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LEGITIMATION AND CONTROL: IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLES WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE

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Legitimation and Control:

Ideological Struggles Within the South African State

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Note: This essay is excerpted from a much longer paper originally prepared for the Social Science Research Council's international conference, "South Africa: Class, Race and Nationalism," New York, September 8-12, 1982. The longer paper will be reworked as a chapter, "Ideological Struggles Within the South African State," to appear in a forthcoming book, Legitimizing the Illegitimate. State and Markets in Divided Societies. These papers represent an initial attempt to order interview and documentary material collected in South Africa between February 1979 and April 1982.

Introduction

In June 1979, Piet Koornhof, minister for Cooperation and Development, proclaimed before the National Press Club in Washington that "apartheid is dead." He may have been grandstanding, of course, but Koornhof's words also resonated at home where doubts about ideological orthodoxy were being expressed both within and outside the state. The Bureau for Economic Policy and Analysis at the University of Pretoria, with well-developed contacts within the government and the Afrikaner business community, reported in July 1980 that the "failure of socio-economic growth in the territories of the Black national states ... is becoming embarassing."[1] The head of the bureau, Jan Lombard, referred to "separate development" as a "sinking philosophy."[2] The perception has spread to yet more official "think tanks": BENSO has published articles that now refer to the failure of the "development paradigm."[3] Little wonder, then, that outside observers, like John Saul and Stephen Gelb and Stanley Greenberg, have begun to write of an "organic crisis" or a "crisis of hegemony."[4]

To understand the ideological ferment in South Africa -- and move beyond generalized statements about crisis[5] -- it will be necessary to elaborate the thematic aspects of a disintegrating, dominant ideology and of an emergent, and still fragmentary market-based substitute. This ideological transformation, we shall see, is rooted in political struggles within the state that center on these thematic changes and that depend profoundly on "connections" with actors and struggles outside the state.

The ideological transformation in South Africa centers thematically on the entanglement of politics and economics -- on the strong state presence in the labor market and workplace. Conventionally, capitalist development, whether understood in Marxist or non-Marxist terms, brings a growing differentiation of social spheres and functions; it involves, in particular, a separation of the political and economic. For Adam Smith, that differentiation is apparent in the ascendancy of markets and entrepreneurs and the diminution of political directive; for Hegel, in the rightful particularism of civil society and the universality of the state; and for Habermas, in the "uncoupling" of the economic system from the political under liberal capitalism.

It is out of such processes that the economic, the realm of private accumulation, gains prestige as a distinct, productive and public-spirited area of activity; and it is out of the same processes that the state loses its identity as a private patrimony and emerges as an overarching institution identified with the public and national interest. With this separation of the political and economic, the foundations are laid for a modernized, capitalist and legitimate order.

But for South Africa, the political and economic realms have remained ideologically and empirically entangled. The state has played a central

role in the market -- allocating labor between sectors, controlling and limiting proletarianization, and suppressing African labor organization. The National Party and state officialdom, at least until the middle-1970s, applauded this state presence, preferring "control" to the allocation decisions of private entrepreneurs and the market.

The ideological struggles in contemporary South Africa center on this problem. How can the state rise above the particularism and struggles of the system of production and emerge as an overarching, national institution? How can the bourgeoisie emerge as an independent and distinct force, engaged in private activity, but contributing to the public good? How can the African working class come to view the economic and political orders as separate and legitimate? How can political struggles be localized and kept from engulfing the whole society?

I Ideological Transformation: Developing Currents Outside the State

Our examination of this ideological transformation begins outside the state, among intellectuals and businessmen who are shaping the ideological themes and who are positioned politically to influence the ideological agenda. These groups, we shall see, are party to a discourse and a radically indeterminate struggle that centers on the problem of legitimation and autonomy and the uncoupling of the political and economic. For both groups, this uncoupling has an ideological, rather practical ring: each has sought to obscure or mystify the state-market relationships rather than to limit the role of the state.[6]

A. Intellectuals: Diminishing the State

During the late seventies, a range of prominent intellectuals, many of them participants in state commissions or advisory boards, began to offer skeptical observations about what had passed for conventional ideology. They questioned the economic viability of the homelands; they wondered aloud about the future of urban Africans; they asked whether any system built centrally around racial discrimination could prove legitimate internally or externally. More broadly, and perhaps more importantly, Afrikaner intellectuals wondered whether emotive and symbolic notions, like "separate development" or "apartheid," could any longer offer some hope for an orderly future. As Hermann Giliomee has observed, apartheid had lost its hegemonic character and emerged purely instrumental.[7] The consequent formalism, Lombard writes, has left white South Africa "dissatisfied with itself" and without "faith in its future." South Africa, consequently, has had no choice but to "fall back on the abilities of its defence and police forces to protect the order against external attack and domestic lawlessness."[8]

The first tenet in the search for a new guiding ideology has been the diminution of the state: state functions are to be dissipated through decentralization; the centrality of the state is to be offset by denying the appropriateness of state control over markets, particularly if that control is manifest as racial discrimination.[9] P.J. van der Merwe underlined these principles in his informed interpretation of the Riekert Commission: "To begin with, the belief in the free market system," characteristic of the commission's findings, "automatically implies a belief in individual economic freedom, individual economic responsibility and decentralized decision-making or as it is sometimes termed limited government from the top."[10]

There is a strong emphasis in this developing body of thought on obscuring the political, limiting its scope, and creating, consequently, a limited autonomy for the state. Under the present entanglement of politics and economics, politics is "explosive, a trap." The "more the functions and power of decision are delegated to government," Lombard writes, "the more important it becomes to BE the government, or at least to CONTROL the government and its administration."[11] Following on this argument, a Pretoria economist -- one closely associated with the business community -- advocates stripping the state of its historic functions:

> It is therefore clearly of crucial importance for constitutional reform that no major decisions about welfare matters such as income re-distribution, development assistance, education, health, housing and the like are taken by the central authority. Any such link would immediately re-establish the need for individual and/or group representation in the central authority.[12]

The denial of the political has even spawned a revisionist historiography. The most eloquent of the revisionist formulations is found in the introduction to the Wiehahn Commission, presumably authored by its chairman, formerly an academic in Pretoria.

