

CONFRONTATION, COOPTATION AND COLLABORATION:
THE RESPONSE AND REACTION OF THE LABOUR
PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA TO GOVERNMENT
POLICY, 1965 - 1984

THESIS

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of Rhodes University

by

ROY HOWARD DU PRÉ

December 1994

ABSTRACT

The Labour Party was a prominent political party amongst coloured people for more than twenty-five years. Formed in 1965 to contest elections for the Coloured Persons' Representative Council (CRC), the Labour Party at the outset adopted an anti-apartheid, anti-separate representation and anti-CRC stance. During the first five years of its existence, the party tried to muster coloured support for its policies. Its promise to cripple the CRC by refusing to occupy seats in the council became the rallying call.

The Labour Party won a majority of the elected seats in the first CRC election in 1969 but the government nominated pro-government candidates to all the nominated seats, depriving the Labour Party of an overall majority. Thwarted in their bid to "wreck" the CRC, Labour Party members instead took their seats in the council, vowing to destroy it from within. For the next five years the Labour Party pursued a policy of "confrontation." By using a "boycott" strategy, it not only hamstrung the effective working of the CRC but thwarted the government in other areas of its "coloured" policy.

In the 1975 election the Labour Party won an outright victory, giving it the power to cripple the CRC. However, it did not seize this opportunity. Its decision to "govern" in the CRC constituted a decisive step in the change from confrontation to cooptation. The Labour Party's continued support of the CRC drew widespread criticism from supporters and opponents alike. Its leaders tried to hold together a disaffected party and eventually agreed to the dissolution of the CRC in 1980 in an effort to paper over the cracks in party unity, and to forestall growing coloured opposition to the CRC at the next election.

In 1983, the Labour Party displayed a decisive shift in its anti-separate representation stance by lending support to the tricameral system. By doing so, it laid itself open to the same charge of collaboration it had levelled at the other

CRC parties.

This thesis will examine the history of the Labour Party from its formation in 1965 as an anti-government party, to one of cooperation with its erstwhile opponent by 1984.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ABBREVIATIONS	v
PREFACE	viii
INTRODUCTION	ix

<u>CHAPTER</u>	Page
1. The political development of coloured people to 1964	1
2. The formation of the Labour Party of South Africa, 1965-1969	23
3. Participation and confrontation, 1969-1975	70
4. The struggle over coloured policy, 1975-1980	159
5. New constitutional proposals and the tricameral system, 1977-1984	232
6. The role of the Labour Party in coloured politics, 1965-1984	299
7. Epilogue: The Labour Party, 1984-1994	337

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa	369
Appendix II - Biographical sketches of Labour Party leaders	374
Appendix III - Labour Party Members of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council, 1969	380
Appendix IV - A. Labour Party Members of the House of Representatives, 1984	381
- B. Labour Party Members of the House of Representatives as at the last session of the tricameral system, April 1994	

BIBLIOGRAPHY	382
--------------	-----

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT AND FOOTNOTES

ACRCOM	- Anti-CRC Committee
ANB	- African National Bond
ANC	- African National Congress
ANTI-CAC	- Anti-Coloured Advisory Council
ANTI-CAD	- Anti-Coloured Affairs Department
APDUSA	- African People's Democratic Union of South Africa
APO	- African People's (later Political) Organisation
AZAPO	- Azanian People's Organisation
AZASM	- Azanian Students' Movement
AZASO	- Azanian Students' Organisation
APO	- African People's Organization
BCM	- Black Consciousness Movement
BPC	- Black People's Convention
CAC	- Coloured Advisory Council
CAD	- Coloured Affairs Department
CAHAC	- Cape Housing Action Committee
CAL	- Cape Action League
CODESA	- Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CPA	- Coloured People's Association
CPNU	- Coloured People's National Union
CRC(CPRC)	- Coloured Persons' Representative Council
CSVA	- Christelike Studente Vereniging van Suid Afrika
CTPA	- Cape Teachers' Professional Association
DP	- Democratic Party
DWP	- Democratic Workers' Party
FCWU	- Food and Canning Workers' Union
FOSATU	- Federation of South African Trade Unions
FP(FCCP)	- Federal Coloured People's Party (changed its name to Freedom Party in 1978)
FRAC	- Franchise Action Council
GWU	- General Workers' Union
HNP	- Herenigde Nasionale Party (est. 1934); Also Herstigte Nasionale Party (est. 1969)
HoR	- House of Representatives
HSRC	- Human Sciences Research Council

IDAF	- International Defence and Aid Fund
LP	- Labour Party
LYO	- Labour Youth Organisation
NCPP	- National Coloured People's Party
NEC	- National Executive Committee
NEF	- New Era Fellowship
NEUF	- Non-European United Front
NEUM	- Non-European Unity Movement
NF	- National Forum
NLL	- National Liberation League
NP	- National Party
NRC	- Native Representative Council
NUM	- New Unity Movement
PA	- Labour Party Private Accession
PAC	- Pan Africanist Congress
PUCHO	- Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys
RFP	- Reformed Freedom Party
SAAWU	- South African Allied Workers' Union
SABA	- South African Black Alliance
SABC	- South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACOS	- South African Council on Sport
SACPO	- South African Coloured People's Organization (later, Congress)
SAIRR	- South African Institute of Race Relations
SALDRU	- South African Labour Development Research Unit
SASO	- South African Students' Organisation
SAUHC	- South African Union of Homemakers' Clubs
SPROCAS	- Special Project on Christianity in an Apartheid Society
SWAPO	- South West African People's Organisation
TARC	- Train Apartheid Resistance Committee
TEPA	- Teachers' Educational and Professional Association
TLSA	- Teachers' League of South Africa
TUCSA	- Trade Union Congress of South Africa
UAL	- United Afrikaner League

- UCCA - Union Council for Coloured Affairs
- UDF - United Democratic Front
- UDP - United Democratic Party
- UP - United Party
- UTASA - Union of Teachers Associations of South Africa
- VKR - Verteenwoordigende Kleurlingraad
- WECTU - Western Cape Teachers' Union

PREFACE

I would like to extend my appreciation to all those who contributed to this thesis: my supervisor, Professor Paul Maylam, for his words of wisdom, infinite patience, constructive criticism and invaluable advice; the friendly and always efficient Mary Allen; and the helpful and competent staff of Rhodes University.

I also wish to express my thanks to the library staff and archivists at Rhodes University (Grahamstown and East London campuses), University of Cape Town, University of Port Elizabeth, University of South Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg City Library and Africana museum, South African Library in Cape Town, and especially the secretary and curator of the Western Cape Institute of Historical Research. I will not forget all the people I interviewed, approached or those who gave background information.

Finally, my deepest gratitude to my parents whom I have always been able to count on; Avril, whose assistance with a previous dissertation paved the way for this one; and Hayley and Olivia who over the years had to endure my absences and moments of preoccupation. To friends who supported my efforts, my sincerest appreciation.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis traces the history of the Labour Party in the period 1965-1984 and examines its development from a vociferously anti-apartheid, confrontationist party, to one which willingly became a partner of the very government it had vigorously attacked and opposed for almost twenty years.

No major works have appeared on the Labour Party and its role in coloured and South African politics.¹ A probable explanation for this is that the events described have occurred very recently. Source material in the form of books and other publications is not as readily available as for the more distant past. The argument that it is not possible to write an objective account of contemporary history has also deterred many prospective researchers. However, recent events focused attention on coloured people and the Labour Party. These included the implementation of the tricameral system in 1984 and the participation of the Labour Party in the House of Representatives; the repeal in 1991 of the Population Registration Act which had classified coloured people; the defeat by the "brown" National Party of the Labour Party in the House of Representatives in 1992; and the competition between the National Party and African National Congress for coloured support prior to the 1994 general election. Yet, very little material is readily available concerning a party which dominated coloured politics since 1965, and which featured prominently in the tricameral parliament between 1984 and 1994. This thesis aims to fill this gap in a vital period of South Africa's political history and endeavours to shed light on an important phase in the history of an enigmatic and prominent coloured movement.

¹The term "Coloured" fell away with the repeal of the Population Registration Act in 1991. Nevertheless, in order that the reader may know who is being referred to in this thesis, it is necessary to use a term which will facilitate identification. Thus, the term "coloured" will be used. See below for explanation of the usage of this term.

While the Labour Party has not received specific attention, it has featured in a number of works. However, where it has been referred to, this is done as part of a general discussion on South African politics or on political issues affecting coloured people. A number of works on coloured people deal with the period prior to 1965 and therefore do not make a study of the Labour Party which was formed after that date.² Those theses and books which do refer to the Labour Party in some detail have only done so as part of a major study on other political issues affecting coloured people. Examples are the removal of coloured voters from the common roll in 1956 and the consequences of that action,³ the formation and functioning of the CRC, and the implementation of the tricameral system in 1984. However, none of the works dealing with the period under review in this thesis have made a detailed study specifically of the Labour Party.

Of books which specifically deal with coloured politics in the period under review, the Labour Party is not the principal subject of discussion. Van der Ross, founder of the Labour Party, has comprehensively documented coloured political movements since the founding of the African Political Organisation (APO) in 1903, but even he hardly makes reference to the Labour Party. In his more recent work on coloured political movements, the Labour Party is dealt with in cursory

²An example of such works are, D.P. Botha, Die Opkoms van ons Derde Stand (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1960); H.P. Cruse, Die Opheffing van die Kleurlingbevolking: Aanvangsjare, 1652-1795 (Stellenbosch: CSVSA, 1947); J.S. Marais, The Cape "Coloured" People (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1937); W.H. Macmillan, The Cape Colour Question : a Historical Survey (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927).

³For instance, D.M. Scher, "The Disenfranchisement of the "Coloured" Voters, 1948-1956" (D.Litt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa, 1983). This is the most exhaustive study yet of the circumstances surrounding the removal of coloured voters from the common voters' roll between 1951 and 1956. Scher refers to the Labour Party in the closing chapter.

fashion in the closing chapter.⁴ Lewis discusses the reaction of Cape coloured people to segregation but only details the history of coloured politics and political movements in the period 1900 to 1948. He does refer to the Labour Party in the closing chapter, but only as part of a general survey on South African history.⁵ The other major work on coloured politics is that by Goldin who examines issues surrounding the development of coloured identity and coloured labour policies and patterns, and related political issues in the Western Cape. General reference is made to the Labour Party and its role in coloured politics as part of this investigation.⁶ However, while these books make a comprehensive study of a number of aspects of coloured politics, they do not examine the Labour Party in any detail.

A number of general works on coloured people have appeared since the formation of the Labour Party; some of these contain material relevant to the period under discussion, and others provide background to the "coloured political problem", but in none of these does the Labour Party warrant any serious study.⁷ A number of works such as those by Venter, who gives

⁴R.E. van der Ross's 3-part, 4-volume unpublished work A Political and Social History of the Cape "Coloured" People, 1880 - 1970, is a detailed collection of source material and has served as the basis of his published work, The Rise and Decline of Apartheid (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1989).

⁵G. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of "Coloured" Politics (Cape Town: David Philip, 1987).

⁶I. Goldin, Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987), which is based on his doctoral thesis, "'Coloured' Preference Policies and the Making of 'Coloured' political Identity in the Western Cape Region of South Africa with particular reference to the period 1948 to 1984."

⁷For example, H.W. van der Merwe and C.J. Groenewald, Occupational and Social Change among the "Coloured" People in South Africa (Cape Town: Juta, 1976); M.G. Whisson and H.W. van der Merwe, Coloured Citizenship in South Africa (Cape Town: UCT, 1972); D.P. Botha, Die Kleurling en ons Kleurlingbeleid (Potchefstroom: PUCHO, 1977); R.E. van der Ross, Myths and
(continued...)

a brief survey of the history and development of the coloured people,⁸ and Thomas, who examines the workings of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council,⁹ refers to the Labour Party in more detail. Hugo's book, which consists of original documents illustrating the policies and strategies of all the major coloured political parties in the period 1961-1977, is a mine of information concerning the role of the Labour Party during this period, but is not a detailed study of the Labour Party itself.¹⁰ Allan Hendrickse's biography sketches his early background, culminating in his appointment as chairman of the Ministers' Council in the House of Representatives in 1984. Reference is made to his role in the Labour Party in the 1970s but concentrates more on the man than the party.¹¹ My own recent work on the political history of coloured people discusses the Labour Party in some detail during the period 1965-1993 but is also not an exhaustive examination of the party.¹² None of the secondary sources, therefore, have made a detailed study of the Labour Party.

A number of theses and dissertations refer to the Labour Party. Behrens' doctoral thesis highlights the role and working of the Houses of Representatives and Delegates and sheds much light on the role of the Labour Party and other

⁷(...continued)

Attitudes: An inside look at the "Coloured" People (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979).

⁸A.J. Venter, "Coloured": A profile of Two Million South Africans (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1974).

⁹W. Thomas, "Debates of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council" (Unpublished paper, 1972).

¹⁰P. Hugo, Quislings or Realists? (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1978).

¹¹P. Coetzer, Awaiting Trial - Allan Hendrickse (Alberton: Librarius, 1984).

¹²R.H. du Pré, Separate but Unequal: The "Coloured" People of South Africa; A Political History (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994).

coloured political parties in the "coloured" parliament, but only investigates the period 1984-1988 which largely falls outside the scope of this thesis.¹³ Hommel's doctoral thesis traces the development of coloured political awareness and the rise of political movements among coloured people up to the 1970s. Reference is made in a closing chapter to the CRC and the Labour Party is referred to only as it related to the functioning of that body.¹⁴ Mina's B.Soc.Sc. Honours mini-thesis and Saks' more detailed M.A. dissertation, both make detailed studies of the CRC between 1969-1979 but the Labour Party is discussed only as it relates to that body.¹⁵ In her wide-ranging study of coloured politics, Freedberg also makes reference to the Labour Party and its role in the CRC and discusses in some detail the party's decision to participate in the tricameral system.¹⁶ However, none of these theses and dissertations make any in-depth study of the Labour Party and it only features as one player in, or just another aspect of, the study of coloured politics. However, my own M.A. dissertation is the only known study made specifically of the Labour Party.¹⁷ This thesis, therefore, fills a particular gap in South African historiography as it is the only detailed

¹³G. Behrens, "The other two Houses" (Ph.D thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989).

¹⁴M. Hommel, "The Organization and Evolution of "Coloured" Political Movements in South Africa" (Ph.D thesis, York University, 1978).

¹⁵B. Mina, "The CRC: Ten Years Hard Labour" (B.Soc.Sc. Honours mini-dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1978); D.Y. Saks, "The Failure of the 'Coloured' Persons' Representative Council and its Constitutional Repercussions, 1956-1984" (M.A. dissertation, Rhodes University, 1991).

¹⁶J. Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity of the 'Coloured' People of South Africa: A Political History, 1652-1982" (Ph.D Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1987).

¹⁷R.H. du Preez, "The Role and Policies of the Labour Party of South Africa, 1975-1978" (M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1987).

study of the Labour Party, its role as a coloured political party, and its place in coloured and South African politics in the period 1965-1984.

Although the sources referred to above are not detailed studies of the Labour Party, they provide valuable information on a number of aspects concerning that organisation. However, a major source of primary material came from archival collections, some of which contained valuable original material, while others were scanty and incomplete. The University of South Africa's archives house a number of collections relating to the Labour Party,¹⁸ but the Sonny Leon Papers is the only major collection containing sufficient relevant and usable material covering the period under discussion.¹⁹ The only original material provided by the Labour Party itself is the Labour Party Private Accession (P.A.29) housed at the Western Cape Institute for Historical Research. The Institute also contains the R.E. van der Ross collection which, at present, is very limited in the amount of material available.

Private collections, still in the hands of the owners, contain the bulk of original material on the Labour Party. The major portion of Van der Ross's valuable collection is still in his possession and is not available to the public. The Leon family in Kimberley has a storeroom of uncatalogued and unsorted material which they have not placed at the disposal of the public. That which was considered suitable for public scrutiny has already been donated to the University of South Africa. Arthur Stanley also has a number of original

¹⁸For example, the Federal Coloured Peoples' Party collection (1973-1974), the N.P. Arends Collection, the S.A. Black Alliance Accession, the Rashid Seria Accession, the Labour Party Accession (donated by F.E. Peters), the Erica Theron Commission collection, the Labour Party collection (donated by P.J. Hugo), and the Tom Swartz collection.

¹⁹Donated by L.S.(Sonny) Leon, founder-member of the Labour Party and its leader between 1970-1978.

photographs and election material but he was reluctant to part with it.²⁰ Alatheia Jansen's private papers contain sensitive material which is not available for public scrutiny. This is understandable because Jansen, the former chairman of the CRC executive, was subjected to much criticism and open hostility for reasons which will be dealt with more fully in this thesis. Trevor George, for years a supporter of the Federal Party, has material on that party's electoral battle with the Labour Party. Norman Middleton has one of the most extensive private collections. However, because of his involvement in sports and trade union activities, his papers do not relate exclusively to the Labour Party. In most instances, the material in the hands of the owners has not been made available to the public or university archives because of two main factors: it has not been sorted and catalogued, which has, in addition, created the second problem of sensitive material which the owners do not want open to public scrutiny. However, limited access was provided in a few instances. Nevertheless, it will probably be found that the majority of official documents in these private collections relating to the Labour Party are duplicated in the official collections of the party.

Because the establishment of the Labour Party, and its role as a political party, took place within the framework of the government's policies for coloured people, matters affecting coloured people, and thus the Labour Party, were recorded in a number of official documents. Therefore, a study of these documents were made insofar as it referred to the Labour Party. Hansard was an important source of information. Debates and Proceedings of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council spotlighted the role and attitude of the Labour Party in that body between 1969 and 1979. Events in the "white" House of Assembly had a bearing on the CRC and the Labour Party, and therefore a study was also made of

²⁰Richard van der Ross, Sonny Leon and Arthur Stanley were founder members of the Labour Party.

Debates of the House of Assembly. Debates of the House of Representatives (from 1984 onwards) largely falls outside the period of this thesis but limited use was made thereof.

A number of government publications proved valuable and supplied additional information for this study.²¹ However, most of these only supplied material which provided background information to other events. Committee reports provided supplementary information, which although not dealing specifically with the Labour Party, provided material which clarified other matters affecting the party.²² The major commissions which were appointed during the period of the Labour Party's existence, issued reports which not only provided vital statistics and survey material, but elicited a response from the government, a factor which itself added value to the material used for this study.²³ The Republic of South Africa: Bulletin of Statistics and the Government Gazette were also consulted.

Newspapers were a valuable source of information. Numerous editorials, leading articles, political reports and letters reflect the lively debate and interest in coloured politics during the period under review. The Sunday newspapers, Sunday

²¹An example of these publications are: Debates of the Senate of the Republic of South Africa, Republic of South Africa: President's Council Reports, and Minutes of proceedings of Parliament, 1985-1990.

²²For example, South African Parliament: Senate Sessional Committees and Joint Committee Reports; Republic of South Africa: Select Committee Reports; Report of the Committee on Alternative Constitutional Proposals.

²³Report of the Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the "Coloured" Population Group (Theron Commission); Witskrif oor die verslag van die Kommissie van Ondersoek na aangeleenthede rakende die kleurlinbevolkingsgroep; Interim Memorandum: Provisional comments by the government on the recommendations of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to the "Coloured" population group; Report of the Commission of Inquiry into riots at Soweto and elsewhere from 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977.

Times and Rapport both published "Extra" editions containing exclusively "coloured" news. The numerous English daily newspapers reported regularly on matters involving the Labour Party and by and large supported it in the late 1960's and 1970's. The Cape Herald, a "coloured" newspaper, directed a constant stream of criticism against the Labour Party since it was perceived to be collaborating with the government. The Afrikaans-language newspapers, especially the Cape Nationalist mouthpiece, Die Burger, reflected government thinking and supported pro-government coloured parties and defended government actions. These newspapers realised that the majority of coloured people were Afrikaans-speaking, and attempted to influence them as much as possible by carrying regular reports of happenings affecting the Labour Party which would influence its readers against the party. African newspapers such as Post, Zulu Voice, Drum and Trust, at various times reported on coloured politics and the Labour Party as it affected South African politics and its possible significance for, and influence on, Africans. However, this was so seldomly done that very little material came from that source.

Various journals such as the Educational Journal, South African Outlook, Reality, Graphic and Bandwagon were especially critical of the Labour Party in the 1970's. However, these were mainly "left-wing" publications which used the Labour Party and its participation in the CRC as an opportunity to attack the government and its apartheid policies. Except for one or two articles,²⁴ the major scientific journals, attached mostly to "white" universities or other institutions and establishments, largely ignored the Labour Party. The South African Institute of Race Relations' annual Survey of Race Relations in South Africa,²⁵ however

²⁴For example, in Africa Perspective, No. 10 (April 1979).

²⁵From 1977, it was called the Race Relations Survey.

reported extensively on happenings in coloured political circles. It must be borne in mind that the Labour Party was only a fringe movement in South African politics in the period under discussion and did not feature prominently in books and the printed and electronic media. Its importance was reflected in press coverage which was sporadic and largely superficial. The Labour Party only began to merit serious attention and media coverage when it decided in 1983 to participate in the tricameral system. However, this study hopes to redress that situation.

One advantage in writing contemporary history is that many of the actors are still alive. I was able to conduct interviews with persons who were members of the Labour Party, and/or the CRC or who were involved in coloured politics during the period under discussion. The surviving founder members of the Labour Party, none of whom were connected with the Labour Party at the time of this study, were very accommodating and more than willing to share whatever information they had.²⁶ Many former members of the Labour Party had at various times been expelled, had resigned, or had defected to other parties. Understandably, their views on the Labour Party were not always objective. Many who were still members of the party at the time of the interview were unwilling to offer comment in case it created problems between them and the party. Others, mindful that South African politics was in a state of flux, were not prepared to commit themselves in comment until they had a clearer vision of how things were going to work out. They did not want to jeopardise their future and those of their children by

²⁶They are Norman Middleton, Arthur Stanley and Richard van der Ross. Middleton is involved in trade union activities in Pietermaritzburg. Van der Ross retired as rector of the University of the Western Cape in 1986 and returned to politics in 1994 with his election to the Western Cape parliament as a member of the Democratic Party. Stanley did not stand for re-election to the House of Representatives in 1989 and retired from public life to his home in Cape Town. I was able to interview Sonny Leon before his death in 1991.

supporting or angering players who might later take up prominent and powerful positions in a new government. Some were only willing to talk freely after the Labour Party was officially dissolved in September 1994. Many persons interviewed had at one time or another, been detained. Uncertain as to what the position would be in the future, these declined to talk too much or to offer information which might later be incriminating or construed as controversial. Despite failing memory, many of the founders and early members of the party gladly shared that which they could recall.

Use will be made of various terms such as "black," "white," "non-white," "Coloured," "Hottentot," "Bushman," "African" and "Indian," in this thesis. A vexing problem of contemporary political and historical writing in South Africa is to find suitable non-pejorative terms which at the same time permit the necessary identification of groups in the society. However, these terms will be used in this thesis because they are terms which South Africans have at one time or another used and understood, and which many still today use. Use thereof does not necessarily signify acceptance of such concepts or their implications. The term "black" will be used to denote those South Africans not considered "white," i.e. Africans, coloureds and Indians. The term "non-white" will be avoided as far as possible and will only be used when it is quoted by other sources. Extensive use will be made in this thesis of the term "coloured." It is therefore necessary at this stage to clarify the term. The Population Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950) defined a "Coloured" person as one who is not a "European and not a Bantu."²⁷ Later, "Coloured" people were divided into seven sub-groups, viz. Cape Coloureds, Other Coloureds, Malay, Griqua, Chinese, Indian and Other Asiatic.²⁸

²⁷Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 5.

²⁸M. Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", in Occupational and Social Change among Coloured People in South Africa, eds., H.W. van der Merwe and C.J. Groenewald (Cape Town: Juta, 1976), 203, 233.

(Chinese, Indians and Other Asiatics were later removed from this grouping and placed in a separate population group). The Theron Commission found that:

The expression "Coloured person" refers essentially to a residual statutory population category, i.e. persons who are not classified as "White" or "Bantu" and do not form part of the Chinese, Indian or other Asiatic groups either. Statutorily speaking, the following main groups are considered to be "Coloured persons": Cape Coloureds, Malays, Griquas and "other" Coloureds.²⁹

People have over the years, referred to coloured people as "Hotnots, Free Blacks, Cape Boys, Capeys, Basters, Bruinmense, Coloureds, Eurafricans, Blacks, Brown South Africans and Gekleurdes."³⁰ In the 1850s, coloured people in the Cape called themselves "Kaapse Mensche."³¹ During the 1970s the philosophy of "black consciousness" led many coloured people to call themselves "black." However, the official designation "Coloured" offends many of the people so described. Some cannot even bring themselves to say the word. When used in conversation, speakers often use a well-known gesture which involves raising two fingers of each hand (to indicate quotation marks), mouthing the prefix "so-called," before uttering the dreaded word "Coloured." When writing, they punctuate the word. Others use the prefix, "so-called" which they punctuate, or use the term "so-called Coloured" which they also punctuate. However to refer to the so-called Coloured people or to punctuate it is clumsy. Therefore, the people thus described will simply be referred to as coloured or coloured people. Use of the term does not denote

²⁹Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to the Coloured Population Group (R P 38 - 1976), 464. [Hereafter referred to as the Theron Report]

³⁰Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 4-5.

³¹W.M. MacMillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton: The Making of the South African Native Problem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 18.

acceptance thereof but is used solely to facilitate identification and ease of understanding.

Nevertheless, even when used in this way, the term is still problematic because it suggests that coloured people are a racial entity and a homogeneous "nation" or cultural group within the South African population. Apart from the common feature of "mixed blood", the "coloured population group" does not constitute a unity, least of all an ethnic entity.³² The various components of this statutorily-defined group originated geographically and historically independent, and the "racial" composition differs widely. It is also an error to assert that coloured people are so different from whites that they have an own identity.³³ It is therefore not correct to speak of coloured people as a separate nation, especially as they do not see themselves as being "Coloured" or a separate nation.³⁴ The Theron Commission found that:

Being Coloured ... is not essentially the result of a process of self-identification. It is not the expression of a common feeling of being different. It is the result of the reactions or actions of other groups.³⁵

Thus, other people have decided that they must be classified, treated and referred to as such. Lacking a common cultural

³²J.H. Coetzee, The Coloured Challenge (Potchefstroom: Institute for South African Politics, 1975), 1-2. See also Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 1-44, in which he explores the myth of coloured identity.

³³National Party pamphlet, The Segregation Problem (National Party, n.d.) 7; C. Ziervogel, Brown South Africa (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1938), 57.

³⁴O.D. Wollheim, ed., Theron Commission: Comment (Cape Town: 1977), 1; E. Theron and J.B. Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1977), 99-101; Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 10. See also Botha, Die Kleurling en ons Kleurlingbeleid, 4-5.

³⁵Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 464.

heritage, there is little to bind coloured people together into a group.³⁶ By the very nature of the creation of the "Coloured" population group, "Coloured" people are not, and never were, a homogeneous grouping. Therefore, any reference to coloured people must of necessity only refer to them in a political context. Coloured people referred to in this thesis are those deemed as "Coloured" in terms of the law and the "Coloured" policy of the National Party.

My approach in this thesis will be in the nature of a study of Labour Party involvement in politics between 1965-1984; its response and reaction to government policy and laws affecting coloured people, and the extent to which it pursued, fulfilled and carried out its declared aims and policies. This thesis intends providing a historical background to the existence of this major political movement and will attempt to account for the change from a party and policy of confrontation to one of co-operation with a government whose policies segregated and discriminated against the very people whom the Labour Party purported to represent. The Labour Party claimed to be the true coloured opposition to the government's policy of separate development and separate political institutions of representation. It promised to oppose all measures designed to maintain the separation of whites and coloureds. The Labour Party at various times also claimed to represent or command the support of the majority of coloured people. This thesis intends examining the Labour Party's claims and the extent to which its promises and policies were carried through.

Although this thesis is not a history of the CRC, this institution will feature prominently in the examination of the Labour Party's role during the 1970's. The Labour Party owed its existence to the formation of the CRC, and its subsequent standing in the coloured community and opposition to the

³⁶See, Coetzee, The Coloured Challenge, 1; Botha, Die Kleurling en ons Kleurlingbeleid, 4-5.

government's "coloured policy" was effected within the confines of the CRC and the policy of political separation. This thesis will also refer to the tricameral system, but only as it clarifies the Labour Party's policy shifts in relation to its political stance of the past. Because a study of the Labour Party is also a study of coloured politics, political issues affecting coloured people in the period under discussion will of necessity be discussed as it relates to the Labour Party.

A study of the Labour Party and coloured politics from the 1960s is of value to the extent that it throws light on an era of increasing segregation and discrimination. Such a study will therefore highlight the frustration of a group of South African citizens who have witnessed the systematic erosion of all their political rights since 1910. Coloured people generally resented being classified and labelled as a separate group. They roundly rejected the political separation of whites and coloureds. Such feelings and attitudes have major implications for South Africans today as they attempt to come to terms with a post-apartheid society and a new constitutional dispensation. Coloured support of Africans (out of a feeling of revenge and bitterness) might tip the scales at future elections. However, coloured people's historical and cultural affinity with whites will probably cause them to swing in that direction, as has already been demonstrated in the general election of April 1994. No matter what happens in this regard, it is already evident that a study of coloured politics will assist in the formulation of strategies and policies by those vying to gain political control in the future.

From the time it was formed in 1965 the Labour Party sought to channel the anger and frustration felt by coloured people and present itself as the vehicle by which political equality could be achieved. The fact that the Labour Party was a purely coloured party was not one of its own choosing. Faced

with a vast mass of restrictive laws, the Labour Party had to confine its activities to the group which the government created through legislation. This study serves to highlight the role of the Labour Party between 1965-1984, against the background of increasing coloured frustration, disenchantment and bitterness.

Chapter 1
THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF
COLOURED PEOPLE TO 1964

In 1652, Europeans employed by the Dutch East India Company, came to the Cape of Good Hope to establish a refreshment station. Upon their arrival, they found that the Cape was already inhabited, largely by the indigenous Khoisan. From 1658, slaves were brought to the Cape to provide labour for the growing settlement. In 1688, French refugees made the Cape their home and they were followed in increasing numbers by other Europeans for decades thereafter.¹ Sex and marriage between Europeans and non-Europeans since 1652 resulted in a steady increase in the number of people of "mixed blood," referred to as coloured people.² The origins of coloured people are generally traced to the blending of a number of cultural strains, namely Malay, Indian and African slaves; the indigenous Khoikhoi (Hottentots) and San (Bushmen); and European colonists, mainly Dutch, Germans, French and English.³ The

¹C.W. de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa: Social and Economic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 19-20; C.F.J. Muller, ed., Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa (Pretoria: Academica, 1984), 6; J.D. Fage, A History of Africa (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 348; J.G. Le Roux, Hugenotebloed in ons Are (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1988), 12, 145, 177.

²The phenomenon of inter-racial relationships is dealt with in detail by H.F. Heese, Groep Sonder Grense. Die Rol en Status van die Gemengde Bevolking aan die Kaap, 1652-1795 (Bellville: Western Cape Institute of Historical Research, 1984). See also P.J. Furlong, The Mixed Marriages Act: An Historical and Theological Study (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1983), and R.E. van der Ross, Myths and Attitude: An Inside Look at the Coloured People (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979).

³Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union (U.G. 54-1937), 8; J. Pampallis, Foundations of the New South Africa (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1991), 80; Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, 10; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 10.

emergence of this heterogeneous group was very gradual and, in so far as it is due to miscegenation and race-mixture, it is still a continuing process.⁴ Mina states that "the blending of these strains, coupled with the particular historical development of the South African social formation, generated a colour-caste system of class relations,... (with the) 'coloured' group ... (constituting) a subordinate colour-caste in the formation."⁵

Up until the 1830s no mention was made of coloured people as such and all laws which included coloured people only made reference to Hottentots (Khoikhoi). The Khoikhoi had never been enslaved and were part of the "free" population of the Cape Colony but they increasingly came to be singled out as objects of the colonists' racial vindictiveness.⁶ Between 1809 and 1819 a number of labour laws were enacted for the specific purpose of protecting them from abuse levelled at them by their white employers.⁷ Unfortunately, while these laws prevented, to a certain degree, the harsh employment practices to which the Khoikhoi had been subjected, they also had the effect of officially conferring an inferior status upon them by singling them out under legislation.⁸ Further Khoikhoi laws between 1819 and 1828 led missionaries and philanthropists to exert pressure on the British government and the governor at the Cape to improve the position of the

⁴A. Lemon, Apartheid: A Geography of Separation (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1976), 14.

⁵Mina, "The CRC", 3. The colour-caste is dealt with in some detail by Mina, 3-36, Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 18-23, and extensively by Goldin, Making Race.

⁶J. Naidoo, Tracking Down Historical Myths (Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1989), 35.

⁷Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, 47.

⁸Naidoo, Historical Myths, 36.

indigenous people.⁹ This culminated in the passing of Ordinance 50 in 1828 which repealed all anti-Khoikhoi proclamations. This Ordinance placed all the inhabitants of the Cape on an equal legal footing and succeeded in establishing a "colourblind" precedent which, eight years later, was reflected in the Colony's first elective form of government.¹⁰

In 1834, Britain initiated steps to emancipate the slaves. Macmillan states that, with the provisional emancipation of slaves, the Khoikhoi and slaves merged together as the "Cape Coloured people", while Marquard speaks of a "new race" being established by 1834.¹¹ The passing of Ordinance 50 and the final emancipation of the slaves in 1838 provided the foundation for political equality which became the hallmark of the "liberal tradition" of the Cape. Henceforth, coloured people would be on an equal political footing with whites until their removal from the voters' roll in 1956. Further legislation such as Ordinance 9 of 1836, which discounted race or colour as criteria for the vote, and the Masters and Servants Ordinance in 1842, paved the way for political equality with the elimination of any legal distinction between

⁹See H.A. Gailey, "John Philip's role in Hottentot emancipation", Journal of African History, III, no.3 (1962).

¹⁰Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 39; Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 206, Marais, Cape Coloured People, 157; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 3-4; Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, 48.

¹¹Macmillan, Cape Colour Question (1927), 265-66; Ibid, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1968), 35; L. Marquard, The People and Policies of South Africa (London: University Press, 1962), 75; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 3; Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, 16; W.P. van Schoor, "The Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa" in Contributions of Non-European Peoples to World Civilization. ed. M. Hommell (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989), 107.

white and coloured.¹² All of these measures only appeared to use the term "coloured" for statistical and descriptive purposes. There was never any indication that they were regarded as a new "nation" or a legally-constituted "race" group.

During this time, the colonists in the Cape began to clamour for representative government. With the advent of a Liberal Government in Britain in 1846, and with the assurance of the Cape Governor that the rights of coloured people were secured, the British Colonial Secretary indicated his willingness to consider the colonists' request for representative government, with coloured people having equal rights as voters.¹³ The 1853 constitution which established representative government at the Cape, incorporated a low franchise qualification, i.e. a man was entitled to register as a voter, irrespective of colour, if he earned £50 a year or £25 a year plus board and lodging.¹⁴ Thus began a tradition of full political rights for coloured people. In 1892, the Franchise and Ballot Act raised the property franchise qualification to £75 and a simple "education test" was introduced (a voter should at least be able to write his name). These changes were aimed at the large number of Africans from the recently annexed Transkeian territories which had been incorporated into the Colony from 1865 onwards.¹⁵ After 1892, the franchise qualifications remained unchanged until 1909.

¹²p. Hugo, "A Study of Arguments used in support of a Policy of Political differentiation between White and Coloured in South Africa" (M.A. dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 1972), 9; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 39.

¹³Macmillan, Cape Colour Question (1968), 259.

¹⁴Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 4; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 40; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 212-14.

¹⁵Pampallis, Foundations, 81; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 215.

In terms of the Charter of Natal of 1856, coloured people received a qualified franchise,¹⁶ but in the Voortrekker republics in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, they had no right or claim to the vote.¹⁷ Efforts to secure political rights for coloured people in the Transvaal and Free State after the Anglo-Boer War led to the formation of the African Political (later People's) Organisation (APO) in 1903 by coloureds in the Cape.¹⁸ When responsible government was granted to the Transvaal in 1906 and the Orange River Colony in 1907, the APO called on Britain to honour promises made before and during the Anglo-Boer War that coloureds would be granted political rights similar to those enjoyed by coloureds in the Cape.¹⁹ Britain reneged on its promise and allowed the Boers in the north to retain their all-white franchise.²⁰ This resulted in an APO delegation leaving for Britain to plead their case before the Colonial Secretary in Britain. They "begged that in the Constitution about to be conferred upon the two ex-Republics, provision might be made for the enfranchisement of the Coloured People."²¹ The British

¹⁶Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 42-43; Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 13-14.

¹⁷Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 12; Hugo, "Study of Arguments", 16; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 41-42; E. Theron and M.J. Swart, Die Kleurlingbevolking van Suid Afrika (Stellenbosch: University Publishers, 1964), 195.

¹⁸M. Adhikari, "Protest and Accommodation: Ambiguities in the Racial Politics of the APO, 1909-1923", Kronos: Journal of Cape History, No.20 (November 1993), 93; Pampallis, Foundations, 82; Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 210; Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 18.

¹⁹Adhikari, "Protest and Accommodation", 96; L.M. Thompson, The Unification of South Africa, 1902-1910 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 11-13.

²⁰Pampallis, Foundations, 81; Thompson, Unification of South Africa, 11-13; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 276-77. Bunting notes that discriminatory legislation was as much a feature of British rule, just as it has been a feature of Afrikaner rule. See B. Bunting, The Rise of the South African Reich (London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1986), 16.

²¹Marais, Cape Coloured People, 278.

government considered it expedient to sacrifice the small and "insignificant" coloured community and yield to the wishes of the Afrikaners.²² Thompson adds that "it was a decisive step towards the triumph of the political colour bar throughout South Africa."²³

The question of coloured voting rights became a contentious issue when the national convention met in 1908 and 1909 to discuss the formation of a union. Two opposing political principles were clearly spelt out: the Cape principle of common citizenship and voting rights for all and the northern principle of "no-equality." This question of the "non-white" franchise became a serious stumbling block to the formation of a Union.²⁴ Smuts and Merriman suggested a compromise that each province in the new Union retain the franchise laws which were in existence in the corresponding colony prior to the formation of Union. The effect of this was that all "non-whites" would be denied the right to the vote in the Transvaal and Orange Free State but those in Natal and the Cape would retain their voting rights.²⁵ However, all "non-whites" were excluded from standing as candidates for election to the union parliament. The Cape delegates insisted that the "non-white" franchise in the Cape Colony be entrenched by a

²²Marais, Cape Coloured People, 278; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 35-36.

²³Thompson, Unification of South Africa, 17. See also, Theron and Swart, Kleurlingbevolking, 196.

²⁴T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1987), 247; P. Randall, ed., Anatomy of Apartheid (Johannesburg: SPROCAS, 1970), 21; De Kiewiet, History of South Africa, 239.

²⁵D.W. Kruger, The Age of the Generals: A Short Political History of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1948 (Johannesburg: Dagbreek, 1958), 40; D.W. Kruger, The Making of a Nation: A History of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961 (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1969), 35-36; De Kiewiet, History of South Africa, 239; Davenport, South Africa, 248. Because Natal sided with the north, "non-whites" who had the vote in Natal would continue to exercise it but no new voters would be added to the voters' roll.

stipulation that any decision to alter it could only be taken by a two-thirds majority of the total number of members at a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament.²⁶ Without this guarantee the Cape would not have entertained union.²⁷ The voting rights of Cape "non-whites" were subsequently entrenched in the constitution by clauses 35 and 152.²⁸ The APO and the newly formed National Native Convention sent a delegation to London in 1909 to persuade the British government not to accept a union in which discrimination on the grounds of colour would be entrenched.²⁹ Abdurahman, the APO leader, warned that clause 35 did not sufficiently safeguard the Cape's non-racial franchise. The British government had no desire to jeopardise the formation of a Union for reasons of its own,³⁰ and so chose to ignore the delegation which returned empty-handed, except for a promise that the governor-general would be on the look-out for any law which the South African parliament might introduce which affected clause 35.³¹

After 1910, the APO engaged itself in attempts to offset the subordinate position of coloured people and concentrated on protest, petitions, deputations and election campaigns in an effort to increase coloured people's electoral influence. To this extent, the APO supported white political parties which championed their cause, as in the case of the Unionist Party

²⁶Kruger, Making of a Nation, 42.

²⁷V.A. Alhadeff, Newspaper History of South Africa (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1985), 33.

²⁸Kruger, Making of a Nation, 42.

²⁹Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, 53; Pampallis, Foundations, 85; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 47-49.

³⁰See Bunting, South African Reich, 13; L.M. Thompson and M. Wilson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa, vol.II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 363-64; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 49.

³¹Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 34.

in 1915.³² The APO later suggested that the coloured vote prevented a number of seats from going to the segregationist National Party which had been formed in 1914. The National Party then claimed that the coloured vote was open to exploitation. This became the most powerful argument in later years in support of separate voters' rolls for coloureds.³³ However, despite the outrage at the supposed exploitation of coloured voters by the English parties, the National Party itself went in pursuit of the coloured vote. The drive to win coloured support began in 1918 when Hertzog enunciated a major viewpoint, stating that coloureds should enjoy the same political and economic rights as whites. The NP also involved itself in the establishment of a coloured organisation, the United Afrikaner League (UAL), which was formed in 1919 to oppose the APO. This step heralded an all-out attempt in the 1920s to gain the support of coloured voters in order to wrest political control of South Africa from the English parties.³⁴ At the party's Free State congress in 1921, Hertzog declared that Africans and coloureds were two totally different races and that coloured people were part of the whites. He favoured the extension of the franchise to coloured people in the other provinces.³⁵ In November 1925, Hertzog, now Prime Minister, indicated his proposed policy towards the Cape coloured people during a visit to his constituency, Smithfield:

³²Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 42. Van der Ross, Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, part 1, 122, quoting APO, 30 October 1915.

³³Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 45.

³⁴Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 212. The potential strength of the coloured vote can be seen in the fact that by 1929, coloured voters were sufficient in number to turn the scales in favour of one of the two main parties in at least 10 of the 58 constituencies in the Cape. See L.M. Thompson, The Cape Coloured Franchise (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1949), 55; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 279.

³⁵G.D. Scholtz, Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner, Deel VI, 1910-1924 (Johannesburg: Voortrekker Pers, 1979), 464.

It must not be lost sight of that, in the case of the Cape Coloured, we have to do with a class of our population which, in many respects, are close to the European ... he knows no other civilisation than that of the Europeans ... has an outlook in life which in fact is that of the European and not of the native; and speaks the language of the European as his mother-tongue. In his case, there can be no segregation.³⁶

Hertzog further outlined the future of coloured people: "The Cape Coloureds must, economically, industrially and politically be classified with the European ... (and) be given a place in our midst."³⁷ In line with Hertzog's attempt to woo coloured voters, the National Party helped to form, and fully fund another coloured party in 1925, the African National Bond (ANB).³⁸

In 1926, Hertzog made further attempts to woo coloured voters when he introduced the Coloured Persons' Rights Bill. This bill proposed to confirm the existing franchise in the Cape and permit those coloured men of the other provinces who fulfilled certain educational and economic qualifications to elect one white to represent them in parliament. Its aim was push coloured people closer towards whites rather than Africans.³⁹ Hertzog's 1929 Coloured Persons' Rights Bill also proposed to give coloured men in the northern provinces an

³⁶National Party pamphlet, The Segregation Problem (National Party, n.d.), 7.

³⁷Segregation Problem, 10. See also Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, 57; C.M. Tatz, Shadow and Substance in South Africa: A Study in Land and Franchise Policies affecting Africans, 1910-1960 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1962), 45-46, 97.

³⁸Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 213; Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 53. See also H.J. Lubbe, "'Vergeet die Arbeiders en wen die Kleurlinge': Die 'Swart Gevaar'-Propaganda in Kaapland gedurende die Parlementêre Verkiesingsstryd van 1928 to 1929," Kronos: Journal of Cape History, No. 18 (October 1991), 24.

³⁹Tatz, Shadow and Substance, 46; Bunting, South African Reich, 37.

elected representative in parliament.⁴⁰ Hertzog however miscalculated and his bills giving coloureds greater rights were never accepted. Hertzog's mistake was to provide for the enfranchisement of coloured women when not even white women had the vote. This alarmed his own supporters who then insisted that white women be enfranchised. This was achieved with the Women's Enfranchisement Act of 1930 which extended the franchise to white women but excluded coloured women. This Act, by nearly doubling the number of white voters, drastically reduced the relative strength of the coloured people's political power.⁴¹ This was further reduced by the Franchise Laws Amendment Act of 1931 which removed the franchise qualifications required of white voters,⁴² and Act No. 35 of 1931 made it possible to challenge the qualifications of non-white voters.⁴³

The Hertzog bills were the beginning of the systematic diminution of the political power of coloured people.⁴⁴ They had the effect of expanding the white electorate to its maximum, "while the non-white electorate was pegged."⁴⁵ While these measures reduced the coloured vote to a fraction of its former value, at the same time it acted as a spur to those members of the National Party who wished to remove coloured voters from the common voters' roll. In 1932, the Head

⁴⁰Thompson, Cape Coloured Franchise, 22.

⁴¹Bunting, South African Reich, 37.

⁴²Marquard, People and Policies, 79.

⁴³Hugo, "A study of Arguments", 19; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 280.

⁴⁴The coloured bills were introduced along with a number of "native" bills by Hertzog in the late 1920s. The reasons for, contents, and implications of these bills are discussed in greater detail in J.T. Cameron, "An analysis of Smuts' attitude to Hertzog's Native Bills from 1926 to 1936" (M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1982).

⁴⁵Bunting, South African Reich, 37.

Committee of the Cape National Party appointed a committee to put the case for separate representation of coloured voters to Hertzog.⁴⁶ However, coalition and fusion between the South African Party(SAP) and National Party in 1933 and 1934 respectively forestalled such moves.

In 1936, the governing United Party tabled bills in parliament which provided for political and territorial segregation of Africans. These measures received the support of the Federal Council of the "Purified" National Party(HNP), which had been formed after D.F. Malan broke with Hertzog when the latter entertained fusion between the SAP and the National Party in 1934.⁴⁷ African voters in the Cape were subsequently removed from the common voters' roll.⁴⁸ Marais pointed out that "signs are not wanting that the policy of political segregation may in due course be applied to the coloured people."⁴⁹ The United Party however gave assurances that the coloured franchise was safe and that there would be no question of political segregation for coloured people. Such assurances did not carry much weight when viewed in the light of Prime Minister Hertzog's confession in 1938 that the NP did not apply political and economic segregation to the coloured people in the 1920s and 1930s because it needed their votes for the application of segregation against the Africans.⁵⁰ On the eve of the 1938 election, D.F. Malan stated that if his party came to power, coloureds would be placed on a separate

⁴⁶O. Du Plessis, Afsonderlike Verteenwoordiging van Kiesers (Kaapstad: Inligtingskomitee van die Nasionale Party, 1954), 42.

⁴⁷Ibid, 43-44.

⁴⁸M. Roth, "The Formation of the Native Representative Council in 1937" (M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1979), 54; D.M. Scher, Donald Molteno: 'Dilizintaba-He-who-Removes-Mountains' (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1979), 7-8.

⁴⁹Marais, Cape Coloured People, 280.

⁵⁰Cape Times, 6 April 1938.

voters' roll and all non-whites would be subject to a policy of segregation.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the United Party was concerned about the position of coloured people in a white-dominated society. Thus, in 1937 a commission of inquiry was appointed to examine the social and economic factors affecting the Cape Coloured population.⁵² One of the major recommendations of this commission was that the Cape Coloured franchise be extended to the rest of the country, but war in 1939 delayed consideration thereof.⁵³ In accordance with another recommendation, the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) was established in 1943 to advise the government on current administration affecting coloureds and to provide a channel for the airing of coloured grievances.⁵⁴

The creation of the CAC created a divisive split in the coloured community and caused a schism in the ranks of the APO which had championed the cause of coloured people since its formation in 1903. A group in the APO believed that, by fully co-operating with the government, they could secure improved conditions for coloured people. Those opposing the CAC argued that the body represented a division on racial lines; that it was the forerunner of further segregation;⁵⁵ and that since the problems of coloured people were known to the government,

⁵¹Botha, Die Opkoms van ons Derde Stand, 108-109.

⁵²Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union (U G 54-1937). (Wilcocks Commission).

⁵³Lemon, A Geography of Separation, 141. Ironically, the implementation of such a recommendation might have saved Smuts from defeat in 1948 when he narrowly lost by five seats to an alliance of Afrikaner parties.

⁵⁴G.M. Carter, The Politics of Inequality: South Africa since 1948 (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977), 360.

⁵⁵These critics pointed to the link between the establishment of the Native Representative Council in 1937 and the removal of the African voter from the common roll. See S. Dollar, "R.F.A. Hoernle (1880-1943) and the Segregation Debate (1923-1943): A Brief Biography". (Unpublished Paper, Rhodes University, 1992), 9.

reform and not a consultative body was what was needed.⁵⁶ Opponents of the CAC formed the Anti-Advisory Council Movement (Anti-CAD [Anti-Coloured Affairs Department]) so as to "canalise all non-European sentiment and endeavour ... in one mighty stream that will expunge from the statute book all discriminatory legislation."⁵⁷ They accused the pro-CAC faction of being "quislings" and "sell-outs." This marked the beginning of a problem which was to dog coloured people for the next fifty years and which was henceforth to characterise coloured politics, viz. the issue of collaboration and non-collaboration.⁵⁸

The Anti-CAD movement had strong intellectual support and succeeded in taking control of the APO. Both these movements and the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA), a professional body of mainly coloured teachers formed in 1913, supported the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), an umbrella federal body which was at the forefront of a vociferous campaign against the CAC.⁵⁹ At the other end of the political spectrum was the Coloured People's National Union formed by George Golding in 1944. This movement consisted largely of former APO members

⁵⁶Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 634-35; M.G. Whisson, "The Coloured People", in South Africa's Minorities, ed. Peter Randall (Johannesburg: SPROCAS, 1970), 47.

⁵⁷Sun, 2 March 1943.

⁵⁸Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 44; Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 224.

⁵⁹Venter, Coloured, 491-92; Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 71. In 1960, the NEUM was banned along with the ANC and PAC and went into exile in Lusaka, Zambia. It formed a military wing, the African People's Democratic Union of South Africa (Apdusa). A breakaway group of the NEUM formed the New Unity Movement in Cape Town in 1985 and during the 1994 general election, called for a boycott of the election. Apdusa still operates and held its first annual congress on South Africa soil since going into exile, in Umtata in December 1993. Colin Dweba, interview with author, Butterworth, 11 November 1994.

who had supported the CAC from the outset. They sought to improve the position of coloured people by co-operating with the government. Golding later became chairman of the CAC.⁶⁰

In 1948 the HNP (later referred to simply as the National Party[NP]), in alliance with the Afrikaner Party, came to power with a slim majority. The CAC resigned en bloc in 1950 in the wake of the NP victory and its declared intention of extending a policy of segregation in the case of coloured people.⁶¹ One of the NP's first tasks to entrench the South African social formation was to define the colour-caste system of relations in law, especially that of the coloured group as a subordinate colour-caste in the formation. This was done by means of the Population Registration Act of 1950. This Act defined a "Coloured" person as one who is not European (white) and not a Bantu. A later proclamation (R123 of 1967) divided coloured people into seven groups, viz. Cape Coloured, other Coloured, Malay, Griqua, Chinese, Indian and Other Asiatic.⁶² The Group Areas Act of 1953 further clarified the coloured group as consisting of "all persons who do not fall into the White or Native group and also all women, including White or Native, who are married to or who cohabit with, Coloured persons."⁶³

Having defined and identified the "coloured" people whom it had vowed, since 1916 already, to place on a separate roll, the Nationalists immediately set about the task of removing

⁶⁰Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", 71.

⁶¹Carter, Politics of Inequality, 361; Whisson, "Coloured People", 47.

⁶²Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 203, 233; Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 5; Whisson, "Coloured People", 46.

⁶³K. Kirkwood, The Group Areas Act (Braamfontein: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1951), 9. In 1976, the Theron Commission considered the following to be "Coloured persons": Cape Coloureds, Malays, Grikwas and "other" Coloureds. See, Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 464.

coloured voters from the Cape common roll.⁶⁴ The government showed its hand in February 1951 with the publication of the Separate Representation of Voters Bill and indicated that it intended to vote it into law by a simple majority. The bill provided for separate voting lists for white and coloured voters in the Cape and Natal.⁶⁵ The Opposition challenged the legality of the bill on the grounds that the coloured vote was protected by the entrenching clauses in the South Africa Act of 1909. Coloured voters could only be removed by a two-thirds majority at a joint session of both Houses of Parliament (i.e. the House of Assembly and the Senate).⁶⁶ The government countered that the Statute of Westminster of 1931 and the Status Act of 1934 made the Union Parliament a sovereign legislative body. Thus the Colonial Laws Validity Act was no longer valid, which meant that the Union Parliament could pass any legislation repugnant to any law passed by the British Parliament.⁶⁷ The government's case was strengthened by a 1937 Supreme Court decision which held that, with the passing of the Statute of Westminster, the Union Parliament was the supreme law-making body in the Union and that the court had no power to decide on an Act of Parliament duly promulgated, printed and published.⁶⁸ The bill duly became

⁶⁴The reasons for the disenfranchisement of coloured voters are fully dealt with by Scher, in "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters". See also Bunting, South African Reich, 134; H. Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1992), 55-56; and Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 252, where the motives for this action are discussed.

