
	Portuguese	Friendly Multi-racial	Hostile Black	All Respondents
- very likely	15%	15%	50%	23%
- fairly likely	22%	27%	36%	30%
- unlikely	37%	38%	5%	26%
- impossible	15%	10%	2%	9%
- no answer	12%	10%	7%	12%

Thus while only 53% of the sample as a whole believes that such attacks are either very or fairly likely, the proportion rises to 86% among those who foresee a hostile Black government. Taking the sample as a whole the Afrikaners are less likely to foresee terrorist attacks: 44% of the Afrikaners, as compared to 28% of the English believe that such attacks are either unlikely or impossible. The discrepancy between this result and the more "pessimistic" response of Afrikaners to the previous question may, perhaps, arise because some of the Afrikaners were denying the possibility of effective terrorist attacks; they were affirming their faith in the present government's capacity (or their collective ability) to forcefully discourage terrorism at the outset.

Scarcely any of our sample believed that the South African

Government should intervene directly in Mocambique. Most spoke of non-interference or of taking precautions of some sort, and some also advocated co-operating with the new government. Again these answers vary to some extent, depending on the nature of the new government predicted:

South African policy should be :	Government expected:			
	Portuguese	Friendly Multi-racial	Hostile Black	All Respondents
- NO change, non-intervention	29%	30%	43%	31%
- Co-operation	10%	25%	14%	16%
- Take precautions, watch	34%	18%	19%	23%
- Internal reform	5%	10%	10%	12%
- Take action <i>hostile to Blacks</i>	2%	3%	4%	2%
- Other	2%	2%	5%	2%

It may be assumed that those who mention the necessity of internal reform are in favour of internal reform anyway. The fact that only 10% mentioned co-operation with the Portuguese is because this would not have been a change in policy. But the fact that 34% of those who predicted Portuguese control felt that they needed to specify precautionary measures indicates that they were aware that such control was likely to be rather precarious.

To summarise, those who predicted that a hostile Black government would come to power in Mocambique believed that this would have serious consequences for the present governments of both Rhodesia and South Africa. Virtually all of them thought that this would make guerilla attacks on South Africa highly likely. One might expect that this would influence all their opinions about politics in South Africa. The situation at present (July 1975) is that Mocambique is independent under a Frelimo Government which will undoubtedly be hostile in attitude if not in action. Can we therefore assume that the opinions of those who were predicting such a government in June when we carried out our interviews are now characteristic of a much wider group? If we assume that we are testing opinions, then that

would be a reasonable deduction to make. However, it may be that we are testing attitudes rather than opinions. The particular beliefs which people hold about the situation in Mocambique and its implications may in fact be a function of their basic attitudes, rather than of the actual evidence. It may be that some people expect trouble and believe in the necessity of change, while others are firmly convinced of the capacity of the whites to maintain power, and that one or both of the groups hold these beliefs to a great extent irrespective of any particular events or evidence. This hypothesis could be tested by another survey in the changed circumstances.

There is only one question in this first survey which throws any light on the question. The Portuguese coup occurred on the day after the South African general election. We asked all the respondents if they would have voted differently had the coup occurred before the election. Of course it is very difficult to get a true answer to a question of this sort. Nevertheless, had the events led many respondents to change their assessment of South African politics to a significant extent, we might have expected to get some evidence of this. In fact, hardly any of the respondents said that they would have voted differently.

