

**THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.**

by

ANTHONY JOHN MC CONNACHIE

submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

HISTORY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR : PROF JCH GROBLER

JOINT SUPERVISOR : MRS BM THERON

NOVEMBER 1999.

SUMMARY.

On August 1, 1961, the Prime Minister, Dr HF Verwoerd, announced that a general election would be held on October 18, 1961, eighteen months prematurely. The announcement of the early election did not come as a great surprise to most of the opposition parties. Although the National Party did not greatly increase its representation in parliament, it did win nearly all its seats with increased majorities. The Progressive Party suffered a very severe reverse with the loss of all but one of its seats in parliament. The newly-formed National Union Party also acquitted itself very poorly in the election, winning only one parliamentary seat. The results of the election helped to strengthen Verwoerd's position as leader of the National Party and appeared to vindicate his decision to lead South Africa out of the British Commonwealth.

Key Terms :

South African general elections, South African politics, National Party, United Party, Progressive Party, Liberal Party, National Union Party, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, Sir de Villiers Graaff, The republican referendum of 1960, The 1961 general election in South Africa, The 1958 general election in South Africa, Statistics concerning South African general elections.

324.968061 MCCC



0001760655

LIST OF CONTENTS.

<u>Title.</u>	<u>Page.</u>
List of abbreviations	
List of tables	
Introduction	(i)
Chapter 1 : An overview of the 1958 general election	1
Chapter 2 : Prelude to the 1958 general election : Significant developments after 1958	38
Chapter 3 : The National Party from 1958 to 1961	78
Chapter 4 : The United Party in the period leading up to the 1961 general election	123
Chapter 5 : The part played by other political parties from 1958 to 1961	156
Chapter 6 : Policies of the political parties prior to the 1961 general election	197
Chapter 7 : The 1961 general election	224
Chapter 8 : The results of the 1961 general election	282
Chapter 9 : The significance of the 1961 general election	313
List of sources	318

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

NP	National Party
UP	United Party
PP	Progressive Party
NUP	National Union Party
AP	Afrikaner Party
CA	Central Archives, Pretoria
SAL	South African Library, Cape Town
UCT	Library of the University of Cape Town
UNISA	Library of the University of South Africa, Pretoria
CACT	Cape Archives, Cape Town
INCH	Institute of Contemporary History, Bloemfontein
WCL	William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand

LIST OF TABLES.

- Table 1 : Ratio of Afrikaans-speaking whites to English-speaking whites in various age groups as shown by the 1951 population census. (Page 154)
- Table 2 : A comparison of the number of "wasted votes" won by the respective parties in the general elections between 1948 and 1961. (Page 305)
- Table 3 : Correlation coefficients between voter turn-out and percentage support for the UP and PP in the general elections between 1948 and 1961. (Page 307)
- Table 4 : A comparison of the percentage support given to the NP in various constituencies in the 1958 and 1961 general elections. (Page 308)
- Table 5 : Distribution of the sizes of the majorities won by the National Party in the various constituencies during various general elections between 1948 and 1961. (Page 310)
- Table 6 : Percentage swings away from the NP that would have been required to unseat the party after every general election between 1948 and 1961. (Page 311)

INTRODUCTION.

The 1961 general election has not received much publicity over the years possibly because it was overshadowed by the referendum of the previous year. It was regarded at the time as being a comparatively unexciting election with a predictable result and it did not produce any really great change in the number of seats held by the National Party (NP). Most of what excitement was engendered by the election lay in the conflict between the United Party (UP) and the Progressive Party (PP). There has also been comparatively little written about this election. Stultz and Butler wrote one short article on the 1961 election and Kenneth Heard also wrote a chapter about it in his study of South African general elections between 1943 and 1970. In his memoirs entitled *My Lewe in die Politiek*, Ben Schoeman devoted very little space to the 1961 general election, and much of what appeared on pages 281 and 282 dealt with Japie Basson and the performance of the National Union Party (NUP) as well as the way that English-speaking whites seemed to have accepted the idea of the republic. In his memoirs, Sir de Villiers Graaff devoted only two short paragraphs on page 185 to this election in which he mentioned the difficulties attached to fighting an election on two fronts against both the NP and the PP while simultaneously facing the reality of having lost much of the support of the English press. Sir de Villiers also discussed the way that the UP regained all but one of their seats lost to the Progressives in 1959.

Memoirs and biographies of PP politicians give a much more comprehensive account of the 1961 general election, possibly

because it was the first general election ever fought by that party as a separate political entity and also because it represented such a major political reversal. Ray Swart's *Progressive Odyssey*, Jeremy Lawrence's *Harry Lawrence*, and Helen Suzman's autobiography, *In no uncertain terms*, all provide interesting accounts of the 1961 general election although the account in Suzman's autobiography does not pay much attention to the Progressive campaign outside her own constituency of Houghton. Joanna Strangwayes-Booth's biography of Helen Suzman also provides very useful information on the formation and the early years of the PP. Dr FA Mouton's thesis on Margaret Ballinger is also very interesting and useful, and gives a lucid description of the dissension within the ranks of the Liberal Party. Terry Wilks's comparatively short biography of Douglas Mitchell describes Mitchell's frequent clashes with members of his own party. Some readers may, however, regard this biography as being rather skimpy on details and too flattering towards Mitchell at times. Catherine Taylor's autobiography, *If courage goes*, gives little detail on the 1961 general election.

Unfortunately Nationalist politicians do not seem to be as prolific in writing their autobiographies as do opposition politicians. Ben Schoeman's memoirs are interesting reading, particularly as they describe the antipathy felt towards Dr Verwoerd by many Nationalist politicians in the early years of his premiership. DS Prinsloo's biography of PW Botha naturally focuses more on the years of his premiership and does not provide much new information on the NP during the period 1958 to 1961. Dirk and Johanna de Villiers' biography of Paul Sauer gives a very

interesting account of the strained relationship between Sauer and Verwoerd.

There are several useful publications on the history of the various parties, including Brian Hackland's thesis on the earlier years of the PP, and an Afrikaans study *Die Verenigde Party - Die Groot Eksperiment*, edited by Barnard and Marais. This latter work is very informative on the dissension that was endemic within the UP for much of its existence. Also very useful were Dan O'Meara's *Forty Lost Years* and the book edited by R Schrire, *Leadership in the Apartheid State*.

This dissertation has a threefold purpose. Its primary objective is to determine and describe the course, background and significance of the 1961 general election. Its second purpose is to analyse the relative position of the political parties in the years leading up to the 1961 general election. Thirdly it quantifies statistically some of the assumptions made about South African politics over the years e.g. the effect of delimitation on the successes or defeats of the National and the United Parties, the effect of the distribution of the support enjoyed by the UP on the fortunes of that party, the strength of the NP during various critical elections and the relationship between percentage turn-out of voters and support received by the UP and the PP.

In many respects the 1961 general election was not as important for the NP as was the 1958 general election. The reason for this assertion is firstly that the gains made by the NP in 1961 were not nearly as significant or extensive as those made in 1958. Furthermore the 1958 general election was

most probably one of the most decisive general elections contested by the NP as it was in this election that its position became virtually impregnable. The UP's hopes of ever being returned to office suffered a blow that can be seen as final and irreversible. However, the 1961 general election was important in that it was probably the first general election in which the NP could realistically be described as enjoying the support of more than half the white electorate. Despite the optimistic claims made by some sections of the Nationalist press after the results of the 1958 general election had been announced, the NP probably did not command the support of half the white electorate in 1958 although it came rather close to doing so. In addition the themes of the two elections do differ slightly in that in 1961 the Nationalists made a much more concerted effort to capture the votes of as many English-speaking whites as possible.

Certain themes are prominent in any study of South African politics of this period. One of them is how the UP's numerical strength in parliament failed to reflect the full extent of its support among the electorate. This was to be a perennial source of discontent among UP supporters. In this dissertation certain statistical comparisons have been drawn with other general elections such as the influence of delimitation on the performance of certain parties and the percentage swings required to unseat the NP in some general elections. These comparisons provide a very interesting perspective on the growth and decline of various parties over nearly two decades. Another theme is how certain marginal seats made the position of the NP a trifle insecure in the early years of its rule and how this situation was remedied by

the general election of 1958. Also interesting is the dilemma in which the UP found itself for much of its post-1948 history : whether to adopt a more liberal approach or to attempt instead to fight the Nationalists on behalf of its traditionally conservative supporters who might have been wavering in their party loyalties. What was also of great interest was the relationship between the English-language press and the leadership of the UP. It was particularly striking how many editors appeared to dislike Douglas Mitchell intensely and how even in 1961 some editors already seemed disenchanted with the leadership of Sir de Villiers Graaff.

It should be remembered that the voters in South West Africa were represented by six members of parliament. Their constituencies were, however, determined by a separate delimitation commission. This dissertation naturally pays much more attention to the 150 seats in which white voters in the Republic of South Africa cast their votes. The coloureds in the Cape Province were represented by three members of parliament, who were not elected on the same day as their 156 fellow parliamentarians representing white voters in South Africa and South West Africa.

In researching this dissertation I have found the newspapers of the period to be invaluable as well as certain periodical publications such as *Round Table*, *African Digest*, and *Forum*. Much useful material has also been found in the archival collections of Harry Lawrence, Oscar Wollheim, Sydney Waterson, and Colin Eglin in the University of Cape Town Library as well as the collection of Dr Eben Dönges in the provincial archives in Cape Town. Useful and interesting information was

also gleaned from the various United Party collections in the UNISA library. The Progressive Party collections and the Liberal Party papers in the William Cullen library at the University of the Witwatersrand were also well worth consulting, as was the Liberal Party Collection in the Alan Paton Centre at the University of Natal. Most archival information concerning the National Party during this period came from the various collections at the Institute for Contemporary History at the University of the Orange Free State. My thanks are due to the staff of all these archival repositories for their assistance and to my two supervisors, Professor JCH Grobler and Mrs BM Theron, for their guidance.

Some readers might regard general elections as being a trivial or inconsequential topic of study, particularly as some people might regard white politics or parliamentary politics as being somewhat irrelevant in the light of contemporary historical events. Nevertheless general elections are a very interesting and fruitful field of research as they provide fascinating revelations on the attitudes held at various times by certain political parties as well as the white population of the time. Thus, even though while not nearly as momentous as, for example, the 1948 general election, the 1961 general election was an interesting contest. In the late 1950s, Professor GHL le May of the University of the Witwatersrand regarded the state of election analysis in South Africa as "abysmal", but hopefully this situation is in the process of being remedied.¹

¹ B Murray, *WITS the open years* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1997), p 258.

CHAPTER ONE.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE 1958 GENERAL ELECTION.

The deteriorating position of the United Party after 1948.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the results of the 1948 general election came as a great if not overwhelming surprise to the majority of South Africans. Although the National Party (NP) had scored significant successes in several by-elections leading up to the general election in May 1948, most observers and participants in both political camps did not expect the NP and its ally, the Afrikaner Party (AP), to come to power. The historian, Newell Stultz, states that "neither Malan nor Smuts appears to have anticipated that the HNP would increase its parliamentary representation by more than, at the outside, twenty seats at the general election of 1948." ¹

Ben Schoeman, in his memoirs, also recounts that about a week before polling day in May 1948, he, JG Strijdom, HF Verwoerd, and Jan de Klerk held discussions concerning the results that they expected. They were all convinced that the Nationalists would do far better than they had fared in the previous general election but none of them thought that the NP would possibly win the election. ²

The reason for this emphasis on the shock and unexpectedness of the NP's victory is that it shows on the one hand how uninformed the NP leaders were concerning the strength of their party and on the other hand a certain inability on the

¹ NM Stultz, *The Nationalists in Opposition 1934 - 1948* (Pretoria & Cape Town, 1974), p 131.

² BJ Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek* (Johannesburg, 1978), p 144. DF Malan's expectations that the UP would remain in power are discussed in PW Coetzer (ed), *Die Nasionale Party*, deel 5, (Bloemfontein, 1994), pp 639 - 640.

part of many senior members in the United Party (UP) hierarchy to realise the strength of the NP. There was also a disinclination to identify and address many of the UP's own weaknesses and problems. There was thus a tendency in certain quarters in the UP to think that the NP's victory was only a very temporary aberration and that the UP might soon be returned to office. Harry Lawrence, for example, when asked by a journalist from the *Rand Daily Mail* how long he thought it would be before the Nationalists would be forced out of office, replied, "It may take as long as two years." ³

Even a cursory inspection of the statistics relating to the general election of 1948 will show how narrow the Nationalist victory was and how tenuous its position was to be in its first few years in office. In the 1948 general election the NP and its electoral partner, the Afrikaner Party, together polled 442 038 votes in the contested seats, while the UP polled 515 273 votes. In addition the UP won 11 uncontested seats while the NP won only one uncontested seat. ⁴

The NP-Afrikaner Party alliance won a total of 79 seats whereas the UP together with the Labour Party won 71 seats. The UP could normally also rely on the support of the three Natives' Representatives who were elected to parliament to represent the interests of the black people in the Cape Province. Thus, the NP-Afrikaner Party alliance had an effective majority of only five seats in parliament.

The weakness of the NP's parliamentary position after the 1948 general election is further shown by the fact that the NP

³ J Lawrence, *Harry Lawrence*, (Cape Town & London, 1978), p 221.

⁴ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika 1910 - 1976* (Pretoria, 1977), p 301.

and the Afrikaner Party had captured 23 of their 79 seats with less than 55 % of the total number of votes cast.⁵ This is striking evidence of the precarious position of the NP-AP alliance in parliament. It also accounts for the NP's necessity to allocate six new seats to South West Africa in 1950.

With the 1953 general election approaching, the UP could possibly be excused for thinking that it had a reasonably good chance of regaining the position it had lost in 1948. We can gauge the level of optimism in some sections of the UP at this time by the fact that the leader of the UP, JG Strauss, in discussing the cabinet that he would be forming after the expected UP victory in 1953, actually asked Sir de Villiers Graaff which portfolio he would like to hold.⁶

In the general election of 1953 the NP won a further nine seats in the Union as well as the six seats that had been allocated to South West Africa in 1950. While this was a considerable setback for the hopes of the UP, the position of the NP was still not particularly secure. The NP now had 94 seats in the House of Assembly and faced a parliamentary opposition that consisted of 57 UP seats, five seats held by the Labour Party and three seats held by the Natives' Representatives.⁷

The insecurity of the NP's parliamentary position after the 1953 general election can be shown by the fact that it had won nineteen seats with less than 55% of the total votes cast and a swing of slightly less than ten percent from the NP would have

⁵ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 282 - 300.

⁶ De Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back* (Cape Town & Johannesburg, 1993), p 141.

⁷ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 333.

been required to oust the Nationalists from office - a significant improvement from its position after the 1948 general election but still one that would have troubled the Nationalist hierarchy.⁸

In the 1958 general election the NP won 97 seats in the Union itself and a further six seats in South West Africa. The Labour Party did not manage to win any seats and the UP won 53 seats. Thus the NP's parliamentary strength increased by nine members while the UP's had decreased by four. The three seats held by the Natives' Representatives had not yet been abolished and there were four seats that were allocated to the representatives for the coloureds. The Nationalists thus now had a majority of 43 seats in parliament.⁹

The Nationalists found much cause for jubilation in their increased representation in parliament and they could also congratulate themselves on becoming much more firmly entrenched in the constituencies which they had won. There were now only seven constituencies in which the Nationalists had won less than 55% of the total votes cast. They were Boksburg, Fort Beaufort, Hottentots-Holland, Kimberley South, North West Rand, False Bay, and Vereeniging.¹⁰

As can be readily seen, the significance of the 1958 general election lies partly in the fact that it strengthened the position of the NP to the extent that it would be virtually unassailable for many years. It indicated incontrovertibly to the UP that its electoral fortunes would henceforth be almost permanently on the wane. This general election was therefore a watershed for the NP

⁸ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 316 - 333.

⁹ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 365.

¹⁰ Figures calculated from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 365.

And a mortal blow to any hopes that the UP may have entertained for an electoral revival in its favour.

An assessment of the support given to the National Party by the electorate in the 1958 general election.

The fact that the UP won 24 uncontested seats in the 1958 general election while the NP won no such seats, makes it difficult to determine precisely the extent of the NP's popular support throughout the Union. Nevertheless it is a valuable and interesting exercise to calculate whether the UP's claim that it represented more voters than the NP, was still valid after the NP's enhanced electoral successes.

After the 1958 general election *The Cape Times* claimed that the NP still had less support than the UP. It declared that even if the "most conservative possible allowance" were to be made for the unopposed seats, the NP had obtained at least 15 500 fewer votes than those polled by the UP and a minimum of 25 800 less than those polled by the opposition parties. This figure would increase to 36 800 if the votes in the coloured elections were to be included.¹¹ The NP polled 625 629 votes in the Union and 16 390 votes in South West Africa. The UP obtained a total of 492 071 votes in the Union and 11 568 votes in South West Africa.¹²

The political reporter for the *Eastern Province Herald*, Donald Prosser, calculated that had all the seats been contested, the UP would have polled 709 746 votes and the NP 682 668. The UP

¹¹ *Cape Times*, 19 April 1958.

¹² BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 365.

would thus have had a majority of 27 078 excluding the majorities it would have obtained in the coloured seats. These figures were reached by assuming that the 5 639 votes obtained by the Liberal, Labour and Christian Democratic Parties would probably have gone to the UP while the 4 723 votes won by the South African Bond, Independent Conservatives, Republicans and Independents would have been expected to go to the NP. In addition it was assumed that the nationwide percentage poll of 89,61 % would also have applied to the uncontested seats and that the Nationalists would have obtained fifteen percent of the votes cast in the uncontested constituencies won by the UP. The reporter stated that this assumption would give the Nationalists an average of slightly more than 1 400 votes in the uncontested seats which was "more than generous". In support of this, Prosser cited the case of the contest in Kensington where the Nationalist candidate had polled only 1 166 votes to the UP candidate's 8 234. Prosser argued that one of the reasons for the UP's lack of success was the new delimitation "which favoured the Government in most seats", and he mentioned the example of the constituency of Hottentots-Holland which had seen the removal of the safe UP area of Somerset West, which had then been added to the safe NP constituency of Stellenbosch. ¹³

In the contested constituencies in the Union, the NP received 133 558 more votes than the UP and similarly in South West Africa it obtained 4 822 votes more than the UP. Thus the Nationalists polled 138 380 votes more than the UP. ¹⁴

In assessing the overall strength of the NP at this time,

¹³ *Eastern Province Herald*, 19 April 1958.

¹⁴ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 365.

the situation is complicated by the fact that there were seven constituencies that the UP won against parties other than the NP. It is thus difficult to determine exactly how many votes the NP would have been able to muster in these constituencies. These seats were Hospital, Cape Town Gardens, Natal South Coast, Orange Grove, Pietermaritzburg District, Sea Point, and Von Brandis. From the fact that in these seven constituencies there were only 13 712 votes in favour of a republic in the 1960 referendum, it is a reasonable assumption that the NP would most probably have had fewer than 13 712 supporters in these constituencies in the 1958 general election. This assumption is naturally somewhat generous towards the Nationalists. ¹⁵

For the UP to support its claim that it represented more voters than did the NP, it would have to be sure that in a contest with the Nationalists in the 24 uncontested seats that it won, it would obtain enough of a majority to counter-balance the Nationalists' majority of 138 380 plus the 13 712 votes represented by the previously mentioned seven constituencies i.e. 152 092. According to the official results of the 1960 referendum, there were 46 376 votes in favour of a republic and 233 176 votes against a republic in these 24 uncontested seats i.e. a majority of 186 800 votes against the proposal. ¹⁶

This argument naturally rests on the assumption that votes in favour of a republic in 1960 would most likely be cast by supporters of the NP while votes cast against the republic in 1960 probably represented those who supported the UP in 1958.

¹⁵ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 376 - 386.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

In comparing these two figures i.e. the majority of 186 800 votes cast in 1960 in the uncontested seats against a republic and the 152 092 votes that would have represented the Nationalist majority in 1958, we should remember two important facts. The first is that the number of eligible voters increased considerably between the 1958 general election and the 1960 referendum. Secondly, the percentage turn-out of the electorate in the referendum in 1960 was appreciably higher than that of eligible voters in the 1958 general election. Such a comparison is understandably rather inconclusive and it is thus very difficult to determine which of the two parties had the greater popular appeal. However, it would appear that the UP still enjoyed a slight majority in 1958.

Some may argue that such calculations or hypotheses are too speculative or vague to have any historical value but they do help us to understand why the UP would have felt extremely despondent and frustrated at such a disparity between the total number of votes that they had won and their position in parliament.

A very interesting view of the 1958 election was given by Professor JL Sadie of the University of Stellenbosch. In an article in *Die Burger*, he claimed that the NP had lost a certain amount of support among Afrikaans-speaking voters and that the Nationalist election victory was due to demographic factors rather than to conversion. He also believed that the effect of the NP's propaganda had been limited to preventing a change in the political affiliations of those who had supported the party in the previous general election and that the decisive factor in the election was the difference in the rate of increase of the two main white language groups. He devoted some attention

to the effect of the proposed enfranchisement of the white eighteen-year-olds and believed that by the time of the 1963 general election, the number of Afrikaans-speaking voters over the age of 21 would exceed the comparable number of English-speaking voters by 223 900. Should the franchise be granted to the eighteen-year-olds, then the difference would be 270 400 i.e. an increase of 46 500 more votes. Sadie was, however, of the opinion that such a lowering in the age requirement for the franchise would lead to the Nationalists winning only one new seat, namely Queenstown. ¹⁷

The National Party's reaction to the general election results.

At a victory celebration in Pretoria on 22 April 1958, the Prime Minister, JG Strijdom, delivered a fiery and uncompromising speech in which he described the NP's reaction to the election results and its view of South Africa's political future. Strijdom stated that the result of the election was "a very decisive reply to the outside world and to those people, who without any real knowledge of the circumstances, are continually poking their noses into our affairs." He condemned the UP, its colour policy and its Senate Plan, stating that the electorate had shown that it would not tolerate a party that preached "a policy of integration of Black with White". In giving his opinion of the UP's Senate Plan, Strijdom stated that, "Never in the history of our country has anything more nefarious and traitorous been hatched against the White man than this abominable U.P. Senate

¹⁷ *Die Burger*, 29 August 1958.

Plan." He also attacked the opposition press and said that although some of its newspapers pretended that they supported cooperation between the two white language groups, they were in reality busy sowing the seeds of opposition among English-speaking people to such a policy. What was perhaps the most significant part of Strijdom's speech was his statement that the cooperation between English and Afrikaans speaking whites, which was an absolute necessity for South Africa, would not be fully achieved until South Africa became a republic, and as he expressed it, "Daarom voorwaarts ... Burgers van Suid-Afrika na ons einddoel en bestemming sonder vrees en sonder aarseling !" ¹⁸

The UP's Senate Plan will be discussed more comprehensively elsewhere but it should be mentioned that it intended to reduce the enlarged Senate from 89 to 50 members, twelve of whom would be elected by voters other than whites, and in which both the representatives of the whites and the blacks would be able to veto any important measures that were detrimental to their interests.¹⁹ Barnard and Marais describe the Senate Plan as being so complicated that the average voter could comprehend it only with difficulty. ²⁰

The results of the 1958 general election made the NP feel much more secure in office. They were able to disregard the parliamentary opposition more than before. The results reinforced the NP in its conviction that the electorate was highly susceptible to a strongly right-wing and aggressive style of

¹⁸ Central Archives, Pretoria (hereafter CA), A2, JG Strijdom Collection, vol 132, pp 203 - 218.

¹⁹ KA Heard, *General elections in South Africa 1943 - 1970* (London, 1974), p 76.

²⁰ SL Barnard & AH Marais, *Die Verenigde Party - Die Groot Eksperiment* (Durban & Pretoria, 1982), p 102.

government and electioneering. The fact that it had at the very least polled only slightly fewer votes than the UP, was a powerful encouragement for it to take concrete steps to establish a republic. The Nationalists also knew that the proposed enfranchisement of eighteen-year-olds would work very appreciably in its favour. Those Nationalists who still feared a possible resurgence or revival of the UP's influence were reassured by that party's much poorer performance at the polls and its inability to decide where it stood on various important issues - an inability which was to be seen repeatedly in the way that the UP spoke with one voice to its supporters in the rural areas and with another voice to those in the urban areas.

The United Party's reaction to the 1958 general election results.

The results of the 1958 general election exacerbated the already hostile relationship between the liberal and conservative wings of the UP - a situation that had been apparent for several years. The conservatives within the UP felt that the liberal wing of the party had cost them a great deal of their traditional support and that their only chance of regaining that support lay in adopting a policy that would appeal to the electorate's sense of "swart gevaar" (i.e. the idea that the blacks posed a considerable threat to the whites) and desire for segregation and white domination. This was not a new feeling. In 1955 for example, Senator Jack Connan, later to become the leader of the UP in the Cape Province, had warned the Cape Head Committee that the UP would lose all its support in the rural areas of the Cape

should they support the re-enfranchisement of the coloureds. ²¹

Similarly, Sir de Villiers Graaff said that he would not allow the liberals in South African politics to influence him detrimentally again. This, he told Colin Eglin, then MP for Pinelands, in an interview in which they discussed the election results and what they portended for the UP and South African politics. ²²

Ray Swart also describes quite strikingly how the results of the 1958 general election propelled Sir de Villiers Graaff in a much more conservative direction. After the election Swart had a discussion with Graaff in which he told him how disappointed he was that the UP was becoming more conservative and drifting towards the Nationalists. Graaff pointed to a drawer in his desk and told Swart that in it were scores of letters from supporters in the rural areas who had expressed their concern at what they perceived to be 'liberal' trends in the UP, ideas they were not prepared to support. Graaff told him that he would not risk large-scale defections from the UP and the possible disintegration of the party by allowing it to become more liberal. As far as he was concerned the UP had gone as far to the left on the question of racial policy as its supporters would tolerate. ²³

Thus the most important effect of the 1958 general election on the UP was probably to hasten the clash between the liberal and conservative wings of the party. This was to culminate in

²¹ J Strangways-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree* (London, 1976), p 99. The coloureds were removed from the common voters roll in 1956 after a very long and acrimonious parliamentary struggle.

²² SL Barnard & AH Marais, *Die Verenigde Party*, p 105.

²³ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey* (Cape Town & Johannesburg, 1991), p 45.

the dramatic break-away of the liberal wing from the UP in Bloemfontein in 1959, propelling the party in an even more conservative direction.

The reaction of the press to the results of the 1958 general election.

Because the press played a very important role in South African politics, the reactions of the various newspapers to the results of the 1958 general election are worth recording briefly. Some of the Afrikaans newspapers saw the election results as a partial vindication of the idea that Afrikaans and English-speaking whites should draw and were drawing closer together. *Die Burger* maintained that Afrikaner Nationalists saw their English-speaking fellow citizens as potential colleagues in the building and preservation of a white nation. According to the newspaper the great majority of Afrikaans and English-speaking whites had a similar outlook on South Africa's racial question.²⁴

Die Transvaler was of the opinion that the election results confirmed the NP's policy of cooperation between the two white language groups on the basis of equal rights and "South Africa First". According to this newspaper, the Nationalist government had shown that the language, culture, rights and assets of all the "volksdele" were safe under its rule. Those English-speakers who opposed the Nationalists should not feel downhearted at their defeat because, as the newspaper expressed it, "As Suid-Afrika wen, kan hulle nie verloor nie."²⁵

²⁴ *Die Burger*, 18 April 1958.

²⁵ *Die Transvaler*, 18 April 1958.

In an article entitled, "Graaff se bydrae tot die ramp", the political correspondent for *Die Burger* accorded Graaff partial blame for the UP's poor performance. It blamed him for the unpopular Senate Plan and the UP's promise to restore the coloureds to the common voters' roll with unspecified higher requirements for new voters. The reporter saw Graaff as being a "reklamebeampte" (advertising agent) rather than a leader and described him as damaging his image by allowing himself to be portrayed in advertisements that did not show him to advantage, were "cheap" or gave the impression that he lacked political weight. ²⁶

Die Volksblad came to the conclusion that the NP had won the general election because it had fought the election on the basis of clearly defined principles without resorting to political opportunism or the making of unrealistic promises. The newspaper seemed to echo the sentiments of Dr DF Malan when it stated that the NP had to bring together all those who as a result of their own convictions, belonged together. In discussing the role and performance of the UP, the newspaper claimed that the process of disintegration could not be reversed and that the influence of the conservatives had waned while that of the liberals had increased. It prophesied that thousands of conservative UP supporters would reject the UP as a result of the growing liberal influence and that these voters would then find a home within the NP. ²⁷

The opposition newspapers generally took a gloomier view of the election results. The *Cape Times* wrote that the NP had won a

²⁶ *Die Burger*, 22 April 1958.

²⁷ *Die Volksblad*, 18 April 1958.

"sectional victory, both in seats and votes", and that no future delimitation or "appeal to sectionalism" could make the NP more fully represent the Afrikaans-speaking whites or the areas outside the cities. ²⁸

The *Eastern Province Herald* likewise took a pessimistic view of the Nationalist victory, stating that the "Europeans of this country" continued to be swayed by their emotions and had voted largely from the heart instead of the head. As they were protected against "the worst economic shocks", they had not discovered the real issues on which elections should be fought. ²⁹

The *Rand Daily Mail* took a similar view. The editorial was of the opinion that the Nationalists had drawn much of their support from "the twin calls of the blood - to White blood in general and Afrikaner blood in particular". ³⁰

After the results of the general election had been announced, the *Natal Mercury* commented that South Africa had chosen "the hard way", and that its decision had been motivated by fear. As the Prime Minister had stated, the colour policy of the NP had been the "dominant factor" in the election and had undoubtedly swayed the floating vote. The fear that had been responsible for engendering such support for the Nationalists, would, however, breed nothing but despair. ³¹

It is worthwhile quoting the opinions of the opposition newspapers as they give a very strong indication of how they detested the NP and its policies. As the UP was becoming

²⁸ *Cape Times*, 18 April 1958.

²⁹ *Eastern Province Herald*, 18 April 1958.

³⁰ *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 April 1958.

³¹ *The Natal Mercury*, 18 April 1958.

progressively weaker, the role of the opposition newspapers in criticising the Nationalists was becoming increasingly important.

The influence of delimitation on the general election of 1958.

The 1958 general election was fought on the 1957 delimitation that was perceived by many opposition supporters as manifestly favouring the Nationalists. The British journal, *The Economist*, commented sarcastically on the influence of delimitation when it wrote :

After the South African election, the prime minister, Mr Strydom, gave thanks to the Creator for willing the government's victory. He failed, however, to express any public gratitude to three gentlemen whose contribution to the triumph was far less disputable : the members of the Delimitation Commission. Had the election been fought on the 1953 boundaries, his 70 000 extra votes would have brought him only three more seats : on the new delimitation, he gained a resounding nine." ³²

After the election there was some dissatisfaction in opposition circles about the system of delimitation which in some people's eyes unduly favoured the rural areas and the NP. *Die Burger* entered the dispute with an editorial which made an issue of the discrepancies in the size of some of the constituencies in Canada and the United Kingdom, claiming that these were far greater than those found in South Africa. It cited several constituencies in Canada such as York-Scarborough, York-Centre and Mercier with populations of 167 310, 127 591 and 124 913 respectively, which were far greater than other constituencies such as Isles-de-la-Madeleine and Kings with their populations of 11 566 and 17 853 respectively. ³³

³² *The Economist*, 10 May 1958.

³³ *Die Burger*, 22 April 1958.

This apparently biased electoral system was discussed in a column "An Afrikaner's Diary", in *The Star*. The columnist mentioned that the Conservative Party in Canada had recently managed to win 208 of the 265 seats in Parliament by polling only 53 % of the votes cast. ³⁴

The South African columnist for *The Round Table* also expressed himself very sarcastically on the discrepancies of the South African electoral system. ³⁵ He wrote :

Whatever the distribution of votes, there is no questioning one fact - that South Africa must have achieved some sort of world record for electoral anomalies. With the same number of votes, one party gets 103 members, the other 53. In this election, it required 13 053 United Party votes to elect one United Party member and 6 566 Nationalist votes to elect one Nationalist member."

The British psephologist, RR Farquharson, quotes the situation in the new Kimberley North seat :

Though even an impartial delimitation would thus preserve some disparity, the Commission has not gone out of its way to remove anomalies, and has indeed introduced some new ones. The salamander-shaped constituency which immortalised Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts could not be more bizarre than the new seat of Kimberley North. The old seat was compact, urban and United Party ; the new is 97 miles long, and achieves a Nationalist Party majority by the inclusion of a thin, wriggly swathe of countryside. On the map it looks like something between a triffid and a Scotsman with a tam o' shanter.

The *Eastern Province Herald* also had some harsh words on the delimitation. It cited Fort Beaufort in which strongly UP areas such as Cathcart and Stutterheim had been removed and added to the safe UP seat of King William's Town. The strongly Nationalist areas of Cookhouse, Alicedale and Alexandria had then been added to it, resulting in a NP victory. ³⁷

³⁴ *The Star*, 23 April 1958.

³⁵ *The Round Table*, June 1958.

³⁶ Quoted in DE Butler (ed.), *Elections Abroad* (London, 1959), p 272.

³⁷ *Eastern Province Herald*, 19 April 1958.

It is therefore quite clear that delimitation will always be a very important factor and in a closely fought election, even a decisive one. It is also easy to note why it has always been such a contentious topic in South African politics.

Reasons for the success of the NP in the general election.

Besides the delimitation of constituencies during the 1950s another demographic factor that favoured the NP was the preponderance of Afrikaans-speaking whites in the younger age groups of the population. This was clearly shown by the census of 1951. For every 1 000 English-speaking whites in the age-groups 40 - 44, 45 - 49, 50 - 54, and 55 - 59, there were 1 107, 1 050, 1 027, and 1 175 Afrikaans-speaking whites respectively. In the age-groups 10 - 14, 15 - 19, 21 - 24, and 25 - 29, for every 1 000 English-speaking whites there were 1 900, 1 941, 1 730, and 1 450 Afrikaans-speaking whites.³⁸

As the NP drew the great mass of its support from the ranks of the Afrikaans-speaking whites, it can be readily understood from these statistics why the NP's electoral fortunes continued to improve after it came to power. This was undoubtedly a crucial factor in the 1958 general election, when most of the whites in the age group 15 - 19 would have been eligible to vote for the first time.

The NP was also assisted in the 1958 general election by the fact that it was a very cohesive and unified party under a

³⁸ Department of the Interior, *Census Report for 1951*, vol 6, pp 50 - 64.

leader who was seen as dynamic and uncompromising. There were undoubtedly some minor tensions within the NP at this time.³⁹

Nevertheless, any attempts by the English-language press to create the impression of disunity in Nationalist ranks were largely unsuccessful.

To boost its own popularity the Nationalists had adopted election tactics that were intended to convince the electorate that the UP was ineffectual, irresolute and incapable of protecting the interests of the whites. It was alleged that policies such as the Senate Plan would lead to chaos, black domination and disaster. This strategy was to prove particularly effective. Prime Minister JG Strijdom, for example, at a meeting in Pretoria on 10 April 1958, attacked the UP's policy of integration that had been set out at its Union Congress in November 1954. He alleged that demands to extend political rights to other race groups were an inevitable and historical consequence of the increase in the economic power of such groups and that the UP would therefore have to adopt certain measures to acknowledge this. In his view this could have only one outcome - full and equal rights with the white man.⁴⁰

The NP also circulated a pamphlet during the campaign, portraying the UP's Senate Plan as virtually an act of treason towards the white man. Headed "The U.P.'s Senate Plan", it was rather dramatically sub-titled: "A dagger into the heart of white South Africa". It stated that this plan would give the twelve representatives of the "non-whites" the ability to control the

³⁹ See *Cape Times*, 8 November 1957.

⁴⁰ CA, A2, JG Strijdom Collection, vol 132, pp 182 - 184.

balance of power "... that is why we accuse the U.P. of giving with their diabolical plan the non-whites a complete stranglehold on the whites". Those who voted for the UP were voting in favour of placing the coloureds in the Cape Province back on the same voters' roll as the whites. ⁴¹

In interviews with the *Cape Times*, several successful Nationalist candidates explained the reasons for the NP's success. Otto du Plessis, the successful candidate for Stellenbosch, commented that greater numbers of English-speaking whites had voted for the NP than had been the case in 1948 or 1953 and this was due to a greater acceptance of the party's policies on colour and republicanism. Voters no longer saw republicanism as a "bogy" and accepted that a republican form of government would undoubtedly bring "greater national unity, and that it need not affect good relations with our friends overseas." In his view the success of the NP had brought a republic much closer. Jan Haak, who won the Bellville seat for the NP, expressed his belief that the Senate Plan had cost the UP much support as the voters thought that it posed a danger to the whites in South Africa. ⁴²

Harry Oppenheimer identified the chief factors for the success of the Nationalists as their ability to identify their party with "the special cultural aspirations and pride of the Afrikaans-speaking majority of the population", and also the widespread belief that the UP did not have the ability or will to "maintain European supremacy in South Africa". He thought that the election showed a "determination not to accept or compromise with

⁴¹ South African Library, Cape Town, (hereafter SAL), National Party Collection, *The U.P.'s Senate Plan*.

⁴² *Cape Times*, 22 April 1958.

the forces of Black nationalism". This outlook was also shared by many South Africans who had not voted for the Nationalists. ⁴³

Bernard Friedman, former MP for Hillbrow, wrote a very discerning article for the *Rand Daily Mail* in which he ascribed the Nationalists' victory to their appeals to "colour prejudice", and its main election theme that "the Nationalist Party is not only the true home of the Afrikaner but it is the only party that can safeguard his status as a member of the White ruling caste." ⁴⁴

In October 1958 the UP published a booklet for the information of speakers from its platforms. Entitled, *Information Guide and Speakers' Notes*, it discussed the 1958 general election comprehensively. It stated that NP policy on its own would not have been responsible for the increased support it received and ascribed the NP success to "careful planning, the indoctrination of our children and young people over the years, the exploitation of race prejudice and sentiment, both as regards the European and non-European races and a favourable distribution of votes". In the writer's opinion, the examples of careful planning included the two previous delimitations in 1952 and 1957 ; the way that the government had raised the requirements for naturalisation, thus making it more difficult for Commonwealth citizens to become South African citizens ; the tendency of the government to discourage the immigration of Commonwealth citizens, and the fact that in 1952 an amendment was passed to the Electoral act that had the

⁴³ *African Digest*, vol 5, no 6, May - June 1958, p 225.

⁴⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 May 1958.

effect of making it no longer compulsory for voters to register a change of address, thus enabling them to vote "selectively".⁴⁵

The NP's ability to appeal to the racial feelings of much of the South African electorate undoubtedly paid dividends during the 1958 general election, and that is why examples of such appeals and sentiments have been described in some length in this section. The NP also stressed the need to preserve Afrikaner unity and its perception that every true Afrikaner belonged in the NP. This was a prominent theme in the 1958 general election but one which was less heavily stressed in the subsequent election in 1961. So strong was this theme that KA Heard entitled his chapter on the 1958 election "The Tribal Drum", - a reference to an excerpt from the *Transvaler* which stated, "The tribal drum beats for every 'rasegte' person ... when the National Party beats the tribal drum, it causes a voice to be heard which its people trust".⁴⁶

Writing on the 1958 general election, Edwin Munger paid some attention to the way in which the Nationalists appeared to be exploiting the language divisions among the whites as well as the theme of Afrikaner nationalism. According to him, the NP made much use of its theme : "There is no place for the Afrikaner in the United Party". Although the UP had tried to counter this criticism, claiming that two-thirds of its candidates were Afrikaners, the Nationalist press had demonstrated that half the "renegade" Afrikaners spoke English at home and that most of them sent their children to English schools. He also described how the

⁴⁵ University of Cape Town Library (hereafter UCT), BC 631, Sydney Waterson Collection, A6.37, *Information Guide and Speakers' Notes*, vol II, pp 269 - 280.

⁴⁶ K Heard, *General elections in South Africa 1943 - 1970*, pp 72 - 73.

Nationalists had ridiculed "the somewhat stilted Afrikaans accent" of Sir de Villiers Graaff.⁴⁷

Reasons for the United Party's lack of success in the 1958 general election.

As discussed earlier, the UP was affected very detrimentally by the delimitation of certain constituencies before the 1958 general election as well as the increasing percentage of Afrikaans-speakers in the white population. What also worked against the UP was its long-established tendency to win many urban constituencies with large numbers of wasted votes while the NP won many of its seats with significantly fewer such wasted votes. This tendency is discussed at greater length in the section dealing with the statistical comparison of the 1958 and 1961 general elections. There were several other factors, however, that militated against the success of the UP in the 1958 general election.

In the immediate aftermath of the general election several UP candidates tried to explain the reasons for their party's electoral reverses. One of them, D Gray, the unsuccessful candidate for Parow, ascribed the failure of the UP in part to the effects of indoctrination in the schools and partly the fact that the NP was able to exercise "tight control" in many constituencies, which enabled it to exert pressure on its supporters and even "indulge in various forms of victimisation". Pieter de Kock, who had contested the Bellville constituency for the UP, denied that the NP had won much English support and stated

⁴⁷ E Munger, "Self-confidence and self-criticism in South Africa", *Foreign Affairs*, vol 36, no 4, July 1958, p 662.

instead that the increase in the NP's majorities was because of a "substantial number of new Afrikaans-speaking voters as a result of its blatant appeal to Afrikaner sentiment." ⁴⁸

The UP was plagued by disunity after the 1953 general election and this was perhaps the most important reason for its lack of success in 1958. In his memoirs, Ray Swart gives a very interesting description of how he and many of his future fellow Progressives, newly elected to parliament in the 1953 general election, attended their first caucus meeting in Pretoria before the commencement of the parliamentary session and encountered the views of the Bailey Bekker group of conservatives. These conservatives argued that the party had lost the 1953 general election partly because of its position concerning the coloureds and the common voters' roll. It came as a "shattering revelation" to Swart that there were several members of the UP caucus who supported the idea that the party should abandon its belief that the coloureds should be kept on the common voters' roll and that it should try "to do a deal with the Nats". Swart identified the five most prominent of these conservatives as Bailey Bekker, Blaar Coetzee, Abraham Jonker, Arthur Barlow and Frank Waring. Significantly he writes : "... But there were others, perhaps a little more cautious (or less courageous ?) who remained silent, but whose silence was not a silence of disapproval." ⁴⁹

It is not really relevant to describe in detail the long and often tortuous process whereby these conservatives either resigned or were expelled from the UP. It will suffice to say that Dr

⁴⁸ *Cape Times*, 23 April 1958.

⁴⁹ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, pp 18 - 22.

Abraham Jonker, the MP for Gardens, was expelled from the UP in the Cape in October 1953 with 96 members of the Cape Provincial Head Committee voting in favour of his expulsion and only four voting against it.⁵⁰ Soon afterwards Bailey Bekker, Frank Waring and Blaar Coetzee were expelled from the UP in the Transvaal as "they had failed to give the undertakings required by the Head Committee of the United Party."⁵¹

Later, when Arthur Barlow, the MP for Hospital Hill, had also been expelled from the UP, a new party came into existence - the Independent United Party - later to become the National Conservative Party, supported by these five former members of the UP. In 1954 they were joined by the MP for Durban Point, Vernon Shearer, who was expelled from the UP in September 1954.⁵²

It is worthwhile to examine the motives of the members of the Bailey Bekker group as they tend to illustrate the mentality and calibre of some of the UP's parliamentarians at the time. Undoubtedly they were strongly influenced by the idea that the UP was moving in a too-liberal direction and that the great mass of the electorate would not accept this. The party's defeat in the 1953 general election was seen as a confirmation of this belief. Shearer, for example, stressed this when he was presenting his case to the Head Committee of the UP, which was considering his possible expulsion. He attacked the liberals in the party for causing a decrease in popular UP support and he predicted that

⁵⁰ *Cape Argus*, 15 October 1953 ; *Cape Times*, 15 October 1953 ; *The Natal Witness*, 15 October 1953.

⁵¹ *Cape Times*, 20 October 1953.

⁵² *Cape Times*, 22 September 1954.

they would precipitate "the destruction of the Party as an effective political force in this country".⁵³

Arthur Barlow expressed the opinion that the right wing of the UP would save the party and would "leave the Straussites barking behind."⁵⁴ Abraham Jonker claimed that the UP had become a "purely English speaking jingoistic party and had pushed away all Afrikaans-speaking people".⁵⁵

The desire for personal political advancement was probably a factor which contributed to the disunity and weak performance of the UP in 1958. The idea that political advancement in the South African context could be achieved only by moving in the direction of the Nationalists was expressed succinctly in a letter written by Arthur Barlow to his daughter, Joyce Waring, in June 1953 :⁵⁶

In this country if you change GO RIGHT. With your background the Nats would worship your shrine, before long you would have every Nat Minister's wife (for a year or so) backing you. ... There is nothing to stop you going into a Nat cabinet. You will NEVER be able to go into a U.P. cabinet because there will never be a U.P. cabinet.

At this time Barlow was already elderly and clearly nearing the end of his political career but he undoubtedly had ambitions for the careers of his daughter and son-in-law, Frank Waring. The fact that Frank Waring was later to be elevated to the cabinet endorses Barlow's view that the Warings would be rewarded for changing their allegiances.

The leadership of JG Strauss also contributed to

⁵³ Natal Mercury, 22 September 1954.

⁵⁴ Rand Daily Mail, 27 October 1953.

⁵⁵ Cape Times, 15 June 1954.

⁵⁶ Sanlam Library, University of South Africa, Pretoria, (hereafter UNISA), Joyce and Frank Waring Collection, File 20.1.1, Barlow - Joyce Waring, 23 June 1953.

disunity in the UP. In his memoirs, Graaff recounts how Bailey Bekker at one time "was lobbying quite openly" to supplant Strauss. According to Graaff, " [Bekker] could not stand Strauss and I think Strauss felt the same about him, but not so intensely".⁵⁷ In his reminiscences, Miles Warren, MP for King William's Town, describes how he clashed with Strauss over certain important agricultural issues even before the latter was chosen as leader of the UP. Warren blames Strauss for much of the UP's defeat in the 1953 general election and for its subsequent problems because he replaced many of the UP "stalwarts" with "liberals".⁵⁸

Ray Swart considers that the breakaway of the Bailey Bekker group "went much further than personal dislike of Mr Strauss", as they were "arch-conservatives who were mesmerised by the success of the National Party on its ultra-conservative ticket". They thought that if they could "do a deal" with the Nationalists over the constitutional deadlock, "there might be some personal rewards".⁵⁹ Zach de Beer was also of the opinion that "personal ambition played an important part" in the breakaway of the Bailey Bekker group.⁶⁰

The removal of the coloureds from the common voters' roll also reinforced the divisions in the UP and there was a great deal of equivocation on the precise policy that it should adopt. This led to the departure of Bernard Friedman, and at one time it appeared that he would be followed by other liberal members of the parliamentary caucus. In his memoirs, Graaff blames the

⁵⁷ De Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back*, pp 142 - 143.

⁵⁸ UNISA, Miles Warren Collection, File 1, *Autobiography*, p 5 ; File 4.4, *Strauss as party leader*, (no page number).

⁵⁹ Ray Swart - Author, Durban, 20 November 1995.

⁶⁰ Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996.

left wing of the UP for provoking the issue that led to Friedman's expulsion from the UP in 1955. He described how the "left-wingers" in the UP asked Strauss to issue a statement that would commit him to restoring the coloureds to the common roll if the UP should win a general election. Strauss refused, preferring to state that while he supported and believed in the common roll, he would do what was best for the coloureds at the appropriate time. Graaff thought Strauss's position to be a "sensible one", but after Friedman dissented publicly from this position, he was expelled from the UP. He did the "honourable thing" by resigning his Hillbrow seat, and subsequently he lost the by-election. ⁶¹

Ray Swart, however, thinks that the question of the UP's intentions was really one set by the NP together with the five "rebels". He describes how the Nationalists devised a simple question to be asked repeatedly in parliament in order to embarrass the UP: "If, after we have taken the coloured voters off the common roll, you are returned to power, will you put them back on the common roll?" The inability of the UP to devise a satisfactory answer to this question caused the party considerable embarrassment and internal dissent. ⁶²

After some of the more liberal members of the UP had issued a statement in 1955 seemingly contradicting their leader, it appeared that another split was imminent. According to Ray Swart, the dissenters were himself, Jan Steytler, IS ("Sakkies") Fourie, Owen Townley Williams, Ronald Butcher, John Cope, Helen Suzman, and later, Bernard Friedman. After many conciliatory attempts by Harry Oppenheimer and other influential members of

⁶¹ De Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back* , p 144.

⁶² R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, p 34.

the party to find a bridge between the new rebels and the party leadership, a compromise statement was agreed upon and issued by Strauss. This was acceptable to all the rebels except Friedman, whose departure from the party was soon to begin.⁶³

In her autobiography, Helen Suzman writes that it was the "intervention of the two Harry's - Oppenheimer and Lawrence"- that averted the split and that persuaded them that they should remain in the UP as "a pressure group ... to advance liberal values."⁶⁴

Although Friedman was the only member of the liberal group to resign from parliament, there was one member of the Provincial Council, A Every, the MPC for Port Elizabeth South, who resigned from the UP in support of him.⁶⁵

This dispute was in many ways the precursor of the much greater breakaway from the UP four years later in 1959. (There were three significant breakaways from the UP in the 1950s, the first being the departure of the Bailey Bekker group, the second being the resignation of Friedman and Every, while the most important one was the schism involving the progressives at Bloemfontein in 1959.) As we have seen, it was only a matter of tact and compromise that stopped the departure of one member from the UP caucus from becoming a much greater exodus. It also heightened tensions between the right and left wings of the already highly divided party. Furthermore it showed how confused and on the defensive the UP leadership and policy planners had become.

⁶³ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, p 35.

⁶⁴ H Suzman, *In no uncertain terms* (Johannesburg, 1993), p 38.

⁶⁵ *Cape Times*, 19 July 1955.

The extent of the disunity within the UP can be gauged by a significant passage in Ray Swart's memoirs. He describes how on "a number of occasions" the members of the caucus were still engaged in "acrimonious debate" when the Assembly bells had rung to begin the day's proceedings. On these occasions Strauss and most of the senior members of the caucus would remain to try to solve the deadlock while Harry Lawrence would be given the responsibility of leading the remaining members of the UP caucus in the debate in the assembly. ⁶⁶

The removal of the coloureds from the common voters' roll in 1956 did not portend a major loss of seats by the UP. If a comparison is made of the number of coloured voters on the voters' rolls of the various constituencies on 15 April 1953 with the size of the UP majorities and defeats in the 1953 general election, we can observe that only the seat of Cape Flats, held by the UP, could possibly have become a marginal seat. In that seat the size of the UP majority was 5 853 while the total number of coloured voters in the constituency was 5 888. This seat was to be abolished in the subsequent delimitation of constituencies. However, Port Elizabeth North, Caledon-Bredasdorp, Paarl, and Prieska, which were won by the NP with the comparatively small majorities of 521 votes, 240 votes, 358 votes, and 779 votes respectively, would with the removal of the coloureds no longer be marginal seats for the Nationalists. In these constituencies, the numbers of coloured voters were 484, 1 083, 2 506 and 448 respectively. ⁶⁷ Thus, in numerical terms the removal of the

⁶⁶ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, p 24.

⁶⁷ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre Verkiesings in Suid Afrika*, pp 316 - 333. Cape Archives, Cape Town, (hereafter referred to as CACT), A 1646, Dr Dönges Collection, file 335.

coloureds from the common voters' roll did not have a particularly serious impact on the fortunes of the UP in the 1958 general election.

After the defeat of the UP in 1958, doubts were also raised as to the quality of Sir de Villiers Graaff's leadership. Whereas the NP possessed in Strijdom an astute and forceful leader who knew exactly what he wanted, the UP was perhaps less fortunate in this regard. Sir de Villiers Graaff's character and leadership had an important effect on the UP prior to the 1958 general election and thereafter. The events and circumstances - often painful and acrimonious - that led to his replacement of JG Strauss as leader of the UP in November 1956, have been well described not only by himself, but also by Joanna Strangwayes-Booth, and Jeremy Lawrence.⁶⁸

The acrimony caused by the replacement of Strauss undoubtedly damaged the UP. His successor, Sir de Villiers Graaff, inherited a party that was fraught by dissension and had become even more dispirited during his predecessor's period of leadership. The election of Graaff was greeted with widespread jubilation among UP supporters including the liberals, even though in time he was to disappoint that particular group considerably. A personality cult began to develop around Graaff soon after his election. *The Times* of London described his election as "marking a significant change in the opposition to the present government." It claimed that "Fresh vigour was needed and this Sir de Villiers Graaff is well qualified to supply".⁶⁹

⁶⁸ De Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back*, pp 137, 145 ; J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, pp 113 - 116 ; J Lawrence, *Harry Lawrence* (Cape Town & London, 1978), pp 230 - 232.

⁶⁹ *The Times*, 22 November 1956.

Although in later years, the English press began to criticise Graaff with increasing severity, his first few years as leader marked a period in which he was usually treated very kindly by them. It was obvious that the English press expected a great deal of Graaff. For example, a review of his leadership style at the 1957 Bloemfontein conference was published in a regular column in the *Cape Argus*, entitled "Tavern of the Seas" : ⁷⁰

The week-end found Cape Town talking about what one might refer to as the resuscitated United Party ... [Div] ... can smile at those who attack him. He has never yet fallen back on the heated personal retort which is the badge of the man who lacks confidence in policy and in his own leadership.

The liberal wing of the UP was to be sorely disappointed in Graaff. Helen Suzman describes how he had a "devoted following" among many ex-servicemen and that everybody assumed that he would be an "outstanding leader" but "in no time at all he had thrown in his lot with the conservative majority in caucus". She alleges that Graaff was "weak and ambivalent" concerning the laws that discriminated against blacks, and was critical of his favourite advice to the caucus on contentious issues : "when in doubt, leave out". ⁷¹

Ray Swart, in his recollections of his political career, describes Graaff as being a "middle-of-the-road" man, who fitted "neatly, if undramatically, into the leadership role of the UP of the late fifties". Swart was rather sarcastic about aspects of Graaff's leadership : "His political convictions were difficult to assess : he was a white South African patriot, and he disliked

⁷⁰ *Cape Argus*, 19 August 1957.

⁷¹ H Suzman, *In no uncertain terms*, p 40.

the extremism of the Nat racial policies, but if he had deep convictions they were often more noticeable in respect of his farming operations than his politics." ⁷²

Zach de Beer was harsher in his judgement of Graaff's qualities of leadership. He described him as a man who "worked extremely hard, and had immense personal charm", but who nonetheless was "without convictions and without vision" on racial issues. ⁷³

SL Barnard is also critical of Graaff's leadership abilities. He ascribes Graaff's lack of success in part to his "clinically-correct scientifically-based" approach to political affairs. This, according to Barnard, did not go down well with the Afrikaans voters, whom Barnard described as being extremely emotional in political matters. Barnard also cites Vorster's description of Graaff as having the problem of talking with the same emotional intensity about Newcastle-sickness in chickens as about republicanism. ⁷⁴

In his article in the *Rand Daily Mail*, discussing the UP's performance in the 1958 general election, Friedman also criticised Graaff's leadership style at some length, accusing him of adopting the policy of "me-tooism" which had supposedly characterised Strauss's tactics in the 1953 general election. ⁷⁵

The final reason for the UP's lack of success in the 1958 general election lay in its vague and contradictory racial policy.