⁶⁵Margaret Ballinger, one of the Native Representatives in parliament at the time, describes in detail the uproar that arose as a result of the introduction of this bill. See M. Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid: A Trek into Isolation (Cape Town: Juta, 1969), 398-403.

⁶⁶Carter, Politics of Inequality, 124.

⁶⁷Ibid, 121.

⁶⁸p. Joyce, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: The Chronicle of a divided society as told through South Africa's newspapers (Cape
(continued...))

law by a simple majority in the two Houses, sitting separately.⁶⁹

In 1952 four coloured voters challenged the validity of the Act in the Cape Supreme Court. This court was however bound by the 1937 Supreme Court decision and upheld the Act. The case was then taken to the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein and the decision of the Cape Supreme Court was overturned. The Act was declared invalid on the grounds that it was not passed with the necessary two-thirds majority as provided for in the Constitution.⁷⁰ Malan immediately announced that the government was not prepared to accept the Appeal Court's decision and would take steps to ensure the sovereignty of parliament by eliminating the "testing rights" of the courts.⁷¹ Shortly after the resumption of the 1952 parliamentary session, the government introduced a bill creating a High Court of Parliament, consisting of the members of parliament, which would review Supreme Court decisions which declared Acts of Parliament invalid. The High Court of Parliament duly met and reversed the judgment of the Appeal Court. Two days later, the Cape Supreme Court declared that the Act creating the High Court was itself invalid and that it had no authority to overturn the judgement of the Appeal Court.⁷² In 1954, Malan placed the Separate Representation of Voters Validation and Amendment Bill before another joint session but this too failed to secure a two-thirds majority. Soon after, Malan resigned as Prime Minister. Bunting

⁶⁸(...continued)
Town: Struik, 1990), 21; E.H. Brookes, Apartheid: A documentary study of modern South Africa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 117-19; Carter, Politics of Inequality, 121-23.

⁶⁹Brookes, Apartheid, 116.

⁷⁰Carter, Politics of Inequality, 127.

⁷¹Bunting, South African Reich, 139.

⁷²Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 281-82.

suggests that Malan's inexplicable resignation came because he "balked at the next necessary step in the struggle over the coloured vote," viz. to remove coloured voters by other means: fair or foul, legal but immoral.⁷³

J.G. Strijdom succeeded Malan who died soon after. In 1955, Strijdom increased the number of judges in the Appeal Court from 6 to 11.⁷⁴ Soon after, the Senate was enlarged by increasing the number of senators from 48 to 89. In February, 1956 the House of Assembly and the newly-enlarged Senate met in a joint session to consider the contentious bill. After a two-week long debate, the bill was passed by 174 votes to 68, a comfortable two-thirds majority, and duly became law. The Senate Act and the measure validating the 1951 Act were duly contested by the Opposition. The recently-enlarged Appeal Court rejected the application and upheld both Acts.⁷⁵ Thus, observes Attwell, "by gerrymandering, the coloureds were removed from the common voters' roll".⁷⁶ This meant that some 45 000 Cape coloured voters were deprived of a right they had enjoyed for over a hundred years and placed on a separate roll. The clause in the 1909 constitution which protected the vote of Cape coloureds was also repealed and they also lost the right to be represented by their own people in the Cape Provincial Council. Finally, provision was made for the creation of a Union Council for Coloured Affairs with elected and nominated members,⁷⁷ a pattern which followed that of the disfranchisement of Cape African voters in 1936 and which the

⁷³Bunting, South African Reich, 139.

⁷⁴Brookes, Apartheid, 121.

⁷⁵Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 309; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 285.

⁷⁶M. Attwell, Background to the Crisis (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986), 91.

⁷⁷Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", xvi; Hugo, "Study of Arguments", 19-20; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 45; Kruger, The Making of a Nation, 293.

Anti-CAD movement had pointed out in 1943.

Coloured reaction to the law depriving them of their political rights vacillated between cowering subservience, apathy and a sullen refusal to cooperate with the government, to active resistance and organised protest against government policies. Members of the banned Communist Party and dissidents from the CPNU, led by Richard van der Ross, had kept up a spirited resistance to government policy after 1948. By forming organisations such as the Train Apartheid Resistance Committee (TARC) in 1948, the Group Areas Action Committee in 1950, the Franchise Action Committee (FRAC) in 1951 and the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) in 1953, these organisations had been able to channel coloured resistance against the government.⁷⁸ Thus, after the removal of coloured voters from the common roll, SACPO, affiliates of the NEUM and the Coloured People's Congress allied to the Congress Movement (arising out of the Kliptown Congress of 1955), were already active and were able to pursue a policy of opposition. They refused to cooperate with the government's new initiatives and advised supporters not to register on the separate voters' roll and to boycott elections held on that roll.⁷⁹ These efforts achieved a measure of success for, whereas 47 849 coloureds had voted in the 1953 election on the common roll,⁸⁰ only 14 694 voted in the first election held on the separate roll in 1958. However, the collaboration issue of the 1940s raised its head once again with certain coloured groups deciding to vote on the grounds that more was to be gained that way than by non-collaboration.⁸¹

In 1959 the government formed the Union Council for Coloured

⁷⁸Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 227.

⁷⁹Venter, Coloured, 493.

⁸⁰Bunting, South African Reich, 136.

⁸¹Venter, Coloured, 493. Among these organisations were the CPNU and the Kleurlingvolksverbond, a rural organisation.

Affairs(UCCA), consisting of fifteen government-nominated members and twelve elected members, "to advise it on matters affecting the coloured people."⁸² A campaign was launched against the council and those coloured people who made themselves available for nomination or election. The Torch, a newspaper which titled itself "the paper for the people", and which had a largely coloured readership, spearheaded the attack on the UCCA.⁸³ Because of the spirited opposition, no one stood for election to the twelve elected seats. The government subsequently nominated all twelve and, added to the fifteen nominated seats, meant that the whole body became a government-nominated instrument.⁸⁴ Those who accepted nomination to the UCCA were dubbed "quislings", "ragged political rejects", "political traitors", "nonentities", "leeches", "traitors" and various other names.⁸⁵ Calls were made to hound them out of "every organisation ... every activity in the political, social, cultural, educational and economic life of the Non-White people."⁸⁶ Faced with such opposition, even the government refused to make known the names of the members when they were finally nominated.⁸⁷

Separate representation and the UCCA proved unsatisfactory as a means of satisfying coloured political aspirations. After the initial opposition, coloureds boycotted elections held on the separate roll and largely ignored the UCCA.

⁸²Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 5. See also L.M. Thompson, Politics in the Republic of South Africa (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), 86; South African Institute of Race Relations, Survey of Race Relations (Braamfontein: SAIRR, 1958-1959), 153, and (1959-1960), 132.

⁸³For example, Torch, 27 October 1959 and 3 November 1959.

⁸⁴Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 45.

⁸⁵See for example, Torch, 27 October, 3 November and 10 November 1959.

⁸⁶Ibid, 10 November 1959.

⁸⁷Ibid, 8 December 1959.

Concern at this state of affairs was reflected in parliamentary debates on coloured matters in the early sixties which were largely preoccupied with the nature of coloured representation in parliament.⁸⁸ Some Cape Nationalists felt that, while coloured voters remained on the separate voters' roll, they should be allowed to elect four coloured, instead of white, representatives to parliament.⁸⁹ This issue brought differences of opinion within the National Party into the open in 1960. The drive for coloureds to elect coloured representatives was led by the Nationalist mouthpiece in the Cape, Die Burger.⁹⁰ This debate engendered an atmosphere of optimism and hope among coloured people. However, the Prime Minister, H.F. Verwoerd, made it clear that he would have no "invasions" of the policy of apartheid in respect of coloured people, and that as long as he was in control, coloureds would not be allowed in parliament.⁹¹ Verwoerd contended that such a concession would lead to biological assimilation with coloureds and ultimately with Africans.⁹² He cautioned party members to consider the dangers in all the discussions that were going on about a possible new approach to coloured people, and urged NP leaders to realise that they "must stand like walls of granite" on their colour policy, because the existence of the Afrikaner nation was at stake.⁹³ Despite

⁸⁸H.W. van der Merwe and R. Schrire, eds, Race and Ethnicity: South African and International Perspectives (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1980), 112.

⁸⁹Venter, Coloured, 494; W.A. de Klerk, The Puritans in Africa: A story of Afrikanerdom (London: Rex Collings, 1975), 253.

⁹⁰Burger, 23 July 1960; Theron and Swart, Die Kleurlingbevolking, 205.

⁹¹Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 455.

⁹²K.A. Heard, General Elections in South Africa, 1943-1970 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 123.

⁹³Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 456. See also Argus, 23 January 1961.

widespread support and constant reference to the matter by Die Burger and the NP-supporting Sunday newspaper, Dagbreek en Sondagnuus, the Prime Minister and the National Party Congress and Federal Council refused to consider changes in the political status of coloured people.⁹⁴

In response to Verwoerd's "granite wall" speech, a group of coloured people met in Cape Town in February 1961 where they decided to call a convention of coloured, Indian and Malay people in order to reply to the Prime Minister's speech. The main purpose of such a convention would be to achieve greater unity with Africans.⁹⁵ The government immediately banned the proposed meeting but upon scrutinising the banning order, the organisers discovered that it did not include the Malmesbury magisterial district. The convention was then held on 8-10 July 1961 in an open field on the farm, Dassenberg at Kalbaskraal, Malmesbury, Cape.⁹⁶ The Convention Movement, arising out of the meeting, renewed calls for a boycott of the UCCA, as well as elections held on the separate voters' roll. Many of those involved in the Convention Movement became founding members of the Labour Party of South Africa.

The Malmesbury convention did not go entirely unnoticed. In a speech to the UCCA in December 1961, Verwoerd referred to the future political status of coloured people, describing them as a "state within a state." He intimated that coloured people would be given full management of their own affairs by means of their own parliament, executive and administration within a decade.⁹⁷ The UCCA immediately began investigating the possibility of establishing a legislative and executive body in which coloured people could enjoy representation by people

⁹⁴Heard, General Elections, 123; Venter, Coloured, 516.

⁹⁵Van der Ross, Political and Social History, 412-13.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Theron and Swart, Kleurlingbevolking, 206; Alpha, 6, No.6 (June 1968), 9.

from their own community. The Cabinet accepted these principles and in 1964 proposed the formation of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council (CRC). This council was to form a link between the government and coloured people, and to "give advice to the government when asked to do so."⁹⁸

The formation of the CRC was to usher in an era in politics for which coloured people were unprepared. It was to have far-reaching consequences, not only for coloured people and the government but for all South Africans. The CRC, and the problems encountered in that body, was to create the environment in which the seed of the tricameral system would germinate and flourish, and which would culminate in the political and economic upheaval of the 1980s and the eventual collapse of white rule.

⁹⁸Thompson, Politics in the Republic of South Africa, 86.

Chapter 2THE FORMATION OF THE LABOUR PARTY OF
SOUTH AFRICA, 1965-1969

The Union Council for Coloured Affairs(UCCA) proved to be ineffectual from its inception in 1959. Not only could the government not find candidates to stand for election to the council, but within two years indicated that it had another body in mind to replace the UCCA. Even the members of the UCCA recognised the ineffectualness of that body and drafted basic principles for its proposed replacement. In 1964, the proposed new body was revealed in the Coloured Persons' Representative Council Act (No. 49). This Act made provision for the replacement of the UCCA with a more representative council consisting of sixteen nominated members and thirty elected members. All coloured persons, male and female, from the age of twenty-one, in all provinces, would be entitled to vote for members of this council, and there would be no income, property or educational qualifications. The council would have advisory, legislative and executive powers. Apart from a provision in the Act that empowered the state president to extend the term of office of the UCCA until the Coloured Person's Representative Council (CRC) became operational, the Act was never brought into effect and five more years was to pass before the first election for the new council was held.¹

Six coloured political parties were formed between 1964 and 1969 to contest the first CRC election. The first party to be formed was the Federal Coloured People's Party(FP) in 1964. The FP was also the first coloured political party ever to be formed for the purpose of fighting an election. This party consisted mainly of members of the UCCA, and its leader Tom

¹Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 63-65; Department of Information, Progress of a People (Pretoria: Department of Information, 1974), 13.

Swartz was also the UCCA chairman.² This party openly supported the government and its policy of separate development and was fully prepared to cooperate in matters which it deemed promoted the advancement of coloured people. The Federal Party intended to provide the machinery through which the National Party could establish some form of credibility for its idea that South Africa was a "multi-national" country and that coloured people were a "nation in the making."³ Thus, the FP would provide a means of representation for the "coloured" colour-caste and establish a cultural distinctiveness that would justify the National Party's claim that coloureds represented an aspirant national minority.⁴

The formation of the Federal Party alarmed many who opposed the government's policies for coloured people. For them, the formation of this party was "a threat to the position of the Coloured people with respect to their regaining political equality."⁵ They saw the dangers in the FP and other similar groups presenting themselves as the representatives of the coloured people, and considered that if the FP was left unopposed, "it will encourage the Government in furthering apartheid for the Coloured people, and it will also be able, with some justification, to claim that ... (the Federal Party)

²Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 228; P. Coetzer, Awaiting Trial: Allan Hendrickse (Alberton: Librarius, 1984), 67.

³Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 65-71, 78-79. This idea of separate nations and the coloured people as a "nation in the making" was referred to by M. Viljoen, Minister of Coloured Affairs, in a speech at the first session of the CRC, 20 November 1969, and by S.W. van der Merwe, Minister of Coloured Relations in a paper, "Government Policy for the Coloured People," delivered to the Abe Bailey Institute for Inter-group studies, University of Cape Town, 17 January 1972.

⁴Mina, "The CRC", 58-59.

⁵Arthur Stanley, interview with author, Athlone, Cape, 10 September 1992.

represents the opinion of the Coloured people."⁶ On 9 October 1965, a meeting was held in Lansdowne, Cape at which a group of coloureds decided to oppose the FP in order "to prevent government-supporting collaborators from hijacking the CRC and setting themselves up as the legitimate representatives of the Coloured people."⁷ Those present came from a variety of organisations which had, over the years, voiced opposition to the government's policies, especially those related to coloured people. Among these organisations were SACPO, the Convention Movement, NEUM and Anti-CAD which had opposed the removal of coloured voters in the 1950's.⁸ Others had been members of the Congress Movement originating in Kliptown in 1955. Many had joined the Liberal Party when it was formed in 1953.⁹ By the 1960s, a number were members of the Progressive Party formed in 1959.¹⁰

A common factor was that all of those present at this meeting, except for Van der Ross, were members of the Coloured Ex-Servicemen's League, an organisation formed after World War I.

⁶LPSA, Newsletter, No.1 (Cape Town: Labour Party of South Africa, March 1966), 3.

⁷Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992; Eastern Province Herald, 16 September 1994. Present at the meeting were H.J. Carelse, E.A. Deane, F.E. Eckstein, M.T. Fakier, W.B. Francis, N.P. Kearns, P.C. Kriger, L.S. Leon, K.S. Lue, N.S. Middleton, E.G. Rooks, D.B. Smith, A. Stanley, R.E. van der Ross and one other. These are the founder-members of the Labour Party of South Africa. See list of founder-members in, LPSA, 1966 And All That (Cape Town: Labour Party of South Africa, 1994). See also Labour Party Private Accession 29, (hereafter referred to as P.A. 29), general letter from F.E. Peters, National Secretary, 8 June 1984. A profile of prominent Labour Party leaders is contained in the Appendix.

⁸Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

⁹Mohammed Dangor, interview with author, Johannesburg, 6 December 1993; Readers' Digest, Illustrated History of South Africa, 490.

¹⁰Allan Hendrickse, interview with author, Cape Town, 23 May 1989.

After 1945, coloured soldiers returning from service found that, after risking their lives in the service of their country, they had to take their place in South African society as "second-class" citizens.¹¹ In addition, promises made by Smuts of a grant of tools of their trade, technical training and a bicycle, were not kept.¹² Disenchanted with Smuts and the United Party, many joined the Ex-Servicemen's League where they engaged in efforts to offset their position in an increasingly segregationist society. Members met on an annual basis to keep the memory of their fallen comrades alive.¹³ At these gatherings, they also discussed with bitterness the increasing marginalisation of coloured people. Thus, it was not unusual that when the CRC was first mooted and the Federal Party was formed to contest elections for that body, that members of the League had already been engaged in discussions concerning the political future of coloured people. Because Van der Ross had been involved in parallel activities during the past few years, their paths had already crossed on a number of occasions. Van der Ross was the founder of the South African Coloured Peoples' Congress in 1953, a co-founder of the Convention Movement in 1961, and was a well-known

¹¹Norman Middleton, interview with author, Pietermaritzburg, 10 October 1994.

¹²Ingram du Preez, interview with author, Cape Town, 30 April 1993; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994. During World War II, Smuts promised coloured, Indian and African members of the Defence Force that, in return for their service, they would receive a bicycle when they returned home. Many persons spoken to by the author over the years remember the promise of a bicycle but cannot recall that their fathers/husbands ever received it.

¹³Besides annual meetings of the League, ex-servicemen commemorate the battle of Squarehill in September every year; a little-known World War I battle involving mainly coloured soldiers. The author attended many of these commemorations in the 1970s as a guest speaker. Squarehill Park, a suburb in Kimberley (the home of the third leader of the Labour Party, Sonny Leon) was named after this battle. The author lived in this suburb in 1971 and came to know of its history. Monuments to this battle stand in Kimberley and Pietermaritzburg today, due largely to the efforts of Sonny Leon and Norman Middleton.

academic in the Cape coloured community.¹⁴ The members of the league looked to him for guidance and leadership.¹⁵

Those present at the founding meeting decided to establish a political party to be known as the Labour Party of South Africa, and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution to be submitted at the inaugural conference. The interim officers elected were: R.E. van der Ross, president; N.S. Kearns, vice-president; E.A. Deane, secretary; D.B. Smith, treasurer; and A. Stanley, trustee.¹⁶ The inaugural meeting was held in the St George's Cathedral Hall in Cape Town on 9 July 1966 and the keynote speaker was Jakes Gerwel, a young lecturer at the University of the Western Cape.¹⁷ The presence at this meeting of Gerwel,¹⁸ who later became an outspoken critic of the Labour Party, is an indication of the regard in which the Labour Party was held at the time as a potential opponent of apartheid and the government's policy of racial and political separation.¹⁹

The date of foundation of the Labour Party has been a source of confusion, with a number of writers indicating either 1965

¹⁴See Appendix II for profile.

¹⁵Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁶Sonny Leon Papers, D.1., "Party Officials, 1965-1970"; P.A. 29, General Letter from F.E. Peters, National Secretary, 8 June 1984. Stanley, Deane and Kearns were prominent trade unionists in the Cape. Edgar Deane was one of the four coloured persons who took the government to court in 1952 on the legitimacy of the bill to remove coloured voters from the voters' roll.

¹⁷Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

¹⁸Gerwel was to succeed Van der Ross as rector of the University of the Western Cape in 1987 and after the general election of April 1994, resigned his post to take up an appointment as Director-General in the Office of the President.

¹⁹Alexander confirms that ANC leaders on Robben Island considered the Labour Party at the time, and well into the 1970s, as one of the movements of the liberation struggle. Neville Alexander, interview with author, George, 15 October 1994.

or 1966 as the founding date. The correct date is important if historians have to later establish the period of existence of the party. The date also has implications for the party when it comes to celebrating anniversaries, e.g. the tenth or silver or golden anniversaries. Thus, the accurate founding date has to be established. The decision to establish the party was taken in October 1965. However, only interim officers were chosen and a constitution still had to be drafted. The party was officially launched at the inaugural conference in Cape Town in 1966. Arthur Stanley, who was present at both meetings, states that the first conference, held on July 9, 1966, signalled the launch of the party.²⁰ However, in a 1984 application to register as a political party for the House of Representatives, Fred Peters, national secretary of the Labour Party indicated the date of foundation as 1965.²¹ This date was also used by Allan Hendrickse as the date of foundation.²² Furthermore, before the first conference was held, the party had already published its first newsletter in March 1966,²³ held its first public meeting on 19 April 1966,²⁴ and had organised a number of fundraising dances.²⁵ However, Van der Ross concurs with Stanley that July 1966 must be regarded as the correct founding date.²⁶ Thus, the Labour Party of South Africa was officially formed in July 1966 with Van der Ross as its first president, M.D. Arendse as vice-president, E.A. Deane as national secretary/treasurer and

²⁰Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

²¹P.A.29, Application for Registration as a Political Party in term of Section 36 of the Electoral Act of 1979.

²²Allan Hendrickse, interview with author, Cape Town, 23 May 1989.

²³LPSA, Newsletter, No.1 (March 1966).

²⁴"A Brief Report of our First Public Meeting", by Edgar Deane, in LPSA, 1966 And All That.

²⁵LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 6.

²⁶Richard van der Ross, interview with author, Belhar, Cape Town, 9 September 1992.

A. Stanley as national trustee.²⁷ Additional executive members were H. Lawrence, W.B. Francis and F.E. Peters.²⁸

The Labour Party claimed direct descent from the non-collaborationist wing of the APO, the NLL, SACPO and the Convention Movement and advanced the view that it was necessary to form the party so as to fill the need for a means of political expression for coloured people. The party planned to capitalise on the leadership void created by the government's suppression of anti-apartheid organisations after the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960.²⁹ Thus, the party believed that participation in the CRC would provide it with a legal platform from which it could attack apartheid, agitate for socio-economic reform, and yet, at the same time, be safe from the harassment that other opposition movements were subjected to at the time.³⁰ By adopting the name "Labour" Party, the leaders hoped to show its identification with the working class, which, in the South African context, generally referred to those who were the victims of government discrimination and harassment. According to Sonny Leon the name was chosen to put the accent on labour because the founders of the party believed "that all Coloured people are workers - all work for their living, mentally or physically."³¹ Allan Hendrickse states that many of the early members were involved in the trade union movement and the bulk

²⁷Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 228; P.A.29, Minutes of Special Conference, 13 May, 1967; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

²⁸P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 9 July 1966. Howard Lawrence later joined the Sunday Times and became the Labour Party's severest critic. F.E. Peters was elected national secretary in 1968, a post he held for more than twenty years.

²⁹Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994; Eastern Province Herald, 19 September 1994.

³⁰LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 4; Mina, "The CRC", 62.

³¹Diamond Fields Advertiser, 7 June 1969.

of supporters in later years came from the rural areas which comprised mostly manual labourers.³² The party outlined in its constitution its own views on the kind of labour policy it would like to have introduced in South Africa.³³ However, the use of the name "Labour" came in for scathing criticism from the Educational Journal:

When it includes the description "Labour" in its trade-name it subjects even that much-prostituted word to a form of cynical abuse it has seldom had to suffer since Madeley's White Labour Party and Hitler's "Labour Front" and Her Britannic Majesty's Labour Party made "Labour" a dirty word usually associated with anti-working man politics.³⁴

The Labour Party at the outset declared its opposition to apartheid in all its forms and demanded full citizenship and universal suffrage with direct representation for all South Africans at parliamentary, provincial and municipal level; the elimination of the colour-bar; justice and equal treatment for all South Africans; and the political, social and economic emancipation of the victims of government discrimination.³⁵ The party also distanced itself from all other political parties and groups and expressed its rejection of communism.³⁶ The above demands had a strong liberal bias, arising out of the early affiliation of Labour Party leaders to the Liberal Party. When that party began to suffer government harassment in the 1950s and early 1960s, the majority of these leaders

³²Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989.

³³P.A.29, "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 9 July 1966. See copy of constitution in Appendix I.

³⁴"The C.A.D's Labour Party," Educational Journal (October 1965), 1-2.

³⁵Survey of Race Relations (1969), 6; Sonny Leon Papers, A.1., The Aims and Objects of the Labour Party.

³⁶LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 4; Richard van der Ross, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 9 July 1966, in LPSA, 1966 And All That; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 7 June 1969.

joined the Progressive Party formed in 1959.³⁷ The close links with coloured people can be seen in the challenge by the Progressive Party, in 1963, on the United Party's hold on the four coloured representative seats in parliament.³⁸ It is therefore not surprising that the policies of the newly-formed Labour Party reflected strong liberal traditions. When coloureds were barred from membership of white political parties in 1968,³⁹ the Labour Party became, in essence, a "coloured" version of the Liberal and Progressive Parties.

What made the Labour Party's declaration of opposition to apartheid conspicuous was that all the other parties formed to contest the CRC election supported the government's policy of "separate" or "parallel development" in one way or another.⁴⁰ The Federal Party, led by Tom Swartz, was a pro-government party which supported "parallel development." The Conservative Party of South Africa (CPSA), led by C.J.R. Fortein, advocated "parallel development" and aimed at unifying coloured people as a group or nation. This party sought equal social and economic opportunities with whites. A Port Elizabeth-based party led by R.H. Fischat, also called itself the Conservative Party (CP) and supported "parallel development." The Republican Party (RP), led by T. le Fleur,

³⁷Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993; Reader's Digest, Illustrated History of South Africa, 484.

³⁸In 1966, the Labour Party's pro-Progressive Party stance even led to accusations that the Labour Party was funded by Harry Oppenheimer. See "A Brief Report of our First Public Meeting" by Edgar Deane, in LPSA, 1966 And All That.

³⁹In terms of the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968, persons of one population group were not allowed to belong to a political party of another population group. The introduction of this Act is dealt with more fully below.

⁴⁰By the 1960s the term "Parallel Development" had replaced the term "Separate Development" which had itself replaced the term "Apartheid" in government terminology. Parallel development was more in line with present government policy which saw the races as parallel streams which would develop equally but never flow into one another.

largely counted the Griquas among its followers. This party strove for coloured unity and an identity apart from whites. It advocated an Immorality Act to prohibit intermarriage between coloured people and other "non-whites." The National Coloured People's Party (NCP), a Johannesburg-based party led by C. Smith, saw coloured people as a separate race with its own identity. This party even led a witch-hunt in coloured residential and business areas in Johannesburg to identify "non-coloureds" and report them for violating the Group Areas Act. It too favoured an Immorality Act as advocated by the Republicans.⁴¹

The differences between the five "pro-government" parties seem minor and it seems reasonable to presume that they could have combined to form one large powerful party supporting separate development and a distinct coloured identity. However, these parties were formed around strong local personalities, and in the case of the Republican Party, around the Griquas who had always considered themselves a separate group with a distinct identity.⁴² The formation of these parties also reflected local attitudes. Whereas the Federal Party comprised largely coloured people in the rural Western Cape who felt secure in their numbers, smaller coloured communities, for example in the Transvaal, always felt threatened by the overwhelming presence of African communities living in close proximity. This accounts for their paranoia about "non-coloureds" in coloured areas.⁴³ The proliferation of parties with similar policies can also be attributed to the new-found "freedom" of coloured people to involve themselves in politics, which the

⁴¹Survey of Race Relations (1969), 6; Venter, Coloured, 498.

⁴²Following the repeal of race classification laws in 1991, a group living at Kranshoek near Plettenberg Bay have tried to keep Griqua identity alive by reclaiming land which they lost under the Group Areas Act in Kokstad, a town established when the followers of Adam Kok III settled there in 1862. Wessel Rabbets, interview with author, Oudtshoorn, 18 October 1994.

⁴³Lily Slinger, interview with author, Johannesburg, 13 December 1993.

proposed CRC Act provided. Except in the Cape prior to 1910, coloured people had never had the opportunity to stand for election to national representative bodies, and the proposed CRC provided that opportunity.

The differences between the five pro-"separate development" parties on the one hand and the anti-"separate development" Labour Party on the other reflected the fundamental divisions among coloured people themselves. While they generally resented discrimination, coloured people also differed sharply as to whether to accept the status imposed upon them by the government in the hope of being at least in a more privileged position than other "non-whites," or whether to throw in their lot with other oppressed groups and create a united front against the government's policy of apartheid.⁴⁴ This diversity of attitude arose largely because coloured people were not a homogeneous group within the South African population.⁴⁵ Apart from the common feature of "mixed blood," the "coloured population group" did not constitute a unity, least of all an ethnic entity.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the "Coloured" population group was not a product of voluntary identification but of statutory race classification.⁴⁷ The various ethnic components of this statutorily-defined group were geographically and historically independent by origin, and the

⁴⁴This problem is discussed in greater depth in N. Alexander, "Non-collaboration in the Western Cape", in The Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape, eds. W.G. James and M. Simons (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 180-91.

⁴⁵Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 13.

⁴⁶J.H. Coetzee, The Coloured Challenge (Potchefstroom: Institute for South African Politics, 1975), 1-2. See also Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 1-44, in which he explores the myth of coloured identity.

⁴⁷Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 464; Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 1; Theron and Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 99-101.

"racial" composition differed widely.⁴⁸ The Theron Commission in its 1976 report made constant reference to the heterogeneity of the "Coloured" population group. By the very nature of the creation of the "Coloured" population group, coloured people were not, and never were, a homogeneous grouping. Culturally, coloured people identified with whites; sharing a common language, religion and lifestyle,⁴⁹ and it was an error to assert that coloured people were so different from whites that they had their own distinctive identity.⁵⁰ Because of their cultural affinity with whites, Van der Ross speaks of "the almost childish optimism which had led the coloured people since the previous century to believe that their political destiny lay with that of Whites."⁵¹ As a result "Coloured elites aspired towards integration into white society, with all the privileges that this implied, not to a separate Coloured identity with its negative social implications."⁵² However, apartheid laws after 1948 created a problem for those who felt that "sanity would prevail" and that whites and coloureds would one day again be reunited.⁵³ Therefore, instead of protest and agitation, should they not exercise patience and wait to be reaccepted into the white group? At the same time, race segregation, as odious as it was, was applied more leniently to coloured people. Would it not therefore be wiser for coloured people not to antagonise whites lest they lose the privileges which went with their

⁴⁸Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 5, 7, 38. Heese, Groep Sonder Grense examined this phenomenon more extensively.

⁴⁹Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 8.

⁵⁰Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 1; Theron and Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 99-101; Botha, Die Kleurling en ons Kleurlingbeleid, 4-5.

⁵¹R.E. van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes: An Inside Look at the Coloured People(Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979), 78.

⁵²Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 13.

⁵³Richard van der Ross, interview, 9 September 1992.

intermediate position in the colour-caste?⁵⁴ The majority of this school of opinion comprised the older generation, especially in the Cape, who had lived, worked, played, voted and worshipped with whites in the past; rural coloureds, who were poorly-educated and poverty-stricken and thus more dependent on whites for their livelihood; and those living in provinces and regions where they were outnumbered by Africans. Since the 1920s the government had sought to cultivate and promote this opinion.⁵⁵ On the other hand, there were those who felt that they ought to throw in their lot with Africans who were also experiencing similar discrimination and oppression. This school of opinion was to be found mostly among coloured people in the Western Cape and better-educated coloureds in other provinces. Because coloureds were in the majority in the Western Cape, and due to the protection offered by the proclamation of the Western Cape as a coloured preference area, they did not feel threatened by Africans.⁵⁶ Carter encapsulates the dilemma facing the coloured community which was reflected in the policies of coloured political parties in the late 1960s:

Of all the non-European groups, the Coloured are the least unified, and the least effective. They are still torn between their desire to associate themselves with Whites, and their reluctant awareness that the Nationalists are forcing them into the same general category as the Indians and Africans.⁵⁷

The six parties formed between 1964 and 1969 also fairly

⁵⁴See Adhikari, "Protest and Accommodation", 106, regarding the ambivalence prevailing in the coloured community on this matter.

⁵⁵Lubbe, "Vergeet die Arbeiders", 19.

⁵⁶Archie Vergotine, Address to Annual Conference of Cape Teacher's Professional Association, Oudtshoorn, 25 June 1994; R. Cohen, Y. Muthien and A. Zegeye, Repression and Resistance: Insider Accounts of Apartheid (London: Hans Zell, 1990).

⁵⁷Carter, Politics of Inequality, 361.

reflected the common divisions of conservatives, liberals and socialists found in other groupings in other countries as well. Simons constructed a typology of the divisions in coloured politics in the twentieth century. She divided coloured political groupings into coloured conservatives, liberals and brown socialists. According to her, coloured conservatives generally formed three main groupings: conservative integrationists who advocated integration under white hegemony - examples were the CPNU and the Federal Party; conservative segregationists who advocated separation in such a manner that it served to maintain white domination - examples were the ANB of 1924 and the Republican Party; conservative nationalists who believed that colour, race and nationalism coincided and that society should be patterned accordingly - examples being the NCPP and the Conservative Party. Liberals formed two main groups: radical liberals who advocated the prohibition of all colour bars - examples were the Labour Party; and reformist liberals who advocated the abolition of economic colour bars and visible manifestations of colour discrimination - an example of which was the APO after the first World War. "Brown" socialists consisted mainly of radical socialists who wanted to abolish both the colour bar and the capitalist mode of production - examples were the APO, prior to the First World War, and the NLL.⁵⁸

Thus, most of the parties formed after 1964 appeared to carry on the tradition of organisations which had gone before, with the "colouredist" philosophy very dominant.⁵⁹ Of the six newly-formed parties, all of them, with the exception of the Labour Party, declared their intention of going into the CRC to improve the lot of coloured people, hoping to eventually

⁵⁸Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 205.

⁵⁹Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 217, describes colouredism as "a cultural consciousness of the unskilled and those leaders and followers who accept separate institutions and separate development as a means by which to improve the position of the 'Coloured' people".

gain equality with whites. The Labour Party on the other hand, tried to distance itself from "colouredism" and stated that it would seek equality and justice for all South Africans, irrespective of race or ethnic grouping. To this end, the preamble to its constitution dedicated the party to "opposing all forms of racial discrimination which undermine the civil liberty and social justice of the individual."⁶⁰ The party's stated objectives were to strive for the effective participation of all people in the government of the country, the elimination of the colour bar in legislation and the development of a political arrangement in the country, such that all sections of the population would be fairly and justly treated.⁶¹ The Labour Party's intention to fight on behalf of all South Africans, not just coloured people, distinguished it from the rest.⁶² As a result, many coloureds who would normally have abstained from voting, or even considered organised boycotts and protest, felt comfortable in supporting the Labour Party.

Before the Labour Party could establish itself as a political force, Van der Ross resigned in 1967 and accepted a post as assistant education planner in the Department of Coloured Affairs. At a special conference convened in Salt River in May 1967 to elect a successor, the party secretary explained that "Dr Van der Ross had not resigned his membership of the Party, but due to him accepting a senior position in the Educational Dept in the Administration of Coloured Affairs, he could not hold any official position in the Party."⁶³ Although Van der Ross himself never gave any written or public

⁶⁰P.A.29, "The Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 9 July 1966.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²P.A.29, "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 9 July 1966.

⁶³P.A.29, Minutes of Special Labour Party Conference, Salt River, Cape, 13 May 1967.

explanation of the reasons behind his decision to resign, Stanley explains that Van der Ross, a teacher by profession, was not employed as a teacher at the time of the formation of the Labour Party and was involved in a journalistic venture with a number of former colleagues. This venture was not successful and he tried to re-enter the teaching profession. However, his links with an anti-apartheid and anti-government party were not viewed favourably by the Department of Coloured Affairs which controlled coloured education, and he failed to get re-appointed. The implied threat was that, unless he wished to remain unemployed, he had to sever his links with the Labour Party.⁶⁴ The irony of this act of coercion was that this same department, in an effort to quell disaffection and forestall protest and boycott at the "coloured" University of the Western Cape (UWC) in 1973,⁶⁵ had to go "cap-in-hand" to Van der Ross to ask him to accept an appointment as rector of that institution, a position he subsequently filled in 1975.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992. Unfortunately, the position Van der Ross found himself in was the rule and not the exception. Coloured teachers, generally, had over the years found themselves caught between their desire to oppose discrimination and the government's segregation policies, and their need to retain their jobs. After 1984, the Labour Party used promises of jobs and promotion to entice teachers to register as members. Those who opposed the party and the House of Representatives lost out as far as employment or promotion was concerned. See chapter 7 for further discussion on this matter.

⁶⁵The problems on the University campus stemmed from unhappiness with the concept of separate universities; the overwhelming preponderance of white lecturers, professors and heads of departments; and the refusal by the rector to recognise the SRC and accede to their request to affiliate with other student organisations. In 1973, the black consciousness movement took root on the campus and the appointment of another white rector left the university in a crisis.

⁶⁶Venter, Coloured, 343-47, 365. Interestingly, after Van der Ross resigned in 1967, he was invited to UWC as a visiting lecturer but all the students walked out before he could begin his address on the topic, "Coloured Culture." See Educational Journal (September 1967), 9. After Van der Ross was appointed in 1975, campus problems and student grievances were still not alleviated. Press reports in 1975 and early 1976 indicate that UWC students still clashed with university authorities, including
(continued...)

Members at this special conference expressed their disappointment at Van der Ross's resignation and complained that, as founder of the party, he had set a bad example by not giving timely notification of his intentions to the executive. This, they argued, put the party organisation in a difficult position.⁶⁷ The impact of Van der Ross's sudden resignation can be seen in the fact that the Labour Party had no obvious successor. Eventually, the delegates concluded that the vice-president, Martin Arendse, "would be the only person here present...who has the capabilities, to take over the leadership of the Labour Party."⁶⁸ Arendse had been a member of the UCCA and had won a reputation as an opponent of government policies for coloured people. However, his links with the UCCA were disturbing to many of the party's anti-government faction, especially as the UCCA was a fully nominated government body which had been vigorously opposed at the time of its formation in 1959.⁶⁹ Arendse's links with the UCCA were to count against him in the leadership struggle in 1970. Unlike the urbane, educated and gentlemanly Van der Ross, Arendse was not a very popular and well-liked person but he was considered the best man in the circumstances in 1967.⁷⁰

⁶⁶(...continued)
their new coloured rector, Van der Ross. See Cape Times 18 September 1975 and 9 March 1976. Evidently, Van der Ross's role in the formation of the Labour Party and the party's participation in the CRC was not approved of by the students: an indication that the Labour Party's role in the CRC was being seriously questioned.

⁶⁷P.A.29, Minutes of Special Labour Party Conference, Salt River, 13 May 1967.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹See Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 673-77, for a selection of articles which reflect the feelings of the coloured people at the time regarding the UCCA.

⁷⁰Saks describes Arendse as a "blunt and irascible politician" and Coetzer indicates that Allan Hendrickse hesitated to join the Labour Party in 1969 and stand as a candidate, because he was not happy with Arendse's leadership. See Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", appendix 6; Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 62.

Van der Ross's resignation was a severe blow as the Labour Party had hoped that he could have used his influence and his standing in the teaching fraternity to garner support for the party. Even though the Labour Party had considerable support in the teaching profession, fear of victimisation and dismissal prevented many teachers from openly declaring their support for the party.⁷¹ Despite Arendse's impassioned appeal to teachers "not to be immune from the struggle of their people" and to "join the ranks of the others in their fight for economic improvement and social and political justice,"⁷² the Labour Party realised that it would have to turn its efforts elsewhere to gain sufficient support to offset the Federal Party's advantage in the rural areas and defeat it in an election.

The leaders of the Labour Party were drawn mainly from trade unions and political and community organisations which had opposed the government's coloured policies since the days of the Anti-CAD movement and the NEUM in 1943. Despite the choice of "Labour" in its name, and despite the emphasis on the "workers" in its constitution,⁷³ the leaders were generally from the urban, middle- and professional class and the initial drive for support was amongst the same classes.

⁷¹Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992. The Cape Herald, 6 May 1972, published a report of a survey undertaken by a Dr A.D. Lazarus into teaching conditions in coloured schools at the time, which confirms the fears of victimisation, intimidation and dismissal experienced by teachers who involved themselves in anti-apartheid and anti-government activities. For example, A.C. Fortuin from East London was dismissed from his post as a teacher in Idutywa in 1969 because he was a member of the Labour Party. Fortuin, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994. This appeared to be a problem coloured teachers faced in the early 1900s already. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 13, indicates that coloured teachers faced dismissal if they involved themselves in politics.

⁷²Post, 9 May 1968.

⁷³P.A.29, "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 9 July 1966.

The first branches formed were all in urban areas.⁷⁴ Thus, the Labour Party realised that it would have to widen its net to increase support in the hope of defeating the pro-government parties. However, the party faced a number of hurdles. Its inability to win overt support from teachers, who had influence in their communities, was a severe setback.⁷⁵ In addition, those coloureds in the Western Cape who would have been considered the natural constituency of the Labour Party were still locked into the ideals of "non-collaboration" and "boycott" which had characterised coloured politics since the 1940s and which had been exercised and vociferously propagated as recently as 1959 with the formation of the UCCA. Former supporters of the NEUM and Anti-CAD movement, the leading proponents of boycott, were not keen to support the Labour Party which advocated voting in the CRC election.⁷⁶ Thus, the Labour Party realised that it would have to take to the rural areas to get sufficient support to win an election.

The party came up against the government and its supporters when it began electioneering in the platteland. Coloured people in the rural areas were mostly farm workers and were

⁷⁴LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 5; P.A.29, Minutes of Special Labour Party Conference, Salt River, Cape, 13 May 1967. The founder-members were themselves mainly urban-based. Of the fifteen persons present at the inaugural meeting in October 1965, ten were from the Cape (eight from the Cape Peninsula, one from the Boland and one from Kimberley) and five from Natal (one from Pietermaritzburg, the rest from Durban). See list of founder-members in LPSA, 1966 And All That.

⁷⁵Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

⁷⁶See Alexander, "Non-Collaboration in the Western Cape", 180-91, and Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 202-32 for a detailed discussion of the debate regarding the principle of "non-collaboration" and the "boycott" as a tactical weapon in coloured politics. Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994, indicates that many from an Anti-CAD background were sceptical of the Labour Party but were attracted by its anti-apartheid stance.

generally impoverished.⁷⁷ It was in the rural areas where the government set out to influence coloured people to support the pro-government Federal Party. The National Party, Department of Coloured Affairs and farmers openly supported the FP. FP members and their supporters and promoters descended upon rural settlements, promising illiterate people increased pensions and food parcels if they voted Federal.⁷⁸ Farm labourers, and those dependent on employment by whites, lived with the ever-present fear of victimisation or dismissal if they supported the Labour Party. Their impoverished state and dependence on white employers meant that the majority of rural coloured people were trapped into giving support to pro-government parties. Moreover, farmers ensured that Labour Party canvassers never got near their employers. According to Michael Hendrickse, "die boere het ons gejaag en op ons geskiet toe ons onder die kleurlinge in die plaasbuurte gewerk het."⁷⁹ The Educational Journal paints a graphic picture of the forces at work in this election campaign:

Everyone knows of the forces that were used to dragoon, intimidate, seduce and bamboozle people into voting. Everyone knows of the zealous interest displayed by police, farmers, priests, employers, location superintendents, housing scheme supervisors - all without "improper interference" no doubt. Everyone knows of the pressures brought to bear upon old-age pensioners and the recipients of official grants or assistance of any kind.⁸⁰

The Afrikaner Broederbond was the government's trump card. It was essential to National Party strategy, after the

⁷⁷Venter, Coloured, 444; Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 52.

⁷⁸"Toens" Rooy, interview with author, Balfour, 17 July 1994.

⁷⁹Michael Hendrickse, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994. Apparently, this happened right up to the 1989 HoR election.

⁸⁰"Riding A Dead Horse", Educational Journal (October-November 1969), 1.

failures of the CAC and UCCA, that the CRC work or that it be seen to be a working institution. The CRC had to pacify the coloured electorate and defuse political frustration and aggression which had begun to surface. This required that the first elections for that body proceeded smoothly; that it attracted a sufficiently large number of voters, and that the "right" party emerge as the majority party in the CRC. In order to ensure that this would happen, the National Party embarked on a clandestine campaign to propel Tom Swartz, former chairman of the coloured conservative CPNU and the pro-government UCCA, to a position of prominence among coloured people. This led to the establishment of the Federal Party and the Broederbond emerged as the instrument to ensure victory for the Federal Party.⁸¹ However, in 1966, the government had introduced a bill which made support for the Federal Party impossible and also unlawful. The Prohibition of Political Interference Bill barred persons of one race group from belonging to political organisations or participating in the political affairs of other race groups.⁸² This bill appeared to be a retaliation for the rejection by coloured voters of National Party-sponsored candidates for the coloured representative seats in parliament and the provincial council, and to undermine the Progressive Party which had made great strides in gaining support from coloured voters.⁸³ The bill was designed to prevent members of the multi-racial Progressive Party from being returned as coloured representatives both to parliament and the Cape Provincial Council.⁸⁴ Vorster had already warned in 1965 that if whites

⁸¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, expressed the conviction that the Federal Party was a "government front".

⁸²Muller, Five Hundred Years, 473, 539.

⁸³LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 1.

⁸⁴M. Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid: A Trek in to Isolation (Cape Town: Juta, 1969), 470; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 59-62; A.G. Mezerik, ed., Apartheid in the Republic of South Africa (New York: International Review Service, 1967), 9;
(continued...)

used these seats as a springboard to launch attacks on government policy, "the time will come when the basis of the representation will have to be considered."⁸⁵ However, this bill also had the effect of restricting the Broederbond in its attempts to assist the Federal Party. If the bill were to be passed, it would wreck its operation to assist Tom Swartz and the Federal Party. The executive council of the Broederbond therefore put pressure on the government to abandon the bill for the time being. However, the Prime Minister, H.F. Verwoerd, appeared to be reluctant to delay passage of the bill. Evidently, his desire to "punish" the coloured electorate and undermine Progressive Party attempts to court them, outweighed the need to assist the Federal Party. Two weeks after the death of H.F. Verwoerd on 6 September 1966, the Broederbond got its way and the bill was withdrawn.⁸⁶

Unfettered for at least two years until the bill was again introduced, the Broederbond made use of the opportunity and vigorously set about promoting the Federal Party. A special Broederbond committee was appointed to help the party in its election campaign in a manner which would not directly involve the government. Louis van der Walt, a fulltime employee of the Broederbond who was also in the employ of the Republikeinse Intelligensie Diens, the ghost section of the Special Branch at the time, was put in charge of the campaign. Funds were provided by the Christiaan de Wet fund, the secret one million Rand fund of the Broederbond which contributed more than R50 000 to cover the Federal Party's election

⁸⁴(...continued)

Bunting, South Africa Reich, 41; M. Attwell, Background to the Crisis (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986), 108.

⁸⁵Cape Times, 16 September 1965.

⁸⁶Sunday Times, 1 October, 1972 and 16 November 1975; I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, The Super-Afrikaners (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978), 160-62.

expenses.⁸⁷ Thus it becomes apparent that the four-year delay between the first CRC Act in 1964 and its amendment in 1968, was intended to give the Broederbond and the campaign of Van der Walt sufficient time to establish a powerful collaborationist party and ensure its election victory. Wilkins and Strydom, in their exposé of the Broederbond, outlined in detail the steps taken to influence the election in favour of the Federal Party. This included urging Broeders to assist with the registration of coloured voters, encouraging coloureds to vote, influencing them to vote Federal, arranging for farmers to get their workers and families to the polling booths, and entrusting vehicles to coloured persons to transport other voters to the polls.⁸⁸

Not only did the Broederbond try to engineer a Federal Party victory, it also flouted the Prohibition of Political Interference Act when it was eventually passed in 1968. The Act laid down that "no person of one population group may be a member of any political party of which any person who belongs to any other population group is a member or render assistance in any way across the colour line in an election..." (emphasis mine).⁸⁹ In a report on the role of the Broederbond in the 1969 CRC election, the Sunday Times alleged that "it gave secret support on a large scale to the Federal Party of Tom Swartz before and after Parliament had passed the Act in 1968 to prevent white political parties from interfering in non-white politics."⁹⁰

⁸⁷Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 160-62; Venter, Coloured, 503; Sunday Times, 16 November 1975. During the 1972 budget debate, David Curry revealed that one member of the Broederbond had alone donated R20 000. (Between 1979-1981, the author was in the employ of a company owned by Christiaan de Wet and his son and came to know of the assistance given to the Federal Party in the 1960s).

⁸⁸Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 160-62.

⁸⁹Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 469.

⁹⁰Sunday Times, 1 October 1972; Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 203.

It was not only the Broederbond which flouted the law. Stanley reports that when he went to hold election meetings in Kroonstad, he found an audience consisting mainly of Africans. When he enquired as to their presence at a "coloured" election meeting, they indicated that they wished to hear the Labour Party's point of view before deciding how to vote. Upon further examination Stanley discovered that Tom Swartz had visited Kroonstad earlier and had found "hundreds of Africans" without identity documents (pass-books). He subsequently arranged with the relevant government authority to issue "Coloured" identity documents to unregistered Africans in Kroonstad, after, of course, extracting from them a promise of support for the Federal Party.⁹¹

Besides the active support of government-supporting newspapers like Die Burger which spoke to coloureds "in their own language," the Department of Coloured Affairs used its monthly departmental journal, Alpha, to indoctrinate coloureds into accepting their status and position as a separate group. The journal was used to "educate" coloureds regarding the CRC. It was at pains to explain to coloured people how this council would benefit them politically, socially and economically. Details were given of how the council would work; when and how the elections would take place; who could stand as candidates; and how and where voting would take place.⁹² Alpha enjoyed wide (and free) distribution in coloured schools and government offices and institutions, especially in the rural areas. Thus, the Labour Party found itself up against formidable opposition when it went into the rural areas to muster support for the party. To compound its problems, the party also had difficulty attracting candidates to stand in the election. The obvious choices, teachers and ministers, declined to be seen to be supporting an anti-government party

⁹¹Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

⁹²See for example, Alpha, Vol.7, No.8 (September 1969), 3-4.

for fear of victimisation.⁹³ Other professionals and businessmen did not want to jeopardise their jobs, their customers and their suppliers. Thus, Arendse, Stanley and Sonny Leon had to travel the country, painstakingly recruiting Labour Party candidates for the forthcoming election.⁹⁴ It was in this way that they met H.J. (Allan) Hendrickse who was later to become the party's leader in the CRC and the House of Representatives.⁹⁵

An indication of the extent of the problems the party experienced in getting sufficient support, was its attempt to raise money by levying contributions from branch members and the holding of dances. In 1967 no money had been received from the newly formed branches, and of the two dances held to raise funds only a few members attended the first and no one turned up for the second. Arendse warned that lack of funds would lead to the demise of the party: "Branches seemed to have forgotten that there is a head office, and should the Party go out of existence then the blame must rest on the shoulders of the members, and particularly those who have founded the Party."⁹⁶ A further statement indicates the parlous financial position which members of the executive found themselves in: "The National Executive has, since the last Conference, existed on nothing and they have made many

⁹³Rural coloured people were generally conservative and ministers feared criticism and a backlash from their parishioners. Many ministers were also full-time teachers and feared victimisation and dismissal by the Education Department. For example, the majority of ministers of the Congregational Church, one of the largest denominations in the coloured community, are also full-time teachers. Chris Drake, interview with author, Fort Beaufort, 17 July 1994.

⁹⁴L.S. (Sonny) Leon, interview with author, Kimberley, 25 September 1985. Another interview planned in 1990 could not take place because of the illness and subsequent death of Leon.

⁹⁵Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 64. At the time, Hendrickse was a minister of the Congregational Church.

⁹⁶P.A.29, Minutes of Special Labour Party Conference, 13 May 1967.

personal sacrifices to keep the Party from going into decline."⁹⁷ This is in marked contrast to the Federal Party which received large donations from the Broederbond, the government and its supporters. Thus, the Labour Party's success in 1969 was all the more remarkable, given these circumstances.

