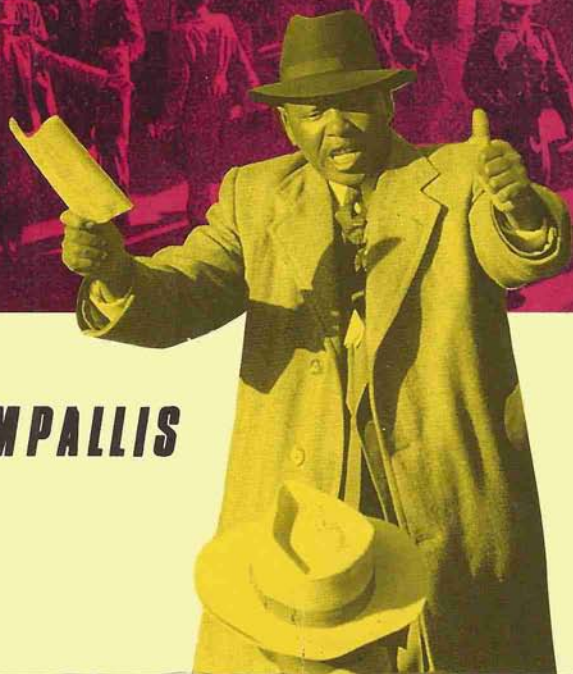
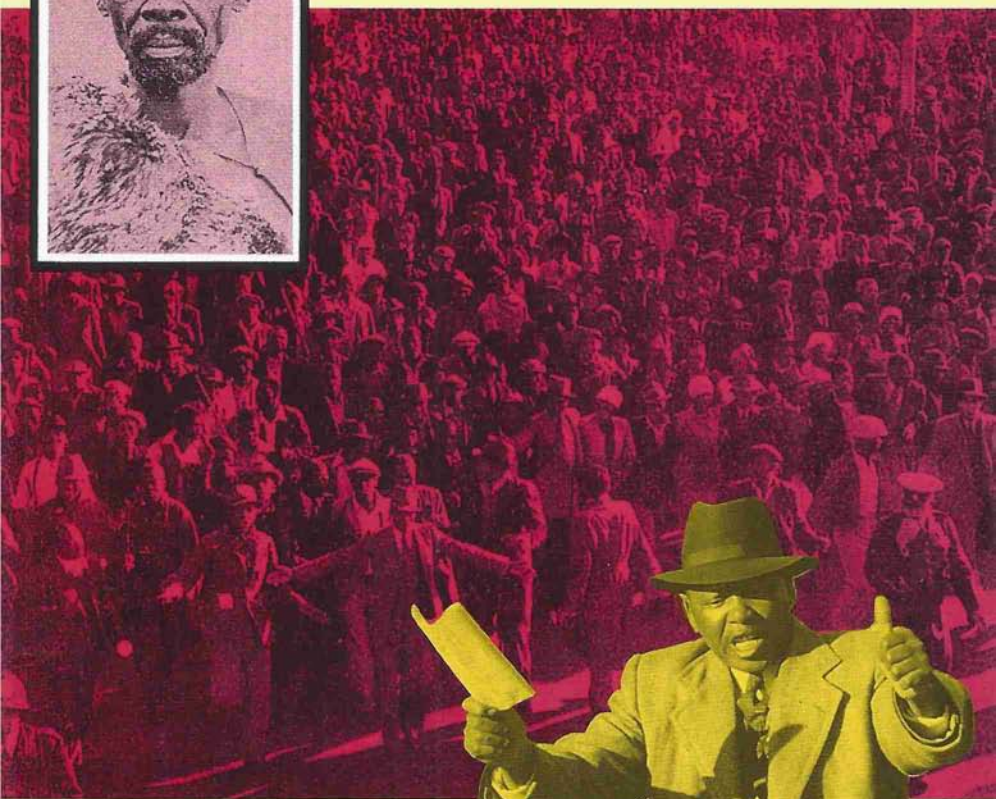
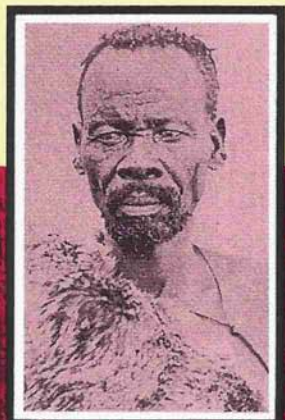


Foundations of the New South Africa



JOHN PAMPALLIS

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Foundations of the New South Africa

John Pampallis



Maskew Miller Longman
Cape Town

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Lastly, I wish to stress that the historical interpretation found in this book is my own and does not represent that of the ANC or any other organization or individual.

Abbreviations

AAC	All African Convention
AME	African Methodist Episcopal (Church)
AMWU	African Mine Workers' Union
ANC	African National Congress
ANCWL	African National Congress Women's League
AP	Afrikaner Party
APO	African Political (later People's) Organization
ARMSCOR	Armaments Development and Production Corporation
ASA	African Students Association
ASM	African Students' Movement (later SASM)
AZACTU	Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organization
AZASO	Azanian Student's Organization (later SANSCO)
BAWU	Black Allied Workers' Union
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BOSS	Bureau of State Security
BPC	Black People's Convention
BYU	Border Youth Union
CNETU	Council of Non-European Trade Unions
COD	Congress of Democrats
CONCP	Confederation of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies
CONSAS	Constellation of Southern African States
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CP	Conservative Party
CPA	Coloured People's Association
CPC	Coloured People's Congress (formerly SACPO)
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa (later SACP)
CPVS	Coloured People's Vigilance Society
CRC	Coloured Persons' Representative Council
CUSA	Council of Unions of South Africa
CYL	Congress of Youth League
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ECC	End Conscription Campaign
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
ESCOM	Electricity Supply Commission
FAK	Federase van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Organizations)
FEDSAW	Federation of South African Women
FNETU	Federation of Non-European Trade Unions
FNLA	Front for the National Liberation of Angola
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GWU	Garment Workers' Union
HNP	Herenigde Nasionale Party (Reunited National Party)
HNP	Herstigte Nasionale Party (Reconstituted National Party)
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
ICWU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ISCOR	Iron and Steel Corporation
ISL	International Socialist League
IWA	Industrial Workers of Africa
JODAC	Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee

JMC	Joint Management Centre
LAR	League of African Rights
LP	Labour Party
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MNR	Mozambique National Resistance
MPC	Multi-Party Conference
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NAFCOC	National African Chamber of Commerce
NAYO	National Youth Organization
NCAW	National Council of African Women
NEC	National Executive Committee (of the ANC)
NECC	National Education Crisis (later Coordinating) Committee
NEUF	Non-European United Front
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NFC	National Forum Committee
NLL	National Liberation League
NP	National Party
NRC	Native Recruiting Corporation
NRC	Natives' Representative Council
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NYO	Natal Youth Organization
OB	Ossewa Brandwag
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PPP	People's Progressive Party
RDB	Reddingsdaadbond (Rescue Action Society)
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party (formerly CPSA)
SACPO	South African Coloured People's Organization (later GPC)
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADCC	South African Development Coordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAIF	South African Industrial Federation
SANSCO	South African National Students Congress (formerly AZASO)
SAP	South African Party
SASM	South African Students' Movement (formerly ASM)
SASO	South African Students' Organization
SATUC	South African Trade Union Council (later TUCSA)
SSRC	Soweto Students' Representative Council
SWANU	South West African National Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization
TLC	Trades and Labour Council
TRAYO	Transvaal Youth Congress
TUCSA	Trade Union Council of South Africa (formerly SATUC)
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
UNITA	Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UP	United Party
WCYO	Western Cape Youth Organization
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Organization
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Foreword

This book was originally written as a textbook for Forms 4 and 5 (the last two years of secondary school) at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO). The college was established in 1979 near Morogoro, Tanzania, by the African National Congress to cater for the education of young South African exiles. In the words of the ANC's 'Education Policy', adopted in 1978, SOMAFCO's aim was (and remains) to provide a sound primary and secondary education and to prepare students 'to serve the national liberation struggle of the people of the South Africa in the phase for the seizure of power and the post-liberation phase.'

In the five years prior to May 1985, when I started writing this book, I taught history to Forms 4 and 5 at SOMAFCO, and found a pressing need for a general textbook to cover the South African section of our syllabus. Although there were other school textbooks which covered the relevant period, none of them was appropriate to our needs. Most were produced for use in South African schools and served the interests of the apartheid regime. They portrayed a distorted colonialist and racist view of the past; they all but ignored the history of the black majority and provided historical justification for the national and class oppression which was the essence of the apartheid system. Most texts about South African history produced for schools outside South Africa tend to have a similar bias, albeit in a somewhat muted form. The few books with a non-racist approach paid insufficient attention to the history of the national liberation and working-class movements. This book was an attempt to produce a school text that was suitable for our purposes at SOMAFCO.

After completing the first version, I returned to SOMAFCO and taught for a further two and a half years; I and other teachers used the book in the classroom. It is on the basis of my own classroom experience, the comments of other teachers and a number of (mostly unpublished) reviews that I have revised and updated the work.

The original version was published in a limited printing of 400 copies and circulated almost entirely within the ANC's exile community. It gives me pleasure now to be able to make this edition available to a wider audience, including students and the general reader. In particular, I am delighted that changed political circumstances have made it possible to distribute the book inside South Africa. It is my hope that it will make some small contribution to the unfolding of a more democratic view of our country's history.

CHAPTER ONE

Prelude to Industrial Capitalism

In the 1860s present-day South Africa was politically fragmented and much of it was still independent. The Cape Colony and Natal were British colonies and the Boers* had established republics in the Transvaal (the South African Republic) and Orange Free State. These states, however, had yet to absorb the land of a number of African peoples — Sotho, Zulu, Pedi, Swazi, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda, Tsonga and Griqua — who still lived in independent states, some of which were large and powerful. The whole region, whether colonized or independent, had to some degree felt the impact of capitalism, the system which had given rise to European colonialism.

The British Colonies

Capitalism was most firmly entrenched in the British colonies, particularly in the Cape Colony where tens of thousands of Dutch, British and other colonists had settled, forcibly taking most of the land and cattle over a period of 200 years.

Cape Town was both South Africa's largest town and its chief port, handling most of the subcontinent's overseas trade. Alongside this commercial centre's banks and merchant enterprises a few small industries had developed, such as brewing, food processing, printing, and the manufacture of bricks, soap, candles and furniture. In the 1860s Port Elizabeth was also growing rapidly as Eastern Cape agricultural production and trade between the port and the interior increased.

* The word Boer (farmer) came to be used for the white Dutch-speaking colonists in South Africa. Their forefathers, who originally settled at the Cape, came mainly from Holland, but also from France and other European countries. Over time they developed their own form of the Dutch language which they called Afrikaans and, particularly from the early twentieth century onwards, began to refer to themselves as Afrikaners rather than Boers.

The most important economic activity in the Cape, and throughout South Africa, was agriculture. Commercial farmers, mainly whites, produced grain, wool, fruit and wine with the use of low-paid coloured and African labourers. In the Eastern Cape a small but growing number of African farmers were producing food and wool for the market on their own plots of land or as tenants on white-owned land. Many other Africans practised subsistence farming, raising crops and livestock. White landowners often did not grow crops, but took a share of the harvest of their African tenants or simply collected rent.

From 1854, the Cape Colony had an elected legislative assembly. The franchise (i.e., the right to vote) was open to all adult males, regardless of colour, who owned fixed property worth £25 or who earned an annual wage of £50. In practice, the voters' roll consisted mainly of whites, but a small number of coloureds and Africans did qualify and their votes were significant in a few constituencies (Salt River and Woodstock in Cape Town, the Transkei).

Natal had come under British rule in 1843. By 1860 it still had a white population of less than 10,000 who were outnumbered more than fifteen to one by Africans. Nonetheless they had seized most of the land which came under the ownership of individual settlers or of large commercial companies. Most white settlers did not farm extensively, relying instead on rents in cash or kind from Africans living on their land. Most Africans who were not tenants or wage-workers were forced to live on eight reserves which comprised about 25 per cent of the land.

Under the system devised by Theophilus Shepstone ('Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes in Natal', 1845-75) all Africans were subject to traditional law as administered by their chiefs. Shepstone dismissed chiefs who displeased him and replaced them with more cooperative successors; sometimes, he created chiefdoms where none existed before. After 1878, the traditional law and custom as interpreted and modified by Shepstone and other colonial officials was codified as the Natal Code of Native Law, to be administered by chiefs 'assisted' by white magistrates. The governor of Natal was the 'Supreme Chief'. Thus Natal, unlike the Cape Colony, subjected Africans and whites to different laws.

From 1856 when elections to a legislative council were introduced in Natal, blacks could, theoretically, become voters. In practice, however, few ever did because of the extremely stringent and discriminatory conditions they had to meet. By 1909 there were only six African voters in Natal.

In the coastal areas of Natal, large sugar plantations were established in the 1860s. Because it proved so difficult to persuade or

pressurize Africans to work at the low wages offered by the sugar planters, thousands of indentured labourers were imported from India. These Indians, mostly driven to leave their homeland by extreme poverty, were bound by contracts to work for a particular employer for five years at very low wages plus food and accommodation. Most chose to stay on in South Africa rather than return to India after their indentures (i.e., contracts) had expired (see Chapter 7).

The Boer Republics

In the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, the Boer rulers had become large landowners between the 1830s and the 1860s, seizing the land by force from the indigenous Africans. Most Boer farmers kept cattle or sheep and grew some vegetables or fruit. For grain (especially maize) and other crops, they depended on African tenants who grew the crops and gave a share of their produce as rents to the landowner.

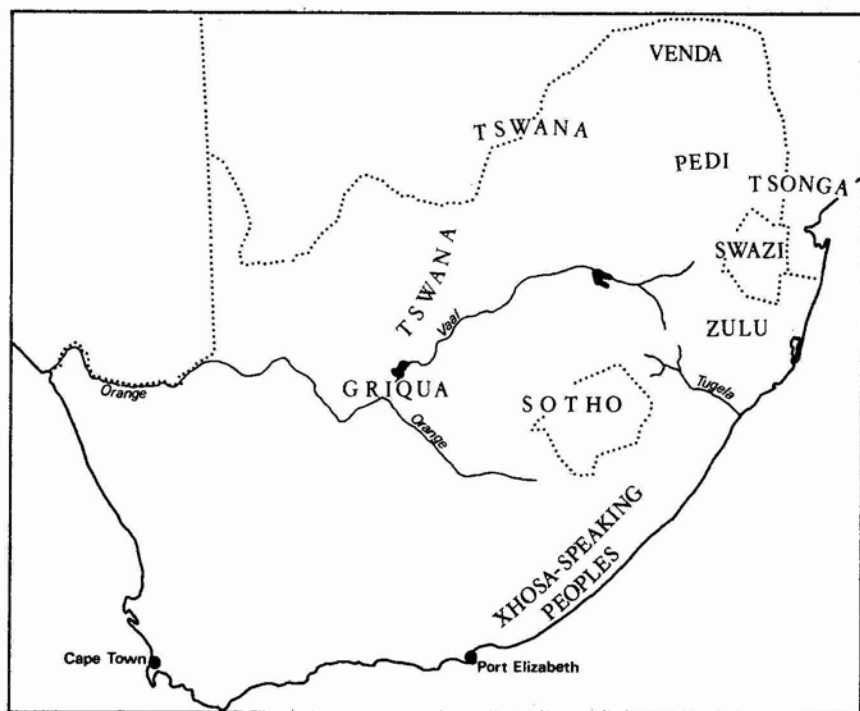
Each Boer farm was self-sufficient except for certain imported goods, some of them essential: textiles, tools, arms and ammunition, coffee, sugar, and other commodities were usually imported from overseas and sold from farm to farm by travelling pedlars.

Some Boers had no land and lived on the property of landowners who often loaned out their cattle to these *bywoners*. Later, from the 1870s, the number of landless Boers increased as some farmers who could not pay their taxes either abandoned their farms or had them confiscated by the government. This gave the opportunity to wealthier Boer families like the Krugers and the Jouberts to buy up large areas of land very cheaply.

Laws relating to Africans in the Boer Republics were harsh and oppressive. The Transvaal constitution stated that there was 'no equality in Church or state' between white and black people. Only whites could vote, and Africans were not allowed to have arms, ammunition or horses. The chief of each 'location' (i.e. African settlement, usually on white-owned land) had to pay taxes and provide conscript labourers for the Boers. These conscripts had to work on farms at a wage of one heifer for one year's work, or serve as auxiliaries in the anti-African wars of the Boer commandos. In addition to this, a form of near-slavery was practised. African children 'captured in warfare' could be held by Boer farmers as 'apprentices' (or *inboekselings*) who had to work without pay until the age of twenty-five.

The Independent African Peoples

The early nineteenth century was a period of war and great social upheaval throughout much of Southern Africa. What came to be



Map 1 Location of independent African societies in the mid-nineteenth century

known as the *Mfecane* (Zulu for 'crushing') or *Difaqane* (Sotho/Tswana word for 'hammering') dates from 1818, when the Zulu state under the leadership of Shaka started to expand by the conquest of neighbouring peoples. While many of the conquered peoples were absorbed into the Zulu state, others fled or set out on their own paths of conquest in search of a place to settle. Some moved north to found new states, among them the Ndebele, the Shangaan, the Kololo and the Ngoni. Others, further south, formed powerful states as a means of protecting themselves: the Sotho, the Swazi, the Pondo, the Pedi and several allied Tswana kingdoms. In the mid-1860s, all these people were still independent, living in their own territories under African kings or chiefs.

Other independent peoples included the Griqua, a group whose mixed Khoikhoi and Boer ancestors were people who had moved north from the Cape Colony in the eighteenth century to escape oppression. By the mid-1860s there were two small Griqua states: one in the area of present-day Kimberley (Griqualand West) and one in an inland area between Natal and the Transkei (Griqualand East).

All the independent African states had economies based on agriculture. They kept livestock, particularly cattle and goats, and grew crops such as maize, sorghum, millet, pumpkins and yams. They also mined and smelted iron and copper; they made iron tools and weapons and copper ornaments. Although African societies had traded with one another for many centuries, their trade increased quite rapidly during the nineteenth century as they began trading with Europeans: British, Boers and (in Mozambique) Portuguese. They bought weapons, ploughs, firearms, horses and some consumer goods such as blankets; they sold grain, cattle and hunting products such as ivory and skins.

From the 1840s some African societies, especially the Pedi, became involved in migrant labour. Many young men went to work for some months on farms in the Cape Colony and Natal. Their main purpose was to earn money to buy guns (often secretly because it was illegal) for both hunting and military purposes. They also bought and took home cattle, sheep and consumer goods. After the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley (see Chapter 2) migrant labour became more widespread.

The experience of a certain D. van der Merwe gives an idea of the power that the Pedi kingdom could wield over neighbouring Boer settlers in the early 1870s:

'After agreeing to transport a number of guns back from Natal for a group of Pedi migrants, van der Merwe subsequently refused to hand them over. Sekhukhune ... threatened dire consequences for the Lydenburgers unless the guns were returned. The *landroost* [magistrate] returned the guns and the *Uitvoerende Raad* (Executive Council) approved his action, and further stipulated that van der Merwe stood in breach of the law and should be tried.'

— Delius in Marks and Atmore (1980), p. 299.

In all pre-capitalist African societies, most production took place in the homestead. This was a largely self-sufficient family unit consisting of a man, his wives and their children. The role of the male homestead head was mainly organizational and supervisory. The wives and daughters did most of the domestic work and grew crops, while the sons looked after the cattle and other livestock. The manufacture of domestic needs, such as tools, clothing, pots and so on, was shared between males and females.

Cattle were extremely important in these societies. They provided milk and occasionally meat as well as skins. They also served as a

means to store and measure wealth. When a man married, he had to give or promise to give a certain number of cattle to his wife's father. This served to compensate the father's homestead for the loss of the woman's labour. The husband's homestead gained not only her labour, but also her capacity to produce children who would in turn provide labour in the future. If a woman did not work properly or failed to produce children, the number of cattle promised for her could be reduced or some of the cattle already given could be returned.

Although there were no classes as we know them, pre-*mfecane/difaqane* African societies were stratified on the basis of different levels of power and wealth (numbers of wives and cattle, for example). Though not egalitarian — there was an obvious inequality, for instance, between men and women — these societies included important democratic elements. With the growth of large states, political power inevitably became more centralized. Nonetheless, these democratic practices did not cease to exist. At times of peace, all societies laid emphasis on government by discussion and consent. Through assemblies like the *pitso* of the Sotho or the *imbizo* (imbizo) of the Nguni, the ruler could be made aware of the feelings of the people. Although he actually took the final decision himself, he was usually careful to take popular opinion into account. This was because of the democratic traditions of African societies and also because the unity of their states was usually quite fragile. An unpopular decision could result in a political breakaway by a section of the people.

Nevertheless, rulers did use their power to gain a share of the products of other people's labour. For example, among the Tswana, the rulers of various tribes derived an income by demanding, among other things, a share of hunting bounty (one tusk of each elephant slain, the skin of every lion), a basket of grain from every member of the tribe after a good harvest, and the produce of public fields for which the ruler had provided the seed. The Zulu king also received cattle, grain, tusks and skins as tribute from his subjects. In addition, he used the army to work on his fields, tend the royal cattle herds, and raid cattle and other wealth from neighbouring peoples. Rulers were, however, expected to provide food from their stocks to the people when there was a bad harvest or some other social calamity.

The Age of Imperialism

In the last half of the nineteenth century, the system of capitalism in Europe and North America changed its form. A small number of major banks and very large companies (often monopolies) displaced merchants and small-scale industrialists as the dominant force in national economies. The owners of these monopolies became the

most powerful section of the ruling class in their respective countries, and their interests increasingly determined government policies.

As the monopolies grew, they intensified their search for overseas markets, raw materials and places to invest their enormous profits. The governments of these economically advanced countries supported the monopolies with an aggressive, imperialist policy to gain control of other countries.

From about 1870, imperialist countries competed among themselves to grab as much African territory as possible. In South Africa, where the British already had a presence, the drive to gain control of territory was intensified by the discovery of vast deposits of diamonds and gold and the economic boom which followed. British investors preferred to have the mineral deposits and the areas from which miners could be recruited at low rates of pay under British control. In addition, white settlers demanded more land and labour. They too urged the British colonial authorities to conquer independent territories so that more African land could be taken over and the people forced into wage labour.

In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Britain conquered the Boer republics and independent African states, taking over all of present-day South Africa and much of the rest of Southern Africa. This process was not an easy one. The African people, whose resistance is examined below, struggled heroically to defend their independence against the superior weapons of both Boer and British forces (see Chapter 3).

The Last Wars of Resistance

The Sotho

In 1869 Britain annexed Lesotho as the colony of Basutoland. This came after decades of struggle to maintain their independence by the Sotho people under King Moshweshwe. They had defeated a British force at the battle of Berea in 1854 and the Orange Free State Boers in the first Sotho-Boer War in 1858.

In the 1850s and 1860s, the Sotho people resisted the attempts of Boer settlers to encroach on their lands, and several skirmishes took place. In any armed conflict, the Boers were at an advantage since the British did not allow Africans to buy arms and ammunition from the Cape or Natal while the Boers could do so freely. The struggle over land led to the Second Sotho-Boer War of 1865–69. While unable to conquer the Sotho, the Boers caused great destruction, burning many fields of crops and seizing large numbers of cattle and other livestock.

The British government then intervened in the dispute. It feared Orange Free State bankruptcy (with debts owed to British institutions)

In 1867 the Orange Free State threatened to attack Lesotho if it did not hand over a part of its territory. This is part of Moshweshwe's reply:

'Although I do not like war and am afraid of its consequent horrors, I cannot consent to buy the lives of my people with country belonging to them, where they were born, where their forefathers were born likewise; besides I know of no country where they could go.'

— Fundisi (1980), p. 68.

and wanted to restore stability to Lesotho lest the resistance there spread into the Cape Colony and Natal. In 1869 Lesotho became a British colony or 'protectorate' as it was called. This was accepted by Moshweshwe who preferred British overlordship to the possibility of subjection to the Boers. However, at the Treaty of Aliwal North, signed in 1869 by the British and the Boers without any representative of Lesotho, the Sotho kingdom lost all its land west of the Caledon River. As a result the Sotho people on this land came under the rule of the Orange Free State. The following year, on 11 March 1870, Moshweshwe died. In 1871, the British government transferred Lesotho to the Cape Colony.

During the 1870s many Sotho men bought guns with the money they had earned as migrant workers on the Kimberley diamond mines or railways or from selling agricultural produce.* By the end of the 1870s, the Sotho people had a significantly larger number of firearms than ten years previously and were the best armed of all the African people in Southern Africa.

In 1880, in the wake of a minor Sotho rebellion as well as the Anglo-Zulu and Anglo-Pedi wars, the Cape government tried to eliminate the possibility of further armed resistance by Africans. It was decided to disarm the Sotho people as well as to increase taxes and open part of the country to white settlement. The majority of the Sotho chiefs and people refused to be disarmed and the 'Gun War' began. Cape troops invaded Lesotho and were met by Sotho forces who were more than a match for them. Sotho troops under Chief Lerotholi won the only major battle at Kalabani. However, both sides were suffering from the continuation of the war and agreed to the arbitration of Hercules Robinson as representative of the British government. He decided that the Sotho could keep their guns but would have to register and license them, and that there would be no white settlement in Lesotho.

In 1884 the British government took over direct control of Lesotho

* In the 1870s, the British authorities lifted the restrictions on African arms purchases for a few years to encourage Africans who wanted to buy guns to go to work in the diamond mines in Kimberley.



King Moshweshwe I — founder of the Sotho nation, great statesman, and leader of his people's resistance to colonialism.



The Pedi king, Sekhukhune I, who led his people's resistance against the armed forces of both the Boers and the British.

from the Cape. This would later ensure that Lesotho did not become part of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Sotho chiefs were allowed to retain limited control over their people's affairs, but the loss of territory suffered in the wars left the country with insufficient fertile land to support all its people. They thus became dependent on wage labour outside their country.

The Xhosa-speaking people

After the Khoikhoi and the San, the Xhosa-speaking people of the Eastern Cape/Transkei area were the first to have contact with white settlers. From 1779 until 1848, eight wars were fought between the Boer settlers or Cape colonial authorities and the African people defending their land. While the stern resistance from the Africans had resulted in some victories, over time their societies had succumbed to British colonialism in varying degrees.

The Ciskei had been incorporated into the Cape Colony in 1846. In the north-eastern Transkei, Pondoland was an independent state tied by a formal treaty with Britain. In between these two areas, traditional leaders still ruled, but with a great deal of interference and 'guidance' from resident 'diplomatic agents' of the Cape Colony.

In 1877, after a dispute between the Gcaleka-Xhosa and Mfengu (who were friendly with the British at the time), the Cape Governor summoned the Gcaleka chief, Sarili, to the Cape Colony. Sarili refused

to go and Cape troops entered the Transkei to punish him. They were met by the united resistance of the Gcaleka, Ngqika and Thembu people and were forced to retreat. British imperial troops were then sent to help the Cape forces and the African forces were defeated in 1878. The Ngqika chief, Sandile, who had rebelled in the Ciskei in solidarity with the Transkei Africans, was caught and killed despite trying to surrender. Thus ended the ninth and last of the Xhosa Wars of Resistance.

By 1885 the Cape Colony had annexed the whole of the Transkei south-west of Pondoland. In 1894 Pondoland was also annexed. The Cape authorities, fearing further armed resistance, did not open the Transkei to large-scale settlement by whites. Most of the area became an African reserve, destined to become a labour pool for white-owned mines, industries and farms in the rest of South Africa.

The Zulu

Since the late 1830s the Zulu kingdom had been confined to the area north of the Tugela River. From 1843, the area to the south had been the British colony of Natal. The two states had lived in relative peace with one another until the late 1870s.

The Zulu kingdom, from 1862 under King Cetshwayo, had a large and well-organized army and was the strongest military power of all the independent South African states. With the intensification of British expansionism in the 1870s, the Zulu state came to be regarded by the British colonial authorities as an obstacle to their plans to dominate the whole of Southern Africa. They therefore wanted to destroy Zulu power. In late 1878, Bartle Frere, the British High Commissioner, sent an ultimatum to Cetshwayo demanding that the Zulu army should be disbanded within thirty days. Cetshwayo rejected the demand and prepared for war.

In January 1879 the British army invaded Zululand with a force of both white and African troops. The central column was met by the Zulu army at Isandhlwana. Armed mainly with assegais, spears and shields, the Zulu army took the British by surprise and decisively defeated them, killing 1,600 of the invaders. The British then brought in reinforcements and their superior weapons eventually proved decisive. At Ulundi, Cetshwayo's capital, the Zulu army was defeated. Cetshwayo was captured and exiled to Cape Town.

The British then broke up the Zulu kingdom into thirteen chiefdoms, independent from each other, each with a chief appointed by the British authorities. The chiefs were forced to undertake not to form an army and to accept the arbitration of a British Resident in case of disputes. The Zulu royalists continued to agitate for the restoration of Cetshwayo, and in 1883 the British allowed him to return. However, he



The captive Cetshwayo is brought to Sir Garnet Wolseley's camp, 31 August 1879.

Writing about the Battle of Isandhlwana, Friedrich Engels commented that the Zulu army

'did what no European army can do. Armed only with pikes and spears, and without firearms, they advanced under a hail of bullets from breach loaders, right up to the bayonets — acknowledged as the best in the world for fighting in close formation — throwing them back in disorder and beating them back more than once; and this despite the colossal disparity in arms.'

— Engels, (1968), pp. 528—9

was only permitted to control the central parts of Zululand, around Ulundi. Conflict soon developed between Cetshwayo and Zibhedhu, a chief in northern Zululand who had the support of the British Resident. Civil war broke out and Cetshwayo's forces were defeated by Zibhedhu.

Cetshwayo fled; he died in 1884 and was succeeded by his son Dinizulu. Helped by an alliance made with Boers living in the area of the Zulu-Transvaal border, Dinizulu counter-attacked and defeated Zibhedhu. The Boers then demanded Zibhedhu's territory as payment, and declared it the 'New Republic' which was recognized by Britain in 1886. In 1887, the rest of the Zulu territory was annexed by Britain as the colony of Zululand. Ten years later it was incorporated into Natal. (The New Republic became part of the Transvaal in 1887 but, in 1902, after the Anglo-Boer War, its territory was given to Natal.)

The Pedi

The Pedi kingdom, based in the mountainous region of the Eastern Transvaal, had been established by Sekwati in the late 1820s in the wake of the turmoil and disruption of the *Mfecane/Difaqane*. In 1861, King Sekwati died and was succeeded by his son Sekhukhune.

From the 1840s Boer farmers had tried to settle on Pedi lands. While some were allowed by Sekwati to settle there, others were prevented from doing so by the Pedi. In 1852, 1867 and 1869 Transvaal Boer commandos launched attacks on the Pedi but were forced to retreat.

Since about 1840 the Pedi had built up a large stockpile of firearms. These had been acquired by trade with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay (now Maputo) or bought by migrant workers.

In 1876 the Transvaal Boers and their Swazi allies invaded Pedi territory. After some initial successes they attacked Sekhukhune's capital but were held by the defending forces. Meanwhile other Pedi soldiers attacked and burnt Boer farms. When they heard this, the Boer army broke up and went home. In 1877 Sekhukhune made peace in order to avoid further conflict when a group of Boers camped on his frontier and threatened to burn down the Pedi harvest.

When the British took control of the Transvaal in 1877 (see Chapter 3) they determined to destroy the independence and military power of the Pedi. They did not feel confident enough to attack, however, until after the Anglo-Zulu War. In late 1879, after the defeat of the Zulu army, a British-led force consisting of British and Swazi soldiers attacked the Pedi. Well-armed with the most modern weapons, the invaders defeated the Pedi forces and captured Sekhukhune. Pedi independence was effectively ended.

The Venda

When the South African Republic (in the Transvaal) tried to establish its authority in the Soutpansberg area in the 1860s, it ran into serious difficulties. The Venda people under Chief Makhado defeated an invading Boer commando, and most of the Boer settlers who had recently moved into the area left. Those Boers who remained paid tribute to African chiefs rather than the Transvaal government.

Later, more Boers started to settle on the borders of Vendaland and the Transvaal threatened Venda independence once more. The resistance of the Venda people was weakened by disputes between Makhado and two other chiefs: Ishivase and Mphaphuli. After Makhado's death in 1895, his son Mphephu tried to settle these conflicts to create an alliance of all the Venda. However, due partly to the influence of a German missionary named Beuster of the Berlin Missionary Society, Tshivase and Mphaphuli refused to cooperate with Mphephu.

When the Boers invaded Vendaland once more in 1898, Mphephu's

forces had to face them alone. Despite heroic resistance, the Venda were overwhelmed by the superior weapons of the invaders who captured Mphephu's capital. Mphephu and a number of his followers fled across the Limpopo into the British colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Four years later, Vendaland fell under British control at the end of the Anglo-Boer War.

Further Colonial Expansion

Botswana

Britain was anxious to keep the 'missionary road' to the north out of the hands of the Transvaal which was eager to expand westwards. This road went from Cape Town north through Griqualand West and then through Tswana territory (west of the Transvaal) to Matabeleland in present-day Zimbabwe. The road was used not only by missionaries but also by British traders, and influential people like Cecil John Rhodes hoped to use it for future British expansion into Central Africa.

In 1881 the British and Transvaal governments signed the Pretoria Convention. Among other things, this agreement defined the western boundary of the Transvaal as lying east of the 'missionary road'. In September 1884, however, President Kruger of the Transvaal issued a proclamation claiming a further south-westward expansion of the Transvaal into Tswana territory.

This worried the British government, especially since Germany had the previous month declared South West Africa (Namibia) to be under German 'protection'. Britain feared that a link might eventually be forged between the Boers and the Germans, cutting the Cape's access to Central Africa via the 'missionary road'. Five thousand British troops were sent to Tswana territory in January 1885 and the Transvaal withdrew its claims. Later the same year, Britain declared the Tswana area south of the Molopo River the colony of British Bechuanaland. The area to the north (present day Botswana) became the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The major chiefs in this area — Khama of the Ngwato, Sechele of the Kwena and Gaseitsiwe of the Ngwaketse — accepted British 'protection', preferring it to possible Boer domination. They were able to retain some power over their own people. Aside from five relatively small blocks of land which were opened for white settlement, the land of the protectorate remained in Tswana hands.

Swaziland

From the 1920s onwards the Swazi kingdom had considered that the major threat to its security came from the Zulu state. It therefore looked to both the Boers and the British as potential allies. As a result,

Swazi soldiers had fought alongside first Boer and then British troops in their wars against the Pedi in the 1870s. At the Pretoria Convention in 1881, Britain and the Transvaal recognized Swazi independence within defined borders, but a section of Swazi territory in the north was awarded to the Transvaal.

In the period 1874 to 1879 the Swazi king Mbandzeni and his counsellors sold a large number of concessions to various individuals and companies, Boer and British. These included rights to land and minerals, and rights to operate industries, telegraphs and postal services. In 1888–89, the Transvaal government bought concessions to collect the Swazi royal revenues (i.e., the cash income of the Swazi government), to collect customs and excise dues and to control the sale of unallotted land south of the Nkomati River. Thus by the time Mbandzeni died in 1889 the Transvaal controlled many key functions of the Swazi state.

In 1890 Britain and the Transvaal decided to end Swazi independence. They established a 'Joint Government' consisting of British and Transvaal representatives and Offy Shepstone, representing Swaziland. The latter was a son of Theophilus Shepstone who had acquired several concessions from Mbandzeni and become his advisor. In 1894, despite protests from Labotsibeni (the Swazi regent who acted on behalf of Mbandzeni's successor, Ngwane V), Britain withdrew and recognized Swaziland as a protectorate of the Transvaal.

This state of affairs lasted until the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 when Britain took over Swaziland as a protectorate, similar in status to Botswana and Lesotho.

The power of the independent African states was thus broken during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, as anti-colonial resistance continued, another great social process was getting underway. The enormous deposits of diamonds and gold which were discovered in South Africa not only increased Britain's determination to control more of its territory; they also resulted in the 'mineral revolution' which was to transform South Africa's social and economic life, and set it on the path to becoming an industrial country. With this were to come new forms of oppression for the majority of South Africans and new forms of resistance.

Essay Topic

Discuss the reasons why African resistance to colonialism eventually failed.

Topic for Group Discussions

From the point of view of the African people, do you think there were any significant differences between the British and the Boer colonizers? Give full reasons for your opinion.

CHAPTER TWO

The Mineral Revolution

In 1867 diamonds, among the most valuable of gem stones, were discovered near the place where the Vaal and Orange rivers meet. This marked the start of the mineral revolution, later intensified by the opening of the gold mines in the Transvaal after 1886. The mining of these valuable minerals was at the centre of the process of industrialization in South Africa, which transformed its economy as well as its social and political life within a few decades. This period coincided with the Scramble for Africa by the major European powers and led to an intensification of British efforts to gain political control of Southern Africa in order to pre-empt colony-grabbing by other countries, particularly Germany. In this age of imperialism, British capitalists saw the South African mines and infrastructure (e.g., the railways) as important areas for the investment of their capital; they were determined that South Africa should not fall, or remain, under the control of others.

Diamonds

The diamond fields dispute

The area in which diamonds were discovered was inhabited by about 3,000 Griquas, some small groups of Khoikhoi (Kora) and Tswana (Rolong and Tlhaping), and some Boers with their African and coloured workers. Over 30 years earlier, in 1834, Britain had recognized Griqua sovereignty over the area in a treaty with the Griqua chief, Andries Waterboer. But this treaty counted for little when, in 1854, Britain signed the Bloemfontein Convention recognizing the independence of the Boer republic of the Orange Free State and denying all responsibilities north of the Orange River.

After the diamond discoveries, however, British interests in the

rights of the Griquas was aroused once more. Sir Philip Wodehouse, Governor of the Cape Colony, wrote to the British Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, that 'as a matter of right, the native tribes are fairly entitled to that tract of country in which, for the present, the diamonds appear to be chiefly found'. Kimberley agreed and said that his government would be displeased if the Boer republics extended 'their slave dealing activities, oppress the natives, and cause disturbances of the peace by encroaching on Griqua territory'.

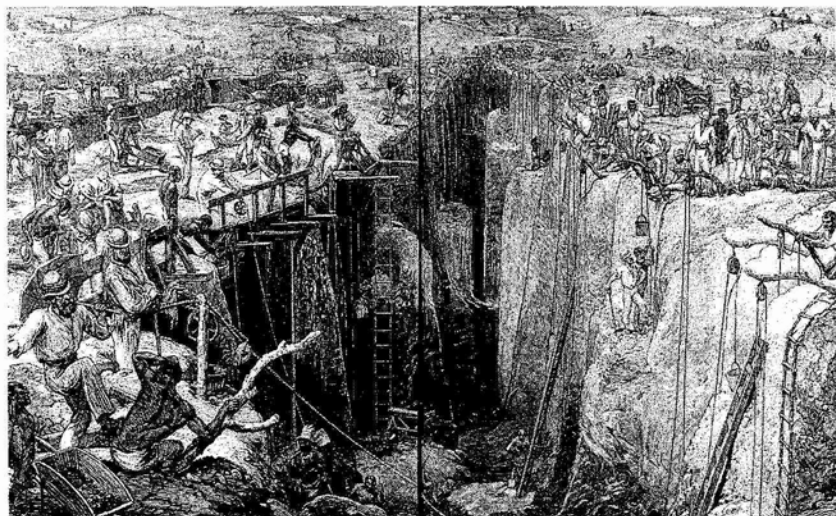
Britain, in fact, feared that if the Boer republics gained control of the diamond fields, their new economic power would make them less amenable to British manipulation. In addition, Britain was anxious that the 'Missionary Road' (which ran through the diamond fields, then north to Botswana) should not be controlled by the Boers who would then be in a position to block a British advance to the north. The wealth of the diamond fields was, of course, also a major attraction to Britain, the world's leading capitalist power.

After 1867, the Transvaal (i.e., the South African Republic) and the Orange Free State both laid claim to parts of the diamond fields as, of course, did the Griquas. Claims to the northern portion of the area were also made by Rolong, Tlhaping and Kora chiefs. The British, who did not make any claim to the land, proposed an Englishman, R. W. Keate, the Lieutenant Governor of Natal, as an arbitrator of the various claims. All the claimants except the Orange Free State accepted the British proposals, and Keate then went ahead to hear evidence without Orange Free State participation. In 1871 Keate awarded the whole area containing the diamonds to Chief Nicholas Waterboer of the Griquas. Later in the same year the British annexed the area as the colony of Griqualand West, supposedly to protect the rights of the Griquas.

The growth of Kimberley

One of the immediate results of the diamond discoveries was the appearance and rapid growth of the town of Kimberley, named after the British Colonial Secretary. Within a few years it had a population of over 30,000, about two thirds of whom were Africans or coloureds. Kimberley became South Africa's largest town after Cape Town. The inhabitants, black and white, included diamond diggers and prospectors, traders, missionaries, canteen keepers and labourers.

In the early years, newcomers to Kimberley were forced to live in makeshift accommodation — tents, galvanized iron shacks, wagons, brushwood huts, and even outdoors without shelter. Later African miners were to be housed in compounds (see below) while most other Africans lived in shanties in segregated locations. More comfortable housing was built for white workers, while wealthy whites lived luxuriously in exclusive neighbourhoods.



A diamond mine at Kimberley in the 1870s. Most of the diamonds were found in 'pipes' of blue ground (called kimberlite) which had a fairly small surface area, but ran deep into the ground.

African people went to Kimberley from all over Southern Africa. From the earliest days of diamond mining a number of blacks — mainly Mfengu, Ngqika and coloureds from the Cape Colony — took part as independent claimholders. Most Africans who went to Kimberley, however, were migrants who worked for short periods (three to six months) to get money for a specific purpose. As time went by, some Africans, especially those doing non-mining work, settled in town. By 1880, nine thousand Africans had become permanent residents of Kimberley, forming the nucleus of a new African working class.

Many of the migrant workers went to the diamond fields to earn money for taxes which were imposed in Lesotho (then Basutoland) as early as 1870 and, after this date, in other areas. Africans from the Pedi kingdom, as well as others from still-independent African states such as Matabeleland (in present-day Zimbabwe) and the Lozi kingdom (in Western Zambia), were sent by their rulers to earn money to buy rifles. These weapons were meant mainly for defence against the encroachment of colonizers, as well as for hunting.

People from Lesotho or the Eastern Cape, expelled from fertile lands in the wars of dispossession, now went to the diamond fields to earn cash to supplement their family incomes. Peasants from these areas as well as Tlhaping peasants from Griqualand West often worked for short spells on the diamond mines to earn money to buy livestock, wagons, carts or agricultural implements such as ploughs.

The whites who went to seek their fortunes at the diamond diggings came from the British colonies and Boer republics of South Africa, or from Britain, Australia, the USA and other countries. Many arrived as penniless 'diggers' hoping to 'strike it rich'. Others came with a little capital and set up business as traders, diamond buyers or bar-keepers.

The development of diamond production led to a rise in the demand for produce of Native as well as European farmers.... There is fairly convincing evidence that trade in Native produce increased in response to the more favourable terms on which they could dispose of their produce.

— Van der Horst (1942), p. 103–4.5.

African peasants appear to have responded more effectively to economic change than white landowners. Many white 'farmers' found it more profitable to leave their land or to trade in African-grown produce than to increase production of foodstuffs themselves.

— Bundy (1979), p. 67.

Kimberley's population had to be fed. African and Boer farmers were thus able to step up production, taking advantage of the large, new market and obtaining the cash required to pay taxes and buy consumer goods. A new class of African peasants — farmers producing for a market as well as for personal consumption — grew up, particularly in Lesotho, the Ciskei and Transkei, and among the Tlhaping of Griqualand West. They sold milk, cattle, sheep and large quantities of grain to Kimberley and other towns. Rapid improvements in their farming methods, including widespread use of the most modern, imported ploughs, made some African peasants more productive and efficient farmers than most whites during this period. In the area immediately north of Kimberley, some Tlhaping collected firewood and reeds or long grass for thatching, and transported it by wagon for sale in Kimberley.

Transport riders, both white and black, used ox-wagons to bring imported goods and Cape liquor to Kimberley until the first railway line from Cape Town was completed in 1885.

Control of the diamond mining industry

In the first few years of the diamond mining industry, the mining was done by thousands of 'diggers'. Each digger owned a small claim and either worked by himself or employed one or more labourers. The alluvial diamonds, in or near river beds, were soon exhausted and mining continued on the dry diggings where the diamonds were

concentrated on small surface areas. Here claims were sometimes as small as 3 square metres.

The process of competition and the periodical slumps in the price of diamonds soon led to some claimholders having to sell their claims to more successful diggers. A slump in 1875 was particularly severe and led to the elimination of a large number of diggers. Consequently, the diamond mining industry came under the control of progressively fewer people.

The rate at which the concentration of ownership took place was hastened by the nature of the Kimberley diamond deposits. Although some diamonds were found near the surface, most were found in pipes of blue ground (later named 'kimberlite') running deep into the ground. The pipes had a fairly small surface area as can be seen from pictures of the Big Hole near Kimberley. As the digging went deeper, so diamond mining became more difficult and dangerous, requiring expensive machinery. For example, from 1877 steam engines were used for pumping water and lifting earth out of the mines; from 1885 underground mining, requiring even more expensive equipment, was started.

As a result, many diggers had to sell their claims while others amalgamated their holdings to form companies with large claims. By 1885 3,600 claims at the four big mines had been reduced to 89 properties. Fierce competition continued driving down the price of diamonds so that only the largest and most efficient operations could survive. Eventually, in 1890, one large company emerged with a monopoly: De Beers Consolidated Mines, whose chairman was Rhodes, with the financial backing of the Anglo-French Rothschild banking house.

Race and class relations in Kimberley

When diamond mining first started the ranks of the diggers included blacks. In 1870, while political control of the diamond fields was still in dispute, the white diggers formed their own government and issued a regulation which prohibited Africans and coloureds from holding claim. This regulation became invalid, however, after Britain annexed Griqualand West in 1871. Under British rule, blacks initially had the same right as whites to become licensed claimholders. The white diggers, wanting all the claims for themselves, protested strongly. Whenever the price of diamonds fell they blamed it on over-supply caused by black claimholders, who, in fact, were mining a lot less than whites. In 1872 the white diggers rioted and attacked Africans and Indians, whom they accused of illicit diamond buying (known as IDB). They also burnt tents and canteens belonging to suspected dealers in stolen diamonds. In order to appease the white diggers, Sir Henry

Barkly (the British High Commissioner for Griqualand West) issued a proclamation stating that no person could become a registered claimholder unless a magistrate certified him to be of good character and worthy of being registered. In practice this regulation served to eliminate all African and most coloured claimholders. This was because the magistrates were under constant pressure from white racist diggers and were, in any case, racists themselves. Thus, from the earliest days, the colonial state would not allow Africans to compete as capitalists with whites; they would only be allowed to participate in South African capitalism as wage workers to be exploited.

In later years the white claimholders were also eliminated by the monopolization of the diamond industry and became wage workers. The mining companies treated black workers less favourably than white workers, with whose demands they were sometimes ready to compromise. For example, in 1883 the companies issued a regulation that all miners must strip naked to be searched when leaving work. The miners, both black and white, objected strongly. The white workers, however, claimed that only black workers should be searched, but that it was degrading for whites; they went on strike and demonstrated, and four of them were shot dead by company guards. They returned to work when the companies stated that whites would have to undergo only irregular, surprise searches wearing a shirt, trousers and socks. Africans continued to be searched naked after work daily.

As new machinery was introduced and underground mining began, the work of the mines was reorganized and large numbers of workers retrenched. In this process the mining companies decreased the proportion of white workers in the workforce, eliminating most unskilled whites. By the end of the century those whites who remained, mainly skilled or supervisory workers, seem to have reached an accord with the capitalists who controlled De Beers. The workers cooperated with the company and were in turn treated as a privileged group, a type of 'labour aristocracy'. They were placed in authority over the African workers, earned four of five times as much, and lived in an attractive suburb of Kimberley.

Gold

In 1886 gold was discovered on a farm called Langlaagte, now part of Johannesburg. Other large gold deposits were soon found along the length of the Witwatersrand (or Rand) area. This was not the first time gold had been found in the Transvaal. Africans had mined gold in pre-colonial times. More recently, small deposits of gold had been mined by white colonists, especially in the Eastern Transvaal. The

Witwatersrand deposits, though, were much, much larger than any of the previous finds.

Gold was an extremely valuable metal because it was the basis of the world's monetary system as well as being highly prized for jewellery. The Witwatersrand gold deposits were the largest ever discovered anywhere in the world and represented a much greater store of wealth than even the diamond fields. However, the average gold content per ton was the lowest of all the gold-producing areas in the world, and most of the gold lay deep below the surface. This made it necessary for sophisticated and expensive methods of gold extraction to be used from the start. Thus, unlike the Kimberley diamond-mining industry, gold mining was controlled from the start by companies with large amounts of capital at their disposal. Much of the capital necessary to develop the first gold mines was invested by people like Rhodes. Barney Barnato, Alfred Beit, J. B. Robinson and others who had become wealthy in the diamond fields. Additional large amounts of capital came from Britain, while substantial investments also came from Germany, France and the USA.

The mining companies cooperated with one another to promote common interests. In 1887 they formed the Chamber of Mines, an association of mine owners. The Chamber did not own or operate any mines, but looked after matters of concern to all the companies. For example, it made representations to the government, set maximum wages so that the companies did not push up costs by competing for labour, and established recruiting companies to ensure that the mines had a sufficient supply of workers.

The mine owners, as well as controlling great wealth, also exercised political power. The government of the Transvaal was dependent on the gold mines for much of its revenue; and the landowners, the most powerful section of the ruling class, benefited from the market for farm products on the Witwatersrand. Because the profitability of the mines was important to the government it was prepared to help the mine owners increase their profits by providing anti-worker legislation, police and administration. The mine owners could also count on the support of the government of the Cape Colony and Natal, which gained financially from the ports and railways carrying the ever-increasing flow of goods to the Transvaal.

Although the Boer government in the Transvaal had reason to favour the mine owners, the relationship between the two was contradictory. The Afrikaans-speaking farmers controlled the government and it ruled primarily in their interest. These interests, while benefiting from the wealth generated by gold mining, also sometimes conflicted with those of the mine owners. For example, the mines and the farms competed with one another for African labour.

In such cases, the government tended to give precedence to the interests of the farmers. The mine owners resented this and aspired to take control of the Transvaal. In order to achieve this they looked for support to the British government and also to the large number of English-speaking whites (the 'Uitlanders') who had come to live and work on the Rand since the discovery of gold. This question is discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

After the Anglo-Boer War, with the defeat of the Boers and the coming of direct British colonial rule, the political position of the mine owners was strengthened. They became, in fact, the strongest political force in the country and maintained their predominant position even after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

Formation of the Working Class

Under the international money system operating at the time (the 'gold standard'), the price of gold was fixed. It could not be raised to compensate for cost increases. The mine owners were therefore particularly keen to keep their production costs as low as possible as their profits depended on this.

Since most of the expensive equipment and supplies used by the mines were imported at prices beyond the control of the mine owners, they were determined to keep their labour costs as low as possible, especially since they required large numbers of workers, with labour costs consequently forming a big proportion of total costs.

One of the major problems for the mine owners, then, was to secure a supply of labour at as cheap a price as possible. As regards African workers, who formed the vast majority of the workforce, a particular system of migrant labour developed to fulfil the needs of the mining capitalists.

The migrant labour system

At first, many workers who became migrants did so as it was a way of earning money without abandoning their ties with their old way of life. The mine owners soon realized that the migrant labour system held major advantages for them.

Under this system, labourers worked on the mines for a contract period of three to twelve months and then returned home to their families in the rural areas. While the men were away, the families continued working on the land, growing crops and raising livestock. If the miner had lived permanently in town with his family, his wages would have had to cover the total living expenses of the family group. The migrant labour system thus allowed the mine owners to pay lower wages while evading all responsibility for the housing, health care,

education and welfare of the workers' families. In this way production in the most backward, poverty-stricken sector of the economy was subsidizing the profits of the mining industry, the most modern sector.

For these reasons the mine owners wanted to preserve the migrant labour system. They realized, however, that workers would stay away from the mines and concentrate on subsistence in the rural areas if wages were too low for their liking, or go home before completing their contracts if they were dissatisfied with their working or living conditions. The mining companies therefore looked for ways of forcing rural Africans into migrant labour and ensuring that they completed their contracts. With the help of the various governments of South Africa, both Boer and British, they developed methods to achieve their aims.

Taxation: Because most Africans were subsistence farmers and did not participate in the money economy, the colonial government introduced taxation as a means of forcing them to become wage workers. Since the wages had to be paid in cash, most people had to work for whites to get the money they required. They worked on farms, mines, the railways, in factories and in private homes. The taxes offered the governments the added advantage of raising money to cover the costs of administering their colonies. In this way Africans were also forced to pay the costs of maintaining the bureaucracy and the police force which oppressed them.

As early as 1870 the British colonial authorities in Lesotho (then Basutoland) imposed a hut tax of 10 shillings on each hut every year in order to pressurize men to go to work on the diamond mines. The hut tax was later introduced in other areas such as Zululand where it was set at 14 shillings per hut from 1887. In those days, a man had to work for about three months to get enough money to pay the hut tax for himself, his family and his parents. In the Cape, the Glen Grey Act introduced a labour tax and other measures which, Cecil Rhodes cynically commented, 'removed Natives from that life of sloth and laziness, teaching them the dignity of labour'. After the Anglo-Boer War, Lord Milner's British administration in the Transvaal imposed a poll tax of £2 on each adult African male and another tax of £2 for the second and each additional wife of a polygamist (a man with several wives). Similar taxes were introduced in other South African colonies.

Land deprivation: In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, large numbers of Africans, especially in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, lived on white-owned farms where they rented land or were sharecroppers.* Many of these people were very productive farmers. They sold part of the produce, paid their taxes and still

enjoyed a much higher standard of living than either wage labourers on the farms or migrant mine workers.

In 1913 the South African government passed the Natives Land Act which made sharecropping illegal and prohibited Africans from renting land on white-owned farms. Thousands of African tenants and sharecroppers were forced to become wage labourers for white farmers. Thousands more had to move to the reserves where they could not get sufficient good land to survive from farming alone, and so became migrant workers in the mines or elsewhere. (The Land Act and its consequences are examined more thoroughly in Chapter 5.)

Recruitment: In 1896, the Chamber of Mines formed the Rand Native Labour Association to recruit African mine workers and to establish centralized control over labour recruitment. In 1901 this was replaced by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA or Wenela). The WNLA recruited workers from as far north as Malawi (then Nyasaland) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). In 1912, the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) was formed to take over the recruitment of workers from South Africa, Botswana (then Bechuanaland), Lesotho (Basutoland) and Swaziland.

With recruiting centralized, it was possible for individual mining companies to avoid competing with one another for workers and so pushing up wages. The companies also agreed on a 'maximum average wage' system whereby the average wage paid by any mine would not exceed an amount set by the WNLA. In this way the companies were able to keep wages as low as possible.

The recruiting organizations sent their agents into even the remotest villages to recruit workers. They would sometimes offer to pay people's taxes and also give them some cash in advance. This money would then be deducted from the workers' wages. Often African chiefs would be given money so that they would send men to sign up for work on the mines.

Dishonest recruiting practices were common. Men would often be recruited with false promises of high wages and good working conditions. Misleading advertising included signs such as the one above the door of a recruiting office in Zululand: *Abathanda imali, abathanda izinkhomo indhlela elula eya e Goli; nanti iHovisi* (lovers of money, lovers of cattle, the road is easy to go to the City of Gold [Johannesburg]; here is the office). In Mozambique, the WNLA would sometimes dress their recruiting agents in uniforms similar to those of the local police to deceive people into thinking that they were compelled by law to be recruited.

In many rural areas, trading-store keepers also worked as recruiters for the mines. They offered credit to people to buy various imported

goods such as hoes, ploughs, blankets, cooking utensils, clothing, etc. The men would then have to sign up as migrant workers to earn the money to pay their debts.

Only about 40 per cent of gold mine workers came from South Africa. The rest came mainly from Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. Until 1930 Mozambican workers on the mines actually outnumbered those from South Africa; this was a result of great poverty in Mozambique and cooperation between South African and Portuguese authorities.

When, after the Anglo-Boer War, the mining companies set wages so low they could not recruit enough African workers, the British authorities imported poverty-stricken Chinese indentured workers. They started to arrive in South Africa in 1904 and altogether about 63,000 workers came. They came under three- or four-year contracts (or 'indentures') which obliged them to live in mine compounds and to work for low rates of pay which were set even lower for the first six months in order to pay for the costs of recruiting and transport from China. This scheme drew strong criticism from the opposition Liberal Party in Britain (who accused the government of promoting 'Chinese slavery') and from white workers and other whites in South Africa who raised the racist cry of 'yellow peril', claiming that the Chinese would eventually swamp the country and take the jobs of whites. Their fears were partly allayed by legislation in 1904 reserving 54 occupations for whites.

After the Liberal Party won the British elections in 1906, they stopped the importation of Chinese labour to the Transvaal and by 1910 all the Chinese workers had been sent back to China. Meanwhile, taxation, rural poverty and better organized recruitment had succeeded in forcing enough African migrants back to the mines at lower rates of pay.

Passes: Pass laws, controlling the movement of black people and limiting their places of residence, have a long history in South Africa. The first pass laws were introduced in the Cape in 1706 to restrict the movement of slaves and prevent them escaping. In 1809, the British governor of the Cape, Lord Caledon, made a type of pass law called the Hottentot Code. This law required all Khoikhoi people to have a pass document from a magistrate in order to leave the district in which they lived; the law stayed in effect until 1828. Other pass laws were also made to control the movement of farm workers in the Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal before 1870. However, it was only after the large mineral discoveries that they were strictly enforced and their scope extended.

After the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley, the Transvaal

government forced Africans who left the Transvaal to buy a pass. This was designed to stop farm workers leaving their employers to go to Kimberley. In Griqualand West an 1872 law required all African men to carry passes so that those who tried to leave the mines before their contracts were over could be easily identified.

After the discovery of gold, the Transvaal governments (both Boer and British) introduced laws requiring African men to carry passes. These laws were meant to control workers' movements for various purposes: to prevent the workers 'deserting' before their contracts expired; to channel them to areas with labour shortages; and to put them at a disadvantage in their relations with their employers.

Pass Office

Take off your hat.

What is your name.

Who is your father?

Who is your chief?

Where do you pay your tax?

What river do you drink?

We mourn for our country.

— Zulu song, translated by Hugh Tracey.

A pass was a document giving the bearer permission to be in a certain area or to move from one area to another. It contained such information as the bearer's name and home address; his father's name; his national group; the name and addresses of his employers and how long he had worked for each of them; what work he had done; his wages; a character reference from each employer.

The exact information depended on the type of pass. All the information on the pass was also registered at the Pass Office to help the authorities keep track of all workers.

Various types of passes were required. The *six-day pass* was required by a person who wanted to look for a job in a particular district. If he didn't have a job within six days he had to leave the district. This put pressure on people to take jobs as soon as they were offered, irrespective of wages and working conditions. A *special pass* was required by a worker to show that he was employed and had to be carried whenever he left his employer's premises. The special pass was aimed at stopping workers breaking their contracts. Workers who did leave work before the end of their contracts were reported to the Pass Office so that they could be more easily found. A *travelling pass* was required by a person who left his home to go elsewhere to find a job.

A *night pass* had to be carried by any African who was outdoors in a town after 9 p.m.

Passes of various kinds were introduced in other parts of South Africa as well. Any African could be stopped at any time by a policeman or by any white man and asked for his pass or passes. If his papers were not in order he could be arrested. The passes became a symbol of oppression for the African people for whom they caused great hardship. Not surprisingly, some of the major political campaigns undertaken by blacks in South African history have been directed against the pass laws.

Compounds: In order to establish a tighter control over the African workers and decrease labour costs, the mine owners on the Kimberley diamond fields set up the compound system in the 1880s. Under this system, the miners were confined to closed compounds for the entire period of the contract. One study has described compound life as follows:

The compound was an enclosure surrounded by a high corrugated iron fence and covered by wire netting. The men lived twenty to a room, in huts or iron cabins built against the fence. They went to work along a tunnel, bought food and clothing from the company's stores, and received free medical treatment but no wage during sickness, all within the compound. Men due for discharge were confined to detention rooms for several days, during which they only wore blankets and fingerless gloves padlocked to their wrists, swallowed purgatives, and were examined for stones concealed in cuts, wounds, swellings and orifices.

—J. and R. Simons (1983), p. 42.

The compound system had many advantages for the mine owners and so it was also introduced in the gold mining industry from its earliest days. With all the workers living together and their movements restricted, it was easier to control the labour force, ensure punctuality and maintain strict discipline. It also helped to minimize desertion by workers. The mine owners' labour costs were cut since compounds provided a cheap way of housing and feeding workers. In the Kimberley mines the tight controls over the compound workers helped the companies in their efforts to prevent diamond theft.

The racial division of the working class was entrenched by the compound system as black and white workers were made to feel different from each other by their whole style of life. The white workers' racist feelings of superiority were enhanced and the possibility of joint struggle with black workers decreased. The mining companies also attempted to prevent solidarity among black workers by housing workers from different national groups separately within the compounds. Trade union organization, which might have countered

these divisions, was extremely difficult because workers' lives were so strictly controlled.

For the workers, the compound system had few, if any, advantages. Food supplies were insufficient so that the men had to spend their meagre wages to buy extra food. In general, compound life was unpleasant and unhygienic and placed great psychological stress on the workers who had no privacy and found it difficult to adjust to the abnormal life they led away from family and friends.

Pull! Pull! (Sika-Sika!) — a Tsonga miners' work song

Leader: Pull! Pull! Pull to your side!

Chorus: We are pulling it.

Leader: Push! Push! Push to my side!

Chorus: We are pushing it.

Leader: Drive! Drive! Drive to your side!

Chorus: We are driving it.

Leader: Drive! Drive! Drive to my side!

Chorus: We are driving it!

The song is accompanied by whistling and a dialogue between the work-gang and the 'boss-boy', with the 'boss-hoy' playing the role of mediator between the workers and the white foreman.)

Gang: Boss-boy! It is time up; we are hungry!

Boss-boy: Work hard, and fast!

Gang: It is time to knock-off, man! This white man of yours is crazy! Man, it is time to knock-off! Time is up! Stop, stop! Time is up, boss-boy!

— First (1983), p. 85.

In the mines, the men would work for up to 15 hours a day. They were not given any food during that time; if they wanted any they had to bring their own. The work involved hard physical labour and was very dangerous. They did not have proper work clothes or helmets and so were easily injured. Rock falls were common and often resulted in death. In 1903, the death rate among miners was 11.2 per cent, with workers dying from accidents and from diseases such as pneumonia, phthisis, silicosis, meningitis, tuberculosis and scurvy. Deaths from pneumonia declined after the discovery of a vaccine in 1913, but mining remained a very hazardous occupation.

Black workers' resistance: In the period before the First World War, workers' resistance usually took the form of desertion or simply refusing to be recruited when wages were too low. Some small-scale, sporadic strikes took place here and there. Sometimes only workers

belonging to a particular national group at the same mine went on strike together. The introduction of closed compounds on the diamond mines led to a strike by 400 African workers in 1885 and 1,500 workers in 1886. In neither strike were the workers able to hold out for very long in the face of repression.

The first large-scale strike of black gold miners took place in 1913. Nine thousand compound workers at four mines struck against low pay and poor conditions, both in the compounds and underground. The army was called in, and in what was to become a familiar scene, the workers were brutally forced back to work. Nonetheless, the Chamber of Mines was frightened by the strike and decided to make some small improvements in the workers' food, medical care, living standards and working conditions.

The white workers

When the gold mines opened, skilled as well as unskilled workers were required. Although some men, both black and white, had learned mining skills on the diamond mines, not enough of them moved north from Kimberley to meet the demands of the gold mines. Most of the skilled workers were experienced miners who came from the tin and coal mines of Britain or Australia.

There was a shortage of skilled miners and those who had skills could demand fairly high wages. These skilled immigrant miners came with some experience of trade unionism in their home countries and soon organized themselves into strong unions. The unions tried to protect the position of the skilled miners. Above all they feared that black miners would learn their skills and then replace them at lower rates of pay.

They therefore agitated for skilled jobs to be reserved for whites only. Armed with the vote (after the Anglo-Boer War) and ready to take militant action, including strikes, to back up their demands, they were able to pressure both governments and employers to help them maintain their position as a 'labour aristocracy'. In 1893 the Boer regime in the Transvaal passed a law preventing all blacks from working as blasters (miners who prepare and set off underground explosions). Later legislation extended job reservation to many other types of work. For example, the British administration of the post-war Transvaal issued regulations in 1903 and 1906 reserving various managerial, supervisory and tradesman's jobs for whites only. The Mines and Works Act of 1911 reserved 32 types of jobs in the Transvaal and Orange Free State for white workers.

Thus the South African working class has, since its birth on the diamond and gold mines, been divided on colour lines. The colonial character of South African society resulted in a racism and elitism



Gold miners pose for a photograph with an early drilling machine. White miners organized strong trade unions to bargain with employers and to protect themselves from African competition. African miners were almost all migrant workers. They lived in compounds, were poorly paid, and were prevented by law and by the white trade unions from getting better-paid skilled jobs. For both black and white workers, the work was dangerous and unhealthy, resulting in large numbers of deaths. For the mine owners the mines were the source of great wealth and power.

among the white workers which prevented them from developing class solidarity with their black fellow-workers. In the longer term, however, some white workers did make an important contribution to black workers' resistance. Some of the white immigrants brought with them socialist ideas and helped develop trade unions. They also formed political organizations such as the Communist Party of South Africa which was later to play an important role in the national liberation and working-class movements.

The non-mining workers

The pattern of the divided working class was followed in manufacturing industry and commerce as well. Here too, white workers got the better-paid and more skilled jobs. Poorly paid, black workers were also prohibited from learning skills or advancing beyond the position of menial labourers.

One big difference between black mine workers and other urban workers was that most of the latter were not confined to compounds. They lived in shanty towns and slumyards in and around the cities, both on the Rand and elsewhere. In the Johannesburg area black locations such as Sophiatown, Nancefield (later renamed Orlando),

Alexandra and Pimville grew up. In Sophiatown and Alexandra Africans could buy plots on freehold tenure. In these locations people from all parts of South Africa lived side by side. Their ethnic loyalties were weakened and they developed a higher degree of both national and class consciousness than did the miners. This was particularly the case for those people who ceased to be migrants and settled in the urban areas.

Other Results of the Mineral Discoveries

Growth of towns and manufacturing industries

As in the case of Kimberley, towns sprang up around most of the mines. On the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg soon became the largest city in South Africa. By 1900 it had a population of 166,000 and continued to grow rapidly. Along the East and West Rand there appeared towns such as Heidelberg, Springs, Brakpan, Benoni, Boksburg, Germiston, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Randfontein.

In addition to the mining towns, the ports of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban grew rapidly in order to cope with the increased traffic in goods and people moving in and out of the country following the birth of the mining industry.

The population of the towns provided a market and stimulated the growth of various small, consumer-goods industries: clothing, leather, pottery, soap, candles, food processing, liquor, blankets and rugs, printing and others. Bricks, tiles and cement were produced for the building trades. The mining industry also stimulated the growth of industries producing goods that it required: explosives, some mining machinery and spare parts, miners' boots and tools. Despite the development of these industries, though, before the First World War manufacturing remained a fairly small and unimportant sector of the economy compared to mining and agriculture.

The proximity to the gold fields of the East Rand coal deposits facilitated the development of coal mining to provide fuel to the mines and towns. In addition, mining stimulated the growing of timber which was used for props in the mines.

The growth of commercial farming

The growth of towns created a large demand for agricultural products. Farmers, both black and white, started to produce maize, wheat, sugar, meat and other foods to meet this demand. At first, commercial farming grew particularly quickly in Southern Transvaal and Northern Orange Free State which were close to the Witwatersrand markets. With the growth of railways, farmers in previously isolated areas gained access to urban markets and commercial

farming spread to these areas as well. The railway lines frequently avoided African areas (e.g., the reserves) to prevent their competing with whites.

Governments, responding to the need to increase food production, and under the influence of politically powerful white farmers, gave loans to farmers and improved agricultural marketing services. This aid was not available to African farmers, and from the time of the 1913 Land Act commercial farming among Africans was systematically destroyed until it disappeared altogether.

Impoverishment of rural Africans

The land remaining under African ownership after the conquest (mainly as 'reserves') gradually became overcrowded as the population increased naturally and more people were forced to move there. Because the land could no longer support the people adequately, and because of taxes and other pressures mentioned above, the young men were forced to leave home to become migrant workers. The rural areas were deprived of many of their most productive workers, and the women, children and old men had to take over their jobs. As a result, not as much food was produced. This in turn increased people's dependence on the money earned by the migrants; moreover, people came to depend on manufactured goods such as blankets, clothes, cooking pots, paraffin, matches, ploughs, hoes, etc. Village craft industries declined and eventually disappeared as people turned to machine-made products.

Here are two songs of Mozambican miners' wives. Below each song, a woman explains what it means for her.

On the Flat Bare Place

- Leader: Oh! on the flat bare place.
 Chorus: Stay there, remain there.
 Leader: Even if they leave me there.
 Chorus: Remain there!
 Leader: With the rains falling on me.
 Chorus: Remain there!
 Leader: Even when they insult me (swear at me).
 Chorus: Remain there!
 Leader: Even if they hit me (beat me up).
 Chorus: Remain there!
 Leader: Even if they kick me.
 Chorus: Remain there!
 Leader: Even if they bewitch me.
 Chorus: Remain there!
 Leader: Even if they throw you out.

Chorus: Remain there!

Leader: Oh! On the flat bare place!

Chorus: Remain there!

This songs means that after I got married my husband left and went to *Joni* [Johannesburg] after building a small hut for me on an open space with no trees. The hut is badly constructed and it leaks when it rains. My in-laws are not nice to me: they insult me, they swear at me and they even kick or beat me up. But in spite of all these problems, I do not pack up my things and return to my own family — no! I stay here, I remain here, on this bare place, and wait until my husband returns from the mines. He must find me here when he comes home!

— R. First (1983), p. 163.

I am happy today

Leader: Oh! What joy! I am happy to see my husband today!

Chorus: Oh! What joy!

Leader: I am so happy to see this father today!

Chorus: Oh! What joy!

Leader: Oh! I am happy today [because] my man has returned.

Chorus: Oh! What joy!

Leader: Oh! What joy! What joy!

Chorus: Oh! What joy!

I am happy because my husband has returned from *Joni* and I welcome him with joy because we are going to do many nice things together. He is back and we shall go visiting together. We shall visit his people and we shall visit my people. My man has returned home from *Joni*!

