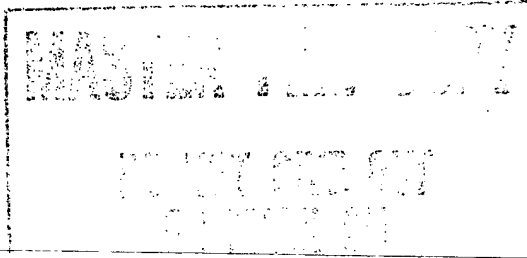




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South Africa: Co-Opting the Coloreds and Indians



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An Intelligence Assessment

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ALA 83-10067X
May 1983

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South Africa: Co-Opting the Coloreds and Indians

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [Redacted] Office of
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**South Africa:
Co-Opting the
Coloreds and Indians**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 15 April 1983
was used in this report.*

The constitutional dispensation proffered last year to South Africa's Coloreds and Indians by the Botha government will restore to them some of the rights and privileges lifted by Botha's predecessors over the past 35 years. But the new provisions are not designed, nor will they lead, in our judgment, to any changes in the basic policy of grand apartheid or any diminution of white political control.

The constitutional proposals, which offer a degree of control over communal affairs to the already favored Coloreds and Indians and a limited role for them in the national government, are as controversial in the white community as they are among all of South Africa's other racial groups. Not all whites agree with the Prime Minister that the changes will co-opt Coloreds and Indians and thereby almost double the size of the group with a stake in the status quo. Many white South Africans, including some in Botha's parliamentary majority, fear that the changes are the first steps on a long, slippery slope of reform that will begin by compromising white authority and end by destroying it.

Botha's concerns about white opposition—and its impact on Afrikaner unity—could lead him to modify his reform package and delay the process of ratifying and implementing the changes. It is also possible, but not probable, in our view, that Botha could lose his nerve in face of rightwing criticism and shelve the proposals.

On balance, however, we believe Botha will push ahead. He has already accepted a potentially dangerous split in the ruling National Party and has shown clearly he is willing to brush aside "extremists" who try to stand in the way of changes that he argues are necessary to maintain white security. We believe that Botha, an Afrikaner and lifelong politician, has correctly gauged white public opinion in South Africa, and that he will win the white referendum on the issue.

Some Colored and Indian political organizations have cautiously supported Botha's proposals, although public opinion polls and a variety of other reporting indicate no more than 30 percent of the Colored population believes the changes as they are now formulated should be adopted. The proposals have benefited from the gradual drift of the Colored community away from close identity with the black majority.

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Blacks see the reforms as yet another trick designed to fracture the nonwhite majority. We doubt that promises by the Coloreds and Indians to work within the new system to achieve concessions for blacks will quell black anger and frustration. Some black leaders have warned darkly of reprisals against Colored and Indian collaborators.

We judge, however, that, despite substantial opposition within every population group in the country, the changes will be in place within the next 18 months. At the same time, we doubt the new arrangements will work effectively and believe the experiment will eventually founder, largely because Colored and Indian leaders will be unable to show sufficient progress toward the destruction of apartheid to ensure that their own followers keep cooperating with the system. Whites will not cease looking for the right formula to generate support for the status quo, however, and we would expect continuing rounds of tinkering with the system.

If we are wrong, and the regime succeeds in effecting a working alliance with Coloreds and Indians—with these groups in a distinctly junior role—Botha can take considerable comfort in having eased the pressure on South Africa's whites. The sheer numbers of the larger equation, however, with blacks constituting nearly three-fourths of the total population, suggest the reprieve will be temporary. We see nothing in the reforms or in white attitudes that would herald the kind of significant change that so alarms the South African right.

By any measure, however, implementation of the constitutional reforms will represent significant compromise by whites. Because of this, the South African Government will, as it has in the past, expect approval from the United States. Because the reforms, in our view, will not satisfy black Africans either inside or out of South Africa, such approval would at least marginally complicate US diplomatic dealings in the region. Black African leaders persist in their inflated notions of US leverage on Pretoria and will view anything but forthright condemnation of the reforms as US complicity in apartheid.

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Figure 1



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South Africa: Co-Opting the Coloreds and Indians

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Introduction

The South African Government has proposed a new constitutional structure designed to give the country's 3.5 million Coloreds and Asians a limited role in the white-controlled political system through participation with whites in a three-chambered Parliament and multiracial Cabinet. The reaction to these proposals by these two minority groups, by blacks—who are excluded from the new system—and by those whites who oppose it, will have a significant impact on the future direction of racial reform in South Africa.