III THE "TERRORISTS"

In order to understand the political behaviour of white South Africans it is important to study their perceptions of the various guerilla movements operating in southern Africa, of which Frelimo has been the most successful. These movements are usually described as "terrorists", and it is unlikely that most white South Africans distinguish between the various movements. We therefore followed our questions on Mocambique with a number of questions about "terrorism", formulated in general terms, but obviously referring to South Africa itself. We have already seen that about half the sample thought that terrorist attacks on South Africa's borders were either very or fairly likely. Our subsequent questions were concerned with perceptions of the leadership, following and motivation of these terrorists. The most striking result of our survey is the response to the question,

"Who are the real leaders of the terrorists?" We offered four alternative categories, and the replies were :

<u>Real Leaders of the Terrorists are:</u>	English	Afrikaans	All Respondents
- Local Blacks who have left the country:	19%	4%	12%
- People from other Black countries:	6%	2%	4%
- Black communists:	9%	7%	8%
- Communists from outside:	49%	72%	59%
- Some combinations of the above:	8%	4%	7%
- Don't know:	10%	10%	10%

Thus it appears that, of those who give an opinion, over seven out of ten Afrikaners, and about six out of ten in the sample as a whole believe that the terrorist movements in southern Africa are lead by non-Black communists from outside. Given that there is absolutely no convincing evidence that this is the case, this is an extraordinary result. It raises two important questions. The first, which of course cannot be answered on the basis of this survey, is where does this belief come from? The second is, how do they see these communists operating? We asked two further questions which help to answer this question. One question was "How many Blacks in South Africa would support the terrorists?"

	English	Afrikaans	All Respondents
Most:	10%	11%	11%
Many but not the majority:	38%	31%	35%
Pew:	42%	49%	45%
None:	4%	1%	2%
No answer:	7%	7%	7%

Thus between 40% and 50% think that many or most South African Blacks would support the terrorists, but slightly more think that few or none would support them. There is no significant correlation between the answers to this question and opinions about the real leaders. Those who believe that the real leaders are outside communists are not significantly more or less

likely to believe that they will be supported by few or many local Blacks.

The second question was "*Why do the terrorists fight?*" We mentioned five possible reasons, and a number of respondent selected more than one reason. Two of the reasons may be described, in varying degrees, as "legitimate", in that they refer to goals which might at least in theory be acceptable to whites without a total revolution in the social structure. These are "*the desire for political rights*", and "*just a desire for better conditions*". In the following table we have combined these two categories which were mentioned respectively by 10% and 13% of the sample. We mentioned two other reasons, "*a desire to drive out the Whites*", and "*a genuine desire for communism*", neither of which are likely to have been accepted as legitimate by more than an infinitely small fraction of our sample. Finally, we mentioned a possible cause "*indoctrination*". The answers were correlated with the opinions about leadership as follows:

Terrorists Fight Because Of:	Terrorist Leadership -					
	English	Afrikaans	All Respondents	Local Blacks	Black Communists	Outside Communists
<i>Indoctrination</i>	39%	27%	35%	24%	17%	42%
<i>Rights and better condi- tions</i>	38%	8%	23%	64%	33%	12%
<i>Genuine desire for communism</i>	16%	41%	28%	0%	33%	36%
<i>To drive out Whites</i>	19%	32%	26%	28%	28%	24%
<i>No answer</i>	4%	7%	6%	0%	6%	1%

(The totals add up to more than 100 because a number of people gave two answers).

As is to be expected, those who believe that the leadership is essentially local are much more likely to believe that the goals are legitimate. It is also evident from the table that most of these are English-speaking. Among those who believe that the leadership is made up of outside communists, two schools of thought can be distinguished, if we leave aside the small group who nevertheless see the goals as legitimate. Firstly, there are those who believe that the followers have been "indoctrinated".

"Indoctrinated" is a catch-phrase, and it is not at all clear precisely what it would mean in this context. But in general terms it presumably means that the rank and file terrorists have in some way been misled by the alien communist leadership, and are not fighting for any genuine goals of their own. The implication of this is that there are no genuinely divisive issues in the society. What problems there are should be resolvable by judicious reforms, which would remove the conditions in which the communists would be able to mislead some of the dissatisfied Blacks. This interpretation is borne out by the fact, as will be shown below, that members of this school of thought are more likely to mention the desirability of socio-political reforms as a means of coping with terrorism.