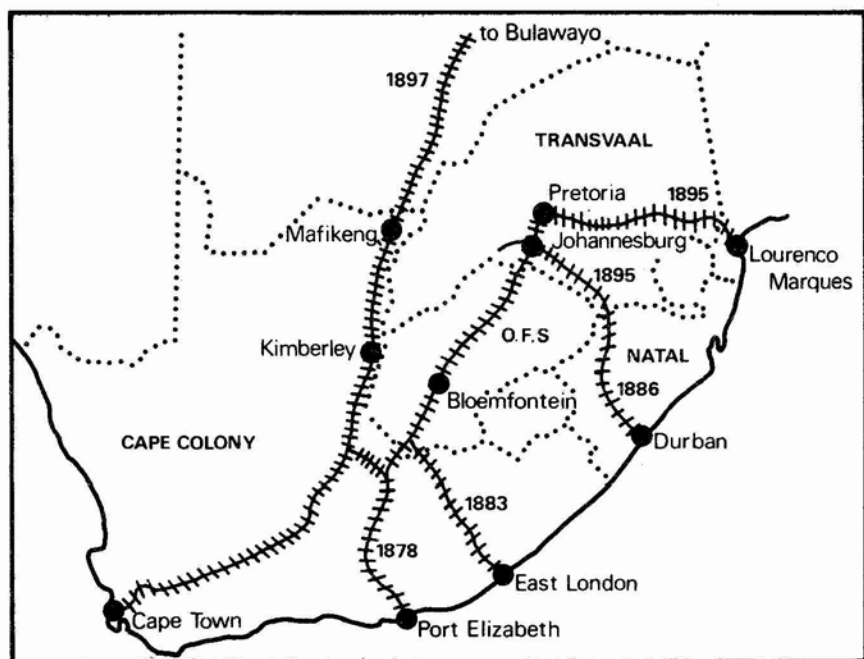
— R. First (1983), p. 166.

In the rural areas children grew up seldom seeing their fathers, wives seldom seeing their husbands. The men came home for a few months at a time and then left again for the mines, factories, farms or homes of the whites. Family life was all but destroyed. The old ways of living, the customs and conditions of the past, were slowly left behind as capitalism satisfied its hunger for cheap labour power.

Improved transport and communications

When diamonds were first discovered South Africa had only 63 miles (101 kilometres) of railway line, from Cape Town to Wellington. By 1885 this line was extended to Kimberley and lines were also constructed from Port Elizabeth and East London to join it. After gold was discovered, Johannesburg was joined by railway to Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and Maputo. Other lines were built linking farming areas with the cities.

Road transport also improved, with new roads being built and old ones improved. Kimberley and the Witwatersrand were also joined to



Map 2 The main railway lines in the 1890s

the ports, to each other and to other inland towns by telegraph and telephone.

Influx of foreign capital

Large amounts of foreign capital were attracted to South Africa by the mining industry and other economic developments. The capital came from investors in Britain and most of the other advanced capitalist countries. These investors gave imperialism a stake in maintaining a grip on South Africa and perpetuating a racist system which guaranteed a vast supply of cheap labour.

Essay Topics

- 1 Describe how South Africa's economy was transformed during the period 1867–1914.

- 2 Why did the mine owners prefer African workers to be migrants rather than permanent workers with homes near the mines?
- 3 Discuss the reasons why Africans left their rural homes to become migrant workers in the period 1867 to 1914.

Topics for Group Discussions

Read the following passage carefully and discuss the questions that follow:

There are two main reasons why Blacks became urbanised, namely the increase of their numbers as a result of the ending of tribal wars, and the fresh needs arising from westernisation of the Black people.

Tribal wars were prevalent among Blacks and often tribes or groups were wiped out, as was the case in the times of Chaka, Dingaan and Msilikazi. The Great Trek and the time that followed, however, changed the picture. Dingaan's power was broken and Msilikazi driven north across the Limpopo. Thereafter refugees left their hiding places and there was a period of unprecedented peace. Their numbers increased rapidly. The White government in SA set aside certain areas or reserves for the Blacks. The rest of the country was owned by whites. The increase in numbers among Blacks soon made the reserves inadequate to support them economically. The methods of the Black farmer were unscientific. Traditionally the women tilled the lands and looked after the farm. Their farming methods were very primitive. This, together with overgrazing, caused soil erosion, low productivity and malnutrition. In spite of the acquisition of more land in 1936 under the Native Trust and Land Act, it was still insufficient to support the evergrowing Bantu population. Consequently the Blacks, in order to supplement their income, turned in growing numbers to White areas.

The second cause of the urbanisation of the Black man lay in the influence on him of Western society. After the Black man had come into contact with the first White traders, he realised that he had other needs that he wanted to satisfy. Commodities such as clothing, blankets, household goods, agricultural implements, the food of the White man, liquor, etc. became part of his everyday wants. He had to pay in currency for these goods since barter was no longer acceptable. He therefore became involved in the monetary economy of the whites. He was compelled to go to the White areas to earn the necessary money, since he could only do it there.

Like most of the Whites, the Black man was also a farmer, i.e. someone with a rural background who fought shy of the city. This caused a shortage of unskilled labour on the Witwatersrand after the discovery of gold. The solution was an agreement with the Portuguese, by which SA could recruit Blacks in Mozambique. Originally therefore South African Blacks went to work on the farms of Whites. The enormous industrial development in SA, coupled with the fact that White farms could not accommodate all the Black labourers, caused thousands of Blacks to stream to the industrial centres, i.e. the cities.

Industrial areas such as the Vaal Triangle, the Witwatersrand, Port

Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Durban-Pinetown and the Western Cape drew thousands. Thus in 1921 38% of the urban population was Black and in 1960 there were 46% Blacks in the cities compared to 35% Whites. The number of Black workers in White factories increased between 1924 and 1960 by 53.8%.

— Lategan and De Kock (1978), pp. 146–47.

- 1 According to the passage, why did the 'tribal wars' end?
- 2 Why, according to the author, was 'the ending of tribal wars' a reason why blacks became urbanised?
(Let one member of the group try to summarize the argument in his/her own words; the others can help or comment on whether the summary is correct.)
- 3 Why, according to the author, did 'the fresh needs arising from westernisation of the Black people' lead to urbanisation?
(Discuss in the same way as 2 above.)
- 4 Do you think it is possible to guess where the author's views on race would place him in today's political spectrum. Give full reasons for your answer.

CHAPTER THREE

Anglo-Boer Relations: War and Conciliation

Background

The Boers had come to settle in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State as a result of the Great Trek of the 1830s. A number of separate groups of Boers had left the Cape because of their dissatisfaction with British rule in general and the abolition of slavery in particular. They had fought several wars to dispossess African people of land and cattle; then they had settled down, with the indigenous inhabitants as their labourers, tenants or sharecroppers.

They had set up their own republics, practising a harsh repression against indigenous populations. These states had been recognized by Britain in 1852 (the Transvaal, or South African Republic) and 1854 (the Orange Free State). However, the British later decided to annex the Transvaal as part of an aggressive attempt to form a federation of South African states within the British Empire. This annexation, which took place in 1877, was resented by the Boers who rose up in arms against Britain four years later. In 1881, after a short war, Britain was forced to recognize the Transvaal's independence, though the Republic would be subject to certain restrictions: for example, British goods would be allowed to enter freely and the Transvaal was not allowed to make treaties with 'foreign powers' or with African peoples to the east or west of its borders.

Afrikaner nationalism, which came into being slowly after the Great Trek, grew much stronger in the 1870s and 1880s. It developed a strong anti-British character as Britain's aggressive attempts to extend its influence in South Africa threatened Boer power and the independence of the Boer republics. The Orange Free State's grievance at being denied control over Griqualand West by Keate in 1871 (see Chapter 2) and the Transvaal's struggle against Britain's annexation both served to fuel the growth of Afrikaner nationalism.

The nationalist movement was given a further boost during the late 1870s by the development in the Western Cape of the Eerste Afrikaanse Taalbeweging (First Afrikaans Language Movement). This literary movement consisted of the publication of several books and the magazine *Die Afrikaner Patriot* in an early form of the Afrikaans language. It thus asserted the distinctiveness of Afrikaans as a separate language from Dutch.

The following extracts from fundamental documents of the Afrikaner Bond give an idea of the outlook of early Afrikaner Nationalism:

From the General Constitution (adopted 1883)

Article 1. The Afrikaner Bond recognizes no nationality of any kind, save that of the Afrikaner, and looks upon all as belonging to it, of whatever descent, who aim at the welfare of South Africa.

Article 2. The object of the Bond is: the formation of a South African nationality by the fostering of true patriotism, as preparation for its final destiny: a United South Africa.

Article 3. This object the Bond will strive after, by encouraging the Afrikanders to assert themselves, both politically and socially, as a nation...

Article 5. The Bond will be divided into Provinces, one of which shall be established in each Republic, each State and each Colony of South Africa....

The Provincial Constitution for the Cape Colony

Article 3. This Province shall give effect to the objects described in the general Constitution by: (a) attending to the registration of qualified citizens; (b) ensuring the election of competent men for civil and state affairs; (c) promoting effective, sound, Christian education; (d) assisting in the advancement of our people by spreading wholesome literature; and by (e) watching the interests of our national industries, especially of agriculture and stock-farming, as being the principal sources of the wealth of this land....

— Malherbe (1971), pp.162–63.

The first Afrikaner nationalist political party, the Afrikaner Bond, was founded in 1879. Based in the Cape, the Bond also had members in the Boer republics. Its long-term goal was a united, Boer-dominated South Africa. In Cape electoral politics it fought for the interests of Afrikaner farmers, particularly for state help to boost agricultural production and exports.

Despite the resentment of the Boer republics at British interference, their antagonistic attitude was restrained by dependence on Britain and its South African colonies for all their manufactured goods, and especially for the arms and ammunition which allowed them to take land from African people and to defend it.

Increasing Anglo-Boer Tension after 1886

Transvaal attempts to decrease dependence on Britain

The growth of gold mining heightened the tension between the Transvaal Boers and Britain. The Transvaal's new-found wealth made it easier to resist British influence over its affairs, but at the same time made Britain more interested in extending its power over the Transvaal.

Most of the capital initially invested in the gold-mining industry and in other business on the Witwatersrand came from Britain and from the diamond mines in Kimberley. Paul Kruger, the Transvaal's President, tried (with some success) to dilute the preponderance of British capital by attracting investment from other European countries, especially Germany.

One of the most important non-British investors was the Netherlands South African Railway Company, owned by Dutch and German interests, which Kruger's government commissioned to build a railway line from Maputo (then Lourenço Marques). Completed in 1894, it gave the Transvaal an outlet to the sea through non-British territory and provided competition for the existing lines to the Cape and Natal ports. To avoid losing rail traffic to the Maputo line, the Cape railways cut their tariffs on the short section between the Vaal and the Rand. The Cape government then organized an ox-wagon service to transport goods over this distance. In response, Kruger's government closed the Vaal Drifts* to ox-wagon traffic. The British and Cape governments made a strong protest and even threatened to use military force to keep the drifts open. Kruger backed down and opened the drifts, but the whole incident served to fuel the antagonism between the Boers and the British.

Mine owners' dissatisfaction with Boer rule

Most mine owners, despite their large profits, were dissatisfied with Kruger's government. As we saw in Chapter 2, their interests did not coincide with those of the Afrikaner farmers who hoped to maintain control of the government and their political independence.

To attract non-British capital, the government had granted monopolies to certain non-mining firms. The mine owners were particularly dissatisfied with the monopolies granted for dynamite production and the railways. The dynamite monopoly, held by a Swedish-Germany company (Nobel), inflated the price of an essential requirement of the mining industry. It was also alleged that the rates charged by the Netherlands South African Railway Company were too

* Drift: a shallow place where a river may be crossed.

high. These and other monopolies, claimed the Chamber of Mines, were pushing up the cost of gold mining. The same charge was also levelled at Kruger's customs policy which, it was said, raised the price of imports unreasonably. The mine owners also charged that the government was not doing enough to help them recruit and control black labour.

For these reasons, powerful mining capitalists and their financial backers in Britain were eager to overthrow Kruger's government and place control of the state in the hands of a British administration which would exercise state power primarily in their interests.

Inter-imperialist rivalries

Behind British designs on the Transvaal were leading members of the government like Chamberlain and Milner, who felt that British imperial interests were being threatened by the growth of an economically powerful Transvaal. They feared that the Transvaal would grow to dominate South Africa politically and economically, and that it would align itself with Britain's European rivals, especially Germany. Germany had already annexed Namibia in 1884, one expression of the intense competition for African territory amongst the imperialist countries in this period. Kruger's increasingly close ties with Germany thus helped to fuel British fears.

Britain's rulers were also concerned that the Transvaal could become the focus of a dynamic and aggressive Boer nationalism, drawing support from Afrikaners in other parts of South Africa, and threatening Britain's very presence in the region.

The Uitlanders

After the discovery of gold, thousands of whites from other parts of South Africa, Europe (especially Britain), America and Australia immigrated to the Transvaal, settling mainly in the Rand towns. The overwhelming majority were English-speaking and of British origin. Among them were the mining capitalists who used their wealth and control of the press to exercise a large degree of influence over the rest of the Uitlander (foreigner) population. By the late 1890s the immigrants the Boers called Uitlanders had begun to rival them in number and owned about a third of the land in the Transvaal.

The Boers felt threatened. While they welcomed the increased government revenues and markets for agricultural products which resulted from the gold-mining industry, they feared that the new immigrants would be used by the mine owners and the British government as pawns to capture the state, thus ending Boer supremacy in the Transvaal. In order to maintain their control, the Boers imposed demanding citizenship and franchise qualifications

on immigrants. In 1890 a law was passed allowing full franchise rights only to those male immigrants who had lived in the Transvaal for fourteen years and were over forty years of age. In addition, the government refused to allow the use of the English language in the courts, the state schools and government affairs, as demanded by many Uitlanders.

Uitlander organizations, such as the Transvaal National Union, which were dominated by mining interests, protested loudly. They complained that although the Uitlanders paid most of the state revenues, they had no voice in the government. They organized petitions to both the Transvaal and British governments, held mass meetings and used the English language press in Johannesburg to voice their dissatisfaction. Important British politicians like Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, and Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa, supported the Uitlanders' agitation to help create conditions for a British take-over of the Transvaal.

The Jameson Raid

In 1895, Cecil Rhodes and some fellow capitalists conspired, with the knowledge of Chamberlain, to use the Uitlanders' discontent to their own advantage and to capture the Transvaal for Britain. They smuggled arms to a committee of Uitlanders who, according to the plan, were to organize an uprising on the appointed day. The uprising was to be supported by a force of five hundred armed men who would ride in on horseback from Botswana, led by Dr L. S. Jameson. Unfortunately for Rhodes and his friends, the uprising did not materialize on any serious scale and Kruger found out about the raid. Boer troops sprung the trap on Jameson's raiders who were easily captured and disarmed near Krugersdorp on 2 January 1896.

Under pressure, the Transvaal handed over Jameson and his senior officers to the British government for trial. They were given prison sentences, but Jameson was excused on the grounds of ill-health. Four of the leaders of the Uitlander rebels were sentenced to death in the Transvaal, but their sentences were later commuted to £25,000 fines which were paid by Rhodes and Beit. Rhodes was forced to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape because he lost the support of the Afrikaner Bond representing the Cape Boers.

The main result of the Jameson Raid was to further heighten Anglo-Boer tensions. The Boers, who now had proof of Britain's intentions and bad faith, felt more insecure. Britain, on the other hand, remained determined to pursue what it regarded as its interests. When the German Kaiser sent a telegram to Kruger, congratulating him on the capture of Jameson, the British government became even more intent on gaining control of the Transvaal.

Towards the outbreak of war

After the Jameson Raid British strategy for gaining control of the Transvaal seemed to have only one aim: provoking a war. They took up the issue of the Uitlanders' grievances more vigorously. Negotiating with the Transvaal government, the British demanded a relaxation of the franchise qualifications. The Boers made a number of concessions until, in August 1899, they agreed to the five-year residence qualification that Britain had been demanding, on condition that the British undertook not to interfere further in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. The British refused to do this and negotiations broke down.

From the time of the Jameson Raid, Kruger's government had assumed that war was inevitable and had started to make serious military preparations. Arms spending increased rapidly and large quantities of modern weapons — rifles, machine guns and field guns — were imported from Germany and France. German instructors were brought in to train an artillery brigade and Boer officers were sent to Europe for military training.

Britain, meanwhile, brought reinforcements into South Africa and posted troops near the Transvaal border. On 9 October 1899 Kruger demanded the withdrawal of these troops. Britain refused and the Transvaal declared war on 11 October. The Boers in the Orange Free State, who sympathized with the Transvaal and realized that a British victory would also mean an end to their independence, joined the war on the side of their fellow Boers.

The Anglo-Boer War

Immediately after the war was declared, the Boer armies took the initiative. They laid siege to Mafikeng (Mafeking) and Kimberley in the Northern Cape and to Ladysmith in Natal. They also encountered and defeated British forces at Magersfontein near Kimberley, Stormberg in the Eastern Cape and Colenso in Natal, all in December 1899.

Soon, however, the British started to bring in more troops from Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and managed to turn the tide. They relieved Kimberley and Ladysmith and forced the Boer General Piet Cronje to surrender with 4,000 men at Paardeberg. British troops marched on Bloemfontein, captured it in March 1900, and then moved north, entering Johannesburg in May and Pretoria in June. In a separate operation, Mafikeng was also relieved in May.

After the occupation of the Boer capitals, both republics were annexed and the Free State renamed the Orange River Colony. The Boers, however, refused to surrender and continued to fight a guerilla war under the leadership of such generals as J. H. de la Rey, C. R. de Wet, Jan Smuts and Louis Botha. Kruger escaped by train to Maputo

and then went to Europe where he hoped to raise support for the Boer cause. The guerilla stage of the war lasted for almost two years until May 1902 when the Boers finally surrendered and signed the Treaty of Vereeniging. The war left the Boers deeply divided between those who had surrendered early (*hensoppers*, from the English 'hands up') and those who wanted to continue fighting to the bitter end (*bittereinders*).

The British were often outmanoeuvred and outfought by the Boer commandos during the guerilla stage of the war. Britain deployed, altogether, some 500,000 troops against the 80,000 Boers. The commandos were helped and fed by the rural Boer population, mainly women and children. To deny them this support, the British burnt Boer farms and herded their women and children into concentration camps which were overcrowded, disease-ridden and lacking in basic medical care and supplies of food and clothing. About 28,000 people died in these camps, 22,000 of whom were children.

Conditions in the Concentration Camps for Africans

At Heidelberg [camp] ... refugees were reported to be subsisting only on the carcasses of diseased cattle; when two water carts were sent to the camp to improve the supply of water, these were soon afterwards commandeered back again by the army. Africans assembled at Heidelberg were consequently dying at the rate of about one a day.

— Warwick (1980), p. 149.

[The Africans in the Dryharts camp] are in great poverty and misery and our visit was a comfort to them. Many are dying from day to day — what is to become of the survivors I cannot think. Between the Dutch and the English they have lost everything, and there being no political party interested in their destiny, they 'go to the wall' as the weakest are bound to do.

— Rev. W.H.R. Brown, a missionary who visited the camp, in Warwick (1980), p. 156.

Conditions were, if anything, worse in the concentration camps established for Africans — mainly labourers and tenants on the Boer farms which were destroyed. By the end of the war 115,000 Africans had been interned in these camps. Over 14,000 deaths were recorded, many thousands more were not. Over 80 per cent of the deaths were among children.

Many blacks — Africans, coloureds and Indians — participated in the war, most on the side of the British. Officially neither side permitted blacks to be armed participants and no training in the use of arms was given to blacks. This was partly because of fear that the

arming and training of blacks would increase the possibility of their resisting white control, and partly because racist morality considered it wrong to have blacks fighting against whites — even if those whites were the enemy.

Most Africans and coloureds participated as labourers, servants, stretcher bearers, transport drivers, attendants for the horses, and intelligence scouts. At times the pressing needs of the war broke down the official policies and some blacks were armed. For example, the British found it necessary to arm their African scouts because of the very dangerous and important nature of their work.

It is understood that you have armed Bastards, Fingos and Barolongs against us — in this you have committed an enormous act of wickedness ... reconsider the matter, even if it cost you the loss of Mafeking ... disarm your blacks and thereby act the part of a white man in a white man's war.

— Message from Boer general Piet Cronje to the British commander, Colonel Baden-Powell during the siege of Mafeking.
Pakenham (1979), p. 396.



A group of Boer soldiers with some of their servants.

Outside the official armies, a number of chiefs also organized forces which harassed the Boers considerably. There were areas where Boer families had been forced to leave and commandos could not enter — either for military purposes or to get food — because the African inhabitants would not allow them to. Such areas included the Pedi heartland in the Eastern Transvaal, controlled by Sekhukhune II and the furthest reaches of the Western Transvaal, controlled by the Kgatla chief Lentshwe from his headquarters in Mochudi, Botswana. The British army also relied on chiefs in Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and the Transkei to prevent the Boers from penetrating those areas. On the Zululand-Transvaal border the Zulu leader Dinizulu organized an extremely efficient intelligence network to keep the British informed of Boer movements. He also sent groups of armed soldiers across the border to help the British capture Boer livestock. In Natal, M. K. Gandhi (later to become famous as Mahatma Gandhi) helped to organize an Indian Ambulance Corps of over 1,000 men who served on the British side.

Altogether about 100,000 black people were employed on the British side and about 10,000 on the Boer side, the latter being personal servants of the Boer soldiers or conscripted into military service. The martial law regulations of both Boer republics provided for compulsory conscription and punishment for those who refused. Blacks in the Boer armies were not paid. On the British side, blacks were paid wages similar to those of gold miners before the outbreak of war. Many people joined the British army to earn money since the migrant labour system had been disrupted by the war and the mines had closed down temporarily. Others were compelled to join by increased poverty caused by the war-time disruption of agriculture, the theft of their foodstocks by soldiers and the poor weather in certain areas in 1900 and 1901.

Most blacks, particularly educated ones, tended to support Britain during the war. British war propaganda criticized the Boers' treatment of black people and claimed that Britain was fighting for the liberation of black people from 'Boer slavery'. Chamberlain said that a non-racial franchise similar to that in the Cape would be introduced in the former Boer republics and other officials made similar statements. Generally, the British were considered to be more liberal than the Boers.

The Treaty of Vereeniging

The Anglo-Boer war ended officially on 31 May 1902 when the Boer leaders signed the Treaty of Vereeniging. It was agreed that the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony would be British colonies.

They were to be granted responsible government in the near future and financial assistance to restore their economies. The Boers would be allowed to keep their rifles and Dutch could be used in schools and law courts. Section 8 of the treaty stated that 'The question of the franchise to natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government.' Self-government therefore meant rule by the white minority which was certain to reject political rights for blacks. White solidarity against blacks thus outweighed Anglo-Boer rivalries, and Britain abandoned its war-time promise to protect the rights of black people.

Dismayed by this betrayal, black South Africans were disappointed in other ways by the British. In spite of the assistance given by the Zulus to the British army, after the war the Natal colonial government confiscated large tracts of land which were given to white settlers. In the Transvaal the British administration of Lord Milner, instead of relieving the oppression of blacks, actually intensified it in order to help the mine owners obtain more labour at low wages: the pass laws were tightened up; punishment for breaking a labour contract was increased; conditions in the compounds deteriorated; municipalities were authorized to segregate Africans in locations; taxes were increased. In the rural areas, British troops helped Boer farmers to evict Africans who had taken over farm land during the war. Unlike the Boer farmers, Africans whose crops and cattle were seized by troops during the war got no compensation, yet were forced to return cattle they had seized from Boer farmers.

Towards Union

British treatment of the defeated Boers at the Treaty of Vereeniging was generous. Britain recognized that to continue to dominate and exploit South Africa it would need the Boers' cooperation. Leading Boer politicians like Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, realizing that Boer independence was a lost cause, opted for reconciliation with Britain and local English-speaking whites. They would try to gain for their people, and especially the big landowners who had dominated the Boer republics, a 'place in the sun' within the British Empire. They would try to promote their economic interests and their culture, language and separate identity within the British Empire, seizing the political opportunity offered by the promise of responsible government.

Milner's anglicization policy

In the years immediately after the war, though, Anglo-Boer relations remained strained, mainly as a result of Lord Milner's policies.

As Governor of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, and High Commissioner for South Africa, Milner tried to anglicize the Boer communities. He established schools where English was the only medium of instruction and Dutch no more than a separate subject. He also tried to attract large-scale immigration from Britain so that English speakers would form a majority among the whites. Even his attempts to promote economic growth and modernization and his establishment of a new and efficient public administration were seen as part of the anglicization policy by Milner, who considered Boer nationalism to be the result of backwardness and isolation from the rest of the world.

Milner's plans did not turn out very successfully. Without the support of the Chamber of Mines, which was not keen to change the composition of the labour force, he failed to attract as many immigrants as he had hoped. Although railways were built and aid given to white farmers to promote commercial agriculture, the economy did not recover as strongly as he had expected. Many Boers responded to Milner's education policy by forming their own schools practising 'Christian National Education', which used Dutch as a medium of instruction and fostered a narrow Calvinist, Afrikaner nationalist outlook.

The anglicization policies fuelled anti-British sentiment among many Boers but leaders like Botha and Smuts persisted in their attempts at reconciliation. They formed *Het Volk* (The People), a new political party, and campaigned in the Transvaal for self-rule (or Responsible Government*) for both the former Boer republics without delay, and for an end to the anglicization policy. In the Orange River Colony a sister political organization called *Oranje Unie* was formed under the leadership of Abraham Fischer.

Milner's term of office ended in 1905 and a Liberal Party government came into power in Britain seven months later. The anglicization policy, having failed to create an English-dominated South Africa, was dropped. The British authorities decided to give Responsible Government with a whites-only franchise to the former Boer republics. In 1907 *Het Volk* won the elections and formed the government in the Transvaal. In 1908 *Oranje Unie* was elected to govern the Orange River Colony.

Reasons for union

The four settler-ruled British colonies — the Cape, Natal, the Transvaal

* Responsible Government: self-government for the inhabitants of a British colony (in this case only for the whites), but with certain matters such as foreign affairs remaining in the hands of Britain, and Britain retaining the right to overrule any decision of the colony's elected government.

and the Orange River Colony — now all had the same status and the way was open for them to unite. Britain supported union because a single, strong regime would safeguard British interests and be better equipped to do so.

Serious economic problems propelled Afrikaners and English-speakers in all four colonies to seek the solution of a political union. Customs tariffs and railway policy, for example, had caused great conflict. The Cape and Natal, heavily dependent on customs tariffs and railway receipts for state revenue, wanted high tariffs and rail charges. The Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, on the other hand, in general wanted low tariffs and rail charges to keep down the prices of imported goods. The Transvaal farmers wanted to raise custom tariffs against agricultural imports from the Cape to protect their produce from competition in the Witwatersrand market. In 1907 the new Transvaal government gave notice of its intention to withdraw from the Customs Union which had been formed among the four colonies in 1903. The Cape and Natal were involved in intense competition for railway and port traffic with each other and with Mozambique, which had the closest port to Johannesburg and was thus favoured by many Transvaal importers and exporters.

Support for union, mainly motivated by economic considerations, was also strengthened by the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 (see Chapter 4). For whites in South Africa, and especially in Natal, the rebellion underlined the need for them to unite against any further African uprisings.

Formation of the Union of South Africa

Between October 1908 and February 1909, representatives of the four colonies met in a National Convention, first in Durban and then in Cape Town, to discuss the establishment of a union. They produced a constitution in the form of a draft Act of Union which was submitted to the British parliament for approval. In the new Union of South Africa the four colonies would become provinces. Virtually all political power in the new state was to lie with whites. Only whites could be elected as members of parliament and only whites could vote in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State (which was to revert to its old name) and Natal. In the Cape the existing qualified franchise was to remain, allowing a few property-owning blacks to vote (but only for white candidates). Black voters in the Cape could, however, be elected to the provincial council. The franchise rights of blacks in the Cape were (supposedly) entrenched in the proposed constitution: they could only be altered by a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament — the House of Assembly and the Senate — at a joint sitting.



White Cape Town celebrates the birth of the Union of South Africa.

The National Convention also decided that Dutch and English would be the official languages with equal status; this too was entrenched. In order to settle a quarrel between the colonies about where the capital of the Union should be, it was decided that Pretoria would be the administrative capital, Cape Town the legislative capital and Bloemfontein the seat of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Pietermaritzburg was given financial compensation.

Despite strong opposition from blacks to the racist nature of the proposed constitution (see Chapter 4), it was ratified by the British parliament as the South Africa Act and came into force on 31 May 1910. Louis Botha was called upon by the first Governor General, Lord Gladstone, to become the first Prime Minister and form a provisional government. Botha later formed a new party, called the South African Party, from a merger of Het Volk, Oranje Unie and two Cape parties, the South African Party and the Afrikaner Bond. This new party won the first general election in September 1910. The official opposition was the Unionist Party, a strongly pro-British, jingoist party which appealed to English-speaking voters and represented mining and merchant capital. The Labour Party, representing mainly the English-speaking white workers, also won a small representation in parliament.

Afrikaner Nationalism

Not all Afrikaners agreed with the Botha-Smuts policy of reconciliation with Britain and local English-speaking whites. Many felt that Botha and Smuts had gone too far and compromised Afrikaner cultural interests. For example, when Het Volk came to power in the Transvaal in 1907, Afrikaner nationalists hoped that the state would support Christian National Education. But the new government refused to do this and did not enforce the full equality of Dutch and English in the state schools. Smuts, as the minister responsible for education, explained that this would encourage the support of English-speakers for the policy of reconciliation. Most Christian National Education private schools could not afford to continue without state support and were integrated into the state school system.

Many former comrades-in-arms of Botha and Smuts now came to regard them as traitors and lackeys of British imperialism. They began to look for leadership to J. B. M. Hertzog, another former Boer general who, as Education Minister in the Orange Free State, had introduced an Education Act which gave equal status to Dutch and English. Hertzog and his followers were determined to maintain the separate identity of the Afrikaner *volk* and not to subordinate its interests to those of the British Empire. Hertzog had the support of Afrikaner farmers and small businessmen who objected to being junior partners of British imperialism and its mine-owner allies in South Africa.

Because Hertzog was one of the most powerful politicians in the Orange Free State, Botha included him in his first cabinet in the interests of white unity. However, the rift between Hertzog and the increasingly pro-imperialist Botha soon became too wide to contain within one party; in 1914, Hertzog broke away to form a new party, the National Party, which came to represent Afrikaner nationalist interests. Although the National Party did not have the support of most Afrikaners at first, it embarked on a path which was to gain this support.

Afrikaner nationalism had its cultural as well as its political side. In the early twentieth century the cultural side was represented above all by the Tweede Afrikaanse Taalbeweging (Second Afrikaans Language Movement). This consisted of the work of a number of Afrikaans writers such as C. L. Leipoldt, Jan Celliers, Totius and Eugene Marais, who attempted to develop Afrikaans as a literary language as opposed to simply a spoken dialect of Dutch. The poet Totius (J. D. du Toit), in particular, was a strong Afrikaner nationalist who wrote poetry praising the Voortrekkers and the Afrikaners' attempt to maintain their identity and independence. His poetry explained the suffering of the women and children in the concentration camps in religious

terms, as part of the Afrikaner people's sacrifices to the achievement of God's greater purpose.

The Dutch Reformed churches also played an important role in the development of Afrikaner nationalism, helping to rally the Afrikaans-speaking whites to the nationalist movement and to provide it with an ideology. Ministers and theologians found religious justifications for Afrikaner isolationism and for racism. They drew a parallel between the Boer *volk* and the biblical children of Israel, and put forward the idea that their *volk* had been placed in South Africa by God to fulfil a similar purpose. They therefore had to maintain their separate identity as a people despite being surrounded by hostile forces — both black and British.

In the early twentieth century, the Afrikaans-speaking whites increasingly referred to themselves as Afrikaners rather than Boers. They also developed a strong sense of identity as one people — especially after the experience of the Anglo-Boer War and the establishment of the Union of South Africa. Yet theirs was a nationalist movement with major inconsistencies. They had experienced domination but were themselves racist and land-grabbing. They were concerned to preserve their language and culture and yet actively suppressed African cultures. Indeed, they came to be seen by the budding African nationalist movement as its main enemy.

Essay Topics

- 1 Discuss the causes of the Anglo-Boer War.
- 2 'After the Anglo-Boer War, Briton and Boer set aside their differences and cooperated in order to better control and exploit the black majority.'

Discuss this statement in the light of the Treaty of Vereeniging and other events up to and including the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. (In the course of your essay, you should make it clear whether or not you agree with the above statement.)

Topics for Group Discussions

- 1 J. A. Hobson, a journalist and author, discusses the Uitlander grievances.

After a month's close inquiry on the spot, I became convinced that this view correctly represented the feeling of the great majority of Outlanders

of British birth, or did so before they had been lashed into a brief enthusiasm for franchise and other reforms by a handful of politicians. I am not condemning these demands for reform, many, if not most, of which were both desirable and feasible; but I am convinced that, until the agitation of the last year, the concrete grievances which arouse the sympathy and indignation of the British public lay very lightly on the soul of the average Outlander. When I began to examine upon the spot, I found plenty of men at the Rand Club and elsewhere who told me startling tales of police brutality and miscarriages of justice, and launched into wholesale denunciations of Boer misgovernment. But two things soon struck me. My informants either confined themselves to generalities unbacked by specific cases, or more commonly narrated wrongs inflicted upon some friends of theirs. When I asked a man to give me instances of injuries or indignities which he himself had experienced, he generally allowed that he had been fortunately immune.

I saw literally no indication of the prevailing terrorism and oppression, the insecurity of person and property, charged against it, nor did my cross-examination of many Outlanders elicit any material support for such accusations.

But what about the tyrannical laws against the freedom of the press and the right of public meeting, which bulk so big in the parade of grievances? The Outlander politician sometimes sought to persuade me that he had been robbed by law of the very elements of liberty of expression. But on examining these laws, I did not find them differ in form or spirit from the laws which stand upon the statute book of England and other European States. The Press Law of 1896, against which so loud an outcry was raised when it was used for the temporary suppression of the *Critic* and the *Star*, contains no more oppressive powers than are contained and have been enforced within the last few years in the English law.

As for general liberty and even licence of conduct, it existed nowhere if not in Johannesburg. Every luxury of life, every extravagance of behaviour, every form of private view flourished unchecked; every man and woman (except Kaffirs, who do the work and don't count) said and did what seemed good in his or her own eyes. The helot wore his golden chains with insolent composure of demeanour, as he feasted in the sumptuous rooms of the Rand and the New Clubs, or lolled in the rickshaw which, drawn by the toiling Kaffir, bore him to his luxurious home. The entire wealth of the country, drawn from the bowels of the earth by Kaffir labour, passed easily into his hands, with the exception of a toll taken by the Government, which he resented as if it were the fruits of the toil of his own hands; in a land of simple-mannered, plain-living farmers he alone had material luxury and the leisure to enjoy it.

— Robinson (n.d.), p. 39.

After you have read the above passage, discuss the following questions:

- (a) Do you think the author agrees with the argument that the Uitlanders (Outlanders) are oppressed? Find all the arguments he puts forward to back up his point of view.
- (b) Does the author believe that anyone is oppressed in the

Transvaal? If so, who? Back up your answer with evidence from the passage.

- 2 Examine the following passage, and try to decide what the author's attitude was to Afrikaner nationalism and Milner's anglicization policy. Substantiate your opinion with evidence from the passage:

Milner hoped that the war would destroy Afrikaner nationalism, which he feared as a threat to British supremacy in South Africa. However, the heroic struggle of the Boers and the suffering of the people led to a resurgence of Afrikaner national feeling through South Africa after the war. This was manifested in the growth of Afrikaans literature that gave rise to the Second Language Movement (Tweede Taalbeweging). As a result of this *cultural* movement a national literature in Afrikaans was built up which led to the struggle for the recognition of Afrikaans as an official language in the place of Dutch. This goal was attained in 1925. In turn the movement did much to foster *political* nationalism as well.

Milner also attempted to denationalize the people of the former republics by sponsoring a large immigration of British settlers and by limiting the use of Dutch in the new state schools. The new education policy was carried out by a Director of Education, E. B. Sargent, who had been appointed for the two crown colonies. This anglicizing policy merely served to encourage the nationalist movement. The D. R. Church thereupon established some 200 private schools financed by funds from the Netherlands. In these CNE schools (Christian National Education) Dutch was the medium of instruction. These schools did much to stimulate Afrikaner nationalism, not only in the ex-republics but also in the Cape Colony. Moreover Milner was unable to attract sufficient British settlers to achieve his political objectives.

— Smit (1980), p. 166.

- 3 Compare and contrast Milner's anglicization policy — in particular his schools policy — with the National Party's policy of enforcing Afrikaans as a language of instruction in African schools in the 1970s. Why do you think that the Afrikaner nationalist movement, which successfully resisted Milner's policy after the Anglo-Boer War, believed in the 1970s that its own language could be forced on Africans? How and why did the responses of the victimized communities differ from each other?

CHAPTER FOUR

The Development of African Nationalism to 1912

As we saw in Chapter 1, the African peoples' armed resistance to colonial expansion was almost over by the early 1880s when most of South Africa was controlled by two groups of colonizers: British and Boers. Of the two groups, the British proved to be dominant, and in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 extended their control over the whole of South Africa.

Growth of National Consciousness

Thus subjected by colonialism and suffering a common oppression (and after 1902 a common oppressor), the African peoples of South Africa began slowly to develop a national, South African consciousness as opposed to the old tribal or ethnic consciousness. This new consciousness was promoted partly by the realization that they had to unite in order to gain strength to fight more effectively for freedom. It was reinforced by three other factors.

Industrialization and urbanization

Africans of different national groups came together in the new urban areas which grew up in the late nineteenth century. They lived in the same neighbourhoods and worked in the same factories, mines and other workplaces. They suffered from the oppressive measures to which all African workers, irrespective of ethnic origin, were subject: low wages, job discrimination, pass laws and constant harassment by police and other government officials.

Under these conditions, ethnic barriers among the people began to crumble, and a new, national consciousness began to develop among Africans of all groups. This, of course, did not happen overnight. It

was a slow process, and ethnically-based organizations such as mutual-aid societies and cultural bodies were formed in the towns and continued to exist. Nonetheless, the strong trend towards the development of an African national identity persisted and grew stronger with time. It was strengthened also by the hostility of white workers towards African workers' aspirations, which inhibited the growth of a non-racial class consciousness.

Mission schools

The activities of the missionaries who had established mission stations and mission schools in various parts of South Africa had helped to create an African intelligentsia which had a common language (English) and common religious beliefs (Christian). This group was to take the lead in articulating the new nationalist sentiments and in forming the first African nationalist organizations.

The growth of independent churches

A number of the Africans educated at the various mission schools became ministers, usually in the church in whose school they had received their education. Some ministers also studied at theological colleges in Britain and the USA. Invariably, however, they found themselves in an inferior position to their white colleagues and their colour proved to be a barrier to their advancement within the church hierarchy. They found that they had very little to say over how the funds they had worked to raise for the church were to be spent, and they were often impeded by the church authorities in their attempts to take part in political affairs. A number of these ministers responded by breaking away to form their own churches, thereby asserting African independence from white control.

The first major independent church in South Africa was the Thembu Church, founded in 1884 by Reverend Nehemiah Tile in cooperation with Ngangelizwe, the Thembu paramount chief. Tile left the Wesleyan Methodist Church after he had been criticized by the church authorities for 'taking part in political matters and stirring up a feeling of hostility against the magistrates ... and donating an ox at the circumcision of Dinyebo [Dalindyebo], heir to the Paramount Chief of the Tembus' (Roux, 1978, p. 78).

The second major breakaway church was founded in 1892. A number of African ministers led by Mangena Mokone walked out of a Wesleyan Methodist Church conference in protest against racial discrimination within the church. Mokone went on to found the Ethiopian Church.* This church, which drew much of its membership

* Ethiopian church: the name was probably chosen since the word Ethiopia is used in the Bible to refer to Africa. The word also came to be associated with freedom since Ethiopia remained the only African country to have resisted colonial occupation successfully.

from the urban areas, was meant as a church for all Africans, regardless of their national group. Many people were attracted by the independent, African image of the church, and it grew very quickly, with congregations from other parts of the country joining it. In 1895 the Thembu Church (which had in the meanwhile renamed itself the African Native Church) also joined the Ethiopian Church. In 1896, the Ethiopian Church itself affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the largest black church in the USA. Mokone had learnt about the AME Church from the letters of Charlotte Manye (later Charlotte Maxeke) who was studying at the Church's Wilberforce Institute in the USA and who was destined to play a prominent role in the African women's struggle in later years. A number of other independent African churches were established across South Africa.

The independent churches, with their assertion of religious independence and their use of the slogan 'Africa for the Africans', were met with suspicion, and even fear, by the colonial authorities. However, the different colonies had different ideas of how to deal with them. In the Transvaal and Orange River Colony the attitude was harsh, and both colonies banned the AME Church in 1907. In Natal, too, the authorities were repressive, on occasion imprisoning church leaders whom they considered subversive. This repression was intensified after the Bambatha Rebellion in which members and preachers of independent churches played an active role.

Two differing attitudes of the state towards the independent churches can be seen from the following quotations:

'I am sure that it is not sound policy to repress these religious ebullitions.... Repression will be like 'the blood of the martyrs — the seed of the church'. When we come to granting church and school sites, it is a different question. Each must be dealt with on its merits.... I hope that the Magistrate will recollect Gibbon's account of the Roman attitude in such matters: To the Magistrates, all religions were equally useful.' — John X. Merriman, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, 1908–10, in Sundkler, 1961, p. 68.

'The Natives must be made clearly to realize that the presence and predominance of the white race will be preserved at all hazards, and that all attempts to destroy its hegemony, whether overt or covert, such as the Ethiopian propaganda, will be promptly punished, instead of being disdainfully treated, as in the past.'

— Report of the Natal Native Affairs Commission, 1906–07, in Sundkler, 1961, p. 69.

In the Cape, the authorities felt that repression would only strengthen the churches and make them more hostile to the government. The Cape therefore adopted a more liberal policy, giving recognition to churches which were considered 'stable' and 'responsible'; and whose leaders were educated. These churches were given sites to build churches or schools, and some of their ministers were recognized as legal Marriage Officers. After the formation of the Union, the government at first followed a repressive policy towards the independent churches, but from 1915 it shifted to a policy similar to that of the former Cape Colony.

At first the AME Church grew rapidly, but from 1904 disputes within the church led to splits and the formation of many other independent churches. After the banning of the church in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, AME Church members joined other churches which were regarded as part of the Ethiopianist or separatist movement (that is, African churches which had asserted their independence of white missionary control). The AME Church continued to exist in the Cape and Natal, and in later years re-established itself in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

By 1912 there were 76 independent churches. These included Ethiopianist churches as well as churches inspired by two American religious movements: Zionism and the Watch Tower sect. Many of the splits in the independent churches were based on personal rivalries between leading figures or squabbles over funds, rather than on differences in religious doctrine. By 1945, the number of independent churches was approaching the 1,000 mark.

The political importance of Ethiopianism has been summarized by the historian Parsons (1982, p. 215) as follows:

Ethiopianism was the first national movement that linked Africans in the coastal colonies and interior republics, even before South Africa was united by British conquest. It promoted national consciousness, race consciousness through its AME Church links overseas, and even worker consciousness among black South Africans. White employers were worried about the effects of Ethiopianism on the labour market after the war, when employment was expanding and wages were considered too high by employers. The news editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* put the Ethiopianist position as: 'This is our country, these are our farms and mines, why are we not working them for ourselves and for our benefit, instead of working them for white people and giving them all the benefit?'

However, while recognizing the role of the churches in building national consciousness and even militancy, we should not ignore another, more negative side of religious life. The multitude of churches and sects, both independent and otherwise, were a source of division among the people. Government regulations, first in the

Cape Colony and later throughout South Africa, encouraged the independent churches to compete with one another for recognition and the advantages that went with it. They were thus manipulated by the state to moderate their attitudes to white authority and to seek respectability. Religion, while sometimes encouraging a militant political consciousness, could also encourage submissiveness and acceptance of oppression in the hope of salvation in the 'hereafter'.

African Political Activity before 1900

As it became clear that armed resistance to colonial domination was no longer effective, the African people began to turn their attention to other (non-violent and constitutional) ways of safeguarding their interests. In the Cape Colony, there had been since 1854 a 'non-racial' franchise, whereby people gained the right to vote or be elected on the basis of their wealth (see Chapter 1). The British authorities favoured this system as the few blacks who qualified as voters were considered pro-British and thus a counterweight to the Boer voters. The system had the added advantage (for Britain) that it excluded a large number of poor, mainly anti-British, Boers from voting. In the three northern colonies, Africans, who formed the vast majority of the population, had no voting rights at all.

The earliest African participation in parliamentary politics was in the Eastern Cape where the lead was taken by a small group of Christian, mission-educated Africans, many of whom were voters. In the early 1880s they formed the first 'modern' political organizations: Imbumba yama Africa (also called the South African Aborigines Association), the Native Educational Association (founded by Elijah Makiwane, a Presbyterian minister) and the Native Electoral Association (led by John Tengo Jabavu). Although these organizations were confined mainly to Xhosa-speaking people, they were non-tribal in composition and reflected a growth of African national consciousness.

Imbumba yama Africa held periodic conferences to discuss matters affecting the African people, and sent petitions and deputations to present its ideas and opinions to the colonial authorities in Cape Town. One of its main concerns was forging unity among Africans of various church organizations. An official of Imbumba, S. N. Mvambo, called for such unity in a statement in 1883:

In fighting for national rights, we must fight together. Although it looks as if they belong to various church organizations, the White people are solidly united when it comes to matters of this nature. We blacks think that these churches are hostile to one another, and in that way we lose our political rights.

— Karis and Carter, Vol. 1 (1972) p. 12.

The Native Educational Association made one of the earliest protests against the pass laws (in 1889), and the Native Electoral Association was active in voicing its opinion on many matters of concern to Africans as well as supporting white candidates who were considered friendly to African interests in the Cape elections.

John Tengo Jabavu, the leading figure in the Native Electoral Association, was the most prominent of the early African politicians. In 1884, with the financial backing of some liberal whites, he founded *Imvo Zabantsundu* in King William's Town as the first independent African newspaper. This paper became the mouthpiece of the Native Electoral Association and of Jabavu himself, playing a role in mobilizing African voters at election times and in opposing discriminatory and repressive legislation.

John Tengo Jabavu

J. T. Jabavu was born in 1859 of Christian parents. He attended the mission school at Healdtown and became a teacher. In 1881 he became the first African newspaper editor when he started work on *Isigidimi SamaXosa* (*Xhosa Express*) the English-Xhosa paper of the Lovedale Mission. While doing this work he studied further at Lovedale, becoming the first African to pass the matriculation examinations. In 1884 he was forced to leave *Isigidimi SamaXosa* because his employers objected to his using the paper to criticize racist statements by certain politicians. During the 1884 General Election in the Cape, Jabavu became the election agent for James Rose-Innes, a liberal politician. Later that year he became the editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu* and also founded the Native Electoral Association. He became the most prominent African political figure in South Africa and worked hard to secure a better deal for Africans. He wielded a great deal of influence among the African people, especially in the Cape.

In later years he alienated himself from other African politicians by his increasingly blind attachment to a small group of liberal white politicians such as Rose-Innes, J. W. Sauer, and John X. Merriman. He refused to join the ANC in 1912 and tried to form an alternative organization, the South African Races Congress. He eventually went so far as to defend the 1913 Land Act (see Chapter 4) because Sauer was the Minister of Native Affairs who introduced the Act. In 1914 he stood against Revd Rubusana in the elections for the Cape Provincial Council, splitting the African vote and allowing a white candidate to win. (The white candidate, A. Payne, got 1,004 votes, Rubusana 852 and Jabavu 294.) After this, Jabavu was thoroughly discredited and retired from politics.

One of Jabavu's later achievements was the important role he played — propagandizing and raising funds — in the establishment of the South African Native College (later the University of Fort Hare) in 1916.



John Tengo Jabavu

An early example of political protest came when the Cape parliament passed the Voters' Registration Act of 1887 which stated that 'no person shall be entitled to be registered as a voter by reason of his sharing in any communal or tribal occupation of lands or buildings'. This resulted in about 30,000 Africans being struck off the voters' roll. Jabavu opposed this Act through *Imvo* and also wrote to the Aborigines' Protection Society in London asking them to pressurize the British government not to give approval to the Act. More significantly, meetings of Africans were held throughout the Eastern Cape and at mass meetings in Port Elizabeth it was decided to send a delegation to England to put the Africans' case to the Colonial Secretary. Before the delegation could leave, however, the Colonial Secretary wrote to the Governor of the Cape Colony saying that if the Africans had complaints, they should take them to the Cape parliament.

Although they often sharply criticized the Cape colonial government's policies and laws, most early African politicians preached loyalty to the British crown and Empire. They looked to Britain for protection against local settler (especially Boer) interests. Jabavu referred to the 'Dutch Boers' as 'the eternal enemies of African political rights' (Walshe, 1971, p. 5).

Another newspaper which played an important role in African politics was *Izwi Labantu*, established in East London in 1898 by a group including the Revd Walter Rubusana, Alan Soga and Meshack Pelem. *Izwi Labantu* also supported white candidates in parliamentary elections, usually candidates opposed by *Imvo Zabantsundu* with which there was great deal of friction. *Izwi Labantu* also carried articles on African history and culture. *Imvo* was published in English and Xhosa, while *Izwi* used English, Xhosa and Sotho.

In the Transvaal, the Transvaal African Teachers' Association was founded by S. M. Makgatho who had joined the teaching staff of Kilnerton Training Institute in Pretoria in 1887. Little is known about the activities of the Teachers' Association, but it is known that S. M. Makgatho successfully made representations to the Pretoria City Council and the government of the Transvaal Republic to establish for Africans the right to walk on the pavements in Pretoria.

Developments after the Anglo-Boer War

During the Anglo-Boer War, Britain claimed to be fighting to free the African people of the Transvaal and Orange Free State from 'Boer slavery'. The British also promised that, after the war, the Cape franchise system would be extended north to the former Boer republics. But, as has already been noted, this promise was not kept and Africans outside the Cape remained without political rights.

In the years following 1902 the main focus of African political activity became the question of the franchise in the Transvaal, Orange River Colony and Natal. Organizations of African people were formed in all four colonies. In Natal, the Natal Native Congress was formed in 1900 by a group of men including, among others, Martin Lutuli (the first chairman and uncle of Chief Albert Lutuli), Saul Msane, Josiah Gumede and John Dube. In the Eastern Cape in 1902, Africans associated with *Izwi Labantu*, and therefore opposed to Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu*, founded the South African Native Congress (later renamed the Cape Native Congress) headed by the Revd Walter Rubusana. In Bloemfontein, the Orange River Colony Native Congress (led by T. M. Mapikela) and the Native Vigilance Association of the Orange River Colony were formed. In the Transvaal, the Transvaal Native Political Union was founded in 1906 by S. M. Makgatho and

later merged with the Transvaal Native Congress which had also been formed at about the same time.

Although not militant in their methods, all these organizations struggled for the rights of the oppressed African people. On numerous occasions they sent delegations, organized petitions or passed resolutions directed either to colonial authorities or to the British crown calling for franchise rights for Africans in the former Boer republics and Natal. In addition they protested against the pass laws, excessive taxation, segregation on trains, the prohibition of Africans from holding public meetings (in the Transvaal) and other discriminatory and oppressive laws and regulations. They also called for increased state support for the education of Africans, for the rights of the Africans to own land wherever they wanted, for meaningful local self-government, and other rights.

African people's opinions and demands were also put forward by newspapers which sprang up outside the Eastern Cape after 1900. Solomon T. Plaatje established the first Setswana-English weekly, *Koranta ea Becoana*, in Mafikeng in 1901. Six years later he moved to Kimberley where he started a new paper, *Tsala ea Becoana* (later renamed *Tsala ea Batho*). In 1903, John Dube established *Ilanga Lase Natal*, with articles in both English and Zulu. These newspapers all protested against race discrimination and voiced the African peoples' resentment of national oppression.



Revd John Langalibalele Dube



Solomon T. Plaatje

The Bambatha Rebellion

In the years immediately following the Anglo-Boer War large tracts of land in Natal were confiscated from the Zulu people and given mainly to white sugar planters. This caused great hardship and overcrowding on the remaining land, but still did not result in enough Africans being forced to work on the white-owned farms and mines. In 1905, a poll tax of £1 for every adult male was introduced. The tax was widely resisted and a few clashes between Africans and police took place. At Richmond two policemen were killed in February 1906 in an attempt to enforce payment of the poll tax. The rebels in this area were led by Majongwe and Makanda who were both prominent members of an 'Ethiopianist' church. Two of the rebels were caught and shot by troops; twelve others were put on trial and sentenced to death. Later Majongwe was also caught and sentenced to death.

In April, Bambatha, Chief of the Lala tribe who lived near Greytown, clashed with the authorities over the poll tax. He took up arms and was joined by large numbers of other patriots. It seems the revolt had the approval of the Zulu Paramount Chief, Dinizulu, but he was forced to publicly proclaim his loyalty to the government. The government mobilized 10,000 armed whites and 6,000 African troops in order to deflect Bambatha and his followers. At the biggest battle, at Mome gorge, 500 Africans, including Bambatha, were mown down with machine guns; they were fighting only with spears and shields. Bambatha's head was cut off and displayed to show that he was not invulnerable as many Africans supposedly thought him to be. Altogether, almost 4,000 African rebels lost their lives; 25 white and six pro-government African troops also died.

During the rebellion, John Dube had been detained for criticizing the government's harsh handling of the rebels. In 1908, Chief Dinizulu was tried and found guilty of harbouring and concealing rebels, including Bambatha and his family for periods during the course of the rebellion. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, released in 1911 and exiled to the Transvaal.

The defeat of the Bambatha rebellion emphasized for Africans the inadequacy of locally based resistance. It also stressed the need for new methods of struggle in the face of the overwhelming military superiority of colonialism.

The brutal suppression of the Bambatha rebellion in 1906 sparked widespread protest by Africans in all four colonies. The South African Native Congress passed a resolution which stated that the cause of the rebellion was 'the imposition of taxation without representation', thus implying that it would not have taken place if Africans had franchise rights in Natal.

Soon after the Anglo-Boer War, South African whites and the



Bambatha (centre)

British colonial authorities began to think of uniting the four colonies to form one country. In 1908–09 representatives of these colonies met in Durban in the so-called South African National Convention to discuss the terms of a draft act of Union to be submitted to the British government for approval. The most sensitive issue discussed was the question of whether or not black people would have the right to vote. The former Boer republics and Natal strongly opposed franchise rights for Africans. It was finally decided that only white males would have the vote, except in the Cape where black men with the necessary property qualifications (the same ones as in the Cape Colony) would be able to vote in parliamentary elections — but only for white candidates. African and coloured voters could still be candidates in Cape provincial elections.

Before the South African National Convention had finished sitting, African politicians called the South African Native Convention in Bloemfontein in March 1909. This was the most broadly representative African gathering ever to have taken place in South Africa up to that time. It included delegates from all four colonies and Botswana (Bechuanaland), members of the intelligentsia as well as traditional rulers. The Native Convention, while approving the principle of Union, called for equal rights for all South Africans regardless of colour. When it became clear that the white settlers would not heed the pleas of the Native Convention, it was decided to carry the people's protests to the British government. The executive of the Convention joined together with the predominantly coloured African Political Organization (APO) and sympathetic whites to send a delegation to London. The delegation consisted of J. T. Jabavu, W. Rubusana, T. M. Mapikela and D. Dwanya as well as A. Abdurahman, M. J. Fredericks and D. J. Lenders of the APO and W. P. Schreiner, a white liberal, and former Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. In addition, J. Gerrans, a white trader from Mafikeng, was sent on the delegation to represent the chiefs of Botswana. The British government paid no heed to the pleas of the delegation, and the draft Act of Union was passed unchanged as the South Africa Act and came into effect on 31 May 1910. One member of the delegation, Revd Walter Rubusana, successfully contested the first Cape Provincial Council election after unification in the Thembuland constituency, becoming thereby the first and only African ever to be elected to a representative legislative body. He lost the seat in 1914 (see Box on John Tengo Jabavu).

Political power was thus transferred by Britain into the hands of the white minority. Although this has often been represented as an act of decolonization, for the majority of South Africa's people it was just a change in the form of colonial domination. For the black majority,

there was no change in status or political power. The transfer of power to the white settlers merely gave rise to a new type of colonialism in which power was held by the local whites rather than Britain. This led, over the coming decades, to an intensification of oppression and exploitation which was to increase the misery of black South Africans and bring increased wealth to British investors and South African whites.

Formation of the ANC

Soon after the formation of the Union of South Africa, the worst fears of the African people were confirmed. A barrage of repressive legislation was passed, including the Native Labour Regulation Act (1911) which made it illegal for black workers in mines and industry to strike; the Mines and Works Act (1911) which reserved certain skilled jobs for white workers only; and the Defence Act (1911) which established an all-white defence force and debarred blacks from military service. In addition, the Squatters' Bill (which was the predecessor of the notorious Natives Land Act of 1913) was published.

Confronted by a new situation after 1910, many Africans realized that they needed to establish a country-wide organization to take the lead in uniting the African people for effective struggle against white minority domination. The initiative was taken by Pixley ka Isaka Seme who with some other professional men called a meeting of African leaders to form such a national organization. On 8 January 1912 representatives of various African provincial and local organizations, chiefs, and other prominent men from throughout South Africa and neighbouring British colonies assembled in Bloemfontein. At this meeting the South African Native National Congress (renamed the African National Congress in 1923) was formed, an event whose full historical significance was possibly not recognized even by the founding fathers themselves.

The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo feud, the animosity that exists between Zulus and the Tongas, between the Basutos and every other Native must be buried and forgotten, it has shed among us sufficient blood! We are one people. These divisions, these jealousies, are the cause of all our woes and of all backwardness and ignorance to-day.

- From Pixley ka Isaka Seme's call for the formation of the South African Native National Congress in *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 24 October 1911.
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It was decided to structure the organization partly along the lines of the British parliamentary model with an Upper House of chiefs and a Lower House of commoners. In the executive of the Lower House (the executive proper), Revd John L. Dube became the first President General, while Pixley ka Isaka Seme was elected Treasurer and Solomon T. Plaatje became Secretary General. Four Vice-Presidents were elected: Alfred Mangena, Revd Walter Rubusana, Meshack Pelem and Sam Makgatho. Thomas Mapikela became the Speaker, George Montsioa the Recording Secretary, and Revd Mqololi the Chaplain in Chief with Revd H. R. Ngcayiya as Assistant Chaplain.

The Upper House consisted of eight paramount chiefs: Letsie II of Lesotho (Basutoland), president of the Upper House; Dalindyebo of the Thembus; Montsioa of the Barolong; Lewanika of Barotseland (now part of Zambia); Khama of Bechuanaland; Marclane of Pondoland; Moepi of the Kgatla; Dinizulu of the Zulus (whom the British had deposed and exiled to the Transvaal). The participation of the chiefs, who still enjoyed considerable prestige among rural people, helped to put the Congress in contact with the masses.

Later in 1912 the ANC started publishing a national newspaper, *Abantu-Batho* (The People) with Seme as editor and the financial backing of the Swazi Queen Regent, Labotsibeni. The newspaper carried articles in English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana.

The significance of 8 January 1912 lies above all in the fact that it marked the birth not only of an organization but also of a nation. The founders of the ANC realized that the old divisions between the different national groups were a source of weakness to the African people and had to be eliminated. In its first Constitution, adopted in 1919, one of the goals of the Congress was stated as:

To encourage mutual understanding and to bring together into common action as one political people all tribes and clans of various tribes or races and by means of combined effort and united political organization to defend their freedom, rights and privileges.

The ANC's large measure of success in achieving this aim over the following decades is undoubtedly one of its major achievements.

The Congress was not then the revolutionary organization that it later became. It was a moderate, reformist body. Some of the other objectives included in the 1919 Constitution were:

- formulate a standard policy on Native Affairs for the benefit and guidance of the Union Government and Parliament;
- educate parliament ... and the public generally regarding the requirements and aspirations of the Native people;
- enlist the support of such European Societies ... as might be willing to espouse the cause of right and fair treatment of coloured races;
- educate Bantu people on their rights, duties and obligations to the state and to themselves individually and collectively.

The work of the Congress, according to the Constitution, was to be carried out

by means of resolutions, protests and a constitutional and peaceful propaganda; by deputations and other forms of representations; by holding enquiries and the investigation of grievances and other matters, and by passive action or continued movement; by means of education, lectures and distribution of literature on the objects of the Congress.

At first Congress did not advocate 'one man, one vote' but strove to have the Cape's qualified franchise extended to the other provinces. For some years Congress continued to maintain loyalty to and faith in Britain to which it looked, always unsuccessfully, for protection against the onslaughts on African rights by South African governments. Congress leaders did not understand the capitalist roots of national oppression; they failed to see that big capital, represented by the British government, would never become an ally of the African people as it benefited from their exploitation and oppression.

The early Congress leaders were mainly professional men, occupying a privileged social position compared to the masses of African people. The African working class was still fairly small and unorganized, and did not therefore exercise a strong influence over ANC policies; over the decades that followed, it was destined to grow more powerful and influential. At the same time it became increasingly obvious that the monopoly of power given to the white minority by the South Africa Act made it impossible for blacks to satisfy their political aspirations within the confines of the law. The result was the development of the ANC from the reformist nationalism of its early days to the revolutionary nationalism of later years.

Essay Topics

- 1 Britain by the Act of Union had divested itself of political responsibility for our country and for the voteless black majority. Colonial power was transferred to the white minority under the constitution that enabled it to perpetuate its supremacy at the expense of our people. Although the South African state was made sovereign in terms of international law, it retained all the characteristics of a colonial power *vis-à-vis* the black majority. Let us not be mystified by legal jargon and constitutional technicalities. We assert that the white minority occupies the position of a colonial power in relation to our people and therefore

our struggle is in essence a struggle for national liberation.

- From 'The Position of the Oppressed Majority in Apartheid South Africa', ANC document presented to the OAU in March, 1980.

Discuss the above statement, expanding on it and giving the kind of arguments that you think could have been used to back it up.

- 2 Discuss the historical significance of the formation of the ANC in 1912.

Topics for Group Discussions

- 1 On the whole, do you think that the churches had played a positive or a negative role in the liberation struggle? Discuss this in relation to the period discussed in this chapter, as well as the contemporary period.
- 2 Despite Britain's betrayal of its promises to black South Africans at the Treaty of Vereeniging, the Native Convention and the APO sent a delegation to London in 1909 to protest against the proposed constitution of the Union of South Africa. Further delegations were sent to the British government by the ANC in 1914 and 1919. What do you think were the reasons for the apparent faith of black leaders in the British government?

CHAPTER FIVE

Tenants, Labourers, Landlords and the 1913 Land Act

At the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the 4.5 million African people in South Africa lived and worked either in reserves or on white-owned land outside the reserves. Most of the reserve land was in the Cape or Natal; very little such land had been set aside in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Of those Africans living outside the reserves, some farmed for themselves on land belonging to the state or to mission stations. Most, however, lived on privately owned 'white' farms belonging to individual landowners or land companies. These Africans were either wage labourers, directly employed by the landowner, or tenants using a portion of land for their own crops and animals.

Tenants

Tenants fell into three major categories: labour tenants, cash tenants (or rent tenants) and sharecroppers.* Labour tenants worked for the landowner, usually for three to six months a year in return for the use of some land for themselves. Cash tenants paid rent in cash to the landowner. Sharecroppers used the land of a white farmer and then shared the crop with him — usually on a 50–50 basis; normally (but not always) the landowner provided the seed while the sharecropper used his own oxen and farm implements. Sometimes sharecroppers or members of their families were also required to provide some labour on the landowner's fields.

In the wake of the mineral discoveries, sharecropping in

* Sharecroppers and cash tenants are sometimes also referred to as 'squatters'. Sharecropping was also known as 'farming on the half' or 'ploughing on shares'.

particular became very widespread, especially in areas near or with easy access to the Witwatersrand market. Landowners wanted to increase their production to take advantage of the new urban markets, but often lacked the capital to farm their land directly. Some couldn't afford the ploughs, tools, draught animals or human labour that were necessary; others lacked the skills and knowledge to increase production profitably. By taking on sharecroppers who owned their own equipment, however, a landowner could get his share of their crops without much capital or effort.

Sharecroppers also found the system advantageous as they worked partially for themselves. Many became efficient farmers, providing a large proportion of the food for the mining towns and contributing to agricultural exports. Through the sale of their products, both sharecroppers and cash tenants earned enough to pay their taxes and to enjoy a much higher standard of living than labour tenants, wage labourers or migrant mine workers. A small number were quite well off, enjoying living standards comparable to those of many white farmers.

The wealthier white landowners who farmed commercially, employing wage labourers or labour tenants, were strongly opposed to sharecropping. They complained that the system deprived them of cheap labour because Africans preferred to be sharecroppers rather than low-paid farm workers. They called on the government to make sharecropping illegal so as to force Africans to become wage labourers or labour tenants. As the number of white farmers with capital grew as a result of loans and other state aid for white agriculture, so demands for an end to sharecropping became more insistent.

African Land Purchases

One immediate response to their loss of land was for Africans to buy back from whites the land which had been taken from their ancestors. Often a number of Africans would form a group or syndicate and pool their resources in order to buy land. In the Transvaal where it was illegal until 1905 for Africans to buy land, various means were used to get around the law. The most common method was to use a willing missionary as a dummy purchaser (i.e. his name would be used on the official documents). In Natal, land purchases by African syndicates or individuals began as early as the 1860s, and by 1910 Africans owned almost 160,000 hectares in the colony. In the Eastern Cape even more land was privately owned by Africans.

Despite these African land purchases outside the reserves, though, by 1913 the amount of land owned by Africans was still negligible in

comparison with white-owned land. Nonetheless, it gave rise to loud complaints from white farmers with whom the Africans competed for both land and markets, and they called on the government to restrict African land ownership. They would even have liked to abolish the reserves, which they said were a refuge for labourers who deserted the farms and for potential labourers who did not want to work for the white farmers. On this question, though, the farmers were strongly opposed by mining capitalists who had their own reasons for supporting the retention of the reserves (see below).

The Land Act, 1913

Largely as a result of pressure from the politically powerful capitalist farmers, the government passed the Natives Land Act of 1913. This Act set aside less than 7.5 per cent of South Africa's land as reserves, or 'scheduled areas', in which Africans (over 70 per cent of the population) could buy land. These areas coincided more or less with the existing reserves. No African was allowed to buy, rent or be a sharecropper on land outside the reserves.* This was to prevent Africans competing with whites for land, and to force sharecroppers and cash tenants to become wage labourers or labour tenants. Any African living on a white-owned farm, stated the Act, had to work for the landowner for at least ninety days a year. Africans who already owned land outside the reserves could retain their land, but could not buy any more.

The Act also specified that no white was allowed to buy or rent land in the reserves except with special government permission. The reason for this provision was that mining capitalists insisted that some land should be reserved for Africans; the low wages they paid to migrant mineworkers were possible because the workers' families could supplement their wages by subsistence farming in the reserves. The government in fact recognized that the reserve land was insufficient to provide subsistence for the population they were expected to accommodate. Consequently the Act also set up the Natives Land Commission (the Beaumont Commission) to recommend which land could be added to the reserves.

In 1916 the Beaumont Commission reported, proposing an additional 7 million largely infertile hectares which would have raised the 'reserved' proportion of South Africa's land to about 14 per cent. Due

* Later the Cape Supreme Court ruled that the property restrictions imposed on Africans by the Land Act were not applicable in the Cape, since a restriction on property rights in turn interfered with franchise qualifications. (Cape African franchise rights were 'entrenched' in the constitution.) This situation continued until 1936.

to opposition from white farmers, however, it was not until the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act that more land was 'released' for addition to the reserves (Chapter 11). Even then, it was 0.8 million hectares less than the amount recommended by Beaumont.

The 1913 Land Act's provisions relating to sharecroppers and cash tenants were not implemented immediately throughout the country. It was left to provincial authorities to implement them as they saw fit.

Resistance to the Land Act

From the time the Natives Land Act was published (originally as the Squatters Bill and later, in amended form, as the Natives Land Bill), there was a storm of protest from the African people. Meetings of protest took place in villages and towns throughout South Africa. Resolutions were made and petitions sent to the government.

The following is taken from a report of a meeting held by a group called the Cape Peninsular Native Association (PNA). The meeting was called to protest against the Squatters' Bill (the initial version of the Land Act).

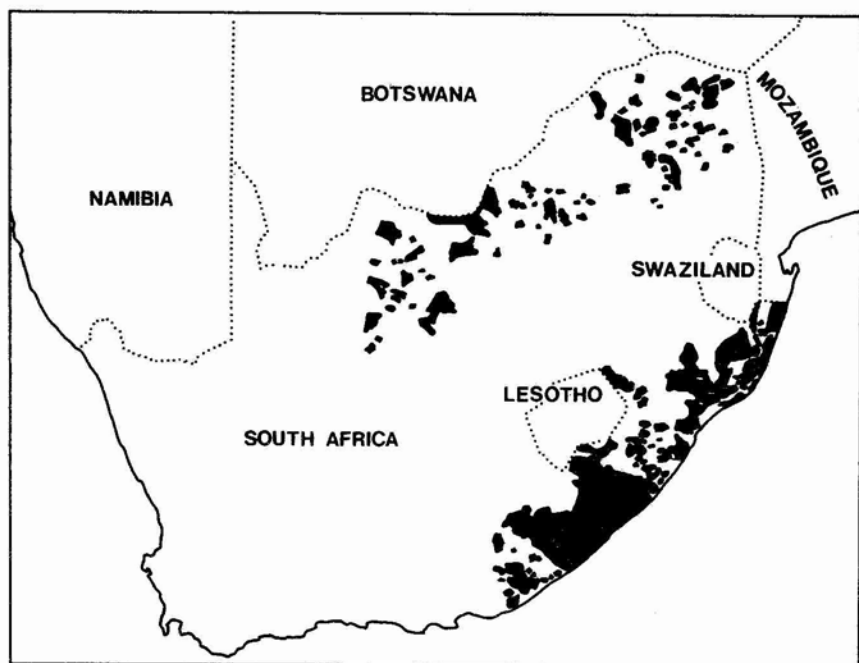
Mr T. Zini (President of the PNA) said . . . it was necessary to explain their attitude to the Squatters' Bill, and their reasons for adopting that attitude. . . . [The Bill] was simply and solely in the interests of the farmers and miners (i.e. mine owners) and no other section of the community. . . . It was a most iniquitous measure and they should oppose it to the very last. If, unhappily, they were not successful in preventing its becoming law, they would at least have it on record that from first to last they had entered an emphatic protest against it. He was certain that all Natives would combine in that. (Loud applause.) The whole measure was one gigantic invasion of their liberties. It would most adversely affect hundreds of thousands of Native families which had, up till then, lived on landed estates and farms, paid rents to the owners, and tilled the soil. . . . They would be driven into locations [i.e., reserves] with the sole object of forcing them to work in the mines or on the farms. If the former, they could hardly fail to prove victims of that terrible scourge, miners' phthisis, while if they went on farms they would be subject to the treatment for which the great majority of the farmers were notorious in their dealings with the Natives.

— *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 19 March 1912.

The newly formed ANC launched a major campaign of opposition to the Act. It held a series of meetings at which it declared its opposition to the Act while it was still being debated in the white parliament. After the Act had been passed, Sol Plaatje, Secretary General of the ANC, together with other Congress members, travelled

widely in the rural areas of the Orange Free State to investigate the hardships caused by the Land Act.

In the Orange Free State the Act was implemented immediately it became law. Thousands of African sharecroppers and cash tenants were evicted from their land and forced to become low-paid farm labourers or labour tenants. Many did not realize that there had been a change in the law and thought they had simply been evicted by their landlord's own individual decision. They wandered about with their families and livestock during the winter of 1913, looking for another farm on which to stay. Of course they could not find a place and suffered great hardship, often having to kill or sell their starving animals to keep themselves alive. Eventually they were forced to move to the already overcrowded reserves or to cross the borders into Lesotho or Botswana. Some found their way to the rapidly growing cities where they either joined the ranks of the unemployed or became low-paid unskilled labourers. Plaatje's group and Congress as a whole drew attention to the people's suffering and called repeatedly for the repeal of the Act.