⁷² R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, p 39.

⁷³ Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996.

⁷⁴ SL Barnard, "Sir de Villiers Graaff se leierskap van die Verenigde Party", *Historia*, 29 (2), September 1984, p 50.

⁷⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 May 1958.

The NP often tried to make political capital out of labelling the UP as a party of "kaffirboeties" (negrophiles) and in the 1958 general election, some members of the UP tried to turn the tables on the Nationalists by trying to label the Nationalists as favouring the blacks above the whites in some respects. This drew comment from both RR Farquharson and Edwin Munger.

Farquharson was critical of the UP which he saw as trying to increase its "slender Afrikaans support" by "outbidding the Nationalist Party" in utterances of a supremacist nature while simultaneously supporting racial integration as an economic policy. He alleges that the UP, while campaigning among the English-speaking electorate, tended to denounce the supposed inhumanity of the government's colour policy, but at the same time in the rural areas it took a completely different stance and accused the government of such actions as favouring blacks over whites in the provision of housing, trying to organise the blacks to support Nationalist policies, and also permitting the products of black industries in the reserves to compete with articles produced by whites. ⁷⁶

Edwin Munger in his article in *Foreign Affairs* on the 1958 general election commented similarly on the UP's attempts to satisfy these two widely divergent groups. ⁷⁷

The Nationalists naturally exploited this situation. Strijdom, for example, at a meeting in the Johannesburg City Hall, said that "To the platteland they send men like Marais Steyn, Louis Steenkamp and Wolfie Swart of the Free State and others to

⁷⁶ Quoted in DE Butler (ed), *Elections abroad*, p 238.

⁷⁷ E Munger, "Self-confidence and self-criticism in South Africa", p 662.

make speeches that are as Nationalist in substance as any Nationalist can make. They sometimes advocate apartheid - yes, even a republic - and they do so with no other reason than to mislead." ⁷⁸

Eric Louw, the Minister of External Affairs, dwelt on this same theme at a subsequent meeting in Pretoria when he told his audience that some liberals in the UP would criticise the government for not spending enough on housing for blacks in urban slums while other members of the UP would tell their meetings in the *platteland* or in parts of the Witwatersrand that the government was spending too much on housing for the blacks. ⁷⁹

An example of the conservative campaigning of some UP members of parliament was provided by Douglas Mitchell, the leader of the UP in Natal, who at a meeting at Kimberley alleged that the NP government preached apartheid but still followed "the lines of economic and Civil Service integration". He mentioned that 10 400 vacancies in the civil service had been filled by those he described as "non-Europeans" during the previous two years. ⁸⁰

Certain sectors of the UP appear to have genuinely believed that the strategy of trying to be more extreme on the racial issue than the Nationalists would bring them a rich harvest of votes in the rural areas. As can readily be seen from the election results, this strategy proved a dismal failure, and increased the polarisation within the UP. It also caused many of

⁷⁸ *Cape Times*, 11 March 1958.

⁷⁹ *The Pretoria News*, 28 March 1958.

⁸⁰ *Eastern Province Herald*, 11 March 1958.

its supporters and opponents to view the party with a certain amount of scorn and derision .

The significance of the 1958 general election.

The 1958 general election was a watershed for both the NP and the UP. It reinforced the view held by many Nationalists that the way to success at the polls lay in the regular and thorough exploitation of the idea of "swart gevaar", and it proved to the Nationalist leadership that its racial policies were becoming acceptable to a significantly larger portion of the electorate. The election results were thus regarded by the Nationalist hierarchy as a vindication of its policies which encouraged it to pursue its racial policies with unremitting vigour. Furthermore the results of the election gave the Nationalists a far greater sense of security. They made the NP much less susceptible to any adverse swing of support. In addition they encouraged the Nationalists to take positive steps to attain their long-cherished republican ideal. The fact that nearly half of the electorate had supported the NP in the 1958 general election, together with the great numerical preponderance of Afrikaans-speaking youths in the soon-to-be-enfranchised age group of eighteen to twenty-one years, meant that the Nationalists could view the future with confidence. ⁸¹

For the UP on the other hand, the results of the 1958 general election were a shattering blow that was to contribute significantly to its gradually waning fortunes in the future. It

⁸¹ GM Carter, *The Politics of Inequality, South Africa since 1948* (London, 1962), p 493.

was a harsh demonstration of the unpalatable reality that it had very little prospect of ever being returned to office. The election showed conclusively that the demographics of the white South African population and the growing conservatism of the South African electorate were to be insuperable barriers to its chances of an electoral resurgence. In the short term the 1958 general election aggravated the already extremely bitter feuds within the UP and ended the likelihood that it would ever adopt a slightly more liberal position. It is thus not surprising that the split which occurred at the 1959 UP congress in Bloemfontein came so soon after the 1958 general election.

CHAPTER TWO.

PRELUDE TO THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION :

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1958.

The three years and six months that followed the general election of April 1958 were undoubtedly full of incidents, traumatic and otherwise, that also had a profound effect on the 1961 general election. They included the death of Advocate JG Strijdom, and the election of his successor, Dr HF Verwoerd, who wasted no time in putting his unique stamp on the NP. There was also a closely-run decision by the white electorate that South Africa should become a republic. This was followed by South Africa's exit from the Commonwealth under considerable pressure from the Afro-Asian bloc. These years saw the realisation by many South Africans, after Harold Macmillan's "Winds of Change" speech, that South Africa's position in world politics as well as its racial policy would be coming under increasingly critical scrutiny. South Africa's status in international circles deteriorated and severe domestic unrest including much bloodshed in various African townships such as Sharpeville and Cato Manor, led to the proclamation of several states of emergency and the adoption of increasingly firm measures to restore domestic tranquillity. South Africa also experienced a considerable readjustment of its relationship with Great Britain, severe clashes with various clerical figures and last but not least, the attempted assassination of Verwoerd at the Rand Show in April 1960. During these years South Africa, the South African government and its domestic policies came increasingly under

siege. This had a notable and extensive influence on the outcome of the 1961 general election.

The death of Advocate JG Strijdom.

Soon after the 1958 general election, Strijdom died after a lingering illness. Although many newspapers in Great Britain expressed a strong dislike of his policies, some admiration was expressed for his strong sense of conviction, his perseverance and his dogged adherence to what he thought was best for South Africa. The influential journal, *The Economist*, stated that "into many a liberal obituary notice in Britain ... there crept an uneasy note of respect", and that "There was in the man a humanity, however overlaid, and in the politician a realism, however belated, which the outside world never really grasped." ¹

The election of Dr HF Verwoerd to the premiership.

Most probably the most important political event of 1958 was the succession to the premiership of Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd. Verwoerd enunciated his principles and goals unambiguously in a broadcast speech soon after his election. He declared that he would devote all his energies to establishing a republic in South Africa which in his opinion was the only way of unifying the two white races in South Africa. The government would afford full opportunities to all racial groups "to the extent to which the people or groups in various stages were capable". He defended the policy of apartheid by saying that "The uninitiated, particularly,

¹ *The Economist*, 30 September 1958.

do not understand that separation or separate development is based on the principle that only in this way can the weak be protected from the strong, and the minority be made to feel safe." The government, however, should not lose sight of the rights of the whites to "everything that they have built up over generations." ² The election of Verwoerd was met with gloom and pessimism in many quarters overseas. The British *Daily Telegraph* expressed its opinion of the new prime minister in an editorial : ... Many have thought that the death of Mr Strijdom would reveal from the ranks behind him a less rigid successor as Prime Minister of South Africa. The Nationalist Party's choice, however, has fallen on the most extreme and intransigent candidate, Dr Verwoerd. ³

The opinion of *The Times* on Verwoerd's succession to the premiership is also relevant because it reflected the views of a very significant section of the Conservative "establishment" in Great Britain. In describing the early career of the man whom it described as "a fanatic of apartheid", it stated that during his career as an academic he had acquired "some notoriety" in 1936 when he protested against the entry into South Africa of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. According to *The Times* of London, in its review of his editorship of *Die Transvaler*, he had "showed that disregard for the opinion and sentiments of opponents which has distinguished his later political career." It described his attitude towards the parliamentary opposition as

² *Cape Times*, 4 September 1958 ; Institute of Contemporary History, University of the Orange Free State, (hereafter INCH), PV 93, DR HF Verwoerd Collection, file 1 / 11 / 2, Dr Verwoerd se radio toespraak, 3 September 1958.

³ *Daily Telegraph*, 2 September 1958.

being typified by some recent incidents in which he had refused to answer questions about "Africans" on the grounds that no South African legislation referred to "Africans" and that there was therefore nothing for him to reply to. The newspaper described Verwoerd as being "contemptuous of opposition from outside his party and intolerant of opposition from within it". The only complimentary remark passed by the newspaper was that he was sincere in his idea that apartheid was in the best interests of all races. ⁴

Time magazine commented that in Verwoerd's eight years as Minister of Native Affairs, he had proved himself to be "pre-eminent among all the racists crowding the South African stage", even though he was "no simple Kaffir-bashing White supremacist". The periodical also alluded to Verwoerd's editorship of *Die Transvaler*, and his attacks on "British Jewish liberalism". ⁵

Helen Suzman said that personally, she would rather have had Verwoerd than Dönges as Prime Minister. Verwoerd, "admittedly is mad, but at least genuinely believes in his mad schemes." Furthermore, she thought that it was already difficult to keep English-speaking people "politically conscious", and had Dr Dönges been chosen as prime minister, "they would have lulled themselves into a complete coma." ⁶

The *Sunday Times* had some harsh words to say about the new Prime Minister. In an editorial in which it described him as a "ruthless egotist" with "none of the traditional

⁴ *The Times*, 3 September 1958.

⁵ *Time*, 8 September 1958.

⁶ J Strangways-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, p 130.

characteristics of the Afrikaner" and one whom "few Nationalists like and all fear", it expressed the opinion that Verwoerd was a man to whom compromise was cowardice. He was "a dictator by nature with entire faith in his own infallibility."⁷ This, then, was the man who would lead the NP into the 1961 general election and whose character would be made a theme in that election campaign.

The attitude of Great Britain towards South Africa.

The attitude of the British government towards South Africa during this period was somewhat ambivalent. It showed a distinct desire to avoid embarrassing incidents while it also displayed a certain reluctance to become too closely associated with some aspects of the South African government's policies. The British Foreign Office naturally did not desire to alienate a dominion where Britain had manifold and extensive interests and connections, both economic, cultural and historical. The Foreign Office also realised that the Afro-Asian bloc of nations was growing larger and more influential every year, and that this bloc, would in conjunction with popular opinion in Britain and elsewhere, expect the British government to adopt a much stronger attitude to what was seen as gross racial discrimination practised openly and unashamedly in South Africa.

The British government's unwillingness to become embroiled in any South African controversy was exemplified by an incident involving the Royal Navy in February 1961. The British Admiralty issued instructions that three coloured ratings from the aircraft

⁷ *Sunday Times*. 7 September 1958.

carrier "HMS Victorious" be landed at Plymouth and another six at Gibraltar, so that they would not be on board the ship when it docked in Cape Town and Durban on its way to the Far East. The Admiralty stated that it had been its practice for some years "to try to avoid involving Coloured personnel in visits to South Africa", and that the men had been landed to save them from possible embarrassment or discriminatory treatment in South Africa. The opposition Labour Party in Britain was highly critical of this decision, but the *Cape Argus* in an editorial was of the opinion that the Admiralty "may have forestalled the manufacture of an incident damaging to South Africa", and that it "may well have acted sagaciously and with a keener appreciation of the outside world's detestation of racial discrimination of any sort than most South Africans possess".⁸

The visit to South Africa by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, and his "Winds of Change" speech in the South African parliament in February 1960 brought it home very forcefully to many white South Africans that their country was in danger of becoming even more isolated than before and that its relationship with the United Kingdom was becoming less than entirely cordial. Macmillan put his government's position very concisely. He told the South African parliament that there were some aspects of South Africa's policies which made it impossible for Britain to support South Africa without being false to her own deep convictions about the political destinies of free men. In emphasizing the strong links between South Africa and Great Britain, Macmillan pointed out that at the end of 1956 Britain

⁸ *Cape Argus*, 30 January 1961.

accounted for nearly two-thirds of overseas investments in South Africa. Britain also took a third of South Africa's exports and produced a third of South Africa's imports. Macmillan expressed the opinion that the great issue in the second half of the twentieth century was whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa would swing to the East or to the West. However, he deplored the boycott that was being planned against South Africa and said that it could have only "serious effects on Commonwealth relations and trade and be to the ultimate detriment of others than those against whom it is aimed." This part of the speech was applauded by many of his listeners. ⁹

It should also be added that what also annoyed many of the Nationalists at this time was the fact that Macmillan's staff neglected to give Verwoerd an advance copy of the speech, as was customary according to diplomatic protocol. This made it necessary for Verwoerd to reply in an impromptu speech. ¹⁰

Verwoerd thanked Macmillan for his frankness and said that Britain and South Africa did not often see "eye to eye" on the question of how Africa could "be won for the West". He saw many inherent dangers in British policies and feared that "they might defeat the very objects aimed at." In what was possibly the most significant sentence in his speech, he pointed out that "Justice to all in Africa did not only mean justice to the black man." ¹¹

⁹ This speech is quoted verbatim in H Macmillan, *Pointing the way* (London, 1972), pp 473 - 482. It was not printed in the Debates of the House of Assembly.

¹⁰ F Barnard, *13 Years with Dr HF Verwoerd* (Johannesburg, 1967), pp 63, 72.

¹¹ *Eastern Province Herald*, 4 February 1960.

In his front-page article the reporter for the *Eastern Province Herald* commented on the way various opposition members of parliament had described Macmillan's speech as "magnificent ... brilliant in its construction ... utterance of a statesman". According to the reporter, however, various Nationalist members claimed that Macmillan had failed "to appreciate the role that the White man was playing in Africa", and were delighted that Verwoerd had made it clear that his government "would not deviate from its policies no matter what the British Government or the rest of the world might have to say about them." ¹²

An interesting assessment of the South African situation in the light of Macmillan's speech was given by a Conservative member of parliament, Christopher Chataway. According to him the only way to avert disaster in South Africa was "to make the Afrikaner see reason". He was of the opinion that the policy of apartheid was not simply "a question of naked oppression", but that it stemmed from "the unity of a fiercely patriotic people and from deeply-held religious beliefs". According to Chataway, the only hope of averting disaster lay in the possibility of "a crack in the racial solidarity of the Afrikaner people". ¹³

Douglas Mitchell, the leader of the UP in Natal, in commenting on Macmillan's speech, gave what would have been the opinion of many of the conservatives in the UP caucus, when he stated that Britain's actions and its "getting out of Africa" would not make the white people of South Africa change their opinions. They were there to stay. ¹⁴

¹² *Eastern Province Herald*, 4 February 1960.

¹³ *Eastern Province Herald*, 8 February 1960.

¹⁴ *Cape Times*, 12 February 1960.

The government's views and sense of indignation at the speech were typified by a statement issued by Eric Louw. He gave the impression that he considered the speech to be motivated partly by Britain's concern about the position of the Western powers relative to Soviet Russia and her allies in Africa and motivated also by criticism of his government both in the British press and in parliament. Louw also questioned whether Macmillan had the right to criticise the domestic policies of a member of the Commonwealth.¹⁵ All in all, Macmillan's speech seems to have strengthened the resolve of the Nationalists to stand united against the outside world.

During the early years of Verwoerd's premiership the attitudes of many overseas opponents of apartheid tended to intensify. This strengthened the "siege mentality" among many South African whites and caused some of the English-speaking electorate to re-assess their traditional loyalties at the time of the 1961 general election. In April 1960 the British House of Commons approved a motion by a Labour member of parliament, John Stonehouse, that condemned the South African government's racial policies as this "was threatening the security and welfare of all races in the Union and good relations between members of the Commonwealth." Sir Godfrey Nicholson of the Conservative Party stated that there was no difference of opinion between the Conservatives and Labourites on the aims of the motion but that Stonehouse was using "a bludgeon when the finest of precision tools was needed."¹⁶

¹⁵ *Cape Argus*, 8 February 1960.

¹⁶ *Cape Times*, 9 April 1960.

During this period there were intermittent calls in Britain for a boycott of South African goods but these had very little effect on the South African government. For example, in December 1959 several anti-South Africa organisations called for a month long boycott of South African consumer goods. ¹⁷

The boycott was inaugurated in February 1960 by a mass rally in Trafalgar Square and a speech made by Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the British Labour Party. Various Labour-controlled local councils affirmed their support of the boycott. The *Economist* claimed that trade boycotts were almost always ineffective and usually increased support for the government concerned. ¹⁸ Approximately a year later, The *Economist* reported that the boycott had failed dismally. ¹⁹

The fulfilment of the Nationalists' republican dream.

In 1960 the cherished ambition of many Nationalists became reality when South Africa was able to declare itself a republic. In his broadcast message to the people on 3 September 1958, soon after becoming Prime Minister, Verwoerd claimed that relations between English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans were continuing to improve. He affirmed his belief that the "unification of a people could only come about with the establishment of a republic in South Africa. He looked forward to the "happy day" when they would all be joined together "by a

¹⁷ *Cape Times*, 28 December 1959.

¹⁸ *The Economist*, 27 February 1960.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 11 March 1961. See also D Austin, *Britain and South Africa* (London, 1966), p 40, for statistics relating to Britain's increased imports from South Africa during this Period.

common patriotism into one people with two languages", and when political differences would no longer be based on "sentiment" but purely on differences of opinion on social and economic problems.²⁰

On 20 January 1960 Verwoerd announced that a referendum would be held in October to decide whether South Africa should become a republic. He added that the decision to proclaim a republic would rest on a "bare majority" of the votes cast by white voters, even if that majority was only "one vote". Later, while speaking in parliament on 21 March, Verwoerd said that if the government did not manage to receive a bare majority of votes in the referendum its next attempt would be to allow the decision on South Africa's becoming a republic to be taken by a majority of the members of a parliament that was "elected for that purpose".²¹

With the benefit of hindsight, Verwoerd's decision to hold a referendum on this issue was not surprising. The results of the general election in 1958 showed that the number of NP voters was now very close to the number of opposition voters. In addition the recent enfranchisement of the eighteen-year-olds would probably benefit the NP as there was a very high proportion of Afrikaans voters in this particular age group.

The decision to hold a referendum elicited a very angry response from the anti-Republicans. The most extreme were most probably those gathered around Douglas Mitchell, the

²⁰ AN Pelzer (ed.), *Verwoerd speaks* (Johannesburg, 1966), p 162.

²¹ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1960, cols 99, 3765, 3766, 3767.

leader of the UP in Natal. In a fiery speech in parliament on 25 April 1960, Mitchell stated :

If the Government are going on with their republican scheme at the present time and in the present circumstances, with the country like this, then let them not believe that they are going to bring peace. They are going to bring a sword. ... And I therefore say that if this goes against us, we say in advance to the Government and to the Nationalist Party - and we say this as South Africans - 'You go and be damned, because we will not accept that decision'.²²

After a rather bitter referendum campaign, the result was that 850 458 voters in both South Africa and South West Africa had voted in favour of a republic while 775 878 had voted against it. This represented a majority of 74 580 votes for a republic. The results in certain regions were particularly interesting. In the Cape the contest had been very evenly balanced with 271 418 votes for and 269 784 votes against a republic (i.e. a majority of 1 634 votes). In the Transvaal the pro-republicans won by the comfortable margin of 81 591 votes with the pro-republican votes numbering 406 632 and the anti-republicans numbering 325 041. The contests in Natal and the Orange Free State, however, illustrated the extreme regional political differences existing in South Africa at the time. In Natal there were 135 598 votes against and 42 299 for a republic (a majority of 93 299). In the Orange Free State there were, however, 110 171 votes cast for the republic while only 33 438 votes against (a majority of 76 733).²³

The results of the referendum were manifold. One was the considerable increase in the stature of Verwoerd. The outcome

²² *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 25 April 1960, col 5987.

²³ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 387.

of the voting represented the fulfilment of an ideal long held by generations of Afrikaners. It would also, in the minds of some Nationalists, have removed the resentment that they felt towards some of their English compatriots. More emphasis could now be laid on Verwoerd's ambition to bring English-speaking whites into the ranks of the NP. To many of the anti-republicans, however, the results of the referendum were a grievous blow and the confirmation of the idea that South Africa was now further on the road to becoming an international pariah. It represented yet another defeat for the UP and its leadership and would cause some soul-searching within the party. It would also be a factor in the slow but definite drift of English-speaking whites into the ranks of the Nationalists as the republican question would not really be an issue in the 1961 general election.

The attitude of the British Commonwealth and the United Nations towards South Africa after becoming a republic.

The feelings of other members of the Commonwealth towards South Africa were very varied. For example, before the Commonwealth Ministers' conference in April 1960, Sir Robert Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, said that he hoped that the South African question would not be discussed at the conference. Instead he wished to have private talks with the South African representatives "to become better informed as to what goes on". On the other hand however, Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the British Labour Party, said that he thought that the South African government's policies should be discussed during the Commonwealth conference as it was a multi-racial association and

should in his opinion "accept a principle of non-discrimination in race relations." ²⁴

Initially it was expected that despite the dislike of its racial policies, South Africa would be allowed to remain within the Commonwealth after becoming a republic in October 1960. The Commonwealth conference which was to debate the matter was to meet on 8 March 1961. In an article in the *Sunday Times* on 28 February, the political reporter, Stanley Uys, stated that it was very likely that South Africa would be allowed to stay in the Commonwealth. Among the reasons advanced for this belief were that the expulsion of South Africa would create a dangerous precedent which could conceivably lead to the eventual disintegration of the Commonwealth. The idea that a possible expulsion of South Africa would lead to Verwoerd's throwing "restraint to the winds" with very unpleasant repercussions for the blacks in South Africa was another possibility. There was also the consideration that Macmillan was not in favour of expelling South Africa from the Commonwealth. Uys also felt that should Eric Louw be "handling the conference on South Africa's behalf, we would be as good as out of the Commonwealth right now." ²⁵

A report in the *Sunday Times* of 5 March 1961, stated that South Africa had a "50-50" chance of staying in the British Commonwealth and expressed the opinion that while there was "little danger of a summary act of expulsion", there was the possibility that South Africa might be "forced to walk out of the Commonwealth". ²⁶

²⁴ *Cape Times*, 25 April 1960.

²⁵ *Sunday Times*, 28 February 1961.

²⁶ *Sunday Times*, 5 March 1961.

In his autobiography, Macmillan recounts how he went to great lengths to keep South Africa within the British Commonwealth. Early in August 1960 he appealed to Verwoerd to postpone the referendum which was set for October as he thought this would avert a possible crisis in the Commonwealth. Macmillan also wrote to the Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies, asking him if he could possibly persuade Verwoerd to postpone the referendum or alternatively to help persuade the Afro-Asians that the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth would be of "no benefit to the non-White population of the Union." Macmillan writes that in the early months of 1960 he was encouraged when both Nkrumah of Ghana and Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaysia, stated that they would not "force the issue" of South Africa's continued membership of the Commonwealth, but that he was discouraged when Diefenbaker informed him that Canada could not be counted upon for support in this regard. This attitude was described by Macmillan as being "holier than thou". Nevertheless, when the conference opened at Lancaster House on 8 March 1961, Macmillan was optimistic that there seemed to be a "fair chance" of finding a way out of what seemed to be a serious *impasse*.²⁷

After much criticism of South Africa's policies at the Commonwealth conference, Verwoerd withdrew South Africa's application to remain a member of the Commonwealth. In a special message to South Africa from London on 16 March 1961, he said that it had been his firm intention to retain Commonwealth membership but that "almost from the beginning of the three-day discussion", it had become clear that the Prime Ministers of

²⁷ H Macmillan, *Pointing the way*, pp 285 - 297.

Canada and the Afro-Asian group had been determined to make it difficult for South Africa to do so. According to Verwoerd the attitude of these countries had made it impossible for South Africa to remain a member of the "changed Commonwealth". After some consultations with Louw and Macmillan, he had decided to withdraw South Africa's application, not only in the interests of South Africa but also in the interests of "the United Kingdom and the older members of the Commonwealth". He could not allow them to be placed in "the invidious position of having to choose between groups". Verwoerd concluded his message by saying rather optimistically that he was sure that relations between South Africa and the United Kingdom and "other friendly member states" would perhaps be placed on an even better and "more mutually beneficial footing than before".²⁸

Verwoerd's remarks in the communique withdrawing South Africa's application for membership were nothing if not forthright and hard-hitting. The second sentence stated, "No self-respecting member of any voluntary organisation could, however, in view of what is being suggested and the degree of interference being shown with what are South Africa's domestic affairs, be expected to retain membership in what is now becoming a pressure group."²⁹

Verwoerd's pronouncements show the great resentment held by many Nationalists towards overseas countries which in the Nationalist opinion did not understand South Africa's racial problems and which deliberately or accidentally misconstrued the

²⁸ AN Pelzer (ed.), *Verwoerd speaks*, pp 489 - 501.

²⁹ GD Scholtz, *Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd*, Deel 2, (Johannesburg, 1974), pp 107 - 108.

aims of Nationalist policies. They also show that the Nationalists perceived much of the outside world as being a place which practised double standards in that they condemned South Africa's racial policies while simultaneously condoning or overlooking much of the racial, social or political oppression that was prevalent in many other countries.

Chief Albert Luthuli of the ANC expressed his approval of South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth. This would bring it home to white South Africans the dislike with which the policy of apartheid was viewed overseas. The PAC also expressed satisfaction at this decision concerning the "Christian barbarians", and said that it would have nothing to do "with the Queen of England or any other Queen for that matter."³⁰

South Africa's problems were viewed with some sympathy by Sir Robert Menzies, then Prime Minister of Australia. Menzies did not approve of the idea of "one man, one vote". In his view "the right to vote should be approximately related to the capacity to vote" and that a "basically uneducated community will mean a basically uneducated electorate", which in turn would produce "a dictator or a small oligarchy".³¹

The large Afro-Asian bloc at the United Nations was also to exert its influence against South Africa during this period. On the eve of the 1961 general election, in October 1961, the United Nations passed a censure motion against South Africa by a large majority. This followed the speech made by Eric Louw,

³⁰ M Makin, "South Africa's departure from the commonwealth in 1961 : postmortems and consequences", *Kleio*, vol XXIX, 1997, p 158.

³¹ R Menzies, *Afternoon light : Some memories of men and events* (London, 1967), pp 191 - 193, 199 - 201.

stating that blacks in South Africa were materially far better off than in other African countries. Louw also criticised subversive elements in such places as New York, London, Cairo and Accra for trying to stir up trouble in South Africa. The delegate for Liberia moved a motion censuring Louw and the South African government and describing the speech as "offensive, fictitious and erroneous". The delegates for the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the United States, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain were among the countries that abstained. The Netherlands was the only Western nation to vote in favour of the censure motion and South Africa was the only country to vote against it. Later the chief United States delegate to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, criticised the motion and stated that the United Nations had been established as a forum for "free and untrammelled speech".³²

However, in South Africa the main outcome in South Africa of all this international opposition was that the Nationalists became even more resolute to continue on their chosen road.

Opposition to the Nationalist government in Natal.

Although there was quite a strong feeling in some quarters in Natal in favour of possible secession from the rest of South Africa, nothing lasting actually came from such sentiments. In a meeting with Verwoerd, Douglas Mitchell argued that as Natal had voted overwhelmingly against the idea of South Africa's becoming a republic, it should be able to make its own decisions concerning its future, but this idea Verwoerd rejected

³² Cape Times, 12 October 1961.

unequivocally. It was just not practicable in the face of such opposition from the central government for Natal to secede. Furthermore, after Mitchell had consulted the British High Commissioner in South Africa, Sir John Maud, in 1960 he realised that Britain did not wish to involve itself in the domestic affairs of members of the Commonwealth. If Natal wished to "come to place itself directly under the Crown, it must do so on the basis of one-man one vote". The fear of civil war in South Africa, doubts as to the real strength and commitment of the anti-republican forces in Natal, and a realisation that many white inhabitants of Natal while opposed to Verwoerd and the idea of a republic would not wholeheartedly support any attempt at secession, all contributed to the gradual subsidence of militant anti-republicanism that took place between the announcement of the results of the referendum and the proclamation of a republic.³³

Further evidence of the rift between the government and popular opinion in Natal was shown by a serious disagreement that arose after the government decided to appoint a certain J Stander, previously a school inspector, as Deputy Director of Education in Natal. The provincial authorities refused to obey a government instruction to appoint Stander in his position but the Supreme Court of Natal later ordered the province to do so.³⁴

Douglas Mitchell raised the question of Stander's appointment in parliament and used it to criticise the government for its apparent disregard for the feelings of many Natalians.

³³ PS Thompson, *Natalians first : separatism in South Africa 1909 - 1961* (Johannesburg, 1990), p 170.

³⁴ *African Digest*, vol VII, no 4, February 1960, p 128.

He described the government as being "not interested in any moral claims, in old traditions, in the feelings of the people of Natal", and its decision to appoint Stander as being motivated by a desire "to teach Natal a lesson".³⁵

A sidelight on the emotions evoked by the referendum is also provided by the existence of a secret group formed in 1959 in Natal known as the "Horticulturists". It circulated anti-Nationalist propaganda, tried to organise boycotts of businesses associated with the Nationalists, and campaigned vigorously against the idea of a republic. However, none of these pre-election activities had much impact on the outcome of the 1961 general election.³⁶

The Formation of the Pan Africanist Congress.

In 1958 months of disagreement between certain groups within the African National Congress (ANC) finally led in November to the secession of some of the more militant members who were later to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). One of the points of disagreement concerned the relationship between black political organisations and the whites, and Robert Sobukwe declared, "We shall think of co-operation with other forces when we have come into our own."³⁷

According to Nelson Mandela, the immediate cause of the breakaway by the "Africanist" group was "its objection to the Freedom Charter and the presence of whites and Indians in the Congress Alliance leadership", and that it was opposed to the

³⁵ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 20 January 1960, col 116.

³⁶ PS Thompson, *Natalians first : separatism in South Africa*, pp 163 - 166.

³⁷ *African Digest*, vol VI, no 4, Jan - Feb 1959, p 143.

idea of inter-racial cooperation largely because it believed that white communists and Indians "had come to dominate the ANC". Mandela also believed that many of those who allied themselves with the new movement did so "out of personal grudges and disappointments".³⁸

The PAC did not initially make the progress or attract the support hoped for by its founders. Although the foundation congress of this movement had hoped to enrol a total of 100 000 members by 1 July 1959, it had, according to the party's admission, enrolled not even a third of that number by the end of that year.³⁹

In spite of its lack of success in building up a large membership, the PAC did have a considerable impact on the South African political scene by creating a significant amount of urban unrest which would undoubtedly have a far-reaching effect on much of the electorate in the 1961 general election.

In a very revealing article published in January 1959, Sobukwe outlined many of the PAC's principles and points of difference with the ANC. He stated that the ANC saw "the struggle" as a class struggle whereas the PAC saw it as "a national struggle" because Africans were oppressed as "a subject nation - the African nation". The two movements also differed in their views on co-operation of anti-government groups. According

³⁸ N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom* (London, 1995), p 267. The Freedom Charter was adopted in 1955 by the ANC as the basis for an alternative constitution for South Africa. It was to take a central place in the minds of those opposed to apartheid from outside the white-inspired constitutional system. Although the charter denied the whites any privileged position, it did accord them equal rights.

³⁹ T Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945* (London, 1983), p 85.

to Sobukwe, the PAC saw co-operation as possible "only between equals" and that there could be no co-operation between "oppressor and oppressed, dominating and dominated", as that would be "collaboration". Sobukwe stated very significantly, "We claim Afrika for the Africans ; the A.N.C. claims South Africa for all".⁴⁰

Later during his speech at the Inaugural Convention of the PAC in April 1959, Sobukwe amplified his earlier remarks. In discussing the role of the whites in South Africa, Sobukwe said "The Europeans are a foreign minority group which has exclusive control of political, economic, social and military power. It is the dominant group. It is the exploiting group, responsible for the pernicious doctrine of White Supremacy which has resulted in the humiliation and degradation of the indigenous African people. It is this group which has dispossessed the African people of their land and with arrogant conceit has set itself up as the 'guardians', the 'trustees' of the Africans."⁴¹

Many whites in South Africa at the time saw these utterances as unbridled arrogance and insolence. They were encouraged in the coming election to support those parties which promised firm measures to suppress what they alleged to be "seditious agitation".

Domestic disturbances within South Africa.

The widespread unrest among blacks in 1960 and the subsequent proclamation of a state of emergency kept South Africa

⁴⁰ T Karis & G Carter, *From protest to challenge*, vol 3, p 509. The PAC sometimes referred to Africa as "Afrika".

⁴¹ Karis & Carter, *From protest to challenge*, vol 3, pp 515 - 516.

sharply in the international limelight for some months. It also had echoes in the election campaign of the following year when the need to preserve law and order became an important issue in the general election. The events at Sharpeville in March 1960 instantly became worldwide news but there were also other comparatively minor incidents prior to Sharpeville which should have warned South Africans that widespread unrest was imminent. During 1959 and 1960 there was rioting and arson in East Pondoland following the opposition shown by many blacks to the system of Bantu Authorities.⁴² Although this rural unrest did not attract much attention among the white electorate, a violent outbreak in Cato Manor on 24 January 1960 shocked many whites. The Minister of Justice, FC Erasmus, announced in the House of Assembly that a party of 26 policemen were engaged in a search for illicit alcohol in Cato Manor when they were attacked by an angry crowd of about 800 blacks. Nine policemen of whom five were black and four white, were killed by the mob.⁴³

The disturbances at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960 overshadowed all other incidents of unrest at the time but Sharpeville was not an isolated case. The violence and the widespread nature of other disturbances also had a very decisive effect on the minds of the white voters. They would have to decide the following year whether to adopt a more liberal, tolerant racial policy, or an increasingly oppressive hardline stance. In March 1960, the PAC announced that it would be launching a campaign of passive resistance against the pass system, and its

⁴² See for instance *Time*, 28 December 1959 ; CM Tatz, *Shadow and Substance in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, 1962), pp 192 - 193.

⁴³ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 23 January 1960, col 300.

President, Robert Sobukwe, informed the Commissioner of Police, Major-General Rademeyer of the plans. Sobukwe asked that the police be restrained from taking aggressive action. He said that his organisation would be launching a "sustained, disciplined, non-violent campaign against the Pass Laws" on 21 March 1960. The rest of the letter was couched in terms that would have infuriated the average white South African voter. It described many of the police as having been brought up "in the racial hothouse of South Africa" and criticised the methods adopted by the police to disperse illegal gatherings. Sobukwe referred to the police as "sadistic bullies" and told Rademeyer that his followers could not be expected to run "helter-skelter because a trigger-happy, African hating young white policeman has given thousands or even hundreds of people three minutes within which to remove their bodies from his immediate environment." ⁴⁴

The decision by the PAC to launch an anti-pass campaign appears to have been partly if not largely animated by rivalry with the ANC which had earlier planned a similar campaign that was due to begin on 31 March 1960. The PAC plan elicited an angry response from the ANC. According to Nelson Mandela, it was "a blatant case of opportunism" that was "motivated more by a desire to eclipse the ANC than to defeat the enemy." Mandela points out that the PAC had not held a conference to discuss the date of the launching of the anti-pass campaign, nor had it done any "organizational work of any significance". ⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Karis & Carter, *From protest to challenge*, pp 565 - 566. See also T Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, pp 208 - 210.

⁴⁵ N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, p 280.

The most momentous event of the campaign was undoubtedly the incident at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. Fearing that the demonstrators were about to attack the police station, the police opened fire on the crowd. Lodge ascribes the action of the police partly to their inexperience in dealing with large political demonstrations. The police had "an acute (if mistaken) consciousness of their vulnerability", and the events of Cato Manor were still fresh in their minds. According to Lodge, 69 people were killed and 180 wounded in the demonstration. ⁴⁶

In order to deal with the civil unrest that had broken out the government took some firm steps. On 24 March, public meetings in several magisterial districts were banned and on 28 March the government introduced legislation to ban both the ANC and the PAC. On March 30 a state of emergency was proclaimed and several hundred people were arrested. ⁴⁷Large scale police raids took place in various black areas and these were a major factor in the suppression of the unrest. The government also introduced more sweeping powers of arrest. According to Edward Feit, during the state of emergency 98 whites, 36 coloureds, 90 Asians, and 11 279 Africans were taken into custody. ⁴⁸

Five days after the Sharpeville unrest the Commissioner of Police declared a moratorium on the enforcement of the pass laws. This drew a fiery reaction from the conservative UP member for Natal South Coast, Douglas Mitchell. Speaking in parliament during the debate on the Unlawful Organisations Bill, Mitchell

⁴⁶ T Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa*, pp 209 - 210.

⁴⁷ South African Institute of Race Relations, *A survey of race relations : 1959 - 1960*, p 62.

⁴⁸ E Feit, *Urban revolt in South Africa 1960 - 1964* (Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp 49 - 50.

fiercely criticised what he perceived as the government's weakness in dealing with the unrest. He described the moratorium as a "shocking exhibition of complete weakness in dealing with the matter".⁴⁹ The moratorium was lifted on 10 April. It is open to conjecture whether Mitchell made this statement out of personal conviction or because he wished to make political capital from the government's predicament. Nevertheless, this is a very striking example of the attitude of the conservative wing of the UP and an indication of how it would sometimes attempt to be more extremist than the Nationalists in the election campaign of the following year.

The firm action taken by the government to deal with the unrest was to pay dividends during the election campaign of 1961. When the voters went to the polls in October 1961 the unrest of the preceding year was still fresh in their minds and they were also very aware of the disturbances and civil unrest in various other African countries such as the Belgian Congo. The NP was able to depict itself as the party that had saved South Africa from a blood-bath. It portrayed itself as the only party that could ensure the security of the whites. The NP would also make an issue of the UP's supposed inability to deal effectively and decisively with such disturbances.

The UP gave qualified support to the bill banning the ANC and PAC. Sir de Villiers Graaff announced in parliament that the UP would support the bill in order "to restore law and order", and he also thanked the coloured community for remaining peaceful. Graaff put part of the blame for the riots on the government,

⁴⁹ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 28 March 1960, col 4202 ;
A survey of race relations : 1959 - 1960, p 62.

claiming that they had created a "ruthless proletariat with no real interest in the maintenance of law and order", which was "fertile ground for the activities of agitators". As a result of this "unrealistic attitude", large numbers of blacks were permanently settled in South Africa's urban areas. According to Graaff, the government had broken down "all bridges of consultation", and had ignored "the emergent middle class". He expressed the opinion that the detribalised blacks living in the cities should be represented in parliament "on a separate roll and by Whites", and that there should be a "more humane administration of the pass laws". In response to a question from a government member, Graaff replied, "I support this Bill because as the result of the policies of this Government you have a situation of emergency in South Africa".⁵⁰

The police took firm measures in Cape Town early in April 1960 to end a stayaway from work in which thousands of Africans were involved. These actions attracted much criticism. The *Cape Argus* reported graphically, "Police armed with truncheons swooped on all suburbs and towns in the Peninsula today to clear the streets of Native intimidators and loiterers. They beat any Natives who refused, or were reluctant, to move from pavements or street corners ... The Peninsula area is virtually under military occupation today."⁵¹

There were many allegations that police had whipped Africans with sjamboks but in parliament in answer to questions put by Zach de Beer, Harry Lawrence, and Helen Suzman, the

⁵⁰ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 29 March 1960, cols 4316 - 4324.

⁵¹ *Cape Argus*, 4 April 1960.

Minister of Justice denied that the police had used undue force. As far as he was concerned, "the police and the army had carried out their duties in an exemplary fashion and had brought the situation under control with tact". He had full confidence that the police would not abuse their powers. ⁵²

The alleged widespread maltreatment of blacks by police in Cape Town also attracted a great deal of attention in the overseas press. The headlines of some British newspapers read : "Police whip Africans in streets" (*Daily Mail*) ; "Day of the lash in Cape Town ; Men whipped in streets ; City of Terror" (*Daily Telegraph*) ; "Whips out in Cape Town ; cries of injured bring protests by phone" (*Daily Express*). ⁵³

The suppression of the riots shows the firm stance that the government was prepared to adopt to restore law and order. It was a policy that would win votes for the NP during the following year. The electorate was very conscious of its numerical inferiority to black South Africans and was, in general, uncompromisingly opposed to giving in to the demands of those it saw as black demagogues and inciters.

The attempted assassination of Verwoerd in 1960.

Soon after the disturbing events at Sharpeville and other centres of unrest, South Africa experienced another great shock when Verwoerd came very close to death in an attempt on his life at the Rand Easter Show in Johannesburg on 9 April 1960. After Verwoerd had addressed the crowd in his opening address,

⁵² *Cape Times*, 5 April 1960.

⁵³ Reported in *Cape Argus*, 6 April 1960.

an assailant (later described by the *Sunday Times* as "a middle-aged European gunman") walked up to him and shot him twice in the face. The would-be assassin, David Pratt, was described as a very wealthy middle-aged farmer who, according to a neighbour, had spent much of the preceding week at a mission station near his farm outside Johannesburg. ⁵⁴

Pratt was later found to have had a history of mental instability and was declared unfit to stand trial on a charge of attempted murder. During his appearance in court, Pratt claimed that he had intended only to injure Verwoerd and that the prime minister's period of convalescence "would at least give him an opportunity to reconsider some of the things that were going on". Pratt subsequently committed suicide in October 1961 while at the Oranje Mental Hospital in Bloemfontein. ⁵⁵

In the political sphere Verwoerd undoubtedly benefited a great deal from the attempt on his life. He came to be identified almost as a martyr for his cause. In the words of Jan Botha, "he had suffered grievously in the cause of Afrikanerdom ; the onslaught on his life was an onslaught on their cause, and the human sympathy that went out to him became in the case of many an enduring love for a hero who so miraculously survived the ordeal to lead them on." ⁵⁶

The end of the Treason Trial.

On 29 March 1961, while the defence at the celebrated Treason Trial of ANC activists in Pretoria was in the fourth week

⁵⁴ *Sunday Times*, 10 April 1960.

⁵⁵ J Botha, *Verwoerd is dead* (Cape Town, 1967), p 67 ; H Kennney, *Architect of apartheid* (Johannesburg, 1980), p 188.

⁵⁶ J Botha, *Verwoerd is dead*, p 67.

of its final argument, Judge Rumpff decided to close the trial. He announced an unanimous verdict of not guilty, stating that "the cornerstone of the case" was the alleged policy of violence of the ANC and that the prosecution had failed to prove the existence of this policy. The complexity and length of the mammoth trial can be gauged from the fact that the defendants had been arrested in December 1956 and the prosecution had examined some 150 witnesses and four thousand documents.⁵⁷

The Treason Trial had by this time become a source of great embarrassment to the South African government. This was because of the periodic acquittal of many of the defendants, the long duration of the trial, the vagueness of some of the evidence and also the embarrassing testimony given by several witnesses. Although the trial was a major event in the history of black politics in South Africa, it was not of overwhelming interest to the white voters. Some may have seen it as an indication of the threat posed by black militants to the whites in South Africa and this issue was given great emphasis in the general election later that year.

The Cottesloe Conference of 1960.

Following a visit to South Africa by Robert Bilheimer, the Assistant Secretary of the World Council of Churches, it was decided that an inter-church conference would be held to discuss the problems that the various churches faced in South Africa. This conference was held for approximately a week in December 1960 at the Cottesloe residence of the University of the Witwatersrand.

⁵⁷ T Karis & G Carter, *From protest to challenge*, pp 345 - 347.

It was attended by a number of deputations consisting of ten members each. Deputations were sent by the seven South African churches which belonged to the World Council of Churches i.e. the Church of the Province of South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) of the Transvaal and Cape Province, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Congregational Union Church, the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk of South Africa. Each paragraph of the statement reflecting the eventual opinions of the conference had to be put to the vote separately. Furthermore, each had to receive the support of at least eighty percent of the delegates before being adopted. ⁵⁸

The statement that was issued by the conference stated *inter alia* that no church should exclude a believer on the grounds of his colour or race ; that there were no scriptural grounds to justify the prohibition of mixed marriages despite the existence of certain "legal social or cultural factors" that would make such marriages "inadvisable" ; that the system of migrant labour should be condemned and that job reservation on the grounds of colour should be replaced by "a more equitable system", and that adult men had the right to own land wherever they were domiciled. ⁵⁹

When this statement was issued by the conference, the delegations from the NGK of the Transvaal and the Cape Province simultaneously issued a declaration stating that in their opinion "a policy of differentiation" was defensible and that "it provided the only realistic solution to the problem of race relations".

⁵⁸ A survey of race relations in South Africa : 1961, p 64.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p 65.

They also said that as far as they were concerned, the right of Africans to own land in white areas and to "participate in government" in these areas was applicable only to those Africans "who were domiciled there and had no other home land". In a subsequent statement they asserted that "if complete territorial segregation was impossible then full rights, including political rights, could not be withheld indefinitely from Coloured people or Africans who were permanent residents of the White areas". It is clear that this was a serious, if not very serious, challenge to the racial policies of the NP. ⁶⁰

The delegation from the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk took a very different line and published a statement in which they voiced their opposition to all the main resolutions of the conference. They also reaffirmed their belief that racial separation would be the best possible environment for serving "the ideals of Christianity". They claimed that they had been outvoted during the conference while trying to oppose these resolutions. ⁶¹

The Cottesloe Conference was very severely criticised by some sections of the Nationalist establishment. The actuary of the Cape division of the NGK, JD Vorster, criticised the members of the synod who had been delegates to the Cottesloe Conference, and stated that they were expounding "a supremely dangerous viewpoint". ⁶²

"Dawie" in his column in *Die Burger* expressed some support for the NGK delegates to the Cottesloe Conference, saying that the NP had to contend with an acute crisis of confidence

⁶⁰ *A survey of race relations in South Africa : 1961*, p 66.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p 66.

⁶² *Sunday Times*, 1 January 1961.

within Nationalist Afrikanerdom concerning race relations. It did not help to try to conceal this. "Dawie" expressed surprise that those NGK delegates who expressed support for the idea of direct representation ("regstreekse verteenwoordiging") for the coloureds should suddenly be labelled as integrationists and liberals. Some of the most prominent NGK churchmen had long propagated the idea that this was the inevitable and logical consequence of the idea of separate development for the coloureds. ⁶³

In contrast to the attitude of "Dawie", *Die Transvaler* was predictably much more critical of the decisions of the Cottesloe Conference. In an editorial it claimed that the application of these principles would lead to the complete collapse and disappearance of Christianity in the southern tip of Africa. The editorial sharply criticised the Conference's resolutions concerning land ownership, the franchise, and mixed marriages. ⁶⁴

In his New Year's message of 1 January 1961, Verwoerd also made a vigorous attack on the Cottesloe Conference. He described it as an attempt by foreigners to interfere in South African affairs. He felt that an organisation such as the World Council of Churches would have no enduring influence on the ideas and feelings of South Africa at all. He believed that the resolutions should be seen as nothing more than the opinions of a certain number of individuals. ⁶⁵

It is quite clear that there was an appreciable division

⁶³ *Die Burger*, 17 December 1960.

⁶⁴ *Die Transvaler*, 17 December 1960.

⁶⁵ AH Luckhoff, *Cottesloe* (Cape Town, 1978), p 116.

among some Afrikaans clergymen, many of whom were influential Nationalists, and laymen on the issues raised at Cottesloe. This could have burgeoned into a severe challenge to Nationalist policies had Verwoerd, supported by various clergymen, not taken a firm stance in suppressing at least some of these contentious arguments.

The clash between the government and some prominent Anglican churchmen.

During the pre-election period a great deal of publicity was given to various clashes between the government and some sections of the hierarchy of the Anglican Church. Among the "turbulent priests" was Bishop Ambrose Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg, who was later deported from South Africa. It was not long after the unrest at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960 that Bishop Reeves published his book *Shooting at Sharpeville*.⁶⁶ He was extremely outspoken in his criticism of both the South African government and the South African Police. This criticism was highly damaging to the government's image both overseas and in South Africa.

On 1 April 1960 Bishop Reeves left his Johannesburg diocese apparently fearing that he would be detained under the emergency regulations. He then drove to Swaziland where he stayed temporarily before travelling to England. In September 1960 he flew back to Johannesburg to resume his episcopal duties. Less than two days after he had returned, a senior policeman visited

⁶⁶ AH Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville* (London, 1960).

him at the Priory of St Benedict and issued him with a deportation order signed by the Minister of the Interior. He was taken to the airport and put on an aeroplane bound for London the same day.⁶⁷

The deportation of the Bishop aroused a storm of criticism in many liberal and clerical circles. *Die Burger* published an editorial which must have reflected a significant section of Nationalist thought on the matter. The newspaper claimed they were sick and tired of this man and his kind who were brought from England to shout at them in the name of God and to treat them like dirt ("om ons in die naam van God te kom beskreeu en rond te foeter asof ons hulle vuilgoed is"). They were unknown and unsung in their own country ("onbekend en onbesonge") but in South Africa they received pompous titles and sham authority ("hoogdrawende titels met die skyngesag wat daarmee saamgaan").⁶⁸

The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Joost de Blank, was also a celebrated figure among the campaigners against apartheid in the Anglican Church. According to the Archbishop, "This hideous doctrine of apartheid must be openly condemned. ... The Africans must be shown by constructive action - not words alone - that the churches have turned their backs on compulsory apartheid." *Time* magazine also described De Blank as demanding that the Dutch Reformed Church should repudiate the policy of apartheid on pain of losing the recognition of the world's religious bodies.⁶⁹

In March 1960 De Blank disclosed that Verwoerd had

⁶⁷ JS Peart-Binns, *Ambrose Reeves* (London, 1973), pp 216 - 219, 234 - 235, 240.

⁶⁸ *Die Burger*, 15 September 1960.

⁶⁹ *Time*, 15 April 1960.

refused to meet a delegation from the Church of the Province of South Africa which was calling for the abolition of the Group Areas Act "in the name of God". Part of Verwoerd's letter read, "The Prime Minister is not prepared to receive the deputation for whom you request an interview since the terms of the resolution clearly demonstrate that the spirit in which the request is made would make such an interview utterly futile."⁷⁰

It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of the significance that these clashes had on the English-speaking electorate. Although many English-speaking whites were members of the Church of England, it is very likely that some would have been as irked by the utterances of Bishop Reeves and Archbishop de Blank as was the government. They might also possibly have differentiated between official church doctrine and what appeared to be the private opinions of these bishops. It is noteworthy that the government tried to refrain from criticising the Church of England as this would have given graver offence. Thus, while many people may have felt that the government should merely have ignored such clerical criticism and may also have thought the government to be heavy-handed in its dealings with Reeves, it is unlikely that the government would have lost a great deal of support from Anglican quarters. In truth it would not have had very much support there to lose in the first place.

The attitude of the Catholic Church towards the government.

Other influential churches were also somewhat critical

⁷⁰ Cape Argus, 5 March 1960. See also EL King, *A good place to be* (Cape Town, 1996), pp 2 - 21, for an interesting description of Archbishop de Blank's stay in South Africa.

of the government's racial policies at the time. In February 1960 the Catholic Bishops issued a moderately worded pastoral letter in which they declared that people were justified "in striving for their legitimate rights" but should use peaceful means to do so. The letter warned "those who are impatient" that they should be on their guard lest "they be misled by men who do not desire the real and true good of the people, but only selfish and destructive ends." The Bishops recognised the existence of social and racial divisions and argued that although it was true that men gather together in groups with loyalties that arise "from the bond of relationship or association", these loyalties should be "subordinate to the great overriding fact of the human person's dignity and his unity with all fellow men." The Bishops considered that "a just wage adequate to the needs of the man and his family" be paid to employees, and they condemned the system of migratory labour and the imposition of restrictions on "free movement" as these hampered the ability to work and earn a living. The letter recognised that it would be wrong to allow people of "a more advanced culture to be deprived at this stage of an effective part in the government, and to have their economic status reduced". At the same time it felt that the desire of one section of the population to protect itself "need not and must not operate oppressively on the other sections." In discussing the question of the franchise, the Bishops wrote, "It does not follow that the giving of the vote directly to all qualified members of the community will result in the domination of one section over another." They felt that colour should not be the criterion in determining the right to exercise the franchise but the

qualification to do so "should be the ability to exercise the vote in a truly responsible manner." ⁷¹

Here again, it is difficult to determine the effect of such opposition on the NP's chances of attracting English or Catholic votes. It is very likely that it would have influenced the small but not insignificant Catholic electorate only in conjunction with various other factors such as the recent riots.

Support given to the government by the Afrikaans churches.

There were, however, other churches that were fully supportive of the government's policies. An example of this was provided by the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed synod of Natal, Rev H Snijders. While opening the NGK synod he said that nowhere in the scriptures were men commanded to wipe out the idea of racial segregation. On the contrary he believed that putting all races on the same level was against the rule of God. According to Snijders, what God had severed no man might bring together, and they "as Europeans" were "far more advanced on the road of Christian civilization". He also said that there was no other nation that had sacrificed more to raise the "non-European". ⁷²

As the great majority of Afrikaans-speaking whites were members of the Dutch Reformed Church or its sister churches, such views would have had a significant effect on their belief in the value and morality of government policies. Their church would undoubtedly have encouraged at least an appreciable number of them to vote Nationalist in the forthcoming general election.

⁷¹ A Prior (ed.), *Catholics in Apartheid Society* (Cape Town & London), pp 173 - 177.

⁷² *Cape Argus*, 6 April 1961.

Events in the Belgian Congo.

The disturbances in the Belgian Congo also had a profound psychological effect on many whites in South Africa, partly because of the large numbers of refugees who were brought to South Africa. Many white South Africans took a great interest in the rapid way in which Belgium decided to grant independence to the Congo. They took note of the inability of the new administration to prevent the chaos and the disturbances that followed. DW Krüger expressed what would have been a widespread attitude at the time when he wrote :

The events in the Congo had instantly shattered the imposing facade liberals had laboriously built up that once the black peoples had established their national states everybody would be happy. ... White public feeling in the Union was inflamed as a result and Verwoerd's policy of separate development received a new impetus.⁷³

The effect of the events leading up to the 1961 general election : an overview.

In general the events of the few years preceding the 1961 general election show a considerable drift towards South Africa's isolation in international affairs. The domestic situation was such that many voters in South Africa had come to regard developments with acute tension and anxiety. Many of these events in South Africa, Europe and the rest of Africa, tended to propel white South Africans towards greater conservatism. During these years the Nationalists attained one of their long-cherished goals when on 31 May 1961 South Africa was proclaimed a republic. Likewise, many English-speaking white

⁷³ DW Krüger, *The making of a nation* (Johannesburg, 1969), p 327.

South Africans suffered a traumatic blow when South Africa's formal constitutional links with Britain were severed. In addition the British government made it apparent that in future it would be increasingly unsympathetic to the beliefs, principles and policies of the English-speaking whites in South Africa, many of whom had been fervent supporters of the imperial connection. This would make English-speaking voters more susceptible to the propaganda of the NP : the need for the two main white groups had to stand together in a country that was threatened both internally and externally by various dangers.