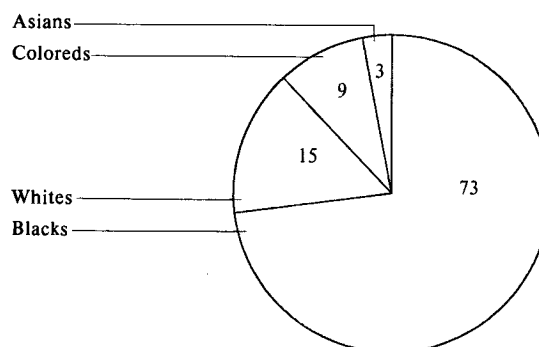
In proposing these constitutional reforms the National Party government has brought to the forefront of South African politics highly sensitive questions it has been sidestepping for over a decade:

- To the Coloreds and Asians (predominantly of Indian origin), who respectively comprise 9 and 3 percent of the country's total population, the proposals offer a stark choice: accept second-class citizenship in a white world with privileges far beyond those of black South Africans or forsake privilege and then trust that blacks will remember if and when they come to power.
- To many whites, the proposals raise fears that the inclusion of Coloreds and Indians will be the opening wedge of a series of reforms that ultimately will bring down white rule.
- To South Africa's blacks, who comprise 73 percent of the population, the issue is whether Colored and Indian acceptance of the new system will strengthen the white community's ability to resist broader reforms demanded by blacks.

This paper discusses white motivations in proposing the new constitution and assesses the near- and long-term reaction of Coloreds and Indians. It also examines the implications of the reform process for the United States.

Figure 2
South Africa: Population Estimate,
Mid-Year 1983

Percent
Total: 30,938,000 persons



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The Constitutional Proposals

Although US Embassy and press reporting indicate that the government is still tinkering with details of the new constitutional system, the outlines of the plan that have emerged make it clear that the role of Coloreds and Indians will be carefully defined and limited. The two nonwhite groups will gain marginally more authority over their own affairs, but the country's system of racially separate development will not be fundamentally altered. Existing apartheid legislation, which also affects Coloreds and Indians, will remain in force and separate political institutions will remain unaffected.

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The central feature of the plan is the provision for the establishment of separate nonwhite chambers of Parliament with authority to legislate on matters relating to the "communal affairs" of Coloreds and Indians. The precise definition of communal affairs is still being debated, but it will probably encompass a limited range of matters such as primary and secondary education, community planning and development, and some social welfare functions.

Matters of "common concern" that relate to more than one population group will be dealt with in joint standing committees made up of representatives from the white, Colored, and Indian chambers and then voted on by each body. These will include agriculture, commerce and industry, defense, foreign affairs, justice, communications, public works, and finance. Budget legislation—including money provided to the separate racial groups for spending on their own affairs—will also be dealt with as a matter of common concern.

Although each chamber of Parliament will in theory have equal powers, white, Colored, and Indian representation in the three chambers and committees is expected to be fixed at 4:2:1, a formula that ensures an absolute white majority on matters of common concern. When the new system comes into effect, we expect the current white members of Parliament to retain their seats, while Colored and Indian members probably will be selected through elections.

As an additional safeguard to ensure white dominance, the President's Council—currently a government advisory group composed of whites, Coloreds, and Indians—will be reconstituted as a legislative body and given the role of final arbitrator in legislative disputes between the three chambers. Of its 60 members, 20 will be elected by the white chamber of Parliament, 10 by the Colored chamber, five by the Indian chamber, and 25 will be appointed by the president. Finally, the new constitution will create a strong executive president who will have broad veto powers as well as authority to assume total control in times of national emergency.

Once the proposals are put into final language as a draft constitution, they will be submitted to the current Parliament as a bill that can be passed by a

simple majority. Following parliamentary approval, but prior to enactment, the government will call a white referendum on the new constitution. According to press reports, the electorate will be presented with a statement of principles rather than the constitution itself. Botha has committed himself to abide by the results of the referendum.

White Motivations and Actions

Numerous South African politicians have made it amply clear that the fundamental purpose of the reforms is to buttress white dominance in South Africa. In general terms, the proponents of the new system argue that an alliance combining the nonwhite minority groups—12 percent of South Africa's population—with the whites' 15 percent will create a larger South African middle class with a strong stake in defending the status quo. A few reform-minded Nationalists, according to press [redacted] have plans for additional reforms that could enhance further the social and economic status of Coloreds and Indians and perhaps ultimately co-opt urban blacks.