Map 3 *Scheduled Areas (Reserves) in Terms of 1913 Land Act*

Sol Plaatje described some of the effects of the Land Act in *Native Life in South Africa* (1987, pp. 70–1). Here he describes the plight of the Kgobadi family who were evicted from an Orange Free State farm in 1913:

Mrs Kgobadi carried a sick baby when the eviction took place, and she had to transfer her darling from the cottage to the jolting ox-wagon in which they left the farm. Two days out the little one began to sink as the result of privation and exposure on the road, and the night before we met them its little soul was released from its earthly bonds. The death of the child added a fresh perplexity to the stricken parents. They had no right or title to the farm lands through which they trekked: they must keep to the public roads — the only places in the country open to the outcasts if they are possessed of a travelling permit. The deceased child had to be buried, but where, when, and how?

This young wandering family decided to dig a grave under cover of the darkness of that night, when no one was looking, and in that crude manner the dead child was interred — and interred amid fear and trembling, as well as the throbs of a torturing anguish, in a stolen grave, lest the proprietor of the spot, or any of his servants, should surprise them in the act. Even criminals dropping straight from the gallows have an undisputed claim to six feet of ground on which to rest their criminal remains, but under the cruel operation of the Natives' Land Act little children, whose only crime is that God did not make them white, are sometimes denied that right in their ancestral home.



The ANC delegation which went to Britain in 1914 to protest against the Land Act. Left to right: Thomas Mapihela, Revd Walter Rubusana, Revd John Dube, Saul Msane, Sol Plaatje.

In February 1914 an ANC delegation led by John Dube was sent to the Prime Minister, Louis Botha, to protest against the Act. When this appeal proved unsuccessful, the ANC leadership decided to send a delegation to Britain to present African grievances against the Land Act to the British government. This delegation too was led by Dube and included Sol Plaatje, Thomas Mapikela, Saul Msane and Walter Rubusana. It was, perhaps predictably, unsuccessful in persuading the British government to intervene on behalf of the African people. When the rest of the delegation returned to South Africa, Sol Plaatje remained in Britain. While he was there, he wrote and published his famous book, *Native Life in South Africa*, which was mainly an exposé of the hardships resulting from the Land Act. For two and a half years Plaatje toured widely in Britain, Canada and the USA, lecturing about the Land Act and the oppression of Africans in South Africa.

At the hearings of the Beaumont Commission, some Africans argued for a substantial increase in the land allocated to Africans; others who appeared before the Commission rejected the idea of land segregation altogether.* After the Beaumont Commission reported, recommending the addition of some largely infertile pieces of land to the reserves, the ANC protested bitterly. At a conference in 1916, it described the report as disappointing and unsatisfactory. A resolution at the conference stated that land segregation did not offer Africans equality of opportunity in their own areas, but was in fact designed 'to reduce ... the Bantu people as a race to the status of permanent labourers or subordinates for all purposes and for all times...' The resolution went on to ask Parliament to reject the Beaumont Commission's report and to repeal the Land Act.

The ANC, the main representative of the African people, was thus implacably opposed to the Land Act. Except for a short period after the First World War broke out, when the campaign against the Act was temporarily suspended, Congress denounced the Act continuously and in the strongest terms. During the course of the anti-Land Act campaign, the ANC confirmed that it was the leading organization of the African people and established its opposition to discrimination or segregation of any kind.

Nonetheless, despite the strong anti-Land Act feelings within the ANC and among the African people generally, Congress took no steps to organize the masses for militant struggle against the Act. The

* Both these trends were reflected in the ANC at the time. This dispute became so intense that in 1912 it was one of the main reasons for S. M. Makgatho being elected as President to replace John Dube. While Dube was strongly opposed to the Land Act and the Beaumont Commission recommendations, he was prepared to accept the *principle* of territorial segregation if it was fairly implemented. The Congress majority rejected this view.

intellectuals, small businessmen and chiefs who led the Congress were not prepared to take up forms of struggle that went beyond the confines of legal protest.

The Act's Long-Term Consequences

Despite the Land Act, sharecropping and cash tenancy did not disappear immediately. In some areas it was years before the Act was enforced by provincial authorities. In other areas, white landowners who benefited from sharecroppers or cash tenants found loopholes in the law or simply defied it. Nonetheless, although the system continued for decades after 1913, it suffered a severe blow and became increasingly less common. The Land Act marked the beginning of the end for the limited independence of African farmers on white-owned land. Their position was further undermined as the government gave low-interest loans to white farmers to make farm improvements and buy agricultural machinery. This made it possible for landowners to farm directly on land which previously they had allocated to sharecroppers.

Africans who owned land either outside or inside the reserves were unable to get more land to expand their operations. They also found it increasingly difficult to compete with white farmers who were able to improve their farming methods more rapidly due to the aid they received from the government. The Land Act, together with other state action, thus ended the possibility of Africans ever becoming successful commercial farmers in competition with whites.

Those African people who were forced to move to the reserves or to neighbouring countries usually found that they could not get sufficient fertile land there to make a living. They were drawn as migrant workers to the mines, industries or farms of the whites. The reserves (and also countries like Lesotho) thus became increasingly impoverished and overcrowded sources of cheap labour for the capitalist economy. The African people's lack of access to land, either as owners or tenants, became a major national grievance which has remained at the heart of the struggle against oppression ever since.

The reserves established in 1913, together with the additional land added by the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, laid the basis for the bantustan system instituted by the South African regime in the 1950s. The reserves were created as part of a scheme to establish a system of cheap labour and deprive Africans of many of their rights to land; the bantustans were to take dispossession a step further, depriving African people of their very South African citizenship. Even those African people who owned land outside the reserves in 1913 were not left in peace. It is the descendants of those landowners who, in accordance

with the provisions of the 1936 Act, were later to be among the main victims of the regime's policy of mass removals.

Essay Topic

Describe the main provisions of the Natives' Land Act of 1913 and explain how it served the interests of both the white, capitalist farmers, and the mine owners.

Topic for Group Discussion

Do you think that the ANC leadership could have opposed the Land Act in any other way than it did? If so, what other action do you think was possible? (Before discussing this question, re-read the section 'Resistance to the Land Act'.)

CHAPTER SIX

Struggles of the Coloured People before World War I

The people who came to be known as the 'coloureds' were descended from various groups who made up the population of South Africa, and particularly of the Western Cape: Khoikhoi, San, other indigenous South African peoples, slaves from other parts of Africa, white colonists, and Muslim Indonesians brought to the Cape by the Dutch East India Company as political prisoners or enslaved artisans. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they remained a heterogeneous group, divided by barriers of class, religion, colour and language; they did not see themselves as a single group of people, nor were they so identified by others.

In the nineteenth century the term 'coloured' was usually used to refer to all those who were not white. The 1891 Cape census, for example, only distinguished between two racial categories: white and coloured. By 1904, however, the census distinguished between three 'clearly defined race groups in this colony: White, Bantu and Coloured', thus indicating official recognition of the coloureds as a distinct category of people. Although this separate identity was imposed and encouraged by the colonial state, it was accepted in varying degrees and for various reasons by sections of the coloured people themselves.

The growth of commerce and industry following the mineral discoveries led large numbers of poor coloured labourers to flee from their highly oppressive conditions on Western Cape farms in search of new opportunities in the towns. The majority of these people were unskilled; they found work as servants or labourers or joined the ranks of the unemployed. Employers of unskilled coloured labourers, wanting to pay lower wages or to break strikes, frequently found they could do so by replacing coloureds with African workers, often

migrants, from the Eastern Cape. This, no doubt, created grievances among coloured labourers and increased their sense of distinct identity to some extent.

The process of urbanization also led to the growth of a coloured petty-bourgeoisie: clerks, storekeepers, hawkers, skilled workers, artisans, teachers, clergymen and others. This group, though far fewer in number than the unskilled workers, had a stronger influence on the development of a coloured identity. More educated and better off than the majority of coloureds, they took the lead in forming political organizations which articulated their own interests and tried to mobilize all coloureds to defend those interests. This group, which included those coloureds with voting rights (in the Cape), were particularly concerned about the threat to those rights — especially when the Treaty of Vereeniging demonstrated that Britain was prepared to sacrifice black rights to placate the Boers. They were also concerned about laws passed after 1900 which enforced residential and other forms of racial segregation in the Cape. Those laws broke with the previous practice of not discriminating *legally* on grounds of colour (despite the existence of a *de facto* racial hierarchy), and indicated that the liberal Cape was moving in the direction of the northern colonies. The effect of such measures was to increase tension between coloured people and the white colonial authorities, and also to cause some coloureds to try to differentiate themselves from Africans in order to gain exemption from certain discriminatory measures.

Political and Other Organizations

The first political organization of coloureds was the Afrikaner League (coloured), formed in 1883 by diamond diggers and transport riders in Kimberley. It contested one local election, failed to make much of an impression and died out. Somewhat more successful was the coloured People's Association (CPA), founded in Kimberley in 1892 to oppose the Franchise and Ballot Act which raised the property qualifications for voters. The CPA held protest meetings in Kimberley and Cape Town and collected over 10,000 signatures for a petition to the British colonial Office. After about two years the CPA also died out.

Other forms of organization which emerged among the coloured people at this time included various occupational and religious associations, welfare societies and recreational clubs. Temperance movements gathered considerable support, indicating the concern felt by many coloureds about the high incidence of alcoholism in their communities. Their demands for the prohibition of the alcohol

trade and an end to the 'tot' system* on farms brought them into conflict with powerful wine-farming interests and so had little chance of success.

In 1901 the coloured People's Vigilance Society (CPVS) was founded in Cape Town by F. S. Z. Peregrino, a Ghanaian-born journalist who also established a newspaper, the *South African Spectator*, in the same year. The CPVS remained small and closely associated with Peregrino himself.

By far the most important political organization of coloureds was the African Political (later People's) Organization (APO) which was formed in Cape Town in 1902 with W. Collins, a commercial traveller, as its first president and John Tobin, a small businessman, as vice-president. Although the APO was theoretically open to all blacks and it did attract some African members, it remained a predominantly coloured organization dealing mainly, but not entirely, with issues of direct concern to the coloured people. Its main base of support was the Western Cape, but it also established branches in other parts of South Africa, becoming the first pan-South African political group in the country. The APO grew rapidly after its formation, claiming 10,000 members in 1905 and 20,000 in over 100 branches in 1910, making it by far the largest organization of black people in South Africa. The APO Women's Guild, formed in 1909, concentrated on social welfare rather than political issues, and claimed 60 to 70 branches in 1911.

Although claiming to speak for all coloured people, the APO drew its membership mainly from the more prosperous and better educated sections. Many of the issues on which they campaigned (e.g., for compulsory education of coloured children, and against segregation measures) were of concern to the coloured people as a whole. Other issues, though, were specifically of concern to the more wealthy. The question of franchise rights, for example, was of particular concern to those who qualified as voters in the Cape. The APO was quite content with the Cape's qualified franchise and did not propose that voting rights should be extended to all regardless of wealth. What it did oppose was the restriction of voting rights on the basis of colour. Another indication of the APO's élitism was the fact that it conducted all its meetings entirely in English, even though the vast majority of coloured people were Afrikaans-speaking.

The most prominent of the early coloured politicians was Abdul Abdurahman, a medical doctor who had studied in Britain. In 1904 he became the first black to be elected to the Cape Town City Council, a

* 'Tot' system: the system whereby farm labourers on Western Cape farms were paid their daily wages partly in the form of wine, a practice which persists on some farms to this day.



Dr Abdul Abdurahman (1872–1940).

position he retained until his death in 1940, except for a brief period in 1913–15. In 1905 he became president of the APO and remained so for the rest of his life. In 1914 he became the second black (after Rubusana) to be elected to the Cape Provincial Council, a position he also retained until 1940.

The Struggle for Franchise Rights

As mentioned above, one of the major areas of struggle for the APO was the question of the franchise for black people. At first this focused on the position in the Transvaal and Orange Free State after the Anglo-Boer War. During the war, Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, had declared that Britain could not 'consent to purchase peace by leaving the coloured population in the position in which they stood before the war, with not even the ordinary civil rights which the Government of the Cape Colony has long conceded to them'.

While the question of the vote for coloured people was not specifically mentioned in the Treaty of Vereeniging, it was simply assumed that the provisions relating to Africans also applied to coloureds ('The question of the franchise to natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government'). In 1903, the colonial authorities in the former Boer republics made laws regarding municipal councils which specifically debarred coloureds from voting. In 1906, when the whites in the two colonies were preparing for the granting of Responsible Government, the APO decided to send Dr Abdurahman and P. J. Daniels to London to appeal to the British government for a non-racial franchise. Abdurahman made it clear that what they were seeking was voting rights for all black people who qualified (as in the Cape) and not just for coloureds. Nonetheless the delegation pointed out that Article 8 of the Treaty of Vereeniging referred only to 'natives', not to coloureds or Indians. They also pointed out that even if Britain refused to give the franchise to black people, she could retain constitutional responsibility for the unrepresented masses, and could also repeal all discriminatory laws before granting Responsible Government to the white minority. These arguments fell on deaf ears; the discriminatory laws remained and all blacks were left unrepresented and unprotected from discrimination when Responsible Government was granted to the whites in the former Boer republics.

The APO and the Union

With the granting of this 'responsible' status, whites began to discuss

the possibility of a union of the four colonies. As a response the APO attended a joint conference in Queenstown of Cape Africans and coloureds, both of whom felt that their franchise rights under the Cape constitution were threatened. Abdurahman called the conference 'the first genuine attempt to fuse the two sections of the population into one political whole'. He also put to the conference the idea that a federation would be better than a union as the northern colonies would then have less chance of forcing their discriminatory policies on the Cape.

When the all-white National Convention met to draft the Act of Union in 1908–09, the APO called on it to respect the rights of blacks in the Cape and to extend these rights to all provinces of the proposed Union. After the draft Act was published, the APO petitioned the prime ministers of the four colonies and the British government for the removal of all racially discriminatory provisions from the Act. The petition also requested that the High Commission territories not be included in the Union unless their chiefs and councillors agreed.

At the APO annual conference in April 1909, especially harsh criticism was aimed at the clause which excluded black people from being elected to parliament, even in the Cape where some blacks would be able to vote. The delegates saw this introduction of legal discrimination in the Cape as a prelude to a further erosion of their franchise rights. The following month the newspaper, *The APO*, was established as a weapon in the coloured people's struggle.

All the protests and petitions proved fruitless, so the APO decided to send a joint delegation of protest to London together with the South African Native National Convention and others (see Chapter 4). The delegation was ignored by the British government and returned home bitterly disappointed. Abdurahman complained that while everyone in Britain regretted the colour bar, none except the Labour Party and 'advanced radicals' were prepared to reject it. He said that coloureds and Africans could no longer rely on Britain and would have to rely on their own strength and economic leverage to win their rights.

Relations with Africans

As its cooperation with African organizations to oppose the franchise laws has shown, the APO was committed to non-racialism and criticized all forms of racism, irrespective of whom it was directed against. For example, *The APO* exposed the harsh treatment of African labourers on Orange Free State farms and also attacked the 1913 Land Act as 'conceived in iniquity and selfishness'. Abdurahman said that the Land Act showed that 'northern illiberalism' with its 'long ... record of rapine and greed' had triumphed over the Cape liberal

tradition. The whites, he said, had 'abandoned their duty and betrayed their trust' towards all black people.

Cooperation between the APO and African organizations, especially the South African Native National Congress, was the result of a desire to work together for common objectives. For example, Revd Walter Rubusana was invited to address the 1910 APO convention, where his call for more cooperation between coloureds and Africans was welcomed by Abdurahman. Later the same year, the APO strongly supported Rubusana's successful election campaign for the Cape Provincial Council. In 1912, they welcomed the formation of the Congress. Similarly, the APO also supported the struggles of the Indian people (see Chapter 7) and established an Indian Passive Resistance Fund to raise money for this purpose.

Despite these examples of black solidarity, the increasingly harsh measures against blacks by the white authorities led the APO to seek special dispensation for coloureds in some instances. For example, the APO conferences (from 1912 to 1914) all passed resolutions calling, with some success, for the exemption of coloureds from curfew regulations applied to blacks in various Cape towns.

Although referring to a later period of history, this quotation from Dennis Brutus, a member of the Teachers' League of South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s, gives an idea of some of the difficulties in the way of building unity between coloureds and other blacks and within the coloured community.

'... there was always the promise of the white dominant group that the coloureds would be treated as an appendage: 'They are our step-children, you know, our half-children, our bastard children.' In a sense, they were given the kind of crumbs from the white man's table, which gave them more hope — especially with the retention of the franchise, when it was being lost all over the country. They came into the Union of South Africa with something which the Asians didn't have and the Africans didn't have, and this gave them some privileged status, however illusory. So out of that comes a certain reluctance to take on the system. There's the hope that there are crumbs for you in the system.

But there is also a very strong insistence by other coloureds that the race categories are irrelevant and that one ought to transcend them — which is my position. On the other hand, the fact that for many years coloureds could own property, could become petty-bourgeois to some degree, was clearly a barrier against fusing both with the Africans in Nyanga and Langa [Cape townships], and also with the coloured working class. They were contemptuous of the coloureds who were hawking fish or vegetables in the street. So this stratification is very strong and there's no point in disputing it.'

— Frederikse, 1990, p. 36.

Political ties between coloured and African people at the grassroots level remained weak. Unity was difficult to achieve partly because coloured workers were not subject to all the restrictions facing African workers (e.g., pass laws and some job reservation laws). coloureds thus tended to get skilled, better-paid jobs more readily than Africans and often did not see black solidarity as in their interests. Other factors contributed to the lack of unity between the two groups. 'Geographical isolation, barrier of language, custom and race, economic differences and inequalities of status restrained them from merging into a single organization' (Simons and Simons, 1983, p. 120). Acute colour consciousness even inhibited the growth of unity among the coloureds themselves. In a racist society, light-skinned coloureds often tried to pass for whites and scorned those with a darker complexion. The APO deplored this but could not eliminate it.

Coloured People and the Labour Movement

In Cape Town, coloured and white workers joined forces on some occasions before 1910, turning out for the big unemployment demonstrations in Cape Town and the campaigns for a workmen's compensation and factories act in 1906-07. White socialist leaders called for closer cooperation between coloured and white workers in the interest of class solidarity. This never came about, largely because rank and file white workers and their trade unions were intent on gaining advantages for themselves at the expense of coloured workers. For example, the unions tried to get labour contracts which excluded coloured workers from certain jobs. The coloured workers, in turn, were understandably sceptical of any calls for closer cooperation with whites.

During the campaign against the draft Act of Union, some APO leaders were impressed by the position against racial discrimination taken by the British Labour Party. They hoped for a similar display of solidarity from the white workers and the Labour Party in South Africa. When the Labour Party pursued racist colour-bar policies, Abdurahman wrote an article in *The APO* trying to persuade white workers that they were wrong to consider coloureds as their enemy. He said that only the employers could gain from such divisions amongst workers. The Labour Party, however, persisted with its racist line, destroying goodwill and the possibility of cooperation.

The APO, while it influenced those coloured workers who were qualified to vote, did not strike deep roots among the poorly organized coloured working class. The intellectuals in the APO leadership were not really in touch with workers' problems and attempts by Abdurahman to form trade unions were unsuccessful. The significant exception

was the formation of the South African Teachers' League in 1912-13. Neither the APO, the white socialists nor anyone else even tried to organize the small number of African workers in the Cape peninsula who were virtually excluded from all skilled work.

The APO and Electoral Politics

The Cape franchise led many coloured leaders to believe that progress was possible through the ballot box and the APO devoted a great deal of attention to election campaigns. White politicians sought support among the coloured voters and, in those constituencies where their vote was significant, they employed coloured election agents who were often APO members. Coloured voters could not themselves be candidates for parliamentary elections and were thus reduced to choosing between parties which were all committed to white supremacy.

Thus energy was diverted to political activity that was essentially ineffective in promoting coloured people's interests and also discouraged the growth of alternative forms of struggle. The voteless coloured masses were not mobilized politically. The APO defined its role mainly within the sphere of parliamentary politics; even then, most voters were only called upon to participate at election times.

Despite these failings, the importance of the APO should not be underestimated. It was the first large organization of the coloured people and through it they voiced their demands for forty years.

Essay Topics

- 1 Discuss the APO's relationship to the following in the period before 1914:
 - (a) African people
 - (b) the white-led labour movement
- 2 Trace the development of political organizations among the coloured people from 1883 to 1914 and evaluate the significance of the APO in the history of black resistance during this period.

Topic for Group Discussion

In the Cape, coloureds (like Africans) with a certain level of income had the vote, though after 1910 they could not be candidates in

parliamentary elections. Do you think that this situation stimulated or dampened political resistance to oppression? In discussing this question, give some consideration to arguments which could be made for both sides before deciding which you feel are strongest.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Struggles of South African Indians before World War I

The first Indians to come to South Africa arrived in 1860 as indentured labourers for the tea, coffee and (in particular) sugar plantations then being established in the Natal coastal region. Since most African people in the Natal colony still found it possible to make a living by farming their own land, they could not be persuaded to work for the low wages offered by the planters. Zululand was then still independent and the men did not leave home to work in the colonial territories. The Natal government thus made arrangements to import labourers from India — mainly impoverished Hindus threatened with starvation by landlessness and debt.

The Indian workers were bound by indentures (i.e., contracts of service) to work for a particular employer for five years at low wages plus food and lodging. Thereafter they were free to live and work as they could. After a further five years, they were entitled to either a free trip back to India or a grant of crown land of the same value as the cost of the trip. By the time ten years were over, most of the Indians had made their homes in South Africa rather than face the uncertainties of re-establishing themselves in India; a few thousand, however, did return. The crown land offered to those Indians who remained was in remote areas and only about fifty such land grants were made.

The hardships suffered by many Indian indentured labourers can be gauged from this complaint to the Protector of Indian Immigrants (a public official). The complaint was made by an indentured man called Bhagoo in February 1884.

I am indentured to Mr J. Meikle. Five of the men who were assigned with me ran away as they were illtreated, and about a fortnight ago one of my

sons named Augna (25980) about 10 years of age left the estate and has not been heard of since. The circumstances of his leaving were, he had 50 sheep to look after and one evening one did not return with the rest, the boy also through fear stayed away. The missing sheep afterwards returned and the boy also. The next morning Mr Meikle with Mrs Meikle's approval tied the boy's hands together with a strap and hung him naked to a rafter in the dining-room and thrashed him with a hunting crop. The boy was kept hanging for an hour about two feet from the ground and when breakfast time came he was taken down and sent off with the sheep as usual.

For one week before I left the estate search was made for the boy when off work but he could not be found. On two occasions after the boy left and could not be found, Mr Meikle beat me and my wife suspecting that we took food to the boy each night.

I am served with (Junari) Kaffir Ammabella one month; and with mealy meal another; I also get salt and dhal but no fish, ghee or rice. I work seven weeks for a month's wages. This has been the case for the last two years. When I went first to the estate I worked only 4 and 5 weeks to a month. I have not received any wages for 4 months.

Not a day passes without one or another of the Indians on Mr Meikle's farm being thrashed. I have often lost clothes, pots ... from my house while at work but can never find out who takes them.

My house is daily searched by Mr and Mrs Meikle and the children. I work a portion of the day on Sunday. No extra pay is given for Sunday work. The other Coolies on the estate witnessed my son being beaten. I refuse to return to the estate.

— Bhana and Pachai, 1984, pp. 5—6.



Indentured workers cutting sugar cane in about 1894.

Most of the Indians continued to work as free (i.e., non-indentured) workers on the plantations after their indentures had expired. The remainder became smallholders, market gardeners, fishermen, hawkers, domestic servants or workers on the coal mines, farms, railways and other enterprises. The Indian immigrants were harshly oppressed but made an important contribution to the economy of Natal which began to prosper. The sugar industry in particular was dependent on cheap Indian labour.

From the 1870s a small number of free Indians, mainly Muslim merchants from Mauritius and India, also started to settle in Natal. At first they traded among the Indian community but soon started to cater to Africans and whites as well. Many of these merchants prospered and some became very wealthy. By the turn of the century, a middle stratum began to emerge in the Indian community: the children of indentured or former indentured labourers who were born in South Africa and had managed to get an education. They included a few lawyers, accountants and civil servants as well as teachers, clerks, bookkeepers and other white-collar workers. By 1904 the total Indian population of Natal was 100,000, slightly outnumbering that of whites.

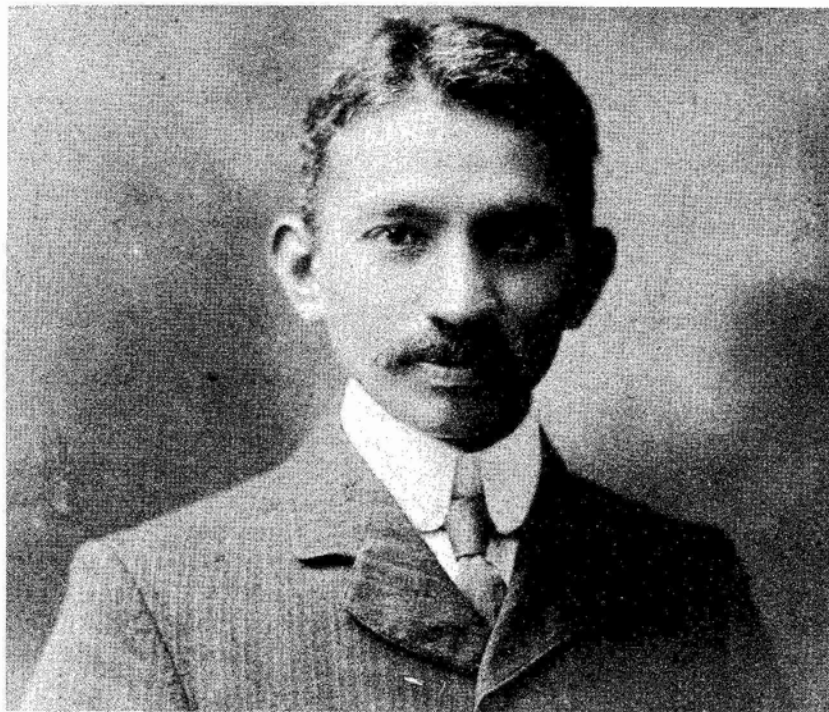
Racism and Resistance in Natal

White business people and some farmers, resenting the competition of the Indian shopkeepers and smallholders, began anti-Indian agitation. They called for an end to further immigration and for the repatriation of Indians already in the colony. The sugar planters, however, derived great benefit from cheap Indian labour, and were opposed to anything that would deprive them of it. After Natal obtained Responsible Government in 1893, an attempt was made to reduce the number of free Indians in the colony without foregoing the use of indentured labour. To pressurize free Indians to leave the colony, a poll tax of £3 was imposed in 1894 on Indians whose terms of indenture had ended but who did not renew their indentures or return to India. In 1903 this tax was extended even to children of former indentured labourers. Since £3 amounted to almost six months wages for the average plantation worker, the law caused great hardship and was one of the major grievances of Natal Indians who fought a long struggle against it. Many people did re-indenture, but only a small number actually returned to India. In 1897 a law was passed which virtually prohibited all further immigration of free Indians into Natal.

In 1894 an assault was also made on the Indians' right to vote in Natal. Before this time, non-indentured Indians could register as voters on the same basis as whites, and almost 300 did so. Despite the

small number of Indian voters, white traders in particular feared that Indians would in time attain significant political influence, and in 1894 the Franchise Amendment Act excluded Indians from being registered as voters in the future. Natal Indians, under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi, protested strongly against the Act. In the course of their struggle against it, they formed the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), an organization dominated by the merchant élite. Abdulla Haji Adam, a wealthy merchant, became the first president and Gandhi the secretary.

Petitions were sent to both the Natal and British governments, the latter accompanied by 10,000 signatures of Indians all over Natal. A thousand copies of this petition, which set out the grievances of the Indian community, were circulated to newspapers and public figures in South Africa, India and Britain. The British government, which also came under pressure from the colonial government of India not to



Mohandas K. Gandhi, later known as Mahatma Gandhi, the most prominent figure in India's struggle for independence from Britain. He came to South Africa as a lawyer to take up a case in 1893 and became involved in politics in both Natal and the Transvaal. He extended his stay until 1914 when he finally returned to India.

allow legislation which openly discriminated against Indians, disallowed the 1894 Act. The Natal Indians' victory, however, was brief; the Natal government passed another Franchise Amendment Act in 1896. This time, Indians were debarred from registering as voters by a law that was not overtly racist: the Act denied the right to vote to anyone whose home country did not have its own parliamentary representation. This time the British government allowed the law.

Restrictions were also placed on the business activities of Indians, making it more difficult for them to obtain trading licences. This was done to prevent Indians from competing with white merchants.

The Situation in Other Parts of South Africa

The Indian community, though based initially in Natal, soon spread to other parts of the country. Several thousand ex-indentured labourers and their descendants moved to the Transvaal in search of higher wages after the discovery of gold. A smaller number moved to the Orange Free State, the Cape and other British colonies in South Africa.

Indian merchants had also started to establish businesses outside Natal from as early as the 1870s. In the republics they met with opposition from white business which called on the Boer governments to take action against the Indians. The reaction in the Orange Free State was particularly harsh. In 1890 a law was passed prohibiting Indians from carrying on business or farming; all existing businesses were forced to close within one year and the owners were deported without compensation. All Indian immigration to the Orange Free State was prohibited.

In the Transvaal, Indians were denied all civil and political rights. They could not vote, own fixed property except in locations set apart for them, travel first or second class on trains, walk on public footpaths or move about after 9 p.m. without a permit. By the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War there were about 17,000 Indians in the Transvaal.

In the Cape, the small number of Indians enjoyed the same legal and political rights as other sections of the population until 1906. However, they suffered from the racist attitudes of whites just as other black people did. In 1906, these attitudes and the fear of competition on the part of white business resulted in the Immigration Act which prohibited the immigration of Asian men from abroad and severely restricted their entry to the Cape from other parts of South Africa.

The Anglo-Boer War and After

During the Anglo-Boer War, the Indians, like the Africans and coloureds, were led to believe that if Britain won the war, their

position in the Transvaal and Orange Free State would be improved. The Boers' treatment of the Indians was also used by the British to justify the war. During the war, Gandhi organized an Indian Ambulance Corps of over 1,000 men to serve on the British side; of these, about 300 were free Indians and the rest indentured labourers. They acquitted themselves well and the leaders of the Corps were awarded the War Medal. But there was no improvement in the conditions of the Indian community after the war.

The post-war British administration in the republics proved to be no better than the previous Boer governments, and none of the repressive legislation was repealed. In fact it was often more strictly enforced than before, and immigration by Indians to the Transvaal was restricted. In 1904, the Transvaal British Indian Association (later renamed the Transvaal Indian Congress, TIC) was formed with the participation of Gandhi. Like the Natal Indian Congress, it was dominated by the wealthier merchants.

When the Bambatha rebellion broke out in Natal in 1906, Gandhi came to the aid of the Natal government by offering to form an Indian Ambulance Corps. A small corps of 24 men was formed and was on active service for six weeks, engaged mainly in nursing wounded Africans.

Gandhi and the Bambatha Rebellion

In the following extract from his autobiography, Gandhi explains his reasons for forming the Indian Ambulance Corps:

'The newspapers brought the news of the outbreak of the Zulu 'rebellion' in Natal. I bore no grudge against the Zulus, they had harmed no Indian. I had doubts about the 'rebellion' itself. But I then believed that the British Empire existed for the benefit of the world. A genuine sense of loyalty prevented me from even wishing ill to the Empire. The rightness or otherwise of the 'rebellion' was therefore not likely to affect my decision. Natal had a Volunteer Defence Force, and it was open to it to recruit more men. I read that this force had already been mobilized to quell the 'rebellion'.

I considered myself a citizen of Natal, being intimately connected to it. So I wrote to the Governor, expressed my readiness, if necessary, to form an Indian Ambulance Corps. He replied immediately accepting the offer.'

— Gandhi, 1962, pp. 261–2.

Satyagraha

In 1907 Botha's new Transvaal government passed the Asiatic Law Amendment Act (nicknamed the 'Black Act'). This law required all male Asians to register themselves and obtain a certificate of

registration (something like a pass) with their fingerprints on it. This certificate had to be carried at all times and be shown to any police officer on demand. Unregistered people and illegal immigrants could be deported without the right to appeal. The Act was approved by the British government despite the protests of a delegation of South African Indians which went to London in 1906.

The Black Act met with strong opposition from the Indian community in the Transvaal under the leadership of Gandhi who was living there at the time. Thousands attended a protest meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg and resolved not to register and, if necessary, to go to prison. This was the beginning of the famous *Satyagraha* campaign inspired by Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance (or *Satyagraha*). The registration offices were picketed and very few Indians registered. A large number of *Satyagrahis*, including Gandhi, were arrested and jailed until the prisons grew full of them.

Eventually Gandhi was summoned from prison by Jan Smuts, the cabinet minister responsible for the Asiatic Law Amendment Act. The two men made a compromise agreement: if the Indians registered voluntarily, the Act would be repealed. Gandhi himself registered and called on the Indian people to do likewise. Although there was dissatisfaction among many people at the agreement and some bitter criticism of Gandhi, most did register. The Act, however, was not repealed and the Indian people took up the struggle once again. At a mass outdoor meeting in Johannesburg on 16 August 1908, over 2,000 of those who had registered burnt their registration certificates.

The *Satyagraha* campaign was intensified when the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act of 1908 was passed. This legislation virtually barred all further Indians from entering the Transvaal. *Satyagrahis* then began to enter the Transvaal illegally, to be arrested and imprisoned or deported back to Natal. Those who were deported simply returned to the Transvaal, so some were deported to India. This caused a great outcry of protest in India and the Indian government prohibited further migration of indentured labourers to South Africa. Later the Transvaal courts declared the deportations to India to be illegal.

When the formation of the Union of South Africa was proposed by the National Convention in 1909, an Indian delegation led by Gandhi went to London to ask for the repeal of the anti-Asiatic laws. Like the joint delegation of the African Political Organization and the Native National Convention, the Indians were unsuccessful.

In 1913 the Supreme Court decided that Indian marriages (i.e., marriages conducted under a polygamous code) were not legal even if a man had only one wife. This nullified many marriages and provoked strong opposition from the Indian community, including women,

many of whom were roused to political militancy for the first time. Protests were also heard from India, especially from the Indian National Congress.

The issue which most ignited mass resistance in the Indian community was the £3 poll tax on the former indentured labourers and their children in Natal. As mentioned above, this tax had been a major grievance of poor Indians since its introduction in 1894. But the NIC, dominated as it was by the wealthy merchants, did not take it up as a political issue. In 1911, however, the new middle stratum of educated, South African-born Indians formed a new political organization, the Colonial Born Indian Association (CBIA) and raised the issue of the poll-tax at its founding meeting. Seeing the potential of anti-tax sentiment in mobilizing the masses of poor Indians, and not wanting the CBIA to monopolize the issue, the NIC also included the abolition of the tax among their demands. Gandhi, who by now was functioning more or less independently of any one political organization, also took up the poll tax issue.

In October 1913, Gandhi and other political activists, including members of various political groups in Natal and the Transvaal, organized a strike of 4,000 Indian coal miners in Newcastle, demanding the repeal of the £3 poll tax. Many of the striking miners, together with a number of women (largely miners' dependants) and a few white sympathizers, formed a group of about 2,500 which marched illegally over the Natal-Transvaal border under Gandhi's leadership. They were all arrested and the leaders were imprisoned. The miners were taken back to the mines and forced to work under the direction of armed whites. The mines were surrounded with barbed wire to stop the Indian workers from escaping.

The coal miners' strike soon spread rapidly, first to the brutally exploited workers on the sugar plantations and then to others: sugar-mill workers, railway workers, cooks and waiters, tailors, printing workers, vegetable sellers and even domestic servants. The strikes were of short duration but, together with other resistance activities, attracted world-wide attention. The Viceroy of India (the highest British official in India and representative of the British monarch), because of pressure from the Indian National Congress, felt bound to criticize the South African government and to express sympathy for the South African Indian resistance. Smuts, then Minister of Justice, under pressure both from abroad and from the actions of the Indian community in South Africa, appointed a Commission of Enquiry. The Commission was boycotted by South African Indians who objected to some of its members, but it eventually recommended the abolition of the £3 poll tax and the legal recognition of Indian marriages. In 1914 the government accepted

these recommendations and also abolished the Transvaal Indian pass laws (i.e., the 'Black Act'). Soon afterwards Gandhi left South Africa for good; the *Satyagraha* phase of the struggle of the South African Indians, having achieved partial success, came to an end.

From this first phase of the Indians' struggle the oppressed people of South Africa would learn important lessons. Its most glaring weakness was that it was a lone struggle by a small section of the population. There was no attempt to link the struggle of the Indians with that of the African and coloured people. The Indian people had not yet learned to regard themselves as South Africans first and foremost, who needed to join with other oppressed South Africans in the struggle against white supremacy. They saw their own problems in isolation, and even Gandhi never raised a voice of protest against the oppression of Africans at a time when African rights were under sustained attack. The assertion of a South African identity by the Indian people, and their development of a united front of struggle together with other oppressed people, came only in the late 1930s and 1940s when Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Dr G. M. Naicker, Yusuf Cachalia, George Ponnen, H. A. Naidoo and other militants took the lead in transforming the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses into allies of the African National Congress.

Another important lesson of the early phase of Indian struggle emerged in the way it brought together a previously divided community. As early as 1894, when Indians in Natal were taking up the fight against disfranchisement, Gandhi (1962, p. 118) noted that:

In the face of the calamity that had overtaken the community all distributions such as high and low, small and great, master and servant, Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis, Christians, Gujaratis, Madrasis, Sindhis, etc. were forgotten. All were alike the children and servants of the motherland.

The leaders of the *Satyagraha* campaigns also mobilized thousands of ordinary people — workers, peasants, the self-employed — to participate actively in struggles for their rights. It was the first time that this type of mass struggle had taken place in South Africa and it sowed the seeds of the passive resistance campaign of 1946 and the 1952 Defiance Campaign. It was undoubtedly the mass participation of all sections of the Indian community which produced those small successes that were achieved.

Essay Topic

Trace the development of the *Satyagraha* campaign of 1907 to 1913 and analyse its strengths and weaknesses.

Topics for Discussion

- 1 Read the following passage and discuss the questions below:

Indian immigration increased the turnover of the sugar industry sevenfold in the first decade after their arrival, but also produced *social and economic problems* that were at first neglected. The Whites began to complain of their growing numbers and entry into the commercial life of the colony. Opposition became so strong that in 1897 two shiploads of free labourers were forcibly prevented from disembarking. In 1885 the Pietermaritzburg chamber of commerce petitioned that the Indians only be allowed to live and trade in *certain parts* of the city.

— Van Jaarsveld and Van Wijk, 1974, p. 329.

- (a) Which group's point of view do you think is expressed by the author?
 - (b) Why do you think it was the Chamber of Commerce that wanted Indians restricted to certain parts of Pietermaritzburg?
- 2 Do you think that *Satyagraha* was an appropriate form of struggle for the Indian people at this time? Do you think other forms (for example, strictly legal protest or armed struggle) would have been more or less useful?

CHAPTER EIGHT

The First World War

The First World War broke out in August 1914. It was an inter-imperialist war fought between two competing groups of countries. On one side were Britain, France and Russia, joined later by Japan, Italy, the USA and some smaller countries; on the other side were Germany and Austro-Hungary, later joined by Bulgaria and Turkey. The war was fought mainly in Europe but also in parts of Asia and Africa.

When Britain declared war on 4 August 1914, it did so on behalf of its empire. Thus, South Africa automatically found itself at war.

Attitudes Towards the War

The government of Louis Botha's South African Party, which represented mainly imperial interests and those of mine owners and wealthy farmers, supported the war and participated wholeheartedly, hoping to gain some benefit from it. Other sections of the population took varying attitudes towards the war. Here we shall consider the responses of the African people (as represented by the ANC), the Afrikaner nationalists, and the organized (mainly white) labour movement.

1 The African National Congress

The ANC gave full support to the government's war policy. When the war broke out, a special conference of the ANC was in session. On hearing news of the outbreak of war, the conference immediately called on the African people to support the war effort and demonstrate their loyalty to the King and the British Empire. It was also decided to suspend further public criticism of the government; this, in effect, meant the suspension of the campaigns against the Land

Act and against the introduction of passes for women in the Orange Free State. A delegation was sent to Pretoria to assure the government of African support for the war effort. Offers to help in the war were sent to the government from African chiefs and people in all parts of the country. Dr Walter Rubusana wrote to the government offering to raise and accompany 5,000 African troops to German South West Africa (Namibia) provided the government would arm and equip them. A number of African chiefs also offered troops. The government, however, refused to allow Africans to serve in the armed forces in any combat capacity.

Although many Africans resented this discrimination, about 71,000 were nevertheless recruited (with the help of the ANC and certain chiefs) to serve in non-combat capacities as wagon drivers, labourers, servants, etc. They served in Namibia and mainland Tanzania (both German colonies) as well as in France. Thousands lost their lives. Many Africans, encouraged by their chiefs and by the ANC leadership, donated money to funds established to aid the war effort.

One of the reasons for the support given to the war by African leaders was that they hoped that their loyalty to the crown would be repaid by British support of their interests against the settlers — in particular, African grievances against the Land Act and the discriminatory franchise laws. This misplaced faith in Britain had persisted despite the betrayal of African interests at the Treaty of Vereeniging and in the 1910 Act of Union. In the longer perspective of history, the African people had comparatively recently suffered heavy defeats in the wars of resistance, loss of land and the imposition of national oppression. They were still unwilling to assert themselves against white authority. The leadership thus sought ways to ease the burden of tyranny. They were hostile to the Afrikaners, often the direct oppressors; but in the absence of a capacity to mobilize the African people for militant struggle for their rights, the leadership looked hopefully (if not very realistically) to Britain for assistance.

Coloured people too, through the APO, offered to serve as soldiers with the South African armed forces. At first they, too, were only allowed to serve in a non-combat capacity. After the Namibian campaign, however, in late 1915, a coloured infantry corps under white officers was formed and served in Tanzania and France.

Despite the original decision to suspend agitation against the government during the war, many Africans did testify at the hearings of the Beaumont Commission which was meant to recommend land for addition to the reserves. The ANC also protested against the report of the Commission and called on the government to reject it and to repeal the Land Act (see Chapter 5). When the Native Administration

Bill was published in 1917, the ANC also protested strongly.* Thus, while protest did decrease during the war, it did not stop altogether.

2 The Afrikaner nationalists

Many Afrikaner nationalists remembered their bittered defeat in the hands of the British in the Anglo-Boer War. They hoped to use the opportunity provided by Britain's involvement in the First World War to throw off British control and re-establish Afrikaner independence. In September 1914 a number of former Boer military leaders, some of whom resigned commissions in the Union Defence Force, led a rebellion against the government of Louis Botha, their former comrade-in-arms. The rebels included Generals Beyers, de la Rey and de Wet; another central figure was Colonel Manie Maritz, a prominent guerilla leader in the Anglo-Boer War who was stationed (in the Union Defence Force) in the Northern Cape. Maritz openly joined the Germans, who promised 'independence' for South Africa, and led his troops into Namibia. (Later, when South Africa invaded Namibia, he retreated into Angola.) All in all, the rebels numbered about 12,000 men, most of whom were organized in commando units.

Botha, assuming the position of Commandant General of the Defence Force, declared martial law and led the army against the rebels. By February 1915, the rebellion, which had taken place mainly in the Orange Free State, the Western Transvaal, and the Northern Cape, had been completely crushed. One of the rebels, Jopie Fourie, a major in the Union Defence Force who had not resigned his commission before joining the rebellion, was executed for treason. He became a martyr to the Afrikaner nationalist cause while Botha and Smuts were branded as traitors to Afrikanerdom.

Although the National Party of General J. B. M. Hertzog did not officially support the rebellion, it strongly opposed South African participation in what it considered 'England's War', and most of the rebel leaders supported Hertzog. The feeling of nationalism which was stimulated among Afrikaners by the revolt led to increased support for the National Party. During the 1915 election campaign, it accused Botha of subordinating the interests of South Africa to those of the British Empire and won enough seats to become the official opposition.

* This Bill proposed to put into effect the recommendations of the Beaumont Commission (see Chapter 5) regarding land allocation. It would also have established a system of government in the 'Native areas' whereby all laws were to be made by proclamation of the Governor General who was to be advised by a permanent commission headed by the Minister of Native Affairs. The Bill was withdrawn in 1919 before it was enacted.

3 The labour movement

The South African Labour Party, formed in 1909, was affiliated to the Second International, an international organization of socialist parties that included both revolutionary Marxists and reformists, and had participated in the International's 1912 Congress at Basle, Switzerland. This Congress had passed a resolution declaring that it was a crime for workers to shoot one another. It called on workers to make every effort to avert a war and, if they failed to do so, to use the crisis to stir up the masses and overthrow capitalist rule in their countries. When the First World War broke out, the Labour Party (unlike most parties in the Second International) opposed participation in it. This was because it had a leadership dominated by progressives such as Bill Andrews, D. I. Jones, Colin Wade and S. P. Bunting. However, the majority of the rank and file members led by the right wing under the party chairman Colonel Frederick Cresswell supported the war and a fierce struggle took place. The progressives formed the War on War League in September 1914 to promote anti-war sentiment.

By August 1915, the conservatives within the party succeeded in calling a special conference which passed a resolution supporting the war. They demanded that all candidates for the coming elections should pledge their support for the war. The progressive section of the party then broke away and formed the International Socialist League (ISL) which opposed the war, adhered to the principles of proletarian internationalism and declared itself a Marxist organization. In 1917 it greeted enthusiastically the two revolutions in Russia and identified itself with the Bolsheviks ('We are South African Bolsheviks', it declared). In 1921, the ISL joined with smaller groups of radical socialists to form the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) as the South African affiliate of the Communist International.* Both the ISL and the CPSA differed from the Labour Party in that they stood against racial discrimination and racial oppression. The CPSA was, in fact, destined to make a major contribution to the struggle of the national liberation movement.

South African Participation in the War

During the First World War, South African troops were deployed in two of Germany's African colonies, South West Africa (Namibia) and German East Africa (mainland Tanzania), as well as in France.

* Communist International: Also known as the Comintern or Third International. This organization was formed on Lenin's initiative in 1918, to unite the world's revolutionary Marxist parties. It succeeded the Second International which had collapsed in 1914.

When the war first broke out, the British government was anxious to gain full control of the Cape sea route between Europe and the East. Since Namibia's location and ports gave Germany partial control of this route, Britain requested the South African government to invade the German colony. The Botha government agreed, but felt that it could not comply with the request until it had dealt with the Afrikaner rebellion. Soon after the rebellion was crushed, South African forces under Botha's command attacked Namibia. By July 1915 they had defeated the Germans. The South African troops then moved north and, with the help of Portuguese troops moving southwards in Angola, overran Ovamboland between 1915 and 1917. (The Ovambos had up to then maintained their independence despite claims to the northern and southern parts of Ovamboland by Germany and Portugal respectively.)

In February 1916 Jan Smuts led South African soldiers into inland Tanzania and took command of a campaign force including large numbers of other British imperial troops — mainly blacks from Kenya, Uganda and Malawi under British officers. They moved south across the border from Kenya. While they never managed to destroy the German army led by General von Lettow-Vorbeck, which gradually retreated into northern Mozambique and then into Zambia, they did gain control of the German colony.

In France, white and coloured South African troops fought against Germany as part of the imperial army. Africans organized into the



Members of the Native Labour Corps entertaining Allied troops in France in 1917.

Native Labour Corps were deployed in offloading ships and trains, cutting wood in forests, digging trenches and other non-combat work. On orders from the South African government, they were segregated from other troops, locked in closed compounds at night and prohibited from drinking liquor or from forming friendships with Europeans. The African troops resented these restrictions and protested. Thirteen men were shot dead in one such protest against the compound system. The South African government, fearing this rebelliousness among the African troops, withdrew them some months before the end of the war. Over six hundred were drowned in the English channel on their way home when the ship *Mendi* sank. Their memory was kept alive by the ANC's Mendi Memorial Club.

The Peace Conference

At the end of the war a South African government delegation, including Botha and Smuts, attended the Paris Peace Conference where the terms of the Treaty of Versailles between Germany and the victorious powers were negotiated in 1919. The most important aspect of the treaty as far as South Africa was concerned was the agreement to distribute all Germany's colonial possessions among the victors as mandated territories under the League of Nations. Under this system South Africa was given Namibia as a Mandate with the responsibility to 'promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants of the territory', and report annually to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. The South African government interpreted this to mean annexation and Namibia became, in effect, a colony of South Africa.

During the war, statements by several British officials had led the ANC to believe that when hostilities were over the African people could expect certain reforms which would improve their situation. When the war ended, the ANC, at a special Congress in December 1918, drew up a petition to King George V of Britain, expressing Africans' loyalty and pride at their contribution in the war. The petition also called for 'a revision of the South African Constitution ... to grant enfranchisement of natives throughout the Union'. It also urged that the High Commission Territories (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) should not be incorporated in the Union and that the future of South West Africa should not be decided until the inhabitants had been consulted.

At a mass meeting organized by the ANC in Cape Town in September 1918, the Cape provincial leader, Revd Zaccheus Mahabane, had demanded that a special 'Native representative' be included in the South African peace delegation. Since this demand was ignored by

the government, Congress decided in the December 1918 Special Congress to send its own delegation to Britain and the Paris Peace Conference. The delegation included Sol T. Plaatje, Seloape Thema, J. T. Gumede, L. T. Mvabaza, and the Revd H. R. Ngcayiya; its main purpose was the achievement of the demands set out in the petition to the king. The delegation met the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, who listened to them but said that he could not interfere in South Africa's internal affairs. He promised no more than to relay their opinions to Botha and Smuts. The petition to King George was referred back to the Governor General of South Africa. Finally disillusioned, the ANC had sent its last delegation to beseech British intervention on behalf of the black people of South Africa.

A National Party delegation led by General Hertzog also went to the Paris Conference to see the British government. It sought independence for the Transvaal and Orange Free State. What he sought, of course, was independence for the white minority only. Lloyd George replied that the Union had complete control over its internal affairs and that the British government could not interfere in these affairs. Hertzog's delegation was reminded that South Africa was represented by Botha at the peace conference.

Socio-Economic Developments During the First World War

The period of the First World War saw a continuation of the socio-economic trends set in motion by the mineral discoveries: urbanization, industrialization, growth of the road and railway networks, the impoverishment of rural Africans and the breakdown of traditional African lifestyles.

One consequence of the war was that European countries, including Britain, switched from the production of civilian consumer goods to military production. This, together with the disruption of normal shipping, meant that South Africa could no longer obtain all the consumer goods it previously imported. Factories were established to manufacture many of these goods, giving a major boost to South African manufacturing industry. The gold-mining industry also prospered during the war due to an increase in the price of gold, while agricultural exports were boosted by an increased demand in Britain for South African fruit and grain.

Birth of an Economic Giant

1917 saw the birth of South Africa's most powerful business concern: the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa (AAC). The moving force

behind the formation of the company was Ernest Oppenheimer, a German-born British businessman with close connections to London's financial community. He had moved to South Africa in 1902 to run the local office of A. Dunkelsbuhler and Co., a London-based diamond-buying firm belonging to his cousin in which he later became a major partner. On Oppenheimer's advice the firm bought control of a mining company known as Consolidated Mines Selection (CMS) in 1905. CMS controlled large tracts of land on the Far East Rand which was believed to have gold-mining potential. It bought even more land in the area, and by 1916 it had become clear that the Far East Rand had the Witwatersrand's richest gold reserves. In 1917 Oppenheimer formed AAC for the purpose of attracting American investors, successfully drawing capital from such large companies as J. P. Morgan and Co., Guaranty Trust and the Newmont Mining Corporation. South Africa and British capitalists also invested in the new company of which Oppenheimer became chairman and managing director. Unlike all the other mining houses, AAC registered itself in South Africa instead of London, thereby winning the support of Jan Smuts as well as substantial tax benefits. By 1929, AAC had not only become South Africa's biggest gold-mining house, but had also taken control of De Beers Consolidated Mines, the world's largest diamond-mining company.

The growth of industry and hardships in the rural areas caused partly by the Land Act led to more rapid urbanization. Tens of thousands of blacks moved to the towns as workers, many settling there permanently. White municipal authorities usually tried to house Africans in squalid locations outside the cities. However, with the rapid increase in population, many moved to 'slumyards' in areas such as Prospect Township and Doornfontein in inner-city Johannesburg or Cato Manor in Durban. Here they paid exorbitant rents to private landlords for crowded, unhygienic accommodation in corrugated iron shacks. In some of the slumyards, Africans lived side by side with the poor of other race groups: coloureds, Indians and whites. In Sophiatown, to the west of Johannesburg, and in Alexandra to the east, wealthier blacks were allowed to buy plots of land on freehold tenure. The plot owners often subdivided their plots and rented them to people who built shanties on them.

In the tough, urban slumyards and townships, especially on the Rand, Africans from all parts of South Africa mixed with one another, sharing economic deprivation and political oppression. This new environment became a melting pot of different cultures, influencing one another and leading gradually to the emergence of a new culture, uniquely South African and distinctly urban.

Essay Topic

Compare and contrast the attitude of African and Afrikaner nationalists towards the First World War.

Topics for Group Discussions

- 1 The Afrikaner nationalists and those socialists who formed the International Socialist League both opposed South African participation in the war and both considered themselves to be anti-imperialist. Discuss the following questions:
 - (a) Why did the Afrikaner nationalists consider themselves anti-imperialist?
 - (b) Why did the socialists consider themselves anti-imperialist?
 - (c) Do you agree that both groups were really anti-imperialist? Discuss fully, considering each group in turn.
- 2 The ANC supported the British war effort. Does this mean, in your opinion, that the ANC was pro-imperialist? Discuss the matter thoroughly and give reasons for your opinions.

CHAPTER NINE

The Post-War Years, 1918–24

Louis Botha died a few weeks after he returned from the Paris Peace Conference and Jan Smuts became the new Prime Minister. Smuts, the former Boer general, had since the Anglo-Boer War become closely associated with British imperialist interests: in 1917 he had even been appointed to the British War Cabinet. After the First World War there were calls from some Afrikaners for *hereniging* (reunion) of the two Afrikaner political parties: Smuts's South African Party (SAP) and Hertzog's National Party (NP). Talks took place between the two but foundered on their different attitudes towards Britain. The SAP wanted to maintain strong, indissoluble links with the British Empire, while the NP insisted that South Africa's right to secede from the Empire should be recognized.

The Nationalists' growing support among Afrikaner voters then forced Smuts to look to an alliance with the strongly pro-British Unionist Party. In 1921 the two parties fused into one under the name of the South African Party, consolidating the SAP's already close links with British imperialism and South African gold-mining interests. The imperial links were emphasized in 1921 when Smuts signed the Simonstown Agreement with the British government, guaranteeing the British navy the use of the Simonstown dockyard.

Economic Hardship and Black Resistance

Wartime industrial growth led to a corresponding enlargement of the working class. As the end of the war came nearer, the economic position of workers, particularly blacks, became more and more difficult. Prices began rising very steeply after 1917 and continued to rise after the war. Whereas the white workers, relatively well organized in trade unions, fought successfully for wages that kept pace with inflation, blacks found their living standards deteriorating rapidly. On top of the pass laws, the job colour bar and racist rule in general,

economic hard times led to an upsurge in black workers' resistance.

After 1920, a world-wide economic depression set in, bringing hardship for white as well as black workers. The prices of most products decreased dramatically. The gold price, for example, fell by about 30 per cent between 1920 and 1922. Wool, the country's major agricultural export, fell by 67 per cent from 1920 to 1921. Prices of imported manufactured goods also decreased, placing industries under the strain of fierce competition and leading to factory closures and lay-offs. All this led to higher unemployment so that workers suffered despite the fall in prices of consumer goods.

The Industrial Workers of Africa

Soon after its formation, the International Socialist League began to take an interest in the organization of black workers. It recruited a few blacks into its ranks and began to co-operate with others. While the League's immediate influence on blacks was not great, it was the first organization to attempt seriously to introduce socialist ideology to the African workers. It also initiated the formation, in 1917, of the first African trade union: the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA). This was a general workers' union which played a role in encouraging militancy among African workers. For a while it was supported by the Transvaal ANC which called on Africans to join it.

The IWA did not grow very large due to its loose organizational structure and harassment by the authorities, including infiltration by police agents. It was eventually absorbed by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU, see below). The ISL also played a role in establishing the Durban Indian Workers' Industrial Union whose leader was B. L. Sigamoney. This union organized Indian printing, tobacco, laundry and dock workers, but it seems not to have lasted very long.

Different Attitudes to the October Revolution

On 7 November 1917 (25 October by the old Russian calendar) the workers and peasants of Russia, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, took power and declared their intention of abolishing capitalism and creating a socialist society. Two groups in South Africa reacted strongly but in very different ways.

The socialists

At its January 1918 Annual Conference, the International Socialist League resolved:

'That this Third Annual Conference of the ISL rejoices beyond measure at the triumph of the Russian Revolutionary proletariat under the banner of the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party, and pledges on

behalf of the advanced proletariat of South Africa its growing support to stand by the Russian workmen against the Capitalist Government of the whole world, that of South Africa included.'

— Bunting, 1981, p. 32.

The revolution was also applauded by various smaller socialist groups such as the Social Democratic Federation of Cape Town, the Jewish Socialist Societies in Cape Town and Johannesburg, the Indian Workers Union of Natal and some others. When the Communist International was formed in 1919, the ISL and several of the smaller groups applied for affiliation. But since the International's rules prohibited the affiliation of more than one party from any country, all groups were advised to unite. The ISL then called them all together to form the Communist Party of South Africa at a conference held in Cape Town from 30 July to 1 August 1921.

The big capitalists

The Johannesburg *Star*, a newspaper closely associated with gold mining interests, bitterly opposed the revolution, especially the Bolshevik policy of ending the First World War. It described Lenin as 'a notorious German agent'. It made reference to 'Lenin and his gang of thieves, cut-throats and spies', and expressed doubt as to whether they had any support outside Petrograd and Moscow. The *Star* also carried reports predicting the imminent collapse of the Bolsheviks whom it referred to as 'a herd of lunatics headed by a gang of scoundrels'.

Boycotts and strikes on the Rand

From 1918, there began a new upsurge in African workers' resistance, especially in the Transvaal. In February mine workers on the East Rand began a boycott of compound stores in protest against price increases. The mining companies were forced to improve the stores and drop prices a little. During the course of the boycott the IWA distributed a leaflet in Zulu and Sotho in the compounds. This leaflet has been described as 'the first serious attempt to put Marx's clarion call for unity into an African language'. It declared:

Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu or Shangaan.... Let Labour be your common bond ... deliver yourselves from the chains of the Capitalist. Unity is strength.

'Bucket strike': A few months later, a strike wave broke out on the Rand. White workers employed at the Johannesburg power station went on strike, forcing the City Council to raise wages by 35 per cent. Following their example, about two hundred African 'bucket boys' also went on strike for higher wages. Their job was to collect the sewage buckets from the toilets of the whites. The strikers were arrested for breaking their contracts and sentenced to two months' hard labour, doing the previous work for no pay under armed guard. The magistrate

ordered that they should be flogged if they refused to obey orders and shot if they tried to escape.

A wave of indignation swept through the African communities on the Rand at the severity of the sentences and the contrast between the ways African and white strikers were treated. The Transvaal ANC began a campaign for the prisoners' release, supported by the APO and IWA. There soon developed a popular demand for a shilling a day wage increase for all black workers and the threat of a general strike on 1 July 1918. The government quickly decided to release the prisoners and met with an African delegation led by Saul Msane, a member of both the ANC and IWA. Botha, who was still Prime Minister at the time, promised to investigate African grievances, a promise which was never kept.

The general strike was called off, but workers from three mines — Crown Mines, Robinson Deep and Ferreira Deep — still refused to go to work on 1 July unless they got a wage increase. Armed police and troops were called in by the mine owners and drove the men to work down the mine shafts after serious clashes in which the workers fought back with iron bars, pipes, pickhandles and axes.

At this point the police arrested the eight people they considered to have instigated the strikes. These included two ANC leaders (D. S. Letanka, Vice-President of the Transvaal ANC, and L. J. Mvabaza, a director of the ANC newspaper *Abantu Batho*), three members of the IWA (J. D. Ngojo, H. Kraai and A. Cetyiwe), and three white members of the ISL (S. P. Bunting, H. C. Hanscombe and T. P. Tinker). This was the first time that blacks and whites had been arrested and charged together in South Africa for a politically motivated offence. The charges were dropped after the prosecution's chief witness, a police agent named Lucas Massina, broke down under cross-examination and admitted to having given false evidence.

Small strikes and boycotts of stores at individual mines continued throughout the rest of 1918 and 1919. These were resolved sometimes by the use of force, sometimes by promises of improvements, and sometimes by calling in chiefs from the reserves to persuade the workers not to 'cause trouble' because they would be fired while their families needed their wages. At this time some Africans who were probably IWA members started visiting mine compounds and distributing leaflets with socialist propaganda.

Miners' strike: In February 1920, two miners named Mobu and Vilikati were arrested on the East Rand for moving about in a mine compound urging workers to strike. The following day all workers in the compound went on strike demanding the release of the two men, a wage increase and an improvement in living conditions. The strike

spread rapidly throughout the Rand, causing the closure of 21 mines and involving about 71,000 black miners. It lasted twelve days and was the largest strike ever to have occurred in South Africa. The strikers were supported by the ANC which sent letters to the government and held a number of meetings in Witwatersrand towns.

Both the mine owners and the government refused to concede any of the demands of the striking workers. All the compounds were surrounded by soldiers and the workers ordered to return to work. At each mine they were told that workers at other mines had started work again, and so-called ringleaders were arrested. In those mines where workers still refused to work, they were beaten and forced down the shafts. In one mine, Village Deep, where the workers resisted with sticks, the soldiers broke the strike by firing on the workers, killing three and wounding forty.

Women and men struggle against passes

Large-scale agitation against the pass laws first surfaced in the Orange Free State. In 1913, municipalities in the province were given the power to force women to buy passes at one shilling a month to allow them to live in municipal locations. This law met with strong opposition. In July 1913, 600 women marched to the municipal offices in Bloemfontein, handed a bag of passes to the Deputy Mayor and said they would not buy any more. Resistance spread, and in many towns throughout the Orange Free State women refused to carry passes, were arrested and jailed. In some towns such as Bloemfontein, Winburg and Jagersfontein the prisons became so full of women that new prisoners had to be sent to neighbouring towns. Conditions in the prisons were extremely harsh: the women were forced to do hard labour, deprived of their shoes and socks despite the winter cold, and given little food.

While the ANC leadership sympathized with the women and supported them with petitions to the Prime Minister, it was the women themselves (at that time denied full membership of Congress) who actually organized and sustained the resistance. When the war broke out in 1914, the anti-pass campaign was suspended in line with ANC policy. In 1918, however, the campaign resumed and led directly to the formation of the Bantu Women's League within the ANC. Charlotte Maxeke, its first President, led a deputation to the Prime Minister, Louis Botha. In the Orange Free State, women once more refused to carry passes and went to prison until the women's pass laws were abolished in 1920.

In the Transvaal the ANC started a campaign against passes in 1919. This campaign, partly meant to forestall the extension of the pass laws to women, also had another purpose. Whenever African workers went on strike they were met with violence, fines and imprisonment in contrast



Demonstrators surrounded by police during the 1919 anti-pass campaign.

spread rapidly throughout the Rand, causing the closure of 21 mines and involving about 71,000 black miners. It lasted twelve days and was the largest strike ever to have occurred in South Africa. The strikers were supported by the ANC which sent letters to the contract, a criminal offence. The ANC responded by demanding the abolition of passes.

When the government ignored the demands, ANC branches on the Rand and in Pretoria started a campaign of non-violent resistance against the pass laws. Large meetings were held where passes were collected in large sacks, followed by marches to the pass offices where the sacks were handed in. The meetings were peaceful with the organizers collecting sticks and other potential weapons from the crowds. However, the police brutally broke up some meetings and arrested thousands of people, most of whom refused to pay fines and went to prison. Crowds gathered outside the Johannesburg magistrate's court during the trials, demanding the release of the prisoners and singing *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*. On 3 April, the police charged the crowds on horseback. This resulted in violent clashes spreading through the town, with groups of blacks and whites coming into conflict. On another occasion Africans attacked a police escort taking the prisoners from the court to the prison to try to free them. The extent of the casualties in the campaign is not clear, but S. M. Makgatho, the ANC President, reported that 'some men and women

are in their graves as a result of their refusal to buy passes.' The campaign did not succeed in having passes abolished, but the authorities were made sufficiently wary not to try extending the pass laws to women for another 35 years.

The authorities insist that they cannot abolish the passes which are a great help to the Natives as they serve to identify dead ones, and stop living ones from committing crimes. But, Chiefs, ladies and gentlemen, you will understand how illogical is this allegation when I say there were no passes in Johannesburg before 1893, and there was less crime proportionately in those days. . . .

What is so difficult for us Natives to understand is that a form of help should be forced upon us against our wish, that we should be fined, imprisoned, and ridden to death by mounted policemen, with our women also under the horses' hoofs, and shot at simply because we say we are not in need of the help that is offered. What kind of protection is so compulsory?

— From S. M. Makgatho's 'Presidential Address' to the ANC Annual Conference, 6 May 1919.

The Bulhoek and Bondelswarts Massacres

The South African regime's brutal reaction to anything that it perceived as defiance of its authority was clearly demonstrated by two events which took place in 1921.

In the Eastern Cape, a religious sect called the Israelites gathered in an open field near Bulhoek to celebrate the passover.* In 1920, after the celebrations, they refused to leave. Instead they built huts and settled down, saying that they were obeying God's orders to wait for the end of the world. The authorities attempted to persuade them to leave but were unsuccessful. The ANC, fearing that violence would be used against the Israelites, also urged them to leave, but they still refused.

Then in May 1921 the Smuts government sent 800 police, armed with rifles and a machine gun to Bulhoek. The Israelites were ordered to leave, but they replied that Jehovah (God) said they should not allow themselves to be forced to move or allow the police to arrest anyone. They then charged the police with spears and sticks. The police fired no warning shots, waiting until the Israelites were just a few yards away.

* Passover: A Jewish festival to mark the occasion when an angel of death flew over homes in Egypt, bringing death to the first-born son in each family. The families of Jews (Israelites) were spared. They had previously been warned by God and had marked the doors of their homes to show who they were. The angel had then avoided their homes. At the time the Jews were slaves in Egypt, and the 'passover' was meant as a punishment for their captors, the Egyptians. This story is told in the Old Testament of the Bible.

They then opened fire on the crowd, killing 163 and wounding 129 people. Those who survived were arrested and tried and more than a hundred were imprisoned.

In the same year a dog tax was introduced in Namibia. The Bondelswarts, a Nama people, were particularly hard hit by this as they used dogs for both hunting and herding, their main economic activities. Since most could not afford to pay the tax of £1 a year for one dog, rising to £10 for five dogs, they would have to get rid of their dogs and become labourers on white-owned farms. When they refused to pay the tax, troops and two aeroplanes dropping bombs were sent in. Over a hundred people were killed and the Bondelswarts were forced to submit.

The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union

The 1920s saw the emergence of what was probably the largest political organization Africa had yet seen. This was the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, more commonly known as the ICU.

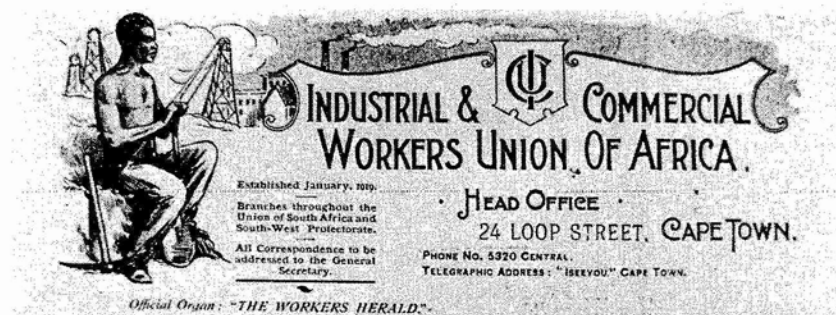
The ICU started off in 1919 as a small union of black workers in Cape Town. It was led by Clements Kadalie, a dynamic and capable organizer who had come to South Africa from Malawi. The first activity of the ICU was a dockers' strike in which it joined with white dockworkers in Cape Town, demanding higher pay and reduction of food exports at a time when food in South Africa was in short supply and very expensive. While the strike did not result in a curtailment of food exports, it did win higher pay for the workers. This success led to a rapid expansion of the ICU in the Western Cape, and it later spread through the rest of the Cape and the other three provinces, as well as to Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and even to Malawi and Zambia. In 1924 it moved its headquarters from Cape Town to Johannesburg.

The ICU was a general union and recruited not only workers but also peasants and some small traders. At the height of its popularity in 1927 it claimed to have 160,000 members, most of whom came from South Africa's rural areas. Its membership included workers in industry, commerce and agriculture, but it never managed to gain much influence among mineworkers. Other African unions, such as the IWA and another Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (the ICWU) which was led by Selby Msimang of the ANC in Bloemfontein, merged with the ICU.

From its earliest days, the ICU was a victim of state brutality. During an ICU strike in Port Elizabeth in 1919, the strike leader, Samuel Masabalala, was arrested. When a crowd of workers marched to the police station where he was held to demand his release, the police fired on them, killing 21 people and injuring many more.

One of the areas of rapid and militant growth was Natal where A. W.

G. Champion was the ICU's leading figure. In 1925 when a typhus epidemic broke out, the Durban health authorities tried to force all Africans coming into the city to be dipped in huge tanks for 'decontamination'. The ICU, with mass popular support, launched a campaign against this attempt to treat people like cattle. They took the issue to court and won their case. After this victory the ICU became known throughout Natal as migrant workers took the news of the victory over the dipping home to the rural areas. The ICU started sending organizers into the countryside.



A letterhead of the ICU which organized African working people in the towns and countryside during the 1920s. At its peak in 1927 it claimed about 160,000 members throughout Southern Africa.

One of the ICU's biggest bases of support was the Greytown/Umvoti area of the Natal Midlands, the area which twenty years earlier had been the home of Bambatha. Agricultural workers in the area, as elsewhere, were extremely poorly paid and worked very long hours. Many of them were actually labour tenants and depended on the produce of their plots and animals to survive. From 1924 the white farm owners began to take more and more land from their tenants in order to benefit from the increased price of wool and wattle on the world markets.

In 1927 the ICU held its first meeting in Greytown, drawing a crowd of about 5,000 people to listen to Zambuloni Gwaza, the Branch Secretary. After this, ICU organizers held secret meetings throughout the surrounding countryside, mobilizing people and recruiting members. Concerts where local musicians performed were also organized by the ICU. Tenants who received eviction notices started refusing to move, and in some cases lawyers hired by the ICU successfully defended tenants' rights to remain on the land. In May 1927 farm workers throughout the district went on strike demanding 8 shillings a day, twenty times more than they were then getting. The strike eventually collapsed because the workers were too poor and

isolated to resist the inevitable repressive measures and wage an organized, sustained struggle.

The rural districts of Pondoland and the Eastern Transvaal were also among the areas where the ICU became a force at about the same time. This growth was stimulated, as in Natal, by the great pressures on farm workers and tenants. In the Eastern Transvaal, for example, labour tenants were losing land and their free labour obligations were being increased. Also, enforcement of the 1913 Land Act was compelling other tenants to leave the land as capitalist farmers tried to respond to a growing demand for agricultural products.

The ICU's spectacular growth could not, unfortunately, be maintained. In the late 1920s it declined even more rapidly for various reasons. These will be examined in the next chapter.