> The Republic of South Africa subscribes to the principles of a free market economy based on individual freedom in the market place. This freedom relates to freedom of choice either as consumer or as producer, and freedom of competition within a political democracy. This ideology has been practised by successive governments of South Africa since the dawn of the industrial and commercial history of the country and the Commission has no reason to believe that this philosophy will be abandoned. [13]

Though Lombard is more sensitive to the laws and administrative practise that limit the workings of the free economy, he too indulges in selective minimization of the political reality. After reviewing major pieces of legislation, including the Marketing Act which fostered European cooperative control of commercial agriculture and the Industrial Conciliation

Act which excluded African workers from the statutory collective bargaining framework, he concludes that "the control functions of state agencies" were not very important. They amount to little more than the keeping of registers, the issueing of licenses and the proclamation of agreements." Discrimination was "purely functional." The role of the state "was mainly to act as an umpire in and a protector of this process." Lombard also denies, against an impressive body of evidence to the contrary, that Afrikaners used their control of the state to realize economic gains: "Between 1900 and 1950 the Afrikaner people regarded politics as a means to freedom, not as a vehicle for economic advancement."[14]

Pushing the history back further yet, Leon Louw, general secretary of the Free Market Foundation, argues that the Afrikaner nation was founded on free-market, anti-statist principles. The free burghers "fought and opposed big government wherever they went." They even established Republics with limited governments; the most famous, the Orange Free State Republic of 1876, "provided that there could be no further legislative enactment."[15]

A more developed and theoretically interesting form of mystification is the notion of "market failure" -- a term that has surfaced in the Riekert Commission and the works of P.J. van der Merwe and Jan Lombard. The term is unassuming, as it suggests a principle for limited and legitimate state control over markets. All capitalist societies, it seems, are permissive of state meddling in markets where individual, rational market decisions produce in the aggregate "undesirable" results "from the standpoint of the community or society."

In this instance, however, our theorists turn a presumed market principle into a defense of massive state abrogation of labor markets. Van der Merwe offers, as a prime example of "market failure," "the social costs as

opposed to the strictly private cost which results from the large scale importation of workers from the subsistence sector in the Black states in and around South Africa and which leads to overcrowding, slum conditions, high unemployment rates, etc. in urban areas." Both van der Merwe and Lombard observe that Africans may not have acquired the degree of "rationality" necessary to the effective use of markets, producing sub-optimum allocation decisions and off-setting state interventions. Lombard suggests that a "liberal system of influx control or group areas would be based on the symptoms of civilised behavior (i.e. as demanded by a sophisticated market economy) rather than on colour as such."[16] A system, constructed around and rationalized by the notion of "market failure" allows an elaborate state penetration of markets and, at the same time, an affirmation of market principles.

Closely related to the first tenet, the diminution of the political, is a second which elevates the economy over the political as a source of wealth, employment and the public welfare generally. Sometimes this tenet emerges as an assertion and a hope. By leaving greater room for economic forces, the state is in fact opening the way for new forms of job creation. It "is therefore up to the business sector," van der Merwe writes, "to take advantage of this climate, to create employment opportunities for Blacks in metropolitan and decentralized areas and to move Blacks up the occupational ladder.[17] For others, the tenet is something more strictly classical: market processes bring an elaborted division of labor, specialization and a flowering of productive forces, often stifled by state-directed systems. "Once every adult participating in the process of production and exchange is able, willing and free to explore the most profitable application of his talents, whether intellectual or physical," Lombard writes, "no alternative

system of organization can measure up to the productive performance of the market system."[18]

Drawing profoundly on the first two tenets, the market theorists have raised a third -- the necessity of finding common principles in social organization. Clearly, a race stratified society based on labor repressive policies offers few such principles. But in capitalist societies, where the formal equality of the market is allowed to emerge and where the state has been disentangled from market exchanges, there is room for broadly shared ideas. In emphasizing the role of the individual, equality, freedom, and material advantage, market theorists hoped to enlist the black population in a broad-based identification with the society and state. Market society, Lombard believes, makes possible a "consistent set of basic political principles which will be acceptable to all the people of South Africa."[19]

For many of the theorists, these universal notions -- the market, freedom and equality -- are a potential counter-idiom to that of socialism and Marxism. The Free Market Foundation, for one, has conducted surveys among Africans and uncovered a partiality to "Marxist rhetoric." It proposes to offer, in response, a market-based idiom, calling for "economic liberation."[20]

B. Afrikaner Business: Shifting the Locus of Prestige

Afrikaner businessmen in the middle and late seventies began questioning the overall framework of state policy, although they had played a formative role in its construction. The Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) -- the principal Afrikaanse business association, representing medium and large firms, as well as some cooperatives and quasi-state enterprises -- challenged directly the efficacy of the homelands policy and state control measures: "The black stream to the cities will thus become stronger and exert pressure, despite all our laudable efforts and incentives to decentralisation and

homeland development .... Economic integration of the Blacks is inevitable and unstoppable if work and welfare is to be created and maintained." In the absence of a policy responsive to this new reality, whites will face a growing vulnerability in the face of black discontent:

> The danger must be avoided that unemployment, particularly in white areas, creates a breeding ground for communism. The small top layer of whites at the pinnacle of the labour pyramid is continually getting relatively smaller as against the base with a broad Black foundation.[21]

Afrikaner businessmen responded to this apparent breakdown in conventional ideology and policy with a two-pronged political initiative. First, they attempted to shift the locus of prestige and power within Afrikanerdom from the state to the private sector; and second, they sought to cope with the evident legitimation problem by providing some space for the urban African.