In 1968, the government introduced a number of bills designed to complete the political separation of whites and coloureds. The Prohibition of Political Interference Act which prohibited whites and coloureds from belonging to the same political party was eventually passed. The Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act effectively terminated representation enjoyed in parliament by coloured people. The last of the trilogy of Acts was the Coloured Persons' Representative Council Amendment Act which replaced the 1964 Act and made provision for a council consisting of 20 nominated members and 40 elected members. Any coloured could stand for election to the CRC if he was registered as a voter for a period of not less than two years, if he resided in the province where the electoral division for which he was standing was situated, and if he was not a communist. The country was divided into 40 electoral divisions - 28 in the Cape, 6 in the Transvaal, 3 each in the Orange Free State and Natal. This was a fair reflection of the demographic distribution of the coloured people in South Africa. This Act signalled the government's intention to proceed with the CRC and provided for the first election to be held on 24 September, 1969.⁹⁸

The announcement of the eventual implementation of the CRC Act and the date of the first election spurred the Labour Party to tighten its administration and sort out its leadership problems. At its 1968 conference, a number of changes were

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 45; Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 468; Post, 9 May 1968.

made. Sonny Leon was elected to the vice-president's post vacated by Arendse in 1967 when the latter succeeded Van der Ross; Deane was succeeded as national secretary by Fred Peters; and Arendse and Stanley were re-elected president and trustee respectively. Thus, within three years, four of the five founder-members elected to office in 1965 had been replaced.⁹⁹ The new office-bearers reflected the division of labour, effort and commitment to the task of canvassing for support and building up the image of the party. In his presidential speech, Arendse was critical of "some people who had started the Labour Party but had since left.... (They had) done themselves much harm and have certainly lost a very large measure of respect from the whole Coloured community." He referred to them as renegades: "Now that we are rid of these renegades, the party must make up its mind to go from strength to strength in its fight for equality of opportunity, rights and justice for all."¹⁰⁰

The departure of most of the early leaders, and Arendse's attack on them, is perhaps a reflection of the frustration experienced by Labour Party leaders in the period prior to the first election. It must be remembered that the Labour Party and the other parties referred to above, had been formed in response to the CRC Act of 1964. These parties had expected an election to be held soon after but the Act was never implemented and the CRC never functioned.¹⁰¹ Thus, between 1964 and the passing of the CRC Amendment Act in 1968, the parties operated in a vacuum, not knowing if and when the CRC would begin functioning. This accounts for the malaise in the Labour Party and its inability to rouse support and enthusiasm and raise funds for its cause. It also created tensions in

⁹⁹ N.S. Kearns left the party in 1966, D.B. Smith was not re-elected in 1966, R.E. van der Ross resigned as leader in 1967; E.A. Deane did not stand for re-election in 1968.

¹⁰⁰P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 11 May 1968; Cape Herald, 18 May 1968.

¹⁰¹Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 468.

the Labour Party with members accusing one another of lack of effort and cooperation. Some complained that they were making great sacrifices while others were showing no enthusiasm and commitment.¹⁰² However, the passing of the 1968 Act and the announcement of the date of the first election gave fresh impetus to the party's election campaign. In discussions for an election platform, the party decided that the boycott strategy previously employed by coloured organisations would not be followed and that the party would definitely fight the election. In his presidential speech to the party's 1968 conference, Arendse explained that "it is imperative that we do not boycott the Council, but see to it that the most capable men and women are elected to serve on the Council."¹⁰³ Thus was established the Labour Party's oft-repeated doctrine that, to boycott separate political institutions, would leave those bodies to pro-government parties who would set themselves up as the legitimate voice of coloured people and give the government the excuse to continue with apartheid because coloured people accepted it. On the basis of this doctrine, the Labour Party decided to confront the electorate with the importance of voting, contending that if they did not vote they would be supporting the apartheid system. The party adopted a slogan which became the foundation of its election platform: "A Vote for Labour is a Vote against Apartheid", and election pamphlets and posters urged: "The CRC is being used to oppress our People. By not voting you support the Apartheid System. Put Punch into the Opposition. Vote Labour."¹⁰⁴ The Labour Party thus styled itself the "Anti-CRC" opposition. The Labour Party was therefore stating that it was opposed to the CRC and that it would represent all those who were likewise opposed. Thus, a very significant aspect of the

¹⁰²P.A.29, Minutes of Special Labour Party Conference, 13 May 1967.

¹⁰³Cape Herald, 18 May 1968. See also Post, 9 May 1968.

¹⁰⁴Sonny Leon Papers, B.2., Labour Party election pamphlet, 1969.

election campaign was the virtual absence of any form of organised protest and opposition as was the case with the formation of the CAC in 1943 and the UCCA in 1959. One must infer, therefore, that the opponents of the CRC did not launch any widespread and sustained opposition to the 1969 CRC elections because they accepted the Labour Party's claim to be the "Anti-CRC" opposition.

However, a promise made during the election campaign not only increased support for the Labour Party, but created problems for the party for the next two decades. During the election campaign the party promised that it would not occupy its seats in the council if it won the election "in order to prove conclusively that the coloured people rejected apartheid institutions in whatever form they came."¹⁰⁵ At the time, it was not specified whether "winning" meant a majority of the elected seats or an outright majority of the combined elected and nominated seats. Stanley maintains, however, that this was never official party policy and that someone may have made an unauthorised promise in the excitement of the moment.¹⁰⁶ However, it is difficult to see how else the party could have captured the anti-apartheid vote as they were in the invidious position of having to deal with the exponents of "boycott" and "non-collaboration" on the one hand, and the not inconsiderable forces of the pro-separate development grouping on the other. That promise certainly attracted a lot of support but was to haunt the Labour Party for the duration of the CRC's existence.

The response of coloured people to the proposed Coloured Persons' Representative Council(CRC) was surprising. The creation of the Coloured Advisory Council(CAC) in 1943 had been vigorously opposed. Various groups and organisations

¹⁰⁵Sunday Times, 16 November 1975; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 56.

¹⁰⁶Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1993.

such as the Anti-CAD movement, APO, NEUM and TLSA had refused to co-operate with the government in its plans for coloured people.¹⁰⁷ Elections held on the separate voters' roll in 1958 and 1963 had been boycotted and a number of organisations such as the Convention Movement and SACPO had called on coloured people not to cooperate in any way with the government, and to oppose all forms of separate consultative and administrative machinery for coloured people.¹⁰⁸ In this vein, the UCCA received similar treatment. Yet, the formation of the CRC aroused great interest. This paradox requires some explanation. In 1943, coloured people were still largely integrated with whites. Even though they could not sit in parliament, coloureds still voted on the same roll as whites, at least in the Cape. The mass of race laws was still something of the future. There were no territorial, social and labour segregation laws in 1943. Coloured people were therefore fighting to retain what they already had and to prevent any erosion of what had always been theirs. In the late 1950's, the spate of discriminatory legislation and their removal from the common roll had come as a shock to coloured people. However, they still hoped that the United Party would return to power and restore them to the position they previously had.¹⁰⁹ Protest, boycott and opposition were therefore necessary to restore the status quo and create a climate for the restoration of their rights. Now, in the mid-sixties, they had no political rights and apartheid laws had stripped them of property and social rights as well. Any

¹⁰⁷Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 44.

¹⁰⁸Du Preez, "The Role and Policies of the Labour Party of South Africa", 25.

¹⁰⁹ In the 1958 election, the United Party still promised coloured people that they would be restored to the common roll if the UP came to power. However, coloured people soon became disillusioned with the United Party because of its indifferent approach to segregation, and voted increasingly for the Progressive Party. See for example C.J. Bundy, "The Colour attitudes and policies of the United Party, 1948-1960" (A long essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Honours degree in History, University of Witwatersrand, 1967).

opportunity to regain what they previously had was eagerly seized at, especially if it gave them an opportunity to move, once again, closer to whites with whom they had always been closely associated.¹¹⁰

Not all coloured people were eager to accept the CRC but, in comparison to the reaction to the formation of the CAC and UCCA, the CRC met with a much greater and enthusiastic response. Coloureds throughout South Africa registered in their thousands. Figures are difficult to compare because only coloureds in the Cape were registered as voters on the separate roll in 1958 and 1963, whereas voters from all four provinces registered for the 1969 CRC election. However, the available figures still give a good indication of the interest in the new council. In 1958 there were 29 281 registered voters in the Cape.¹¹¹ In 1963 the figure dropped to 9 818.¹¹² For the 1969 election, 637 587 coloureds from all four provinces registered as voters.¹¹³ The high figure could be ascribed to the fact that coloureds in all the provinces were eligible to vote. Yet, if one considers that of the 843 973 eligible for registration, approximately 700 000 lived in the Cape, it becomes apparent that coloured people, especially those in the Cape, seemed more than usually interested in the CRC.¹¹⁴ However, the unusually high interest displayed in the CRC was not so much a spontaneous reaction by enthusiastic coloureds as it was a result of coercion. To ensure that its latest instrument for separate representation did not go the same way as the CAC and UCCA, the government decreed that registration would be compulsory, with non-registration

¹¹⁰Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 78.

¹¹¹F. Van Jaarsveld, From Van Riebeeck to Vorster, 1652-1974 (Johannesburg: APB, 1975), 336.

¹¹²Heard, General Elections, 114.

¹¹³Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 February 1980.

¹¹⁴Debates of the House of Assembly (4 February 1969), Col. 92; Department of Information, Progress of a People, 8.

carrying a penalty of R50 or three months imprisonment.¹¹⁵ This penalty may seem low and not sufficient to ensure registration on such a large scale. However, in 1969, the majority of coloured people were still impoverished and poorly-paid. R50 was more than a month's salary for many and a fine would have had severe economic consequences.¹¹⁶ Also, coloured people were generally conservative and law-abiding citizens and were prepared to obey the law, no matter how unfair or coercive it was. Furthermore, the government's race laws after 1948, and the harsh enforcement thereof, had brow-beaten and demoralised coloured people so that by the 1960s, they did not have the strength nor inclination to oppose the government. Thus, the seemingly enthusiastic response was not so spontaneous after all as the percentage polls in the 1969 election were later to bear out.

Because the statutory coloured population group was not a homogeneous group,¹¹⁷ it would have been surprising had there not been diverse reaction to the CRC. Yet, while it was clear that the CRC was going to be a subordinate political institution with limited powers, only a small section of the community voiced opposition, branding the CRC as an attempt to dampen the coloured clamour for equal political rights and democratic representation in parliament. Since the launch of the Anti-CAD movement and the NEUM in the 1940s, a strong tradition of non-collaboration had existed among the more educated and politically aware coloureds, particularly in the

¹¹⁵Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 469.

¹¹⁶Venter, Coloured, 54, 461-62, indicates that in 1972, coloured farm labourers earned between R5 and R8 per week and 60% of the coloured work force earned less than R60 per month. Thus, the fine of R50 in 1969 comes into perspective. Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 52, indicates that the average income in the Cape rural areas in 1974 was R157 p.a. There is no record of the government ever enforcing this provision.

¹¹⁷See for instance, Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 5,7,38. The Theron Commission in its 1976 report makes constant reference to the heterogeneity of the "Coloured" population group.

Cape. This small group, consisting mostly of academics, had used the Educational Journal, the organ of the TLSA, to attack the CAC and UCCA in the past. Now, they attacked the proposed CRC and the Federal and Labour Parties for choosing to participate.¹¹⁸ They labelled as collaborators, "quislings" and "sellouts," anyone who was prepared to support this body and serve in it.¹¹⁹ Besides advocating a boycott of the CRC and the elections for that body, these opponents were however unable to come forward with constructive alternatives. For the most part, all they could do was to involve themselves in cultural and educational activities, "endlessly elaborating their own particular doctrine and damning those who disagreed with them as revisionists, collaborators, C.I.A. agents, quislings or lackeys."¹²⁰ Although the Labour Party agreed with the argument put up by the anti-CRC faction, it nevertheless declared its willingness to use the CRC as a forum for articulating grievances and expressing views.¹²¹ The Federal Party and the other pro-separate development parties dismissed anti-CRC opposition and accepted the National Party's view that coloureds were a distinct group with an identity separate from whites. They were convinced that working within the framework of the CRC would improve the position of coloured people.¹²² These three opposing views

¹¹⁸Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 436.

¹¹⁹Federal Coloured People's Party Collection, T.F. Swartz, Address to Federal Party National Conference, Kroonstad, 1-8 July 1967. The term "quisling" takes its name from Vidkun Quisling, the head of the Norwegian puppet and collaborationist government during the Nazi occupation of Norway during World War II. The term was first used in coloured politics in 1943 when the pro-CAC faction were branded "quislings" because they chose to "collaborate" with the government.

¹²⁰Whisson, "Coloured People", 56.

¹²¹See Arthur Stanley Private Collection, Richard van der Ross, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 9 July 1966.

¹²²See Thompson and Prior, South African Politics, 95; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 299-301.

represented the divergence of opinion within this heterogeneous group. However, the voices of opposition were drowned out in 1969 as the Labour and Federal Parties with their respective standpoints dominated the election campaign.

The Labour Party duly won the election, gaining 26 of the 40 elected seats. In the process it received 136 845 of the 300 918 votes cast (table 1). Although the Labour Party won

Table 1 - Schedule of 1969 Election Results.¹²³

<u>Party</u>	<u>No. of Seats Contested</u>	<u>No. of Seats won</u>	<u>Total No. of votes</u>	<u>% of poll</u>
Labour Party	36	26 (65,0%)	136 845	45,4%
Federal Party	40	11 (27,5%)	91 327	30,4%
Republican Party	17	1 (2,5%)	30 241	10,1%
National Coloured People' Party	16	1 (2,5%)	23 260	7,7%
Conservative Party	10	- (0,0%)	3 216	1,1%
Independents	8	1 (2,5%)	11 407	3,8%
Spoilt Papers	-	- (-)	4 622	1,5%
	40	40 (100%)	300 918	100%

65% of the elected seats, the pro-government parties polled a combined 159 451 (53,1%) votes against the 136 845 (45,4%) of the Labour Party, a factor which the government later exploited when it came to nominating members to the twenty nominated seats.¹²⁴ The Labour Party was immediately tagged a "minority" party, a label it resented.¹²⁵ Thus, despite winning the majority of elected seats, the result gave a different indication of the party's standing in the coloured community: 45,4% of the popular vote could not be construed as overwhelming support by coloured people. The strength of the Labour Party's support comes more sharply into focus when

¹²³Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 February 1980, Statistics supplied by P.J. Keyser, Chief Electoral Officer.

¹²⁴See below.

¹²⁵Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 83.

viewed in the light of the statistics in table 2.

Table 2 - Statistical Analysis of the 1969 CRC Election¹²⁶

Number of eligible voters	: 843 973
Number of registered voters	: 637 587
Number of actual votes	: 300 918
Votes received by the Labour Party	: 136 845
Labour Party support as percentage of eligible voters	: 16,2%
Labour Party support as percentage of registered voters	: 21,4%
Labour Party support as percentage of actual votes	: 45,4%

The coloured population in South Africa in 1970 was given as 2 018 453 of which 993 115 lived in the Western Cape. Of this figure, 598 952 lived in the Cape Town metropolitan area.¹²⁷ At the time of the 1969 CRC election, 843 973 persons were eligible to vote of which 637 587 (75,5%) registered. However, less than half of the registered voters (300 918) went to the polls and less than half that again (136 845) voted for the Labour Party. Thus while the Labour Party received almost half of the popular vote, this represented only 21,4% of the registered voters and 16,2% of the eligible voters.

The low poll was a result of a combination of political ignorance on the part of coloureds, particularly those outside the Cape who were voting for the first time;¹²⁸ apathy or the resentment of many in the Cape who had been alienated because

¹²⁶Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 February 1980.

¹²⁷Department of Information, Progress of a People, 8. The Theron Commission put the total coloured population in 1970 at 2 050 699. See also Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 26.

¹²⁸See chapter 1. Coloureds in the Orange Free State and Transvaal had never had the franchise and after 1910, no new coloured voters were registered in Natal. Coloureds in the Cape only enjoyed a qualified franchise which excluded poorer members of the community and the majority of those in the rural areas.

of their removal from the common roll in 1956; and the anger of coloureds in general at the harsh application of apartheid laws after 1948. This was the first time that the majority had the opportunity to express their feelings and they did so by ignoring the CRC. The Educational Journal was however convinced that the low poll was a result of the conscious application of the boycott strategy which was popular in coloured circles:

In a never-ending stream of big lies and small lies, half-truths, sophistries, home-brewed rumours, threats, they all - from the party to the sex-crime press - joined forces to assure the voters and the world at large that the boycott was dead, that the boycott had never really existed except in the minds of a few doctrinaires, that only a handful of perverse intellectuals might boycott, that ex-boycotters could hardly wait to vote, that the so-called Labour Party was really for the boycott And then, as a clear and indisputable fact, the people boycotted.¹²⁹

While the council, which was largely an elected body, was undoubtedly an improvement on earlier consultative bodies, it nevertheless symbolised the government's policy of political separation and for that reason, it was rejected by a large segment of the coloured electorate.¹³⁰ A significant number of those who did vote registered their dissatisfaction by voting for the Labour Party. However, the results could not substantiate the Labour Party's claim to represent the majority of coloured people. While many might have been sympathetic to the Labour Party and supported its anti-government and anti-CRC stance, that support did not translate into tangible results at the polls. The Labour Party was painfully aware that its standing as a coloured party of substance was being questioned and Sonny Leon, after he became

¹²⁹"Riding A Dead Horse", Educational Journal (October-November 1969), 1.

¹³⁰W.H. Thomas, "The Coloured People and the Limits of Separation", in South Africa: Public Policy Perspectives, ed. R Schrire (Cape Town: Juta, 1982), 157.

party leader in 1970, pointed critics to the 1975 election in which the Labour Party would show whether it was a "seven-day" wonder or a political force to be reckoned with.¹³¹

However, if one takes into the account the problems which the Labour Party encountered prior to the election and the forces ranged against it, then the Labour Party did rather well under the circumstances. The support it received in the election can be attributed to three factors. Firstly, the party promised not to occupy its seats in the council if it won the election, in order to prove that the coloured people rejected the CRC.¹³² What the Labour Party was saying was - vote for us and we will destroy the CRC; a vote for us is a vote against separate institutions of representation like the CRC. Secondly, the party received support from the African, coloured and white opposition press which kept it constantly in the public eye. Thirdly, the Federal Party was widely considered a "sellout" party prepared to accept apartheid. The extent of rejection was so emphatic in some areas that the leader of the Federal Party, Tom Swartz, not only lost in his own constituency but lost his deposit as well. The only party leader to win a seat was the Labour Party's Martin Arendse. Thus, pro-government parties were individually dealt a blow by the coloured electorate.¹³³ The government's attempts to ensure a high voter turn-out also did not succeed - the government could force people to register but it could not force them to vote.

The intriguing question after the election was how the government would react to the results which saw a professedly anti-government, anti-apartheid, anti-CRC Labour Party "win"

¹³¹P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975; Sonny Leon, interview, 25 September 1985.

¹³²Sunday Times, 16 November 1975.

¹³³Survey of Race Relations (1969), 7.

the election by 26 out of 40 elected seats. However, the CRC consisted of 60 seats in all (20 nominated) and the Labour Party thus did not have an outright majority to "govern" in the new council. The 20 seats to be nominated by the government would thus prove crucial. Mindful of Labour threats to destroy the CRC before it began functioning, the government packed the council in its favour by appointing 20 members from the ranks of the Federal Party (13 of these had been defeated candidates in the election) to the 20 nominated seats provided for in the CRC Act. This gave the Federal Party an instant majority in the council and control of the executive committee. Having won only 11 of the 40 elected seats, the Federal Party suddenly had 31 of 60 seats in the full council.¹³⁴ In a further act of cynicism, Tom Swartz, leader of the Federal Party, was appointed chairman of the executive committee despite his election defeat by a Labour candidate and the loss of his deposit. Thus, a pro-apartheid, government-supporting coloured, having been decisively defeated, was now the "Prime Minister" of the very people who had roundly rejected him. According to Richards, "the NP took the losers, picked them up off the floor and said to the coloured people, 'here are your leaders'."¹³⁵ By this act of cynicism, the government destroyed any possible credibility of a body which it had hoped would be the final solution to the political problems of coloured people. Thus, when the CRC convened its first session in November 1969, the Labour Party which had convincingly won the election with 26 of the 40 elected seats, became, instead, the Opposition. The Federal Party, which had lost the election, became the ruling party in the council. J.J. Loots, the Minister of Coloured, Rehoboth and Nama Relations later confessed: "I admit the council was

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

loaded and I would so do again if necessary."¹³⁶

The Labour Party, critics of the government, and the opposition press condemned this action by the government and attacked the CRC as a farce. Arendse, the Labour Party leader, stated that South Africa was the only country in the world where a party which had won an election ended up as the opposition.¹³⁷ Schalk van der Merwe, the Minister of Coloured Affairs, called critics "naive" and lacking an "understanding of political realities."¹³⁸ He strongly defended the government's actions and in an ingenious argument dismissed criticism of his action:

It would be extremely naive and politically stupid of this government to destroy its own creation with its own hands, that is to say the Coloured Persons' Representative Council, created for this developing group, by filling it with representatives of a party whose declared aim it is not to cooperate with or even engage in dialogue with the lawful government of the country, a party which advocates complete integration, and, ... has shown repeatedly that it wishes to destroy the Coloured Persons' Representative Council.... As far as the charge of immorality as such is concerned ... the question remains whether the approximately 158 000 votes cast in favour of the parties which support the policy of separate development in the broader sense, as against approximately 137 000 recorded in favour of the party which rejects it ... cannot be regarded as a referendum in favour of Government policy, so that the government had a moral duty to ensure that the views of the majority are respected by appointing members who are unbiased towards government policy¹³⁹

¹³⁶Cape Times, 23 March 1970. The Department of Coloured Relations was established on 1 July 1969 to serve as a link between the CRC and the government. See Alpha, Vol.7, No.4 (April 1969), 8.

¹³⁷Survey of Race Relations (1969), 7-8.

¹³⁸Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 82.

¹³⁹Ibid, 83. When Tom Swartz lost his deposit after being defeated by the Labour Party candidate in the Kasselsvlei constituency, he used the same argument. See Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 162.

However, this was neither a logical nor a credible argument. The CRC election was organised as an election and not a referendum. Elections in South Africa up to 1994 have always been won by the party gaining the majority of seats, not votes. The governing National Party itself had come to power with minority support. In the general election of 1948, the United Party and other opposition parties had mustered 74 seats against the 79 of the National and Afrikaner Parties. Despite losing the election, the opposition parties polled 547 437 (50,9%), compared to 443 278 (41,2%) polled by the National and Afrikaner Parties. Nevertheless, even though the National Party polled 100 000 votes less than its opposition, it won the election on the basis of the number of seats won and proceeded to govern.¹⁴⁰

The Labour Party's reaction to Van der Merwe's action was to call off its election promise not to occupy its seats in the council. It decided instead to participate in the CRC and destroy that body from within.¹⁴¹ Having been so outspoken during the election, the Labour Party's about-turn drew sharp criticism from both supporters and critics. However, it should be remembered that the Labour Party had expected to gain at least 31 seats to enable it to control the CRC. Only if it were the ruling party in the CRC could a boycott of the council have had the maximum impact. Yet now, if it boycotted council proceedings, the CRC would continue to function with a Federal majority. If Labour members resigned their seats, the government would simply arrange by-elections which, because of the Labour Party boycott, would then be contested by other government-supporting parties.

On closer examination, however, the Labour Party's promise not to occupy its seats in the council was not seriously intended and must be considered an election ploy to impress the

¹⁴⁰Heard, General Elections in South Africa, 41.

¹⁴¹Sunday Times, 16 November 1975.

electorate as to the seriousness of its opposition to apartheid and separate institutions, and an attempt to distance itself from the other parties who all supported separate development. Numerous statements by party leaders prior to the 1969 election showed that the Labour Party had every intention of contesting the election and participating in the CRC, irrespective of the outcome. Prior to resigning in 1967, Van der Ross issued a statement in which he accepted that separate development was "here to stay" and that the Labour Party will "take separate development and demand as our right everything the Government tells us separate development has to offer."¹⁴² He later confirmed that one of the main reasons why he had formed the Labour Party was so that it could "get away from only being a pressure or discussion group and to take part in the mainstream."¹⁴³ In a memorandum submitted to the Commission of Enquiry into the Improper Interference and the Political Representation of the various Population Groups in 1967 (R.P. 72-67), the Labour Party made the following submissions:

The Coloured Persons' Representative Council Act is of great importance in considering the proposed political future of the Coloured people. The CRC represents the Government's attempt to supply the Coloured people, in the absence of Common Roll representation, with an instrument of government which will satisfy some of the functions of legislation and which will at the same time provide needed legislative experience and outlets. The attitude of the Labour Party to this Council must be seen in relation to its attitude to the Common Roll and to the welfare of the Coloured people. As Common Roll representation is denied to us, we feel that we cannot avoid using the machinery of the CRC in order to achieve such an advancement for the people and such legislative outlets and experience as may be achieved.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴²Survey of Race Relations (1968), 7.

¹⁴³Richard van der Ross, interview, 9 September 1992.

¹⁴⁴"Memorandum to the Commission of Enquiry into the Improper Interference and the Political Representation of the Various Population Groups" in LPSA, 1966 And All That; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 125.

In 1968, Arendse, while sketching the brief history of the Labour Party, stated:

The Labour Party came into existence in order to fill the need for a means of political expression for the Coloured people of South Africa today Many of the Founders ... are men and women who have consistently opposed these measures of separate representation, separate Councils, etc But faced with the type of government action, they foresee that they will be cancelled out of having any influence on the South African political scene whatsoever, if they do not use the present machinery.¹⁴⁵

In his presidential address to the 1968 conference of the Labour Party, Arendse vowed to fight every available seat in the election and declared that the party would not boycott the CRC and leave it to "members sympathetic to the government." He also declared the party's intention of using the CRC as a "forum for the conducting of a further campaign for the improvement of our political status and eventual restoration to the common roll franchise of which we were so blatantly denuded."¹⁴⁶ At the 1969 Labour Party conference, Arendse again repeated these sentiments and Leon weighed in against those who advocated a boycott of the elections.¹⁴⁷ The Labour Party, therefore, had every intention of participating in the CRC. Leaders argued that the party was still implacably opposed to apartheid, separate development and separate institutions of political representation, but faced with the harsh political reality, they realised that if they left the

pro-separate development parties unopposed in the CRC, it would encourage the government in furthering apartheid for coloured people, because the government would be able to claim that these parties represented the opinion of coloured people

¹⁴⁵Hugo, Quisling or Realists, 119.

¹⁴⁶Post, 9 May 1968.

¹⁴⁷P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Salt River, Cape, 5 April 1969.

in South Africa.¹⁴⁸ Arendse expressed regret for Labour's participation in the CRC but insisted that even though the party's constitution rejected apartheid, it needed to use all legal means and machinery to destroy the idea that coloured people as a whole accepted apartheid. In order to do this, said Arendse, "it must enter the political field and fight the elections on the basis of the present set-up. This it regrets exceedingly, but it sees no practicable alternative."¹⁴⁹

Thus began the Labour Party's dilemma. It rejected the CRC, yet decided to participate; it wished to destroy it, but found that it did not have the power to do so; it rejected apartheid, but was forced to participate in an apartheid institution in order to provide for its political aspirations. The Labour Party's dilemma also represented the dilemma of the coloured colour-caste. They realised that the government was seeking to coopt them into a loose political union with whites so that they could serve as a buffer against Africans. However, such unity meant the relegation of coloured people to a second class status vis-à-vis the white group, which, nevertheless, was a higher status in the stratification of South African society than that of the African group. On the other hand, coloureds identified with Africans as oppressed castes, yet, had no real affinity with them. Also, unity with Africans would bring them into confrontation with the ruling white group.¹⁵⁰ Thus, coloured people and the Labour Party found themselves subjected to pulls and strains from both sides. The problem which faced the coloured people was: did one collaborate with the oppressor in the hope of obtaining concessions and a more favourable application of government

¹⁴⁸LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 3; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 120.

¹⁴⁹Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 120.

¹⁵⁰See M. Adhikari, "Between Black and White: The History of Coloured Politics in South Africa", Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol.25, No.1 (1991), 106-7.

policy, or did one totally oppose the government and refuse to co-operate in any way at all, even risking their ire and the withholding of possible future privileges? This was a dilemma which the coloured people faced for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it was a problem which was to dog the footsteps of the Labour Party throughout the existence of the CRC and its successor, the House of Representatives.

The decision by the Labour Party to fight elections for the CRC and subsequently to participate in that body, drew strident criticism from the proponents of the principle of non-collaboration and those who had accepted the party's promise that it would not occupy its seats in the council. They claimed that the party was selling out to the "multi-national development strategy" of the government and the party was therefore pro-segregationist.¹⁵¹ The harshest criticism of the Labour Party and the CRC to date had come from the Educational Journal which had labelled the CRC as "the present form of the 'Kleurling' equivalent of Matanzima's Tribal Assembly." The Labour Party was described as "a creature of the C.A.D.... tribalist and segregationist.... pro-apartheid ... (and) politically 'Coloured' from choice ... because it seeks to do business in that group area and under that classification."¹⁵² Now, the Labour Party's response to the government's move to pack the council elicited sarcastic comment from the journal:

Some of the collaborators, surprised and stripped naked by the boycott, are frantically casting about for something, anything, with which to cover their (political) pudenda, not from any sense of shame but merely because of the freezing draught. But there is

¹⁵¹Mina, "The CRC", 63; J. Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 191.

¹⁵²"The C.A.D.'s Labour Party", Educational Journal (October 1965), 1. Miley Richards contends that the Labour Party was launched to step into the vacuum created by the banning and imprisonment of the leaders of the oppressed and that it was never launched as a "Coloured" party. Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

nothing that they can do and so they might as well abandon all notions of dramatic gestures which might salvage some portion of the reputations they had or pretended to have. They are nailed to the scaffolding of Uncle Tom's Cabin and nothing can save them.¹⁵³

Despite criticism of its decision to remain in the council, triggered by its failure to gain sufficient elected seats, the Labour Party's failure to gain an outright majority was seen as a strategic blessing by those who felt that being in opposition was actually the party's best position and would allow it to carry out the aims and objectives in its constitution. George Manuel of the Cape Times articulated this point of view at the height of the furore over the nominated seats. He pointed out that the CRC was the "fruit of the Nationalist government's policy," that it was a "Government-created apartheid machine," and that its role was to implement apartheid in all aspects affecting the coloured people. Thus if the Labour Party with its anti-apartheid policy had won the election outright and proceeded to "govern," it would have found its position there untenable because it would have had to observe the constitution of the CRC which backed apartheid. However, in opposition, the Labour Party could serve as a strong pressure group, ensure that the pro-apartheid elements did not have things their own way, prevent further inroads being made on coloured people's remaining rights, press for less harsh application of existing race laws, and continue the campaign for democratic rights. At best, the Labour Party could use the CRC as a legal platform to criticise apartheid laws.¹⁵⁴ That is what the Labour Party proceeded to do in the first CRC. By adopting a policy of "confrontation," it set out to frustrate the

¹⁵³"Riding A Dead Horse", Educational Journal (October-November 1969), 2.

¹⁵⁴Cape Times, 11 October 1969. As will be discussed in chapter 4, a number of the party hierarchy, especially Allan Hendrickse, steadfastly maintained that remaining in opposition was the Labour Party's best ploy.

government and prevent the smooth functioning of the council. Being in opposition enabled the Labour Party to carry out its election promises and mount an opposition to apartheid in fulfilment of the vision of the men who first met in 1965 to form the party.

However, as much as the various coloured parties saw the CRC as a medium whereby they could gain greater rights for coloured people and eventually draw closer to whites, the council was still nothing more than a device to ensure that not only would coloureds become physically, economically and socially separated from both whites and Africans, but that this separation would enable them to develop "an independent nationalist perspective, and a political identity as 'Coloureds'." This would "demonstrate that apartheid was based on the reality of separate racial groups, rather than the creation of a few wishful thinkers."¹⁵⁵ Thus, government policy was designed to persuade sufficient coloureds that, even if the CRC was not the perfect solution, it was in their best interests to participate and to trust that the government knew best. The plan required enough coloureds willing to participate in the CRC to allow it to function reasonably efficiently, or at least to create the impression that it was viable. For a while, it seemed that the government's plan would work because many of those who participated felt that the prestige and status which came along with the CRC, along with perks such as housing and cars, more than justified the criticism which they suffered from the rest of the coloured community. However, getting the Labour Party to participate was the government's greatest success. It allowed the government to point to the fact that the CRC was taken seriously enough that even groups opposed to that body and the government's policies would use it as a platform.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 191.

¹⁵⁶Ibid, 192.

Unfortunately, the hopes of the participating coloured people and parties soon proved to be false and the CRC did not turn out to be the political utopia they thought it would be.

Thus, the participation of the Labour Party comes into perspective: Its presence in the CRC helped to give life to a body which was never designed to improve the political lot of coloured people in South Africa.

Chapter 3PARTICIPATION AND CONFRONTATION, 1969-1975

The success of the Labour Party in the 1969 election was a remarkable achievement. It had managed to mobilise a considerable number of people who had never voted before. The overwhelming majority of coloured people had never undertaken the exercise of registering as voters, much less had experience of voting. In addition, the fledgling Labour Party had to withstand the combined opposition of the government and the Broederbond which gave full support to the pro-government Federal Party. Furthermore, the majority of coloured people were from the rural areas and most of them worked on the farms. Their farmer-employers, under the influence of the Broederbond, exerted intense pressure on their employees to support the Federal Party. Labour Party organisers who travelled around the country found that many, especially teachers, were reluctant to support the Labour Party because of the fear of victimisation. Stanley explains that "hulle was so bang, hulle trek 'n kombers oor hulle kop en dan praat hulle met jou."¹

In its attempts to nullify the opposition, gain support and project an image as the only opposition to apartheid, the Labour Party resorted to a promise which it was later to regret: It promised to destroy the CRC by abandoning its seats in the council if it won the election. Realising that a boycott would not prevent the CRC from operating, it reneged on its promise and remained in the CRC. This laid the party open to accusations by a host of critics of immorality and collaboration and caused tensions within the party itself. Whether it should remain in the CRC and participate in its proceedings or not, became the central theme of discussion in the party for the entire duration of the existence of the CRC. Although the party officially expressed rejection of the CRC,

¹Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

members increasingly began to argue that if they remained outside of the CRC, they would have no influence in matters concerning coloured people. On the other hand, apartheid also increased in intensity between 1969-1975 and others found it difficult to reconcile their presence in an apartheid institution while outside, apartheid was being applied in increasing measures.² Because this issue was never properly thrashed out immediately after the election, the party could not make up its mind as to how it would approach its role in, and attitude towards, the council. What they did agree upon, however, was that they would not accommodate the government and would confront it at every turn, while at the same time agitating for full equality for coloureds. This led to the adoption of a policy of "confrontation" as the Labour Party's compromise response to the thorny issue of participation.

The Labour Party's leader, Martin Arendse, soon fell foul of the party's new confrontationist stance. Before the CRC began its first working session in 1970, Vorster sent a message to Arendse asking for a private meeting between the two. Arendse discussed the invitation with some of the Labour Party leaders who recommended that he take other members with him as witnesses. When Arendse asked Vorster whether he could bring one or two members with him, Vorster refused, stating that the invitation was "from the leader of the National Party to the leader of the Labour Party," and that he had not asked for a delegation to meet with him.³ He thereupon accepted Vorster's invitation and went alone. Arendse also had further meetings with Vorster which the party leadership was not informed of.⁴ He was subsequently accused of having secret talks with

²P. Joyce, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: The Chronicle of a divided society as told through South Africa's newspapers (Cape Town: Struik, 1990), 69-84, gives a detailed list of the apartheid measures applied between 1969-1975.

³Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

⁴John Nash, interview with author, East London, 31 August 1993; Whisson, "Coloured People", 55.

Vorster on the future of the coloured people and of collaborating with the government, because he had not been given a mandate from the party to engage in such talks. In an atmosphere of accusation and counter-accusation, Arendse was ousted at the Labour Party conference in January 1970 and Lionel Samuel (Sonny) Leon was elected leader.⁵ Arthur Stanley, a close friend of Arendse, insists that Arendse's removal was more of a "palace coup" than a matter of principle and that he was "ousted by a clique." Apparently, some of the members of the party hierarchy, among them Sonny Leon, Allan Hendrickse, David Curry and Norman Middleton, were not happy serving under Arendse, a strong and forthright leader who did not allow himself to be manipulated. They could not "push M.D. around," and so they sought to depose him and replace him with one of their own.⁶ Hendrickse and Curry were the frontrunners for the vacant post but because both had strong followings and the election of either might have led to a rift in the party, Sonny Leon was elected as a compromise candidate.⁷

Leon was the son of a cabinet-maker and attained the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major in World War II. He resented Nationalist-Afrikaners because they had refused to support the war and had in fact tried to overthrow the Smuts government in 1943. After 1948, Afrikaners had applied apartheid to those like Leon who had served in the armed forces and had been prepared to give their lives for their country. Yet, now, these coloured soldiers were treated like second-class

⁵Sunday Times, 26 January 1975.

⁶Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992; Whisson, "The Coloured People", 55.

⁷According to Allan Hendrickse, interview, 17 September 1994, it was never intended that Leon be a long-term candidate as leader, but he was charismatic and popular with the rank-and-file so that it became increasingly difficult in later years to replace him.

citizens in their own country.⁸ Despite his lack of formal education, Leon became involved in politics in the 1940s and established a close relationship with the United Party in Kimberley. He was also an active member of the Coloured Ex-Servicemen's League. He took part in trade union activities and served on the Kimberley City Council until coloureds were removed from municipal representation in 1972. He was a founder-member of the Labour Party in 1965 and proved to be a charismatic and popular leader.⁹

The Labour Party's confrontational approach was revealed for the first time when the CRC's first working session was opened by the Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster on Friday, 13 November 1970. The Labour Party initially decided to stage a mass walk-out during the Prime Minister's speech, citing the packing of the council with Federal Party members as the reason for its protest,¹⁰ but Arendse informed them that they faced the possibility of arrest as they left the chamber. In terms of a new law, the Powers and Privileges Act published on 23 October 1970, any person causing a disturbance in the council likely to disrupt the council's business was liable to a fine of R200. It provided for the arrest of such persons, without a warrant, by council officers.¹¹ In mid-October 1970, council members had received letters informing them that an Act relating to their powers and privileges had been passed and would soon be published. However, they were not informed of the contents of the Act and by the morning of the Prime Minister's opening speech, members had not yet received copies. Arendse had an arrangement whereby all publications of interest to the coloured community were sent directly to

⁸Sonny Leon, interview, 25 September 1985; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

⁹Sonny Leon Papers, Curriculum Vitae of L.S. Leon; Rapport, 18 August 1974; Allan Hendrickse, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹⁰Cape Herald, 14 November 1970; Reality (1971), 10.

¹¹Cape Herald, 14 November 1970.

him by the Government Printer and at a meeting of Labour Party councillors called to discuss the walk-out, he brought them up to date with the new development. Members decided that a walk-out might prove too risky, but concluded that if they abstained from the council chamber altogether during the opening ceremony, this could not constitute a disturbance because they would not be there in the first place.¹² One must of course see the Labour Party's actions in the context of the time. The previous decade had seen a harsh government crackdown on all dissent. All opposition to the government had been ruthlessly crushed and a number of organisations had been banned and their leaders imprisoned. The fear of arrest and detention deterred many who would have liked to oppose the government more often and more openly. Thus, the Labour Party's trepidation regarding their walk-out is understandable.¹³

Out of these deliberations came the decision to boycott the opening ceremony completely.¹⁴ Labour Party members assembled instead at a restaurant in Bellville South while Vorster addressed the council. While there, they received a report that white officials outside the council chamber had been overheard discussing the possible illegality of the party's stayaway. Allan Hendrickse responded: "All members are fully aware of the possible consequences. The worst that can be

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ironically, the party's first newsletter published in 1966 had stressed that there was no danger to anyone who belonged to the Labour Party of "getting into trouble with the police". However it also emphasised that "the Labour Party does not stand for any sort of illegal, subversive activities We shall not tolerate any action which will get our members into any sort of trouble with the law." LPSA, Newsletter (No.1), 4. See also Eastern Province Herald, 16 September 1994.

¹⁴Two members declined to join the boycott. Arendse was instructed by his constituency not to participate in the boycott. J.D. Petersen, an old friend of Arendse's, resigned from the party, calling the boycott an insult to the Prime Minister. See Cape Herald, 14 November 1970.

done to us is to fine us each R200."¹⁵ No action was taken against Labour Party members but during the lunch-time recess following Vorster's speech, councillors were suddenly provided with copies of the Powers and Privileges Act. This gave rise to speculation by Labour councillors that details regarding this Act had deliberately been withheld to embarrass the party. As their planned mass walk-out had already been publicised in advance of the opening ceremony, it appears that certain government officials were counting on the Labour Party's ignorance of the provisions of this Act to allow it to fall into a trap, resulting in the mass arrest of party members. Arendse's advance knowledge of the contents of the Act thwarted this scheme. However, the crisis generated by the possibility of arrest created a new sense of unity.¹⁶ This strengthened the party's resolve to proceed with its boycott policy.

Right at the beginning of a new "era" for coloured people, the pattern for the future relationship between the government and the Labour Party was established. Thereafter, the term "confrontation" became the key word in describing that relationship. However, the adoption of a policy of confrontation and the use of the boycott warrants closer inspection. The Labour Party was uneasy at having to participate in a body which it had long and publicly opposed. Thus, the confrontational attitude between 1969-1975 was more a fight against conscience than anything else. The Labour Party was embarrassed that it had to abandon its promise not to sit in the council and it also needed to silence critics who accused it of collaboration. This created a dilemma for the party in 1969: If it did not participate, it would be left

¹⁵Cape Herald, 14 November 1970; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992. During the first CRC, 1969-1974, councillors received a salary of R150 per month. See Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 305.

¹⁶Cape Herald, 14 November 1970; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

out in the cold because the CRC would continue to function. However, if it did participate, how did it justify its presence in a body it rejected and had promised to destroy.¹⁷ This dilemma was to dog the footsteps of the Labour Party for the next ten years of the existence of the CRC. Nevertheless, a number of members felt that participation would enable the party to carry out its stated reasons for existence, viz. to oppose apartheid and to show that coloureds did not accept it either. Thus, participation would enable the Labour Party to carry out the aims and objects in its constitution. On the other hand, it could not be seen to be assisting the government by allowing the CRC to function smoothly. Out of the struggle between conscience, ideology and pragmatism came the decision to confront and hamstring the functioning of the CRC. The result was the vociferous and strident confrontation with the government which characterised Labour Party participation during the first CRC.

Although the use of the boycott in November 1970 as a method of confrontation was initially an unplanned strategy and adopted almost by accident, the Labour Party's use thereof was not a new one in coloured politics.¹⁸ It was used by the Anti-CAD and Non-European Unity Movements in 1943 in their opposition to the establishment of the Coloured Advisory Council and was regarded as "one of the most potent weapons in the armoury of the people struggling for liberation."¹⁹ Coloured voters in the Cape were called on to boycott the 1948 election in protest against the United Party's "creeping discrimination."²⁰ In 1958, coloured voters were urged to

¹⁷Sonny Leon, interview, 25 September 1985.

¹⁸Whisson, "Coloured People", 55-56.

¹⁹M. Temba, "Boycott as Weapon of Struggle", in Contributions of Non-European Peoples to World Civilization, ed. M. Hommel (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989), 165. See also B. Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash. The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution? (London: Zed, 1981), 223.

²⁰Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 246-47.

boycott elections on the separate roll and in 1959, the call to boycott the proposed Union Council for Coloured Affairs revived opposition on the scale of the 1943 anti-CAC opposition.²¹ Boycott, then, as a "weapon of struggle" had become part of coloured politics by 1969 and it is not surprising that the Labour Party resorted to that method in its attempts to oppose the functioning of the CRC.

In pursuance of its policy of confrontation, the Labour Party attended the first short session on 20 and 21 November 1970, but after its no-confidence motion was defeated, walked out en bloc. This was followed by a boycott of the CRC dining-room.²² In 1971, Labour Party councillors again boycotted the opening ceremony of the CRC session at which the Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, was the guest speaker. Botha was greeted at the entrance to the CRC buildings by a line of demonstrators carrying anti-apartheid placards. Inside the council chamber, he was faced with empty Labour Party benches. During his opening speech, Botha pointed to the empty opposition benches and harangued the Labour Party, stating that the boycott would achieve nothing and that it showed how irresponsible the Labour Party was.²³

The party also discovered that it could use the boycott weapon most effectively during the budget debates. During the 1971 session, a motion was proposed opposing the budget whereupon Labour Party members walked out of the debating chamber and refused to take part in the debate.²⁴ The reason advanced was that the budget was discriminatory and did not provide for parity in salaries and pensions. During the 1972 session, the Labour Party again opposed the budget and towards the latter

²¹Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 673-78.

²²Venter, Coloured, 481.

²³Reality (1971), 10.

²⁴Debates and Proceedings of the Coloured Person's Representative Council, vol. 8 (13 August 1971), 283.

part of the session, it boycotted the debating chamber altogether.²⁵ Sonny Leon stated that it was the objective of the Labour Party to embark on a program of exposure and embarrassment, adding: "It is our duty to humanity to tell the apostles of Apartheid that they are destroying our country."²⁶

The government also increased tensions in the CRC. In 1970, it announced plans to remove coloureds from the municipal voters' roll and deny them the right to sit on municipal councils. Bearing in mind the open hostility between the government and the Labour Party at the time, critics viewed this move as shortsighted and inflammatory. The Leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly condemned this move as containing the "seeds of further friction and bitterness between White and Coloured people."²⁷ Arendse pointed out that the CRC had not been consulted by the government - the very purpose for which it had been set up. Only Tom Swartz, a government appointee, had been consulted and he gave his full support to the government's move. When the coloured municipal franchise was finally terminated in 1972, the last vestiges of coloured participation in "white politics" were removed.²⁸ The passing of an era was noted with nostalgia by coloured leaders but acted as a spur to the Labour Party. Attitudes hardened and public statements emanating from party leaders became more strident.

The government was clearly concerned that the Labour Party's confrontational tactics might result in it gaining sufficient support in the council to block approval of the budget. This

²⁵Venter, Coloured, 504; Debates of the CRC, vol. 16 (16 August 1972), 455.

²⁶Reality, May 1971.

²⁷Cape Times, 7 February 1970.

²⁸G.C.Brown, "The Abolition of the Non-racial Municipal Franchise in the Cape, 1958-1972: Responses and Reactions in Cape Town" (B.A.[Hons] Extended Essay, University of Cape Town, 1981), 86.

led to the passing of the CRC Amendment Act (No. 99) of 1972 which gave the Minister of Coloured Relations powers to ensure that the CRC would continue to function in such an event.²⁹ With this Act, the government revoked the CRC's final say in the approval of its budget and vested this power in the hands of the government. The Minister of Coloured Relations, Jannie Loots, justified this step on the basis of threats made by the Labour Party to destroy the CRC. He stressed, however, that the government would only use these powers as a last resort to prevent the Labour Party, or any anti-government majority in the CRC, from halting the functioning of the council by refusing to pass the budget.³⁰ This move was embarrassing for the government, coming only three years after the establishment of the CRC. Helen Suzman, Progressive Party MP, reflected that the measure gave "the complete lie" to the government's claim that the coloured people were happy with the representation they had been given in the council.³¹

This step appeared to be a notable victory for the Labour Party's policy of confrontation, notwithstanding the fact that it did not have a majority in the CRC to do what the government feared. However, it was not only the attitude of the Labour Party which had affected government thinking. In 1971, Tom Swartz and his Federal Party had also changed course. Swartz had become disillusioned because of the minimal attention which the government paid to the resolutions of the council, which exposed him as ineffective and made him vulnerable to attacks from the Labour Party. He had expected more from the government in return for his cooperation. At the Federal Party's national conference in Durban in June 1971, the Federal Party adopted a more aggressive and

²⁹B. Mina, "The Coloured Persons' Representative Council - Ten Years Hard Labour" (B.Soc.Sc. Hons. Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1978), 92.

³⁰Venter, Coloured, 504; Survey of Race Relations (1972), 17.

³¹Survey of Race Relations (1972), 17.

assertive stance; a major departure from its earlier acquiescence. Swartz demanded for coloured people "everything that the White man has got for himself."³² Changes were also made to the party's constitution which stressed "positive equal development" instead of "parallel development."³³ During the 1972 CRC session, Swartz again expressed his frustration that his party was not being rewarded for supporting the government's cause by accepting CRC recommendations. The disillusionment in the Federal Party soon became evident when the Labour Party's no-confidence motion was only narrowly defeated by thirty-one votes to twenty-eight. Alarm bells rang in Federal and government circles shortly thereafter when four Federal members voted with the Labour Party on a minor issue concerning nursery schools.³⁴ The fear of a possible Labour takeover of the CRC alarmed the government and this led to the revocation of the CRC's say in the approval of its budget.

The Labour Party interpreted this move as a victory for its policy of confrontation and in 1973, an emboldened party again rejected the budget. Sonny Leon argued:

The powers of this Council have been taken away from the Council and vested in the Minister. Why ... should the Minister accept on our behalf a budget of this nature, where we have no authority to change or alter in any direction the contents of the budget ... the budget is presented to us - it is decided by the White Parliament and then sent down to us for acceptance.³⁵

The Labour Party did not only restrict its boycott policy to the CRC. In 1970 it initiated a call for a boycott of the tenth anniversary Republic Day celebrations to be held on 31

³²Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 305.

³³Mina, "The CRC", 81.

³⁴Ibid, 86.

³⁵Debates of the CRC, vol. 24 (13 August 1973), 291-92.

May 1971,³⁶ and also called for a bread boycott. Neither of these calls met with much success,³⁷ but this preference for boycott and confrontation over dialogue led to the resignation of the party's Natal leader, E.G. Rooks.³⁸ Undeterred, the party embarked in 1972 on a vigorous nationwide campaign of "boycotts and confrontation."³⁹ Its first target was the Shell petroleum company. Shell was accused of discriminating against blacks in the provision of rest rooms at its service stations.⁴⁰ The Labour Party's call for a boycott of the company's products did not however meet with much success.⁴¹ When it was announced that the British ballerina, Dame Margot Fonteyn was to give a number of ballet performances in the Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town during April of that year, the Labour Party called on Dame Fonteyn to cancel her visit to South Africa because the theatre was open only to whites. To offset criticism, a performance at the Three Arts theatre in Plumstead was specially arranged by the organisers to accommodate coloureds. Fonteyn had already signed a contract and could not cancel her trip. The Labour Party thereupon organised a demonstration at the airport to coincide with her arrival and a pamphlet campaign was initiated, urging the public to boycott the special performances arranged for coloureds. While a large group of protestors were present at

³⁶Post, 22 November 1970.

³⁷Tom Swartz Collection, T.F. Swartz, Address to Federal Party National Conference, Durban, 5-7 June 1971.

³⁸Daily News, 12 April 1971.

³⁹Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1972; Cape Herald, 15 April 1972; Argus, 29 April 1972.

⁴⁰The use of the term "black" was in line with the philosophy of black consciousness which came to the fore in 1969 with the formation of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), and which led to coloured people also calling themselves "black". See chapter 4 for the role of black consciousness in the coloured community in the 1970s.

⁴¹The Graphic, 21 January 1972; Rand Daily Mail, 27 April 1972.

the airport when Fonteyn arrived, the performance at the Three Arts theatre was well-attended.⁴²

The Labour Party also called for a boycott of white soccer matches played under the auspices of the National Football League;⁴³ a boycott of matches played by a visiting English Rugby team;⁴⁴ a boycott of segregated agricultural shows,⁴⁵ a boycott of the proposed British Lions Rugby tour due in 1974; a boycott of the multi-national South African Games;⁴⁶ and a boycott of all apartheid institutions. The party further announced that, as part of a massive boycott campaign against commercial organisations which practised "pinprick" racism,⁴⁷ posters would be placed outside business concerns which practised petty apartheid,⁴⁸ and one million stickers denouncing apartheid would be stuck on public and private

⁴²Cape Herald, 18 March and 15 April 1972.

⁴³Ibid, 15 April 1972.

⁴⁴The party distributed 10 000 pamphlets in May 1972, urging all rugby players and rugby supporters to boycott 'Apartheid rugby matches' due to be played against a white team at Newlands, and a coloured team at Athlone stadium in Cape Town on 20 and 22 May 1972 respectively. See Argus, 13 May 1972; Burger, 17 May 1972.

⁴⁵Worcester Standard and Advertiser, 9 February 1973.

⁴⁶P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Port Elizabeth, 12-14 April 1974.

⁴⁷Argus, 29 April 1972. Many of the provisions and applications under the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, were over the years euphemised as "petty-apartheid". Because they were not major applications but "little nuisances, little indignities and little humiliations", they were referred to as "pin-pricks". W.A. de Klerk, The Puritans in Africa: A Story of Afrikanerdom (London: Rex Collings, 1975), 274-76, recounts a number of these "pin-prick" measures. In parliament, many of these "pin-pricks" were spelt out. See Debates of the House of Assembly (11 February 1983), col. 802.

⁴⁸Cape Herald, 20 May 1972; Joyce, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid, 81.

buildings.⁴⁹ While on a visit to the United States, David Curry, deputy leader of the Labour Party, also urged American politicians and businessmen to boycott South Africa. He called on foreign companies to disinvest and to boycott South African goods.⁵⁰ Many supporters heeded the party's calls but in the early 1970s coloured people were still largely conservative, and while many may have been sympathetic to the issues, "they were more concerned with the daily problems of earning a living."⁵¹ Thus, despite vigorous efforts by the party and wide media coverage of its boycott calls, the party's boycott calls did not meet with much success.

