Should South Africa be a unitary state?

Yes! replied most, but not all, South Africans. The full question read "Do you think there should be a unitary state in South Africa which includes Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana?"

More than two thousand South Africans of all races were polled for this question with the over-all result that 60,1% were in favour, 21,2% were against and 18,7% were undecided.

When the individual race groups are examined, however, stark contrasts appear.

Almost all blacks (81,4%) think a unitary state is desirable, Asians agree (53%) - but only marginally so, while less than half the coloureds (41,6%) and whites (38,8%) share this view. More than 43% of whites oppose a unitary state, a proportion which is almost double that found in the Asian (24,5%) and coloured (23,7%) groups, while only 8,7% of blacks share this view. Certainly a telling indication of black/white aspirations and fears with the other groups trapped somewhere in between! Very few (9,8%) blacks are undecided about the issue. Whites are also relatively polarised, but not nearly as much as the blacks, with only 17,9% being undecided against the 22,5% of Asians and 34,6% of coloureds.

When examined in terms of gender males in the black (88,6%), Asian (63,7%) and coloured (49%) groups showed far greater support than women belonging to the same groups (77,2%, 42,8% and 36,2% respectively). There was no significant difference in the way white males and females viewed the situation. Women were more undecided than men, especially in the case of coloured women (44,5%). Asian women showed surprisingly strong (30,3%) opposition to the idea, followed by coloured men (29,9%) and women (19,2%), Asian men (18,5%), black women between 18 and 24 (14,8%), black women over 25 (7,8%), and black men (7,5%). Age played a significant role with black female respondents.
Gender and age made no difference to the replies of the white group, but income and the reading of newspapers did. The middle income bracket (R1,200 - R5,999) as well as the extremely low end of the scale (under R400 per month), opposed the idea (53.8%) with only 34.7% in favour and 12.5% undecided. Opinion in the lower income group (R400 - R1,999) and amongst those refusing to divulge their income, was more evenly distributed with 32.7% supporting the idea, the same percentage opposing it, and 34.7% having no opinion. The upper income bracket almost inverts the attitudes of the middle group with 57.5% in favour of a unitary state, 31.3% against it, and 11.3% having no opinion. This is also the only white group where the reading of newspapers make no difference. It is quite surprising to find the low income group the least polarised of all (black, Asian and coloured included), and the middle income group as opposed as the top income group is in favour. Newspaper readers in the middle income bracket were significantly less undecided (10.6%) than the lower bracket (23.4%), making up in No's! (46.2%) what the other had gained in "Maybes" (only 29.8% voting no). The non-readers of the two groups also showed significant differences, again mostly between those who said no and those who had no opinion:

"Quo vadis?", one might ask given such varied responses. Certainly we should sit down and talk.
Would you Kill in Self-Defence?

Given the marked increase in the level of violence in South Africa we asked our telephone respondents whether they thought that killing someone in self-defence could be allowed or was justified. It is perhaps surprising that only 50% of our respondents answered the above question in the affirmative.

Our recorded responses varied markedly with race. The group most likely to use violence as a means of self-defence were the whites in our sample (84,1% responded affirmatively); the least likely were the blacks, with the coloureds and the Asians in between. Within the black group, the highest proportion of affirmative responses was among those with matric or better, and that was only 39%.

Asians also thought violence used in self-defence was justified (71,5%), especially the better educated group with matric or higher qualifications, 84,4% of whom shared this view, as opposed to only 60% of those with high-school or lower education. Amongst newspaper readers in the latter group, however, this sense of justification jumped to 70% - a fact consistent with the highly credible hypothesis that knowledge of the violent actions of others tends to increase our willingness to commit violent acts of our own, for whatever reason.

Perhaps the most unexpected and therefore most interesting, finding of the poll is the strong correlation between belief that killing in self-defence is justifiable and high levels of education in Asians, blacks and coloureds.