Andreas Wassenaar's polemical attack on the Vorster government was, above all, an attempt to denigrate the value of the political and assert the supremacy of the economic. He called on the public to "retard or stop the slide towards ever-increasing state absorption of the private sector, bit by bit, piece by piece." He countered this trend by elevating the position of the economic: the "full economy of a country" cannot be "sound unless the private sector, as a whole, is sound"; the private economy represents the "material life of a people."[22]

The elevation of the economic suggests, from this perspective, two policy-related conclusions: first, the strategic importance of the private sector in coping with problems of employment and African living standards; and second, the necessity of curtailing state involvement in the economy, above all, pulling back on state support for the parastatal corporations. Both observations, if translated into policy, suggest a shift of public

attention -- and resources -- from areas of traditional state activity to the private sector. Such an implication is explicit in the expressed views of the AHI. In the middle seventies, it came increasingly to justify profits and free enterprise -- a "system that can solve the problem of poverty."[23]

Simultaneously, the AHI launched an attack on the public corporations, particularly the Industrial Development Corporation and the Iron and Steel Corporation. In 1972-73, the AHI suggested, tentatively and privately, that these public entities "had gone beyond their terms of reference." By 1976, the Instituut was attacking directly the growing fixed capital of public corporations and the tendency to destroy the "goose which lays the golden egg," the private sector. Indeed, its critique was emerging as a generalized attack on the conventional state role:

> It is time to reflect seriously on the slow subversion of our free enterprise system on which South Africa's growth and prosperity is based, and to stimulate private initiative and the profit motive instead of restricting it. We will have to scrap the many unnecessary regulatory measures and laws, decrease and consolidate the unnecessary (government) departments and councils, make public services more efficient and better remunerated, better utilise and decrease the number of officials... We make too many laws to protect and regulate with the result that we are increasingly enslaved to our bureaucracy which controls and regulates us.[24]

Afrikaner business' second thematic response involves a pervasive concern with urban Africans -- how to improve their living standards and presumably reduce their discontent? How to provide for some kind of incorporation and broadened legitimacy for the social order?

While the prime minister at the first of two historic meetings with the business community spoke of a "constellation of states," business participants spoke repeatedly of poor living conditions or unemployment among urban Africans. These concerns were reiterated at the second meeting

in 1981 where businessmen concentrated, in particular, on the housing and training needs of the industrialized and stabilized portion of the African population.[25] The concern, voiced at these conferences, has been institutionalized in the work of the Urban Foundation (supported by English and Afrikaner businessmen). It has tried, through repetition, to legitimize the premise that urbanization is "inevitable," "natural," and "desireable." It has even tried to associate urban communities symbolically with the emerging economic order: "Urban communities are, by and large, free enterprise communities; and thus free enterprise links at every level with the complexities of urban life."[26]

The emphasis on urban Africans is part of a narrowly constructed concern with legitimation. Afrikaner businessmen, for the most part, have sought to uncouple the political and economic in a limited way, in a limited space, while maintaining the broad framework of state policy, including homelands and influx control. The AHI offers an interesting example of this posture. On the one hand, it says that "urban unemployment and the threats which this entails require serious action" and, further, that the "black worker in the white areas must be accepted as an economic necessity, trained and utilised..." On the other hand, it talks about political incorporation in the homelands: "the challenge is to devise a master plan for division of power, not power sharing."[27] In the area of collective bargaining, for example, the AHI consistently opposed African trade unions prior to their recognition by the government. "It would appear necessary to subordinate the bargaining power of the trade unions in each case to the national interest," the AHI declared in 1979.[28]

The focus of Afrikaner business was not essentially on uncoupling the political and economic in the labor field but on stratification. Any new

dispensation must make room for "stabilised elements," an "African middle-class," and the "black entrepreneur." The African must be given a "stake" in the system, some form of ownership, such as housing, which can be a "stabilising influence on Black urban communities."[29] A former president of AHI observed, ruefully, the African "has participated as a worker, but he has not shared the sweet fruits of the system."[30]

The precondition for stratification is de-racialization -- the stripping away of the least legitimate characteristics of the old order. For some businessmen, de-racialization has come to mean removing visibly discriminatory measures, particularly those that hamper the position of the emerging educated middle-class.[31] For others, the notion involves black collaboration in the labor control bureaucracy, above all, in influx control. The AHI seemed to think in 1976 that a homelands (black) takeover of the labor control administration would end the "incitement of hate against the Whites -- since in present circumstances the Whites have to enforce their laws..." The director of the Urban Foundation, while not wholly supportive of influx control, could envision its retention, "if there was bigger black participation in it."[32]

II Continuity and Struggle Within the State

Within the state, there is a broad consensus, opposed to the views of Afrikaner intellectuals and businessmen, that the state will inevitably play a larger and larger role in the labor market. Yet within this consensus, there are vast differences in perspective; specifically, on whether the politicized market is a problem and whether and how one broadens support for the regime. Where officials stand in this discourse depends very much

on their role in the bureaucracy and their connections to parties outside the state.[33]

A. In Defense of Conventional Ideology

While intellectuals and businessmen have been attempting in recent years to reconstruct state ideology, officials within the labor control bureaucracy have been holding on to the core tenet -- the state's essential control over markets. The commitment to this central aspect of traditional ideology has survived the Soweto disorders and the Biko murder; it has survived the ideological discourses surrounding the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions; and it has survived the apparent coming together of business and political leaders at the Carleton Centre and at Cape Town's Civic Centre. Moreover, adherence has not simply lingered in the rural backwaters or at the bottom of the bureaucratic structure. The entanglement of politics and economics has remained central to ideological thinking at all levels.

Officials, wherever they are employed in the structure, describe their functions in formal and in service terms -- "to bring the employer and laborer together" (Labor Bureau, Johannesburg), to place people in employment and to correlate the demand and supply" (LB, Krugersdorp); "the main purpose is to supply labor according to the demand" (Central Transvaal Administration Board).[34]

But the formal responses are nearly always overshadowed by a constant attention to maintaining "control." "True," one labor official observed,

> we bring the employer and employee together, but influx control is just as important. It is our job to see that blacks coming to the urban areas are on an organised basis, to see that blacks won't flow to an area where there aren't facilities (LB, Carletonville).

Few officials, whether simple operatives at the bottom or policy-makers at the top, can imagine life in the absence of controls:

> If you allow everybody to come in without the necessary documents, you will have a flooding (East Rand, AB).
>
> You'll have them in the bushes around Cape Town.... We are a developing country and with the political situation around us, if everything is abolished, the whole of South Africa would be overrun by the blacks. Then it would be impossible out of the chaos to maintain an economically sound basis (Western Cape AB).
>
> The influx from the rural areas into the urban areas, as elsewhere in the world, will be controlled. If you don't do that, you will create social problems that we will not be able to handle (Manpower Commission).

The enduring commitment to control translates into two streams of thought that are difficult to reconcile with the new ideology: first, officials evidence almost no sympathy or understanding of market principles; and second, officials envision a growing, rather than diminished role for the state in the regulation of economic life, particularly over the movements of African labor.