The second school of thought consists of those who attribute unacceptable goals to the terrorists; the genuine desire for communism, and the desire to drive out the Whites. At first sight these two goals might appear to be very different, the first being a positive goal for a particular type of society, while the second is merely negative. But, given the stereotype of "communism" held by the average white, it is unlikely that they would attribute Blacks with a desire for communism in a positive sense. It is particularly significant that the Afrikaners are much more likely to mention such a motive, and they are certainly even less likely than are the English to conceive of communism as a possible positive goal. It seems to us, therefore, that when our respondents speak of a genuine desire for communism, they have in mind a rather confused idea of an absolute rejection of the present society, rather than any positive alternative. This is why we suggest that "*driving out the Whites*" and "*a genuine desire for communism*" are, from one point of view, equivalent goals. They both represent a perception of an absolute conflict of interest; of goals which can in no way be accommodated within the existing society. It is of course also significant that this perception should be formulated in terms of "communism", and we shall discuss this further. But for the moment we wish to stress the difference between those who conceive of the threatened guerilla war in terms of goals which can possibly be accommodated, and those who conceive of it in terms of an irreconcilable conflict of interest. It is significant, as can be seen from the table,

that English-speaking respondents are much more likely to speak in terms of Blacks who have been lead astray by indoctrination, or who are seeking rights and better conditions, while Afrikaners mention indoctrination less frequently, and instead perceive the situation in terms of irreconcilable goals.

We asked "*What is South Africa's best defence against terrorism?*"

Most of the answers could be classified as referring either to socio-political or to military and repressive measures. The question itself does encourage a military answer, but it does seem to us to be significant that purely socio-political measures are mentioned slightly more frequently by those who believe that the leadership consists of local Blacks:

<i>South Africa's Best Defence is:</i>	Perceptions of Terrorist Leadership		
	Local Blacks	Black Communists	Outside Communists
- No change	8%	0%	8%
- Military-repressive	36%	56%	44%
- Socio-political change	36%	22%	21%
- Both	0%	6%	9%
- Other	8%	6%	10%
- No answer	12%	11%	8%

There is also some correlation between opinions about motivation of the terrorists, and about South Africa's best defence:

<i>South Africa's Best Defence is:</i>	Perception of Motivation of Terrorists			
	Indoc-trination	Rights/ Better Conditions	To Drive Whites Out	Communism
- No change	8%	4%	5%	7%
- Military-repressive	30%	42%	38%	54%
- Socio-political change	30%	30%	27%	15%
- Both	11%	12%	9%	7%
- Other	9%	6%	11%	12%
- No answer	12%	6%	6%	5%

Although the two main alternatives are mentioned a significant number of times by all opinion groups, nevertheless those who believe that the guerillas are motivated by a genuine desire for communism seem more likely to mention a military solution, and less likely to refer to measures of reform. On the other hand those who refer to indoctrination seem least likely to mention military measures. This tends to confirm the hypothesis that they blame the situation on a climate of grievance in which it is relatively easy for outside communists to mislead people. The high proportion of those who mention goals which might be accommodated within the system who nevertheless mention a military solution perhaps indicates that some of them are not willing to countenance even reformist measures.

IV. THE RESULTS IN RELATION TO THOSE OF A WIDER NATION-WIDE STUDY

We will take the results presented thus far, in combination, as broadly indicative of trends in the thinking of white South Africans. The nature, size and location of the sample (i.e. Durban only) prevent any firm and detailed conclusions being drawn on the basis of specific tabulations we have presented.

The most interesting information which emerges from these results is that regarding perceptions of terrorism. This issue is of high salience for white South Africans. In a nation-wide urban study undertaken by the Institute for Social Research among a probability sample of over 600 Afrikaans whites in April-June 1974,¹ respondents were asked to rate the importance of the "*threat of communism and terrorism*" on a 10 point scale. Over 80% rated it as 10 out of 10 in terms of importance; 89% rated it as 9 out of 10 or more. In addition, 90% of Afrikaners felt that the threat had become more important over the past 5 to 10 years. (As a comparison, we can quote the finding that only roughly 50% of the respondents rated

1. The fieldwork was undertaken by the firm Market Research Africa (Pty) Ltd. The sampling design was of a two-stage type. Clusters were selected in cities, towns and hamlets throughout the country, and in each cluster every nth dwelling unit was sampled. The total number of Afrikaans interviews was 641.