For example, blacks with a Standard 5 education or below said that killing someone in self-defence cannot be justified (72%), while 21% said it could be justified, and (8%) were uncertain. The corresponding figures for blacks with matric or better were 39%, 54,8% and 6,2% respectively. Of the English-speaking coloureds with a Standard 5 to Standard 9 education, 61% thought that killing somebody in self-defence was justified, whereas 34% thought it was not justified, and 5% were uncertain. However, 88% of the English speaking coloureds with a
matric education thought that killing in self-defence was justified and only 13% thought that it was not.

As socio-economic status is, broadly speaking, highly correlated with education, it is probably not too rash to conclude from the data that socio-economic status is a good predictor of the attitudes of the members of our sample on this issue. In short, within our sample, willingness to use violence as a means of self-defence appears to be most prevalent among the upper classes, be they black, white, coloured or Asian.

VIOLENCE: WHEN IS IT JUSTIFIED?

Recently in South Africa there has been a marked upsurge in all types of violence. Much of this violence appears to be politically motivated. In addition to this unstable political and economic conditions have provided a fertile breeding ground for a substantial increase in the level of criminal violence. Under the circumstances it is often hard to distinguish between acts of criminal violence and acts of political violence. Furthermore, it is equally difficult to distinguish between offensive and defensive violence (see previous article). After all the best form of defence may be offence.

The vast majority of those polled (85.6%) took the view that violence and the killing of opponents was not politically justified. Only 8.6% thought that it was justified. The remaining 5.8% did not know.

A significantly higher proportion of Sotho and Nguni-speakers (12.8%) than whites (5.6%) believed that violence and the killing of political opponents was politically justified. The relatively small proportion of our black respondents who believed that political violence was justified (12.8%) seems almost inconsistent with the relatively large proportion who were willing to use violence as a means of self-defence (30.7%) until one bears in mind that even at the high end of the scale, only 12.8% of Sotho and Nguni-speakers believe in it.
Our findings are not inconsistent with the recent upsurge in violence in South Africa. It is generally accepted that acts of political violence are committed by a small minority. This is consistent with the attitudes displayed by our respondents. Furthermore, violent acts are often committed in moments of passion, even if afterwards dispassionate reflection on the matter leads the individual to the conclusion that such acts are not politically justified and wrong. When polled on this question, it is likely that our respondents told us what they feel they ought to do rather than what they in fact would do under possibly very difficult and provocative circumstances.

Our sample of blacks is most representative of those with higher incomes who can afford telephones. This could have the effect of under emphasizing political violence since the perpetrators of such acts may be from the lowest socio-economic groups who are not accessible by telephone.

ARE WE HEADING FOR CIVIL WAR?

South Africans are living through a period of very rapid political change. The politically unthinkable of a few years ago has become the politically commonplace of today. There are many contenders for power in our newly created political arena. At a time like this there is always the chance that the authorities will lose control of the situation, and that the country will drift into a state in which high levels of violence are the norm.

Recent events in South Africa are certainly not inconsistent with the above scenario. There have been the tit-for-tat killings by Inkatha and ANC supporters, the assassination of black leaders, and much talk of the dangers of the country lapping into civil war. There have been ominous rumblings from the white far right. Many might, with justification, assert that the country is already in a state of low-level civil war.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that a substantial proportion of our respondents (40,5%) take the view that there is a high risk of civil war in South Africa. Some 32,8% of our respondents believed that there was a low risk of civil war, while 12,4% thought that the risk was neither great nor small, and 14,3% did not know or were not sure.

Males with matric in the professional-management class were most likely to believe that there is a high risk of civil war breaking out (51,4%). Some 20% of them believed that the risk was small, 14,3% thought that the risk was neither great nor small, and 14,3% did not know or were not sure.
This bodes ill for the South African economy, as many key economic decision makers are members of this group. Key managers are unlikely, for example to invest if they believe that there is a great chance of civil war or if they are uncertain. In addition, the fact that a substantial proportion of those in our overall sample believed that a civil war is a real possibility must have serious consequences for the morale of the nation.