Hostility to Market Principles

Labor officials who have been tutored in an administered system find it very difficult to comprehend the market. In the absence of state administration, one official remarked quizzically, "the employer would have to get his own labor; he would not end up with the best type of employee." As for the employee, "there is no control over there; you will have uncontrolled entry of blacks" (Port Natal AB). A process that would certainly seem dear and appropriate to adherents of free enterprise, in official eyes, appears unseemly:

> [Without] any inducement for an employer or an employee to abide by legislation for unregistered employment, there would be no canalisation whatsoever; with the result that you would

> have undesireable social circumstances. People would flock in by the thousands. Employers would hire and fire them. There would be squatting conditions and crime (West Rand AB).
>
> [If the labor bureaus were abolished], how would you regulate the employee? You would throw the whole labor market open to whomever wanted to work wherever. What are you going to have then? It would be chaotic [Chief Commissioner, Northern Transvaal].

One official finally asked, "Isn't supply and demand the same as influx control?" (CC, Natal)

In any event, officials argued, the African is in many respects unprepared for market arrangements. When he cannot find a job in the city, the African does not return home. "Even with these new penalties," and the high unemployment, "they are streaming in to the urban areas... They have a different mentality. You can't always understand these people" (LB, Kempton Park). That mentality apparently includes a continued attachment to traditional culture, "even in the industrial situation," and a certain market impracticality compared with the white man: "These people just get on the train and they create the problem, like we have at Crossroads" (Employment Services Committee, Manpower Commission; Deputy Minister). "A majority of the blacks, the unskilled labourers, has not yet learned to think for himself, that there is no sense going to a place where there is no job" (Orange-Vaal AB).

The African's lack of understanding for labor markets leads him, almost inexorably, to the labor bureaucracy. "It is in their culture," one official observed. "They want somebody to lead them in a direction" (Employment Services Committee, Manpower Commission). With respect to the labor market, the "blacks need help" (LB, Boksburg). "They are so used to the system now," one official observed, "they expect us to find a job for them" (LB, Johannesburg).

Elaborating the State

The ideological discourse outside the state takes as axiomatic the diminishing role of the state. Within the bureaucracy, at every level, the opposite is the case. In these offices, there is very strong sense that pervading market relations bring a corresponding increase in state efforts to regulate them. Politics, consequently, remains deeply entangled in the economic.

The theme is propagated right from the top. An advisor to the minister for Cooperation and Development, member of legislative drafting committees, and formerly a chief commissioner, speaks eloquently of the process:

> Hopefully, it [expanding markets] should bring less [state regulation], but I know as a fact that it will bring more. How can you avoid that, because there are bound to be employers who will take the chance? They will find a loophole somewhere. You fill the loophole and that means another regulation.

He joined this general observation with a range of specific recommendations that suggests an overarching state structure: "What I would like to see is a system in this country whereby the faulting employee, as well as the faulting employer, are tried in the same forum, simultaneously and punished in that same forum. We should have new courts -- labor control tribunals." With regard to labor supplies, he noted, "there is a flaw, a weakness in our system of distribution ... If we could have a reservoir at a strategic point, then we could insist that nobody take a shortcut."

For officials at lower levels of the labor bureaucracy, the state role is simply a common sense extension of their commitment to control. "Personally," a Kempton Park labor bureau official observed,

> I think control will be more needed. You will have more people looking for work so you will need a proper system to canalise people, so that you can maintain proper health conditions.

A Klerksdorp official underlined the presumption with a simple definitiveness:

> There should always be control. Control is a very good thing. Without control, we don't have much of a chance of surviving -- *not just in South Africa but all over the world.... Maybe* less regulation, but control must always be there.

The conclusion that follows from the presumption is an expanded role for the bureaucracy itself. "Because these are the people who are handling the labor, who have the experience with the labor," an official at Carletonville observed, "they must have more to say in the flow of labor." Across a broad range of administration boards, there was a feeling that growing industrialization and urbanization, even with recent "reforms," would bring more labor bureaus, more inspectors, and more state regulation (LB, East Rand, Western Transvaal, Central Transvaal).

Narrow Legitimacy: Protecting the Locals

The pervasive concern with control is combined, throughout the bureaucratic structure, with an expressed desire to protect the position of the local or urban African population. This concern may seem paradoxical or, at least, disingenuous, yet nonetheless seems central to the legitimation of this ideological structure. Officials are concerned, not so much with broadening support for law and regulation amongst Africans, but instead with establishing a satisfactory justification for policy within the bureaucracy.

In the political climate of the time, maintaining the homelands policy is insufficient justification in itself, even for these unreconstructed adherents of the conventional faith. Indeed, at this level, the homelands are hardly mentioned, except as places where certain categories of workers live.[35]

Much more important to ideological thinking in the bureaucracy is the preoccupation with protecting local Africans. At the policy-making levels, there is a great deal of self-congratulation on this "concession." "It is now recognized," the chairman of the Manpower Commission declared, "that the black labor force is there to stay." It is accepted "at the senior level," the economic advisor to the prime minister observes, "that increasing numbers of blacks are in the urban areas; and provision is already being made in the plan for the PWV region." The chairman of the committee responsible for the plan agrees: "Now it has changed, for we can no longer think of Africans as temporary sojourners. We must rethink; that is a fact."

The recognition of African permanence is not confined to "reform circles" at the top. The tenet has equal or greater currency amongst the outgoing officials and at the lower ends of the bureaucracy. The former department secretary, for example, is eloquent on the point:

> There isn't any doubt in anybody's head that there will be a permanent black population in the cities. We can't wish them away. We can't dream them away. You can't carry on with the factories without these people.
>
> In the old days, some said they were here only as long as they sold their labor, but that is the old days. Not any more.

The former chief commissioner for the Western Cape says he and the local authorities have had a "soft spot" for "their locals" -- "their coloureds and for their local blacks who have been here 20 years and have qualified."

At the level of the administration boards and labor bureaus, the protection of urban Africans emerges, ideologically, as virtually the primary preoccupation of the labor control officialdom. The purpose of influx control is not so much to protect the standards of the white community, as to ensure the stability of the local black community; it "is to protect the

local boy, specifically, without any doubt, that is the main reason" (LB, East Rand). Another official notes, "the main thing to remember is that the local labor supply must not be exploited. It must be utilized first. They are the local residents as far as employment is concerned" (Carletonville LB).