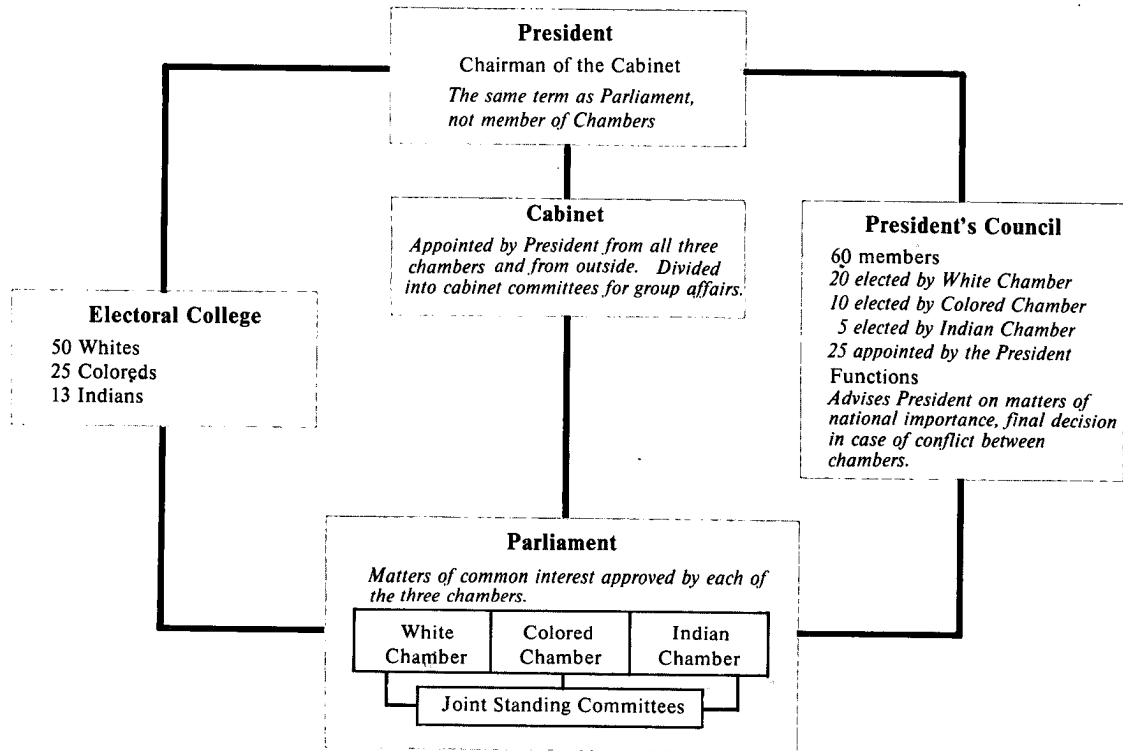
US Embassy and press reporting indicates that proponents of the new system see potentially important and practical side benefits to co-opting the two nonwhite groups. Some Nationalists have advocated extending mandatory military service to Coloreds and Indians—and thereby doubling the military manpower pool—as a price the two groups should be required to pay for expanding their political rights. Moreover, the government, ever mindful of international criticism, is already using the constitutional changes to bolster its claims that white South Africa's interest in reform is genuine.

A Contentious Issue. The new dispensation is also an attempt to resolve a contentious political and emotional issue that has long divided whites: How to fit Coloreds and Indians into the structure of the overall philosophy of apartheid, where all "groups" are to have a measure of political self-determination. Under pressure from Afrikaners, early South African governments, although dominated by the more liberal English-speaking whites, began progressively to limit Colored and Indian political rights. Once the Afrikaner National Party took power in 1948, it further

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Figure 3
South African Government Under Proposed Constitution



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limited Indian rights and abolished the constitutional provision that allowed Coloreds in Cape Province to vote on the common rolls with whites for members of Parliament.

Even as they were being stripped of their political rights, questions over how Coloreds and Indians fit into the theoretical framework of apartheid persisted. Rightwing members of the National Party proposed

in the early 1970s to give the two groups separate territorial homelands. Liberal whites, especially from Cape Province where most Coloreds are located, argued that Coloreds are really "brown Afrikaners" who share the same language, religion, history, and culture with Afrikaners and should be integrated into white society.

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Denied a political voice at the national level, Coloreds and Indians, for their part, have expressed strong dissatisfaction since the late 1960s with the alternative political institutions the government offered them. These included two impotent advisory councils, the "Colored Persons Representative Council" (CRC) and the "South African Indians Council" (SAIC), as well as various "local affairs committees" that advised white-controlled local government.

Constitutional Proposals of 1977. In response to both Colored discontent and the debate in the white community, the government created a commission in the early 1970s to study the Colored question. When the commission recommended a general enhancement of Colored rights in a report submitted in 1977, the government responded to conservative white pressure by rejecting most of its findings, proposing instead a new constitution with separate white, Colored, and Indian Parliaments and a "Council of Cabinets" drawn from the three chambers.

These proposals, which are the antecedents of the current constitutional reforms, were soundly rejected at the time by leaders of the two nonwhite minority communities. In the aftermath of black riots that had swept the country in 1976, Colored and Indian leaders—motivated in part by a desire not to antagonize a black majority that appeared on the verge of mass revolt—argued that the new system offered them insufficient political power, and that by excluding blacks it perpetuated apartheid.

The government abandoned the 1977 constitutional proposals two years later and eventually turned the question of nonwhite rights over to the white-dominated President's Council for still more study. The Council—itself created by a constitutional reform package in 1980—produced the general outlines of the current proposals in early 1982 and the government subsequently approved them with some minor modification.

Continuing White Opposition. Although the National Party—whose four regional congresses have endorsed the new proposals—remains in firm control of Parliament and polls indicate broad-based white support for

racial reform, Prime Minister Botha still faces political risks in pushing his program toward implementation.¹ Polls show that many conservative whites, especially in the Afrikaner community, still reject the Indians as an alien race unacceptable for assimilation in white society and the Coloreds as inferior products of "miscegenation." Both groups, they feel, should be either left in political limbo or be provided with their own homelands where they could exercise political rights.

The issue continues to be played out in the white political arena. The prospect of a new "reform" constitution precipitated a split in the National Party in early 1982 when Andries Treurnicht, then the leader of the right wing of the National Party, resigned from the Cabinet and along with 16 other Nationalists formed the Conservative Party of South Africa (CPSA)—the first Afrikaner parliamentary opposition party in the 35 years since the National Party came to power.²

Since his departure, Treurnicht has charged that the reforms are a first step toward a process that will lead to eventual black rule; he is making them a key issue in efforts to attract support for his new party. Many still in the National Party share Treurnicht's basic view and, according to well-informed political sources of the US Embassy, several senior party officials would like to water down or even abandon the constitutional proposals as a way of reuniting the Afrikaner community and bringing Conservative Party members back into the National Party fold.