FOCUS ON BLACK OPINION: SHOULD BLACK LEADERS BE IN THE CABINET

Until fairly recently the Nationalist government has been closely identified with its now disavowed policy of apartheid. President de Klerk's government, having recanted on the question of apartheid, has set itself the task of overseeing the implementation of a new constitution. However, many of the same people previously associated with the discredited policies of apartheid are still present. This includes President de Klerk himself. Without in any way questioning its bona fides, the government's history may hinder its attempts at promoting greater co-operation among all South Africans.

Many, particularly black South Africans, may question the ability of the leopard to change its spots. The ANC has demanded a constituent assembly in order to oversee the implementation of a new constitution. We suggested that our respondents consider the incorporation of black leaders into the government. Such a move may help quell the rising tide of violence in the country, and facilitate the transition to the new South Africa.

A substantial majority of our respondents (64.5%) in all groups supported the move. Of the black males with a Standard 5 education or less, 82.6% were strongly supportive of or inclined to support the suggestion that black leaders be included in the present government, whilst only 17.4% were inclined to reject or strongly rejected the suggestion. For black males with a Standard 6 to matric education, the corresponding figures are 70.8% in favour and 20.1% against our suggestion.
interpretations of the causes of the violence, and on the other, their suggested measures for preventing it. The ANC's decision not to participate in the State President's conference on violence is indicative of deep divisions in the approach of the major political parties to the causes and consequences of violence in South Africa.

Meanwhile, there is growing fear among all population groups - particularly in the urban black communities - that political violence is running out of control. Whites increasingly believe that the violence in the black communities could spill over into the white residential areas. It goes without saying that a development of this nature will stoke the fires of white radicalism. There is little doubt that the issue of violence will be critical in the forthcoming constitutional negotiations.

The questions asked to probe the respondents' perceptions of the current level of political stability/confidence in South Africa were roughly the same as those used for the April survey. As in April, some of the response patterns indicate perceptions that point to a relatively low level of perceived political stability; whereas others indicate a high level of perceived political stability.

Generally speaking the findings of the present survey do not deviate significantly from those set forth in our April issue. Where applicable, the corresponding percentages from the April issue are included in brackets.

In the context of the concept "New South Africa" close on half the respondents (46%, April = 55%) believed that life in the new South Africa would be better than at present, as against 21% (April = 24%) who expected life to be worse.

Some 40% (April = 43%) of the main sample strongly agreed that a new South Africa would bring prosperity to all South Africans with only 8% (April = 9%) strongly disagreeing, and 43% (April = 49%) giving either neutral answers or indicating that they agreed or disagreed "to some extent". Those who strongly agreed were 52% of coloured respondents, 56% of Asian respondents, 34% of black respondents and 26% of white respondents.
However, black males with a better than matric education are almost evenly divided on the issue, with 44.6% favouring the proposal and 42.5% against, the remaining 12.8% either not knowing or being unsure. One possible explanation for these figures is that some of the most highly educated blacks fear that their leaders may be co-opted by the government before there has been any real political change in South Africa.

**Political Confidence Index**

During the past month in South Africa the upsurge in violence showed no sign of abating. On the contrary, many different analysts and decisionmakers increasingly believe that a culture of violence is taking root in South Africa, a development which could seriously jeopardize peaceful nation-building based on democratic principles. Even the State President said in Parliament recently that South Africa was destined for civil war should the rising tide of violence not be brought under control. Also the ANC continued warning the Government that the violence must be stopped, if the gains made during contacts between them and the Government were not to be squandered. The ANC allege that their call for effective government action against violence was the main reason behind the ultimatum recently issued to State President de Klerk, in which various demands related to the issue of violence were presented to the Government.

Regardless of the differences between the Government and the various anti-Government interest groups, a growing consensus is emerging that a legitimate democratic social order in South Africa will remain beyond the country's reach if the main players on the South African stage fail to create the order and stability essential for the transition to a democratic post-apartheid society.