In 1972, Tom Swartz echoed the Labour Party's criticism of the CRC, calling it a "puppet institution without real power," and demanded a parliamentary vote for coloured people. Fearful of the consequences of losing its closest coloured ally, the government took note of the increasingly critical stance of the Federal Party leader.⁵² In an attempt to salvage the credibility of the CRC, deflect Federal Party criticism and dampen Labour Party opposition, the government proposed the establishment of liaison structures. During the 1971 debate in the House of Assembly on the prime minister's budgetary vote, B.J. Vorster had already mooted the idea of liaison between the CRC and parliament in the form of a CRC liaison committee whereby members of the CRC and CRC executive would liaise directly with members of the National Party Cabinet. Formal meetings would be held after the beginning of each annual parliamentary session and thereafter, every two months with the Minister of Coloured Relations or other members of

⁴⁹Burger, 9 May 1972; Cape Times, 18 May 1972, Cape Herald, 20 May 1972.

⁵⁰Rand Daily Mail, 27 April 1972.

⁵¹Alathea Jansen, interview with author, Cape Town, 6 January 1994; Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

⁵²Argus, 15 April 1972.

the Cabinet.⁵³ Thus, with the entire concept of the CRC being called into question, the government decided to proceed with the implementation of a CRC liaison committee. It hoped that by doing so, it would forestall criticism that the CRC was merely a "talk-shop where coloured councillors did the talking while the government did the deciding."⁵⁴ Critics saw wider implications in this move which took place at about the same time as debates were raging in parliament and in National Party circles on the political future of coloured people, and the concept of a coloured homeland.⁵⁵ Anthony Holiday of the Rand Daily Mail saw this sudden concern as springing "from a fear that Coloureds may finally turn away entirely from White-created political institutions and decide to throw in their lot with the Black majority."⁵⁶

The Labour Party summarily rejected the idea of a liaison committee and flatly refused to participate in any talks between the CRC and the government.⁵⁷ Undaunted, the government pressed ahead and on 23 January 1975, the Prime Minister held the first meeting with the CRC liaison committee. At this meeting, members of the CRC advanced certain proposals which aimed at securing meaningful political rights for coloured people. The main thrust of the proposals concerned greater legislative and executive powers for the CRC, representation on statutory bodies, expansion of coloured participation at local government level, and coloured

⁵³Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 81, Venter, Coloured, 482, 515.

⁵⁴Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1972.

⁵⁵See chapter 4 for discussion on this matter.

⁵⁶Rand Daily Mail, 13 July 1971. See also Sunday Times, 11 March 1973.

⁵⁷P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 6 February 1971; Burger, 21 April 1971.

representation in parliament on a common or separate roll.⁵⁸ Vorster bluntly stated that one parliament for whites and coloureds was not acceptable as this would lead to political chaos, but he agreed in principle to the rest of the proposals which would serve to grant coloured people a "better deal."⁵⁹ Because the Labour Party boycotted the talks with Vorster, only members of the pro-government parties in the CRC attended, with the Federal Party in the preponderance. The agreement reached between the members of the CRC and the government was immediately rejected by the Labour Party as a "clever trap concocted by the Federal Party which will put the Coloured people at the mercy of the apostles of racism and apartheid." It contended that the proposals advanced by the liaison committee, and those agreed to by Vorster, was not to grant coloured people more rights, but to grant the Federal Party powers to more efficiently implement the policy of apartheid.⁶⁰ Clearly then, the concept of the liaison committee was doomed to failure if the Labour Party came to power.

The vehemence of the Labour Party's attack on the talks must be seen in the light of the fact that the talks were timed to take place shortly before the second CRC election was due to be held in March 1975. The government's apparent concern for the welfare of the coloured people was in no large measure due to its desire to forestall rising opposition to the CRC. The talks with the CRC were designed to give the impression that the government was indeed talking with coloured people and that it was taking their problems seriously. Vorster's agreement to consider granting coloured people greater rights

⁵⁸The details of the proposals were contained in a memorandum submitted by the CRC liaison committee to the Prime Minister prior to the meeting. See Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 353-61.

⁵⁹Sunday Times, 26 January 1975. See also Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 361-64.

⁶⁰Sunday Times, 16 and 26 January, 1975.

and a "better deal" was clearly an attempt to increase support for the Federal Party in the forthcoming election. Thus the Labour Party resorted to strident public denunciations to deflect any possible support from the Federal Party and once again establish itself as a credible opposition to the government.

The vociferous criticism by the Labour Party of the CRC liaison committee pressured the government into rethinking the concept of liaison structures. It subsequently proposed that the CRC liaison committee be replaced by a cabinet council. This proposal suggested that members of the CRC executive be elevated to cabinet status, who, with an equal number of white cabinet ministers, would function as a cabinet council under the chairmanship of the prime minister. The pro-government parties in the CRC accepted the idea but the Labour Party again rejected such an arrangement and indicated that it would refuse to cooperate if it won the next election.⁶¹ The Labour Party's boycott strategy eventually took its toll on the government. The latter was seriously concerned that the Labour Party would win an outright majority in the 1975 election and sabotage the CRC as it had previously promised, and was now again threatening to do.⁶² On 19 March 1975, the government introduced a bill which enabled the Minister of Coloured Relations to keep the CRC operating even if the Labour Party attempted to close it down by instituting a total boycott of the council and the executive.⁶³ The Labour Party immediately declared that in the light of this action, it would abandon any plans to boycott the CRC because the

⁶¹Survey of Race Relations (1975), 12.

⁶²Natal Witness, 22 March 1975; Sunday Times, 23 March 1975. In 1974, Leon stated that the Labour Party would use the elections to obtain a mandate from the people for the rejection of separate development and the CRC. See Survey of Race Relations (1975), 14.

⁶³Debates of the House of Assembly (19 March 1975), col. 3009.

minister would simply run the council himself or appoint the Federal Party or other government-supporting coloureds to do so.⁶⁴ The party announced that it would remain in the CRC, whether it won the election or not, and continue to use the council as a platform to expose and embarrass the government.⁶⁵

It appears inexplicable that the Labour Party, which had threatened since 1969 to close down the CRC if it came to power, would now back down from that threat when victory in the 1975 election appeared to be within its grasp. However, the Labour Party had undergone a silent revolution since the first election in 1969 which, by 1975, had radically changed the character of the party. During the years between the formation of the Labour Party in 1965 and the first CRC election in 1969, Labour Party membership comprised mainly anti-government and anti-separate development coloureds, most of whom had been members of the Liberal and Progressive Parties and who had opposed the government in the decades prior to the formation of the CRC. When the Labour Party fought the 1969 election, its intention was to push for the restoration of coloured political rights and common roll representation - viz. liberal traditions, and this within a "liberal-moralistic" framework.⁶⁶ Thus, winning the election and sabotaging the CRC before it could begin to function was compatible with their philosophy. When the Labour Party subsequently abandoned its plan to walk out of the CRC and decided instead to participate, members were initially uncomfortable but soon realised that participation would serve two important purposes: Firstly, it would provide a forum in which they could articulate their grievances and demands, and secondly, provide a platform from which they could do so free

⁶⁴Sunday Tribune, 23 March 1975.

⁶⁵Rand Daily Mail, 19 March 1975.

⁶⁶Mohammed Dangor, interview with author, Johannesburg, 6 December 1993.

from prosecution. The latter factor was crucial in view of the fact that the government had harshly crushed all opposition after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. African resistance movements had been banned and attempts to continue protest had been thwarted. The CRC, on the other hand, provided a government-created institution in which the Labour Party could legally voice its dissatisfaction with government policy. However, this approach to participation in the CRC was never adequately discussed at the beginning and because the party did not develop a clear-cut method as to how it would approach its participation in the CRC, divergent views soon surfaced. This divergence, as early as 1970, was in itself evidence of the heterogeneity of coloured people and had already been reflected in the variety of political parties formed between 1964 and 1969. This heterogeneity was also reflected within the Labour Party. Although a historically-collaborationist group among coloured people supported the openly pro-government Federal Party and, to a lesser extent, the other minor pro-apartheid parties,⁶⁷ neither were those who were opposed to the government and its coloured policy united in the form of opposition they wished the Labour Party to take. Even though Labour Party supporters were largely anti-government, anti-separate development and against institutions of separate political representation, they differed as to the form their "anti" stance would take.

Thus, even though the Labour Party settled unanimously on a policy of confrontation as its response to participation in the CRC, members differed as to the form the confrontation would take. The form of confrontation only began to take shape after 1970 when two major factors became manifest,

⁶⁷The Afrikaner Nasionale Bond and the Cape Malay Association in the 1920s; the CPNU and the pro-CAC faction in the 1940s; the Kleurlingvolksverbond and pro-UCCA supporters in 1959 and the voters on the separate roll in 1958 and 1963 gives an indication of a significant proportion of coloured people who historically were prepared to cooperate with the government of the day despite the fact that its policies openly discriminated against coloured people. See chapter 1.

leading to a change in the composition of the Labour Party's membership. The first was the infiltration of the party by supporters of the banned liberation movements and other opposition groups. The ability of the Labour Party to use the CRC as a legal platform for protest and opposition, free from the threat of imprisonment or security action, attracted the attention of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) which had been banned in 1960, and the black consciousness movement (BCM) which surfaced in 1969. These organisations saw in the Labour Party a vehicle which they could use to promote their interests. Organisers of black trade unions, which were outlawed by government legislation, also saw an opportunity to organise workers, using the Labour Party as a front. Thus from 1969 onwards, the Labour Party was "infiltrated" by a variety of persons intent on using the safety afforded by party membership to promote the interests of their respective organisations.⁶⁸ Of necessity, only coloured persons could join the Labour Party because of the restrictions imposed upon membership of political parties in terms of the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968.⁶⁹

Don Mattera (BCM, later Azanian Peoples' Organisation[AZAPO]) was the first to realise the opportunities which Labour Party membership afforded, and initiated the process of "infiltration."⁷⁰ By 1971, he occupied the post of National

⁶⁸Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993; Neville Alexander, interview, 15 October 1994.

⁶⁹Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 469. Labour Party leaders, from Van der Ross in 1966 to Miley Richards in 1994, often insisted that the Labour Party was never established as a "Coloured" party but expressed regret that it had to function as one. See, "The Leader's Address to the first Labour Party Conference," in LPSA, 1966 And All That; Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

⁷⁰Mattera later distinguished himself as a poet and a writer of books on life in Sophiatown. In 1994, he was elected to parliament on an ANC ticket.

Public Relations Officer of the Labour Party.⁷¹ Les du Preez (BCM) stood as a Labour Party candidate in the Newclare constituency in 1969 and was elected to the CRC.⁷² Others who joined the Labour Party soon after were Mohammed Dangor (ANC), Sam Solomon (who later joined the South-west African Peoples' Organisation[SWAPO]),⁷³ Don Mateman (ANC),⁷⁴ and Hennie Ferris (ANC).⁷⁵ These members rallied around Allan Hendrickse who had won the Bethelsdorp constituency in 1969. He appeared to be their natural leader because of his background. Although a minister of religion, Hendrickse's family had suffered harassment under apartheid: his father's church and their home were demolished under the Group Areas Act;⁷⁶ his

⁷¹Rand Daily Mail, 19 April 1971; P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, East London, 6-8 April 1972.

⁷²Tom Swartz Collection, Table of Results: 1969 CRC election.

⁷³Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

⁷⁴Ron Swartz, interview with author, Johannesburg, 10 December 1993, reports that when his organisation, the Progressive Teachers' Union(PTU), wanted to launch a campaign of harassment against Mateman in the early 1980s, they were warned by the ANC to keep their distance because Mateman was an "ANC inside man".

⁷⁵Mohammed Dangor, 6 December 1993; Neville Alexander, interview, 15 October 1994. According to Alexander who was imprisoned on Robben Island with Ferris, the latter was given specific instructions by the ANC leadership, also imprisoned on the island, to "infiltrate" the Labour Party after his release in 1971. By 1978, Ferris was chairman of the Cape Region of the party. In 1981, he was killed in mysterious circumstances when the wheels came off his car. Dangor suggests that Ferris was "hit" by the security police.

⁷⁶Allan Hendrickse, interview with author, Cape Town, 23 May 1989. On 17 September 1994, Hendrickse showed the author the site where the church stood. The parsonage which stood next to the church was the first to be demolished. After the church was bulldozed to the ground, the church school was also demolished. The ground remained vacant until the Group Areas Act was scrapped in 1991. Ironically, Allan Hendrickse and his sons, Peter and Michael, recently repurchased the ground on which their home had previously stood, and the Congregational Church also repurchased the ground on which the church and school had stood. See also
(continued...)

sister was exiled and his brother had to leave the country, settling in Nigeria.⁷⁷ This group came to be referred to in the press and within the party as the "militants."⁷⁸

The second factor which influenced the composition of the Labour Party was the influx of Federal Party supporters into the party. These former members had increasingly become disillusioned with their party's performance in the CRC and the government's treatment of that body, and over a period of years deserted in increasing numbers to the Labour Party. This trend continued right through the term of the CRC and into the 1980s during the term of the House of Representatives.⁷⁹ However, although the former Federal supporters were disenchanted with their party, they did not necessarily share the Labour Party's views on separate representation and the CRC. They soon began to assert themselves, which resulted in a distinct faction coming to the fore within the Labour Party. This faction propagated the view that participation was an opportunity to engage the government in negotiations in order to persuade it to restore

⁷⁶(...continued)

G. Leach, The Afrikaners (London: Macmillan, 1989), 221; Allan Hendrickse, Address to Joint Session of Parliament, 28 September 1988.

⁷⁷Ron Swartz, interview, 10 December 1993. Throughout the CRC and HoR period, Hendrickse and his family were constantly harassed by the security police. Hendrickse's sister's room at Tygerberg hospital, and farm churches used by Hendrickse's congregations were bugged. His brother was denied re-entry to South Africa because he had married an Englishwoman. Both Allan and his son Peter, were detained in 1976 (see chapter 4). Peter Hendrickse, interview with author, 18 September 1994; Leach, The Afrikaners, 223.

⁷⁸The "militants" were militants only within the context of Labour Party and CRC politics. They were not equated with the militants or radicals in anti-apartheid and anti-government movements outside the CRC and the country.

⁷⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993. See also Mina, "The CRC", 86; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 124; Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 39-40.

to coloured people the political rights which they formerly enjoyed. It proposed "confrontation through dialogue" by using the institutions and committees to engage the government in discussion.⁸⁰ This faction came to be referred to in the press and within the party as the "moderates."⁸¹

As the Labour Party settled into the CRC, the two divergent views regarding participation in the CRC began to concretise and party members gravitated towards the faction which represented their respective views. The "militants" saw in the CRC an opportunity to embarrass the government by hamstringing the workings of the CRC. They intended using the CRC as a platform from which they could launch attacks on the government. This faction intended aggressively confronting the government through the medium of boycott and stayaways until the government indicated its preparedness to change its apartheid policies regarding blacks. It was not prepared to engage the government in dialogue until this was done. For both factions, therefore, the Labour Party became a vehicle for their own agendas. Initially, however, the "militant" faction held the upper hand in the party, its committees and conferences.

The division into "moderates" and "militants" was not at first clear-cut. In fact, between 1969 and 1976, six loose groupings could be identified within the Labour Party. These were the "Curry-Group" around deputy-leader David Curry, which represented the "liberal-moralistic" faction made up of the majority of the original founding and early members;⁸² the "Rabie-group" consisting of Federal Party defectors who were later to rally around Jac Rabie when he joined the Labour

⁸⁰Sunday Times, 16 May 1976.

⁸¹These persons were "moderates" vis-à-vis the "militants" within the Labour Party.

⁸²In later years, Curry was increasingly accused of "radicalism" and came to be identified with the "militants".

Party from the Federal Party; and the Arthur Stanley/Fred Peters grouping of persons who had been involved in trade unions in the Cape.⁸³ These groups could be loosely grouped under the "moderate" umbrella. The "militants" comprised the "Middleton-group" around Norman Middleton who had strong Africanist leanings, and the "Hendrickse-group" around Allan Hendrickse which was a populist/Christian grouping with strong ANC leanings.⁸⁴ An indistinct grouping around Sonny Leon drew supporters from either camp, depending on the stance taken by Leon at any one time. Leon had no particular ideological leanings and was not tied to the ANC, PAC, BCM or liberals. He was quite happy to promote either a "moderate" or "militant" line if he felt strongly about their cause. Most often, he went along with the "militants" but after 1975 showed distinctly "moderate" leanings.

Considering the number of ideological groupings within the party, it is a wonder that it held together at all. What bound them together was the opportunity which the party provided "to all and sundry" to use it as a front or vehicle for their own ends. David Curry referred to the Labour Party as a "whore" because it could be used by anyone for their own purposes.⁸⁵ For example, Mohammed Dangor, Sam Solomon and Hennie Ferris were particularly successful in using the Labour Party as a cover to organise trade unions. When they were confronted by the security police, they were able to say that they were engaged in organising for the Labour Party.⁸⁶

⁸³Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 198; Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989; Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

⁸⁴Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993; Alatheia Jansen, 6 January 1994; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", Appendix 6.

⁸⁵Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

⁸⁶Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993; Ron Swartz, interview, 10 December 1993.

The "militants" steered the Labour Party on a stridently confrontational course. Between 1970 and 1975, they were responsible for the Labour Party rejecting every budget presented in the CRC; rejecting the liaison committee and the cabinet council; rejecting the appointment of the Theron Commission; refusing to pass the budget after the Labour Party gained control of the CRC in 1975; and the adjournment of the CRC in September 1975. In 1976 they were behind the rejection of Alatheia Jansen and the rejection of the Theron Report.⁸⁷ However, after the Soweto uprising in June 1976, the "militants" began to direct their energies to the "struggle" which gained in intensity. This left a vacuum in the Labour Party which the Rabie-group increasingly filled.

The "infiltrators" from the liberation movements formed the core of the "militant" faction and was responsible for the boycotts and stayaways which the Labour Party used in 1970 and propagated so vigorously in 1971 and 1972. In 1972, a number of Labour Party members began to express their disillusionment with the CRC. By then, the government had already rejected every recommendation of substance passed on to it by the CRC.⁸⁸ In addition, the government had revoked the CRC's say in the approval of the budget. The "militants" seized the opportunity to exploit this dissatisfaction and began to advance the view that the Labour Party should withdraw from participation in the council. This precipitated a heated debate and brought into the open the divergent views on participation which had been simmering since the 1969 election and which had never been properly thrashed out. A number of those who openly advocated closer cooperation with the CRC and the government had already been expelled or had resigned. Among these were former leader, Martin Arendse; the councillor for Rietvlei, J.D. Petersen;⁸⁹ and the party's Natal leader,

⁸⁷These will be dealt with more fully in chapter 4.

⁸⁸Mina, "The CRC", 81, 85.

⁸⁹Cape Herald, 14 November 1970.

E.G. Rooks.⁹⁰ Others had been on the point of expulsion but had returned to the party line before action could be taken.⁹¹ On the other side, there were those who were critical of the Labour Party for making use of the CRC, while expressing rejection thereof. This led to the formation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) by the party's former Transvaal leader, E. Domingo, in 1972. The SDP declared itself "unashamedly and unambiguously anti-apartheid" and positioned itself to provide a home for those Labour Party members unhappy with the party's participatory stance.⁹²

The issue of participation came to a head at the Labour Party's national conference in East London in April 1972. At this conference, an attempt was made to force the Labour Party to withdraw from the CRC. The youth wing of the party in the Transvaal (Labour Youth Organisation [LYO]) gave notice that a motion calling for the party to withdraw from the CRC would be made at the conference.⁹³ That the agitation to withdraw came from the Transvaal, can be understood in terms of the fact that "militants" Mohammed Dangor, Sam Solomon and Don Mattera were from that region. Leon expressed his opposition to the suggestion, slating it as "unwise" because it would be "playing into the hands of the Government." Furthermore, "to stage a complete stayaway from the council will be to the advantage of the Government who will then be in a position to force Mr. Swartz's Federal Party in a direction to suit themselves."⁹⁴ Giving the clearest indication thus far of a major rethink in the Labour Party regarding participation,

⁹⁰Daily News, 12 April 1971; Natal Mercury, 14 April 1971.

⁹¹Rand Daily Mail, 12 and 19 October 1971; Natal Mercury, 13 October 1971.

⁹²P.A.29, Social Democratic Party Bulletin No. 2, July 1972; Mary Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 229.

⁹³Diamond Fields Advertiser, 14 March 1972; Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1972.

⁹⁴Diamond Fields Advertiser, 14 March 1972.

Leon insisted that the party must remain in the CRC "as it provides us with a legal instrument to express the desires of the people, without interference, in our objective for political freedom."⁹⁵ His argument revolved around a matter which the party leadership had increasingly come to realise as the key reason for remaining in the CRC: membership of the CRC provided immunity from prosecution. While dissenters and critics of apartheid were being arrested on a regular basis in the rest of the country, Labour Party councillors discovered that they could "hammer the government left right and centre" without fear of arrest.⁹⁶ Under the rules of parliamentary privilege, councillors could attack the government, expose corruption, point out anomalies and highlight the many injustices their people experienced under apartheid.⁹⁷

Leon's argument highlighted the motivation behind the two major views which had come to the fore in the Labour Party. The "moderates", many of whom still clung to the liberal tradition which provided the foundation of their argument for CRC participation in 1969, saw continued participation in the CRC as an opportunity to continue the fight for equal political rights for coloureds. The protection which CRC membership provided would allow them the opportunity to highlight the position of coloured people. The "militants" were not so much interested in the political plight of coloured people as it was in organizing resistance and opposition to the government: the aim being to build up a strong enough opposition to challenge and eventually force the

⁹⁵Diamond Fields Advertiser, 14 March 1972. In a letter to the Cape Herald, 3 June 1972, Leon again defended participation and advanced reasons why a walk-out would be disastrous for coloured people.

⁹⁶Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

⁹⁷John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993, called this "boer se moer" politics. He indicates that Labour Party members revelled in the opportunity of getting up in council chambers or at constituency and election meetings, and "hammer the government."

government to recognise the rights of all oppressed South Africans, and not just those of coloured people.⁹⁸ Sabotaging the CRC would be one way of causing the government some discomfort. Thus, while the "moderates" sought the protection of the CRC to press for coloured rights, the "militants" only needed the cover of Labour Party membership to do their clandestine organising.

With the knowledge of the motion to be put to the conference, the party's executive asked Carter Ebrahim, the editor of the party's newsletter, to present a paper outlining the case for participation. It was arranged for the address, "The Labour Party and Participation in the Coloured Persons Representative Council," to be given before the motion took place. Ebrahim highlighted the main issues that had dominated coloured politics since the 1940s. In an ingenious move, he first raised all the grounds for opposition to participation in the CRC - that the CRC had been set up to implement separate development and that any association with it meant the acceptance of apartheid; that it was a worthless institution because it was powerless to enact laws in the interests of the people; and that Labour's presence in the CRC was incompatible with its demands for full democratic rights and direct representation on central and other governing bodies.⁹⁹ No matter what the reasons for participation might be, he argued, merely taking part in apartheid structures made the fineness between a "quisling" and a "realist" all the more apparent. What then were the differences, if any, between the Federals and Labour?¹⁰⁰ Ebrahim then went on to dismantle each of these arguments, pointing out the futility of alternative strategies and emphasised the achievements of the Labour Party

⁹⁸Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

⁹⁹p.A.29, Carter Ebrahim, Address to Labour Party National Conference, East London, 7 April 1972; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 155-59.

¹⁰⁰p.A.29, Carter Ebrahim, Address to Labour Party National Conference, East London, 7 April 1972.

since it entered the CRC, viz. that Labour's victory at the polls in 1969 demonstrated to the world the rejection of apartheid by two million coloureds; that the Labour Party "forced the Nationalists to expose their insincerity" by driving them to the immoral act of packing the CRC with defeated Federals. He attacked those who proposed a withdrawal from the CRC, likening them to fighters who would rather shadow-box in the dressing room than come out to fight and risk losing. He made out a strong case for participation, indicating that the party's participation had ensured that instead of the CRC becoming "the quiet efficient machine designed to smoothly implement and rubber-stamp separate development," it had become a public forum where the problems caused by that policy had been exposed and debated. To walk out now would give "stooges and yes-men a free hand to carry out separate development."¹⁰¹ Ebrahim concluded that the party's insistence on participation had placed the government in a dilemma by forcing it to pack the council. The government therefore had a moral duty to either dissolve the CRC or call an election. "This," he added, "is Labour's victory" because, either way, the Labour Party would triumph the next time around.¹⁰²

The resolution to withdraw from the CRC was then put by Don Mattera, that "the Labour Party withdraw as soon as possible from the CPRC." To this Ebrahim proposed an amendment "that the Labour Party of S.A. remains in the CRC until such time as the political situation warrants its withdrawal from that institution"¹⁰³ After a heated debate, both the resolution and the amendment were put to the vote. The

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³p.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, East London, 6-8 April 1972, Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1972.

resolution was defeated and the amendment was carried.¹⁰⁴ The LYO disassociated itself from the decision to continue participation,¹⁰⁵ and soon after the party's national treasurer Paul Kleinschmidt resigned in protest.¹⁰⁶

The defeat suffered by the "militant" faction, which had had a strong influence on Labour Party policy in 1970 and 1971, was surprising but it was not so much an indication of the numerical ascendancy of the "moderate" faction in the party as the fact that the "militant" faction did not push their view strongly. At that stage, the members of the ANC and PAC who had infiltrated the party had concealed their affiliation in order not to jeopardise their work. Dangor indicates that the majority of the members of the Labour Party were never aware that the ANC and PAC had infiltrated their organisation and were using it as a cover. At the party's Bloemfontein congress in 1978, Jac Rabie appeared to have guessed what was going on when he warned delegates that the ANC was in their midst.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, no one was able to name these members and they were able to operate unhindered within the Labour Party for the entire duration of the term of the CRC. Thus, the "militants" did not want to belabour their point at the conference and risk exposure. However, they did manage to get delegates to accept a resolution instituting a program of intensive political organisation outside the CRC; intensifying the scale of non-violent confrontations; and identifying itself with oppressed groups.¹⁰⁸ In addition, they also got

¹⁰⁴Daily Dispatch, 8 April 1972; Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1972.

¹⁰⁵See P.A.29, LYO report to NEC, September 1972.

¹⁰⁶See P.A.29, Memo to Secretary of the Labour Party, 23 April 1973.

¹⁰⁷Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

¹⁰⁸P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, East London, 6-8 April 1972; Rand Daily Mail, 8 April 1972; Daily Dispatch, 8 April 1972.

the conference to resolve to embark on a course of "confrontations and boycotts."¹⁰⁹ Thus, despite this setback on the issue of continued participation, the "militants" were able to steer the Labour Party on a course of greater involvement in the black struggle for political rights. As a result, after 1972, it was easier for "militant" members to openly espouse the philosophy of black consciousness without risking exposure. Despite the wording in the party's constitution that the Labour Party would fight for the rights of all South Africans, this was the first time the party officially and publicly identified with Africans and the "liberation struggle."¹¹⁰

By debating the issue of participation, the Labour Party also clarified its position for the first time since its formation, and publicly indicated that cooperation with instruments of separate representation was now official policy, and that even though it would continue to confront and embarrass the government, it would not walk out and abandon the CRC. However, the implications of participation did not trouble the Labour Party after its 1972 decision because it was in opposition in the CRC. It was only when the 1975 elections drew near that this presented a new dilemma for the Labour Party leaders. In the expectation of victory, what would they now do if they were the governing party?

The Labour Party approached the 1975 CRC election with some trepidation. The five years in which the CRC had been in operation had given coloured people an opportunity to study at first hand the workings of their "own parliament." Numerous letters to editors in this period as well as statements made in interviews by prominent leaders in the community, gave an inkling of the growing dissatisfaction with the council as a

¹⁰⁹Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1972.

¹¹⁰Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3, "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 8 April 1972.

representative body, as well as the behaviour and contribution of the various parties and its members in the council.¹¹¹ Added to this was the fact that throughout the first five years, the government had repeatedly rejected numerous resolutions passed by the council.¹¹² Was participation therefore not just a futile exercise? Were coloured people not disillusioned with the CRC as an instrument of political expression? Furthermore, the support given to the party had enabled it to win twenty-six of the forty elected seats in 1969. However, the Labour Party had reneged on its promise not to occupy its seats in the council and had spent five years as the official opposition. Did the electorate consider this an act of betrayal? How would they view the new position on participation? The government had also ignored the feelings of the electorate by appointing defeated Federal Party members to the twenty nominated seats which gave the party a majority to govern. How would the coloured people react to this cynical disregard of their will as expressed at the polls? Finally, the various pro-government parties had polled 53% of the popular vote. With a 45% share of the vote, the Labour Party had won 65% of the constituencies, mainly in urban areas.¹¹³ Would the party be able to hold its urban seats and increase its share of the vote in rural areas?

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, the Labour Party began its annual conference in Umtata on 1 January 1975. It took "a long hard look" at the state of the party, its relationship with the coloured community, its handling of the political situation in the country and its attitude towards the CRC and

¹¹¹Cape Times, 19 March 1975.

¹¹²Burger, 21 March 1975; Graphic, 28 March 1975; Venter, Coloured, 480; S.T. van der Horst, The Theron Commission: A summary of the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured Population Group (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1976), 102.

¹¹³Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 February 1980.

other governing institutions.¹¹⁴ This introspection led to another about-turn. The party confessed that its policy of refusing to serve on the various committees of the CRC and in other government committees and institutions, had been wrong. Sonny Leon thereupon announced that the party now intended to "get into every institution, government and otherwise, where we can effect any sort of change in the people's living conditions."¹¹⁵ This view was reinforced in the secretary's annual report:

The Coloured Persons' Representative Council was a means to an end ... (It was the Goose that laid the golden egg). It would be the height of folly to destroy our protection and legal platforms which had become an embarrassment to the government. If these platforms were destroyed what would happen to the masses. The Labour Party has entered this game to expose and embarrass the Government. It was easy to urge confrontation but we had to be sure we were not found wanting when the occasion arose.¹¹⁶

This was the first public indication of a second major shift in policy. In 1969, besides promising to boycott the council chamber, and embarking on walk-outs which had frequently brought the CRC to a virtual standstill through boycotts and walkouts, the party had opposed the introduction of management committees and had boycotted elections for these bodies. It had also publicly and vociferously stated that it would never accept nominated seats, nor would it, if it came to power, accept the chairmanship of the CRC executive committee or seats on the executive.¹¹⁷ Now, the party reversed its

¹¹⁴P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975; Sunday Times, 5 January 1975.

¹¹⁵Sunday Times, 12 January 1975.

¹¹⁶Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., 2 January 1975.

¹¹⁷Cape Times, 10 November 1969. During the 1974 CRC session, the Labour Party defeated a Federal Party motion whereupon the Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, offered Sonny Leon the chairmanship of the CRC Executive should Tom Swartz resign.
(continued...)

attitude and pledged to serve on all institutions of separate representation. This new approach took the East London resolution even further. If it planned to remain in the CRC, it made no sense to refuse to serve on committees of that body, or to reject other institutions of separate representation which fulfilled a similar role.

The shift to the right was an indication of the decline of the influence of the "militants" in the party and a corresponding increase in influence of the "moderates." The party's decision in 1972 to remain in the CRC had led to the resignation of a number of "militants." This included a number of councillors. By mid-1973, the Labour Party only had twenty-one councillors as opposed to the twenty-six of 1969.¹¹⁸ This not only weakened the party's representation in the CRC, it also depleted the ranks of the "militants" and, correspondingly, their influence in the party. The strength of the "militants" was further depleted with the decline of the Labour Youth Organisation (LYO) which was strongest in the Transvaal. The Transvaal branch of the LYO had been the prime mover behind the 1972 resolution to withdraw from the CRC.¹¹⁹ In that year, the LYO national conference had accepted a resolution calling for open membership in defiance of the government prohibition.¹²⁰ This resulted in an influx of 6 000 new members to the LYO, but the organisation soon went into decline as members accused the Labour Party of being upholders of the apartheid system.¹²¹ The virtual demise of

¹¹⁷(...continued)

Leon turned down the offer on the grounds that by accepting it he would be "selling" his people. See Mina, "The CRC", 108.

¹¹⁸Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 122.

¹¹⁹Diamond Fields Advertiser, 14 March 1972; Mina, "The CRC", 89.

¹²⁰The Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968.

¹²¹P.A.29, Achmat Dangor, "Report of Labour Youth Organisation", n.d.; Eastern Province Herald, 3 May 1973.

the LYO, which had been used by ANC and PAC "militants" as their mouthpiece, seriously undermined the ability of this group to continue to exercise a strong influence on party policy. By the time of the 1975 conference, the "militants" were dealt a further blow when ten sitting councillors did not attend the conference. The majority of these were "militants." These councillors were subsequently omitted from the list of Labour Party candidates to contest the March 1975 CRC election.¹²²

Another factor in the shift to the right was a more recent influx of former Federal Party members into the party. While the influence of the "militants" waned, the ranks of the "moderates" were strengthened when a number of Federal Party councillors defected to the Labour Party in 1974.¹²³ Former Federal councillors were also included in the list of Labour Party candidates for the March 1975 CRC election.¹²⁴ The Federal Party presence in party membership had also dramatically increased when the Labour Party won a number of by-elections in 1973 and 1974 in former Federal Party constituencies.¹²⁵ An important factor was the promise of further Federal Party defections. During the 1974 session, the Federal Party had lost a no-confidence motion and the council was prorogued before the Labour Party could capitalise on its victory. The Labour Party saw in all of this an opportunity to win over more Federal Party members. Thus a move to the right would encourage those who were wavering. Besides, the Labour Party sensed victory in the forthcoming elections and wanted to ensure this. Opposition to the party and the forthcoming elections was intensifying and there

¹²²P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.

¹²³Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 126.

¹²⁴P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.

¹²⁵Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 123-24.

existed the probability of stronger calls for a boycott. Thus the Labour Party had to have greater appeal for those who would go and vote, and these would most likely be the rural, conservative coloureds and voters in Federal Party constituencies which had previously displayed the highest electoral support. Feeling the pressure from those, many of them its former supporters, who accused the Labour Party of allowing itself to be coopted, the Labour Party decided to strengthen its power base and ensure victory by shifting to the right.

This shift did not take place without some trauma. It led to the resignation of a number of members, including branch officials and CRC councillors. In addition, ten sitting councillors were omitted from the list of candidates for the March election and these immediately joined the ranks of the independents in the CRC. This had repercussions when the CRC election was held three months later when ten of the eleven independents contested their seats on the same issues as Labour Party candidates. The two groups fought each other in an atmosphere of acrimony.¹²⁶ The Labour Party declared "war" on the "Labour Independents" while the latter attacked Labour "for trying to give the impression that they have a monopoly on opposition to apartheid."¹²⁷

¹²⁶John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993, called it a "dirty election". He was one of those who had replaced a sitting councillor. The former councillor fought him as a Labour Independent and embarked on a "smear campaign", using the press, pamphlets and public meetings to discredit and impugn his character.

¹²⁷Sunday Times, 16 February 1975 and 2 March 1975. One of the notable omissions from the list of candidates was that of former leader, Martin Arendse. After he lost the leadership to Leon in 1970, Arendse had continued in the CRC as a Labour Party backbencher. He then resigned from the party, sat as an Independent, then returned to the party as a frontbencher. Following his omission from the candidate list, he resigned from the party "for the last time." He then stood as an Independent in the Tafelberg constituency but lost his deposit. Arendse still had a strong following in the party and many were bitter
(continued...)

The party emerged from its Umtata conference very different to the one that had fought the 1969 elections. While it continued to espouse opposition to apartheid, and still called for direct representation at parliamentary, provincial and municipal levels as it had done in 1969, the party now sought to justify its presence, rationalise its participation, and entrench itself in the CRC. An undated election pamphlet declared:

The Labour Party decided to use every legal means and machinery at its disposal in order to demonstrate that the "Coloured" people totally rejected the apartheid policy. To this end it was necessary therefore to participate in the political machinery provided for the "Coloured" people because there were simply no other practical alternatives. The strategy of exposure, embarrassment and obstruction, whilst at the same time politicising and organising the people, enjoyed tremendous success. Accordingly the Party enjoys overwhelming support and has frustrated the envisaged unfolding of apartheid (separate development).¹²⁸

The reversal of its 1969 stance created feelings of unease in the party. Members were not sure what the electorate would make of their about-face. Their nervousness concerning the possibility of a boycott of the election, but more especially of the party at the polls because of its new stance, was reflected in a wide variety of pamphlets outlining the party's aims and objectives and its opposition to separate development. The aggressively anti-CRC rhetoric of the 1969 campaign was replaced by concerted pleas for people to vote, and if they did vote, to vote for the Labour Party. The electorate was warned that to abstain from voting was to support the apartheid system. A typical pamphlet carried this warning: "The CRC is being used to oppress our people. By not

¹²⁷(...continued)
at the treatment he received, especially as Arendse's "cooperation" stance of 1970 was now party policy in 1975. See P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975; Argus, 20 March 1975; Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 70.

¹²⁸Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.6., Election Pamphlet, 1975.

voting you support the Apartheid system. Put punch into the opposition - Vote Labour."¹²⁹ At a meeting held in Kimberley on 18 January 1975, Sonny Leon also warned the party's election candidates that "unless the Coloured people vote for the Labour Party and thereby inform the White people of their total rejection of apartheid in whatever guise it is dressed, the Government will find a way to tell the world that we accept racial discrimination." Leon further urged coloured people to give the Labour Party a "unanimous mandate to demand those rights which White people believe they require to enable them to live a decent life" He pointed out that the only way in which Coloured people could make their hatred of apartheid known without inviting attention from the authorities, "is to vote against apartheid by voting for the Labour Party in the March elections" He then warned that "any election candidate who is not a Labour Party official is a front man for the Federal Party and apartheid."¹³⁰ In its anxiety to ensure that the electorate would not snub it, the party made the election, in effect, a referendum on apartheid.¹³¹

The Labour Party's fear of an election boycott brought on by disillusionment and disenchantment were not unfounded. An organisation calling itself the Anti-CRC Committee (ACRCOM) surfaced in January 1975, after the Labour Party had publicly indicated its shift in policy. ACRCOM was composed of members of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC), both of them black consciousness movements, which had a considerable following in the coloured community after this philosophy was embraced by

¹²⁹For example, Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.12.4., undated election pamphlet, issued between January and March 1975.

¹³⁰Sunday Times, 19 January 1975.

¹³¹Rand Daily Mail, 22 March 1975.

coloured youths, mostly in the Cape, in the 1970s.¹³² ACRCOM declared that its aim was to influence people not to participate in the March election and to discourage participation in the CRC and similar institutions. The organisation did not believe that a "humanitarian society where justice is meted out to all (could) be achieved by separate, multi-national or parallel development, of which the CRC is an integral part."¹³³ Boycott pamphlets carried the simple message:

This is what the CRC has achieved
 1969 - Oppression
 1970 - Oppression
 1971 - Oppression
 1972 - Oppression
 1973 - Oppression
 1974 - Oppression
 DON'T VOTE¹³⁴

The opposing positions taken by the Labour Party and ACRCOM meant that they were bound to clash, and they soon became embroiled in a war of words. Sonny Leon attacked ACRCOM's calls for a boycott of the CRC because this would "silence the protest of the Coloured people A boycott will only defeat ourselves and not the government or apartheid (If) people who would vote Labour (stayed) away from the polling booths ... the Federal Party would get into the Council If the Federal Party gets a majority in the CRC, their views ... would be accepted as the view of the Coloured people."¹³⁵ In a press statement ACRCOM rebuked the Labour Party in a reply which, perhaps, reflected the feelings of many who opposed the CRC:

¹³²Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 441. The attitude of coloured people to the black consciousness movement is dealt with in chapter 4.

¹³³Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 473.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Sunday Times, 2 February 1975.

To take stock, Mr Leon has retrogressed from full parliamentary representation to four White representatives for "Coloureds," to the present institution which he himself calls "a circus"

The attitude Mr Leon expresses that we "must use the legal protection afforded us" smacks of a dependency complex.

He feels that we have to make use of the instruments created by the government as if they were the only people able to create instruments to free people. The truth is that they can only create instruments to oppress

Our obsession to be protected by our adversaries coerced us into using their instruments

And finally in reply to Mr Leon's concern about the Federal Party gaining absolute control of the Council, ACRCOM feels that his concern is unnecessary since neither the Labour Party's nor the Federal's presence in the Council was intended to have any influence over its effectiveness.

The CRC record shows that 99% of its motions for improvement and development are rejected by the nationalist government.

Their presence as an "Opposition" to the Federals in the CRC has given this white elephant an esteem it does not deserve. In fact, it assisted in making this game of playing parliament so impressive, leading people into believing that it does serve a positive purpose in our struggle against oppression ... ¹³⁶

ACRCOM's argument evidently summed up the feelings of a large number of coloured people, as the results of the March election were subsequently to show. Significantly, ACRCOM was the first organised opposition to the CRC since the council's formation was first announced in 1964. The question immediately comes to mind as to why there was no such organisation and opposition to the CRC during the 1969 election campaign. The logical answer was that an organisation such as ACRCOM was not necessary at the time because such an organisation already existed - the Labour Party. This party had assumed the mantle of opposition to the government, the CRC and the policy of separate development. Moreover, the electorate had accepted the Labour Party's claim to be the opposition to government policy and when they voted in 1969, they voted for a party which advocated the destruction of the CRC as an instrument of separate

¹³⁶Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 477-78.

development. The appearance of ACRCOM in 1975 confirmed that the Labour Party had undergone a radical shift in policy. In 1969 the Labour Party had railed against the CRC and the pro-government Federal Party had had to defend that body and its participation therein. Now in 1975, ACRCOM was the opponent of the CRC and the Labour Party was the one justifying its presence in, and the existence of, the CRC. From an election promise to destroy the system, the Labour Party was now working "within the system" and attacking those who occupied the same ground it had itself occupied in 1969.

The government was also concerned that coloureds might be disillusioned with the CRC, desert the Federal Party and boycott the election. It needed large-scale coloured support to dampen disaffection with their political lot and to justify separate political institutions. So, in the months leading up to the election, certain concessions were made which could be construed as attempts to "buy" a pro-government vote.¹³⁷ On 23 January 1975 Vorster agreed to proposals granting greater rights and a better deal for coloured people.¹³⁸ Soon after, racial barriers at the Nico Malan theatre in Cape Town were dropped, a move which Sonny Leon dismissed as a ruse to deceive ill-informed coloureds.¹³⁹ Coloureds were also allowed to serve on boards and councils affecting their affairs, and coloured representation was allowed on the Prime Minister's Advisory Council.¹⁴⁰ The Labour Party brushed these concessions aside and contended that the proposals agreed to by Vorster were not to grant coloured people more rights but to grant the Federal Party powers to more efficiently implement the policy of apartheid.¹⁴¹ An examination of the

¹³⁷Sunday Tribune, 23 March 1975

¹³⁸Survey of Race Relations (1975), 11.

¹³⁹Rapport, 16 March 1975.

¹⁴⁰Sunday Tribune, 23 March 1975

¹⁴¹Sunday Times, 26 January 1975.

election results attests to the failure of these concessions to influence the coloured electorate to vote for and support pro-apartheid parties (see table 3).

Although the Broederbond was prevented by the Improper Political Interference Act from actively assisting the Labour Party's pro-government opposition, this did not stop the government from again trying to disadvantage and discredit the Labour Party as it had done in 1969. For example, Norman Middleton, one of the most radical of the Labour Party leaders, was arrested in February 1975 after addressing a Labour Party election meeting in De Aar. At the meeting he indicated that he was happy to see squatter shacks in De Aar because if the Labour Party came to power in the 1975 election, it would move whites into those shacks. He also stated that if God was living in South Africa, he would have been imprisoned on Robben Island. Middleton was subsequently charged with high treason and racial incitement. The case dragged on for a number of years but was dismissed when it finally came to court.¹⁴²

On 19 March 1975, the second election for the CRC was held. The results overwhelmingly favoured the Labour Party which won thirty-one of the forty elected seats and received 151 410 (60,2%) of the 251 631 votes cast. The pro-government Federal Party, which contested thirty-eight seats, won eight and received 75 851 (30,1%) votes. One seat went to an independent candidate but none of the other parties gained a seat (see Table 3). Despite a resounding Labour Party victory, the figures gave evidence of voter apathy, disillusionment with the CRC, disenchantment with the Labour Party and the effectiveness of the boycott call. Of the 994 191 persons eligible to register as voters only 521 557 registered of whom 251 631 voted. In comparison to the 1969 election, the number of people eligible to register as voters

¹⁴²Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

Table 3 - Schedule of 1975 Election Results.¹⁴³

<u>Party</u>	<u>No. of Seats Contested</u>	<u>No. of Seats won</u>	<u>Total No. of votes</u>	<u>% of poll</u>
Labour Party	40	31 (77,5%)	151 410	60,2%
Federal Party	38	8 (20,0%)	75 851	30,1%
Independents	11	1 (2,5%)	13 413	5,3%
Republican Party	7	0 (0,0%)	3 326	1,3%
Social Democratic Party	6	0 (0,0%)	2 736	1,1%

	40	40 (100%)	251 631	100%

had increased by 17,8% (843 973 to 994 191), yet the number who actually registered declined by 18,2% (637 587 to 521 557) and less than half of the registered voters went to the polls (see table 4).

Table 4 - Comparison of the 1969 and 1975 CRC Elections¹⁴⁴

	<u>1969</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>Increase/ Decrease</u>	<u>%Increase/ Decrease</u>
No. of eligible voters	843973	994191	+150218	+17,8%
No. of registered voters	637587	521557	-116030	-18,2%
No. who actually voted	300918	251631	- 49287	-16,3%

Nevertheless, the results of the election came as a relief for the Labour Party. It increased its share of the poll and the number of seats from 26 to 31. The increase in seats meant that even if the government nominated pro-government members to the twenty nominated seats, the Labour Party would still have a large enough majority to "govern." By increasing its share of the popular vote from 136 845 (45,4%) to 151 410 (60,2%), the Labour Party also effectively countered the government's accusation that it was a minority party. However, the Labour Party was still not able to substantiate its claim that it had the majority support of the coloured electorate because, although it experienced an increase in the

¹⁴³Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 February 1980.

¹⁴⁴Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 February 1980; Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 442.

percentage of the popular vote, it mainly increased its support at the expense of the other parties.

Sonny Leon attributed the low number of registered voters to a "public boycott" and inefficiency on the part of the Administration of Coloured Affairs.¹⁴⁵ However, it was clear that a number of other factors contributed to the poor turnout in 1975. The actions of the government during the first CRC had destroyed any credibility the CRC as an effective political instrument might have had; the Labour Party, even though it increased its share of the popular vote and the number of seats in the council, was being viewed with scepticism in many circles because of its inconsistent stand in respect of the CRC; the 1975 election saw the rise of strong opposition to the CRC in the form of the Anti-CRC committee (ACRCOM); the opposition press, which had overwhelmingly supported the Labour Party in 1969, had begun to attack the CRC as a farce; the Broederbond, having been exposed in the 1969 election, was not as active in giving support to the Federal Party in 1975; and the coloured people, having trustingly decided to give the CRC a chance in 1969, were disillusioned because they felt they had been tricked once again. The increase in the pettiness of apartheid after 1969 was perhaps the telling blow which militated against wider popular support. More apartheid laws affecting coloured people were passed between 1969-1975 than at any other time.¹⁴⁶

The poor turnout in urban areas, especially in the Western Cape, suggests that a large section of the coloured middle-class boycotted this election, signifying their discontent with institutions of separate representation and the philosophy of separate development. Those who voted elected to compromise and use the CRC for short-term gains and

¹⁴⁵Diamond Fields Advertiser, 19 March 1985.

¹⁴⁶See Joyce, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid, 69-84.

the hope of long-term political accommodation. The majority of voters were the rural coloureds who were generally influenced by their white employers who in turn were influenced by the Broederbond as was the case in the 1969 election. Although the Broederbond was not as blatant in its support in 1975, Wilkins and Strydom reports that the Broederbond nevertheless made it clear to its members in a special circular dated 3 March 1975 whom they should encourage their coloured employees and their acquaintances to support.¹⁴⁷

From a study of the election results, the inference could be made that the coloured electorate rejected apartheid and endorsed the Labour Party as an instrument in the destruction of separate development. However, even though its share of the vote was overwhelming, this victory gave a false impression of Labour's popularity, as well as the extent of coloured rejection of Nationalist policy. The number of potential voters, i.e. those eligible to register as voters, had increased dramatically since 1969 but the number who actually registered and those who eventually voted declined even more markedly. In the 1969 election, 25% of the eligible voters did not register and of those who did, less than 50% voted. In the 1975 election, about 50% of the eligible voters did not register and of those who did, less than half voted. In most constituencies, the percentage poll was low. Reality analysed the results thus:

The message to the Government is clear. The Coloured people don't like apartheid. They showed this by their massive refusal to register for the CRC roll, the massive stayaway of those who did register, and the massive vote for the Labour Party of those who did vote ... the same message three times over.¹⁴⁸

Nevertheless, even though the Labour Party emerged a winner on

¹⁴⁷Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 165.

¹⁴⁸Reality, May 1975.

most counts, it was hardly an overwhelming vote of confidence by coloured people. Despite the increase in the number of eligible voters, the Labour Party's share of the potential vote decreased from 16,2% to 15,2%. However, another trend first noticed in 1969 and confirmed in this election, was that Labour Party seats were mostly in Cape and urban areas. Of the nineteen urban constituencies in South Africa in 1975, the Labour Party won seventeen, eleven of them in the Cape Province. In contrast, six of the eight constituencies won by the Federal Party were rural.¹⁴⁹ However, the percentage polls in the Western Cape, where half of the coloured population lived, revealed a phenomenon which was repeated later in the tricameral elections. The Labour Party won all nine Western Cape urban seats but, compared to the rest of the country, the percentage polls were low and declined even more in subsequent elections.¹⁵⁰ For example, in 1969, there were 202 436 registered voters in these nine constituencies (out of a total of 637 587 countrywide). Even though a third (31,7%) of all registered voters lived in this area, barely one in three (32,4%) went to the polls, with 49% supporting the Labour Party. Despite winning all nine seats, the total number of all votes received by the Labour Party in all nine constituencies was only 31 967.¹⁵¹ In 1975, the number of registered voters in these constituencies declined to 176 670 (out of a total of 521 557 countrywide) and even though these constituencies contained a little over one-third (33,8%) of all registered voters, only one in five (22,4%) went to the polls. This time, 81% supported the Labour Party. The Labour Party again won all nine seats but the total vote came to only 32 362.¹⁵² In comparison the average poll in the five urban

¹⁴⁹Burger, 21 March 1975.

¹⁵⁰These urban seats were Bonteheuwel, Elsie's River, Heideveld, Rietvlei, Strandfontein, Kasselsvlei, Liesbeek, South Cape, Tafelberg.

¹⁵¹Burger, 26 September 1969.

¹⁵²Ibid, 21 March 1975.

Transvaal seats was 70%, with 75% in the two urban Natal seats and 66% in the two urban Port Elizabeth seats.

These statistics are significant when assessing overall support of coloureds in the Cape for the CRC and the impact that support would have on support for the Labour Party. Firstly, the majority of coloureds in the Cape Peninsula, which contained all the Western Cape urban seats, stayed away from the polls. Those who did go, voted for the Labour Party. This phenomenon can be more easily understood in terms of the political history of coloured people in the Cape. For more than a century coloured voters in the Cape had shared the common roll with their white counterparts. In 1956, they were removed from the voters' roll after a bitter political and legal struggle and placed on a separate roll.¹⁵³ Between 1956 and 1968 coloured voters in the Cape voted on a separate roll to elect four white representatives to parliament and two to the Cape Provincial Council. The principle of political separation was further entrenched by the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968 which prohibited coloureds and whites from belonging to the same political party; the Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act of 1968, which terminated coloured representation in parliament; and the Coloured Persons Representative Council Act of 1968, which was intended to provide for, and entrench, separate political representation for coloured people.¹⁵⁴ The political separation of whites and coloureds was completed with the removal of the municipal franchise from Cape coloureds in September 1972.¹⁵⁵ Then, to add insult to injury, they were asked in 1969 and 1975 to vote for representatives for an apartheid institution which would remove them even further

¹⁵³See Scher, "Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters", for a detailed discussion of this issue.

¹⁵⁴Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 45; Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 468.