To diffuse the rightwing criticism, Prime Minister Botha promised to hold the referendum on the constitutional reforms among white voters, implying, in effect, that he will not implement them without broad

¹ In the current Parliament, the Nationalists have 125 seats, the major English-speaking opposition group, the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) has 26, the Conservative Party has 18, and the New Republic Party, a moderate to conservative English-speaking party based largely in Natal, eight.



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Poll of Colored and Asian Attitudes

The most accurate reading of Colored and Indian attitudes toward the constitutional reforms is probably reflected in a recent poll of urban Coloreds and Indians. Although its findings are disputed by opponents of the new system, they are generally substantiated by other surveys. The poll showed that:

- *In a referendum, about one-fourth of the Coloreds would vote for the constitutional proposals as they now stand and 57 percent would reject them. Seventy percent claimed, however, that they were either for cooperation with the new system "in order to change it for the better" (31 percent) or were for improving its terms and then cooperating (39 percent).*
- *Thirty-one percent of the those surveyed supported the Colored Labor Party; 46 percent supported no party; and 21 percent had no opinion.*
- *An overwhelming majority favored black participation in the system.*

The poll of urban Indians produced indications of somewhat more support for the constitutional proposals than among the Coloreds, although an assumed margin of error may make the small difference even less significant:

- *Thirty-one percent claimed they would vote for the proposals in referendum (as compared with 25 percent of the Coloreds polled) and 53 percent said they would vote against it (as against 57 percent of the Coloreds).*
 - *Almost half of the sample claimed they wanted Indian political groups to join the new system in order to change it for the better while another quarter claimed they were willing to cooperate with the new system once it is "improved." Only one-fourth of those polled rejected anything to do with the proposals.*
 - *Eighty-five percent thought it was "bad" to exclude blacks from the system.*
-

white support. In our view, Botha believes that the referendum will favor the reforms and will strengthen his hand among party conservatives.

In addition to the conservative criticism, a less powerful but highly vocal group of white liberals, mainly English-speakers and led by the Progressive Federal Party, argues that the reforms do not go far enough in that they exclude blacks.³ Conservatives and liberals alike are deeply suspicious of the broad power Prime Minister Botha will have as executive president, fearing even stronger Nationalist political dominance under the new constitution.

Because of the forces at work in the white electorate—particularly in the right wing of the Afrikaner community—and the personal capital Botha has invested in his reforms, we believe he would find it highly embarrassing and perhaps politically damaging if the Coloreds and Indians were to reject participation in the new system.

Colored Reactions

The Colored reaction so far to the constitutional proposals has been divided.

- The Colored Labor Party, the community's major political organization, has given the proposals qualified support.
- A variety of loosely affiliated local level organizations firmly oppose the reforms and bitterly denounce the Labor Party's support.
- A majority of Coloreds, while largely apathetic, seem opposed to the proposals as they now stand but many also appear prepared to go along with them if their terms are improved.

Labor Party Support. At its congress in early January 1983, the Colored Labor Party endorsed the constitutional package with the caveat that it would continue to press for black participation and general reform of the apartheid system. The final vote for the resolution supporting the endorsement was overwhelming, although several senior members of the party resigned in protest.

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In accepting the proposals, and thus indicating its intention to work within the system for further racial reform, the party reversed the strategy it followed in the Colored Persons Representative Council (CRC) during the 1970s. After it had gained a majority on the CRC in 1975, the Labor Party frequently refused to conduct normal business and used the Council as a platform to demand full political rights for nonwhites and an end to apartheid. Press accounts indicate that it was these tactics, which had strong Colored community support, that led the government to abolish the CRC in 1980.

Co-Optation. In our view, the Labor Party began to shift its tactics toward cooperation with the government in 1980 after several months of violence that grew out of a boycott of Colored schools in Cape Province. The boycott was led by a loose coalition of radical community organizations—student committees, taxpayers' groups, sports associations—that spurned the party's leadership. Both Labor Party leaders and the government seemed to be startled by the radicalism of the boycott's leaders and the extent of their grass-roots support.

The Botha government subsequently began a systematic effort to court Labor Party leaders Alan Henderickse and David Curry, who were publicly expressing their concern about the radical drift in their community. The government's purpose appears to have been to gain the party's approval for the constitutional proposals even then under consideration in the President's Council.

We believe that the Labor Party leaders decided to endorse the new constitution—which contained few important changes from the rejected 1977 proposals—for a variety of reasons. One strong motive, in our view, has been the erosion of popular support for the party. Since the CRC was abolished in 1980, the party has lacked a public platform to demonstrate to the Colored community that it is aggressively pursuing its interests. In the interim, the grass-roots civic organizations, spawned by the 1980 boycott, have won significant support away from the Labor Party by organizing rent strikes and various local boycotts. Colored leaders undoubtedly view membership in Parliament and the Cabinet as providing a new platform.