"separation of the races" and "protection of Whites against Black competition" as 10 out of 10 in importance. Hence the perceived dangers of communism and terrorism seem to take clear precedence over very long-established white political concerns as regards current priority and importance).

The pattern of results in this study would seem to indicate that the perception of the danger of communism and terrorism has a strong attitudinal and value component; i.e. that it is not simply a pattern of opinions which is formed in response to current developments in southern Africa. This emerges from the fact that variations in this perception are related to differences in socio-cultural and socio-economic characteristics of respondents. For example, social mobility (the holding of an occupation of higher status than father's occupation) is inversely correlated with such fears and generalised race prejudice as well as 'religiosity' are positively correlated with the perceived importance of these threats. As mentioned earlier, we must, therefore, consider that the responses of the majority of whites will not shift easily or quickly as a consequence of changing geo-political factors in southern Africa or of political pressures in general.

Despite this important qualification, however, there is an indication from the results of the nation-wide study among Afrikaners that the perception of political threat does have some influence on white (in this case Afrikaans) responses, and that this influence is not insignificant in political terms. In the study, questions were asked relating to the amount of 'Black discontent' perceived by the respondents. The two most important were: "How contented or discontented with their circumstances do you think the majority of Bantu (Africans) are at the moment?" and, "How long do you think our present race-situation can continue without creating serious problems for Whites?" Responses to these two items were combined into a single index. Results on this index appeared to be independent of socio-cultural background factors like status-mobility, religiosity and other socio-cultural factors.. (Although graduates in the sample were clearly more likely than others to perceive Africans as being relatively contented; a pattern which is difficult to explain).

However, the perceived extent of Black discontent was mildly but consistently related in a positive direction to a greater expressed willingness to countenance internal reform (this pattern not being due to any intervening factors like education or socio-cultural characteristics, as the remarks in the previous paragraph would suggest). For example, 38% of those Afrikaners who saw Blacks as discontented were willing to subscribe to the idea of greater consultation with Black leaders, or to a policy of granting reforms for Blacks in "white" areas, compared with 26% among those who saw Blacks as contented.

In regard to concessions to Blacks which respondents felt should be made, the following pattern emerged, according to whether Blacks were perceived to be discontented or not.

Statements Which Respondents Endorsed	Blacks Perceived to be:	
	Contented (n=252)	Discontented (n=87) ¹
"Whites and non-Whites should take decisions jointly regarding national affairs":	8%	12%
"There should be permanent rights for Coloureds in White areas":	8%	15%
"There should be permanent rights for certain Bantu (Africans) in 'White' areas":	4%	12%
"There should be higher wages for non-Whites" (agreement):	14%	34%
"Bantu (Africans) should be allowed to perform skilled work in 'White' areas":	17%	32%
"Bantu (African) Trade Unions should be officially recognised":	12%	23%

Furthermore, 16% of those respondents who perceived Blacks to be contented as opposed to 22% of those perceiving them to be discontented gave a 9 or 10 out of 10 "importance-rating" to the statement "There is

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1. The reason why the combined sample sizes in the table are lower than the size of the overall sample lies in the fact that respondents were selected into the two categories of Black contentment/discontentment on the basis of consistent answers to more than one schedule question. Hence certain respondents whose answers were not consistent with one another were omitted.

too little consultation between White and non-White leaders".