These pre-election years also saw the deterioration of race relations in South Africa and foreshadowed the wave of sabotage and terrorism which was launched by black political organisations soon after the 1961 general election. This made both English and Afrikaans-speaking whites very unsympathetic to any suggestion of more liberal racial policies. The electorate wanted a feeling of security and a firm hand in dealing with problems of this nature and this caused many floating voters to drift in the direction of the NP.

CHAPTER THREE.

THE NATIONAL PARTY FROM 1958 TO 1961.

As mentioned earlier, the 1958 general election put the NP in a comparatively unassailable position and the Nationalists could now justifiably be confident that nothing but a major political swing could unseat them. This chapter will examine some of the other important events that influenced the NP during the period between the general elections of 1958 and 1961. As the NP made concerted efforts during this period to attract the votes of more English-speaking whites in South Africa, this aspect of NP strategy will also receive attention. It should be remembered that the English-language press in South Africa was virtually if not entirely anti-Nationalist during this period and that it played a significant role in forming the political opinions of the English-speaking community at the time. It was thus an important factor in the NP's attempts to gain English support. Much of what appears in this chapter will be from the perspective of the English-language press : its views on the NP's strategies, policies, leaders and members.

The election of HF Verwoerd as Prime Minister and its impact on the National Party.

Although Verwoerd in his later years as Prime Minister achieved the respect if not adulation of the NP, it should be remembered that at the time of his election in September 1958, his popularity in the party was far less widespread. His election to the premiership came after a vigorous and at times bitterly fought campaign in the Nationalist caucus between his supporters

and those of Dönges and CR Swart. His appointment was seen by many as emphasising the divisions in the party between the rigid and the more flexible proponents of apartheid and nationalism, as well as a cleavage between the Nationalists of the Transvaal and those of the Cape.

Early in the course of the election the *Cape Times* commented that the campaign to elect Verwoerd as Prime Minister was a case of a 'now or never' effort as his supporters realised that the decisive gains made by the NP in the general election of that year could very well usher in a greater feeling of security among the Afrikaans-speaking whites. This in turn could lead to the adoption of a more liberal approach towards other sectors of the population and could cause a decline in the influence of Verwoerd, whose more "hard-line" approach would then become less acceptable.¹

The mammoth campaign in the mid-1950s to remove the coloureds from the common voters' roll involved the extensive enlargement of the Senate. It had the unforeseen result of allowing Verwoerd to create a power-base in the Senate that enabled him to attain the premiership in the face of opposition from most of the cabinet and what was possibly a majority of the House of Assembly. Verwoerd was proposed by De Wet Nel, who was a junior member of the cabinet, and according to the *Cape Times* his election was opposed by ten cabinet ministers and supported by only three. In commenting on the powerful hold that Verwoerd had gradually come to exert on the Senate, the *Cape Times* noted that the Senate had been enlarged by 41 members in 1955 and that

¹ *Cape Times*, 30 August 1958.

it had been "Dr Verwoerd's private preserve for so long that, when it became enlarged, it became even more his reserve of support".²

It is also possibly significant as an indication of Verwoerd's strength in the Senate that his nomination as a candidate for the leadership of the NP was seconded by Senator MJ Vermeulen, the deputy president of the Senate. Dönges and Swart were proposed by cabinet ministers of considerably greater seniority than Verwoerd or his proposer, Daan de Wet Nel. Dönges was proposed by FC Erasmus, the Minister of Defence, while Swart was proposed by BJ Schoeman and seconded by Jan de Klerk. In the first round Verwoerd received 80 votes while Dönges and Swart received 52 and 41 votes respectively. The fact that Verwoerd did not receive an outright majority meant that a second round of voting had to take place, and on this occasion Verwoerd received 98 votes to Dönges's 75 votes.

According to MC Botha, the amount of support gained by the various candidates on the basis of provincialism was not worth mentioning. Botha also believes that there is inadequate evidence to support the theory that the members of the enlarged Senate were the decisive factor in Verwoerd's election.³ BJ Schoeman holds a different view. He believes that the extra Senators gave Verwoerd the edge over Dönges, who enjoyed the support of most of the members of the House of Assembly.⁴

In his memoirs, BJ Schoeman, then Minister of Transport, gives an indication of how deeply he disliked Verwoerd when he

² *Cape Times*, 3 September 1958.

³ MC Botha, *Premiersverkiezings sedert 1910* (Johannesburg, 1979), pp 114 - 116.

⁴ BJ Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek*, p 240.

says that in nominating Swart for election, he was motivated largely by a desire to prevent Verwoerd from winning at all costs. Schoeman was also convinced that his career in the cabinet was over and recounts how when he was summoned to Verwoerd's office that afternoon he expected to be told that he was being replaced. Instead to his surprise, he was invited to remain in the cabinet. Verwoerd told him that they should forget their quarrels of the past and make a new beginning.⁵ This, to some extent, indicates the apprehension that at least some of the senior Nationalists must have felt about Verwoerd's election.

The reaction of the Nationalist press to Verwoerd's election.

In an editorial *Die Burger* claimed that nobody had been subjected to more merciless discussion in the previous few years than had Verwoerd, and that a mighty propaganda campaign had been concentrated upon him. Nobody could doubt the new Prime Minister's immense intellectual abilities, his intense perseverance and his sense of application. Verwoerd's career as Minister of Native Affairs was described as being a history of clashes on basic principles, great periods of agitation, bitterly disputed measures but also certain noteworthy successes in unexpected areas.⁶

In his regular column in *Die Burger*, "Dawie" examined the personality of Verwoerd, and stated that he had the ability to be one of South Africa's great Prime Ministers but that his critics regarded him as having the ability to cause disasters. This, according to "Dawie", was the case with many brilliant men in

⁵ BJ Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek*, pp 239 - 241.

⁶ *Die Burger*, 3 September 1958.

positions of power. "Dawie" compared Verwoerd with Lloyd George's assessment of Churchill in his earlier years : when he erred, his strength made the consequences disastrous not just for himself but for the issues with which he was engaged, and the people with whom he was co-operating. In an emergency such a person would be more of an asset than a legion of normal individuals provided that a vigilant eye be kept over him.⁷ One should be wary of reading too much into a newspaper article but Dawie's comments indicate a certain attitude towards Verwoerd that was not wholeheartedly supportive or laudatory.

In its editorial on Verwoerd's election *Die Transvaler* emphasised the close links that the new Prime Minister had had with Strijdom for many years, stretching back to the establishment of *Die Transvaler* in 1937. It mentioned what a strong and determined leader Verwoerd was, and how he could be relied upon to preserve the traditions and the ideals of the NP to which he had dedicated himself and given so much for so many years. In the editorial there were also echoes of DF Malan's sentiments : one of Verwoerd's tasks would be to maintain ties within the party and to strengthen the NP cause by encouraging others to join their ranks.⁸

Speculation in the English-language press on the political futures of some senior Nationalists.

The election of Hendrik Verwoerd as Prime Minister in September 1958 was without a doubt a watershed in the history of

⁷ *Die Burger*, 3 September 1958.

⁸ *Die Transvaler*, 3 September 1958. The English-language press and UP supporters were antagonistic towards Verwoerd's election. See Chapter 2, pp 40 - 42.

the NP. To many observers it illustrated a marked clash of wills, opinions and temperaments between the supposedly more liberal, tolerant and compromising Nationalists of the Cape and the more conservative, dogmatic and intolerant Nationalists of the Transvaal. The English-language press took a great interest in speculating on the future of some senior Nationalists who were perceived to be in disfavour with their leader. In some cases this speculation would have created the impression among English-speakers, including some prospective converts to the NP, that there was no place for moderates or lukewarm Nationalists in Verwoerd's party.

Soon after the election of Verwoerd, the political columnist, "Backbencher", wrote a memorable article in the *Cape Argus*, entitled "Malan's Old Guard is in eclipse : Transvaal in Power". This provided a very lucid and vivid description of what was seen as a conspicuous division between the provinces. It was alleged that Stellenbosch was no longer the "fount of Nationalism's philosophy", and that political power was now firmly established in "the powerful hands of the Transvaal extremists and the rigid theorists of Potchefstroom and Pretoria Universities." In the light of the political careers of several of the top Nationalists in later years, it is worth paying some attention to what "Backbencher" had to say about some of Verwoerd's possible "victims". He pointed out that there were already rumours that some cabinet members would be going "to the wall" as soon as Verwoerd had the opportunity to rearrange his cabinet. "Backbencher" speculated that Paul Sauer might soon be appointed Union High Commissioner in London in an attempt to

remove him from the cabinet as the new Prime Minister, "the tireless, slave-driving Dr. Verwoerd", would not regard Sauer "as the ideal Cabinet colleague in the relentless prosecution of ideological obsessions such as apartheid and the republic". "Backbencher" also regarded Frans Erasmus's position as being in jeopardy and said that it was an "open political secret" that the growing strength of Transvaal nationalism was a cause of concern to him. In discussing the potential nominees for vacant cabinet posts, "Backbencher" suggested that they might include Carel de Wet, Nico Diederichs, Willie Maree who was described as "a loyal apartheid acolyte of Dr. Verwoerd's", and Jan Haak. "Backbencher" thought it strange that Professor Avril Malan (father of General Magnus Malan) had apparently been ignored as a possible cabinet minister. One statement from "Backbencher" was, however, off course. He observed that "another forgotten man" appeared to be PW Botha, the MP for George, who although being a successful organising secretary with ten years' experience in the House of Assembly, appeared to have been overlooked.⁹ (Verwoerd subsequently appointed Botha as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs in 1958 and Minister of Coloured Affairs and Community Development in 1961.)

These differences following Verwoerd's election were mild compared with the dissension that came to light in the following few years and became apparent not only in the NP caucus but also in the cabinet. The opposition press was to analyse these signs of dissent in quite exhaustive detail. It paid particularly close attention to what was perceived as a gulf

⁹ Cape Argus, 5 September 1958.

between the Transvaal and the Cape sections of the party. In October 1958 when AJ van Rhijn, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Mines, was appointed as Union High Commissioner in London, the *Cape Times* claimed in an editorial that this was the Prime Minister's first step towards his goal of reconstituting the cabinet "closer to his heart's desire". It also thought that van Rhijn had been brought into the cabinet by Malan to counter "the stranglehold" which the Transvaal section of the party was trying to establish. ¹⁰

In November 1960 a public disagreement between Verwoerd and Franz Mentz, the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, led to the latter's resignation. The resignation also proved to be the source of much interest to the English-language press. According to Mentz, who was also the MP for Westdene, he had had a difference of opinion with the Minister of Bantu Administration, De Wet Nel, with whom Verwoerd had subsequently sided. Mentz also denied the claims made by *Die Burger* and the SABC that he was resigning for health reasons. ¹¹

The appointment in July 1961 of the Minister of Justice, FC Erasmus, as the Ambassador to Rome, was also the cause of much speculation in the opposition press. Why, they asked, was a man of his seniority, position and experience in the NP, parliament and the cabinet, being given such an insignificant position? The *Sunday Times* expressed the view that Erasmus had been on Verwoerd's "black list" for "several years" and that his changed status was seen "as the start of a Cabinet Purge" that would culminate in a complete reshuffle after the coming general

¹⁰ *Cape Times*, 16 October 1958.

¹¹ *Cape Times*, 4 November 1960.

election. The newspaper also speculated that Eric Louw and Paul Sauer might possibly be dropped in the near future. ¹²

On one occasion *Time* magazine described Erasmus as being one of the "Four Horsemen of Apartheid", the others being Verwoerd, Swart and Eric Louw. It also regarded Erasmus as largely responsible for taking the effective measures that had ended the disturbances in 1960. ¹³ In his announcement of Erasmus's appointment, Verwoerd said that Erasmus had asked several months earlier to be given some less arduous duties as "he would prefer a less strenuous life". In its editorial the *Cape Times* said that whether his new appointment was due to his ill-health or the state of his politics, it would naturally be the topic of debate. It pointed out that Erasmus had recently had two serious operations. ¹⁴

In his memoirs BJ Schoeman claims that Verwoerd had long been unhappy with Erasmus's lack of ability as a Minister of Defence and refers to the remark made in certain circles that Erasmus was nothing more than an effective designer of uniforms. Schoeman also writes that Erasmus was bitterly disappointed when he was assigned the portfolio of Minister of Justice. According to Schoeman, Erasmus approached Verwoerd with the request that he be given a more restful position with fewer responsibilities as his health was giving cause for concern. ¹⁵

In her dissertation on Erasmus's role as Minister of Defence, Louisa Jooste mentions that his health deteriorated noticeably in the late 1950s and that he suffered a serious heart

¹² *Sunday Times*, 23 July 1961.

¹³ *Time*, 11 April 1961.

¹⁴ *Cape Times*, 24 July 1961.

¹⁵ BJ Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek*, pp 252, 253, 278.

attack in March 1959 while on a visit to London. Although he had been a confidant of Malan, Erasmus was apparently on much less intimate terms with Malan's two successors from the north.¹⁶

Whatever the true position and making due allowance for newspaper speculation and exaggeration, it is quite likely that the relationship between Verwoerd and Erasmus was not particularly harmonious. This must have added to the conjecture about the differences between the Cape and the Transvaal Nationalists.

The English-language press also occasionally speculated on the future of Eric Louw. Such conjecture was possibly influenced by the fact that he had long been their bitter critic. These sentiments seem to have been reciprocated as he came in for regular criticism in their editorial pages. A report in the *Sunday Times* at the end of July 1961 claimed that during the recent parliamentary session it had been "freely stated" that Louw, who was 70 years old at the time, would be retiring from the cabinet that year. He was not "physically able to continue as Minister of Foreign Affairs" as he had undergone a major operation and he was "temperamentally unfitted" for the portfolio because he made too many enemies". Louw was, according to the report, "making a bold bid to be retained in the Cabinet", and had said in a speech at Fraserburg that he would be willing to stand for parliament in the event of a general election that year.¹⁷

Louw's position in this respect was rather anomalous. He had been a senior member of the NP for many years and must have had a great deal of influence within its ranks. He was also

¹⁶ L Jooste, *FC Erasmus as minister van verdediging, 1948 - 1959* (Unpublished MA dissertation, UNISA, 1995), pp 13 & 211.

¹⁷ *Sunday Times*, 30 July 1961.

admired for his undoubted intellectual ability, and for the aggressive, uncompromising way he had defended South Africa in his position as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, he had many enemies partly because he was perceived as having a difficult personality. However, the fact that he only retired at the end of 1963 shows that the speculation in the *Sunday Times* was not entirely accurate. Interestingly, press speculation that Louw was unpopular goes back as far as 1947.¹⁸

Any leader of the NP would have been aware of the existence of provincial differences and allegiances within the party as well as the need to avoid the unnecessary alienation of Nationalists in any particular province. Erasmus, Sauer, Louw, and Dönges were the senior and most influential Cape representatives in the cabinet. If they were to be removed under possibly acrimonious circumstances, there might have been very adverse repercussions for the NP in the Cape and on the 1961 general election as well.

The relationship between Paul Sauer and Verwoerd.

Although Paul Sauer managed to retain his position in the cabinet throughout Verwoerd's premiership, there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that his position was very tenuous at times and that relations between him and Verwoerd were frequently strained. In their biography of Paul Sauer, Dirk and Johanna de Villiers recount how Mrs Sauer had on one occasion in 1961 told the ambassador to France, Jan Jordaan, that Verwoerd wanted to remove her husband from the cabinet. Less than three

¹⁸ *Sunday Express*, 22 June 1947. It was claimed that Louw was a "liability", who often made "offensive" counter-productive remarks.

weeks after Verwoerd became Prime Minister, he tried to persuade Sauer to accept a move to a less important portfolio in the cabinet but Sauer refused. ¹⁹

Further evidence of the poor relationship between Sauer and Verwoerd is given by Jaap Marais. He claims that on one occasion Verwoerd said to him, "I have never known why Paul Sauer is a Nationalist." ²⁰ Apparently Verwoerd also expressed similar sentiments to Albert Hertzog and sometimes anglicised the pronunciation of Sauer's Christian name as a subtle insult to him. ²¹

Shortly after the Sharpeville riots and the attempted assassination of Verwoerd, Sauer made his famous speech at Humansdorp. He pleaded for a revision of certain legislation relating to blacks. After stating that the old book of South African history had been closed a few weeks earlier at Sharpeville, he said that there would have to be a considerable change in the practical applications of the government's policy even though such changes did not imply any deviation from the declared policy of the government. Among the changes he felt necessary were the revision of the pass system wherever it caused ill-feeling, the revision of the laws relating to the use of strong drink by black people, an increase and improvement in the amount of contact between whites and peace-loving urban blacks, earnest attention to the improvement of wages paid to Africans, and extensive development of areas for black settlement. This speech had a considerable impact in both government and opposition

¹⁹ Dirk & Johanna de Villiers, *Paul Sauer* (Cape Town, 1997), pp 122, 141.

²⁰ Jaap Marais - Author, Pretoria, November 1995.

²¹ D O'Meara, *Forty lost years* (Randburg, 1996), p 94.

circles and for a time was taken by some as heralding a very significant change in the implementation of government policy. ²²

Sauer appeared to retreat slightly after the controversy had begun to rage and when a reporter from the *Cape Argus* asked him whether his speech reflected any actual change of policy, he replied, "It was a statement of my opinion on the question and that is all." ²³

The fact that Sauer was merely expressing some of the sentiments held by other NP cabinet ministers shows how invidious his position was. At the last cabinet meeting held before the unsuccessful attempt on Verwoerd's life, Sauer, Dönges and Ben Schoeman had all argued in favour of considering the abolition of pass books for blacks. ²⁴

In an editorial entitled "Politieke Fantasie", *Die Burger* attempted to allay suspicions that Sauer's speech indicated dissent within the NP or a sharp break with traditional Nationalist policy. It also ridiculed any idea that it was the harbinger of a realignment of South African politics. It felt that the speech had been distorted by devious individuals in order to deceive fools. Sauer was the third minister to have made such a plea within the space of a few days, the others being Erasmus and Maree. In conclusion, the extraordinary importance attached to Sauer's speech by opposition circles was discounted as a desperate attempt to spread dissension and division among the Nationalists. ²⁵

²² Dirk & Johanna de Villiers, *Paul Sauer*, pp 135 - 136.

²³ *Cape Argus*, 21 April 1960.

²⁴ D O' Meara, *Forty lost years*, p 103.

²⁵ *Die Burger*, 21 April 1960.

On 20 May 1960 Dönges read a statement to parliament that had been prepared by Verwoerd (who was recovering from the assassination attempt) which was seen as definitely laying to roost any ideas raised by Sauer's speech that the NP would consider embarking on a more liberal course. ²⁶

At a press conference in London, Eric Louw also reacted to Sauer's speech and noted that before he had left South Africa he had had a long discussion with Verwoerd in which the Prime Minister had said that he saw no reason for changing South Africa's basic policy of separate development. Verwoerd had pointed out that such riots were not uncommon in South Africa and other African territories. The recent riots had been chiefly confined to three main urban centres. He also emphasised that the government's policy of separate development "was intended equally for promoting the welfare of the non-European peoples", and that it was a pity that the overseas press were not prepared to give the whites any credit for their attempts to improve the welfare of the blacks. ²⁷

Many of the English-language newspapers in South Africa took great interest in the relationship between Sauer and Verwoerd for some time afterwards. In July 1961 the *Sunday Times*, for example, published an article entitled, "Verwoerd axe hangs over Louw, Sauer". The *Sunday Times* political correspondent wrote that after Sauer's controversial speech at Humansdorp, Verwoerd had tried to persuade him to become the Speaker in parliament but Sauer had refused "point-blank" and had told Verwoerd that he

²⁶ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 20 May 1960, col 8837.

²⁷ INCH, PV4, Eric Louw Collection, File 55, Reply to question concerning the Sauer broadcast statement, September 1960.

would have to dissolve the cabinet and then reconstitute it without him.²⁸

Notwithstanding his differences with Verwoerd, Sauer remained a loyal apologist for the NP. This may be seen in a letter that he wrote in August 1961 to JC Wilkinson of "The Unification Movement", a very minor political group that was concentrated largely in Natal. Wilkinson had attacked the NP for supposedly following policies that divided the nation and Sauer defended the government on all counts.²⁹

Indications of dissent by junior members of the NP caucus.

The NP caucus during this period appears to have been a remarkably cohesive body and there were very few indications of public dissent from Nationalist doctrines by its less influential members. Although the opposition press was quick to comment on rumblings of discontent, there were only two really well-publicised cases of division in the NP caucus during this period - those of J du Pisanie, and Japie Basson.

In the NP caucus a simmering dispute between the Minister of Labour, Senator Jan De Klerk, and the MP for Germiston, Du Pisanie, showed a certain dissatisfaction with Verwoerd's plans to encourage the development of the homelands and the realities of bread-and-butter politics as they affected the needs of the white worker. At the beginning of 1961 the *Sunday Times* described how the development of the clothing industry on the borders of the Natal homelands and the concomitant employment of cheap black

²⁸ *Sunday Times*, 30 July 1961.

²⁹ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, File 2/9/1/1/9, P Sauer - JC Wilkinson, 8 August 1961.

labour had led to the closure of various textile factories in Germiston and had caused a great deal of distress to the white garment workers in that area. Du Pisanie was strongly opposed to such industrial development - development which would understandably cause unemployment and poverty in white working class areas. The newspaper stated that the feud between the minister and Du Pisanie had been going on for "two or three years" and that de Klerk's address to a meeting of garment workers in this constituency without first informing Du Pisanie of his intention to do so had led to an acrimonious debate between the two men in the Nationalist caucus - a debate which had to be resolved by Verwoerd himself.³⁰

Matters did not improve in the Germiston constituency and a severe clash broke out between Senator De Klerk and the Germiston *Klerewerkersunie*, which, according to the *Sunday Times* was "Nationalist controlled". The *Klerewerkersunie* alleged that De Klerk had broken the promises that he had made to them in April 1959 that the workers would be protected from the competition presented by cheap black labour. According to the newspaper, De Klerk had written a letter to Du Pisanie in which he accused them of "ingratitude", and was critical of Du Pisanie of "attacking Government Policy at a caucus meeting on February 26".³¹

Within a week the *Klerewerkersunie* reacted by petitioning all cabinet ministers to support their requests to protect them against the competition of cheap black labour, to institute

³⁰ *Sunday Times*, 1 January 1961.

³¹ *Sunday Times*, 12 March 1961.

effective wage control and to protect "European standards". The union pointed out that the number of white clothing workers in Germiston had decreased from 1 591 in 1954 to 610 in 1961. ³²

In April the Deputy Minister of Labour, Marais Viljoen, "reported" Du Pisanie to his divisional committee for "indiscipline" in that Du Pisanie allegedly threatened to "raise his differences" with De Klerk in parliament. Du Pisanie denied that this was the case. ³³

In November 1959 Du Pisanie offered his resignation to Verwoerd, effective from 1 March 1960. In his letter of resignation he did not state any reasons for his decision but merely affirmed that he would continue to do his best for the NP. Verwoerd replied that he would have asked him to reconsider his decision if he thought that such a request would have any effect. He asked Du Pisanie to postpone the effective date of his resignation from 1 March to 1 July or 1 August, as the NP would be severely discomfited by the resignation of a MP during a parliamentary session, particularly during the year of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Union. ³⁴

Du Pisanie showed some of his feelings in a letter that he wrote to Eben Dönges in March 1961. He told Dönges that the NP was experiencing the greatest crisis in its history - a crisis which would have grave ramifications for the party should adequate leadership not be forthcoming. Du Pisanie expressed his belief that the prime minister was not equal to dealing with such a

³² *Sunday Times*, 19 March 1961.

³³ *Sunday Times*, 30 April 1961.

³⁴ INCH, PV 93, Dr HF Verwoerd Collection, file 1/30/8/1, J du Pisanie - HF Verwoerd, 12 November 1959; HF Verwoerd - J du Pisanie, 20 November 1959.

situation and that he should receive immediate help. Du Pisanie was of the opinion that Dönges deserved to be prime minister and that he would have a decisive part to play in preventing any disaster from striking their people.³⁵

It is easy enough to dismiss the entire Du Pisanie "rebellion" as being of trivial importance - he commanded little overt support from fellow parliamentarians : his "rebellion" did not thwart Verwoerd in his plans for the homelands, and the whole episode was soon relegated to history. Nevertheless it was evidence of a growing disenchantment with the ideology and the labour policies of the NP on the part of those white workers who had traditionally supported the NP. They had not been as successful as they had hoped in reaping the economic benefits to which they felt they were entitled. It was from such workers that the Conservative Workers' Party would look for support later that year.

The white population of South West Africa (now Namibia) was represented by six Nationalist representatives in parliament and one of them, the MP for Namib, Japie Basson, attracted a great deal of attention in 1959 with his quite spectacular one-man revolt against the rule of Verwoerd. Basson had come from a political family and had already changed allegiance from the UP to the NP. He was the son of a former Nationalist senator and had later, after gaining a law degree at Stellenbosch University been a journalist on the staff of the *Suiderstem* which was a pro-UP newspaper. In the 1943 general election he had stood for the UP in Moorreesburg against Frans Erasmus. In 1947 he left the UP

³⁵ CACT, A 1646, Dr Dönges Collection, vol 322, J du Pisanie - TE Dönges, 16 March 1961.

"because he disagreed with its anti-Republican policy" and in 1950 he was elected to parliament as the Nationalist candidate for Namib.³⁶

In 1959 the NP introduced legislation in parliament to end the representation of blacks in both the House of Assembly and the Senate. Basson disagreed strongly with these steps and was subsequently expelled from the caucus of the NP because of his refusal to accept the discipline of the party in this matter. In July 1959 the Head Committee of the NP in South West Africa met to discuss what steps should be taken concerning his future in the party. After deliberating for two days, the committee decided not to expel him from the party but instead to offer him "the opportunity to make proposals to bridge the gap between himself and the party."³⁷

During this difficult period in Basson's career, some NP parliamentarians were quick to distance themselves from him. Eric Louw addressed a meeting of his constituents in Beaufort West in May 1959 and told them that it had been apparent during the previous two parliamentary sessions that Japie Basson had adopted a position of dissent. Louw cited Basson's recent call for the speedy exchange of diplomats between South Africa and black African states as an example of his dissident tendencies.³⁸

Japie Basson received support from at least one Nationalist MP, namely P du Plessis, the MP for Brakpan. In a letter to Basson in July 1959, Du Plessis wrote that it appeared

³⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 September 1961.

³⁷ *Cape Times*, 11 July 1959.

³⁸ INCH, PV4, Eric Louw Collection, file 52, Speech at Beaufort West, 21 May 1959.

from the newspapers that the gears of the "steamroller" had begun to grind a little. Du Plessis described himself as one of the few in the party who believed that it was better to build than to destroy. He was therefore pleased that Japie Basson was still in their midst.³⁹ This letter is particularly interesting in the light of Jaap Marais's opinion that Basson "was promised support which was not forthcoming when the die was cast."⁴⁰

In October 1959, however, the Head Committee reversed its earlier decision and by eighteen votes to six, decided "with regret" to expel Basson from the NP.⁴¹ In a letter to the Chief Management Council of the NP in South West Africa in October 1959, Basson pointed out that in all his public actions since May earlier that year, he had been inspired by only one motive - namely to work for the best interests of the NP. His years in the NP had been the happiest in all his political career and the NP deserved unending credit for the great and historic task that it had performed in South Africa. However, he acknowledged that he felt less happy with their current leader, who had made great mistakes that had proved unfortunate for himself, for the country and for the NP. He was nevertheless prepared to give Verwoerd a reasonable chance as the leader of the party and as prime minister.⁴²

In an editorial soon after Japie Basson's expulsion, the *Cape Times* pointed out that the decision to expel Basson had not been unanimous and had taken longer than was really necessary. It

³⁹ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, file 2/8/1/2/2, P du Plessis - Japie Basson, 11 July 1959.

⁴⁰ Jaap Marais - Author, Pretoria, 3 November 1959.

⁴¹ *Cape Times*, 27 October 1959.

⁴² INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, File 2/8/1/2/2, Japie Basson - Chief Management Council of the NP, 26 October 1959.

expressed the opinion that "the dissatisfaction with Verwoerd and sympathy with Basson must be much more widespread in the constituencies." The issue of the abolition of the Natives' Representatives, which was the reason for Basson's breakaway, had not been discussed by the caucus and had been "exclusively" the idea of Verwoerd.⁴³

Basson resisted all attempts and appeals made to persuade him to resign his seat in parliament after he left the NP. In April 1960 he refused to accede to a request made by the Head Management Council of the NP in South West Africa that he should resign his seat. In a letter to Basson in April 1960, the assistant secretary, JWF Pretorius, notified him that the Council had asked him to resign without delay as he had irrevocably broken with the NP and was currently acting in opposition to that party.⁴⁴

In May 1960 the chairman of the Oranjemund branch of the NP notified Basson that at a public meeting held there and attended by 269 people, a motion had been passed unanimously asking for his resignation. The motion pointed out that although he had been elected to represent the Nationalists, he was now campaigning against NP policies. He was now apparently the chief parliamentary spokesman for the coloureds and for the UP of South West Africa. The motion also reminded Basson of his own motto, "Hou Namib Nasionaal".⁴⁵

⁴³ *Cape Times*, 28 October 1959.

⁴⁴ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, file 2/8/1/2/2, JWF Pretorius - Japie Basson, 12 April 1960.

⁴⁵ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, file 2/8/1/2/2, Chairman of the Oranjemund branch of the NP - Japie Basson, 9 May 1960.

In July 1960 Basson addressed a meeting of his constituents for the first time since his expulsion from the NP. He described Verwoerd as an "out-and-out dictator" who wanted no-one but "yes-men" around him, and said that this dictatorial attitude would be the downfall of the NP. Referring to the issue of South Africa's becoming a republic he told his constituents that this would neither make it more independent nor unite the Afrikaans and English-speaking whites. He reaffirmed his refusal to resign his seat in parliament and claimed that he still had the "confidence of his constituents".⁴⁶

According to H Kenney, one of Verwoerd's biographers, not all the Nationalist MPs had been in favour of ending the system of Native Representation at that time. Although this matter had been discussed in the Nationalist caucus, no final decision had been reached and Verwoerd did not discuss it again with the caucus before he announced his intentions in parliament concerning this matter. Kenney describes this as "a typical high-handed action by Verwoerd ... accepted with typical docility by his party."⁴⁷ Verwoerd's actions may also have caused some MPs to feel resentful against him.

It is easy to exaggerate the importance of Basson's well-publicised rebellion against Verwoerd's leadership. With hindsight it is clear that some sections of the English-language press did overemphasise the real strength of Basson's support, much of which was a spin-off from dissatisfaction with Verwoerd's style of leadership. One thing is however certain : whatever

⁴⁶ *Cape Times*, 18 July 1960.

⁴⁷ H Kenney, *Architect of apartheid* (Johannesburg, 1990), p 159.

support Basson might have thought he had within the ranks of the NP and whatever the publicity the press might have accorded him, Verwoerd's hold over the NP did not suffer as a result of the Basson issue. In the subsequent general election in 1961 there was a further swing in favour of the NP in both South Africa and South West Africa.

Murmurs of discontent among the Nationalist rank-and-file.

The occasional rumblings of dissatisfaction among ordinary Nationalists also received a certain amount of attention from the English-language press. Towards the end of 1959 there was a minor upheaval among some of the Nationalists on the Orange Free State goldfields, and this received some publicity. In a series of meetings in the Odenaalsrus and Virginia areas approximately 50 former Nationalists signed declarations rejecting Nationalist policies and affirming support for the UP. The signatories included the secretary of the NP in the Welkom / Virginia / Hennenman area, JC Grundling. One of the statements accused the government of "grossly neglecting the interests of the European worker", and described the miners as being "over-taxed".⁴⁸

Although the effects of this discontent were rather ephemeral, they did indicate a certain resentment in some working-class circles in the NP. In an editorial in the *Cape Argus*, the writer cautioned readers against entertaining hopes of a serious split in the NP, at the same time emphasizing that the government's racial policies and its Bantustan policy could be expected to affect the economy. The editor wrote :

⁴⁸ *Cape Argus*, 24 November 1959. The report erroneously referred to Hennenman as "Hanneman".

A few miners renouncing their support of the Nationalist Party does not mean a landslide, but what the movement on the Free State goldfields does mean is that persistent neglect of the economic factor is beginning to cause trouble for the party. ⁴⁹

In the ranks of the opposition press, inspecting the NP for any signs of dissension or possible rupture was understandably a popular pursuit. Thus, in *The Forum*, a comparatively liberal journal, one political columnist, called "Scrutator", wrote in the January 1960 issue that at the "humbler party levels" of the NP,

there have been signs of fractiousness - rebellion would be too strong a word - and in the upper intellectual brackets little breezes of self-criticism and candour blowing through the stale political atmosphere have told the same story. ⁵⁰

Opponents of the NP recognised that the party's hold on the support of the white working-class was not as strong as it had previously been. The journalist Scott Haigh writing in *The Forum*, described the urban and peri-urban constituencies in the Transvaal and the Cape as the "Achilles heel of Nationalism". He saw these constituents as "railwaymen trying to come out on their wizened pay packets, white-collar Afrikaners struggling on meagre salaries, artisans whose earnings buy less and less as prices rise." ⁵¹

Dissent in academic and intellectual circles.

Academics had always played a significant role both in supporting and formulating the policy of the NP, and although the vast majority of NP-supporting academics remained loyal to the

⁴⁹ *Cape Argus*, 27 November 1959.

⁵⁰ *The Forum*, January 1960, p 23.

⁵¹ *The Forum*, February 1960, p 20.

party during the early years of Verwoerd's rule, there were small but significant signs of dissent on the part of some academics at a few Afrikaans universities. It is tempting to draw similarities between these signs of dissent and the memorable period in the middle 1950s when a number of academics at the University of Pretoria vehemently opposed the attempts of the NP to remove the coloureds from the common roll. This attracted much opprobrium in NP circles. In 1959 the University of Potchefstroom was the scene of minor dissent against Verwoerd's leadership of the NP, staged by two influential academics, Professor HJ Coetzee and Professor LJ du Plessis.

Du Plessis was influential, not only because of his position as Professor of Law and Politics and Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Potchefstroom, but also because of the significant role he had played in various Afrikaner institutions. He had been one of the founders of the *Broederbond* in 1918 ; he was a director of the newspaper, *Dagbreek* ; he had been a co-author of the 1942 Nationalist "Draft Constitution for the Republic" ; he had been influential in formulating the policy of Christian National Education, and was also the first chairman of Volkskas Bank. In 1939 he became a director of the *Transvaler* when Verwoerd was editor of that newspaper, but later he resigned his directorship after clashing with Verwoerd over the question of the *Ossewabrandwag*. His influence in NP circles was thus considerable.⁵²

In 1958 Du Plessis began writing a weekly column for the

⁵² *Cape Times*, 9 March 1959 & 11 April 1959. Professor du Plessis's earlier career is also described in PJ Furlong, *Between crown and swastika* (Johannesburg, 1991), pp 105 - 108.

Cape Times in which he criticised certain aspects of National Party doctrine and practice. In his opinion, "Dr. Verwoerd's policy was the main obstacle to national progress" and the Prime Minister's Bantustan policy was not "in the interests of South Africa" but was instead in the "sectional interests" of the NP. In an interview with the *Cape Times* he also expressed his view that a coalition between sections of the UP and NP was imminent but that something would be necessary to "trigger off" such a coalition. Subsequently, Du Plessis was expelled from the NP.⁵³

Verwoerd expressed his disdain for the "professors" in a letter to Professor Abel Coetzee of Parktown, Johannesburg. Coetzee was of the opinion that the intellectual revolt stemmed from the fact that the NP was so strong in parliament and the opposition so weak. This meant that the NP had to act as its own opposition as well and had to subject its own actions to criticism. Such criticism from within the party would then be seized upon and exaggerated by the English press which was determined to sow confusion among the Nationalists. Verwoerd told Coetzee that he would rather refer to these academics as dissenters instead of intellectuals, as the dissidents were greatly outnumbered by academics who did not stir up trouble. The NP preferred to remain silent as far as possible, in the hope that these "dissenters" would be dealt with by their own friends. According to Verwoerd, the NP caucus had been more unified during the previous parliamentary session than ever before and public reaction to the revolt of the academics had been more gratifying

⁵³ *Cape Times*, 9 March 1959, 11 April 1959.

to the NP than they had expected. Verwoerd attributed this to the NP's progress in its racial policies.⁵⁴

In a letter to a NP supporter Verwoerd's private secretary wrote that Verwoerd had frequently tried to persuade Du Plessis to abandon such UP ideas as political integration with the blacks in white areas, the creation of a racial federation, and co-operation with the ANC leadership. Although Verwoerd had been unsuccessful in this respect, he was convinced that Du Plessis and his fellow thinkers represented only a few dissident voices and that virtually the entire Potchefstroom community and the Reformed Church were still solidly Nationalist.⁵⁵

Du Plessis was not alone in expressing his dissent. He was supported by Professor JH Coetzee, of the same University. Professor Coetzee was described by the *Cape Times* as "a leading Nationalist intellectual" who had also been one of the founders of the *Ossewabrandwag*. He was jailed during the Second World War for his part in the *Stormjaer* movement. He was on record as saying that "voluntary apartheid" was the answer to South Africa's problems, that the government's policies on blacks were "impractical", showed a "lack of tact" and also placed too much reliance on the "negative aspects of apartheid" such as the pass laws and "discriminatory practices". Regarding segregation, he was of the opinion that South Africa did need segregation, but that it should not be based on a "baasskap or Herrenvolk ideal" but rather on the reality of the existence of the "diversities

⁵⁴ INCH, PV 93, Dr HF Verwoerd Collection, file 1/30/1/4, A Coetzee - HF Verwoerd, 19 May 1959 ; HF Verwoerd - A Coetzee, 1 July 1959.

⁵⁵ INCH, PV 93, DR HF Verwoerd Collection, file 1/30/1/4, F Barnard - J Venter, 29 May 1959.

of race" in South Africa. Coetzee also urged much greater consultation and co-operation with the leaders of the ANC and described Chief Luthuli as a man for whom he had "the deepest respect". Not surprisingly, Coetzee stated that the reception he had received from some cabinet ministers in "personal discussions" had been "cool".⁵⁶

Du Plessis and Coetzee were also supported by a prominent historian at the University of Potchefstroom, Professor DW Krüger, who subsequently announced that he had resigned from the NP. In an interview with the *Cape Times* he expressed his support for Graaff's opinion that the coloureds should be returned to the common voters' roll. He also felt that economic integration was not a "policy" but a "fact", and that skin colour was not important but Western values certainly were.⁵⁷

In his article on the "professors' rebellion" of 1959, CJ Coetzee describes graphically how much pressure was exerted on these academics to recant or to remain silent. This pressure was exerted by other academics, the students at the university, the Council of the university, the Nationalist press, some clergymen, and various other people. The chairman of the Council of the university informed the three professors of the "damage they had caused the university", and he asked them to act as circumspectly as possible ; to abstain for a while from making public appearances ; "to attend to their work" and to "carefully conduct themselves in classes in front of students".⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Cape Times*, 4 May 1959.

⁵⁷ *Cape Times*, 11 May 1959.

⁵⁸ CJ Coetzee, "Luthuli for President of 'die professorale rebellie' of 1959 at the PUK", *Journal for Contemporary History*, vol 21, no 1, June 1996, pp 144 - 152.

Another Nationalist thinker, FA (Floors) van Jaarsveld, wrote a letter to *Die Transvaler* under the pseudonym "Nasionalis-Realis". He argued that the whites had tried for three hundred years to segregate themselves from the blacks, but this policy had not advanced one iota. The question of rights for the permanently settled urban blacks formed the kernel of South Africa's racial policies but whites continued to ignore their legitimate grievances, in the process labelling their leaders as "agitators" who were under the influence of communists. Flexibility was not an indication of weakness. In his view the coloureds should also be granted the concession of representation by their own people in parliament and this would win half a million more friends for the whites. ⁵⁹

Professor CJ Uys, Professor of History at the University of the Orange Free State, attracted some attention when he told his audience at a "Wonder of Afrikaans" festival in Molteno that sooner or later the control of South Africa had to pass into the hands of the black majority. He was of the opinion that the attitude of the whites towards the Africans had to undergo a drastic and immediate change. As the result of the actions of "a hostile press and short-sighted politicians", the blacks were under the impression that "Afrikaans-speaking South Africans were their particular arch enemies". This idea had been emphasised by Chief Luthuli. ⁶⁰

The dissatisfaction of the academics at the University of Pretoria about the removal of the coloureds from the common

⁵⁹ *Die Transvaler*, 9 April 1960; UCT, BC 587, Leo Marquard Collection, C 156.3, Note from FA van Jaarsveld to Leo Marquard, 29 April 1960.

⁶⁰ *Cape Argus*, 4 May 1959.

roll most probably had very little ultimate effect on the NP other than to embarrass it temporarily. Likewise the "revolt" of academics such as Du Plessis, Krüger and Coetzee had little impact on the NP or the government. The great mass of Nationalist-supporting academics remained loyal to the party whatever their private reservations or objections. It should be remembered that there was a distinct gulf between the "intellectuals" in the NP who deliberated about policy partly on intellectual grounds, and the rank-and-file supporter of the party who based his support for the NP largely on emotional and personal issues. Nevertheless these events in academic circles would have had some effect, caused as they were by men who had been prominent in Nationalist politics or in the field of Afrikaner interests for a long time.

No mention of the dissent in the NP in the early 1960s would be complete without a passing reference to the Hermanus Conference held in April 1961 by what the *Sunday Times* described as a group of "Nationalist intellectuals and 'other thinkers' ". This conference resulted in the formation of an "action committee" of about a dozen members which in the words of the newspaper had the intention of forming "pressure groups" in order "to bring pressure to bear on the government to modify its race-policies immediately". Some influential figures in intellectual circles served on the committee. These included Professor NJ Olivier, who was vice-chairman of the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) and who was also an academic at Stellenbosch ; Professor SP Celliers, who was from Stellenbosch University and an executive member of SABRA, and the Afrikaans

writer, WA de Klerk. In the report in the *Sunday Times* an unnamed Nationalist MP was quoted as saying that any Nationalist who joined such pressure groups and who persisted in criticising the government would face expulsion from the party. ⁶¹

A subsequent report in the *Cape Times* commented on a "scathing attack" made in parliament by BJ Vorster, then Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Science, on the "intellectuals" who were involved in the Hermanus conference. The newspaper saw this speech "as a warning to all Afrikaner intellectuals who claimed to be Nationalists and yet who ventured to criticize the Government and apartheid". ⁶²

The controversial position adopted by Die Burger.

Any students of South African politics at this time, who were speculating on the existence and extent of dissension within the ranks of the NP, would have viewed the controversy surrounding "Dawie", i.e. Piet Cillie, the editor of *Die Burger*, with great interest because it was another indication of the difference between the supposed hard-liners of the Transvaal and the more conciliatory and liberal Cape Nationalists.

In November 1960 there was a significant and embarrassing clash between Cillie and the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development. *Die Burger* speculated on the "possibility" of the coloureds' being represented by "their own people" in parliament. De Wet Nel denied that he had ever referred to "the possibility of direct representation for Coloureds and Indians in

⁶¹ *Sunday Times*, 30 April 1961.

⁶² *Cape Times*, 24 July 1961.

Parliament", whereupon *Die Burger* then published a photocopy of his statement on the matter that had appeared in *Die Transvaler*. The Cape leader of the NP, Dönges, apparently then visited Cillie to discuss the matter and allegedly told him that the newspaper should be more "careful". To this, Cillie replied that it was a "newspaper's duty to allow free discussion among its readers."⁶³

Die Burger criticised De Wet Nel in its editorials of 28 and 30 November 1960 in terms that effectively accused him of tampering with the truth. The newspaper claimed that it had not been the intention to "affront" De Wet Nel but that it was clear from an article published in *Die Transvaler*, that Nel's opinion was that as the coloureds increased in number and maturity, they should gradually be given more representation on a basis which would hold no danger for the whites. The editorial then went on to say that Nel had no reason to be ashamed of expressing such sentiments as they were typical of the trend of thought in Nationalist circles.⁶⁴

The editorial of 30 November 1960 was much harsher in its criticism. It began with the statement that two days earlier it had regretfully published a sharp statement by De Wet Nel and that it now felt compelled to publish an even more hostile letter from Nel including several inaccuracies. This letter, it said, was bitterly damaging to the Nationalist unity which Nel should, after all, be as eager to defend as they were. The editorial also accused Nel of expressing his disagreements with *Die Burger* in a way which would delight only his political opponents. It reaffirmed the newspaper's belief that Nel had indeed expressed

⁶³ *Die Burger*, 28 November 1960.

⁶⁴ *Die Burger*, 28 & 30 November 1960 ; *Die Transvaler*, 20 September 1960.

the sentiments that he was now denying and that *Die Burger* had been accurate in its reporting. It suggested that Nel should, for once, read the newspaper for himself and not rely on an unreliable clipping service. It reiterated that he had no reason to be ashamed of his utterances and deprecated any attempt to have a witch-hunt in NP circles as this would have very unfortunate repercussions on the political unity of the Afrikaners.⁶⁵

It would have been less noteworthy if an opposition newspaper had launched this kind of attack on a cabinet minister. The fact that it had been made by a newspaper that had been a staunch supporter of and propagandist for the NP ever since its establishment, gives an indication of the feelings aroused in some NP circles by this incident.

The opposition press naturally paid much attention to these tempestuous events reported in *Die Burger*. The *Sunday Times* in its edition of 9 April 1961, devoted a great deal of attention to Cillie's position. It also presented an article written by him in *Die Burger* of the day before, in which he had criticised certain aspects of the NP leadership. Cillie stated that in the previous few years a certain tendency to follow public opinion rather than to mould it had crept into Nationalist circles. He posed the question whether the NP was the political schoolmaster of the people and whether its leaders spoke primarily to be applauded or to keep the public fully informed. He also commented that there was a great deal of talent on the fringes of the NP that was not being utilised effectively. The *Sunday Times* reported that in 1960 "extremist Nationalists" had attempted to

⁶⁵ *Die Burger*, 28 November 1960 & 30 November 1960.

force Cillie out of his editorial position. This occurred when *Die Burger* had supported a "New Deal" policy for the coloureds. On that occasion Cillie had resigned but his board of directors had refused to accept his resignation and had instead stated their confidence in him. ⁶⁶

Another example of Cillie's demonstration of independence was a discussion that he had with Dr Dönges when the government was intending to lower the voting age to eighteen years so that its republican campaign could reap the benefits of the high percentage of Afrikaans-speakers in that age group. Cillie was not in favour of this and when Dönges said that it was necessary for the attainment of a republic, he retorted that they would then simply have to wait another three years for their republic. ⁶⁷

In June 1961, PW Botha, then Deputy Minister of the Interior, wrote a letter to Cillie, complaining that *Die Burger* had not given adequate coverage to one of his recent important speeches. Cillie replied in conciliatory terms. Botha actually threatened that he would refuse to give copies of his speeches to *Die Burger* in future. Cillie asked him to reconsider this threat and told Botha that he was always at Botha's disposal for a personal conversation about such problems. He reminded Botha that honest reporting was the primary function of *Die Burger*. ⁶⁸

During the 1961 parliamentary session, the board of directors of Nasionale Pers received a delegation from the

⁶⁶ *Sunday Times*, 9 April 1961; *Die Burger*, 8 April 1961.

⁶⁷ WD Beukes (ed.), *Oor grense heen : op pad na 'n nasionale pers 1948 - 1990* (Cape Town, 1992), p 15.

⁶⁸ CACT, Dr Dönges Collection, A 1646, vol 322, Piet Cillie - PW Botha, 12 June 1961.

Federal Council of the NP, which complained about certain attitudes adopted by *Die Burger*. One of the members of the NP delegation, Dr Dönges, requested that there be closer contact between the NP and the newspaper in order to avoid unpleasant estrangements. Ben Schoeman added his voice by insisting that the newspaper should stay in line with Nationalist policy.⁶⁹

In any discussion of the role played by NP-supporting newspapers during this period, it should be remembered that the Afrikaans-language press was not as strong or influential as its English-language counterpart. William Vatcher points out that the circulation of the nineteen daily newspapers which he calls "pro-Afrikaner", was 165 600 while that of the English newspapers was 731 000.⁷⁰

Feelings of disquiet in Nationalist circles about the Immorality Act.

The English-language press at this time also gave some prominence to feelings of disquiet on the implementation of the Immorality Act (Act 21 of 1950). In a report in August 1961 the *Cape Times* claimed that in the space of one week *Die Burger* had published 24 letters about the Immorality Act. Widely contradictory views were expressed ranging from those of the reader who wrote that all the law had achieved was "dreadful heartbreak and the destruction of homes" to those of another, who stated that in his opinion the punishment for contravention of the act was too light. In his view, the guilty ones should be branded

⁶⁹ W Beukes (ed.), *Oor grense heen*, p 467.

⁷⁰ WD Vatcher Jr., *White Laager : the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism* (New York, 1965), p 98.

or have an iron ring put through their noses as such people were "nothing but barbarians and should be treated as such." ⁷¹

During the following month there was a discussion on the effects of the Immorality Act at the NP's Cape Congress. A report in the *Sunday Times* prior to the congress predicted that some delegates might ask that the police should intervene only when there were "flagrant violations of the Act". No resolution was adopted and after a debate lasting an hour, the matter was referred to the Head Committee which would "raise the matter" with the government. One demand put forward was that hearings under this act should be held in private. The reporter for the *Sunday Times* stated that the general view of delegates who criticised the Immorality Act was that the act had failed to serve as a deterrent. It was causing misery to innocent people such as wives, children and other relatives. ⁷²

The utterances and conduct of Albert Hertzog.

In its attempt to win votes from UP supporters, the NP was probably hampered by some of the actions and utterances of the right wing members of the party. Prominent among these was Dr Albert Hertzog, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, who was later forced out of the NP. A small selection of Hertzog's speeches will illustrate that he may well have alienated UP supporters who might otherwise have switched allegiance to the NP.

In a speech at the Strand in December 1958, Hertzog was reported as saying

⁷¹ *Cape Times*, 19 August 1961.

⁷² *Sunday Times*, 20 August 1961 & 3 September 1961.

that the South African War had never ended. It continues today with its form changed. It was no longer the British Tommy v. the Boer ; the soldier today was the Black man - the Native, the Coloured man and the 'koelie'. The weapons were ideas ; half-truths, which included lies like 'You have been stealing their lands', 'You cause the greater number of them to face hunger and starvation', 'Apartheid is a form of slavery', and so on. ⁷³

Hertzog was also a fierce opponent of what he saw as English "liberal" institutions such as the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand. In a speech in parliament in May 1960, he criticised the University of the Witwatersrand for employing Robert Sobukwe. He said, "For the university authorities to keep a lecturer there, a man who was educated at the University of the Witwatersrand, a man whose salary was paid by them, whilst at the same time he was the organizer and leader of the Pan Africanists, shows the greatest irresponsibility or else ill-will towards the White man in this country." ⁷⁴

Hertzog had an extreme dislike of the South African mining capitalists, and he criticised them severely in speeches delivered in July 1960. Opening the 21 st Congress of the Nasionale Jeugbond he said that the mining capitalists, using an "English Press which they had systematically built up since 1896" were trying to "destroy the Nationalist Government and the White man". In his view there was a choice between breaking this mining press or witnessing the destruction of the white man. He accused the press of being largely responsible for what had happened at Sharpeville, Nyanga and Langa. ⁷⁵

⁷³ *Cape Times*, 31 December 1958.

⁷⁴ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 5 May 1960, col 6723.

⁷⁵ *Cape Times*, 11 July 1960 ; See also *Cape Times*, 18 July 1960.

Attempts by the National Party to improve its overseas image.

As the Nationalist government was desirous of improving its image overseas it tended to welcome influential pro-South African overseas visitors such as Field-Marshal Montgomery. In December 1959, after visiting South Africa and meeting Verwoerd, Montgomery described him as an "obviously sincere, quiet-spoken and kindly man", who was a "leader, a man of decision and action." Montgomery said that he did not think that racial barriers in South Africa "could be suddenly swept away because of the social differences and varying standards of civilization in the country." He described Verwoerd's plans as being a "sincere attempt to work out a solution that would be acceptable to the White people and which would not be unjust to the Native population."⁷⁶ With the 1961 general election looming, this kind of publicity could conceivably have increased the credibility of the NP in the eyes of the white electorate, especially among those English-speaking voters who might have been concerned with the negative international image of South Africa.

The effect on the National Party of memories of the Second World War.

When BJ Vorster became Minister of Justice in 1961 the *Sunday Times* published an article on his internment during the war, and how he had been rejected by the NP as its candidate for the Brakpan constituency in 1948 because he was considered too extreme. Until 1952 Vorster had regarded the NP as too

⁷⁶ *Cape Times*, 21 December 1959

moderate. He was also accused of referring to Queen Elizabeth as "the Medem in England". The newspaper quoted Vorster as having said in 1942,

We stand for Christian Nationalism, which is an ally of National Socialism. You can call the anti-democratic system dictatorship if you like. In Italy it is called Fascism, in Germany National Socialism, and in South Africa Christian Nationalism. ⁷⁷

In an interview with his biographer, John D'Oliviera, Vorster claimed that he was originally nominated as the Afrikaner Party candidate for Brakpan but Malan had refused to accept this because Vorster was an officer in the *Ossewabrandwag*. ⁷⁸

Many voters were aware that Verwoerd had opposed the immigration of Jewish refugees to South Africa when he was still a professor at the University of Stellenbosch. He had also opposed the royal visit in 1947, not even mentioning it in his newspaper. Most importantly a judge in the Transvaal Supreme Court, who was passing judgement in a case of defamation brought against *The Star* by *Die Transvaler*, said that Verwoerd had supported nazi propaganda, and had made his paper a "tool of the nazis in South Africa". ⁷⁹

Thus, during this period the NP was hindered in its attempts to attract support from some sections of the electorate by the fact that some of its influential members were seen or remembered as having taken extremist positions during the Second World War - an event which was still fresh in many people's memories.

⁷⁷ *Sunday Times*, 6 August 1961.

⁷⁸ J d'Oliviera, *Vorster : The man* (Johannesburg, 1977), pp 109 - 110.

⁷⁹ H Tyson, *Editors under fire* (Sandton, 1993), p 391.

The National Party attempts to attract English support.

A conspicuous aspect of the NP's activities during the period 1958 - 1961 was an attempt to broaden its base of support by attracting more votes from the English-speaking electorate. This was possibly related to a feeling within the party that as South Africa would soon be a republic, English-speaking whites would become more aware of their South African identity and would in some way be more amenable to the ideals and goals of the Nationalists. Japie Basson, shortly before his expulsion from the NP, told parliament : "For historical reasons, with which we are well acquainted, the National Party to-day consists practically only of Afrikaans-speaking people."⁸⁰ This was to change slightly in the years to come. WA Kleynhans estimates that only about ten percent of the English-speaking voters in Natal voted for the republic in the referendum of 1960. This shows the magnitude of the task which the NP had set for itself.⁸¹

After the announcement of the results of the referendum, Verwoerd expressed the hope that if English-speaking whites found it difficult to join the NP they would establish their own conservative political party which could then co-operate with the Nationalists on racial matters. *Die Burger* saw Verwoerd's speech as an intimation that English-speakers might soon be included in the cabinet. This would attract the English vote in the next general election.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 19 May 1959, col 6175.