The ANC in the early 1920s

The role played by the ANC in the popular upsurge of strike and anti-pass activity on the Rand in the period 1918–20 worried the more cautious members of the Congress leadership, especially those from outside the Transvaal. They favoured the more constitutional methods that they were used to and felt uneasy about the radicalization of the working class. This led to conflict within the organization. Sol Plaatje, for example, wrote in a letter to the Secretary of De Beers Consolidated Mines in Kimberley in August 1918:

I had to attend the Native Congress at Bloemfontein to prevent the spread among our people of the Johannesburg Socialist propaganda.... The ten Transvaal delegates ... spoke almost in unison, in short sentences, nearly every one of which began with the word 'strike'.... It was only late on the second day that we succeeded in satisfying the delegates to report, on getting to their homes, that the Socialist's method of pitting up black and white will land our people in serious disaster.

— Willan, 1984, p. 224.

Plaatje, despite being a tireless campaigner against the 1913 Land Act, took such a conservative stand because he and others like him believed that the best way for Africans to exercise political influence was by cultivating contacts with influential whites. These whites, it was believed, could then be persuaded to help Africans in lobbying the government for their demands. In addition, the conservatives may have feared that the growth of a militant working-class component in Congress threatened their positions as leaders. They thus used their positions to influence Congress not to continue with the radical policies followed in the Transvaal after the war. This was made easier for them by the rise of the ICU which decreased the pressures from below as militants turned from the ANC to the ICU as a vehicle of struggle.

So, from 1921 to 1927, the ANC entered a period of relative inactivity as the ICU became the vanguard of the liberation movement. Some Congress leaders joined with white liberals in the so-called Joint Councils of Europeans and Natives, multi-racial bodies which were established in all the major towns to discuss and make recommendations to parliament about matters affecting Africans. During this period, though, Congress did take three important, if symbolic decisions: to change the organization's name from the South African Native National Congress to the African National Congress; to make *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* its official anthem; and to adopt its black, green and gold flag, the colours symbolizing the people, the land and the mineral wealth.

During this period, the ANC's relations with the ISL and (after 1921) the CPSA were somewhat strained. This was the result of the rather conservative and anti-socialist attitudes of the Congress leadership on the one hand, and the Communists' underestimation of the African people's national struggle on the other. The ISL/CPSA still saw the white working class as the revolutionary vanguard in South Africa, and referred disparagingly to the 'bourgeois Congress' which was considered to be misleading the African people with its overly respectful attitudes towards the authorities.

The White Labour Government and the 1922 Miners' Strike

Since the 1870s, the white workers in South Africa had tried to ensure for themselves a privileged position at the expense of blacks. With the power of their votes and with militant industrial action, notably the miners' strikes of 1907 and 1913-14, they had forced successive governments and their employers to accept their privileged status. By the time of the First World War, Africans had been excluded from virtually all skilled and semi-skilled jobs — either by law, by custom or by agreement between their trade unions and employers. Before the end of the war, in September 1917, the Chamber of Mines and the South African Mine Workers Union signed the so-called *Status Quo* Agreement which stated that no jobs held by whites would be given to black workers. The agreement also stated that the mines would continue to employ two whites for every seventeen black workers. Thus if the mines wanted to expand and employ more blacks, they would have to employ more whites as well; they would also not be able to replace white workers with blacks.

With the onset of the depression after 1920 and the fall of the gold price, the mines faced serious financial difficulties and sought ways to cut their costs, especially labour costs. Black workers' wages were already so low that they could not be cut any further. So mine owners

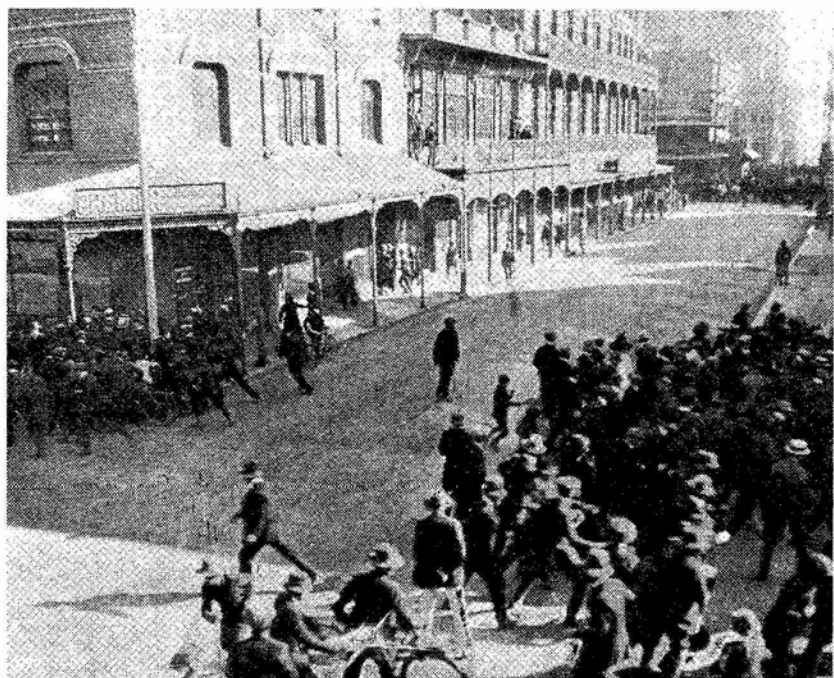
began to consider cutting white workers' wages and employing low-paid blacks instead of whites, thereby breaking the *Status Quo* Agreement. They said that unless this was done, 24 mines would have to close. There were negotiations between the Chamber of Mines and the South African Industrial Federation (SAIF) which represented the white gold and coal miners. No agreement could be reached, and in December 1921 the Chamber of Mines announced that it was going to cut the wages of many white miners and start to replace semi-skilled whites with blacks at low rates of pay.

The 'Poor Whites'

By the Roman-Dutch law of inheritance, a man's sons each received an equal portion of his land when he died. After the settlers had taken most of the land from the Africans and there was no more to take, the law of inheritance resulted in Boer farms becoming smaller and smaller. Unable to make a living off their small pieces of land, many were forced to sell to wealthier farmers and become tenants (or *bywoners*). As capitalist farming developed, landowners expelled *bywoners*, thus compelling them to move to the new towns in search of work. The destruction caused by the Anglo-Boer War, periodic economic crises, and the rinderpest epidemic (a cattle-disease which swept through Southern Africa in the late 1890s devastating cattle herds) also led to the ruin of many white farmers, forcing them to leave the land.

In the towns, these 'poor whites' found life very difficult. They were unskilled and had to compete for jobs with Africans whose wages were set at the lowest possible levels. Many remained unemployed, ill-fed and poorly housed in slum areas; they often lived in the same areas as blacks and had similar living standards. While for the most part the 'poor whites' did not lose the racist ideas of white South African society, the social intermingling which sometimes occurred between 'poor whites' and blacks was a cause of concern to racists who thought it would undermine the ideology of race superiority. So in 1923 the government passed the Native (Urban Areas) Act which required municipalities to provide housing for Africans in segregated locations. In 1927, the Immorality Act prohibited extra-marital intercourse between African men and white women.

The white miners felt that they could not accept this, especially considering the general economic climate at the time. The high level of unemployment resulting from the economic downturn would make it difficult for retrenched miners to get alternative employment. The situation was made even worse by the low agricultural prices which forced many Afrikaners to leave their farms and swell the ranks of 'poor whites' in the towns. So, on 2 January 1922, white coal miners



A meeting of white workers in Johannesburg disperses as troops appear at the far end of the street during the 1922 miners' strike.

came out on strike and eight days later the white gold miners followed suit. In all, about 25,000 workers joined. After the strike broke out there were some further attempts at negotiation between the Chamber of Mines and the SAIF, but these came to nothing. In March 1922, the Chamber announced that it was stopping negotiations.

During the course of the strike many strikers and their supporters began to form armed 'commandos' to maintain discipline among the workers, stop scabs from going to work, and prepare for confrontation with the armed forces in the event of their being used against the workers. Towards the end of the strike some of the commandos and other strikers attacked African miners who had continued working, as well as other Africans. This drew strong protests from the ANC, the APO and the ICU, in addition to calls for restraint from white Communist leaders.

On 7 March, the executive of the SAIF, responding to pressure from rank and file miners, called for a general strike. The response of other workers to this call was rather weak on the Rand and virtually

non-existent in the rest of the country. The government which at first had claimed to be neutral in the dispute between mine owners and workers now decided to use military force against the strikers. Smuts, claiming that the country faced an insurrection, declared martial law and personally took charge of the army which went in to break the strike. For five days an armed struggle took place between strikers and troops. The army used overwhelming force, including bomber aircraft, artillery, tanks and machine guns. On 16 March the strike (or the 'Rand Revolt' as it became known) came to an end. In all, almost 250 people were killed during the strike, 30 of whom were Africans killed by strikers or white hooligans and 76 of whom were members of government forces. Over 1,000 strikers and their leaders were arrested, and four of them — H. K. Hull, D. Lewis, S. A. Long and C. C. Stassen — were executed for alleged murders committed during the strike.

After the strike, many whites previously employed in semi-skilled work lost their jobs and were replaced by black workers at low rates of pay. The rest of the white workers had their wages reduced by between 25 and 50 per cent. The defeat of the miners, the best organized section of the white working class, weakened all the white workers and led to a reduction in wages paid in manufacturing, the railways and government departments.

The defeat of the white miners on the issue of job reservation did not signal a general improvement in the position of black workers. In the two years following the 1922 strike, the Smuts government passed three major laws further restricting the rights of blacks. The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 required would-be apprentices to have completed eight years of schooling. This worked to the disadvantage of black workers because of their very limited access to educational opportunities. In addition, Apprenticeship Boards were allowed to restrict training to persons eligible to join racially exclusive trade unions. As a result, no Africans and few other blacks were apprenticed. The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 required municipalities to provide housing for Africans in segregated areas. It also provided for the forced removal of 'redundant' Africans from the towns in line with the principle that urban areas belonged to whites and that Africans should only be allowed to enter to minister to the needs of the white man. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 laid down procedures for the settlement of industrial disputes between employers and employees and for the registration of trade unions. However, the Act excluded pass-bearing Africans and indentured Indians from the definition of 'employee', thus preventing them from being members of registered trade unions.

White workers and the Industrial Conciliation Act

The 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act established a set of bureaucratic structures and procedures. These were aimed at settling disputes and preventing strikes by those workers eligible for membership in registered trade unions.

The Act allowed for the voluntary establishment of Industrial Councils for particular industries (e.g., engineering, building, clothing, printing, etc.), either nationally, provincially or in a particular district. These Councils were permanent bodies to bargain for wages and working conditions, and consisted of an equal number of representatives of trade unions and employer organizations. Where no Industrial Council existed, either workers or employers could ask the Minister of Labour to appoint a Conciliation Board to handle a particular dispute.

The Industrial Conciliation Act severely curtailed the right to strike. No strike could take place until an attempt had been made to settle the dispute through an Industrial Council or Conciliation Board. After an agreement had been reached by an Industrial Council or Conciliation Board, no strike was lawful before the agreement had expired. If in the course of trying to come to an agreement, the negotiations broke down, no strike could be called until after a 30-day 'cooling off period'. For employees in what were called 'essential public services', strikes were totally prohibited under any circumstances.

One effect of the Industrial Conciliation Act was that decision-making power with the registered trade unions passed more and more into the hands of full-time trade union leaders. They spent most of their time negotiating with employers and government officials on matters regarding the industry as a whole, and lost touch with workers on the shop floor.

The white workers lost their militancy and the number of strikes declined dramatically. Between 1924 and 1934, the annual average number of white strikers fell to 2,000 compared to 15,000 in the period 1910–21. The number and size of registered trade unions increased, and at times were even encouraged by employers who considered that the unions increased the stability of the workforce.

The employers were prepared to pay for this stability by negotiating higher wages for white (and a small upper stratum of Coloured and Indian) workers. They compensated for this by paying very low wages to African workers, taking advantage of the racial discrimination engrained in the Industrial Conciliation Act and other legislation.

The CPSA and the 1922 strike

A controversial aspect of the 1922 strike was the role of the newly formed CPSA, then a party with an overwhelmingly white membership. The CPSA and its predecessor, the ISL, had for years condemned racism and struggled to promote the unity of workers irrespective of their colour. Nonetheless, when the white miners went on strike to

maintain the industrial colour bar, the CPSA gave them its determined and energetic support. Why did they do this? This question is partly answered by a manifesto to the striking workers issued during the strike in which the CPSA said that organized labour should take full advantage of such situations 'with a view to shaking the position of the ruling class and so facilitate a change in the existing order of society'. Hence, it continued:

Without necessarily identifying itself with every slogan heard in the strike,* the Communist Party of South Africa gladly offers its support to the strike Committee convinced that essentially this is a fight against the rule of the capitalist class, a fight which, if energetically pushed, may drive at least one more nail into its coffin and contribute to its eventual downfall.

— From 'The Fight to the Finish' in Bunting, 1981, p. 69.

The Communists saw their major immediate task as the class struggle for the establishment of socialism. Once the working class took power and brought an end to capitalist exploitation, then national and racial oppression would be brought to an end. In this context it seemed sensible for the CPSA to support the white workers in their struggle against the capitalists. They were, after all, the best organized, most articulate section of the working class, and had a history of class struggle and sacrifice.

Because the strike put the white workers in conflict with the mine owners and the government, the CPSA felt it should support them whether they were right or wrong. In the eyes of the Communists, then, the strike itself was more important than the aims of the strikers. Thus the CPSA gave its whole-hearted support to the miners despite the fact that the strike's main purpose was to maintain white workers' privileges at the expense of black workers, the largest and most oppressed section of the working class.

Following the strike, it became more and more clear that the white workers were not the revolutionary force the Communists had thought them to be. After the 1924 Pact election victory (see below), it became obvious that they were content to be junior partners of the capitalist ruling class, acting as allies of the employers in oppressing and exploiting the black workers. At its 1924 Conference, the CPSA changed its emphasis and decided to concentrate on work among Africans who, within a few years, came to constitute the overwhelming majority of CPSA members.

The end of the Smuts government

The government's harsh action against the striking miners in 1922 as well as the current economic depression led to a loss of popularity

* One such slogan that has become famous is the ludicrous 'Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White South Africa'.

among white voters. The SAP lost a series of by-elections so that its parliamentary majority fell from 22 seats in 1921 to only 8 seats in April 1924 when Smuts decided to call a general election.

In the meantime, in 1923, Hertzog's National Party and the Labour Party under the leadership of F. Cresswell made a pact (or agreement) to cooperate in the next election in an attempt to defeat Smuts. This alliance gained wide support among white voters, and even the ANC and the ICU, in their eagerness to get rid of Smuts, supported the Pact election campaign. The 1923 ANC conference called on the small black electorate to 'vote solidly for a change in government', and Kadalie actively campaigned for the National Party among black voters in the Cape before the 1924 election. The APO, however, decided to support the South African Party.

When the elections took place the strong anti-Smuts sentiment, especially among white workers and farmers, made itself felt. The SAP was swept from office and Hertzog became the new Prime Minister in what was known as the Pact government.

Essay Topics

- 1 Discuss the rise of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), describing the scope of its activities and giving details of some of its struggles.
- 2 What were the major causes and consequences of the 1922 strike by white miners?

Topics for Group Discussions

- 1 The ANC, after being deeply involved in the strike and anti-pass movement in the period 1918 to 1920, withdrew from militant activity for a few years. Why do you think this was so? Do you think this was a good or a bad thing for the national movement at the time? (Give reasons for your opinions.)
- 2 Read the passage below and discuss the questions that follow:

African mineworkers had more to gain from supporting the mineowners in 1922 than from supporting the white mineworkers, for abandonment of the 1918 *status quo* agreement which the owners desired would have made twenty-five categories of semi-skilled work available for black and Coloured workers. African coalminers in fact continued to work, and with the help of a few officials brought up the coal while the white miners

were on strike. But the Chamber sent large numbers of black gold miners back to the Reserves when the strike started, in a necessary move to reduce working costs.

— Davenport, 1977, p. 195.

- (a) Do you agree that, 'African mineworkers had more to gain from supporting the mineowners in 1922 than from supporting the white mineworkers'? If there had been a strong union of African mineworkers, how do you think it would have reacted to the dispute between the white miners and the Chamber of Mines?
- (b) Why did the employers send large numbers of gold miners back to the reserves? Explain more fully the reasons given in the passage, and try to think of other possible reasons.

CHAPTER TEN

The Years of the Pact Government

The senior partner in the Pact government, Hertzog's National Party, was closely identified with the interests of Afrikaner farmers and small business. It also enjoyed wide support from public employees, Afrikaner intellectuals and working-class Afrikaners. The National Party identified Smuts and the mine owners who supported him with British imperialism, to which the NP was still strongly opposed. The Labour Party (LP), based mainly on the English-speaking section of the white working class, was committed to maintaining and extending the industrial colour bar (i.e., job reservation) and thus securing the position of the white workers as a 'labour aristocracy'. This had brought the LP into sharp conflict with Smuts' South African Party government, especially in the 1922 strike.

Thus, both the NP and the LP were strongly opposed to the SAP with its close links to mining capital; they also shared a determination to entrench the privileged position of the white workers. However, even after the Pact government came to power, the mine owners continued to hold the dominant position in the economy and so retained considerable political influence on the government.

Onslaught on the Rights of Black People

On taking power, Hertzog's government immediately set about introducing his 'civilized labour policy' which was meant to benefit white workers at the expense of black workers. Tens of thousands of blacks employed in the state sector (e.g., the railways and the civil service) lost their jobs and were replaced by 'poor whites' at 'civilized' rates of pay. These were rates which, according to the Department of Labour, would maintain 'persons whose standard of living conforms to the standard of living generally recognized as tolerable from the usual European standpoint'. 'Uncivilized labour', on the other hand, was defined as 'persons whose aim is restricted to the bare requirements of

the necessities of life as understood among barbarous and under-developed peoples'.

The Pact government's racist labour policies also gave birth to legislation such as the Wage Act of 1925 and the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 (the 'Colour Bar Act'). The Wage Act established the Wage Board which set minimum wages for workers in various industries where there was no collective bargaining. Its purpose was to protect white workers in less-skilled jobs; if a minimum wage was set for a particular job, there would be no incentive for employers to replace white workers with blacks. The Colour Bar Act excluded Africans and Indians on the mines from most categories of skilled and semi-skilled work.*

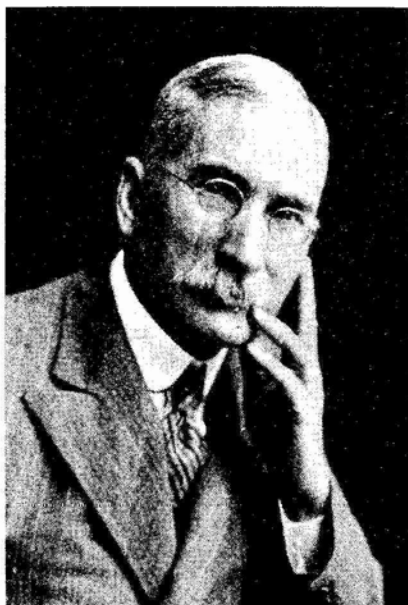
The privileged position of the white workers was thus secured. Almost all skilled and semi-skilled jobs were reserved for them (and for a small number of coloureds and Indians) and many held supervisory jobs such as foremen. From this time, the former militancy of the white workers began to disappear. They gradually became 'an exclusive group ... which is politically integrated into the ruling class so as to play an active role in maximising the exploitation of the black workers' (Slovo in Davidson *et al.*, 1976, p. 121).

Hertzog's government, not satisfied with its attack on black labour, also set its sights on African franchise rights. In 1926 four 'Hertzog Bills' were introduced in parliament with the following aims:

- 1 To remove Africans in the Cape Province from the common voters' roll. In future, Africans were to be represented by seven white MPs and four white senators on a separate communal vote, with chiefs and headmen voting on behalf of the people.
- 2 To establish a Native Representative Council, some members of which would be nominated by the government and some elected, with very restricted powers; this was also considered as partial compensation for the removal of Cape Africans from the common voters' roll.
- 3 To add slightly more land to the reserves in accordance with the recommendations of the Beaumont Commission report of 1916.
- 4 To confirm the franchise rights of coloureds in the Cape and to extend the qualified franchise to coloured men in other provinces.**

* The Mines and Works Act of 1911 had been nullified by a Supreme Court decision, and the colour Bar Act was designed to counter this decision.

** This fourth bill may seem surprising, but at that time Hertzog enjoyed quite substantial support from Cape coloured voters and hoped to win even stronger support from the coloured community in general. In its election propaganda the NP spoke of the language and culture ties between Afrikaners and coloureds, and promised coloureds a higher status than Africans.



General J. B. M. Hertzog, founder of the National Party in 1914 and Prime Minister from 1924 to 1939. The governments he headed passed a vast array of repressive and racist legislation.

It was necessary to get a two-thirds majority in parliament to support the four bills since they dealt with franchise rights which were entrenched in the constitution (i.e., the South Africa Act of 1910). The opposition, led by Smuts, refused to support the Bills and they were not passed. However, ten years later, in 1936, when the NP and SAP had fused into a single party (the United Party), Smuts withdrew his opposition. The provisions of the first three bills then became law (in somewhat amended form) in two new Acts of parliament: the Representation of Natives Act and the Natives Trust and Land Act (see Chapter 11 for details). The idea of extending the vote to coloureds outside the Cape had quietly been dropped.

The Native Administration Act 1927 gave the government wide-ranging powers to take arbitrary action against the African people. It made the Governor General the 'Supreme Chief' of all Africans outside the Cape with the authority, among other things, to appoint and remove Native Commissioners, chiefs and headmen; alter the composition of tribes; and move individual Africans or whole tribes 'from any place to any other place' in the country. The last-mentioned provision was used to banish militant politicians and trade unionists to remote rural areas. The Act also made it a punishable offence 'to promote hostility between Natives and Europeans'. This, in the strange terminology of racist South Africa, meant to struggle for the equality of all people regardless of colour.

The Indian people were the target of Hertzog's racist policies in the Areas Reservation, Immigration and Registration Bill of 1925, which aimed at stricter segregation of Indians and facilitated their 'repatriation' to India. The bill met with strong opposition both in South Africa and abroad. Following discussions between the South African government and the colonial government of India, an agreement was reached that the segregation measures should be dropped and 'repatriation' encouraged by both governments. The plan to 'repatriate' Indians had no real success, however.

The Pact Government and Afrikaner Nationalist Aspirations

Another area to which the Hertzog government turned its attention was the promotion of the Afrikaans language. In 1925, Afrikaans replaced Dutch as an official language and bilingualism (i.e., knowledge of both English and Afrikaans) became compulsory in the civil service. This led to the gradual promotion of bilingual Afrikaners to senior posts in government departments, an area formerly dominated by English-speaking whites.

Hertzog also pursued the goal of gaining full constitutional independence from Britain for the white minority regime. At the 1926 Imperial Conference in London his demands for greater independence coincided with those of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Conference resulted in the Balfour Declaration which stated that Britain and the dominions (settler-governed colonies such as South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) were 'autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by common allegiance to the crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations'. This independence of the dominions was formally recognized by the British parliament when it passed the Statute of Westminster in 1931. After the Balfour Declaration, the South African government created a Department of External Affairs and appointed diplomatic representatives abroad. After the Statute of Westminster the Governor General (the South African Representative of the King) was no longer appointed by the British government but by the South African government. He was now considered to be only the personal representative of the King and not a representative of the British government.

After some controversy over its design, a new South African flag was adopted. This flag, which is still used by the regime, displays in its centre both the British flag (the Union Jack) and the flags of the two former Boer Republics.

Economic Nationalism

The Pact government took power in 1924 just as the capitalist world economy moved into a period of recovery. This led to greater overseas demand for South African goods, and production of gold, diamonds and agricultural goods increased. The Hertzog government embarked on a policy of state aid and protection for white-owned agriculture and industry. The Land Bank now gave small farmers low-interest loans which it had previously considered too risky; it also continued to give low-interest loans to big capitalist farmers. Food sales within South Africa were taxed to subsidize the price of exports so that exported food could compete on the world market. Subsidized exports included meat, wine, dairy products, fruit, wheat and maize. Heavy duties were imposed on imported agricultural produce so that it could not under-sell local produce.

Manufacturing was also given a boost by the introduction of high duties on various imported goods. The government's idea was to protect local industries so that South African manufacturing could gain sufficient strength to replace mining as a major economic activity when the mineral reserves started to run out. Examples of goods on which import duties were imposed are bacon and ham, cardboard boxes, buckets, cheese, clothing, confectionary, fish, jam, printed matter, coir mats, embossed steel ceilings and varnishes. As a result of both the government's policies and the buoyant state of the world economy, the value of manufactured goods increased by almost 40 per cent between 1925 and 1929.

In an attempt to make South Africa self-sufficient in iron and steel, which are products of fundamental importance in any industrial economy, the government formed the Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) in 1928. The first ISCOR plant was built in Pretoria, near deposits of iron ore and coal, the two basic raw materials.

The Liberation Movement

The ICU

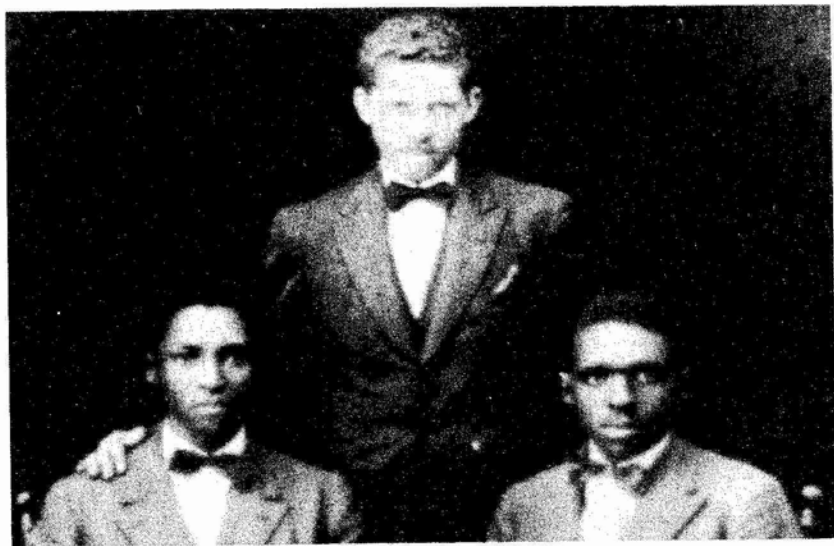
As we saw in Chapter 9, the ICU enjoyed a period of extremely rapid growth up to 1927, then declined very rapidly. By 1930, it had virtually ceased to exist. The main reasons for this were massive repression by the state and the ICU's inability to withstand this pressure because of organizational weaknesses, internal division, and an attempt by its leader, Clements Kadalie, to transform it from a radical, militant organization into a reformist, 'respectable' trade union.

The ICU had struck fear into the hearts of many whites when it showed itself capable of organizing large numbers of people and

taking militant action. The police reacted harshly and officials were often arrested and jailed. Lengthy, expensive court proceedings were required to defend them, and this drained the union's funds and diverted its attention from the job of organizing workers and fighting for better wages and working conditions. The police gradually infiltrated the ICU with spies and *agents provocateurs*; ICU meetings were often disrupted and participants assaulted by police and white hooligans. In the countryside there were incidents where ICU offices were destroyed and members beaten up by gangs of armed whites. Contact between rural organizers and farm workers and tenants was made extremely difficult. ICU members were often evicted from farms and replaced by non-members recruited from the reserves.

The ICU was unable to deal effectively with this brutal response. Its organizational structure was loose-knit, its membership scattered geographically and in many different types of occupation. Well-organized action at the workplace was thus inhibited and the organization of solidarity actions with workers in other areas, factories, or farms was almost impossible due to poor internal communications. In addition, white workers refused to support the ICU and the South African Trades Union Council rejected the ICU's application for affiliation.

To add to all this, serious divisions were beginning to appear at the highest levels of the ICU leadership. At the end of 1926, A. W. G.



Communist Party officials (left to right) Stanley Silwana, John Gomas and Bransby Ndobi spent three months in prison in 1928 under the terms of the Native Administration Act for protesting against the shooting of an African by a white policeman in Paarl.

Champion, supported by Clements Kadalie, sponsored a resolution at the ICU Conference which excluded members of the Communist Party from holding office in the ICU. As a result some of its most able and dedicated organizers — among them Johnny Gomas, E. J. Khaile, James la Guma, Stanley Silwana and Thomas Thibedi — were lost to the organization.

In the following year, Kadalie toured Britain and the rest of Western Europe at the invitation of the anti-communist International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). The IFTU and the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) seem to have persuaded Kadalie that the ICU ought to moderate its stand and seek 'respectability'. He returned to South Africa with a new constitution for the ICU, drafted by TUC 'experts'. He was also persuaded to take on a British adviser, William Ballinger, who followed him to South Africa.

Kadalie's new direction caused strains within the ICU and deprived it of the militancy which had helped attract thousands of oppressed and exploited people to its ranks. Further weakening of the organization resulted from personal rivalries among the leadership. In 1928, Champion, the Natal leader, broke away to form the ICU *yase* Natal, and other branch leaders then also declared their independence. In 1929, Kadalie himself quarrelled with Ballinger. He quit to form the Independent ICU, based in East London. This organization called a successful strike of railway and harbour workers and then disintegrated under the impact of police action, although it continued in name until Kadalie's death in 1951. The original ICU, now under Ballinger, who had little understanding of South African conditions, soon ceased to function. In 1930, when the government banished Champion from Natal, the ICU *yase* Natal also collapsed; after Champion's banishment was lifted, he continued to speak in the organization's name, but the organization itself had ceased to exist.

The ANC

The harsh measures taken by the Pact government against black people's rights, together with signs of disintegration in the ICU, stirred the more militant sections of the ANC to revitalize Congress. In 1927, Josiah T. Gumede was elected President and E. J. Khaile, a member of the CPSA, Secretary General. Gumede believed that Africans should rely on their own strength and demand equal rights by means of militant activities such as strikes, demonstrations and anti-pass campaigns. He also advocated cooperation with the CPSA and was outspoken about his sympathetic attitude to the Communists. He developed a strong international perspective on the national liberation struggle, and sought a world-wide solidarity of anti-imperialist forces.

In 1927 he was the ANC delegate to the International Congress of the

League Against Imperialism in Brussels, Belgium. At the conference he met and had discussions with anti-imperial activists from all parts of the world. Among those at the conference were Jawaharlal Nehru, the future Prime Minister of India; Soong Ching-ling, a Chinese revolutionary and wife of Sun Yat Sen; Julio Antonio Mella, a founder member and leader of the Cuban Communist Party; Diego Rivera, the great Mexican revolutionary artist; Maxim Gorky, the Soviet novelist and cultural leader, and Albert Einstein, the outstanding German physicist.

During the Brussels conference, Gumede explained his relationship with South African Communists: 'I am happy that there are Communists in South Africa. I myself am not one, but it is my experience that the Communist Party is the only party which stands behind us and from which we can expect something.' When he attended the tenth anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union he was very impressed with what he saw, particularly the progress made by previously oppressed and colonized peoples in Central Asia. 'I have been to the new Jerusalem,' he declared on his return.

These were Gumede's own attitudes: he was not always successful in getting Congress approval for more militant policies. Strong conservative elements remained opposed to such policies and often managed to exert a restraining influence. Nonetheless, in the three years of Gumede's presidency, there was a definite revival and radicalization of the ANC.

Other organizations

In the late 1920s, two important but short-lived organizations came into being. The first was the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions (FNETU), the first ever federation of black unions. It was formed on the Rand in early 1928 by five unions with a combined membership of about 10,000 industrial workers, mainly Africans. The affiliated unions had been organized largely by members of the CPSA and the leadership of FNETU consisted mainly of Party members. It attempted to bring about a united front of all black workers and managed to organize a number of new unions in manufacturing industry. In 1930, FNETU declined in strength due to the difficult conditions of the Great Depression and the withdrawal of some key leaders such as Ben Weinbren, Thomas Thibedi and others who left because of problems within the CPSA which was moving into a period of internal conflict. FNETU was revived under a new name — the African Federation of Trade Unions — but remained rather small and ineffective in the face of harsh repression and economic depression.

The CPSA, the Comintern and National Liberation

After 1924 the Communist Party concentrated its efforts on mobilizing and recruiting African workers and on the struggle for racial equality and against racist legislation and practices such as the pass laws. Nonetheless, the CPSA continued to believe that class and not national issues were uppermost in South Africa; it thus regarded the national struggle of the African people as secondary to the struggle of the working class as a whole.

When this issue was debated at the Congress of the Communist International in 1928, that body disagreed with the CPSA. After the Congress, the Executive Committee of the Comintern adopted a special resolution on 'The South African Question' based on the view that 'the national question ... which is based on the agrarian question lies at the foundation of the revolution in South Africa' and requiring the CPSA to put forward 'the slogan of an independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic...'

The CPSA, as a disciplined section of the Comintern, formally endorsed its decision. At its annual conference in January 1929, it adopted a new programme emphasizing the importance of the national struggle of the African people.

Although the majority of the CPSA's Central Committee opposed the new line in 1928, many years later the Communist Party's official history would declare that

'taken all in all it is a remarkable Marxist Leninist appraisal of the fundamental structure and character of South African society, whose aptness and relevance have been vindicated rather than made obsolete by the passage of time.'

— Lerumo, 1980, p. 58.

The other new organization was the League of African Rights (LAR) formed in early 1929. Also initiated by the CPSA as part of its policy of building a united front of oppressed people, the League was 'the first successful coming together of working class and national radicals in the liberation movement' (Simons and Simons, 1983, p. 417). The executive of the LAR reflected its broad character, with J. T. Gumede as President, Doyle Modiakgotla of the ICU as Vice-President, S. P. Bunting of the CPSA as Chairman, and N. B. Tantsi of the Transvaal ANC as Vice-Chairman. The League launched a mass petition for civic rights and held meetings throughout the country denouncing the racist regime's policies and collecting signatures for the petition. It also helped organize anti-pass demonstrations on 16 December 1929. At one such demonstration in Potchefstroom where J. B. Marks and Edwin Mofutsanyane were speaking, a white thug shot at the speakers; he missed the leaders but killed Hermanus Lethebe, a local

Communist Party member. About a year after its promotion, the LAR was dissolved as a result of a decision by the Comintern that the CPSA should withdraw its support.

The late 1920s also saw the first Non-European Conference (in 1927) in which the ANC, CPSA, APO, South African Indian Congress and various African welfare societies, religious bodies and other groups participated. This conference condemned all forms of racial discrimination and called for 'closer cooperation among the Non-European sections of South Africa'. Other Non-European Conferences took place in 1930, 1931 and 1934.

Essay Topics

- 1 Discuss the ways in which the Pact government tried to satisfy the interests of white workers, farmers and industrialists.
- 2 Describe and explain the decline of the ICU.

Topic for Group Discussion

Read the following passage carefully and look up any words you don't understand in the dictionary. Then discuss the questions that follow.

As soon as the Nationalist-Labour 'Pact' assumed power, a Ministry of Labour was created, with very definite aims in mind, *viz.* the protection of the interests of white workers. To achieve this objective an ingenious theory was devised: 'civilized' labour was distinguished from 'non-civilized' labour. According to the official definition, 'civilized' labour was that capable of being performed by 'persons whose standard of living conforms to the standard of living generally recognized as tolerable from the usual European viewpoint'. The second category comprised those 'whose aim is restricted by the base requirements of the necessities of life as understood amongst barbarous and undeveloped people'. Starting from these premises, the conclusion was obvious: decent remuneration for the Whites and miserable wages for the rest. This imbalance had existed for a long time, but the Pact Government considered it essential that the facts and the law should tally. An Act of 1926 laid down the principle of the Colour Bar: skilled and semi-skilled jobs would be open only to those possessing a 'certificate of efficiency', to which only Whites and Coloureds would be entitled. It would be a mistake to interpret this *lasciate ogni speranza* as a sign of hostility or even indifference towards the natives. After all, the Boers did not persecute or destroy the Bantu, as the Americans did the Indians. But, imbued as they were with the conviction that the divine will had predestined each race to a different role, it seemed to them only natural

that they should abide by the intentions of Providence. About what might happen in the life hereafter they spoke less readily.

— Lacour-Gayet, 1977, pp. 267–8.

- 1 What reasons does the author give for the Pact government's 'civilized labour policy'?
- 2 The author says it 'would be a mistake to interpret this *lasciate ogni speranza** as a sign of hostility or even indifference towards the natives'.
 - (a) What reasons does he give for saying this?
 - (b) Do you think that his opinion is justified? Give reasons for your views.

* *Lasciate ogni speranza* : an Italian phrase meaning 'abandon all hope'. It is written on a sign above the gates of hell in Dante's famous poem, 'The Divine Comedy'. It may be taken here to mean 'policy which seems to offer no hope'.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Crisis and Revival, 1929–1939

In 1929, the term of office of the Pact government came to an end. In the general election of that year, the National Party based its campaign on the accusation that Smuts wanted equality between whites and blacks. Using the slogan '*Stem wit vir 'n Witmansland*' ('Vote white for a white man's country'), they won a clear majority and could now rule without the support of the Labour Party.

The Economy

The new NP government, led by Hertzog, assumed office on the eve of the Great Depression when South Africa, like the rest of the capitalist world, entered a time of unprecedented economic hardship. A slump in overseas markets led to a sharp drop in the prices of South Africa's main exports. Diamond exports, for example, fell in value from £16.5 million in 1928 to £1.4 million in 1934. The world price of wool fell by almost 75 per cent between 1928 and 1932. The prices of other mineral and farm products also suffered, resulting in a big fall in the total value of exports. Mining and manufacturing production were cut back and commercial activity decreased.

While world prices for agricultural products fell sharply during the depression, white commercial farmers in South Africa did not suffer as much as might be expected. The government introduced high protective tariffs and subsidized exports so that the farmers continued to increase, or at least maintain, production levels for most products. This policy, however, increased the burden on the taxpayer and forced the local consumer to pay much more than the world price for food.

Despite the protection given to white farmers, the wages paid to black farm labourers were decreased. Labour tenants also found themselves under pressure; landowners sought to increase the areas they themselves cultivated; and so increasingly forced tenants to

become full-time wage labourers or leave the farm altogether.

In the towns, thousands of black workers lost their jobs and were forced by the authorities to leave the cities for the overcrowded and poverty-stricken reserves. White workers, while also experiencing some unemployment and wage cuts, were protected to some extent by the 'civilized labour' policy which gave them preference over black workers in the shrinking job market.

The economic position of South Africa became worse when Britain devalued its currency in September 1931 by abandoning the gold standard. The British lead was followed by other countries such as Australia which, like South Africa, was an important exporter of wool and other agricultural products. These devaluations made South African products relatively more expensive overseas, and thus exports dropped.

The Gold Standard

A monetary system in which the value of a country's currency was fixed in terms of gold (i.e., the pound, the dollar or the franc was worth a fixed weight of gold). Under the gold standard, currency was freely convertible into gold and the free import and export of gold was allowed. Gold coins of a fixed weight were minted.

This system was in operation in most countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but ceased in 1914 when the war inhibited the free movement of gold. Only in 1925 did Britain (and with it, South Africa) return to a form of the gold standard. While coins were not minted and paper money could not be converted into gold at the banks, gold bars were bought and sold at the central bank and the pound's value was fixed in terms of gold.

One problem was that the pound's value in terms of gold was fixed at the same level as before 1914. The result was that the pound was grossly overvalued in terms of the US dollar since Britain's trading position in the world had weakened. The overvalued pound meant that British (and South African) exports were much more expensive than similar US products, and imports much cheaper. This adversely affected production in the country as goods produced found it difficult to compete with products from countries whose currency was not overvalued.

It is for this reason that Britain and most of the British Empire abandoned the gold standard in 1931, thus effectively devaluing their currencies. South Africa's refusal to follow suit resulted in a worsening of its economic position as most of its foreign trade was within the Empire. The economic problems which ensued finally forced Hertzog to abandon the gold standard in December 1932.

How Currency Devaluation Affects Imports and Exports

- 1 Say South African and British currencies are of equal value (SA £1 = Br £1). In this case a South African exporter who sells goods to a British importer for Br £100 will get SA £100 when he exchanges the money.
 - 2 Now assume that the British pound is devalued so that SA £0.50 = Br £1. In this case a South African exporter who sells goods to a British importer for Br £100 will only get SA £50 when he exchanges his money. If he still wants to get SA £100 when he exchanges the money, he will have to charge the British importer Br £200. As a result, the price of South African goods in Britain will tend to rise and the British will tend to buy less South African goods. In other words, a devaluation of British currency will result in a decrease in South African exports to Britain.
 - 3 Now assume that the South African pound is also devalued, so that SA £1 = Br £1 once more. When this happens, the British importer will once more only need to pay Br £100 in order for the South African exporter to get SA £100. So the price of South African goods in Britain will become cheaper again and South African exports will probably rise.
-

In addition, foreign investors started to withdraw their funds from South Africa because the South African pound was overvalued and could be exchanged for foreign currency of a greater value. For fifteen months the Hertzog government, to prove South Africa's economic independence from Britain, remained on the gold standard and refused to devalue the South African pound to bring it into line with other currencies. Eventually, however, the flight of capital, decreased exports and the demands of businessmen forced the government to abandon the gold standard in December 1932.

This resulted in an immediate rise in the price of gold from £4.6s to £6.5s per fine ounce. Further increases occurred each year until 1940 when the price stood at £8.8s, almost double the 1932 price. This rapid improvement in the gold price brought the depression to an end in South Africa, much sooner than in most countries. Foreign capital poured into the gold-mining industry which expanded rapidly, resulting in a general economic boom. Mining profits were taxed to subsidize prices paid to commercial farmers and give loans for farm improvements. The state-owned railways and Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) were developed to extend their services.

The most important structural change in the economy was the rapid expansion of manufacturing industry, which grew rapidly as the mining companies and foreign capitalists invested in it and the domestic market expanded. By 1939, manufacturing accounted for 18 per cent of South Africa's total production, almost as much as mining (21 per cent) and more than agriculture (13 per cent).

Social Conditions

The economic boom resulted in rapid urban growth, especially on the Witwatersrand and around major ports. By 1936 there were approximately 3,150,000 South Africans of all races living in urban areas according to official statistics, a 63 per cent increase over 1921. Of these, almost 39 per cent were said to be African, 42 per cent white, 14 per cent coloured and 5 per cent Indian. (The actual number of urban Africans must have been higher than indicated by these figures, as many Africans who were in the cities illegally were not recorded by the census.)

The ratio of African women to African men in the Witwatersrand towns increased faster during this period, but by 1936 women still constituted little more than a third of the total African population in the area. This predominance of men was balanced by a predominance of women in the reserves. It resulted mainly from the migrant labour system, but also, to some extent, from legal restrictions on the movement of African women. In some smaller and more stable urban communities such as Bloemfontein, East London, Kimberley and Port Elizabeth, the ratio of men to women was more even.



When the Johannesburg municipality first built Orlando township for Africans in the 1930s, the two-roomed houses were so poorly constructed and so far from central Johannesburg that few people wanted to live there. To overcome this 'problem' the city council forcibly removed the whole population of Prospect Township – a slumyard near the city centre and not really a 'township' – and demolished the buildings. This photograph was taken during the Prospect Township removals in 1938.

Most women in urban areas could get jobs only as domestic servants. Those who could not or did not want to take low-paid and onerous domestic jobs often survived as hawkers of food and other items, or as brewers and sellers of home-made liquor. Liquor-selling was illegal and the women were frequently raided and harassed by police. A small but growing number of African women were employed in manufacturing industries.

For people living in the black urban locations, low wages and government neglect resulted in poverty, poor housing and services, overcrowding, a high incidence of disease and a high crime rate. For Africans in the rural areas, land dispossession, overcrowding, high taxation and the loss of young people to the cities led to a continuation of the trend towards increased starvation, disease and high infant mortality. Farming became less and less productive as the soil was impoverished, and overstocking led to increased soil erosion. Home life broke down and social problems increased as families were split by the migrant labour system.

By contrast, a combination of economic growth and discriminatory government labour policies created many new jobs for whites. This all but ended the 'poor white problem' during the late 1930s.

White Political Realignment

During the economic and financial crisis of 1931-2, demands arose from the white community for the formation of a government of 'national unity'. In early 1933 the NP and the SAP formed a government with Hertzog as Prime Minister and Smuts as his deputy. The following year the two parties were fused to create the United Party which formed what became known as the 'Fusion' government.

Although the fusion was supported by the majority of the members of both the NP and the SAP, minorities in both parties were strongly opposed to it. Jingoistic supporters of British imperialism from the old SAP, led by Colonel Stallard, broke away to form the Dominion Party. More importantly, a strongly nationalist section of the old NP under the leadership of Dr D. F. Malan accused Hertzog of betraying Afrikaner nationalist interests. They said that while they too sought unity with the Afrikaners in the SAP, they were not prepared to compromise with the monopoly capitalist and pro-imperialist elements who dominated the SAP. Malan's followers wanted South Africa to become a republic, free from all ties with Britain. They rejected Hertzog's assertion that South Africa's independence from Britain was guaranteed by the 1931 Statute of Westminster (see Chapter 10), since South Africa remained under the British crown and there were no laws guaranteeing its right to secede from the British Empire or to remain neutral if Britain went to

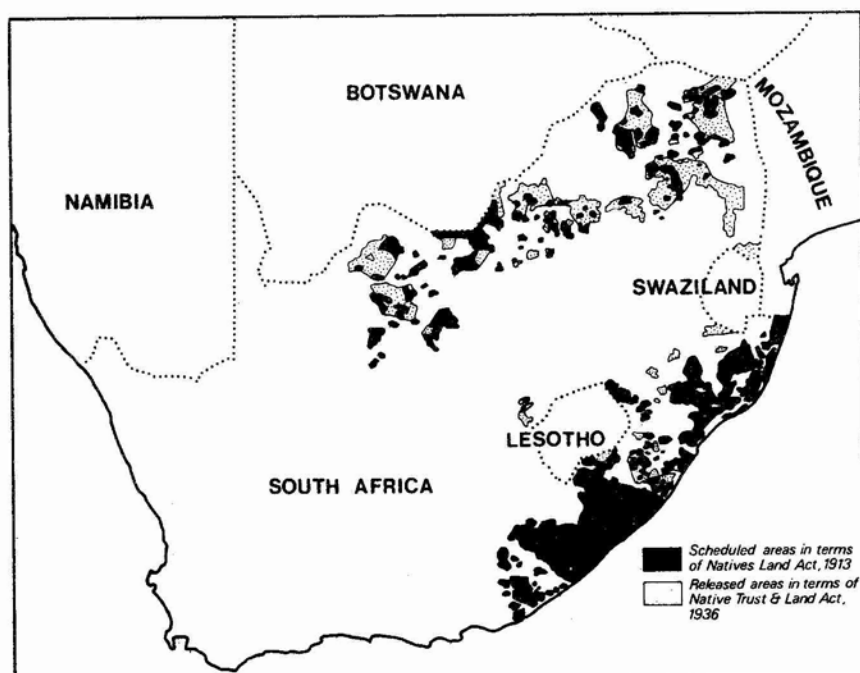
war. Due to these differences, Malan and his followers refused to join the United Party; they formed the Purified National Party, which soon became known simply as the National Party. At its first meeting the party's Federal Council adopted a 'Programme of Action'. Among other things, this called for completely separate territories, political institutions and places of work for whites and blacks: the basis for the apartheid policy of later years.

The Hertzog Bills

One of the results of 'fusion' was that Smuts dropped his opposition to the Hertzog Bills, which were re-introduced in a new form — this time as two bills. In 1936, despite strong opposition from blacks (see section on the All African Convention in this chapter), the bills became law as the Representation of Natives Act and the Native Trust and Land Act.

Already the African and Coloured vote in the Cape had been de-valued as a percentage of the total electorate when the franchise had been extended to white women in 1930 and to all white adults in the Cape (regardless of qualification) in 1931. Now the Representation of Natives Act removed 'qualified' Cape Africans from the common voters' roll, and placed them on a separate roll to elect three white representatives to parliament and two to the Cape Provincial Council. All other Africans were to elect four whites to the Senate. A Natives Representative Council (NRC) with advisory powers only was set up, consisting of 12 elected and 6 appointed Africans and 12 white officials. Elections of senators and NRC members were to take place indirectly through chiefs and local councils. An important effect of the Act was that, by removing all Cape Africans from the common voters' roll, it made the 1913 Natives Land Act applicable also in the Cape (see Chapter 5).

The Native Trust and Land Act 'released' land for addition to the African reserves in line with the recommendations of the 1916 Beaumont Commission report (see Chapter 5). This land — bringing the African share of the total land area up to 13 per cent — was to be bought by a government fund known only as the SA Native Trust and then incorporated into the reserves. Even after 55 years, the purchasing programme has not been completed and the total land acquired in this way still fell short of the target in 1990. Farms outside the reserves owned by Africans (who had purchased them before 1913) and surrounded by white-owned land were labelled 'black spots'; the people who lived there could now be forced to move to land adjacent to the reserves, almost always of lower quality than their former land. These people became the victims of many of the forced removals of later years. The Native Trust and Land Act also extended to 180 days the period for which labour tenants had to work for the white land-owner.



Map 4 *Scheduled areas (Natives Land Act 1913) and released areas (Native Trust and Land Act 1936)*

The Liberation Movement in Crisis

The increased militancy of the liberation movement in the late 1920s was met with brutal repression by the regime. Oswald Pirow, the Minister of Justice and an admirer of Hitler's German Nazi Party, played a prominent role in this process. In November 1929 Pirow personally conducted a tax-collecting raid against Africans in Durban. He led a force of 700 police carrying machine guns and bayoneted rifles and using tear-gas. The raid was obviously meant mainly to intimidate Africans, but Pirow tried to justify it by claiming that the ANC, the CPSA, the ICU and the LAR were in correspondence with the Comintern which was, he said, conspiring to overthrow the South African government. On 16 December 1930, Johannes Nkosi, a leading member of the ANC and the CPSA, was murdered by police at an anti-pass demonstration in Durban. All over the country meetings were broken up and militants harassed, imprisoned or banished to remote rural areas.

Attempts by Communists and non-Communists to form united front

organizations were strongly opposed by the more conservative leaders of the ANC and the ICU. In 1929, for example, the Revd Zaccheus Mahabane, the former ANC President, announced that the Non-European Christian Ministers Association would confer on methods of combating 'the menace of communist propaganda'. Kadalie opposed pass-burning rallies in 1930 on the grounds that Communists were supposedly leading them. In the same year, the more conservative forces in the ANC succeeded in removing J. T. Gumede from office. His replacement as President by Pixley ka I. Seme signalled an end to militant activity by the ANC and ruled out any further cooperation with the CPSA. In the Western Cape ANC the President, James Thaele, expelled prominent militants, B. Ndobe and E. Tonjeni. At the ANC's 1931 Conference, Seme condemned the burning of passes, arguing that Africans could obtain the respect of whites only by acting in a moderate way. A. W. G. Champion and James Thaele called on the same conference to expel Communists, an indication of Congress's new direction, even though their calls went unheeded. Divided and temporarily deprived of its fighting spirit, Congress fell into almost total inactivity; even its newspaper, *Abantu Batho*, closed down.

The Conflict in the ANC

The following quotations from J. T. Gumede and Pixley ka I. Seme indicate two diametrically opposed views on the direction and tactics the ANC should follow:

'We have now to rely on our own strength, on the strength of the revolutionary masses of white workers the world over with whom we must join forces. We have to demand our equal economic, social and political rights. That cannot be expressed more clearly than to demand a South African Native Republic, with equal rights for all, but free from all foreign and local domination.'

— Gumede, 1930 Presidential Address.

'We really don't need much of that common agitator, who only wants to create strife and class hatred. We need the white man in this country as much as the white man really needs us. Our welfare as a nation can never be served by sowing hatred between whites and blacks in this or any other country or by disseminating cowardly slanders against the Government, who have no means of knowing what our wishes as a nation may be. ...

Most of the misery which our people suffer in the towns and the country today is due to this one factor, no confidence between the educated classes and their own uneducated people. The former cannot open any business relations amongst the latter and get good support because to be able to establish a business anywhere you want confidence.'

— Seme, 1932.

In the early 1930s, the CPSA also fell into crisis. Communists were among the major targets of the police onslaught, and the party was decimated in certain areas as some activists were banished from their places of residence and others withdrew from politics to avoid harassment by the police. In December 1930 the CPSA in Durban was an influential force under the leadership of Johannes Nkosi, capable of attracting 3,000 people to its meetings. One year later it had virtually collapsed. A trade unionist, George Ponnen, later recalled that when he and his comrade H. A. Naidoo joined in 1934, there were only seven members at the annual general meeting of the CPSA's Durban district branch. In Cape Town there were only twenty members left at the end of 1931.

The CPSA's difficulties were aggravated by grave internal problems caused largely by a sectarian leadership which took hold of the party after D. G. Wolton became General Secretary in 1931. The new leadership, following a tendency within the Comintern at that time, expelled a large number of prominent members in a campaign against 'right-wing opportunism'. Bill Andrews and others who worked in the white trade union movement were expelled for building 'a strong reactionary trade union apparatus, in full support of the class collaboration policy of the reformist Unions'. This was a wholly unjustified accusation against people who had consistently fought for progressive and militant trade union policies. S. P. Bunting, a lawyer, was expelled for, among other things, appealing for leniency when defending political prisoners, and for speaking on the same platform as members of the ICU and the ANC, both of which were considered to be reformist (i.e., non-revolutionary) organizations. Gana Makabeni, secretary of the African Clothing Workers' Union, was expelled when he refused to end the cooperation between his union and the Garment Workers' Union.

As the Party became enmeshed in internal conflicts its public work dwindled and the proportion of Africans in its ranks decreased. It was not until 1934 that a concerted fightback against sectarianism started, led by Moses Kotane in particular. Expelled members returned to a CPSA which gave renewed attention to building united fronts with other democratic forces and re-establishing its contact with the workers at grass-roots level.

The All African Convention

The threat of the Hertzog Bills prompted some African leaders to urge Seme and Professor D. D. T. Jabavu to call the All African Convention in December 1935. The call aroused great enthusiasm and the Convention attracted over 400 black delegates of all shades of political opinion: ANC, APO, South African Indian Congress (SAIC),

and CPSA members; clergy; chiefs; members of advisory boards; representatives of local organizations; and prominent black women. The delegates were unanimous in their opposition to the bills, though generally moderate in the actions they proposed to combat them. A delegation was sent to speak to Hertzog, who was prepared to make only some minor amendments.

The 1935 meeting decided to constitute the All African Convention (AAC) as a permanent organization. Professor Jabavu became its President and Dr James Moroka Secretary. The AAC also decided, on a motion submitted by Charlotte Maxeke, that a National Council of African Women (NCAW) should be formed. It was then established with Maxeke as President and soon superseded the Bantu Women's League which ceased to function. The NCAW, however, became a social welfare rather than a political organization.

On the international front, the AAC condemned the 1935 invasion of Ethiopia. This act of aggression by Mussolini's fascist government had aroused strong opposition from Africans throughout the continent and anti-fascists throughout the world. Ethiopia had been one of only two independent African countries at the time, looked on throughout the continent as a beacon of freedom. The ANC and the CPSA also condemned the invasion and large demonstrations were organized in the major cities. In Durban and Cape Town, African dock workers refused to handle Italian cargo.



Moses Kotane



Revd James Calata

Revival of the liberation movement

After the formation of the AAC, some debate took place within the ANC on whether the Congress should dissolve itself in favour of the Convention or be resuscitated. At a special meeting of members in the Pretoria-Johannesburg area, the new Secretary General of the ANC, the Revd James A. Calata, joined CPSA member J. B. Marks to argue successfully that Congress should be revived. It was decided to hold a Silver Jubilee Conference in December 1937 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ANC. The conference was held and generated considerable enthusiasm among African people. The Revd Z. Mahabane was elected to serve a second term as President, replacing Seme.

A number of prominent Congress members were elected to the Natives Representative Council in 1937. Congress stalwarts like Selope Thema, R. G. Baloyi and T. Mapikela used their positions as councillors to travel to many parts of the country at government expense while helping to revive the ANC. J. B. Marks, who travelled widely as Baloyi's secretary, noted that though the ANC was 'literally dead' throughout the Orange Free State and Transvaal, its remnants remained and could, he presumed, be revived. Progress was slow, however, and by the time the Second World War broke out in 1939 Congress was still struggling to re-establish itself.

The Communist Party also began a period of renewal. New members were recruited and became involved in the national movements: the ANC, the APO and the Indian Congresses. In the Western Cape, the National Liberation League (NLL) was formed in late 1935 by left-wing coloureds opposed to the cautious approach of the APO. Although it was prepared to use the same methods as the APO — protest meetings, sending resolutions and petitions to the authorities and participation in elections — the NLL also advocated the use of strikes, demonstrations and boycotts as instruments of struggle. The president of the NLL was Zainunnissa 'Cissie' Gool, a prominent CPSA member and daughter of Abdul Abdurahman. Although it was open to all races, the NLL was in practice mainly confined to coloureds in the Western Cape. In 1938 the NLL took the initiative in calling a conference in Cape Town to form the Non-European United Front (NEUF). The conference was attended by delegates from 45 organizations including the ANC and the CPSA and elected Cissie Gool to lead the Front. Although neither as successful nor as lasting as its founders had hoped, the NEUF did exercise considerable influence for a few years, especially in the Cape Province and in the Transvaal, where it was led by Dr Yusuf Dadoo. In the Cape the NLL and NEUF organized a major campaign against the residential segregation of Coloureds which culminated in March 1939 with protest meetings in 14 towns, including mass meetings of 5,000 people in Kimberley and up to 15,000 people in Cape Town.

An Old Worker Remembers

George Ponnen joined the CPSA in 1934 and within a month of joining was elected Party organizer for the Durban district. He remembers the rebuilding of the party and the trade unions in the late 1930s.

'My work was to do both [kinds of] work: trade union work and organization of the party. Mind you, this was not a full-time job. We had to do our job in the factory; this was done out of work [hours] — evenings, weekends. ...

Now slowly we got many of the old [CPSA] members back into the fold and many new members joined in. We were slowly building up the party. And the building of the trade union movement also ... our work, the party's work in the industrial field helped us to bring in more members to the party. There was a growing membership from the Indian workers, coloured workers and African workers — not many in the coloured section, but African and Indian workers were coming into the party right up to 1937, '38, right from the mid-1930s up to the 1940s ... the party was growing up. ...

What is the work? To go to factories, have groups, talk to them. You go to areas, have factory meetings, talk to the people. You organize those things, then organize area groups and factory groups, a tremendous task. The work in 1936–37 was becoming so much that I had to go on to be full-time industrial organizer for the party. ...

[I]n addition to the work in the party, I was also secretary for a number of trade unions; the Tea and Coffee Workers' Union, the Broom and Brush Workers' Union, Tobacco Workers' Union, Brewery and Mineral Workers' Union. ... besides being secretary, I was adviser to a number of unions so I had contact with all the organized workers and helping to organize the unorganized such as the sugar workers, coal mine workers and so on.'

— Interview with George Ponnen, Morogoro, Tanzania, 1984.

The late 1930s brought a spate of new trade unions with Communists and non-Communist radicals involved in organizing black workers after the virtual collapse of their unions in the early years of the decade. Two main trade union federations emerged: the Communist-led African Federation of Trade Unions, first formed in 1930, and the Joint Committee of African Trade Unions led by Max Gordon and Dan Koza. An unsuccessful attempt to merge the two was made in 1938; in 1941 they did merge to form the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU).

The militant Garment Workers Union (GWU) under the leadership of Solly Sachs successfully built a multi-racial trade union of African, coloured and white workers, mainly women. While quite successful in winning concessions for workers, the GWU came under strong attack not only from employers but also from racist trade unionists like

Albert Hertzog and Piet Meyer. Backed by the Dutch Reformed Church and the entire Afrikaner nationalist movement, the racists urged Afrikaner workers to withdraw from the union which, they said, was run by Jews and Communists and advocated racial integration. They established rival Afrikaner nationalist unions to try to lure workers from the GWU. The GWU eventually succumbed to racist pressures, and in 1940 established racially segregated branches in an attempt to preserve its white membership.

Afrikaner Nationalism

Dr Malan's National Party of the 1930s reflected the interests of a loose coalition of Afrikaner groups — farmers and small businessmen, professionals and intellectuals. The leadership of the Party was acutely aware of the disadvantaged position of the Afrikaner in the white community where the most influential centres of public life, particularly in commerce and industry, were dominated by English speakers. The overcoming of this 'second-class position' of the Afrikaner was the main driving force of the National Party under Malan. To achieve this, the Party set out to imbue Afrikaners of all classes with a strong but narrowly nationalistic ideology, and to create a series of separate institutions through which to promote Afrikaner cultural values (alternatives were created, for example, to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides) and channel what economic resources existed amongst Afrikaners.

The most important of such organizations was the Afrikaner Broederbond, a secret society based at first mainly in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. In 1934 Dr Malan and other important Afrikaner political leaders joined the Broederbond and its members began to secure various key positions in political, cultural, educational, religious and economic institutions. In 1929 the Broederbond had founded a public 'front' organization, the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings* (FAK) or Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Organizations, an umbrella body coordinating and guiding the work of Afrikaner cultural groups. During the 1930s the FAK grew into a large and influential organization with almost 300 affiliates: cultural bodies; youth and student organizations; church, charitable, scientific and educational groups. Through this network the Broederbond was able to exercise a powerful ideological influence on large sections of the Afrikaner people and influence their political and economic activities. FAK committees also played an important role in developing the Afrikaans language, standardizing grammar and coining new words for scientific, technological and commercial concepts.

In 1938 the FAK organized a massive celebration of the centenary of the 'Great Trek'. Nine ox-wagons like those used by the Voortrekkers of 1838 travelled from Cape Town to Pretoria, visiting many towns along the way. In each town celebrations were held, with the inhabitants dressing up as Voortrekkers and streets being renamed after Voortrekker leaders. The journey culminated in a mass meeting of 100,000 people near Pretoria, where the foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument was laid on 16 December, the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Ncome (Blood River) in which the Boers had defeated Dingane's Zulu army.

The Great Trek celebrations also gave rise to the Ossewa Brandwag (Ox-wagon Sentinel), a cultural movement organized on semi-military lines which was later to develop into a militant, pro-Nazi organization during the Second World War. Fertile ground already existed for the growth of such an organization as pro-Nazi feeling had been spreading among Afrikaner intellectuals throughout the 1930s. A growing number of them saw an affinity between Hitler's *herrenvolk* (master race) and their own white-supremacist ideas, and had formed a number of pro-Nazi paramilitary organizations such as the Greyshirts, the Blackshirts and Boerenasie.

The white nationalist movement made a concerted effort to penetrate the white trade unions in order to win Afrikaner workers away from 'socialist' and 'foreign' influences. In 1934 H. J. Kloppe, founder of the Broederbond, set up a short-lived railway workers' union, the Spoorbond. More significantly, though, from 1936 Albert Hertzog led a Broederbond fight to gain control of the Mine Workers' Union, the most powerful white trade union, whose members were mainly Afrikaners. Supported by Afrikaner church and cultural organizations, the nationalists fought a twelve-year struggle for this union before finally winning control in 1948.

The nationalists were also very active in promoting Afrikaner-owned business. In 1914 in the Western Cape, a group of Afrikaner professionals headed by W. A. Hofmeyr had formed Nasionale Pers to publish a nationalist newspaper, *Die Burger*, with capital invested mainly by wealthy wine farmers. In 1918 the same group had formed a trust company, Santam, and an insurance company, Sanlam. These financial institutions aimed to mobilize the savings of Afrikaner farmers and workers, and to invest them as capital. In the Transvaal and Orange Free State, the Broederbond started a small cooperative bank, Volkskas, in 1934, and a few years later transformed it into a private commercial bank owned largely by Broederbond members. In addition two cooperative stores, Uniewinkels and Sonop, were established in Pretoria and Bloemfontein respectively.

In 1939 a large economic congress, the 'Volkskongres', was held,

organized jointly by the Broederbond and the Sanlam/Santam group. Its purpose was to discuss and plan ways to promote the growth of Afrikaner business. One of the major results of the Congress was the formation of the Reddingsdaadbond (RDB or Rescue Action Society) under the leadership of Broederbond chairman Nico Diedrichs who would much later become a Minister of Finance and State President. The main task of the RDB was to create an 'economic consciousness' among the Afrikaner masses so that they would support Afrikaner-owned banks, insurance companies, shops, manufacturing and other business concerns. Later the RDB also established trade and secretarial schools to teach skills to young Afrikaner workers, and an RDB Employment Bureau tried to find work for them with Afrikaner companies.

As a result of all these activities, an Afrikaner bourgeoisie emerged and began to prosper in the late 1930s and the 1940s, and sought to gain political power in order to promote its economic interests still further. Malan's National Party and its successors were the main political vehicles in this quest for power.

The Second World War and the Crisis in the United Party

When Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, a crisis broke out in the United Party. Hertzog and Smuts differed fundamentally on the path South Africa should take. Smuts felt that South Africa should immediately declare war on Germany in support of Britain. Hertzog and his followers, who had pro-Nazi sympathies and no desire to fight for Britain, wanted South Africa to remain neutral. However, Smuts and his pro-British faction managed to gain the support of the majority in parliament, and South Africa entered the war.

Hertzog was forced to resign and Smuts became Prime Minister. In 1940, Hertzog's supporters fused with Malan's NP to form the Reunited National Party (still commonly referred to as the National Party or NP). A year later, Hertzog, unable to reconcile himself to the extreme nationalism of the new Party, left it to form the Afrikaner Party.

Essay Topics

- 1 What were the reasons for the decline of the liberation movement during the period 1929 to 1935? Do you think it was possible for the movement to have avoided this crisis? Give reasons for your opinions.

- 2 Describe the growth of the Afrikaner nationalist movement during the late 1930s.

Topic for Group Discussions

- 1 Read the following passage about the All African Convention of 1935:

The Convention was able to put up excellent arguments against the Government's Bills. But it was clear, at least to the left wing, that something more than arguments would have to be put forward if the bills were not to become law. And here a tremendous contrast revealed itself. There were over 400 delegates present. But what did they represent in the way of effective organization? The years of collapse and disintegration had played havoc with the once powerful organizations of the Congress and the ICU. The 400 delegates represented very little but themselves. Most of them had no idea of stirring up the countryside. In vain the communists and other radicals pleaded for militant action, for strikes, for passive resistance. They were cold-shouldered into silence. The 'big guns' of the Convention were all for negotiation and moderation. The communists called mass meetings in different centres. There was a very poor response. Try as they might, they could not rouse the masses even to effective demonstrations, let alone to strikes and passive resistance. An Afrikaner paper proclaimed in newspaper placards: *'Naturelle bly stil'* (Natives remain quiet). It was only too true; the masses did not act.

— Roux, 1978, p. 289.

The All African convention aroused widespread interest among African leaders and attracted over 400 delegates from a wide range of organizations. All were strongly opposed to the Hertzog Bills. Why, then, do you think that the masses of Africans did not seem prepared to take militant action at this time?

CHAPTER TWELVE

South Africa during the Second World War

The Second World War began in September 1939 when both Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany in response to Hitler's invasion of Poland. South Africa, with the rest of the British Empire, entered the war in support of Britain. Fascist Italy and Japan soon joined on Germany's side. In June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union, thus bringing the latter into the war. In December 1941, the Japanese air force attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, causing the USA to join Britain and the Soviet Union (known as 'the Allies') against Germany, Italy and Japan (the 'Axis' powers).

By the middle of 1941, much of Eastern and Western Europe (including France) was under the control of Germany and its allies. In addition, Japan had invaded and taken over British and French colonies in South-east Asia and was occupying large parts of China.

The Allies' struggle against the Axis powers was ideological as well as military. Anti-fascist propaganda was spread throughout the world by all available media. People were told that the war was being fought to eliminate oppression and ensure freedom in the world. In August 1941, the leaders of the USA and Britain (Roosevelt and Churchill) signed, amid great publicity, the Atlantic Charter which declared that all peoples should have the right to choose their own form of government and to live free from fear and want. The Charter was later endorsed by 26 other countries, including the Soviet Union. While the British anti-fascist ideological offensive was aimed solely at combating the Axis powers, it unavoidably also had the effect of stirring up popular sentiment against oppression of all types in the colonies of Africa and other parts of the world. South Africa was no exception; as wartime rhetoric flowed, black people were stirred to hope and strive for a future free from oppression.

South African Military Participation

When the war broke out, the Union Defence Force called for volunteers to join it. The National Party, while opposing any South African participation in the war, also conducted a campaign against the recruitment of any section of the black population into the armed forces. The government rejected their demands, and of the 300,000 volunteers who were recruited about 120,000 were blacks. Africans were enrolled in the South African Native Military Corps and were not allowed to carry arms. So, as in the First World War, they only participated in a non-combat capacity because the government feared the possible future consequences for white domination of giving military training to Africans.

An African Soldier in the Second World War

Graham Morodi was an African who served in the South African army in the Second World War. Later, in the 1960s, he joined Umkhonto we Sizwe and in the 1980s served as the ANC's Chief Representative in Zambia and Tanzania.

Here he describes his experience in the South African army:

'In 1941 I joined the army. We handled a gun, but never to shoot. We were only carrying *assegais* [spears]. We didn't like it. We were demobilized in 1945. I was given a Khaki suit, a blanket and a lot of certificates and some medals and nothing else but five pounds pocket money, and promised that we'll get something when we're at home: we won't carry passes, and we'll be given houses which we are not going to rent for so much. But all those things never happened.

Then I started to say, "Now I'm going to join the ANC and fight against this government which has robbed me and told me a lot of lies."

—Frederikse, 1990, pp. 22–3.

South African troops were sent to Kenya in 1940 and from there moved, with other British and colonial forces, against the Italians in Ethiopia. Joining forces with Ethiopian resistance fighters, they managed to capture Addis Ababa by April 1941. The Italians surrendered and Emperor Haile Selassie, whom they had deposed five years earlier, was reinstated. By 1941, 160,000 South African troops were in Egypt where they participated in the North African campaign against the Italian and German armies. The South Africans suffered a major setback at Tobruk, in Libya, where 25,000 of them were forced to surrender to the Germans and taken prisoner. However, other South African troops participated in the Allied advance westwards along the North African coast and the final defeat of the Italians and Germans in

North Africa in 1942–43. Then they joined the Anglo-American invasion of Italy in 1943–44, and at the end of the war they were in Northern Italy.

Earlier, in 1940, the South African army had joined British forces in invading Madagascar, a French colony which was controlled by Vichy France (the puppet, pro-Nazi regime which existed in part of France). A few months after the Allies had captured it, they handed it back to General De Gaulle's Free French Forces, which were based in the French African colonies and fought together with the Allies.

Economic Development

The outbreak of war in 1939 led to even faster industrial expansion than during the boom of the previous five years. This was mainly due to the increased production of military goods for South African and Allied forces, and the growth of industries to produce goods which could not be imported while the war lasted.

Factories started to manufacture armoured cars, artillery guns, ammunition, soldiers' boots, uniforms and other equipment. There was rapid growth in mining production, building construction, and the engineering, chemical, electronics and textile industries. Local steel production also boomed: ISCOR, which produced 38 per cent of the iron and steel used in South Africa in 1939, accounted for 58 per cent of the greater amount used in 1945. The South African government established trade missions in Central and East Africa to promote exports of South African goods to these areas whose imports from Europe had also been disrupted by the war.

With the growth of industry, it was necessary to recruit more people from the reserves as workers. During the war the industrial labour force grew by 53 per cent, of whom the overwhelming majority were blacks. The result was a rapid growth in the population of the major towns and an acute housing shortage with consequent overcrowding in the African townships and other urban slums. By the end of the war almost a quarter of all African people lived in the urban areas, providing the social base which was to invigorate the liberation movement.