If influx control were to be relaxed, if the state were to leave the labor market to its own dynamic, the local labor would be the first hurt. They would be thrown out of work and their wages undercut, as cheap labor from outside became available. "The locals would starve," a Durban labor bureau official concludes. A Transvaal official describes dire consequences:

> If you do away with the labor bureau, abolish influx control, everybody will be running in the street, even the Europeans... We'd have crowding again.... The employer, he wants the outside people; he's not so fussy.... You would frustrate the local people and you will get riots (Northern Transvaal AB).

It is not difficult to understand how such a posture would fit within the official's general ideological stance. The concern for the welfare of local Africans is, in fact, a justification for influx control, for continued state control over the developing labor market. It is an argument that officials can advance, with good conscience, in a period when politicians and actors outside the state have begun to question the old order and cast about for new ideas.

Nonetheless, the concern with the welfare of local Africans is no substitute for the homelands or the sense of totality in the Verwoerdian vision.[36] It essentially reinforces the other ideological principles discussed in this section which together further entangle the political and economic. In the next section, we will explore attempts within the bureaucracy to grapple with the contradictions in this ideological posture and with the political struggles that these contradictions have set in motion.

B. The Conflict Over Legitimation

There is a reasonable consensus within the labor control bureaucracy on the necessity of state regulation of African labor mobility. But within that consensus, officials are greatly divided on how to broaden the legitimacy of the political order. Officials at the top are very much concerned with appearances, with depoliticizing and deracializing the state's role. They wish to move towards the uncoupling of politics and economics, even as, paradoxically, they support an expanded state control over the labor market. Their ideological position reflects a partial assimilation of the discourse outside the state, a sensitivity to the "positive" pressure of private employers, and perhaps a greater degree of association with the private sector.[37]

Further down the bureaucratic ladder, there is less concern with altering appearances. Officials are more likely to describe existing arrangements as non-discriminatory and unproblematic. That position is reminiscent of the legitimations in the traditional racial-state ideology but not particularly responsive to the problem of broadening legitimacy among Africans. These officials, unlike their superiors, extend their critique of the market to employers who are seen as exploitive and destructive of broad community interests. They seem, as a result, isolated from the new directions in ideological thinking.[38]

Upper-level Officials: De-politicizing the State

While officials at the policy-making level will not easily relinquish control over the market, they are anxious to put a different face on it. "The influx control side is still there," one official observes and then proceeds to a frank account of "uncoupling."

> The impact of influx control will be phased out. In the future, it will not be a political issue but a practical issue. In the future, it will be a question of accommodation and jobs.
>
> In the 1950s, when we started with the labor bureaus, the main issue was to keep the numbers down. At that time, the government of the day made that determination. But at this time, it has been turned around, to get everybody in a job, to protect them, to give them a service. But the political sting of influx control is no longer so important. (Employment Services Committee)

Control based on availability of employment and housing, the chairman of the Manpower Commission concludes, is "more morally defensible; also more economically defensible." The economic advisor to the prime minister generalizes the problem and the government's intent: "The idea of managing the economy through indirect means still is hard to sell."

The emphasis on "indirect means" carries over into a range of policy areas, particularly the removal of racially discriminatory appearances. Control measures are now applied to Africans, not as Africans, but as rural dwellers in a situation of labor surplus. The Manpower Commission chairman observes:

> It is not a question of race discrimination. It just so happens that blacks are the people in the rural areas. At one time, there was a political basis for it, but not anymore.

Nicholas Wiehahn, chairman of the Commission of Inquiry into Labor Legislation and later of the Industrial Court, adopts a more active posture towards de-racialization, though framed by the same ideological context. "The problem" with influx control "so far" is "that it has been discriminatory," he observes. "If one retains influx control, it must be made applicable to all citizens," or at least all citizens whose entry into urban employment would tax water, housing and transportation facilities. The key, he points out, is "imagery," the imagery of "removing discrimination."

The attempt at ideological mystification is reflected in the disassociation of employers from the market critique.[39] Employers are no longer seen as the "magnets" creating social problems by attracting black labor; instead, social problems derive from processes that have been stripped of their class character. Influx control is necessitated by "development problems" -- the "uneven" location of industrial sites and employment opportunities (See economic advisor to the prime minister; Industrial Court).

Officials at this level view employers as the principal pressure group that has forced the state to face the problem of legitimation. The disorders in Soweto and elsewhere were important, as were the economic boom between 1969 and 1972 and the appearance of skilled labor shortages; but direct action by employers provided the main impetus. "It was an overwhelming pressure from private thinking," the chairman of the Employment Services Committee observes. Wiehahn agrees: "Business pressed hard for such a commission." The coolness that historically separated the state and business community has now "changed completely," the economic advisor to the prime minister notes: "With the breakthrough of Afrikaner businessmen into mining and industry, there was a more complete coalition with business. When Afrikaner businessmen pressed for the same things as English businessmen, the government began to listen."

Lower-Level Officials: Holding On

Administration board and labor bureau officials apparently have not been listening or, at least, have operated outside the networks that have brought greater identification with employer perspectives on the state. Though groups of intellectuals, Afrikaner businessmen and high officials

have begun to see the employer in a public-spirited role, these officials have remained committed to the traditional ideological posture. In the halls of the labor control bureaucracy, employers are still the villains of the piece, putting their immediate labor requirements ahead of the larger community's interest in limiting the influx of labor.

Wherever you turn in the officials depiction of the labor market, employers are a disruptive force. At the point of recruitment in the homelands, only the officials stand between the African and exploitation. "If you allow it [direct employer recruiting], with all respect to my fellow white man, it leads itself to so much irregularity, bribery and corruption, to the detriment of the black man," one official notes (CC, Northern Transvaal). In the labor market generally, officials restrain the employer's exploitive impulses. A Natal official describes his mediating role.

> I don't need to tell you that labor is a commodity like any other commodity. The employer will go for an illegal worker who will be cheaper... It is our responsibility to protect the permanent resident... There is exploitation. In our own way, we are trying to use the legal system to fight this exploitation.

The officials on the ground, working directly with the African worker and most removed from the heady discourses at the top, are uniformly hostile to the role of business. Indeed, they seem to define their role in direct opposition to the employer:

> You simply have to protect these local blacks. These employers want a black from the outside. He is normally illegally in the area and he will give a higher standard of work; he will take more from an employer before getting fed up. But as soon as they get the right to be in the area, they are the same as the local ones. But the employer is always seeking the outsider (LB, Carletonville).