⁸¹ WA Kleynhans in A de Crespigny & R Schrire (eds.), *The government and politics of South Africa* (Cape Town, 1978), p 110.

⁸² *Die Burger*, 8 October 1960.

A letter that Verwoerd wrote to a SJ Suchet of Vereeniging in September 1959 also provides insight into Verwoerd's thinking on the matter. He said that it was a matter of great regret that English-speakers had not been included in the cabinets of Malan and Strijdom. He claimed that those English-speakers who joined the NP often found themselves "ostracised, intimidated or harmed in their business life". This had been the case with Senators Struben, Miles-Cadman and Mc Cord, who had been raised to the former Senate but who had then been regarded as outcasts by their own people. Likewise, when Alf Trollip, "a front-bencher United Party man who remained United Party, was appointed Administrator of Natal, he was often treated badly and even called a tool of the Government".⁸³

In 1961 there was indeed speculation that the NP was devoting serious thought to the idea of appointing one or two English speakers to the cabinet. The *Cape Times* mentioned press that there was a possibility that Verwoerd would appoint Sir Francis de Guingand to the cabinet. Sir Francis had been chief of staff to Field-Marshal Montgomery during the Second World War and had later settled in South Africa where he was head of the South African Foundation. But nothing came of this suggestion.⁸⁴

One of the logical English-speaking contenders for a cabinet post during this time was Frank Waring, whom Verwoerd approached during the middle of 1961. In a letter to Verwoerd, Waring summed up his position. Since his break with the UP, he and his wife had taken "a pro South African independent line",

⁸³ INCH, PV 93, Dr HF Verwoerd Collection, file 1/30/1/13, HF Verwoerd - SJ Suchet, 28 September 1959.

⁸⁴ *Cape Times*, 30 March 1961.

which had closely followed the "broad principles" of the NP concerning both "Native policy" and "constitutional independence culminating in the Republic". Nevertheless, Waring expressed the opinion that it would defeat the "object of bringing English speaking support" to the Nationalists, were he and his wife to join the NP. "As English speaking independents what we say or do cannot be readily discredited by the opposition press but as members of your party it would be a different matter ... Differences, however slight, would be exaggerated and be used to frighten English support away, and both of us would be on the defensive." Waring was however of the opinion that there was a role to be played by "selected Independent candidates" in seats which the Nationalists could not win as they could attract "a substantial floating vote plus Nationalist support", and thus reduce the voting strength of the Opposition as well as give the English vote "a new directive".⁸⁵

In his subsequent letter to Waring, Verwoerd expressed disappointment that Waring was reluctant to play a more public and forceful role in the NP. In his view, Waring would fill a much more important role "as a full-fledged leading member of the government party, who in your person would symbolise both the fact that the government and its party do not wish to be sectional, as it may seem to be against its wish, and the fact that English-speaking (whites) also subscribe fully to the policy of separate development." Verwoerd told Waring that he was putting these ideas to him as he would not like to see him entering "a

⁸⁵ UNISA, Joyce and Frank Waring Collection, file 20.2.4, Correspondence of a political nature to and from J. and F. Waring, F Waring - HF Verwoerd, 5 July 1961.

futile dead-end lane in political life", and that he was proposing such ideas only as "a friend interested in your future".⁸⁶

The general position of the National Party in 1961.

The NP was able to approach the 1961 general election very confidently. It was a remarkably cohesive party at the time although there were undoubtedly feelings of disquiet in certain circles of the party - a disquiet, which to a large extent, was magnified by sections of the opposition press. It was a period in which Verwoerd was able to consolidate his position as leader of the party, partly by successfully bringing the Nationalists' republican ideals to fruition, and partly by exerting his very forceful personality among his fellow Nationalists. Verwoerd's close encounter with death also contributed to the growth of his prestige. Many of the electorate felt that he was a man with a mission and that his task had not yet been accomplished. In short, an element of hero worship crept into their regard for Verwoerd. Most of the factors influencing the South African political scene were also to the advantage of the Nationalists - these would include the delimitation of certain constituencies ; the lowering of the age requirement pertaining to the franchise ; the preponderance of Afrikaans voters among the younger electorate ; the fact that the Afrikaans newspapers played a great role in propagating the ideals of Nationalism, as well as the way in which the NP was able to identify itself so successfully with the

⁸⁶ UNISA, Joyce and Frank Waring Collection, file 20.2.4, Correspondence of a political nature to and from J. and F. Waring, HF Verwoerd - F Waring, 8 July 1961. Soon after the 1961 general election both Frank Waring and AE Trollip were appointed to the cabinet.

current aims and beliefs of the Afrikaans-speaking whites. The firm way in which the NP dealt with those academics, journalists and rank-and-file Nationalists who publicly deviated from Nationalist doctrine also had some impact on the consolidation of the position of the party. During this period the NP began to feel more secure of its position in white politics in the light of the results of the 1958 general election. This feeling of greater security manifested itself in the Nationalists' attempts to attract greater support from English-speaking voters. The attempts made in certain overseas quarters to discredit South Africa, as well as the domestic disturbances in South Africa in 1960, probably also played a part in the party's attempts to persuade the electorate that South Africa was a beleaguered nation which would be defended most easily only if many whites were to move in a more conservative direction and to fall in under the Nationalist banner.

Over and above all this, the personality of Verwoerd loomed large. Professor Nic Olivier gives a very lucid description of the way that Verwoerd managed to assert his dominance over the NP. He wrote :

Verwoerd, because of his intellect and ideological commitment to a particular approach and vision ; his ability to provide an intellectually acceptable and logical motivation for apartheid, the consistency he displayed in implementing the principles of that policy ; his ability to render his opponents' arguments worthless or illogical ; his ability to utilise the political forces at his disposal both within and outside the NP ; and, some would say, his ability to exploit the innate prejudices of the white electorate, was able to squash effectively the opposition which existed or arose within the NP against his policies. The fact that he provided the NP with what appeared to be a logical and coherent racial policy ; that he stood up to Harold Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech ; that he stood firmly against the vendetta waged against South Africa by and in the

United Nations ; that he was the man who transformed South Africa into a republic (and won the referendum on this issue) - all these tended to promote him beyond reproach.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ N Olivier in R Schrire (ed.), *Leadership in the apartheid state* (Cape Town, 1994), p 94.

CHAPTER FOUR.

THE UNITED PARTY IN THE PERIOD

LEADING UP TO THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION.

Although the results of the 1958 general election were a grievous disappointment to the UP, it could derive some consolation from the fact that there were now very few marginal constituencies left and that the political situation in this respect had become relatively stable. Unless a new delimitation commission were to make very far reaching changes and barring some very extraordinary shift of population or some great calamity for the UP, there would be relatively few UP seats at risk in the forthcoming general election. The only UP seats won with majorities of fewer than 2 000 votes were Benoni (1 247), Pretoria-Sunnyside (614), Queenstown (13), and Drakensberg (1 530). This shows that only a small number of UP seats were then at risk of being lost to the Nationalists. This was of some slight comfort to the UP. ¹

Several important factors influenced the UP between the general elections of 1958 and 1961. One of these was the rancorous soul searching within its ranks after its bitter defeat in the 1958 election. Another important factor was the campaign launched by several of the conservatives to regain some of the party's lost support by trying to dispose of their liberal colleagues. There was also the spectacular split within the party at the congress in Bloemfontein in August 1959. The following year saw the UP's inability to prevent Verwoerd from winning the

¹ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 365.

republican referendum. Some observers also maintained that in parliament the UP was drifting uncomfortably nearer to the Nationalists. Later, in the months preceding the 1961 general election, the UP also entered into a pact with the National Union Party in an attempt to attract what was hoped would be a significant number of dissatisfied Nationalists. This pact did not bring the UP any noteworthy rewards and in the opinion of many, caused it to move even closer to the right.

The period leading up to the 1959 congress and the conservative campaign against the liberals.

Some attention was paid in the chapter on the 1958 general election to the breakaway from the UP of the Bailey Bekker group and the departure in later years of Bernard Friedman, the MP for Hillbrow.² In 1959 the third and arguably the most spectacular breakaway from the UP occurred. After years of antagonism between the right and left wings of the UP, most members of the liberal faction broke away at the Bloemfontein Congress. These members were to establish the Progressive Party (PP) later that year. Although the immediate cause of the breakaway was Mitchell's motion against the granting of more land for the prospective black homelands, there had been a great deal of tension for some time between the progressive and the conservative factions in the party. There seems to be a certain amount of evidence that there was a concerted campaign on the part of some members of the right wing to drive the liberals out of the

² See Chapter 1, pp 24 - 30.

party. Ray Swart, for example, cites the case of the MP for Turffontein, Badenhorst Durrant, who told him after the split, "I travelled all over the country, covering thousands of miles, visiting party members in the platteland and organising to get rid of you liberals at the congress - and see how well it worked!"³ Mitchell opposed the government's plans to obtain more lands for the black homelands on two main grounds. He was against the idea of expropriating land in the white areas of South Africa for the purpose of establishing autonomous black states independent of South Africa. He was also of the opinion that such land would not be properly looked after and would be ravaged by over-grazing and soil erosion. Although the progressives were opposed to Verwoerd's policy of independent homelands, they were not against the purchase of more land for the reserves.

According to Joanna Strangwayes-Booth, Graaff had expected that Suzman, Wilson and Cope would resign from the UP after the Bloemfontein Congress and he had told the chairman of the South African Associated Newspapers "not to be upset if he heard that a few MPs had left the Party."⁴

Graaff states that he was unaware of any concerted effort on the part of the conservatives in the UP to get rid of the progressives. He writes, "If this was so I was certainly not aware of it and although I did not like the ideas of some of the so-called Progressive members I did everything in my power to prevent the party from splitting."⁵ It is possible that Graaff

³ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, pp 51 - 52, 66.

⁴ J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, 146 - 147.

⁵ Sir de Villiers Graaff - Author, Cape Town, 19 December 1995.

would not have known about the campaign. However, as the leader of the UP he must have been well aware of how frustrated the progressives were feeling and how strong the conservative sentiment in the party had become. Even had there not been a campaign to expel the progressives, it was surely on the cards that at a congress dominated by conservatives, a few progressive MPs would decide to leave the UP.

Even as early as July 1959 there had been comment in the press about the likelihood of a split or a purge at the UP congress in August. The *Eastern Province Herald* commented that a plan to drive the "progressive wing" out of the UP was being openly discussed by conservative members of the UP on the Witwatersrand and an unknown conservative was quoted as saying, "To get rid of these liberals would win us many votes". The conservatives hoped to exploit conservative sentiment on the *platteland* where many people were concerned about the implications of Verwoerd's Bantustan policies. According to the newspaper the conservatives were gathering around Douglas Mitchell and his "lieutenant", Vause Raw. ⁶

An article in *The Forum* of September 1959 - soon after the breakaway - provides further illustration of the idea that there had been a plan among some conservative members to cause some of the liberals to resign or be ejected from the UP at the 1959 congress. According to *The Forum*, "If a Progressive conspiracy did not exist, a right-wing conspiracy certainly did, and there is plenty of evidence to show it." ⁷ The article referred

⁶ *Eastern Province Herald*, 31 July 1959 ; See also *Cape Times*, 31 July 1959.

⁷ *The Forum*, September 1959, p 5.

to certain resolutions that were "submitted to Congress and approved" and that were aimed at "putting the liberals in their place". These included a resolution that any public statement in conflict with the colour policy of the UP as laid down in 1954 should "be dealt with as an act hostile to the interests of the party". Another resolution called for stronger discipline to ensure that nobody should use the UP to propagate personal views that conflicted with the "basic direction outlined in 1954". It was also resolved that, "In view of the liberalistic principles attributed to our party, we ask Congress to reaffirm our policy on matters of race relations". One significant resolution also called on the UP to be conservative in its approach to South African problems and to avoid at all times "the liberal view so prevalent in the party's debates in Parliament." ⁸

The leader of the UP in Natal, Douglas Mitchell, was, however, adamant that there was no conspiracy to drive the liberals out of the UP. He spoke disparagingly of them in an interview with his biographer, Terry Wilks, claiming that the liberals had seen "expulsion facing them", but had not wanted to be expelled in disgrace, preferring to go out as "martyrs". Mitchell thought that it was in the UP's interests that a more left-wing political party should be formed as "all the curious people with their curious political ideas" could be put into this "political rubbish bin" to the left of the UP. ⁹ Mitchell's views are open to criticism as he seems to ignore the fact that the UP and not the NP would be the loser in any long-lasting contest

⁸ *The Forum*, September 1959, p 5.

⁹ T Wilks, *Douglas Mitchell* (Durban, 1980), pp 120 - 121.

between the UP and the PP. Furthermore, it can be asked, on what grounds were these members going to be expelled from the UP ? Furthermore, the UP congress would not have had the power to expel the "liberals".

Mitchell was also adamant that the liberals had planned their departure at a meeting held on Steytler's farm prior to the congress. He said that on the day before that fateful congress began, "most of the leading members of the progressive wing" had gathered at Jan Steytler's farm in order to consult one another on their breakaway from the UP. Mitchell said that he heard about the meeting afterwards "chapter and verse", and that these progressives had forgotten that they had "spies in their own camp". According to Barnard and Marais in their history of the UP, it would appear that besides Steytler there were only two other MPs at his farm, namely De Beer and Colin Eglin.¹⁰

Colin Eglin denies strongly that there was any such meeting at Steytler's farm. His version of the incident is that he and Zach de Beer met Steytler on his farm and then travelled with him to Bloemfontein. According to Eglin, while they were at his farm, a certain MEC, Mannie Goldberg and his wife, neither of whom were "rebels", also called in on their way from Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein.¹¹ The lack of any really conclusive evidence from Mitchell leads one to place more faith in the testimony supplied by Eglin.

Mrs Jacqueline Beck, then an UP MPC and subsequently the PP candidate for Simonstown, remembers that before the

¹⁰ SL Barnard & AH Marais, *Die Verenigde Party - Die groot eksperiment*, p 114.

¹¹ Colin Eglin - Author, Cape Town, 7 November 1995.

congress she was aware of a campaign to get rid of the liberals. On one occasion while she was working in the UP offices in Cape Town, Jack Basson, the MP for Green Point, said that he was going to "get" Jan Steytler at the forthcoming congress. She recollects that when she asked Graaff whether there was any truth in the rumour that the conservatives, with Douglas Mitchell at their head, were going to try to drive the liberals out of the party, he replied that there was no such campaign and that Douglas Mitchell was the "truest friend" one could possibly hope to have. ¹²

Catherine Taylor, then an MPC and later the MP for Wynberg, writes in her memoirs that "the Progressive wing in the UP obtained information that Raw had gone so far as to issue instructions to Party organisers to arrange to send delegates to Congress who would drive the liberals out of the Party." Interestingly, Taylor describes Vause Raw as being the "key figure" among the right wing opponents of the liberals, and she states that Raw was obviously "looking for blood" at the congress. ¹³

It should be added that it is not surprising that there was so much anti-liberal feeling at the UP congress when one considers the preponderance of delegates from the rural areas where the spirit of conservatism would be particularly strong. Helen Suzman comments on the difficulty of getting policy changed in a more liberal direction at the congress. This was because of the "absurdly large representation of the conservative

¹² Personal interview with Jacqueline Beck, Kalk Bay, 15 March 1996.

¹³ C Taylor, *If courage goes* (Johannesburg, 1976), pp 83 - 84.

rural constituencies at Congress, compared to the unrepresentative number from the urban areas where the United Party had much more solid support." ¹⁴

In 1959 the divisional committees of the UP in all constituencies were each entitled to elect four delegates to the Union congress. In addition senators, members of parliament, members of the provincial council, and chairmen of provincial general councils, women's councils and youth councils were *ex officio* members of the congress. The congress was attended by about 700 delegates. ¹⁵

The attitude between the conservatives and the liberals at the 1959 congress is possibly best exemplified by what Frans Cronje told Helen Suzman when she complained about the poor reception accorded to her fellow liberals. Cronje said, "Don't be such a starry-eyed idealist, Helen. You can only go as far as your electorate will let you and they won't let you go very far at all in this country." According to Helen Suzman's biographer, Joanna Strangwayes-Booth, the progressives were encouraged to leave the UP because of the sustained barracking and abuse at the congress while they were presenting their views. Certain speeches, such as that of Miles Warren, also played a role. Warren apparently accused Helen Suzman in a "tone of hysteria" of betraying the UP. Graaff himself was of the opinion that some of the delegates had overstepped "the normal limits of debate." ¹⁶

Miles Warren's own version was that he became so

¹⁴ Helen Suzman - Author, Johannesburg, 9 January 1996.

¹⁵ UNISA, Sir de Villiers Graaff Papers, File 149.3, United Party Central Congress, September 1959.

¹⁶ J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, pp 150 - 151.

incensed at a speech by John Cope, praising the great merits and unanimity of the UP, that he went to the microphone and "told the six hundred delegates that they had been told a lie ; the united party [sic] was harbouring two groups, those loyal to the party principles and those who flouted the party line at every opportunity, were caucusing on their own and had taken over much of the United party organisation." Miles Warren writes that "this caused pandemonium among the liberals, while the rest of the congress roared their approval." ¹⁷ Graaff admitted in a letter to Harry Lawrence that at the congress there were "some quite stupid and provocative statements from people who should have known better". ¹⁸

The events at the stormy UP congress in Bloemfontein in August 1959 have been well described by many authors. Joanna Strangwayes-Booth gives a very succinct account of the entire congress and the breakaway of the progressives. There were several important stages concerning the congress. At the meeting of the Head Committee before the congress, Mitchell announced his intention to use the occasion of the congress to raise the issue of further purchases of land for the Bantustans. Graaff asked him not to raise the matter at the congress but Mitchell was adamant that he would do so. In the words of Strangwayes-Booth : "Reluctantly, Graaff, reiterating his disapproval, suggested that it be referred to Congress for an expression of opinion." Later at the congress Graaff put forward his suggestions that he had

¹⁷ UNISA, Miles Warren Collection, File 4.3, Liberal break away from UP.

¹⁸ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.64, Sir de Villiers Graaff - Harry Lawrence, 9 September 1959.

divided into five parts. He proposed that the "Natives in all four provinces" would be given representation in the House of Assembly, that this representation would be on the basis of a separate roll, that this would be "primarily based on the 'responsible class' of Native", that the representatives in the House of Assembly and the Senate would be whites, and that there would be not more than eight Natives' Representatives. Another resolution from the Head Committee praised Graaff for accepting the idea that "future political relations between Europeans and Africans would be on the basis of group representation of Africans on the separate roll."

During the discussion of these resolutions, the debate became very heated, provocative and personal. One example of the style of debate was seen when Steytler took the chair and was abused with cries of "We will not have that ultra liberal." Later, Miles Warren made his memorable speech attacking the liberals within the party. When one of the future Progressives, Ronald Butcher, asked Graaff why he did not put an end to this unpleasant debate and the airing of untrue allegations, Graaff replied, "... when I have two dogs and they don't get on with each other, I just let them fight it out and then they are good friends after that." Graaff subsequently appealed to the delegates to observe the decencies of debate. During the more peaceful evening session that followed Graaff's appeal, Leo Boyd moved an amendment that the Native Representatives should be of any colour. This amendment, however, received the support of only thirty delegates. In Graaff's opinion the public were not ready for such "revolutionary suggestions".

The congress knew that Mitchell's resolutions on the

issue of land for the Bantustans were still to be discussed. Strangways-Booth writes that during the congress Helen Suzman and "several other progressives separately made up their minds to leave the party if Mitchell's land resolutions were passed." On the last day of the Congress, Mitchell moved that the Congress "expresses its entire opposition to the acquisition and alienation of more land for the Government's avowed purpose of giving it to Bantu tribes which under the Bantustan policy of the Government are to form independent sovereign Bantu states ...". Mitchell also called upon the Prime Minister to define the boundaries of the new independent Bantustans. Graaff informed the Congress that he would not support this resolution but he would not regard it as a challenge to the Party leadership should it be passed. He mentioned his belief that Verwoerd would not stay in power long enough for the Bantustan policy to be made irreversible. In the words of Strangways-Booth,

Very few political leaders have ever made a public statement before a vote that if it went against them, they would not take it as a vote of no confidence in their leadership. It seems that it was only the regard the conservative rank-and-file had for Graaff, and the fact that Mitchell, Steenkamp and Raw can have had no desire to lose so compliant a figurehead, which enabled him to retain the leadership at all at this crucial juncture.¹⁹

Mitchell's resolution was the prelude to a momentous and heated debate which saw many delegates again indulging in personalities and abusive comments and recriminations. Mitchell's motion was, however, carried by an overwhelming majority. It was after this debate that most of the progressives held a meeting in the Maitland Hotel in Bloemfontein, and decided to leave the UP.

¹⁹ J Strangways-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, pp 147 - 157.

Reasons for the breakaway of the liberals in the United Party.

It is extremely difficult to determine exactly what caused so many of the liberals in the UP to decide to leave that party after the Bloemfontein congress. Nevertheless, it would seem that "the spark that lit the tinderbox" was the motion proposed by Mitchell that was so enthusiastically accepted by most of the delegates. The constant and unpleasant barracking of the liberals at the congress together with the general animosity displayed towards them doubtless also contributed to their decision to secede. The congress was, in short, the outcome of years of bitterness and dislike felt by the conservatives and the liberals towards each other. There was also a strong conservative campaign to attract the votes of conservative voters by driving the liberals out of the party. Personal antipathies also played a very significant role.

Perhaps, from a tactical perspective the liberals miscalculated when they left the UP. After all, in leaving, they were merely doing exactly what Mitchell and the conservatives wanted them to do. It would have been very difficult for the conservatives to succeed in formally expelling the liberals from the UP and there would have been little to prevent the liberals from using their positions in the UP to propagate their policies, much to the discomfiture of the conservative wing. Going out into the political wilderness as many of them were soon to do, would deprive them of this opportunity. Possibly, however, the liberals saw this as a contest between morality and expediency.

The establishment of the Progressive Party.

In November 1959, very soon after the celebrated Bloemfontein Congress, the Progressive Party was formally established at its inaugural congress in Johannesburg. According to the *Cape Times*, the aim of the PP as enunciated at this congress was "a complete reform of the South African constitution" which would "contain adequate safeguards for each of our racial communities and will accord to each a share in the government." The newspaper described the "main principle" of the new party as being based on the assumption that "any attempt by one of our racial communities indefinitely to dominate others is doomed to failure."²⁰

The impact of the breakaway on the United Party and its attempts to neutralise the effects of the departure of the progressive wing.

After the momentous UP congress in Bloemfontein in 1959 a total of twelve MPs left the party permanently. They were Helen Suzman, John Cope, Owen Townley Williams, Ronald Butcher, Ray Swart, Zach de Beer, Clive van Ryneveld, Colin Eglin, Harry Lawrence, Professor I Fourie, Boris Wilson, and Jan Steytler. Harry Lawrence left the party later as he was overseas at the time of the congress. Five MPCs also left the UP. Fourie initially allied himself with the liberals and then left them after their first congress because he disagreed with their policy on

²⁰ *Cape Times*, 14 November 1959.

republicanism. After the referendum in 1960 he returned to their ranks. The list of resignations would have been even longer had Graaff not been able to persuade Sydney Waterson, the MP for Constantia, and Hamilton Russell, the MP for Wynberg, to remain in the UP. It is perhaps significant that both these parliamentarians represented constituencies in the Cape Peninsula, where Graaff's influence was very strong. In this respect Graaff was partially successful in limiting the extent of the damage to his party by the departure of the progressives. Hamilton Russell was however to leave the UP in 1963.²¹ Although Graaff tried his best to keep Clive van Ryneveld, the MP for East London North, in the UP he was unsuccessful.²²

Graaff appears to have had made vigorous attempts to retain certain MPs, particularly those from the Cape Peninsula, while accepting that others were irretrievably lost to the UP. He seems to have made little or no effort to keep members such as Helen Suzman within the fold. Helen Suzman recounts, "The impression I obtained when Sir de Villiers Graaff interviewed me in Cape Town was that he was heartily glad to be rid of me."²³

Thus, within the space of little more than five years, there were two large scale defections from the UP's parliamentary caucus as well as the much smaller but still significant rebellion of Bernard Friedman. The enormity of these defections

²¹ UNISA, Sir de Villiers Graaff Collection, File 149.15, Problems in the Party, Hamilton Russell - Sir de Villiers Graaff, 13 August 1959 ; Cape Times, 19 August 1959 ; UCT, BC 631, Sydney Waterson Collection, A6.64, Sydney Waterson - Sir de Villiers Graaff, 18 August 1959.

²² UNISA, Sir de Villiers Graaff Collection, File 149.15, Problems in the Party, 18 August 1959 & 20 August 1959.

²³ Helen Suzman - Author, Johannesburg, 9 January 1996.

can be calculated by taking a look at the list of UP members of parliament elected in the 1953 general election. Excluding the Natives' Representatives, the 1953 general election sent 57 UP MPs to parliament. Of these 57 members, the following had left or resigned or were expelled from the UP parliamentary caucus before the end of 1959 : O Townley Williams, VL Shearer, IS Fourie, B Friedman, AG Barlow, H Suzman, PB Bekker, AH Jonker, HF Oppenheimer, Z de Beer, B Coetzee, F Waring, J Cope, J Steytler, H Lawrence, and Ray Swart.²⁴ Members such as Colin Eglin and Ronald Butcher, who also left the UP in 1959, were elected to parliament after the 1953 general election, and thus are not included in the ranks of these 57 MPs.

There were thus sixteen members of the 1953 parliamentary caucus who left the party. This number does not include Miles Warren whose departure from the caucus was comparatively brief. When one also looks at the various UP members of parliament who at times teetered on the brink of leaving but who subsequently stayed, then it can be appreciated that there were many problems facing the UP in the 1950s.

The remaining UP MPs displayed very varied reactions to the departure of the progressives. Some saw them as troublesome and too liberal and thought that their departure was advantageous for the party, which would now have more appeal to the conservative electorate. Badenhorst Durrant expressed what must have been the hope of many conservative UP members when he said, "With the departure of the Liberals from our ranks we of the

²⁴ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 316 - 333.

United Party can now talk to moderate members of the Nationalist Party and they to us." ²⁵

Other UP parliamentarians adopted a very different approach. Possibly they hoped that a reconciliation might still be feasible. Amidst all the recriminations and the rancour of the breakaway, two UP MPs, neither really associated with the liberal movement, pleaded for a calmer approach to the dispute and an end to the bitterness and "witch-hunting". The MP for Port Elizabeth South, HO Frielinghaus, was reported as saying :

Personally, I am standing by our Leader, Sir de Villiers Graaff, but I hope he takes firm action against the agitation to rid the party of the so-called liberals. There is no question that this organized agitation has been going on for some time. It was deplorable of Mr Mitchell, as a Provincial leader, who knew full-well that Sir de Villiers was not in favour of preventing the sale of further land to Natives under the 1936 agreement, went ahead and introduced an amendment to this effect. Furthermore, I resent the personal attacks against our Cape Leader, Dr Jan Steytler. There is no finer, or more loyal man in the party.

In the same report, the UP MP for Albany, TB Bowker, was quoted as saying that "the witch-hunt engineered by the 'ultra-conservatives' should be stopped immediately." ²⁶

The official United Party view of the 1959 split.

A very illuminating document was produced by Marais Steyn, one of the leading propagandists of the UP. ²⁷ This statement was circulated among the members of the UP's Parliamentary and Provincial Council teams and gave what seemed to be the

²⁵ *Cape Times*, 10 September 1959.

²⁶ *Cape Times*, 15 August 1959.

²⁷ UNISA, Sir de Villiers Graaff Collection, File 149.15, Resume of events preceding the breakaway of the Progressive group from the United Party.

conservative view of the split in the party. Steyn's opinion was that "the Bantustan Motion was merely the occasion" and not "the fundamental cause" of the progressives' departure. He believed that most of the liberals had been seen by the press as a "separate pressure group" within the UP as early as July 1954, and he quoted an article written at the time by Joel Mervis in *The Forum* in support of his view. Steyn also cited the series of articles that were written on the editorial page of the *Rand Daily Mail* prior to the Bloemfontein congress. These were an attempt "to compel the United Party to adopt a much more liberal policy". He also alleged that the liberal members had actually been told by the Chief Whip "to desist from caucassing [sic] as a separate group" while they were still members of the UP and that at no time while discussing the Bantustan motion before the Bloemfontein congress "did they even hint that it was a matter of conscience and irreducible principle to them and that its acceptance would compel their resignation." Marais Steyn also pointed out that several of the Progressives such as Boris Wilson, and Leo Kowarsky had not regarded the Bantustan motion "as sufficiently important" for them to stay and cast their votes on it. (Both Wilson and Kowarsky subsequently helped establish the PP.) Significantly, Marais Steyn wrote that Mitchell "did not move the Bantustan Motion for any ulterior motives or in order to be provocative", and that this motion had already been discussed several times during the parliamentary session and at meetings of the Central Executive Committee "in Durban and elsewhere". According to Marais Steyn, shortly before the Bloemfontein congress, the Head Committee had asked Mitchell to submit this motion to the congress, and that it was not

therefore "a rebellious Mr. Mitchell who acted at Congress, but a co-operative Mr. Mitchell acting at the leader's request to seek clarification." On the question of whether the UP had become a "backward-looking party", Marais Steyn expressed the view that nobody could accuse it of being backward when it supported "the restoration of the Cape Coloureds to the Common Roll in the Cape", the granting to the "non-European people" of "greater representation in the Senate", the restoration of the system of Native representation to the Cape and the extension of that representation to the North. Furthermore, the UP was responsible "for the concept that a responsible class of Natives should be given more individual rights and a larger individual say in the election of their representatives." Steyn wrote that the question was sometimes posed whether the UP was "not expedient rather than realistic", and he answered this in a very illuminating manner : "The United Party is not expedient, but it frankly states that its approach to the non-European problem is empirical." He added that the UP did not profess to have "super-natural insight into the distant future".

Douglas Mitchell gave his side of the story to an audience in Durban : the "real bone of contention" at the congress was the amendment moved by Leo Boyd, proposing that "non-Whites should have the right to represent non-Whites in Parliament". He denied that Graaff had fought his Bantustan motion but said that when it had been introduced, "Sir de Villiers said that after some considerable hesitation, he felt there was the gravest risk of the resolution being misunderstood." ²⁸

²⁸ *The Natal Daily News*, 21 August 1959.

Mitchell's statement that Graaff had not resisted his land resolution is debatable in the light of a statement made by Graaff himself at a public meeting in Durban. Here Graaff said that he had been against it for two reasons - the first being that it might be misunderstood and the second being that he believed that the UP "could get rid of Verwoerd" before they were "too far on the road to Bantustan." He described the land resolution at the congress as "the occasion, not the cause of the break". He told his audience that the real cause of the break had been the liberals themselves, as "They could no longer associate themselves with the conservative South African approach of the United Party, which sees growing living standards and increasing opportunities for all the peoples of the Union under the guidance and control of vigorous White leadership." ²⁹

The *Natal Mercury* tried to refute Mitchell's claim that the resolution of Leo Boyd was a prime cause of the split. In an editorial it pointed out that Boyd's resolution had been debated and rejected on the first day of the congress and that the breakaway had had not occurred until the end of congress, two days later. It expressed the opinion that the resolutions passed by Boyd and other members of the progressive wing "could have done no more than set the tone of the hostility that developed towards them." ³⁰

Thus, the 1959 split had the effect of severely fragmenting the parliamentary opposition. During the 1960 referendum the Progressives were to enter an agreement with

²⁹ *Cape Argus*, 10 October 1959.

³⁰ *The Natal Mercury*, 22 August 1959.

the UP in order to prevent a victory for republicanism. This, however, was to be an uneasy and very temporary relationship. There were to be no other serious attempts at reconciliation. This is hardly surprising as it would have been a crucial part of the UP's tactics to destroy the Progressives as quickly and as ruthlessly as possible. The UP and the Progressives spent much of the 1960 and 1961 parliamentary sessions attacking each other - much to the delight of the Nationalists and concern of those who saw the need for a more united opposition. The conservatives in the UP were very aware of the conservatism of the South African electorate and the absence of any strong signs of an emergent liberalism among the voters. They also remembered that the realities of South African politics had traditionally been unfavourable to the existence of small breakaway parties. These factors would have reassured them in their belief that the liberals would soon be swept away. This would leave the UP in the position of being able to gather in the votes of as many disaffected Nationalists as possible and also to win the "floating vote". This strategy was successful to a certain extent as the UP was able to win back all but one of the seats that it had lost with the departure of the liberals. After the breakaway, although numerically weaker, the UP caucus was certainly much more unified than it had been previously. Although the Progressives did entertain hopes of concluding an electoral agreement with the UP, the UP leadership refused to countenance this. It is not surprising that the UP preferred instead to enter into an agreement with the National Union Party as this was in line with their strategy to win votes from the ranks of "moderate Nationalism".

The relationship between the United Party and the English press.

What would become increasingly disadvantageous to the UP was the gradual loss of support from the English press that the party had enjoyed for many years. This was to have an effect on the 1961 general election, particularly in Johannesburg where the *Rand Daily Mail* supported the PP wholeheartedly. Graaff describes in his memoirs how the editor of the *Cape Times*, Victor Norton, came to see him at the time of the liberal breakaway, and "begged me not to hound those who had broken away as he regarded their break as a most important step in South Africa's development." Graaff writes : "It was clear to me that there was a section of the press which had a lot of sympathy with the new Progs." ³¹

Anthony Heard, a *Cape Times* reporter who later became its editor, states that Victor Norton "despised" Sir de Villiers but faced the dilemma that if he followed his natural inclination to support the Progressives, he might encourage the splitting of the anti-Nationalist vote. ³²

Joel Mervis gives a very lucid description of how the *Rand Daily Mail* decided to support the new PP in preference to the UP soon after the progressive breakaway. He also discusses the reasons why the *Sunday Times* continued its long standing and vigorous support of the UP. ³³

Although most sections of the English press maintained their support for the UP, this did not prevent them at times

³¹ Sir de Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back*, p 163.

³² Anthony Heard - Author, Cape Town, 15 January 1996.

³³ J Mervis, *The Fourth Estate : a newspaper story* (Johannesburg, 1989), pp 341, 411.

from criticising certain members of the party, notably Douglas Mitchell. This was perhaps attributable to a feeling that Mitchell was particularly responsible for what they saw as a needless split in 1959. An example of such criticism is the editorial in the *Daily Dispatch* which once slated Mitchell, saying : "There is no difference between the policy he advocates and the policy that Dr. Verwoerd advocates." ³⁴ An editorial in *The Natal Witness* in August 1959 also makes interesting reading : "The amount of mischief which Mr. Douglas Mitchell, M.P., is doing - either wittingly or unwittingly - seems to us to be almost incredible." ³⁵

Graaff did not escape criticism in the editorials of this Pietermaritzburg newspaper either. An editorial published the previous day described him "as an amiable but somewhat bewildered figurehead" who together with the rest of the UP was "tied firmly to the triumphant chariot wheels of Mr. Douglas Mitchell, who is careering madly to the fools' paradise of Nationalist measures without Nationalist men." ³⁶

Understandably, during and after this momentous split there was a great deal of acrimony expressed by members in vilifying the motives and actions of their former allies. The English-language press frequently deplored this, regarding it as both puerile and uncalled for. The political columnist, "Backbencher", of the *Cape Argus* commented on a speech delivered in Parktown by Douglas Mitchell. Mitchell was reported to have

³⁴ *Daily Dispatch*, 26 February 1960. See also the editorial in the *Cape Times*, 25 September 1959.

³⁵ *The Natal Witness*, 20 August 1959.

³⁶ *The Natal Witness*, 19 August 1959.

said that the Progressives were "nothing more than a group of spoilt children and deserve a good hiding". "Backbencher" rebuked Mitchell for this, saying, "Really Mr Mitchell ! The people of Parktown are intelligent and such a silly statement is an insult to their intelligence." ³⁷

The reasons for dwelling at some length on the attitude of the English-language press towards the UP are many. The most important is that the press was an extremely significant moulder of opposition opinion, and much of what they reported and commented upon would ultimately have an effect on the decision of the English-speaking electorate in 1961 either to stay with the UP or to make a break and vote for the PP. It also showed that many editors were becoming disenchanted with the UP. They saw the party as being more interested in scoring petty debating points against the PP than acting as an effective opposition to the Nationalists.

The Nationalist view of the breakaway from the United Party.

Die Burger saw the liberal breakaway as the outcome of an opportunistic decision by Douglas Mitchell to capitalise on the unpopularity of the government's desire to acquire more land for the development of the Bantustans. It mentioned the over representation of the conservative platteland element at the Bloemfontein congress and saw the issue as being motivated by a desire to tell the government, "... julle wil oom Jan van der

³⁷ *Cape Argus*, 27 November 1959. See also *Cape Argus*, 18 September 1959.

Merwe se plaas vir die Kaffers gee." The newspaper praised the eleven rebels for their opposition to this "cynical opportunism", and saw their breakaway as a victory for decency in contrast to the double-faced attitude of the UP.³⁸

The United Party fends off the Progressive Party challenge at the polls.

In the period leading up to the 1961 general election, the poor performance of the PP in one by-election and various provincial council elections reassured the UP that it was not a particularly serious electoral threat. This must also have encouraged the UP leadership in their belief that they could safely destroy the PP at the polls while simultaneously attracting dissatisfied Nationalists by means of the pact with the National Union. In the 1959 provincial elections, held soon after the breakaway at Bloemfontein, the three Progressive Party candidates, campaigning as "Independent Progressives", all lost to the UP opposition, one rather narrowly. Leo Boyd lost Durban Gardens by 1 954 votes to 2 639. WG Mc Conkey lost the election in Pietermaritzburg South by 1 964 votes to the 2 692 votes cast for the UP candidate and to the 559 votes cast for the Federal Party candidate. In Pinetown the "Independent Progressive" candidate, L Hall, lost to the UP by 2 719 votes to 2 879.³⁹

Dr Boris Wilson, the PP member for Hospital, resigned his seat in parliament at the beginning of the 1961 parliamentary session and the by-election was subsequently held in that

³⁸ *Die Burger*, 15 August 1959.

³⁹ *Cape Times*, 16 October 1959.

constituency on 3 May 1961. In a very low poll of 43,5 %, the PP candidate received 1 703 votes against the 2 993 votes obtained by the UP candidate - a majority of 1 290. ⁴⁰

In the important provincial by-election held at Green Point in February 1961, both parties fielded strong candidates. The UP candidate, O Newton Thompson, obtained 5 518 votes, decisively defeating the PP candidate, Rupert Hurley, who polled only 1 710 votes. The percentage poll was 58,9 %.⁴¹ The PP came closest to shaking the complacency of the UP in July 1960 in a municipal election in Ward Six in Johannesburg when its candidate, Mrs Jean Sinclair, obtained 1 779 votes to the UP candidate's 1 878, thus losing by only 99 votes. Only 62 % of the eligible voters bothered to cast their votes in this election. ⁴²

"Backbencher", one of the political columnists for the *Cape Argus* wrote a perceptive article soon after this municipal election. He pointed out that municipal elections are never "reliable barometers politically". To substantiate his point he showed that at one time official Communists had won seats on the Cape Town City Council, yet later three Communist candidates standing in various seats in the Cape Peninsula in the 1943 General Election all lost their deposits. "Backbencher" added, "In times of unrest the politically uncommitted nearly always turn timidly Right." He attributed the failure of the PP in the council election to the disturbances in the Congo and at Sharpeville which most probably prompted a certain number of hesitant voters to vote for the UP. ⁴³

⁴⁰ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 388.

⁴¹ *Cape Argus*, 23 February 1961.

⁴² *Cape Argus*, 21 July 1960.

⁴³ *Cape Argus*, 22 July 1960.

All these results would no doubt have encouraged the conservatives in the UP in their belief that the PP had overestimated its appeal to the electorate. They probably felt that the 1959 split was beneficial to the UP, signalling the end of the liberal element in its ranks while also appeasing the *Bloedsappe* (i.e. those traditionally dyed-in-the-wool supporters of the UP who while taking a resolutely anti-Nationalist stance on historical or cultural grounds still took a very conservative position on the colour issue). It would also have soothed the feelings of the conservatives among the electorate, who might well have been disturbed by the utterances of the liberals.

The United Party loses ground to the Nationalists.

What concerned the UP leadership at this time was the fact that in the two by-elections held in 1961 (which were fought in straight contests between the NP and the UP) the UP fared even worse than in the previous general election in 1958. On 19 April 1961, the UP in Bethal-Middelburg obtained 32,1 % of the votes cast which was a significant decline from the 37,7 % that they had polled in 1958. In the by-election held in Swellendam on 3 May 1961, the UP's share of the votes cast dropped to 39,8 % from the 42,3 % obtained in the 1958 general election. This did not augur very well for the future.⁴⁴ It should be remembered that in these rural seats the impact of the progressive breakaway would have been very slight.

⁴⁴ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 347, 361 & 388.

The United Party loses the referendum battle.

In 1960 the UP suffered another reverse when Verwoerd triumphed in his efforts to have South Africa declared a republic with a majority of 74 580 votes. In the campaign the enfranchised eighteen-year-olds were an important factor. The morale of many UP supporters suffered another blow when it became clear later that South Africa would also leave the commonwealth. ⁴⁵

Graaff held the PP partly responsible for the defeat of the anti-republicans in the 1960 referendum. According to him they "made it a practice to try and put across their nonwhite policy at public meetings and frightened many anti-republicans into the republican camp." ⁴⁶

Nevertheless, after its defeat in the republican referendum, the UP showed a certain resilience. In a declaration drawn up by Graaff in June 1961, bemoaning the straits into which South Africa had supposedly been led by the Nationalists, he called upon all those who could forget "past differences for the sake of our joint future" to combine their talents and their influence. Significantly he described one of the "basic aims" of such an "almighty common effort" as the recognition of the republic : he saw this as an "accomplished fact". ⁴⁷

⁴⁵ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 387.

⁴⁶ Sir de Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back*, p 173.

⁴⁷ UNISA, Sir de Villiers Graaff Collection, File 42.9.1, Election pact : United Party and National Union , *Konsepverklaring van Sir de Villiers Graaff*, p 2.

The United Party moves closer to the Nationalists.

During the 1960 parliamentary session the UP voted with the Nationalists for the extension of several apartheid measures and this was seen by the Progressives as evidence that the UP was moving closer to the Nationalists. The UP voted with the Nationalists on the Reservation of Separate Amenities Amendment Bill and the Factories, Machinery and Building Work Amendment Bill. At the third reading of the former, there were 114 votes in favour and only fifteen against. Only the Progressives and the Natives' Representatives voted against the Bill. ⁴⁸

The UP explained its view on the Separate Amenities Bill saying that it "involved no extension of the principle of segregation but only an extension of the area over which segregation could be applied." It also claimed that it had merely been responding to requests from local authorities and the Provincial Administration in Natal for the right to enforce apartheid on beaches between the high-water and low-water marks and in the sea itself. ⁴⁹

In what was perhaps a rather tongue-in-cheek article entitled "V.P. Nou Apartheidsparty ? Word Gevra", *Die Burger* commented that the UP had voted with the government on two consecutive days, extending the principles of apartheid in factories, on the beaches and in the sea. The UP

⁴⁸ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 4 February 1960, cols 938 - 939.

⁴⁹ *Sunday Times*, 14 February 1960. See also *Cape Times*, 4 February 1960.

appeared to be trying to show that it had been purified of all liberal elements after the split the previous year. The newspaper also saw this as an attempt by the Graaff leadership to attract votes from the Nationalists in the forthcoming election by the expedient of moving closer to the government and by ostensibly accepting the idea of apartheid.⁵⁰

In an interesting article written in 1959 about the position of the UP, Edward Tiryakian of Princeton University expressed the view that the "ultra-right wing of the Party led by Mitchell" held views on the racial policy that were "hardly different from that of the Nationalists." This was seen as undermining the position of Graaff.⁵¹

The United Party enters into a pact with the National Union.

As the 1961 general election approached there seems to have been an idea prevalent among the UP leadership that there were a number of Nationalists who had become disenchanted with Verwoerd and the more extreme Nationalist leadership and with the NP's doctrines, but were not well disposed enough towards the UP to vote for it. Such voters, it was felt, might be attracted to the National Union Party which had recently been established by Japie Basson and included an appreciable number of former Nationalists within its ranks. Consequently an election pact (not a coalition) was formed between the two parties. The details of this pact will be studied more comprehensively in the discussion of the general election campaign in Chapter Seven.

⁵⁰ *Die Burger*, 29 January 1960.

⁵¹ EA Tiryakian, "Apartheid and politics in South Africa", *The Journal of Politics*, vol 22, 1960, p 693.

Advantages enjoyed by the United Party in 1960 and 1961.

It is significant to assess the relative strength of the UP as South Africa moved towards republican status. The UP was able to obtain some support because of its image as the party most likely to protect the rights of English-speaking whites in the Republic. Matters such as the role of the *Broederbond*, the decline of English influence in the government service and other spheres of South African life all played an important role. The NP was seen as often favouring its supporters in organisations that were supposed to be free of political influence, such as school boards, censorship boards, the SABC and various other government institutions. All these factors aided the UP to some degree in turning conservative English-speaking whites away from the NP. Many of the articles in the *Sunday Times* in 1961 show how significant this problem was at the time. A report on 16 April 1961 provides an interesting example of the attitude of the *Sunday Times* to the demotion of Gideon Roos and his replacement at the head of the SABC by Piet Meyer. This incident was seen as detrimental to the interests of non-Nationalist whites.⁵²

The UP also drew advantage from Verwoerd's plans to develop the African homelands in the 1960s. Many whites felt that this would lead to much greater expense for the white taxpayer and a dislocation of the economy in certain areas. Another factor which carried some weight was the purchase or expropriation of land in the rural areas for the purpose of homeland development

⁵² *Sunday Times*, 16 April 1961.

and consolidation. This gave rise to the idea that independent African governments which might be hostile would be established within South Africa. A soundly organised campaign outlining the implications of such a policy would also have been very beneficial to the UP. Indeed the issue was to become important in the 1961 general election although the UP did not draw maximum advantage from it.

Problems facing the United Party in 1960 and 1961.

The bitter feud between the UP and the newly founded PP was certainly damaging to the UP prior to the 1961 general election. An example of this enmity can be seen in a report in the *Cape Argus* in February 1960 describing how "Nationalists laughed in Parliament last night as Progressive and United Party speakers came to grips with one another, egged on from the Government cross-benches." This was on the occasion when the Progressives introduced a motion calling on parliament to accept "the permanent multi-racial character of the South African nation and society." According to the report, "The Nationalists were able to sit back and enjoy the spectacle of a divided opposition carrying on a running fight to the accompaniment of Government interjections and laughter." ⁵³

Demographically too, the UP was at a severe disadvantage. While it is obviously incorrect to assert that every Afrikaans-speaking white voter supported the NP, it is very clear that in the 1950s the NP drew most of its support from the

⁵³ *Cape Argus*, 16 February 1960.

Afrikaans-speaking community. The greater the number of Afrikaans voters in a constituency, the better were the chances of success for the NP in any election. The data supplied by the 1951 census was therefore extremely disturbing for the UP because they showed an increasing preponderance of Afrikaans voters, especially among the younger age groups and in the rural areas. The age group from 25 to 29 years would have been the youngest age group to vote in the 1948 general election and the greater preponderance of Afrikaans voters in this group (approximately 1 450 Afrikaans speakers for every 1 000 English speakers) must have been crucial in the success of the NP. It is perhaps best to give the ratios of Afrikaans-speaking whites to their English-speaking compatriots in tabular form.

* TABLE 1. *

* Ratio of Afrikaans-speaking whites to English-speaking whites *

* in various age groups as shown by the 1951 population census. ⁵⁴ *

* Age group Number of Afrikaans-speaking whites for *

* (in years) every 1 000 English-speaking whites. *

* 0 - 4	1 750	*
* 5 - 6	1 918	*
* 7 - 9	1 893	*
* 10 - 14	1 900	*
* 15 - 19	1 941	*
* 21 - 24	1 730	*
* 25 - 29	1 450	*
* 30 - 34	1 316	*
* 35 - 39	1 176	*
* 40 - 44	1 107	*
* 45 - 49	1 050	*
* 50 - 54	1 027	*
* 55 - 59	1 175	*
* 60 - 64	1 161	*
* 65 - 69	1 052	*
* 70 - 74	897	*
* 75 - 79	915	*

⁵⁴ Department of the Interior, *Census report for 1951*, vol 6, pp 50 - 64.

The position of the United Party in 1961.

The events of 1960 were generally unfavourable for the UP. They had lost prestige by being unable to prevent South Africa from becoming a republic and from leaving the Commonwealth. The riots, and disturbances and the state of emergency in South Africa, the problems in such places as the Congo, the increasing hostility of some overseas countries, the attitude of the British government as exemplified in Macmillan's "Winds of Change" speech and the emergence of additional independent African states all combined to make the South African voters look more to the Nationalists than to the UP for protection, security and reassurance. At times the UP was vague in its policy or appeared to contradict itself. Furthermore the UP carried the stigma of years of unsuccessful opposition to the Nationalists both at the polls and in parliament. As the general election approached in 1961, the UP was a far more cohesive party following the departure of the liberals, but it was certainly not in any condition to make the breakthrough at the polls that it desired so ardently and which was so urgently necessary for the maintenance of a spirit of enthusiasm in the party as a whole.

CHAPTER FIVE.

THE PART PLAYED BY OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES FROM 1958 TO 1961.

THE POSITION OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY.

The Progressive Party was officially established in Johannesburg in November 1959 and it is therefore a very valuable and instructive exercise to examine the circumstances that led to its establishment. In August 1959 the campaign waged by the conservatives in the UP to get rid of the liberals reached its zenith at the Bloemfontein Congress of the party. Many of the conservatives did their best to make the position of the liberals as untenable as possible.¹ This campaign and the subsequent breakaway of a large and significant segment of the party have already been discussed in the section on the UP. In this section brief comment will also be made on the way the dissidents perceived their departure from the UP.'

Views of various Progressives on the breakaway in 1959.

In the previous chapter the reaction of the UP to the split has been discussed. How did the progressives view the breakaway ? The views of some of these progressives on the split at the 1959 congress are very revealing, partly because they show the resentment displayed by the conservatives towards the progressives. Walter Stanford felt that the animosity of the conservative delegates had a major role to play in the progressives' decision to leave the UP. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the composition of the congress and the

¹ J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, pp 147 - 158.
See also Chapter 4, pp 124 - 133.

unduly high representation of the rural districts. Stanford thought that Graaff made "a great deal of maintaining white baasskap, more so than in the House." He was also of the opinion that there might not have been a split at all if it had not been for "the terrible debate on Wednesday in which personalities were indulged in to a great extent", and in which Miles Warren "absolutely screamed with rage at the betrayal of the U.P. by the progressives." According to Stanford, "The whole object of Mitchell's resolution on land was to be able to call the Nats kafferboeties on the platteland and he forced it through after Div had told him he was against it." Stanford also wrote that he did not know how Graaff was going to lead a party "with a policy whose main plank is simply to out Nat the Nats." ²

Unlike the UP stalwarts, Zach de Beer is of the opinion that the breakaway from the UP was not inevitable. In his words, "If Graaff had resisted the proposal to shut the door on the common roll vote for Africans and the 'land resolution', we would certainly not have broken away, and I do not think he would have lost any right-wingers either." ³

In a letter to Harry Lawrence, De Beer told him that what had happened at the congress was "almost exactly what we had feared. ... Douglas, Louis, Vause and Sannie [van Niekerk] had organised the whole congress to 'kick out the liberals'." De Beer also wrote that "The venom of the speeches was quite unbelievable." ⁴

² UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.45, Walter Stanford - Harry Lawrence, 21 August 1959.

³ Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996.

⁴ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.40, Zach de Beer - Harry Lawrence, 20 August 1959.

Similarly, Ray Swart believed that Graaff could have averted the split in the UP if he had exercised "strong and principled leadership". Nevertheless Swart thought that such a split would perhaps have come later as "The U.P. was made up of far too many differing factions to really be a cohesive force." ⁵

The idea that Graaff could have prevented the 1959 breakaway is also supported by Colin Eglin, who wrote, "Sir de Villiers Graaff could have certainly averted the split in the United Party in 1959, however, stung by the UP's electoral defeat in 1958, he decided that he wanted his Party to project a more conservative rather than a more progressive image." Eglin emphasises that none of the MPs who broke away went to the Bloemfontein Congress "wanting to leave the United Party". Eglin thinks that Graaff also relied heavily on the "loyalty to Div factor" to limit the extent of the breakaway. ⁶

The progressives gain the support of Oppenheimer and Lawrence.

The cause of the progressives received a stimulus in September 1959 when Harry Oppenheimer resigned from the UP and announced his support for the new group. The *Cape Argus* quoted him as saying "After careful consideration of the issues involved ... I find myself in general sympathy with the progressive group. ... I have accordingly tendered my resignation." ⁷

The *Times* of London saw Oppenheimer's resignation as having a momentous effect on opposition politics in South Africa,

⁵ Ray Swart - Author, Durban, 20 November 1995.

⁶ Colin Eglin - Author, Cape Town, 8 November 1995.

⁷ *Cape Argus*, 2 September 1959. See also A Hocking, *Oppenheimer and Son* (Mc Graw Hill, 1973), p 359.

partly because it soon precipitated a decision by Harry Lawrence. Oppenheimer's resignation was described as "a courageous action" from a man, "who has long and consistently supported the view that you cannot unscramble eggs ... industrial integration is an undeniable fact ; and ... should be pursued, not halted." ⁸

Oppenheimer had already made his sympathies with the liberals clear in a letter written to Harry Lawrence in June 1959. "I had a talk with Div and was pretty frank. I feel very sorry for him ... Is there any hope of keeping him on the side of the angels ? I am not optimistic - he seems convinced that the only thing is to accept, or appear to accept, the Nat view on race relations ..." ⁹

Shortly after his return to South Africa from overseas, Harry Lawrence also allied himself with the Progressives. In his memoirs, Graaff is of the opinion that although Lawrence "had indicated his disagreement with Mitchell's motion", he did not seem to be determined to leave the UP. ¹⁰ It appears that Lawrence had already decided while overseas that he was going to resign from the UP on the grounds that the UP was "irretrievably split", and he had no other option "on grounds of principle and conscience" but to go. ¹¹

The value which the Progressives attached to the acquisition of such a "senior parliamentarian" as Lawrence is clear in a letter from Zach de Beer : "One thing we lack - a

⁸ The Times, London, 3 September 1959.

⁹ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.28, Harry Oppenheimer - Harry Lawrence, 12 June 1959.

¹⁰ Sir de Villiers Graaff, *Div looks back*, p 163.