The view that Labor Party leaders have of the role of Coloreds in South African society has also evolved in recent years. We believe that, as the prospect of a black "revolution" has receded, so has the imperative Coloreds felt in the 1970s to retain a close identity with blacks. Many observers also believe that the links between the blacks and Coloreds that were built up in the 1970s were significantly weakened in 1980 after Coloreds, who had prompted many blacks to join their school boycott, abruptly canceled their own action when the government acceded to their demands. The blacks continued their school boycott and, although they too obtained some concessions from the government, felt betrayed by the Coloreds.

Public statements by Henderickse and Curry also suggest they are convinced that the Coloreds are being offered the best deal that the National Party, in the face of continuing pressure from the far right, is likely to let them have for the foreseeable future. They are almost certainly mindful of the Conservative Party's call for the establishment of separate "heartlands" for Coloreds and Indians where they would be given "political rights" in much the same way as blacks in the "independent" tribal homelands. The Conservatives also want to apply to Coloreds and Indians the system of residence permits and immigration controls now used to limit black migration into white areas.

Finally, we believe that Henderickse, Curry, and other aging, once-radical party leaders may be tempted by the potential salary, patronage, and perquisites of future office.

Opposition. The size of the hardcore opposition is difficult to determine, but we believe it does not yet represent majority Colored sentiment. The most prominent Colored critic of the constitution reform is the Rev. Allan Boesak, leader of the Colored Dutch Reformed Church, chaplain at the influential Stellenbosch University, and president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Boesak recently endorsed an Indian group's call for a multiracial "United Democratic Front" against the constitutional proposals. At least 23 clergymen from his church also have joined him in his condemnation of the new constitution.

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The Coloreds^a

South Africa's almost 2.5 million Coloreds—generally considered to be people who are neither white, black, nor Indian—originated as the product of intermixture between indigenous Bushmen and Hottentots and either white colonists or Malay slaves. For a century, beginning in the 1850s, they formed a separate but relatively elite society with political rights nearly equal to those of whites. Their political rights, however, were an issue of bitter dispute between the Afrikaner-controlled Transvaal and Orange Free State and the English-dominated southern provinces. At the time of South African union in 1910, the two white groups adopted a compromise that allowed a continued Colored franchise in the Cape and Natal Provinces, with the understanding that Coloreds themselves could not stand for office.

The political and social position of the Coloreds soon began to erode. In 1931 voting rights were extended to white but not Colored women; the following year voting qualification for white but not Colored men was lowered; in 1945 the registration of whites but not Coloreds was made compulsory; and, three years later, the government made Colored registration more complicated.

After the Afrikaans-speaking Nationalists came to power in 1948, they moved quickly to remove Coloreds from the common voting rolls and allowed them to vote only for four special white candidates who represented their interests in Parliament. After even that limited franchise was abolished in 1968, Colored interests were represented by advisory national and local level committees under the white-controlled Department of Colored Affairs.

The Nationalists also quickly began enacting apartheid legislation that applied to Coloreds as well as other nonwhites:

- 1949
Mixed Marriages Act barred Coloreds from marrying whites.

^a This review is based on academic studies, press reporting, and US Embassy reports.

- 1950
Immorality Act made sexual intercourse illegal between whites and nonwhites.

Population Registration Act required that every South African be classified according to race and carry an identity card with this information.

Group Areas Act segregated residential areas.
- 1956
South African Act provided for a separate voter's role for Coloreds.
- 1963
Colored Persons Education Act put Colored education under the Department of Colored Affairs.
- 1968
Representation of Colored Persons Act segregated the Colored group politically by removing its representatives from Parliament.

Perhaps the most devastating apartheid measure applied to the Coloreds has been the Group Areas Act, which has been used to break up longstanding Colored areas in Cape Town and elsewhere. Today, Coloreds live throughout the country, but about 70 percent reside in the sprawling and violence-prone bedroom communities in the "Cape Flats" area, which stretches for miles beyond now largely white Cape Town proper.

The result of Colored disenfranchisement and the application of racial restrictions has been the rending of their social fabric and the creation of a largely alienated subculture. A succession of surveys shows the Colored community to have a high incidence of alcoholism and job absenteeism and a per capita crime rate higher than other groups in South Africa. Although the more affluent as well as the younger and more educated have debated the proper strategy to gain greater Colored rights, the predominant political attitude in the community revealed in surveys is apathy and pessimism.

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The Indians^a

Indians were first brought to Natal—where 80 percent of them now reside—in the 1860s as indentured agricultural laborers on 10-year contracts. As the Indian population grew, supplemented by the arrival of wealthy Indian merchants in the latter part of the 19th century, whites in Natal stopped Indian immigration and began placing social and political restrictions on those already there.

In the early 1950s, Indians were stripped of their voting rights for Parliament and, in place of a franchise, were given advisory councils and supervision by a government department. The government attempted to repatriate them to India through a variety of voluntary schemes, but, in the face of opposition by the overwhelming majority of the community, the Nationalists finally recognized them as a permanent "group" in South Africa in 1961.

Indians have bridled under apartheid restrictions in general as well as under legislation directed mainly at them. The first "group areas" legislation was directed primarily at Indian retail merchants in Durban and other communities where they had become competitive with white businesses. Subsequent

removals have driven many Indians out of the retail business, which they once dominated, and have broken up longstanding Indian residential areas as well. A strong Indian business community has nevertheless survived with some Indian merchants reportedly operate in white areas through white front partners. One special form of restriction applying only to Indians has been restrictions on their residence and travel in the Orange Free State and portions of northern Natal.