¹⁵⁵Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 76; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 142-43.

from that which they previously enjoyed, viz. common roll representation. It is therefore understandable that so few Cape coloureds voted, and when they did, they voted for a party which promised to destroy the CRC. The government's action in packing the CRC in 1969 with defeated Federal Party members further angered coloured people and contributed to a poorer turnout in 1975.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the factors which influenced Cape coloured attitudes in respect of the CRC were bound to affect support for the Labour Party. People boycotted the CRC because it perpetuated political inequality, while others voted for the Labour Party because it promised to use the CRC to gain political equality, but as more people became disillusioned with the CRC, so the Labour Party also lost voters. This would account for the reason why the Labour Party won an overwhelming number of seats, but with low polls.

Nevertheless, the Labour Party's feat in winning thirty-one of the forty elected seats meant that the government could not keep it out of power as it had done in 1969, for even if Federal Party members were nominated to the twenty nominated seats, the Labour Party would still have an outright majority. Mindful of Labour threats in the past to cripple the workings of the CRC if it ever came to power, the government moved to meet such an eventuality. On the day of the election, Schalk van der Merwe gave notice in parliament of a bill which would empower the Minister of Coloured Relations "in certain circumstances to exercise or perform ... the powers, functions or duties of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council ... or its executive, or the chairman of the executive and to provide for matters connected therewith."¹⁵⁷ In effect, the Coloured Persons' Representative Council Amendment Bill

¹⁵⁶See F. Molteno, "The Coloured Representative Council: Its place in the evolving strategy of South Africa's Rulers," Africa Perspective, No.10 (April 1979), for a more detailed discussion of coloured attitudes to the CRC.

¹⁵⁷Debates of the House of Assembly (20 March 1975), col. 3009.

enabled the minister to keep the CRC operating even if the Labour Party attempted to close it down by walking out. Van der Merwe defended the bill on the grounds that it was "the declared aim of certain parties to destroy the Coloured Representative Council." In his view, the bill was designed to prevent chaos which would result from the breakdown of administrative and financial functions because the refusal to exercise powers and duties would lead to funds not being available for pensions and salaries.¹⁵⁸

The reaction of opposition parties in the House of Assembly and the opposition and government press followed a predictable pattern. Colin Eglin of the Progressive Party argued that the bill deprived coloured people of their rights and represented a negation of the Prime Minister's recent undertaking that the powers of the CRC would be extended.¹⁵⁹ He labelled the bill "cynical in the extreme" and countered that coloured people, stripped of all their political rights, had used the freedom that remained to reject the policy of apartheid.¹⁶⁰ He added: "The hon. the Minister is anticipating the end of the road of parallel development for the Coloured people. This will be the end of the road of the Coloured Representative Council."¹⁶¹ Harry Schwarz of the Reform Party supported Eglin by suggesting that the introduction of the bill at a time when the full election results were not yet known, was "a piece of cynicism."¹⁶² He reiterated his belief that coloured people should be represented in parliament and that the timing

¹⁵⁸Debates of the House of Assembly (20 March 1975), cols. 2298-302; Cape Times, 26 March 1975.

¹⁵⁹Debates of the House of Assembly (20 March 1975), cols. 3009-11.

¹⁶⁰Rand Daily Mail, 21 March 1975.

¹⁶¹Debates of the House of Assembly (20 March 1975), col. 3012.

¹⁶²Survey of Race Relations (1975), 15-16.

of the bill harmed any effort at consensus.¹⁶³ De Villiers Graaff of the United Party condemned the bill because it was "a return to baasskap," but indicated that he would vote for it to be read the first time to allow a debate to "let the whole world know that ... the Coloured Representative Council is just a rubber stamp, that it means nothing."¹⁶⁴ The opposition press heaped scorn on the government,¹⁶⁵ but the government-supporting press sought to justify the government's actions. In an article which sharply criticised the Labour Party, the Cape Nationalist mouthpiece, Die Burger, acknowledged that it was a pity the government had to resort to such a measure, just as it was a pity that they had nominated Federal Party members in 1969, but added that a government which neglected to prevent impending chaos in a section of its administration "is nie sy sout werd nie."¹⁶⁶

The bill was not the only government reaction to a possible Labour victory. It must, of course, be remembered that notice of the bill was given before the results of the election became known.¹⁶⁷ When the results confirmed that the Labour Party had indeed won an outright victory, Vorster warned party leaders "not to destroy the goodwill between Whites and Coloured people."¹⁶⁸ Addressing a public meeting at Smithfield, he insisted that the government would not tolerate attempts by people to upset public order and peace and would

¹⁶³Debates of the House of Assembly (20 March 1975), col. 3014.

¹⁶⁴Ibid, col. 3013.

¹⁶⁵For example, Rand Daily Mail, 21 March 1975; Cape Times, 22 March 1975; Sunday Times, 23 March 1975.

¹⁶⁶Burger, 22 March 1975.

¹⁶⁷Notice of the bill was given on 19 March 1975 and introduced in the House of Assembly on 20 March. The election results only confirmed a Labour victory on 20 March.

¹⁶⁸Diamond Fields Advertiser, 21 March 1975.

take the strongest steps to preserve peace and order.¹⁶⁹ Die Volksblad supported Vorster's warning by criticising the Labour Party's confrontationist posture:

Dit is ironies dat terwyl die Regering groot welslae behaal om vrede in Suider-Afrika te verseker, 'n deel van ons binnelandse bevolking hom skynbaar op die weg van konfrontasie will begeef. 'n Mens kan net hoop dat die Kleurlinge in die algemeen genoeg sin vir verantwoordelikheid het om betyds van hierdie koers weg te draai en Mnr Vorster se hand van samewerking te aanvaar.¹⁷⁰

The newly-elected Labour Party member for the Eastern Cape, John Nash, took up the cudgels in defence of the Labour Party and coloured people, retorting that the Prime Minister should get his priorities right when he warned the Labour Party not to disturb goodwill in South Africa:

The Coloured people have shown goodwill for years. We fought and were prepared to sacrifice our lives in the last war. We suffered the humiliation of being removed from the common roll. We even accepted the Coloured Representative Council and the embarrassment of being robbed of our right to rule in the Council after winning the 1969 elections. What more must we do to show our goodwill. The only way we can convince our electorate that we should not close the CRC now, is for the Prime Minister to show goodwill by putting us on the road to equal rights immediately. The electorate is prepared to settle for nothing less.¹⁷¹

The reaction of the Labour Party itself to the whole furore was one of confusion. Sonny Leon at first stated that his party, having gained a clear majority, would call upon the Prime Minister to scrap the CRC and give full parliamentary representation to the coloured people.¹⁷² When the party had had time to absorb the implications of the new bill, it

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Volksblad, 21 March 1975.

¹⁷¹Rand Daily Mail, 25 March 1975.

¹⁷²Survey of Race Relations (1975), 14.

decided to abandon its undertaking to boycott the council. Leon explained that a walk-out or boycott would play into the minister's hands because the new powers contained in the bill enabled the minister to run the council himself. On the other hand, if the minister chose not to do so, the Labour Party's majority in the CRC was still too fragile to withstand defections, which would then allow the Federal Party in through the back door. The Labour Party had been extremely confident of victory, even expecting to win up to thirty-nine of the forty elected seats, and such an overwhelming victory would have given it the ability to boycott the council and cripple it completely.¹⁷³ Even if the government then nominated twenty pro-government members, the CRC could not function. However, winning only thirty-one seats was not a comfortable margin. If the government again nominated twenty pro-government members, these, added to the eight Federal Party elected members and the one independent, only gave the Labour Party a potential majority of two. Although, the pro-government forces still would not have had enough to govern, there still existed the possibility that one or two Labour councillors could defect. The Labour Party therefore decided to remain in the CRC. Leon however repeated the party's commitment to use it as a platform to fight apartheid and press for equality for coloured people, with direct representation in parliament - the same argument as in 1969.¹⁷⁴

Leon later acknowledged that the party erred by making its intentions public, thus allowing the government to take

¹⁷³Fred Peters suggested that if the Labour Party had paid greater heed to good organisation, it would have won at least thirty-five seats. Labour Party Accession, Secretary's Report to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6-8 January 1976. John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993, states that the party at one stage expected that it could win at least thirty-nine of the forty elected seats.

¹⁷⁴Rand Daily Mail, 24 March 1975; Survey of Race Relations (1975), 17.

preventative measures.¹⁷⁵ Of course, it is difficult to understand such an argument as the Labour Party's intention to cripple the CRC if it came to power had been often and publicly stated for a number of years. It was the main platform of the party's 1969 campaign. Boycotting the CRC was part of the Labour Party's tradition and constituted the foundation upon which its attitude to the CRC was built. Not to make its intentions public would have deprived the party of its main electoral weapon and the main thrust of its anti-CRC platform. Ironically, the Labour Party had softened its stance on this point and in the run-up to the 1975 election had repeatedly told the electorate that it would participate so as to use the CRC as a platform to attack apartheid and press for coloured rights. Even though the boycott call still surfaced during the election campaign, the Labour Party was not serious about boycotting the council after March 1975. The government knew this but it appears that the cumulative effect of Labour Party actions and threats influenced the government. The party's hostility had been evident in speech after speech by Labour Party leaders at the Umtata conference held earlier in the year, and in its outright rejection of the CRC liaison committee. The dramatic switch to an anti-apartheid platform by the Federal Party just before the election also "spooked" the government.¹⁷⁶ It was not prepared to run the risk of having its creation destroyed by either a Labour Party government or a united coloured front and so, in a panic, resorted to the controversial Coloured Persons' Representative Council Amendment Bill.

Accusations were immediately forthcoming. Critics charged that the Labour Party had never been serious about boycotting the CRC and that it had used the threat as an election ploy to improve its image among those who considered the CRC to be a

¹⁷⁵Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., Sonny Leon, Address to the Labour Party National Conference, Uppington, 6 January 1976.

¹⁷⁶Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1975.

farce. ACRCOM took the Labour Party to task in a press statement:

The Labour Party went to the "electorate" specifically on ... two issues viz. a referendum on the rejection of apartheid and the closing down of the CRC if it "came to power." One would have thought that post-"election" statements on the strategy that the Labour Party would employ, would conform to a plan consistent with the implementation of this "mandate." Instead, we hear Mr Leon stating that the Labour Party will "stay put to destroy it from within." It ... was (not) unexpected, that the Nationalist government ... would introduce legislation guaranteeing the continuation of the CRC For Mr Leon and the Labour Party to have pretended that this was an unexpected development casts a bad reflection on their political acumen - especially in the light of similar legislation having been passed in respect of like bodies to the CRC e.g. the Bantustan Legislative Assemblies.

The Labour Party obtained its mandate under the pretence that it could "close down" the CRC. Even the introduction of this supposedly-contentious bill does not justify its somersault, unless they thought the Nationalist government was not serious in its determination to implement its policy of separate development. Having received a clear and unambiguous "mandate" to close down the CRC and secondly, without added justification in this Bill - if ever there existed any - the Labour Party have misled and are misleading the "voters."¹⁷⁷

ACRCOM also attacked the Labour Party's argument that, to boycott the council, would be to abandon it to pro-government elements who would claim recognition as being the genuine leaders of the coloured people. There was a measure of substance to ACRCOM's argument because support and respect for the pro-government parties had declined so alarmingly that very few would have accepted them as the genuine leaders of the coloured people. The pro-government elements had been so discredited by their performance in the CRC that even they had changed their position to an anti-apartheid one just before the March 1975 election. There is little evidence to suggest that had the Labour Party exploited its majority and walked

¹⁷⁷Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 478-79.

out of the CRC, that the eight elected Federal Party members could have set themselves up as the genuine leaders of the coloured people and be accepted and recognised as such. Articles such as "The Politics of Collaboration" in Bandwagon supported such an assessment:

Regardless of the objective historical patterns underlying Labour Party history, the leadership argues that if they were to leave the CRC, they would abandon it to the Federals, who would then proceed to pose as the "interlocutors" between whom and the government a dialogue is possible. Here again, one must look at the assumptions underlying such an argument, namely that the people are fooled by the pompous words of self-appointed "leaders", and secondly, that the aspirations of the people are satisfied by pseudo-political institutions which deny them access to the real annals of power. The only way to show that dummy institutions are not acceptable, is to boycott them. If the Labour Party and its supporters boycotted the CRC and joined the genuine and consistently anti-apartheid and anti-racist forces in South Africa, the CRC would be exposed even more indisputably for the political mockery it is.¹⁷⁸

In 1972, the Labour Party had opposed withdrawal from the CRC but resolved to do so "when the political situation warrants a withdrawal."¹⁷⁹ Many critics saw Labour's victory in 1975 as that "situation" and therefore expected it to carry out its resolution. When it did not, they accused the party of dishonesty. ACRCOM suggested that "the Labour Party is really only after this platform with its bonus of Government protection and other attendant `perks' or `fringe benefits', which exposes them as a bunch of conformists and opportunists wanting to clad themselves in anti-apartheid garb."¹⁸⁰ This accusation was not entirely unwarranted in 1975, but it may have been unfair in the preceding years. In 1969, councillors

¹⁷⁸R. Elliot, "The Politics of Collaboration", Bandwagon, No.5 (April 1975), 4.

¹⁷⁹P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, East London, 6-8 April 1972.

¹⁸⁰Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 479; John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

received R150 per month and perks and fringe benefits were almost non-existent. However, R150 was approximately thrice that earned by the majority of coloured people.¹⁸¹ Yet it is arguable whether this salary was enough to ensnare councillors. Statements made by Sonny Leon in his speech to the party's national conference in 1975 indicates that most of this salary was used to cover travelling expenses as councillors tried to keep contact with large and often far-flung constituencies.¹⁸² Nash concurs that CRC salaries were paltry considering that most of it went on travelling expenses and the costs of running a constituency. He also makes the point that members had no real perks in those days; in any event, not sufficient to warrant such accusations.¹⁸³ Councillors were also expected to contribute 10% of their CRC salary to the party's Head Office and 5% to their region's coffers.¹⁸⁴ The fact that a number of sitting councillors made themselves unavailable for re-election perhaps confirms that membership of the CRC between 1969 and 1974 was not particularly appealing.¹⁸⁵ However, councillors' remuneration underwent a drastic revision at the end of 1974 when it was announced that salaries were to be increased to R500 per month after the election.¹⁸⁶ This was probably part of the government's attempts to counter the Labour Party's threat to abandon its seats in the council. By making membership of the CRC financially attractive, the government hoped to change the minds of sufficient members, inducing them to remain in the CRC. While the increase may seem reasonable in view of the

¹⁸¹See Venter, Coloured, 54, 461-62.

¹⁸²p.A.29, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.

¹⁸³John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

¹⁸⁴p.A.29, Treasurer's Report to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.

¹⁸⁵p.A.29, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

fact that CRC salaries during the previous five years had remained static, membership of the CRC was still largely a part-time affair. CRC sessions lasted at most about four weeks every year.¹⁸⁷ Thus, the increase to R500 certainly caused a rethink in members' attitudes to CRC membership. This was borne out when Leon castigated party members at the Umtata conference: "Before the handsome increases announced by the government, a number of sitting members indicated that they were not available. Suddenly they are."¹⁸⁸ As far as ACRCOM's accusation of government protection was concerned, Nash contends that that is precisely what the party was exploiting. He maintains that whereas the voices of opposition outside the CRC were silenced by draconian security laws, CRC membership allowed anti-apartheid opponents an opportunity to launch scathing attacks on the government without fear of arrest. The Labour Party was thus the channel through which the anti-government bloc could express its opposition.¹⁸⁹

The accusations levelled at the Labour Party could, of course, be expected of its political opponents and other critics, but an examination of the party's election platform in 1969, its confrontationist posture between 1970 and 1972, and its policy of boycott up to 1973 clearly indicates that the more accommodating stance of the Labour Party in 1975 indeed demonstrated a marked shift to cooperation with the system. A shift to the right had already been evident at the national conference earlier that year, and therefore the position it took after the March election was not entirely unexpected. This more cooperative stance appeared to signal the ascendancy of the "moderates" in the party. However, if such a shift was

¹⁸⁷Alathea Jansen, interview, 6 January 1994.

¹⁸⁸p.A.29, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.

¹⁸⁹John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993; Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, 17 September 1994.

a calculated one, then it would be expected that the Labour Party had already decided on its strategy if, as expected, it won the election and took control of the CRC executive. Yet, statements emanating from the party indicated that members were not certain of party strategy in the wake of their electoral success.¹⁹⁰ Leon later acknowledged that they were divided on what to do with their victory.¹⁹¹ This confirms the impression that Labour Party members did not anticipate such a "narrow" victory. The government's CRC Amendment Bill therefore presented a dilemma. Thus their reaction to the bill was of an ad hoc nature and, consequently, they could offer no reasoned reply to the criticism heaped upon them.

The confusion and uncertainty that reigned in the Labour Party in the days immediately following the March election must also be understood in the context of the circumstances prevailing at the time. Throughout the first CRC, the Labour Party did not only have the Federal Party to contend with. It was up against the not inconsiderable forces of the government, the Cabinet, the National Party and the Broederbond. Furthermore, all the officials of the CRC were white and they had lent their full weight to the pro-government parties in the CRC. The party had also been the object of intense scrutiny by newspapers like Die Burger and the Sunday Times, which had "Extra" editions carrying exclusively "coloured" news. Their political reporters had made the Labour Party their special interest.¹⁹² Conrad Sidego of Die Burger usually got his information directly from the government and white CRC officials who served the Labour Party. However, Howard Lawrence of the Sunday Times was the thorn in the flesh of the

¹⁹⁰Mary Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 229.

¹⁹¹Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., Sonny Leon, Address to the Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976.

¹⁹²Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992; John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

Labour Party.¹⁹³ His column was devoted almost exclusively to criticism of the party as an examination of the Sunday Times Extra in the 1970s shows. Nash reports that certain Federal Party members who had defected to the Labour Party were suspected of being Lawrence's "informers." It appears that this reporter had made the Labour Party his special object of investigation.¹⁹⁴ Since the first CRC election in 1969, Lawrence had reported every aspect which involved the Labour Party. He built up a special relationship with a number of CRC members and leading party supporters and was privy to much confidential information. The party leaders never knew who supplied him with information and it frustrated them that minutes after a secret meeting, Lawrence would phone asking them to confirm or deny decisions. He would hang around hotels and meeting places and glean snippets of information which he would later reveal in the Sunday Times.¹⁹⁵ Lawrence relentlessly exposed every shift in policy and reported dissension and tensions in the caucus and branch meetings. He so dedicated himself to reporting on the Labour Party that much of the behind-the-scenes in-fighting and internal disagreements were reported exclusively in the Sunday Times. This accounts for the fact that this newspaper, in many instances, is the only source of information regarding the internal problems of the Labour Party. Eventually, the Labour Party could bear his probing no longer and had him barred from the sessions of the CRC.¹⁹⁶ Dissatisfied Labour Party councillors leaked information on a regular basis to these correspondents and the party found its discussions and plans splashed across the newspapers before it had even been debated and finalised. The party's own white CRC officials also

¹⁹³Howard Lawrence had been a member of the executive of the Labour Party in 1966. See LPSA, 1966 And All That.

¹⁹⁴P.A.29, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1 January 1975.

¹⁹⁵John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

¹⁹⁶See Debates of the CRC, vol. 36 (22 October 1976), 1360.

preempted many of its decisions by leaking information to the Federal Party. By the following day, the Federals had prepared themselves to counter Labour Party arguments, accusations and attacks on its plans and policies.¹⁹⁷

Thus, when the party won the election in March 1975, the government and its assorted agents brought their full weight to bear on the Labour Party. The torrent of criticism and the behind-the-scenes pressure from the government created a situation which the Labour Party had been ill-prepared to cope with. Newspaper reporters and government agents stalked the newly-elected councillors, trying to find out what their plans were. The caucus had to meet in secret, and between 20 March and 1 April, used four different venues for secret meetings. They also had to try to keep vital information from certain members of the caucus whom they suspected of being responsible for the leaks. These were mostly former Federal Party members who had won seats in the election on a Labour Party ticket.¹⁹⁸ It was therefore difficult under such conditions to plan a coherent strategy in the wake of the election victory, to discuss and assess the new CRC bill before parliament, and to formulate structured replies to criticism.

Eventually, the Labour Party decided that it had to try and salvage the situation and called an official meeting of the caucus on 2 April 1975 to plan long-term strategy. Aware that its recent measures might have antagonised the Labour Party which might then decide to carry out threats to disrupt the CRC, the government made certain conciliatory gestures in the week before this meeting. Firstly, the Minister of Coloured Relations pledged that the twenty persons to be nominated to

¹⁹⁷At a meeting of the NEC in May 1975, Sonny Leon had to take the unusual step of asking the caucus to display its confidence in him by treating all decisions taken by the party in the strictest confidence. See Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 12-13 May 1975.

¹⁹⁸John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

the CRC would consist of the "best men."¹⁹⁹ Two days later, the minister had two letters delivered by special courier to Sonny Leon.²⁰⁰ One letter congratulated the party on its success in the election. The minister also indicated his willingness to recommend the appointment of Sonny Leon to the chairmanship of the executive of the CRC if he was willing to accept the position. The second letter requested Leon to submit the names of persons for consideration for nomination to the CRC.²⁰¹ Neither of these steps were magnanimous gestures by the government. Firstly, it was expected that the leader of the victorious party would gain the chairmanship of the executive, and secondly, the offer of nominated seats would have made no difference to the Labour Party's position as the majority party. However, by taking these steps, the government was clearly trying to undo the harm done when it passed the bill allowing it to take control of the CRC. It hoped to smooth ruffled feathers and placate a hostile opponent which had the potential to further frustrate the government's coloured policy and cause it untold embarrassment.

Nevertheless, the offers in the letters created a new dilemma for the Labour Party. Having decided to remain in the CRC, it would have been foolish to reject the offers. However, if they were accepted, the Labour Party would play into the hands of those who accused it of collaboration and of working within a system it had previously rejected and tried to destroy. Besides, the Labour Party would be reneging on an earlier undertaking by its national executive in November 1969 never to serve on the CRC executive:

Twenty-six Labour Party members are now Councillors,

¹⁹⁹Rand Daily Mail, 25 March 1975.

²⁰⁰Cape Times, 28 March 1975.

²⁰¹Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.5., Minutes of Labour Party Caucus Meeting, 2 April 1975.

these Councillors can in no way escape from their duty to the Party, its Constitution and the electorate who rallied to the Party, by accepting positions on the C.P.R.C.'s governing body The Executive is no more than a servile instrument of the National Party ideology. Thus the Labour Party is necessarily forced by the character of the Council and by our own principled position to refuse to "govern." That is to say that we must remain in Opposition.²⁰²

In consultation with Allan Hendrickse, national chairman, and David Curry, deputy-leader, Leon dispatched a telegraphic reply to the minister:

Letters received (stop) prepared to consider question of chairmanship and nomination of members (stop) Reply dependent on your willingness to meet us before final passage of Bill and your release of intended further amendment.²⁰³

The contents of the letters had not come as a surprise to Leon, nor was his reply given on the spur of the moment. On 23 March, two weeks before the caucus met, Leon had received a letter from Richard van der Ross, founder and first leader of the Labour Party, congratulating Leon on winning the election. The letter advised Leon to accept the chairmanship of the executive and to appoint one or two Federal or non-Labour members to the executive in order to rule out party antagonisms. The letter further suggested that Leon ask for a quota, possibly half, of the nominated members. Van der Ross added: "If you concede basic cooperation, there is no reason why you should not get it." He concluded by urging the Labour Party to use the machinery of the CRC in order to advance the

²⁰²This was confirmed by the Labour Party's leader, Martin Arendse, in an address to the party's national conference, Cape Town, 4 April 1970. See also Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 140; Cape Times, 10 November 1969.

²⁰³Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.5., telegram from Sonny Leon to the Minister of Coloured Relations, 2 April 1975.

welfare of the people in the practical day to day areas.²⁰⁴ Van der Ross further invited Leon to show the letter to the party caucus.

The intrusion of Van der Ross into the affairs of the Labour Party is significant. He evidently felt very strongly about this matter and probably hoped that the letter, coming from someone of his stature and standing in the party and community, would influence the caucus sufficiently to allow for acceptance of these points.²⁰⁵ In the early 1960s Van der Ross had become discouraged by the futility of opposition to the basic direction of the government's coloured policy and argued that apartheid should be opposed and demands made within that framework.²⁰⁶ What Van der Ross advocated was a policy of working within the system.²⁰⁷ This became the underlying motivation behind the formation of the Labour Party. Thus, his letter of 1975 must be seen in this light: it was an invocation to Leon and the Labour Party to return to the original ideal and work within the system.

Although the minutes of the meeting do not indicate whether he did, the reaction of the members seems to indicate that Leon did not circulate the Van der Ross letter. As a result the telegram to the minister unleashed a storm of protest concerning the contents, and whether Leon had the right to take action on his own. He defended his prerogative to decide on the issues at stake, but resolved to follow the guidance of

²⁰⁴Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.3.2.2., letter from R.E.van der Ross to Sonny Leon, 23 March 1975.

²⁰⁵See Appendix II for profile of Van der Ross.

²⁰⁶T. Karis and G.M. Carter, From Protest to Challenge: A documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964, Vol 4 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), 162.

²⁰⁷Survey of Race Relations (1967), 7.

the caucus.²⁰⁸ Historically, the Labour Party was founded on the principle of opposing apartheid but had always intended working within the system. Leon's acceptance of the minister's offer was therefore a tacit admission that the Labour Party had dropped the pretence of opposition to participation in the CRC. The telegram to the Minister of Coloured Relations only confirmed that the party had returned to the ideals of its original founders. Furthermore, the discussions and decisions taken at the caucus meeting that April were to confirm that the Labour Party had indeed changed its position from outright opposition to one of acceptance of the principle of participation in separate structures. By 1975, then, the Labour Party had succumbed to government cooptation.

Although the caucus meeting had been called to discuss long-term strategy, initial discussion was dominated by the minister's offers and Leon's reply. The caucus debated whether it was competent to make decisions on subjects which concerned party policy. As party policy was the function of the national conference or the national executive committee, any decision by the caucus would mean a usurpation of the powers of those bodies.²⁰⁹ Certain members, sensing that Leon and a coterie of supporters were eager to push for acceptance of the chairmanship, pressed for the issue to be left to the forthcoming session of the NEC and cautioned that the minister's insistence that Leon reply by 4 April 1975 could be construed as an ultimatum or at least an attempt to dictate to the party and to force it into indiscretions which could create dissension in its ranks. Others felt that, having gained control of the CRC, it was logical to ensure complete control by accepting the chairmanship of the CRC executive as well as other executive positions. The argument was advanced

²⁰⁸Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.5., Minutes of Labour Party Caucus Meeting, 2 April 1975.

²⁰⁹Ibid.

that the caucus, consisting of elected representatives of the people, was competent to decide on the subjects under discussion. Besides, they argued, deferring a decision could be construed as fear, weakness, incompetence and inability to shoulder responsibility. Deferring the matter might also give the minister the excuse to appoint someone else.²¹⁰

When the subject of the chairmanship had been fully debated, the issue was put to the vote. A motion in favour of the caucus itself deciding whether Leon should accept the chairmanship of the executive was carried by 16 votes to 9. An attempt to refer the matter to the NEC was defeated by the same margin. David Curry and Dennis Young requested that their objections be recorded. A second motion allowing Leon to accept nomination as chairman of the CRC executive was carried by 17 votes to 10. There were, however, clear indications of divisions of opinion within the Labour Party about the wisdom of this move.²¹¹

Discussion concerning the question of nominated seats was even more heated. Attention was drawn to the party's consistent opposition to the concept of nomination. In 1969 the Labour Party had roundly condemned the government for nominating defeated pro-government members to the nominated seats and nominated members had been the object of constant ridicule and derision during the first CRC. The party had vilified the Federal Party for accepting nominated seats, had repeatedly insulted nominated members,²¹² and had resolved never to

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹Cape Times, 23 December 1975; Survey of Race Relations (1975), 17. John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993, states that Leon and a coterie of supporters were very eager to accept the chairmanship. Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, states that from 1975, Leon began to show a predilection to support government initiatives and promote the position of the "moderates" in the party.

²¹²for example, Debates of the CRC, vol. 23 (August 1973), 153, and vol. 27 (27 July 1974).

accept positions on the CRC executive. As recently as the 1975 election campaign, the party had condemned the practice of nomination and of defeated candidates accepting nomination. How would it now answer public criticism if the Labour Party itself accepted nominated seats? Furthermore, accepting nominations would lead to a tendency towards making the CRC work, which would mean accepting the principle of separate institutions and thereby, separate development. The supporters of nomination pointed out, however, that the party had a slender majority of one in the CRC and it would be able to consolidate its position by accepting nominations. Caucus members were reminded that the party had lost control of the CRC in 1969 because it did not have a sufficient enough majority to nullify the government's appointment of twenty pro-government members, which gave the Federal Party control of the CRC. It was strongly felt that the party ought not to let control slip out of its hands on this occasion. Besides, they argued, the party would be taking out insurance against defections. Councillors could then not hold the party to ransom.²¹³

The voting on this issue was even closer. A motion calling for the matter to be referred to the NEC was defeated by an amendment that the caucus agree to submit the names of persons to be considered for nomination to the CRC. The amendment was carried by 13 votes to 12. This discussion evoked such strong reactions that the party's deputy leader, David Curry, left the meeting before the vote was taken and seven members requested that their objections be recorded.²¹⁴ That this

²¹³Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.5., Minutes of Labour Party Caucus Meeting, 2 April 1975.

²¹⁴These were H.J. Hendrickse (party chairman), N.S. Middleton (deputy-chairman), F.E. Peters (national secretary), D. Young, J. Nash, C. Hendrickse and R. Arendse. Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, states that Leon's open adoption of a "moderate" stance resulted in the resignation of Curry and Hendrickse. Although they immediately withdrew their resignations, this rift marked the beginning of friction between these leaders.

debate even took place is evidence of the gradual cooptation of the Labour Party into apartheid structures. By this stage, it was no longer debating whether to take part in the system, but to what degree. At stake was not the issue of accepting or rejecting instruments of separate representation but how firmly it could entrench itself in these structures.

This was however not the end of the matter. When the NEC met in Uitenhage a few days later, it agreed that the Labour Party should use the CRC to effect the total emancipation of the coloured people. It was also agreed that Leon accept the chairmanship of the CRC's executive committee. However, regret was expressed that nominations for the nominated seats had been submitted to the government and Leon was called upon to withdraw these.²¹⁵ Leon decided however to abide by the original caucus decision and declined to withdraw the nominations. The Labour Party thus committed itself to working within the system. It only differed in the extent to which it would allow itself to be coopted.

The wounds caused by these two issues appeared to have healed before the first session of the second CRC in September 1975, but it was clearly evident that the Labour Party was struggling to come to terms with the dilemma of how to oppose apartheid, yet serve in an apartheid institution. The great debate in coloured politics since 1943 - collaboration vs. non-collaboration - had finally caught up with the Labour Party. Yet, so gradual was the process of incorporation into the system that the party did not even consider the possibility that it was being coopted into apartheid structures. It still considered itself to be a party of protest and confrontation and the foremost opponent of the policy of separate development and instruments of that policy. The Labour Party still felt that by serving in the CRC, it was fulfilling its objective of destroying that body from within.

²¹⁵Survey of Race Relations (1975), 18.

However, by taking the decision to remain in the CRC; by accepting the chairmanship of the CRC executive and the rest of the positions on the executive, as well as the nominated seats in the council, the Labour Party strengthened a body it had vowed to destroy. It was now actively engaged in making the CRC work. By electing to "govern" and by strengthening its hand, the Labour Party had completed a volte face when compared to its stated position in 1969. At a meeting of the NEC in November 1969, the Labour Party had adopted a resolution that members view the CRC only as the final instrument created to deprive coloured people of direct representation in parliament. The resolution further stated that "failure to denounce this function of the council will forever endanger the struggle for the right to elect or be elected to the genuine organs of democratic Government of the republic."²¹⁶ The resolution also contained a telling condemnation of the CRC executive. Yet, at the very next election, the Labour Party not only agreed to "govern," but to accept positions on the executive.

The gradual yet steady abandonment of its previously-established position created tensions in the Labour Party, which finally surfaced at the caucus meeting in April 1975. When the second CRC commenced business in September 1975, the party's discomfort was clearly evident. The Labour Party had found the role of "opposition" comfortable during the first CRC. From their seats across the council chamber from the ruling Federal Party, Labour councillors had launched ceaseless and scathing attacks on the pro-government parties, the CRC and the government. They had given vent to a wide array of grievances ranging from housing shortages to apartheid laws,²¹⁷ and had mercilessly attacked the nominated

²¹⁶Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 140.

²¹⁷Venter, Coloured, 449. Nash points out that this would not have been possible in any other forum but the CRC and that the Labour Party was justified in using the CRC as a safe platform.
(continued...)

members and heaped scorn on Tom Swartz, chairman of the CRC executive. Now the tables were turned: the Labour Party was now the ruling party. It had allowed its defeated candidates to accept nomination;²¹⁸ its leader had accepted the appointment as chairman of the CRC executive; and all the members of the executive were from its own ranks. Moreover, despite threats to destroy the CRC, the Labour Party had succeeded, instead, in entrenching itself in this body.

It was not long before opponents exploited this situation. At the opening of the second CRC on Friday, 5 September 1975, students demonstrated outside the council chambers. Their posters challenged and abused Labour Party members, accusing them of showing "your true colours" and, "you're nothing but a sell-out in disguise."²¹⁹ Speaking during the no-confidence debate during this session, the leader of the Federal Party, Willie Bergins, also attacked the Labour Party for "promising to abolish the Council when they came to power, then collaborating with the apartheid system they previously condemned."²²⁰ The Labour Party's "rule" was however short-lived. On 9 September 1975, Leon refused to deliver the budget speech and presented a motion adjourning the council to

²¹⁷(...continued)

Professor Vosloo of Stellenbosch University however considered the Labour Party's opposition a success for the government's creation of a separate political forum for coloureds because, by allowing free and frank public debate, and by giving coloureds a platform for "vocal and vigorous opposition", the CRC gave notice of the end of unilateral political control by whites over coloureds. W.B. Vosloo, "The Coloured Policy of the National Party," in South African Dialogue: Contrasts in South African Thinking on Basic Race Issues, ed. N.J. Rhodie (Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 377.

²¹⁸Despite the generous offer by the Minister of Coloured Affairs, and the eager acceptance of nominated seats by the Labour Party, only four Labour Party members were eventually assigned nominated seats. Thus, the government was not so magnanimous after all.

²¹⁹Sunday Times, 7 September 1975.

²²⁰Cape Times, 9 September 1975.

March 1976.²²¹ He explained his reasons in a short statement the following day:

In view of the fact that the Budget before the House was not prepared, nor accepted, by the present Executive, and in view of the fact that the Budget speech, which I am expected to present this morning, does not represent the views of this side of the House, I merely move this morning the motion standing in my name.²²²

Leon explained that he had taken this step because of the government's failure to respond to the numerous decisions of the council during the period 1969-1974, and that, furthermore, "the Budget and Part Appropriation motion reflects absolute discrimination ... and does not provide us ... with any form of parity We expected that after the Prime Minister's statement that there would be a gradual ... narrowing of the gap Instead, the gap had broadened."²²³ David Curry, deputy leader, amplified Leon's remarks, adding that "the Council is tired of going to the Government year after year with requests that are never met. That is why the Council is adjourning and that is why the Labour Party has been abstaining from debates. We are tired of talking."²²⁴

The Labour Party had, of course, targeted the CRC budget since the first one was presented in 1970. It had always given the same reasons for boycotting budget debates: that the budget was discriminatory and that the CRC had no say in its composition. Because of the actions of the Labour Party and

²²¹The matter of the budget was already discussed at the NEC meeting in July 1975 but no decision had been taken. It was decided to leave it to the caucus to determine what strategy would be adopted. This appears to have been done just before the budget speech was due to be presented. Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 19-20 July 1975.

²²²Debates of the CRC, vol. 31 (10 September 1975), 202-3.

²²³Ibid, (12 September 1975), 303.

²²⁴Argus, 12 September 1975.

the fear that the party might gain control of the CRC, the government had, in 1972, revoked the CRC's powers to pass the budget and had vested these in the hands of the Minister of Coloured Relations. However, the Labour Party had at the outset realised that the budget was crucial to the functioning of the CRC. Before the establishment of the CRC, the Department of Coloured Affairs, through the nominated UCCA, had been directly responsible for finances relating to coloured people. However, the budget had always been drawn up according to the provisions of the policy of separate development. Coloured pensions were lower than those of whites and coloured teachers were paid less than their white counterparts. While coloureds were unhappy with this arrangement, they had no forum for expressing their grievances. When the CRC was established, the government retained the right to draw up the budget but expected the Federal Party to "do its dirty work" by passing inadequate budgets and paying discriminatory pensions and salaries.²²⁵

In fact, one of the many advantages of the CRC was that the government could perpetuate the inadequacies of apartheid, yet not have to accept sole responsibility for it. That burden was passed over to the CRC. This was the reason for the Labour Party's opposition to the budget during the first CRC. It had a legal platform to voice coloured dissatisfaction and it did so. Now, in 1975, the Labour Party was the governing party and the government was expecting it to pass a grossly inadequate budget. Therefore, the Labour Party's action in 1975 comes into perspective: it had to refuse to pass the 1975 budget otherwise its protest in the preceding years would have been called into question. Accepting the budget would have been political suicide because acceptance meant the Labour Party would be responsible for "paying" discriminatory pensions and salaries. The Labour Party would then, in effect, be condoning the principle of salaries and pensions

²²⁵Burger, 5 November 1975; Star, 6 November 1975; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

based on colour.

However, the party had also been stung by criticism of its decision to stay in the council and accept nominated seats, the executive chairmanship and seats on the executive, as well as by accusations that it was collaborating with the apartheid system. What made it even harder to bear was that the jibes of collaboration came from the pro-government Federal Party, which, after the 1975 election, appeared to be more anti-CRC than the Labour Party.²²⁶ Thus, refusing to pass the budget would also deflect such criticism. Another factor to be considered was that the Labour Party knew that its action would force the government's hand. The party hoped that, in view of the possibly damaging consequences, the government might rethink the budget and provide more money. Such a step would boost the Labour Party's flagging image. On the other hand, if the government did decide to pass the budget itself or authorise someone else to do so, it would be playing into the hands of the Labour Party which had always accused the government of foisting a discriminatory budget on a group which had had no say in its composition. As such a move would undoubtedly draw criticism from many quarters, the party could claim that it was carrying out its declared aim of using the CRC to embarrass the government, while at the same time proving the CRC to be a toothless, powerless institution which had no meaningful political role for coloured people. Thus, the Labour Party's action in 1975 constituted a gamble.

The gamble appeared to pay off when statements of support immediately began to pour in from many quarters. Regional branches of the party sent messages of support for the party's stand.²²⁷ Even the "coloured" newspaper, the Cape Herald, a staunch critic of the Labour Party, applauded the move and

²²⁶See for example, Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 186-87.

²²⁷See, for example, Daily News, 10 September, 1975, Argus, 12 September 1975, Cape Herald, 12 September 1975.

called for the CRC to be closed down because "it achieves very little..., is utterly powerless, ... has failed as an instrument to better the lot of the Coloured people ... has failed as a platform (and) has failed to politicise Coloured people."²²⁸ The newspaper heaped scorn on the CRC because it gave a totally wrong image of coloured people:

By taking Coloured individuals, by billing them as a 'Group', by putting them on a stage to scrap it out in public and show a delighted audience of bigots what a disunited and immature 'Group' they are, the Government has merely succeeded in projecting a totally wrong image of Coloured people.²²⁹

The Federal Party attempted to profit from the Labour Party's actions. Willie Bergins, national leader and Jac Rabie, Transvaal leader, announced that they would arrange meetings with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Coloured Relations. Their intention was to work out ways whereby the Federal Party could either continue the session of the CRC and carry out its duties, or establish common ground with the government whereby it could be considered the de facto representatives of the coloured people, and be available for consultation on matters affecting this group. On 29 October 1975, a deputation of Federal Party members subsequently met the Prime Minister and informed him that they were prepared to cooperate with him to start a new dispensation for coloured people.²³⁰

The government reacted to the Labour Party's adjournment by declaring that the Minister of Coloured Relations would, in the interim, do the work of the CRC himself. The CRC Amendment Act of March 1975 had made provision for just such

²²⁸Cape Herald, 12 September 1975.

²²⁹Ibid.

²³⁰Cape Times, 30 October 1975.

an eventuality.²³¹ Sonny Leon responded that it was "incredible (that) in these times of political turmoil the Government has to rely on an Act of Parliament to suppress our demands." He reiterated the demands of the Labour Party for full citizenship for coloured people and equality with whites, adding: "This has been repeatedly rejected by the Government and I see little point in continuing apartheid camouflage."²³² The scene was therefore set for the ultimate confrontation which the Labour Party had been looking for since 1969. Unless the government now acceded to its demands, it would refuse to continue participation in the council. As the ruling party, such an action would paralyse the CRC. If the minister decided to run the CRC himself or nominate defeated pro-government members to fill the Labour Party seats, the CRC, already short on credibility, would become the object of even further ridicule. If the government called another election, the Labour Party would contest it and thereafter, members would again refuse to take their seats. Any attempt by the minister to then take over the powers of the CRC or delegate it to the Federal Party or someone else, would render the CRC even more irrelevant than it was already becoming.

The budget, due to be passed on 10 September 1975, was designed to provide funds for the CRC for the fiscal year starting 8 November 1975. Thus, if the budget was not passed by then, funds to pay for the services supported by the CRC would theoretically run out. In an attempt to reconvene the CRC and get the budget passed, the Prime Minister called for a meeting with the CRC executive.²³³ Vorster expected to discuss the future of the CRC, the executive's refusal to reconvene it, and the proposed multi-racial cabinet council. The Labour Party, however, saw the political future of the

²³¹Rand Daily Mail, 12 September 1975.

²³²Ibid.

²³³Star, 21 October 1975; Rand Daily Mail, 24 and 25 October 1975.

coloured people as the focus of discussion. Leon was emphatic that he expected meaningful concessions from Vorster otherwise the stalemate between the government and the CRC would be complete. He warned that an "unsatisfactory" meeting would lead to a total breakdown in communication between coloureds and the government. The Labour Party prepared a 36-point questionnaire which it expected Vorster to respond to.²³⁴ However, the four-hour-long talks ended in deadlock. The delegation demanded that Vorster spell out the details of his white-coloured cabinet council and to show them what the government's coloured policy intended for coloured people. Vorster indicated that the details of the proposed council still had to be worked out but that he hoped the Labour Party would assist in this task. As far as the government's coloured policy was concerned, Vorster refused to consider solutions to the problem of coloured citizenship, and instead invited future generations to solve this problem.²³⁵ "Where else in the Western democratic world," queried Venter, "would the electorate tolerate such a ridiculous refusal to face reality and the decision to bequeath it to posterity?"²³⁶ The delegation declined to participate in any plan unless they could be shown where it would lead. Leon explained that "the Prime Minister made it clear the Government will not depart from its policy of separate development. Therefore in no circumstances can we expect to be part of the law-making process of our country."²³⁷ David Curry was even more blunt: "The Government wants us to compromise without any compromise

²³⁴Rand Daily Mail, 20 October 1975.

²³⁵Eastern Province Herald, 13 December 1975.

²³⁶Venter, Coloured, 532. Vorster appears to have continued a tradition set by Smuts who, in the 1940s, also refused to spell out the goal of the government's coloured policy in respect of coloured political rights, replying instead: "You and your children will arrive in the end." See War on Traitors, pamphlet issued by Anti-CAD Committee, 1943.

²³⁷Argus, 21 October 1975.

from the Government's side. We are not prepared to do it."²³⁸

On the day following this meeting, Sonny Leon launched a bitter attack on the government, claiming that relations between the government and coloured people had reached a "flashpoint."²³⁹ He warned that coloured people were "frustrated to the eyebrows" with their indefinite second-class status and would go to any length to attain equality with whites. The time was past for "pussyfooting."²⁴⁰ He then called for a referendum among white voters on the issue of full citizenship rights for coloureds and threatened that if the government continued to impose second-class status upon coloureds, they would have no choice but to join forces with blacks.²⁴¹ He threatened that "the Blacks and with them the Coloured people realised that their only weapon was their labour, and unless there was a swift change of direction in the Government's race policy, this weapon would be used."²⁴² Leon's "black alliance" threat met with a cool response from his proposed allies, as yet unnamed. Zulu Voice praised him for his courage in "standing up to Pretoria's bureaucracy" and for confronting the government on the issue of citizenship rights, but castigated him for using the formation of a black alliance with which to threaten the government. The newspaper indicated that blacks resented being used by ambitious politicians or any other persons for their own ends.²⁴³

On 23 October 1975, two days after Leon's threat, the

²³⁸Ibid.

²³⁹Cape Times, 22 October 1975.

²⁴⁰Argus, 21 October 1975.

²⁴¹Argus, 21 October 1975. See also Daily Dispatch, 8 November 1975 in which Norman Middleton, deputy-chairman of the Labour Party, repeated this threat.

²⁴²Cape Times, 22 October 1975.

²⁴³Zulu Voice, 22 November 1975.

government tried a new tactic. The Minister of Coloured Relations, Schalk van der Merwe, announced that, under the powers granted to him by the CRC Amendment Act, he had decided to appoint Sonny Leon to "appropriate funds" to continue the services of the CRC. This made Leon responsible for passing the CRC's R158 million budget. By doing so, the minister placed Leon in an invidious position. If the budget was not passed by 7 November 1975, the CRC would have no funds to pay its 25 000 employees which included 21 700 teachers in the employ of the coloured education department, 1 000 clerical workers, and 148 000 coloured pensioners and grantees.²⁴⁴

Willie Bergins of the Federal Party painted a picture of frustration, chaos and suffering which would result from the Labour Party's refusal to pass the budget. He warned that the coloured people would lay the blame squarely at the door of the Labour Party, as the welfare of thousands depended on the outcome.²⁴⁵ While this was probably political posturing by

the leader of the Federal Party, Alatheia Jansen indicates that pensioners did in fact suffer in October and November 1975. Shopkeepers refused to provide pensioners with goods "op die boekie," because they had read in the newspapers that pensioners might not receive pensions after November.²⁴⁶

This was therefore a shrewd move by the government because if the budget was not approved and funds actually ran out, the Labour Party would in all likelihood face a backlash by those adversely affected. Yet, if Leon decided to pass the budget, another section would certainly heap opprobrium on the Labour Party. Thus, whereas the Labour Party had gambled on embarrassing the government and strengthening its image, it now appeared as if the gamble had backfired and the government had succeeded in creating a situation in which the Labour

²⁴⁴Argus, 23 and 24 October 1975; Survey of Race Relations (1975), 20.

²⁴⁵Ibid, 24 October 1975.

²⁴⁶Alatheia Jansen, interview, 6 January 1994. Because pensions were guaranteed, shopkeepers, especially in the rural areas, allowed pensioners to purchase goods on credit.

Party would draw fire from both sides.

On 24 October, the day following Van der Merwe's announcement, the CRC executive held an emergency meeting and decided unanimously that Leon should not implement the budget and rather refer it back to the minister.²⁴⁷ On 29 October, they met again and confirmed their decision and conveyed it to the minister on the afternoon of 31 October, seven days before the deadline for passing the budget. The decision triggered a wave of response from many quarters. Telegrams of support, especially from teachers whose salaries were in jeopardy, began arriving at Leon's home. Well-wishers applauded his decision and urged him to stand firm.²⁴⁸ Messages varied from: "You are prepared to sacrifice so are we," and, "reject, reject, reject," to, "call their bluff."²⁴⁹ Telegrams from Labour Party branches gave Leon and the executive a "unanimous vote of confidence,"²⁵⁰ while others proclaimed, "We are proud of our leader."²⁵¹ Messages such as, "Leon and Exec Bravo for your stand the oppressed are one with you carry on God be with you,"²⁵² were typical of most telegrams.

Support also came from other quarters. The Cape Professional Teachers' Association (CTPA),²⁵³ the largest "coloured"

²⁴⁷Argus, 24 October 1975; Burger, 31 October 1975.

²⁴⁸Sunday Express, 9 November 1975.

²⁴⁹The Sonny Leon Papers, C.2.4.6.2., has a large selection of telegrams dated from about 28 October 1975 onwards and the overwhelming majority express support for the party's stand.

²⁵⁰For example, Sonny Leon Papers, Keimoes Branch to Leon, 15 November 1975.

²⁵¹Ibid, Carnarvon Branch to Leon, 12 November 1975.

²⁵²Ibid, Orange Free State region to Leon, 12 November 1975.

²⁵³The CTPA was formed in 1967 when two small conservative teacher organisations, the Cape Teachers' Association and the Teachers' Educational and Professional Association combined. See Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 273.

teacher organisation in South Africa, issued a press statement in which it approved of the Labour Party's stand, because it brought the grievances of coloured teachers to the attention of the government. If that was the case, the statement read, then the initiative had not been in vain. The CTPA expressed support for Leon and hoped that the situation would spur the government to phase out the inequality between white and coloured teachers.²⁵⁴ Pensioners who stood to suffer most if the CRC ran out of money, also expressed support. A pensioner from Carnarvon summed up the sentiments of many in this message: "Ons was bereid om te offer want ons weet dat u vir almal se regte gestaan het."²⁵⁵ However, others were aware that they might suffer. Typical of such telegrams was this unsigned admonition: "Pass the Budget under protest. Think of our poor people who will go hungry."²⁵⁶

Letters to editors by and large supported the Labour Party. Most English-language newspapers applauded the party's stand on the budget and felt that the party was fully justified in refusing to pass a grossly inadequate budget. Comments were accompanied by articles outlining the history of injustices inflicted upon coloured people by the policy of separate development.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, most newspapers were unanimous in their opinion that the government would not allow teachers, employees and pensioners to go without their salaries and pensions. They felt that the government was only playing a political game by letting the Labour Party "stew" in the belief that it would suffer in the eyes of the coloured electorate, coloured public servants and pensioners in

²⁵⁴Burger, 8 November 1975; Rapport, 9 November 1975.

²⁵⁵Sonny Leon Papers, C.2.4.6.2., (n.d.)

²⁵⁶Ibid, C.2.4.6.3., (n.d.)

²⁵⁷See for example, Argus, 1 November 1975; Eastern Province Herald, 1 November 1975.

particular, and coloured people in general.²⁵⁸ At the appointed time, they reasoned, the minister would pass the budget himself or appoint someone else to do so.²⁵⁹

These assurances did not seem to have any effect on the Labour Party because the intense pressure which it had been subjected to by the government and supporting press, and the host of its own critics, gave it the impression that it was in the midst of a grave crisis. The government played up the crisis by indulging in a war of words, warning Leon that it would be "most regrettable" if he did not pass the budget.²⁶⁰ The Minister of Coloured Relations issued grave warnings and made official statements which heightened tensions and made it appear that the Labour Party and Sonny Leon were on the brink of committing serious offences against the government and the country. For example:

As the Council, because of its early adjournment on September 12 was denied the opportunity to pass the budget, I decided to empower Mr Leon in his capacity as chairman of the Council's executive to do so on my behalf. Until such a time as I revoke the authority conferred upon Mr Leon, he is in fact responsible for exercising those powers and is the only person that could legally do so. I have no intention of exercising these powers myself as it would be tantamount to usurping functions of the CRC and its chairman.²⁶¹

That of course was not true as the government had, in 1972, revoked the CRC's final say in the approval of the budget and vested that power in the Minister of Coloured Relations. The CRC Amendment Act of 1975 also gave the minister the power to

²⁵⁸For example, Jakes Gerwel, lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, in an interview with Rapport, 9 November 1975.

²⁵⁹See Eastern Province Herald, 1 November 1975; Sunday Express, 9 November 1975; Trust, January 1976, 10-11.

²⁶⁰Cape Times, 3 November 1975.

²⁶¹Ibid.

carry out the duties of the CRC, or its executive or its chairman. What the minister was therefore doing was to extract as much mileage out of a crisis it had initiated, to embarrass the Labour Party. The Labour Party, on the other hand, hoped to use the crisis to restore its credibility in the eyes of "its people" and other critics. It therefore responded in similar "crisis language" to the minister, calling his statement political blackmail "and an attempt to discredit Mr Leon in the eyes of his people."²⁶² In a statement issued by the CRC executive, the party pledged its full support for Leon, adding that it was the government's responsibility to ensure that teachers, pensioners and CRC employees were paid because "die Uitvoerende Bestuur en die VKR regeer nie die land nie."²⁶³ In fighting language, the statement accused the minister of trying to dictate to the Labour Party on how it should act. This, said the statement, was an exposure of the government's policy of naked "baasskap." The statement closed in a note of defiance: "Ons weet dat ons die steun van ons mense het. Goedkeuring van die begroting beteken aanvaarding van diskriminasie en is 'n belediging vir die waardigheid van die mense wat ons verkies het."²⁶⁴

The Minister of Coloured Relations retaliated by signalling his intention of using the 173 000 people dependent on the CRC budget as his final weapon to force Leon to pass the budget.²⁶⁵ The Labour Party appeared by then to have found the measure of the government and resisted the pressure.²⁶⁶

²⁶²Burger, 5 November 1975.