¹¹ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.65, Harry Lawrence - Sir de Villiers Graaff, 13 September 1959.

really senior parliamentarian. The implication is obvious. We have taken the whole future of progressive thought into our hands. We may stand or fall by what you do. I do hope you will think it right to join us." ¹²

The inevitability of a split in the UP is perhaps illustrated by a memorandum drawn up by Harry Lawrence in conjunction with Zach de Beer and Colin Eglin in April 1959. This memorandum was entitled, "The Irreducible Minimum". It proposed that the UP should declare itself in favour of "overt consultation with truly representative African leaders", and that it should accept the principle of "a continuous process of extension" of political rights. It also stated very significantly, "While it need not be explicitly advocated at present, the common roll for Africans, either instead of or in conjunction with the separate roll, must not be excluded as a future possibility." The memorandum went on to say that "men of colour must not be indefinitely debarred from participating personally in the government of their country, as members of legislative bodies." When one considers the conservatism and influence of many members of the UP right-wing, it is hardly surprising that members with political views such as these quoted here would soon be forced to leave the UP. ¹³ As the PP had no official election manifesto in 1961, this memorandum formed the basis on which the party carried out its election campaign. ¹⁴

¹² UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.40, Zach de Beer - Harry Lawrence, 20 August 1959.

¹³ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.13, The Irreducible Minimum.

¹⁴ See discussion in Chapter 6, pp 205 - 209.

The Progressives incur criticism for failing to resign their seats.

After the formation of the PP in November 1959, its members of parliament, all of whom had originally been elected under the banner of the UP, suffered a certain stigma because they did not resign their seats after their change of political allegiance. The UP was to use this as a weapon against them, purportedly to show their "lack of honesty". What was particularly damaging was that some of the Transvaal members of parliament had earlier signed a pledge that they would resign their seats should they leave the UP. This pledge, the Borkum pledge, had been instituted partly as a result of pressure from the liberal wing after the defection of Bailey Bekker and his four supporters soon after the 1953 general election. Helen Suzman remembers that she and the MP for Parktown, John Cope, favoured resigning their seats and fighting by-elections but after a great deal of discussion it was decided against this. ¹⁵

The PP incurred a great deal of criticism for this decision and its MPs had to defend themselves vigorously against what was seen as an act of bad faith. When asked at a public meeting in Sea Point why he had not resigned his seat, Harry Lawrence replied that, "A member of parliament owes his duty not to those who voted for him, but first of all to his country." ¹⁶ The MP for Pinelands, Colin Eglin, gave a similar answer to demands that he should resign from parliament. At a public meeting

¹⁵ H Suzman, *In no uncertain terms*, p 48.

¹⁶ *Cape Times*, 24 November 1959.

in his constituency, he quoted Sir Winston Churchill : ... "an MP's first responsibility was to his country, his second to his constituency and his third to his party." He went on to say that he had been given a mandate to fight the Nationalists and "baasskap" and that he would continue to do so. ¹⁷

In a statement on the possible resignation of the dissident MPs, Steytler wrote, "Without arrogating to themselves a superior moral law, these ten Members of Parliament have, after a great deal of heart searching, come to the conclusion that they are not prepared to put the fetish [sic] of a narrow political loyalty above the national interest." In his view, holding by - elections throughout the country " would engender a spirit of bitterness unparalleled in the history of this country." ¹⁸

In what was seen as a "surprise decision", the UP divisional committee in Queenstown declared that it would not ask its MP, Jan Steytler, to resign as he had a record of "invaluable service". The committee however pledged "wholehearted support" for Graaff and for the UP. The report in the *Cape Times* described the support for the motion as being "virtually unanimous". The same report stated that four of the five constituency branches in the seat of Durban Musgrave had passed an unanimous vote of confidence in their MP, Townley Owen Williams. ¹⁹

The Progressives were supported in their decision not

¹⁷ *Cape Times*, 21 October 1959.

¹⁸ William Cullen Library (hereafter WCL), AG 883, Progressive Party Collection, B2, Statement by Dr. Jan Steytler, M.P., 25 August 1959.

¹⁹ *Cape Times*, 21 August 1959.

to resign their seats by *The Natal Witness* which devoted an editorial entitled "A duty not to resign" to the matter. The editorial commented, "Their moral case for retaining their seats is unassailable. We would, indeed, go further than that, and confidently assert that they would be failing in their moral duty if they did resign their seats, should they do so on the ground that there is a disagreement between them and the majority of the United Party." ²⁰ Be that as it may, this question led to a great deal of ill feeling between the two parties during the 1961 election.

The Progressives formulate their basic principles.

Soon after their departure from the UP, the dissidents issued an important statement outlining their beliefs and their reasons for resigning from the UP. This statement did not differ much from the policies that they expounded during the 1961 election campaign, eighteen months after the official formation of their party. The statement expressed the signatories' convictions that South Africa should face up more squarely than it had done in the past to the problems which flowed from the multi-racial composition of the nation. It was its duty to maintain Western civilization and to extend this progressively to all the people of South Africa. This would lead to the increasing participation of all races in the economic and political life of the country. Restrictions which prevented such participation should be gradually removed. The party believed that the multi-racial character of South Africa demanded that such

²⁰ *The Natal Witness*, 26 August 1959.

development should take place by co-operation based on consultation and on the recognition of individual aspirations, group sentiments and the right of groups to maintain their own character. The South African constitution would have to be reformed so as to entrench civilized standards, protect the rights of minorities, and promote the harmonious co-operation of all groups in one great and growing South Africa. ²¹

The policies of the Progressives will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 but the above sentiments have been quoted as they indicate a certain need felt by many of the Progressives to justify their leaving the UP and their establishment of a new party with a widely different policy on the racial and franchise issues.

The attitude of the press towards the Progressives.

The press coverage of the Progressives was very varied : it ranged from favourable to frankly condemnatory. Initially only the *Rand Daily Mail* supported the PP openly. The *Sunday Times* complimented them for the forthrightness but did not believe that they would have much chance of success in the conservative world of South African politics. The editorial congratulated Steytler and the PP on the bold stance which they had presented to the nation. Their move was of some significance as it was the first time since Union in 1910 that a parliamentary group with more than ten representatives had openly advocated the presence of black participation in parliament, the admission of Africans to party membership, and

²¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 26 August 1959.

a vote for Africans (subject to a qualification) on a common roll with whites. The newspaper was of the opinion that everyone would agree that the Progressives had the merit of being honest and forthright, but doubted whether it would have much popular appeal as the Progressives could not hope to attract Nationalists "by advocating greater tolerance and by urging more rights for Natives". If the party was to win any support, it would have to come from the ranks of the UP and even from that quarter the signs were not hopeful. The UP supporters had shown themselves, at heart, to be "intensely conservative."²²

The *Evening Post*, published in Port Elizabeth, also complimented the Progressives on their honesty in the presentation of their beliefs and principles. It expressed cautious optimism for the PP, pointing out that far from "betraying" Graaff at the congress, the Progressives had actually been "manoeuvred out" by the Mitchell group.²³ The *Natal Mercury* also had some praise for the Progressives and their policies. It put forward the theory that the Nationalists had managed to persuade the electorate that there were only two choices for South Africa's future - the first being that of "a grim, shrunken and palisaded police state regimented under some of the strangest laws in the modern world and permanently ruled by a Transvaal Nationalist Afrikaner oligarchy", and the other choice being "a seedy and shabby multiracial slum presided over by inefficient and probably revengeful Black demagogues." The editorial congratulated the Progressives for insisting that there was another "clear perspective" for South Africa's future.²⁴

²² *Sunday Times*, 15 November 1959.

²³ *Evening Post*, 3 December 1959.

²⁴ *The Natal Mercury*, 20 August 1959.

Die Transvaler condemned the Progressives unequivocally. In an editorial entitled, "Gevaarlike Beginsels", the newspaper described the Progressives' proposals as being a prescription for chaos and the collapse of society. It commented that the kernel of the Progressive Party's policy lay in the acceptance of the idea that South Africa consisted of one nation irrespective of race, religion, language and tradition. This would mean that "Boer, Brit, Jood, Bantoe, Indiër en Kleurling" would all be brought together in one national group. This, it said, was the most lethal position ever adopted by a political party in South Africa. ²⁵

Die Burger took a more sympathetic line towards the Progressives than did its Johannesburg counterpart. It acknowledged the fact that the new party possessed some first-class parliamentary talent as well as a certain sympathy from sections of the English-language press but at the same time pointed out that the South African electorate had proved historically that it had little sympathy with smaller political parties. In its view, the most important role the Progressives had to play in South African politics was to bring clarity and honesty to the various colour policies, particularly those of the UP. ²⁶

The general position of the Progressive Party in 1961.

When the dissidents from the UP broke away from that party in 1959, they could not have been unaware of the

²⁵ *Die Transvaler*, 14 November 1959.

²⁶ *Die Burger*, 19 October 1959.

conservative nature of the South African electorate at the time. Nevertheless, in 1959 there were some factors that favoured this new political party despite other factors militating against their success. For many years the UP had suffered the disadvantage that its support tended to be concentrated in large numbers in a disproportionately small number of constituencies. These seats were very often won by the UP with very large majorities, with many "wasted" votes. The PP thus had the advantage that most of its prospective supporters were gathered together in a small number of predominantly urban constituencies where they could be more readily canvassed. Its supporters were not spread throughout the country in small "penny packets". However, in 1959 even the most optimistic PP supporter could not have identified many constituencies that would be likely to return PP candidates to parliament.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the PP could count on the support of the *Rand Daily Mail* which circulated in Johannesburg, the business and industrial heart of South Africa.²⁷ It was here that the PP was to win its only seat in the 1961 general election and come close to winning the constituency of Parktown. It could also rely on fair treatment from much of the English-language press even though it could not count on its wholehearted support. In his memoirs Ray Swart recounts that many of the senior reporters in the press gallery at parliament, some of whom were later to become editors of influential newspapers, developed an antipathy towards some of the senior parliamentarians in the UP,

²⁷ See Chapter 4, p 143.

and this could only be of benefit to the PP. As Ray Swart expressed it, ²⁸

Few of the papers were openly hostile towards us, however, and by and large we were given reasonable coverage in their news pages, but in those early days one had the feeling that we were being tolerated and no more by those occupying editorial chairs. Indeed, the extent of support or hostility seemed to depend very much on the personal views of individual editors.

He also cites the *Evening Post*, the *Daily Dispatch* and *The Natal Witness* as showing "sympathy and understanding" for the Progressives. ²⁹

Also to the advantage of the PP in the early years of its existence was the fact that it included some very capable parliamentarians and public figures. Perhaps the best example was Harry Lawrence. Whereas all the other PP members of parliament had been elected no earlier than 1953, Harry Lawrence had been a member since 1929. He had been an influential member of the cabinet from 1938 to 1948 and General Smuts had relied upon him a great deal, even sending him as a delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1946. In his many years in parliament, he had established a reputation as a fine and forceful speaker and debater. When he joined the PP, the *Cape Times* commented in an editorial that, "The adherence of Mr Harry Lawrence, plus the background support of Mr Harry Oppenheimer, makes the Progressives a formidable parliamentary group, whether or not the group has a substantial following in the constituencies." ³⁰

²⁸ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, p 30.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p 71.

³⁰ *Cape Times*, 17 September 1959.

In fact, the PP regarded its parliamentary performance during the 1960 and 1961 sessions as another of its assets. It felt that it and not the UP had put up the stoutest resistance to the government's policies. In its opinion the PP parliamentarians had exposed the closeness of many of the UP MPs to the government on several crucial issues, and they had shown the electorate that the PP had their own characteristic, unambiguous and distinctive policy. Joanna Strangwayes-Booth reviews the Progressives' parliamentary performance : ³¹

The new party had already earned a reputation for itself as a first-rate parliamentary team. In its first session, its members had asked more questions than the whole of the official Opposition, especially on aspects of the emergency. ... ; and the Progressives and their supporters were well satisfied that they at least had been able to present a consistently solid opposing front.

In similar vein, the political commentator of *The Forum* praised the Progressive MPs in August 1961, comparing them to the UP to the latter's disadvantage : ³²

When the Progressive M.P.s broke away from the U.P. (there are 11 Progressive M.P.s), someone made the quip that the U.P. had blown out its brains. Certainly, this was largely true of the Natal Progressives. Natal's contribution to the U.P. Parliamentary caucus has been appalling. With some exceptions, the Natal M.P.s are the most bewildered, ineffective, futile M.P.s in Parliament.

However, the PP also faced some serious problems. It was seen as a party that was entirely English orientated and thus its appeal, if any, to the Afrikaans community was insignificant. Jan Steytler, as the son of the South African war hero, Louw Steytler, was the only senior member of the

³¹ J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, p 189.

³² *The Forum*, August 1961, p 11.

Progressives to have an Afrikaans background although Zach de Beer does have some Afrikaans ancestry.

The PP was also hurt at an early stage by the departure of Dr Boris Wilson, the MP for Hospital. In his memoirs Wilson mentions the frustration that he experienced in parliament, his party's ineffectual role in opposition, and what he perceived as inefficiency in the party's ranks. He also did not get on very well with Colin Eglin and Zach de Beer. In his own words, "Had I not been one of the original founders of the PP, I might have ignored the unco-operative attitude of De Beer and Eglin, and their desire for control. ... I felt very deeply the continued mismanagement by my political colleagues, which was associated with an emerging struggle for power in the party." These factors encouraged him to resign from parliament in January 1961.³³

Colin Eglin writes that Wilson's reasons for resigning from parliament were never clear. Eglin thinks that Wilson was by nature a "loner" and suggests that "his reasons reflected his personal style rather than any significant political or philosophical issues."³⁴ Zach de Beer recalls that he and Dr Wilson never became "close friends" - "I don't actually think there was a serious difference of opinion, but we often differed on tactics."³⁵

Small splinter parties have often been doomed to extinction in South African politics and the Progressives would naturally have experienced a feeling of trepidation on their

³³ B Wilson, *A time of innocence* (Bergvlei, 1991), pp 389 - 390, 400 - 404.

³⁴ Colin Eglin - Author, Cape Town, 8 November 1995.

³⁵ Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996.

possible fate. Nevertheless, they did feel that they had no other alternative than to leave the UP. They were under no illusions as to the difficulties facing them. South Africa was drifting in a more conservative political direction and events in South Africa and the rest of Africa were reinforcing a sense of conservatism among the South African electorate. The Progressives would have to contend with opposition from the UP, which was still a powerful voice and was determined to crush the Progressive threat for ever. It would have to contend with propaganda from both the NP and the UP. This was designed to show that the Progressives were at best naive, impractical idealists and at worst, proponents of a doctrine that would lead to the extinction of the white man in South Africa. Thus, even though the Progressives had virtually only two years to prepare for the 1961 general election and to spread their message among the electorate, they enjoyed some significant advantages that other minor parties did not have. These advantages should not be underestimated because they did have a significant influence on the 1961 general election campaign and its aftermath.

THE POSITION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

The Liberal Party was established in 1953 and did not have very many members at any time in its existence. Its membership peaked in 1961 when it had a total of about five thousand members of all races. In addition to the cities, certain rural areas such

as Rustenburg, Northern Natal, and the Transkei had a fair number of Liberal Party followers.³⁶ This was an improvement on the situation in January 1959 when the membership figures for the Transvaal, Cape and Natal were 1 000, 670 and 850 respectively.³⁷

The party had always dedicated much of its effort to building up support among the Africans, coloureds, and Asians, and thus its participation in the election of 1961 was not as crucial as it was to the leading white political parties. The party had been monumentally unsuccessful in contesting white seats in the 1958 general election. It contested only three constituencies and lost heavily in all of them. In the seats of Orange Grove, Pietermaritzburg District and Sea Point the Liberal Party obtained 7,1 %, 8,2 % and 18,3 % respectively of all the votes cast.³⁸

During the period from 1958 to 1961 some important changes took place in the Liberal Party, causing it to move much closer to the left. Its representation in parliament was ended when the government abolished the system of representation of Africans in 1959. In 1960 at its congress in Green Point the party took a significant step when it decided that it stood for universal adult suffrage and an entrenched bill of rights. In a statement issued after the congress the party declared that, "the racial exclusion of the majority of the South African nation constitutes a gross insult to that majority ... as long as the

³⁶ D Irvine in J Butler, R Elphick & D Welsh, (eds.) *Democratic liberalism in South Africa : Its history and prospect* (Connecticut, 1987), p 119.

³⁷ WCL, Liberal Party Papers, Minutes of a meeting of the National Executive Committee, 17 & 18 January 1959. (This is a microfiche collection.)

³⁸ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 357 - 360.

republic is not accepted by the majority of the nation it will not survive". At this congress Alan Paton was elected the national president and Jordan Ngubane, Jack Unterhalter and Jean van der Riet were chosen as vice-presidents.³⁹

The white electorate was generally very apprehensive of the emergent African nationalism in the rest of the continent. Political figures such as Nkrumah of Ghana were regarded with grave suspicion by many whites and with extreme dislike by others. Thus the Liberal Party did not improve its image with the white electorate on occasions such as their well-publicised "Africa Day" meeting on the Grand Parade in Cape Town in 1959. The meeting was held to commemorate the Pan African Congress in Accra the previous year and a message from Nkrumah was read to the audience, congratulating "those Europeans in the Union who have the moral courage to identify themselves with the cause of racial equality". Senator Leslie Rubin, then one of the natives' representatives in the Senate, described Nkrumah as being the "inspiration of African people in their struggle for freedom in South Africa". According to Rubin there was no better person than Nkrumah "to act as inspiration, as he was the embodiment of the spirit of co-operation between white and black in the whole development of Africa and in every aspect of its life. Nkrumah would go down in history as an architect of unity, just as Verwoerd would go down as an architect of disunity." At the same meeting, which was also addressed by Thomas Ngwenya, chairman of the Cape Town branch of the African National Congress (ANC), Ngwenya told the audience

³⁹ *Cape Argus*, 30 May 1960 ; *Cape Times*, 30 May 1960.

that, "The Dutch Reformed Church must learn to think in terms of humanity, not in terms of the Afrikaner nation." ⁴⁰

In December 1958 the Liberal Party had antagonised many white South Africans when it sent Jordan Ngubane, Patrick Duncan and his wife Cynthia, as its representatives to the All-Africa People's Conference which was held in Accra, Ghana. On his return to South Africa, Duncan commented that Ghana was "the nearest thing to Utopia I have seen". His biographer writes that on this occasion Duncan was criticised by many whites for praising Nkrumah and simultaneously ignoring "the thousands of people Nkrumah had locked up". ⁴¹

Many white South Africans would have been highly aggrieved at a letter sent by Alan Paton to the *New Zealand Herald*, praising the "efforts made by many New Zealanders to prevent the exclusion of Maoris from the famous All Blacks Team soon to tour our country". In his letter, Paton wrote "We hope also that your sportsmen will refuse to give any further support to the practice of Apartheid in South Africa, and will therefore cease to play against a country that excludes all non-white players from its football sides." ⁴²

In the provincial elections held in 1959, Patrick Duncan, the Liberal Party candidate for Sea Point, told his audience that he thought that overseas trade boycotts of South Africa were a "good thing". By contrast the chairman of the

⁴⁰ Alan Paton Centre, Liberal Party Collection, PC 2/4/9/1-2. Message from Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana, to the Liberal Party of South Africa, Cape Town. See also *Cape Times*, 13 April 1959.

⁴¹ CJ Driver, *Patrick Duncan : South African and Pan-African* (London, 1980), p 158.

⁴² UCT, Alan Paton Papers, No. 62, Alan Paton - *New Zealand Herald*, 20 June 1959.

meeting, Gerald Gordon, who had been the Liberal Party's candidate in Sea Point during the general election of the previous year, said that he was opposed to such boycotts. Such ⁴³ episodes were evidence of the differences in opinion between the various factions of the Liberal Party. Although the party was small, it had a distinct lack of cohesion not usually associated with small political parties.

In September 1960, two prominent members of the Liberal Party in Cape Town, Oscar Wollheim and Gerald Gordon, resigned from the party, as they supported the idea of a qualified franchise whereas the Liberal Party had recently decided to adopt a policy of universal franchise. According to them they had wished to resign earlier but had postponed their resignations until the end of the state of the emergency that had been proclaimed after Sharpeville. The chairman of the Liberal Party in the Cape, Peter Hjul, told the press that about fifty members of the party in that province had resigned their membership during the previous two years. They included Donald Molteno and J Gibson, a prominent early member of the party, as well as B Curran, who was a member of the provincial council. ⁴⁴ Earlier in 1960, Margaret Ballinger and her husband, Senator Ballinger, announced that although they were not going to leave the Liberal Party, they did not support an overseas boycott of South African goods. ⁴⁵ In his letter of resignation, Wollheim told Peter Brown

⁴³ *Cape Argus*, 30 September 1959.

⁴⁴ *Cape Times*, 14 September 1960.

⁴⁵ *Eastern Province Herald*, 13 February 1960.

that he had disagreed with the party's views on the franchise issue for many years and that he believed that the qualification for the franchise should not be lowered to allow voters "to vote without any clear conception as to the issues involved". In a letter to Margaret Ballinger, Wollheim also mentioned his differences of opinion with Patrick Duncan.⁴⁶

The differences between the more militant and the peaceful wings of the Liberal Party are exemplified by the position of Margaret Ballinger, who took care not to express her opinions too publicly for fear of hurting her own party. She strongly disapproved of such methods as encouraging overseas trade boycotts of South Africa and she was disturbed by the increasing radicalism of some of her more militant colleagues such as Patrick Duncan. At one time she and some of her fellow thinkers sent a letter to the Liberal Party leadership urging a return to a qualified franchise policy and an end to the encouragement of overseas pressure on South Africa. The chairman of the Liberal party, Peter Brown, was not prepared to accede to these requests. Apparently Brown also thought it was inevitable that she would also leave the party after it adopted universal franchise as one of its policies. Significantly, after her departure from parliament in 1960, she had very limited contact with the Liberal Party.⁴⁷

Several important Liberals were detained during the

⁴⁶ UCT, BC 627, Oscar Wollheim Papers, D2.119, Oscar Wollheim - Margaret Ballinger, 10 September 1960 ; D2.120, Oscar Wollheim - Peter Brown, 10 September 1960.

⁴⁷ FA Mouton, *Die politieke loopbaan van Margaret Ballinger* (Unpublished D Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990), pp 245 - 247.

state of emergency in 1960. These included the national chairman, Peter Brown, the national vice-chairmen, J Isacowitz and H Meidner, and the Transvaal secretary, Ernest Wentzel.⁴⁸ Patrick Duncan and the vice-chairman of the Liberal Party in the Cape, Joseph Nkatlo, were both banned towards the end of March 1961 under the Suppression of Communism Act. Nkatlo had been listed as a Communist in 1950. According to the *Cape Argus* he left the Communist Party in 1945 and joined the Liberal Party in 1958.⁴⁹

The attitude of the government towards the Liberal Party can be gauged by the accusations levelled against it. In January 1961 the prime minister accused the Liberal Party of "conspiring with foreign allies to overthrow the Government by force".⁵⁰ Later the Minister of Native Administration and Development, De Wet Nel, while speaking in the Senate accused Patrick Duncan, one of the more prominent Liberals, of trying to stir up trouble in the reserves. He told the Senate that the Liberal Party was carrying on a campaign of "sowing suspicion among the Bantu" in order to cause the failure of the government's racial policies. According to him, Patrick Duncan, "the son of a very honourable Governor-General of South Africa", was one of those who did not hesitate to carry on a campaign of trying to cause suspicion against the government amongst Africans.⁵¹

The Liberal Party sometimes found it difficult to disseminate its views through the medium of *Contact*, the

⁴⁸ *Cape Times*, 27 September 1960 & 10 October 1960.

⁴⁹ *Cape Argus*, 1 April 1961.

⁵⁰ *Cape Argus*, 2 March 1961.

⁵¹ *Debates of the Senate*, 27 February 1961, col 1245.

periodical that was associated with it. The agents selling it were sometimes "harassed" by the police. During the state of emergency in 1960, the police also raided the offices of Contact several times and confiscated copies of certain issues.⁵² Individual members of the Liberal Party occasionally complained of police harassment and in January 1961 it was reported that no meetings of the Liberal Party had been permitted in Orlando or the south-west townships of Johannesburg.⁵³

While South Africa was moving towards becoming a republic, Alan Paton, Peter Brown, and Jordan Ngubane, wrote an open letter to Verwoerd in which they stated some of their feelings :

Your new Republic will have no friend in the world, unless it be the tottering regime of Portugal ... You are called by your followers the saviour of Afrikanerdom, but History will call you its destroyer ... Even amongst your own, the will to dominate is losing its ancient power.

In reaction to this letter, the Prime Minister's secretary wrote, "Due to the distorted outlook and wrong statement of facts the Prime Minister does not regard it as deserving any reply."⁵⁴

It was during 1961 that Alan Paton suspected that some members of the Liberal Party, namely Adrian Leftwich and Randolph Vigne, were contemplating violent methods of trying to force the government to change its policies. Alan Paton describes how he felt qualms of conscience when he was asked to address a meeting of the Liberal Party in Constantia during

⁵² CJ Driver, *Patrick Duncan : South African and Pan-African*, pp 156 & 184.

⁵³ WCL, Liberal Party Papers, Minutes of a National Committee Meeting, 28 - 29 January 1961. (This is a microfiche collection.)

⁵⁴ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/30/1/12, Letter from A Paton, J Ngubane and P Brown to HF Verwoerd, 9 May 1961 ; Letter from HF Verwoerd to A Paton, 16 May 1961 ; A Paton, *Journey continued* (Claremont, 1988), pp 220 - 221.

the 1961 general election in support of Vigne who was the party's candidate in that constituency. Leftwich was to turn state's witness in later years after he was implicated in trying to blow up a radio mast in Constantia.⁵⁵

The establishment of the PP in 1959 meant that the Liberal Party would be facing far greater opposition in future. Both parties would be appealing largely to the same type of voter in a country where the electorate was becoming more conservative. In a statement in November 1959 the Liberal Party sharply criticised the PP as being "clearly tied to the environment of the White electorate". It felt that it was significant that no "non-Whites" had been elected to the new party's National Executive, and characterised the Progressives as "still thinking in terms of consultation with non-White leaders rather than working with them to mould policies". In the opinion of the Liberal Party the Progressive policy of guaranteeing minority group rights was "their means of maintaining White rights and privileges", and such a policy was "exceedingly vague" and would arouse "non-White suspicion that it was designed to maintain White supremacy over non-Whites".⁵⁶

The National Chairman of the Liberal Party, Peter Brown, had some harsh words to say about the newly established Progressives in his quarterly report in November 1959. He described the launching of the new party as an all-white affair and he also doubted whether "Non-Whites" would join the Progressives in large numbers as the new party would be sure to take on "a White South African colouring which it will be

⁵⁵ A Paton, *Journey continued*, pp 223 - 229.

⁵⁶ *Cape Argus*, 18 November 1959.

extremely difficult for it to put off". Nevertheless it was Brown's opinion that "time and events" would drive the Progressives towards the Liberal Party.⁵⁷

Soon after the formation of the PP, Walter Stanford, who was one of the most capable members of the Liberal Party hierarchy, left the party. His main difference with the Liberal Party lay in their policy of adult universal suffrage and "other similar trends" concerning which he felt deeply. Stanford praised the policies of the Progressives who in his opinion, "aimed at doing away with the prime evils in South Africa". In an interview with the *Cape Times* he expressed the belief that the "policy of adult universal suffrage" propagated by the Liberal Party was certain to lead to "bad government and illiberal results". Although he thought that the Liberal Party had played a "very important" part in the history of South Africa "in educating the public and acting as a catalyst for the emergence of the Progressives", he was of the opinion that "the best way of alleviating the injustices to the African in the shortest possible time" lay in the policy of the Progressives.⁵⁸ Margaret Ballinger, however, exhibited a hostile attitude towards the newly established PP. She thought it would divide and fragment the liberal opposition even further.⁵⁹

Thus, as the Liberal Party approached the 1961 general election, it was in a beleaguered position. It had lost many of

⁵⁷ UCT, BC 627, Oscar Wollheim Papers, D2.109, National Chairman's report for the months of September, October and November 1959.

⁵⁸ *Cape Argus*, 8 December 1959 ; *Cape Times*, 9 December 1959.

⁵⁹ FA Mouton, *Die politieke loopbaan van Margaret Ballinger*, pp 213 - 216.

its most capable and prominent members, some of its senior members had been banned, and it had very little support from the major newspapers. Its policies were regarded by the majority of the electorate as idealistic at best and close to treasonable at worst. It was fighting the new and much stronger Progressive Party for the allegiance of a comparatively small section of the electorate. The party had lost its small but vociferous parliamentary representation after the abolition of the system of natives' representatives in parliament. It was therefore not surprising that the Liberal Party contested only two white constituencies in the 1961 general election and fared rather badly in both of them.

THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL UNION PARTY.

The National Union Party (NUP) owed its existence largely to the efforts and initiative of one man, Japie Basson, who had been an Independent MP after being expelled from the NP in 1959. Although the NUP had only a short existence and ultimately gained only one seat in parliament, it attracted the attention of the press and the public, and its establishment was regarded by some as being a portent of a possible split in the NP.

In February 1960 the *Sunday Times* announced that Basson had launched a new political party in South Africa that was to be called the NUP. According to the newspaper, Basson had outlined the aims of the party on the previous Thursday "at secret talks in Johannesburg attended mainly by Nationalist

dissidents". Basson told the *Sunday Times* that the principles of the new party "broadly speaking would be those of Hertzogism". Basson also said that he was convinced that "the time is ripe for a new party that will bring the English and Afrikaans-speaking people closer together and will acknowledge the brainpower and experience of both groups".⁶⁰ It would appear, however, that there were significant differences between Basson's policies and those of Hertzogism. The latter entailed a two-stream policy in which the two main language groups were separated to a large extent and allowed to maintain their own identities and cultural values. Nevertheless, the word "Hertzogism" might have attracted some voters, particularly older ones who hankered after a bygone era in South African history.

In reviewing the 1961 general election, the political scientists, Stultz and Butler, saw the purpose behind the establishment of the NUP as a desire "to create a political force between the National Party and the United Party and therefore to provide a basis for a political reunion of the two European linguistic groups."⁶¹

In April 1961, the South African Bond, a very minor political group, decided to join forces with the NUP. The points on which the two parties agreed included a desire to have a national government of Afrikaans and English speaking people, "the implementation of a virile economic policy based on private enterprise", and an "immediate return to what was the natural and traditional form of White and non-White relations in place of the

⁶⁰ *Sunday Times*, 14 February 1960.

⁶¹ NM Stultz & J Butler, "The South African general election of 1961", *Political Science Quarterly*, March 1963, vol LXXVIII, no 1, p 93.

present extreme, compulsory and impractical implementation of apartheid and State intervention in regulating and policing the private lives of people." It also recognised that "a minority of the Bantu are permanently settled outside the Bantu territories", and urged the acceptance of the Republic "as a fact". The coloureds should also be granted "direct election to parliament ... on the present basis of representation as a group."⁶² After the signing of the election pact between the UP and the NUP,⁶³ the South African Bond decided to withdraw its support from the NUP.⁶⁴

It was hardly surprising that the alliance between the NUP and the South African Bond should have ended so quickly as discussions between the two parties in July 1960 had also ended in failure. One of the NUP delegates, HL Schachat, in a letter to Japie Basson mentioned that agreement could not be reached on two issues, namely the republic and the right of the coloureds to elect their own people to parliament. According to Schachat, the South African Bond was not in favour of a republic. He also mentioned that the delegates for the South African Bond had taken the view that as soon as the coloureds were in parliament, "the African and Indian would follow with similar claims, and that by granting

⁶² INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, File 3/5/1/1/2, Statement issued by the National Chairman of the South African Bond, Mr. Raymond Joubert, in Johannesburg on Saturday, 8 th. April 1961. See also *Sunday Times*, 9 April 1961.

⁶³ See Chapter 4, p 151.

⁶⁴ *Sunday Times*, 20 August 1961. The strength of the South African Bond can be gauged by the fact that in the 1958 general election, it contested only the seats of Hospital and Orange Grove, gaining 863 and 221 votes in these seats respectively. BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 364.

the right to Coloureds you are immediately conceding the same right to the other non-European sections." ⁶⁵

In July 1961 Mr Justice Henry Fagan became the leader of the National Union Party and Basson became the National Chairman. Fagan's inclusion in the party gave it considerably more stature. Fagan was the secretary of the founding committee of *Die Burger*, and from 1916 to 1919 he was assistant chief editor when DF Malan occupied the editorial chair. He was elected to parliament as the member for Swellendam in 1933 and in 1938 he was appointed by General Hertzog as the Minister of Native Affairs and Social Welfare. After opposing South Africa's entry into the Second World War, he left the cabinet with General Hertzog. In 1943 he became a judge and later Chief Justice of the Union, retiring from that position in 1959. ⁶⁶

Brian Bamford, who was to stand for the NUP in George, regards Japie Basson as "a remarkable leader by any standards". He describes him as a splendid orator, hard working, imaginative, with a great sense of humour and showing unquestionable loyalty to his supporters. Bamford also remembers how the Afrikaans press gave Fagan "a hard time" as they regarded him as a "traitor to Afrikanerdom". ⁶⁷ As the NUP was so small, newly established and so fraught with difficulties, the personality and leadership of Basson were undoubtedly of great importance. The party was to a large extent his creation and bore all the imprints of his beliefs and character.

Some members of the NUP in the Cape experienced

⁶⁵ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, File 2/9/1/1/4, HL Schachat - Japie Basson, 29 July 1960.

⁶⁶ *The Realist*, vol 1, no 6, June 1961, p 5.

⁶⁷ Brian Bamford - Author, Rondebosch, 23 January 1996.

misgivings in August 1960 on the party's approach to the referendum. Several members of the Cape branch including Brian Bamford wrote a letter to Japie Basson informing him :

We are ourselves absolutely and irrevocably opposed to the referendum - if only for one reason, which, to us, is crystal clear. We believe that there is a risk, however slight, that South Africa will not be re-admitted to the Commonwealth, and in any event, that this is the view of the electorate. ... We believe that, having regard to the disrepute in which South Africa stands, there must remain at least a possibility of such non-readmission.

The correspondents thought that the party would alienate "a vast section of potential supporters" should they officially support the referendum. They did not, however, oppose the issue of republicanism : "If the referendum is lost, we shall continue to advocate republicanism ; if it is won, we can honestly state that we were wholeheartedly republican on terms which were nationally acceptable, and did not endanger the very cause of republicanism itself." ⁶⁸

Any potential success of the NUP would depend largely on its ability to attract disillusioned Nationalists. It was a party which revolved largely around the personalities of Basson and Fagan and which in general did not have candidates with much popular appeal or charisma. Although it did have some newspapers such as *Werda* and *The Realist* under its auspices, it also lacked press support, and most of its support was as a result of its alliance with the UP. The party was established only a short while before the 1961 general election and had even less time than the Progressives to present itself and its views to the electorate.

⁶⁸ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, file 2/9/1/1/5, C Broesma, B de Villiers, B Bamford, E Nathan, J van Niekerk, S Relding, J Fagan, H Brodie - Japie Basson, August 1960.

THE POSITION OF THE CONSERVATIVE WORKERS' PARTY.

The journalist and author John Gunther, in his very interesting book, *Inside Africa*, states that South Africa was the first country that he had encountered in Africa with a large poor white class.⁶⁹ Although the position of the working class whites in South Africa during the 1950s and early 1960s was far removed from their parlous situation in the late 1920s and 1930s, there were still whites who were impoverished and whose economic position would be severely jeopardised during any economic downturn. These people would have much to fear in the abolition of job reservation or any decision by the government to save money by retrenching staff in various government institutions. In 1961 the economy was experiencing a slight recession caused partially by the civil disorder in 1960 and the subsequent state of emergency. After the Sharpeville shootings there was a great loss of confidence on the part of foreign investors in South Africa. There was also a great outflow of capital from the country and the stock exchange slumped dramatically.⁷⁰ The recession naturally had an effect on the unemployment figures.

The report of the Department of Labour for the year 1961 shows that there was a monthly average of 30 392 unemployed whites, coloureds and Asiatics in South Africa. Of these, 15 875 were whites. For the purposes of comparison, the monthly average of unemployed people during the previous year was 25 738.⁷¹

⁶⁹ J Gunther, *Inside Africa* (London, 1955), p 457.

⁷⁰ BJ Liebenberg & SB Spies (eds.), *South Africa in the 20 th century* (Pretoria, 1993), p 397.

⁷¹ Department of Labour, *Annual Report, 1961*, p 1.

Reference has already been made to a feeling of dissatisfaction among a significant number of working class whites in areas such as Germiston. An example is those working in the clothing industry, who had been adversely affected by the government's decision to encourage industrial development in the homelands. It is therefore not entirely surprising that a new party saw the light of day in September 1961 and that it was dedicated to supporting the white workers. Although this new party, the Conservative Workers' Party, was short-lived and did not come anywhere near winning the seats that it contested in 1961, its establishment did show that the government had lost some of its support among the white workers whom they had assiduously cultivated for many years and it did cause slight concern in some NP circles.

Although the Conservative Workers' Party did not really pose any great threat to the Nationalists, *Die Transvaler* tried to soothe the fears of some workers that they were being neglected or forgotten. In an editorial entitled "Die werkers se vriend", the newspaper dismissed the new party as being of no consequence at all. In its view no party established so soon before a general election could have any chance of success. It pointed out that under the NP government the average annual salary of white workers in factories had risen from R 907 in 1948 to R 1 825 in 1960. The editorial did not however indicate whether these increases were above or below the general inflation rate. It also listed some of the improvements the NP government had introduced in the position of the workers ; improved conditions for apprentices, higher payments to the unemployed, the establishment of minimum

rates of payment in some industries, an increase in payment for overtime work, and greater opportunities for adults to be trained as artisans. ⁷²

On 22 September 1961 the NP took out a double-page advertisement in *Die Transvaler* describing what they had done for the workers. It was entitled, "Ons regering sorg vir die werkers". It pointed out *inter alia* that in its thirteen years in office more than 73 000 houses for whites had been built using state capital or with the help of the government. The advertisement also enumerated the additional benefits that the government had granted to its employees and to workers in general. Special mention was made of how the mineworkers, railwaymen, and members of the Police, Defence Force, and Prison Services had benefited under NP rule. ⁷³

The Conservative Workers' Party was formed and led primarily by leaders in various trade unions that had long been regarded as a source of support for the NP. When the party was established, the *Sunday Times* identified its leaders as J Kruger, the assistant chief secretary of the South African Iron and Steel Workers' Union, K du Preez, general secretary of the South African Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association, R Nagel, the chief organiser of the Witwatersrand's Iron and Steel Workers, H Harvey, secretary of the Johannesburg Iron and Steel Workers' Union, and B Keeble, district secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. The report described the new party's main grievances as a perception that the "standards of industrial workers are being sacrificed on the altar of Bantustan apartheid",

⁷² *Die Transvaler*, 9 September 1961.

⁷³ *Die Transvaler*, 22 September 1961.

and that, "instead of checking unemployment, the Government is urging Afrikaner workers to pull their belts tighter".⁷⁴

Nagel and Kruger were later dismissed from their positions in the South African Iron and Steel Workers' Union, when they refused to accede to the demand of the executive committee that they should stand down as candidates for the Conservative Workers' Party and withdraw from active politics.⁷⁵

How significant, then, was the Conservative Workers' Party ? It would appear to be of very little moment in the South African political scene but was largely an indication that a number of working class Nationalists, particularly in certain urban areas, were discontented with their position. They felt that others in the NP were being favoured above them. The party's short life, its lack of success in the 1961 general election and the fact that it was rooted virtually entirely in the trade union movement meant that it would make very little impact on South African political history.

THE ROLE PLAYED BY ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTING
THE DISENFRANCHISED.

At the time of the 1958 general election the ranks of the disenfranchised in South Africa included the Asiatics, the Africans (except for a small number in the Cape Province), and nearly all the coloured people. During the 1959 parliamentary session Verwoerd managed to remove the parliamentary

⁷⁴ *Sunday Times*, 3 September 1961.

⁷⁵ *Sunday Times*, 24 September 1961.

representation of the Africans in the Cape, thus effectively disenfranchising all the Africans in South Africa. A small number of coloureds in the Cape were represented by four members of parliament. The Eleventh Delimitation Commission had the task of assigning these coloureds to four constituencies based on the voters' roll of 15 June 1957. These four constituencies, namely Boland, Karoo, Outeniqua and Peninsula had 8 221, 6 330, 6 330, and 8 393 voters respectively - 29 274 voters in all. There were doubtless some coloured people who were too apathetic or alienated to register. These figures are a very adequate indication of how limited and ineffective the coloured vote was during this period. ⁷⁶

The most influential black political organisation during this time was undoubtedly the ANC, led in 1958 by Chief Albert Lutuli. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a significant number of members of the ANC broke away from that organisation in 1959 to form the PAC under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe. ⁷⁷ The breakaway took place in circumstances of much bitterness. During the following year the rivalry between the organisations was an important factor in the events at Sharpeville and the subsequent unrest throughout the country. The extent of the animosity existing between these two organisations is evident in a statement released by a spokesman for the PAC, William Jolebe, after the bloodshed at Sharpeville : ⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Report of the Eleventh Delimitation Commission, *Government Gazette Extraordinary*, no 6006, 7 February 1958.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 2, pp 57 - 59.

⁷⁸ B Pogrund, *Sobukwe and apartheid* (Johannesburg, 1990), p 141.

The ANC is now trying to bask in the sunshine of the PAC's successes. Luthuli now has the courage which he has lacked for over twelve years to burn his reference book after passes had been suspended. Supported and boosted by the white Press, he has been making one foolish statement after the other, pretending he has a following in the country. ... Our advice and warning to the ANC and its liberal friends is : Hands off our campaign. We do not need your interference. Go on with your coffin-carrying and other childish pastimes but leave the African people to fight their struggle without you. Tell your bosses you cannot sell the African people because you do not control them.

The animosity between the ANC and the PAC is also shown by a statement issued by Mandela in June 1961. It discussed the results of the stay-at-home which had been called for 29, 30 and 31 May 1961 and criticised the PAC for its lack of support. It accused the PAC of mean and cowardly behaviour in stabbing their kith and kin at a time when maximum unity had become a "matter of life and death to Africans." It mentioned supposed instances of collaboration between the PAC and the police and accused the PAC of "supporting a government that suppresses Africans". This was "treacherous and unforgivable".⁷⁹

Tom Lodge identifies several key areas in which the ANC and the PAC differed. They differed in their attitudes towards white supporters with the PAC believing that whites had mainly sectional interests. These ideals had been reflected in the Freedom Charter in the form of various clauses that guaranteed the position and rights of various population groups. This had caused the dissolution of the "ethnically assertive nationalism" which the PAC believed should form the kernel of the black

⁷⁹ N Mandela, *The struggle is my life* (London, 1990), pp 112 - 113.

struggle. The ANC and the PAC also differed on the question of "spontaneity". In Lodge's opinion the ANC regarded it as the duty of the leaders to give "proper direction" to the mass movements whereas the PAC thought that it merely had "to show the light and the masses will find the way."⁸⁰

Personality differences between the leaders of the ANC and the PAC were undoubtedly important in preventing the formation of a really effective and united front but these two parties also had considerable policy differences. They differed in their attitudes to the other population groups in South Africa. One writer, P van den Berghe, describes the PAC as being "militantly anti-Indian, anti-European and anti-Coloured, in spite of declarations to the contrary".⁸¹ Van den Berghe also believes that there were certain other factors that hampered the various black political organisations in opposing the Verwoerd government. Some of these factors included the vigorous role played by the police in intimidating the leadership and the rank and file in these organisations. Many of these leaders were arrested and imprisoned while other leaders had to operate underground. These organisations often did not have the financial resources needed for sustained campaigns and the poverty of most black workers meant that most strikes would be doomed to failure. The traditional chiefs often viewed black political organisations with suspicion and there was sometimes a lack of contact between the leadership of these bodies and the rural masses.⁸²

⁸⁰ T Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, pp 83 - 84.

⁸¹ P van den Berghe, *South Africa : a study in conflict* (Connecticut), pp 168 - 169.

⁸² Ibid.

Two important events had a great influence on the history of the black extra-parliamentary organisations between 1958 and 1961. One was the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960. This has been discussed in Chapter 2 but it should be emphasised that this had the effect of driving most of the leadership into hiding or making them work underground. It also undoubtedly hardened the attitude of the ANC leadership and made them more willing to accept the idea of violence as a tactic. The other event was the drift from more peaceful methods of protest to more violent or forceful ones. For example, during the 1958 general election, the ANC tried to call a general strike but this was a complete failure, partly because of the difficulties involved in organising such a strike and partly because of the firm measures adopted by the state. In London *The Observer* mentioned some of the strong tactics that the state might use to suppress such a strike. These included the use of convict labour in certain areas and the prohibition of gatherings of more than ten blacks in most cities. The fact that many companies had threatened to dismiss striking workers also militated against the possible success of strike action. Whatever the outcome, the ANC had been successful in its primary aim - "to intervene impressively in the Union's all-white general election."⁸³

Interestingly enough, Graaff also warned the blacks against taking part in these protests. At a meeting in Johannesburg he said :⁸⁴

The United Party will not tolerate disorder, illegal action or economic blackmail for the redress of political grievances and I want to take this opportunity of warning the Native people of South

⁸³ *The Observer*, 13 April 1958.

⁸⁴ *The Pretoria News*, 25 March 1958.

Africa not to be so foolish as to join the protest that is being organised by the Native workers' conference and other bodies to make election week a week of national protest and demonstration in support of what they call the people's demands.

After the first day of the general strike the ANC decided to call it off as it promised, in Nelson Mandela's words, to be a "fiasco". In the discussions that took place within the ANC afterwards, a certain number of members argued that it would have been more successful had pickets and more coercive methods been employed.⁸⁵ This was possibly the most significant result of the strike - it showed the growth of a willingness to discard peaceful or persuasive methods of protest.

In the three years that followed the 1958 general election, black politics in South Africa was dominated by various incidents of rebellion and violent protest. These included the disturbances in Pondoland, the riots at Cato Manor, the shootings at Sharpeville, the never to be forgotten march on Cape Town and the disturbances that occurred in much of South Africa in 1960. All of these have been discussed in Chapter Two.⁸⁶ The extent of the racial unrest had two main results - one was the hardening of racial attitudes among many whites. The other was the decision to declare a state of emergency and to ban both the ANC and the PAC. This, understandably, contributed greatly to the way that leadership of these parties disappeared underground. It also influenced their shift towards a policy of violence or "armed struggle". The ANC, thus, reached a significant point in its history at a meeting of the Working Committee in June 1961 when

⁸⁵ N Mandela, *A long walk to freedom*, pp 254 - 255.

⁸⁶ See Chapter 2, pp 59 - 65.

Mandela raised the question of an "armed struggle". Mandela commented that the state had given them no alternative but to use violent methods and that should the ANC not take the lead in employing violence it would soon "be latecomers and followers" to a movement over which they had no control."⁶⁷ According to Tom Lodge, the ANC National Executive decided that the Congress itself would not change its official policy of non-violence but "those of its members who involved themselves in the campaign should not be restrained". Lodge sees this as implying the need to establish a separate organisation - in this case *Umkhonto we Sizwe*.⁶⁸

By the time of the 1961 election campaign many of the prominent leaders of the black "liberation organisations" had gone into exile or were in hiding. An example of this was Nelson Mandela who was on the run from the authorities after a warrant had been issued for his arrest. On 26 June 1961 he issued a press release which ran, "I will not leave South Africa, nor will I surrender. ... Only through hardship, sacrifice, and militant action can freedom be won. The struggle is my life. I will continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days."⁶⁹

As will be seen in the chapter dealing with the themes of the 1961 general election campaign, the NP made an issue of the need to deal firmly with black unrest and with subversive black political organisations. The ANC and PAC were thus important in influencing white politics at this time. Black resistance politics during this period was characterised by a

⁶⁷ N Mandela, *A long walk to freedom*, pp 320 - 323.

⁶⁸ T Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, p 233.

⁶⁹ S Johns & R Hunt Davis (eds.), *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress* (New York, 1991), p 90.

move towards more confrontational and violent methods of trying to influence the government. The resources of the state and its security apparatus were brought into action to suppress black resistance. Also of crucial importance was the banning of the ANC and the PAC and their transformation into underground political movements. There were numerous factors that militated against these movements' chances of success. These included the strength and resolution of the state and the whites, the lack of unity among various black political groups, their inability to attract much support from foreign governments and furthermore the inability to launch a sustained and powerful campaign of resistance among a population group that was poverty-stricken and often fragmented.

CHAPTER SIX.

POLICIES OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES

PRIOR TO THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION.

This chapter will examine the policies of the various parties participating in the 1961 general election, followed by the decision to call an early election.

The policies of the National Party.

After the 1958 general election the government began paying considerable attention to the further implementation of the apartheid policy. In higher education, for example, the outcome was the Extension of University Education Act (Act No. 45 of 1959), which provided for the establishment of university colleges for black students. In future these students would need the permission of the Minister of Education to attend a white university. This law was opposed by the UP, partly on the grounds that it was an attack on the autonomy of the existing universities and partly because the new black university colleges would not have the status of universities and would lack academic freedom. There were also objections that the Committee of University Principals had not been consulted on the new measure and that it would limit contact among the people who would in time become leaders of their own communities. It was furthermore quite impracticable for the new colleges to duplicate the courses that were already being followed by black students at their present racially-mixed universities. ¹

The Population Registration Act (Act 30 of 1950)

¹ A survey of race relations, 1958 - 1959, pp 266 - 267.

was fundamental to the policy of apartheid and there were regular examinations of doubtful racial classification. The Minister of the Interior announced in April 1961 that his department had thus far determined the race of 57 981 people on the white / coloured borderline and 70 605 people on the coloured / African borderline. He also claimed that the decisive test lay in the acceptance of a person by the community. For example, some Chinese had been accepted as individuals by the whites but this could not be said about the Chinese as a group, and thus this problem would have to receive attention.²

The Nationalist government was also determined to enforce the pass laws more stringently despite the difficulties involved in doing so. The pass system naturally involved a great deal of administration. The Minister of Bantu Administration mentioned in parliament in February 1961 that during the preceding twelve months 3976 black men and 991 women had been "endorsed out" of the municipal areas of Cape Town, Goodwood, Parow and Bellville. On 21 March 1961 the Minister of Justice said that during the last year for which statistics had been determined, "a daily average of 162 persons had been charged in Johannesburg for offences against laws and regulations dealing with ... measures generally known as the Pass laws."³

Although the policy of having separate schools on language grounds was a less prominent theme in the 1961 general election than it had been in 1958, it did occasionally feature in Verwoerd's correspondence. In a letter to a SJ Suchet of

² *A survey of race relations*, 1961, p 85.

³ *Ibid.*, p 128.

Vereeniging, Verwoerd's private secretary pointed out that the Union government was not actually in control of the school system. The schools were in fact controlled by the provincial administrations. According to Verwoerd most rural schools in South Africa (with the exception of those in Natal) had been actually designated as parallel-medium but this was not always apparent as many English-speaking parents in the rural areas preferred to send their children to schools in the urban areas. It was therefore the English-speaking parents and not the government, who ensured that parallel-medium schools were not widely utilised. ⁴

In May 1959 Verwoerd denied that the policy of independent black homelands meant that urbanised blacks would have to return to "purely rural reserves, as we knew them in the past", or that the tribal system "as it existed in primitive times" would be the "be-all and end-all of the Bantu governmental development visualized in this Bill".⁵ No black who had acquired "either learning or knowledge or capital in the urban areas of South Africa" would be expected to return to any rural reserve "without any hope of advancement". Verwoerd claimed that since the adoption of the policy of separate development, "openings and opportunities" had been created on "an unprecedented scale for the Bantu, and particularly also for the more skilled or even the educated Native". Hundreds of young Africans had been given

⁴ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/30/1/13, HF Verwoerd - SJ Suchet, 28 September 1959.

⁵ Verwoerd was referring here to the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill, which was later passed as Act No. 46 of 1959.

responsible and important positions "in the service of their own nation".⁶

KA Heard has identified some of the main objections to the NP's policies on the Bantustans and how these affected the 1961 election. For example, if these policies were to be comprehensively implemented there would still be six million blacks living in white areas by the end of the century. Furthermore, black urban dwellers (even though they would have a limited form of self-government in the Bantustans) would be unable to own their own land there. They would thus have rights that could 'hardly be regarded as substantial'. It was also clear that the economic development of the homelands would not be rapid or extensive enough to stop the large-scale migration of homeland blacks to the cities.⁷

Verwoerd's policies and visions relating to the black homelands were an easy target for the right-wing of the UP, which accused him of causing the break-up of large parts of South Africa. Typical of this is the oft-quoted speech by Vause Raw :⁸

What mockery of the future of South Africa, to put the White man in a minority of two to one in a multi-racial state and at the same time to build round him a horse-shoe, a Black noose of states which inevitably must be alienated from the White man in this country.

By the 1950s the NP had come to accept the Indians as part of the permanent population. There was no question, however, of their political or economic status being improved. The South African government had fallen foul of the UNO over the

⁶ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 20 May 1959, cols 6215, 6216, 6217.

⁷ K Heard, *General elections in South Africa*, p 122.

⁸ *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 2 June 1959, cols 7180, 7181, 7182.

Indian question but neither this nor the massive passive resistance campaign in the 1940s had produced any redress of the Indians' grievances by 1961.

The policies of the United Party.

The policies of the UP are described in an article written by Graaff in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1961.⁹ In describing the "evolutionary progress of any racial group in Africa towards higher economic or political status," Graaff believed that, "the White man in South Africa has a duty as the bearer of the older and more established civilization to guide that evolutionary process, where it is within his power to do so." He felt that the Nationalist government was trying to seek a just solution to the country's race problems but that the difficulty with their proposals was that they had come two hundred years too late. Graaff regarded the government's aim of establishing segregation in the economic sphere as being unrealistic as it had "gone too far" and "the egg cannot be unscrambled". Furthermore, calculations had shown that the whites would compose a much smaller percentage of the country's work force by the year 2000 and this meant that it would be impossible to maintain "parallel development and rigid separation for the races in those circumstances".

The coloured people in South Africa had shown that they had accepted "Western standards" and were "civilized", and

⁹ Sir de Villiers Graaff, "South African Prospect", *Foreign Affairs*, June 1961, vol 39, no 4, pp 670 - 682.

therefore "they should in every way be regarded as part of Western society in South Africa, enjoying the rights to which that status entitles them." They should be placed on a common voters roll and allowed to nominate and elect their own people to parliament. Furthermore, any measure "that may be necessary in the economic field to protect the higher standard of living of our civilized people should not apply to them".

In discussing the blacks in South Africa, Graaff wrote, "When people are at varying stages of development one cannot be dogmatic about their position in society." As the whites feared being submerged "under a wave of primitive nationalism", the UP regarded the strengthening of the white population as very important and would do so by increased immigration and by "social planning to increase the birth rate". The UP hoped that with such a policy the white population would increase to at least fifteen million by the end of the century. This would mean a great change in the psychology of the white man as, "His influence will be supported by numbers, as democracy demands ; and his good intentions will then not be frustrated by the fear that justice done to the Native may mean his own cultural, economic and political annihilation." According to Graaff, the "responsible class of Natives qualifying for registration on their own voters roll" would be represented in parliament, and the blacks would also be represented in local government by "elective bodies - not archaic tribal authorities" and in the administration of the reservations. The UP believed that as South Africa could not prosper if "dismembered", it could not support the Nationalist policy of partitioning South Africa. The UP intended to restore the representatives for the blacks to the central parliament.