> Though I'm a white man, as far as I'm concerned, alot of white employers will take advantage of the black man (LB, Klerksdorp).

> Employers -- some employers -- prefer contract workers. If we get a slack of employment and we want to place the local people,

> they moan. They say we always used these people. Some of these employers are very clever; they are only interested in their pockets. The outside man is prepared to work for a lower wage (LB, Boksburg).

In their isolation from the mainstream of the ideological discourse, officials at this level have remained reasonably indifferent to the broader legitimation problem. There is almost no mention here of depoliticizing labor control, that is, removing the visible state presence in the market. They seem little concerned with changing the racial character of state institutions. Indeed, most of these officials deny that these institutions in their present form have a racial character. "It is not discriminatory," a Boksburg official declares.

> We are there to help them. When I took one of the boys to Umtata to recruit labor, I had to show my book, just like him. It didn't bother me. Why should it bother them?

An official at Kempton Park is equally adament in his denials:

> I can't accept that we have any [discrimination] here at all, except that we only deal with blacks. Our machinery is not set to handle whites. We mainly cater to the ordinary laborer.

Officials in the administration boards are willing to entertain recent proposals that would consolidate departments and bring blacks and whites under a uniform administration. But, like the labor bureau officials below them in the hierarchy, they tend to deny that existing structures are tainted by a racial character -- and, therefore, illegitimate. "As far as I am concerned, it is not discrimination," a Transvaal official says. "In the case of the Bantu, you have the numbers that count; so you have to control to avert chaos" (Central Transvaal AB). The chief commissioner for the Witwatersrand adopts a similar stance: "influx control would have been necessary even if all rural blacks were poor white. We would have to have the same control." An official at the East Rand board concludes with a

definiteness that seems to negate the problem:

> There is no racial discrimination in a labor bureau. There is no race in this. This is labor, even though the laborer is a black man and the employer a white man.

III. The Political Leadership: The Political Use of Ideas

Some fractions of the National Party, now organized in the opposition, ritualistically affirm conventional tenets about the homelands and urban Africans. Even within the government, there are centers of traditional thought. The deputy minister for Cooperation and Development still talks about "keeping the numbers down" and the need for more "regulation with a greater influx of people." Some state agencies, like the South African Broadcasting Corporation, as late as 1976, were reaffirming core philosophic notions: there is a "natural" split between "economic man and spiritual man" and the latter can only be realized amongst one's "people"; "the Black man will be stunted and frustrated if he is isolated from the mainstream of his people and is culturally alienated";[40] the black man "cannot survive, let alone fulfill himself, as a fragmented, isolated individual";[41] the greater and the greatest must be attained by him within his own nation."[42]

But those currents have been isolated within the media and within the state. The ascendant political leadership begins with two premises: one, articulated by the minister of Cooperation and Development, that "apartheid is dead"; the other, articulated by the prime minister himself and every major commission in recent years, that the "maintenance of free enterprise" is "the basis of our economic and financial policy." But what do political leaders intend when they advance these grand ideological notions? Are they constructing a new state ideology?

Political leaders offer what probably should be characterized as a formal and correct affirmation of free market tenets. Prime Minister Botha supported new financial policies that have allowed floating exchange rates, reduced marginal tax rates, and limits on capital investment by parastatal enterprises.[43] He, and other members of the government, speak freely of the economic bounty in free enterprise. His finance minister, drawing directly on Adam Smith, states that free enterprise makes possible an "unprecedented rise in real wealth and income."[44] Finally, the political leadership has adopted as convention the diminished role of the state in economic affairs. The finance minister again states the principle: "... private enterprise must be considered the norm and State interference with private enterprise must be regarded as a deviation from the general principle, to be justified in each instance by reference to the special circumstances of the case."[45]

The affirmation, however, is not part of a well-integrated or widely accepted body of thought. As the advisor to the prime minister points out, free enterprise principles are not well understood in the bureaucracy, even in the economic departments, and "there is not much clarity" at the "cabinet level."[46]

For the political leadership, free enterprise is largely a strategic political resource. It provides a loose set of principles, and some emotive terms, upon which the state can organize opposition to external forces, broaden support for the regime among Africans, and enlist business's economic resources in new state initiatives.

A. Countering Marxism

Free enterprise is, above all, a counterpoint to the Marxist, "total onslaught" -- both external and domestic. On the external front, the prime

minister has associated free enterprise with South Africa and counterposed it to the tyranny and subversion that comes with Marxist regimes: "The order which Marxism creates leaves no room for freedom."[47] The minister of defense, General Magnus Malan, believes South Africa is caught up in a "communist-inspired onslaught" which intends the "overthrow of the present constitutional order and its replacement by a subject communist-oriented black government." South Africa's association with free enterprise is part of a broader association with "free" nations opposed to such an onslaught.[48]

Because a direct assault from outside seems implausible, the main thrust of the onslaught is on domestic subversion, thus the concern with legitimation. By associating free enterprise with the regime, political leaders apparently hope to broaden opportunities for a shared identification with the existing social and political order. Koornhof views this association as the primary task before the government -- how to prevent lingering dissatisfaction from becoming an anti-regime ideology and how to form a new ideology that enlists black cooperation.[49]

Support for the ideological project is strong across the ascendant political leadership. The defense white paper in 1977, organized by General Malan, sets the stage by asserting the need to enlist the "entire population, the nation and every population group" in the "national strategy."[50] The Human Sciences Research Council plan for the early 1980s places a considerable emphasis on "the susceptibility of the various cultural groups to ideologies."[51] To organize support around a free enterprise ideology, political leaders understand that Africans will have to be provided reasons for becoming adherents. The prime minister told the Carleton Centre conclave that the "benefits must be made apparent"; the finance minister told a

gathering on free enterprise that "the man on the shop floor must have the feeling that for him or his children there are no insurmountable barriers ...."[52]

B. Enlisting Business Support

Free enterprise also represents an idiom and bargaining resource that, political leaders hope, will bring closer business-state cooperation. Such a trade was evident at the outset of the Carleton Centre meeting with business leaders, when the prime minister outlined "free enterprise" concessions to business: restrictions on government investment and the "release of resources to the private sector", lower tax rates, and the "general deregularisation of the economy as evidenced by the re-examination of price, rent and exchange control." Moreover, he drew a clear line between the proper role of government and the proper role of business:

> I believe we in government must understand that economic growth as such is mostly the responsibility of private enterprise. Of course, governments have a key role to play in areas such as the creation of physical and social infrastructure. Essentially, however, it is private enterprise which combines all the elements of production to produce wealth... No government can successfully prescribe to private enterprise what to produce, how to produce, for whom to produce, and where to invest."