Today South Africa's Indians are concentrated largely around Durban, although smaller groups live in the Transvaal and in the western Cape. As a group they are relatively prosperous but their cohesion—to the degree that it exists—is due largely to external pressure. The smaller Muslim group (about 20 percent) tend to be more conservative and affluent than the majority Hindus (70 percent), while a growing number (about 10 percent) are Christian. Within the two main religious groups cast and sect differences further divide the community.

^a This summary is based on academic studies, press reporting, and US Embassy reports.

Two major Colored civic groups in the Cape, the "Federation of Civic Organizations" and the "Western Cape Civic Association," have issued strident statements opposing both the government's proposals and the Labor Party's endorsement of them. The "Cape Area Housing Action Committee," acting for 23 civic associations, has begun publishing a newspaper called *Grassroots* aimed mainly at building opposition to the proposals. At least two Cape area trade unions have also come out against the constitutional changes.

The most active opponents of the constitutional proposals, according to press accounts, are Colored youth and students who advocate solidarity with South Africa's black majority. These young militants have

used violence to break up meetings called by Labor Party leaders to explain their acceptance of the government's proposals.

Indian Reactions⁴

Support by the African Indian Council. In early January 1983 the National People's Party (NPP), which most observers view as synonymous with the South African Indian Council (SAIC), quietly followed the Colored Labor Party's footsteps by agreeing

⁴ The overwhelming number of the 850,000 South Africans classified as Asians are Indians. There is a Chinese community numbering some 10,000 that enjoys many privileges reserved for whites but is designated as a nonwhite Asian group. The small Japanese community, because of Japan's extensive commercial ties with South Africa, was granted "honorary white" status in the 1960s.

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to participate in the new system, although it specified several terms it wished the government to meet. These included relaxation of the Group Areas Act, which restricts the areas where racial "groups" can live, and restrictions on Indian freedom of movement in the Orange Free State and northern Natal.

The NPP as a party does not appear to have any significant grass-roots support and serves largely as a personal vehicle for its leader, Amichand Rajbansi, according to Embassy reporting. Rajbansi, who is also chairman of the SAIC's Executive Council, formed the party out of independent members elected to the council in 1981—an election that drew votes from less than 10 percent of potential Indian voters. According to one knowledgeable Indian source, Rajbansi has asked the government to appoint members of the SAIC to fill the seats of the proposed Indian chamber in Parliament.

Neither Rajbansi nor other supporters of the new constitution have yet undertaken a drive similar to the Colored Labor Party's effort to gain community support for the reforms. Rajbansi has publicly called for a referendum by Indians on the constitutional reforms, although he has also told the press that he would favor the government determining Indian support through an opinion poll and thus avoid a referendum that could be boycotted. The government, for its part, has begun to publish a newspaper, *The Phoenix*, aimed at winning Indian support.

Opposition. The only Indian political party that can claim any significant following, the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), sharply opposes the SAIC and the new constitution. Composed of young, largely Marxist radicals who reject the new arrangements, the NIC traces its roots to the Congress movement that was started by Mohandas K. Gandhi in the 1890s and was later associated with the African National Congress until it was banned in 1961. Moribund for over a decade, the NIC revived in the 1970s due in large measure to popular Indian opposition to the SAIC. Although the government has not cracked down on the NIC itself, many of its leaders have been banned and it now operates with a rotating leadership.

Along with the NIC, the smaller Transvaal Anti-South African Indian Council Committee—a descendant of the Transvaal Indian Congress—has denounced publicly the new constitutional proposals and plans to boycott any elections for the Indian chamber of Parliament. The Transvaal group is also attempting to organize a multiracial "United Democratic Front" to take the boycott campaign to the Colored and white communities as well. While the front has received some expressions of support from important Colored and black leaders, it has not yet become an effective protest movement.

Black Reaction

The reaction of black South Africans to the constitutional proposals has been largely muted, but we believe that most politically aware blacks are nonetheless hostile to the reforms and view the willingness of some Coloreds and Indians to go along with it as a sellout of black interests.

The "Azanian People's Organization," one of the most radical self-styled "black consciousness" groups that has not been banned, has publicly rejected the government's constitutional proposals as a "white man's agenda calculated to maintain white domination." Leaders of the largely black Federation of South African Trade Unions, which has about 100,000 members and includes some predominantly Colored affiliates, is "mobilizing" in opposition to the new constitution, according to press reports, but it has not yet followed through with significant action. The banned African National Congress has also condemned the new constitution, which it cites as evidence of the white's inability to make reforms meaningful to blacks.

The most strident black critic of the new arrangements is Zulu chief Gatsha Buthelezi. As an international figure in his own right, as the Chief of the large Zulu tribe, and as the chief minister of the KwaZulu homeland, he has the stature and relative security from white intimidation that enable him to speak out forcefully. He has denounced the Colored Labor

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Party for its decision to support the reforms and has effectively read it out of the South African Black Alliance, a Buthelezi-led, antiapartheid coalition of black, Colored, and Indian political groups formed in the late 1970s. He has also warned that the whole of South Africa would be "reduced to rubble" if the government's constitutional proposals are not changed to include black political participation.