²⁶³Ibid.

²⁶⁴Ibid.

²⁶⁵Star, 6 November 1975.

²⁶⁶Much of this pressure came from white officials assigned to work for the Labour Party in the CRC. They actively sought to undermine the Labour Party and passed on secret information,
(continued...)

Norman Middleton reiterated that the CRC executive was not prepared to do the government's "dirty work" by passing a "discriminatory budget."²⁶⁷ As the November 7 deadline approached, the government, Afrikaans newspapers and pro-government parties in the CRC became more strident in their criticism. The Federal Party seemed to succumb to the orchestrated hysteria by requesting the government, as a matter of urgency, to remove Leon from office and appoint a more competent person so as to ensure that "bruinmense nie ellende en ontbering ly nie."²⁶⁸ The call to remove Leon from the chairmanship of the CRC executive was significant. Unlike other members of the executive who were chosen by the CRC, the chairman was appointed by the Minister of Coloured Relations. The CRC Act of 1964 made provision for the removal from office of the chairman at any time by order of the State President. Failing to carry out an instruction from the minister gave him the right to dismiss the chairman. Thus, the refusal by Leon to pass the budget, after an explicit instruction by the Minister to do so, rendered him liable to dismissal.²⁶⁹ This was an action which the Labour Party appeared to have anticipated but it did not feel that the government would go that far.

By 7 November, neither side had yielded. On that day, the CRC was technically bankrupt. The Labour Party waited for some reaction from the government but none came. The next day, the party's NEC met in Kimberley, Leon's home town, amidst a stream of support for Leon and his executive from representatives and their branches. Local newspapers assured

²⁶⁶(...continued)
 decisions and impending actions to the government and the CRC opposition parties. John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993, ruefully states: "We were the governing party but we could not even trust our own officials."

²⁶⁷Burger, 5 November 1975; Star, 6 November 1975.

²⁶⁸Burger, 8 November 1975.

²⁶⁹Argus, 24 October 1975; Sunday Express, 26 October 1975.

the party that it had the solid support of coloured people.²⁷⁰ Prominent coloured leaders and organisations such as N.S. Kearns, founder member of the party; Jakes Gerwel, later to become rector of the University of Western Cape, and the CTPA, sent messages of support. Allan Hendrickse warned the government not to attempt to dismiss Leon, adding dramatically: "Touch Sonny Leon and you touch the whole Coloured community in South Africa."²⁷¹ Bolstered by the show of solidarity, Leon stated defiantly that he would call an election before he signed the budget.²⁷²

After the NEC meeting ended on Sunday, 9 November, Leon embarked on a tour of selected cities to get support for his party's stand. He addressed a hastily-arranged, but well-attended meeting in Uitenhage near Port Elizabeth on the Monday,²⁷³ followed by another the next day at Tiervlei in Cape Town, where he was "given a standing ovation by nearly 1 000 people."²⁷⁴ The air of crisis and confrontation was heightened by calls to people not reliant on government salaries or pensions to assist and feed those who would find themselves in difficulty because of the delay in authorising the new budget.²⁷⁵

The government's long-awaited response came on 11 November 1975 with an announcement by Schalk van der Merwe:

²⁷⁰For example, Diamond Fields Advertiser, 8 November 1975; The Friend, 8 November 1975.

²⁷¹Eastern Province Herald, 11 November 1975.

²⁷²Daily Dispatch, 8 November 1975; Rand Daily Mail, 11 November 1975. However, in terms of the CRC Act, Leon had no power to call an election.

²⁷³Eastern Province Herald, 11 November 1975.

²⁷⁴Argus, 12 November 1975.

²⁷⁵The Friend, 8 November 1975; Eastern Province Herald, 11 November 1975.

I ... wish to announce that the State President has deemed it fit (a) to remove Mr L S Leon from his post of chairman of the executive of the Coloured Representative Council as from November 11, 1975 in terms of Section 17(2)(A) of the Coloured Persons Representative Council Act No.49 of 1964; (b) To appoint Mrs A A Jansen as from November 12, 1975 as chairman of the council's executive in terms of Section 17(1)(A) of the abovementioned act. I have furthermore decided to authorise Mrs Jansen in terms of Section 22A of the Act to make the necessary funds available for the continued services of the Council ... and to revoke Mr Leon's appointment in this regard as from November 11.²⁷⁶

The Labour Party responded immediately to this move by announcing that the rest of the members of the CRC executive would resign with immediate effect.²⁷⁷ Leon responded to his dismissal by issuing a press statement:

I have no regrets. What I have done, I have done honourably which is much more than can be said by people in other quarters. I want to say that the respect of my people means to me much more than the position of Chairman of the Executive. This exercising of power by the Minister of Coloured Relations, Dr Van der Merwe, makes a sham of the whole detente of the Prime Minister, for on the South African scene it becomes obvious that detente demands acceptance, without question, of the policy of Separate Development.²⁷⁸

The Labour Party tried to capitalise on the groundswell of support following Leon's dismissal by embarking on a nationwide campaign of meetings.²⁷⁹ 30 000 people attended meetings in the first ten days following Leon's dismissal.²⁸⁰ Over a period of thirty days, thirty-six meetings were held

²⁷⁶Argus, 12 November 1975.

²⁷⁷Survey of Race Relations (1975), 21.

²⁷⁸Sonny Leon Papers, D.1.1.1., Press Statement, 11 November 1975.

²⁷⁹Diamond Fields Advertiser, 15 November 1975.

²⁸⁰Sunday Times, 23 November 1975.

throughout the country with a total attendance of 62 500.²⁸¹ Far from discrediting Leon in the eyes of the coloured people, it appears as if his dismissal had actually strengthened the party and given it much wider popular support among coloureds. Numerous newspaper articles,²⁸² letters to editors, statements and remarks by prominent coloured leaders,²⁸³ the reaction of the government,²⁸⁴ and the buoyant and confident attitude of the party leaders,²⁸⁵ attest to the fact that the Labour Party was indeed "riding high on the support of their followers and others"²⁸⁶ and enjoyed support not previously evidenced in such a prolonged, sustained and public manner.

Thus it appears that if the government had hoped that by creating a crisis and then dismissing Leon, it would discredit the Labour Party, then its plan had backfired. The Labour Party, in turn, had hoped to embarrass the government and increase its support and thus appeared to have succeeded. David Welsh, senior lecturer in African government at the University of Cape Town, agreed that the Labour Party had profited from the exercise, adding that "far from being discredited by his dismissal, Mr Leon's political standing has

²⁸¹Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., Secretary's Report to National Conference, 3-6 January 1976. These meetings were reported in a variety of newspapers such as the Sunday Times, 23 November and 7 December 1975; Post, 15 November 1975; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 15 November 1975; Eastern Province Herald, 17 November 1975; Daily Dispatch, 18 November 1975; Argus, 2 December 1975.

²⁸²The budget crisis and the response of coloureds to Labour Party-held protest meetings was reported extensively in newspapers for more than a month following Leon's dismissal.

²⁸³As reported in a variety of newspapers. The Sonny Leon Papers contains a number of letters and telegrams of support.

²⁸⁴See for example, Cape Herald, 22 November 1975; Star, 19 November 1975; Weekend Post, 15 November 1975.

²⁸⁵For example, Daily News, 12 November 1975; Rand Daily Mail, 14 November 1975; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 15 November 1975; The Friend, 20 November 1975.

²⁸⁶Sunday Times, 10 November 1975.

risen surprisingly. The Coloured people's only political weapon has been to try and embarrass the Government. They have done so pretty effectively."²⁸⁷

Clearly, Leon's refusal to pass a discriminatory budget, and his adjournment of the CRC struck a responsive chord among many coloureds. Disillusioned voters who had seen the Labour Party renege on an election promise to boycott and destroy the CRC looked to the budget crisis with renewed hope. Many who had abstained from voting in 1975 felt that the Labour Party was going to do what it had promised in 1969, viz. destroy institutions of separate representation by refusing to allow them to work. Anti-government activists saw in the crisis an opportunity to confront the government and force it to come forward with an acceptable political solution to the problem of coloured political rights. However, there were those who saw it another way. They questioned the party's motives regarding the adjournment and the budget crisis. Hassan Howa, chairman of the South African Cricket Board of Control, suggested that the Labour Party had for a long time stumbled from crisis to crisis, seeking confrontation to justify its existence and its presence in the CRC and the budget crisis was just another such ploy:

Most of the confrontations the Labour Party has had with the government were, in fact, really confrontations with the party's own stated principles. The fact that they are in the CRC had placed them in the position of having to have confrontations, to take stands to cover their deviations from their party principles as well as those of the rest of the people.²⁸⁸

Trust magazine suggested that the Labour Party had lost its

²⁸⁷Rand Daily Mail, 14 November 1975.

²⁸⁸Sunday Times, 10 November 1975. During the 1970s, when the government sought to restore sporting links with the rest of the world, Hassan Howa urged other sporting nations to continue to resist such overtures, gaining prominence with the slogan, "No normal sport in an abnormal society".

impetus and the potency it had shown earlier. The party was going downhill and needed a diversion to give it time to regroup, replan and regain its position in the coloured community:

Many political observers suspect that the real reason for the adjournment was that the Labour Party found themselves with their backs to the wall and the only line of action open to them was to adjourn the Council and so gain time to replan their line of action."²⁸⁹

This accusation had some credence but others may consider this sound strategy and political astuteness on the part of the Labour Party. If the party was indeed in a corner, the budget crisis gave it an opportunity to redeem itself and renew and increase its support. Yet, while, the crisis appeared to be in line with the Labour Party's earlier policy of confrontation, the party did not, at any time before or during the crisis, repeat its promise to cripple the council by boycotting it. In fact, the Labour Party's action had not been intended to destroy the CRC as an institution of separate representation, because when the CRC convened again in March 1976, the Labour Party was present. Furthermore, even though the chairmanship of the CRC executive had been taken away from it and executive members had resigned their seats, the Labour Party later reclaimed the seats on the executive.²⁹⁰

If the Labour Party was serious in its opposition to the CRC and the government's policy of separate political representation, the budget crisis presented the party with the best opportunity to cripple the CRC, mobilise opposition and

²⁸⁹Trust (January 1976), 11; See also Cape Herald, 15 November 1975.

²⁹⁰Prior to Leon's dismissal, the CRC executive consisted of Sonny Leon, chairman, and four senior party members, viz. Allan Hendrickse, David Curry, Norman Middleton and George Fortuin. After Leon was dismissed, Alatheia Jansen, a government-nominated independent member in the CRC, took the chair. The Labour Party then dropped Fortuin and allocated his seat to Leon. Fortuin took exception and resigned from the party. Survey of Race Relations (1975), 21.

show the government the extent of coloured rejection of "dummy institutions."²⁹¹ According to Jakes Gerwel, the budget crisis offered the Labour Party an "unprecedented chance of 'going to the nation' with a tangible case of mobilising anti-apartheid energy in the Coloured people and of laying its foundation as a mass movement which in any event could be the only justifiable raison d'etre for the Labour Party."²⁹² Thus, a statement to the effect that it would not return to the CRC would have rallied the vast majority of coloured people to its side. That the party did not do so calls into question its actions regarding the budget and the adjournment of the CRC: The Labour Party did not take this action as part of its promise to cripple the CRC, it did so to deflect criticism of its decisions after the election to strengthen the CRC and its participation therein.

Undoubtedly, the budget crisis provided the Labour Party with the opportunity to build a broad-based popular movement. However, it let the opportunity slip and its popularity soon began to dissipate. For example, the party's national conference in Upington in January 1976 was characterised by dissatisfaction and a potentially divisive split. The conference was torn between the adoption of a "moderate" line leading towards negotiation with the government, and a more "militant" stance proposing greater confrontation and polarisation.²⁹³ By the end of the three-day conference, it transpired that the Labour Party had been captured by a "radical" wing bent on intensifying the party's policy of confrontation. The leaders of this wing were identified as Allan Hendrickse and Norman Middleton, chairman and deputy-chairman respectively.²⁹⁴ Some CRC members claimed that these

²⁹¹Cape Times, 10 November 1969.

²⁹²Star, 20 November 1975.

²⁹³Sunday Times, 18 January 1976.

²⁹⁴Ibid.

leaders were deliberately making matters difficult for moderate CRC members so that they would leave the party. This would then wipe out the party's majority, forcing it to go into opposition.²⁹⁵ This allegation was repeated four months later when Hendrickse and deputy-leader, David Curry, were accused of forcing conservative CRC members to resign so that the Labour Party could lose its majority and become the opposition in the council.²⁹⁶ The Labour Party leadership appeared to be uncomfortable in the role of the "ruling" party. Its weaknesses, lack of policy and absence of organisation were cruelly exposed. The inability of the party to initiate action and plot a definite course for itself and coloured people was clearly evident. The party therefore preferred to return to the role of a "reaction" party. It felt safer attacking the government, the CRC, apartheid and the Federal Party, and reacting to government policies as it had done for the first five years of the CRC. This stance came in for scathing condemnation by the Cape Herald:

They showed yet again that the Government initiative is the only thing that keeps them going. When the Government kicks them, they have something definite to do - howl in chorus. But when the Government ignores them they can only squawk around in circles, getting nowhere, like a gramophone record that is stuck.²⁹⁷

Nevertheless, the events of 1975 appeared to signal a marked shift in Labour Party policy. While it embarked on a highly-publicised campaign of confrontation with the government over the budget, the party had already shifted from a policy of confrontation to one of cooperation. The budget crisis merely disguised the traumatic transition from one policy stance to another.

²⁹⁵Ibid, 25 January 1976.

²⁹⁶Ibid, 2 May 1976.

²⁹⁷Cape Herald, 11 January 1977.

Chapter 4THE STRUGGLE OVER COLOURED POLICY, 1975-1980

The Labour Party's election success and the budget crisis in 1975 boosted the popularity of the party considerably but at the cost of bringing divisions into the open. Between 1969 and 1975, the two factions, the initially small and insignificant "moderate" grouping which later grew in numbers and influence, and the powerful and influential "militant" element which later began to be overshadowed, took shape. However, these two factions were not clearly defined in the early years of the Labour Party and many members often supported both positions as the Labour Party struggled to come to terms with its role in the CRC and in coloured politics.¹ At the time of the 1975 CRC election, these two factions had settled into specific ideological positions: the "militant" position based on conflict and confrontation and a "hard-line" attitude to the government; and the "moderate" position of working within the system and utilising all institutions of separate development with the aim of improving the position of coloured people; hoping eventually to gain equality with whites.² The "militants" were mostly from the Cape urban areas and were better educated. By 1975, this faction was in the minority but it comprised elements in the party leadership and caucus and its influence was considerable. Among the "militants" were founder-members of the party and those who had campaigned and fought the first election in the heady atmosphere of anti-apartheid and anti-government rhetoric. They had been able to influence the party to adopt the policy of boycott and confrontation which the Labour Party displayed during the first CRC. The "moderates" were mainly conservative, unsophisticated and less-educated members who

¹For example, David Curry was initially considered a "moderate" but later came to be identified with the "militants". Sonny Leon shifted between the two positions often during his first five years as leader.

²Whisson, "Coloured People", 55.

were more "collaborationist" in their approach. They were mostly from the rural areas of South Africa and the urban areas of the Orange Free State and Transvaal.³ This group increasingly felt that dialogue was preferable to confrontation and that the party should drop its opposition to the council and participate fully in all bodies created by the government.⁴ This accounts for the increasing tendency in the party, especially after 1972 to soften its attitude to participation in the CRC and promote dialogue with the government. However, because they were better-educated and well-spoken, the "militants" were often able to hold sway at conferences, resulting in their position most often being reported in the media. Thus the public image of the Labour Party which often emerged was a hard-line, confrontationist one. "Moderates" did not often publicly oppose the "militants" for fear of appearing ignorant and unsophisticated, but when it came to voting, their numerical superiority often counted. In public, therefore, the Labour Party was confrontationist but in private, increasingly collaborationist.

The "moderates" had won their first major victory in 1972 when they were able to defeat attempts by the "militants" to withdraw from the CRC.⁵ After the party's election victory in 1975, the party's role in the CRC had once again become the subject of heated debate when the caucus met in April of that year. The "moderates" again won when the party accepted the chairmanship and seats on the CRC executive as well as the offer of nominated seats in the council. The budget crisis in

³In areas where they were a minority in a largely African-dominated city or province, coloured voters in 1969 and 1975 tended to support the Federal Party and other parties which promised them protection from racial integration. This factor is discussed more fully below.

⁴Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 231.

⁵P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, East London, 6-8 April 1972.

the latter part of 1975 papered over the cracks and allowed a temporary unity. However, this unity was shattered in 1976 when the idea of the liaison committee was resurrected, and a struggle for the heart of the Labour Party ensued. The "militants" had no intention of reconstituting the liaison committee, refused to accept the system whereby the CRC executive merely made recommendations to the government, and claimed that the restoration of full political rights for all South Africans was a prerequisite for cooperation with the government.⁶ "Moderates" on the other hand felt that the CRC, the liaison committee and other bodies should be utilised in the struggle for the freedom of coloured people. They were prepared, for the time being, to settle for less than what the party demanded.⁷ This group was therefore prepared to abandon boycott and confrontation and meet with the prime minister.⁸

The Labour Party's reaction to the liaison committee accurately mirrored the divisions in the Labour Party and the struggle between the two opposing elements. When the idea of liaison was first suggested in 1971, the Labour Party rejected it outright. The "militants" appeared to have succeeded in their objections when the government acknowledged in 1974 that this committee was an unsatisfactory solution. The government had increasingly come to believe that if the CRC commanded executive powers and shouldered more responsibility for enforcing its legislation by means of its own administration, this might dampen hostility to that body and perhaps win over the Labour Party to the principle of separate institutions. Vorster therefore made another effort to find a suitable instrument which would salvage the CRC as a credible and viable coloured parliament. In a speech at the opening of the CRC in November 1974, Vorster announced:

⁶Argus, 27 March 1976.

⁷Sunday Times, 28 March 1976.

⁸Post, 4 April 1976.

That there should be a liaison at the highest level ... is already accepted policy. What requires further thought is how this liaison can, in practice, take place to mutual satisfaction As I see it, the current machinery for liaison should be further developed to a more satisfactory and more significant instrument. I therefore think that the time has come to transform the Liaison Committee into a consultative Cabinet Council.⁹

Vorster suggested that members of the CRC executive be elevated to cabinet status and, with an equal number of white cabinet ministers, function as a cabinet council under the chairmanship of the prime minister. This body would attend to all matters of interest common to whites and coloureds. Furthermore, the Administration of Coloured Affairs would also be organised into various departments or directorates. Each directorate would fall under the authority of a CRC executive member as in the case of cabinet ministers in the white parliament.¹⁰ The concept of a cabinet council was taken a step further in January 1975 when the Prime Minister met a delegation from the CRC. The delegation, which was comprised of non-Labour Party members, submitted a memorandum which stated that their interests would best be served by direct representation in the central parliament.¹¹ The mainly Federal Party delegation, by indicating its preference for direct representation, was taking a dramatic step by intimating its disenchantment with the concept of separate representation as represented by the CRC. This concept constituted the cornerstone of Federal Party policy and the reason for its existence. Vorster rejected their submission on the grounds that it would lead to political chaos.

⁹Opening speech by the Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster at the seventh session of the CRC, 8 November 1974 in Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 96-97. See also Debates of the House of Assembly (12 May 1975), col. 578.

¹⁰Survey of Race Relations (1974), 11; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 95,97.

¹¹"Memorandum submitted by the Liaison Committee of the C.P.R.C. to the Prime Minister", January 1975, in Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 353-61.

However, he appeared to have taken cognisance of this dramatic shift in the Federal Party's stance by agreeing to extend the powers and functions of the CRC. It would control thirteen portfolios instead of five. Each executive member would become a cabinet minister, responsible for his own department, and have the power to initiate legislation without the prior approval of the Minister of Coloured Relations.¹² Vorster saw the cabinet council as the solution to the problem of sharing executive power without having to share the same legislative body. In a speech in Ceres in March 1975, he expressed his satisfaction with the cabinet council concept:

I can report here tonight that where we struggled for years with the problems that you cannot have two or three sovereign parliaments in one country, I believe we have found the unique solution. Each group should have exclusive say in its own affairs, but spheres of common interest could be discussed in the inter-cabinet council and each group's own legislative body.¹³

The cabinet council thus contained the germ of the tricameral system and established the concept of "own affairs" and "general affairs" which were to be at the heart of the new constitutional dispensation inaugurated eight years later.¹⁴

The Labour Party's reaction to the cabinet council was ambivalent. The party at first declined Vorster's invitation to attend the January meeting because it was not interested in "window-dressing talks."¹⁵ The party expressed its opposition to the cabinet council because it would be able to block the wishes of coloured people by means of the casting vote of the

¹²Prime Minister's response to "Memorandum submitted by the Liaison Committee of the C.P.R.C." in Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 361-64; Survey of Race Relations (1975), 12.

¹³Rand Daily Mail, 17 March 1975.

¹⁴Debates of the House of Assembly (24 June 1976), cols. 10473-74.

¹⁵Survey of Race Relations (1975), 11.

prime minister. Sonny Leon viewed this council as being "no more than advisory machinery in the formulation of the Prime Minister's policy decisions."¹⁶ He proposed instead that an interim body be established to deal with matters of mutual white-coloured concerns until his party's aim of direct representation in parliament was achieved. Both the white and coloured legislative bodies would voluntarily delegate sovereignty to this body on matters which were of mutual concern.¹⁷

Having forthrightly rejected the cabinet council idea, the Labour Party then did an about-face in July 1975 and tentatively accepted the cabinet council as a replacement for the liaison committee. The party felt that the cabinet council offered a more effective opportunity than the CRC to put pressure on the government. This council would be able to enlarge the coloured budget and enable coloured ministers to apply pressure to prevent legislation adversely affecting coloureds going through parliament, or at the very least, have it watered down. A month later, the Labour Party returned to its earlier criticism of the cabinet council with Leon stating that it was doomed unless it became a decision-making body. The party not only expressed its rejection of the cabinet council but also rejected representation on the Road Transportation Board, Prisons Board, Hospitals Board and other statutory bodies.¹⁸ Leon later cited the "apparent double standards" of the Prime Minister as justification for their rejection - that while Vorster advocated discussions between black and white in South West Africa and Rhodesia, he was

¹⁶ Ibid, 18.

¹⁷ Star, 26 March 1975; Survey of Race Relations (1975), 18.

¹⁸ Star, 22 and 24 August 1975; Debates of the CRC, vol. 31 (10 September 1975), 203.

reluctant to do the same in South Africa.¹⁹

In September 1975, the party's NEC reaffirmed its opposition to the cabinet council and all government policies affecting coloureds.²⁰ In his address to the party's national conference in January 1976, Leon stated that all racial groups should meet together to work out a common destiny for all. The cabinet council was a "separate package deal" and a "subtle means of getting us tied up to a system that denies what is given to others."²¹ He warned delegates that the cabinet council and other political concessions were mere "sops" and were designed to detour the coloured people in their demands for full citizenship rights.²² Thus, even before the proposed council had reached the drawing board, the Labour Party had already rejected, then accepted, then rejected it again. The reason for this vacillation can be attributed to the struggle between the "militants" and "moderates" in the party.

It was not only in the Labour Party that an ideological struggle was taking place. While Vorster insisted that coloureds would not return to parliament and that the cabinet council was the answer to their demands,²³ a confidential

¹⁹Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., Speech by Sonny Leon to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976; Daily News, 7 January 1976; Star, 7 January 1976.

²⁰Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 4-7 September 1975.

²¹Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976.

²²Ibid.

²³Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 93-96, opening speech by the Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster at the seventh session of the CRC, 8 November 1974; Labour Party Accession, Fred Peters, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976; "Colouredism: The Last Grovellings; The End of a Political Obscenity", Educational Journal (January-February 1977), 6-8; Debates of the House of Assembly (28 January, 1977), col. 376.

study group of the Cape National Party advocated full citizenship rights for coloured people. However, the study group conceded that coloureds would have to pass through a transitional stage in which it would be linked to the white parliament through the cabinet council. Such a transitional period would prepare the white electorate for the inevitability of full coloured citizenship.²⁴ Thus, the cabinet council began to assume a position of great significance in the evolutionary development of the government's coloured policy.²⁵

Almost a year passed after the cabinet council was first mooted but no concrete steps were taken to implement the proposal. The government seemed hesitant to proceed with yet another body which appeared to be doomed before it was even formed. It appeared to be waiting for some evidence of acceptance by the Labour Party. As this party controlled the CRC and its executive after March 1975, its cooperation was vital to the success of this council. When Sonny Leon refused to pass the CRC budget in September 1975 and adjourned the CRC to March 1976, the government's coloured policy was in danger of collapsing and the proposed cabinet council seemed the only way out to salvage a rapidly deteriorating situation. Vorster thereupon called for a meeting with the leaders of the Labour Party. On the eve of the meeting which was to be held in Pretoria on 20 October 1975, the two sides became involved in a war of words. Buoyed by the encouraging response to his recent action regarding the budget, Sonny Leon warned that a total breakdown in communication between the government and coloureds was close and could follow an "unsatisfactory meeting" with Vorster. He added: "On this issue our position is clear. If the Government's offer included real concessions the CRC would accept it, but only provided the Coloured people

²⁴Sunday Times, 19 October 1975.

²⁵Debates of the House of Assembly (22 June 1976), col. 10136.

accepted it too."²⁶ The Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, entered the fray, stating that he saw no advantage in coloureds having direct representation in parliament. He warned Nationalists to stick to party policy, pending the report of the Theron Commission.²⁷

The meeting on which Vorster had staked so much ended in a complete impasse. The Labour Party delegation asked Vorster to show them where the political road for coloured people would lead to, by spelling out the details of his plans for the cabinet council. Vorster replied that he could not do so because he had not formulated any plans. He was hoping that these could be worked out mutually. Vorster tried in vain to get the coloured leaders to participate in a plan where the final answers could only be reached by negotiation. However, he made it difficult for them to accede to his request by conceding that the area of negotiation was limited. Leon made it clear that the delegates would not accept the government's proposals because of the latter's refusal to depart from its policy of separate development. The Labour Party thereupon decided that it would report to its members and ask for a mandate on the government's proposals.²⁸ Leon called, at the same time, on the government to also test white opinion by calling a referendum on full citizenship for coloured people.²⁹

The rejection of the cabinet council exacerbated the struggle in the party. The "moderates" felt that the cabinet council should have been accepted as an interim measure. Some members

²⁶Star, 20 October 1975.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Argus, 21 October 1975.

²⁹Cape Times, 22 October 1975.

of the CRC executive also supported this view.³⁰ A split in the party appeared imminent. The position of the "moderates" was made even more uncomfortable by the announcement that a deputation of Federal Party members had met the Prime Minister soon after his meeting with the Labour Party leaders and informed him that they were prepared to cooperate with the government to start a new dispensation for coloured people. This included full acceptance of the proposed cabinet council.³¹ A significant percentage in the Labour Party appeared to be speaking the language of the Federal Party and a convergence of interests appeared likely at some stage.

Even though the Federal Party and "moderates" in the Labour Party were convinced that the cabinet council was a major step forward on the road to political rights for coloured people, the proposed cabinet council had a fatal flaw which seemed to condemn it in the eyes of those who might have been prepared to accept the government's bona fides. The council was designed to function on the basis of consensus.³² White and coloured representatives would discuss matters of mutual concern and try to reach consensus without a vote being taken. If they could not reach consensus a final decision would be taken by the chairman. In terms of Vorster's plan, the chairman would be the prime minister. The final decision would thus always be the prerogative of whites because a coloured could never become chairman of the cabinet council. The "militants" in the Labour Party therefore saw the cabinet council as nothing else than a new tactic to perpetuate and preserve white domination and that this body would be as

³⁰Sunday Times, 26 October 1975. Middleton points out that after the 1975 election, Sonny Leon was more inclined to support a "moderate" stance, and the other members of the executive had a battle trying to keep him "in line". Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

³¹Cape Times, 30 October 1975; Argus, 31 October 1975; Sunday Times, 2 November 1975; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 17 June 1976.

³²Debates of the House of Assembly (12 May 1975), col. 5817.

powerless as the CRC to effect meaningful change on behalf of coloured people.³³

Eventually, it was not this aspect that doomed the cabinet council but Sonny Leon's dismissal in November 1975 for refusing to pass the budget. This action generated such bitterness and hostility that the Labour Party summarily rejected the cabinet council, considering it an issue never more to be entertained.³⁴ As far as the party was concerned, the CRC had been destroyed and with it the concept of the cabinet council.³⁵ Vorster tried one last ploy. He declared his willingness to continue talks with any CRC members, irrespective of party affiliation, who were prepared to discuss his offer of coloured representation on the cabinet council. He even went so far as to offer to provide credibility for the proposed council by passing on to it responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the Theron Commission when it issued its report the following year.³⁶ However the government's action in dismissing Leon brought the "moderates" back into line as the party was swept along on a wave of popular support. The budget crisis unified the party for the first time in years.

The appointment of Alatheia Jansen by the Minister of Coloured Relations to replace Leon as chairman of the CRC executive only served to further exacerbate the already strained relations between the government and the Labour Party, and

³³Cape Herald, 8 November 1975. This aspect of consensus was later to become a core feature of the President's Council and the basis of the "general affairs" concept in the new tricameral system.

³⁴Evening Post, 10 November 1975; Sonny Leon Papers, J.1.10., Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 16 November 1975.

³⁵Weekend Post, 15 November 1975.

³⁶Sunday Express, 16 November 1975.

appeared to harden the resolve of the party's leaders.³⁷ Jansen was a schoolteacher by profession but at the time of her nomination to the CRC, she was employed by the Administration of Coloured Affairs in a department dealing with family and women's issues. She came to prominence after establishing social work in coloured communities in the Cape in the 1960s. She had also founded the South African Union of Homemakers' Clubs in 1961, an association which still functions today in coloured communities throughout South Africa.³⁸ Jansen also served as principal of the Eoan Group, a cultural organisation established in the coloured community in 1934 and widely known for its renditions of Italian operas in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁹ Her prominence and standing in the coloured community attracted the attention of the government and she was nominated to the CRC after the 1975 election and sat as an independent.⁴⁰

Jansen's appointment as Leon's replacement as chairman of the CRC executive was not without intrigue. After a meeting between the government and the Labour Party on 20 October 1975 to discuss the premature adjournment of the CRC and the deadlock over the budget, Schalk van der Merwe decided to take the precautionary step of finding a replacement, should Leon have to be dismissed. He subsequently called on Jansen and informed her that Leon had until 9 November to pass the budget, whereupon he would be dismissed. He asked her if she would accept the appointment if that should happen. Jansen

³⁷The CRC Act referred to the head of the CRC executive committee as "chairman" and made no provision if that person should be a woman. Jansen was appointed as "chairman" in terms of the proclamation by Schalk van der Merwe and this was a title she bore throughout her term as head of the executive. See Argus, 12 November 1975.

³⁸A.A. Jansen, The Story of the South African Union of Homemakers' Clubs (Cape Town: SAUHC, 1986), 3.

³⁹Alathea Jansen, interview, 3 November 1993; Venter, Coloured, 350-52.

⁴⁰Alathea Jansen, interview, 6 January 1994.

agreed on condition she remained an independent in the council. To this day, Jansen does not know why she, and not an experienced member of one of the parties in the CRC, was approached. The government probably decided that it was not worth courting the same type of reaction when it had appointed the defeated Federal Party leader, Tom Swartz, to the chairmanship of the CRC executive in 1969.⁴¹ Alatheia Jansen was "neutral, an independent, and a woman with no political baggage."⁴² By midnight 9 November 1975, the final deadline for Leon to respond to the ministerial instruction to sign the budget passed without reaction from the Labour Party. On the morning of the 10th, Van der Merwe phoned Jansen to ascertain whether she was still willing to accept the appointment, and immediately prepared a press statement to be released that day at midnight. When the news broke on the morning of the 11th, the press converged on Jansen's house and waited until she returned from a women's meeting in Ceres. The sudden media attention was something Jansen and her family were totally unprepared for: "I did not know what the reaction to my appointment would be. Nevertheless, I went into the post knowing what the Labour Party and others wanted to do, but I couldn't be pickled about it."⁴³ Jansen did not suffer any personal condemnation at the beginning. David Welsh, senior lecturer in African government at the University of Cape Town, summed up the general feeling when Jansen's appointment became known: "For all I know she is a worthy person, but she is politically unknown."⁴⁴

Alatheia Jansen had very strong views about the CRC and its role in the political life of coloured people. She fully supported the view that coloured people should accept the CRC

⁴¹See chapter 2.

⁴²Alatheia Jansen, interview, 6 January 1994.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Rand Daily Mail, 14 November 1975.

and similar bodies because "you must take the little you can get to eventually get what you want."⁴⁵ She took a kinder view of the government's motives in creating the CRC than other opponents had, seeing the CRC as the government's plan to train and educate coloured people to a higher level and prepare them for equal citizenship some time in the future. The CRC would also serve as a training ground for coloured politicians against the day when they would serve their people in "higher councils." She therefore accepted nomination to the CRC because she saw it as an opportunity "to get what I could for the coloured people." Regarding her decision to accept the appointment as chairman of the executive, Jansen says that she decided to accept it in order "to be there to see what is going on and to educate our people into the realm of politics."⁴⁶

After Jansen was appointed chairman, she immediately signed the budget which the Labour Party had rejected, an action which prompted Sonny Leon to respond in strong language: "The Government's cynical dishonesty has been exposed once and for all. The fact that the Minister has all the powers he needs to override and perform all the functions of the council is evidence enough that this unholy experiment must be brought to an abrupt end." He added: "We want to bring this farce to an end ..." because the CRC had never been anything else but a "puppet body."⁴⁷ This marked the beginning of a testy and ill-tempered relationship between Jansen and the members of the Labour Party who filled the rest of the seats on the CRC executive. At the outset, the Labour Party barely concealed their dislike of her. In his reaction to his replacement by Jansen and her action of signing the budget, Leon indicated that if the minister called the council into session the Labour Party would fill the benches of the governing party,

⁴⁵Alathea Jansen, interview, 6 January 1994.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Rand Daily Mail, 14 November 1975.

but, he queried caustically: "Where will Mrs Jansen sit? She is neither a member of the governing party nor of the opposition Federal Party."⁴⁸ On her part, Jansen had no sympathy for Leon and the manner of his dismissal: "If Leon was willing to accept the chairmanship of the executive, he had to accept the responsibility, and passing the budget was his administrative duty. It was an administrative matter and had nothing to do with politics."⁴⁹

The four Labour Party members who served on the executive with Jansen did not conceal their resentment of her. They tried her patience by turning up late for the weekly executive meetings. She in turn would reprimand them in the manner of a school teacher. This infuriated them and Jansen admits: "I was cheeky and stubborn. They probably also resented serving under a woman and I was not going to let them push me around."⁵⁰ The members would show their frustration and resentment by banging doors when they left committee meetings. Saks agrees that Jansen was good-natured and well-intentioned, and "was also, as her exasperated opponents discovered, thick-skinned and extremely stubborn."⁵¹ Middleton confesses that the Labour Party made life miserable for Jansen,⁵² and Nash admits that party councillors "gave a her a rough ride" in the CRC, but even then, they privately condemned the government for taking "this nice lady and throwing her to the wolves."⁵³ However, despite the criticism and the Labour Party's attitude towards her, Alatheia Jansen's competence as an administrator was never called into question.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Alatheia Jansen, interview, 6 January 1994.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 143-44.

⁵²Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

⁵³John Nash, interview, 30 August 1993.

In March 1976 Jansen called a meeting of CRC members to discuss resumption of liaison between the CRC and the government.⁵⁴ The purpose of the meeting was to elect a committee which would provide a link with the government.⁵⁵ This attempt to resurrect the aborted CRC liaison committee was vehemently opposed by the Labour Party and it issued a directive to its members to boycott the meeting. Sonny Leon stated that the only liaison the party would recognise would be "direct representation in Parliament."⁵⁶ However, this "hard-line" stance forced the hand of some "moderates." Disgruntled members met with certain Federal Party and CRC Independents to consider the formation of a new party to challenge both the Federal and Labour Parties. When a deputation of CRC members led by Jansen met Hennie Smit the new Minister of Coloured Relations in May 1976, three Labour Party councillors defied the party's directive and joined the delegation.⁵⁷ Under pressure from the "militants," these councillors resigned from the party.⁵⁸ When David Curry, the party's deputy-leader also had talks with Smit and Jansen, the "militants" tried to have him suspended from the party.⁵⁹ However, the "militants" soon came to realise that their position was threatening to split the party. They subsequently softened their stance by accepting "confrontation through dialogue."⁶⁰ The threat by "moderates" to break from the party and form a new party abated for the time being.

⁵⁴Sunday Times, 28 March 1976.

⁵⁵Post, 4 April 1976.

⁵⁶Sunday Times, 28 March 1976; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 30 March 1976.

⁵⁷Sunday Times, 18 April 1976.

⁵⁸Sunday Times, 9 May 1976; Sonny Leon Papers, D.3., Labour Party information circular, (n.d.); Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 3 January 1977.

⁵⁹Sunday Times, 16 May 1976.

⁶⁰Ibid.

Despite the dissension within the majority party in the CRC, the government was clearly aware that its coloured policy lay in tatters. In the space of a few months, all its attempts to dampen coloured political aspirations by providing alternative but separate political outlets had failed. The CRC had been adjourned; the budget rejected; the chairman of the CRC executive had been dismissed; the entire CRC executive had resigned in protest; the government had had to resort to appointing a nominated member of the CRC as chairman and had instructed her to pass the budget; and the Minister of Coloured Affairs had effectively taken over the powers of the CRC and was running that body through an appointee. Thus, at the beginning of 1976, the government was virtually back where it had started in 1969. The CRC and the cabinet council, as a final arrangement for coloureds, had come to a dead-end. The government now looked hopefully to the Theron Commission to salvage its coloured policy and provide the impetus for the next phase in the policy of separate representation.

In January 1973, Vorster appointed an 18-member commission chaired by Professor Erica Theron, a retired University of Stellenbosch academic.⁶¹ The commission's brief was to investigate the progress of coloured people in a number of spheres, to identify points of contention in those spheres and make suitable recommendations to the government.⁶² This was the first commission to survey this field since the Wilcocks Commission of 1934. The appointment of the commission once again highlighted the problems which the government had long been wrestling with in its attempts to implement its coloured policy. The formation of the CRC in 1969 had been heralded by the government as a breakthrough and the final solution to the

⁶¹Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured Population Group (Theron Commission).

⁶²Theron and Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 1; Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 163; Debates of the House of Assembly (2 February 1978), col. 8.

coloured question. Then came the liaison committee and cabinet council. Yet the government was aware that these steps were unacceptable to the majority of coloured people, but because of its long and implacable opposition to coloured representation in a central parliament, the government was left with no option but to keep coming up with new formulae until it found one which suited both the National Party and which would be acceptable to the majority of coloured people.

The single-minded determination to "fit the Coloureds into the neat logic of separate development" caused divisions in Nationalist ranks as well.⁶³ A faction within the National Party considered coloured people to be a "nation in the making" who therefore needed their own country, a coloured homeland, in order to develop to the status of a nation. Apartheid and the belief that coloureds were a separate "nasie-in-wording" decreed that this group be separated from whites.⁶⁴ But coloureds had no territory where they could reach sovereign independence. Because they had no homeland, the moral base of separate development did not exist.⁶⁵ The government then offered parallel development as a compromise.⁶⁶ However, many Nationalists came to regard this as morally indefensible.⁶⁷ They saw the various institutions

⁶³Sunday Times, 20 June 1976.

⁶⁴Pretoria News, 7 December 1970; Survey of Race Relations (1971), 6.

⁶⁵Burger, 26 October 1963; Star, 6 August 1971. The creation of a coloured homeland was never seriously considered, although the idea was kept alive in the Transvaal for many years, especially by Andries Treurnicht, editor of Hoofstad. See also M.G. Whisson and H.W. Van der Merwe, (eds), Coloured Citizenship in South Africa (Cape Town: Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies, University of Cape Town, 1972), 1-2; Venter, Coloured, 524-25; B. Pottinger, The Imperial Presidency - P.W. Botha, the First Ten Years (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988), 151; Vosloo, "The Coloured Policy of the National Party", 379.

⁶⁶Cape Times, 1 July 1971.

⁶⁷Burger, 1 July 1971.

of separate representation such as the UCCA and CRC struggle ineffectually through lack of real powers. Moreover, coloureds were increasingly driven away by the Group Areas Act and other apartheid laws which were perceived as rejection by whites.⁶⁸ This led those Nationalists to plead for the political integration of coloured people with whites and their acceptance as "Brown Afrikaners."⁶⁹ This argument was strongly supported in 1971 by academics from the Universities of South Africa, Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Stellenbosch and Cape Town as well as writers, professional men and prominent farmers in the Boland who pleaded for full equal citizenship for coloured people.⁷⁰ Opposition to integration was just as vehement. The proponents of continued separation argued that integration would erode the very foundation of the philosophy of separate development.⁷¹

At the height of the debate the CRC was in a state of near-collapse, barely two years after it had been established.⁷² This factor induced a mild panic in Nationalist circles.⁷³

⁶⁸Goldin, Making Race, 135.

⁶⁹ Sunday Times, 20 June 1976. Cape Nationalists had already argued in 1961 that the future of coloureds and whites were intertwined and that a separate homeland for coloureds was not feasible. Verwoerd, however, had insisted that coloured people were a separate "nation-state". See Goldin, Making Race, 133; Cape Times, 23 November 1964.

⁷⁰Transvaler, 31 July 1971; Hoofstad, 31 July 1971; Argus, 5 August 1971; Star, 6 August 1971; Burger, 26 August 1971.

⁷¹Transvaler, 31 July 1971; Hoofstad, 31 July 1971; Burger, 2 and 5 August 1971; Star, 6 August 1971; Argus, 6 August 1971. Despite chiding the academics for precipitating a division in Afrikaner circles, Burger did not repudiate the "integrationists".

⁷²Rapport, 26 March 1972.

⁷³See, for example, Survey of Race Relations (1971), 8-9; S.P. Cilliers, Appeal to Reason (Stellenbosch: University Press, 1971), i-vii; P.S. Coertze, Die Afrikaner Volk en die Kleurlinge (Pretoria: HAUM, 1983), 138-39; Argus, 9 July 1971; Hoofstad, 31 July 1971; Burger, 2 and 26 August 1971.

N. Rhoodie of the University of Pretoria suggested that an umbrella constitutional body in which whites, Indians and coloureds would be represented, would have to be established eventually to solve the present problems.⁷⁴ A.B. du Toit in a doctoral thesis, advocated that coloureds be represented in parliament by their own people.⁷⁵ W.A. de Klerk, editor of Die Transvaler, argued that coloureds and Indians should participate jointly in a council which handled communal affairs.⁷⁶ D. Worrall, National Party Member of Parliament, suggested that white South Africa would have to consider transferring power "on the basis of adult suffrage with representation in different parliaments corresponding to different parts of the country."⁷⁷

A number of books and articles by well-known Afrikaner academics, such as S.P. Cilliers, J.H. Coetzee and D.P. Botha, also appeared at the time, urging Afrikaners to re-think their political attitudes in respect of coloured people.⁷⁸ The Afrikaanse Calvinistiese Beweging's Woord en Daad of April 1971 urged in an article, entitled "Volk? Sonder Land?", that coloureds be treated as citizens with political rights equal to that of whites.⁷⁹ Andries Treurnicht placed the importance of the coloured question in perspective: "Whether we

⁷⁴Sunday Times, 1 August 1971.

⁷⁵A.B. Du Toit, "Politics and Ethics in South Africa: A Study in the identification and evaluation of political alternatives", (D.Phil thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1974).

⁷⁶J. Kane-Berman, South Africa: The Method and the Madness (London: Pluto Press, 1979), 172

⁷⁷D.Worrall (ed), South Africa: Government and Politics (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1971), 351. Worrall's suggestion came very close to the concept of the tricameral system which Worrall himself had a hand in developing when he chaired the President's Council constitutional committee in 1981-82.

⁷⁸For example, Cilliers, Appeal to Reason; Coetzee, The Coloured Challenge; Botha, Die Kleurling en ons Kleurlingbeleid. See also Educational Journal (January-February 1977).

⁷⁹Survey of Race Relations (1971), 8.

acknowledge it or not, the National Party's policy of separate development will succeed or fail with the implementation of its coloured policy."⁸⁰ It was becoming obvious that the position of coloured people had become a source of embarrassment to the government which was now coming under heavy pressure from within its own ranks to act on the issue. This ideological battle within Afrikanerdom and the National Party, the expressed frustration of coloured people and the Labour Party, and the perceived failure of the CRC as a political instrument to appease the coloured clamour for political rights, led to Vorster appointing the Theron Commission.⁸¹ The appointment of this commission removed a thorny issue from the party's agenda for the time being and contained a growing revolt in party ranks.⁸²

When the appointment of the commission was first announced, it elicited negative reaction from a broad spectrum of South Africans. The Labour Party argued that the needs and wishes of coloured people were well-known and had been stated on many occasions by community leaders. The appointment of a commission was therefore merely a device for postponing yet again the removal of discrimination based on colour and a solution to meet the political aspirations of coloured people.⁸³ Others viewed the commission with scepticism. The previous "Coloured" commission had resulted in the formation of the CAC, the first instrument of separate representation. Yet, the lot of the coloured people had not improved. The findings of other commissions of inquiry in the past into other matters had been rejected by the government which itself had appointed those commissions. It was thus an inescapable fact that when the government wanted to sideline an issue and

⁸⁰Hoofstad, 23 April 1971.

⁸¹Sunday Times, 20 July 1976.

⁸²Goldin, Making Race, 137.

⁸³Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 32.

remove it from public scrutiny, debate and criticism, it appointed a commission of inquiry. However, despite the initial criticism, the work of the commission grew in importance as it set about preparing its report. Frequent reference was made to it by members of parliament and the cabinet, as well as by the news media. Great expectations were aroused throughout the period of the three years that it took to compile the report, and the public awaited the publication with keen interest and growing anticipation. Coloured people held high hopes that the commission's findings would restore them to their rightful place alongside whites, politically and socially. The importance of the commission in the eyes of all concerned can be gauged from the fact that every piece of legislation or conjecture regarding the future of coloured people was met with the reaction: "Wait for the Theron Report."⁸⁴

Apart from investigating the economic and social problems affecting coloured people, the commission also looked closely at their political status and future. It invited all parties to comment and make submissions in respect of the role of the CRC in coloured politics.⁸⁵ The Labour Party was the only party to refuse to cooperate with the commission.⁸⁶ It could not accept that coloured people were a separate "population group" from whom full citizenship rights had to be withheld and it was therefore pointless to examine them as a separate

⁸⁴Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 363; Theron and Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 3; Weekend Post, 15 November 1975; Rand Daily Mail, 15 November 1975; S.A. Financial Gazette, 5 March 1976; Oggendblad, 4 June 1976.

⁸⁵N.P. Arends Accession, Acc. 136, Letter from J.B. du Toit, Secretary of the Theron Commission, 30 November 1973. (Arends was one of the coloured members of the Theron Commission).

⁸⁶Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 9-11 February 1973; Theron and Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 3; Sunday Times, 25 January 1976.

population and political group.⁸⁷ Sonny Leon explained in an address to the party's national conference: "My submission to you is that unless subpoenaed, we refer them to the debates of the CRC which has all the evidence required to convince them of the desires of the people."⁸⁸ Yet, despite the Labour Party's conviction that the appointment of the commission was not motivated by a desire to improve the lot of coloured people, on the surface, it did appear to be a genuine attempt to try to find answers to the dilemma of their political future. For the first time, a significant number, six in all, of representatives from the people who were the subject of a commission's examination were actually appointed to serve on that commission,⁸⁹ although none of them were considered opponents of the government and its policy of political separation as applied to coloured people, except perhaps for Van der Ross.⁹⁰ The white membership looked independent too in the sense that the government had steered clear of the temptation of appointing National Party politicians. Although eleven were Nationalists and one was from the United Party, only two were members of parliament.⁹¹ The commission's brief

⁸⁷Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, 225.

⁸⁸Sonny Leon Papers, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Durban, 20 April 1973.

⁸⁹Abdullah Abdurahman had been the sole coloured member to serve on the Wilcocks Commission.

⁹⁰The coloured members were R.E. van der Ross, J. Rabie, A.J. Arendse, S.I. Arendse, H.M. Beets and J.S. Feldman. Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 341; Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976; Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 1. Despite a record of being anti-government and anti-separate development, Van der Ross nevertheless accepted the CRC and similar institutions as opportunities for coloured people to advance toward the goal of equality with whites.

⁹¹These were N.G. Treurnicht and W. Kingwill of the National and United Parties respectively. The other white members were F.H. Badenhorst, G. Cronjé, J.E. de V. Loubser, A.S. Meyer, J.H. Pretorius, C.D. Roode, S.J. Terreblanche, C. van den B. Uys, G.J. van Zyl and W.B. Vosloo. The 13th white member, Erica Theron
(continued...)

was also wider than that of any previous commission and it was expected that a major portion of its report would deal with socio-economic issues.⁹²

The real interest in the commission centred on its investigations into, and recommendations on coloured politics. It was this aspect that disturbed the Labour Party. The commission was part of South Africa's separate development framework. If its findings did not accord with the stated intentions of the Labour Party regarding full citizenship and direct representation in parliament, the party would have justified its refusal to cooperate on the grounds that the commission was just another government attempt to dupe coloured people. On the other hand, if the commission's recommendations did not fit into the framework of separate development, the government would be faced with the dilemma of rejecting the recommendations of a commission it had itself appointed. Accepting the recommendation would mean going against its own policies. The government had repeatedly stated that it would not allow coloureds in parliament. It was therefore apparent that whatever the commission recommended, Vorster and the government were not going to accede to the demands of the Labour Party.⁹³ Because government policy was clear on this point, the commission could not recommend with any hope of success that coloured people be represented directly in the central parliament or in any other political body which might exercise sovereignty over whites. If it did, the government would reject it out of hand. In fact, three months before the commission reported, Vorster indicated that the government would not be bound by the findings of the commission. He informed parliament in

⁹¹(...continued)
served as chairman. See Van der Ross, Rise and Decline of Apartheid, 342.

⁹²Burger, 19 June 1976.

⁹³Rand Daily Mail, 15 November 1975; Star, 17 November 1975.

April 1976 that the Theron Commission had not been appointed to devise a coloured policy because the government already had a policy. The commission's job was to identify points of friction and bring these to the attention of the government in order that it may be dealt with in terms of that policy.⁹⁴

The findings of the Theron Commission thus began to assume a position of irrelevance. To provide a formula that would satisfy whites on the one hand, but which would give coloured people sufficient hope to once again cooperate with the government, seemed beyond the capabilities of the Theron Commission. The commission therefore seemed to provide only one reasonable justification for its existence: it was an attempt by the government to extricate itself from a problem of its own making. The appointment of the commission would give the government time to review its coloured policy and provide it with an excuse for any possible changes to that policy. If some changes were inevitable, the appointment of the commission would serve an important function in the government's strategy of re-educating the white electorate towards the acceptance of the need for flexibility in respect of the political position of coloured people. However, Vorster had already prepared the people for a possible rejection of the report if it made recommendations contrary to Nationalist policy.⁹⁵ When the Theron Commission finally presented its report on 18 June 1976,⁹⁶ the government

⁹⁴Debates of the House of Assembly (21 April 1976), col. 5133-34; Ibid (23 April 1976), cols. 5275-76. See also "Colouredism: The Last Grovellingings", Educational Journal (January-February 1977), 7.

⁹⁵Labour Party Accession, Fred Peters, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976; Debates of the House of Assembly (21 April 1976), col. 5133-34; Ibid (23 April 1976), cols. 5275-76.

⁹⁶The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured Population Group (R P 38 - 1976), was written in Afrikaans and had five parts, divided into twenty-two chapters giving factual information and argument. A sixth part
(continued...)

responded by issuing a White Paper which rejected virtually every recommendation that held any meaningful political consequence for coloured people.⁹⁷ An examination of the findings and the 178 recommendations clearly shows why, as the majority of these were too far ahead of the government for it to consider implementing them.⁹⁸ Many of these were aimed at the very foundation of the policy of apartheid.⁹⁹ For example, the report called into question the argument that coloured people comprised a separate ethnic group. As this premise constituted part of the foundation of the policy of apartheid, the commission instead urged that the Population Registration Act be amended to make both acceptance and descent criteria for purposes of population classification. This would make it easier for those classified "Coloured" to apply for reclassification into the "white population group" and would remove a source of aggravation for the coloured "petty-bourgeoisie" who had long considered themselves part of white society.¹⁰⁰ Other recommendations were not only aimed at benefiting coloured people but other population groups as

⁹⁶(...continued)
contained 178 recommendations and two further parts contained tables and annexures such as provisos to recommendations.