In exchange, the prime minister appealed to business leaders for greater cooperation in the implementation of government policy; specifically, for business leaders to invest in the homelands and deconcentration points:

> In the extension of co-operation the Government can, however, only create a framework; the greatest real contribution to the extension of those relationships lies in the domain of the business sector. If you as business leaders extend your activities within our region in an innovative and energetic manner, you will be making a significant contribution to the happiness and well-being of all those peoples who make a living under the Southern Cross.[53]

While Botha posed this exchange at a high level, other observers and

political leaders have focused on the more directly political form of the bargaining process. An Afrikaner businessman who served on the Wiehahn Commission suggests that a loose free enterprise ideology is part of an accommodation between the government and business, at the expense of white workers. The state could not address the question of legitimation, unless it "could break the power structure of the whites." For that, the government had to enlist the prestige and position of Afrikaner businessmen.

At the cabinet level, the accommodation around free enterprise concepts may represent an attempt to reconstitute the political process around technocratic criteria. "For most cabinet members," the economic advisor to the prime minister observes,

> [free interprise] means forming a coalition of government and big business. It brings the Latin American model to mind. There is a belief, if only leading business people and leading government officials can get together, they can work out the country's problems.[54]

IV Ideological Dissolution

It should be apparent from this extended discussion that the racial-state ideology, forged during the 1950s and 1960s, had yielded from the mid-1970s to widespread disunity. The dissolution of the ascendant ideology is apparent in the disintegration of thematic unity and the emergence of conflicting perspectives within and outside the state.

The developing contradiction of an entangled political-economic order has spun off groups of diverse position and perspective. Officials at the bottom of the labor control bureaucracy, very much isolated from the growing association with business and weakened politically by the general isolation of white workers, has sought to defend their function and some of the traditional ideological tenets. They have not placed much emphasis on efforts to

deracialize and depoliticize labor control activities and continue to view employers as a threat to the white community. Officials at the policy level, while insisting on the maintenance of market control, have struggled with the implications of a politicized market and of black disaffection. In contrast with other officials, they have attempted to define a positive role for employers. Political leaders have siezed on the idiom in free enterprise to build a closer alignment with business, though they have not addressed with clarity the problem of an elaborated state role in the labor market. In policy terms, the state remains deeply mired in the market; in ideological terms, political leaders have hardly begun to elaborate the themes, raised by Afrikaner intellectuals and businessmen, for disentangling the political and economic.

The dissolution of state ideology is also apparent in the acrimony that has accompanied the growing differences in ideology and connection to dominant class actors. Andreas Wassenaar, chairman of one of South Africa's largest financial enterprises, intitated the public encounter by declaring that the government, particularly the bureaucracy, is the "foe."[55]

Officials, with close ties to the business community and the present political leadership, have subsequently come into direct conflict with the labor control bureaucracy. The chairman of the Manpower Commission observes that officials in Cooperation and Development are "a real problem... They wear blinkers," (By contrast, officials at Manpower Utilization, "much more closely associated with business," are seen as able to implement policy.) A principal advisor on the Riekert Commission, and now an official, observes that "the bureaucrats in the various sections are now as cold as ice to me." His experience was shared by a chairman of one of the labor reform commissions who observes that, when visiting the minister of

Cooperation and Development, "the people don't talk to me -- the upper level of civil servants. Those that aided in the preparation of the report are deeply opposed to the policy recommendations." He declares, with remarkable boldness, that we have "to break the mafia that could think of no other way of dealing with the black man" and concludes, with some confidence, that "the private sector will not allow the mafia to kill these proposals."

FOOTNOTES

1. Bureau for Economic Policy and Analysis, Focus on Key Issues: Political Stability, No. 26, University of Pretoria, July 1980.

2. Jan Lombard, On Economic Liberalism in South Africa, Bureau for Economic Policy and Analysis, University of Pretoria, ( ), p. 25.

3. For an example, see R.J.W. van der Kooy, "In Search of a New Economic Development Paradigm for Southern Africa: an Introduction," Development Studies Southern Africa 2 ( ), p. 22.

4. John S. Saul and Stephen Gelb, The Crisis in South Africa: Class Defense, Class Revolution. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981, pp. 1-8; Stanley B. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development: Comparative Perspectives. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, pp. 398-403.

5. Saul and Gelb provide an excellent analysis of the crisis in South Africa, its structural roots and political manifestations; they spend less time discussing the content and transformation of dominant ideology.

6. By beginning with intellectuals and businessmen, I do not mean to imply that the initiative for this discourse originated outside the state. There is credible evidence suggesting an interactive process, with political leadership inviting the questioning and initiative of business and intellectuals.

7. Hermann Giliomee, Parting of the Ways: South African Politics 1976-82. Cape Town: David Philip, 1982, pp. x-xi; notes 1-3; also Robert T. Tusenius, "Prosperity Southern Africa," Proceedings of the South African Economic Convention, 27 June-28, 1979, p. 28.

8. Jan Lombard, "Cause of the Black Welfare Economy," in Volkshandel, March 1978; Lombard, On Economic Liberalism in South Africa, Bureau for Economic Policies and Analysis, University of Pretoria, ( ) , p. 54.

9. There are two other principles to be considered later, but both follow from the first.

10. P.J. van der Merwe, "An Analysis of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower," Finance and Trade Review 13 (June 1979), p. 34.

11. Lombard, On Economic Liberalism, p. 16, 34.

12. I was asked by this individual not to attribute this document to him or any organization.

13. Republic of South Africa, Commission of Enquiry into Labour Legislation (Wiehahn), p. 181.

14. Lombard, On Economic Liberalism, pp.

15. Lombard, On Economic Liberalism, pp. 12-13, 30-31. See Heribert Adam and Hermann Giliomee, Ethnic Power Mobilized (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, pp.) for a discussion of the Afrikaner economic advance.