Buthelezi's rhetoric is backed up by the 300,000-man largely Zulu "Inkatha" movement whose militant and well-organized members are capable of intimidating Natal's Indian population as well as the province's smaller Colored community. His threats are also supported by a history of Zulu violence. In an event Indians still vividly remember, Zulus killed over 50 Indians in a riot near Durban in 1949. Since then, Indian leaders have courted Zulu favor but the relationship has remained uneasy. Buthelezi has alternated expressions of benign intentions toward Indians with statements that the Zulus would be willing to "wipe them out" if given sufficient provocation.

Notwithstanding his unambiguous rhetorical threats against would-be backers of the government's proposals, Buthelezi's strategy is not clear. He has voiced support for the Indian-proposed, multiracial United Democratic Front, and has recently held meetings with homeland leaders to coordinate strategy, according to press reports, but no results have been publicized. In our view, Buthelezi is unlikely to cooperate with more radical blacks, who consider him an arch-enemy because of his relative moderation.

Outlook

Short Term. The granting of limited political rights to Coloreds and Asians will, in our view, continue to divide and polarize the Afrikaner community because it represents the first constitutional departure from the ideology of racially separate development. During the intense debate that will accompany the constitutional reforms as they move through Parliament and as they are placed before the white electorate, the government is bound to suffer occasional setbacks that will be interpreted by some as harbingers of electoral doom for the National Party. Conservative white opponents of the reforms will use the parliamentary debates to offer amendments that water down the

proposals and focus public attention on specific provisions. Their aim will be to compel Botha to withdraw the constitutional proposals, and thereby hand him a stinging political defeat—one they hope would force him to call new general elections. They will continue to pursue these same aims as they work to defeat the proposals in the white referendum.

Botha's concern about white opposition—and its impact on Afrikaner unity—could lead him to modify his reform package and delay the process of ratifying and implementing the changes. It is also possible, but not probable in our view, that Botha could lose his nerve in the face of rightwing criticism and shelve the proposals indefinitely.

On balance, however, we believe Botha, after investing so much of his energy and credibility in the reforms, will push ahead. He has already accepted a potentially dangerous split in the ruling National Party, and has shown clearly that he is willing to brush aside "extremists" who try to stand in the way of changes he argues are necessary to maintain white security. In our judgment, the Nationalists are likely to adopt the new constitution in 1983. Elections for the Colored and Asian chambers of Parliament may be held this year as well, and the new system could well be implemented in 1984. Most observers of the South African political scene agree that the balance of forces within the National Party still favors Botha and that he has the political power and skill to overcome any new opposition to the reforms that develops within the party. We believe that Botha, an Afrikaner and lifelong politician, has correctly gauged white public opinion, and that he will win the white public referendum on this issue.

The response of the Colored and Indian communities is more difficult to gauge. We believe that, to a significant degree, it will be determined by a combination of the inducements the government offers and by the counterpressures applied by blacks. In our view, Botha could enhance the prospects of acceptance by the Coloreds and Indians by doing as little as expressing a willingness to ease apartheid restrictions that apply to these two groups. He could also make

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the system more acceptable to both groups if he held out some prospect that blacks might eventually be given even a circumscribed role in the new system. The issue of black political rights, however, is probably less important to the majority of either community than it was in the late 1970s. Among many Coloreds and Indians, we believe, the primary concerns are their privileged status and, especially among Indians, protection against the black majority. Colored and Indian concern about the black rights issue appears to be more a lingering matter of conscience and a question of placating a hostile, threatening majority.

Black opposition, in our view, probably will be restricted largely to verbal protest and will not be a significant factor in the Colored or Indian debate over the new constitution. Considering South Africa's depressed economy, action through black trade unions—the potentially strongest protest vehicle—is likely to be restrained, and what protests do occur are likely to be quickly suppressed. Should violent opposition occur, it might have offsetting effects. It would, we believe, force some Coloreds and Indians away from supporting the reforms but would force others to support them as they sought closer association with whites for protection.

The government, in our view, is unlikely in the short term to make concessions to Coloreds or Indians that will attract much more support for the system than already exists. We expect that the Botha government will continue to be wary of further polarizing the Afrikaner community or the National Party. As a result Botha probably will continue to move cautiously on reform, allowing the conservative white constituency, in effect, to digest the limited measures now proposed.

The government may, nevertheless, make some small gestures toward the nonwhite communities. Botha, for example, formed a cabinet-level commission in February to study the question of political rights for blacks outside of their homelands—predominantly urban blacks—although he ruled out in advance the creation of a black chamber in Parliament. Privately, the government may hint to Colored and Indian leaders, in order to string them along, that the reform process will continue to improve their communities' status, but we doubt it will make any specific commitments.

We believe that the government may also work quietly behind the scenes to both cajole and intimidate opponents or waverers. To boost its allies, it can step up the covert financial assistance that we suspect it may already be giving to the Colored Labor Party and members of the South African Indian Council, while moving simultaneously to intimidate Colored and Indian political groups that oppose the reforms. Although it will probably try to avoid formal actions like banning of individuals or organizations, the security police may use occasional detentions as well as harassment to keep the opposition off balance.