Parliamentary representation for blacks, which had previously been limited to the Cape Province, would be extended to the rest of the country. These representatives would be whites "at least in the initial stages", and they would be chosen "by Natives registered on the grounds of character and responsible status on a separate voters roll". This would obviate the need to have "civilization tests", which were "at best arbitrary and unscientific".

In the same article, turning to the position of urban blacks, Graaff identified three immediate and urgent tasks. These were namely to amend the laws which offended "against the dignity of our Native peoples as human beings"; to take steps which would bring real improvements in their standard of living and education and thirdly, to give the urban blacks a stake in the community by developing them into "a responsible, property-owning, middle class in contrast to the dangerous proletariat which they may well become as things are at present." In the economic sphere the UP intended to narrow the gap between the wages of the various racial groups, to boost productivity by improving the training given to blacks, to abolish job reservation, and to uphold the principle of paying "the rate for the job".¹⁰

In October 1960 when Graaff visited Britain and Canada in order to raise support for South Africa's membership of the commonwealth, he issued a statement outlining the UP's stance. According to him, those coloured people entitled to vote on a separate roll or a common roll should also have the right to stand for parliament. Artificial economic discrimination against

¹⁰ Sir de Villiers Graaff, "South African Prospect", *Foreign Affairs*, July 1961, vol 39, no 4, pp 670 - 682.

coloured people, like job reservation, should disappear. Asians in South Africa should be accepted as a permanent part of the population. Immediate attention should be given to the effects of the application of the Group Areas Act (Act No. 41 of 1950) on the economic enterprises run by the Asians and negotiations should be opened to determine their future political status. Special emphasis should be placed "on the development of the African Reserves with White capital and White skill". South Africa should "have the courage to accept a permanent detribalized African population as a fact" and this group should be given representation in parliament based primarily on a permanent urban middle class, whose emergence should be fostered. ¹¹

The policies outlined earlier emphasise the integrationist aspects of the UP's policies and do not stress those that were segregationist in character. The motion introduced by Marais Steyn in parliament in February 1960 showed a more right-wing bias, particularly the first section. This was probably intended more for the South African voter than for overseas opinion. He moved that the House should confirm the traditional and accepted South African policy of social and residential separation among the races and that it should condemn those NP policies which sought a solution of South Africa's race problems in unrealistic attempts to develop independent Native states. These were impracticable because they had no regard for the permanent presence of millions of blacks of the same ethnic groups outside those areas. He called upon the government to accept the

¹¹ *A survey of race relations, 1959 - 1960, p 11.*

permanent multi-racial character of South Africa and to formulate its policies accordingly. He also demanded that such reformed policies should "accept the restoration of the Cape Coloured people in the Cape Province and Natal on a common roll". They should "be based upon consultation with the Native peoples at all levels and their representation as a group in the Parliament of South Africa while ensuring the maintenance of those Western standards of which the European race group is by tradition and history the guardian." ¹²

At the very significant Bloemfontein Congress of the UP in August 1959, ¹³ Graaff managed to have his ideas on racial issues adopted by the delegates, but only after what was described by the *Cape Times* as a "bitter row". The resolutions were that "African representation be restored to the Cape and extended to the Northern provinces ; that this representation be based on separate rolls ; that qualification for registration on separate rolls be based on responsibility ; that such representation be by Europeans and that the maximum number of representatives will be eight." ¹⁴

The policies of the Progressive Party.

After the first National Conference of the PP in Johannesburg in November 1959, the party formulated a statement of its main principles and policies. The first dedicated the party to "the maintenance and extension of the values of Western civilization, the protection of fundamental human rights and the

¹² *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 15 February 1960, cols 1560, 1561.

¹³ See Chapter 4, pp 131 - 133.

¹⁴ *Cape Times*, 13 August 1959.

safeguarding of the dignity and worth of the human person, irrespective of race, colour or creed". No citizen of the Union of South Africa should be debarred on grounds of race, religion, language or sex, from making the contribution to their national life of which he or she might be capable. The Union of South Africa is one nation embracing various racial groups with different religions, languages and traditions. Each such group is entitled to the protection of its culture and its right to participation in the government of the nation. Furthermore, understanding, tolerance and goodwill between the different racial groups should be fostered. The Rule of Law should be maintained. The party pledged itself to the promotion of social progress and the improvement of living standards through the energetic development of a modern economy based on free enterprise, with the free utilisation of all national resources. It also encouraged the promotion of friendly relations with other nations, more particularly the members of the Commonwealth and those sharing the heritage of Western civilization with South Africa. ¹⁵

In 1960 the PP adopted a franchise policy that was based on the recommendations of the Molteno Commission. In February 1960, Steytler announced the names of the members of the commission, which was to be chaired by D Molteno, a former natives' representative in parliament. Its members included ex-Chief Justice Centlivres, Leslie Blackwell (also a former judge and retired MP), Harry Oppenheimer, JG Strauss (formerly leader of the UP), Dr D van der Ross, and Zach de Beer. Two

¹⁵ *A survey of race relations, 1959 - 1960, p 12.*

professors of history, LM Thompson and S Marais, were also members of the commission. In October 1960 its report was published.¹⁶ It proposed granting full voting rights on the ordinary voters' roll to all South Africans who had passed Standard Eight or its equivalent. Alternatively those who had reached Standard Six and had the attainments of a semi-skilled worker or who were literate and had the attainments of at least a skilled worker should be allowed to vote. Those who were literate and owned fixed property or who had been at any time a voter for the House of Assembly should also be enfranchised. There would be a special voters' roll for those who did not qualify to vote on the general voters' roll. The main requirement for admission to the special voters' roll was passing a literacy test. Voters on this roll would elect no more than ten percent of the members of the House of Assembly in specially delimited constituencies and at a separate election. There would be a rigid, entrenched constitution and a Bill of Rights to protect the rights of individuals and groups. The composition of the Senate would be changed and would exercise control over all non-financial legislation. A candidate could not be elected to the Senate unless he or she had obtained the support of a "meaningful percentage" of the members of each population group. The majority report of the Molteno Commission suggested that "a candidate at a Senate election who receives the largest number of votes shall be declared elected, provided that his votes include at least one-fifth of the total votes cast by members of each community." Otherwise the elected person would be the candidate who "had received the highest proportion of the

¹⁶ J Strangways-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, pp 299 - 301.

votes of all the communities concerned i.e. the candidate whose ratio of votes of the community which favoured him proportionately least, is higher than any other candidates' ratio of the votes of the community that favoured him proportionately least."

The above definition is somewhat obscure but the procedure is clarified by the report of the Molteno Commission which provided clear examples of how members of the Senate would be elected. ¹⁷ According to David Scher, there were two main schools of thought among the members of the Molteno Commission. The one held that there should be "a fairly high qualification for the full franchise" and that there should be special minority representation for all those who did not qualify. The other school believed that there was a general demand among the blacks for universal suffrage and that such aspirant voters would regard a high franchise qualification as merely "a device for the maintenance of white dominance". It should also be remembered that more than half of the members of the commission were not PP members. The commission rejected the idea of a "B" roll for those who did not qualify for the ordinary voters' roll. Harry Oppenheimer and Zach de Beer, however, submitted a minority report in favour of such a roll and this proposal was accepted by the PP congress. ¹⁸

One of the members of the Molteno Commission, Richard van der Ross, also submitted a minority report and a letter to Molteno. The letter was subsequently printed as part of the report of the commission, and argued that the educational qualifications

¹⁷ UNISA, Progressive Party Collection, File 12, Constitution and Franchise, Molteno Verslag, Deel 1, p 22, November 1960.

¹⁸ D Scher, *Dilitinzaba - He - who - removes - mountains* (Johannesburg, 1979), pp 83 & 85.

for the franchise should be Standard Four. Van der Ross rejected the idea of a "B" roll but supported the idea of adult suffrage.¹⁹

Harry Oppenheimer also played a significant role in the formulation of policy. In a letter that he wrote to Harry Lawrence in November 1959, he pointed out that care would have to be taken not to give their opponents the opportunity to say that the Progressives were going to abolish the system of migrant labour. As far as the gold mining areas were concerned, ending the system of migrant labour would entail bringing another 2 000 000 blacks to these areas "and this I should think would be impossible both economically and physically from the space point of view". Oppenheimer thought that the party should emphasise the need to create "proper conditions for a settled African population" and that they "could not express opposition to the migrant system as such". The Progressives' policy on labour should make it clear "that it is appreciated that the migrant system, especially in regard to the mining industry, cannot be abolished." Although Oppenheimer thought that the pass laws and the system of influx control should be abolished, he felt that experts should be consulted before taking any firm stand on the issues.²⁰

The policies of the National Union Party.

To a very large extent the policies of the newly established NUP were similar to those of the UP but there were some noteworthy differences and omissions. K Heard points out

¹⁹ UNISA, Progressive Party Collection, File 12, Constitution and Franchise, *Molteno Verslag*, Deel 1, pp 47 - 48, November 1960.

²⁰ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, H1.36, Harry Oppenheimer - Harry Lawrence, 12 November 1959.

that the NUP favoured a republican form of government although with continued membership of the commonwealth. It omitted all references to the Asians, to the future political status of Africans and to the race federation idea expounded by the UP.²¹

Various PP supporters also sometimes tended to stress the fact that while the UP wished to return the coloureds to the common voters' roll with the whites, the NUP wanted them kept on a separate roll. The NUP also attempted to make political capital out of the need to improve relations between the two white language groups.

Much of the intellectual basis for the policies of the NUP was provided by Henry Fagan's book, *Our Responsibility*, which was published in 1960.²² Fagan provided statistics that showed that at the time of the 1951 census a mere 38,5 % of the black population lived in the "Bantu areas" and that the corresponding percentages for the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were 21 and 3,5 % respectively. He cited the report of the Commission under his guidance that had been appointed by General Smuts in 1946 to investigate the "Native problem" :

The Commission found it would be impossible to remove the Bantu from the European areas ; the Reserves could not carry them, and the industries which were established in the European areas, but which were now an indispensable source of income for all, White and non-White, could not do without them.

Fagan defended the segregationist policies that were adopted by General Hertzog. He felt that the conduct of the

²¹ K Heard, *General elections in South Africa*, p 126.

²² HA Fagan, *Our responsibility* (Stellenbosch, 1960), pp 12 - 15, 21, 44, 49, 54 - 55.

[Hertzog] Government was motivated solely by its general duty to preserve peace and order and to promote good living conditions." He condemned the "either-or" approach of the government that recognised only extremes of policies and could not reach a compromise between such extremes. He also pointed out that apartheid did not direct economic laws but instead economic laws would dictate to apartheid what was feasible and what was not. In Fagan's view there was a natural segregation between the races which did not require the application of Draconian legislation. He also believed that legislation was not necessarily the remedy for everything. Generally his point was that there were certain forces at work that were irreversible : apartheid, in his view, would be impracticable.

An interesting aspect of Fagan's book is his idea that paying "the rate for the job" was not always feasible in South Africa. He referred to the building industry, maintaining that if blacks were trained to do skilled work in this industry it would be "unequal, and therefore unfair and harmful, competition" for them to compete with whites, coloureds and Asiatics. As Fagan expressed it, "... people who have a high standard of life may require protection against others whose lower needs make the competition unequal and threaten to have a detrimental effect on the way of life of the best portion of the population." Nevertheless, he conceded that any job reservation should be applied "rarely and only with great caution".²³

²³ HA Fagan, *Our responsibility*, pp 75 - 76.

The policies of the Conservative Workers' Party.

There was very little publicity given to the short-lived Conservative Workers' Party but their policies were described in an article in the *Rand Daily Mail* of 8 September 1961. The party stood for a system of comprehensive social security and welfare with free education, free hospital and medical services, a compulsory national pension scheme, and an enlarged scheme of national unemployment insurance. It also favoured family allowances, adequate housing for workers, minimum wage levels for all sections of the community and an immigration policy that took into account the needs of white workers without threatening the security of an employee's position. ²⁴

The policies of the Liberal Party.

In 1960 the Liberal Party changed its policy on the franchise and decided that all adults in South Africa should be entitled to vote. It also believed that there should be a rigid constitution with a Bill of Rights based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This would protect the rights of all South Africans and would be enforced by an independent judiciary. ²⁵

After its adoption of a policy of universal suffrage, the Liberal Party published a guide to its policies entitled "Non-Racial Democracy". It detailed its two major objections to the prevailing system of government - the fact that political

²⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 8 September 1961.

²⁵ *A survey of race relations*, 1961, pp 11 & 12.

rights were restricted to whites and that there was no protection of "individual rights against arbitrary curtailment". The Liberal Party intended "to extend the right of franchise on the common roll to all adult persons". Because it recognised that universal franchise together with "unlimited sovereignty of the central legislature" might lead to "tyranny by the majority", it would seek to establish "a controlled constitution, in which a Bill of Rights will be entrenched". Major economic changes would also have to accompany these political changes. These would hopefully lead "to greater prosperity for the country as a whole, a more just distribution of income and equality of opportunity for all the people of South Africa". To implement this, the party would use four main methods : the abolition of the economic colour bar, the raising of wage levels, "the intensive expansion of industry by means of capital investment", and the "redistribution of land and progressive development of agriculture". The Wage Board would be responsible for raising the wages of poorer employees. The policy of redistribution of land would be facilitated by "means of taxation designed to discourage the concentration of large estates in a few hands and by enforcing the sale to the state of unused or under-developed land".²⁶

A prominent Liberal, Ernest Wentzel, defended the party's adoption of a policy of universal franchise in a speech delivered in November 1960. In his view the Liberal Party could not deny the vote to blacks who through no fault of their own had not been particularly well educated but who had shown themselves

²⁶ UNISA, United Party Archives, Division of Information, File 92, Liberal Party of South Africa, Non-racial democracy (no date), pp 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 21,

to be men of "wisdom and integrity". It did not believe that education was the best test of a man's civilisation and asked why "illiterate India" had elected a responsible government while Germany "for all its learning" had fallen under the sway of Hitler. Under the PP's definition of a civilised man, "All the Nazis would easily qualify." Furthermore the Liberal Party believed that all men, whatever their education or financial worth, had certain needs and interests. Their needs would only be catered for if they had the vote and if some politician depended on them for support. Denying the franchise to blacks would merely cause them to adopt unconstitutional means to achieve their political aims.²⁷

Rumours on the possibility of an early general election in 1961.

When Verwoerd announced that a general election would be held on 18 October 1961, the news did not come as a great surprise. There had been considerable speculation in the press during the course of that year on the likelihood that the Prime Minister might call an early general election. As early as October 1960 *The Natal Mercury* speculated that Verwoerd's victory in the referendum would encourage him to call an early general election. With a skilful delimitation of seats, Verwoerd might well increase his parliamentary majority by eight or ten members. It would also be to his advantage, when attending the Commonwealth Conference to be able to claim that the majority of

²⁷ WCL, A1931, Liberal Party Collection, D61, Speech delivered by Ernest Wentzel at Kensington Hall, 29 November 1960.

the electorate had clearly supported his policies in a general election.²⁸

In November 1960 *Die Burger* published a report expressing the opinion that rumours about the possibility of an early election were pure guesswork. It commented that the general election of 1958, the provincial elections of 1959 and the referendum of 1960 had placed an extreme burden on the civil service, the organisations of the various parties and on the public purse. An early election would also make it difficult to excite enthusiasm among the electorate. *Die Burger* felt that the UP would welcome an early election. It would have the opportunity to obliterate the Progressives in parliament, which would save the party much embarrassment. It would make the House of Assembly a more moderate body as none of the Progressive MPs there had been elected on a Progressive ticket.²⁹

A report in the *Cape Times* on 9 February 1961 mentioned that there was "a general feeling of preparedness for an election in Parliamentary circles" and that the opposition was making sure that it would not be taken "by surprise". The article referred to "persistent reports in the Nationalist newspapers" that the government might decide to call an early general election. It also commented on speculation in *Die Burger* that the early calling of the Nationalist Congresses might be an indication of an early general election.³⁰

In June 1961 the Chief Whip of the UP, Jack Higgerty, asked the Prime Minister in parliament whether a general election

²⁸ *The Natal Mercury*, 7 October 1960.

²⁹ *Die Burger*, 10 November 1960.

³⁰ *Cape Times*, 9 February 1961.

would be called prematurely but Verwoerd replied that press reports concerning such an early election were just "guesswork and shots in the dark". In a report on this reply the *Cape Times* mentioned that the UP was taking immediate steps to be ready for an early general election and commented on warnings that the Prime Minister might take the country to the polls early "before the deteriorating economic situation was felt by the country". Bill Horak, the General Secretary of the UP, said that such an early election would give the NP the chance to dispense with "certain lukewarm Verwoerd supporters".³¹ Later that month, the *Cape Times* speculated that Verwoerd could not afford to wait till the expiry of the government's five-year term of office in April 1963. By then the situation in the country would have deteriorated significantly and the electorate would be experiencing "the full draught of the lack of overseas confidence in South Africa". The newspaper claimed that some Nationalist organisers were already preparing for such an election.³² A report in the *Sunday Express* in June 1961 also speculated on an early NP call for a general election as it would allow them to capitalise on the emotional fervour generated by the establishment of the republic.³³

It is also significant that the Information Committee of the NP was unaware of the date of the general election when it met on 19 June 1961 under the chairmanship of FC Erasmus. The chairman informed the committee that no decision had yet been reached on an early general election, but

³¹ *Cape Times*, 10 June 1961.

³² *Cape Times*, 20 June 1961. See also *Cape Times*, 24 June 1961.

³³ *Sunday Express*, 4 June 1961.

that it was desirable that the necessary preparations should be completed in case of this eventuality.³⁴

In February 1961 the Chief Secretary of the NP in the Transvaal, Jack Steyl, wrote to Verwoerd about the need to have a new delimitation of constituencies during 1962. Steyl doubted whether the NP would gain much advantage from a new delimitation. He thought that they would win the constituencies of Boksburg and Pretoria Sunnyside even without a delimitation.³⁵

Reasons for calling an early general election.

On 1 August, Verwoerd announced that a general election would be held on 18 October 1961. The nomination day would be 15 September. According to Verwoerd, the decision to hold an early general election had been taken to provide the country with a "strong, stable" government to withstand any internal "organized onslaught on orderly administration" ; to counter "external pressure and attacks" and to "let the world know that a strong government would once again be in power for the next five years". As soon as the election was behind them the government could pay full attention to economic development. National unity could also be developed more successfully and progress made on racial issues. The prime minister expressed his

³⁴ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/30/1/13, Notule, Vergadering van die Inligtingkomitee, Kaapstad, 19 Junie 1961.

³⁵ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/30/8/2, JH Steyl - HF Verwoerd, 16 February 1961. See also a letter from JS Gericke of the University of Stellenbosch to Verwoerd concerning the way that an early general election would conflict with the synod of the NGK in the Cape in late October and early November 1961. INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/2/10, JS Gericke - HF Verwoerd, 28 July 1961.

belief that a calmer political atmosphere was needed for economic progress. It was also desirable that "the whole population, White as well as non-White ... be protected by an election soon against efforts to disturb law and order". Those who had tried to incite internal disturbances had chosen 1963 for launching an active rebellion against the government and the state. An early election would allow the government to move ahead to address this problem without simultaneously having to fight a general election. Verwoerd was critical of the parliamentary opposition which had predicted an early general election with "such confidence". It would no doubt be "relieved at the fact that its dearest wish is to be fulfilled". In his view, they had in preceding months been keeping alive "unfounded rumours and even bitter feelings". What the opposition feared most was "prosperity in the Republic" under NP rule as this would "weaken its chances of attaining high office".³⁶

Paul Sauer also advanced a symbolic reason for the holding of a premature election : the last general election had been in 1958 under the old monarchical constitution and as the country had since become a republic, it was apposite to elect a parliament based on the new republican constitution.³⁷

Verwoerd's statements and his decision to hold an early general election were sharply criticised by both the opposition and their press. Marais Steyn, then the chairman of the UP's Witwatersrand General Council, described Verwoerd's statement as "couched in arrogant terms", and said that the Prime Minister had disguised the real reasons for calling an early

³⁶ Cape Times, 2 August 1961 ; Die Transvaler, 2 August 1961.

³⁷ K Heard, *General elections in South Africa*, p 119.

general election, namely a desire to conduct a purge within his own party and to avoid "having to face the people when the mounting difficulties his Government will have to face in the coming two or three years have become apparent to everyone". Dr Frans Cronje gave his view that the "scarcity of foreign investment" would make the budget of the following year a hard one. South Africa would soon be feeling the effects of being out of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, in 1962 the International Court would deliver its judgement concerning South West Africa. All these, in Cronje's opinion, were factors that had prompted Dr Verwoerd to call an early general election. ³⁸

At a meeting held in Milnerton in October 1961 shortly before the electorate went to the polls, the Minister of Bantu Education and Indian Affairs, Willie Maree, asserted that a great deal of trouble and unrest could be expected in 1963, which he described as "the year set aside for the so-called liberation of the Bantu in South Africa." Maree accused the opposition of spreading "scare stories and rumours ... to harm the republic economically". According to him, the early general election had been called partly to put an end to such stories. ³⁹

The idea that South Africa could expect military aggression from other African states had also been expounded earlier by Jim Fouché, the Minister of Defence. At a meeting in Adelaide he told his audience that the government possessed "documentary evidence which had come from North African states, showing that certain of these states wished to make a final assault on South Africa in 1963". Fouché accused the Soviet

³⁸ *Cape Times*, 3 August 1961.

³⁹ *Cape Times*, 10 October 1961.

Union of wanting to use "those countries as starting points for the capture of Southern Africa for communism".⁴⁰

At a meeting in Rustenburg, the Minister of Justice, BJ Vorster, advanced what was probably the major reason for calling an early general election. He told his audience that such an election would give the electorate the opportunity to get rid of the PP, which was "the most dangerous party in South Africa". He also mentioned that Verwoerd had promised before the referendum that South Africa would "under certain conditions" remain within the Commonwealth and that when he had withdrawn South Africa's application for membership, the NP was accused of having won the referendum on "false pretexts". An early general election would give the voters a chance to voice their opinions on this decision. The responsibility for leaving the commonwealth had to be shared by "every South African".⁴¹

Not all the PP sources concur that one of the major reasons for calling an early general election was the desire to eliminate the Progressives. Joanna Strangwayes-Booth writes that Verwoerd called an early election partly because he wanted to exploit the preoccupation of the voters with the recent events in the Congo and partly because he wanted to bring the waverers from the NP back into line.⁴²

The views of various politicians are also worth examining. Brian Bamford, then a member of the National Union Party, ascribes Verwoerd's decision to an attempt to eliminate both the Progressives and the National Union party. He claims

⁴⁰ *Cape Times*, 27 September 1961. See also *Die Transvaler*, 24 June 1961.

⁴¹ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 20 September 1961.

⁴² J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, p 192.

that Verwoerd was well aware of the advantages enjoyed by the Nationalists and was keen to make use of them. These included the fact that the country "was still in a republic euphoria". Graaff regards Verwoerd's decision as politically "astute", wanting to capitalise on his victory in the referendum and to test his own popularity in his first election as premier. Jaap Marais remembers that certain influential members of the NP caucus felt that an early general election would enable the party to consolidate the support that it had received in the referendum. An early election would also allow the government to have a full uninterrupted five year period of office "to put the republic on course and, more importantly, to deal with the anticipated intensified international and internal onslaught on South Africa".⁴³

Various PP MPs also see Verwoerd's decision to hold an early general election as being motivated by his desire to strengthen his personal position and his prime ministerial image. According to Colin Eglin, Verwoerd had not yet received a personal mandate from the electorate and he wanted a direct mandate to govern the country in terms of his racial policies. This view is supported by Zach de Beer, who also thinks that Verwoerd realised that he could exploit the differences and confusion prevailing in the ranks of the opposition. Ray Swart recalls that Verwoerd knew that the UP was in "disarray" and that the Progressives, whom he "loathed", needed time to build an effective organisation. Further support for the view that Verwoerd wanted to strengthen

⁴³ Brian Bamford - Author, Rondebosch, 23 January 1996 ; Sir de Villiers Graaff - Author, Cape Town, 19 December 1995 ; Jaap Marais - Author, Pretoria, 3 November 1995.

his position is provided by Helen Suzman. She thinks that Verwoerd wanted the electorate to endorse his decision to take South Africa out of the Commonwealth, especially as he realised that the republican referendum had given him a majority of approximately seventy thousand votes. ⁴⁴

Following the events at Sharpeville in March 1960, the riots and the state of emergency thereafter, the South African economy had seen an increase in the rate of unemployment and also the reduction of wages in some areas of industry and commerce. Marais Steyn claimed that there were more white workers unemployed in South Africa in October 1961 than there had been at any stage since the Great Depression. Farmers were faced with the possibility of being unable to sell their surpluses and the economic situation showed signs of worsening. It therefore made sense for the prime minister to call an election in 1961 rather than in 1963 when the economy could be expected to have deteriorated even further. ⁴⁵

At the NP congress in Bloemfontein in September 1961, Verwoerd also referred to South Africa's financial difficulties. He told the delegates that these difficulties had also influenced the government in its decision to call an early general election. The government's opponents, he claimed, had deliberately caused unemployment and had encouraged the flight of capital to overseas countries - all in order to hurt the NP government regardless of the harm caused to South Africa's people. ⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Colin Eglin - Author, Cape Town, 8 November 1995 ; Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996 ; Helen Suzman - Author, Johannesburg, 9 January 1996 ; Ray Swart - Author, Durban, 20 November 1995.

⁴⁵ *Cape Argus*, 4 October 1961.

⁴⁶ *Die Transvaler*, 13 September 1961.

Later, during the election campaign, Blaar Coetzee claimed at a meeting in Virginia that the calling of an early general election had frustrated "a plot by Sir de Villiers Graaff's United Party and the English press to bring the Government to its knees with economic sabotage." Verwoerd's announcement of an early general election had caused money to flow back into South Africa. ⁴⁷

In Chapter Three some attention was paid to Verwoerd's problems with certain members of his caucus and cabinet. An early general election could afford Verwoerd the opportunity of disposing of cabinet members such as Paul Sauer and other Nationalist MPs such as Du Pisanie of Germiston. Naturally Verwoerd would not have admitted to these reasons for calling an early general election, but the thought of removing certain dissidents or members with lukewarm loyalties must have been very tempting.

The political correspondent for the *Sunday Times*, Stanley Uys, ridiculed some of Verwoerd's reasons for calling an early election. In reply to Verwoerd's statement that the announcement of an early election would surprise nobody, Uys wrote that they were no longer surprised by the morality of a government that first waited for the voters' rolls to be closed before announcing an election. Uys also thought that the political atmosphere would be even stormier after 18 October and that this made a mockery of Verwoerd's claim that an early general election would produce "a calmer political atmosphere". ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *The Natal Mercury*, 4 October 1961.

⁴⁸ *Sunday Times*, 6 August 1961.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

According to Professor Willem Kleynhans neither the Nationalists nor the Progressives issued an official manifesto for the 1961 general election. The only manifesto was in the form of a signed agreement between the UP and the National Union, giving clarity on the policies of the NUP. This was signed on 15 August 1961.¹

Whereas in the 1958 general election there were 24 seats that were uncontested, all of them UP seats, in the 1961 general election there were no fewer than 67 such seats countrywide. The fact that 67 seats in a parliament of 150 seats - nearly 45 % - were uncontested, was a striking phenomenon and one that was unique in South African politics until that time. It illustrates how static the white political system had become with so many seats either solidly UP or NP. Understandably the general election was regarded in some quarters as being predictable and "tame". One glaring point of interest was the degree of support for the PP. Would it be able to retain or even increase its parliamentary strength? Another was whether the National Union Party would be able to draw enough support (particularly from disillusioned Nationalists) to establish itself as a durable and significant South African political party. Also of interest was the performance and strength of the Conservative Workers' Party which was showing signs of unsettling the Nationalist establishment in parts of the Transvaal. There were also a few marginal seats held by the UP such as Pretoria

¹ WA Kleynhans, *South African general election manifestos 1910 - 1981* (Pretoria, 1987), p 401.

Sunnyside and Queenstown, which the NP focused upon. They became the scene of much political canvassing. The election campaign was also characterised by fierce enmity between the PP and the UP. It also saw much bitterness between the NUP and the NP. As will be seen, another feature of the campaign was to be the large number of NUP meetings that were disrupted by Nationalist supporters.

The election campaign conducted by the National Party.

The themes of the Nationalist campaign in 1961 were not vastly different from those of earlier elections. The NP took care to project the party as the spiritual home of Afrikaans-speaking whites. Simultaneously it tried to attract significantly more support among the English-speakers. It portrayed itself as the only party that was capable of protecting the whites in South Africa. It made a special appeal to the white workers. The domestic disturbances of the previous year, the departure of South Africa from the commonwealth and the growing overseas spirit of hostility towards South Africa had made many voters nervous and apprehensive. The NP did its best to exploit the fears of these voters. Nor did it neglect to attack its traditional enemies such as the English-language press and South Africa's small liberal establishment. As was to be expected, it made great capital of the theme that the UP was weak, irresolute, and uninterested in the needs and aspirations of Afrikaans-speaking whites. The UP was accused of following policies that would lead to the extinction of the white man in South Africa. It should be remembered that the PP tried to avoid

contesting seats where they would have to fight both the UP and the NP. This meant that in most NP-contested seats the NP would be opposed chiefly by the UP and not by the Progressives. Although the NP did criticise the Progressives vehemently at times, it was doubtless aware that the UP was hoping to remove many of the Progressives from parliament. Thus, the NP could safely leave it to the UP to criticise and attack the Progressives.

To strengthen the NP image, a leading MP, PW Botha, sent a pamphlet to his George constituents in which he listed four main principles according to which the government intended to run the country. The first was the creation of a process of development for both whites and blacks on the basis of good neighbourliness with clearly defined boundaries. To achieve this it would be necessary to ensure the safety of the white man in the country. The second principle was the bolstering of the country's economy while the third was that the government would strive to co-operate as fully as possible with friendly nations. The defences of the country would be strengthened in order to make the country a powerful force against communism. Fourthly, the government would continue to develop the spirit of unity and mutual respect among Afrikaans and English-speaking whites on the basis of one nation, one citizenship, one anthem and the principle of South Africa first.²

Nomination contests within the NP.

The English-language press had predicted that Verwoerd would use the 1961 general election as an occasion

² Author's private collection, Pamphlet from PW Botha to the constituents of George, n.d.

to conduct a mini-purge in the NP caucus. Because of this, it took keen interest in some NP nomination contests. Two controversial MPs, Franz Mentz and L du Pisanie, announced that they were not going to stand for re-election.³ The MP for Namaqualand, D Scholtz, who was also Deputy Chairman of Committees in parliament, was defeated in his nomination contest by G Maree.⁴

The protracted and acrimonious nomination contest in Pretoria District attracted much attention. Here, the sitting MP, Johannes Schoombee, was defeated by a minister of the Hervormde Kerk, AJ Peltzer, by 54 votes to 50. Schoombee, who was also Verwoerd's brother-in-law, claimed that his speech urging that members of races other than whites be given greater opportunities in the defence force and be allowed to receive "military rank of the highest order", had been used by his opponents to discredit him.⁵ Schoombee appealed against the decision to unseat him and he was later reinstated as the party's candidate. Verwoerd opposed the idea that Senator de Klerk should be put forward as a compromise candidate.⁶ According to the chairman of the Sesmylspruit branch of the NP in Pretoria District, JS Kitshoff, Schoombee had caused a division in the constituency. The choice of Dominee Peltzer had thus been to reconcile the two opposing factions.⁷

Jaap Marais recalls that Schoombee had received the nomination in his constituency in the face of strong opposition

³ *Cape Times*, 1 September 1961.

⁴ *Cape Times*, 14 September 1961.

⁵ *Cape Times*, 25 August 1961.

⁶ *Cape Times*, 14 September 1961.

⁷ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/2/10, JS Kitshoff - HF Verwoerd, 13 September 1961.

from former members of the Afrikaner Party. These men felt that one of their nominees should have been chosen as the seat had been allocated to the Afrikaner Party after its agreement with the NP in 1948.⁸

The political correspondent for the *Sunday Express*, "Tantalus", predicted that the NP establishment would replace the MP for Brakpan, Piet du Plessis, partly because he did not "blow his racial top as regularly as the higher authority would like."⁹ In the nomination contest, Du Plessis was subsequently beaten by G Bezuidenhout, who had represented Nigel in the Transvaal Provincial Council.¹⁰

The NP tries to attract the votes of English-speakers.

During the election campaign the NP made concerted attempts to attract the votes of English-speakers. One such example was covered by *Die Transvaler* in an article entitled "Engelssprekendes in honderde na N.P." It claimed that hundreds of English speakers had become new NP supporters. They were the forerunners of a stream of voters who had wrenched themselves free from years of political isolation.¹¹

The *Sunday Times* took a much more sceptical view of the NP's attempts to attract English support. In one of its issues in September 1961 it published an article "Softly catchee Englishman", in which it depicted these attempts as insincere. It commented caustically :¹²

⁸ Jaap Marais - Author, Pretoria, 3 November 1995.

⁹ *Sunday Express*, 6 August 1961.

¹⁰ *Cape Times*, 1 September 1961.

¹¹ *Die Transvaler*, 3 October 1961.

¹² *Sunday Times*, 3 September 1961.

The Nationalist Party's candidates are tiptoeing around the country whispering to their mystified followers, 'Shhh, ons gaan die Engelse vang'. ... All this must be very confusing for some of the old timers, whose idea of catching an Englishman would be to take down the old Mauser and ride over the bult.

In an earlier article appearing in the *Daily Dispatch* on the day the election was announced, Donald Woods also ridiculed the Nationalist appeals for English support and its intention to appoint an English-speaking cabinet minister. He wrote sarcastically, "There is a job worth R 8 000 going for the asking. It is a job for one man who (a) is English-speaking (b) has an English name and (c) is prepared to submerge all his reason and conscience. The post is that of Cabinet Minister in the Nationalist Government." According to Woods, the lack of any English-speaking Nationalist MPs gave the lie to the Nationalists' claim that more and more English-speakers were joining the NP.¹³

There are several reasons for paying close attention to these newspaper extracts and for reproducing parts of them *verbatim*. One is that they show the dislike felt for the NP by many senior English journalists. As the English-language press had a wide readership, these journalists were able to exercise a significant influence on the NP's attempts to attract English support. We can hypothesise whether this was what the NP would have characterised as "boerehaat" - deliberately intended to perpetuate certain divisions within the white population and to bolster the UP. Whatever the motives of these journalists, it is clear that it was no easy task for the NP to garner English support.

¹³ *Daily Dispatch*, 1 August 1961.

The NP criticises the English-language press in South Africa.

As the NP had long harboured a fierce dislike of the English press, it was predictable that the question of press freedom and the role of the press should be mentioned during the campaign. At a meeting in Maitland, Frank Waring, standing as an independent under the auspices of the NP, criticised the English-language press most strongly, saying: "Freedom of the Press does not mean licence to commit some of the worst misrepresentations against this country that has been done over the years." Furthermore the press had failed to discipline itself and a council should be established to ensure that it "did not overstep the mark". In this respect, Waring was also supported by his father-in-law, Arthur Barlow, who delivered a speech at one of his meetings in which he criticised both Britain and the English-language press.¹⁴

Speaking in Pretoria, Ben Schoeman said that many thousands of English-speaking Whites would vote for the NP despite the campaign that had been waged against it by the English newspapers. He praised those English-speakers who would vote for the government, saying, "I have great admiration for those many English-speaking South Africans who today are prepared to throw in their lot with ours. Their decision is a difficult one." Schoeman criticised the English-language press harshly for supposedly encouraging English-speaking Whites to regard Afrikaners with distrust and suspicion. After describing the attitude of the "British Press" as "the South African tragedy" he explained

¹⁴ *Cape Times*, 22 September 1961 & 7 October 1961.

why he had used the term, "British Press", rather than "English-language Press". In his words, ¹⁵

My reasons for saying that are quite simple. This Press is nothing more or less than the sounding board of Downing Street. They have never shown any South African patriotism. They have at all times gleefully vilified and slandered our own country. ... Their hate, their contempt is reserved exclusively for the South African Government.

The National Party defends its racial policies.

The events at the Commonwealth Conference in 1961 as well as the riots and racial disturbances of the previous year understandably focused a great deal of attention on South Africa's racial policies. Various NP parliamentarians emphasised their belief that the government's policies of separate development, (an euphemism for apartheid), offered the only chance of peace in South Africa while benefiting all sections of the population. They made it clear that the reins of government would however remain in the hands of the whites. For example, Verwoerd defined his concept of "nationhood" at the Transvaal congress of the NP in August 1961 : ¹⁶

Let me be very clear about this : when I talk of the nation of South Africa I talk of the White people of South Africa. I do not say that in disparagement of any other racial group of South Africa. I believe that they too have their nationalisms ... I do not see us all as one multi-racial state descending from various racial groups.

Paul Sauer, seen by some as espousing the values of the more moderate Nationalists, also made it clear that the NP did not intend to make political concessions to the

¹⁵ Cape Times, 13 October 1961.

¹⁶ Cape Times, 17 August 1961.

"underdeveloped" black man. According to Sauer, the NP knew that "political rights could not be withheld from the Native people for all time", but the blacks had to be encouraged to develop separately in their own areas. Sauer believed that, "Any attempt at joint political rule would mean that finally the numerical majority, the Black man, would rule completely." ¹⁷

BJ Vorster, the "coming-man" in the NP, expressed his racial beliefs very forthrightly in a speech at Brakpan, which attracted much attention, partly because his star was seen to be in the ascendant. In his speech he said to loud applause : "I do not want to belong to this nation of Blacks, Browns and whites - I want to belong to a White nation." He condemned the view of the PP that educated Africans should be allowed political rights, saying, "If you let the vote get into the hands of non-Whites you cannot exist as a White nation."¹⁸ At an earlier meeting in Glencoe, both Vorster and Willie Maree were applauded enthusiastically by about 350 Nationalists when they appealed for South Africa to develop its military strength "to protect the White man's heritage". In their opinion there was only one issue in the general election : "White leadership in South Africa". ¹⁹ The NP's strong stand on racial issues would certainly have had some impact on all sections of the electorate.

By the 1950s the NP had also come to accept the Indians as part of the permanent population. There was no question, however, of an improvement in their political or

¹⁷ *Cape Argus*, 29 September 1961.

¹⁸ *Cape Times*, 13 October 1961 ; *Die Burger*, 14 October 1961.

¹⁹ *The Natal Daily News*, 21 September 1961.

economic status. The South African government had fallen foul of the UNO over the Indian question but neither this nor a massive passive resistance campaign in the 1940s had produced any redress of the Indians' grievances by 1961. During the 1961 election campaign a statement was issued concerning the Indian population. The failure of the policy of voluntary repatriation was ascribed to the reluctance of a poverty-stricken Indian to accept its people back. The South African government would institute an Indian Council to act as an intermediary with the Indian people and provide certain social services. This was a natural development in the process of separate development on the same lines as followed for the coloureds. However, the Indians did not receive any parliamentary representation. There would be close contact between the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of Community Development concerning the application of the Group Areas Act.²⁰

The National Party and South Africa's international position.

South Africa's position in the international community had deteriorated since the previous general election in 1958. South Africa had left the British Commonwealth mainly because of the opposition of the Afro-Asian bloc ; the government had been criticised by the UNO and was also facing the reality that many African states would soon be independent and would be adding their voices to the criticism of South Africa's racial policies. It was therefore not surprising that some Nationalist politicians adopted a belligerent tone during the campaign when

²⁰ INCH, PV 14, Marais Viljoen Collection, JM 45 / 2, Nasionale Party se Indiërbeleid, 19 September 1961.

describing the need for white South Africans to stand together against "the total onslaught". It was predictable that these politicians would also mention certain issues on the Cold War. For example, PW Botha described the international situation as being "in such an uncertain state of suspension" that "one false move could light the spark to set off a global explosion".²¹ The Minister of Labour and the Interior, Jan de Klerk, told an audience in Pretoria that the world was "waiting for the answer" that the whites would give on 18 October and that "If there was the slightest sign of weakening by the Whites the enemies of South Africa would be strengthened and their attacks would become more violent."²² The Minister of Defence, JJ Fouché, tried to reassure the electorate that South Africa's international position was not as serious as sometimes thought. South Africa would always be important to the West in any future war and the country had many friends "although perhaps not diplomatically". Britain knew that it could trust South Africa in the future just as it had done in the past.²³ The Nationalists did not give as much emphasis to the country's international difficulties as they did in later general elections but this was nevertheless an important theme in their campaign. The electorate would also have been susceptible to this kind of propaganda because many of them - particularly the English voters - would have been very distressed by the hostility directed at South Africa at the 1961 Commonwealth Conference.

²¹ *George and Knysna Herald*, 15 September 1961.

²² *Cape Times*, 10 October 1961.

²³ *The Natal Mercury*, 14 October 1961.

Nationalist campaigns in marginal constituencies.

The Nationalist press took some interest in the few marginal constituencies being contested. These constituencies included Queenstown and Pretoria Sunnyside. Much of the campaigning there revolved around postal votes with the various parties sparing little effort to track down missing voters. The importance of postal voters is shown in an article in *Die Burger* which claimed that by 11 October 1961, 3 594 postal votes had been issued in Queenstown. ²⁴

The granting of the franchise to eighteen-year-olds had a great effect on the campaign in Pretoria Sunnyside, which the UP had won with a majority of 614 votes in 1958. According to *Die Burger*, this constituency had more than 15 000 voters but had only approximately 3 000 houses. The fact that many of the voters lived in flats, hotels or hostels meant that there was a very large floating vote. Figures supplied by the NP office showed that every five months between 4 000 and 5 000 voters changed their addresses. About one-seventh of the voters were students at the Teachers' Training College or at the University of Pretoria and these, according to *Die Burger*, were virtually entirely Nationalist. ²⁵

The NP also hoped to make inroads into the UP support in the Pretoria Rissik constituency which had returned a UP candidate with a majority of 2 756 votes in the 1958 general election. The NP was encouraged by the fact that in the referendum campaign of the previous year, the anti-Republican majority had

²⁴ *Die Burger*, 12 October 1961.

²⁵ *Die Burger*, 8 October 1961.

only been 1 290. Approximately one-seventh of the voters in this constituency were students. The NP candidate, Sybrand van Niekerk, also claimed that he had impressive support from English-speakers and from Jews. ²⁶

The pro-Nationalist newspaper in the Eastern Cape, *Die Oosterlig*, counselled against NP over-optimism in Pretoria Rissik, saying that a victory there would be nothing short of a miracle. Nevertheless, the NP was confident of winning Pretoria Sunnyside and also had high hopes of taking Queenstown. It was also optimistic of increasing its majorities in Kimberley South, Aliwal and Port Elizabeth North. They were also encouraged by the way that many English-speakers in Natal had apparently begun to understand and value the government's racial policies. These voters realised that they were a very small minority surrounded by a large black population. ²⁷

The efficiency of the NP campaign organisation.

The NP also benefited from a very capable campaign organisation which was very close to the voters which it hoped to attract. An example of this is to be found in the recollections of Brian Bamford of his campaign as the candidate for the National Union Party against PW Botha in the George constituency. He remembers that on election day, Botha took out a cigarette box and wrote on it what he thought the result would be. In the case of each of the three candidates, Botha proved to be correct "within a dozen or so votes". An interesting

²⁶ *Die Burger*, 4 October 1961.

²⁷ *Die Oosterlig*, 6 October 1961.

sidelight on the realities of electioneering in the future prime minister's constituency is also provided by Bamford. He writes, ²⁸

Election day was hell. Mr Botha and his workers committed all sorts of irregularities - they used electric megaphones, they lined the streets with schoolchildren in school uniforms, they led (Mr Heunis on a horse, Mr and Mrs Botha in a smart carriage) a procession of voters from the State Saw Mills to the polling booths. Every time I objected (mostly to Mr Heunis) I was told that these were hallowed customs in the George constituency and if I were serious about my objections I was in danger of being lynched.

The NP was also able to rely upon a very extensive organisation divided into a large number of branches throughout the country. This organisation had been systematically built over the years. An indication of the size and enthusiasm of the NP is provided by a cursory inspection of its membership figures. In 1960, for example, in the Cape Province alone, the NP had no fewer than 140 450 members, divided into 892 branches. ²⁹ This meant that during election time the NP was able to call upon a vast pool of talent, expertise and enthusiasm for its task of propagating its political message.

During the 1961 election campaign the NP contested far fewer constituencies than in 1958 ; it was therefore able to bring all its resources to bear on the relatively small number of constituencies with NP candidates. It regarded the few marginal constituencies as being particularly important in this respect. The NP press frequently publicised examples of the zeal of various NP workers in these constituencies. For example, they described one worker in Queenstown who travelled more than two thousand miles in search of missing voters. ³⁰

²⁸ Brian Bamford - Author, Rondebosch, 23 January 1996.

²⁹ *Die Kruithoring*, September 1960, p 1.

³⁰ *Die Burger*, 12 October 1961.

A significant number of NP MPs were drawn from the ranks of former fulltime NP organisers. This meant that the NP was able to encourage its political organisers to new heights of endeavour by offering them the prospect of seats in the House of Assembly. With its dwindling number of seats in parliament, the UP did not have this advantage. The NP organisation was also imbued with a spirit of victory after its successful campaign in the referendum of the previous year ; this would also have encouraged them while on the campaign trail in 1961. The NP also had the encouragement of knowing that it was favoured by the delimitation of constituencies then in force and it was also helped by the enfranchisement of the eighteen-year-olds.

The Nationalists defend their record during the Second World War.

As the memories of the Second World War were still very fresh in the minds of many voters, it is not surprising that the UP sometimes tried to capitalise on the war records of prominent Nationalists. This was, however, only a minor issue. Eric Louw, for example, adopted a "tu quoque" attitude when faced with such criticism. At a meeting in Brits, he claimed that the opposition press was trying to stir up hostility towards BJ Vorster on the grounds that he had been a general in the Ossewa Brandwag during the war. Louw pointed out that one of the new much-publicised and applauded recruits for the UP, Jan Moolman, had also been a general in the Ossewa Brandwag. Was the opposition press going to publicise this fact ? ³¹

³¹ INCH, PV4, Eric Louw Versameling, File 56, Punte in Minister Louw se toespraak te Brits op Saterdag 12 Augustus 1961.

The campaign waged by the United Party

During the 1961 election campaign the UP faced severe challenges from both the left and the right and on occasion this forced the party into a difficult position. As in the 1958 election campaign, the UP was often accused of trying to out-do the NP in appealing to the conservatism of the South African electorate. The UP also entered into a pact with the recently established NUP and this was seen by many observers as another indication of the UP's drift to the right. The UP also, predictably, made an issue of Verwoerd's racial and Bantustan policies. This, however, did not bring the UP the rewards that it sought.

The pact between the United Party and the National Union Party

On 15 August, shortly after Verwoerd's announcement of an early general election, the UP formed an election pact with the NUP. This party appeared to occupy a political position to the right of the UP but to the left of the Nationalists. It was hoped that the pact would compensate for any loss of support suffered by the UP on account of the Progressives. Furthermore the differences between the UP and the NUP were not nearly as pronounced as those between the UP and the Progressives. It was unlikely that the UP and the Progressives would form a pact. There was considerable disparity in their respective policies and the embarrassment caused to the UP in parliament by the PP was not easily forgiven. The *Cape Times* announced on 16 August 1961 that the leaders of the NUP and the UP had signed

a nine point pact. It noted that "each party stood by its immediate policy on non-White parliamentary representation" but that they "both accepted the policies of race federation, consultation with non-Whites and the elimination from legislation of 'those things which offend against the dignity of the non-White'." ³²

It would appear that by entering this pact the UP took a pronounced step to the right in South African politics. The political commentator for the *Sunday Times*, Stanley Uys, saw the pact as the logical consequence of a strategy which the UP had been pursuing for many years. This strategy was based on the idea that the UP could be returned to power only with the support of disenchanted Nationalists. The UP was accordingly trying to make itself acceptable to those voters. ³³

During the talks that were held between the two parties to finalise the details of the pact, there appears to have been some antipathy in the UP towards members of the NUP. ³⁴ *Die Transvaler* attributed some of these initial difficulties to the absence of Marais Steyn, who was in hospital as the result of an accident. The newspaper regarded Steyn as the only person who could act effectively as a mediator between the two groups. ³⁵

In August *Die Transvaler* described the UP supporters as having misgivings about the two seats that their party had allocated to the NUP - one seat in the Senate and the other in the House of Assembly. It quoted Jack Basson, MP for Sea Point,

³² *Cape Times*, 16 August 1961.

³³ *Sunday Times*, 20 August 1961.

³⁴ *Sunday Times*, 9 July 1961.

³⁵ *Die Transvaler*, 10 July 1961.

as stating bluntly that he did not think that the NUP enjoyed much support throughout the country. ³⁶

Brian Bamford, Chairman of the Cape Peninsula Council of the NUP, recalls "that there were several leading figures in the UP, including Mr Vause Raw, who were deeply suspicious of Mr [Japie] Basson, but who were, for temporary purposes, prepared to 'live' with the alliance." Bamford, however, saw the Cape Provincial Leader of the UP, Jack Connan, as being "clearly in favour of the alliance" and "doing his best to make it work". ³⁷

This pact undoubtedly saved Japie Basson's political career from a serious reverse if not complete extinction. Basson had very little chance of being re-elected by his constituents in the staunchly Nationalist seat of Namib. In the discussions on the prospective pact, the question of a safe seat for Basson was what the *Sunday Times* described as a "stumbling - block". It was eventually decided that Basson would stand in Bezuidenhout, a safe UP seat, and the member for Bezuidenhout, Hymie Miller, would oppose Helen Suzman in Houghton. ³⁸

The NUP was hardly in a position to make extravagant demands of the UP leadership. Their representation in parliament was limited to Basson. With the exception of Fagan they had few really prominent or charismatic members and their hopes were pinned on the idea that there was a large constituency of dissatisfied Nationalists who might be persuaded to change their allegiance. The UP leadership was probably "clutching at straws".

It appeared that some sections of the NUP thought that

³⁶ *Die Transvaler*, 30 August 1961.

³⁷ Brian Bamford - Author, Rondebosch, 23 January 1996.

³⁸ *Sunday Times*, 13 February 1961 & 20 February 1961.

they had a great deal to offer the UP in this pact. One of Basson's lieutenants in Natal, JC Wilkinson of a very minor and little known political organisation known as the "Unification Movement", wrote a letter to Graaff in August 1961 complaining about the small number of seats allocated to the NUP. Wilkinson, who wanted nine candidates in the province, felt that the long-term solution to the country's political problems depended on the building up of "the strength of that one party which is most acceptable to the moderate members of the National Party at the expense of those parties which are completely unacceptable to them, i.e. the National Union at the expense of the United Party and the Progressive Party." In an earlier letter to Judge Fagan, Wilkinson also suggested that the only real solution to their problems lay in the "immediate fusion of the United Party and the National Union under a new name and your leadership".³⁹

After the signing of the pact, the PP soon attacked the disparities in the policies of the NUP and the UP. Jacqueline Beck, who had once been an UP MPC, made a great play of this in a speech at a PP lunch-hour forum in Cape Town. She pointed out that Fagan had voted against South Africa's entry into the Second World War and had also voted with DF Malan in favour of concluding a separate peace while the UP was "engaged in an all-out effort to wage the war". She mentioned that Basson had been in favour of such apartheid legislation as the separate representation of voters, which had been opposed by the UP opposition. The NUP

³⁹ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection ; File 2/9/1/1/8, J Wilkinson - H Fagan, 20 July 1961 ; File 2/9/1/1/9, J Wilkinson - de Villiers Graaff, 3 August 1961.

favoured separate rolls for white and coloured voters while the UP intended to restore the coloured voters to the common roll. The UP, by undertaking to extend what was then referred to as Native representation to the northern provinces, went much further than the NUP. Basson's party intended only to return to the original system of "Native Representation" that had prevailed until its very recent abolition. In Beck's opinion, the election agreement would mean that the UP would move "nearer to the Nationalist Party than ever before".⁴⁰

The role of Douglas Mitchell in the election campaign

As Douglas Mitchell had long been an outspoken and prominent member of the UP hierarchy, it was not surprising that the press paid much attention to his speeches and meetings. During the campaign Mitchell was criticised for his comments in a speech at Umkomaas on the question of mixed bathing. Mitchell said that mixed bathing would cause the tourist trade to decline, property to deteriorate and would result in general stagnation. At one point he said, "Let the Progressives go and frolic in the surf with coolies and non-Europeans". Mitchell was heavily criticised in certain quarters for his use of the word "coolie".⁴¹ Subsequently Mitchell withdrew the remark unreservedly.⁴² Mitchell also went on record at Doonside for criticising the PP for its franchise proposals. Could anybody be so naive, he asked, as to believe that a black minister of defence would defend South Africa against attacks from other black countries.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Cape Argus*, 15 August 1961.

⁴¹ *Cape Times*, 31 September 1961.

⁴² *Cape Times*, 2 October 1961.

⁴³ *Cape Times*, 22 September 1961 ; *Die Burger*, 21 September 1961.

In his history of South Africa, Alex Hepple also quotes Mitchell as saying during the campaign : "If you give the non-European a gun he will shoot five or six people ; but the Progressives propose to give the non-white a far more powerful weapon - the vote to kick the white man out of South Africa." ⁴⁴

The *Sunday Express* was very critical of Mitchell for his contentious statements. It commented that the UP was already handicapped by having to fight on two fronts and could do without "the further embarrassment - and racial nonsense - of people like Mr. Douglas Mitchell, its Natal leader, and some of its candidates who have raised the 'swart gevaar' bogy." ⁴⁵ It is difficult to assess Mitchell's influence on the campaign. Few voters would have been lukewarm towards him - they either supported him strongly or abhorred him completely. Some of his statements were undoubtedly a great boon to both the Progressives and the Nationalists. The Progressives could depict him and his supporters as being Nationalists under the skin while the NP could relish and capitalise on the embarrassment that he caused other members of the UP establishment.

The United Party takes a conservative line on the issue of race.

During the general election campaign various members of the UP made it very clear that their party stood for "White Leadership". Some members commented adversely on the alleged inability of the black people to govern themselves properly.

⁴⁴ A Hepple, *South Africa - a political and economic history* (London, 1966), p 167.

⁴⁵ *Sunday Express*, 1 October 1961.

One prominent UP member, Major Piet van der Byl, told a meeting at Bathurst that, "An African from the kraal - if he had the brain - could become an Einstein ; but that won't necessarily mean he is civilised in the true sense of the word." He claimed that it took centuries to counteract "the turmoil and ferment of the barbaric aeons" that lay behind black culture. ⁴⁶

Van der Byl's sentiments were echoed by Graaff, who described the development of "non-Whites" on the road to democracy as being comparable to that of England during the reign of King Alfred. Graaff also argued that there were examples of other African states that had discarded democracy very soon after gaining independence. ⁴⁷

An examination of the manifestos of several UP candidates shows how strongly they emphasised the theme of white leadership. For example, in a letter to his constituents Douglas Mitchell expressed his pride in belonging to a party that stood for "The retention of white leadership in South Africa with every effort to strengthen the European group." ⁴⁸ Similar sentiments were expressed by the UP candidate for Pretoria- Rissik, HC de Kock, in a circular to his constituents. De Kock described the main objective of the UP as "the preservation of our White western civilisation." According to him, "any reasonable approach to the colour question" would be based "in the first instance on continued white leadership". ⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Eastern Province Herald*, 4 October 1961.