These results from the study among a national sample of urban Afrikaners seem to lend support to one of the broad and tentative conclusions which can be drawn from the telephone surveys conducted in Durban. There seems to be a relationship between a knowledge that Black people in South Africa are discontented and the expression of a willingness to support certain concessions and reforms as they would affect Blacks, even in "White" areas of the country. Although support for policies of reform seems, in large measure, to be a function of socio-culturally linked attitudes and values, it seems, nonetheless, that we may posit some degree of independent importance to Whites' perceptions of Black discontent. Perceptions of Blacks as being discontented certainly would appear to affect the way in which the motivations of the guerilla movements and their leaders are viewed.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Broadly speaking, and for the moment ignoring the question of "communism", it is possible to distinguish from the telephone survey results, three general categories of response in regard to "terrorism".

- 1) Those who see the phenomenon as being in some way related to internal problems of a kind which can be overcome by reform and who therefore believe that the government's reaction should at least include some internal reforms (i.e. Black South Africans have real problems which either make them subject to outside manipulation or could make them revolt, and these problems can be overcome by reform).
- 2) Those who see it as being related to internal problems, but to internal problems which could only be resolved by unthinkable or unacceptable concessions, and who therefore advocate a policy of repression (i.e., since the demands of Black South Africans are unacceptable to Whites, the Black discontent must be suppressed).

- 3) Those who see it as being purely an external phenomenon requiring a purely repressive military solution (i.e. "it is all an external communist plot").

These three response-types are also consistent with the broad pattern of findings in the national sample among Afrikaners.

Whether the local issues and causes of discontent can be resolved in a way satisfactory to both Whites, with their present interests and goals, and Blacks, with their present needs and goals, is a separate question. The disagreement between those Whites holding positions 1) and 2) outlined above is thus, to some extent at least, a disagreement over what is "acceptable" to Whites; it is a value question. But it is also partly a question of the interpretation of Black grievances. Some people holding position 1) might be saying that Black grievances are relatively minor, so that White authorities could cope with them without making major concessions, while some of those holding position 2) may be saying that Blacks have major grievances which can only be resolved by major and unacceptable concessions by Whites. Since the difference may be due to perceptions of the extent of the grievances, it is important to consider that the evidence we have would tend to suggest that the grievances of Blacks are large, and will require major changes in policy in order to be assuaged.¹¹

Not all respondents in the telephone survey fit neatly into one or other of the above three categories. But, although not far short of

¹¹ One recent example of an empirical study adducing evidence of widespread serious discontent among Blacks is that of L. Schlemmer (1975). *"Black Attitudes: Adaptation and Reaction"*, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, Swaziland, July, 1975. (Mimeo; publication forthcoming.)

half of the respondents consider that terrorists would be supported by many or most Black South Africans, only about a third of the sample as a whole seems to think that socio-economic reforms are needed. The majority of the English-speaking group and a large majority of the Afrikaners adopt positions 2) or 3): they see terrorism as resulting either from illegitimate Black demands, or else as having no relation to internal problems, since they see it as stemming from a world-wide communist conspiracy. English-speakers are more likely to think in terms of resolvable issues (albeit possibly issues which are capitalised on by communists) whereas Afrikaans respondents are more likely to think in terms of entirely irresolvable issues. Over 70% of the Afrikaners, as opposed to 35% of the English, believe that terrorists fight either out of a genuine desire for communism, or else in order to drive out the Whites. Thus most Afrikaners seem to see the situation in terms of clearly antagonistic and irreconcilable interests. However, the position is complicated by the question of "communism." Some, perhaps the majority, see the question as being exclusively a conflict between South Africa and communism, while others see it as being a conflict between Blacks and Whites within South Africa, with or without the issue of communism as a factor.

In commenting on and trying to assess the significance of these positions, we have necessarily to give our own answers to the questions raised. For reasons of space it is not possible to give detailed data to support our judgements. However, if we consider the evidence contained both in speeches of Black politicians and in studies carried out by social and political scientists, we may conclude that there is overwhelming evidence of widespread discontent amongst Blacks as regards the nature of White rule in southern Africa,¹⁾ and, that there is no evidence

1) Here again we can refer to the recent study of Black attitudes by Schlemmer (*ibid*) which contains references to a number of other studies which produce evidence of Black grievances.

that "outside **communists**" are significant active agents in the various guerilla campaigns **in southern Africa. The various movements have received and continue to receive support from communist governments, but** they appear to be led by local people concerned with local issues and are aimed at local solutions.