⁹⁷Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 164; Pretoria News, 18 June 1976; Sunday Express, 20 June 1976; Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976. The White Paper was entitled, Provisional Comments by the Government on the Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured Population Group (W.P. S - `76).

⁹⁸Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 69-70; E.S. Munger, ed. The Afrikaners (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979), 126-27.

⁹⁹Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 193.

¹⁰⁰Goldin, Making Race, 151. The term "petty-bourgeois" is used by Goldin to describe the coloured middle class who agitated throughout the twentieth century for equal rights. By introducing and tinkering with laws which eased restrictions and discrimination experienced by this group, the government hoped to defuse hostility and dampen the clamour emanating from coloured people.

well. The commission called for the Immorality Act and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act to be changed or repealed, the Separate Amenities Act to be implemented in such a way as to reduce separate amenities or allow the mixed use thereof, and for all forms of statutory job reservation to be abolished. Furthermore, in order to provide greater business opportunities for entrepreneurs of all "population groups," the commission recommended that the Group Areas Act be adjusted to allow members of any "population group" to own and occupy business premises in industrial areas and in specific areas of business concentration.¹⁰¹ The most telling recommendation was that the "coloured population" should not be viewed as a community culturally different or distinguishable from the "white population," and that satisfactory forms of direct coloured representation and a direct say for coloureds at various levels of government and on various decision-making bodies must be created.¹⁰²

Given its previous position on these points, these recommendations had very little hope of being accepted by the government. The White Paper outlined the government's position and declared that "recommendations that would amount to the recognition and development of the identity of the various population groups in the Republic being broken down are not conducive to the orderly and evolutionary advancement of the various population groups in the Republic as a whole."¹⁰³ For this reason, stated the White Paper, the

¹⁰¹The most significant recommendations were summarised by Oscar Wollheim in Theron Commission: Comment, and the United Party in a booklet, Die Theron-Kommissie en die Verenigde Party: 'n Samevatting (September 1976), 1-21. See also van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 374-79; Survey of Race Relations (1976), 11-12; Joyce, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid, 91; Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, 225.

¹⁰²Diamond Fields Advertiser, 19 June 1976; Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976; Sunday Times, 20 June 1976; Survey of Race Relations (1976), 11-12; Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 70-71.

¹⁰³Provisional Comments, (W.P. S - '76), 2.

government was not prepared to change its standpoint in regard to the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Act. Similarly, coloureds would not be allowed direct representation in parliament; a coloured homeland was rejected on the grounds that it was not "practical politics"; the government was not prepared to change its policy of separate development. Vorster bluntly stated that any recommendations that direct representation be granted to coloureds was not acceptable to the government. The government indicated, however, that it accepted the recommendation that the Westminster system of government on which South Africa's parliamentary system was based, be altered to meet the particular requirements of South Africa's plural society, and that a committee of experts be appointed to investigate the adjustments which would be necessary to achieve this.¹⁰⁴

If the appointment of the Theron Commission was designed to sweep the "Coloured Problem" under the carpet or relegate it to a committee which would spend years discussing it until the problem hopefully disappeared, then the idea backfired. The government had "loaded the dice" in its favour by appointing eleven Nationalists of whom seven were known supporters of a "hard-line" Nationalist policy.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, the appointment of Erika Theron as chairman was a step in its favour. She was a fervent "Afrikaner Nationalist" who had lectured at the University of Stellenbosch's Department of Sociology under H.F. Verwoerd, the architect of "Grand Apartheid." She greatly admired him and authored a book on his life in 1970.¹⁰⁶ Yet, despite their impeccable credentials within the

¹⁰⁴Provisional Comments (W.P. S - 1976), 2; Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 30; Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 164; Vosloo, "The Coloured Policy of the National Party", 381; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 18 June 1976; Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976.

¹⁰⁵Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 1, 29.

¹⁰⁶Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976, article by J. Basson, Progressive Federal Party MP.

Nationalist establishment, these commissioners, along with the others, made recommendations abandoning or undoing twenty-eight years of laborious and complicated legislative attempts by the National Party to keep white and coloured South Africans apart.

If one takes into consideration the composition of the commission and the fact that it had to, at all times, bear in mind that it was expected to recommend within the general framework of the policy of separate development, then under the circumstances, the commissioners appeared to show courage in going as far as they did. Of the 178 recommendations, no one voted against 141 recommendations of which 125 were unanimous and 16 with abstentions. Of the 37 remaining recommendations on which there were opposing votes, minority recommendations were only made on 18.¹⁰⁷ However, those consisted of recommendations which struck at the very core of the government's race policies. It was therefore easy for the commission to achieve unanimity on relatively neutral issues. The majority of the Afrikaner commissioners, mindful that the commission was appointed within the framework of the government's separate development policy and, placing their personal ideological views above the facts at their disposal, balked at recommending unanimously the repeal of odious race legislation. Thus, the minority recommendations from commissioners influenced the government in its attitude to the Theron Report.

The Labour Party, which had at the outset refused to accept the Theron Commission and had declined to cooperate with it, immediately issued a statement to the effect that the party had been vindicated in its stand in refusing to give evidence to the commission. Because of its previously stated rejection

¹⁰⁷Wollheim, Theron Commission: Comment, 3.

of the commission,¹⁰⁸ the party did not consider it necessary to offer any further comment on the report or the government's response to it. Sonny Leon, however, described the commission as "an expensive exercise in futility" as the government had consigned the report to the "waste-paper basket."¹⁰⁹ He predicted that coloured/white relations would become more strained than before as many coloured people had been looking to the commission to create a new political dispensation for coloureds.¹¹⁰ His statements were given the hard edge of reality because two days before the commission presented its report, Soweto had erupted in violence. The long-held fears of coloured alienation and a coloured-African alliance were realised when coloured youth came out in support of their African counterparts.¹¹¹ This was a startling development as coloureds had always occupied a social and economic position above that of the African and appeared to be sufficiently insulated for such a phenomenon to be unthinkable.¹¹² Even coloured people themselves were taken aback by the ferocity of coloured support. This was reflected in the Cape Herald which reported the Cape uprising in banner headlines: "They said it could never happen." The headline elaborated further: "Bonteheuwel, Wednesday, August 25, 1976 - a day to remember. A day people said would never happen. Soweto, yes. Guguletu, Langa, Nyanga, yes. But never a Coloured township. But then it happened."¹¹³

¹⁰⁸Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 9-11 February 1973.

¹⁰⁹Diamond Fields Advertiser, 18 June 1976; Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976.

¹¹⁰Sunday Express, 20 June 1976.

¹¹¹M. Attwell, South Africa: Background to the Crisis (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986), 113.

¹¹²R.W. Johnson, How Long will South Africa Survive? (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1977), 194.

¹¹³Cape Herald, 31 August, 1976.

The chairman of the Theron Commission, Erika Theron, also gave an indication of the great expectations coloured people had of the commission and the devastating effect it had on them when the main recommendations were rejected. During the riots in coloured areas in support of the Soweto uprising, Theron reports that a prominent coloured leader cited the rejection of the Theron Report as the reason for coloured unrest:

Ja, sien u, drie jaar het ons op hierdie verslag gewag; drie jaar het ons veral aan die jonger groep wat begin kriewelrig word en net nie meer die dinge wil vat nie, gesê: "Wag nou, wees tog geduldig, dalk stel die Theron-Kommissie ons saak reg." En toe kom die verslag en ons sê: "Die manne het reg gepraat." Maar toe kom daar mos ook daardie memorandum (the White Paper) en dit slaan ons voete onder ons uit.¹¹⁴

The government's rejection of the Theron Report was again cited as a factor in the unrest in the Cape in 1976 when a deputation representing all parties in the CRC handed a memorandum to the Prime Minister on 21 September 1976:¹¹⁵

Dit was geen enkele insident wat die situasie plofbaar gemaak het nie, dit het ontwikkel in 'n oplaaiende gevoel van magteloosheid; 'n vernet teen die sosiale struktuur wat menswaardigheid aantast, en 'n reeks spanningvolle insidente waarvan die negering van die Erika Theron-verslag as deurslaggewend kan beskou word.¹¹⁶

The Labour Party accused the government of making it impossible for coloured people to achieve anything by means of dialogue and discussion. Young people were rejecting their leaders because of the failure of dialogue with the government.¹¹⁷ However, although the Theron Report aimed at improving conditions for coloureds vis-à-vis Africans, the majority of its recommendations were also aimed at removing

¹¹⁴Theron en Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 5.

¹¹⁵Argus, 23 September 1976.

¹¹⁶Theron and Du Toit, Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag, 5.

¹¹⁷Star, 23 September 1976; Argus, 23 September 1976.

restrictions applied to other population groups. Acceptance of the Theron Report would therefore have broken up the political logjam and given an indication of a move towards an equitable political dispensation. Yet, while many of the older generation of coloured people might have been disappointed that the rejection of the Theron Report would delay the removal of "pin-prick" and humiliating apartheid laws,¹¹⁸ as well as their assimilation into white society, coloured youth saw the rejection in a wider sense. The Cillié commission which inquired into the riots found that a large section of the coloured community rejected "not only the word 'Coloured' but also the notion of a separate Coloured identity" and that they had "joined up with the Black community so as to remove (their) grievances and obtain their rights through concerted action." The commission argued that the attitudes of coloureds "had changed to the extent that they were prepared to regard the Black man as their comrade in distress and to continue the struggle for improvement with them."¹¹⁹

The government was clearly caught off-guard by the controversial nature of what was essentially a conservative document. It acted instinctively in rejecting the significant recommendations without regard to the repercussions or the feelings and reactions of the people who were the subject and supposed beneficiaries of the investigation. In an attempt to dampen the criticism and soften the rejection, the government announced that it would table a comprehensive response to the commission's report at a later date. In April 1977, ten months after the Theron Commission reported, the government eventually tabled its detailed White Paper.¹²⁰ The reason

¹¹⁸See De Klerk, The Puritans in Africa, 274-76, for reference to, and discussion of these "pin-pricks".

¹¹⁹Goldin, Making Race, 207.

¹²⁰Witskrif oor die Verslag van die Kommissie van Onderzoek na Aangeleenthede rakende die Kleurlingbevolkingsgroep (W.P. D - 1977).

given for the time lapse was that the various state departments needed to make a thorough study of the commission's report.¹²¹ However, it was not so much the departments which needed the time but the Broederbond. Throughout the process of tabling the report in 1976, the Broederbond had been intimately involved in the formulation of the government's provisional comments and in the drawing up of the White Paper in 1977. In a circular to all members,¹²² it was indicated that the government's objections to, and rejection of, the main recommendations of the Theron Report, were formulated by the Executive Council of the Broederbond:

Branches are aware of the first reactions to the release of the report of the Erika Theron Commission on Coloured matters. The Executive Council had a special consultation with the relevant responsible friend (Mr Hennie Smit, Minister of Coloured, Rehoboth and Nama Relations) before the report was released. The provisional comments ... of the Government on the report represent the considerations discussed in this consultation.¹²³

The Broederbond executive further advised its members to study the Theron Report and the comments of its committee for coloured matters. Thus, between June 1976 when the Theron Report was tabled and the government's detailed response in April 1977, the Broederbond was actively engaged in formulating coloured policy and providing comments which the government could use in response to the report. This allowed the government the space to pursue further attempts to salvage its coloured policy in the wake of the criticism over its rejection of the Theron Report. The government used this time to try to revive the proposed cabinet council. In an attempt to give it some credibility and facilitate acceptance, the government announced that it would include Indian leaders in

¹²¹Provisional Comments, (W.P. S - '76); Survey of Race Relations (1976), 13.

¹²²Circular letter No. 5/76/77 of 1 July 1976.

¹²³Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 164.

the proposed council.¹²⁴ Vorster then called a meeting for 9 August 1976 and unilaterally decided that the cabinet council would function, announcing that the first meeting would be held on 24 September 1976.¹²⁵

It appears inexplicable that, at this juncture, Vorster would suddenly decide that the cabinet council would be implemented, with or without the Labour Party. The council was originally conceived to dampen coloured demands for direct representation, but when the Labour Party rejected it at the outset, Vorster abandoned the idea. Now, after the Indian Council indicated its willingness to support the idea, Vorster suddenly felt emboldened to proceed. He hoped that by broadening the base it would facilitate acceptance. The Labour Party, however, reiterated its rejection of the council and still refused to participate. Sonny Leon explained:

The Cabinet Council will be nothing more than a powerless discussion group and the Labour Party will have nothing to do with it The Cabinet Council will be a purely consultative body with no power and no chance of moving towards powersharing between South Africa's race groups The Labour Party will not participate until the government includes Africans in the discussions and there is progress towards genuine power sharing.¹²⁶

The Minister of Indian Affairs dismissed Leon's remarks concerning Africans and explained that the cabinet council was not intended for "blacks" because "they have a different destination in terms of the NP's thinking."¹²⁷ Nevertheless, the government decided to ignore the Labour Party and convened a meeting which was attended by cabinet ministers, chairman of

¹²⁴Rand Daily Mail, 28 June 1976; Race Relations Survey (1977), 22. (From 1977 the Survey of Race Relations was called Race Relations Survey).

¹²⁵Star, 10 August 1976.

¹²⁶Rand Daily Mail, 28 June 1976.

¹²⁷Debates of the House of Assembly (24 June 1976), col. 10501.

the CRC executive, Alatheia Jansen, and fifteen Federal Party and independent members of the CRC. However, the original plan of operation for the cabinet council was that it would consist of an equal number of cabinet ministers and CRC executive members. As the Labour Party controlled the CRC executive, Vorster would have to alter the composition of the council and choose ordinary members for the cabinet posts.¹²⁸ This would then create a ludicrous situation whereby Labour Party members would occupy the executive posts in the CRC (in effect, the coloured cabinet), and ordinary opposition members would occupy the cabinet posts in the cabinet council. The government would then be liaising with persons who had no authority, position or standing in the CRC or the coloured community. It was difficult to see how the cabinet council, under these circumstances, would fill the role of satisfying the political demands of coloured people. Sonny Leon warned that such a course of action "will reduce the council to a total farce."¹²⁹

What then were Vorster's motives in pressing ahead in the face of Labour Party opposition, with a combination of coloured minority groups to set up the council? It must be interpreted as an attempt to outflank the Labour Party and at the same time create a divisive wedge by exploiting the struggle between "moderates" and "militants" in the party, thereby breaking the party's control of the CRC. Vorster appeared to be taking a calculated gamble that he would eventually win majority support in the CRC for the cabinet council. However, if he failed to break the party or persuade it to cooperate, the Labour Party would be able to block the implementation of any decisions taken by the council that required legislation to be passed by the CRC. If this happened, the government would in turn be forced to pass amending legislation bypassing the CRC. Such an action would

¹²⁸Sunday Times, 12 August 1976.

¹²⁹Rand Daily Mail, 28 June 1976.

then defeat the purpose of having a CRC at all. The government would then be using one instrument of its coloured policy to destroy another.¹³⁰

Vorster was astute enough to realise that he needed the Labour Party's cooperation and made another attempt to win it over, this time hoping to change the attitude of a sufficiently large number of Labour councillors to enlist their support for his plans. At the opening ceremony of the 1976 session of the CRC, which the Labour Party boycotted because of the detention of its chairman Allan Hendrickse,¹³¹ the President of the Senate, Marais Viljoen, announced a number of "important concessions" aimed at removing obsolete discriminatory practices which caused dissatisfaction among coloured people.¹³² These concessions were designed to please, and so win the support of the more affluent sections of the coloured people. Among the concessions were those which made allowance for the right to open industries in any area; the right to trade outside coloured group areas; prominent coloured people serving on committees to help handle the squatter problem in coloured residential areas; the provision of proper waiting-room facilities at health institutions serving coloured people; better seating at arts and science conferences and in courts of law; laying down guidelines for the solution of problems caused by separate entrances in public buildings; the removal of some points of friction on the motorways by providing more (but still separate) eating and rest facilities; and allowing private patients to be treated by a doctor of his or her own choice in any hospital.¹³³

¹³⁰Star, 13 July 1976.

¹³¹The detention of Allan Hendrickse is discussed in greater detail below.

¹³²Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, 225.

¹³³Survey of Race Relations (1976), 16-17; Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, 226; Star, 10 September 1976; Argus, 11 September 1976; Beeld, 11 September 1976; Rand Daily Mail, 11 September 1976.

However, these "special concessions" were so feeble and inconsequential that it is hard to understand why the government even considered that they would impress coloured people, dampen the anger of coloured youth who had joined the Soweto protesters, or bring the Labour Party around to accepting the cabinet council. None of the concessions in any way addressed the root of the problems experienced by coloured people, viz. the harsh and insensitive application of the policy of apartheid. Hirson contends that more appropriate concessions might have helped to "cool down the situation in the Cape which had reached boiling point," but that the government had no real intention of "cooling" the coloured people. These concessions were really intended to subdue or repress opposition.¹³⁴ It was therefore not surprising that the Labour Party summarily dismissed these so-called concessions. Leon pointed out that coloured people were not the only ones affected by apartheid and that urban Africans were "part and parcel of those who suffer under the laws of discrimination."¹³⁵ Moreover, argued Leon, the concessions would benefit only the more affluent sections of the community. He added that the party was not concerned with "special concessions for special people."¹³⁶

Whereas the government had hoped that its offer of special concessions would influence or divide the Labour Party, it had the opposite effect: it succeeded in uniting the parties in the CRC. The CRC unanimously accepted a motion to adjourn and appoint a deputation to meet with the Prime Minister. Among the aims of the deputation was to discuss the unrest in South Africa and the release of Allan Hendrickse who had been

¹³⁴Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, 226.

¹³⁵Argus, 11 September 1976.

¹³⁶Ibid.

detained on 26 August 1976 in Grahamstown.¹³⁷ The Labour Party hinted that it would consider serving on the cabinet council if the government guaranteed that Hendrickse would be allowed to attend; if it gave an assurance that the council would have meaningful powers; if it indicated what powers coloured cabinet ministers would have if and when they were appointed; and, finally, if the government considered the inclusion of urban blacks.¹³⁸ However, the Labour Party's hint of participation was not seriously intended, given its "hard-line" attitude to this council, and must be seen as an attempt to gauge the government's attitude to Hendrickse's detention and the party's request for his release. Indeed, the Labour Party informed the Secretary for Coloured Relations the next day that the party's attitude to the cabinet council remained unchanged.¹³⁹

The detention of Allan Hendrickse became a bargaining chip as the government and the Labour Party took opposing positions regarding the cabinet council. Neither the government nor Allan Hendrickse ever gave any indication why the latter had been detained. Hendrickse's biographer suggests that it had to do with his association with the black consciousness movement (BCM).¹⁴⁰ The nationwide unrest in 1976 was linked

¹³⁷Daily Dispatch, 27 August 1976; Cape Times, 5 September 1976; Rand Daily Mail, 15 September 1976; Star, 21 September 1976; Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 94. Coetzer maintains that only five minutes of discussion was directed to Hendrickse's detention.

¹³⁸ Cape Times, 30 August 1976; Debates of the CRC, vol. 32, (13 September 1976), 113.

¹³⁹Survey of Race Relations(1976), 19; Star, 22 September 1976; Rand Daily Mail, 22 September 1976; Argus, 23 September 1976.

¹⁴⁰Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 93-95; S. Gastrow, Who's Who in SA Politics, No.3 (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1990), 105. Middleton however refutes this suggestion and denies that Hendrickse was ever associated with the black consciousness movement. Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994. The Labour Party's links with the black consciousness movement will be examined more fully below.

to the BCM and Hendrickse was suspected of being involved. This was hinted at by the Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, in an interview with Hendrickse's wife.¹⁴¹ Sonny Leon however declared that Hendrickse was detained as part of a government plan to render the coloured people leaderless and that the detention was a ploy to obtain a pro-government majority in the CRC.¹⁴² At that stage, the Labour Party held a one-seat majority in the CRC. This would then enable the government to proceed with the cabinet council. However no official reasons for Hendrickse's detention have ever been given but it was clearly linked to the Labour Party's confrontationist stance and the debilitating effect its opposition to the CRC and the cabinet council was having on the government and its coloured policy. An indication of this was given by the Prime Minister himself. Vorster told the delegation that while he did not know why Hendrickse was held, if the Labour Party was prepared to cooperate with the cabinet council to investigate the constitutional position of coloureds, he would see what could be done about Hendrickse's detention.¹⁴³ According to Coetzer, the threat of blackmail was obvious: "Cooperate and Allan Hendrickse will be a free man."¹⁴⁴ John Nash states that the most important consequence of Hendrickse's detention was that "it put the fear of God into the Labour Party."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 93, 127.

¹⁴²Daily Dispatch, 27 August 1976; Weekend Post, 28 August 1976.

¹⁴³Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 94-95.

¹⁴⁴Ibid, 95. Allan Hendrickse was detained on 26 August 1976. On 7 September 1976, his seventeen-year old son, Peter, was detained in the Walmer jail in Port Elizabeth. His mother, Terry, was not told that he had been detained, nor was she allowed to see him. Security police later told her that if she "calmed Labour Party supporters and opponents of the government" her son would be released. Terry Hendrickse concluded that this step had been taken to put pressure on her husband in order to break his spirit and dampen his opposition to the government. Terry Hendrickse, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹⁴⁵John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

Members were so scared of the Security Police that not one of the Labour Party leaders wanted to hold meetings in Port Elizabeth. Nash conjectures that this may have been behind the thinking of the government because the Eastern Cape was a cauldron of political activity and protest at the time. The germ of the idea which led to the formation of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) originated in the Eastern Cape,¹⁴⁶ and the BCM was strongest in this area. Steve Biko, who was behind the rise and development of both movements, had his roots in the Eastern Cape.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, SASO appeared to be the driving force behind the protest sweeping the country after 16 June 1976. Thus it appears that the government considered it necessary to keep agitators out of the area in order to bring unrest under control. This view was given some credence when Hendrickse was eventually released on 24 October 1976. A condition of his release was that he made no political speeches until the end of November 1976 and that he did not enter the Port Elizabeth magisterial district until 31 December 1976.¹⁴⁸ If one of the reasons for Hendrickse's detention was to banish the Labour Party from the Eastern Cape, it certainly succeeded.

Nevertheless, despite all efforts, veiled threats and hints of blackmail, the government's desperate attempt to get the cabinet council off the ground did not meet with much success. Yet, with the obstinacy born of ideological single-mindedness, Vorster doggedly forged ahead and invited five members from CRC opposition groups to become cabinet council members. The five consisted of three nominated CRC members, one elected

¹⁴⁶M. Motlhabi, The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: A Social-Ethical Analysis (Skotaville: Johannesburg, 1987), 108-9.

¹⁴⁷Readers' Digest, Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story (Readers' Digest Association: Cape Town, 1988), 443.

¹⁴⁸Gastrow, Who's Who (1986), 107; Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December, 1993.

independent and one elected Federal Party member. This move posed several immediate questions about the CRC and its participating parties. Since 1969 the CRC executive had been the control mechanism of the government's coloured policy and the highest statutory executive body in terms of the government's coloured policy. Yet the government now planned to introduce another committee which would have a say at government level, something which the CRC executive had never had. Because the Labour Party, which controlled the CRC executive, refused to serve on the cabinet council, a council consisting largely of unelected members would have powers greater than the elected members on the executive and be able to override and ignore the CRC executive. Cabinet council decisions would automatically be imposed on the CRC. This raised the question that if the coloured members of the cabinet council had the final say in what laws would be made and what laws would be done away with, what was the purpose of debating them in the CRC? The CRC had therefore become irrelevant. With three government-nominated members in a position to dictate to the CRC, the government would effectively be bypassing the election process.¹⁴⁹ Thus, in one inexplicable stroke, the government sabotaged its own creation and relegated coloured people to the position they had occupied in 1956 - a disfranchised, politically powerless group, ruled by government decree and whim. However, even though the cabinet council was to meet again on two further occasions, the government had to admit that the current composition of the coloured component in the cabinet council was unrepresentative and their presence had to be seen as a temporary arrangement until the duly elected CRC executive was prepared to participate.¹⁵⁰

While the Labour Party and the government wrangled over the

¹⁴⁹Sunday Times, 26 September 1976.

¹⁵⁰Sonny Leon Papers, government memorandum to the CRC Executive on the "Functions and Objects of the Cabinet Council", (1976).

implementation of coloured policy, the detailed response to the Theron Report was being drawn up. Unfortunately for the government, it had not been able to use the time successfully to establish its cabinet council. When the detailed White Paper on the Theron Report was eventually tabled in April 1977, it confirmed the fears of those who had hoped for significant change. Seven members of the Theron Commission, including Erika Theron herself, publicly condemned the White Paper.¹⁵¹ Even newspapers sympathetic to the National Party joined with opposition newspapers in condemnation, while the Labour Party dismissed it as an "apartheid document."¹⁵² In a bitter attack, the Sunday Times declared:

The White Paper on the Theron Report has signalled to the Coloured People that they will be deprived of the rights and dignity of citizenship for as long as our present rulers can see into the future. The government's response to the report - itself a cautious document - is a disgraceful rejection of any notion that this hapless group has a right to full social, economic and political acceptance by Whites. In the first place, it did not require a commission to establish that coloured people are bitterly aggrieved. How close they are to the end of their tether was chillingly demonstrated in last year's upheaval. And what are we left with at the end of the long, costly exercise? The Government has evaded the central issue of political rights by shunting it into a Cabinet committee The Coloureds, therefore, are on a single track to - nowhere?¹⁵³

The newspaper concluded that the White Paper was really "a whitewash job Beneath the whitewash the structure is still ugly."¹⁵⁴ Four years of research had been callously swept away. Thirty-one recommendations by the Theron Commission that crucially affected the political, social and

¹⁵¹Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 165; Rapport, 17 April 1977.

¹⁵²Rand Daily Mail, 22 April 1977.

¹⁵³Sunday Times, 17 April 1977.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

economic life of the coloured people were rejected outright in the White Paper. The rest of the recommendations which met some grievances were accepted by the government. However, the newspaper pointed out, these could have been implemented administratively long before they were highlighted by the Theron Commission. The Sunday Times referred to the acceptance, often unenthusiastic and qualified, of this vast majority of the commission's recommendations as "the whitewash."¹⁵⁵ The White Paper did not address the grievances of the coloured people. The apartheid edifice remained solid. The government made no attempt to offer comment on the main recommendations of the commission - those dealing with the political future of, and race laws affecting, coloured people, neither did it offer a blueprint or definite guidelines on the future of coloured people or their position vis-à-vis other population groups in South Africa.¹⁵⁶ The fragmentary, purposeless nature of the White Paper led Rapport to plead:

Ons wil dit ten sterkste beklemtoon dat dit in die huidige binne-en-buitelandse omstandighede dringend noodsaaklik is dat daar so gou moontlik bevredigende vorme van regstreekse kleurlingverteenvoording en kleurlingseggenskap op die sentrale sowel as die plaaslike owerheidsvlak ingeruim sal word.¹⁵⁷

What the newspaper was pleading for was something that the Labour Party had been calling for since 1965. This call had formed the basis of the Labour Party's opposition to the CRC and the reason for its policy of occasional boycott and confrontation. The CRC, liaison committee and cabinet council, in fact the entire coloured policy of the government had shipwrecked on this very issue. The Theron Report had been rejected because it had dared to suggest the same. The government's insistence that coloured people would never be directly represented in parliament was the root cause of the

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 167.

¹⁵⁷Rapport, 17 April 1977.

impasse in coloured politics in the 1970s. The long-held fears of many whites that coloureds would become completely estranged from them was again echoed during the no-confidence debate in parliament in January 1977:

The Government did not accept the recommendations of the Erika Theron Commission and since then agonising things have happened to the Coloured community. I say that we should stop beating about the bush and we should give the Coloured people full citizenship with representation in this House. This is the least we can do to try to remove the conflict situation between us and them.¹⁵⁸

To which the Prime Minister replied:

The hon. member for Sea Point asked me whether I was going to bring the Coloured people back to this parliament, and I told him that I had no such intention.¹⁵⁹

It was therefore obvious that the government's inflexible stance on coloured representation would render impossible any further hope of cooperation by the Labour Party. The White Paper appeared to signal a permanent impasse in coloured politics. However, the Theron Commission had given the government an outlet. While pointing out that coloured people had no direct say in the decisive legislative institutions and that the vast majority rejected alternative measures of coloured representation, the commission suggested in recommendation 178 that the Westminster system of government in South Africa be changed. It recommended that a committee of experts be appointed to consider proposals for satisfactory forms of direct coloured representation at the various levels

¹⁵⁸Colin Eglin, Leader of the Opposition, no-confidence motion, Debates of the House of Assembly (24 January 1977), col. 88.

¹⁵⁹B.J. Vorster, Debates of the House of Assembly (28 January 1977), col. 376.

of government and on decision-making bodies.¹⁶⁰ The commission made no recommendation as to how this particular proposal should be implemented. However, it had already stated that this proposal could hardly come to fruition without the majority support of the CRC. As the CRC was controlled by the Labour Party, and its opposition to the commission and its findings was already well-known, it was clear that any proposals arising out of the acceptance of recommendation 178 could only be implemented if it suited the Labour Party. Because the government had consistently refused to consider full citizenship for coloureds, any proposals providing for an alternative to the Westminster system would merely be an extension of the present policy of separate development. It therefore had no chance of acceptance by the Labour Party. Thus, this much-vaunted recommendation offered no additional relief to coloured people in their quest for political equality.

The government nevertheless accepted both the majority and minority views in this recommendation and announced that it would investigate the present parliamentary system to determine the adaptations necessary to suit South African circumstances.¹⁶¹ This investigation was entrusted to a special cabinet committee under the chairmanship of P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence.¹⁶² During August 1977, the committee put constitutional proposals to a National Party caucus meeting, then to the party's provincial congresses. The proposals made provision for a constitutional dispensation consisting of three parliaments for each of whites, Indians

¹⁶⁰Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 519; Van der Horst, The Theron Commission, 118-20; Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 70-72.

¹⁶¹Debates of the House of Assembly (20 May 1977), col. 133-4.

¹⁶²Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 71; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 741.

and coloureds.¹⁶³ Before full details of the scheme were available to the public, it became an issue in the white general election of 1977.¹⁶⁴ However, just as the hand of the Broederbond was clearly evident in the drafting of the provisional comments to the Theron Report in June 1976 and the detailed White Paper in April 1977, so the government's new constitutional plans again bore the unmistakable stamp of the Broederbond.¹⁶⁵ Circular 7/77/78 dated 1 September 1977 told members: "The Executive Council is pleased to say that friends in responsible circles took part in our brain-storming and that there was a healthy exchange of ideas."¹⁶⁶ The circular also informed members that the executive council was party to the discussions that preceded the formulation of new constitutional proposals and that the Broederbond's view was presented to "responsible friends long before the plan was announced."¹⁶⁷ That the Broederbond's proposals were submitted and approved by the organisation before they came to parliament is striking evidence of the strength of its influence over government policy. The fact that influential policy-makers in respect of coloured policy, such as the Prime Minister John Vorster (membership No. 3737), Schalk van der Merwe (membership No. 6571), Hennie Smit and P.W. Botha, were members of the Broederbond, explains in some ways the strong influence this organisation had in the formulation of the

¹⁶³The proposals of the Botha committee are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

¹⁶⁴F. van Zyl Slabbert and D. Welsh, South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), 105.

¹⁶⁵Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 164-65; Sunday Times, 22 January 1978.

¹⁶⁶Wilkins and Strydom, Super-Afrikaners, 173.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

government's coloured policy.¹⁶⁸

The initial reaction of the Labour Party to the proposals was enthusiastic. Sonny Leon felt that it contained "encouraging flexibility" and that it would be a breakthrough if it was accepted by National Party congresses. Norman Middleton, deputy-chairman, and one of the "militants" in the party, agreed that the proposals offered more than the Labour Party and coloured people had expected. He stated however that it was not a question of whether coloured people would accept it but whether whites would.¹⁶⁹ However, the initial favourable reaction turned to criticism. At a specially called meeting of the party's NEC on 10 September 1977, the proposals were discussed in detail and then rejected. The NEC saw the formal ethnic divisions in the proposals as entrenching racism in the constitution. Furthermore, the plan sought to create an alliance of whites, coloureds and Indians, and even if this alliance were to comprise equal partners, which it clearly did not, it was still unacceptable since it excluded blacks. This exclusion would intensify, and not eliminate, racial conflict.¹⁷⁰ These objections led the party to reject the constitutional proposals.¹⁷¹ Labour Party chairman, Allan Hendrickse, elaborated on the reasons why the party rejected the proposals. He indicated that the party considered the plan for supposed "power-sharing" a facade and that "the new system has the essence and germ of further oppression and

¹⁶⁸Ibid, 22, 173, A211, A254, A290. This book contains a comprehensive list of members of the Broederbond and, in many cases, indicates the membership numbers as well as the date when members joined the organisation. See also Serfontein, Brotherhood of Power, 257-75.

¹⁶⁹Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 739-40.

¹⁷⁰Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, Stellenbosch, 10 September 1977.

¹⁷¹Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, Stellenbosch, 10 September 1977; Race Relations Survey (1977), 9; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 739-40. See also Debates of the House of Assembly (20 May 1977), cols. 133-34.

therefore white domination."¹⁷² Hendrickse explained that the Westminster system had come into being to curb the despotism of the English kings. This system presupposed the indivisibility of power and enshrined the fact that parliament could not be constrained. Now this system had been taken away and given to the state president "which makes him a dictator." Acceptance of the proposals would mean buying time for white nationalism. Furthermore, said Hendrickse, the Labour Party could not accept the proposals because it did not include Africans: "The White man needs us just as we need him. Together we need the Africans."¹⁷³

Despite expressing concern for the rights of Africans in the early 1970s, the Labour Party had mainly been a "coloured" party concerned with "coloured" rights. Thus, the party's sudden concern for Africans in 1977 was out of character, arising primarily out of concern at the party's rejection by coloured youth during the Soweto uprising in 1976.¹⁷⁴ Hendrickse, as one of the party "militants," had always been sympathetic to the African struggle,¹⁷⁵ but his views were not those of the majority of members in his party. However, having carefully studied the proposals, the party concluded that, by removing coloureds and Indians from their intermediate position in South African society, and taking them into the white fold, the government was attempting to negate any chance there might be of a "black alliance." This would have had the added advantage of allowing it to pursue its policy for Africans without hindrance. If that was the underlying motive behind the new constitutional proposals, then the government's plan failed. In December 1977, the Labour Party announced that it had turned its back on the government and white people

¹⁷²Cape Times, 17 September 1977.

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴See for example, Star, 23 September 1976; Argus, 23 September 1976.

¹⁷⁵See chapter 3.

and was seeking an alliance with other "non-white" groups in a "joint freedom effort."¹⁷⁶ Gatsha Buthelezi of Inkatha praised the Labour Party for its stand and for its intention of throwing in its lot with Africans.¹⁷⁷ Leon tried to allay white fears by insisting that the proposed alliance did not mean that they were "ganging up on whites."¹⁷⁸

Since its inception, the Labour Party had mainly concerned itself with coloured rights and grievances. After a brief flirtation with the idea of closer cooperation with Africans at its East London conference in 1972, and an invitation in 1973 to Gatsha Buthelezi to address the party's national conference in Durban,¹⁷⁹ the Labour Party, after winning the election in 1975, had begun to look once again after coloured interests. Nevertheless its leaders, who were mainly from the "militant" faction in the party, continued to seek closer ties with Africans. The budget crisis of 1975 afforded the "militants" the opportunity to strengthen their position, and at the height of the crisis party leaders felt confident enough to publicly intimate that they wished to see the formation of a black bloc. During the 1976 uprising, coloured students identified themselves with Africans and actively involved themselves in the protests, boycotts and riots.¹⁸⁰ The alienation of the coloured youth and the feeling of

¹⁷⁶Star, 29 December 1977. See also Eastern Province Herald, 18 November 1975; Rand Daily Mail, 18 November 1975; Cape Times, 9 December 1975.

¹⁷⁷Rand Daily Mail, 31 December 1977.

¹⁷⁸Star, 30 December 1977.

¹⁷⁹Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Durban, 20-22 April 1973. See also below.

¹⁸⁰See Report of the Commission of Inquiry into riots at Soweto and elsewhere from 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977, 260-79, for the role of coloured youth in the Soweto uprising. Also S. Ntebe, L. Levetan, G. Kraak and N. Rousseau, "Soweto and After: A Diary of Urban Unrest in 1976", South African Outlook (February 1977), 21-29.

rejection suffered by the Labour Party led leaders to push, once again, for closer identification with the African struggle. Thus, even though coloured adults and the bulk of the party membership were generally not in favour of assimilation with Africans, Labour Party leaders and the coloured youth appeared to have no such qualms.

The movement which had the greatest influence on coloured youth in the 1970s was the black consciousness movement (BCM) which took root in South Africa in the early 1970s.¹⁸¹ Black consciousness sought, in Biko's words, "to challenge the pent-up forces of the angry black masses to meaningful and directional opposition."¹⁸² Black anger was present and the function of this ideology was to give it coherence and direction. According to Allan Boesak, black consciousness could be described as "the awareness of black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. It means that people are no longer ashamed that they are black It means that blacks are determined to be judged no longer by, and to adhere no longer to white values."¹⁸³ Black consciousness sought to "instil a sense of pride and dignity in black people and to free them psychologically and physically from the inferior position to which apartheid had relegated them."¹⁸⁴

Black consciousness emerged at a time when coloured people in general had become increasingly disillusioned. The promises made by whites and their governments over the years had proven to be empty. The CRC and similar bodies had turned out to be

¹⁸¹D.M. Balia, Christian Resistance to Apartheid (Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989), 65-67.

¹⁸²SASO Newsletter, September 1970.

¹⁸³J.W. de Gruchy, The Church Struggle in South Africa (Cape Town: David Philip, 1986), 153.

¹⁸⁴Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 113. See also Venter, Coloured, 540.

toothless. Urban, middle-class coloureds, especially in the Cape, and particularly the youth, had become dispirited by their inability to organise effectively and to effect meaningful change. For them black consciousness "provided a new focus for their identity and action."¹⁸⁵ Moreover, if Africans were identified negatively, coloureds were even more so. They occupied a vague middle ground between white and African; they had been negatively constituted and defined in 1950;¹⁸⁶ they carried the negative definition of "non-white"; they had no distinct national or cultural heritage upon which they could fall back, except for their historical ties with whites who had, in any case, rejected them. The earlier conservative coloured movements which drew their strength from the racial concept of "coloured" had done so in response to the African threat. Black consciousness broke through these boundaries and many coloureds, especially the youth, increasingly began to reject the idea of "coloured" being a racial category and found common cause with Africans. The affirmation of this commonality was reflected in coloured support, particularly among those in the Cape, and more so, the youth, for the Soweto uprising of 1976.¹⁸⁷

The BCM and the Soweto uprising of 1976 politicised many coloured people, but the Labour Party did not keep pace with trends in the broader coloured community and black society in general. While some of its leaders seemed to understand the impact of black consciousness on the coloured community, the party increasingly shied away from greater contact with

¹⁸⁵Freedberg, "Changing Coloured Identity", 201.

¹⁸⁶The Population Registration Act of 1950 declared that all persons who were not European and not Native were classified Coloured. See chapter 1.

¹⁸⁷Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 200; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 196.

Africans and African political organisations.¹⁸⁸ Yet, the BCM politicised a generation of coloured youth who increasingly viewed with hostility attempts by coloured moderates to reach accommodation with the government. This was particularly noticeable in the Labour Party Youth Organisation which experienced a surge of support in 1973 when it decided to become a non-racial organisation and accept African and Indian members,¹⁸⁹ but which virtually disappeared after 1975 when the Labour Party came increasingly to be viewed as a supporter of the system of separate development.¹⁹⁰ In fact the Labour Party's vacillation regarding involvement in the African political struggle contributed in no small measure to the party's problems. It was attacked by conservatives on the one hand for its attempts to forge closer ties with Africans, and by radicals on the other for adopting a narrow "colouredist" approach which played into the government's plan of driving a wedge between members of the oppressed.¹⁹¹ By trying to appease both camps, the Labour Party increasingly relegated itself to a position of irrelevance in coloured and South African politics.

Certain party leaders like David Curry, Allan Hendrickse and Norman Middleton, whose maternal family was descended from the Zulu, were disposed to involving the party in the African political struggle and embraced the principles of black consciousness. Hendrickse's support of the BCM was reportedly

¹⁸⁸The increasingly conservative trend in the Labour Party continued to strengthen so that by the time of the 1984 election, the Labour Party occupied the same conservative platform that the Federal Party had in 1969, which led W.J. Bergins, former Federal Party leader, to remark that the Labour Party of 1983 was walking the same road as the Federal Party did in 1969. See Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 240.

¹⁸⁹Eastern Province Herald, 3 May 1973.

¹⁹⁰Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁹¹Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 217. See chapter 2 for a discussion on "colouredism".

the cause of his detention in 1976.¹⁹² The Labour Party was even able to influence the CRC to support the 1973 protest by coloured students at the University of the Western Cape. The protest followed the refusal of university authorities to allow a BCM speaker representing the South African Students Organisation (SASO) to deliver a lecture there.¹⁹³ The unrest led to the temporary closure of the university as students extended their protest against the concept of separate universities.¹⁹⁴ However, even though some Labour Party leaders aligned themselves with the black consciousness movement by pressing for the omission of the term "coloured" from the party's constitution;¹⁹⁵ accepting invitations to share political platforms with representatives of the BCM;¹⁹⁶ and urging supporters to show solidarity with other oppressed groups,¹⁹⁷ there was no tangible support for Africans in the Labour Party until the South African Black Alliance was formed in 1978.¹⁹⁸ This meant that the party became increasingly isolated as urban coloureds joined the mainstream of resistance politics.

¹⁹²Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 93-95; Gastrow, Who's Who (1990), 105.

¹⁹³Venter, Coloured, 540.

¹⁹⁴K.G. Moodley, "South Africa's Indians", in Change in Contemporary South Africa, eds., L. Thompson and J. Butler (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 267.

¹⁹⁵Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3., Labour Party Constitution, as amended, April 1972, 4.

¹⁹⁶A. Todes, V. Watson and P. Wilkinson, "Local government restructuring in Greater Cape Town", in The Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape, eds. G.W. James and M. Simons (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1989), 198.

¹⁹⁷Rand Daily Mail, 17 June 1972.

¹⁹⁸Labour Party of South Africa, Steadfast, (Cape Town: Labour Party, n.d.), 1. (Most probably published in 1985 or shortly thereafter).

The idea of a black alliance had been bandied about in the Labour Party for a number of years already. In 1973, Gatsha Buthelezi was invited to address the Labour Party's national conference, and his call for solidarity between coloureds and Africans was embraced by party leaders.¹⁹⁹ This heralded the beginning of a flirtation with Buthelezi and the idea of a united front of the oppressed which was to blossom into a formal alliance in later years. In November 1975, at the height of the budget crisis, Labour Party leader, Sonny Leon announced that plans were under way to organise a black summit and that he had already met with African, coloured and Indian leaders to discuss a formal black alliance.²⁰⁰ On 6 December 1975, Leon conferred with African and Indian leaders, as well as leaders of the white Progressive Reform Party, in Johannesburg to discuss "a wide range of issues facing our country."²⁰¹ In a joint statement after the meeting, the leaders called on the government to convene a national convention "in order to achieve peaceful co-existence by an honest exchange of views."²⁰² The call for a national convention was repeated at the Labour Party's National Conference in January 1976.²⁰³ However, nothing further came of the Labour Party's call for a black alliance and although passing reference was made to it in 1976 and 1977, the idea only came to fruition in 1978 when a formal alliance was concluded. The reason for the delay in forming such an alliance lay in the fact that while certain leaders were

¹⁹⁹Mina, "The CRC", 101; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 199.

²⁰⁰Eastern Province Herald, 18 November 1975; Rand Daily Mail, 18 November 1975; Daily Dispatch, 21 November 1975.

²⁰¹Cape Times, 9 December 1975.

²⁰²Sunday Times, 7 December 1975; Cape Times, 9 December 1975. Present at the meeting were Buthelezi of KwaZulu, Hudson Ntsanwisi of Gazankulu, Kenneth Mopeli of Qwa Qwa, Colin Eglin and Harry Schwarz from the Progressive Reform Party, Sonny Leon from the Labour Party and J.N. Reddy from the South African Indian Council.

²⁰³Die Burger, 7 January 1976; Star, 9 January 1976.

prepared for such a move, the rank-and-file in the Labour Party were not. This confirmed the Labour Party's image as a "coloured" party. Despite sporadic references to solidarity with Africans and their political struggle, the party continued to pursue its policies as a mainly coloured party in a coloured political environment.

Rumblings of conservative discontent were heard at the 1976 conference concerning Leon's call for an alliance. Fred Peters, the party's secretary, was forced to issue a statement to dispel "unfounded statements" that since coloured people had been rejected by the white man, he now sought an alliance or unity with black groups.²⁰⁴ It appears that Leon's "black alliance" call was made without ascertaining the feelings of supporters on the issue. This call came after Sonny Leon had been dismissed as chairman of the executive committee of the CRC in November 1975, and followed the emotional response of supporters and well-wishers to this action. Leon therefore issued his call in the heat of the moment. The reaction at the 1976 conference showed that members of the Labour Party were generally not in favour of seeking unity with Africans.

The attitude of Labour Party members to Africans appeared to reflect the attitude of a large group of coloureds. In an investigation of coloured attitudes to Africans and other population groups by the Theron Commission, the commission found that the majority of coloured people were Afrikaans-speaking and came from a middle to lower socio-economic and rural background. Most persons who voted in CRC elections came from this group and they mainly supported the Federal Party but also the Labour Party. They generally had a strong sense of identity as coloureds. Because they lived in areas where they constituted a minority group in their immediate environment, they tended to fear being swamped by Africans.

²⁰⁴Labour Party Accession, Fred Peters, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976; Sunday Times, 11 January 1976; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 235.

These coloureds were not in favour of assimilation with Africans. They tended towards closer association with whites because they believed culturally and historically that they had a common destiny. English-speaking coloureds were a small group, generally better-educated and from an urban background. They did not identify positively with coloureds as a group.²⁰⁵ Because they were mainly from the Western Cape where they constituted a majority vis-à-vis Africans, they had less fear of the latter. This group were more likely to accept black consciousness or oppose any form of "ethnocentrism or racial prejudice".²⁰⁶ Because the Labour Party increasingly drew the bulk of its support from rural coloureds, it appears that the majority of Labour Party supporters were generally not in favour of an alliance with Africans.

These findings were not surprising as coloureds had in the past not generally identified with Africans. The African People's Organisation (APO), an exclusively coloured organisation founded in 1903, never developed formal ties with the African National Congress, as the "Coloured community remained hopeful of full and prior acceptance by Europeans."²⁰⁷ Except for the involvement of the Anti-CAD movement in the NEUM in the 1940s, and the Coloured People's Congress in 1953 which joined with the ANC and Indian Congress to plan the Kliptown Congress in 1955, coloureds generally remained aloof from the African struggle against segregation and racial discrimination.²⁰⁸ In other studies conducted in

²⁰⁵Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 13.

²⁰⁶Summary of Chapters of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry Into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group, 136-37.

²⁰⁷P. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa. The African National Congress, 1912-1952 (London: C. Hurst, 1970) 247.

²⁰⁸Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 270; Reader's Digest, Illustrated History of South Africa, 387.

the 1960s, Randall and Burrow found that coloured people in Johannesburg "saw a real danger of 'racial degeneration' if Africans were admitted to their ranks."²⁰⁹ On the strength of her findings in a survey conducted in Riverlea, Johannesburg, Unterhalter came to the following conclusions:

While Coloured leaders might say "we have no alternative but to go to those people whose arms are open to us - the Black people of South Africa" - and Black leaders might invite a Coloured alliance under a Black Power or Black Consciousness banner, the average Coloured is unconcerned. Attitudes to the African remain unfavourable and Coloureds want to maintain social distance.²¹⁰

In 1969 and 1975, the Labour Party had fared badly in the Free State and Transvaal where coloured communities were heavily outnumbered by nearby African townships and homelands. As had happened in the past,²¹¹ "swartgevaar" tactics were used to scare people into voting for pro-government parties.²¹² Voters were told that the policies of the Labour Party would lead to assimilation and social mixing with Africans. The status quo was preferable to closer association with Africans. Thus, coloured voters in these areas preferred to support parties which advocated accepting separate development as a means of securing the advancement of their community towards eventual equality with whites.²¹³ As the Labour Party began

²⁰⁹P. Randall and P.C. Burrow, Johannesburg's Coloured Community, with special reference to Riverlea (Braamfontein: SAIRR, 1968), 41.

²¹⁰B. Unterhalter, "Changing Attitudes to 'Passing for White' in an urban Coloured Community", Social Dynamics, 61-62 quoted in Theron Report (R P 38 - 1976), 449.

²¹¹See for example Lubbe, "Vergeet die Arbeiders", 15-28.

²¹²Venter, Coloured, 540.

²¹³Lemon, Apartheid: a Geography of Separation, 141; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

to win in the former Federal Party-held constituencies after the first by-election victory in 1973, the party inherited these conservative coloured voters with their particular attitudes towards Africans. Thus while the "black alliance" issue showed the Labour Party's leaders to be progressive in their racial attitudes, their conservative followers resisted attempts to forge closer links with Africans. Because of the attitude of members, party leaders had to retreat from their pro-black consciousness stance and in 1974, had already begun to direct themselves towards the internal affairs of the coloured community. This was probably done with the 1975 election in mind - the party leadership not wanting to alienate supporters.²¹⁴ This was also borne out by the party's response to the Soweto uprising. Even though coloured students came out in support of the Soweto protestors in 1976, the Labour Party kept aloof from the struggle. Richards explains that "the Labour Party was a conservative party because its main support was conservative."²¹⁵

After years of hinting at closer political cooperation and an alliance with Africans, the Labour Party finally made a public commitment and on 10 January 1978, representatives from the Labour Party, Indian Reform Party, Inkatha Yakazulu, homeland leaders from Gazankulu, Basotho Qwa Qwa and KaNgwane, and white liberal groups, met at Ulundi in KwaZulu to form the South African Black Alliance (SABA), described as "the broadest-based 'political alliance' South Africa has yet seen."²¹⁶ It was the intention of the meeting to strive for unity of purpose among all unenfranchised people, a unity of

²¹⁴Goldin, Making Race, 158.

²¹⁵Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

²¹⁶K.A. Moodley, "Structural inequality and Minority Anxiety: Responses of Middle Groups in South Africa", in The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Domination, eds. R.M. Price and C.G. Rosberg, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1980), 221; Star, 11 January 1978; Steadfast, (n.d.) 1; A. Venter, ed., South African Government and Politics (Johannesburg: Southern, 1989), 135.

the oppressed that had been unknown since the days of the Congress of the People in 1955.²¹⁷ Gatsha Buthelezi of Inkatha was elected chairman of SABA.²¹⁸ The government press reacted with alarm to this new grouping, seeing it as a threat to the new constitutional proposals which depended on the participation of coloureds and Indians. Beeld suggested that the Labour Party had abdicated and was blindly following after Buthelezi, while the Transvaler warned Leon that he was walking a dangerous road by joining SABA.²¹⁹ Vaderland played on coloured fears of racial domination and called SABA the first step towards a "Zulu-dominated unitary state."²²⁰ Allan Hendrickse retorted that coloureds and Africans had found each other and that no amount of attempts to buy off the Labour Party would succeed.²²¹

The Labour Party at its national conference later that year responded to criticism of its role in SABA by stating that they saw themselves as "blacks" and no longer wished to be called "Coloured" or "Brown."²²² David Curry warned that coloured people would only be free when the black man was free and that whites should understand that coloured people would no longer side with them. Allan Hendrickse indicated that the Labour Party would consult with the ANC, PAC and SWAPO whose objectives they supported. Party leaders urged members to beware of schemes such as the constitutional proposals which

²¹⁷L. Schlemmer, "The Stirring Giant: Observations on the Inkatha and other Black Political Movements in South Africa", in The Apartheid Regime, 121.

²¹⁸R. Stanbridge, "Contemporary African Political Organisations and Movements", in The Apartheid Regime, 95.

²¹⁹Beeld, 11 January 1978; Transvaler, 30 December and 13 January 1978.

²²⁰Vaderland, 13 January 1978.

²²¹Natal Mercury, 9 June 1980.