⁴⁷ *Eastern Province Herald*, 13 October 1961.

⁴⁸ UNISA, United Party Archives Natal, Natal South Coast Division, File 51.2.1, Pamphlet entitled, *The United Party policy to save South Africa*, (no date).

⁴⁹ UNISA, United Party Archives, Pretoria - Rissik Division, File 90.2.1, Circular disseminated by H.C. de Kock, (no date).

The UP candidate for Constantia, Sydney Waterson, also stressed the supposed backwardness of the Africans, describing the great majority of them as being "still in a state of ignorance as far as modern civilisation is concerned." Any cession of political control to the Africans would be "an ignoble abdication on the part of the White man, of his responsibilities for maintaining the standards of western civilisation." As Waterson had identified himself with the Progressives in 1959, it is interesting how his views appear to have drifted much closer to those of the conservatives in the UP.⁵⁰

There are several possible reasons why many of the UP candidates stressed their views on the racial issue so forthrightly. It should be remembered that they were fighting their campaign against both the NP and the Progressives simultaneously. Candidates might have felt that a conservative approach on the racial issue would reassure those UP supporters who might be tempted to vote for the Nationalists. Such an approach would also deter some traditional UP supporters from voting for the Progressives. In short, the UP would have felt that there were dividends to be earned in presenting the image of a conservatively-inclined party. Some UP candidates might also have felt inhibited in earlier years by the presence of the Progressives in their party but the departure of the latter in 1959 might have caused them to feel less constrained when it came to racial issues.

⁵⁰ UCT, BC 631, Sydney Waterson Collection, A6.38, Your United Party Candidate, Sydney Waterson.

*The United Party tries to capitalise
on the issue of the Bantustans.*

The UP was severely critical of Verwoerd's policies on the Bantustans and gave much prominence to the consequences of such policies. According to the UP, the policy would lead to the fragmentation of South Africa and the growth of a possible fifth column among the black people. It might even lead to the establishment of military bases by hostile countries on what was formerly South African territory and would cause many black people to have divided loyalties. It was also assailed as being completely impracticable as there were so many blacks who were effectively permanent residents in the urban areas. The UP also expressed concern at the financial implications of the Bantustan policy and were sometimes sceptical about the leadership ability of those the leaders who would administer the Bantustans.

Two of Graaff's speeches indicate the emphasis placed on this issue. At a meeting in Wolmaransstad, he expressed the opinion that one of Verwoerd's reasons for calling an early general election was to obtain a mandate for his Bantustan policy. This would lead to the irrevocable situation that "every Native in the White areas of South Africa" would be regarded as "a foreigner or Uitlander" and would be expected to display patriotism towards a country other than South Africa. ⁵¹

On a subsequent occasion, this time at a meeting in Port Elizabeth, Graaff warned that the Bantustan policy might encourage unrealistic ambitions among the black people by making

⁵¹ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 22 September 1961.

promises that could not be fulfilled. The non-fulfilment or breaking of such promises might be seen as "a breach of faith" or "an act of treachery" that would have a very adverse effect on race relations.⁵²

In East London which was particularly close to a possible Bantustan area, the policy featured prominently in the UP election campaign. Douglas Smit told his audience that the independent black states would become "hotbeds of Communist propaganda" and that the millions of "disgruntled Natives" remaining in the white areas would form an "immense fifth column". Smit regarded Verwoerd's scheme as "a fantastic piece of humbug".⁵³

Although the issue of Bantustans was to be a major one in the UP's campaign, there were several reasons why it failed to bring the desired results. One reason was that in 1961 the implications of the Bantustan policy were too remote and nebulous for the average white voter. Many voters would have regarded the UP's predictions as excessively fanciful. They would not have been convinced by the suggestion that the NP government would allow hostile military bases to be established in the Bantustans. Furthermore, a large number of white voters lived in areas too far away from the borders of the potential Bantustans.

The *Daily Dispatch* disapproved vehemently of some of Graaff's attempts to capitalise on the Bantustan issue. At one meeting in East London, Graaff asked his audience to imagine what their position would be next to the Transkei, which would be free

⁵² *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 28 September 1961.

⁵³ *Daily Dispatch*, 12 October 1961.

to become a Communist state should it so wish and to serve as a base for an army invading South Africa. According to Graaff, the Transkei could also wreak havoc with the economy in the Border region by erecting customs barriers or by turning local labour disputes into international issues. An editorial in the *Daily Dispatch* described Graaff's notions as being "utterly ridiculous and far-fetched" and an "astonishingly frank admission of United Party ineptitude and its inability to take a realistic view of the political situation in South Africa."⁵⁴

The criticism of Graaff's actions and utterances by the *Daily Dispatch* was indicative of the feelings of much of the English-language press at the time. According to E Potter, the *Daily Dispatch*, the *Evening Post* in Port Elizabeth and *The Natal Witness* went along with the *Rand Daily Mail* in its support of the Progressives. The UP was supported by the English-language press "only because the Press saw no practical alternative and not because of any sincere belief in the party or its policies". Potter regards the *Sunday Times* as being virtually the only newspaper to give "uncritical support" to the UP during the election campaign.⁵⁵ There are several possible reasons why the English-language press became rather tepid in its support for the UP. On the one hand various editors probably feared that if they supported the Progressives very vigorously, they could split the opposition vote and thus keep the opposition weak and fragmented. This would be only to the advantage of the Nationalists. Some editors also realised that the Progressives

⁵⁴ *Daily Dispatch*, 28 September 1961 & 10 October 1961.

⁵⁵ E Potter, *The press as opposition : the political role of South African newspapers* (London, 1975), pp 171 - 172.

would be viewed by most of the electorate as being too far ahead of its time. It would also be very difficult for senior journalists to discard their long-held and traditional loyalties to the UP. On the other hand many opposition journalists might well have become disenchanted by what they saw as the autocratic and dictatorial attitudes of some of the UP leadership. They might well have resented the way that some senior members of the UP had come to regard the English-language press as a type of fiefdom which could be regularly abused but would always be expected to remain loyal. There would also be the feeling that too many senior UP parliamentarians merely tried to "out-do the Nationalists at their own game" and pandered too much to the prejudices of the voters.

The UP makes an issue of the state of the economy.

The temporary increase in the unemployment figures and the state of the economy were also themes that UP campaigners tried to use against the Nationalists. At a meeting in Welkom, Graaff dwelt for some time on the government's economic policies. The country needed a government which would "give priority to raising incomes and thus make the life of the agitator more difficult". Instead of being able to provide jobs for "a growing population", the government was unable to guarantee existing jobs. Significantly, Graaff stated that the UP recognised "the right of White workers to protection against unequal competition from lower-paid non-White labour".⁵⁶

Later, at a somewhat rowdy meeting in Kimberley, Graaff

⁵⁶ *Sunday Times*, 24 September 1961.

paid attention to the supposed decline in real incomes and to the increase in the rate of unemployment. He claimed that the increase in real incomes in South Africa had been "among the lowest in the Western world", and that R 248 million worth of private capital had left the country in the previous eighteen months. He blamed the government for not heeding the advice given over the years by Chambers of Commerce and Industry.⁵⁷

It should be remembered that the economic problems that had followed the state of emergency in 1960 were much less acute by the time of the election campaign than they had been the previous year. The level of white unemployment - although higher than normal by post-Second World War standards - was still very far from being as serious as it had been during the 1920s or 1930s. These factors would most probably have militated against the UP's chances of attracting NP voters on economic grounds.

The vigorous UP attacks on the Progressives.

During the 1961 general election the UP faced a severe threat from the PP. An election pamphlet circulated at the time by the UP entitled, "The Progressives and their policies are a danger to you and your country !" gave ten reasons why the "thinking voter" should reject the PP. Firstly, the UP was "the only alternative government", as it was the only party that was contesting enough seats - "more than a hundred - to get the Nationalists out." Secondly, the UP alleged that the Progressives were really helping Verwoerd "by fighting the United Party, splitting the vote, and tying up the U.P. organisation in safe

⁵⁷ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 5 October 1961.

seats." When examining this claim it should be remembered that the UP had refused to enter into an election pact with the Progressives. Furthermore, the Progressives tried to follow a policy of not contesting seats in which the Nationalists and the UP were also involved. The UP's third reason was that "the Progressives openly work for a multi-racial parliament with a Black majority," and their leader had actually stated that "he would work under a Black Prime Minister with such a Black majority". Fourthly the PP was wrong in its view that votes for all would solve "the Native problem". To the contrary, the UP believed that "What a backward people first of all needs is food, clothing, homes, health and education. Start with first things first." This was a contentious point because the Progressives claimed to stand for a qualified franchise and not a policy of votes for all. Fifthly, the UP pamphlet asserted that "the Progressives' own Report admits that their proposals are not acceptable now to either White or Non-White." As its sixth reason, the pamphlet discussed the differences of opinion among various Progressive thinkers. It claimed "The Progs. drift when it comes to direct matters like social and residential separation, Defence and Trade Unions." While one member said: "mixed schools and swimming baths for all I care", another said, "leave it to individual choice". The seventh reason advanced in the UP pamphlet was that it was Progressive policy to abolish the pass laws and influx control. This would surely "lead to thousands of unemployed Bantu, squalid squatter camps and crime". As its eighth reason for rejecting the Progressives the UP claimed that the Progressives' policy on immigration "on merit not colour" would mean "the door would be open to thousands of job seekers from India,

Pakistan, Malaya, Kenya, Congo and Japan. Is this fair when we have 15 million of our own non-Whites to look after?" The ninth reason was that the Progressives had failed "to obtain any significant support from Non-Europeans", and that the "two hand-picked Non-Whites placed by them on their own Commission to work out their franchise, rejected its majority report where it conflicted with their own ideas on universal franchise." Lastly, the pamphlet criticised some of the Progressive candidates for failing to honour the pledge that they had signed - the "Borkum pledge" - while still UP members of parliament, that they would resign their seats should they leave the UP. ⁵⁸

A recording of an address given by Graaff that was circulated by the UP elicited some criticism from the Progressives. In the speech Graaff accused the Progressives of "weakening the opposition against the Nationalists", and claimed that the Progressives' policies would promote communism and lead to a barbarous dictatorship. Graaff referred to incidents of torture and imprisonment without trial of various opposition figures in Ghana and Guinea and warned his listeners that under PP policy, "it not only can happen, but it will happen here and they know it". ⁵⁹

Steytler referred to this recording as evidence of "a degree of racial and colour prejudice that is disquieting indeed to anyone concerned about the future of race relations in South Africa." He criticised Graaff for singling out the

⁵⁸ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, C8.44, "The Progressives and their policies are a danger to you and your country !"

⁵⁹ UNISA, United Party Archives Natal, File 11.5, General election 1961, Address on UP policy prior to the 1961 general election.

unsuccessful examples of independent African countries such as Ghana, the Congo, Guinea and Sudan while ignoring the seemingly more successful countries such as Nigeria and Tanganyika (now Tanzania). The examples were clearly chosen as an attempt to suggest to voters that PP policies would lead to chaos, tyranny and dictatorship. In a statement intended to refute Graaff's claims, Steytler commented : "It is significant, however, that the United Party case should in the opinion of its leader, be sufficiently weak on its merits to require bolstering by methods compared with which the worst examples of Nationalist swart gevaar propaganda pale into insignificance." ⁶⁰

In a message to the voters of Pinelands, Graaff criticised the Progressives for dividing the opposition and claimed that nothing could be more futile "than for minor opposition groups to play musical chairs against the United Party" as the country needed a new government and not an opposition "that mills around in indecision". ⁶¹

In order to neutralise the Progressive challenge, the UP issued a pamphlet for the guidance of their own candidates. This listed points that their candidates could raise in countering the Progressive challenge. It accused the Progressives of "tying up the U.P. organisation in safe seats" and asserted that third parties had no chance of succeeding in a two-party democracy. The policy of the Progressives would also lead to a black parliament and black rule all over South Africa as its franchise proposals were unrealistic and would not protect the whites. The literacy

⁶⁰ Cape Times, 16 October 1961.

⁶¹ UCT, Colin Eglin Collection, Letter from Sir de Villiers Graaff to the voters of Pinelands. (This collection was still unsorted).

test that the Progressives wanted to prescribe for candidates for the franchise was equivalent to that of a ten-year old white child. The Progressives were "starting at the wrong end" by wanting to give the blacks political rights instead of first looking at their social advancement. The Progressives' policy on social and residential separation was very contradictory and their policies on influx control and the pass laws would create overcrowding and poverty although experience had shown that influx control actually protected the blacks. Under Progressive rule there would be strikes and industrial unrest and black workers would be allowed "to paralyze our economy". Nor would the Progressives win the support of the blacks with their franchise proposals. The Progressives' policies would lead to "dishonest subterfuges such as special servitudes in title deeds". It also criticised the Progressive MPs for failing to resign their seats after leaving the UP in 1959 and claimed that it was the Progressives' fault that any plans to conclude an election agreement with the UP had floundered. "The Progressives, through their stubborn adherence to unacceptable and left-wing policies, excluded themselves from any agreement." The Progressives had also undermined the anti-republican campaign and had even produced a confidential circular which read, "We must not allow the whole effort to be consumed in merely the anti-republican campaign, but must at all times balance it out by putting Progressive Party policies before the public." ⁶²

The earlier refusal by the Progressive MPs to resign their seats in 1959 was a great cause of bitterness and resentment

⁶² UNISA, Sir de Villiers Graaff Papers, File 99.1, Progressive Party, pamphlet circulated by the United Party, n.d.

in UP circles during the election campaign. Zach de Beer tried to counter these accusations of bad faith when he asked in an election pamphlet why the UP had formed a pact with Japie Basson although Basson had failed to resign his seat after leaving the NP two years earlier.⁶³ The attitude of Graaff over this particular issue is discussed by Professor Gideon Jacobs, a former MP for Hillbrow : "To Div, whose word is his bond, failure to meet this solemn obligation was not only inexplicable, it was totally unforgivable."⁶⁴

The attitudes of the UP towards the Progressives during the election campaign have been examined in some detail in this section. They show the extreme resentment felt towards the Progressives - a resentment fuelled by the long-held belief that the progressive element had been responsible for the UP's reverses in earlier general elections. The impression sometimes created is that the UP saw the Progressives as being more of a danger than the Nationalists. The UP were resentful that the Progressives had alienated a large number of their traditional supporters. It is clear that the UP attacked the Progressives on a very wide range of issues from the question of character to allegations of disguising unpalatable aspects of their policy. The UP adopted the effective policy of depicting the Progressives as vague and unrealistic idealists whose policies would lead to a black take-over and dictatorship with resultant chaos. In this respect the predictions of some members of the UP were not dissimilar to those made by the Nationalists against the UP.

⁶³ Author's private collection, Zach de Beer to the voters of Maitland, n.d.

⁶⁴ L Barnard & D Kriek (eds.), *Sir de Villiers Graaff* (Digma, Pretoria, 1990), p 170.

Minor dissent within the UP during the election campaign

Shortly before polling day, a difference of opinion in the Natal branch of the UP caused the well-publicised resignation from the UP of AT Allison, who had been a MPC in Natal for 28 years. The Divisional Committee of the UP in Pietermaritzburg City had unanimously chosen Colonel OL Shearer as its candidate in the general election but this choice had been overruled by the party's hierarchy and Howard Odell was nominated instead. This caused a great deal of annoyance and led to Allison's resignation. Allison also announced that he would not be joining any other party but would be supporting the PP candidate for that seat, WG Mc Conkey.⁶⁵

The *Sunday Express* expressed disapproval of what it saw as retrogressive trends within the UP. It condemned the replacement of the MP for Johannesburg North, Percy Plewman, a former Auditor-General, in a nomination contest. Plewman was seen as being the victim of the Mitchell group. Plewman had always been critical of the "bull-like methods of Mr. Mitchell and the more colour conscious manoeuvres in the United Party".⁶⁶

Although it had been outspoken in its criticism of some of the actions of the leading members of the UP during the election campaign, the *Sunday Express* expressed muted support for the party before election day. It regarded the Progressives' attempts to "belittle or destroy" the UP as "utterly stupid" because the UP would remain the chief opposition to the Nationalists. The Progressives were "more a party of the future

⁶⁵ *The Natal Witness*, 13 October 1961.

⁶⁶ *Sunday Express*, 27 August 1961.

than of the present" and they were "the conscience of thinking South Africans". The UP would come into its own should there be a "realignment of political forces". The newspaper's "main support" had to go to the UP-National Union alliance "in the belief that if it fails, the chance of eventually getting rid of the Nationalist Government will also be lost". Nevertheless, the editorial expressed the hope that the Progressives would do well as it would be a sad day should they be completely eliminated from parliament. ⁶⁷

In retrospect, Graaff thinks that the UP's main advantage in the election campaign was that at the time of the referendum it had built up an organisation in every constituency which was working "quite smoothly". What counted most against it was that in many constituencies it had to fight on two fronts against both the Nationalists and the Progressives. ⁶⁸

A few days before the polling day the UP published a statement of its stance on some of the more controversial issues confronting the voters. It suggested several stages for "an ordered advance to a race federation". The first step to be taken was to "relieve racial tensions", and comprised the repeal or amendment of all laws "infringing the individual dignity of Non-Whites", as well as "a more humane administration of the pass laws and a drastic revision of the Group Areas Act". The second stage comprised "an ordered advance through constitutional and economic reform to meet the legitimate aspirations of the non-white races", and included measures already discussed such as the acceptance of the coloureds as part of the Western group and

⁶⁷ *Sunday Express*, 15 October 1961.

⁶⁸ Sir de Villiers Graaff - Author, Cape Town, 19 December 1995.

their restoration to the common voters' roll ; the recognition of the Indians as a permanent part of the population and the amelioration of their lot under the Group areas Act ; the development of "a responsible and satisfied urban Native middle class ... as a bulwark against unrest and agitation ; the granting of opportunities for urban blacks to earn exemptions from the pass laws ; the upliftment of rural blacks from their lives of poverty ; the representation of blacks on a separate roll by members of parliament and senators ; and the abolition of job reservation and its replacement by the "rate for the job". The third stage was the ultimate goal of a race federation in which South Africa would be ruled by a "sovereign central parliament", in which "each racial group will have defined shares". The "basic rights of individuals, groups and areas will be entrenched constitutionally", and the federation would be "primarily one of races and not of territories but areas predominantly white or predominantly black (e.g. the Transkei)". These would be "treated as political units for administrative purposes within the framework of the race federation". The UP plan rested upon "four fundamental principles", which were "a sincere willingness to share in practice the benefits of Western civilization with all non-Whites who are capable of accepting joint responsibility for the future well-being of the Republic" ; ... "the maintenance for the foreseeable future of White leadership and a firm refusal to permit political control to pass into the hands of an uneducated black proletariat" ; ... "effective inter-racial consultation at all levels of Government and administration",

and ... "the protection of the human dignity of every individual, irrespective of colour, race or creed." ⁶⁹

The campaign waged by the National Union Party.

The campaign waged by the NUP was to a large extent dominated by the characters and electioneering of its two most influential members : Japie Basson and ex-Chief Justice HA Fagan. They concentrated their campaign on what they saw as the increasing authoritarianism of the government as well as the damage done by the government to relations between the English and Afrikaans speaking whites. The alienation of the coloureds was a less prominent theme in the NUP campaign. In a significant speech at Greytown, Fagan summed up the policies of his party. He called for less authoritarianism and claimed that South Africa was becoming a country where "more and more arbitrary rights" were being taken away. He criticised the NP for its supposed belief that English-speaking whites should join the NP to achieve good relations between the two white population groups. Whites in South Africa "would hold their own - if they recognized that Coloureds were part of Western Civilization." Fagan claimed that the government had refused to recognise that "there was a permanent urbanized African population", and that the policy regarding Bantustans was a "policy of madness". The policy of the Nationalists seemed to be "Divided we stand". In his party's view South Africa had to work out the details of a scheme whereby all races could be represented in parliament - "but the rule of the White man should not be endangered." ⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *Eastern Province Herald*, 12 October 1961.

⁷⁰ *Cape Times*, 20 September 1961.

The campaign strategy of the NUP was comprehensively discussed in a manifesto that was signed between that party and the UP on 15 August 1961.⁷¹ The manifesto affirmed that it would ensure "the fullest co-operation, participation and co-responsibility of both Afrikaans and English-speaking people in the government of the country". Children from both language groups would go to school together. The policy on the coloureds would be to accept them as an inseparable part of the country's Western European population. The coloureds would be represented by their own leaders in bodies such as the Cape Provincial council. Those measures which were "disparaging to the non-White population groups" and which offended their human dignity should be removed from the statute book. The party would create "effective machinery ... for continued consultation between the different population groups". There should also be a "speedy and large-scale economic, social and constitutional development of the Bantu territories" ... Such urbanized Bantu who have a sense of responsibility must be given a proper share in the management of the townships and enjoy the right of property ownership". Further, the Bantu should have an independent means of expressing his views, beliefs and grievances in Parliament". The party also recognised the Indians "as an established section of the population". It promised that any proposals for an extension of the political rights of the "non-Whites" (other than those previously mentioned) would be submitted to the electorate for approval in a referendum or election. The party believed in "the democratic way of life as the basis for civilized government"

⁷¹ See WA Kleynhans, *South African general election manifestos*, p 404.

and would encourage "a speeding up of economic and industrial development" and the fullest opportunities of employment to all". It would also work towards the encouragement of friendly relations with other states in Africa and the creation of diplomatic and other contacts with them. ⁷²

Several of the points made by the NUP were somewhat vague. For example, the manifesto does not mention any of the laws that were "disparaging to the non-White population groups". It does not elaborate on the "effective machinery" that should be created for "consultation between the different population groups", nor does it say how the "Bantu" were going to be given the opportunity of expressing their "views, beliefs and grievances in Parliament."

Other campaign points made by Fagan were that the NUP believed that South Africa should remain under white control but that there should be a type of federation in which all the racial groups would be allowed responsibilities for the management of their own affairs - these responsibilities would be related to the abilities of the different groups. Fagan also accused the government of dragging "the name of the Afrikaner people through the world's mud". ⁷³

A remarkable feature of the NUP's campaign was the large number of its meetings that were disrupted by heckling and fighting. Japie Basson's meetings in Vereeniging and Pretoria, for example, were broken up prematurely. ⁷⁴

⁷² UNISA, United Party Archives, Division of Information, File 97, National Union Party.

⁷³ *Cape Times*, 17 September 1961, 9 October 1961, 14 October 1961.

⁷⁴ *Cape Times*, 3 October 1961 & 12 October 1961.

The English-language press was very critical of the refusal of some audiences to give Japie Basson and Fagan a hearing. The behaviour of many students at these meetings came in for vehement criticism. In an editorial the *Cape Times* strongly condemned "shocking displays of bad manners and moronic jibing" from students at universities and teacher training colleges. The newspaper expressed its confidence that most Nationalists would deplore the way that these "strident youths" treated Fagan in an attempt "to maintain their ignorance intact".⁷⁵

The fact that so many of the candidates for the NUP had been former members of the NP and were seen by many Nationalists as being defectors or deserters from the party might explain the particularly difficult reception that their speakers often received from Nationalist supporters. This tendency to rowdiness was not uncommon in South African politics and was to be repeated at meetings of the Herstigte Nasionale Party in the 1970 general election. During the 1961 general election, however, it was infrequent at meetings of the UP.

An examination of the background of many of the National Union candidates shows that many were former Nationalists. One of the most influential members of the NUP, the candidate for Boksburg, Jan "Hennie" Serfontein, was a former leader of the Jeugbond of the NP in Pretoria. He had resigned partly in indignation at the Senate Act and because he felt that he was not allowed "to criticise the party's leadership or methods, even within the party fold". At a meeting organised by Serfontein, "a group of hot-headed Nationalist extremists burst into the room and

⁷⁵ *Cape Times*, 25 September 1961.

assaulted Mr Luthuli, Mr Serfontein and many others". The leader of these "extremists" was later jailed for three months for assault.⁷⁶

Besides Fagan and Basson, the NUP also had one former MP in its list of candidates. He was SJ Swanepoel, who had been the NP representative for the constituency of Gezina from 1943 to 1948. He was described by the *Cape Argus* as a follower of General Hertzog. In the 1953 general election he stood for the UP in Koedoespoort and in 1961 he was the NUP candidate in Stellenbosch.⁷⁷ Other prominent ex-Nationalists who stood for the NUP in the 1961 election included Willie Beckman in Port Elizabeth North, RJ Verster in Newcastle, and Johannes Strydom in Vereeniging. All these men had occupied leadership roles in the NP at one time.⁷⁸

The NUP candidates generally presented an image of youth but it was debatable whether this would appeal to the electorate. A special correspondent for *The Times* of London wrote in March 1960 of the Union parliament, "An appearance of age will strike anyone familiar with Westminster and it is confirmed by a vital statistic. Fourteen members in a house of 163 are in their seventies, more than 30 in their sixties, and some 50 in their fifties. Youth gets a poor show in contemporary South African politics ; rising parliamentary hopes of the 1920s are still to be found languishing, unfulfilled, on the back benches."⁷⁹

Japie Basson also made the character of Verwoerd

⁷⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 2 October 1961.

⁷⁷ *Cape Argus*, 7 September 1961.

⁷⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 5 October 1961 ; *Sunday Times*, 20 August 1961.

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 1 March 1960.

a theme of his election campaign in his future constituency of Bezuidenhout. He accused Verwoerd of showing open support for Hitler and Mussolini and described him as having a "fascination" for fascism and Nazism. Basson noted that Holland had been invaded by Hitler and labelled Verwoerd as the only statesman in the world to have chosen sides against both his fatherland and his motherland." ⁸⁰

The campaign conducted by the Progressive Party.

In his memoirs, Ray Swart describes how the calling of an early election was detrimental to the Progressives' election campaign. In his words : ⁸¹

The early election ... was most unwelcome from our point of view ; We had done well in setting up a basic party organisation in most parts of the country ; we had recruited members and established branches : and we had - thanks largely to the Molteno Commission - formulated much of our policy, but we needed much more time to get it across to the electorate.

The PP candidates faced some formidable problems in their campaign. Helen Suzman recalls that the party had hoped to have three more years to formulate its policies and to present these to the electorate. In her opinion the calling of an early general election had dissipated any advantage gained from the party's recent performance in parliament. Zach de Beer thinks that the Progressives' main advantage was their "freshness" as many people had come to believe that the UP was "dull and

⁸⁰ INCH, PV 58, Japie Basson Collection, File 3/5/1/1/2, Speech delivered at Cyrildene, Johannesburg, 18 September 1961.

⁸¹ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, p 91.

directionless" and these voters hoped that the Progressives would be a "more vigorous opposition" to the Nationalists. He considers that the "Don't split the vote" line of thought among many voters was the main problem confronting the Progressives. Colin Eglin agrees with Zach de Beer on the importance of this issue but regards the fact that the party was regarded as being "too far ahead of its time" as more important. Many voters were influenced by "the background of Uhuru elsewhere in Africa and conflict inside South Africa".⁸²

At the outset of the election the PP decided that it would try to avoid contesting seats in which the NP would have a chance of winning should the vote be split. In the Zululand constituency, represented in parliament by Ray Swart, the PP decided not to contest the seat when the NP decided at the last moment to put up a candidate. As the PP's nomination had already been accepted, Swart appealed to the voters not to vote for him and ended up losing his deposit.⁸³

Likewise, the decision of the UP to contest the Queenstown constituency against the Nationalists prompted Steytler to decide not to contest that seat for the PP. The *Cape Times* applauded this decision, saying that it could only congratulate him for his responsible withdrawal from the contest even though it must have been a great temptation for him to prove that there was solid support for the PP in the rural areas.⁸⁴

⁸² Helen Suzman - Author, Johannesburg, 9 January 1996 ; Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996 ; Colin Eglin - Author, Cape Town, 8 November 1995.

⁸³ R Swart, *Progressive Odyssey*, pp 94 - 96.

⁸⁴ *Cape Times*, 16 July 1961.

The Progressive Party attempts to defend its racial policies.

Throughout its campaign the PP had to refute allegations that it stood for a policy of one man, one vote, and that its policies would lead to compulsory integration and the swamping of white areas and facilities by blacks. In a pamphlet circulated by Harry Lawrence in his constituency of Salt River, the party's position was uncompromisingly given : ⁸⁵

Any one who tells you that because Harry Lawrence is a Progressive he stands for "One Man, One Vote", IS TELLING A LIE ! Any one who tells you that because Harry Lawrence is a Progressive he will make you share Swimming Baths, Residential Areas, Playing Fields or other amenities with people of other races, IS TELLING A LIE. Any one who tells you that because Harry Lawrence is a Progressive he is helping the Communists, IS TELLING A LIE !

Colin Eglin, in contesting his constituency of Pinelands, reiterated the PP's position in the social field in a pamphlet distributed to his electorate. He described the PP as rejecting enforced social integration while at the same time believing that people should not be compelled to segregate against their will. The PP view was that experience had shown "that social relationships in our multi-racial country are best regulated by the conventions which exist." Should there be a demand from the inhabitants in any area to associate with or to reside among members of their own group, provision should be made for them to do so. ⁸⁶

Similar points were raised by Leo Boyd, who was standing for the Progressives against Douglas Mitchell in Natal

⁸⁵ UCT, BC 640, Harry Lawrence Collection, C 8.15, Pamphlet circulated by Harry Lawrence.

⁸⁶ SAL, A 326.968 PRO, Progressive Party Collection, Pamphlet entitled, *To the voters of Pinelands.*

South Coast. Boyd circulated a pamphlet in which he tried to allay some of the misgivings felt by the constituents regarding social integration or segregation. One section of the circular was entitled, "Of course, there *WILL* be SEPARATE BATHING AREAS FOR WHITES when the Progressives are in power". He told the voters, "Under a Progressive Party government, separate beaches, swimming baths, residential areas, schools and other services and amenities will continue to be provided just as they are now. Nobody who does not want to mix with non-Whites will in any way be compelled to do so."⁸⁷

Clive van Ryneveld, who was seeking re-election in East London North, also had to deal with similar allegations raised in a pamphlet that was circulated widely by the UP in his constituency. At a public meeting he added a few more points to those raised by Boyd. Van Ryneveld described the party as standing for a qualified franchise and not for "votes for all". In addition it was "completely untrue" that the Progressives would abolish the pass laws "overnight". The Progressives would also not allow the country to be swamped by job-seekers from "India, Pakistan, Malaya, Kenya, Congo and Japan". In answer to the allegation that the Progressives were helping Verwoerd by splitting the anti-Nationalist vote, van Ryneveld claimed that there was not a single three-cornered contest between Nationalist, Progressive and UP candidates.⁸⁸

The *Daily Dispatch* commented scathingly on this UP pamphlet and also criticised aspects of the UP's campaign against

⁸⁷ UNISA, Douglas E. Mitchell Papers, File 18.13, Pamphlet circulated by Leo Boyd (no date).

⁸⁸ *Daily Dispatch*, 14 October 1961.

the Progressives. It described the pamphlet as "an example of wilful distortion and deliberate misrepresentation of the truth that puts the party to shame." The newspaper also discussed some of the UP's various other methods of electioneering and criticised the recording of Graaff's speech attacking the Progressives.⁸⁹

These attempts to frighten by false statements about, and false inferences drawn from, the policy of the Progressive Party clearly reveal the United Party as a carbon copy of Nationalist ideas and prejudices, using Nationalist methods. Is such a party deserving of support on Wednesday ?

Die Transvaler also tried to compare the Progressives' policies on segregation with those about to be put into practice in Southern Rhodesia. The city council in Salisbury had recently decided to open the municipal swimming pools to all races and *Die Transvaler* attributed this move to the Rhodesians' recent decision to accept the idea of partnership.⁹⁰

Professor PV Pistorius, an influential member of the PP in its early years, compiled a summary of the PP's principles and beliefs. This was published in the *Eastern Province Herald*. It stated in its preamble that the PP was convinced that any policy based on colour and race discrimination would destroy "not only the white man in South Africa but also the civilization brought by the White man to this country." It described the policies of the UP and the NP as being "identical in principle" and claimed that they differed only in the manner in which "race domination should be practised". They were based on "the false myth that even the most uneducated and irresponsible white man is superior to the most educated and responsible black individual

⁸⁹ *Daily Dispatch*, 16 October 1961.

⁹⁰ *Die Transvaler*, 30 August 1961.

and that the one should be the leader and the other the one who has to obey". Pistorius described the PP policy as being one of "gradualism" and recognising that "very many non-whites are not yet capable of sharing political power with us". Significantly, Pistorius wrote, "For that reason we utterly reject the principle of one man, one vote". The Progressives believed in a rigid constitution that would need the approval of all race groups before it could be changed so that it would be impossible for any one racial group to dominate another. Job reservation would be abolished as the Progressives believed that "it is morally right and economically sound that all men, whatever their colour, should be free to do whatever work their abilities allow them to do". Importantly, it also claimed : "We totally reject enforced social integration. Our written policy pledges our party to protect the rights of every individual to reside among his own kind and to share social amenities such as schools, swimming baths and sports fields with people of his own colour only. The Party will not stand in the way of people who may ask to establish integrated townships. It will not allow the racial character of existing townships to be changed without the consent of the inhabitants of these townships." Pistorius described South Africa's political choice as being between "temporary white domination followed by inevitable disaster or otherwise a gradual adaptation of the country to the change that can in any case not be avoided".⁹¹

⁹¹ *Eastern Province Herald*, 5 October 1961 ; An interesting discussion of some of the philosophical beliefs that went into the formation of Progressive Party doctrine is provided by Zach de Beer in his book, *Multi - racial South Africa : the reconciliation of forces* (London, 1961), p 9.

These individual statements made by various Progressive Party candidates show the enormity of the problem faced by the Progressives in trying to explain their policies to an electorate that was very largely convinced that these views would lead to a large-scale enfranchisement of vast numbers of blacks and the subsequent "swamping" of white residential areas and facilities. It is also an indication of the preoccupation of many voters with safeguarding white areas and privileges. It should also be remembered that all these appeals were directed primarily at voters in traditional UP seats and thus reflected the need to placate the fears of traditional UP supporters. It is clear that UP fears were similar to those felt by most NP voters. This is also a very revealing indication of how the UP was able to reap benefits from a more subtle form of the "swart gevaar" tactics that the NP had adopted for so long and so successfully. In addition it is interesting to notice how the NP was able to depict the UP as following policies that would lead to the subjugation of the white man while the UP in its turn made similar claims against the Progressives. A speech made by Colin Eglin at Landsdowne shows how the Progressives likened the UP tactics to those of the Nationalists. Eglin thought that Verwoerd would be delighted when he heard UP candidates telling urban audiences that "the Progressives were more dangerous to South Africa than the Nationalists".⁹²

The UP was given a certain amount of ammunition to use

⁹² UCT, Colin Eglin Collection, Speech delivered by Colin Eglin M.P., Progressive Party candidate for Pinelands, at Landsdowne, 25 September 1961. (This collection was still unsorted.)

against the Progressives by the Progressive candidates themselves. For example, Clive van Ryneveld asserted that approximately a hundred thousand "non-Whites" would receive the franchise under the PP's system.⁹³ This seemingly contradicted an earlier statement made by the PP's candidate for Maitland, Zach de Beer, who had told a meeting at Mowbray that it was possible that his party's position on the franchise would eventually lead to a black majority in parliament. He told his audience that to prevent a fear of oppression among minority groups the PP supported "a written constitution that would protect the rights of minorities".⁹⁴ Zach de Beer's faith in the inviolability of an entrenched constitution is shown in a pamphlet distributed to the voters of Maitland. Here he claimed that such a constitution would make it impossible even for parliament to take rights away from any section of the population. According to De Beer, such a constitution was used in America and most Western countries.⁹⁵ The obvious rejoinder from UP supporters was that South Africa was very far from being a Westernised country with a Westernised population. Nor did it have a long tradition of democratic and stable government ; circumstances in South Africa were very different from those in America or Western Europe and furthermore, experience in other African countries was evidence of the short duration of democratic government on the principles of an entrenched constitution.

The very frankness of some PP candidates was, in a way,

⁹³ *Cape Argus*, 3 October 1961.

⁹⁴ *Cape Argus*, 8 September 1961.

⁹⁵ Author's private collection, Zach de Beer to the voters of Maitland, n.d.

a hindrance to their chances of being successful in an election that was dominated by the racial issue. An example of this was provided by Zach de Beer who told a PP meeting in George that the Progressives would accept a black premier should he be elected in a democratic manner. In De Beer's opinion there was historical justification for the Progressives' desire for a qualified franchise as this had been practised "successfully in the Cape from 1854 to 1936 - a vote for any man, White, Brown or Black, who could prove he was civilized and responsible".⁹⁶ De Beer's statements were in accordance with the idea expressed by the leader of the PP, Jan Steytler, that although the rest of the world did not expect South Africa to adopt a policy of universal suffrage, it did expect South Africa to treat people "on merit".⁹⁷

Newspaper headlines such as "We want lots of non-Whites to qualify for vote" would also have caused the Progressives some harm in certain quarters. Leo Boyd was addressing a meeting in Umkomaas when he announced that the Progressives had fixed lower qualifications for the franchise than was the case in the Rhodesian Federation to ensure that "many would qualify and to prove the party's sincerity".⁹⁸

A letter from the postal vote agent for the Progressives in Pinelands gives a valuable description of the animosity between the UP and the Progressives. The agent complained that one of the senior members of the UP, Lionel Murray, had taken advantage of his position as chairman of one

⁹⁶ *Cape Times*, 5 October 1961.

⁹⁷ *Cape Argus*, 29 September 1961.

⁹⁸ *The Natal Daily News*, 31 August 1961.

of the local old age homes. Murray had barred Colin Eglin from addressing the old people there although he simultaneously took the UP candidate, Ogilvie Newton Thompson, there to be introduced to the residents. ⁹⁹

The Progressive Party receives support from various newspapers.

The PP was fortunate to gain the support of several influential English newspapers (notably the *Rand Daily Mail*) during the campaign. Joel Mervis describes how enthusiastically the then editor of the newspaper, Laurence Gandar, supported the Progressives' cause : ¹⁰⁰

The paper, delighted at the chance of supporting a party after its own heart, treated the election as if it was itself a candidate. For weeks the Progressive Party was given plenty of space to express its views. On election day perhaps only the outbreak of war could have claimed bigger headlines, bolder paragraphs or a more impressive display than that given to the Progressive Party.

Allister Sparks wrote a series of "Election Spotlights" for the *Rand Daily Mail*, most of which concentrated on individual politicians. Many were particularly effusive in their praise of the PP candidates. For example, in describing Bernard Friedman, Sparks described the "striking" similarities between Friedman and Jan Hofmeyr, a previous MP for the constituency. Sparks described these two parliamentarians as arguably the greatest orators that the House of Assembly had ever seen. ¹⁰¹

Sparks also praised the leader of the PP, Jan Steytler,

⁹⁹ UCT, Colin Eglin Collection, Letter to the Union Head Office of the Progressive Party from the postal vote Agent of Pinelands, 10 September 1961.

¹⁰⁰ J Mervis, *The Fourth Estate*, p 342.

¹⁰¹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 September 1961.

as a man "whose every word carries an aura of complete sincerity and honesty", and who possessed the "forthrightness, warmth and open-heartedness typical of Cape Afrikaners".¹⁰² Helen Suzman was also given generous tributes in an article by Sparks : "Compassion lies behind lash of Helen Suzman's witty tongue". According to Sparks, the Progressives would ensure South Africa's return to the Commonwealth and they would prevent a black revolution from breaking out. The PP would also provide a home for moderate Nationalists who might eventually realise the futility of Nationalist doctrines. A PP victory would also give much encouragement to South Africa's overseas friends.¹⁰³

On polling day Gandar published a forceful editorial encouraging his readers to vote for the Progressives. He nailed his newspaper's sympathies firmly to the mast. His editorial ended by saying that South Africa was faced with two alternatives. One was "political separation accompanied by immense economic sacrifices" ; the other was "economic integration accompanied by extensive political concessions". It was "hopelessly unrealistic" and "downright dishonest and dangerous" to carry on with a policy of "enjoying the fruits of economic integration and ignoring its political obligations". He told his readers : "And so - vote Progressive if you have the opportunity ; if not, vote 'Pact'." ¹⁰⁴

The *Cape Times* expressed less enthusiastic support for the Progressive Party. According to the editorial it would be a tragedy if the Progressives were to be removed from

¹⁰² *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 October 1961.

¹⁰³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 October 1961.

¹⁰⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 October 1961.

parliament - particularly so in the case of Harry Lawrence. The Progressives presented the "thinking and ideas ... in the true European tradition". The Progressives would receive the support of those voters to whom modern Africa was "a moral and intellectual challenge".¹⁰⁵

In Pietermaritzburg the PP also received warm support from *The Natal Witness*, which published an editorial on the day before the election, "Why We Support The Progressives". It was very critical of the UP in Natal :¹⁰⁶

The praise that we have bestowed on the United Party in other provinces is not merited in Natal, where the Party's leadership and political tactics have fallen far below the level that we expect in those who aspire to represent the cause of freedom and decency in a house that will be dominated by Dr Verwoerd.

The Progressives would never betray their principles, were not "docile", and would never run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The UP, on the other hand, had made a pact with Japie Basson's party and had "exploited racial prejudice with such blatant irresponsibility." It is interesting to speculate to what extent the support from *The Natal Witness* contributed to the comparatively good showing of the PP candidates in Pietermaritzburg.

In general we can observe how press support for the Progressives centred on three important issues. The first was the supposed more honest and less self-centred nature of the individual Progressive candidates. Another was their disenchantment with the UP and its alleged offensive and racially provocative style of electioneering. Thirdly, the press

¹⁰⁵ *Cape Times*, 17 October 1961.

¹⁰⁶ *The Natal Witness*, 17 October 1961.

emphasised the morality, honesty and altruism of PP doctrines. The *Rand Daily Mail* was by far the most enthusiastic and effusive supporter of the Progressives.¹⁰⁷

The campaign waged by the Liberal Party.

In the 1961 election the Liberal Party fielded only two candidates. They were its Randolph Vigne in Constantia, and Mary Walker in Hillbrow. Mary Walker was the sister of the historian Rayne Kruger. Both these candidates had an uphill struggle. Vigne complained that the PP had been distinctly uncooperative in providing voting details for his Constantia constituency. The newspapers, furthermore, did not want to publish anything sent to them by the Liberal Party.¹⁰⁸ Mary Walker also encountered difficulties in Hillbrow. She was unable to hire a hall for multiracial gatherings and most of her campaign meetings were held in the open air using a bullhorn and a penny-whistle band to attract listeners.¹⁰⁹

The Liberal Party candidates tried to convince the electorate of the inevitability of black rule. Mary Walker's manifesto read :¹¹⁰

Change is coming to South Africa. ... In five brief years over 100 million non-whites have gained their independence in Africa. This tide is sweeping towards us - we cannot avoid it ! You, the voters of Hillbrow, could have reason to fear the change.

¹⁰⁷ J Mervis, *The Fourth Estate*, p 346.

¹⁰⁸ UCT, BC 587, Leo Marquard Collection, E 2.77, Randolph Vigne - Leo Marquard, 2 October 1961.

¹⁰⁹ D Irvine in J Butler, R Elphick and D Welsh (eds.), *Democratic liberalism in South Africa*, p 123.

¹¹⁰ Alan Paton Centre, Liberal Party Collection, PC 2/7/2/1, These are the people of South Africa.

Randolph Vigne's statement described the Liberal Party as "the true opposition to the Nationalists". It claimed that voting for the Liberal Party would be a rejection of "Verwoerd's and Graaff's claim that sharing of rights inevitably means 'black nationalism' and end of the whites". Those who believed this claim "should get out now : this is no country for them". ¹¹¹

According to Peter Brown, the Liberal Party also tried to enter into an agreement with the Progressives whereby the Liberal Party would contest Pietermaritzburg District. This had come to nothing but the Liberal Party members were told that they would be free to work for the Progressive candidate should they so wish, and some did indeed do so. ¹¹²

In assessing the performance of the Liberal Party, Kenneth Heard is of the opinion that the Liberal Party waged its campaign not so much with the intention of winning votes but with the object of using the election to propagate its message from a public platform. According to Heard, the Liberal Party suffered from a lack of press support and its leaders lacked direct political experience. It did, however, have a "deep-seated conviction in the rightness of its cause, and the honesty and courage to express it". ¹¹³

¹¹¹ Alan Paton Centre, Liberal Party Collection, PC 2/7/2/1, South Africa is a wonderful country ruined by politics.

¹¹² UCT, BC 587, Leo Marquard Collection, E 2.76, Peter Brown - Leo Marquard, 12 September 1961.

¹¹³ K Heard, *General elections in South Africa*, p 133.

The campaign waged by the Conservative Workers Party.

Very few commentators regarded the election campaign of the Conservative Workers Party (CWP) as more than a minor side-show. The historian Leo Marquard, for example, wrote in his weekly column in *The Baltimore Sun* that this party would most probably do no more than reduce the NP majorities in the four seats that it was contesting.¹¹⁴ Kenneth Heard also regards the CWP's campaign as being of secondary importance and thinks that its "only real contribution to the debate" was that it might have focused more attention on economic issues.¹¹⁵ One noteworthy aspect of this campaign was the way the CWP tried to evoke memories of the harsh economic times of the 1920s and 1930s. This was a powerful emotional issue to many voters across the political divide - one of the many emotional issues of the campaign.

The CWP's election campaign emphasised the fact that it represented the interests of the workers, who were "the backbone of any country". It tried to exploit the fact that the NP was represented in parliament primarily by professional men, farmers and businessmen, with very little representation of the working class. A pamphlet circulated by the CWP made great play of the fact that the working classes were very poorly represented among the NP's 102 members of parliament.¹¹⁶

The NP was depicted as being indifferent towards the workers. The pamphlet circulated by JA Kruger, for example,

¹¹⁴ *The Baltimore Sun*, 17 October 1961.

¹¹⁵ K Heard, *General elections in South Africa*, p 134.

¹¹⁶ UNISA, United Party Archives, Division of Information and Research, File 52, Conservative Workers' Party, Pamphlet entitled *Our Party*.

accused the government of neglecting the workers' economic problems so as to "cadge for votes on ideological grounds". It claimed that nothing had been done to establish minimum wage standards for the workers or to obtain a measure of social security for them. The candidate for Germiston, KW du Preez, maintained that the CWP would concentrate "mainly on the economic problems of the workers, with a view to affording them a reasonable standard of living with adequate security against the problems and difficulties that come with unemployment, old age and infirmity".¹¹⁷

In an interview with Allister Sparks, KW du Preez linked the formation of his party to memories of the Great Depression. He told Sparks that his party had no quarrel with any party on ideological grounds but asked why it should be regarded as unrealistic to spend money on old age pensions and "a family's bread and butter" when "vast sums can be found to pour into ideological solutions".¹¹⁸

The press paid very little attention to the CWP. The party did, however, attract some attention at a public meeting held in Johannesburg to discuss the plight of the unemployed. The candidate for Mayfair, RJ Nagel, told the meeting, "All we get is promises. What do our wives and children eat while we wait another 15 weeks for the unemployment situation to resolve itself?" This was in response to a statement that the Minister of Labour had told a delegation of unemployed workers that the

¹¹⁷ UNISA, United Party Archives, Division of Information and Research, File 52, Pamphlets circulated by candidates of the Conservative Workers' Party.

¹¹⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 September 1961.

unemployment situation would be resolved by the end of December.¹¹⁹

There had been for many years a traditional disinclination among Nationalists to break ranks and to be seen as disloyal to the NP or to the "volk". This would be an important factor in limiting the CWP's chances of success. In addition, it lacked the funds and the opportunity to propagate its doctrines very effectively. It had little support from the press and its leaders had no great parliamentary or electoral experience. It also had the drawback of being a very newly-established party. With very few, if any, advantages and with the cards stacked against it, it is not surprising that the CWP made comparatively little impact in the 1961 election campaign.

¹¹⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 October 1961.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE RESULTS OF THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section provides a general overview of the election results and the second takes a look at the election results from a statistical perspective. The second section also attempts to relate the 1961 general election results to trends that had become apparent since 1948.

An overview of the results of the 1961 general election.

The NP did not have over-ambitious aims for the 1961 general election and did not expect a dramatic increase in its number of seats. It hoped merely to improve its majorities nationwide and to win a few seats which had become marginal as a result of the 1958 general election or gradual demographic changes. These changes included population shifts and an increase in the percentage of Afrikaans speaking voters. The constituency of Queenstown fell into the first category while Pretoria Sunnyside fell into the second. The UP won the constituency of Queenstown in 1958 by a majority of thirteen votes while in the referendum of 1960 it had obtained a majority (against the republic) of 121 votes. Following a concerted campaign the NP won this seat in 1961 by a fairly decisive majority of 369 votes. In the 1958 general election the UP had won Pretoria-Sunnyside by a majority of 614 votes but following the enfranchisement of eighteen-year-olds the composition of the constituency changed dramatically with large numbers of young Afrikaans speaking students living there. In the 1960 referendum there was a

majority (for the republic) of 2 050 votes. By the 1961 general election the constituency had effectively become a safe seat for the Nationalists who won it with a majority of 2 727 votes. These two constituencies were the only new seats won in the 1961 election by the NP. The party thus increased its representation in parliament from 103 members to 105 (including the six members from South West Africa). As can be seen in Chapter Seven, most of the interest in this election was not on the contest between the NP and the UP but on that between the UP and the PP. ¹

One of the issues in the election was whether the National Union Party (NUP) would be able to draw an appreciable number of disenchanted Nationalists away from the NP. It failed lamentably in this respect. In straight contests between the NP and the NUP-UP alliance, the NP increased its majorities in every constituency except Humansdorp. In Humansdorp, Paul Sauer's constituency, the NP received 65,7 % of the votes cast in the 1958 general election. In the 1961 general election this dropped to 65,3 %. This small decrease was only significant in that it was the only constituency where the NP suffered any decrease at all. The NUP did nothing to check this tendency. The election effectively meant the end of the NUP and it is not surprising that it amalgamated with the UP soon afterwards. ² We can speculate on whether this slight decrease indicated any disenchantment among some Nationalists in Humansdorp as a result of Sauer's well-known speech after Sharpeville in 1960. ³

¹ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 359, 378, 385, 400.

² Figures extracted from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 365, 388 - 405.

³ See Chapter 3, pp 89 - 91.

Ben Schoeman, who was a long-serving member of the cabinet, summed up the position of the NUP very aptly when he wrote in his memoirs : ⁴

Basson het Graaff met 'n slenter gevang. Die Nasionale Unie het hoegenaamd geen steun by die publiek gehad nie. Hoedat Graaff ooit kon gedink het dat Basson en sy Nasionale Unie vir die VP iets sou beteken, gaan my verstand te bowe. As Basson se kandidate op eie bene moes gestaan het, sonder die hulp van die VP, sou almal, insluitend Basson self, hul deposito's verloor het.

The NP was easily able to fend off the challenge from the Conservative Workers' Party (CWP) which also collapsed after the election. The NP won the constituencies of Germiston, Langlaagte, Mayfair and Westdene with majorities of 4 186, 3 566, 3 392 and 4 030 votes respectively. Nevertheless the creditable performance of the CWP in polling 24,7 %, 28,1 %, 27,2 % and 25,6 % of the votes cast in those constituencies did show that the NP did not have an overwhelming grip on the affections of the white working classes in some urban areas. ⁵

The 1961 general election was also significant as it was most probably the first general election in which the NP could claim to have obtained the support of more than half the electorate. It will be remembered that the large number of uncontested seats in the 1958 general election made it difficult to determine exactly the level of support given to the NP. ⁶ This achievement was partly attributable to the good organisation of the NP, but it should be remembered that there were many factors that also worked to the advantage of the party. These factors

⁴ Ben Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek*, p 282.

⁵ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 392, 395, 396, 404.

⁶ See Chapter 1, pp 5 - 8.

have been discussed elsewhere.

Much of the real interest in this general election was to be concentrated on the contests between the PP and UP. Although the PP performed much better than in the 1966 general election, its supporters were very disappointed with its performance. It won only the constituency of Houghton with a majority of 564 votes. As the PP had polled 5 405 votes to the UP's 4 841 votes, this means that a comparatively small swing of 5,22 % away from the PP would have been sufficient for the UP to wrest this seat from the Progressives' grasp. ⁷

The PP was unfortunate to lose Parktown by the narrow margin of 85 votes, polling 5 015 votes to the UP's 5 100. A swing away from the UP of 0,85 percent would have been enough for the Progressives to win this seat. ⁸

Joanna Strangwayes-Booth attributed Jack Cope's defeat in Parktown partly to a "smear campaign by the United Party" that alleged that he had signed a petition against the construction of a synagogue in Greenside, part of his constituency. This supposedly cost him a portion of the Jewish vote in that area. ⁹

Allister Sparks of the *Rand Daily Mail* commented that the UP had won in Parktown merely because it had a bigger party machine and was thus able to build up a lead of 117 votes while collecting postal votes. On election day the PP had received 32 more votes than the UP. ¹⁰

⁷ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 393.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 398.

⁹ J Strangwayes-Booth, *A cricket in the thorn tree*, p 198.

¹⁰ *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 October 1961.

Helen Suzman regards her victory in Houghton as largely attributable to "the remarkable campaign organisation under the Campaign Manager, Max Borkum". She does not venture an opinion on why the Progressives lost Parktown.¹¹

In the section of this chapter concerning the statistical analysis of the election results it is pointed out that in general the PP benefited in elections from a high turn-out of voters. Although the percentage turn-out of voters in the Parktown constituency was 81,7 %, we can speculate that a slightly higher turn-out might have been sufficient for a narrow Progressive victory.

In Johannesburg North, Bernard Friedman of the PP polled 4 541 votes to the UP's 5 413, thus losing by 872 votes. In the constituency of Orange Grove Alfred Einstein of the PP polled 4 846 votes to the UP's 5 363, and thus lost by 517 votes. The percentage polls in these two constituencies were 75,7 % and 81,6 % respectively.¹² These results are further confirmation of how the Progressives fared comparatively well at the polls.

The PP came comparatively close to winning the contest in Pietermaritzburg District where it obtained 3 839 votes to the UP's 4 014 - an effective majority of 175 votes. In this particular constituency the percentage poll was only 69,1 % and here again if there had been a higher turn-out the Progressives might have been able to capture the seat. In Pietermaritzburg City the PP polled 3 282 votes to the UP's 3 915, losing by only 633 votes. An interesting characteristic of this contest was

¹¹ Helen Suzman - Author, Johannesburg, 9 January 1996.