Developments in the Liberation Movement

Attitudes to the war

Immediately after the war broke out the ANC's National Executive Committee issued a circular stating that it would support the war on condition that (1) the government gave 'military training whereby our men shall not only be used as labourers but as soldiers'; and (2) 'the African people are included in the South African body politic.'

This position was overturned, however, at the annual conference held in Bloemfontein in December. The conference rejected a motion proposed by Dr A. B. Xuma that the ANC should not advise Africans to participate in the war 'in any capacity' unless they were granted 'full democratic and citizenship rights'. Instead it adopted a motion which stated that the government's decision to declare war on the side of Britain was correct. The motion then went on to state that the government 'should consider the expediency of admitting the African and other Non-European races of this country into the full citizenship of the Union'. Further, it was stated that 'all racial restrictions in the recruitment of soldiers should be removed'. Thus, while Congress did not openly proclaim its full support for the war effort as it did in the First World War, it was clearly not prepared to oppose it either.

The Communist Party's attitude to the war was more definite. At the beginning the party characterized it as an anti-imperialist war, 'a struggle between rival imperialisms for raw materials, markets, capitalist domination and the power to exploit colonial peoples in Africa and Asia'. While the party recognized the necessity of destroying Nazism, for South Africans 'the fight against Nazism must be carried on in South Africa'. A struggle against the Hertzog-Malan forces and all pro-Nazis was necessary, and the Smuts government had to be prevented from taking away rights and liberties. The CPSA thus called on South Africans not to support the war in any way — either by joining the armed forces or by giving money.

However, after Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the CPSA said the character of the war had changed. A statement issued by the Central Committee argued that since the Soviet Union was not an imperialist country, the war could no longer be characterized merely as an inter-imperialist war. The Soviet Union was the world's first (and only) socialist country where the workers had taken over the factories, the mines and the land, and ruled themselves. It had no colonies and stood for the national liberation of all oppressed people. The 'defeat of the Soviet Union' would thus be 'the greatest triumph that capitalism could achieve over the workers and oppressed people of all nations'; accordingly, the CPSA called on all people to stand by the Soviet Union and support the war effort. It also called for democratic rights for all people in South Africa so that blacks could give their full support to the war and stated its intention of continuing the 'struggle against Fascism in all its forms, against race oppression and for true democracy for all people in South Africa'.

Revival of the ANC

The gradual revival and reorganization of the ANC, which started in

the late 1930s, continued. The search for new leadership resulted in the election of Dr Xuma as President in 1940, and attempts to improve the organizational structure resulted in the adoption of a new constitution in 1943. It provided for a more centralized structure with a stronger National Executive Committee which was to carry out day-to-day functions through a Working Committee whose members lived within fifty miles of the national headquarters in Johannesburg. The old Upper House of Chiefs, which had become defunct as chiefs came increasingly under government pressure, was now abolished. Women finally became full members of the ANC and not just 'auxiliary members' as under the 1919 constitution.

At its 1942 annual conference, the ANC asked Xuma to establish a committee to study the Atlantic Charter and to draft a Bill of Rights. A year later this resulted in the adoption of the document *Africans' Claims in South Africa*. It analysed the Atlantic Charter as applied to Africa, particularly South Africa, and also included a Bill of Rights which called for the abolition of race discrimination and the extension to all adults of the right to vote and be elected. It also demanded, *inter alia*, a fair redistribution of land, the abolition of all discriminatory labour legislation, freedom of trade for Africans, the right to a good education for all African children, and adequate medical and health facilities for all.

Despite the gradual revival of the ANC, a group of young Africans — mainly intellectuals — became increasingly impatient with its slow progress and with the conservatism of many of the older members. Many of the young activists were teachers, lawyers, doctors or students; among their ranks were Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, William Nkomo, A. P. Mda and David Bopape. Two prominent youth activists who came from the working class were Walter Sisulu and Dan Tloome. These activists often met with other young men and women in Johannesburg to discuss politics. They sought ways to overcome the timidity and conservatism which they saw in the ANC, and to turn it into a dynamic, militant organization.

In response to pressure from the youth, the 1943 annual conference of the ANC adopted a resolution providing 'that Congress Youth Leagues and Women's Leagues be formed'. In April 1944, the African National Congress Youth League was formed in the Transvaal with Anton Lembede as President. In the next few years, branches were also formed in the Cape and Natal; among the prominent members in those areas were Joe Matthews, Duma Nokwe, Robert Sobukwe (all students at Fort Hare), Dr James Njongwe (from Port Elizabeth) and M. B. Yengwa (from Durban).

The Youth League called its philosophy 'African Nationalism'. This involved an assertion of African identity, a rejection of 'foreign

The 'Power-Station'

The formation of the African National Congress Youth League is an answer and assurance to the critics of the national movement that African Youth will not allow the struggles and sacrifices of their fathers to have been in vain. Our fathers fought so that we, better equipped when our time came, should start and continue from where they stopped.

The formation of this League is an attempt on the part of Youth to impart to Congress a truly national character. It is also a protest against the lack of discipline and the absence of a clearly-defined goal in the movement as a whole.

The Congress Youth League must be the brains-trust and power-station of the spirit of African nationalism; the spirit of African self-determination; the spirit that is so discernible in the thinking of our Youth. It must be an organization where young African men and women will meet and exchange ideas in an atmosphere pervaded by a common hatred of oppression.

At this power-station the League will be a co-ordinating agency for all youthful forces employed in rousing popular political consciousness and fighting oppression and reaction. It will educate the people politically by concentrating its energies on the African homefront to make all sections of our people Congress-minded and nation-conscious.

— Extract from the Manifesto of the ANC Youth League, 1944.

leadership of Africa', a stress on the unity of all Africans, and the belief that Africans must rely on their own efforts to free themselves. The League also rejected 'the wholesale importation of foreign ideologies into Africa' — a clear reference to the influence of the Communists. The Youth League Manifesto described African Nationalism as 'the militant outlook of an oppressed people seeking a solid basis for waging a long, bitter, and unrelenting struggle for its national freedom'. The Youth League aspired to a society free from race domination, but it specifically rejected that stream of African Nationalism 'based on the "quit Africa" slogan and on the cry "Hurl the White man into the sea"'.

The ANC Women's League was established in 1943 to coincide with the admission of women to full membership in the organization. Madie Hall-Xuma, the American-born wife of Dr Xuma, was elected its first President. The Women's League was not very active during the war years, but it did participate in a Women's Anti-Pass Conference which took place in Johannesburg in March 1944 as part of the Anti-Pass Campaign (see below).

The development of unity in action

The Non-European United Front (NEUF), whose membership was drawn from all the black communities, became very active during the

early war years. It campaigned against South African participation, holding meetings and distributing pamphlets. In 1940, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Transvaal leader of the NEUF, was jailed for issuing an anti-war leaflet which ended with the words: 'Don't support this war where the rich get richer and the poor get killed.' After June 1941 the NEUF campaigned in support of the war and repeatedly called on the government to extend democratic rights to blacks and to allow black soldiers to carry arms so that they could make a full contribution to the war. 'If you want the Non-Europeans to fight for democracy, why not give them democracy to fight for?' said Moses Kotane, who was secretary of the NEUF.

The war years saw growing cooperation between the ANC and the CPSA. On a number of occasions the ANC, having no newspaper of its own, used the pages of CPSA publications such as *Inkululeko* and *Freedom* to publicize its views. Increasing use was also made of the *Guardian*, an independent weekly with close ties to the CPSA. When Dr Xuma appointed the committee to look into the Atlantic Charter, he included three prominent Communists — Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks and Edwin Mofutsanyana — in a group which represented a wide range of political opinions. In 1944, a march of over 15,000 people took place in Johannesburg. The campaign continued until June 1945, when a massive petition against the pass laws was taken to Cape Town by R. V. Seloape Thema, Dr Dadoo and Moses Kotane. The acting Prime Minister, J. H. Hofmeyr, refused even to see them to accept the petition, but the entire campaign had been successful in raising mass political consciousness and promoting ANC-CPSA cooperation.



GUNS — NOT PASSES!

The Way to Victory Over Fascism

From the progressive newspaper, the Guardian.



Gana Makabeni, first President of the CNETU. He was a prominent trade unionist from the mid-1920s until his death in 1955, and was active in the ANC.

The Communist Party had grown considerably during the war years. Their hard work in the NEUF, the anti-pass campaign and the trade union movement had helped to increase their popularity; and the decisive role played by the Soviet Union in the war against fascism had raised the prestige of the Communist movement throughout the world. The party's membership had increased and its influence had grown, extending even outside the urban area. In elections to the Native Representative Council, three Communist candidates, Edwin Mofutsanyana, Alpheus Maliba and J. Lekhota, got hundreds of thousands of votes in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal even though they were not elected. Communists were actually elected to the City Councils in Cape Town (Sam Kahn and three others), East London (Archie Miller) and Johannesburg, where in 1943 Hilda Watts became the only Communist ever to be elected to public office by an all-white electorate (in the Cape Province, a portion of the electorate was still coloured). In Advisory Board* elections, six Communists were elected in East London and some in four East Rand townships. In Langa, near Cape Town, Communist candidates won every seat in the 1944 Advisory Board elections. A significant development affecting the CPSA was the decision of the Comintern to dissolve itself in 1943 in order to help bring about the maximum unity of anti-Nazi forces. This left the CPSA without formal international ties.

Renewal of the Natal Indian Congress

Kay Moonsamy, a radical trade unionist and supporter of the 'nationalist bloc' of the NIC in the 1940s, describes the change in the NIC's view of African-Indian cooperation:

'Prior to 1944, the Indian Congresses in South Africa were led by leaders who did not want to have any cooperation between Indians and Africans or coloureds. The new leadership called upon the democratic forces to work together, that is, for the closest cooperation with the African people, because we feel that the majority in our country are the Africans — if they're not liberated, then I don't think the others will be liberated. So we believe that the main content of our revolution is the liberation of the African people, and the Indian Congress worked for that.'

— Frederikse, 1990, p. 30.

* Advisory Boards: Local bodies, elected in African townships with limited jurisdiction over matters such as sanitation and the collection of dog taxes. The CPSA used them as platforms to voice the people's grievances and to demand African representation on city and town councils.

The political organizations of the Indian people went through an important change during the war years. Militants formed the 'nationalist bloc' in the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Anti-Segregation Council in the Natal Indian Congress. These groups struggled to change the reformist policies and to remove the wealthy leaders of the Congresses. They were eventually successful in 1945 when Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr G. M. 'Monty' Naicker became presidents of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses respectively. The Indian people were from now on to assert their South African identity strongly and to seek closer alliances with Africans, coloureds and democratic whites in their struggle for their rights.

The All African Convention joined forces with the Anti-CAD (formed to oppose the establishment by the government in 1943 of the Coloured Affairs Department) to form the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). The NEUM's membership was soon restricted mainly to the Western Cape where it gained some strength amongst coloured and some African intellectuals — especially teachers. Its most prominent leaders included I. B. Tabata, Dr Goolam Gool and Ben Kies. The NEUM called for a policy of 'non-collaboration with the oppressor' and refused to have anything to do with the Native Representative Council or institutions such as Advisory Boards. It adopted a 'Ten Point Programme' calling for universal franchise; free and compulsory education; personal security; freedom of expression, movement and occupation; civil rights for all; redivision of the land; revision of the legal code, including the taxation and labour laws. The NEUM would only cooperate with other organizations if the planned activities were 'principled' in terms of the programme. It refused to cooperate with others on single-issue campaigns such as those against passes or against particular legislation. It condemned the struggle for reforms as tantamount to accepting 'half a loaf' instead of total freedom. In practice the NEUM confined itself to 'ideological work' and seldom engaged in mass political action. It dismissed the mass actions of the Congress Alliance during the 1950s as merely 'spectacular stunts' and as 'unprincipled'. The result of such tactics was to isolate the NEUM from the mainstream of the liberation movement and to fragment and weaken the overall resistance against oppression.

In the Transvaal a group including Paul Mosaka (a member of the ANC) and Dan Koza quit the ANC to form the African Democratic Party (ADP) in 1943, working closely with Senator Hyman Basner, a 'native representative' in the Senate. Like the members of the Youth League, the ADP's founders were dissatisfied with the ANC's moderation and lack of militancy, but they did not believe it could be reformed from within. The new party failed to find support, however, and ceased to exist after five years.

In 1941 the Springbok Legion was formed, an organization of 40,000 servicemen and ex-servicemen of all races which campaigned for the rights of soldiers and their dependants. With CPSA members such as Cecil Williams and Jack Hodgson holding leading positions, the Legion agitated for the arming of black troops and (until June 1944) for the opening of a second front against Germany to relieve the Soviet Union which was bearing the brunt of Nazi aggression. The Legion's newspaper, *Fighting Talk*, exposed the activities of pro-Nazi Afrikaner nationalists on the home front; after the war it became an organ of the liberation movement.

New urban movements

The rapid growth of population in the urban areas during 1939–45 led to serious housing shortages in African townships, especially on the Rand. One study estimates that in Orlando, one of four municipal townships around Johannesburg, there were an average of eight people living in each two-roomed house. Rents were very burdensome; a single unskilled worker who earned about £5 a month had to pay £1 for rent. These conditions gave rise to the 'squatters' movement' when in April 1944 several hundred families led by James Mpanza moved on to open land near Orlando. There they built homes from corrugated iron, scraps of wood and other materials. The police tried in vain to remove the squatters, whose example was followed by others; similar shanty towns sprang up near other townships on the Rand and elsewhere. The squatters set up administrations which controlled entry into and membership of the community, dispensed justice and enforced rules through fines and other punishments, charged traders a fee for permission to operate, and provided some basic services, especially water. In the late 1940s, most of the squatter communities were destroyed by the authorities and the people were removed to large housing estates around Orlando known as South Western Townships — now shortened to Soweto.

During the period 1940 to 1944, the people of Alexandra township near Johannesburg organized four separate bus boycotts to protest against attempts to raise the bus fare to town from 4 to 5 pence. The boycott grew bigger each time and on each occasion the people were successful in preventing a fare increase. The last of the boycotts lasted for seven weeks; many thousands of people woke up at three o'clock in the morning to walk to work and only arrived home at nine o'clock at night. Eventually the city council agreed to subsidize bus fares so that people still paid 4 pence while the council gave the bus companies an extra penny for each passenger. The bus companies were eventually bought out by the monopolistic Public Utility Transport Company (PUTCO) which was subsidized by the central government.

Growth of the trade union movement

As the black industrial workforce expanded during the war, more and more trade unions were organized. On the Rand, the most important African trade unions were affiliated to the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) which was formed in 1941. At this time, although the Trades and Labour Council did admit African (i.e., unregistered) trade unions to membership and there were still some progressive trade unionists in the TLC leadership, the TLC had not done sufficient to promote the organization of African workers. In order to do this and to bring about greater unity among African trade unions, CNETU was formed in November 1941 at a meeting chaired by Moses Kotane. Gana Makabeni became the first President and Dan Tloome the Vice-President. By 1945, CNETU claimed 119 affiliated unions with a membership of 158,000. Although 60 per cent of the members were in the Transvaal, CNETU affiliates also had considerable strength in the Cape, especially in Port Elizabeth. The unions represented workers in commerce, manufacturing and mining.

From September 1942 a large number of strikes by African workers took place. They occurred in the coal-mining, sweet, dairy, brick and railway industries, and among municipal workers in Johannesburg and Pretoria. In Pretoria police shot at workers while they were demonstrating, killing fourteen and wounding over a hundred. In late 1942, the government banned all strikes by Africans in terms of the War Measures Act, but despite this a further 60 strikes took place before the end of the war.

The largest CNETU union was the African Mine Workers' Union, formed in 1941 with J. B. Marks as President and James Majoro as General Secretary. Union meetings were arranged with the help of African mine clerks (like Majoro), who could move freely in and out of mine property, and union organizers who got jobs in the mines. The meetings were both large and small, legal and illegal, and took place both inside and outside the compounds. By 1944 the union had a membership of 25,000.

Afrikaner Nationalism and Pro-Nazi Movements

Pro-Nazi sentiments were widespread within the Afrikaner nationalist movement. Many felt that the war presented an opportunity to gain an Afrikaner-dominated republic if Britain lost the war. The strongest supporters of Nazism were grouped in the Ossewa Brandwag (OB) whose membership grew to about a quarter of a million at its peak. The OB was led by J. F. J. van Rensburg and engaged in a campaign of sabotage against railway lines, post offices, telegraph poles and electric pylons. These activities were undertaken by an élite OB

military unit known as the *stormjaers* who also provoked armed skirmishes with soldiers. The OB had considerable support amongst policemen and hundreds of them were 'relieved of their duties' and arrested. Smuts ordered all civil servants to resign from the OB and many of its members were detained in internment camps. One such pro-Nazi detainee was B. J. Vorster, later Prime Minister of South Africa from 1966 to 1978.

Malan's National Party was also very sympathetic to the Nazis. In fact many OB members also belonged to the NP and relations between the two organizations were very good in the early years of the war. However, rivalry between the two for the dominant place in the Afrikaner movement, and a clash between Malan and van Rensburg, led to bitter conflict. In September 1942 the NP called upon its members to resign from the OB and forbade all NP office-holders to belong to it.

As the war drew to a close, members of the OB realized that an Allied victory would put an end to their dream of seizing power by force. Many returned to the NP to use it as a vehicle for gaining power through the parliamentary system. The OB declined in strength and the NP became the unquestioned leader of the nationalist movement.

Essay Topics

- 1 Outline the factors leading to the re-activation and growth of the ANC and the CPSA during 1939–45.
- 2 Write short essays on each of the following:
 - (a) The effects of the Second World War on the South African economy.
 - (b) The black trade union movement, 1939–45.

Topics for Group Discussion

- 1 During the Second World War Afrikaner nationalists campaigned against the recruitment of blacks, armed or unarmed. During the 1980s the National Party government started actively recruiting and arming soldiers from all the black population groups. How do you account for this change in policy?
- 2 South African school history syllabi and most school textbooks make no mention of the following topics. What do you think are the reasons for this?
 - (a) The growth of the liberation movement.
 - (b) The conflict between Malan's NP and the Ossewa Brandwag, and the deep divisions in Afrikanerdom during the war years.
 (Discuss each one in turn.)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Passive Resistance, the Miners' Strike and the Coming of Apartheid

The defeat of fascism in Europe and the end of the Second World War brought about fundamental changes in the world. The prestige of the Soviet Union, which had played the major part in destroying the Nazi forces, was at an all-time high. Left-wing governments, led by Communist parties and committed to building socialism, came to power in a number of East European countries. Within a few years of the end of the war, Communist parties also headed governments in China, North Korea and North Vietnam. Anti-colonial struggles resulted in the independence of a number of former colonies in Asia: India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia and others. In a number of African countries, too, mass movements calling for independence from colonial rule were starting to appear and grow. The European colonial powers and Japan had been considerably weakened by the war. The USA clearly emerged as the dominant power in the capitalist world and soon led a counter-offensive against the spread of socialism and Communist ideas, initiating a period of great power rivalry that became known as the Cold War.

The South African government, while obviously pleased at the defeat of fascism in Europe, was not at all prepared to bring an end to racial oppression at home and implement the Atlantic Charter. Smuts helped to draft the United Nations Charter and spoke about human rights while he was abroad; but at home his government continued to preside over the oppression of a vast majority of the people.

At the United Nations (UN), Smuts had proposed that Namibia be incorporated into South Africa. The Namibian people were strongly opposed to this. After the South African administration refused the Herero chief, Hosea Kutako, permission to send his representatives to the UN, he sent cables of protest to the Secretary General. The Paramount Chief of the Herero, Frederick Maherero, who was in exile in Botswana, sent a white priest, Revd Michael Scott, to make his protests known to the UN. Cables of protest were sent by the Botswana

chiefs (who also feared incorporation by South Africa) and by Dr A. B. Xuma on behalf of the ANC (see 'No Share in Government'). Smuts's proposal also met strong opposition at the UN, especially from India and the socialist bloc. The world body refused to allow the incorporation of Namibia and proposed that it be made a Trust Territory under the UN Trusteeship Committee. South Africa refused, asserting that it would continue to administer Namibia 'in the spirit of the [League of Nations] mandate'.

No Share in Government

The following is the text of a cable from Dr A. B. Xuma to the UN, opposing the proposed incorporation of South West Africa (Namibia) into the Union of South Africa:

Africans South Africa Protest against incorporation South West Africa into Union. Pray urge control Territory by UNO Trusteeship Council. Mandate over territory was under Article 22 Covenant League of Nations.

Africans South West Africa no share in Government therefore take no part in incorporation negotiations. South Africa itself denies political and economic rights her 8,000,000 Africans.

83 per cent Land reserved for 2,000,000 Europeans only less than 17½ per cent for 8,000,000 Africans.

Only 40 per cent African Children accommodated in mission schools.

95 per cent Africans are imprisoned under discriminatory regulations against Africans only. South Africa must first remove colour bar, restrictions, discrimination at home.

(Sgd) A. B. Xuma
President-General
South African National Congress

The liberation movement in South Africa emerged from the war stronger and better organized than ever, determined to continue its struggle for freedom and a better life for all South Africans. It found itself confronted not only by the government but also by the Afrikaner nationalist movement. The latter, too, had gained strength during the 1940s. Though set back by the defeat of Germany, the Afrikaner nationalists recovered rapidly, encouraged by the anti-communist Cold War of the late 1940s and by growing unity within their own ranks. Nonetheless, the liberation movement waged some militant struggles immediately after the war — in particular the Indian passive resistance campaign and the gold miners' strike — and continued to consolidate the unity that such struggles were helping to forge.

The People Resist

Passive resistance

White traders who resented business competition from Indians and other white racists who wanted to prevent Indians from living in 'white' neighbourhoods filed complaints with the government. This resulted in the 'Pegging' Act of 1943 which restricted Indians' rights to acquire property in predominantly white areas for a period of three years. In 1946 it was replaced by the even more restrictive Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act (commonly known as the Ghetto Act). This Act prohibited Indian land purchases from non-Indians except in certain 'exempted' areas, and prevented Indians from occupying property outside the 'exempted' areas. It was, in fact, designed to force Indians to live and trade only in designated ghettos. The Ghetto Act also provided for Indians to elect three white representatives to the House of Assembly and one of two white senators to represent Indians (the other senator was to be appointed by the government). This provision was presented as compensation for the restrictions on land ownership.

The South African Indian Congress (SAIC) condemned the Ghetto Bill and embarked on a passive resistance campaign, demanding that it be withdrawn. Smuts's 'gift' of Indian representatives in parliament was rejected as a useless sop which could do nothing to benefit the Indian people. Passive Resistance Councils were set up in Natal and the Transvaal to organize the campaign. On 13 June 1946, eleven days after the bill became law, a day of *hartal* (mourning) was marked by a strike and the closure of Indian businesses. A campaign of defiance of the law was launched at a mass meeting of 15,000 people. Volunteers, thousands of Indian men and women, including Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker, broke the law by pitching tents on land reserved for whites in Durban. The campaign continued for two years despite attacks by white hooligans and the arrests of 2,000 people (including 300 women) followed by fines and imprisonment.

The passive resistance campaign helped to focus world attention on South Africa when the SAIC appealed to the United Nations for support. The South African government, backed by Britain and other colonial powers, maintained that the treatment of the Indians was an internal South Africa matter and should not be dealt with by the UN. Newly independent India, supported by the Soviet Union and others, disagreed and attacked not only the condition of Indians in South Africa, but the whole system of race discrimination and oppression. The majority in the General Assembly was persuaded to demand that the treatment of Indians should conform to agreements between India and South Africa and to the relevant clauses of the United Nations



Dr G. M. Naicker addressing a meeting during the passive resistance campaign to protest against the Ghetto Act.

Charter. The Smuts government refused to negotiate with India or to change its policies in any way, but the whole affair served to put the country's racist policies under UN scrutiny for the first time. India, responding to a request from the SAIC, decided to withdraw its High Commissioner in Pretoria and to break trade relations with South Africa. This was the first time economic sanctions were imposed on South Africa.

Closer unity

Solidarity with the Indian resisters was expressed in various ways by other South Africans, and the resisters in turn supported other forms of action. At the Anti-Pass conference of June 1946, fraternal messages were delivered by representatives of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses who pledged full support for the Africans' struggle against passes. The conference itself passed a resolution of support for the Indian passive resisters. Similar resolutions were passed by various gatherings, including meetings of the ANC and the Communist Party. A group of volunteers, led by Cissie Gool, by now a Cape Town City Councillor, travelled to Durban from Cape Town to join in the passive resistance campaign; some, including Gool, were arrested. A number of whites, including Revd Michael Scott, were also imprisoned for taking

part in the campaign. A group of Africans broke the segregation laws in Germiston in support of the Indian passive resisters and were arrested.

The Non-European Unity Movement, while condemning the Ghetto Act, refused to support the passive resistance campaign on the grounds that it was a sectional protest confined to Indians, riddled with reformist Gandhism, and therefore 'impotent as a weapon of liberation'. Revolutionary rhetoric thus became a substitute for the NEUM's inactivity.

The growing Indian-African unity was formalized in the joint declaration signed by the presidents of the ANC and the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses in March 1947. This declaration, which became known as the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact or the Doctors' Pact (all three signatories were medical doctors by profession), pledged 'the fullest cooperation between African and Indian peoples' and called on 'all democratic and freedom loving citizens of South Africa' to cooperate in the struggle for:

- 1 Full franchise;
- 2 Equal economic and industrial rights and opportunities and the recognition of African trade unions under the Industrial Conciliation Act;
- 3 The removal of all land restrictions against non-Europeans and the provision of adequate housing facilities for all non-Europeans;
- 4 The extension of free and compulsory education to non-Europeans;
- 5 Guaranteeing freedom of movement and the abolition of pass laws against the African people and the provincial barriers against Indians;
- 6 And the removal of all discriminatory and oppressive legislation from the Union's statute-book.

The African miners' strike

African gold miners found their wages and living conditions becoming more and more intolerable. Wages had not increased since the beginning of the century despite rises in the cost of living. Mine wages were fixed on the assumption that migrant workers' wages were subsidized by income from subsistence agriculture in the rural areas. This assumption ignored the reality: overcrowding, with the resultant land shortages and land deterioration in the reserves, had made families almost entirely dependent on the wages of migrant workers. In compound stores, workers paid inflated prices for boots, blankets, cigarettes and food bought to supplement their inadequate rations. Rising prices of all consumer goods further affected the ability of migrant workers' families to survive in the rural areas.

The government-appointed Lansdowne Commission which investigated black miners' wages reported in 1944. It recommended some minor wage increases which would have cost the mines £2.6 million a year. The mining companies, which paid out seventeen times this

amount in the form of dividends and taxes each year, refused to accept the recommendations. The increases they gave were even smaller than the meagre amount recommended and did nothing to improve the situation of black miners.

During the early 1940s, the workers dissatisfaction and militancy was expressed increasingly through the African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU). With the full support of the state, the mining companies attempted to suppress the union. In August 1944, the government enacted War Measure 1425 which prohibited gatherings of more than twenty people in the gold-mining areas. Arrests and assaults of union organizers became common, and informers were employed by police and mining companies to spy on the workers and their union. Despite the end of the war in 1945, War Measure 1425 remained in force. Nonetheless, the miners became more insistent in their demands for better wages and living conditions and a number of protests occurred in individual mine compounds.

At an AMWU conference in April 1946, 2,000 delegates decided to demand a minimum wage of 10 shillings a day, adequate food and the withdrawal of War Measure 1425 (the average wage for African miners at the time was 2s 5d a day). The Chamber of Mines refused point blank to consider the demands, and so at a mass meeting of miners' delegates it was decided to call a strike on 12 August. The strike by 73,557 miners (the official figure, but unofficial estimates put the figure as high as 100,000) resulted in the closure of twelve mines and a partial stoppage at nine others.

The state reacted with typical brutality. Compounds were surrounded and isolated by police who forced men down the shafts with firearms and batons. At some mines the men refused to work after being forced underground. They were driven violently back to the surface and into the compounds, some miners losing their lives in the process. On 13 August, a group of 4,000 miners decided to return to their homes. They tried to walk to Johannesburg to get their passes from the WNLA offices, but the police opened fire and forced them back to their compounds. The AMWU offices were raided and union leaders arrested. J. B. Marks was taken as he chaired a meeting of CNETU which decided to call a general strike in support of the miners. The general strike never got off the ground. The strike committee's leaders were arrested, its leaflets confiscated and its meetings banned; the presence of hundreds of police at bus terminals and railway stations prevented strike organizers from speaking to the workers. Within a week the miner's strike had been broken and their union all but destroyed by the joint forces of the Chamber of Mines and the Smuts government. Official figures gave the miners' casualties as nine dead and 1,248 injured; the actual figures are likely to have been much higher.



J. B. Marks, President of the African Mine Workers' Union and leader of the great strike of 1946.

The CPSA and the Miners' Strike

Kotane's whole approach to politics was that the drive for action must come from below, from the workers themselves, and not be foisted on them from above. Strikes were not to be manufactured or 'pulled off' — they were the product of mass pressure and mass action, and they were to be led and guided by the union, not by the Communist Party.

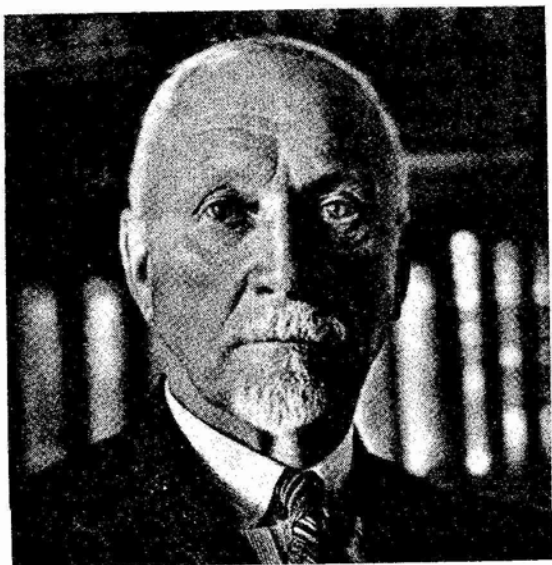
This did not mean that the Communist Party felt no responsibility towards the strike. It had its contacts and sources of information, it knew what was in the offing, and it made its dispositions accordingly. When the strike took place, the whole machinery of the Johannesburg District went into action immediately. The entire membership, black and white, was thrown into the struggle. Though some of its leading members had been arrested and immobilized, the District Committee met secretly at different venues both by day and by night to direct the work of its membership. Leaflets were printed and distributed from end to end of the Witwatersrand by Communist Party members as well as by others. Flying squads of Communist Party activists were ferried from mine to mine to give a lead to the workers and to back up the efforts of the union.

To the charge of having assisted the strike after it had broken out, the Communist Party members who were brought to court pleaded guilty with pride. They had done a good job. Without them, nothing on the scale of what was achieved would have been possible.

— B. Bunting, 1986, p. 130.

The authorities claimed that the strike had been caused by agitators, especially Communists. The week after the strike, offices of the CPSA and the *Guardian* were raided and documents, including lists of party members and supporters, were seized. Fifty-two people, including the entire Johannesburg District Committee of the party, were arrested and charged with conspiracy to bring about a strike. The state's case was weak and the conspiracy charges were dropped, but most of the accused pleaded guilty to another charge of supporting an illegal strike. The police then arrested the whole Central Executive Committee of the CPSA in Cape Town and charged them with sedition (inciting people to rebel against the authority of the state). The case continued for two years but eventually collapsed for lack of serious evidence.

The strike and the brutal way in which it was suppressed evoked a wave of solidarity throughout South Africa and abroad. Many volunteers of all races spoke out and distributed leaflets on behalf of the union during the strike. The miners were hailed as heroes by the ANC, the Indian Congresses and other organizations. The ANC Annual Conference of 1946 referred to those miners who lost their lives as 'martyrs to the cause of freedom'. The Native Representative Council adjourned its session in protest at the government's vicious action against the miners. Even the Labour Party, some local committees of the Trades and Labour Council, and some white liberals denounced the police terror and called for negotiations between workers and mine owners.



General J. C. Smuts, Prime Minister and long-time representative of mining capital, who brutally crushed the 1946 strike of African miners as he had done the white miners' strike 22 years earlier.

American Support for the Mineworkers

This letter from Paul Robeson, famous Afro-American singer, actor and crusader for the rights of black people and workers, appeared in the *New York Times* on 6 September 1946:

'Unaided and with no effective organization, for the South African law prevents such, African workers in the Gold Mines of South Africa, involving over 300,000 men, are striking for an increase in their present pay of 50 cents a day.

According to *The New York Times* of Aug. 15, the Government of South Africa has announced its determination to 'protect' these workers from their leaders. Four members of the Cabinet constitute a committee to make emergency decisions. Thus does one of the most oppressive Governments in the world give further evidence of its disregard of the rights of its people.

The Hitler-like statement of the South African government that it is 'agitators' from whom it would protect the workers will fool no one. Such a statement serves only to reveal the true character of the governing forces in South Africa now headed by General Smuts.

The owners of the South African gold mines, as is well known, represent a form of tyranny repugnant to decent practice in modern industrial employment. The conscience of the civilized world is outraged by these practices, and men of goodwill everywhere must lift their voices.

In the name of everything that is decent in human relations, I appeal to my fellow Americans to make known their protest against such conditions to the South African Ministry in Washington; to send to the Council of African Affairs, 23 West Twenty-sixth Street, New York City, an expression of support for these grievously oppressed workers in South Africa; to keep the South African situation in mind against the time when General Smuts will come to the United Nations Assembly in September to demand the annexation of South West Africa, which means more Africans for him to exploit.'

In contrast, the white miners continued working during the strike, and the Trades and Labour Council, when asked for information by the World Federation of Trade Unions, sent a cable saying: 'Appears natives were misled by irresponsible people. Police methods controlling strike drastic but warranted. Such action was necessary to maintain law and order and prevent chaos.' This message was later retracted because of pressure from some TLC affiliates, but nonetheless represented the view of the right-wing majority on the executive.

For the black miners, the crushing of the strike led to a near collapse of their union within a few years as repression by the regime and the mining companies made it almost impossible for the AMWU

to function. The union did maintain an office and continue to distribute leaflets until the early 1960s. The years immediately following the miners' strike saw a general weakening of the African trade union movement on the Rand. By 1949, a number of African trade unions had become defunct and CNETU, consequently, was also weakened.

Victory for Afrikaner Nationalism

The war had resulted in a changed perception of Britain by the Afrikaner nationalist movement. With the eclipse of Britain as the leading imperialist nation, the nationalists no longer saw it as a major obstacle to their striving for Afrikaner power and, ultimately, a republic. In the sphere of foreign affairs, they supported the USA and Britain in confronting the Soviet Union which they now saw as the main enemy. At home, they set about trying to consolidate the unity of Afrikaners to win the 1948 election and to further curtail the rights of black people.

The National Party had emerged as the dominant political force of Afrikaner nationalism in its conflict with the Ossewa Brandwag during the war. Soon after the war, all major divisions within the Afrikaner nationalist movement were resolved. What was left of the OB was absorbed by the Afrikaner Party which had been under the leadership of N. C. Havenga since Hertzog's death. In 1947, the NP and the Afrikaner Party made an electoral pact, thus enabling the Afrikaner nationalists to face the 1948 election with a united front.

The nationalists put forward the demand for 'apartheid' as the central slogan in their campaign. The idea of apartheid was not a new one; it had been embraced by Afrikaner nationalists in the 1930s. It was based on the old idea of segregation but took it much further, calling for the separation of the races in all spheres of life. Africans were to have no political rights in the 'white' areas, but were to exercise such rights only in their 'own' areas — the reserves. Where different race groups lived in the same districts (as in the cities), they were to live in racially segregated areas. Businessmen would only be allowed to operate in their 'own' areas.

Proponents of apartheid all agreed that Africans in the white areas should not be considered as permanent residents but only as workers who were there temporarily to work for the whites. There were some differences within the Afrikaner nationalist movement over the long-term aims of apartheid. On the one hand, there were those who sought total separation of the races into separate territories, each with its own socio-economic system. On the other hand, a more pragmatic and more influential group claimed that the economy needed cheap

black labour and so Africans would have to continue to work as migrants in 'white South Africa'.

One of the main aims of apartheid was to maintain white supremacy by denying any political rights to blacks in the so-called white areas, which made up the largest and most economically developed part of the country. Even in the reserves Africans would exercise only limited powers, mainly through the chiefs, under white 'trusteeship' or 'guidance'. The idea that Africans had their 'own' areas in the reserves was used to justify denying them any representation in the country's major political institutions. Apartheid was even given religious justification by theologians of the Dutch Reformed Churches. They said that the Afrikaners had a God-given mission to preserve the purity of the white race, and also to be 'trustees' of the African peoples by protecting their distinct ethnic and cultural identities from being submerged in an integrated society.

During the 1948 election campaign, the nationalists' appeal to Afrikaner voters was supported by the various Afrikaner cultural organizations and Dutch Reformed Churches, and backed by a programme which appealed to the economic self-interest of Afrikaner farmers, public servants, workers and businessmen. The ruling United Party (UP) favoured increased proletarianization of blacks; it wanted a larger permanent urban working class with a 'surplus labour force' (unemployed workers) resident in the urban areas. This, the UP felt, would lead to a greater stabilization of the labour force as required by manufacturing industry. The NP opposed this policy. It said that the towns were being 'inundated' by blacks, who should only be allowed in the cities to provide labour for white employers; blacks without jobs should be forced to go to the reserves. The nationalists frightened whites with the spectre of a *swart gevaar* (black peril) and promised that they would deal ruthlessly with black opposition of any sort. They criticized the Smuts government for its alleged failure to deal with high crime rates, rising prices and white unemployment.

The Native in our urban areas must be regarded as a 'visitor', who will never have the right to claim any political rights or equal social rights with the Europeans in the European areas.

— From an NP pamphlet, 'Native in the towns', 1949.

The NP policy appealed to white farmers who resented the large-scale movement of Africans to the cities. This migration caused a labour shortage on the farms and resulted in pressure to increase

agricultural wages which were much lower than urban wages. The NP also won farmers' support by promising them 'the special concern and protection of the state' — including higher prices for farm products. Many white workers found the nationalists' policies attractive as they feared competition for jobs from Africans. The NP promised to protect the position of white workers through the enforcement and extension of job reservation laws, protected employment in the public service, the provision of more opportunities for training in skills, and the introduction of a wide-ranging social welfare programme for whites.

Afrikaner businessmen, owners of small or medium-sized businesses, were strong in their support for the NP. They looked forward to a state controlled by Afrikaner nationalists which would help their businesses in various ways (state orders for their products and services, tariff protection, subsidies, etc.). The larger Afrikaner businessmen, financiers and industrialists who dominated the NP were still small fry compared to the big foreign and English-speaking businessmen; to fulfil their ambitions and become economic giants they would need state support. They also backed the NP's commitment to help capitalist agriculture since Afrikaner business relied on the farmers as customers and as a source of funds for investment. For instance, farmers's savings were used by institutions like Volkskas Bank and Sanlam to lend to Afrikaner businessmen. The NP policy of allowing blacks to trade only in black residential areas was also welcomed by Afrikaner shopkeepers, who often found difficulty in competing with more efficient Indian businessmen.

The Nationalists based their bid for power on a call to all Afrikaners to unite under their banner and vote for the NP/AP alliance. Since Afrikaans-speakers constituted about 60 per cent of all whites in South Africa, they calculated that a united Afrikanerdom would result in electoral victory. Their plans were largely successful: in 1948 the NP/AP alliance won the election with a majority of five seats, though with a minority of the total votes. D. F. Malan, as leader of the NP, became the new Prime Minister, and South Africa moved into a period when oppression of the majority was to be more intense and systematic than ever before. The threat posed by the new government was aptly referred to by its opponents as the 'Malanazi Menace'.

Essay Topics

- 1 Discuss the significance to the liberation movement of the Indian passive resistance campaign of 1946–48.
- 2 Trace the development of the Afrikaner nationalist movement from 1942 to 1948, showing how it managed to overcome its internal divisions and to rally enough support from Afrikaners to win the 1948 election.

Topic for Group Discussion

- 1 Discuss the similarities and differences between the miners' strikes of 1922 and 1946. Examine each of the following aspects of the strikes:
 - (a) the causes;
 - (b) the reactions of the government;
 - (c) the ability of the strikers to resist oppression;
 - (d) the role of the Communist Party;
 - (e) the political consequences of the strike.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Apartheid Established, 1948–1960

Having gained a narrow parliamentary majority, consolidating their hold on power was as much as priority for the Nationalists in the early years as their desire to restructure South African society. In 1949, whites in Namibia (largely NP supporters) were given the right to elect six MPs to the South African parliament. At the same time, the right of the Indian people to elect parliamentary representatives (granted in terms of the 1946 Ghetto Act but never exercised) was withdrawn. In 1951 the government began a long series of manoeuvres to remove coloured people (largely United Party voters) from the common voters' roll (see 'The Struggle over the Coloured Franchise'). In the same year the Afrikaner Party formally dissolved and joined the NP *en bloc*. Finally, just prior to the 1953 election, constituency boundaries were altered to favour the NP.

The Struggle Over the Coloured Franchise

The 1951 Separate Representation of Voters Act was passed to remove coloured voters from the common voters' roll; it created a separate roll on which coloureds could elect white representatives. The Act was passed by a small parliamentary majority, but was declared illegal by the Supreme Court; to abolish voting rights, the constitution required a two-thirds majority of both houses of parliament sitting together. Three years later, in 1954, the government tried and failed again to gain a two-thirds majority in favour of their law.

The National Party then passed the Senate Act of 1955 with a simple majority. This law allowed the government to appoint more senators to give it a two-thirds majority and the Separate Representation of Voters Act was passed. Meanwhile a number of pro-apartheid judges were appointed to the Supreme Court, and when the Act was challenged it was held to be valid.

Strong extra-parliamentary opposition developed to the disfranchisement of the coloured people. In Cape Town, the Franchise Action Council

organized a one-day general strike in May 1951, involving both coloured and African workers. It also organized several demonstrations. In 1952, the Separate Representation of Voters Act was one of the targets of the Defiance Campaign (see Chapter 15). Among whites, the Torch Commando organized opposition to the Act in the form of several large protest marches. White support for the protest came mainly from the Springbok Legion, but also from more conservative elements, including the United Party. The UP opposed the Act because it received the majority of coloured votes and because it feared a government attack on English language rights, which, like coloured voting rights, were supposedly entrenched in the constitution.

In order to establish the Nationalists' power in the army, a number of senior officers were removed and replaced with NP supporters secretly chosen by the Broederbond. Similarly, leading Afrikaner nationalists were appointed to top positions in the judiciary, the civil service and state enterprises such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the South African Railways, the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) and the Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR).

The measures taken by the NP helped it increase its parliamentary majority in the 1953 election and tightened its grip on the state machinery. In 1954, Malan retired as Prime Minister. He was replaced by J. G. Strijdom, who died in 1958 and was succeeded by Hendrik Verwoerd.

Despite its anti-imperialist pronouncements during the Second World War, the National Party lost no time in aligning itself with the strident anti-communist policies of the USA. The Afrikaner nationalists, only recently so strongly opposed to fighting 'England's war' against the Nazis, in 1950 sent a small contingent of South African troops to fight in the Korean War in support of the United States and its allies, including Britain.

The liberation movement had experienced almost a decade of growth in size, militancy and level of organization when the Malan government took power in 1948. The growing African trade union movement had won higher wages in manufacturing and commerce. The increasing poverty of the reserves and the growth in the number of landless people was radicalizing migrant workers. In earlier times, the incomes of migrants had been supplemented by the small-scale agricultural production of their families in the rural areas. As this now became more difficult or completely impossible, the migrant workers became more insistent in their demands for higher wages.

The new government and its supporters would attempt to counter these alarming developments with their policy of apartheid. They

were resolved to maintain South Africa's cheap labour system and to crush the militancy of the liberation movement. They tried to do this by various means: restrictions on political activity, the further exclusion of blacks from parliamentary representation, stricter pass laws, further restrictions on the residential and land ownership rights of blacks, suppression of African workers' rights and other measures. All this was to be done within the framework of the apartheid ideal: the separation of the races as much as possible in all spheres of life.

Restrictions on Political Activity

The first major restriction on democratic political activity was the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. The Afrikaner nationalist movement had long been hostile to the CPSA because it had some influence over Afrikaner workers and a following among the African working class. The nationalists feared the militant class-struggle policies of the CPSA as well as its uncompromising opposition to racism and the fragmentation of South Africa into racial blocs.

The Suppression of Communism Act outlawed the Communist Party and made it an offence to propagate communism. But the Act was much more than an attack on the CPSA. The term 'communism' was so broadly defined that it could include virtually any non-parliamentary political opposition: people or organizations could be punished for doing anything intended to bring about 'any political, industrial, social or economic change ... by the promotion of disturbance or disorder, by unlawful acts' or 'encouragement of feelings of hostility between the European and non-European races of the Union'.

The Act also gave the Minister of Justice the power to place restrictions on, or 'ban', any person he considered to be engaged in 'communist activities'. A banned person could be confined to a certain district, prevented from holding office in any trade union, political or other organization, and prevented from attending meetings. The law was used to restrict large numbers of leaders and other activists in the liberation movement. Included among the many banned people in the 1950s were such well-known figures as Albert Lutuli, Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo, Walter Sisulu, Dora Tamana, Josie Mpama, Eli Weinberg, Betty du Toit, Dan Tloome, M. P. Naicker, G. M. Naicker, Reg September, and Joe Slovo.

The government also expelled the former CPSA 'native representatives' Sam Kahn and Fred Carneson from parliament and the Cape Provincial Council respectively. To replace Kahn, the African voters of the Western Cape then elected another Communist, Brian



2.

NOTICE IN TERMS OF SECTION FIVE OF THE
SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM ACT, 1950 (ACT
NO. 44 OF 1950), AS AMENDED.

WHEREAS your name appears on the list in the custody
of the officer referred to in Section eight of the above-
mentioned Act;

NOW THEREFORE, I, CHARLES ROBERTS SWART, in my
capacity as Minister of Justice for the Union of South Africa,
by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by Section five of
the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950 (Act No. 44 of 1950),
as amended, do hereby direct you :

- (a) to resign within a period of thirty days as from
the date of this notice as an office-bearer, officer
or member of the -
Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (Non-European)
not again to become an office-bearer, officer or
member of the said organisation and not to take
part in its activities;
- (b) not to become an office-bearer, officer or member
of the -

Africa Club,
Cape Town Peace Council,
South African Peace Council,
Federation of South African Women,
Women's International Democratic Federation,
South African Congress of Democrats,
Congress of the People,

Guardian Co-op. Christmas Club,
Workers Council of Action,
S.A. Race Relations,
Cape Town Night School Association,
Civil Rights League,
Non-Sectarian Boycott Committee,
S.A. Society for Peace and Friendship with the
U.S.S.R.,
The Forum Club,
The New Era Fellowship,
Modern Youth Society,
Co-ordinating Committee of Peoples Organisation,
World Peace Movement,
United Action Council,
South African Coloured Peoples Organisation,
Franchise Action Council,
Non-European Unity Movement,
Freedom of the Press Committee,

and not to take part in their activities.

Given under my hand at Rehena on this
1st day of September 1954.

[Signature]
MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

Mrs. S. Carneson,
49 Belmont Avenue,
Cape Town,
CAPE TOWN.

An early banning order restricting the trade union and political activity of Sarah Carneson, a former member of the CPSA. Later banning orders, such as those received by hundreds of people in the 1960s and later, were much more restrictive. They often included orders for the banned person to remain at home from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., to report daily to the police, not to leave their magisterial district without permission, not to meet with more than one other person at a time, and not to communicate with another banned person.

Bunting, but he too was removed. By the time yet another Communist, Ray Alexander, was elected, an amendment to the Suppression of Communism Act had been passed prohibiting the election of Communists. She was therefore prevented from taking her seat in parliament.

In 1951 the Bantu Authorities Act finally abolished the Native Representative Council. It also allowed for the establishment of 'Bantu Authorities' headed by government-appointed chiefs with limited administration powers, in the reserves.

In response to the Defiance Campaign (see Chapter 15), the government passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1953, further restricting political freedom. This law provided for long terms of imprisonment, fines or floggings for persons who broke any regulation 'by way of protest, or in support of any campaign against the law, or in support of any campaign for the repeal or modification of any law'. The 1953 Public Safety Act gave the government powers to declare a State of Emergency accompanied by ruthless suppression, including detention without trial, of any dissent.

Racial Segregation and Forced Removals

Central to the NP's apartheid programme was the racial classification of the population. This was achieved by the Population Registration Act of 1950 which required that every person in South Africa be classified into one of four racial groups: 'Native' (later changed to 'Bantu'), 'European' (later 'White'), coloured, or Indian (later 'Asian'). By the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 marriages between whites and members of other groups were prohibited. Under the 1950 Immorality Act all extra-marital sexual contact between whites and blacks was made punishable by up to seven years' imprisonment.

Another pillar of the new apartheid state was provided by the Group Areas Act of 1950 which designated specific urban areas for occupation by particular racial groups. When any area was set aside for a particular group, all non-members of that group could be forced to move. The Group Areas Act was used to remove hundreds of thousands of black people from their homes and businesses to various townships in their own 'group areas'.

Another law, the 1954 Natives Resettlement Act, led to the removal of 58,000 Africans from the Western areas of Johannesburg (including Sophiatown) to Meadowlands in Soweto despite mass popular resistance. Several thousand coloureds, Indians and Chinese who lived in Sophiatown were also forced to move. A white suburb named Triomf (Triumph) was later built on the site of Sophiatown. Thousands of families were also removed from Alexandra township to Soweto,

which was rapidly growing into an enormous settlement with hundreds of thousands of people living in small, nearly identical, 'matchbox' houses. Like other African townships, it had no electricity supply and very few social amenities.

Rural people were affected by a number of laws and administrative measures which reduced the number of labour tenants on the white-owned farms. Entire families were forced to move to the reserves, and white farmers switched to the contract labour system whereby individual workers came to work on the farm for limited periods of time.

Bantu Education

In the early 1950s, over 70 per cent of schools for Africans were run by missionaries of various denominations; the remainder were either state schools or community schools. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 provided for a separate education system for Africans run by the government's Native Affairs Department; all unauthorized schooling for Africans was banned. The Bantu Education system was meant mainly to provide basic knowledge for unskilled manual workers, to train African children to accept an inferior position in society and to promote an ethnic (as opposed to national) consciousness in students. Dr H. F. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, explained his policy as follows:

There is no place [for the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour.... Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze.

Separate education departments were also formed for coloureds and Indians in 1963 and 1967 respectively.

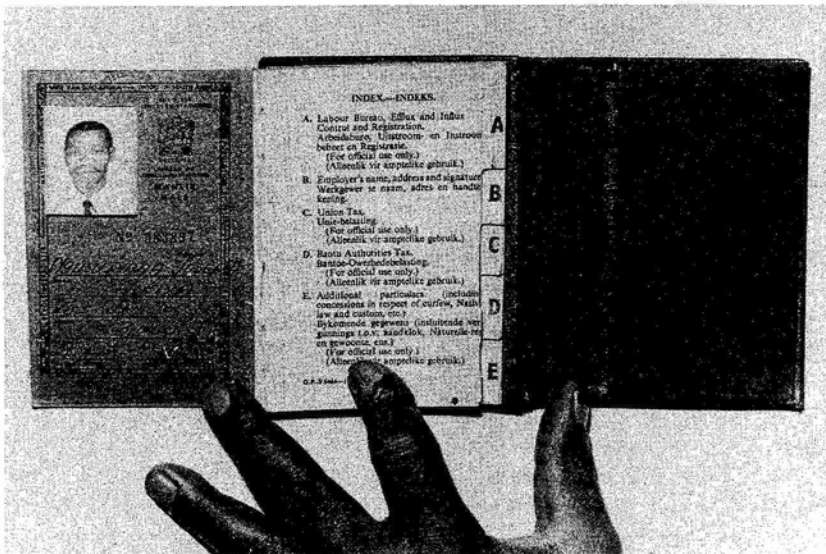
The 1959 Extension of University Education Act closed 'white' universities to blacks, except with special government permission. Fort Hare University was restricted to Xhosa students only, and new university colleges were opened at Turfloop (for Sotho/Tswana students), Ngoye (for Zulus), Belville (coloureds) and Durban-Westville (Indians). Most lecturers at Fort Hare, including the Vice-Principal and prominent ANC member, Professor Z. K. Matthews, resigned in protest. The 'tribal colleges', or 'bush colleges' as they came to be known, were staffed mainly by Afrikaner academics loyal to the National Party.

Pass Laws

The pass laws were made stricter in order to increase control over the

African population and ensure that labour was directed to where it was most needed by white businessmen and farmers.

Under the so-called Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act of 1952, the various passes required by Africans were consolidated into a single pass book (officially called a 'reference book'). These books were to be issued over a few years on an area by area basis. For the first time since 1920 women also had to carry passes. In each passbook was to appear the holder's name, address, photograph, identity number, ethnic grouping, authorization to be in a particular area, tax receipt, and the monthly signature of his or her employer. Every African had to carry a pass book at all times and produce it to any policeman on demand. People who did not have passes, were not carrying their passes or whose passes were not in order, could be fined or imprisoned. The conviction of hundreds of thousands of Africans each year for pass offences became a feature of South African life.



A pass book.

New laws restricted the rights of Africans to live in or even visit urban areas. Under Section 10 of the 1955 Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act, only Africans who had lived in a particular urban area since birth, or had worked there for one employer for ten years, or for more than one employer for fifteen years, had the right to live in the area. All others needed a permit to stay for longer than 72 hours.

Labour bureaux were set up to control the movement of workers into the cities and to ensure that workers did not leave the 'white' rural areas unless farmers' labour needs were fulfilled.

Restrictions on Trade Union Rights

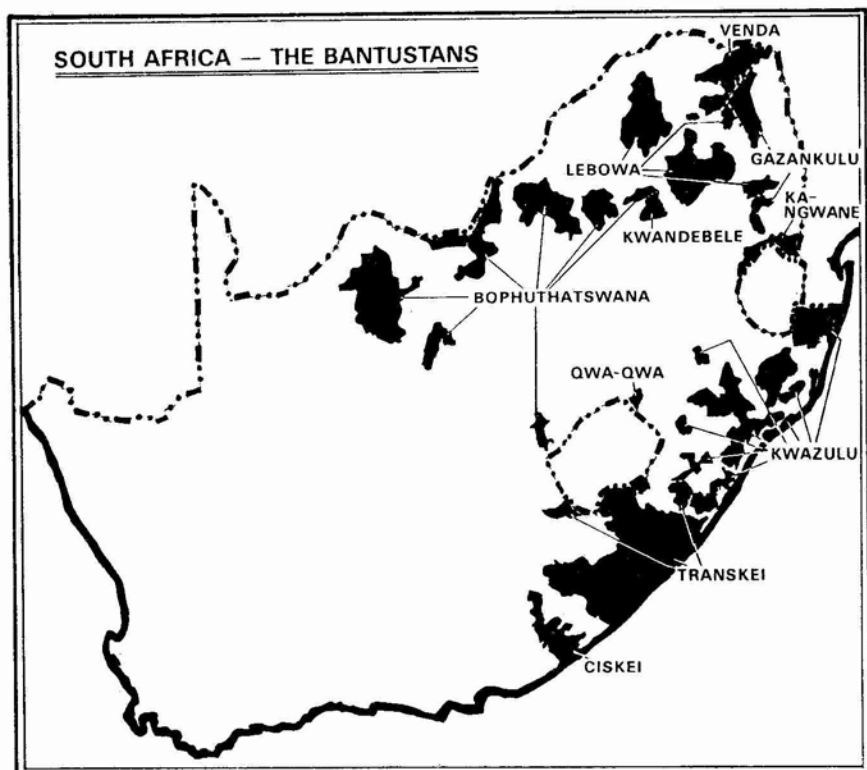
The NP adopted a policy of 'bleeding the black trade unions to death'. While not banning African trade unions outright (and so inviting international condemnation), burdensome restrictions were placed on them. Strikes by Africans were made illegal and many trade unionists were restricted under the Suppression of Communism Act. African trade unions could still not be registered; employers did not have to negotiate with them, and, if they did, the resulting agreements could not be enforced by law. The only legal negotiations between African workers and their employers were through employer-dominated Works and Liaison Committees. Under a 1956 amendment to the Industrial Conciliation Act, job reservations were further extended.

The Bantustans

In 1959, the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act was passed, providing for the establishment of eight (later increased to ten) bantustans or 'Bantu Homelands'. This scheme was partly based on the recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission, which drew up plans for developing the reserves within an apartheid structure.

The bantustans, which were to occupy roughly the same area as the reserves, were eventually supposed to become independent states. Each bantustan was meant to be for the members of a particular ethnic group (with two bantustans for Xhosas). In time, every African in South Africa was to become a citizen of one of these 'homelands', and would thus be deprived of his or her South African citizenship; 'white South Africa' would then be left with no African citizens. The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act abolished the 'native representatives' in parliament as Africans were in future supposed to have a political voice only in the bantustans. According to apartheid propaganda, each African 'nation' is supposed to develop separately and freely within its own territory, without hindrance from anyone else, thereby exercising its right to political self-determination.

In reality, the bantustan scheme was a response to growing mass resistance in South Africa and international pressure (see Chapter 15). It was even seen by Dr Verwoerd as a means of perpetuating white domination by a 'divide and rule' strategy, while providing justification for refusing to grant any real political power to the



Map 5 *South Africa — the bantustans*

African majority. It was also envisaged that white domination would be strengthened by the creation of a group of African collaborators associated with bantustan governments and small businesses which would develop inside the bantustans. The economic interests of this group would be tied to the bantustan system. In time, they would become allies of the white regime and play an active role in maintaining the oppression of the black masses.

The bantustans were seen as places where the unemployed could be dumped, far away from the major industrial centres. There they could be kept until they were needed again, their very poverty ensuring that they would be prepared to work for rock-bottom wages. The threat of being sent to the bantustans lay over every African if he or she was retrenched or fired, or resigned from a job.

In the bantustans, living conditions were even worse than they had

been in the early part of the century when most people in the reserves could supplement their income by subsistence farming. Now, with decreasing production and an increasing number of landless families, the extent of poverty and human suffering grew. These conditions had led to a growth of resistance in the rural areas (see Chapter 15), and the regime felt it necessary to strengthen the system of repression in the reserves by establishing more sophisticated structures. The suppression of popular discontent was to be one of the main functions of the bantustan administration. The regime would thus allow the task of repression to be carried out by African collaborators and so disclaim responsibility for it.

The Progressive Party

In 1959, a group of twelve United Party Members of Parliament broke away from their party to form the Progressive Party. They were dissatisfied with the UP's lack of vigorous opposition to the government's policies. The Progressive Party represented mainly the liberal wing of big business; and it was particularly associated with Harry Oppenheimer, the Chairman of Anglo American Corporation, who provided large sums of money to finance the party. The Progressive Party advocated a 'non-racial' qualified franchise, with any adult who owned property and had completed ten years of schooling being allowed to vote. (This would still have resulted in a white-dominated electorate.) The party thought that the best way to defuse the growing national liberation movement led by the ANC was to promote the growth of a black middle class, with a stake in the 'free enterprise' system and committed to maintaining it. The party failed to gain widespread support among whites, and at the next election retained only one seat. Mrs Helen Suzman was elected as MP for Houghton, the wealthiest constituency in the country. The Progressive Party later amalgamated with other UP breakaway groups to form first the Progressive Reform Party and then the Progressive Federal Party (PFP). In 1988 the PFP merged with two groups which had broken away from the Nationalists to form the Democratic Party.

Economic Growth

The repressive measures taken by the NP government had resulted in a reduction in real wages for black workers, thus reversing the trend of the previous period. This led to greater profits for all sections of the capitalist class and attracted large-scale foreign investment from Britain, the USA and Western Europe. For the first time foreign capital went into manufacturing as well as mining on a large scale. In addition, South African mining houses started to invest heavily in

manufacturing which now began to be dominated more and more by a few very large firms.

The entire economy, and the gold-mining industry in particular, was given a boost by the development of the newly discovered Orange Free State gold fields at places such as Odendaalsrus, Welkom and Virginia in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Anglo American Corporation (a South African-controlled company, despite its name) played a major part in developing the new mines and became by far the largest private company in the country. Anglo American also owned most of South Africa's diamond mines, through De Beers, and became a large investor in manufacturing and finance.

The state intervened directly in the economy, establishing SASOL in 1950 to manufacture oil from coal, expanding production at ISCOR, and setting up the National Finance Corporation and the Industrial Finance Corporation to help provide funds for the expansion of manufacturing and mining. In addition, tariff protection helped selected industries to establish themselves and grow without the threat of being crushed by foreign competition.

While the white capitalist class as a whole benefited from the policies of the NP, Afrikaner capitalists derived particular benefits: profitable government contracts were awarded to Afrikaner firms; the bank accounts of many government departments, local authorities and state corporations were transferred to Afrikaner banks; Afrikaner businessmen were appointed to official economic boards and could thus influence decisions so as to benefit their interests. As a result, Afrikaner businesses grew rapidly and firms such as Sanlam, Rembrandt, Volkskas and others grew into giant monopolies, on a par with the big companies controlled by English-speakers.

Capitalist agriculture, as well as benefiting from the stricter pass laws, was provided with prison labour from 1954. Farmers were guaranteed favourable prices for their products which rose in price by almost 50 per cent in the first five years of NP rule. White small businessmen benefited from lower wages and from the removal of Indian traders from certain areas where they had been a source of competition. White workers, too, made advances as job reservation was strengthened and many manual workers were promoted to supervisory, technical and clerical jobs.

As long as black resistance could be contained, there appeared to be few disadvantages to apartheid for any section of the white population; only a small number of left-wing whites supported the liberation movement's fundamental opposition to the system.

Essay Topics

Write short essays on each of the following:

- (a) How the National Party consolidated its power after it won the 1948 election and formed the government.
- (b) The economic strategy of the Nationalist government in the 1950s.

Topic for Group Discussion

Make a list of the regime's major aims for the Bantustan programme and then discuss the extent to which you think they have been achieved.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Upsurge of Resistance, 1949–1960

The coming to power of Malan's apartheid government stimulated the ANC to shift to the more militant stand advocated by members of the Youth League and the CPSA. Events such as the Indian passive resistance campaign and the 1946 miners' strike had shown that it was possible for the oppressed people to organize large-scale, militant opposition to the regime, and the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact had already laid the basis for the unity of the black people in their struggle against oppression.

This unity was threatened by the violent conflict between Africans and Indians which broke out in Durban in early 1949. Tensions had developed partly as a result of the severe housing shortage for Durban's growing African population. Shanty towns began to grow up around the city, some of them on land owned by wealthy Indians who demanded higher rents than most people could afford. In addition, Indian shopkeepers were blamed for overcharging and taking advantage of post-war food shortages to engage in black marketeering. Some African shopkeepers encouraged anti-Indian feelings as they tried to win over customers from Indian businessmen.

The hardships faced by the African people led to increasing frustration. Some of them, encouraged by the anti-Indian attitudes of white politicians and the press, began to direct their anger at the Indian people (the majority of whom were poorly paid workers) rather than at the unjust political and economic system. There is evidence to show that the violence against Indians was actively encouraged by the police; certainly they made no effort to protect people who were under attack. Many Indians were in fact helped by African families who hid them and provided them with food and shelter. In all, 142 people were killed and over a thousand injured.

The conflict was a severe setback to the efforts of political leaders

to build unity between the African and Indian communities. As soon as it broke out, ANC and NIC leaders mounted a joint effort to end the violence, and eventually managed to calm the people and restore order. This cooperation, together with the many instances of Africans giving protection to Indians fleeing from attack, helped to limit the harm done to inter-community relations by the conflict.

At the ANC's 1949 conference, the Programme of Action drafted by members of the Congress Youth League (CYL) was adopted. This marked a definite shift as Congress formally recognized the need for more militant methods of struggle. The Programme of Action claimed the right of self-determination for the African people and rejected all forms of white domination. It called for the use of mass struggle through boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience, and stressed the need to issue propaganda material to 'raise the level of political and national consciousness'. At the same conference there was a change of leadership. Dr Xuma was replaced by Dr J. S. Moroka as President. Walter Sisulu became Secretary General and the new 18-member National Executive Committee (NEC) included six members of the CYL.

The CYL represented the radical intelligentsia of the new generation. Impatient with the ANC's past reluctance to use militant methods of struggle, it hoped to mobilize the rapidly expanding urban population. Africans had been moving into the cities in large numbers for over a decade, spurred on by intensifying rural poverty. But in the cities wages were low, unemployment widespread and living conditions squalid for most Africans. To create a powerful political movement, the Youth Leaguers realized, the ANC would have to draw these masses into political activity by articulating their grievances and providing them with organization and leadership. Since the Communist Party had always concentrated its efforts on mobilizing the working class, Communists within the ANC and the Youth Leaguers now found themselves with very similar aims. So, despite their different ideologies, cooperation between the two groups grew stronger. The result was a moderation of the anti-Communism of the Youth League and a growing mutual respect between members of the two groups.

The ANC's more militant stand and the growth of its activity throughout the 1950s coincided with, and was inspired by, the growing anti-colonial movement in the rest of Africa and elsewhere. The anti-imperialist revolution led by Colonel Nasser in Egypt in 1952, and the winning of independence by Libya (1952), Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia (all in 1956), Ghana (1957), Guinea (1958) and a number of other African countries in 1960, all fuelled the hopes and increased the confidence of the oppressed South African people. In April 1955 the ANC sent an official observer, Moses Kotane, to the Bandung

Conference in Indonesia, where 29 newly-independent African and Asian countries met and gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement. Thus the ANC's contacts with the international anti-imperialist movement were strengthened and the oppressed people of South Africa began to feel more and more part of a world-wide struggle for freedom.

The Communist Party

When in 1950 the government published the Unlawful Organizations Bill (later renamed and passed as the Suppression of Communism Act), the CPSA leadership decided to dissolve the Party as from 20 June 1950. The Party had not prepared itself for illegal existence and underground work despite previous threats by the NP to ban it. The leadership thought that dissolving the Party would protect members from persecution. As Sam Kahn, the Communist MP, explained in parliament:

Recognising that the day the Suppression of Communism Bill becomes law every one of our members, merely by virtue of their membership, may be liable to be imprisoned without the option of a fine for a maximum of ten years, the Central Committee of the Communist Party has decided to dissolve the Party as from today.

The decision to dissolve the Party was a controversial one and was not unanimously adopted by the Party executive which made the recommendations to dissolve to the Central Committee. Two executive members, Michael Harmel and the veteran Bill Andrews, voted against it and many rank and file members were dissatisfied with it. Most Communists, however, accepted the dissolution as a tactic to avoid unnecessary repression. They remained active in liberation politics as members of the national movements, trade unions and other bodies, although many were later banned by the government from holding official positions. The Communists' unity with the rest of the liberation movement became, if anything, even stronger after the Party was made illegal. Campaigns against the Suppression of Communism Act were waged by the ANC and other organizations (see below). Despite an openly anti-Communist campaign waged against him by the short-lived 'National Minded bloc' in the ANC, J. B. Marks was elected Transvaal President of the ANC in December 1950.

In 1953 former CPSA members regrouped and, at an underground conference, the Party was reconstituted under a new name, the South African Communist Party (SACP) which operated clandestinely. The new Party did not even publicly declare its existence until July 1960 when, during the state of emergency, it issued a leaflet calling on the people to intensify their resistance. In October 1959, the SACP

produced its first issue of *The African Communist*, which became an important theoretical journal in the liberation movement. At first it was published anonymously, but in its third issue, in September 1960, it revealed that it was the organ of the SACP.

1 May and 26 June 1950

The first major mass action undertaken by the liberation movement after the adoption of the Programme of Action was the call for a general strike in the Transvaal on May Day, 1950. The strike, called by the Transvaal ANC, the Transvaal Indian Congress, the African People's Organization, and the Johannesburg District of the CPSA, followed a large publicity campaign and was an outstanding success, virtually stopping all industry except mining on the Witwatersrand. Everything went off very calmly and quietly during the day but in the evening the police opened fire on groups of Africans in Sophiatown, Alexandra, Orlando and Benoni. Eighteen people were killed and over 30 wounded, triggering off a wave of anger throughout South Africa.

In protest against these murders, and also against the Unlawful Organizations Bill which was first published during May 1950, a 'National Day of Protest and Mourning' was called for 26 June. It was organized by a joint committee established by the ANC, South African Indian Congress and CPSA, and supported by APO and CNETU. The ANC Youth League, which had not participated in organizing the May Day strike, gave its full support to the 26 June action. Attacking the Unlawful Organizations Bill which banned the CPSA, Oliver Tambo said prophetically that it was the beginning of an attack on all democratic organizations: 'Today it is the Communist Party. Tomorrow it will be our trade unions, our Indian Congress, our APO, our African National Congress.'

Through leaflet distribution, newspaper articles and public meetings, workers were called on to stay away from work, students were urged not to attend school, and shopkeepers were asked to close their businesses for the day. The stay-at-home's success varied from area to area and was most marked in the Eastern Cape. In Durban about a thousand people lost their jobs because they participated. In his report on the day, Walter Sisulu stated:

Having regard to the fact that the Committee had only two weeks to prepare, and in the face of intensive and relentless police intimidation, and after studying the reports from various parts of the country, I am perfectly satisfied that, as a political strike, Monday June 26 was an outstanding success.

The Defiance Campaign

In 1951 a Joint Planning Council was set up by the ANC and the South African Indian Congress to give consideration to a strategy of mass resistance to six unjust laws: the pass laws, stock limitation laws,* the Bantu Authorities Act, the Group Areas Act, the Separate Representation of Voters Act and the Suppression of Communism Act. The Council's report recommended that an ultimatum be sent to the government to repeal the six laws. If this demand was not met (no one expected it to be), a Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws was to be started to back it up. These recommendations were accepted and a National Action Council, consisting of four ANC and three South African Indian Congress members, was set up to direct the campaign.

The period preceding the Defiance Campaign included large rallies throughout the country on 6 April 1952 to protest against the official 300th anniversary celebrations of van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape. The government was attacked for glorifying 300 years of



One of the rallies called to protest at the official celebrations of the 300th anniversary of van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape on 4 April 1652.

* Stock limitation laws: laws limiting the number of cattle Africans could own and resulting in the slaughter of 'excess animals'. These laws were meant to prevent overgrazing and thus soil erosion. In fact, they only served to fuel Africans' frustration at the lack of sufficient land to support their cattle.

'conquest, enslavement and oppression' and for saying nothing about those who had heroically resisted colonization and fought for freedom. The success of anti-celebration rallies encouraged the organizers of the Defiance Campaign, and at the end of April, the ANC called on people to enrol as volunteers to defy the law.

The main aim of the campaign was to arouse large numbers of ordinary people to action in support of the demand that unjust laws be repealed. The idea was for large numbers of people to defy segregation measures and other laws, and thus invite imprisonment. The volunteers were to act in small groups, in a disciplined fashion and to refrain from violence. The starting day for the campaign was set at 26 June 1952, the second anniversary of the National Day of Protest and Mourning, which was now named South African Freedom Day.

The Defiance Campaign was conducted by the National Action Council in cooperation with a national volunteer board set up in early June with Nelson Mandela as volunteer-in-chief. Some volunteers walked through 'Europeans only' entrances at railway stations and other public places or demanded service at the 'white' counters of post offices. Africans disobeyed curfew regulations and broke the pass laws, while non-Africans (mainly Indian, but including some coloureds and whites) entered African locations without a permit. People recently banned under the Suppression of Communism Act — among them David Bopape, Yusuf Dadoo, Sam Kahn, Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks and Solly Sachs defied their bans.