In the near term, we believe, about 20 to 30 percent of the Colored community probably will vote in an election for the new Parliament—reflecting the extent of support for the new constitution shown in recent polls. Because we judge that there will be no significant enticements from the government before the election, we also believe the large body of undecided Coloreds is likely to stay away from the polls.

Past Indian boycotts of local elections have been fairly successful, and Indian participation in an election to a new Parliament may be slightly lower than that of the Coloreds. If the government perceives that participation will be much lower than 20 percent, it may appoint the members of the SAIC to the new Parliament.

Despite the likely low turnout of Colored and Indian voters, we believe the government will implement the new constitution anyway and hope that support for it will grow in the longer term.

Long Term. We believe the same factors that have influenced the Colored and Indian reaction to date will influence their longer term response. In neither community is the question one of simple political rights. Both opponents and supporters of the reforms among these two groups are debating, in effect, the best strategy for obtaining full economic, social, and political equality with whites. The supporters of the new dispensation argue that the new system will give their minorities a wedge into white society that will lead to a continuing elevation of their status. If this

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argument is proved false in the next several years, the new Parliament—like the CRC, SAIC, and the President's Council before it—is likely to be rejected by the majority of Coloreds and Indians.

Although some liberal Nationalists have an agenda for continuing racial reform, there is no dynamic yet visible within the party that is likely to spur the kind of social or economic reform that would satisfy long-term Colored and Indian demands. The National Party, we believe, is likely to remain a fundamentally conservative institution, even with the loss of its right wing, until shocked into a different course of behavior.

As a result, even under the best of circumstances the new constitutional system probably will not operate smoothly and will limp along for several years until the whites conclude they must again "reform" the system, either to open it up to greater nonwhite participation and relax apartheid restrictions or to turn back to a more segregated political and social structure.

Implications for the United States

Over the past several years, the government of P.W. Botha has looked to the United States for expressions of approval for its efforts at racial reform. We believe this expectation of support probably will continue as South Africa implements its new constitution in the face of external and internal criticism. As these reforms will, in our view, satisfy neither nonwhite South Africans nor the outside world, any such approval by the United States would at least marginally complicate US diplomatic dealings in the region. Black African leaders, as well as black South Africans, continue to have an inflated view of US leverage over Pretoria and will view anything short of full condemnation of the reforms as endorsement of apartheid.

The reforms are also inevitably linked with other foreign policy issues of concern to the United States. We believe, for example, that Botha has been able to proceed with all deliberate speed on the reforms at least partly because the Namibia negotiations have been marking time. If the constitutional reforms remain highly controversial even after they are implemented—as we expect they will—Botha's ability to make compromises on Namibia that can be portrayed by his opponents as selling out whites will be limited. This, in our judgment, will lead to yet further calls from Pretoria not only for approval, but for patience and understanding in Washington.



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Confidential**Appendix****Key Personalities****Allan Hendrickse**

Labor Party leader since 1978, he has been involved in Colored politics for over a decade. Before the Colored Persons Representative Council was abolished in 1980, he spearheaded the party's effort to disrupt the Council from within and shunned government overtures to co-opt him into the President's Council. Although he claims the current constitutional proposals are far from ideal, he has persuaded the party to endorse them with the caveat that he will continue to work for the goal of "one man, one vote in a unitary state."



Camera Press ©

Pieter W. Botha

Prime Minister and a relatively liberal Nationalist from the Cape Province, he believes that whites have long mistreated the Coloreds and has warned his fellow Afrikaners that they must "adapt or die" in confronting South Africa's racial problem. He is committed, however, to only limited reforms and has categorically rejected any role for blacks in national decisionmaking.

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Wide World ©

Allan Boesak

One of the most influential Colored intellectuals in South Africa, Boesak strongly opposes the new dispensation. He uses his clerical positions—president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and a leader in the Colored Dutch Reformed Church—to condemn the Labor Party's support for the "sham" constitution, which he claims is designed to entrench white political domination. He refuses, however, to abandon his pulpit for the political arena by declining to take a formal role in leading Colored and Indian opposition to the proposals.



Andries Treurnicht

Broke away from the National Party in 1982, largely over its decision to press for limited racial reform. Now head of the Conservative Party, he has called for establishment of separate geographic "heartlands" for Coloreds and Asians where they would be given the same political rights as blacks in the "independent" tribal homelands. He claims that the new constitution will eventually spell "the end for the whites" in South Africa.

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Gatsha Buthelezi

Chief Minister of the Zulu homeland, he is the most powerful moderate black leader in South Africa. He charges that the Coloreds and Indians who have endorsed the proposals are "selling out" blacks. Although he warns of violence if the constitution is not altered to include provisions for black participation, his ability to oppose the new dispensation in the short term will be severely limited.

Amichand Rajbansi

As chairman of the South African Indian Council, he has tentatively endorsed the new constitution while claiming he will continue to press for "the best constitutional deal" he can for Indians. Considered by many to be a shrewd opportunist, he represents the interests of the wealthier segment of the fractious Indian community and is strongly opposed by the Natal Indian Congress, the major group in the community opposed to the reforms.



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