¹² BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 394, 398.

that the percentage poll was only 53,8 %. It can be hypothesised that a large number of UP supporters or former supporters refrained from voting.¹³ In Durban Berea, RR Butcher of the PP obtained 4 568 votes losing by 883 votes to the UP candidate. In Durban Musgrave, Durban North and Natal South Coast, the Progressive candidates obtained 44,7 %, 38,9 % and 31,4 % respectively of all the votes cast.¹⁴ In short, these results provide ample proof as to why SL Barnard describes the political strength of the Progressives in the 1961 general election as lying in the areas of Johannesburg, Durban and Pietermaritzburg.¹⁵

It is interesting to speculate whether the PP's comparatively good performances in some of the Natal seats may have been influenced by the UP "back-lash" in some quarters which was aimed at the unpopularity of the provincial leader, Douglas Mitchell. Alternatively, many UP supporters may have decided not to vote as a sign of protest against the UP's supposed lack of direction and the way that it had seemingly forced the progressives out of the party in 1959. Some UP supporters may also have been disenchanted with the UP but were not yet prepared to make a total break with the UP and vote for the PP. The "apathy vote" may also have been an important factor.

The UP's successful candidate for Pietermaritzburg City, H Odell, later claimed that both he and the UP candidate for Pietermaritzburg District had received help from the NP

¹³ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 398.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 391 & 397.

¹⁵ SL Barnard, "Die eensame pad : 'n evalueering van die geskiedenis van die rogressiewe Party van Suid-Afrika (1959 - 1966)" in *Journal of Contemporary History*, April 1987, vol 12, no 1, p 19.

during the 1961 general election and that the UP leadership had approved of this. B Hackland also claims that the UP benefited from "tactical voting by National Party supporters" although there was no apparent evidence of any formal agreements between the two parties. ¹⁶

Some of the most disappointing PP performances were recorded in the Cape Province. In the Sea Point constituency Professor Fourie managed to obtain only 35,4 % of the votes cast, in the Simonstown constituency, Mrs Jacqueline Beck polled only 20,4 % of the votes cast. In the constituencies of George, East London North and East London City, the Progressive candidates polled 5,3 %, 28,8 % and 17,3 % of the votes respectively while in the Albany constituency the Progressive candidate obtained only 16,1 % of the votes cast. Perhaps the saddest defeat suffered by the PP was in Salt River where the colourful veteran politician, Harry Lawrence, polled only 2 190 votes for the Progressives in comparison with the UP candidate's 4 670 votes. ¹⁷

Zach de Beer recalls that the Progressives' hopes regarding Cape Town were not unduly optimistic. According to him, "Cape Town people do not make decisions or change attitudes as easily as some others." He also mentions that Cape Town was Graaff's home town and that he had always been very popular on a personal level there. According to Colin Eglin the Progressives' poor performance in Cape Town could be ascribed to the "background of Uhuru elsewhere in Africa and conflict inside South Africa".

¹⁶ B Hackland, *The Progressive Party of South Africa 1959 - 1981 : Political responses to structural change and class struggle* (Unpublished D Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1984), p 161.

¹⁷ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 388, 392, 396, 398, 399, 401 & 402.

Then too, the "English-speaking establishment remained loyal to Sir de Villiers Graaff and the United Party which was still seen by the middle and old age group as the Party of General Smuts". Graaff, however, regards the Progressives' poor showing as basically due to their lack of "grassroots support". As evidence he cites the fact that the PP was originally able to muster about eleven or twelve votes in the Cape Peninsula General Council, an organisation consisting of "between 130 and 140 delegates", when it discussed the Progressives' actions at the fateful 1959 congress. Anthony Heard attributes the Progressives' poor performance to the fact that splinter parties "rarely made it" and the way that the UP relied on "strong wartime loyalties and camaraderie". In his opinion the incidents in the Congo had also frightened the whites in South Africa. Most of these recollections emphasise the conservatism of the Cape Town electorate and the strong personal loyalties commanded by the UP and Graaff.¹⁸

The opinions expressed above are supported by ER Mc Kenzie, who shows how the various disturbing events in Africa affected the Progressives' chances at the polls. In her words, "Lurid accounts of atrocities being committed in these former colonies and the seemingly sudden spate of black violence within South Africa served to entrench white prejudice and fears as well as the belief that blacks were unable to participate responsibly and peacefully in government. Within this unsettled

¹⁸ Zach de Beer - Author, The Hague, 15 January 1996 ; Colin Eglin - Author, Cape Town, 8 November 1995 ; Sir de Villiers Graaff - Author, Cape Town, 19 December 1995 ; Anthony Heard - Author, Cape Town, 15 January 1996.

climate the electorate was hardly likely to give enthusiastic support to a party whose ultimate goal was the inclusion of blacks in central government."¹⁹

It should be remembered that many of the Progressive candidates had represented their constituencies for some time and that they would probably have built up a personal following. Thus they would have obtained some votes from genuine Progressive supporters and because of personal loyalties and affections. What was ominous for the future of the PP was that new Progressive candidates would not have this advantage. It could also have been a factor in the poor performance of the PP in the 1966 general election.

Post-election comments by prominent leaders.

In his post-election address to the nation, Verwoerd expressed the opinion that the most significant lesson of the election was that "the tremendous stability of South African governments had been reaffirmed". He saw the increased majorities obtained by the Nationalist candidates as a sign of "a steadily broadening base of English and Afrikaans-speaking citizens" who had supported the government. He also declared that the nation had decided "that its very existence depends upon a policy, not of discrimination but of differentiation between racial groups in the population." Verwoerd said that the electorate had rejected "all forms of compromise", and described the NUP as being "the weakest straw of all". He described "a new star" that had arisen

¹⁹ ER Mc Kenzie, "From obscurity to official opposition : The Progressive Federal Party, 1959 - 1977", in *Historia*, May 1984, vol 39, no 1, p 84.

in the form of the PP and asked whether it was "really a star, or ... meteor". In discussing the electoral fortunes of the Progressives, he said :

I do not wish to spoil the pleasure of its members in their minor successes, but to me the figures in which they exult tell the story of personal popularity of a lively group of middle-aged idealists and of another Natalian stand, this time to teach Mr Mitchell a lesson, rather than a strong conviction of the wisdom of equalitarianism for the solution of South Africa's colour and other problems.

Verwoerd considered that the low percentage poll indicated that there were many voters who had rejected the UP but had not yet gone over to the NP fold. ²⁰

Verwoerd was criticised in some quarters for the exultant tone of his comments on the election results and for his remarks on some of the opposition members. In a letter to a couple in Pinelands, Verwoerd responded to criticism of his radio talk by saying that his "references to personalities were very slight". Despite the two-month campaign in the press claiming that the NUP had been draining away support from the NP. The NUP had failed to impress the voters. Graaff had been "rather caught out" in his pact with this party. Verwoerd added that during the campaign he had been repeatedly attacked "in person most violently and unfairly", but had not retaliated by discussing or criticising Graaff, Fagan, Japie Basson or Steytler. ²¹

Dr Dönges, the Cape leader of the NP, expressed the

²⁰ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/2/12, Radio talk by Dr Verwoerd ; *Cape Argus*, 21 October 1961.

²¹ INCH, PV 93, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd Collection, File 1/2/11, HF Verwoerd - Mr and Mrs M Burgoyne, Pretoria, 27 October 1961.

opinion that the election was a "mandate to continue working for racial unity between the English and Afrikaans-speaking peoples." ²² In similar vein at his meeting to celebrate his victory, PW Botha told the voters of George that the election results "threw a great responsibility on to the government to carry on with the principle of separate and parallel development and to make the most of the spirit of unity which was becoming more apparent." He also said that the hand of friendship was being extended to the English-speaking population and that the government "invited them to join in the forward march of South Africa." ²³

Sir de Villiers Graaff commented that the virtual extinction of the PP meant that the UP would be returning to parliament with a team of "capable young men" to replace the Progressives who had lost their seats. KA Heard describes Graaff's statement as "a most ungenerous comment on the older Harry Lawrence and Dr Steytler, and on the young Dr De Beer and R.A.F. Swart, apart from the other members." ²⁴

Graaff went on to say that he thought it very likely that the government would be forced to appeal to the voters again in another election before its five year period of office had expired in 1966, but he did not explain why he held this view. He decried the achievements of the Progressives saying that they had been backed by "disproportionate financial resources" and that a "section of the Press created an image in the public mind of an Opposition divided against itself and rendered helpless by schism." ²⁵

²² *Cape Times*, 20 October 1961.

²³ *George and Knysna Herald*, 27 October 1961.

²⁴ KA Heard, *General Elections in South Africa*, pp 149 - 150.

²⁵ *Cape Times*, 23 October 1961.

After an opportunity to review the election results in greater detail, the UP expressed the view that the Progressives had been reduced to "a small artificial enclave" in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The election had been a time of "consolidation" for the UP. It had now emerged as a "purposeful unified body, no longer plagued by Left- and Right-wing dissentients". In the process it has shown a nett gain of eight seats - the largest of any party in the election. Surprisingly, no attention was drawn to the fact that the 1961 general election had returned 49 UP candidates whereas the previous general election had seen the election of 53 candidates. The so-called UP gain was largely one of winning back the seats that the breakaway Progressives had won under the UP umbrella in 1958. ²⁶

Graaff later addressed a gathering of UP supporters in Johannesburg on the election results. He laid part of the blame for the UP's weaker performance at the door of the opposition press. He claimed it had split the English-speaking vote - something which the NP had never managed to do. He commended some newspapers, particularly the *Sunday Times*, for supporting the UP and for propagating its plans for racial federation. He also criticised the state-controlled broadcasting services for favouring the NP in its presentation of the news. He regarded the radio as having become even more important than the Afrikaans press in spreading propaganda for the NP in the rural areas. ²⁷

The various PP spokesmen tried to be as optimistic as possible about their respective defeats. Jan Steytler said that

²⁶ *Cape Times*, 28 December 1961.

²⁷ UNISA, Corrie van Vuuren Collection, 286 / 2, Discussion concerning general election results c November 1961, Johannesburg.

the results of the election showed that there was no place left in South African politics for centre parties. In his view "the future division in politics would be between the Nationalist Party and the Progressive party." Leo Boyd, the Natal leader of the Progressive Party, felt that it was a tremendous achievement for a party that was barely two years old to win the number of votes that the Progressives had obtained.²⁸ Altogether, the PP obtained 68 045 votes - 19 886 in the Cape, 24 437 in Natal and 23 722 in the Transvaal.²⁹

According to Brian Bamford, the poor performance of the NUP can be attributed to several unpropitious factors. The party had only recently been formed and it had had very little time to organise itself or raise funds. The country was still in the grip of "Republic euphoria" and was not ready for the type of electoral reform advocated by the National Union. Isolation and boycotts had not yet begun to affect South Africa in any appreciable way and the government had "struck a gold reef in clamping down on Communism and civil lawlessness."³⁰

The views of the press concerning the results of the general election.

The various newspaper editorials had very divergent ideas concerning the results of the general election. In reviewing the election the Cape Times commented on the imbalances of an electoral system that allowed the

²⁸ Cape Argus, 20 October 1961.

²⁹ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 405.

³⁰ Brian Bamford - Author, Cape Town, 23 January 1996.

Nationalists to rule the country with a large parliamentary majority while at the same time polling only about half the total votes cast. It wrote : ³¹

The Nationalists' great strength in Parliament is a result of the eccentric delimitations in South Africa, which water down the votes of the central city areas (which have enabled the Progressive Party to make a real impact) and over-value the votes of the platteland. The fact that this set of circumstances has resulted in an increase in Nationalist Parliamentary strength does not prove less than 1 000 000 Nationalists right against the almost equal number of opposing White votes in South Africa, against the almost unanimous sentiments of the non-Whites in South Africa, and against the millions of politically conscious people outside, who have overwhelmingly renounced racial discrimination as a motive for political action.

These claims are, of course, open to contention.

The Cape Argus in its editorial took a more conservative line than did the Cape Times. It concentrated more on the reasons for the lack of success of the NUP and the PP. It hypothesised that the poor showing of the NUP was because the election had been called too early for the party. It had not had enough time to propagate its doctrines and "although many Nationalists sympathised with it, the time has not come for them to throw off their old allegiance and be accused of stabbing Afrikanerdom in the back." The Cape Argus gave several reasons for the poor PP results in the Cape. These included the way that the Progressives had broken away from the UP, "the conservativeness of the Cape and the fact that the Cape, erstwhile liberal leader of South Africa, is not prepared to go any way near as far left as the Progressive Party would go." It also speculated

³¹ Cape Times, 20 October 1961.

on whether the Progressives' comparatively better showing in Natal was due to antipathy towards Douglas Mitchell.³²

The *Daily Dispatch* discussed the disappointing performance of the PP in the Cape : "It is a remarkable reversal of political tradition in South Africa that the spirit of liberalism in race relationship is now much stronger in Natal and the Transvaal than in the Cape. ... Though beaten the Progressive Party can look forward to the future with confidence."³³

Die Burger published a rather triumphant editorial in which it speculated on the future of the PP and the UP. It asked whether the Progressives, "a party which draws its greatest initial power from the flatland civilization of Johannesburg and the endemic separatism of Natal, can really develop into a first power on the national scene." It also pointed out that the comparatively satisfactory performances of the Progressives in some constituencies were facilitated by the complete absence of any Nationalist candidates. The editorial discussed the UP's "traditional dilemma" : being attacked from two sides. "This puts it under renewed pressure to swing more to the Left, while its experience on the second front again prescribes a clearer adaptation to the Right." The newspaper's reference to the "second front" presumably points to the challenge that the UP received from the NP.³⁴

A triumphant note was also sounded by *Die Transvaler*, which ascribed the NP victory to a Higher Hand, which guided the destinies of nations. This newspaper also attributed the victory

³² *Cape Argus*, 19 October 1961.

³³ *Daily Dispatch*, 20 October 1961.

³⁴ *Die Burger*, 20 October 1961.

of the NP to the honesty with which it enunciated its principles and goals and waged its campaign. This was "the best weapon" that the NP had employed and it gave its supporters a spiritual power that had benefited them greatly during the election. The editorial also recorded its pleasure that the NP had won Queenstown - a constituency that had been so strongly UP in 1948 that the UP had been unopposed in it. However, the editorial omitted to mention that the delimitation after 1948 had much to do with the successes of the NP in that constituency. ³⁵

The *Rand Daily Mail* had been vociferous in its support for the Progressives during the campaign and its political comment after the election continued to reflect this attitude. In an editorial entitled "Has the U.P. got a future?", it pointed out that in every election since 1948 the party had "lost ground". In the recent election "its attempts to use the National Union as a bridge by which dissatisfied Nationalists could cross to the Opposition failed completely." It accused the UP of being a pale reflection of the NP and being unable to offer any leadership to "the confused and frightened electorate". It stated bluntly that the "good elements" of the UP had been "increasingly obscured and vitiated by an overlay of compromise and expediency". This had caused the UP to become "a fortress of the status quo". ³⁶

Allister Sparks also praised the Progressives generously. He pointed out that although Smuts had won two-thirds of the seats in 1943, many had been won with narrow majorities. He drew an analogy between this and the way that the Progressives, although losing their "artificial strength" had increased their "real

³⁵ *Die Transvaler*, 20 October 1961.

³⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 October 1961.

strength ... by their gaining one seat and the knowledge that there are eight others which the inevitable further decline of the UP must place within their grasp very soon." He also expressed his opinion that the UP had taken "such a beating" from both the NP and the PP that its whole future had to be in the balance.³⁷

The following day Sparks wrote another article : "Clear signs of strong post-election swing to the Progressives". He claimed that were there to be a new election immediately, the Progressives would win eight seats : namely Houghton, Parktown, Pietermaritzburg District, Orange Grove, Johannesburg North, Pietermaritzburg City, Durban Berea and Durban Musgrave.³⁸ Sparks was probably guilty of wishful thinking but the Progressives might have been able to capture Parktown and possibly another marginal seat if they had been able to ensure a higher turn-out of voters.

The Natal Witness also spoke deprecatingly of the UP, describing it as failing to understand the times in which it was living :

The great days of this party were in the war years and the epoch that preceded them : before the racial question became the crucial factor in South African politics. ... As things are it remains in the middle position exposed to attack on two sides, like the Liberal Party in Britain after the First World War.

It also expressed some optimism on the future of the PP, describing it as "a new force in our political life" which had forced the UP to use "all its strength and cunning" in fighting off the Progressive challenge.³⁹

³⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 October 1961.

³⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 October 1961.

³⁹ *The Natal Witness*, 20 October 1961.

The Star was critical of claims that the UP was facing eclipse or extinction, but it conceded that the party had lost votes to both the NP and the Progressives. The UP was still the official opposition "and, indeed, the only alternative government for the foreseeable future unless South Africa is involved in calamity." The UP also represented the opinions of a substantial number of voters. The newspaper also cautioned the UP against adopting policies that were reactionary or excessively cautious, saying, "... the United Party must realise that its strength, and its real claim to be the official Opposition, lies in its differences from, not its similarities to, Afrikaner Nationalism. ... It cannot meet reactionary trends with yet more reaction." ⁴⁰

In Durban *The Natal Mercury* wrote : "White nationalism had answered black nationalism. That is the only intelligent explanation for the blind, frightening and, let it be said, impressive loyalty of Afrikaners to the rigid leadership of the Nationalist Party." ⁴¹

The Eastern Province Herald commented in its editorial that there must have been considerable apathy among sections of the opposition electorate for the NP to have increased its majorities so considerably in so many seats. It also discussed the dismal performance of the NUP and cited the case of Port Elizabeth North where the Nationalist candidate had more than doubled his previous majority despite the presence of much unemployment in that constituency. In explaining the NP success it wrote, "... there can be no gainsaying the fact that the racialistic slogans of the Nationalist Party continue to exert

⁴⁰ *The Star*, 20 October 1961.

⁴¹ *The Natal Mercury*, 20 October 1961.

a powerful appeal, and that race tolerance and the new concept of partnership based on merit have as yet made insufficient headway among the rank and file of voters." ⁴²

The *Sunday Times* took a more pro-United Party line and pointed out that although it had lost two seats to the Nationalists, the UP had nevertheless polled 302 000 votes compared to the 370 000 by the NP. It had also recaptured all but one of the seats held by the Progressives. While it was "sad" that the UP had not fared better, the reason for this was that South Africa was fundamentally a right-wing country and that since 1948 there had been a "steady, constant move to the right." It also claimed that the Progressives' achievement was "remarkable, perhaps one may even say historic", and complimented the Progressives on the way they presented their policies with "frankness and candour". What the White electorate had been asked to vote for was "the abdication of their political power as a separate group ... and the fact that 69 000 White voters endorsed this policy is, in our view, one of the most remarkable political events of recent years." ⁴³ The *Sunday Times* gives an incorrect total for the number of UP votes. According to BM Schoeman the UP polled 285 242 votes in the general election. ⁴⁴

The *Times* of London wrote that the "hesitant former Smuts party supporters" who had crossed over to vote yes in the referendum of 1960 had stayed in Verwoerd's camp. Most of Verwoerd's newest supporters were former right-wing supporters of the UP who had decided "at last to go the whole hog". It

⁴² *Eastern Province Herald*, 21 October 1961.

⁴³ *Sunday Times*, 22 October 1961.

⁴⁴ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p 405.

thought that Nationalist thinking was summed up well by the utterances by Daan de Wet Nel, the Minister of Bantu Administration, to an audience of young Nationalists in Pretoria : "Every son and daughter of South Africa must regard the result of the election as a mobilization order for the struggle that lies ahead. We will die, each and every one of us, rather than give up our nationhood." ⁴⁵

Thus, in general, the PP was very favourably commended by many of the major English-language newspapers. It would appear that there was also a certain disenchantment with the rather poor showing of the UP. The UP increased its percentage of the vote in only two constituencies - that of Humansdorp where the percentage increase was only very small and in Benoni where there had been a three-cornered contest in the 1958 general election between Labour, the UP and the NP, and where in 1961 there was only a contest between the PP and the UP.

The success of the NP in the 1961 general election can be attributed to several factors, one being that the NP waged an aggressive campaign on a few issues that had a strong emotional appeal to the electorate. The NP had a very strong belief in the virtues of its policies and this naturally transmitted itself to the voters. The NP was also well organised and had a large number of very keen and experienced campaigners, canvassers and organisers. It was further assisted by the fact that it had to campaign in a smaller number of constituencies than normal. It also benefited from the euphoria engendered among its supporters by the successful referendum campaign of the previous year.

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 20 October 1961.

Furthermore, events in South Africa and the rest of Africa had helped to convince many voters that their chances of security and prosperity depended on supporting the NP. Even if the NP had rested on its laurels it would still have done well as there were various other factors in its favour - the opposition was very disunited, the delimitation of constituencies was very favourable to the NP, and the proportion of Afrikaans-speaking voters had increased since 1958. The granting of the franchise to the 18-year-olds also benefited the NP very significantly. In short, there were so many factors that favoured the NP, it could hardly have done anything else other than win a convincing victory in the 1961 general election.

Statistical Analysis of the election results.

The purpose of this section is to examine certain interesting statistical trends in the 1961 general election. It also attempts to relate these trends to those that were apparent in previous general elections and those which emerged in subsequent elections. The analysis focuses specifically on the 150 seats reserved for white voters in the House of Assembly in the Cape, Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State.

Influence of 'loading' and 'unloading' of constituencies.

It is well known in South African politics that the delimitation process often allocates fewer voters to rural constituencies than to urban ones. According to Heard, the delimitation commissioners were allowed to increase or decrease

the number of voters in a constituency by a maximum of fifteen percent of the quota. The quota was established by dividing the number of eligible voters in the province by the number of constituencies allocated to the relevant province.⁴⁶ This system has been vigorously criticised by those opposed to the NP, and has often been seen as an important factor in NP victories. Likewise it has been used as an excuse for the decline in the parliamentary strength of the opposition after the 1948 general election. Helen Suzman has this to say about the causes of General Smuts's defeat in 1948 :⁴⁷

... - a most important factor contributing to his defeat [was that] Smuts stubbornly refused to amend the law that loaded the urban seats (where the United Party had most support) with disproportionately more voters than the rural seats.

What must be determined is whether the loading and unloading of seats was really as crucial as has been claimed.

The Eleventh Delimitation Commission based its calculations on the population statistics of 15 June 1957. It had the task of assigning the 1 493 973 white voters to 150 constituencies. Under a system of equal constituencies, there would have been approximately 9 960 voters in each constituency (i.e. $1\,493\,973 / 150$). In the 1958 general election, based on the decisions of this commission, the NP won 97 seats, to which the commission had allocated 928 572 voters. The NP would thus have been entitled to approximately 93 seats ($928\,572 / 9\,960$).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ KA Heard, *General elections in South Africa*, p 8.

⁴⁷ H Suzman, *In no uncertain terms*, p 16.

⁴⁸ Figures extracted from the report of the Eleventh Delimitation Commission as at 15 June 1957, *Government Gazette Extraordinary*, vol CXCI, no 6006, 7 February 1958, pp 1 - 123.

There was no new delimitation before the 1961 general election. Therefore, in both the 1958 and 1961 elections, the boundaries of the constituencies remained the same. In the 1961 general election the NP won 99 seats in the Union while the UP won 49, and the NUP and the PP one each. The delimitation commission had assigned 948 754 votes to the 99 seats won by the Nationalists and 523 626 voters to the 49 seats won by the UP. Under a system of equal values, the NP could therefore expect to win approximately 95 seats (i.e. $948\ 754 / 9\ 960$) and the UP would have won approximately 53 seats (i.e. $523\ 626 / 9\ 960$). The NP would have been entitled to four fewer seats than the 99 seats that it actually won. The UP, which won 49 seats, would have been entitled to four more seats.

We can thus conclude that the loading and unloading of constituencies was not nearly as important in causing the decline of the UP's parliamentary strength as has been claimed.

Influence of the phenomenon of 'wasted votes'.

Votes cast for a successful candidate are 'wasted' if they are not needed in order to win the seat i.e. the number of wasted votes for a successful party is one vote less than the majority. If a candidate is unsuccessful then all the votes cast for his party in that constituency are wasted. For many years there had been a very noticeable tendency for the UP to win many of its seats with very large majorities while the NP tended to win many of its seats by much smaller margins. This contributed to the phenomenon in 1948 whereby the NP received more seats in parliament than the UP although the UP had polled more votes in

the country as a whole. This phenomenon was not a temporary one. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in the 1958 general election the UP had nearly as many supporters in the Union as did the NP, yet the NP received many more seats in parliament. This tendency can best be described in tabular form :

```

*****
*
* Table 2 : A comparison of the number of "wasted
*           votes" won by the respective parties
*           in the general elections between 1948
*           and 1961 : 49
*
*           1948      1953      1958      1961
*
* No. of wasted
* votes won by :
*
* NP           191 823    289 560    325 776    191 210
* AP            12 687      -
* UP           384 242    461 944    422 201    198 149
* Lab.         19 281      28 452      2 670      -
* NUP           -         -         -         44 465
* PP           -         -         -         64 201
*
* No. of uncontested
* seats won by :
*
* NP              1          2          -          47
* AP              -          -          -          -
* UP             11         18         24         20
* Lab.           -          -          -          -
* NUP            -          -          -          -
* PP            -          -          -          -
*
*****

```

Thus, it can be easily observed how the phenomenon of "wastage of votes" operated to the detriment of the UP and to the advantage of the NP over the years between 1948 and 1961. These statistics provide an illustration of how the peculiarities of South African demographics favoured the NP in the 1961 general

⁴⁹ Figures extracted from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 282 - 300, 316 - 333, 346 - 364, 388 - 404.

election. The NP's followers were spread much more evenly over South Africa than those of the UP and had a much greater effect on South African politics than is often realised. This was probably far more significant in the success of the NP than the loading of constituencies - an issue which has received substantially more attention over the years.

*Relationship between voter turn-out and support
for the United and the Progressive Parties.*

It is interesting that certain parties are favoured by a high percentage turn-out at an election while others are correspondingly disadvantaged. The contests between the PP and the UP in the 1961 general election give a clear illustration of this phenomenon. Only constituencies involved in contests between the PP and the UP were included in determining a correlation between the percentage turn-out of voters and the percentage of votes won by each party. Eighteen constituencies were straight clashes between the UP and the Progressives. In the 1961 general election the correlation coefficient for the relationship between the percentage voter turn-out and the percentage support for the Progressives was $r = 0,6385$ and for the UP it was $r = - 0,5989$.⁵⁰

For interest's sake and the purposes of determining whether this was the start of a trend or merely just a temporary phenomenon, similar calculations were performed for the general elections of 1966, 1970 and 1974. Some very interesting results

⁵⁰ Figures extracted from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 388 - 404, 417 - 438, 452 - 473, 490 - 509.

were obtained and these are presented in tabular form.

```

*****
*
* Table 3 : Correlation coefficients between voter
*
*           turn-out and percentage support for the
*
*           UP and the PP in the general elections
*
*           between 1961 and 1974. 51
*
*           ( Only "straight" contests between the
*             UP and PP were examined. )
*
*           Year                PP                UP
*
*           1961                0,6385            - 0,5989
*           1966                0,6707            - 0,6717
*           1970                0,7197            - 0,7175
*           1974                0,8837            - 0,8758
*
*****

```

It can be seen that in straight contests between the UP and the PP, a high percentage turn-out of voters favoured the latter and were to the disadvantage of the UP.

These results can be viewed in several ways. One interpretation is that in each constituency there were a number of disaffected UP supporters who despite this were also hesitant to vote for the PP. Such voters would tend to abstain from voting in general elections. Thus, it would have been in the best interests of the PP to try to ensure the greatest possible turn-out of voters in its contests with the UP. Another interpretation is that there were significant numbers of aggrieved UP supporters in the various constituencies who stayed away from the polls as a sign of protest against their own party.

⁵¹ Figures extracted from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 398 - 404, 417 - 438, 452 - 473, 490 - 509.

Comparison of the results of the 1958 and 1961 general elections.

There was no delimitation of constituencies between the general elections in 1958 and 1961, so it is a useful exercise to compare the results obtained by the NP and the UP in terms of the percentages of votes cast for each party in various constituencies. Even a superficial examination of these statistics shows that in the space of three years the NP improved its position in all but one of the seats that it contested. Notable examples were False Bay, Stellenbosch, Bellville, Roodepoort, Alberton, Pretoria Rissik and Pretoria Sunnyside. These are presented in the form of a table :

```

*****
*
*   Table 4 : A comparison of the percentage support
*
*           given to the NP in various constituencies
*
*           in the 1958 and 1961 general elections. 52
*
*           1958           1961
*
* False Bay           53,7           63,7
* Stellenbosch        61,6           70,1
* Bellville           57,8           67,0
* Roodepoort          59,0           69,5
* Alberton            63,2           77,0
* Bloemfontein East   60,3           68,8
*
*****

```

The NP obtained some remarkable successes in the Orange Free State where only five seats were contested. In none of these seats did the NP obtain less than 67,7 % of the votes cast. In the constituencies of Mayfair, Westdene, Germiston and

⁵² BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 364, 388 - 404.

Langlaagte, all of which were contested by the UP in 1958 but not in 1961, and in which the NP in 1961 was opposed by the Conservative Workers' Party, there was a considerable increase in the percentages of votes cast for the NP, but naturally it is difficult to make comparisons in these constituencies.⁵³

The only constituency which showed a slight drop in support for the NP was, as has been mentioned elsewhere, that of Humansdorp, which was represented by Paul Sauer. In this constituency Sauer polled 65,7 % of the popular vote in 1958 and 65,3 % in 1961.⁵⁴

The improvement in Nationalist fortunes in some constituencies could arguably be because of population shifts. A striking example of this was that of Pretoria Sunnyside where there were many students living in various hostels.⁵⁵ In his weekly column in the *Cape Argus* "Backbencher" claimed that 3 600 students of the Pretoria Normal College and 6 000 students at the University of Pretoria would become voters in the Sunnyside and Rissik constituencies after the eighteen-year olds had been enfranchised. In his opinion, this would greatly affect the position of the UP in Pretoria, where in the general election of April 1958, the NP had polled 57 529 votes and had won eight seats, while the UP had polled 36 480 votes but had won only two seats.⁵⁶

⁵³ BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 346 - 364, 388 - 404.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 352, 394.

⁵⁵ See Chapter 7, p 235.

⁵⁶ *Cape Argus*, 7 June 1958.

The growing impregnability of the National Party.

The Nationalist Party - Afrikaner Party alliance had won the 1948 general election very narrowly and its grip on power at that time depended largely on the political swings in a number of very marginal constituencies. This situation was, however, to change in the NP's favour. This situation is depicted very accurately in the following table :

*
* Table 5 : Distribution of the sizes of the *
* majorities won by the National Party *
* in the various constituencies during *
* various general elections between *
* 1948 and 1961. *
* (The figures for 1948 include those *
* seats won by the Afrikaner Party.) ⁵⁷ *
*
* Number of Seats. *
*
* 1948 1953 1958 1961 *
*
* 40,0 - 44,9 % - - - - *
* 45,0 - 49,9 % 2 1 - - *
* 50,0 - 54,9 % 21 18 7 1 *
* 55,0 - 59,9 % 18 25 18 8 *
* 60,0 - 64,9 % 17 14 27 13 *
* 65,0 - 69,9 % 9 17 19 15 *
* 70,0 - 74,9 % 11 4 14 8 *
* 75,0 - 79,9 % - 6 7 7 *
* 80,0 - 84,9 % - 1 5 - *
* 85,0 - 89,9 % - - - - *
* 90,0 - 94,9 % - - - - *
* 95,0 - 100,0 % - - - - *
* Uncontested 1 2 - 47 *
*
* Total 79 88 97 99 *
*

⁵⁷ Figures extracted from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 282 - 300, 316 - 333, 346 - 364, 388 - 404.

It is interesting that the NP appeared to be somewhat vulnerable until the 1958 general election, after which its position seemed virtually impregnable. It grew from strength to strength in subsequent years and in the 1961 general election it polled more than seventy percent of the votes cast in fifteen constituencies and won 47 other constituencies in uncontested elections - a total of 62 constituencies, 26 more than in 1958.

Further evidence of the growing impregnability of the NP between 1948 and 1961 is provided by an examination of the percentage swings of support away from the NP that would have been necessary to unseat the NP after every general election. This is also best provided in the form of a table :

```

*****
*
* Table 6 : Percentage swings away from the NP
*
* that would have been required to unseat
*
* the party after every general election
*
* between 1948 and 1961. 58
*
*
*
* 1948 1953 1958 1961
*
* % swing : 1,687 8,727 16,134 24,479
*
*****

```

Until the 1958 general election there was still a possibility that the NP could be unseated under certain circumstances. In circumstances such as a severe economic depression, a reinvigoration of the UP or a rupture in the ranks

⁵⁸ Figures extracted from BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 282 - 300, 316 - 333, 346 - 364, 388 - 404.

of the ruling party, the NP might have lost a general election. After the 1958 general election, however, a very substantial swing of 16,134 % would have been necessary and after the 1961 general election the swing would have had to be 24,479 % i.e. nearly a quarter of the NP voters would have had to change their political allegiance.

Political researchers Stultz and Butler use a very ingenious formula based on the results of the 1960 referendum, to calculate the percentage support enjoyed by the NP by 1961. They concluded that approximately 53,5 % of the white electorate would give its support to the NP in the 1961 general election.⁵⁹

There seems to be no reason why the same formula should not be used to calculate the percentage support enjoyed by the NP in the 1958 general election. Using the formula, it can be calculated that approximately 49,084 % of the white voters would have supported the NP in 1958. Thus, the 1961 general election was a break-through for the NP : it was the first general election in which the party was supported by more than half the white electorate.

⁵⁹ KA Heard, *General elections in South Africa 1943 - 1970*, p 145.

CHAPTER NINE.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1961 GENERAL ELECTION.

In many respects the 1958 general election was much more significant for the NP than was the 1961 election. The reason for this assertion is that the 1958 general election had, as previously discussed, put the NP in an impregnable position, something that the two previous general elections had been unable to do. In the 1961 general election the NP did not make much progress in increasing its number of seats. It only regained Japie Basson's seat in South West Africa and won two additional seats from the UP but it did consolidate its position by improving its majorities in nearly all the seats that it contested.

To the Nationalists it appeared that the electorate had vindicated the government's policies on racial segregation, the Bantustans, and the decision to have a republic outside the British Commonwealth. The results of the general election were also to be another point in the NP's upward curve on the graph of election successes since 1948 - a curve that was only to show a temporary decline in the bitterly contested 1970 general election. This decline was partly the result of the acrimony and recriminations generated after the secession of Dr Albert Hertzog, Jaap Marais and their supporters in order to form the Herstigte Nasionale Party. What must also have been another cause of satisfaction for Verwoerd was that the election marked another personal triumph for him, and one that would improve his popularity and standing both in the NP and among Afrikanerdom as a whole. This was to be the first of the two general elections

in which he led the NP to the polls. As Henry Kenney has pointed out in his biography of Verwoerd, up to the time of the assassination attempt at the Rand Show in 1960 Verwoerd had not been particularly popular in his own party and there were many Nationalists who were suspicious or wary of him. Events such as the assassination attempt and Verwoerd's leadership of the country to a republic did much to improve his stature and in the same way the NP's triumph at the polls in October 1961 was also to improve his popularity and his position and to assuage the doubts which many Nationalists had about his leadership abilities. ¹

For the UP the 1961 general election was merely to be another of the many disappointments that had plagued the party since May 1948. Granted, it had regained all but one of the seats that it had lost after the defection of the Progressives in 1959 and furthermore it had lost only two seats to the Nationalists, but more importantly its support had decreased considerably in nearly all the constituencies that it had contested. It is clear that the NP was making steady inroads into the UP's electoral base and the NP's electoral pool was increasing dramatically as a result of the disparity in the birth-rates of the two white language groups and the fact that the NP had the advantage of thirteen years in power to propagate its policies. This was to be a portent for the 1966 general election in which the NP scored sweeping successes at the expense of the UP and even extended its influence into the heartland of Natal, which had so emphatically rejected the NP in many previous elections.

The 1961 general election was also significant in

¹ H Kenney, *Architect of apartheid*, p 194.

that it dispelled the claims that the NP harboured many dissidents and disillusioned supporters who were on the verge of leaving the party. Such hopes as were held by the opposition parties were soon dashed. The poor performance of the National Union Party showed that although there may have been disenchanted sections here and there in the NP, they were not significant enough to influence South African politics in any meaningful way. It was another illustration of the deep party loyalty of the NP's supporters despite the misgivings that some of them might have had.

For the Progressives, the 1961 general election was highly significant. It marked the beginning of a decline in their fortunes which continued until the early 1970s when their position began to improve to the point that they were able to win seven seats in the 1974 general election. Although the Progressives gave the appearance of being elated by their comparatively good showing in some constituencies, the reality was that only one of their candidates had been returned to parliament. Furthermore this was after the Progressives had had a full two years in which to propagate their views to the electorate. From now on their opportunities would be limited. Their influence, numerical strength and speaking time in parliament would be far less. In addition some of their most capable parliamentarians such as John Cope and Harry Lawrence would soon fade from active politics. The decade that followed the 1961 general election was not at all propitious for the Progressives. Events such as the disturbances in many African countries, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia, the disturbances in the various Portuguese colonies, the emergence of political terrorism and sabotage in South Africa, the growing isolation of South Africa

in world affairs, and various other factors all contributed towards a beleaguered mentality that precluded all support for political parties that appeared even remotely liberal. It is therefore not surprising that the Progressives fared so badly in the 1966 general election when Helen Suzman became the only Progressive candidate returned to parliament.

Although it should be remembered that a delimitation of constituencies had taken place before the 1966 general election, we can observe the extent of the Progressive decline by examining certain constituencies. Whereas in Parktown, for example, the Progressives had lost by only 85 votes in 1961, in the 1966 general election they lost by 2 949 votes. In the Houghton constituency Helen Suzman increased her share of the votes only marginally from 52,4 to 52,9 %. The extent of the electoral disaster for the Progressives can be gauged by the fact that in the 1966 election it would have lost its deposit by virtue of polling less than one-fifth of the votes of the winning party) in the constituencies of Bezuidenhout, Brentwood, Durban North, Durban Central, East London North, Rosettenville, Stellenbosch, Virginia, Walmer, Waterkloof, Welkom, and Zululand. It was only in the constituencies of Hillbrow, Houghton, Sea Point, Parktown, and Johannesburg North that the Progressives gained more than 25 % of the votes cast. In only Houghton and Parktown did the PP obtain more than thirty percent of the votes. ²

In short it can be claimed with some justification that the 1961 general election was significant. It extinguished

² BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp 417 - 438.

much of any tendency to liberalism and re-established the UP as the influential opposition party. It most probably quelled any moves towards a more liberal spirit in both the NP and the UP and underlines the strength of the NP's grassroots support. It confirmed again that the road to electoral success for the NP lay in catering for the rising tide of conservatism among the white South African electorate. It provided a shattering blow to the Progressive Party from which it took years to recover. It also effectively ended the careers of some distinguished parliamentarians such as Harry Lawrence, and last but not least, it enhanced the prestige of Verwoerd both in his private capacity and in his capacity as leader of the NP. It was for Verwoerd one of the milestones - albeit not one of the major milestones - on his path towards achieving great popularity among his supporters. Furthermore the result of the election was evidently an endorsement by the electorate of Verwoerd's decision to make South Africa a republic outside the British Commonwealth.

LIST OF SOURCES.

1. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Union of South Africa, *Population Census 8 th May 1951*
Volume VI, *Languages and Literacy*, (The Government
Printer, Pretoria, U.G. 64 / 1958).

Debates of the House of Assembly, 1958 - 1961.

Debates of the Senate, 1958 - 1961.

Report of the Department of Labour, 1959 - 1961 (The
Government Printer, Pretoria.)

Report of the Eighth Delimitation Commission, *Government*
Gazette extraordinary, No. 3139, 8 January 1943.

Report of the Tenth Delimitation Commission, *Government*
Gazette extraordinary, No. 5009, 20 February 1953.

Report of the Eleventh Delimitation Commission, *Government*
Gazette extraordinary, No. 6006, 7 February 1958.

2. BOOKS

Austin, D, *Britain and South Africa* (London, Oxford
University Press, 1966).

Ballinger, Margaret, *From Union to Apartheid : a trek to*
isolation (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Juta, 1969).

Barlow, A, *Almost in confidence* (Cape Town, Juta, 1952).

Barnard, Fred, *13 Years with Dr. H.F. Verwoerd* (Johannesburg,
Voortrekkerpers, 1967).

Barnard, L & Kriek, D, (eds.), *Sir de Villiers Graaff*
(Pretoria, Digma, 1990).

Barnard, SL & Marais, AH, *Die Verenigde Party - Die groot*
eksperiment (Durban and Pretoria, Butterworth, 1982).

Beukes, WD, (ed.), *Oor Grense Heen : op pad na 'n nasionale*
pers, 1948 - 1990 (Cape Town, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1992).

Botha, Jan, *Verwoerd is dead* (Cape Town, Books of Africa,
1967).

Botha, MC, *Premiersverkiesings sedert 1910* (Johannesburg,
Perskor, 1979).

Brookes, EH, *Apartheid : A documentary study of modern*
South Africa (New York, Barnes and Noble, 1968).

Bunting, B, *The rise of the South African Reich* (Harmondsworth,
Penguin Books, 1969).

Butler, DE (ed.), *Elections Abroad* (London, Macmillan, 1959).

- Butler, J, Elphick, R, & Welsh, D, (eds.), *Democratic liberalism in South Africa : its history and prospect* (Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, and Claremont, David Philip, 1987).
- Carter, GM, *The politics of inequality, South Africa since 1948* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1962).
- Coetzer, PW, (ed.), *Die Nasionale Party, Deel 5, Van oorlog tot oorwinning, 1940 - 1948* (Bloemfontein, Instituut vir Eietydse Geskiedenis, UOVS, 1994).
- Cope, John, *South Africa* (London, Ernest Benn, 1965).
- Davenport, TRH, *South Africa, a modern history* (London, Macmillan, 1977).
- Davis, JA & Baker, JK (eds.) *Southern Africa in transition* (New York, Praeger, 1966).
- De Crespigny, A, & Schrire, R, (eds.), *The government and politics of South Africa* (Cape Town, Juta, 1978).
- De Beer, ZJ, *Multi-Racial South Africa : The reconciliation of forces* (London, Oxford University Press, 1961).
- De Kock, WS, *History of South Africa* (South African Department of Information, 1971).
- Delius, Anthony, *The last division* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1959).
- De Villiers, Dirk and Johanna, *Paul Sauer* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1977).
- D'Oliviera, John, *Vorster - The Man* (Johannesburg, Ernest Stanton, 1977).
- Driver, CJ, *Patrick Duncan : South African and Pan-African* (London, Heinemann, 1980).
- Egeland, Lief, *Bridges of understanding* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1978).
- Evans, Harold, *Downing Street diary* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1981).
- Fagan, HA, *Our Responsibility* (Stellenbosch, University Publishers, 1960).
- Feit, Edward, *South Africa : The dynamics of the African National Congress,* (London, Oxford University Press, 1962).
- Feit, Edward, *Urban Revolt in South Africa 1960 - 1964* (Northwestern University Press, 1971).
- Flather, Horace, *The way of an editor* (Cape Town, Purnell, 1977).
- Furlong, PJ, *Between crown and swastika* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1991).

Geyser, AS, (ed.), *Delayed action* (Pretoria, N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1960).

Graaff, Sir de Villiers, *Div looks back* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Human & Rousseau, 1993).

Gunther, J, *Inside Africa* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1955).

Hahlo, HR & Kahn, E, *The Union of South Africa : The development of its Laws and Constitution* (London, Stevens, 1960).

Heard, KA, *General Elections in South Africa 1943 - 1970* (London, Oxford University Press, 1974).

Hellman, E, & Lever, H, (eds.) *Race relations in South Africa, 1929 - 1979* (London, Macmillan, 1980).

Hepple, A, *South Africa : a political and economic history* (London, Pall Mall Press, 1966).

Hepple, A, *Verwoerd* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967).

Hocking, Anthony, *Oppenheimer and son* (Johannesburg, Mc Graw - Hill, 1973).

Horrell, M, *Action, Reaction and Counter-action : a review of non-white opposition to the apartheid policy, counter-measures by the Government, and the eruption of new waves of unrest* (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations, 1963).

Innes, Duncan, *Anglo-American and the rise of modern South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984).

Johns, S, and Hunt Davis, R, *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress* (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991).

H Joseph, *If this be treason* (Johannesburg, Contra, 1998.)

Karis, T & Carter, G, (eds.), *From protest to challenge : A documentary history of African politics in South Africa 1882 - 1964 Volume 3, Challenge and violence 1953 - 1964* (Stanford, California, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1977).

Kenney, H, *Architect of Apartheid* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1980).

King, EL, *A good place to be* (Cape Town, PreText, 1996).

Kleynhans, W, *South African general election manifestos 1910 - 1981* (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1987).

Krüger, DW, *South African parties and policies : a select sourcebook* (Cape Town and London, Human & Rousseau, 1960).

Krüger, DW, *The making of a nation* (Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1969).

Lawrence, J, *Harry Lawrence* (Cape Town and London, David Philip, 1978).

Lelyveld, Joseph, *Move your shadow* (London, Michael Joseph, 1985).

Lewin, J, *Politics and Law in South Africa* (London, Merlin Press, 1963).

Liebenberg, BJ & Spies, SB, (eds.), *South Africa in the 20th Century* (Pretoria, Van Schaik Academic, 1993).

Lipton, Merle, *Capitalism and Apartheid* (London, Gower Temple Smith, 1985).

Lodge, Tom, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945* (London, Longman, 1983).

Luckhoff, AH, *Cottesloe* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1978).

Macmillan, Harold, *Pointing the way* (London, Macmillan, 1972).

Mandela, NR, *The struggle is my life* (London, IDAF Publications, April 1990).

Mandela, NR, *Long walk to freedom* (London, Abacus, 1995).

Mansergh, Nicholas, *South Africa 1906 - 1961 : The price of magnanimity* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1962).

Matthews, ZK, *Freedom for my people* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1983).

Menzies, R, *Afternoon light : some memories of men and events* (London, Cassell, 1967).

Mervis, Joel, *The Fourth Estate : a newspaper story* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1989).

Meyer, PJ, *Trek verder, die Afrikaner in Afrika* (Cape Town and Pretoria, HAUM Publishers, 1959.)

Mouton, FA, *Voices in the desert : Margaret and William Ballinger : a Biography* (Pretoria, Benedic Books, 1997).

Murray, B, *WITS the open years* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1997).

Neame, LE, *The History of Apartheid : the story of the colour war in South Africa* (London, Pall Mall Press, 1962).

O'Meara, Dan, *Forty lost years* (Randburg, Ravan Press, 1996).

Faton, A, *Journey continued* (Claremont, David Philip, 1988).

Peart-Binns, JS, *Ambrose Reeves* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1973).

Pelzer, AN, (ed.), *Verwoerd speaks* (Johannesburg, APB Publishers, 1966).

- Pogrand, Benjamin, *Sobukwe and apartheid* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1990).
- Potter, E, *The Press as Opposition : the political role of South African newspapers* (London, Chato and Windus, 1975).
- Prinsloo, DS, *Stem uit die wilderness : 'n biografie oor oud-President PW Botha* (Mossel Bay, Vaandel Publishers, 1997).
- Prior, A, (ed.), *Catholics in Apartheid Society* (Cape Town and London, David Philip, 1982).
- Reeves, Ambrose, *Shooting at Sharpeville* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1960).
- Rich, PB, *White Power and the Liberal conscience : racial segregation and South African Liberalism, 1921 - 1960* (Manchester and Dover, Manchester University Press, 1984).
- Robertson, J, *Liberalism in South Africa 1948 - 1963* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971).
- Rupert, Anton, *Progress through partnership* (Cape Town, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1967).
- Scher, David, *Dilitinzaba : He-who-removes- mountains* (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations, 1979).
- Schoeman, Ben, *My lewe in die politiek* (Johannesburg, Perskor, Johannesburg, 1978).
- Schoeman, BM, *Parlementêre Verkiesings in Suid-Afrika 1910 - 1976* (Pretoria, Aktuele Publikasies, 1977).
- Scholtz, GD, *Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd 1901 - 1966, deel 2,* (Johannesburg, Perskor, 1974).
- Schrire, R, (ed.), *Leadership in the apartheid state* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Shaw, G, *The Cape Times : an informal history* (Claremont, David Philip, 1999.)
- Solomon, Bertha, *Time remembered* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1968).
- South African Institute of Race Relations, *A survey of race relations*, 1958.
- South African Institute of Race Relations, *A survey of race relations*, 1959 - 1960.
- South African Institute of Race Relations, *A survey of race relations*, 1961.
- Strangways-Booth, J, *A cricket in the thorn tree* (Johannesburg & London, Hutchinson, 1976).

- Strydom, CJS, *Black and White Africans. A factual account of South African race problems in the Verwoerd era* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1967).
- Stultz, N, *The Nationalists in opposition 1934 - 1948* (Cape Town and Pretoria, Human & Rousseau, 1974).
- Suzman, Helen, *In no uncertain terms* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1993).
- Swart, Ray, *Progressive Odyssey* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Human and Rousseau, 1991).
- Tatz, CM, *Shadow and substance in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1962).
- Taylor, Catherine, *If courage goes* (Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1976).
- Thompson, Leonard, *Politics in the Republic of South Africa* (Boston : Little, Brown, 1966).
- Thompson, PS, *Natalians First : separatism in South Africa 1909 - 1961* (Johannesburg, Southern, 1990).
- Tyson, H, *Editors under fire* (Sandton, Random House, 1993).
- Van den Berghe, Pierre, *South Africa, a study in conflict* (Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 1965).
- Van der Byl, Piet, *The shadows lengthen* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1973).
- Van Jaarsveld, F & Scholtz, GD, *Die Republiek van Suid-Afrika. Agtergrond, Ontstaan en Toekoms* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1966).
- Vatcher, WH, *White laager : the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1965).
- Wilks, Terry, *Douglas Mitchell* (Durban, King and Wilks, 1980).
- Wilson, B, *A Time of Innocence* (Bergvlei, Murray Coombes Publisher in association with Random Century South Africa, 1991).

3. PERIODICAL ARTICLES.

- Barnard, SL, "Die eensame pad : 'n evalueering van die geskiedenis van die Progressiewe Party van Suid-Afrika (1959 - 1966)", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 12, no 1, April 1987.
- Barnard, SL, "Sir de Villiers Graaff se leierskap van die Verenigde Party", *Historia*, vol 29, no 2, September 1984.
- Coetzee, CJ, "Luthuli for President of 'die professorale rebellie' of 1959 at the PUK", *Journal for Contemporary History*, vol 21, no 1, June 1996.

Graaff, De Villiers, "South African Prospect", *Foreign Affairs*, vol 39, no 4, July 1961.

Hancock, K, "South African Elections", *Australian Journal of Science*, vol XXVIII, no 3, September 1965.

Longmore, L, "The teenage vote in South Africa", *Political Quarterly*, vol XXX, no 2, April - June 1959.

Makin, M, "South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth in 1961 : postmortems and consequences", *Kleio*, XXIX, 1997.

Mc Kenzie, Elspeth, "The English-language press and the Anglo American Corporation : an assessment", *Kleio*, XXVI, 1994.

Mc Kenzie, ER, "From obscurity to official opposition : The Progressive Federal Party, 1959 - 1977", *Historia*, vol 39, no 1, May 1984.

Mouton, FA, "'A cusser when crossed' : the turbulent career of William Ballinger", *Kleio*, XXVII, 1995.

Munger, E, "Self-confidence and self-criticism in South Africa", *Foreign Affairs*, vol 36, no 4, July 1958.

O'Meara, P, "Tensions in the Nationalist Party", *Africa Report*, vol XIV, no 2, February 1969.

Scher, D, "United Party membership and the coloureds", *Kleio*, XVII, 1985.

Scher, D, "The career of Graham S Eden : 'coloured representative'", *Kleio*, XXIII, 1991.

Scher, D, "The loyal dissident : CM Warren and the United Party", *Kleio*, XXV, 1993.

Stultz, N, and Butler, J, "The South African General Election of 1961", *Political Science Quarterly*, vol 78, no 1, March 1963.

Tiryakian, E, "Apartheid and Politics in South Africa", *Journal of Politics*, vol XXII, no 4, November 1960.

Tothill, D, "Australia, South Africa and the United Nations", *Kleio*, XXIX, 1997.

4. PERIODICALS

African Digest
Foreign Affairs
The Economist
The Forum
The Round Table
Time
The Realist
Die Kruithoring

5. NEWSPAPERS

Cape Times
Daily Dispatch
Daily Telegraph (London)
Diamond Fields Advertiser
Die Burger
Die Transvaler
Die Volksblad
Eastern Province Herald
Die Oosterlig
Evening Post
George and Knysna Herald
Rand Daily Mail
Sunday Express
Sunday Times
Sunday Tribune
The Baltimore Sun
The Cape Argus
The Friend
The Natal Daily News
The Natal Mercury
The Natal Witness
The Pretoria News
The Star
The Times (London)
The Observer (London)

6. THESES AND DISSERTATIONS.

Hackland, Brian, *The Progressive Party of South Africa 1959 - 1981 : Political responses to structural change and class struggle*, (Unpublished D Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1984.)

Heard, KA, *Voting trends in South Africa as revealed in recent general elections and their implications for the theory of representation*, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1966.)

Jooste, L, *FC Erasmus as minister van verdediging, 1948 - 1959*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of South Africa, 1995.)

Mouton, FA, *Die politieke loopbaan van Margaret Ballinger*, (Unpublished D Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990.)

Tothill, FD, *The 1943 general election*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of South Africa, 1987.)

7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.

Brian Bamford, Cape Town, 23 January 1996.
Zach de Beer, The Hague, 15 January 1996.
Colin Eglin, Cape Town, 8 November 1995.
de Villiers Graaff, Cape Town, 19 December 1995.
Anthony Heard, Cape Town, 15 January 1996.
Jaap Marais, Pretoria, 3 November 1995.
Helen Suzman, Johannesburg, 9 January 1996.
Ray Swart, Durban, 20 November 1995.

8. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED.

Interview with Mrs Jacqueline Beck, Kalk Bay, 15 March 1996.

9. ARCHIVAL SOURCES.

Cape Provincial Archives.

A 1646 Dr Dönges Collection.

Institute for Contemporary History

PV58 Japie Basson Collection
PV4 Eric Louw Collection
PV93 Dr H.F. Verwoerd Collection
PV14 Marais Viljoen Collection

Transvaal Archives.

A 2 JG Strijdom Collection.

South African Library.

A.P. 329.968 NAS National Party Collection.
A 326.968 PRO Progressive Party Collection.

Library of the University of South Africa.

Arthur Barlow Collection.
Miles Warren Collection
Sir de Villiers Graaff Collection
Douglas Mitchell Collection.
Frank & Joyce Waring Collection.
United Party Collection.
Corrie van Vuuren Collection.

Library of the University of the Witwatersrand.

A 883 Progressive Party Collection.
A 1931 Liberal Party Collection

Library of the University of Cape Town.

BC 1103 Colin Eglin Collection
BC 640 Harry Lawrence Collection
BC 587 Leo Marquard Collection
BC 579 Donald Molteno Collection
BCZA 7723 / 25 Alan Paton Collection
BC 631 Sydney Waterson Collection.
BC 627 Oscar Wollheim Collection

University of Natal - Alan Paton Centre.

Liberal Party Collection.