Defiance Campaign Volunteer's Pledge

I, the undersigned, Volunteer of the National Volunteer Corps, do hereby solemnly pledge and bind myself to serve my country and my people in accordance with the directives of the National Volunteer Corps and to participate fully and without reservation to the best of my ability in the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws. I shall obey the orders of my leader under whom I shall be placed and strictly abide by the rules and regulations of the National Volunteer Corps framed from time to time. It shall be my duty to keep myself physically, mentally and morally fit.

Over 8,000 people were arrested, about 6,000 of them in the Eastern Cape. They refused to pay bail or fines; in some areas, prisons were filled to capacity as defiers served prison sentences of two or three months. The defiance took place in towns and cities throughout South Africa. There was also some participation in rural areas, notably in Peddie in the Eastern Cape and Bethal in the Eastern Transvaal. On most occasions, the police were informed beforehand that people

were going to defy the law. Acts of defiance were often preceded by meetings or street processions and watched by large crowds. In Port Elizabeth, defiance was combined with strike action.

On October 1952, violence broke out in Port Elizabeth when police fired at Africans, killing seven. In the turmoil that followed, four whites were also killed and property destroyed. On 19 November a successful stay-away was called in Port Elizabeth. In East London on 9 November, police attacked a prayer meeting attended by Africans; they fired shots, drove those attending the meeting into the African location, and there continued their terror. At least eight Africans were killed. Africans killed two whites in their retreat to the township and later destroyed municipal and other buildings. Apart from this police-provoked violence, the Defiance Campaign remained peaceful at all times.

The government reacted harshly in its attempts to end the campaign. On 28 November, 52 black leaders in the Eastern Cape were banned from attending meetings for six months. Other bannings followed: Mandela, Sisulu, Lutuli and Naicker, among others, were prohibited from travelling outside their districts of residence and from attending meetings. In September 1952, before he was banned, Chief Lutuli had been dismissed as a chief when he refused a government demand to resign as ANC Provincial President. Nearly 50 leaders of the two Congresses were arrested and convicted for launching the Defiance Campaign; they were given sentences ranging from three months to two years, suspended on condition that they did not defy the law. At one such trial of 20 leaders in November 1952, Dr Moroka chose to be defended separately by his own lawyer, and at the end of the trial entered a separate plea in mitigation. He said that he had good relations with white farmers who were his neighbours in the Orange Free State and that he helped financially with the education of white boys. This breach of unity with the other accused and with the spirit of the Defiance Campaign discredited Moroka in the eyes of many. In December 1952, Albert Lutuli was elected president of the ANC, thus providing the movement with a militant and dynamic leader who would become well-known and widely respected both nationally and internationally.

In addition to the bannings and imprisonments, the government also passed the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Laws Amendment Act (see Chapter 14) which threatened extremely harsh action against people who defied the law. Under these conditions the Congress leaders called off the Defiance Campaign and decided to seek other forms of struggle. As part of this decision the ANC formulated the M-Plan (Mandela Plan), so named because Nelson Mandela was put in charge of implementing it. It was a plan to organize the ANC

membership into cells at grassroots level with a structure connecting them through the district and regional leadership to the National Executive Committee. This new structure was to improve communications within the organization, the ties between Congress and the people. It was also designed to allow the leadership to communicate with the members without the use of public meetings or press statements.

Significance of the Defiance Campaign

The willingness of volunteers to defy the law openly, and to confront the authorities head on, changed the ANC's image — particularly among the urban working class. Previously, large numbers of people who sympathized with the movement and supported its aims had not been prepared to sign up as members. In their eyes membership of the ANC was for the educated and better-off. Now, inspired by the Defiance Campaign, tens of thousands joined the ANC, swelling its paid-up membership from 7,000 to 100,000 people and changing its social composition to reflect more accurately that of the African people as a whole.

Why I Joined the ANC

I started joining the political ranks exactly when I saw that now ANC was on a stand of making some protest with the government, that people now were practically taking a certain line — 1952, Defiance Campaign. Then I enlisted my name. But 1949 when they asked me to do so I refused because, I said, they were always asking for 'point of order Mr Chairman'; their meetings were just becoming a flop all the time. Because of such things, then I felt no, I couldn't join such things. 1952, when they started taking an action, then I joined their ranks, in Brakpan. . . .

[Before 1952] the African National Congress was not taken as a very serious organization that could do the government any harm. But 1952, they started seeing that things were becoming hot, that the people were being called on to defy. Then even some of the teachers started to go behind the doors, started joining ANC.

— 'Silver Dollar' Maboee, interviewed by Wandile Nkankule, Morogoro, Tanzania, 1984.

The campaign also drew world attention to the oppression of the black majority in South Africa. Apartheid was debated in the United Nations and was strongly condemned by representatives of the socialist and newly liberated countries. The General Assembly voted (with most of the advanced capitalist countries abstaining) to set up a UN 'Commission on the Racial Situation in South Africa'.

The campaign also resulted in the strengthening of unity between the ANC and the Indian Congresses. The APO, whose influence among the coloured people had already dwindled considerably, did not participate in the campaign and soon ceased to exist. This, together with the NEUM's open opposition to the campaign, resulted in the weakening of its impact in the Western Cape. Nonetheless the Franchise Action Council (established to oppose the disfranchisement of the coloureds — see Chapter 14) and the ANC in the Western Cape did manage to organize about 300 defiance volunteers. In 1953, members of the Franchise Action Council took the initiative in forming the South African Coloured People's Organization (SACPO), renamed the Coloured People's Congress in 1959. It was also in 1953 that Oliver Tambo addressed a meeting of white Congress supporters, convened by the ANC, which went on to establish the Congress of Democrats (COD). SACPO and COD then joined the ANC and the South African Indian Congress in the Congress Alliance. This alliance, later joined by the Federation of South African Women and the SA Congress of Trade Unions, coordinated the work of the member organizations and was a concrete manifestation of their non-racialism.

At about the same time the Liberal Party was formed, mainly by anti-racist whites opposed to what they saw as Communist influence in COD. Some blacks also joined the Liberal Party.

The Struggle against Bantu Education

The Bantu Education Act aroused strong condemnation from the African people who were virtually unanimous in their opposition to it. The December 1954 conference of the ANC resolved on 'total rejection' of the Act and called on African parents to prepare 'to withdraw their children from primary schools indefinitely as from April 1, 1955'.

While opposition to Bantu Education was universal among Africans, support for the proposed schools boycott was not. Although in some areas such as the East Rand there was strong support for the boycott, in other areas support was weak. Parents found themselves in a dilemma: if they withdrew their children from inferior education, the alternative could possibly be no education at all. As it became clear that support for the boycott was patchy, the ANC's National Executive decided to call off a country-wide boycott, but agreed that it could go ahead in areas where the people were prepared for it.

Sustained boycotts took place on the East Rand, at Bethlehem in the Orange Free State, and in Port Elizabeth. Some boycotts took place for a few days before pupils returned to school, while in other cases the

children were withdrawn for longer. About 7,000 children either left school for good or were expelled for boycotting, and over a hundred teachers were fired. Where boycotts took place, local leaders and volunteers set up schools to provide an alternative education. These schools were called 'cultural clubs' in an effort to get around the prohibition of unauthorized schools. Harassed by police raids, they did not survive for long. There was a shortage of qualified staff, and some teachers were prosecuted, banned or deported. The schools also suffered from lack of funds, equipment and adequate premises.

The Congress of the People

In August 1953, Z. K. Matthews, Cape President of the ANC, suggested at a provincial conference that

the time has ... come for the African National Congress to consider the question of convening a national convention, a congress of the people, representing all the people of this country irrespective of race or colour, to draw up a Freedom Charter for the democratic South Africa of the future.

This idea was discussed and approved at the national conference of December 1953 with the proviso that the ANC should seek the cooperation of other national organizations. Later, a joint meeting of the executives of the ANC, SA Indian Congress, SACPO and COD was called. A National Action Council was established to organize the Congress of the People and ensure that the people's views were collected for incorporation in the Freedom Charter. Local committees were then set up and organized meetings throughout South Africa in both urban and rural areas, among industrial workers, miners, peasants, traders and professional people. The people's grievances and demands were collected and forwarded to the organizers. The drafting committee of the National Action Council sorted carefully through the material sent to it from all parts of the country and eventually drafted the Freedom Charter.

The Congress of the People was held in Kliptown, near Johannesburg, on 26 June 1955. Many leaders of the Congress Alliance were unable to attend because of banning orders, and many hundreds of people were prevented by police roadblocks from reaching Kliptown. Nonetheless, almost 3,000 people did participate in one of the most famous and representative gatherings ever to have been held in South Africa. Surrounded by armed police the meeting discussed and adopted the Freedom Charter clause by clause. The Charter represented the people's demands for a non-racial South Africa with political rights for all 'regardless of race, colour or sex', equality of all national groups, a fairer distribution of wealth, the right to social security and education, and friendly relations with all other countries (see

Collecting the People's Demands

Wolfie Kodesh, who had joined the Communist Party during the Second World War and in the 1950s was an active member of the Congress of Democrats, recalls his work in the Western Cape, collecting people's demands for inclusion in the Freedom Charter:

'I remember going into the countryside with various people — Johnstone Ngwevela, I think Greenwood Ngotyana ... and many others. We went right into the countryside to all the places we'd known before — a whole network. We got resolutions from women, children, farm workers — the tot system people, the whole lot. We even got resolutions written on the back of Cavalla cigarette boxes, pieces of cardboard or paper. It was a very difficult task because people were not used to expressing themselves [openly]. Those [volunteers] who were able to do so openly (Kodesh was banned and thus not able to do so) had to go out and explain to the people carefully, 'Look here, I'm not telling you what to say, you tell me what you want.'

It therefore became the most comprehensive and widespread list of resolutions and demands for what the people wanted. These varied from being able to get a uniform at work, for instance, for the wives to be able to live with their husbands and not be separated, to much more comprehensive political ideas such as a vote for all and everybody to have their own members of parliament and members of council — a whole range — of things which later became encapsulated into the Freedom Charter as we know it.'

— Interview with the author, London, 1989.

From 'Freedom in our Lifetime' by Nelson Mandela (June 1956)

Few people will deny ... that the Freedom Charter is an event of major political significance in the life of this country. The intensive and nation-wide political campaigning that preceded it, the 2,844 elected delegates of the people that attended, the attention it attracted far and wide and the favourable comment it continued to receive at home and abroad from people of diverse political opinions and beliefs long after its adoption, are evidence of this fact. ... The Charter is more than a mere list of demands for democratic reforms. It is a revolutionary document precisely because the changes it envisages cannot be won without breaking up the economic and political set up of present South Africa. To win the demands calls for the organization, launching, and development of mass struggles on the widest scale.



Part of the crowd from all national groups and many walks of life who adopted the Freedom Charter at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, 26 June 1955.

Appendix for full text). At the Congress of the People, the award *Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe* for outstanding service to the people was awarded to Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Father Trevor Huddleston and Chief Albert Lutuli. Dr Dadoo and Chief Lutuli, banned at the time, could not receive their awards in person.

The Freedom Charter was later endorsed by the national conferences of all member organizations of the Congress Alliance as well as in the 1962 Programme of the South African Communist Party.

The Trade Unions and the Birth of SACTU

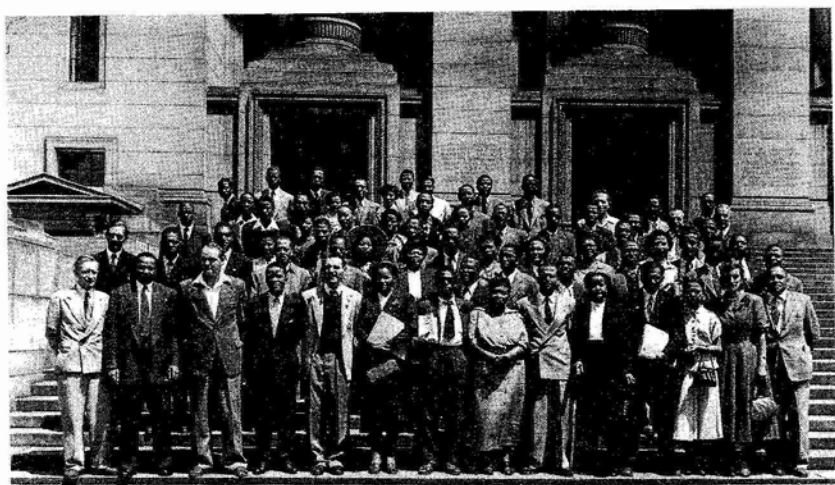
From the end of the war, right-wing whites in the trade union leadership tried to have African unions excluded from affiliation to the Trades and Labour Council (TLC). These attempts were defeated at first largely due to the efforts of a fairly small group of progressive

unionists in the TLC leadership. As a result, a number of whites-only unions under Afrikaner nationalist leadership left the TLC in the late 1940s.

After the Suppression of Communism Act became law in 1950, a number of progressive trade union leaders of all races were banned from holding office. By the end of 1955, 56 unionists had been affected in this way, including leaders of both registered and non-registered (i.e., African) trade unions. Those banned included nine members of the TLC executive, thus leaving the right-wingers in total control of that body.

In October 1954, at the TLC conference in Durban, a decision was taken to dissolve the organization and form the South African Trade Union Council, SATUC (later changed to the Trade Union Council of South Africa, TUCSA) with a constitution barring the affiliation of African trade unions or 'mixed' unions with African members. Two African representatives of TLC-affiliated unions were not even allowed to address the conference.

Eleven of the unions which voted against the formation of SATUC got together with the Council for Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) to form a new non-racial trade union federation: the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). Its inaugural conference, held in Johannesburg in March 1955, adopted a Declaration of Principles (see Appendix) and a constitution, and elected SACTU's first executive. Petrus Beylerveld of the textile Workers Industrial Union became President and Leslie Massina, formerly Secretary of CNETU, became General Secretary. Vice-Presidents were Cleopas



Delegates to the founding conference of SACTU, 5 March 1955.

Sibande and Lucy Mvubelo. Other executive members included Leon Levy, John Nkadimeng, Mark Shope and Billy Nair.

SACTU placed great emphasis on organizing unorganized workers. Its affiliated membership of about 20,000 workers in 19 unions in 1956 grew to 46,000 in 35 unions in 1959 and 53,000 in 51 unions in 1961. Aside from its commitment to organizing all workers irrespective of race, SACTU also pledged itself to participate in the political struggle against racism and exploitation. It consequently became an active partner in the Congress Alliance.

Community Struggles

A wide range of community struggles against oppression took place in South Africa during the 1950s. One of the most important was the struggle against government plans to destroy Sophiatown and remove its people to Meadowlands, in Soweto, in 1954–56. Sophiatown, one of the oldest African urban communities in South Africa, was one of few areas where Africans could own freehold property. Compensation offered to property owners was far below the market value of their properties. Workers would be forced to pay more for rent and transport in Meadowlands.

The ANC launched a major campaign against the removals, lasting several months, with mass protest meetings in Sophiatown and other Rand townships. A group of Freedom Volunteers was recruited in Sophiatown to help mobilize the people to resist removals. The government responded by banning all meetings in the Johannesburg area. The date for starting the removals was brought forward to disorganize the resistance and, on 9 February 1955, 2,000 troops and 80 trucks were ordered into Sophiatown to begin the removals. Eventually overwhelming force prevailed, and Sophiatown was destroyed.

Other significant community struggles during this period included bus boycotts in protest against fare increases in Alexandra, Evaton, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth and other towns. In the biggest and best known of these, the people of Alexandra walked to work for the first three months of 1957. They adopted the slogan '*Azizwela!*' (We shall not ride) and, despite massive intimidation by the police, refused to give up their boycott until the fares were lowered again.

In 1959 the ANC organized a potato boycott in protest against the inhuman conditions of workers on potato farms in the Bethal area of the Eastern Transvaal. This led to a slight improvement in legal requirements for the treatment of farm workers. In the same year a boycott of 'Nationalist products' forced the country's largest canning company to enter into direct negotiations with the SACTU-affiliated Food and Canning Workers Union.

The Women's Movement

During the early 1950s, the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) increased its level of activity. Significant numbers of women participated in the Defiance Campaign, were arrested and served prison sentences. The Women's League participated in community struggles, in the fight against Bantu Education, in organizing the Congress of the People and in other campaigns.

The major campaign undertaken by the ANCWL was against the introduction of passes for women. In this, as in many of its other activities, it worked closely with non-African women, particularly through the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). Formed in April 1954 at a national meeting of women in Johannesburg, FEDSAW was a non-racial, national organization which became closely associated with the Congress Alliance. FEDSAW's first President was Ida Mntwana and its secretary was Ray Alexander; as Vice-Presidents it had Florence Matomela, Bertha Mkize, Lilian Ngoyi and Bertha Smith.

A large number of anti-pass demonstrations took place in various parts of South Africa, in both major cities and smaller centres. For example, in April 1955, in Winburg, a small town in the Orange Free State where the government had started issuing passes to women, several hundred women who said they had been tricked into accepting pass books marched to the magistrates' court and burned their books. A number were arrested and imprisoned.

On 27 October 1955, almost 2,000 women of all races staged a march through Pretoria. The high point of the anti-pass campaign was the march of 20,000 women in Pretoria on 9 August 1956, a day which is now marked by the liberation movement as South African Women's Day. They marched to the Union Buildings, the administrative seat of the government, to present a massive anti-pass petition to the Prime Minister, J. G. Strijdom. Strijdom refused to see them but thousands of petition forms were left at his door.

Although a number of top FEDSAW and ANCWL leaders were arrested in the December 1956 Treason Trial arrests, the anti-pass campaigns continued with some large rallies and demonstrations in Johannesburg and strong resistance to the issue of passes in rural areas. It was only at the end of 1960 that the regime was finally able to impose and enforce the pass laws on all African women.

In mid-1959 the women of Cato Manor, an African shanty town in Durban, became involved in a campaign against municipal beer halls. The women resented the fact that it was illegal for them to brew liquor at home, while the municipality ran beer halls where sorghum beer was sold to African men. Women often defied the law, brewing beer at

home to sell and sometimes entertaining guests on the premises. The police raided homes regularly to destroy home-brewed liquor so that men would use the beer halls.

In June 1959 a crowd of women attacked a beer hall, driving out the male customers, spilling beer stocks and destroying brewing equipment. The following day baton-wielding police brutally broke up a crowd of 2,000 women. The people of Cato Manor, men as well as women, retaliated, burning municipal buildings and destroying vehicles. Three were shot dead while setting fire to a beer hall.

The women, led by influential figures such as Dorothy Nyembe, Florence Mkize and Gladys Manzi, organized several large demonstrations. They picketed the beer halls and, with the support of the ANC, organized a highly successful beer hall boycott. Six months later, in February 1960, violence erupted again as nine police were attacked and killed while on a liquor raid.

In Cato Manor, the women's struggles merged with mass resistance against forced removals to the new township of Kwa-Mashu. That same February, at a mass meeting called by the ANC, 4,500 people



June 1959. Police with batons break up a women's demonstration in Cato Manor. The women objected to laws which prohibited them from brewing beer at home to supplement their meagre incomes.

made plans for a general strike and a bus and beer hall boycott in protest against the removals. These plans were diverted, however, by the Sharpeville massacre and the events that followed it (see below).

Rural Struggles

A number of uprisings took place in the countryside during the 1950s. The earliest, in 1950, was in the Drakensburg district reserve of Witzieshoek, where the government had fenced off certain areas to prevent cattle from grazing there. The local people, who had already lost much land and suffered from intense overcrowding, saw this soil conservation measure as a threat to their livelihood and tore down the new fences. The police moved in, and in clashes that followed fourteen African peasants and two policemen were killed.

In the period 1956–60 there was an upsurge in rural resistance in various parts of the country: the Northern, Eastern and Western Transvaal, Natal, Tembuland and Pondoland. The resistance was triggered off by various grievances: forced removals of rural communities; the deposing, under the Bantu Authorities Act, of popular chiefs who refused to cooperate with the authorities; the issue of passes to women and other problems. Some of these struggles were under the leadership of ANC branches, while others were led by a purely local leadership in areas where the ANC had little or no organization.

One of the most sustained rural struggles, in the Zeerust area of the Western Transvaal in 1957–58, was initiated by women in the area who resisted the introduction of passes. Thousands of women refused to accept pass books or else burned them at protest meetings. They were supported by male migrant workers who returned from the Witwatersrand, held meetings to discuss the issue, and later attacked chiefs and others who collaborated with the government. The police and their collaborators responded by unleashing a reign of terror, with wholesale arrests, beatings and killings, finally forcing 2,000 people to flee across the border into Bechuanaland.

In the rural areas of Natal there was widespread resistance by women in July and August 1959. Their grievances included the stock limitation laws, insecurity of land tenure, women's passes and the collaboration of chiefs and local headmen with government officials. In various parts of rural Natal they held protest meetings, marched on police stations, courts and government offices, stoned police and burnt sugar cane fields. In all, about 20,000 women were actively involved in these activities and about 1,000 were arrested.

The central episode of rural resistance was the peasants' revolt in Pondoland in 1960. Huge meetings were held to protest against the

imposition of stooge chiefs and Bantu Education, and to demand parliamentary representation and lower taxes. The homes of 27 government informers were burnt, and many were forced to flee the area. On 6 June 1960, two aircraft, a helicopter and ground-based police attacked a peaceful outdoor meeting at Ngquza Hill, killing more than eleven people. In certain areas the 'Mountain Committee', set up by the rebels, exercised considerable authority, and people's courts were also established. The peasants' movement later adopted the Freedom Charter, thus linking rural resistance with the national struggle. Eventually the government declared a state of emergency in November 1960, and the peasants' revolt was crushed by the armed might of the state. Thirty people were sentenced to death.

The Treason Trial

In early December 1956, police swooped on homes all over South Africa, arresting 156 people, including most of the leaders of the Congress movement, on charges of High Treason. For over a year the police had been collecting evidence; in raids on homes and meetings, thousands of documents had been seized. They now accused those arrested of 'a country-wide conspiracy' inspired by 'international Communism' to overthrow the state. After an initial few weeks in prison, the accused were released on bail.

Central to the prosecution's case was the charge that the Freedom Charter was a Communist document and that the ANC and its allies had a policy of violence. A brilliant team of defence lawyers, including some lawyers among the accused (e.g., Duma Nokwe, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Joe Matthews and Joe Slovo) demolished the prosecution's case. After a year, charges were withdrawn against 61 persons and later against others, until in March 1961 the last thirty accused were found not guilty.

The state had intended the trial to intimidate the liberation movement, to weaken it by removing most of its main leaders, and to label the movement as Communist, thus encouraging a division between Communists and non-Communists. While the removal of the leadership from most political activity did have negative effects on the movement, the trial also served to bring together, inspire and strengthen the unity of leaders from different parts of South Africa. Rank-and-file members refused to be intimidated, and a large movement in support of the accused developed. Big crowds of people, singing freedom songs and carrying placards bearing the words, 'We stand by our leaders', gathered outside the preparatory examination; on one occasion they were dispersed by police clubs and gunfire. A Treason Trial Defence Fund was started to collect

money to pay legal fees and support the families of the accused. In Britain, Canon John Collins also started a fund which collected substantial sums of money for the same purpose.

M. B. Yengwa on the Treason Trial

The Treason Trial was a very important period of my political life. As a result, I consider the Treason Trial as a way of making me aware of so many of the leaders in various provinces and our strengths in the liberation struggle. That's where I met many of the prominent leaders like ... Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela ... and that's where I met some of the whites in the Congress of Democrats like Ben Turok, Fred Carneson, Joe Slovo, and also Ruth First. It was a way of uniting us in a common struggle and the government made a big mistake by arresting us and collecting us all together and [letting us form] some ideas on our common programme. The Treason Trial became a focal point in addressing the issues on our common ownership of South Africa.

— M. B. Yengwa, Natal Provincial Secretary and National Executive Member of the ANC during the 1950s, interview with the author, London, 1985.



Demonstrators at the Treason Trial.

The PAC

Some elements in the ANC were unhappy with Congress's increasing cooperation with other national groups. They said that Africans should 'go it alone', and claimed that the ANC had abandoned the true African nationalism of the Youth League during Lembede's time. Their slogan was 'Africa for the Africans'. They also objected to what they said was the growing influence of Communists in the ANC, and referred to Marxism as a 'foreign ideology'.

PAC Viewpoint

A. B. Ngcobo, a leader of the ANC Youth League in Natal, who joined the PAC, becoming the first treasurer-general in 1959, explains the Africanist position:

'The coloureds are as indigenous as anybody else because they are born of miscegenation between the whites and our sisters or our daughters. We say the bulk of the coloureds come from the loins of the Africans, they are part of the African nation. But what I'm saying is that the whites and the Asians, those are the people that were manipulating. The Africans, that is their struggle in the first place, and they've got to lead that struggle. The Indians should not lead the struggle — they've got to support on issues. For instance, they didn't carry passes and the whites didn't carry passes, and therefore they couldn't understand anything about passes. With the whites, we say that it's not for them to say the struggle must go this way or that way, as in fact, has happened. Within the ANC there has been a wave of dissatisfaction with the whites in the movement.

By 1958, we decided we can't take any more the policies that the ANC was carrying on. African emancipation could only be realized by the return of the land that had been taken away. The ANC had been established in 1912 in order to espouse that, with the question of the land being paramount. As [Anton] Lembede said, there's a mystic connection between the soil and the soul. The economic system we inherited from our fathers, where there was no starvation, where there was no exploitation — we wanted an economic system based on those principles.'

— Fredrikse, 1990, p. 73.

The Africanists, as they called themselves, campaigned against the Freedom Charter and tried to prevent its adoption by the ANC. They objected particularly to the formulation that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white'. Despite their failure to prevent the Charter's adoption, they continued their campaign against it. In the Transvaal in particular, the Africanists became involved in extremely

disruptive factional activity. In November 1958, at a Transvaal Provincial Conference, the Africanists tried but failed to take over the meeting by packing it with people who were not accredited delegates. They then left the Conference after declaring their intention of forming a new organization. In April 1959, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) was formed with Robert Sobukwe as President and Potlako Leballo as National Secretary. The PAC drew most of its strength from a few Rand townships such as Orlando and Alexandra, the Vaal Triangle area and the Western Cape.

The Sharpeville Crisis

In early 1960, the ANC announced that it would begin an anti-pass campaign on 31 March. In an attempt to pre-empt this, the PAC announced its own anti-pass campaign starting on 21 March. It called on people to leave their pass books at home and gather outside police stations in Orlando, Sharpeville, and the Western Cape townships of Langa and Nyanga. At Sharpeville the police opened fired on the unarmed and peaceful crowd, killing 69 people and wounding 180. The majority of those killed were shot in the back while fleeing. At Langa and Nyanga the police similarly killed at least five people.

That night in Langa, the people attacked the police, burnt municipal offices, cut telephone wires and blocked roads to prevent the entry of fire engines. A two-week general strike in Cape Town followed, and was met with violence by the police. On 30 March, Philip Kgosana of the PAC led a march of 30,000 people in Cape Town to protest against police violence. The police managed to persuade Kgosana to send the marchers home in return for the promise of an interview between the leaders and the Minister of Justice. The police then broke their promise and arrested Kgosana later the same day. He was later charged with incitement. President Lutuli of the ANC called for a one-day stay-away on 28 March in protest against the Sharpeville/Langa/Nyanga massacres. The stay-away was highly successful with about 90 per cent of workers in the major cities refusing to go to work. A protest march of 10,000 people took place in Durban.

On 28 March, the government announced that it would be banning the ANC and the PAC; the ban came into effect on 8 April. On 30 March, the regime declared a state-of emergency and began a round-up of its opponents. In all, it arrested over 2,000 activists, mainly members of the Congress Alliance, but also including many PAC members. A turning point in South African history had been reached. The liberation movement had been deprived of the ability to operate legally, and large numbers of people were coming to the conclusion that it was impossible to attain liberation by non-violent means alone.

Essay Topics

- 1 Evaluate the view that the ANC's Programme of Action of 1949 was a significant turning point in the development of the liberation movement.
- 2 Outline the main demands of the Freedom Charter and discuss their significance.
- 3 Trace the development of the Congress Alliance from 1945 to 1960, and evaluate its importance to the liberation struggle.

Topics for Group Discussion

- 1 Discuss the following questions in connection with the Defiance Campaign:
 - (a) What were the aims of the campaign?
 - (b) Were these aims achieved?
 - (c) In your opinion, was the Campaign a worthwhile activity in the struggle for liberation? Give full reasons for your opinion.
- 2 Read the passage below and then discuss the questions that follow.

After the war the national and political awareness of the Blacks was expressed in different ways. They began to voice their ideals and ambitions in no uncertain manner. They also began to pose more and more as the injured party and proudly called themselves 'Africans'. They referred to the fact that they were not given the vote in spite of being in the majority, and were ruled by a White minority who approved discriminatory laws which were to the detriment of the Blacks.

Communism made an increasingly strong impact on Blacks. Communist methods, namely incitement, strikes and riots, were also in evidence, with an eye to creating chaos if possible. The once-reasonable, passive ANC, changed completely. The leaders were now Dr James Moroka, W. M. Sisulu and Dr Albert Luthuli. Already in 1945 the ANC had demanded the abolishment of discriminating laws [sic]. In 1951 it announced a country-wide strike to demonstrate against the 'apartheid' laws, and delivered an ultimatum to the Government in Bloemfontein. The demand of this ultimatum was that six of the laws concerning separate development should be recalled before 29 February 1952. If this did not happen, the Van Riebeeck Festival, which was to commemorate 300 years of White culture in South Africa, would be disrupted. The National Government refused to accede to this ultimatum. Revolt and violence was the Black answer to this refusal.

The Government had however previously taken precautionary measures to maintain law and order. Thus the Suppression of Communism Act was steered through in 1950, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act as well as the Public Safety Act were placed on the statute book in 1953. As a counter-reaction against these laws, the Non-Whites tried to form a united front. At Kliptown, near Johannesburg, three thousand delegates of the

Congress of Democrats (a leftist White organization), the Coloured People's Organization, the Indian Congress and the ANC gathered on 26 June 1955. Among the representatives of the Congress of Democrats there were some who stirred up unrest and anarchy. Since it was regarded as communist inspired, the police could put a stop to it. Before the meeting could be broken up, the so-called Freedom Charter had been accepted by the congress. In this was declared, *inter alia*, that South Africa belonged to her White and Black inhabitants. The Government consequently only had the mandate to exercise its will, if it were in accordance with the will of all its inhabitants.

The Government was, however, not intimidated. The Russian Consulate in Johannesburg was closed down to put an end to the communist-inspired revolt movement. A further 156 people were arrested, among them Dr G. M. Naicker, the leader of the Indian Congress, and Albert Luthuli, the President of the ANC. A charge of treason was brought against 29 of them, the trial lasting until 1961. The rest were set free.

— Lategan and De Kock, *History in Perspective: Standard 10*, pp. 186-7.

- (a) What is the author implying when he says that Africans 'began to pose more and more as the injured party'?
- (b) What is the author's conception of Communism? Try to explain it as fully as possible and show how he puts it across.
- (c) What, in the author's opinion, is the nature of the relationship between the ANC and the Communists?
- (d) How does the author justify the repressive legislation and police action during the 1950s?
- (e) Which social group's point of view do you think is represented by the author?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

From Sharpeville to Rivonia, 1960–1964

The massacres at Sharpeville and elsewhere, the strikes and demonstrations that followed them, the State of Emergency and the banning of the ANC and PAC focused international attention on South Africa. The publicity was intensified when the Prime Minister, Dr Verwoerd, was shot (but not killed) at the Rand Easter Show by a white farmer, David Pratt, on 9 April 1960.* At the United Nations, the Security Council intervened in South African affairs for the first time. A resolution was passed (with the abstention of Britain and France) blaming the South African government for the recent killings and calling on it to initiate measures to bring about racial harmony. Anti-apartheid feelings at the UN and other international bodies were becoming stronger as many African countries gained their independence and added their voices to anti-colonial and anti-racist moves.

Foreign investors began to withdraw their money from South Africa, fearing a situation in which the government could no longer guarantee stability. This outflow of funds had already started when the economy slumped in 1959 and some investors became nervous at the state's apparent inability to stem the growth of the liberation movement despite all its repressive measures. After Sharpeville, the rate of disinvestment increased and many white South Africans sent money out of the country. Gold and foreign exchange reserves plummeted by 51 per cent between January 1960 and May 1961.

By early 1960 the ANC expected the regime to step up its level of repression and decided to widen its activities by sending Oliver Tambo, then Deputy President, out of the country to help mobilize international support and make links with other African anti-colonial

* Pratt was declared by the court to be unfit to stand trial on the basis of psychiatric evidence. He was put into a mental institution where he later committed suicide.

struggles.* He was soon joined by Yusuf Dadoo who was sent out during the State of Emergency by the SACP, in consultation with the South African Indian Congress. Some others, including PAC members, also left South Africa at this time. In June 1960, exiled leaders of the ANC, PAC, SAIC and the South West African National Union (SWANU, a Namibian movement) together formed the United Front to coordinate their international work and present a united face to the outside world. The Front was handicapped, however, by the PAC leaders' hostility to cooperation with the ANC, and collapsed after eighteen months.

The Last Phase of Non-violent Struggle

Establishment of the underground

After it was banned the ANC refused to dissolve itself and set about building an underground organization. This was extremely difficult during the State of Emergency, with the leadership either in detention or in hiding. Despite the massive repression, though, the ANC leaders in hiding did manage to build some underground structures based on the M-Plan; they established means of communication, and produced and distributed a number of leaflets. During the Emergency, plans were made to boycott festivities for the fiftieth anniversary of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1960. The regime decided to cancel all festival events for Africans but most coloureds and Indians boycotted the celebrations. In Natal a small multi-racial group of people marked the day with fasting and prayer, and in Cape Town 8,000 people of all races marched through the city streets to show their support for a non-racial South Africa.

The South African Communist Party also reorganized its underground work to accord with the new conditions and coordinate its work with the ANC. In fact, the leaflet which first announced the Party's existence was distributed with the aid of non-Communist ANC members. Although no formal alliance existed between the ANC and the SACP, joint underground work, in which the Communists already had some experience, helped to strengthen the unity of the two organizations.

After most detainees were released and the State of Emergency was finally lifted on 31 August 1960, political work became a little easier. The ANC and SACP, as well as the PAC, still had to work underground but members were able to do some limited political work in other organizations. One example of such an organization was the African

* Although this decision was taken before the Sharpeville massacre, Oliver Tambo only left on 26 March 1960, after the massacre but before the State of Emergency was declared and the ANC banned.

Students Association (ASA) formed by ANC Youth League members to represent African high school and university students.

At the beginning of 1960, Dr Verwoerd had announced his intention of holding a referendum of voters to decide on whether South Africa should become a republic, thus realizing the old Afrikaner nationalist dream. The referendum was held in October and a majority of whites (52 per cent) voted in favour of a republic. As usual, the black majority had no say in the matter. South Africa's impending republican status meant that the country would no longer automatically remain in the Commonwealth; if it wanted to remain, it would have to apply for membership. At the conference of Commonwealth prime ministers in March 1961, opposition to South Africa's membership from countries like Ghana, India and Canada was so strong that Verwoerd withdrew the application. In effect, South Africa had been expelled.

The All-In African Conference

In December 1960, a group of ANC leaders called a consultative conference in Johannesburg. Invited to attend the meetings were members of the ANC, PAC, African members of the Liberal Party and some other organizations. The conference called for the convening of an 'all-in conference representative of African people' in order to 'demand the calling of a National Convention representing all the people of South Africa'. A Continuation Committee was elected to organize the conference.

The PAC and Liberal Party representatives later withdrew from the Continuation Committee, claiming that the ANC was trying to dominate it. Jordan Ngubane of the Liberal Party also claimed, without any evidence, that the committee was being manipulated with the aid of money coming from Moscow.

Nonetheless, a very successful conference, known as the All-In African Conference, was held on 25 and 26 March 1961 in Pietermaritzburg, drawing 1,400 representatives of 145 groups from all parts of the country. Groups as diverse as the Interdenominational African Ministers' Federation, the Southern Transvaal Football Association, the Apostolic Church of Zion and even the Liberal Party attended. The highlight of the conference was the unexpected and dramatic appearance of Nelson Mandela who had been banned for 8 years. The expiry of his banning order eleven days before the conference had somehow been overlooked by the government, and he now made his first public speech since the Defiance Campaign.

The conference demanded that before 31 May 1961 there should be a National Convention 'of elected representatives of all adult men and women on an equal basis irrespective of race, colour, creed or other limitations'. The purpose of the Convention was to draw up 'a

IF GOVERNMENT REFUSES NATIONAL CONVENTION...

ALL-IN CONFERENCE CALLS FOR ACTION

Mass Demonstrations On Eve of Republic

THE ALL AFRICAN PEOPLES CONFERENCE, HELD AT PETERSBURG LAST SATURDAY WAS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS.

Over 1,000 delegates attended and passed resolutions demanding that the Government call a National Convention of all South African peoples to discuss the future of the country.

The delegates also passed resolutions demanding that the Government call a National Convention of all South African peoples to discuss the future of the country.



Thousands on one side, which had been asked to be the largest group. Photographs showed the other side of the crowd.



The African National Congress has been invited to the conference.

AFRICA DAY SPECIAL
In commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the formation of the African National Congress, the New Age is publishing a special supplement on Africa Day. This supplement will contain a full and complete report on the day's events.

TREASON TRIAL MAY END THIS WEEK

TREASON TRIAL MAY END THIS WEEK. The trial of the accused traitors in the Treason Trial is expected to conclude this week. The trial has been a long and arduous process, and the outcome is eagerly awaited by the public.

New Age reports on the All-In African Conference

non-racial democratic constitution for South Africa'. If the government did not call such a Convention, and no one expected that it would, there would be 'country-wide demonstrations on the eve of the proclamation of the Republic'. A National Action Council, headed by Mandela, was established to carry out the conference decisions. The identity of other members was kept secret and Mandela himself went underground to avoid arrest.

Soon after the conference, a warrant for Mandela's arrest was issued, but he evaded the police as he toured the country organizing people to carry out the decisions of the All-In African Conference. In mid-April, Mandela wrote to Dr Verwoerd informing him of the demand for a National Convention. There was no reply although Verwoerd said in parliament that he had received Mandela's 'arrogant' letter with its 'threats'.

The stay-at-home

In May, the National Action Council decided that the demonstration against the republic should take the form of a three day stay-at-home on 29-31 May 1961. This was publicized through leaflets and press statements (sometimes ignored or distorted by the press), as well as through the ANC underground and other organizations, particularly SACTU. The PAC, playing a spoiling role, opposed the strike and distributed leaflets discouraging participation.

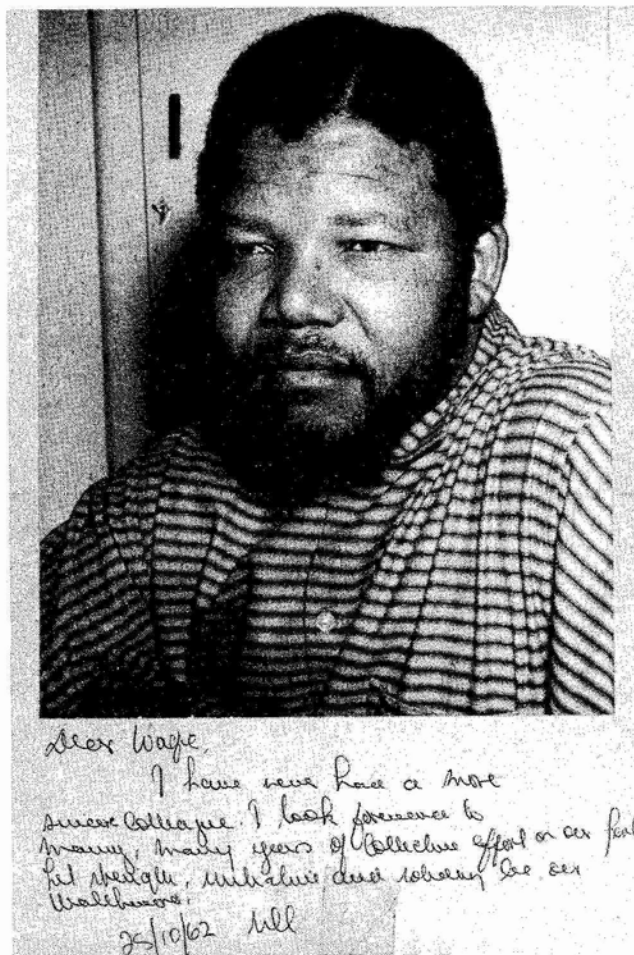
Nelson Mandela, in an article about the May 1961 stay-at-home, wrote the following on the role played by the PAC:

The attitude of former members of the Pan-Africanist Congress on the stay-at-home has been one of shocking contradiction and amazing confusion. Nothing has been more disastrous to themselves than their pathetic attempts to sabotage the demonstrations....

What shocked most people was the extent to which they completely identified themselves with the action of the police in the repression of the demonstrations. We have already indicated the unprecedented measures adopted by the government to deal with our campaign. These measures provoked strong protests from many organizations and individuals, but there was not a single word of protest from the former PAC people.

The police reacted with large-scale arrests of leaders and organizers. They also arrested about 10,000 Africans under the pass laws in order to create an atmosphere of intimidation. All meetings were banned throughout the country, printing presses were raided and tens of thousands of leaflets confiscated. In the African townships, police with loudspeakers and leaflets in African languages attacked the people's leaders and threatened that those who joined the stay-at-home would be fined. The armed forces were put on the alert and armoured cars patrolled the townships.

Despite all these efforts by the regime, hundreds of thousands of workers and others responded to the stay-at-home on 29 May. In Johannesburg about 60 per cent of workers stayed away from their jobs. In most major cities, commerce and industry were severely disrupted, with large numbers of coloured and Indian workers striking together with Africans. In Port Elizabeth about 75 per cent of black workers stayed away on 30 May. In Cape Town, where African workers had suffered greatly during the two-week strike in March-April 1960, the response from Africans was weak; the CPC did manage, however, to organize a very successful stay-at-home among coloured workers. In some areas the stay-at-home was also supported by university students of all races and by African primary and secondary school students. In Durban and Pietermaritzburg most Indian businesses were closed on 29 May. Despite its successes, though, the strike was not as widespread as had been hoped and the leadership feared that it could not be sustained for three days. Nelson Mandela thus announced on 30 May that the strike was being called off.



This photograph of Nelson Mandela was taken while he was 'underground' in 1961. The inscription below it was written by Mandela after his arrest and was addressed to a comrade, Wolfie Kodesh, one of those who had helped to conceal him. It was a typical example of Mandela's thoughtfulness and desire to keep up the spirits of his comrades even after his own arrest. It reads: 'Dear Wolfie, I have never had a more sincere colleague. I look forward to many years of collective effort on our part. Let strength, initiative and solidarity be our watchword.'

The Beginning of the Armed Struggle

The massive use of force against people during this period, on top of the banning of the ANC and all the state violence over the decades, now forced the people's leaders to look for alternative forms of struggle. Nelson Mandela put the matter thus:

Even up to the present day the question that is being asked with monotonous regularity up and down the country is this: Is it politically correct to continue preaching peace and non-violence when dealing with a Government whose barbaric practices have brought so much suffering and misery to Africans? With equal monotony the question is posed: Have we not closed a chapter on this question? These are crucial questions that merit sane and sober reflection. It would be a serious mistake to brush them aside and leave them unanswered.

After the stay-at-home, the police continued to search for Mandela while he remained underground, moving about the country doing the work of the movement. In June 1961, a small group of ANC leaders, including Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others, met to discuss the future direction of the liberation struggle. They concluded that the use of violence by the African people had become inevitable and that this violence ought to be controlled and directed by the responsible political leadership. They also felt that without the use of violence the African people could not succeed in their struggle for liberation. It was therefore decided to form a military organization which would conduct a sabotage campaign and at the same time prepare for guerilla warfare against the regime.

Umkhonto we Sizwe

Before the armed struggle could be started, it was necessary to consult other members of the leadership. This was done, and in November 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation) was formed as a non-racial organization separate from the ANC but under the ANC's political guidance. The SACP also backed Umkhonto and its members participated in it from the beginning. On 16 December, the new organization announced its existence with a number of sabotage explosions at government buildings and electrical power installations. On the same day, the *Umkhonto we Sizwe Manifesto* was issued, explaining why the organization had been formed and what its purpose was (see below for extracts).

From the *Umkhonto we Sizwe Manifesto*, 1961

It is ... well known that the main national liberation organizations in this country have consistently followed a policy of non-violence. They have conducted themselves peaceably at all times, regardless of Government attacks and persecutions upon them, and despite all Government-inspired attempts to provoke them to violence. They have done so because the people prefer peaceful methods of change to achieve their aspirations without the suffering and bitterness of civil war. But the people's patience is not endless.

The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.

The Government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as weakness; the people's non-violent policies have been taken as a green light for Government violence. Refusal to resort to force has been interpreted by the Government as an invitation to use armed force against the people without any fear of reprisals. The methods of Umkhonto we Sizwe mark a break with that past.

The National High Command was based at Lilliesleaf Farm at Rivonia near Johannesburg which was being rented by an Umkhonto member, Arthur Goldreich. Regional commands were established in various parts of the country to select targets and direct operations within the overall framework set out by the High Command. In a period of eighteen months over 200 attacks were made in all the major cities and a number of smaller towns. During the whole of this period, Umkhonto's policy was to avoid the taking of human life in its attacks.

Meanwhile, the government was under pressure as a result of the withdrawal of capital from South Africa, international condemnation and its failure to crush the liberation movement. In 1961, controls to prevent the flight of capital were introduced. In early 1962, Verwoerd announced that the Transkei bantustan was to get 'self-government' the following year. He hoped this would deflect international criticism by providing what seemed like a transfer of some political power to Africans. In June 1962 the Sabotage Act provided for the death penalty for sabotage and much tighter restrictions on banned persons who could now be subject to 24-hour house arrest at the whim of the Minister of Justice. Later in the year the Congress of Democrats was banned, as was the newspaper *New Age. Spark*, the successor to *New Age*, continued to publish until March 1963, when it was forced to close because so many of its staff members were banned and no longer allowed to work on a newspaper.

Soon after the formation of Umkhonto, it was decided to send Mandela out of the country to attend the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa in Addis Ababa. After the conference he toured Africa and also went to Britain where he met leaders of the opposition parties. He met many of Africa's leaders, among them Julius Nyerere, Haile Selassie, Leopold Senghor, Sekou Toure, Milton Obote and Ben Bella. He was given a sympathetic hearing and promised help, and made arrangements for Umkhonto combatants to obtain military training. He himself took a course of training with the Algerian Army of

National Liberation which was at that time nearing the end of its struggle for Algeria's independence from France. As he passed through Tanzania on his way home, he met the first Umkhonto recruits from South Africa *en route* to obtain military training. Mandela returned to South Africa in July 1962 but was arrested the following month. He was charged with inciting African workers to strike and leaving the country illegally, for which he was found guilty and sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour.

At about this time, the ANC external mission took an important step in cementing its ties with the liberation movements fighting Portuguese colonialism: FRELIMO of Mozambique, MPLA of Angola and PAIGC of Guinea-Bissau. The three movements had an alliance known as CONCP (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies) with which the ANC made a formal agreement to strengthen solidarity and cooperation.

In October 1962, a conference of ANC leaders from inside and outside South Africa was held in Lobatse, Botswana. The resolutions of the conference were kept secret, but soon afterwards the National Executive issued a newsletter declaring:

Our Emphasis Still Remains Mass Political Action.... Political agitation is the only way of creating the atmosphere in which military action can most effectively operate. The political front gives sustenance to the military operations.

For the first time the ANC was publicly linked with Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Other organizations

While Umkhonto was the best organized and most widely established organization employing armed struggle, it was not the only one; nor was it the first to launch armed actions. In October 1961, the National Committee of Liberation (later renamed the African Resistance Movement, ARM) began a campaign of sabotage. Its total membership was about fifty and consisted mainly of white radicals, although there were also a few black members. The ARM was finally smashed by the police and many of its activists imprisoned in early 1964. Later that year a member of the movement, John Harris, planted a bomb in Johannesburg station. It exploded, killing one person and injuring fourteen others. Harris was caught and sentenced to death — the only white South African executed for a politically motivated offence since the Rand Revolt of 1922. At Harris's funeral, a schoolboy read the oration on behalf of his banned parents. He was Peter Hain, who was to play a leading role in halting South African sports tours to Britain in the 1970s.

A bigger group, with a certain amount of popular support, particularly in the Western Cape, was Poqo which was associated with the PAC. Poqo undertook the killing of a few suspected informers and policemen in Langa and Paarl, and also killed a few whites. The white victims were apparently chosen indiscriminately.

In late 1962, the Maseru-based exiled leaders of the PAC, headed by Potlako Leballo, planned a national uprising on 8 April 1963 to fulfil their earlier slogan, 'Independence by 1963'. The plan was for all branches to begin a programme of mass recruitment with a target of 1,000 members per branch before April 1963. On 8 April there were to be simultaneous attacks on police stations, power installations and other targets. This was to be accompanied by a mass, indiscriminate slaughter of whites. A democratic government would then be established.

This plan ran into trouble when Leballo, at a press conference on 24 March, boasted about his plans for a revolution which was soon to be launched in South Africa. He claimed that the PAC had 155,000 members who were ready to strike when he gave the word. Soon after this, the colonial Basutoland police raided the PAC offices and seized a list of 10,000 names, supposedly those of PAC members in South Africa. This list was, it seems, turned over to the South African police and large numbers of PAC members were arrested. There were even more arrests after 1 May 1963 when the '90 day Act' (see p. 226) provided for detention without trial. The crackdown on the PAC was a devastating blow which all but destroyed it as an organized force in South Africa, and from which it was never to recover fully.

'The Road to South African Freedom'

In 1962 the South African Communist Party adopted a new programme, 'The Road to South African Freedom', a major document in the evolution of revolutionary theory in South Africa. It provided a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the country's domestic situation and its relationship to developments in Africa and the world.

It also elaborated for the first time the theory of 'colonialism of a special type', which characterized South Africa as a colonial type of society but one in which both the oppressor and oppressed nations share the same territory. This understanding led to the conclusion that the immediate aim of the struggle was 'a national democratic revolution which will overthrow the colonist state of White supremacy and establish an independent state of National Democracy in South Africa'. This, it considered, could be brought about by a combination of armed struggle and non-violent mass struggle.

The programme pledged the party's 'unqualified support for the Freedom Charter', and considered that the achievements of the

Charter's aims would 'lay the indispensable basis for the advance of our country along non-capitalist lines to a communist and socialist future'.

International Pressures on the South African Regime

The international campaign against South Africa's policies was boosted after 1960 when some leaders of the national liberation movement went into exile and began to mobilize world opinion against apartheid. It was also strengthened by the formation, in April 1960, of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) which began to campaign for the freedom of Namibia from South African occupation, and by the fact that a large number of African countries gained their independence from about this time. In Britain, the Anti-Apartheid Movement was established — the first of many such groups which were to be set up in various countries around the world.

In November 1960, Liberia and Ethiopia, the only independent African countries to have been members of the League of Nations, asked the International Court of Justice to force South Africa to fulfil its duties in Namibia according to the League of Nations mandate. This case was to last six years before the Court finally ruled that Liberia and Ethiopia had no legal right to bring such a case, thus prompting SWAPO to begin an armed struggle. In the early 1960s, though, the court case helped to pressurize the South African government by bringing its occupation of Namibia to world attention.



Electricity pylons damaged in a sabotage attack by Umkhonto we Sizwe in the early 1960s.

The Sabotage Campaign

Eric Mtshali was in the first Umkhonto we Sizwe group to be established in Durban. He was also a member of the Natal Regional Command together with Ronnie Kasrils, Bruno Mtolo, Billy Nair and Curnick Ndlovu. Mtolo later turned out to be a police informer whose evidence in the Rivonia Trial and other trials helped to convict a number of Umkhonto militants. Below, Mtshali describes the first Umkhonto attack in Durban:

'Our first target in Durban was the Durban pass office. Billy, Curnick, Bruno and myself went to plant a bomb there which we had made out of aluminium, potassium permanganate and coffee. I don't remember what other mixtures there were. We planted this bomb at the door of the main office of the pass office in Ordinance Road. When we were a few steps away, Bruno said there was something that we did not put correctly and he ran back to correct that. We then proceeded to another area where a pylon was to be blown up. This pylon was situated at a place called Morningside, in Durban. First we went to prepare the material, placed it at the target, retreated. We then heard a big explosion going off. A big cloud of smoke and flames covered that pylon. It was a new experience to us, and we were proud. We read about it the next day in the *Natal Mercury*. The damage was quite substantial. This operation was more successful than the one in Ordinance Road where the bomb did not explode properly and caused very little damage. Well, we thought it was because we were amateurs, but later we suspected that Bruno must have sabotaged it when he went back after we had placed everything correctly.'

— *Dawn*, Souvenir issue, December 1986.

In December 1961, Chief Albert Lutuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his important contribution to the struggle for peace and freedom in South Africa. When he went overseas to receive his prize, he called for economic sanctions against South Africa. This call was taken up by the United Nations General Assembly which, in November 1962, recommended economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa. The resolution was passed by a two-thirds majority but a number of Western countries abstained. The following year the Security Council recommended that the sale and shipment of all arms, ammunition and military vehicles to South Africa should stop.

These sanctions were not mandatory and most of South Africa's main trading partners ignored them. However, the UN resolutions did help to ensure that most newly independent countries did not establish diplomatic relations with South Africa. Economic contracts with independent Africa also remained much more limited than they might have been without the international campaign to



ANC President, Chief Albert Lutuli, leaving for Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, December 1961. With him are his wife and W. B. Yengwa, Natal Secretary of the ANC.

isolate South Africa, In December 1963, the General Assembly established the UN Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid to keep the situation in South Africa under review and submit reports on it to the UN.

The Regime Gains the Upper Hand

On 1 May 1963, the government passed the General Laws Amendment Act or '90 Day Act' which empowered the police to detain anybody without trial for a period of 90 days. Since a detention order could be renewed at the end of the 90 day period, the law in fact provided for indefinite detention without trial. Hundreds of detentions followed and the liberation movement lost many of its leaders and rank and file members. The detainees were held in solitary confinement, interrogated and often tortured; some broke down under the strain, giving valuable information to the police. In September 1963, Looksmart Ngudle became the first of a long line of detainees to die in detention as a result of their refusal to cooperate with the police.

The liberation movement suffered its heaviest blow on 11 July 1963 when the police raided the headquarters of Umkhonto at Rivonia, capturing members of the High Command as well as important

documents. They and a few others, including Nelson Mandela who was brought from Robben Island prison to stand trial, were charged with recruiting men for training with the object of causing a violent revolution and of conspiring to aid foreign military units if they invaded South Africa. All except one of the accused in what became known as the Rivonia trial were found guilty on 11 June 1964 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Those sentenced were: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Andrew Mlangeni, Elias Motsoaledi and Denis Goldberg. Lionel Bernstein was found not guilty but was immediately re-arrested and placed under house arrest.

This was a great blow for the liberation movement and further blows were to follow. Soon after the Rivonia trial, the High Command of Umkhonto was re-established under the leadership of Wilton Mkwayi and conducted a number of sabotage attacks. However, within months Mkwayi was sentenced to life imprisonment and his comrades to lesser terms. In September 1964, Bram Fischer was arrested and charged with membership of the Communist Party. While on bail, he went underground to carry on political work. He was recaptured ten months later and imprisoned for life. Many other activists were detained or arrested and sentenced to long terms in prison.



In disguise. Bram Fischer before and after he jumped bail to continue his political activity in the underground.



SACTU leader, Vuyisile Mini, who was executed in 1964 together with fellow trade unionists, Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkaba, for their part in the activities of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Mini walked to the gallows singing a freedom song.

Even before the Rivonia arrests, many prominent leaders of the liberation movement like Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, Duma Nokwe, and Joe Slovo had been instructed by the underground to join Oliver Tambo and Yusuf Dadoo in exile. By 1966, the entire leadership inside the country were either in prison or banned. Very little remained of the underground structures and communication with the external mission was minimal.

The trade union movement also found itself in trouble as SACTU leaders and activists were banned, detained or went into exile. Many trade unionists also became active in the ANC underground and Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the trade union work was neglected. Vuyisile Mini, a leading SACTU member in the Eastern Cape, and two other trade unionists, Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkaba, were sentenced to death on charges of sabotage and complicity in the murder of a police informer. They were hanged on 6 November 1964 despite world-wide appeals for clemency. By 1964, SACTU had lost so many of its officials that, although it was not banned, it could no longer operate openly and turned to underground work. A number of its affiliated unions became defunct. SACTU members in exile established an external mission which rallied support for the workers' struggle from trade unions in other countries, and tried to give support to those operating inside South Africa.

Economic Recovery

The outflow of capital from South Africa following the Sharpeville massacre was partially stopped by the currency and trade controls imposed by the government from 1961. The sharp increase in military spending gave a boost to business by providing work for factories producing goods for the South African Defence Force.

When the regime managed to inflict serious setbacks on the liberation movement, foreign investors lost their fears of an impending revolution. American firms like the big mining company, Engelhard Corporation, invested large amounts of capital in the country, thus displaying their confidence in the apartheid regime and encouraging other foreign investors to follow suit. By 1965 overseas capital was once more flowing into South Africa, where cheap black labour assured it of huge profits.

An important development during the post-Sharpeville crisis was the growth of Afrikaner monopoly capital. With the flight of foreign capital from South Africa and the fall in share prices, Afrikaner companies, especially Sanlam, took advantage of the opportunity to invest cheaply and on a large scale in industries which were previously dominated by foreign or English-speaking South African capitalists. Afrikaner capital also gained a foothold in the mining industry when Anglo American Corporation sold General Mining and Finance Corporation (later renamed Gencor) to the Sanlam group very cheaply. Anglo American, headed by Harry Oppenheimer, did this because it saw the development of Afrikaner monopoly capital as a means of bringing about closer ties between the government and big business.

Essay Topics

- 1 'The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa.'

— *Umkhonto we Sizwe Manifesto*, 1961.

With reference to the past history of the ANC and the events of 1960 and 1961, explain why the founders of Umkhonto believed that armed struggle had become necessary in South Africa.

- 2 Analyse the role that the international community has played in helping or hindering the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

Topics for Group Discussion

- 1 Of the various groups which decided to take up arms in South Africa, why do you think that it is only Umkhonto we Sizwe which has survived as a significant military force over the years? Give as many reasons as you can.
- 2 Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

Verwoerd announced that the republic would be within the Commonwealth, if it was possible for him to achieve this. . . . It was with this intention, then, that Verwoerd left for the Commonwealth conference in London on 3 March 1961. But his request was greeted with strenuous opposition. The Afro-Asian members of the Commonwealth, with Nkrumah and Nehru as the chief spokesmen, demanded that South Africa abandon her racial policies if she wanted to remain in the Commonwealth. The Afro-Asians were supported by John Diefenbaker, then Prime Minister of Canada. It was quite obvious that Verwoerd would not agree to this. No self-respecting country could remain a member of an organization that had developed into a pressure group against it. On 15 March he announced that he was withdrawing his request for continued membership. This meant that South Africa would become a republic outside the Commonwealth on 31 May. Most South Africans agreed that Verwoerd could not have acted otherwise, and in the House of Assembly the Leader of the Opposition, Sir de Villiers-Graaff, praised him for the dignified way in which he had carried out his task.

— Joubert, 1979, p. 192.

- (a) Do you accept that 'Most South Africans agreed that Verwoerd could not have acted otherwise'? What do you think led the author to say this?
- (b) Do you think that South Africa's exclusion from the Commonwealth has harmed the regime in the long run?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Economic Growth and Political Repression, 1964–1972

The period 1964–72 was one of sustained economic growth. Production expanded and foreign capital flowed into the country as profits soared. White living standards rose to higher levels than ever before. The boom was fuelled by the labour of black workers whose wages were kept low by harsh repression at a time when dozens of leading trade union organizers had been imprisoned or banned, or had left the country to continue the struggle on other fronts. The liberation movement was on the defensive as a result of the ban on the ANC and the arrest of most of its top leadership inside South Africa. The external mission now had to take a greater responsibility and started looking for ways to reactivate the resistance inside the country.

Repressive Machinery

Despite its seemingly strong position, the South African regime continued to feel insecure and took strong measures to protect itself. From 1965 the police were allowed to detain people for 180 days without trial (instead of 90 days as previously), and to redetain them immediately at the end of this period. The 1967 Terrorism Act was passed in direct response to SWAPO's launching of the armed struggle in Namibia, but applied to South Africa as well as Namibia. The crime of 'terrorism' included a wide range of activities, from participating in the armed struggle to 'embarrassing the administration of the affairs of state'. The Act also provided for indefinite detention without trial and put the onus on the accused to prove their innocence. The maximum penalty for 'terrorism' was death.

In 1969, legislation was passed creating the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), an intelligence agency accountable only to the Prime Minister and thus separate from the police. Under Prime Minister John

Vorster,* BOSS became a large and powerful structure. It gathered information and infiltrated organizations opposed to the regime; it was responsible for murders, bribery and propaganda campaigns in overseas countries.

The military forces also grew rapidly during this period. The 'defence' budget increased over ten times from R44 million in 1960/1 to R472 million for 1973/4. In 1967 compulsory conscription for military service was introduced for all young white males.** In 1966, the police became involved in operations against SWAPO in the Caprivi Strip; in the following year the army and police together assisted the Rhodesian army against joint ZAPU-ANC guerilla forces (see p. 234). The army also remained in reserve as a force which could be used against the black population in South Africa whenever the police were unable to cope.

Because of the fear of an arms embargo against South Africa in 1964, the government established the Armaments Development and Production Corporation (ARMSCOR) to manufacture arms locally. The navy was expanded as more ships and submarines were bought. In 1967 South Africa took over the Simonstown Naval Base by agreement with Britain, which had controlled it for 46 years.

Conflict within Afrikanerdom

The late 1960s saw the beginning of serious conflict within the National Party for the first time since it had come to power. In 1969, four NP members of parliament led by Albert Hertzog split from the party to form the ultra-right *Herstigste Nasionale Party* (HNP or Reconstituted National Party). The immediate cause of the split was a government decision to allow visiting international sports teams to include black players in an effort to counter the growing international sports boycott of South Africa. But its real origins went deeper. An increasingly powerful class of Afrikaner monopoly capitalists was urging the government to promote further economic growth by such policies as establishing relations with independent African countries, increasing spending on black education, promoting white immigration from Europe, and encouraging foreign investment. HNP supporters felt that such policies threatened Afrikaner supremacy; they were prepared to see economic growth restricted rather than allow the interests of white labour and local capital to be threatened.

* Vorster succeeded Dr Verwoerd who was stabbed to death in Parliament in 1966 by Dimitri Tsafendas, a parliamentary messenger. The court found Tsafendas to be insane and ruled that he should be detained 'at the pleasure of the State President'. At the time of writing (24 years later) he was still being held in prison.

** Before 1967 some, but not all, white youth had been called up for military service.

The HNP did not initially gain much electoral support and lost all its seats in the next election. But the HNP split was an early manifestation of the more serious conflicts within Afrikanerdom which were to develop in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the upsurge of revolutionary forces began to threaten the very survival of white supremacy.

The Bantustans

The government pressed on with its bantustan programme, giving more of the bantustans 'self-government'. It established legislative assemblies with a majority of government-appointed members (usually chiefs), and set up administrative structures. The system was also extended to Namibia with the establishment in 1969 of Ovamboland, the first of eleven proposed bantustans. The politicians and bureaucrats who ran the bantustan machinery, as well as a handful of business-people (mainly small merchants), began to prosper. Politicians and bureaucrats earned good salaries, and often used their limited powers to promote their own business interests and to demand bribes. Businesses benefited from loans from the Bantu Investment Corporation. The interests of this small group of collaborators developed with the bantustan system and they became strong allies of the apartheid regime.

During the period 1960-79, three million South Africans were forcibly removed from their places of residence, mainly into the bantustans. A large number of these were moved from white-owned farms as agriculture became more mechanized and required less labour. In addition, legislation was passed abolishing labour tenancies; hundreds of thousands of former labour tenants were then removed to the bantustans. Other victims of mass removals included people from 'black spots' (African-owned farms outside the bantustans which had been acquired before the 1913 Land Act) and those 'endorsed out' of the urban areas because the authorities regarded them as 'superfluous' (i.e., their labour was not required).

The removals were carried out with great brutality and no concern for the ability of the already overcrowded bantustans to absorb the extra people. Most were dumped in 'resettlement' camps, overcrowded, unhygienic areas with virtually no provision for health care, educational or recreational facilities. In these camps, one out of every four children died from malnutrition or disease before its first birthday.

Coloured and Indian Councils

In an attempt to provide some semblance of political representation

for the coloured and Indian people, the government set up the Coloured Persons' Representative Council (CRC) and the South African Indian Council – advisory bodies with very limited powers.

The South African Indian Council was established in 1968, and until 1974 all its members were appointed by the government. After 1974, half of the members were elected by the coloured people. Its feebleness was exposed at the very first election when, in a 37 per cent poll, the anti-apartheid Labour Party won 26 seats while the Federal Party which supported the government won 11 seats. The government then appointed 20 members of the Federal Party, giving this party control of the CRC.

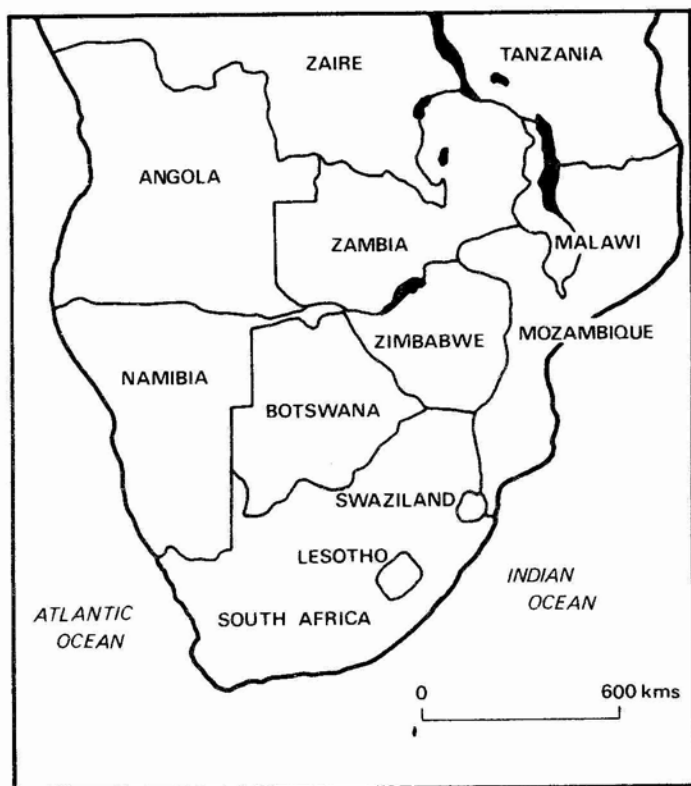
Southern Africa: Regional Developments

The great struggle for freedom which swept the African continent did not leave South Africa's neighbouring states untouched. In most of them, though, the struggle had not met with the same success as it had further north during the 1960s. South Africa remained surrounded by states which could be relied on not to give assistance to the ANC in its efforts to infiltrate trained men into the country to conduct the armed struggle.

Portugal still held Mozambique and Angola, refusing to concede independence. In response, liberation movements headed by FRELIMO in Mozambique and the MPLA in Angola grew up, and in the early 1960s they embarked on armed struggles against their oppressors. They were increasingly successful in the late 1960s and early 1970s, tying down tens of thousands of Portuguese troops and placing great strain on the colonial power's army, economy and political system. The South African government, wishing to maintain a 'buffer zone' of colonial states on its borders, gave military and economic support to the Portuguese.

In Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), the white settlers under the leadership of Ian Smith were unwilling to make even the minor concessions to African demands required by the British government. On 11 November 1965, the white minority proclaimed UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence), asserting their determination to maintain white rule without British backing. Two liberation organizations, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), then took to armed struggle. Here, too, South Africa supported the settler regime, supplying arms and military personnel and helping Rhodesia circumvent the economic sanctions imposed by the international community.

The three former High Commission territories gained their



Map 6 *Southern Africa*

independence from Britain. Botswana and Lesotho became independent in 1966 and Swaziland in 1968. These countries were almost completely dependent on South Africa economically and the South African government did not yet consider them a real threat to its stability.

Much more pressing was the situation in Namibia where SWAPO began its armed struggle in 1966 after the International Court of Justice refused to consider the Namibian question (see Chapter 16). Later that year the United Nations terminated South Africa's mandate over the territory and officially changed its name from South West Africa to Namibia. In 1967 the UN Council for Namibia was formed. Its duties were to take over the administration of the country and maintain law and order until a legislative assembly had been elected in free elections. The Council's aim was to have Namibia independent by 1968, but the South African government had no intention of

surrendering control and refused to allow the UN takeover. The UN later recognized SWAPO as the 'sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people'. In 1971, the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa was occupying Namibia illegally.

The South African regime's major foreign policy success during this period was the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Malawi in 1971. This was an important breach in the ranks of independent Africa as all other African countries had refused to open diplomatic relations with South Africa. Some of these countries did succumb, however, to promises of economic benefit. President Felix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast suggested that African countries should engage in a 'dialogue' with the apartheid state 'which does not necessarily lead to political recognition of the South African regime'. In October 1971 a delegation from the Ivory Coast visited South Africa and held talks with Prime Minister Vorster. Some other African countries – the Malagasy Republic (which received a \$3.2 million loan from South Africa), Gabon, Dahomey (now Benin) and Ghana – also spoke up in favour of the policy of 'dialogue'. The policy, however, was strongly opposed by most member states of the Organization of African Unity, and South Africa was unable to break out of its diplomatic isolation despite these limited contacts. Its trade with African countries, while expanding to some extent, remained mainly confined to Southern Africa where countries had built up a close economic dependence on South Africa during the colonial period.

The ANC

The blows suffered by the national liberation movement in 1963–64 had left it severely weakened. The arrest of most of the movement's leadership inside the country imposed an extra burden on the external mission, originally charged with mobilizing international support and getting training facilities for Umkhonto cadres. Now it had to assume the leadership of the organization and take on the main responsibility for prosecuting the struggle.

On the death of Chief Albert Lutuli in 1967,* Oliver Tambo, the Deputy President who was in exile, became Acting President of the ANC; he remained in this position until 1977 when the National Executive Committee appointed him President after secret consultations with ANC leaders imprisoned on Robben Island.

* Some people were sceptical of the official explanation of his death. The press reported that he was struck by a train while crossing a railway bridge, a short-cut between his shop and home. They described the 68-year-old chief as 'deaf and near blind'. The implication was that he failed to see or hear the train. Chief Lutuli had been restricted for some years to a small area near Stanger. He was rarely allowed visitors but many saw him secretly, and were surprised by press accounts of his state of health.

Armed struggle

After leaving South Africa, young Umkhonto soldiers received military training in friendly countries. Originally it had been planned to send them back into South Africa to train others and take part in military activity against the regime, but the hostile Rhodesian and Portuguese governments on South Africa's borders made such infiltration extremely difficult.

In an article written in 1971 to mark the tenth anniversary of Umkhonto we Sizwe, one of its cadres lists the following as among the Umkhonto cadres who lost their lives in the Zimbabwe campaigns:

In Wankie:

DELMAS SIBANYONI, a light machine gunner who halted the advance of a Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) platoon and never withdrew until his machine gun position was destroyed by a helicopter.

JAMES MASIMINI, who though mortally wounded volunteered to cover the retreat of his comrades until he himself was killed by enemy fire.