It appears that all the politically relevant interest groups agree that mass political violence is detrimental to the interpretations of normalization/democratization of South African society: however there are sharp differences between, on the one hand, their
Support for State President de Klerk's leadership is still closely associated with optimistic expectations about the new South Africa. Broadly speaking, there is a strong positive relationship between support for Mr De Klerk's policies and optimism about conditions in a post-apartheid South Africa. As reflected in Figure 8, 34% (April = 40%) of the main sample agreed that these policies would bring lasting peace to South Africa; only 9% (April = 8%) disagreed with this assessment and the rest were either neutral or supported the assessment only to some extent. Black respondents were significantly more inclined to support this assessment than whites (30% and 18% respectively). It also appears that NP supporters (46%) were more inclined to support this assessment followed by DP supporters (33%), ANC supporters (33%) and, significantly, by only 8% of CP supporters.

Slightly more than half (52%, April = 51%) of the respondents strongly agreed that State President De Klerk was sincere in his endeavour to eradicate racial discrimination in South Africa, with a mere 6% (April = 6%) strongly disagreeing. The white respondents were significantly more inclined to support the statement regarding Mr De Klerk's sincerity than the black respondents (65% and 35% of the white and black respondents respectively). The comparable proportions of coloured and Asian respondents subscribing to this statement were 69% (coloured) and 58% (Asian).

As can be deduced from Figure 9, 30% (April = 34%) of the main sample strongly supported the statement that South Africans shared a sufficient degree of goodwill to ensure a happy future with 13% (April = 13%) strongly disagreeing. As reflected also in Figure 8, the white respondents were less optimistic than the other three main population groups on questions probing South Africa's chances of achieving a new and stable democratic order.

As also determined during the April survey, South Africans' growing pre-occupation with violence and security continues unabated. As set out in Figure 10 for instance, 57% (April = 50%) of the main sample strongly agreed with the statement that
political violence in particular was continuing to threaten the introduction of a stable democratic order in South Africa, with only 6% (April = 6%) strongly disagreeing. Relatively more whites (69%) than blacks (45%) were inclined to support this statement. The comparable figures for the Asian and coloured respondents were 75% and 57% respectively. White English-speaking respondents (71%) were only slightly more inclined than white Afrikaans-speaking respondents (68%) to support this statement.

Looking at Figure 11 it appears that 61% (April = 52%) strongly agreed that the possibility of growing mass political violence and anarchy in South Africa was increasing, with only 3% (April = 4%) strongly disagreeing. Following a general trend, relatively more white respondents (69%) were pessimistic in this regard than black respondents (55%). In the case of the Asian and coloured segments of the main sample the comparable figures were 70% and 58% respectively. However, despite the gloomy nature of the views of South Africans on socio-political stability, almost nine out of every ten respondents (87%) declared that they were not considering leaving the country, whereas 11% mentioned that they were thinking in this direction.

Still on the subject of socio-political instability, more respondents (50%, April = 46%) said that they felt "unsafe" to "very unsafe" than respondents who declared that they felt "safe" to "very safe" (41%, April = 43%) - see Figure 12. Following the general trend, more black respondents (67%) were inclined to feel unsafe compared with the coloured (33%), white (36%) and Asian (47%) respondents. Relatively more Afrikaans-speaking than English-speaking respondents felt unsafe (38% and 33% respectively).
However, despite a high level of pessimism about the incidence of violence in South Africa, relatively more respondents strongly agreed that foreign investors could feel assured about the safety of their investments (29%, April = 43%), compared with those respondents (9% April = 11%) who strongly disagreed with this statement - with 35% (April = 38%) conceding the reality of some risk.

With a view to measuring the extent to which respondents have confidence in the present political situation in South Africa, we designed an index based on the summed response frequencies in respect of 10 questions each of which can serve as a rough indicator/predictor of the degree of political confidence of individual respondents (see figure 13). An exploratory index was introduced in the April edition of Information Update. For the May survey certain technical adjustments were made to the original basic design. Each of the ten questions mentioned above was coded on a six point scale.