In comparing what appear to be the facts of the case with the responses of people interviewed in the Durban telephone survey on the coup in Portugal, as well as the responses of the Afrikaners interviewed in the nation-wide survey, two major points emerge.

1) The first point concerns the typical perceptions among Whites of the situation and reactions of Black South Africans. Both studies suggest that a slight majority of Whites perceive rank and file Blacks as being reasonably contented with their situation in South Africa. The reader will **recollect that in the telephone survey in Durban only 10% of English-speakers and 11% of Afrikaners felt that most Blacks would support the terrorists.** Among English-speakers, 46% expressed the view that "few" or "none" would support the terrorists and the proportion among Afrikaners was not significantly different at 50%. Only 30% of respondents **in the first telephone survey believed that Blacks supported the oil boycott. In the nation-wide study among Afrikaners, 56% of respondents considered that Africans in South Africa are either "contented" or "fairly contented", and only 11% felt that they are "very discontented".**

Both these studies strongly suggest **that, while White political** motivations are in considerable measure a function of fairly basic values and attitudes, some of the variability in policy orientations is related to perceptions of political pressure on the status-quo in South Africa, whether from internal or external sources. We may posit, therefore, that there is fairly widespread awareness of the link between ~~these~~ political pressures (terrorism being the most important of them) and the situation of Blacks in southern Africa. However, among some

people this awareness is inadequate or negative in consequence, since it tends to be perceived in highly emotionally-laden terms which make rational responses to the perception of pressure difficult.

We would like to conclude our discussion of this first major point with the suggestions:

- a) That there is a great need to make more white South Africans aware of the extent and intensity of Black grievances in southern Africa, and of the legitimacy of the reasons for these grievances; and
- b) that the grievances and discontent of Blacks does not or need not take the form of anti-white hostility or racist fervour, and that there is little objective basis for the kind of irrational fears that many whites evince. To give but one example, since assuming power in Mocambique, President Samora Machel has constantly reiterated that he does not blame whites for the earlier situation which existed under colonial rule, but rather the kind of politico-economic system that existed in that territory. Unfortunately, press coverage on events elsewhere in independent Africa has tended to create an impression of instability, authoritarian rule, factionalism and arbitrary action against individuals and aliens (mainly Indians in East Africa) which whites perceive as threatening to themselves. What the press has not been able to convey successfully, however, is that trends and events like these are the consequence not of some imbedded characteristic of African political systems, but rather of a range of complex structural characteristics in these societies which need not exist in South Africa. Those African states which are characterised by the kind of unpredictability and lack of order referred to above (and this is not a feature of all African states) display the effects of, inter alia:

- low levels of economic development;

- great material inequality between elites and masses, and between urban and rural levels of welfare;
- inadequate political mobilisation and political participation among the populations generally, which allows arbitrary action by a few political leaders;
- ruthless trading and employment practices by minorities, the members of which have shown little identification with the interests of the new states;
- governmental bureaucracies based on former colonial "control" models rather than on models appropriate to developing regions;
- the relative absence of social, economic, political, civic and cultural organisations in intermediate positions between the people and politicians which could create a system of checks and balances in the political life of these societies.

It is almost redundant to add that a more developed and differentiated social structure like that of South Africa would be most unlikely to display the characteristics mentioned above, provided that the problem of white-Black inequality were to be tackled constructively and Black people at large were incorporated into organised political and economic activity. If the press and other media in South Africa consider that they have a social responsibility, then this, broadly, is the kind of understanding which should be disseminated among whites.