ANDRIES MOTSEPE, the brave and energetic commander who tirelessly commanded his men forcing the RAR to retreat under cover of darkness.

CHARLES SISHUBA whose bravery was an inspiration to all the comrades.

SPARKS MOLOI, young and brave.

DONDA, powerful, tireless and ready to undertake any tough mission.

BALOI, calm and determined.

JACK SIMELANE, that tower of strength, nimble and agile and always full of energy.

PAUL PETERSON (BASIL FEBRUARY), who, single handed, fought the Rhodesian Security Forces refusing to surrender until he was killed.

In Sipolilo:

PATRICK MOLAOA, former president of the African National Congress Youth League and ex-treason trialist.

MICHAEL POOE, who played an active role in MK activities on the Rand.

BENSON NTSELE, affectionately known as Commissar.

DAVID MOLEFE, young and one of the longest-serving MK men.

— ANC, 1977.

Against this background, and because it felt a need to increase cooperation with other anti-colonial movements, the ANC formed a military alliance with ZAPU in 1967. The ANC's aim was to secure routes to South Africa through Zimbabwean territory with the help of their ZAPU comrades. The ZAPU/ANC groups entered Zimbabwe from Zambia. They moved into the Wankie area of north-west Zimbabwe and the Sipolilo area of the north east. In separate campaigns on both fronts they fought numerous battles with Rhodesian forces.

Despite considerable difficulties, the freedom fighters acquitted

themselves well in their first military engagement, causing many casualties and putting the Rhodesian forces under some pressure. This led South Africa to send its own police and military forces to help the Smith regime. For the ANC the campaign in Zimbabwe eventually failed in its main aim of opening routes to South Africa, and had to be discontinued. Nonetheless it marked an important milestone in the history of the liberation movement as it was the first time that Umkhonto we Sizwe had engaged enemy forces in guerilla warfare.

The Morogoro Conference

In 1969 the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC called a consultative conference at Morogoro, Tanzania. It was convened mainly as a response to pressure from rank and file members, especially those in the military camps. Many cadres felt that the external mission of the ANC was being diverted by international solidarity work and was not paying sufficient attention to promoting the struggle inside South Africa. A need had arisen to take stock of the situation facing the liberation movement, make plans for the future, and review the composition of the leadership, about some of whom there was considerable dissatisfaction. Also, there was the problem of deciding on the best way for non-African revolutionaries to function in exile. In the early 1960s the internal leadership had decided that the SAIC, CPC and COD should not establish external missions, and that the ANC should represent the entire movement. Since the ANC was exclusively African in membership, this left non-African revolutionaries without any organization.

The conference was preceded by six months of intense discussions. Members at all levels of the organization discussed the issues facing the movement and elected delegates. At the conference itself, the 70 to 80 delegates took several important decisions and adopted two major documents: 'Strategy and Tactics of the ANC' and 'Revolutionary Programme of the ANC'. The former laid out the perspective for an all-round struggle — including armed and mass political struggle — against the South African regime, and described the national liberation of the African people as the 'main content of the present stage of the South African revolution'. The latter was a clause-by-clause analysis of the Freedom Charter. In addition the conference elected a new NEC of nine members (it formerly had 23) with Alfred Nzo as Secretary General.

The conference established the Revolutionary Council, which was to devote itself to the internal struggle and take overall responsibility for military matters; it was to be subordinate only to the NEC. The conference also decided that non-African revolutionaries in exile should be integrated into the ANC's External Mission on a basis of individual equality, with the proviso that they could not be members of the NEC.

After the Morogoro Conference the ANC began to infiltrate cadres back to South Africa by various means and started slowly to rebuild its underground machinery. In August 1971, pamphlet 'bombs' were exploded simultaneously in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, instantly 'publishing' ANC pamphlets in crowded places. The following year an ANC newsletter, *Amandla-Matla*, began to circulate secretly inside South Africa. Between 1971 and 1973, six guerillas were convicted of undergoing military and political training abroad and returning to South Africa to engage in ANC activities. They were James April, Theophilus Cholo, Justice Mpanza, Fana Mzimela, Gardner Sejaka and Petrus Tembu. They were each sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. In a separate trial, Alex Moumbaris, an Australian, and Sean Hosey, an Irishman, were convicted of doing underground work for the ANC; they were sentenced to 12 years and 5 years respectively.

**From James April's Statement to the Supreme Court,
10 May 1971**

The ANC is a great movement. It is the spirit of the African people. As long as you do not satisfy the aspirations of the African people you will never crush the ANC, in spite of the fascist Security Police....

Solutions to South Africa's problems can truly be found, but only on a democratic basis, and not on a democracy imposed upon a majority by a minority which has within it a secret Broederbond fascist society....

I did these things because I believed I was right. I am still prepared to face the consequences of my actions.

The Student Movement and Black Consciousness

In 1961 young ANC activists formed the African Students Association (ASA) to cater for the needs of African university and high school students. In a climate of intense repression, however, it did not survive long. With the liberation movement under sustained attack from the regime, the liberal National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) gained prominence as virtually the only radical opposition to apartheid which remained legal. NUSAS was dominated by white students at the English-language universities, although some black students on 'white' campuses and at the University of Natal Medical School and the University of Fort Hare did participate in its activities.* The

* After 1959, black students could only attend 'white' universities with special government permission. Their numbers were consequently rather small except at the University of Natal whose Medical School was separate from the main campus and catered for black students only. Fort Hare had catered only for black students since 1916.

organization's mainly white leaders were outspoken in their opposition to apartheid. NUSAS often earned the wrath of the regime which tried to discredit it among white students and banned some of its leaders. It was prohibited by the authorities from operating at the newly opened ethnic universities ('tribal colleges') for Africans, coloureds and Indians. One result of the NUSAS leadership's lack of close contact with black students was that it tended to be out of touch with their problems and often displayed a paternalistic attitude towards them.

The South African Students Organization

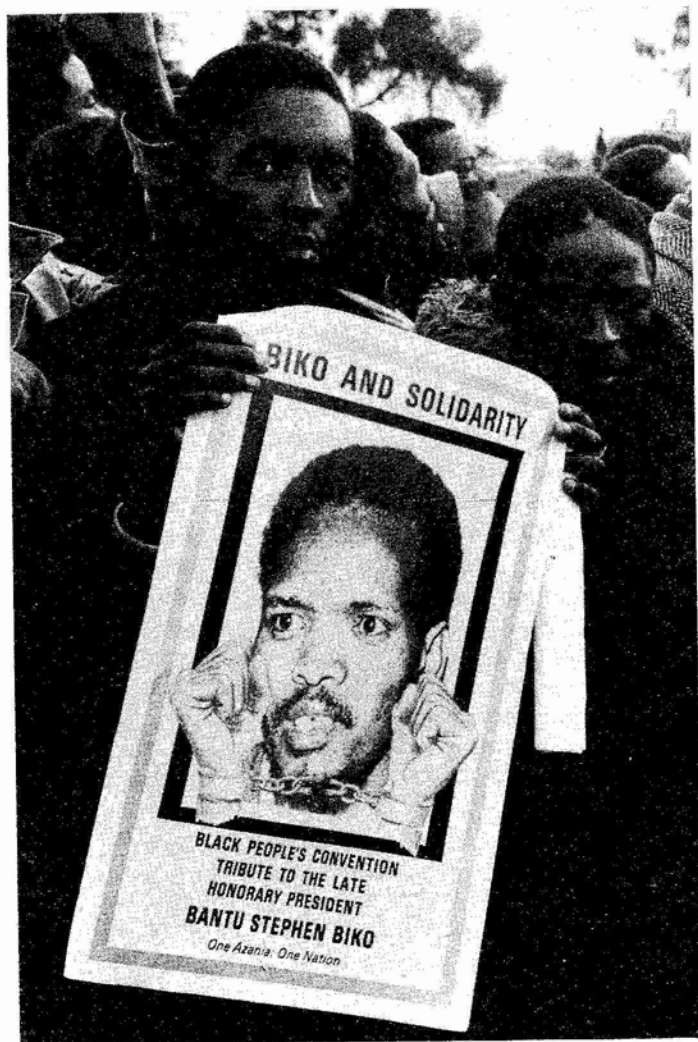
Black students became dissatisfied with NUSAS, and in 1969 formed an all-black student body, the South African Students Organization (SASO). In the conditions of harsh repression following the banning of the ANC, a vacuum had come to exist in the sphere of organized resistance to white domination. SASO, most of whose leaders and members were not familiar with the history and policies of the ANC, began to fill this vacuum. They developed an ideology which became known as Black Consciousness.

Exponents of Black Consciousness stressed the need for psychological liberation. They said that the years of subjugation had caused black people to lose confidence in themselves and develop feelings of inferiority. They insisted that blacks should not work in the same political, social and cultural organizations as whites. Blacks should develop their own organizations, they said, with an exclusively black leadership and membership, free from the suffocating influence of white liberals who tended to dominate multi-racial organizations. SASO, seeing one of its major tasks as instilling in the black people a pride and confidence in themselves, rejected the term 'non-white' which had long been used in South Africa and took to using the word 'black'. Steve Biko, one of the most prominent SASO leaders, later explained their reasoning in reply to a question in court:

I think students in fact took a decision to the effect that they would no longer use the term Non-Whites, nor allow it to be used as a description of them, because they saw it as a negation of their being. They were stated as 'non something' which implied that the standard was something and they were not that particular standard. They felt that a positive view of life, which is commensurate with the build-up of one's dignity and confidence, should be contained in a description which you accept, and they sought to replace the term Non-Whites with the term Black.

— Biko, 1979, p. 14.

SASO also stressed the importance of unity for all black people — Africans, coloureds and Indians — in the struggle against white domination. It drew its leadership from all three black population groups and had a strong following on all the black campuses. In line



A portrait of Steve Biko, the most prominent SASO and Black Consciousness leader, is held up by mourners attending his funeral in September 1977. Biko's death while in police detention outraged public opinion in South Africa and abroad.

with this stress on the need for unity, SASO rejected the bantustan system with its aim of dividing the black people. It was sharply critical of those blacks who participated as 'leaders' in the bantustan and other state-created institutions.

The authorities at first welcomed the formation of SASO, mistaking it for a form of 'separate development', and it was given official

recognition at the African universities, teacher training colleges and seminaries. Authorities at the exclusively coloured and Indian institutions refused to allow formal affiliation of the student councils to SASO but it nonetheless enjoyed wide popularity and influence on these campuses. SASO's increasingly vocal protests against the government and university authorities soon led to confrontation, and in May 1972 there were mass expulsions of students at some of the universities followed by prolonged student strikes. White students at the universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand protested against the expulsion of the black students. Their demonstrations were broken up forcibly by police, and many students were beaten up and arrested.

The Black Consciousness Movement

In an attempt to spread their ideas into the black community at large, in 1972 SASO called together various educational, cultural and religious organizations to form the Black People's Convention (BPC). The BPC was the political wing of what, together with SASO and other bodies, became known as the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).

BCM activists established the Black Community Programmes which set up and operated a few clinics, crèches, literacy training and other programmes in the black communities, especially in the rural areas. Most of these sought the involvement of the local community in the hope that it would eventually take over the project, but many projects did not survive long. The BCM also set up theatre and cultural groups, organized a trade union (the Black Allied Workers Union, BAWU) and was involved in elaborating 'Black Theology' which sought to identify the church with the black oppressed. It gained widespread support amongst black intellectuals and other sections of the community, including small businessmen.

The ANC's Assessment of the BC Movement

We have already referred to the contribution that the BCM made to the activation of our people into struggle. This is a positive contribution that we must recognize and to which we must pay tribute. We should also recognize the significant input that the BCM made towards further uniting the black oppressed masses of our country, by emphasizing the commonness of their oppression and their shared destiny. These views were built on political positions that our movement had long canvassed and fought for. Nevertheless, we must still express our appreciation of the contribution that the BCM made in this regard while recognizing the limitations of this movement which saw our struggle as racial, describing the entire white population of our country as 'part of the problem'.

— ANC National Executive Committee, report to the National Consultative Council, June 1985.

School students and working youth

Another political development during this period was the creation of a large number of organizations by secondary school students and working or unemployed youth. These groups tended to be small and did not have a strong political impact at the time. But they were important in that they helped prepare the ground for the 1976 student uprising by politicizing young people and providing organizational structures within which they could be mobilized for action. Groups were set up in most major urban and some rural areas, and were based both in and out of schools. Some, like the Soweto-based Society for African Development, the League of African Youth in Umtata or the Junior African Students Congress at Inanda Seminary, Natal, were mainly discussion groups which aimed to raise the political consciousness of the youth. Church-based organizations such as the Student Christian Movement provided a forum for joint activities and discussions, both general and political. Other groups catered to cultural interests – music, drama, poetry, dancing, debating – or organized sports and recreational activities such as picnics. Often the cultural activities had a political content, and social events such as dances or picnics would sometimes be a cover for political discussions or meetings. A frequent topic of debate was the poor quality of education received by young blacks.

One of the most important groups to emerge at this time was the African Students' Movement (ASM) which was formed in 1971 by students at three Soweto secondary schools. It began to spread to other schools in the Transvaal and elsewhere, and in 1972 renamed itself the South African Students' Movement (SASM). It was to play a crucial role in the Soweto uprising of June 1976.

In 1972, some youth and student groups began to come together to form regional groups such as the Natal, Transvaal and Western Cape Youth Organizations (NYO, TRAYO and WCYO) and the Border Youth Union (BYU). These brought together various local and sectional groups for discussions and other activities, and tried to promote unity among them. Although most of these groups operated in African communities, in the Western Cape many were based in coloured areas, thus laying the basis for future cooperation among school pupils of the two black groups.

While some of the youth groups were formed by SASO or BPC activists, most were not; all of them were influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the ideology of Black Consciousness. Some of the more politically aware youth began to seek advice from older members of the community who were former ANC activists or were part of the ANC underground. In this way began the process whereby the ANC, the oldest and most experienced people's organization,

started to make its influence felt once more within the youth movement. This coalescence of youth and experience would in time prove to be of major significance.

Essay Topics

- 1 Describe the steps taken by the South African regime to strengthen itself and entrench white supremacy in the period 1964–72.
- 2 'In the eight years following the Rivonia trial, the regime looked invincible and the liberation movement seemed to be utterly crushed. In fact, the ANC was busy reorganizing and adjusting itself to the new conditions, and new forces of liberation were building up under the surface.'

Discuss this statement.

Topics for Group Discussion

Read the following passage and discuss the questions below:

When Black students launched SASO they were immediately plagued by the false issue that they were appearing to conform with Government policy by forming a segregated organization. Liberals and NUSAS were bitterly disappointed at the rejection of their 'non-racial' ideal and SASO found itself on the defensive, spending much time and energy justifying its existence. Much of SASO rhetoric therefore was initially involved in an attack on NUSAS and the liberal structures. Some SASO spokesmen continue to give the impression that they regard White liberals as a major obstacle to ending White oppression. Neither do they bother to distinguish between White liberals and genuine White revolutionaries. The Government of course benefits from such unnecessary diversions and enjoys the discomfort caused to NUSAS and the liberals.

In reality SASO's formation represented a quite obvious rejection of apartheid style exclusiveness by its very fact of uniting, in the first instance, the various African groups, and in the second instance, the Africans with the minority Black groups. The government is frightened of such developments and its Departments of Indian and of Coloured Affairs announced that they would not allow the campuses under their respective controls to affiliate to SASO, because 'there was nothing in common between the African, Indian and Coloured socially or culturally'. Apartheid doctrine declares that there is nothing in common between the various African tribal groupings too, but, for the moment at any rate, the authorities are hesitant about moving against SASO on these grounds. It is this aspect of Black unity that represents the most positive and necessary feature of SASO's existence, rather than the negative reason of repelling White liberals. This latter factor was purely a subjective one, resulting from

the transitory set of circumstances that briefly placed NUSAS at the head of the student movement. SASO would benefit by passing beyond this phase of its history since the point has been well enough made, although this is not to suggest that one must cease exposing liberal illusions.

— Sibeko, 1972, pp. 77-8.

- 1 Against what charges did SASO spend 'much time and energy justifying its existence'?
- 2 What do you think was the real reason why the Departments of Indian and Coloured Affairs did not allow campuses under their control to affiliate to SASO?
- 3 What was the 'transitory set of circumstances that briefly placed NUSAS at the head of the student movement'?
- 4 What does the author believe to be SASO's main strengths and weaknesses as regards promoting the unity of the forces of liberation? Do you agree with him?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Revival of the Mass Movement, 1973–1977

The mid-1970s brought to an end the 'golden age of apartheid' (1964–72), when the liberation movement had been on the defensive and the economy booming as never before. Now, economic growth slowed as the whole capitalist world went into recession. The Portuguese empire collapsed, bringing independence to Mozambique and Angola, and removing the 'buffer zone' of colonial states which had shielded South Africa from independent Africa. Above all, there was a revival of mass resistance inside South Africa, particularly among workers and students.

Economic Downturn

The boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s had given rise to new economic problems. Industries needed larger markets in order to continue expanding, but the poverty of most of South Africa's people — the result of national oppression and the low wages of black workers — meant that the home market was small. South Africa's 'natural' export market in Africa could not be developed fully or openly because of political hostility to apartheid.

The world economic recession, which set in from about 1973, had the effect of further reducing export markets and decreasing foreign investment in South Africa. The massive rise in the price of imported oil in 1973 served to deepen the economic problems. These were partially offset by a huge rise in the price of gold in 1973 and 1974. But the gold price fell sharply again in 1975, thus ensuring an economic recession which was to continue until the end of the decade, affecting people's living standards and fuelling their resistance.

Growth of Workers' Resistance

The economic boom of 1964–72 had done little to benefit South

Africa's black workers whose wage levels had not improved. From about 1970 prices of basic commodities (e.g., food, clothing and transport) had risen sharply, thus making it very difficult for workers to survive on their incomes.

At the beginning of 1973, a spontaneous outbreak of strikes in the Durban area heralded the revival of the black workers' movement in South Africa. The strikes started on 9 January 1973 at the Coronation Brick and Tile Company where the entire workforce of almost 2,000 workers went on strike, demanding an increase in their minimum wage from R8,97 to R20 per week. The strike received a lot of publicity, with stories and photographs appearing in the local press, and the workers eventually received an increase, although not as much as they had demanded.

The relative success of this strike served to encourage workers at other factories, and further strikes broke out. In late January, thousands of workers walked off the job in the Pinetown-New Germany industrial complex, about fifteen miles from Durban. Here the largest strikes were at the textile factories of the Frame Group where thousands of African and Indian workers were employed at wages as low as R5 per week. One of the workers told a mass meeting of strikers: 'Although I make blankets for Mr Philip Frame, I can't afford to buy blankets for my children.'

In the first three months of 1973, 61,000 workers were involved in 160 strikes. Because of the large numbers involved, the police and employers could not respond in their usual way by arresting all strikers and replacing them with other workers. Nonetheless, tear-gas was used to break up meetings and police often appeared in large numbers to intimidate strikers. The workers invariably refused to put forward representatives, preventing employers and police from victimizing 'ringleaders'. Instead, crowds of workers shouted their wage demands and refused to return to work or elect leaders. In most cases, small wage increases were offered after a few days or weeks, and the workers returned to their jobs. The fact that they had no unions with strike funds meant that they could not survive long without pay and had to return to work.

Although the increases they won were small, the Durban strikers offered the first large-scale resistance by South African workers since the early 1960s. Other workers learnt the lesson that gains could be made by mass, united action, and many more strikes took place throughout 1973 and 1974, spreading to other parts of the country, particularly the Witwatersrand.

The workers' new-found confidence and the experience gained in the strikes led to the formation of new, independent, unregistered trade unions for black workers. By 1977 there were 27 such unions and



A strike meeting at Coronation Brick and Tile Company, 10 January 1973.

it was becoming obvious that existing labour laws, which prohibited Africans from belonging to registered trade unions, were no longer preventing effective worker organization. The regime therefore began to re-examine its legislation.

In 1973, the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) decided to set up 'parallel' unions in an attempt to control the new black workers' movement. These were unregistered unions which were supposed to be helped by the registered, white-led unions. Very undemocratic, they were dominated by officials of the registered unions and as a result were rejected by most African workers.

Mozambique and Angola Win Independence

By the early 1970s Portugal's war against the liberation movements in its African colonies was becoming a serious economic burden. In addition, it was causing political strain as young conscripts became increasingly reluctant to fight and senior Portuguese officers began to feel they were engaged in unwinnable wars. These factors, together with the growing resistance to oppression within Portugal, resulted in a coup on 25 April 1974 which developed into a popular anti-fascist revolution during the course of the year.

Though the military government which took power after the April

coup wanted to negotiate neo-colonial solutions in the colonies, the intensification of the struggle by FRELIMO and MPLA, the Portuguese soldiers' reluctance to continue the war, and the coming to power of more progressive forces in Portugal itself all combined to frustrate neo-colonial schemes. In September 1974, Portugal and FRELIMO agreed to set up a transitional government in Mozambique with Joaquim Chissano as Prime Minister. On 25 June 1975, Mozambique gained full independence under a FRELIMO government led by the new President, Samora Machel.

In Angola the situation was more complicated because, in addition to the MPLA, there existed two counter-revolutionary 'liberation movements', FNLA and UNITA, which were supported by the United States, South Africa, China, Zaire and reactionary Portuguese settlers. A transitional government consisting of the MPLA, FNLA, UNITA and Portugal was set up. However, the FNLA and UNITA soon joined forces to attack the MPLA in an attempt to destroy it. The MPLA, with far greater support among the Angolan people, gained the upper hand and took control of most of the country before 11 November, the agreed date of independence.

Meanwhile, though, the South African army had invaded Angola in support of UNITA and was moving towards the capital, Luanda. The new Angolan government, led by Agostinho Neto, felt unable to stop the South African advance alone because of the more sophisticated weapons and equipment of the invaders. Angola therefore requested help from Cuba which responded immediately by sending several thousands troops. The Soviet Union also responded to an Angolan request, sending the heavy weapons needed to meet the South African artillery. The joint Angolan-Cuban forces managed to stop the South African advance just south of Luanda and then to drive the invaders out of the country.

Both Mozambique and Angola were now led by anti-imperialist governments committed to building socialism. Both were strong supporters of liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. The 'buffer zone' of colonial states surrounding South Africa and Namibia had partially collapsed, and Ian Smith's regime came under increasing pressure as Zimbabwean (ZANU) freedom fighters began military operations from bases in free Mozambique. With the advantage of being able to make use of Angolan territory as a springboard, SWAPO was now able to extend its operations inside Namibia.

The ANC was given considerable moral, material and diplomatic support by both Angola and Mozambique. The latter's border with South Africa enabled the ANC's external mission to establish closer links with internal structures. Swaziland, no longer completely

surrounded by colonial territory, was now more accessible for use by the ANC. As a result, the liberation movement was able to strengthen its underground machinery and prepare for the armed struggle which was to be resumed from 1977.

Your defeat of Vorster's racist forces was a source of the greatest inspiration to the struggling masses of our country. You showed, in practice, that it could be done. And your triumph was celebrated not only in Angola but in the streets of Soweto, and by the growing resistance throughout the land which the enemy's terror has been unable to put down.

— From message of Central Committee of the SACP to First Congress of MPLA, December 1977.

In South Africa, the independence of the former Portuguese colonies was greeted with great enthusiasm by the black population. The victories of the liberation forces served to boost confidence and give hope that freedom could be attained in South Africa. Leaders of SASO and BPC called for nationwide 'Viva FRELIMO' rallies on 25 September 1974 to celebrate Mozambique's coming independence. The government responded by banning all SASO and BPC meetings for a month, but the rallies in Durban and at Turfloop (University of the North) went ahead anyway. Both gatherings were broken up by police. Nine BPC/SASO leaders were arrested after the Durban meeting; they were later tried and imprisoned. The defeat of the regime's army in Angola was a particular morale-booster for the oppressed people of South Africa. The myth of military invincibility, so carefully cultivated, was now destroyed.

The Student Movement and the Soweto Uprising

Youth and student organizations

Many of the organizations formed by school students in the early 1970s (see Chapter 17) continued to grow in membership. Some groups disappeared because of poor organization or police repression, but others were formed to take their place. New organizations grew up in places where they had not existed before.

In 1973, delegates from the Transvaal, Natal and Western Cape Youth Organizations (TRAYO, NYO, WPYO), and the Border Youth Union (BYU) attended a national youth seminar near King William's Town and formed the National Youth Organization (NAYO). NAYO was significant as the first attempt since the early 1960s to form a

national organization of youth. It did not become an effective national body, however, but remained a loose federation of regional groupings until the banning and imprisonment of dozens of leading members resulted in its demise in early 1976.

The South African Students' Movement (SASM) grew rapidly from 1973 onwards. By 1976 it had branches in many townships and some rural areas of the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape, and in some individual schools in the Western Cape, the Orange Free State and Natal. Its main base of support was in the Transvaal townships, particularly Soweto. At first, SASM branches were mainly forums for discussion, often with invited speakers and the support of principals who provided school facilities for meetings. Politics and educational matters were common topics for discussion; principals of other schools and black consciousness activists were among the invited speakers and BC ideology gained influence in the schools, although it never became as dominant as it was in the universities. In 1973, SASM started a militant newspaper, *Thrust*, and organized a summer school for matriculants writing the supplementary examinations in March.

By this time repression by the state was creating difficulties for SASM. *Thrust* was prohibited by the censors and Mathe Diseko, General Secretary of SASM and President of NAYO, was banned. Each year a growing number of SASM activists were arrested, interrogated and, in many cases, cruelly tortured. Arrests resulted from organizing and participating in political meetings, writing poetry and articles critical of the authorities, and being generally active in SASM affairs.

As they became more politicized, many young activists began to see more clearly the need to overthrow the entire apartheid system and replace it with a democratic form of government. Only in this way, they began to realize, could the situation of blacks be improved, and their poverty, insecurity, lack of political power and inferior education be eliminated. As a result, a small number of SASM and NAYO activists began to think about and discuss the question of armed struggle.

In 1974 small organized groups of students were created which used to meet in secret places. Those cells were concentrated mostly in Soweto, Durban and so on. To be specific and direct, they were initiated by the national liberation movement, that is, by the ANC.... We in SASM did not actually think of forming such things. We were operating legally and tried to keep SASM as a broad legal organization. But some of us listened to our elders from the ANC when they said we needed more than just mass legal organization. Hence we founded these underground cells.

— From an interview with a student leader, quoted in Brooks and Brickhill, 1980, p. 87.

From 1974, young people began to organize on the basis of small groups which met secretly. This was done largely on the advice of older ANC members and often under the direction of ANC underground structures. These groups made preparations to recruit and send people out of the country for military training, gathered information of interest to the liberation movement, and guided the work of their members in the mass organizations. The police discovered some of these groups and a number of people were arrested; but other groups continued to function. At the same time, the open, mass work of SASM and other groups continued in the schools and communities.

The problems of Bantu Education

The Bantu Education system had originally been introduced in the 1950s to place the control of African education firmly in the hands of the state. The aim was to educate African children only up to the level necessary to serve the needs of white employers for unskilled labour. This led to a system of schooling which was in all respects inferior to that provided for white children. Inadequate financing resulted in overcrowded classrooms, underqualified teachers, poor school facilities, poor examination results, a high drop-out rate, and high costs to parents who, unlike white parents, had to pay school fees and buy school books. The curriculum reflected a racist approach to social science subjects and attempts to inculcate a narrow ethnic consciousness in the pupils. Little attention was given to scientific and technical subjects.

The rapid economic growth during the late 1960s and early 1970s led to an increased demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour. The regime tried to attract white immigrants from Europe to meet this demand, but could not get enough of them. It became increasingly obvious that skilled and unskilled black workers would be required by the economy. The government was thus forced to expand schooling for Africans, especially secondary schooling. This expansion was particularly rapid in the period 1970–75 when the number of African pupils at secondary schools increased by 160 per cent.

But while numbers increased, the government was not willing to increase expenditure and expand school facilities correspondingly. This led to severe overcrowding, exacerbated in 1975 when the abolition of Standard 6 (then the highest class in the primary school) led to the promotion of both Standard 5 and Standard 6 pupils simultaneously into Form 1. The result was a great deal of disorganization; many classrooms were used on a shift basis by two classes, and some classes had over 100 pupils. Dissatisfaction among pupils, teachers and parents ran high.

Racist Arrogance

When Punt Jansen, Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, was asked in parliament in 1975 whether he had consulted the African people on language policy, he replied, 'No, I have not consulted them and I am not going to consult them.' He added that he thought 'it a good thing that everyone should learn as many languages as possible. An African might find that "the big boss" only spoke Afrikaans or only spoke English. It would be to his advantage to know both languages.'

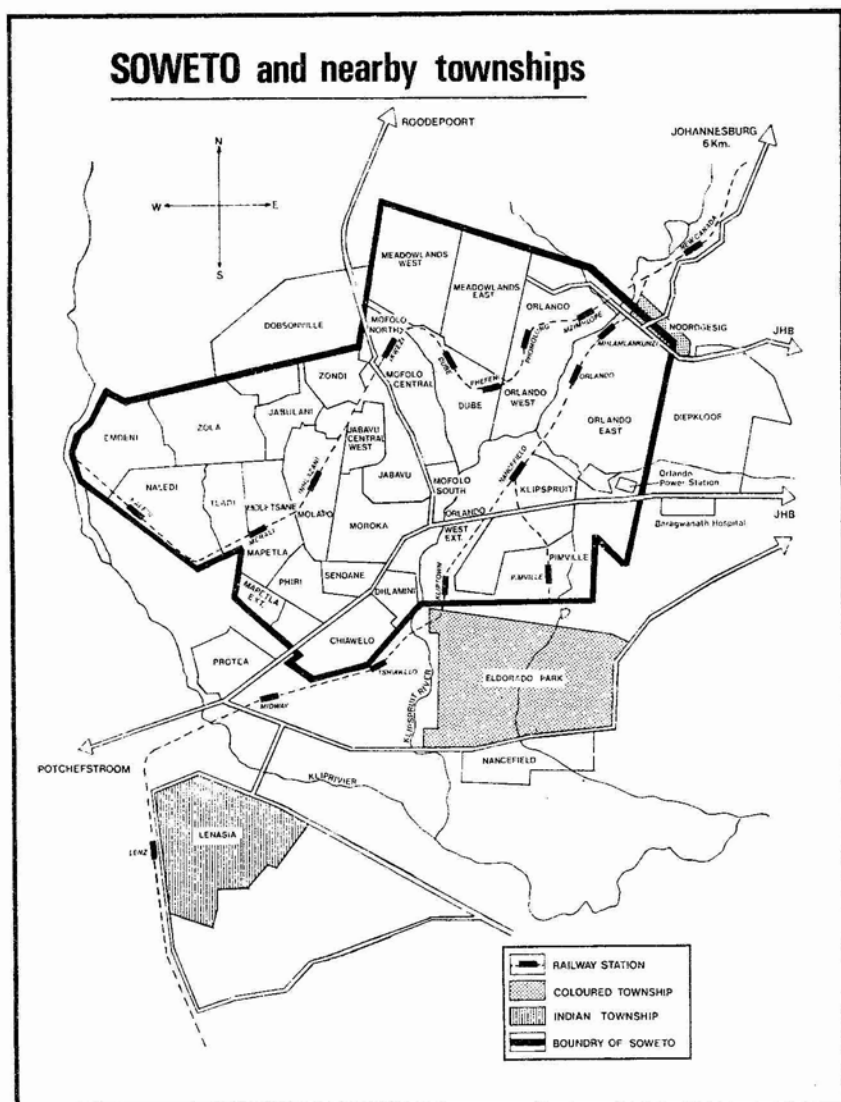
Andries Treurnicht, who took over as Deputy Minister of Bantu Education the following year, said on 17 June 1976: 'In the white area of South Africa, where the government pays, it is certainly our right to decide on the language division'.

— Brooks and Brickhill, 1980, p. 97.

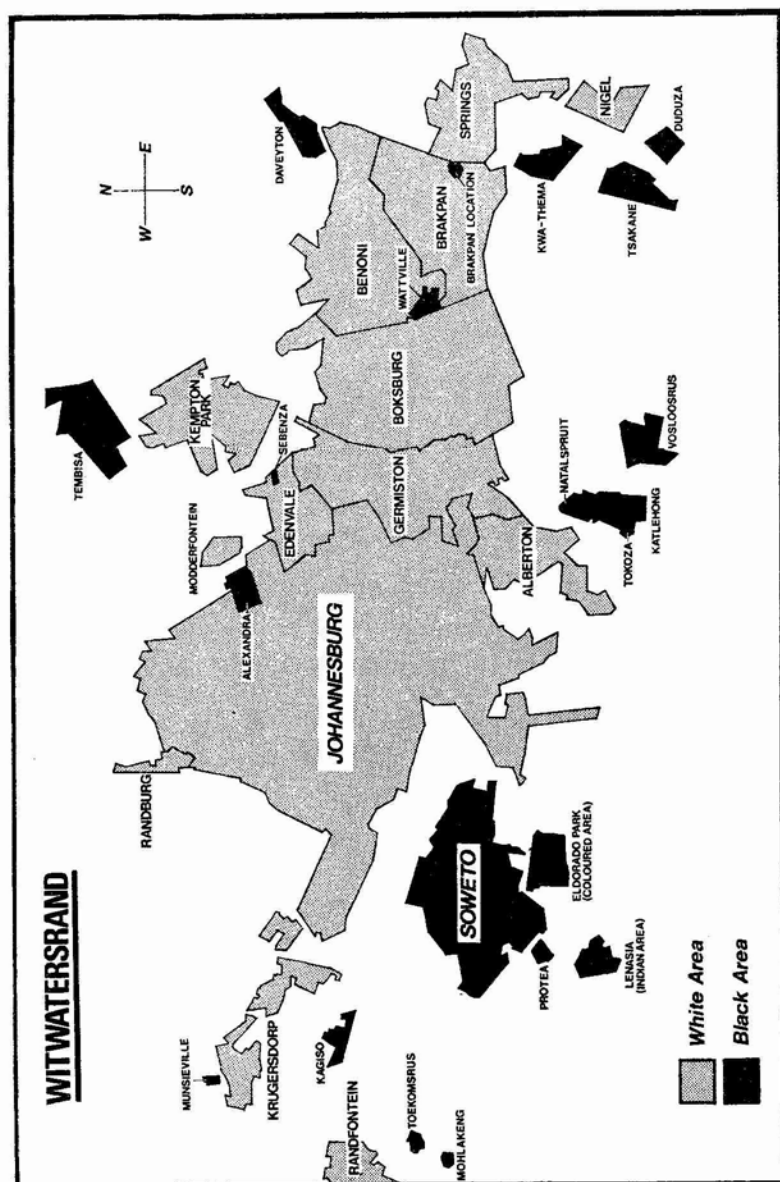
Just at this time the Department of Bantu Education decided to introduce its new language policy for secondary schools. Up until then, pupils had studied through the medium of their 'mother tongue' (i.e., a vernacular language) in the primary school, and then switched to English as a medium of instruction in the secondary school. From 1975 the government started to enforce both English and Afrikaans as media of instruction in the secondary schools of the South Transvaal region, which included Soweto. A direction was issued to all schools stating that general science and all practical subjects (needlework, woodwork, art, etc.) should be taught in English, while mathematics, social sciences, history and geography should be taught in Afrikaans. Religious instruction, music and physical education were to be conducted in a vernacular language. This policy, it should be noted, was quite different to that in white schools where there was only one medium of instruction although students had to learn the other official language as a subject. White children were not required to learn any African language.

Black resistance grows

This new policy caused considerable difficulties. Students who were proficient in neither English nor Afrikaans when they completed primary school suddenly found themselves needing a good knowledge of both. African school principals, teachers and parents all protested, but when the government refused to change its policy, the pupils started to play a more direct role in the dispute. In early 1976 pupils in some Soweto schools refused to attend classes taught in Afrikaans. Later, in May, pupils at a number of schools stopped attending classes altogether in protest against the use of Afrikaans.



Map 7 Soweto and nearby townships



Map 8 The Witwatersrand

The SASM leadership took up the issue, supporting the students who were on strike. They called for a complete boycott of the June examinations and made plans for a mass demonstration against the use of Afrikaans. A meeting attended by 300 to 400 students representing all Soweto secondary schools was held to discuss the demonstration. They elected a Soweto regional committee of SASM and decided that this committee, together with two delegates from each school, should form an Action Committee. This Committee was to organize the demonstration set for 16 June; it was later renamed the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). Its first chairman was Tebello Motapanyane and its members included Tsietsi Mashanini (who later became chairman), Murphy Morobe and others.

The Soweto Uprising

Early on 16 June 1976, pupils marched from various assembly points around Soweto towards a meeting point in Orlando West from where they were going to march together to Orlando Stadium for a rally. The march was peaceful and disciplined; pupils sang freedom songs and chanted slogans as they walked. They carried placards bearing phrases such as, 'Down With Afrikaans' and 'Bantu Education - To Hell With It'.

Just as the demonstrators converged, the police appeared, armed with automatic rifles, and formed up facing them. As the crowd sang 'Morena Boloka' (the Sotho version of the African national anthem), a white policeman threw a tear-gas canister. The police then opened fire, killing 13-year-old Hector Peterson and at least three others. The crowd reacted by picking up stones, bricks and bottles and pelting the police who were forced to retreat despite their weapons and the fact that the pupils suffered more casualties. Thus began an uprising which was to continue through to the end of 1977 and lead to the loss of over a thousand lives, most as a result of police action.

The uprising spreads

The uprising spread rapidly through Soweto and into other Transvaal townships. It then took hold of many other parts of the country, most notably the Western Cape but also to areas in all four provinces and all the bantustans. School boycotts continued, on and off, for a year and a half, and universities and colleges closed on numerous occasions. Students and others attacked and burnt down school buildings as well as administrative buildings, vehicles, beer-halls and bottle stores owned by the Bantu Affairs Administration Boards. In addition, police informers and government collaborators were attacked and the



Students demonstrate against Afrikaans teaching, Soweto, 16 June 1976.



Hector Peterson, first casualty of the Soweto uprising, 1976.

Soweto Urban Bantu Council was forced to resign. The students held more demonstrations, including some in the middle of Cape Town and Johannesburg, and clashed with armed police on numerous occasions. Thousands of student leaders and activists were detained and tortured in prison, and dozens were banned. In 1977, hundreds of black teachers resigned in solidarity with the students.

The uprising was clearly aimed at much more than correcting the wrongs caused by the use of Afrikaans in schools. It very soon became an outlet for the African people's resentment against the whole system of apartheid and national oppression. When, in mid-July 1976, the government backed down on the Afrikaans language issue, it had no effect in dampening the students' militancy. Students, supported by the black community in general, demanded the release of detainees, the total abolition of Bantu Education and an end to all apartheid laws and practices. At demonstrations, although most slogans were mainly aimed against Bantu Education, some went further, proclaiming for example: 'It happened in Angola — why not here?' When the US Secretary of State, Dr Henry Kissinger, visited South Africa in September 1976, demonstrations were held condemning US collaboration with the apartheid regime.

Role of the ANC

From the earliest days of the uprising, the ANC underground was active in trying to give it direction and draw wider sections of the community into it. As early as late June 1976, ANC news-sheets and copies of the publication *Amandla-Matla* were circulating in Soweto and other townships. These placed the student uprising in a wider context, linking it to other areas of resistance such as the trade union movement and the struggle against the bantustans. They hailed the uprising and urged that the struggle be taken into the white cities, the factories and the mines. One ANC leaflet drew attention to the events of 1960–61 and made the point that: 'The reaction of the racist state then proved to our people that protest was not enough and opened a new stage of struggle in which the liberation movement prepared to seize power by force.'

During the course of the uprising, the ANC underground continued to issue leaflets (often by the use of 'leaflet bombs') and to have personal contact with student activists. Members of the student leadership consulted regularly with the ANC and some were ANC members. Although many of the student activists had been strongly influenced by black consciousness ideology, a growing number now came in contact with the ideas contained in the Freedom Charter and with the ANC's history and political experience. Most of the students

who left the country to avoid police persecution or to get military training turned towards the ANC.

Parents and workers

Soon after the uprising began in June, the Soweto Parents Association joined a number of groups such as SASO, BPC, SASM, the Federation of Independent Churches, the YMCA, YWCA and the Housewives League to form the Black Parents Association. This body was chaired by Dr Manas Buthelezi of the Christian Institute, and included Winnie Mandela, Aubrey Mokoena, Dr Nthatho Motlana and others as executive members.

The Black Parents Association helped to organize funerals for victims of police violence, acted as a spokesperson for parents and, on occasion, even for the students. It helped to build unity between students and the adult community. 'We honour our parents' support and our voice is one with theirs', said an SSRC statement in August 1976, thus countering the regime's propaganda which claimed that an unbridgeable 'generation gap' existed between young and old in the black community.

During 1976 Soweto workers responded on three occasions to calls from the students for stay-at-homes: twice in August and once in September. Each of these stay-at-homes lasted for three days; all were largely successful, with hundreds of thousands of workers staying away from work despite police intimidation and brutality which resulted in the deaths of numerous workers and students. The last two stay-at-homes were also widely supported by workers in other Rand townships such as Kagiso, Alexandra and Tembisa. In September, successful stay-at-homes were held in Cape Town (two days) and Tembisa (three days). Most workers clearly supported the demands of the students and were prepared to make considerable sacrifices to show their solidarity.

The Migrant Workers' 'Backlash'

During the second day of the second stay-at-home (24 August), migrant workers from the Mzimhlope hostel in Meadowlands, Soweto, attacked students and other permanent township residents. In the fighting that followed in the next three days, more than 20 people were killed and over 100 injured, and dozens of houses were smashed up. All the evidence points to the police being behind what they referred to as the 'Zulu backlash'. (Most, but not all, of the migrant workers involved were Zulus.)

At the start, the Mzimhlope hostel was set on fire, probably by the

police. The migrant workers were told that the students were attacking them and depriving them of their beerhalls. On a number of occasions migrant workers were addressed by police who encouraged them to attack students. A number of people have claimed that the police gave money, liquor and even dagga (marijuana) to the migrants. Black policemen were among the crowd of migrants who attacked Soweto residents.

To some extent, the migrant workers could be used in this way by the police because conditions of life in the hostels isolated them socially from the more settled Soweto community. In addition, the students had never consulted with the migrants, tried to explain to them what they wanted to achieve, or put forward demands of direct and immediate concern to migrant workers.

The students and other township residents soon realized their failures. A series of meetings were held between migrants and residents and a sense of unity between them was restored. Before the third stay-at-home pamphlets in English, Zulu and Sotho were distributed throughout Soweto, including the hostels. Students and resident workers also went to the hostels to explain the situation and gain their support. This paid off as the majority of hostel-dwellers supported the strike.

In November, Soweto students called a five day stay-at-home but this was almost totally ignored by the workers — possibly they felt that another strike, especially for five days, was too much. Nonetheless, this did not seem to harm student-worker unity, and the workers responded positively once more to a call for a one day general strike to commemorate the first anniversary of the uprising in June 1977.

State murder and bannings

The state acted with increasing brutality as the school boycotts, demonstrations and strikes continued. The murder in detention of the Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko, in September 1977 led to a countrywide (and worldwide) outrage, resulting in the intensification of the uprising. School boycotts spread, becoming almost 100 per cent effective in such places as Venda, Bophuthatswana and throughout the Eastern Cape. In October 1977 the government announced the banning of 18 organizations including SASM, SASO, BPC, SSRC and the Christian Institute. At the same time three newspapers, the *World*, *Weekend World* and *Pro Veritate* (a church paper) were also banned as were a number of individual political activists.

The struggle flared up again for a while and then began to subside. Although school boycotts continued into the beginning of 1978, the Soweto Students League, which replaced the SSRC, decided to call for a return to classes in the early part of the year. Students in Soweto

and throughout the country had almost all abandoned their boycotts by April 1978. The uprising which had begun in June 1976, shaking the whole country and raising the black people's political consciousness to new heights, came to an end; but it was only a temporary respite before the struggle would be intensified yet further.

Results of the Soweto Uprising

The ANC later described the Soweto Uprising as an 'historic watershed' which 'propelled into the forefront of our struggle millions of young people, thus immeasurably expanding the active forces of the revolution and inspiring other sections of our people into activity' (ANC, 1985).

The uprising, though starting as a protest against Bantu Education, became something much more. The students soon realized that Bantu Education could not be eliminated without ending the whole apartheid system, and that this could not be achieved by students alone. This realization led the students early on to look to the workers, parents and communities for support. In the process they helped to forge the beginnings of an anti-apartheid alliance involving most sections of the black community, and rekindled mass resistance to apartheid on a scale not seen in South Africa since the early sixties.

The indiscriminate massacre of unarmed people by the state's armed forces led many young people to the conclusion that liberation could not be achieved by non-violent means alone. Several thousand left the country with the aim of getting military training. The vast majority of these sought out the ANC's external mission and joined Umkhonto we Sizwe, rejuvenating it and raising the strength and morale of the whole ANC.* From 1977 armed activity began once more inside South Africa and was to play an increasingly important role in the liberation struggle.

The Soweto Uprising also struck a blow at the South African government's hopes of ending its international isolation. From 1974 it had resumed its earlier drive to open economic and diplomatic relations with independent Africa, this time under the label 'detente'. This had led to many secret contacts, a secret visit by Prime Minister Vorster to some West African countries (for example, Ivory Coast and Liberia), and other meetings with independent African states. However, South Africa's invasion of Angola and its brutal reaction to the students and other protesters, so discredited the regime in the eyes of the world that the 'detente' initiative collapsed. The international anti-apartheid movement was also stimulated as public revulsion at

* Some young people joined the Pan-Africanist Congress which also had a presence in some neighbouring states. While providing training, the PAC never succeeded in establishing much of a military presence inside South Africa.

the killing of unarmed protesters resulted in demonstrations in many towns and cities around the world. South Africa's hopes of international acceptance and its imperialist economic ambitions in Africa thus suffered a serious setback.

Transkei Independence

In October 1976, the Transkei Bantustan was 'pushed' into 'independence' with Kaiser Matanzima as 'Prime Minister'. All Africans of Transkeian origin now became citizens of the Transkei, simultaneously losing their South African citizenship. This was considered by the regime as the first step in the process of depriving all Africans in the country of their citizenship, and of tearing apart by law the nation that political and economic forces had created over decades. It was an attempt to cripple resistance to apartheid by splitting up the oppressed people irrevocably, and undermining the legitimacy of African demands for political rights in South Africa as a whole.

Although the Transkei, like all other bantustans, would be economically and politically totally dependent on Pretoria, the South African government hoped to convince the world that it was involved in an act of decolonization, and that it was making a generous gift of political rights to Africans. This it was unable to do. The 'independence' which it had hoped to usher in with a great fanfare was completely overshadowed by the mass uprisings taking place throughout South Africa in the last half of 1976. It was denounced by all sections of the oppressed people and was condemned by the United Nations. Every other country in the world refused to recognize the Transkei as an independent state.

Nonetheless, the South African regime was clearly determined to continue implementing its apartheid schemes, and to maintain and strengthen white supremacy despite all opposition. With the oppressed people's resolve to end apartheid and their ability to do so increasing rapidly, the stage was set for an ever-increasing level of confrontation.

Essay Topics

- 1 Discuss the consequences for South Africa of the collapse of the Portuguese Empire.
- 2 Discuss the factors leading to the Soweto Uprising of 1976.

Topic for Group Discussion

The Durban strikes of 1973 took place more or less spontaneously, without any role being played by trade unions. Do you think that workers really need trade unions, either for their struggle for better wages and working conditions or for any other reason? Give reasons for your opinion.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

White Supremacy on the Defensive, 1978–1986

The Soweto uprising proved a decisive turning point in the development of the liberation struggle. From that time resistance spread to all parts of the country and became increasingly better organized. It took a variety of forms and drew into activity all sectors of the black population as well as a small but growing proportion of whites.

The most striking feature of this new growth of resistance was the re-emergence of the ANC as the unrivalled leader of the struggle for national liberation. The influence of Black Consciousness ideology diminished and a non-racial ideology based on the ideas of the Freedom Charter and associated with the ANC became dominant within the mass movement. The ANC's flag and other symbols were displayed openly at political gatherings, particularly at the funerals of victims of police and army violence.

The ANC was actively involved in spreading its ideas by all available means, including the clandestine distribution of magazines, leaflets, audio and video cassettes, and broadcasting from independent African states of the movement's 'Radio Freedom'. The ANC's ally, the South African Communist Party, was engaged in similar activities and gained considerable support. The aim of both organizations was to build a broad anti-apartheid alliance, including all classes among the black people and as many white democrats as possible. The black working class was seen as having an especially important role in the struggle.

From 1977, Umkhonto we Sizwe steadily increased the scope and effectiveness of its activities. Military operations included spectacular attacks such as those against two SASOL oil-from-coal plants (June 1980), the Koeberg nuclear power station while it was still under construction (December 1982), and Air Force headquarters in Pretoria (May 1983). Umkhonto units also carried out many other acts of

sabotage and had numerous encounters with police and SADF personnel. All these operations had an important impact on the consciousness of the oppressed, inspiring large numbers to join the struggle against apartheid.



The attack on the SASOL oil-from-coal plant in June 1980 was evidence of the growing sophistication of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and helped to boost the morale of the oppressed people of South Africa.

By the mid-1980s the ANC's leading role in the liberation movement was recognized even by the leaders of big business. In September 1985 a delegation of businessmen led by Gavin Relly of the Anglo American Corporation visited Lusaka for talks with the ANC's exiled leaders. This was followed by other meetings with various groups who left South Africa — often in the face of strong government hostility — to meet with the ANC. These included groups which had previously been hostile to the ANC (e.g., Afrikaner intellectuals) as well as

Solomon Mahlangu

Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu left South Africa in 1976 in the wake of the Soweto uprising. He joined Umkhonto we Sizwe, received military training and re-entered South Africa the following year.

In June 1977 he and his comrade, Mondy Motloung, were confronted by a policeman in Goch Street, Johannesburg, on their way to carry out a military operation. They attempted to escape by fleeing into a garage, but they were chased by police and white civilians. A battle ensued in which Motloung fired a pistol and threw a hand grenade, killing two white men. Both the Umkhonto combatants were captured and Motloung was assaulted so badly that he was later unable to stand trial due to brain damage.

Although the judge accepted that Solomon Mahlangu had not thrown a grenade nor fired any shots, he found him guilty of murder through 'common purpose' with Motloung and sentenced him to death.

Mahlangu was not allowed to appeal against his sentence and Prime Minister Botha refused to grant clemency despite nation-wide and world-wide appeals, including those of the UN Security Council and a number of governments and heads of state. Before he was hanged on 6 April 1979 his last message to his mother was:

'My blood will nourish the tree which will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them and that they must continue the struggle. Do not worry about me but about those who are suffering.'

Soon after his death, the ANC named the school it established for South African exiles in Tanzania the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College.

Richard 'Barney' Molokoane

Richard Molokoane, known to his comrades as Barney, left South Africa during the 1976 student uprising. Like Solomon Mahlangu he received military training as a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

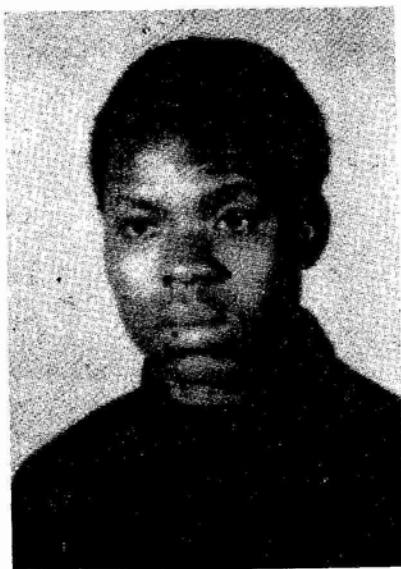
One of the most outstanding of the new recruits, he returned to South Africa in 1978 and was involved in a clash with the SADF near Zeerust. He was shot in the leg but managed to outwit the enemy, retreating 200 kilometres to base outside the country.

From 1978 to 1985, Molokoane was involved in numerous military operations, usually as a unit commander. These actions included the 1980 attack on the SASOL oil-from-coal plant in Sasolburg, the shelling of military installations in Voortrekkerhoogte in 1981 and the shelling of SASOL's Secunda plant in 1985.

In their retreat after the Secunda operation, Molokoane and two of his comrades were intercepted by SADF forces near Piet Retief and a fierce battle ensued. The three Umkhonto combatants were reported by local residents to have killed a large number of SADF troops before finally losing their own lives.



Solomon Mahlangu.



Barney Molokoane.

organizations within the liberation movement, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the United Democratic Front (UDF).

The political crisis facing the South African state as a result of the growth of the liberation movement was accompanied and aggravated by an economic crisis, with serious consequences: a big fall in the value of the Rand; an inflation rate of 15 per cent or more a year; a decrease in foreign investment and an increase in disinvestment; an inability to repay international loans as they fell due; and an increase in unemployment which reached as high as four million people in 1986 and started to affect even the white community for the first time in fifty years. All this hurt the living standards of the oppressed people, intensifying their determination to struggle for a democratic system which could overcome their problems.

The Growth of Mass Resistance

The trade union movement

The growth of new, militant trade unions, independent of the white-controlled Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), continued

throughout the 1970s. Building on earlier democratic trade union traditions, the new unions emphasized the direct democratic participation of rank-and-file workers in the decisions of the union, and close consultation between the leadership and the shop floor during negotiations.

In 1979 twelve of the new unions came together to form the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). The membership of FOSATU unions consisted mainly of Africans but also included coloured and Indian workers; there were some white organizers and officials but few, if any, white rank-and-file members. In principle, though, membership was open to all workers regardless of colour, thus making FOSATU the first non-racial trade union federation since the early 1960s when SACTU had ceased to operate openly. In 1980, a number of other democratic trade unions formed a separate federation, the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). CUSA was oriented to the ideology of Black Consciousness and committed to black leadership of the unions. Other democratic unions remained independent of any federation.

As the unions established themselves in the late 1970s and tried to win improvements in wages and working conditions, a number of hard-fought strikes took place. The growing level of industrial conflict made it clear to the government that existing legislation, which prevented the registration of African trade unions and made strikes by Africans illegal, was no longer adequate to control the workers. In addition, the government was under pressure from big business to scrap job reservation laws and allow blacks to do jobs previously reserved for higher-paid white workers. In 1977 the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation (the Wiehahn Commission) was appointed to examine these problems and to make recommendations for dealing with them.

Wiehahn reported in 1979, proposing that African workers should be allowed to belong to registered trade unions and participate in the Industrial Council system. The Commission also recommended that workers of all race groups should be allowed to belong to the same unions and that all legal job reservation should be abolished. These major recommendations of the Commission were accepted by the government and legislated for in the 1979 amendment to the Industrial Conciliation Act.

This represented a major shift in policy and marked a victory for the working class and the national liberation movement, which had fought for decades against racially discriminatory trade union legislation. But it was also an attempt by the government to draw African workers into the highly centralized and bureaucratic Industrial Council system which had so effectively ended the

militancy of white workers after the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act (see Chapter 10). Union leaders, it was hoped, would become involved in complex negotiations at industry level in the Industrial Councils, and less responsive to pressure from their membership. The registration of unions with African members was also seen as a means of controlling them. Registered unions had to draw up their constitutions in accordance with the specifications laid down in the Industrial Conciliation Act, and to submit regular information about themselves to the government. They also had to keep proper accounts and a register of all members. Registered unions were liable to be investigated by labour inspectors who could demand information about a union's affairs, including the minutes of its meetings and other documents.

A large number of democratic unions refused to register because they recognized registration as an attempt by the government to control them. The government then amended the Act in 1981 to extend the controls on registered unions to unregistered unions as well. Thus the difference between the two types of union became less important. In 1981 the Act was renamed the Industrial Relations Act.

After these changes in the law, some democratic unions registered but others did not. Of those which registered, some but not all joined Industrial Councils. All of them, however, were aware of the state's policy of trying to control them and defuse their militancy, and they



COSATU leaders at the Federation's launch in November 1985. Left to right: Elijah Barayi, Chris Dlamini, Jay Naidoo, Sidney Mufamadi and Cyril Ramaphosa.

were largely successful in avoiding these pitfalls, maintaining their democratic structures and fighting spirit.

A small number of 'parallel' unions formed by TUCSA affiliates merged with their parent unions but maintained racially separate branches. Employers were often eager to recognize these collaborationist unions to pre-empt organization of the workers by the democratic unions. The workers, however, preferred to join the democratic unions which grew much more quickly as they took advantage of their newly won rights to organize and the militant mood existing among workers. Between 1980 and 1987 membership of democratic unions increased from 70,000 to 300,000. One of the most important breakthroughs for the trade union movement was the formation in 1982 and rapid growth of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) — the first successful mass organization of migrant workers since 1946. By the end of 1985 the NUM's membership was 180,000.

The democratic unions felt it was necessary to seek greater unity in order to face employers and the state from a position of strength. Urged on and aided by SACTU and the ANC, the various unions and federations made a concerted effort from 1981 to work out a basis for unity. A number of unity conferences were held over a period of four years and eventually most of the democratic trade unions agreed to form a single federation. COSATU was founded at a conference in Durban in December 1982. Elijah Barayi of the NUM was elected its first President and Jay Naidoo of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union became the first General Secretary. COSATU had a membership of about half a million workers at its founding. From the beginning, the federation was committed to participation in the political struggle for national liberation. In the first six months of its existence, it showed this by backing two political general strikes: one on May Day 1986 and the other to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soweto Uprising on 16 June 1986.

The only significant democratic unions which remained outside COSATU were those affiliated to CUSA and a new federation, the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU). These unions, with a joint membership of about 100,000, objected to the new federation's non-racialism and wanted to maintain the principle of blacks-only leadership. In October 1986 they merged to form the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU).

Two other significant developments on the trade union front took place in 1986. First, TUCSA, whose membership had fallen from 500,000 in 1983 to 100,000 in 1986 due to defections by member unions, decided to dissolve itself. Second, the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) was formed by the Inkatha organization of

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of the KwaZulu bantustan. UWUSA was explicitly pro-capitalist and most of its leading officials were not workers but officers of Inkatha. Some employers welcomed the formation of UWUSA and helped it to establish itself in their factories at the expense of COSATU unions. However, UWUSA was not trusted by most workers and experienced little success in recruiting members.

The student movement

Despite the return to school of students in early 1978, grievances against inferior education continued. In 1978 the government changed the name of the discredited Department of Bantu Education to the Department of Education and Training in an attempt to give it a more positive image.

Expenditure on African education was increased substantially and school enrolment rose rapidly, particularly at secondary schools where the number of students rose from 319,000 in 1975 to almost 1,300,000 in 1986. However, the disparity between black and white education remained. In 1980 the amount spent on each African child was 10 per cent that spent on each white child; by 1985 the figure was still only 14 per cent. After the report of the De Lange Commission on Education in 1981, the government decided to strengthen technical and vocational – as opposed to academic – education for blacks. It remained opposed to the most basic educational demand of black South Africans: the demand for a single, non-racial system of education.

The education system continued to be a major focus of the struggle against apartheid. In 1979 the Congress of South African Students (COSAS, for students at schools and at technical and teacher-training colleges) and the Azanian Students Organization (AZASO, for university students) was formed to coordinate and direct educational struggles. Both organizations formed branches throughout the country, in large centres and small towns. Although originally oriented to Black Consciousness, by 1981 they had changed their thinking and declared their support for the Freedom Charter. They also recognized the leading role of the working class in the struggle for freedom. In 1987 AZASO changed its name to the South African National Student Congress (SANSCO) to identify the organization more clearly with pro-ANC forces.

From this time on, there was increasing unity between student groups and groups representing workers and black communities, an alliance manifested dramatically by the mass worker-student stay-away in the Transvaal in November 1984 to demand the removal of troops from the townships. COSAS and AZASO also developed links

with the white student union NUSAS which itself became more militant in its support for a democratic education system and society.

Ideological Shift in the Student Movement

Wantu Zenzile was a founder member of COSAS and its national president from 1980 to 1982. He was later forced into exile where he was interviewed about relative changes in ANC and Black Consciousness influences in the student movement:

You see, initially what had happened is that since we were planning to launch a new organization, we had to consult elderly people and experienced people. And in actual fact it was them who showed us our shortcomings in 1976 and 1977. They were trying to show us that we are going to find ourselves in a racist problem if we are going to pursue BC. In 1979 already there was ANC literature coming up, you know, there was an ANC vibe growing inside the country. ANC started intensifying 'armed propaganda'. Now this was helping to sort of change the mood.

The more the struggle was becoming popular, the more this non-racial thing was becoming popular. By the end of 1980, I can say those students who were active, they had accepted it and made those who later on joined the struggle accept it. What has happened of late is that some students know nothing about BC — students who can actually speak of BC, it's those who were involved prior to 1980. Earlier on we had to sort of transform these people from this BC mentality to non-racialism, but now we don't actually even go through BC.

— Frederikse, 1990, pp. 166–8.

Black student protests against inferior education became a common occurrence in the decade following the Soweto uprising. In 1980, a school boycott started by coloured secondary school pupils in Cape Town spread to many schools and colleges in all four provinces and most bantustans, as well as to some of the black universities. It involved coloured, African and Indian students. The authorities closed many schools, banned meetings and detained hundreds of students as well as teachers, lecturers and school principals. The school boycott was called off in early 1981, but dissatisfaction continued and various local protests continued. Another wave of school boycotts started at the end of 1983 and continued throughout 1984 and 1985. The areas most affected at first were the East Rand, the Vaal Triangle and the Eastern Cape. Later the boycotts also became very widespread in the Orange Free State, Soweto, Pretoria and other areas.

In December 1985, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed at a conference in Johannesburg. This body consisted of

representatives of parents, students and political and community organizations throughout the country. It decided to suspend the school boycott for three months. Certain demands were put forward, including the unbanning of COSAS (banned earlier in 1985), the abolition of school fees, and the lifting of the State of Emergency which had been declared in July 1985 (see below). If these demands were not met within three months, the NECC would meet again to consider what action to take. When the NECC met again in March 1986, the State of Emergency had been lifted but none of the other demands had been met. The March Conference discussed various possible courses of action and eventually decided that there was little to be gained from renewing the school boycott. Instead, the NECC called for a national stay-at-home to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising in June, for consumer boycotts of white-owned businesses, and a refusal to pay rents. It also decided to call on teachers and students to unite to create an alternative system of 'people's education'.

Community and other organizations

The period from the late 1970s saw the emergence of numerous community or civic associations, women's organizations, youth organizations, and organizations linked to specific campaigns.

Community or civic associations often grew out of parent-student committees (formed to support struggles in schools), residents' associations, groups formed to oppose increases in rents or bus fares, or to oppose the Community Councils which the regime was trying to establish. Although some community/civic associations concentrated their attention on specific issues such as rents and housing, and all concentrated on particular townships or regions, most of them came to see their struggle as part of an overall fight against apartheid and were prepared to undertake joint activities with other groups in their communities or elsewhere. They became involved in a wide range of actions such as rent or consumer boycotts, support for striking workers, and the public celebration of significant days in the history of the liberation movement.

Youth organizations also played an important role in these and other activities. Youth groups, often called Youth Congresses (e.g., Port Elizabeth Youth Congress, Sekhukhuneland Youth Congress, etc.) were set up in urban and rural areas throughout the country. Most appeared after 1982 and played a prominent role in various struggles. Women's groups at local, regional and national levels were also established, helping to mobilize women and cooperating with other groups in various campaigns.

Country-wide campaigns grew up around particular issues. One

such campaign effectively disrupted the regime's plans for celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Republic in 1981. Under the slogan, 'A People's Republic not a Racist Republic', a wide range of organizations joined forces to focus attention on the unrepresentative and oppressive nature of the South African state and to make demands for a democratic society. A similar broad campaign urged the Indian people to boycott the elections for the South African Indian Council in November 1981. As a result, less than 20 per cent of potential voters participated in the election. When, in 1983, the government held elections in the African townships for Black Local Authorities (which replaced the Community Councils and had slightly more power), a boycott campaign resulted in an average poll of barely 10 per cent. The campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners gained enormous support and was taken up by anti-apartheid movements and governments around the world.

Other mass campaigns were mounted against the state's attempt to remove people forcibly from 'squatter' camps at Crossroads (near Cape Town), Inanda (Durban), Fingo Village (Grahamstown), Katlehong (Germiston) and other urban areas, or from 'black spots' in the rural areas. Although the resistance ensured that the removals were only partially successful, the army and police did move tens of thousands of people to the bantustans or to the new townships such as Ekangala (east of Witwatersrand). Other campaigns were directed against plans to incorporate new areas into bantustans.

A significant development of the 1980s was the more prominent role played by some of the churches in the liberation movement. Leading Christian churchmen such as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Revd Allan Boesak, Revd Frank Chikane, Ds Beyers Naude, Archbishop Dennis Hurley and Father Smangalis Mkatshwa were outspoken critics of apartheid. They and many others developed theological and moral critiques of apartheid, and voiced the strong opposition of many Christians to all forms of oppression. The Muslim community, especially in the Western Cape, also became deeply involved in struggles against racist rule.

The United Democratic Front

In January 1983 at a conference of the Transvaal Anti-South African Indian Council, Revd Allan Boesak made a call for the unity of all groups opposed to the proposed new constitution (see below). In response a steering committee was formed to found the UDF. Regional branches were then formed in the Transvaal, Cape and Natal. In August 1983, at a conference in Mitchell's Plain, near Cape Town, the national UDF was launched.



Funerals of the victims of police bullets grew into major political rallies, with thousands of people mourning their dead comrades, denouncing the regime and asserting their determination to end oppression. It became common to drape the coffins with the ANC flag as in this photograph.



A woman salvages materials from her shack during the destruction of the Crossroads squatter settlement by police and vigilantes attempting to forcibly remove thousands of people.

The Front was an umbrella body for about 400 national, regional and local organizations: community/civic associations; trade unions; women's, student, sporting and cultural organizations; Christian and Islamic groups. The membership of the UDF affiliates totalled about 1.5 million people and was drawn from all national groups. Most but not all of the affiliates subscribed to the principles of the Freedom Charter. The first major task that the UDF set itself at the time of its formation was to oppose the new constitution, and to ensure that the coloured and Indian people were not drawn into the regime's plans to turn them into its junior partners at the expense of the African majority.

In the months preceding the elections to the coloured and Indian chambers of the new parliament in August 1984, the UDF held mass meetings to call for a boycott of the elections. Although many meetings were prevented or broken up by the authorities, and over 200 pro-boycott activists were detained, the campaign was successful. In the coloured election only 17.5 per cent of the potential electorate voted, while in the Indian elections the figure was 16.6 per cent.

The UDF continued to grow rapidly as new democratic organizations were formed, and by 1986 there were no fewer than 700 affiliated organizations. These bodies were largely responsible for organizing the intensified resistance of the 1984–86 period.

In 1985 many UDF affiliates took up the ANC's call to make South Africa ungovernable by destroying much of the administrative apparatus in the townships. Black collaborators such as local authority councillors and police were called upon to resign. Many of those who refused were attacked; often they were forced to resign or to flee to the townships. As local authorities broke down, organs of popular power such as street and area committees, people's defence committees and people's courts were formed to replace them. The main function of these new bodies was to mobilize and organize people to take action against the regime, to defend the people and to establish alternative systems of administration and justice. It was thus not surprising that the army, which moved in to occupy townships in late 1984 and 1985, met with strong resistance. In running street battles with militant youth, in which hundreds of lives were lost, the army proved incapable of asserting its control over the townships.

Within the white community, growing opposition to compulsory military service led to the formation of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) in July 1983. The ECC affiliated to the UDF and came to represent a small but growing minority of white youth. Another white organization to join the UDF was the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (JODAC) which campaigned for support for a democratic non-racial South Africa among the white community.

Shortly before the formation of the national UDF, another coalition, the National Forum Committee (NFC), was formed at a meeting at Hammanskraal. It adopted the Azanian Manifesto which called for socialism in South Africa. The NFC represented a coming together of groups from two ideological trends: the Black Consciousness movement and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) tradition. The NFC groups rejected the UDF's non-racialism, insisting that blacks could not work together with progressive whites for the overthrow of apartheid. This position was reconciled with the class-based arguments of the NEUM tradition by the expedient of equating all blacks with the working class, and all whites with the capitalist class. The largest group in the NFC was the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO). The NFC affiliates, while having some influence, never managed to gain the widespread support enjoyed by the UDF.

The International Movement against Apartheid

Despite elaborate attempts to improve its image and gain international respectability, the South African government made little progress in this direction. The decade following the Soweto Uprising saw its further isolation both regionally and globally. By contrast, the ANC's diplomatic efforts were increasingly successful, winning further international recognition of its role as the leading force in the anti-apartheid opposition.

In 1980, the illegal Smith regime in Zimbabwe finally conceded defeat and the ensuing election was won by the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led by Robert Mugabe. The South African government thus lost its last major ally in the region. The new Zimbabwe government joined the rest of Africa in its strong condemnation of apartheid in international forums, and its calls for the international isolation of South Africa.

The Eminent Persons' Group

In 1985, the Commonwealth appointed the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) to try to find ways of ending apartheid through non-violent means by encouraging dialogue between the South African government and its opponents. This summary discusses the regime's attitude towards the group:

'The EPG had emerged from the Commonwealth summit held in the Bahamas in October 1985 as a compromise proposal designed to avert a Commonwealth split over the sanctions question. Pretoria initially calculated that the Group would not propose anything seriously

inconvenient and might even conclude that "significant progress" was being made to dismantle apartheid. It accordingly allowed the EPG to visit South Africa and went through the motions of appearing to discuss with it proposals for negotiations. However, when the EPG put forward its own "possible negotiating concept" which would have implied the opening of serious talks about a transfer of power, the regime dramatically extricated itself from the process. On 19 May 1986, the date on which the EPG returned to South Africa from talks with the ANC in Lusaka to present its proposals, the South African Defence Force launched simultaneous raids against alleged ANC targets in Gaborone, Harare and Lusaka. This was generally taken as a signal of Pretoria's rejection of the EPG's proposals. A little later, Foreign Minister R. F. Botha wrote to the EPG saying "It [the South African government] is not interested in negotiations about a transfer of power".

— Davies, O'Meara and Dlamini (1988), p. 3.

In the United Nations and other international bodies such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement, opposition to South Africa's apartheid policies continued to grow. Numerous calls were made for international economic sanctions against South Africa; in the United Nations Security Council, only the vetoes of the USA, Britain and France prevented the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions.

International opposition to the apartheid regime came from most of the developing countries of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as from the East European socialist countries and some West European (e.g., the Scandinavian) countries. In the major capitalist countries, especially Britain and the USA, anti-apartheid movements thrived as popular awareness of the South African crisis deepened with increased television, radio and press coverage in 1984–86. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Desmond Tutu, and the Bishop's numerous public appearances and interviews with the mass media, also served to focus world public attention on South Africa.

Demonstrations by tens of thousands of people called on world governments to withdraw support from the regime and impose economic sanctions. Many universities and local governments withdrew investments from companies with stakes in South Africa; a number of major companies responded by selling their South African interests. Anti-apartheid groups urged the general public in their countries to boycott South African products. A campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela caught the public imagination in many countries where parks, libraries, streets, halls and other public places were named after the imprisoned leader.

The Regime's Response — the 'Total Strategy'

Following the 1976 uprising, deep divisions developed within the National Party on how the government ought to respond to the crisis. One faction, led by the Defence Minister, P. W. Botha and backed by Afrikaner big business, saw a threat to capitalism in South Africa. They felt that some important changes (or 'reforms') had to be made to the apartheid system to make it more stable. They wanted to win allies among some sections of the black population by making concessions to them. They also wanted to recognize African trade unions and abolish legal job reservation, for reasons already discussed. These changes were opposed by Prime Minister Vorster and particularly by the Information Minister and Transvaal NP leader, Connie Mulder. Mulder represented the views of smaller Afrikaner businesspeople and workers who rejected the proposed reforms as a threat to 'the interests of the white man'.