The two poles of the scale separate, on the one hand, those respondents who have no confidence in South Africa's political situation (the negative responses), and, on the other, those who have full confidence in the country's political situation (the positive responses). A zero value signifies that the respondent is uncertain or unsure about the indicator concerned; a 1-value signifies that the respondent concerned strongly agrees with a particular negative statement about political confidence; a 2-value indicates that the respondent feels negative to some extent with regard to a specific statement (indicator); a 3-value represents a neutral viewpoint; a 4-value means that the respondent agrees to
some extent with the positive statement concerned; and a 5-value signifies that the respondent strongly agrees with a particular positive statement (indicator). By summing the ten individual scores the aggregate score for each respondent can be computed. The respondent who consistently reflects the highest level of political confidence in respect of all ten questions, scores 50 points, and the respondent who consistently reflects the lowest level of political confidence, scores 10 points. For purposes of analysis the respondents were grouped into six categories:

Category 1: aggregate scores between 0-9 inclusive (the uncertain/Do not know respondents); Category 2: scores between 10-17 inclusive (the respondents who feels strongly negative about the level of political stability); Category 3: scores between 18-25 inclusive (respondents who feel negative to some extent regarding the relevant indicators of political stability); Category 4: scores between 26-34 inclusive (respondents with a neutral attitude towards the relevant indicators); Category 5: scores between 35-42 inclusive (respondents who feel positive to some extent regarding the indicators of political stability; and Category 6: scores between 43-50 inclusive (respondents who feel strongly positive regarding the relevant indicators of political stability).

As shown in the figure only 2% of the respondents registered the highest level of political confidence compared with 6% who indicated the lowest level of confidence in the country’s political situation. Significantly, 47% recorded that they had only partial (limited) confidence in the country’s political situation. More than 40% of the respondents indicated that they were neutral on the issue. The latter figures read together, underscore the widespread uncertainty about the political future of the country in the minds of many South Africans. The white respondents (8%) expressed the greatest measure of no-confidence in the political situation compared with the other three main population groups. Relatively more Afrikaans-speaking respondents (12%) than English-speaking respondents (2%) were strongly negative on South Africa’s political situation.
WHO'S THE BOSS

*Information Update* decided to put the popularity of the country's political leaders to the test. F.W. de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, A.P. Treurnicht, M. Buthelezi and other white and ANC leaders all fell under the spotlight. F.W. de Klerk and Dr Mandela emerged as the firm favourites, but President de Klerk won the stakes as the number one choice of most of the members of our main sample.

Forty three percent of the sample overall preferred Mr de Klerk as national leader compared with 18% who expressed a preference for Mr Mandela. A breakdown of the relevant findings in terms of the two main white language groups as well as the four main population groups shows that Mr Mandela enjoys considerably less support among the white, coloured and Asian respondents than State President de Klerk. In fact, on the basis of our sample Mr de Klerk's support at present is much broader than that of any other leader. For most blacks, however Mr Mandela remains the leader of preference (40,4%) although even here Mr de Klerk enjoys strong support (33,9%).

It is noticeable that relatively more English-speaking than Afrikaans-speaking respondents supported Mr de Klerk (70% and 52,9% respectively). The coloured population supported Mr de Klerk most strongly of all groups (74,1%).

In the case of political party preference, just more than a quarter (26%) of the sample overall expressed support for the NP; 4% supported the CP and 22% preferred the ANC. Of the white respondents, 56% supported the NP, 19% the CP, and only 1% indicated a preference for the ANC. Forty six percent of the black respondents expressed support for the ANC with other groups lagging far behind. Only 3% preferred the NP, 1,9% PAC and 1,3% Inkatha.

A large segment of all groups (39%) refused to commit themselves politically, whites being the most committed with only 17% un-decided and blacks the most uncommitted with 45,7% of their number undecided.

A political eye opener in some cases.
Update Indicators

Leadership profile

12 April
The Department of Education and Training reports that hundreds of thousands of rand’s worth of black school facilities were plundered by squatters during 1990.

13 April
Mr Nelson Mandela urges the formation of self-defence units in black residential areas equating the existence of such units to neighbourhood watch units in white areas.

14 April
Mr Dave Mohr, chief economist of Old Mutual says that it is difficult to deny that a correlation exists between the present economic downturn in the country and internal unrest.

15 April
The European Community decides to lift sanctions on the importation of South African iron, steel and gold coins. A Pretoria woman is to receive R475 000 from the South African Blood Transfusion Service after she was infected with the HIV virus during a blood transfusion in 1987.