16. van der Merwe, "An Analysis," pp. 34-36; Lombard, On Economic Liberalism, p. 8, 23, 39.

17. van der Merwe, "An Analysis," p. 56; also see Willie Breytenbach, "The Botha Strategy and the 'Eighties'." South Africa Foundation, Briefing Papers, No. 5, July 1980.

18. Lombard, On Economic Liberalism, pp. 17-18, 34-35.

19. Ibid., pp. 33, 51.

20. Interview, general secretary, Free Market Foundation. See also, Free Market 1 (1980), p. 26; and Jan Lombard, "Socio-Economic Prospect for the Eighties," speech before Institute of Personnel Management, Pretoria, September 23, 1981, p. 5.

21. Volkshandel, April 1976, trans. MT. In October 1981, Volkshandel published a strong editorial reiterating these themes.

22. A.D. Wassenaar, Assault on Private Enterprise: Freeway to Communism. Tafelberg, 1977, pp. 65,67.

23. Interview, former president, Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut; also Volkshandel, May, 1976, trans. MT

24. Interview, former president, AHI; Volkshandel, March 1977, May 1976, trans. MT

25. "Toward a Constellation of States," meeting between the prime minister and business leaders, Carleton Centre, 22 November 1979, pp. 24, 29; "A Regional Development Strategy for Southern Africa," meeting between the prime minister and business and community leaders (Good Hope) Civic Centre, Cape Town, 12 November 1981, pp. 32-36.

26. J.H. Steyn, "The Quality of Life in our Future Towns -- Services Hold the Key," South Africa Institute of Civil Engineers, 1980, pp. 3-4; Steyn, "Free Enterprise and Urban Communities," National Conference of the 1820 Settlers National Monument Foundation, November 1979, p. 1.

27. Volkshandel, June 1977, trans. MT; August 1978.

28. Volkshandel, June, 1979.

29. J.G. van der Horst, Old Mutual, at Good Hope Conference, p. 37.

30. Interview, former president, AHI. 98. F.J.C. Cronje, Nedbank, Good Hope Conference, p. 40; also AHI memorandum to the Wiehahn Commission, Volkshandel February 1978.

31.

32. Volkshandel, April 1976; Interview: Urban Foundation.

33. This report on the interview material concentrates on the main lines of thought. It does not include, for lack of space, a discussion of the exceptional views which pepper the bureaucracy.

34. During the period, February 1979 to April 1982, I conducted interviews with individuals holding positions at various levels within the labor control framework and with individuals in strategic positions outside. A list of the state interviews is presented below:

Policy Makers
- Chairman, Manpower Commission
- Director, Manpower Commission
- Chairman, Employment Services Comm., Manpower Commission
- Special Assistant to the Minister for Cooperation and Development
- Deputy Minister for Department of Cooperation and Development
- Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister
- Senior Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank
- Chairman, Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation
- Chairman, Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower
- Deputy Secretary for Labour, Department of Cooperation and Development

Middle-Level: Chief Commissioners (CC)
Witwatersrand, Western Cape, Natal, Northern Transvaal

Middle-Level: Chairman or Director of Administration Boards (AB)
Central Transvaal, Western Cape, Western Transvaal, West Rand, Port Natal, East Rand

Middle-Level: Directors of Labor, Administration Boards (AB)
Central Transvaal, Western Transvaal, East Rand, Orange-Vaal, West Rand, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Port Natal, Northern Transvaal

Lower-Level: Directors of Labor Bureaus (LB)
Carletonville, Johannesburg, Krugersdrop, Klerksdorp, Lichtenburg, Germiston, Boksburg, Kempton Park, Langa, Grahamstown, Durban, Empangeni, Pretoria, Mabopane

35. It is interesting that the strongest affirmation of the homeland connection came from two officials who had lost their positions. A former department secretary spoke of homelands in genuine national terms; "... if a chap just gets on a train, he is breaking the laws of his country and my country." A former chief commissioner in the Western Cape used a similar idiom: "Every government has the right to have its borders protected."

36. At the upper levels of the bureaucracy, officials still stress the importance of continued political outlets in the homelands. They speak about "representation in the national states" and the possibilities for economic, though not political integration in the white areas (Employment Services Committee; Manpower Commission). On occasion, there is mention of African interest in an election in QwaQwa (CC, Northern Transvaal); even more occasionally, there are strong affirmations of the traditional sort: "They have their own states where they can be state president" (Central Transvaal AB). But such affirmations are rare, overshadowed by descriptive or instrumental accounts of the connection.

37. Their critique of the market does not include a critique of the role of private employers; in their reflections on "labor reform," they suggest that employer pressure has been the most important consideration.

38. Their scattered impressions about the impulse for "reform" includes almost no reference to the private sector.

39. The former officials at this level, unlike the present officials continue to view employers as associated with the problem. The former chief commissioner for the Western Cape describes the squatter problem after the war as an "employer's paradise."

40. SABC, Current Affairs, July 17, 1974.

41. SABC, Current Affairs, December 3, 1975.

42. SABC, Current Affairs, June 11, 1976.

43. See Nigel Bruce, "Monetary Policy on the Mend." Energos (1980).

44. Owen Horwood, opening address, National Conference of the 1820 Settlers' Monument Foundation, 19 November 1979, pp. 24-25.

45. Ibid., p. 3. One should contrast this quote with the ideological position discussion on pp.

46. The director of the Urban Foundation made a similar observation.

47. P.W. Botha, opening address, Carleton Centre Conference, p. 10.

48. Magnus Malan, quoted in Deon Geldenhuys, "Some Foreign Policy Implications of South Africa's 'Total National Strategy', with particular reference to the '12 point plan.'" The South African Institute for International Affairs, March 1981, p. 3.

49. Rand Daily Mail, 12 October 1979.

50. Republic of South Africa, White Paper on Defense 1977.

51. Human Sciences Research Council, "Possible National Research Programmes.'" ( ).

52. P.W. Botha, opening address, p. 11; Horwood, opening address, pp. 19-20.

53. Botha, opening address, pp. 11-12, 21; also comments at Good Hope Conference, pp. 20-21.

54. See the discussion of "technocratic ideology" in Giliomee, The Parting of the Ways, pp. 35-40.

55. Wassenaar, Assault, pp. 85-87.