This conflict was resolved in 1978 by the so-called 'information scandal' (or 'Muldergate') in which Connie Mulder was discredited and the position of Vorster weakened. The 'Information Scandal' was a series of disclosures in the press about corruption and misuse of funds in the Department of Information. The damaging disclosures were mainly the result of secret 'leaks' to the press by senior state officials aligned with P. W. Botha. With his opposition thus weakened, Botha emerged as the most powerful figure in the NP and replaced Vorster as Prime Minister.

The Botha administration soon explained its ideas further and began to implement them. The new policy was called the 'Total Strategy'. According to Botha, 'free enterprise' in South Africa was facing a 'total onslaught' from a 'Marxist threat'. In order to defend itself, the state had to put into effect a strategy to deal with the crisis on all fronts: ideological, political, economic and military. The Total Strategy had various dimensions, both internal and regional.

Ideological shifts

The leaders of the NP found it necessary to adjust their ideology to make it more acceptable to the international community and more consistent with their policy of winning allies among the black population. The white population was told by President Botha and others that traditional apartheid must be modified if 'the white man's way of life' was to survive. In Botha's words, the whites had to 'adapt or die', and had to be prepared for 'healthy power sharing' with other groups. Botha even spoke about South Africa having 'outgrown the out-dated colonial system of paternalism as well as the out-dated concept of apartheid'.

The racist language of white supremacy was toned down, and the government emphasized the idea that it was defending free enterprise, capitalism and western civilization against the forces of 'international communism'. The ANC, SACP and the liberation movement in general were portrayed as puppets of the Soviet Union. This approach, it was hoped, would enable the regime to appear less racist and to win more sympathy from the conservative governments of major capitalist countries.

Despite these shifts in ideology, though, the regime had little success in convincing any significant section of the oppressed people of its sincerity. In the international arena the regime's new approach did win some sympathy from government leaders in the USA, West Germany and Britain, but this was ultimately countered by the growing strength of the anti-apartheid forces. Within the ranks of their own party, the new image that the NP leadership tried to project was sufficient to cause deep dissatisfaction. In 1982, a group of ultra-right MPs who were campaigning against Botha's new policies were expelled from the Party. Under the leadership of Andries Treurnicht, they then formed the Conservative Party (CP) and won a substantial following among Afrikaners.

Militarization

Central to the Total Strategy was the increased influence of the South African Defence Force (SADF) in political life. At the top levels of the apartheid state, the State Security Council, chaired by the Prime Minister (later, in terms of the 1984 constitution, by the President) and including a few senior cabinet ministers and top military and police personnel, was established. Officially it was just one cabinet committee but in reality it took all major strategic decisions, becoming more powerful than the cabinet itself.

In the decade from 1976 to 1986, military expenditure increased almost five times to about R5,000 million, and police expenditure increased about eight times to almost R1,000 million. Compulsory military service for whites was extended substantially as a result of various factors: SWAPO's intensification of the liberation struggle in Namibia; the offensive by Umkhonto we Sizwe; the use of troops to aid police who proved unable to cope with the mass resistance in the black townships. Almost all white schools introduced compulsory cadet training programmes.

Military and police forces were established in the four 'independent' bantustans, often headed or advised by South African or ex-Rhodesian officers. In 1985, there were about 3,000 soldiers and an equal number of police in the bantustan forces. The African 'multi-ethnic' Battalion 21 of the SADF, which trained soldiers for the

bantustan armies, was also deployed in Namibia against the freedom fighters of SWAPO. Recruitment of coloureds into the SADF was stepped up and restrictions which prevented coloureds becoming officers were lifted. A small Indian naval unit was also created. The regime's plans to introduce conscription for coloureds and Indians were set back by the massive rejection of the new constitution by the two communities, which made it clear that conscription would be resisted.

Constitutional changes

An important element of the Total Strategy was the framing of a new constitution. This gave limited powers to the coloured and Indian people in an attempt to divide them from the Africans who remained excluded from all political power at the national level. The new constitution created a parliament with three separate chambers, one each for whites, coloureds and Indians. The head of state was the President (P. W. Botha was the first) who was effectively appointed by the majority party in the white chamber. His very wide powers included the power to appoint cabinet ministers, proclaim martial law, declare war, appoint or remove civil servants, and dissolve parliament.

Each of the three chambers of parliament dealt with matters considered to be of exclusive concern to the group it represented (e.g., education, health or housing for a particular race group). All laws dealing with 'general affairs' (i.e., those matters the President considered to affect all three groups) needed to be passed by all three chambers. If they could not agree, the legislation was to be considered by a body called the President's Council where the majority consisted of people appointed by the white chamber and the President himself. Thus the majority party in the white chamber in effect decided on how differences between the three chambers should be resolved.

As noted above, the new constitution failed to win the support of the coloured and Indian people, who staged a massive boycott of the first election. The regime, however, implemented the new structures in the hope of winning support for them.

Attempts to nurture African collaborators

Bantustans and 'vigilantes': The government pushed ahead with its bantustan scheme which was incorporated as an important part of the Total Strategy. After the 'independence' of the Transkei in 1976, three other bantustans were given the same status: Bophuthatswana (1977), Venda (1979) and Ciskei (1981). The regime also announced plans for the 'independence' of KwaNdebele by December 1986, although massive resistance from the people in the area forced them to scrap this proposal.

The police and armies of 'independent' bantustans were repeatedly used to attack opponents of the apartheid system. In addition, elements linked to bantustan leaders formed so-called vigilante groups which attacked, and sometimes killed, members of popular organizations, burned their houses and broke up their meetings. The vigilante groups included members of the Inkatha movement and the Mbhokodo organization formed by Simon Skosana of KwaNdebele. Similar vigilante groups were formed in urban areas outside the bantustans, sometimes by Black Local Authorities and sometimes, it has been claimed, directly by the South African Police. The vigilante groups often appeared to enjoy the support of the police who at times allegedly provided them with firearms.

Attempts to create an urban 'black middle class': The Total Strategy aimed to win allies for the regime by encouraging the emergence in urban areas of a stratum of Africans with considerably higher incomes and standards of living than the majority of African people. As a result of various 'reforms', the regime argued, this group of people would be given a stake in the system and drawn away from revolutionary activity. The regime hoped that it would win support for the capitalist system from this group, and that its members would have a moderating influence on the liberation movement.

Big business, which had long urged the state to adopt such a policy, now gave it active support. Large companies such as Anglo American Corporation and others made an effort to promote blacks into lower or middle level managerial positions. Some companies opened up new enterprises in partnership with black businesspeople, often providing the expertise necessary to manage the businesses and training Africans in managerial skills. The Urban Foundation, a private organization formed in 1979 with funding from South African and foreign-based companies, gave loans for blacks to open small businesses and to buy their own homes (see below). It also raised funds for the electrification of Soweto and the building of new houses for Africans. In 1985, the government announced that it would allow black businesses to trade in certain formerly 'white' business districts.

During the early 1980s, the government abolished discriminatory pay scales for professionals so that doctors, nurses, teachers and others in state employment got equal pay for equal work, irrespective of race. While this did not bring actual equality amongst professionals, since whites were usually more highly qualified due to their better educational opportunities, it resulted in higher incomes for blacks in these jobs.

In 1978 the law was changed to allow some Africans in urban areas to buy residential plots on 99-year leases; in 1980 the government

announced its intention to allow them to buy freehold property and passed a law to this effect in 1985. Property ownership, it was hoped, would give wealthier Africans a stake in the social system and make them more conservative. Certain forms of petty apartheid were also abolished, allowing some hotels, restaurants and recreational activities to be used by members of all race groups.

Although some progress was made in creating a 'black middle class', it remained small. Furthermore, the regime failed dismally to make an ally of this group. Although its members made economic progress, their political aspirations could not be satisfied by the bantustans or Black Local Authorities. Their opposition to the regime was also ensured by the fact that they remained subject to all the discriminatory legislation affecting African people in South Africa. Most 'middle class' Africans thus continued to identify themselves with the liberation movement and even to provide some of its revolutionary leaders.

Regional dimensions of the total strategy

The Botha regime's strategy aimed to maintain and strengthen South Africa's economic and political influence throughout Southern Africa, and to undermine support for the ANC from neighbouring states.

Constellation of states: In early 1979, soon after P. W. Botha became Prime Minister, the government unveiled a plan to form a Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS). This was to be a regional economic grouping including South Africa, the 'independent' bantustans, Namibia (under a South African-imposed administration), Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe (under the leadership of Ian Smith's collaborator, Bishop Abel Muzorewa). The aim of the South African regime was to create an alliance dominated by South Africa, to stem the growth of the so-called 'Marxist threat' in the region.

Despite South African promises of economic aid, the independent states all rejected the idea of CONSAS. The overwhelming victory of ZANU in the Zimbabwe independence election in March 1980 was the final nail in the coffin of the proposed 'Constellation'. On 4 April 1980, even before Zimbabwe's formal independence, nine Southern African states joined together to form the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).^{*} Its purpose was to promote development in the region and to break the member states' economic dependence on South Africa.

^{*} SADCC members: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Destabilization: After this rebuff, the South African regime turned to other ways of preventing the independent development of the region and undermining support for the ANC. While the regime continued to make some promises of economic aid, its main strategy was the destabilization of neighbouring states. Counter-revolutionary groups, organized and armed by South Africa, disrupted their economies by attacking economically important installations (fuel depots, railway lines, fuel pipelines, bridges, etc.) and by making normal agricultural production almost impossible over large areas. The largest of the counter-revolutionary groups were UNITA in Angola, and the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR). Similar groups operated in Zimbabwe and Lesotho.

Angola was also the victim of large-scale direct attacks by South Africa. Entire towns and villages were destroyed, as were roads, railways, factories and mines. From 1980 until mid-1985 the South African army occupied large sections of Southern Angola, using it as a base for making attacks further north and supporting UNITA. Even after the South African troops withdrew into northern Namibia in 1985, they continued to support UNITA and to make raids into Angola, using commando groups on sabotage missions as far north as Cabinda. Other sabotage raids were also made by commandos into Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

By March 1984, Mozambique was under such pressure from MNR raids and banditry, and the effects of a bad drought, that it felt constrained to sign a 'non-aggression pact' with South Africa. By the Nkomati Accord, as the pact became known, Mozambique agreed to expel all ANC members from its territory (except for a ten-person diplomatic mission). In return, South Africa promised to end all support for the MNR. While Mozambique complied immediately with its undertaking, South Africa continued to support the MNR which expanded its war against the government of President Samora Machel.

After the signing of the Nkomati Accord, South Africa revealed that it had signed a similar agreement with Swaziland two years previously. Most ANC members who had not already left Swaziland were now forced to do so. South Africa intensified pressure on other countries, especially Lesotho and Botswana, to sign 'non-aggression pacts' as well.

Anti-ANC operations: The regime also made several attacks against ANC personnel and other South African refugees, including children, in neighbouring states. The first such raid was on Matola, near Maputo, killing fourteen people on 31 January 1981. Thereafter a number of other raids were made on Maseru, Gaborone, Harare and Lusaka. The main targets were ANC members, but many others, including

nationals of the countries attacked, also lost their lives. A number of leading ANC members — Joe Gqabi, Ruth First and others — were assassinated by South African agents.

Namibia: Particularly important in South Africa's regional strategy was its policy towards Namibia. After SWAPO launched its armed struggle in 1966, it was confronted by the South African Police. By 1973, the army had deployed units in Namibia, taking over responsibility for counter-insurgency operations. South African aggression against Angola in 1975–76 led to a large increase of troops in Namibia, from 16,000 to about 50,000. The intensification of SWAPO's military activities after 1976 led to further increases in South African forces.

In 1980 a number of Namibian-manned SADF units were transferred to the newly formed South West African Territory Force. Attempts were made to 'Namibianize' the war, using more Namibian troops, both black and white, under overall South African command. Nonetheless, by 1985 as much as half their total troop strength of about 100,000 (including police) remained South African. From 1979 most of Namibia was covered by emergency legislation and the regime's forces maintained a reign of terror over the population. Thousands were killed or tortured in a vain attempt to halt popular support for SWAPO and its military wing, PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia).

The South African government matched military activity with political moves aimed at creating a nominally independent Namibia loyal to South Africa. As early as 1975 the regime had organized the so-called Turnhalle Conference which continued to meet until 1978. Here, various leaders of Namibian bantustans and other allies of Pretoria met to discuss a new constitution for the country. SWAPO refused to participate and condemned the whole exercise as a manoeuvre by the regime to maintain its hold over Namibia through surrogates. The Turnhalle Conference was also condemned by the United Nations.

Meanwhile, a group of five leading capitalist countries — the USA, Britain, France, Federal Republic of Germany and Canada — formed a 'Contact Group' to discuss Namibian independence with South Africa, and to stave off international criticism of their refusal to impose sanctions on South Africa. After negotiations, both South Africa and SWAPO agreed to a plan for a ceasefire and the holding of free and fair elections under United Nations supervision. These provisions were incorporated in UN Security Council Resolution 435 adopted in September 1978.

The South African government accepted the plan, then began to raise objections to some of its details. The day before Resolution 435 was adopted by the Security Council, South Africa announced that it would organize its own elections for a Constituent Assembly in Namibia. This election was held in December 1978 in an atmosphere of intensified repression. SWAPO boycotted the election which was won by the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), an alliance of the groups which participated in the Turnhalle Conference. South Africa hoped that the DTA would develop into a credible alternative to SWAPO and win some popular support. However, it was plagued with internal squabbles, financial mismanagement and corruption, and in 1982 it collapsed along with the administration it had established. The South African Administrator-General took direct control.

In September 1983 a Multi-Party Conference (MPC) of pro-Pretoria groups was launched. In 1985, the MPC took over the administration with limited powers. Although SWAPO and most of the international community still called for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 435, from 1982 South Africa insisted that Cuban troops must first be removed from Angola. This was rejected by SWAPO and Angola. Despite all South Africa's constitutional manoeuvres, it was unable to create any real base of support for its puppets among the Namibian people. It continued, therefore, to rely ultimately on military power alone to prevent a democratic government led by SWAPO from gaining power.

States of Emergency

As resistance to apartheid mounted inside South Africa, particularly when black local authorities began to collapse and local organs of people's power (e.g., street and area committees) started to establish themselves, the regime decided that a more naked use of repressive force was necessary to try to restore its authority. In July 1985 it declared a State of Emergency over many parts of the country. Despite the detention of over 8,000 people and other forms of repression, it proved unsuccessful in quelling resistance which actually increased during this period. The State of Emergency was lifted in early 1986.

However, the regime was only preparing itself for a more vigorous assault on the liberation movement. This came in June 1986 with the declaration of a new, nation-wide State of Emergency, just days before demonstrations to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soweto Uprising.

Essay Topics

- 1 Briefly describe the growth of the black trade union movement in South Africa in the period 1973–1985 and explain the factors which led to this growth.
- 2 Discuss the developments from 1976 to 1983 that led to the growth of the United Democratic Front.
- 3 Discuss the Total Strategy of the South African regime. Briefly explain why the regime adopted this strategy, describe its main features and say to what extent you think it was successful.

Topics for Group Discussion

- 1 What are the main reasons why the ANC re-emerged as the leading force in the national liberation struggle in the period from 1976, despite being outlawed and suppressed for so long?
- 2 What, in your opinion, do the independent states of Southern Africa have to gain from the end of the apartheid regime and its replacement by a non-racial, democratic government?

CHAPTER TWENTY

Apartheid's Last Stand, 1986–1990

During the visit of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group to South Africa (see box in Chapter 19), the government was placed under pressure to open genuine negotiations with the ANC. A division appeared within the ranks of the regime. On the one hand were the reformers who wanted to pursue negotiations in search of a political solution to the country's problems. On the other were the 'securocrats', associated with the military and police and closely allied with P. W. Botha himself, who favoured a switch to a greater emphasis on repression. The result of this internal struggle was dramatically announced by the SADF's bombing raids on the capital cities of the front-line states just as the EPG returned to South Africa from talks in Lusaka with the ANC. The securocrats had clearly emerged as the leading force in the government and the idea of negotiations was scuppered.

The 1986 State of Emergency – which was extended to 1990 – was an attempt to crush the liberation movement by brute force and repression. With the movement suppressed, it was hoped that a climate could be created in which it would be easier to find black collaborators to participate in a system which would perpetuate white domination in a slightly modified form. At the same time, it was planned to defuse popular grievances by making some improvements in living conditions in order to win popular support for local councils and away from the militant organizations aligned with the UDF and the ANC.

Repression during the Emergency

The declaration of the State of Emergency in June 1986 was followed by the detention of thousands of activists. Over 75 per cent of detainees belonged to UDF-affiliated organizations and COSATU;

others were from AZAPO and its allied groups. Those detained included not only national leaders but also many local leaders of trade unions, community and student organizations, even street and area committees. By June 1988 over 30,000 people had been detained, and thousands more over the following two years. Detainees were held for varying periods of time; over a thousand were kept for more than two years. Thousands of detainees, including children and old people, spent long periods in solitary confinement and were brutally tortured. In September 1988, for example, it was reported that at least 176 people under 18 years of age were in detention in the Transvaal alone. Hundreds of activists, however, did manage to avoid detention by 'going underground' to avoid the police.

Torture

Buras Nhlabathi, President of the Tembisa Youth Congress, was 17 years old when he was detained in October 1986. Below he describes part of his experiences in detention. On his release he fled the country and later became a student at the ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Tanzania.

'I was at Tembisa Police Station for one day. I was beaten and given electric shocks from handcuffs. Then I was also taken to a room where there are bright search lights and by the time I came out of that room I couldn't see nothing and I felt like my mind was tired and they started beating me up and then the only thing I remember is that when I started being normal, you know, I mean my mind now working normally, I realised that I was injured in my body. All my comrades were released. I stood firm, preferring to die.

During the first day at Tembisa Police Station, even my mother was refused permission to see me and actually didn't have any confirmation that I was detained. She got the information after my brother was released because he was released the same day and then he told my mother that I am also there.

On the second day, I was taken to Kempton Park Police Station. I was given electric shocks. I was stripped and put in a rubber suit from head to foot. A dummy was put in my mouth so I could not scream. There was no air. They switched the plug on. My muscles pumping hard, no signs on my body. I couldn't see anything.

When they switched the plug off they took the dummy out and said I should speak. When I refused, they put the dummy back and switched on again. After a long time they stopped. I was stripped and put into a refrigerated room naked. I was left there. In the fridge it was also something like 30 minutes. Then they brought me out again and put me back in the electric shock suit. I was then taken into another interrogation room. My hands, feet and head were tied around a pole and bright search lights turned on. I could not remove my head from those search lights. And then they brightened them straight into my face. I felt my mind go

dead. I couldn't see. I cannot even read at this present juncture. I was dizzy. I was beaten again for the whole day. I have scars on my right hip, in my head and on my back.

I was then taken to Modderbee Prison. I was given no medical treatment on arrival. I was given ice cubes for my swollen face. I was in prison for three months. I spent two weeks in solitary confinement. Sometimes I would be there for two weeks and then they took me out again. They were changing. It depends, because if they've detained somebody from the membership of the organization and maybe if that somebody has revealed certain information about me to them, then they came to my cell telling me, 'So-and-so has told us about you.' And then, 'It seems you were telling us the wrong information and you are not prepared to say the right information.' So then they took me back to the solitary confinement.

Maybe after two weeks then they would take me out again and if they detain somebody I would go back again. I was beaten in prison, but only with fists. After my release I was to report at 7am and 7 pm at the police station. I didn't. I spent five months in hiding after my release before leaving. I could not attend school. My family do not know where I am.'

— Testimony to the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Laws in Apartheid South Africa. Brittain and Minty (1988), pp. 42-3.

Emergency regulations were also used to prevent the media from reporting anything about 'unrest' except the news given out officially by the state's Bureau of Information. During 1988, three progressive newspapers — *South*, *New Nation* and the *Weekly Mail* — were closed temporarily under the emergency regulations. Meetings and other gatherings — including funerals — were regularly banned by police.

In the course of 1988, the government also restricted 31 organizations, including the UDF, the South African National Students Congress (SANSCO, formerly AZASO), the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), the NECC, the ECC, and AZAPO. Although they could maintain their offices, they were banned from undertaking any activity without the permission of the Minister of Law and Order. In addition, COSATU involvement in political activities was prohibited.

By this time, the government had put in place an elaborate structure known as the National Security Management System. This structure, under the control of the State Security Council (see Chapter 19), consisted of a system of committees called Joint Management Centres (JMCs) dealing with 'security' questions at regional, district and local level. (At first, local level committees — or 'mini-JMCs' — were established only in some of the most rebellious townships.) The term 'security' was so widely defined as to include almost all aspects of social and political life, including even attempts to influence popular ideology. Most JMCs were headed by military or police personnel.

Their tasks were to pool intelligence from the police, army and National Intelligence Service, to disseminate government propaganda at local level, and to monitor social and political problems in the communities for which they were responsible.

The real purpose of the JMCs was to re-establish state control by better coordinating the state's policies from the top right down to grass-roots level, and more effectively combining repression and reform. To this end they cooperated with other state structures in the detention of activists, deployment of vigilantes, and undermining of community organizations. At the same time, they aimed to defuse popular grievances by upgrading facilities such as roads, schools, health clinics and water supplies. The idea was to give credit for these improvements to the black local authorities and so win some support for these discredited structures. The emphasis of the JMCs, however, was always on the repressive tasks. The upgrading which did occur failed to achieve its objective of 'winning the hearts and minds' of the people and gaining legitimacy for the black local authorities. Possibilities of upgrading were, in any case, limited by the economic crisis.

Internal repression was mirrored by aggression beyond South Africa's borders. The regime continued its anti-ANC operations and destabilizing activities in the frontline states. It increased its help to UNITA and made direct military incursions into Angolan territory from Namibia; it continued to support the terroristic activities of the MNR in Mozambique; it deployed 'hit squads' against ANC personnel in various frontline states as well as overseas, killing leading members such as Cassius Make (in Swaziland, July 1977) and Dulcie September (in Paris, March 1988) among others. Frontline states which supported the ANC were regularly threatened with economic or military repercussions.

Death squads

One of the ugliest aspects of the apartheid system was exposed in late 1989 and early 1990. A Security Branch policeman named Almond Nofomela was sentenced to death for the murder (unrelated to his job) of a white farmer. Disgusted at the refusal of his former Security Branch colleagues to save him from the gallows, he filed an affidavit claiming that he had been a member of a secret police unit which had carried out several murders of political opponents of the government during the 1980s. He named the commander of the unit as Captain Dirk Coetzee. Nofomela won a stay of execution pending investigation of his allegations; Coetzee fled the country and, under protection of the ANC, disclosed further details about the unit.

The government initially resisted numerous calls for a commission of

enquiry; but as the evidence mounted it decided to appoint Justice Harms as a one-man judicial commission to investigate allegations about political assassinations inside South Africa; the commission had no jurisdiction outside the country. Nofomela, Coetsee and another former security policeman, David Tshikalange, however, made public allegations about the operation of South African 'death squads' in other countries. During the course of these revelations, evidence came to light that an SADF unit, known as the Civilian Cooperation Bureau (CCB), was also involved in political assassinations. People alleged to have been killed by the 'death squads' included Griffith Mxenge, David Webster, Zweli Nyanda, Keith McFadden, Ruth Firtst, Jeanette Schoon, Cassius Make, Paul Dikeledi and a SWAPO leader, Anton Lubowski. Captain Coetsee also said that the Security Police had been responsible for bombing the ANC office in London in 1982.

The People's Response

The State of Emergency had an impact on all sectors of the liberation struggle. As can be seen from the graph, Umkhonto we Sizwe's military actions more than doubled in frequency in 1985 and again in 1986, the year that the State of Emergency was declared, but remained fairly steady after that. Further escalation was hampered by the greater difficulties facing Umkhonto cadres under conditions of the State of Emergency. In addition, the regime's intimidation of the frontline

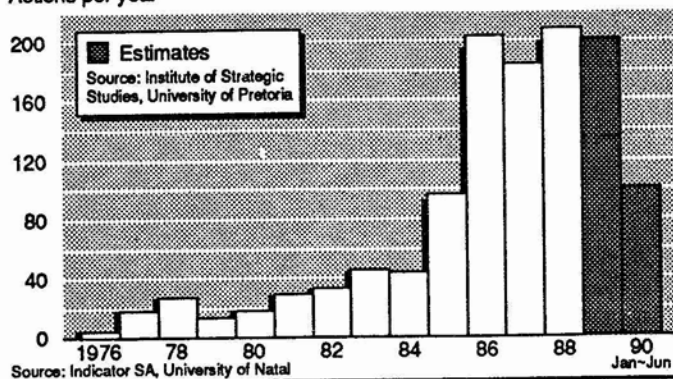


A protest march against police brutality, Johannesburg, September 1989.

states forced them to forbid most ANC activity within their territories, thus making it more difficult to infiltrate trained cadres, arms and equipment into South Africa. The regime also had some success in infiltrating agents into ANC political and military structures, and Umkhonto experienced some internal organizational difficulties of its own. Nonetheless, despite these difficulties, MK's continuing activity helped to keep alive the flames of resistance and to inspire people to continue the struggle.

ANC guerrilla activity

Actions per year



The United Democratic Front, the trade unions, student and community organizations, and the rudimentary organs of people's power such as street and area committees, were all hit hard by the restrictions of the State of Emergency. Many of their leaders were detained or forced into hiding. The level of anti-apartheid activity, especially mass demonstrations, decreased and many organizations went on the defensive, some struggling even to survive.

However, though it could impose hardships and cripple structures, the repression could not destroy most democratic organizations and many learned to operate in clandestine conditions. Clear evidence that the democratic movement would not be crushed was the secret launch of SAYCO in April 1987. SAYCO adopted the Freedom Charter, joined the UDF and stated its intention to work closely with COSATU and the NECC. With over half a million members, it became the UDF's largest affiliate. In June 1987, the UDF itself held a secret conference with 200 delegates from around the country to review policy. It formally adopted the Freedom Charter and pledged itself to build the broadest possible anti-apartheid unity.

As it became more difficult for the UDF and its allies to voice

opposition to apartheid openly, so progressive church leaders took on a more important role. For a while Christian churchmen like Archbishop Tutu, Allan Boesak and Frank Chikane became the voice of the movement inside South Africa. In 1987, the Anglican church took the bold step of recognizing the legitimacy of armed struggle. Muslim leaders like Farid Essack also took on a prominent role. The ANC, recognizing the crucial role of the religious community, established a multi-faith Department of Religious Affairs in 1987, and a number of meetings took place in Lusaka between the ANC and religious leaders from inside South Africa.

COSATU, with its strong organized base in the heart of the country's economic life, was able to grow despite repression and became increasingly involved in political issues. At its 1986 meeting with the ANC and SACTU in Lusaka a joint communique from the participants declared that 'lasting solutions [to the crisis in South Africa] can only emerge from the national liberation movement, headed by the ANC, and the entire democratic forces of our country, of which COSATU is an important and integral part.' At its July 1987 conference COSATU formally adopted the Freedom Charter, thereby bringing its stated social and political goals even closer to the ANC and UDF. Like the UDF, COSATU also called for a broader alliance of democratic forces.

COSATU unions became embroiled in a number of important strikes – including the strike by over 300,000 mineworkers in August 1987 – and the federation regularly supported national stay-aways during the whole period of the State of Emergency. Each year, May Day and 16 June (the anniversary of the Soweto Uprising) were marked by national stay-aways, as were the polling days of the whites-only election in May 1987 and the elections for all three chambers of the tricameral parliament in September 1989. In most of the stay-aways, COSATU was joined by other democratic organizations. These included NACTU, the BC-oriented trade union federation, as well as the UDF and its affiliates.

All this activity led the state to increase its pressure on the organized labour movement. Hundreds of trade union activists were detained; there were police raids on union premises; COSATU's offices were bombed; and, in February 1988, the emergency regulations banned COSATU from all political activity.

This latter regulation, coming as it did at the same time as the severe restrictions on the UDF and other organizations, made the creation of a formal broad alliance linking COSATU with these organizations difficult to achieve. Gradually, however, the informal alliance centred on the UDF and COSATU (in close but clandestine cooperation with the ANC) took on a more permanent character, and during 1989 came to be known as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). By

not constituting itself formally as an organization the MDM avoided being legally restricted by the government. In any case a strategic alliance of this sort may have been more desirable than a single body as it provided a forum for all voices and probably resulted in a broader alliance of forces.

The emergence of the MDM coincided with a gradual change in the political atmosphere. The regime's military defeat in Angola in 1988 and its subsequent acceptance of independence for Namibia under the UN Security Council Resolution 435 (see below) contributed to the new mood. Democratic organizations sensed the possibility of taking advantage of differences within the National Party which appeared at the time (see below) and they became more vociferous and challenging. In January-February 1989, 600 detainees staged a hunger strike to demand their release. The world-wide publicity and strong support given to them obliged the government to start releasing detainees; by the end of May there were reportedly less than 100 left in prison. Despite the fact that most of those released were served with banning orders, their success in forcing the regime to release them boosted morale in the democratic movement.

Economic crisis and poverty fuelled further resistance. As the detainees were being released, rent and bus boycotts and other forms of protest intensified in many townships. In Boksburg and Carltonville, effective consumer boycotts against white businesses were organized in early 1989 in response to attempts by newly-elected Conservative Party town councils to put the clock back and re-segregate public amenities which had previously been desegregated. Political funerals and commemorations which had long been suppressed by the emergency regulations were held openly once more. In June more than 10,000 youths in the Eastern Transvaal marched in protest at the renewal of the State of Emergency.

From mid-1989, opposition to the state became more organized and widespread. In June, the annual conference of the South African Council of Churches committed member churches to supporting non-violent action to end apartheid. An insurrectionary mood was developing as the state was challenged on every front. In July, the MDM announced it would start a defiance campaign against segregated facilities and restrictions on meetings. From August, black patients were organized to present themselves for treatment at white hospitals; most were, in fact, given treatment. This was followed by similar challenges to the segregation of schools, transport, workplace facilities, beaches and other public amenities. Illegal demonstrations, at times involving thousands of people, took place in various cities. On 20 August, the anniversary of the UDF, meetings were held by organizations prohibited from doing so, to proclaim themselves

'unbanned': speakers at these meetings often included banned persons. The controls imposed by the State of Emergency were clearly showing signs of breaking down.

The Bantustans

In all the bantustans the authorities started to lose control as the people's resistance spread. Severe repression by the bantustan regimes, often aided by the South African Police or SADF, could not stem the tide of popular anger.

Opposition to the independence of KwaNdebele (see Chapter 19) was sustained despite wide-scale detentions and even killings by the authorities or 'vigilantes'. Traditional leaders opposed to 'independence' for KwaNdebele were among the founders of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) which recruited members in all parts of the country as a growing number of chiefs openly allied themselves to the democratic movement.

Sustained campaigns were waged in areas facing incorporation into bantustans or attempting to reverse incorporation where it had been imposed. Such resistance was particularly strong in Bophuthatswana, Venda, KwaNdebele, Ciskei and Transkei. All the bantustans also experienced popular local revolts over issues such as educational grievances, police repression and corruption.

In Natal (both in and outside KwaZulu), as support for the UDF and COSATU grew, so Inkatha-organized vigilantes — often backed by police — attacked people or even entire communities who were considered anti-Inkatha. Aimed at asserting Inkatha dominance in the Natal area, these assaults often provoked counter-attacks, leading to a spiral of violence in which hundreds of lives were lost and which continued into 1990.

The bantustan armies moved into the political arena when two military coups took place in rapid succession in the Transkei. In September 1987 George Matanzima was removed as president and replaced by Stella Sigcau. Three months later, she too was removed and a military council headed by General Bantu Holomisa took direct control of the bantustan's affairs. The South African government, apparently approving of the changes, did not intervene. While repression of opposition continued in the Transkei, Holomisa found it expedient to respond to popular pressure. In early 1989, he allowed the reburial of Chief Sabata Dalindyebo.* It was attended by 60,000 people

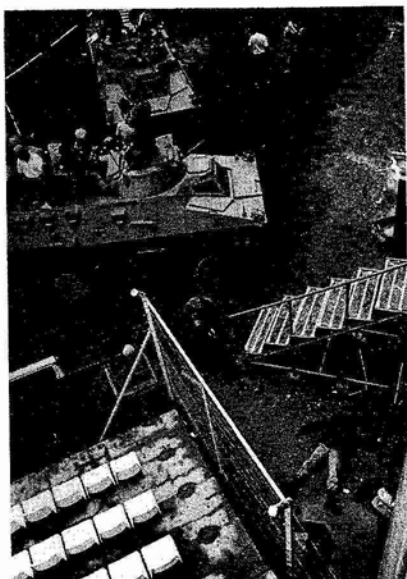
* In the early 1980s, Dalindyebo, Paramount Chief of the Thembus and a long-time foe of bantustan authorities, had been forced into exile where he was integrated into the ANC structures. When he died in 1986, his body was sent to Transkei for burial, but it was seized by the Matanzima administration which conducted a quick funeral under its own control and against the wishes of the immediate family.



Soweto, 29 October 1989. Part of the crowd of 80,000 who attended a rally to welcome home the seven released ANC leaders.

in a massive show of support for the ANC. In October 1989 a rally of 80,000 people in Umtata welcomed Walter Sisulu and other ANC leaders recently released from prison (see below). In response to other demonstrations, Holomisa anticipated the South African government by announcing the lifting of the Transkei's State of Emergency, the suspension of executions and the release of some political prisoners. He also indicated that the ANC and PAC would be unbanned in the near future and spoke about the possibility of a referendum on reversing the Transkei's 'independence'.

In February 1989, another coup was attempted, this time in Bophuthatswana. Members of the Bophuthatswana Defence Force, supported by the opposition People's Progressive Party (PPP), briefly overthrew the regime of Lucas Mangope. The coup had obvious popular support but was immediately crushed by the SADF which rushed troops into Bophuthatswana to restore Mangope. Hundreds of people were detained; the University of Bophuthatswana, where students had supported the coup, was closed down; pro-PPP civil servants were fired; and hundreds of soldiers and nine leading members of the PPP were charged with high treason. Despite all this, resistance to the Bophuthatswana authorities continued on many fronts, notably against the incorporation of Leeuwfontein and Braklaagte where clashes led to thousands of detentions and arrests and the death of seven policemen.



SADF soldiers guard injured and captured rebels following a 'coup' by members of the Bophuthatswana army. Four people were killed in the failed coup and the SADF reinstated President Lucas Mangope.



Inanda, Durban, 1990. A resident with a homemade firearm called a 'kwasher' stands guard defending his home and community from attack by Inkatha impis (warriors).

Economic Problems

The South African economy continued to stagnate, with the Gross Domestic Product (the total value of goods and services produced inside the country) growing at an annual average rate of only 1.1 per cent in the decade from 1979. Since the population grew at 2.3 per cent during this period, the average income for the whole population actually decreased (despite rising incomes for certain sectors, both white and black). All this resulted in deepening poverty for many, which in turn helped increase political instability.

While South Africa's small internal market and its poorly trained labour force — the results of decades of black oppression — were at the root of its economic problems, they were made worse by other factors. Large state expenditures on the SADF, police and other repressive machinery, as well as the cost of financing the inefficient and often corrupt bantustan administrations, all diverted funds from investment in education and other vital economic and social areas.

From the mid-1980s in particular, the success of the international anti-apartheid movement resulted in the escalation of economic sanctions, adding to South Africa's problems. Some trade sanctions

were imposed by the European Community and the Commonwealth in 1985–86, and a virtual ban on trade with South Africa was imposed by all Nordic countries in 1987. In 1986, as a result of a surge of anti-apartheid consciousness in the United States, Congress overrode President Reagan's veto with a two-thirds majority vote to impose wide-ranging economic sanctions on South Africa.

In addition, a number of private companies withdrew their investments in South Africa due to pressure from shareholders or customers. In most cases, though, they sold out to local companies, thus doing relatively little harm to the economy. Probably more damaging than disinvestment was the reluctance of foreign companies to invest new capital in South Africa because of pressure from anti-apartheid forces. This deprived South Africa of much-needed foreign money and technology. Where technology was acquired, it was expensive and a drain on foreign exchange.

COSATU and Sanctions

COSATU supported economic sanctions against South Africa even though they could threaten the jobs of some workers. In an article explaining why, COSATU's national education officer, Alec Erwin, wrote:

'The base line is that the regime is an obstacle to change and must go. To achieve this requires a combination of forces, and sanctions are one of those, even if they are unlikely to be decisive in themselves. Although they threaten certain hardships, shop-steward leadership perceives that unemployment and poverty will not be eliminated unless there is a restructuring of the economy. This can only be achieved by removing the regime. In this sense sanctions are seen as a solution to the unemployment problem rather than the cause of it.'

— Alec Erwin, 1989, p. 55.

South Africa's ability to get foreign capital by overseas borrowing was further curtailed by its inability to pay back existing loans on schedule. In 1985, the government had declared a moratorium (postponement) on the repayment of some foreign debts. Although it later agreed to a new schedule to repay these debts, the confidence of foreign bankers in the South African economy was shaken and it became much more difficult to get further loans. So, unlike the crisis of the early 1960s when the South African economy had been rescued by foreign capital, the reluctance of foreigners to invest in the country was now deepening the crisis.

The roots of the economic problems were, by now, quite clearly political in origin: the structure of the apartheid economy; political

instability with the government unable to impose its will on the people despite enormous expenditure; and international economic sanctions. This led sectors of private capital and even certain circles within the National Party to consider political solutions that went beyond the framework of apartheid. Many of their representatives had already sought consultations with the ANC, though it was still outlawed and based in Lusaka.

International Changes

Increasing economic sanctions reflected the shift in public opinion in precisely those countries which had previously supported South Africa: the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and North America. Democratic opinion in those countries emphasized South Africa's isolation through academic, cultural and sports boycotts in addition to economic sanctions.

South Africa's value to the right wing in these countries decreased quite dramatically in the late 1980s with the ending of the Cold War. The new Soviet government led by Mikhail Gorbachev successfully concluded an agreement with the USA for the reduction of nuclear weapons. The Soviet 'new thinking' on international relations emphasized cooperation to overcome common problems rather than stressing the antagonisms between states with different social systems. This led to a relaxation of international tensions and an emphasis on solving international problems by political rather than military means.

One result of all these changes, particularly as they resulted in part from the economic weakness of the Soviet Union and its consequent inability to sustain high military expenditures, was the sharp decline of what many in the capitalist world had seen as the 'Soviet threat'. The overthrow of most of the Communist-led governments in Eastern Europe in 1989, and the virtual collapse of the Warsaw Pact, finally removed any remaining fears. In South Africa, the regime thus found itself no longer able to win support in the West by posing as a 'bulwark against Communism' and a counter against 'Soviet expansionism in Southern Africa'.

While the changes in Eastern Europe undermined the ANC's international support to some extent (the new governments were less supportive of it than the previous ones), the damage was limited by the fact that they came at a time when the movement's support and prestige in Western countries was higher than ever before and the South African regime was weakened.

Cuito Cuanavale and Namibian Independence

In 1987–88, the myth of the invincibility of the South African military

machine was laid to rest, with important consequences for social change. In July 1987, the SADF launched a major attack into south-eastern Angola. This was an attempt to prevent Angolan government forces from capturing the town of Mavinga from UNITA, and to extend the area under UNITA control. The South African and UNITA forces met unexpectedly strong resistance from Angolan and Cuban forces around the town of Cuito Cuanavale. Despite the arrival of fresh SADF reinforcements in December, and the use of their most destructive and sophisticated weapons — aircraft, artillery, tanks and armoured cars — the invaders suffered heavy casualties but failed to capture Cuito Cuanavale. Meanwhile other Angolan and Cuban forces moved south towards the Namibian border, cutting off the South Africans' line of retreat.

Decisive in the SADF's defeat was its loss of air superiority. The South African Air Force found itself unable to match the modern Soviet equipment brought into battle by the defenders. South African aircraft were unable to penetrate the radar/missile defences at Cuito Cuanavale, and when the Angolan/Cuban forces launched an air strike on the Caleque dam in June 1988, SADF air defences proved inadequate.

In order to extricate its troops trapped inside Angola, South Africa would have had to escalate the war sharply. This it did not want to do because of the high cost in both money and lives. In particular, the



SWAPO Youth League rally in Katutura township during Namibia's first free election campaign.

government felt that the loss of a large number of white conscripts' lives would have been unacceptable to the white electorate in South Africa.

As a result of its military setbacks, the South African government opened talks with Angola and Cuba in May 1988. In a series of meetings over a period of seven months, the Angolans and Cubans insisted that any agreement on SADF withdrawal from Angola be linked to the independence of Namibia. Eventually, in December 1988, an agreement was reached. South Africa would withdraw from Angola and end its occupation of Namibia. Namibia would become independent in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 435. South Africa also undertook to stop aggression against Angola, including its support for UNITA. In return it was agreed that all Cuban forces would be withdrawn from Angola over a period of 27 months. Umkhonto we Sizwe's military bases in Angola would also be closed to facilitate the peace process (these bases were later moved by the ANC to Tanzania and Uganda).

South Africa thus lost its long struggle to retain control of Namibia. In UN-supervised elections for a constituent assembly in November 1989, SWAPO won 57 per cent of the votes. This majority was achieved in spite of a strong anti-SWAPO bias in the media (largely South African-controlled) and widespread intimidation of voters by the authorities. Nonetheless, SWAPO declared itself in favour of national reconciliation, and cooperated with the other parties in reaching agreement on a constitution. Namibia became an independent country on 21 March 1990 with the SWAPO leader, Sam Nujoma, as president.

End of the Botha Era

By the late 1980s the failure of National Party policies was becoming evident: the liberation movement had continued to grow despite all attempts to crush it; South Africa's isolation was increasing; economic stagnation had persisted for well over a decade and there was no sign of recovery; even its military strategy had suffered a serious setback.

All this caused a major rethink by powerful elements in the National Party, urged on by some of the large business corporations. They realized that repression alone could offer no solution, and that minor reforms such as those which had already been made would not satisfy the black majority. Internal stability, international acceptance, and economic recovery required a fundamental change of direction. They realized that they could no longer avoid addressing the real political aspirations of the black majority: negotiations with the real

leaders of the black majority would have to be undertaken. However, while being prepared to relinquish a degree of political power, these elements still sought a formula that would maintain white privilege and keep economic power in existing hands.

While far from revolutionary, such an approach could not be introduced while P. W. Botha remained president and his securocrats dominated government policy. For all Botha's talk of the need for reform he could not take the leap from repression and confrontation to dialogue with the ANC and real social change. The opportunity for the reformers came when Botha suffered a heart attack and felt obliged to relieve his workload by resigning as leader of the NP. This came at a time when the securocrats had been partially discredited by the failure of their policies and the military defeat in Angola, and the Minister of National Education and Transvaal NP leader, F. W. de Klerk, was chosen to take Botha's place.

Botha, who retained his position as president, was unhappy with the new NP leadership; on his recovery, a power struggle ensued. Most NP politicians, fed up with the dominance of Botha and his allies in the military, police and other security services, backed De Klerk. In August 1989, Botha resigned as president. De Klerk (ironically regarded as a conservative during the Botha regime) became acting president and confirmed in office after the elections to the tricameral parliament the following month.

The elections themselves resulted in a clear victory for the NP in the white chamber, while the far-right Conservative Party increased its support and became the official opposition. During the election campaign the NP put forward a vaguely worded 'Five Year Plan of Action' which called for overcoming divisions and suspicion in the country but gave little indication of the steps De Klerk was actually to take later on. The elections took place against a background of an increasingly assertive mass movement. A two-day stay-away and schools boycott was supported by three million workers and students, and the elections to the coloured and Indian chambers were widely boycotted, with less than a fifth of the potential voters taking part.

Statements by NP leaders in the pre- and post-election periods gave an idea of the type of constitution they now envisaged for South Africa. They rejected a 'pure one-person one-vote system' and insisted on 'group rights' so that people would be represented in a future parliament on the basis of their racial group rather than simply as individual voters. The new constitution, they said, should be based on the principle of 'consensus' rather than majority rule. In this way they hoped to maintain a white veto to ward off threats to white interests.

The ANC, which had foreseen the possibility of negotiations with the South African government, had taken steps, meanwhile, to prepare

the ground. Early in 1988, it had published its 'Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa' in which it called for 'an independent, unitary, democratic and non-racial state' and a system of 'universal suffrage based on the principle of one person, one vote' (see Appendix).

The Organization of African Unity's 'Harare Declaration' of August 1989 (see Appendix), adopted on the ANC's initiative, recognized the possibility of ending apartheid through negotiations. This, it stated, would be possible if the South African regime was prepared to negotiate 'genuinely and seriously' and to create a climate conducive to negotiations. The United Nations similarly endorsed the peace process. Nelson Mandela, though still a prisoner, met with P. W. Botha in July 1989 and with De Klerk in December 1989. The subjects discussed included the release of political prisoners and the possibility of talks between the ANC and the government.

After De Klerk became president, several important political developments took place in quick succession. Starting in September, a number of large demonstrations were allowed at which ANC and SACP symbols were prominently displayed. In October, eight prominent political prisoners were released, including Walter Sisulu and all the remaining Rivonia trialists except Mandela (Denis Goldberg had been released in 1985 and Govan Mbeki in 1987). The released ANC leaders addressed 80,000 people at a mass rally in Johannesburg and later addressed huge rallies in other parts of the country, in the largest series of public gatherings in the ANC's history. De Klerk took the reform process further and announced the restructuring of the National Security Management System, cutting down the influence of the security forces and increasing that of the government departments. He also announced the desegregation of beaches and other facilities and declared that the government intended to scrap the Separate Amenities Act which allowed local authorities to enforce segregation in public places.

All this did not end conflict in the country, and clashes between the people and police continued in various areas. However, the political atmosphere of the country was being transformed as the mass democratic movement virtually unbanned the ANC by refusing to accept its illegality, openly displaying its symbols and distributing its documents and other literature.

It had become merely a question of time before the government formally accepted the new reality. Eventually, on 2 February, at the opening of parliament, F. W. de Klerk announced the unbanning of the ANC, SACP, PAC and 58 other organizations. He also announced an easing of the State of Emergency regulations, including the partial lifting of press restrictions; the State of Emergency was not lifted,

however, and the police continued to exercise draconian powers. The death penalty was suspended and all death sentences were to be reviewed.

De Klerk also declared that he intended releasing Nelson Mandela in the near future. Nine days later, on 11 February 1990, Mandela, who had become the most potent symbol of the South African freedom struggle, was released after 27 years of captivity. He emerged from prison a hero, watched on television by millions of people in South Africa and abroad, to join the leadership of the liberation struggle as it shifted into a new phase.

In February 1990, South Africa stood at the beginning of a new stage in its history. Although the apartheid system was still in place and wealth and power remained overwhelmingly in white hands, the writing was on the wall: the new balance of forces in the country ensured that change would take place and a different type of political dispensation would be built. The struggle would now be over the nature of the new South Africa, a struggle in which different visions of the future contended with one another in the making of a new reality.

Essay Topics

- 1 Assume that you are the Minister of Law and Order. Prepare a speech justifying the government's decision to impose the State of Emergency in June 1986.
- 2 Assume that you are a leading official of the UDF. Write a newspaper article attacking the imposition of the State of Emergency.
- 3 Discuss the impact on the South African liberation struggle of South Africa's involvement in Angola and the independence of Namibia.

Topics for Group Discussion

- 1 F. W. de Klerk gave no indication during the 1989 election campaign that he intended legalizing the ANC, SACP and other organizations, releasing imprisoned political leaders and taking a number of other steps. Do you think that he deliberately misled the white electorate, or was he not yet sure of the steps he would take? If he did mislead his voters, why do you think he did this?
- 2 What, in your opinion, was the role of economic sanctions as an instrument of progressive change in South Africa? Were they useful or not to those fighting apartheid?

APPENDIX 1

Programme of Action

Statement of Policy Adopted at
the ANC Annual Conference, 17 December 1949

The fundamental principles of the programme of action of the African National Congress are inspired by the desire to achieve National freedom. By National freedom we mean freedom from White domination and the attainment of political independence. This implies the rejection of the conception of segregation, apartheid, trusteeship, or White leadership which are all in one way or another motivated by the idea of White domination or domination of the Whites over the Blacks. Like all other people the African people claim the right of self-determination.

With this object in view in the light of these principles we claim and will continue to fight for the political rights tabulated on page 8 of our Bill of Rights such as:-

- 1 the right of direct representation in all the governing bodies of the country — national, provincial and local, and we resolve to work for the abolition of all differential institutions or bodies specially created for Africans, viz. representative councils, present form of parliamentary representation.
- 2 to achieve these objectives the following programme of action is suggested:
 - (a) the creation of a national fund to finance the struggle for national liberation.
 - (b) the appointment of a committee to organise an appeal for funds and to devise ways and means therefore.
 - (c) the regular issue of propaganda material through:-
 - (i) the usual press, newsletter or other means of disseminating our ideas in order to raise the standard of political and national consciousness.
 - (ii) establishment of a national press.
- 3 appointment of a council of action whose function should be to carry into effect, vigorously and with the utmost determination the programme of action. It should be competent for the council of action to implement our resolve to work for:-
 - (a) the abolition of all differential political institutions the boycotting of which we accept and to undertake a campaign to educate our people on this issue and, in addition, to employ the following weapons: immediate and active boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations.
 - (b) preparations and making of plans for a national stoppage of work for one day as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the Government.
- 4 Economic
 - (a) The establishment of commercial, industrial, transport and other enterprises in both urban and rural areas.
 - (b) Consolidation of the industrial organisation of the workers for the improvement of their standard of living.
 - (c) Pursuant to paragraph (a) herein instructions be issued to Provincial Congresses to study the economic and social conditions in the reserves and other African settlements and to devise ways and means for their development, establishment of industries and such other enterprises as may give employment to a number of people.
- 5 Education

It be an instruction to the African National Congress to devise ways and means for:-

 - (a) Raising the standard of Africans in the commercial, industrial and other enterprises and workers in their workers' organisations by means of providing a common educational forum wherein intellectuals, peasants and workers participate for the common good.
 - (b) Establishment of national centres of education for the purpose of training and

educating African youth and provision of large scale scholarships tenable in various overseas countries.

6 Cultural

(a) To unite the cultural with the educational and national struggle.

(b) The establishment of a national academy of arts and sciences.

7 Congress realises that ultimately the people will be brought together by inspired leadership, under the banner of African Nationalism with courage and determination.

APPENDIX 2

Declaration of Principles Adopted at the Foundation Conference of the South African Congress of Trade Unions on 5 March 1955, and included as a Preamble to its Constitution

History has shown that unorganised workers are unable to improve their wages and conditions of work *on a lasting basis*. Only where workers have organised in effective trade unions have they been able to improve their lot, raise their standard of living and generally protect themselves and their families against the insecurities of life.

The whole experience of the Trade Union Movement the world over has furthermore established the fact that the Movement can only progress on the basis of unity and the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity of all workers. Trade Unions must unreservedly reject any attempts to sow disunity among the workers, on the basis of colour or nationality or any other basis.

Just as the individual worker, or any group of workers, are unable to improve their lot without organisation into Trade Unions, so the individual trade union is powerless unless there is in existence a coordinating body of trade unions which unites the efforts of all workers. For such a trade union federation to be successful, it must be able to speak on behalf of all workers, irrespective of race or colour, nationality or sex.

The future of the people of South Africa is in the hands of the workers. Only the working class, in alliance with other progressive minded sections of the community, can build a happy life for all South Africans, a life free from unemployment, insecurity and poverty, free from racial hatred and oppression, a life of vast opportunities for all people.

But the working class can only succeed in this great and noble endeavour if it itself is united and strong, if it is conscious of its inspiring responsibility. The workers of South Africa need a united trade union movement in which all sections of the working class can play their part unhindered by prejudice or racial discrimination. Only such a truly united movement can serve effectively the interests of the workers, both the immediate interests of higher wages and better conditions of life and work as well as the ultimate objective of complete emancipation for which our forefathers have fought.

We firmly declare that the interests of all workers are alike, whether they be European, African, Coloured, Indian, English, Afrikaans or Jewish. We resolve that this coordinating body of trade unions shall strive to unite all workers, and that its guiding motto shall be the universal slogan of working class solidarity:

'An injury to one is an injury to all.'

APPENDIX 3

The Freedom Charter

WE, THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA, DECLARE FOR ALL OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD TO KNOW:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people;

That our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

That only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white, together equals, countrymen and brothers, adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All the people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHALL HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts, and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industries and trades shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

THE LAND SHALL BE SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO WORK IT!

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall end, and all the land be redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

ALL SHALL BE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without fair trial;

No one shall be condemned by the order of any government official;

The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not only vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on the grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

ALL SHALL ENJOY HUMAN RIGHTS!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organize, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;

Pass laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

THERE SHALL BE WORK AND SECURITY!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The state shall recognize the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

THE DOORS OF LEARNING AND CULTURE SHALL BE OPENED!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

THERE SHALL BE HOUSES, SECURITY AND COMFORT!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space to be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry;

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

Free medical care and hospitalization shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children;

Slums shall be demolished and new suburbs built where all shall have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres;

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all;

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

THERE SHALL BE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation, not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;

The people of the protectorates, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, shall be recognized, and shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;

The right of all the peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognized, and shall be the basis of close cooperation;

LET ALL WHO LOVE THEIR PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY NOW SAY, AS WE SAY HERE:

'These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty.'

APPENDIX 4

Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa

The Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 by the Congress of the People at Kliptown near Johannesburg, was the first systematic statement in the history of our country of the political and constitutional vision of a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

The Freedom Charter remains today unique as the only South African document of its kind that adheres firmly to democratic principles as accepted throughout the world. Amongst South Africans it has become by far the most widely accepted programme for a post-apartheid country. The stage is now approaching where the Freedom Charter must be converted from a vision for the future into a constitutional reality.

We in the African National Congress submit to the people of South Africa, and to all those throughout the world who wish to see an end to apartheid, our basic guidelines for the foundations of government in a post-apartheid South Africa. Extensive and democratic debate on these guidelines will mobilise the widest sections of our population to achieve agreement on how to put an end to the tyranny and oppression under which our people live, thus enabling them to lead normal and decent lives as free citizens in a free country.

The immediate aim is to create a just and democratic society that will sweep away the centuries-old legacy of colonial conquest and white domination, and abolish all laws imposing racial oppression and discrimination. The removal of discriminatory laws and eradication of all vestiges of the illegitimate regime are, however, not enough; the structures and the institutions of apartheid must be dismantled and be replaced by democratic ones. Steps must be taken to ensure that apartheid ideas and practices are not permitted to appear in old forms or new.

In addition, the effects of centuries of racial domination and inequality must be overcome by constitutional provisions for corrective action which guarantee a rapid and irreversible redistribution of wealth and opening up of facilities to all. The Constitution must also be such as to promote the habits of non-racial and non-sexist thinking, the practice of anti-racist behaviour and the acquisition of genuinely shared patriotic consciousness.

The Constitution must give firm protection to the fundamental human rights of all citizens. There shall be equal rights for all individuals, irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed. In addition, it requires the entrenching of equal cultural, linguistic and religious rights for all.

Under the conditions of contemporary South Africa 87% of the land and 95% of the

instruments of production of the country are in the hands of the ruling class, which is solely drawn from the white community. It follows, therefore, that constitutional protection for group rights would perpetuate the status quo and would mean that the mass of the people would continue to be constitutionally trapped in poverty and remain as outsiders in the land of their birth.

Finally, success of the constitution will be, to a large extent, determined by the degree to which it promotes conditions for the active involvement of all sectors of the population at all levels in government and in the economic and cultural life. Bearing these fundamental objectives in mind, we declare that the elimination of apartheid and the creation of a truly just and democratic South Africa requires a constitution based on the following principles:

The State:

- (a) South Africa shall be an independent, unitary, democratic and non-racial state.
- (b) (i) Sovereignty shall belong to the people as a whole and shall be exercised through one central legislature, executive and administration.
(ii) Provision shall be made for the delegation of the powers of the central authority to subordinate administrative units for purposes of more efficient administration and democratic participation.
- (c) The institution of hereditary rulers and chiefs shall be transformed to serve the interests of the people as a whole in conformity with the democratic principles embodied in the constitution.
- (d) All organs of government including justice, security and armed forces shall be representative of the people as a whole, democratic in their structure and functioning, and dedicated to defending the principles of the constitution.

Franchise

- (e) In the exercise of their sovereignty, the people shall have the right to vote under a system of universal suffrage based on the principle of one person, one vote.
- (f) Every voter shall have the right to stand for election and be elected to all legislative bodies.

National identity

- (g) It shall be state policy to promote the growth of a single national identity and loyalty binding on all South Africans. At the same time, the state shall recognise the linguistic and cultural diversity of the people and provide facilities for free linguistic and cultural development.

A Bill of Rights and affirmative action

- (h) The constitution shall include a Bill of Rights based on the Freedom Charter. Such a Bill of Rights shall guarantee the fundamental human rights of all citizens irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed, and shall provide appropriate mechanisms for their enforcement.
- (i) The state and all social institutions shall be under a constitutional duty to eradicate race discrimination in all its forms.
- (j) The state and all social institutions shall be under a constitutional duty to take active steps to eradicate, speedily, the economic and social inequalities produced by racial discrimination.
- (k) The advocacy or practice of racism, fascism, nazism or the incitement of ethnic or regional exclusiveness or hatred shall be outlawed.
- (l) Subject to clauses (i) and (k) above, the democratic state shall guarantee the basic rights and freedoms, such as freedom of association, expression, thought, worship and the press. Furthermore, the state shall have the duty to protect the right to work, and guarantee education and social security.

- (m) All parties which conform to the provisions of paragraphs (i) to (k) shall have the legal right to exist and to take part in the political life of the country.

Economy

- (n) The state shall ensure the entire economy serves the interests and well-being of all sections of the population.
- (o) The state shall have the right to determine the general context in which economic life takes place and define and limit the rights and obligations attaching to the ownership and use of productive capacity.
- (p) The private sector of the economy shall be obliged to co-operate with the state in realising the objectives of the Freedom Charter in promoting social well-being.
- (q) The economy shall be a mixed one, with a public sector, a private sector, a co-operative sector and a small-scale family sector.
- (r) Co-operative forms of economic enterprise, village industries and small-scale family activities shall be supported by the state.
- (s) The state shall promote the acquisition of managerial, technical and scientific skills among all sections of the population, especially the blacks.
- (t) Property for personal use and consumption shall be constitutionally protected.

Land

- (u) The state shall devise and implement a Land Reform Programme that will include and address the following issues:
- (i) Abolition of all racial restrictions on ownership and use of land.
 - (ii) Implementation of land reforms in conformity with the principle of Affirmative Action, taking into account the status of victims of forced removals.

APPENDIX 5

Declaration of the OAU Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa on the Question of South Africa

Harare, Zimbabwe — 21 August 1989

('The Harare Declaration')

1 *Preamble*

- 1.0 The people of Africa, singly, collectively and acting through the OAU, are engaged in serious efforts to establish peace throughout the continent by ending all conflicts through negotiations based on the principle of justice and peace for all.
- 2.0 We reaffirm our conviction, which history confirms, that where colonial, racial and apartheid domination exist, there can neither be peace nor justice.
- 3.0 Accordingly, we reiterate that while the apartheid system in South Africa persists, the peoples of our continent as a whole cannot achieve the fundamental objectives of justice, human dignity and peace which are both crucial in themselves and fundamental to the stability and development of Africa.
- 4.0 With regard to the region of Southern Africa, the entire continent is vitally interested that the processes, in which it is involved, leading to the complete and genuine independence of Namibia, as well as peace in Angola and Mozambique, should succeed in the shortest possible time. Equally, Africa is deeply concerned that the destabilisation by South Africa of all the countries in the region, whether through direct aggression, sponsorship of surrogates, economic subversion and other means, should end immediately.
- 5.0 We recognise the reality that permanent peace and stability in Southern Africa can only be achieved when the system of apartheid in South Africa has been liquidated and South Africa transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

We therefore reiterate that all the necessary measures should be adopted now, to bring a speedy end to the apartheid system, in the interest of all the people of Southern Africa, our continent and the world at large.

- 6.0 We believe that, as a result of the liberation struggle and international pressure against apartheid, as well as global efforts to liquidate regional conflicts, possibilities exist for further movement towards the resolution of the problems facing the people of South Africa. For these possibilities to lead to fundamental change in South Africa, the Pretoria regime must abandon its abhorrent concepts and practices of racial domination and its record of failure to honour agreements, all of which have already resulted in the loss of so many lives and the destruction of much property in the countries of Southern Africa.
- 7.0 We reaffirm our recognition of the right of all peoples, including those of South Africa, to determine their own destiny, and to work out for themselves the institutions and the system of government under which they will, by general consent, live and work together to build a harmonious society. The Organisation of African Unity remains committed to do everything possible and necessary, to assist the people of South Africa, in such ways as the representatives of the oppressed may determine, to achieve this objective. We are certain that, arising from its duty to help end the criminal apartheid system, the rest of the world community is ready to extend similar assistance to the people of South Africa.
- 8.0 We make these commitments because we believe that all people are equal and have equal rights to human dignity and respect, regardless of colour, race, sex or creed. We believe that all men and women have the right and duty to participate in their own government, as equal members of society. No individual or group of individuals has any right to govern others without their consent. The apartheid system violates all these fundamental and universal principles. Correctly characterised as a crime against humanity, it is responsible for the death of countless numbers of people in South Africa. It has sought to dehumanise entire peoples. It has imposed a brutal war on the whole region of Southern Africa, resulting in untold loss of life, destruction of property and massive displacement of innocent men, women and children. This scourge and affront to humanity must be fought and eradicated in its totality.
- 9.0 We have therefore supported and continue to support all those in South Africa who pursue this noble objective through political, armed and other forms of struggle. We believe this to be our duty, carried out in the interests of all humanity.
- 10.0 While extending this support to those who strive for a non-racial and democratic society in South Africa, a point on which no compromise is possible, we have repeatedly expressed our preference for a solution arrived at by peaceful means. We know that the majority of the people of South Africa and their liberation movement, who have been compelled to take up arms, have also upheld this position for many decades and continue to do so.
- 11.0 The positions contained in this Declaration are consistent with and are a continuation of those elaborated in the Lusaka Manifesto two decades ago. They take into account the changes that have taken place in Southern Africa since that Manifesto was adopted by the OAU and the rest of the international community. They constitute a new challenge to the Pretoria regime to join in the noble effort to end the apartheid system, an objective to which the OAU has been committed from its very birth.
- 12.0 Consequently, we shall continue to do everything in our power to help intensify the liberation struggle and international pressure against the system of apartheid until this system is ended and South Africa is transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country, with justice and security for all its citizens.
- 13.0 In keeping with this solemn resolve, and responding directly to the wishes of the representatives of the majority of the people of South Africa, we publicly pledge ourselves to the position contained hereunder. We are convinced that their implementation will lead to a speedy end of the apartheid system and therefore the

opening of a new dawn of peace for all the peoples of Africa, in which racism, colonial domination and white minority rule on our continent would be abolished forever.

2 *Statement of Principles*

- 14.0 We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exists which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations. Such an eventuality would be an expression of the long-standing preference of the majority of the people of South Africa to arrive at a political settlement.
- 15.0 We would therefore encourage the people of South Africa, as part of their overall struggle, to get together to negotiate an end to the apartheid system and agree on all the measures that are necessary to transform their country into a non-racial democracy. We support the position held by the majority of the people of South Africa that these objectives, and not the amendment or reform of the apartheid system, should be the aims of the negotiations.
- 16.0 We are at one with them that the outcome of such a process should be a new constitutional order based on the following principles, among others:
 - 16.1 South Africa shall become a united, democratic and non-racial state.
 - 16.2 All its people shall enjoy common and equal citizenship and nationality, regardless of race, colour, sex or creed.
 - 16.3 All its people shall have the right to participate in the government and administration of the country on the basis of a universal suffrage, exercised through one person one vote, under a common voters' roll.
 - 16.4 All shall have the right to form and join any political party of their choice, provided that this is not in furtherance of racism.
 - 16.5 All shall enjoy universally recognised human rights, freedoms and civil liberties, protected under an entrenched Bill of Rights.
 - 16.6 South Africa shall have a new legal system which shall guarantee equality of all before the law.
 - 16.7 South Africa shall have an independent and non-racial judiciary.
 - 16.8 There shall be created an economic order which shall promote and advance the well-being of all South Africans.
 - 16.9 A democratic South Africa shall respect the rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and pursue a policy of peace, friendship, and mutually beneficial co-operation with all peoples.
- 17.0 We believe that agreement on the above principles shall constitute the foundation for an internationally acceptable solution which shall enable South Africa to take its rightful place as an equal partner among the African and world community of nations.

3 *Climate for negotiations*

- 18.0 Together with the rest of the world, we believe that it is essential, before any negotiations can take place, that the necessary climate for negotiations be created. The apartheid regime has the urgent responsibility to respond positively to this universally acclaimed demand and thus create this climate.
- 19.0 Accordingly, the present regime should, at the very least:
 - 19.1 Release all political prisoners and detainees unconditionally and refrain from imposing any restrictions on them;
 - 19.2 Lift all bans and restrictions on all proscribed and restricted organisations and persons;
 - 19.3 Remove all troops from the townships;
 - 19.4 End the state of emergency and repeal all legislation, such as, and including the Internal Security Act, designed to circumscribe political activity; and,

19.5 Cease all political trials and political executions.

20.0 These measures are necessary to produce the conditions in which free political discussion can take place — an essential condition to ensure that the people themselves participate in the process of remaking their country. The measures listed above should therefore precede negotiations.

4 *Guidelines to the process of negotiations*

21.0 We support the view of the South African liberation movement that upon the creation of this climate, the process of negotiations should commence along the following lines:

21.1 Discussions should take place between the liberation movement and the South African regime to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing to a mutually binding ceasefire.

21.2 Negotiations should then proceed to establish the basis for the adoption of a new Constitution by agreeing on, among others, the principles enunciated above.

21.3 Having agreed on these principles, the parties should then negotiate the necessary mechanism for drawing up the new Constitution.

21.4 The parties shall define and agree on the role to be played by the international community in ensuring a successful transition to a democratic order.

21.5 The parties shall agree on the formation of an interim government to supervise the process of the drawing up and adoption of a new constitution; govern and administer the country, as well as effect the transition to a democratic order including the holding of elections.

21.6 After the adoption of the new Constitution, all armed hostilities will be deemed to have formally terminated.

21.7 For its part, the international community would lift the sanctions that have been imposed against apartheid South Africa.

22.0 The new South Africa shall qualify for membership of the Organisation of African Unity.

5 *Programme of action*

23.0 In pursuance of the objectives stated in this document, the Organisation of African Unity hereby commits itself to:

23.1 Inform governments and inter-governmental organisations throughout the world, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, the Commonwealth and others of these perspectives, and solicit their support.

23.2 Mandate the OAU Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa, acting as the representative of the OAU and assisted by the Frontline States, to remain seized of the issue of a political resolution of the South African question.

23.3 Step up all-round support for the South African liberation movement and campaign in the rest of the world in pursuance of this objective.

23.4 Intensify the campaign for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against apartheid South Africa: in this regard, immediately mobilise against the rescheduling of Pretoria's foreign debt; work for the imposition of a mandatory oil embargo and the full observance by all countries of the arms embargo.

23.5 Ensure that the African continent does not relax existing measures for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa.

23.6 Continue to monitor the situation in Namibia and extend all necessary support to SWAPO in its struggle for a genuinely independent Namibia.

23.7 Extend such assistance as the Governments of Angola and Mozambique may request in order to secure peace for their peoples; and

23.8 Render all possible assistance to the Frontline States to enable them to withstand Pretoria's campaign of aggression and destabilisation and enable them to continue to give their all-round support to the people of Namibia and South Africa.

24.0 We appeal to all people of goodwill throughout the world to support this Programme of Action as a necessary measure to secure the earliest liquidation of the apartheid system and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

APPENDIX 6

Prime Ministers of South Africa

1910–19	Louis Botha
1919–24	J. C. Smuts
1924–39	J. B. M. Hertzog
1939–48	J. C. Smuts
1948–54	D. F. Malan
1954–58	J. G. Strydom
1958–67	H. F. Verwoerd
1967–78	J. B. Vorster
1978–89	P. W. Botha (President after 1984)
1989–	F. W. de Klerk (President)

APPENDIX 7

Presidents of the ANC

1912–17	J. L. Dube
1917–24	S. M. Makgatho
1924–27	Z. R. Mahabane
1927–30	J. T. Gumede
1930–37	P. ka Isaka Seme
1937–40	Z. R. Mahabane
1940–49	A. B. Xuma
1949–52	J. S. Moroka
1952–67	A. J. Lutuli
1967–77	O. R. Tambo (Acting President)
1977–	O. R. Tambo

APPENDIX 8

Secretaries General of the ANC

1912–17	S. T. Plaatje*
1917–19	H. I. Bud-Mbelle
1919–23	S. Msane
1923–27	T. D. Mveli Skota
1927–30	E. J. Khaile
1930–36	Revd E. H. Mdolomba
1936–49	Revd J. A. Calata
1949–55	W. Sisulu
1955–58	O. R. Tambo
1958–69	D. Nokwe
1969–	A. Nzo

* In the period 1915–17, R. V. Selope Thema became Acting Secretary General as Plaatje was in England trying to win support for the campaign against the Land Act.

APPENDIX 9

Recipients of the ANC's Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe Award*

Yusuf Dadoo
Trevor Huddleston
Albert Lutuli
Govan Mbeki
Lillian Ngoyi
Helen Joseph
Ahmed Kathrada
Nelson Mandela
Raymond Mhlaba
Andrew Mlangeni
Elias Motsoaledi
Walter Sisulu

* This is the ANC's highest honour awarded for outstanding contribution to the liberation struggle. This list is complete as at October 1990.

APPENDIX 10

How the Congress Alliance Functioned (1954–1960)*

Constituent organizations of the Congress Alliance

African National Congress (ANC)
South African Indian Congress (SAIC)
Congress of Democrats (COD)
South African Coloured Peoples Organisation (SACPO)
(later renamed Coloured Peoples Congress – CPC)
South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)

The alliance operated through three main structures:

1 *The Joint Executives*

Chairman: Albert Lutuli
Convenor and Secretary: Duma Nokwe

This was the largest of the three structures, with approximately eight executive members of each of the five constituent organizations attending its meetings (the exact number attending meetings varied). The Joint Executives met at least once a year.

2 *The National Consultative Committee*

Chairman: Walter Sisulu
Secretary: Ben Turok

This committee consisted of two high-ranking delegates from each constituent organization (usually the president and secretary). It usually met once a month.

3 *The Secretariat*

ANC delegate (Chairman): Walter Sisulu

* I am indebted to Ben Turok for this information.

Secretary of Joint Executive:	Duma Nokwe
SAIC delegate:	Don Mateman
COD delegate:	Piet Beyleveld, later succeeded by Ben Turok
SACTU delegate:	Leon Levy

The Secretariat was responsible for the day to day coordination of the alliance's activities. It met almost every day.

Note: Although the Congress Alliance was technically a legal organization, most of the leading figures in the above structures were banned. This meant that meetings were actually illegal and had to take place clandestinely. The Secretariat meetings, for example, took place daily in ever-changing venues – often cafés or cars – and included whichever members were able to attend on a particular day.

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A graduate of Natal and Manitoba Universities, **John Pampallis** taught for eight years at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. After fifteen years in exile he returned to South Africa, where he is now Director for the Centre for Educational Policy Development. He recently received an award for this book from the University of Natal.



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