17 April
Mr Gwam Mbeki, a prominent member of the ANC's national executive committee pronounces a damning judgement on sanctions against and disinvestment from South Africa.

18 April
The total number of liquidations during the period December 1990 to February 1991 is only 1% more than during the same period of 1990. State President F.W. de Klerk announces new initiatives to curb violence and intimidation; The University of South Africa's Bureau of Market Research estimates South Africa's population to have been 37.5 million during March 1990.

21 April
Mr Leon Louw, executive director of the Freemarket Foundation discloses that the Foundation is working with the Government on ways to transfer at “no cost” the property occupied by black families on State land. This could be done by decree.

22 April
South Africa has gained more than 10 000 immigrants during 1990. This figure represents an increase of more than 3 000 over the figure for 1989 and a gain of more than 7 000 over the figure for 1988. Reports state that life insurance claims due to AIDS increased by 75% during the years 1984 to 1989. (A person who is HIV positive has a mortality risk 2 000 times greater than the normal).
Update Indicators

F W de Klerk

28 April
Mandela loses her leadership position on the National Executive Council of the ANC Women's League after being outvoted for both the presidency and vice-presidency of the organisation.

29 April
About 100 rightwing supporters break up a meeting that was to be addressed by Mrs Mandela at the amphitheatre of the University of Pretoria.

2 May
It is reported that five times more Namibians are testing HIV positive than during the same period last year, and that the number already exceeds the total number for 1989. State President F.W. de Klerk says that for the first time in six years an amount of R1 000 million in new capital has entered the country during the first quarter of last year.

6 May
Mr Adriaan Vlok, Minister of Law and Order, says that the number of unrest related incidents during the first four months of 1991 shows a dramatic decrease compared to the corresponding period last year.

7 May
Mr Ashley Mabogongane, chief executive officer responsible for the marketing of the Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services, is reported as saying that the foundation is opposed to the nationalisation of existing companies and corporations currently in private ownership.

8 May
The SA Chamber of Business (SACOB) say that it seems as if business confidence in South Africa has reached its lowest ebb after a long decline since September 1990. The first black female magistrate in South Africa, Mrs Zelda Moleetsane, is sworn in at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court by the senior magistrate in South Africa, Mr A.O. de Meyer. Mrs. Moleetsane has been a public prosecutor at the Johannesburg Magistrate Court since 1988.

27 April to 9 May
A total of at least 87 people are killed and many more injured in renewed clashes between members of the ANC and Inkatha on the Witwatersrand.

10 May
It is reported that the CSIR has published a report commissioned by the Department of Environmental Affairs containing shocking facts about pollution in South Africa. According to the report about half the country's air pollution has its origin in the Transvaal.

Figure 19

Nelson Mandela

Support for Nelson Mandela

Figure 20.
In the previous issue of *Information Update* unemployment resulting from the closure of certain gold mines was illustrated. This is merely one more indicator of the serious implications which the present state of the economy holds for the average South African worker and his/her family. To highlight this from another angle respondents were requested to indicate their degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the financial situation in their households. The majority of the respondents (61,5%) were not satisfied (29,6% = very dissatisfied; 31,9% = dissatisfied), and only one third (33,2%) indicated that they were satisfied (27,9% = satisfied; 5,3% = very satisfied).

![Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with financial situation of household](image)

Population group proved to be the main divider. The figures indicate that the highest degree of dissatisfaction occurs among black respondents. Some 49% of all black respondents were dissatisfied with the financial situation in their households. Only 14,8% expressed any degree of satisfaction. White and Asian respondents shared similar views, 42% being unsatisfied and 52,5% being relatively satisfied with the financial situation in their households. More than half (55,7%) of all coloured respondents expressed some degree of dissatisfaction, while 40,3% were satisfied to some extent.

Respondents were also asked whether or not they believed that the financial positions of their households would improve over the next 12 months.

Only 36,8% were of the opinion that any improvement would occur (30,4% = get a little better; 6,4% = get a lot better), whereas 27,7% believed it would get worse (17,1% = get a little worse; 10,6% = get a lot worse).