- 2) The second major point is that the idea of "communism" plays a role which bears virtually no relation to the facts of the case. There is a problem in interpreting the significance of this fact; it is difficult to know exactly what our respondents understood by the term "communism". We would suggest, in fact, that the term no longer has any precise analytical content for most white South Africans. To the extent that it has a specific meaning, it is probably connected with the idea of Soviet or Chinese imperialism. But, beyond this, it would seem to have^a much vaguer and more pervasive role, as an expression or a name for the

unthinkable. When 41% of our Afrikaans respondents say that they think that the terrorists are motivated by a "genuine desire for communism", it is unlikely that they have in mind a desire for a specific form of political and economic organisation. It is more likely that they mean by it some literally unthinkable order in which everything is turned upside down; Blacks no longer keep in their place and all sorts of patterns of social life are changed.

Of course, this interpretation is purely speculative, but two things are clear:

- a) To the extent that the term "communism" functions purely as an emotive word to designate the unthinkable, it confuses the issue and prevents people from thinking about things to which they should be giving very serious thought.
- b) The belief that terrorism is associated with an external communist plot aiming at foreign domination of South Africa will have even more serious consequences. If the aim of the adversary is foreign domination, what possible compromise can there be? It becomes quite out of the question to accord any legitimacy to, or to consider the grievances of, the "terrorist" movements. Military repression is the only possible response.

If, as we have said, there is no evidence that terrorist groups in southern Africa are led by "outside communists", why is the belief so widespread? Of course we cannot answer this question from our surveys. A full answer would require further investigation of what white South Africans understand by the term communism, and a detailed study of the news media through which a particular idea of communism is projected. But it does seem to us to be possible to say that the press, including the English-language press, has a large responsibility in projecting a crude and oversimplified idea of "communism". There is rarely any clear analysis

of Soviet or Chinese foreign policy, or of the very varied policies and practices of the various communist parties and communist governments around the world. "Communism" is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon and it should be treated as such. It is necessary to distinguish between at least the following:

- 1) The various political and social theories contained under the broad rubric "**marxism**".
- 2) The divergent internal political practices of different communist governments.
- 3) The different and sometimes conflicting foreign policies of the various communist governments, and the differences in policy towards different parts of the world. For example, one cannot necessarily draw conclusions about Soviet policy in Africa on the basis of a study of Soviet policy toward the states in the Soviet Union's eastern European buffer zone.
- 4) The relation between the policy of and support for any particular national communist party, and the local political problems of that country.
- 5) The different relations of various communist parties towards established centres such as Moscow, Peking and Havana.
- 6) The relation between various communist governments and various national liberation movements.

For South Africa this last point perhaps is the most important. It is vital to untangle the relationship between communist great power policy, local communist aims and general social problems when analysing "wars of national liberation". In countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, for example, it is simply impossible to understand events by using a single

undifferentiated concept of "communism". Mocambique is a case in point and the adequacy of our press as a source of information and analysis surely be brought into question here. Before April the 25th, 1974, any reasonably well-informed reader of the western press abroad knew that Portugal was ruled by a dictatorship which governed by the widespread use of coercion and torture, and which was fighting colonial wars against guerilla movements which had widespread popular support. Why was it that the South African press was only able to discover this after the 25th? Until that date South Africans were still being regaled with stories of model prisons, Portugal's civilising mission, and the pointless atrocities committed by a handful of terrorists. It would seem that South African journalists in Portuguese territories simply accepted without question the publicity handouts of the Caetano regime. For example, many if not all South African newspapers joined in the charade of denying the very existence of the town of Wiriyamu when the story of the massacre there was finally broken.

Of course, there were exceptions, just as there are occasional exceptions to the inadequate treatment of communism. But it is our contention that the overall effect of the press is to propagate a crude and inadequate view of what is happening in the world. This would be of little importance if it were merely an academic question of fact. But it is not only an academic question. As the results of our surveys show there is a close relation between the way in which white South Africans interpret the outside world and the way in which they understand what happens in South Africa. While white South Africans have the mistaken belief that violent conflict in southern Africa is largely a question of communist instigation, they will not be able to see the real causes, and a peaceful resolution of South Africa's problems will be impossible.