²²²p.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Bloemfontein, December 1978.

did not afford full, unqualified and real equality for all people. The conference thereupon reaffirmed its rejection of the government's constitutional proposals and called for a national convention to work out a new constitution.²²³

This conference gave indication of a return to the pro-African stance which the Labour Party had flirted with in the early 1970s. Those in attendance at the conference now considered that as part of the oppressed, their destiny lay with Africans. For them, cooperation with Africans was a good tactical weapon against whites. This meant that if the circumstances ever required it, the government should not count on the loyalty of coloured people. Already, during a visit to Britain in March 1976, Sonny Leon had told the British that most blacks would not rally to South Africa's defence in a war on its borders, until apartheid was removed.²²⁴ Later, Leon warned that black South Africans "would not lift a finger to support whites in the event of war in the Republic - in fact they would support forces fighting to topple the present system."²²⁵ David Curry stated defiantly: "We shall not assist in building a South Africa for 'Whites only'."²²⁶ However, while the Labour Party now appeared to have changed its attitude to Africans, this did not mean that conservative members had suddenly found a new affinity with Africans, but it appeared to be more of a reaction or anger at the way they were being treated by the government. The rejection of the Theron Report and the handling of recommendation 178 appeared to harden attitudes. Van der Ross summed up the feelings of many coloured people:

²²³Race Relations Survey (1980), 18-19.

²²⁴Argus, 20 March 1976.

²²⁵Sunday Tribune, 19 November 1976.

²²⁶Rashid Seria Accession, Acc 154, speech by David Curry, 4 January 1977. Of course, Curry and the Labour Party could not claim to be speaking for all coloured people because, at the time, the Labour Party only represented some 15% of the potential coloured electorate.

Successive South African governments have done a near-fatal thing; by reducing the Coloured people to a situation where we have no political rights, they have put us in a position where we can only improve. At the same time, they invested us, for the first time in many years, with a type of power - the power to say No. We have been so long outside the decision-making process, that many believe we can stay a while longer. Time is on our side.²²⁷

The protracted debate in the Labour Party over closer ties with Africans and the acceptance or not of the government's proposals masked another struggle in the Labour Party: a battle for the leadership of the party.²²⁸ Ongoing friction in the leadership had sapped the party's energy throughout the 1970s. This was mainly caused by the ideological struggle in the party over the issue of dialogue with the government as against a policy of confrontation and non-cooperation. These tensions affected the leadership of the party as some leaders advocated a collaborationist approach while others opted for confrontation with, and opposition to the government. In 1970, Martin Arendse was ousted amidst accusations that he was meeting in secret with the prime minister. He refused to accept his defeat with grace, and although he withdrew his threat to contest Sonny Leon's election in court on the grounds that the voting was irregular, tensions ran high between the two and threatened to split the party on a number of occasions.²²⁹ The "militants", Allan Hendrickse and David Curry were the frontrunners to replace Arendse but because they both had strong followings, the election of one over the other might have caused a split in the party. Sonny Leon was elected as a compromise candidate and immediately took up a

²²⁷Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 110.

²²⁸This issue is discussed more fully in chapter 6.

²²⁹Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989.

"militant" stance.²³⁰

Tensions soon burst into the open after the party's election victory in 1975, over the issue of the acceptance of nominated seats and the chairmanship of the CRC executive. Leon took an openly "moderate" line, advocating full cooperation with the CRC and the government and acceptance of the cabinet council; a stance which led to the resignation of Curry and Hendrickse.²³¹ Although they later withdrew their resignations, this rift marked the beginning of friction between these leaders. At the party's annual conference in January 1976, Leon indicated his wish to stand down as party leader,²³² and at the next conference asked to be relieved of all positions, stating his wish to resign from the party. In a strongly-worded statement, which indicated strained relations within the executive, he said that he was not prepared to be a figure-head and to rubber-stamp policy and did not see why he had to justify himself to everyone, because as leader he was able to act on his own discretion as he saw fit.²³³ Delegates however refused to accept Leon's resignation and passed a unanimous vote of confidence in his leadership. Lockey suggests that the reason Leon's resignation was not accepted was because he was very popular with the party's rank-and-file. He was a charismatic personality and at national conferences indulged in stirring speeches, used fiery rhetoric and spoke in the "language" of the people, "sommer `n paar skelwoorde en vloekwoorde ook."²³⁴

²³⁰Hendrickse contends that Leon was not a good leader. He had been a compromise candidate but had not been expected to serve for very long. Allan Hendrickse, interview, 17 September 1994.

²³¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

²³²P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6-8 January 1976.

²³³P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 3-6 January 1977.

²³⁴Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994.

Leon thereafter continued to advocate a "moderate" position and began to draw closer to the Federals. In July 1977, without consulting his fellow-leaders, he met with Jac Rabie and Willie Bergins of the Federal Party to discuss unity between the various CRC parties.²³⁵ Leon's action hastened the deterioration in relations between himself and the rest of the executive. When the NEC later met, members rejected the decisions taken at that meeting. Leon took this to be a vote of no confidence and tendered his resignation as leader, but was prevailed upon to withdraw it in the interests of party unity.²³⁶

The strained relations between Leon and his colleagues split the party into two camps, referred to by the Federal Party as the Leon-Group and the Curry-Group.²³⁷ The Leon-Group, who were of course the "moderates" in the party, privately expressed their unhappiness with the boycott of the proposed cabinet council and stated their intention of accepting the government's constitutional proposals which were being discussed at the time. The "Curry-Group" were the "militants" but as Leon increasingly identified himself with the "moderates," Curry, the deputy-leader, came to the fore as the most vocal opponent of the "moderate" position. At a SABA meeting in August 1978, Leon publicly expressed support for the new constitutional dispensation and indicated that he would participate if it was implemented. Although he was rebuked by Buthelezi, the SABA chairman, and by some of the "militant" Labour Party leaders who would do exactly in 1983 what Leon was suggesting,²³⁸ Leon continued to alienate his colleagues. He defied the party by attending the inauguration

²³⁵Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 23-24 July 1977.

²³⁶Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 23-24, July 1977.

²³⁷Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 198.

²³⁸Ibid, 204. See also chapter 5.

of State President Diedrichs; visited Walvis Bay to inspect the South African Navy fleet; and appeared at the Nico Malan theatre in Cape Town which for years had been closed to coloureds. In August 1978, he attended the funeral of the late State President, Nico Diedrichs and accepted an invitation by the South African Defence Force to visit the operational area with Alatheia Jansen. Upon his return, the NEC demanded that he account for his actions whereupon Leon resigned as leader. This time, no-one asked him to reconsider.²³⁹ Middleton indicates that by this time, Leon could no longer be "controlled" by the executive. He had become too "moderate" and too "pro-government."²⁴⁰ In fact, before his final resignation in September 1978, Leon had already resigned or threatened to resign in January 1976,²⁴¹ September 1976,²⁴² December 1977,²⁴³ July 1978,²⁴⁴ and August 1978.²⁴⁵

The tension between the leaders from the outset was an accurate reflection of the turmoil in the Labour Party. When the leaders were united in their cause, the Labour Party flourished and was able to pursue its aims. When leaders pulled in different directions, the Labour Party was in danger of splitting. As early as 1970, energies had to be directed towards keeping the party together instead of building up its power base and improving its organisation. Divisions in the party and within the leadership also corresponded with drastic fluctuations in the size of the Labour Party's CRC membership.

²³⁹Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 124.

²⁴⁰Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

²⁴¹Sunday Times, 18 January 1976.

²⁴²Ibid, 12 September 1976.

²⁴³Star, 28 December 1977.

²⁴⁴Transvaler, 7 July 1978.

²⁴⁵Sunday Times, 10 September 1978.

In fact, the attitude of the "militants" was so inflexible between 1969 and 1973, that expulsions and resignations resulted in the party's numbers in the CRC declining from the original 26 to 21.²⁴⁶ The party only began to recover late in 1973 when it decided to moderate its attitude towards serving on all committees of the CRC.

After the surge of support for the Labour Party in 1975, the Labour Party then lost five CRC members to the independent benches in 1977 because of dissatisfaction over the party's attitude to the cabinet council. Had it not been for the votes of its four nominated members, the party would have lost its overall majority. After Leon's resignation in September 1978 and Curry's election as acting leader, the Labour Party was in a state of disarray. When the CRC session began a few days after the change in the party leadership, the Labour Party lost its majority and was in danger of losing the no-confidence motion. Its four nominated members joined the re-named Freedom Party (formerly Federal) and the Labour Party was down to 28 seats in the council, two short of the required majority. The twelve independents, many of them Labour Party defectors, held the balance of power. The Labour Party suffered a further blow in the Labour Party heartland, the Cape Peninsula, when it lost the Tafelberg by-election to the Freedom Party, bringing the latter's total to 20. This encouraged the Freedom Party to attempt to wrest control of the CRC. The Labour Party soon came under attack from the Federal Party on a number of issues, such as its inability to assist in the development of the coloured community; its destructive confrontationist policy; its failure to bring about a new constitutional dispensation for coloured people; for being a tool of Buthelezi through SABA; and for concluding an alliance with a terrorist organisation (SWAPO).²⁴⁷ When

²⁴⁶Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 90.

²⁴⁷Debates of the CRC, vol. 40 (9 September 1978), 48-49, 60-61.

the no-confidence motion was eventually passed, six independents voted with the Freedom Party, three abstained and three voted with the Labour Party. The Labour Party survived by just one vote. The Labour Party seemingly recovered after Allan Hendrickse was elected party leader in December 1978. However, the acting leader, David Curry had also had designs on the leadership but was defeated by a stronger candidate. His defeat again caused strains in the party.²⁴⁸ Reconciliation between "moderates" and "militants" was also but a fragile one and Hendrickse struggled to hold the party together.

Changes in white politics at the same time put further strains on a fragile unity. Vorster was succeeded as Prime Minister by P.W. Botha in September 1978. Botha decided to make another effort to reconcile the government and the Labour Party and get support from the largest coloured party for the government's constitutional plans. He called for a meeting with the Labour Party to discuss the latter's attitude to the Schlebusch commission which had been appointed to investigate the future of the CRC and the constitutional proposals which had arisen out of the Botha committee of 1977. Given the atmosphere which prevailed at the previous meeting between Botha and the Labour Party leaders in October 1977, this meeting was bound to be an acrimonious one. Botha faced tougher opposition this time as the "moderate" Sonny Leon had resigned in the interim. Although David Curry had stood in as acting leader for a short period, the power within the executive had shifted to the "militant" Allan Hendrickse who was elected leader in December 1978. At the meeting, which was held on 9 November 1979, Labour Party executive members repeated their refusal to give evidence to the Schlebusch commission and also flatly refused to submit the findings of

²⁴⁸Already in 1970, Curry and Hendrickse had vied for the leadership, but because they both had strong followings, Leon was elected so as not to cause a split in the party. See also chapter 6.

their own investigation into alternative proposals.²⁴⁹ The reason given for not doing so was that merely submitting evidence was not the same as negotiating from an equal position of strength.²⁵⁰ However the Labour Party's fragile unity, and the apparent facade of united opposition to the new constitutional proposals, was shattered when Les du Preez resigned in protest at the decision not to submit his committee's report to the Schlebusch commission.²⁵¹ He thereupon presented the report to the Schlebusch commission in his personal capacity. This action caused a rumpus in the Labour Party, and threats to take him to court were made.²⁵² The party's Chief Whip, ex-Federal Party member Lofty Adams, was also expelled for going on a one-man peace mission, preaching reconciliation between whites and coloureds.²⁵³ Sonny Leon then tendered his resignation from the party, citing the refusal to give evidence before the Schlebusch commission as his main reason for leaving.²⁵⁴ All three members subsequently accepted nomination to the President's Council.²⁵⁵

With the resignation of what appeared to be the most

²⁴⁹Burger, 3 April 1979; Race Relations Survey (1980), 22. The Report of the Committee on Alternative Constitutional Proposals (Du Preez committee) is discussed more fully in chapter 5.

²⁵⁰Sonny Leon Papers, transcript of discussions between the Prime Minister and the CRC Executive, 9 November 1979; Cape Times, 13 November 1979.

²⁵¹Argus, 29 December 1979; Sunday Times, 30 December 1979; Race Relations Survey (1980), 25; Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1979.

²⁵²Argus, 29 December 1979; Sunday Times, 30 December 1979.

²⁵³Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 207.

²⁵⁴Sonny Leon Papers, Letter from Sonny Leon to F.E. Peters, Secretary of the Labour Party, 19 January 1980.

²⁵⁵The President's Council is discussed more fully in chapter 5.

influential of the "moderate" leaders, control of the party was established more firmly in the hands of the "militant" Hendrickse and his followers. The Labour Party was therefore able to approach the CRC session in September 1979 with a greater degree of unity than in previous years. This session proved to be one of the most momentous in the history of the CRC up to then, and one of great significance for the Labour Party. The third election for the CRC was due to take place in 1980. However, at the earlier meeting with P.W. Botha the constitutional proposals had been summarily rejected by the Labour Party. The new Minister of Coloured Relations, Marais Steyn, was upset by the Labour Party's attitude. He came to the conclusion that a strengthened Labour Party might win the 1980 election with increased support and would finally close down the CRC. Because such a move would embarrass the government, Steyn decided to preempt that possibility. During his speech at the CRC's opening session, he suddenly announced that the CRC would be abolished. This was a snap decision taken without consultation with anyone.²⁵⁶ Steyn advanced the reason that the CRC had proved to be an inadequate instrument of the policy of shared responsibility.²⁵⁷

The official announcement of the dissolution of the CRC was made in Parliament on 3 March 1980 by Steyn, and a bill to replace the CRC with an interim body, the Coloured Persons' Council (CPC), was ratified by the Senate later that month.²⁵⁸ The Coloured Persons' Council Act (No. 24) of 1980 made provision for a nominated body which would preserve continuity between the demise of the CRC and the inauguration of the

²⁵⁶Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

²⁵⁷Saks, The Failure of the CRC, 208-9; Race Relations Survey (1980), 27.

²⁵⁸Debates of the Senate (12 March 1980), col. 372; R.H. Davies, D. O'Meara and S. Dlamini. The Struggle for South Africa: A reference guide to movements, organisers and institutions (London: Zed, 1984), 398; Argus, 22 February 1980; Cape Times, 23 February, 1980; Rapport, 24 February 1980.

tricameral parliament.²⁵⁹ The CPC would consist of 30 members and would have virtually the same functions as the CRC. The Minister admitted that this body was not a satisfactory form of political representation but that it was nevertheless better than trying to work out a new constitution while having to contend with the CRC resembling an "overheated oven." Steyn expressed his regret that it had come to this and made the Labour Party wholly responsible for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. He launched a bitter attack on members for their refusal in making the government's initiatives work. He added that the behaviour of some of its members had not been a "credit to the coloured community" or a "reflection" of their "standards of civilisation and development."²⁶⁰ The Labour Party dismissed the criticism, announced its dissatisfaction with the CPC and resolved to disassociate itself from this "ill-conceived and undemocratic body."²⁶¹ Hendrickse accused the government of using the National Intelligence Service (NIS) to encourage members to resign from the party and to forward their names to the government as persons who would be willing to serve on the council. Several party members alleged that they had been approached by NIS agents. The head of the NIS conceded that it was possible that the NIS was involved in soliciting the opinions of members of the coloured community.²⁶² After a meeting between the Prime Minister and Labour Party representatives in August 1980, plans to implement the CPC were dropped.

On 1 April 1980, the CRC was officially dissolved by proclamation. The Labour Party subsequently took credit for closing down it down. Hendrickse stated: "We have no regrets.

²⁵⁹Government Gazette, 31 March 1980.

²⁶⁰Debates of the House of Assembly (3 March 1980), col. 1877-9; Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

²⁶¹Cape Times, 23 February 1980; Rapport, 24 February 1980; P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 5-6 April 1980.

²⁶²Eastern Province Herald, 2 and 8 April 1980.

Today is a day of celebration, it is history. We have achieved that which we have set out to achieve."²⁶³ If that was indeed the case, then the Labour Party was doing what it had promised to do in 1969 but which should at least have been done in 1975. However, the party had not previously wanted to destroy its power base. Yet, it now agreed to the demise of an institution to which it owed its very birth and existence. The Labour Party argued that this was the fulfilment of its promise to close down the CRC. However, this claim cannot be taken seriously because, at its national conference in 1978, the party had in fact made detailed plans to contest elections due to be held in 1980. Members were urged to assist with voter registration, plans were laid to collect more funds to fight the election and the party's cooperation with the delimitation commission was discussed. The party also considered how best it could win more seats in the proposed fully-elected body.²⁶⁴ Hendrickse's claim must therefore be seen as an attempt to claim credit for the demise of the CRC at a time when his party's credibility was at a low point. The Labour Party's popularity had declined to a point where it would most probably have been humiliated if an election had taken place in 1980. Critics countered that it was rejection by the community that finally led to the closure of the CRC and that members decided that forfeiting perks and privileges was preferable to humiliation in another election.

Registration figures for 1979 appear to bear out observations that the Labour Party could have been severely embarrassed if an election were held in 1980. A general registration of coloureds undertaken in 1979 shows that the decline in the percentage of registration continued unabated (see table 5).

²⁶³P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 5-6 April 1980.

²⁶⁴Labour Party Accession, Secretary's Report to Labour Party National Conference, Bloemfontein, 27 December 1978.

Table 5 - General Registration for 1969, 1974 and 1979.²⁶⁵

	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1979</u>
No. of eligible voters	843 973	994 191	1 227 000
No. of registered voters	637 587	521 557	587 615
% of registered to eligible voters	75,0%	52,4%	47,8%
No. of actual voters	300 918	251 631	-
% of actual voters to eligible voters	35,7%	25,3%	-

These figures appear to indicate mounting dissatisfaction and/or disinterest in the functioning and future of the CRC in the political life of coloured people. Whereas the number of eligible voters increased by some 24%, the number of registered voters increased by only 12.5%. Not even half of all eligible voters bothered to register. This trend appeared to be one of the factors which led the Labour Party to accept the dissolution of the CRC. If the trend were to continue, there was no indication that the Labour Party would increase its support if an election were to be held in 1980, but every indication that it could be embarrassed by the results. The two previous elections showed the party to be incapable of attracting more than 16,2% of the eligible vote.²⁶⁶ As the tide of coloured opinion turned against it in the latter part of the 1970s, there was every indication that the party would do even worse if another election were to take place.

The 1980 student boycotts in some ways provided credibility for this viewpoint because Curry conceded at the time that the boycotts prevented the birth of the nominated CPC. The inference was that if the CRC had been in place at the time, that body would have borne the brunt of student opposition.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 September 1980; L. Thompson and A. Prior, South African Politics (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 95.

²⁶⁶See Table 2, chapter 2 and Table 4, chapter 3.

²⁶⁷D.F. Molteno, "The Schooling of Black South Africans and the 1980 Cape Town Student's boycott: A sociological (continued...)

Carter Ebrahim, chairman of the Labour Party's Cape region, admitted that the Labour Party did not intervene in the 1980 student unrest in any substantial way because of the party's "total rejection by the students."²⁶⁸ The 1980 student boycotts also illustrated the extent to which the Labour Party had become irrelevant in coloured politics. In 1976, the Labour Party had not supported the students because, according to Miley Richards, the Labour Party was a conservative party.²⁶⁹ In 1980, the Labour Party did not support the students because the students did not want their support. Although Carter Ebrahim declared that the party identified with the students and recognised that their grievances were justified, Molteno states that "apart from calls for students to go back to school, and apart from negotiating with authorities for the release of the students in detention, the LPSA did not intervene in the boycott in any substantial way because of the LP's total rejection by the students."²⁷⁰ The 1980 boycotts, the actions of the students, and the preoccupation of the government and its attempts to address problems arising out of the boycotts, led the Labour Party finally to realise that it had been relegated to a position of insignificance in the lives of coloured people in general. In summarising the Labour Party's response to the boycott, Molteno comments:

Of all the liberal organisations operating in Cape Town at the time, the LPSA seems to have experienced the least internal pressure to do "something" in relation to the boycott and the most external pressure from the community to do nothing. But then the Labour Party can claim

²⁶⁷(...continued)
interpretation." (M.Soc.Sc dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1983), 358.

²⁶⁸Molteno, "The Schooling of Black South Africans", 357.

²⁶⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

²⁷⁰Molteno, "The Schooling of Black South Africans", 357.

considerable experience in gauging when it is not wanted.²⁷¹

It was therefore clear to the Labour Party, by 1980, that it had lost the support and sympathy of the majority of the coloured people and that it had come to realise that it was "not wanted."²⁷² The dissolution of the CRC appeared to extricate the Labour Party from an embarrassing situation. However, while it immediately tried to fill the void by announcing wide-ranging plans to strengthen the party by establishing new branches and increasing membership; establishing a black convention; identifying with the goals of the ANC, PAC, BPC and SWAPO; and embarking on a campaign to secure the release of students detained in the 1980 student boycotts,²⁷³ it soon became clear that the loss of the CRC had severely affected the morale of the Labour Party. While party "militants" gamely presented a public facade of continued opposition, it was not long before thoughts turned to the question of negotiations with the government on the new constitutional proposals.

²⁷¹Ibid.

²⁷²Ibid.

²⁷³Race Relations Survey (1980), 31-32.

Chapter 5NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS AND THE
TRICAMERAL SYSTEM, 1977-1984

The dissolution of the CRC in 1980 had far-reaching consequences both for the Labour Party and for the government. For the former, it meant that the forum in which it had been able to articulate its opposition to government policies no longer existed; for the latter, it signalled the collapse of yet another attempt to fob coloured people off with a substitute for full political rights. Even the proposed replacement, the nominated Coloured Persons' Council, was abandoned by the government when it became apparent that it would not receive support in the coloured community.¹ After 1980, the government based its hopes on the constitutional proposals before the Schlebusch commission to salvage its problematic coloured policy. For the Labour Party, however, the loss of a political platform and the accompanying prestige, influence and financial security which membership of that body provided, left members facing a dismal political, economic and social future. In an effort to remain relevant and sustain its support base, the moribund party turned its attention to the proposals for a new constitutional dispensation. The period 1980-83 was dominated by the debate within the party over the government's plan to introduce a new dispensation.

However, of far greater long-term consequence for the Labour Party was the effect the dissolution of the CRC had on the Freedom (formerly Federal) Party. Since the 1969 CRC election, Federal Party members had defected on a regular basis to the Labour Party. At that stage already, Labour Party leaders such as deputy-chairman Norman Middleton and party secretary Fred Peters saw the dangers inherent in this

¹Thompson and Prior, South African Politics, 96.

"insidious infiltration."² From 1974, the Federal Party had begun to move away from its overtly pro-separate development stance, and after the Labour Party took control of the CRC in 1975, the Federal Party began to support motions criticising government policy. In the last two years of the CRC's existence, the Federal (now Freedom) and Labour Parties co-operated more closely than at any other time in the history of the CRC. This close working relationship can be ascribed to the influence of the large number of former Federal Party members who were by then members of the Labour Party, and the fact that the earlier, overtly pro-government Federal leaders had long since left the scene. When the CRC was closed, the Freedom Party disintegrated and the majority of its members joined the Labour Party. Thus, by 1980, the Labour Party had become the home of the majority of former Federal Party members and between 1980 and 1983, former Federal Party members came to constitute the majority in the Labour Party, as well as the executive and in leadership positions.³ Because the Federal Party had always supported dialogue with the government and fully accepted instruments of separate political representation, this had profound implications for the party in its debate over the new constitutional proposals.

The idea of a new constitutional dispensation first surfaced in 1977 when the government accepted both the majority and minority views of recommendation 178 of the Theron Report, and announced that it would investigate the present parliamentary system to determine the adaptations necessary to suit South

²Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994. Sylvia Landers, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994, states that Fred Peters warned throughout the CRC period against the dangers of accepting Federal Party defectors into the party. His warnings became more strident in the period after 1980 when he saw the danger of the Labour Party actually being "taken over" by former Federal members.

³Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

African circumstances.⁴ This investigation was entrusted to a special cabinet committee under the chairmanship of P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence.⁵ During August 1977, the new constitutional plans were put to a National Party caucus meeting and then to the party's provincial congresses. Before full details of the scheme were available to the public, it became an issue in the white general election of 1977.⁶ The white electorate overwhelmingly accepted the new constitutional proposals. These proposals provided for a separate parliament for each of three "population groups": white, coloured and Indian. Representation would correspond to the relative population strength of the three groups. The white parliament would have 165 elected and 20 nominated members; the coloured parliament, 82 elected and 10 nominated members; the Indian parliament, 41 elected and 5 nominated members.⁷ The respective cabinets would consist of a prime minister and 17 members in the white cabinet; a prime minister and 5 members in the coloured cabinet and a prime minister and 3 members in the Indian cabinet. Each parliament would make laws affecting its own population group exclusively, while legislation affecting all three groups would be initiated by a council of cabinets consisting of the three prime ministers and other members of the three cabinets. The chairman of the council of cabinets would be the state president who would be elected by an electoral college. Another body, the president's council, consisting of white, coloured and Indian experts would act in an advisory capacity to the council of

⁴Debates of the House of Assembly (20 May 1977), col. 133-34.

⁵Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 71; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 741.

⁶F.van Zyl Slabbert and D.Welsh, South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), 105.

⁷Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 739, pamphlet prepared by the Department of Information, South Africa's New Constitutional Plan (1977), for mass circulation among coloureds. See also Race Relations Survey (1977), 7-10.

cabinets and the state president.⁸

An important feature of the Botha proposals was the provision for an electoral college composed of 50 whites, 25 coloureds and 13 Indians which would choose the state president, who would head the council of cabinets.⁹ The majority party in each population group's parliament would elect all of that group's delegates to the electoral college. Thus, in the present circumstances, all of the fifty white representatives would be members of the National Party. This arrangement ensured that the Nationalists, by virtue of their superior numbers, would choose the state president. As the council of cabinets was expected to deal with national issues by trying to reach consensus, the failure to do so would leave the president to decide policy. Thus a white Nationalist president would have the final say in the new dispensation.

The negative reaction of the Labour Party to the Botha constitutional proposals led P.W. Botha and Hennie Smit to call for a meeting with the CRC on 21 October 1977 to explain the proposals and elicit reactions. The title for the meeting's agenda read: "Discussion in connection with the new Constitutional proposals; An Alternative to the present and for the future." The Labour Party-dominated CRC replied by laying down two basic premises for acceptance of the proposals: (1) All South African citizens must be represented and take part in constructive dialogue where important decisions are made; (2) All South African citizens must be represented on statutory bodies, local, provincial and central.¹⁰ The independents in the CRC presented their own memorandum which analysed the proposals one by one, detailing

⁸Moodley, "Structural Inequality", 218.

⁹Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 742.

¹⁰Rashid Seria Accession, Acc 154, 21 October 1977.

their reactions, objections and fears in respect of each proposal.¹¹ The meeting turned nasty when Hennie Smit, Minister of Coloured Relations, called the coloured people "slow thinkers," to which CRC members responded by nicknaming him "Flinkdink."¹² Members angrily rounded on Botha and rudely rebuffed his attempts to sell the new constitution. Botha was taken aback at the ferocity of their attitude and retorted: "Ek gaan hier vandaan om te rapporteer aan die Eerste Minister en julle sal die wronge vrugte van julle dade proe."¹³ With that, he grabbed his hat and stormed out of the meeting.¹⁴

The attitude of Botha and Smit was not an isolated one in the government's relationship with coloured people. Its whole approach to the coloured question was one of arrogance and disdain. This was apparent in the way the government went about formulating the proposals. It had unilaterally formed a cabinet committee consisting only of members of the National Party. The plans were drawn up in isolation by this committee which consisted largely of Nationalist-supporting political scientists. No one else was consulted or invited to provide input, least of all coloureds and Indians who were to be included in the new proposals and who were expected to accept it.¹⁵ The proposals were then considered by the National Party caucus and presented to closed sessions of the provincial congresses. It was finally presented to the CRC as a fait accompli, for members to accept or reject. The

¹¹"Memo in reaction to the New Constitutional Proposals", presented to the government by the Independent Group in the CRC, October 1977, in Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 711-19.

¹²Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992. See also Debates of the Senate (13 June 1980), col. 2558.

¹³John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

¹⁴See also Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 19-20 November 1977.

¹⁵Mina, "The CRC", 138.

possibility of rejection did not even bother the government as the following quotation from the September 1977 edition of Pro-Nat, a National Party magazine illustrates:

Q: What would the position be if the Coloureds and Indians were to withhold their co-operation in the implementation of the plan?

A: Then they will be in exactly the same position as the homelands which are rejecting independence. They then remain where they are. We lay the table and those refusing to sit down shall do without. Because the old dispensation is something of the past, we will simply continue with the new dispensation.¹⁶

One of the major problems which the Labour Party and the other CRC and independent members had with the Botha proposals was the provision in Clause 26(I)(a) which stated that "the legislative power of the Republic shall be vested in the Assembly."¹⁷ This meant that sovereign legislative power lay with the white parliament while the other two would always remain subordinate. Clause 26(III) determined that the white parliament alone could change the constitution and could thus abolish the coloured and Indian parliaments at will.¹⁸ It began to dawn on the Labour Party that the proposed coloured parliament would simply be an upgraded CRC. At the same time, it was increasingly being recognised in Nationalist circles that representative bodies without real authority were ineffectual and that a new dispensation had to be worked out. Consequently, the draft bill based on the Botha proposals was not passed and the legislation was referred to a select committee which would open up the issue and allow for more input on the matter. The select committee took the form of a joint select committee of both houses of parliament. Its terms of reference were that it consider the introduction of a

¹⁶"Questions and Replies on Constitutional Plan", Pro-Nat, September 1977.

¹⁷"The Republic of South Africa Constitutional Bill", Government Gazette (April 1979), no. 6386.

¹⁸Ibid.

new constitution for the Republic of South Africa. It would have powers to take evidence and call for papers and submit draft legislation. All races would be able to give evidence.¹⁹ This initiative gave evidence that the government had taken some cognisance of a general movement of opinion among whites that the existing political system had to be altered, a "movement stimulated by the constitutional debate in Rhodesia and South-West Africa, by external pressure and ... by more realistic thinking within South Africa about the future."²⁰ At long last, the government appeared to be heeding the debate which had been taking place in Nationalist circles for a number of years already on the political future of the coloured people.

It was expected that the select committee, later converted into a 24-man commission under the chairmanship of Alwyn Schlebusch, the Minister of Interior, would only report in 1981 at the earliest. However, the government intimated that if coloureds and Indians did not accept the new constitution, they could carry on according to existing legislation. The bill on the new constitutional proposals had contained clauses in sections dealing with the electoral college, the council of cabinets and the president's council to ensure that it would be possible for them to come into operation even if the coloured and Indian groups did not participate.²¹ This revelation confirmed suspicions and accusations that the new constitution was not a "new" one after all; that this was not a "radical" departure from existing coloured policy. This was simply apartheid in a new form. Since 1956, the government

¹⁹Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 72; T.R.H.Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1987), 466.

²⁰M. Forsyth, "Constitutional Proposals: The Middle Ground", in South Africa in Crisis, ed. J. Blumenfeld (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1987), 127.

²¹Race Relations Survey (1980), 4-5.

had held out against the possibility of coloureds gaining parliamentary representation and one plan after another had been adopted to ensure their exclusion. Yet, the acceptance of recommendation 178 appeared to be a sign that coloureds would at last be accommodated in a political arrangement that would satisfy their clamour for political rights. However, by making provision for a system to operate with only one chamber, the government showed its cynical disregard for the sentiments behind the recommendations of the Theron Commission. In retrospect, the Theron Commission was naive to ever expect the government to dismantle twenty-eight years of methodical construction of the apartheid edifice.

In response to the Botha constitutional proposals, the Labour Party-controlled CRC executive appointed a five-man committee chaired by Les du Preez,²² chairman of the CRC, to formulate the CRC's views on constitutional matters which could serve as a basis for future negotiations with the government.²³ The Labour Party made it clear that it was not going to accept the government's proposals in its present form. It spelt out the points of difference with the government's proposals by advocating the retention of the Westminster system, formation of political parties on ideological and not group lines, and the inclusion of all races on a common roll.²⁴ The Labour Party's reservations regarding a plan which appeared to give coloured people the opportunity to legislate for the first time on their own affairs and which, moreover, gave them access to the upper councils of the nation, fairly reflected coloured scepticism of the government's proposals. Van der Ross offered the following explanation for this attitude:

Coloured people have come to view the attitude of Whites

²²Members were: L.V. du Preez (chairman), C.H. Ebrahim, J.A. Rabie, M.B. Savahl, P.M. Sonn.

²³Committee on Alternative Constitutional Proposals (Du Preez committee).

²⁴Race Relations Survey (1980), 22.

towards them, as less than sincere. So now, when White people come forward with a new plan, any new plan, it is likely to meet the same suspicion, scepticism and even distrust.

Why are the Whites now offering to give us a share in running the country, Coloured people ask. Are they really giving us a share? Isn't it just another way of hoodwinking us into the acceptance of something which will turn out to be a hoax?²⁵

Van der Ross pointed out that every governmental offer made to the coloured people had turned out to be a hoax - the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) of 1943, the Union Council for Coloured Affairs (UCCA) of 1959, Coloured Management Committees of 1966 and the Coloured Persons' Representative Council (CRC) of 1969. In each case, the body specially created for coloured people ran itself into a state where operations could not continue as originally envisaged. The CAC resigned in 1950 and the UCCA was replaced by the CRC, "which now continues to produce little else besides a continuous cry of its own ineffectiveness."²⁶ The government, continued Van der Ross, had often insisted that these bodies failed because of the uncooperative attitude of the coloured people themselves. This was not entirely true because in each case, coloured people were found to man the posts. The system did not so much fail because coloured people did not cooperate "but more so because those who did co-operate found they had no real power."²⁷ According to Van der Ross, if coloureds had been given the right political incentive, the response would have been more enthusiastic, but thus far, they had been held at a distance and fobbed off with substitute institutions. With such a record, any new proposal from the government was likely to be met with scepticism. Thus, the answer to the reasons for the rejection of the government's coloured policy to date

²⁵Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 97.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

was to be found in that policy itself.²⁸ Now, in 1977, the government was making another offer which upon closer examination, retained power for whites and entrenched the subordinate position of the coloured people. It is therefore not surprising that coloured people not only rejected this new offer but proceeded to ignore it. They had seen it all happen before.

Eventually, it was not Labour Party recalcitrance but the upheaval within the National Party caused by revelations of fraud and corruption within the Department of Information, which prevented the Botha proposals from becoming law.²⁹ P.W. Botha subsequently replaced B.J. Vorster as Prime Minister in September 1978 but the problems in the National Party had succeeded in pushing the constitutional proposals into the background. However, in 1979, a set of proposals almost identical to those of the Botha committee was published in the form of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill. This bill was not tabled in parliament and was referred to the Schlebusch Commission for further deliberation.³⁰ After several rounds of discussions at government and National Party level, the bill was eventually passed as the Republic of South Africa Constitution Fifth Amendment Act (No.101) of 1980.³¹ This Act made provision for the abolition of the Senate and its replacement with a multi-racial president's council as

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹The Information scandal led to the fall of Vorster, the rise to the prime ministership of P.W. Botha, and the expulsion from the party of Connie Mulder, Minister of Information and heir-apparent to Vorster. See Davenport, South Africa, 435-37. E. Rhoodie, Die Ware Inligtingskandaal (Pretoria: Orbis, 1984) discusses the entire scandal.

³⁰Commission of Inquiry on the Constitution (known as the Schlebusch Commission).

³¹Thompson and Prior, South African Politics, 96.

recommended by the Schlebusch Commission.³² On 3 February 1981, the State President, Marais Viljoen, formally inaugurated this body.³³ The President's Council was given the task of drawing up a new constitution which would make provision for coloured and Indian representation.³⁴ The council was to consist of 60 members nominated by the government, including "recognised" leaders of the coloured, Indian and Chinese communities, with the majority being made up of white members.³⁵ Initially, 14 coloured and Asian members were appointed with most of the coloured members coming from the Freedom Party. The majority of the councillors had previously worked in state-created structures and were, according to Van Zyl Slabbert, "political has-beens rewarded for loyal service, or ... others waiting for vacancies to occur elsewhere."³⁶

The Labour Party no longer had an official forum in which to present its views, but opposition members in parliament took up the task of articulating the concerns of opponents and critics regarding the Act and the President's Council. During the marathon debate on the constitutional bill in the Senate, Senator Winchester insisted that "the President's Council, if it is set up in the way proposed here, is bound to fail because it will be seen as merely another attempt to bolster the Government's policies." He pointed out that "all (the various consultative bodies) have failed because they have been seen as merely another instrument of the Government's

³²Interim Report of Commission of Inquiry on the Constitution, R.P.68/1980.

³³Thompson and Prior, South African Politics, 96.

³⁴G. Leach, South Africa (London: Methuen-Mandarin, 1989), 48; Race Relations Survey (1980), 4-7; Thompson and Prior, South African Politics, 96.

³⁵These members were recognised as leaders by the government and not necessarily by the community concerned.

³⁶F. van Zyl Slabbert, The Last White Parliament (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1985), 107.

attempt to bolster its own policy of separate development."³⁷ Criticism of the President's Council, inside and outside of parliament, had no effect, however, on the government. Frustrated at the futility of their cause, coloureds and Indians who were opposed to the council rounded on those who did accept nomination, accusing them of being "sellouts." An Anti-President's Council campaign was launched to drum up support from coloured and Indian quarters.

Despite the nation-wide campaign to discredit it, the President's Council set about its deliberations. After months of listening to testimony, the council's constitutional committee, chaired by Dennis Worrall, tabled its first report in May 1982. The report proposed a system of "consociational democracy" for whites, coloureds and Indians but recommended the perpetuation of the existing system for Africans, whereby they would continue to be part of the political dispensation in their respective homelands.³⁸ The second and final report in November 1982 spelt out the tricameral structures and gave details of the "Own Affairs" and "General Affairs" concepts.³⁹ A bill was presented to parliament in May 1983; passed as the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act (No. 110) of 1983, and put to the white electorate in a referendum in November of that year.⁴⁰

The new constitution provided for a three-chamber system which envisaged the establishment of three racially-based parliaments. Each parliament would consist of elected members from a particular race group, and would also have its own cabinet (ministers' council) with its own "prime minister" as

³⁷Debates of the Senate (13 June 1980), col. 2552.

³⁸Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 74; Forsyth, "Constitutional Proposals", 131.

³⁹Report of the Van der Merwe Committee (November 1982).

⁴⁰Government Gazette, 28 September 1983; Van Zyl Slabbert, The System and the Struggle, 61.

chairman.⁴¹ Although the government proudly proclaimed that this system afforded other race groups a say in the political affairs of the country, the system had been carefully constructed to ensure that no power was "shared." Each parliament would only deal with affairs concerning its own race group (the "Own Affairs" concept). Matters that affected all race groups in general were debated separately and then consensus would be attempted (the "General Affairs" concept). If this could not be achieved, the matter would be referred to the President's Council and its ruling would be final. Because the President's Council was dominated by whites, they would always have the final say.

The Labour Party's response to the constitutional proposals manifested itself on two levels: a public facade of opposition and non-cooperation, and a struggle behind closed doors on the merits of participation. The subject of participation in a new constitutional dispensation had become the central feature of Labour Party debate after the new constitutional dispensation was first proposed by the Botha committee in 1977. The public response of the Labour Party to proposals presented between 1977 and 1982 was consistently critical and one of unanimous rejection. When proposals were first presented in 1977, the initial reaction of Labour Party leaders was one of enthusiasm. Party leader, Sonny Leon, felt that the proposals contained "encouraging flexibility," and Norman Middleton, deputy-chairman, agreed that the proposals offered more than the party and coloured people had expected.⁴² However, the favourable reaction turned to criticism. At a specially called meeting of the party's NEC on 10 September 1977, the proposals were discussed in detail. The NEC saw the formal ethnic divisions in the proposals as

⁴¹"Republic of South Africa Act (No. 110 of 1983)", Government Gazette, 28 September 1983; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 350.

⁴²Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 739-40.

entrenching racism in the constitution.⁴³ A resolution was thereupon adopted to the effect that an alliance of whites, coloureds and Indians "is totally unacceptable to the Labour Party because it will completely alienate the overwhelming majority of South Africans."⁴⁴ The resolution pointed out that the exclusion of Africans would intensify, and not eliminate, racial conflict. Allan Hendrickse, party chairman, was especially scathing in his criticism and described the proposals as indicative of "decadence, immorality and a sick society and an attempt to entrench racism in the constitution."⁴⁵ The party thereupon voted to reject the constitutional proposals and refused to entertain further discussion on the subject.⁴⁶

The Labour Party's rejection of the proposals was to be expected in view of its consistent opposition to institutions of separate representation.⁴⁷ Even though it served in, and used the CRC as a political forum, the party had never accepted that body as meeting its demands for full and equal political rights and it was therefore not going to accept any other body which continued to perpetuate political separation.

⁴³See also A. Lemon, "The Indian and Coloured Elections: Co-optation rejected?", South African International, vol. 15, No. 2, (October 1984), 86. Lemon points out that in the tricameral constitution, the Population Registration Act enjoyed constitutional entrenchment for the first time; that the "Own Affairs" concept rested on the Group Areas Act, and that therefore, the tricameral system reinforced, not diluted, apartheid.

⁴⁴Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Special Labour Party NEC meeting, Stellenbosch, 10 September 1977.

⁴⁵T. Abrahams, "'Coloured Politics' in South Africa: The Quislings' trek into the Abyss," Ufahamu (1983), 255.

⁴⁶Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, Stellenbosch, 10 September 1977; Race Relations Survey (1977), 9.

⁴⁷See for instance, P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, East London, 6-8 April 1972; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 14 March 1972; Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1972; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 120.

Thus, it was not surprising that the Labour Party summarily rejected the Botha and Schlebusch proposals. It also refused to give evidence before the Schlebusch Commission on the grounds that to do so would to give the government an opportunity to claim "legitimacy" for its plans.⁴⁸ The party then formed its own commission, headed by CRC chairman, Les du Preez, to draw up its own constitutional proposals.⁴⁹ The Du Preez committee presented its report in April 1979. The report rejected pluralism and insisted that South Africa was one nation.⁵⁰ It criticised the proposed council of cabinets and the president's council concept and rejected the idea of three separate parliaments, suggesting instead a federal system of government.⁵¹ The committee pointed out that a unitary system of government, as well as partition had failed in South Africa and only a federation could equitably take into account the heterogeneous and multicultural character of the country. The report suggested that, in the search for an ideal democratic system of government, there would be an initial phase in which all provinces, homelands and national states consolidate geographically and develop their own constitutions. Thereupon, the country would embark on a constitutional phase to "organise and formulate the institutions of the federal umbrella government."⁵² The committee recommended a Federal Senate, Federal House of Assembly and a president and a cabinet as the main structures of central government and advocated an enforceable Bill of Rights. It insisted on the principle of one citizenship and

⁴⁸P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 8-9 September 1979.

⁴⁹Race Relations Survey (1979), 22.

⁵⁰Report of the Committee on Alternative Constitutional Proposals, 9.

⁵¹Ibid, 1, 17-19.

⁵²Report on Alternative Constitutional Proposals, 17-19; P.A.29, pamphlet issued by F.E. Peters, The Labour Party of South Africa and its Constitutional Options for South Africa (Cape Town: Labour Party, n.d.), 4-5.

universal suffrage for all South Africans on a "one-man-one-vote" basis.⁵³ The committee then expressed its rejection of the 1977 proposals on the grounds that these would entrench inequality, and insisted that no group should dominate any of the others politically.⁵⁴ Therefore, negotiations based on these proposals were out of the question. The report concluded that the "government's constitutional proposals are so defective in essence that the product (viz. the draft constitution) cannot give concrete expression to the Minister's well-intentioned optimistic willingness and obvious enthusiasms for negotiations."⁵⁵ The committee's report was accepted unanimously by the Labour Party.

When the idea of a president's council was first suggested by the Schibusch Commission in 1979, the Labour Party refused to cooperate with the commission; rejected the proposed council out of hand, and threatened its members with expulsion if they accepted nominations to the council.⁵⁶ The vehement Labour Party reaction was accompanied by the accusation that the president's council was simply another ploy to keep whites in power. The party insisted that, as citizens of this country, coloureds were entitled to full political rights and an equal say in the running of the country; that the president's council would not enhance the role of coloureds in the political sphere because of the preponderance of whites on the council; and that the council was just an attempt to sidestep

⁵³P.A.29, The Labour Party of South Africa and its Constitutional Options, 4; Report on Alternative Constitutional Proposals, 1

⁵⁴P.A.29, The Labour Party of South Africa and its Constitutional Options, 4.

⁵⁵Report on Alternative Constitutional Proposals, 21.

⁵⁶Goldin, "The Coloured Labour Preference Policy", The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, vol. 13, collected Seminar Papers, No. 33 (University of London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1984), 116.

coloured demands for full political rights.⁵⁷ Allan Hendrickse later outlined the basis of the Labour Party's rejection of the council and its initial proposals:

We would certainly reject such an arrangement. We would not accept any parliamentary system which excludes blacks. We want full and equal citizenship and nothing less will satisfy us.⁵⁸

Attempts by the government to get the Labour Party to change its attitude was of no avail. P.W. Botha called a meeting to discuss the latter's attitude to the Schlebusch Commission, as well as the future of the CRC and the constitutional proposals. At the meeting, held on 9 September 1979, Labour Party executive members repeated their refusal to give evidence to the Schlebusch Commission and also flatly refused to submit the findings of the Du Preez committee.⁵⁹ The reason given for not doing so was that merely submitting evidence was not the same as negotiating from an equal position of strength.⁶⁰ At a further meeting in June 1981, party leaders met with government ministers to discuss constitutional issues.⁶¹ Immediately thereafter, the party chairman, David Curry, repeated the party's hard-line position, stating that it would only support a new constitution if it provided for universal franchise within a single political system and if Africans were allowed to participate at all levels.⁶² The party reiterated its rejection of the President's Council and the three-chamber

⁵⁷L.P.O.Wagenaar, interview with author, Oudtshoorn, 19 December 1992.

⁵⁸Argus, 22 September 1980.

⁵⁹Burger, 3 April 1979; Race Relations Survey (1980), 22.

⁶⁰Sonny Leon Papers, transcript of discussions between the Prime Minister and the CRC Executive, 9 November 1979; Cape Times, 13 November 1979.

⁶¹Cape Times, 12 June 1981.

⁶²Race Relations Survey, (1981), 13.

parliament because they were simply an "extension of the policies of apartheid," and because separate parliaments for Indians and coloureds, and the exclusion of Africans, would increase polarisation. Furthermore, three parliaments could not function effectively because the white parliament would continue to have a political monopoly.⁶³

Although the party was beginning to show signs of dormancy following the dissolution of the CRC in 1980, leaders continued to publicly air hostility to the President's Council and rejection of a three-chamber parliament. At the Labour Party's national conference in December 1981, Allan Hendrickse spelt out the party's position on participation: "Nothing but direct representation in parliament for all South Africans is going to satisfy the majority of South Africans and particularly the Labour Party."⁶⁴ And at a meeting in April 1982, the party's NEC reiterated its support for the principle of a unitary state based on "one-man-one-vote," and confirmed that it would not accept a dispensation which did not include all South Africans.⁶⁵ When the President's Council's final report on the proposals were released in August 1982, Norman Middleton condemned the exclusion of Africans and confirmed the party's rejection because of that. Middleton stated that the plan was not an advance on the 1977 proposals and that it could not succeed without the inclusion of the majority of the people of South Africa. Allan Hendrickse confirmed that there was no possibility that the Labour Party would approve the proposals and that the forthcoming party congress would examine it to see how it could provide a basis for the attainment of the Labour Party's ideals.⁶⁶

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴P.A.29, Allan Hendrickse, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 27 December 1981.

⁶⁵Cape Times, 30 April 1982.

⁶⁶Natal Witness, 4 August 1982; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

Before the final draft of the constitutional proposals was presented in December 1982, a meeting of the South African Black Alliance (SABA) was held in November to establish the position of the members of the alliance regarding the proposals.⁶⁷ The Labour Party was at pains to assure its alliance partners that it would hold to its position and would not participate in the proposed tricameral system. David Curry convinced alliance members of the strength of the Labour Party's stand by slating the proposals as "a clever and sophisticated scheme for entrenching white baasskap ... (which would not be acceptable to the coloured community and which) seemed to be a new version of the old recipe for conflict that we had in the old Coloured Representative Council."⁶⁸

Immediately thereafter, the party's NEC met to discuss matters pertaining to the forthcoming Labour Party conference. The NEC again confirmed that the party would not consider participation.⁶⁹ Thus, by the time the Labour Party prepared for its national conference in Eshowe, Natal, in January 1983, it had over a period of six years publicly assured its members, its alliance partners, the government and the South African public that it would not participate in the tricameral system. It had also convinced the majority of coloured people that the Labour Party would reject participation.⁷⁰

However, while it presented a united public face of opposition to the constitutional proposals, all was not well in the Labour Party. Although the public image of the party between 1977 and 1982 was one of implacable and resolute opposition to the proposals, in private, the question of participation

⁶⁷Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 353.

⁶⁸"Labour Party - A constitutional Decision?" Work in Progress No. 25 (1983), 9.

⁶⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

⁷⁰Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 353; Race Relations Survey (1977), 9; Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 10 September 1977.

threatened to tear the Labour Party apart. The struggle between the "moderates" and the "militants" again came to the fore when the Botha proposals were first raised at a party meeting in 1977. Although the Labour Party voted to reject the proposals, the decision was only carried by the casting vote of the chairman.⁷¹ The "militants" then pushed the party to form a commission to draw up its own constitutional proposals,⁷² but appeared to soften their hard-line attitude when, in August 1978, Leon hinted that the party might consider participation. He cited Buthelezi's use of the homeland system as a means of fighting apartheid and felt that the Labour Party could do the same with the tricameral system.⁷³ The indications were that the "moderates" were exerting pressure on the party to reconsider its position on participation.

In 1979, cracks began to appear in the seemingly implacable facade of the Labour Party, when Les du Preez resigned because of the party's refusal to cooperate with the Schlebuschy Commission.⁷⁴ Du Preez's resignation was followed by that of the party's former leader, Sonny Leon, who cited the party's refusal to cooperate with the Schlebusch Commission, as one of his reasons.⁷⁵ In previous years, leading members such as Leon, Du Preez, Arendse and Adams had come under attack from the "militants" in the Labour Party for adopting an increasingly moderate tone towards the government. All of them later lost their positions in the Labour Party and, except for Arendse, became members of the President's

⁷¹Race Relations Survey (1977), 9.

⁷²Ibid (1979), 22.

⁷³Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 204.

⁷⁴Sunday Times, 30 December 1979. The threat was never carried out.

⁷⁵Sonny Leon Papers, Letter to F.E. Peters, 19 January 1980.

Council.⁷⁶ The resignations of Du Preez and Leon brought into the open the turmoil within the Labour Party on the issue of participation, even though the party publicly continued to condemn the proposals.

At the same time, the Labour Party also found itself at the crossroads regarding its future. The massive drop in voter numbers between 1969 and 1975 did not augur well for the 1980 CRC election. The rising tide of discontent and criticism from all quarters in the coloured community led the Labour Party to believe that it would not survive this election.⁷⁷ It therefore agreed that the government not proceed with the election and that it dissolve the CRC.⁷⁸ However, the demise of the CRC soon presented a crisis for the Labour Party. The party owed its existence to the CRC. It had specifically been formed to contest elections for that body and to work within the "system." Deprived of a political environment, the Labour Party began to show signs of dormancy. The "moderates" in the party who supported dialogue on the constitutional proposals stepped up their campaign against the "militants" who continued to espouse opposition.⁷⁹ It became clear that a split was looming in the Labour Party and that its constituency was falling apart.⁸⁰ Thus, at the urging of the "moderates" in the party, thoughts increasingly turned to the question of participation in the constitutional system with which the government, in the meantime, had been doggedly forging ahead.

The turmoil in the Labour Party was a reflection of the

⁷⁶Cape Times, 6 February 1982.

⁷⁷Molteno, "The Schooling of Black South Africans", 357-58.

⁷⁸Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 127; Debates of the House of Assembly, (3 March 1980), col. 1877.

⁷⁹Sunday Tribune, 4 January 1981.

⁸⁰Venter, South African Government and Politics, 136.

ambivalence in the coloured community itself. For example, Roothman and Schutte's investigation into coloured attitudes towards the President's Council found that 37,9% felt that the introduction of the council was a good thing, 15,5% disagreed, 39,7% were uncertain and 6,9% did not respond.⁸¹ The uncertainty and opposing views were similarly represented in the Labour Party. While the Labour Party continued to vilify the President's Council and its proposal of a three-chamber parliament, the party leaders, most of whom were in the "militant" camp, sensed that a spirit of revolt was brewing in the party. They therefore agreed to discussions with government ministers in June 1981 on constitutional issues, although the meeting was ostensibly held to discuss unrest in coloured schools. After the meeting, both parties decided to hold further talks.⁸² This meeting represented a victory for party "moderates." However, talks did not take place and at the Labour Party's national conference in December of that year, "moderates" expressed alarm that only the government appeared to be involved in the formulation of the new constitution. Fearing that the interests of coloured people were not being represented, they forced through a resolution that party leaders "initiate a process of negotiation with the government of the day in order to achieve our political goals and to end the existing stalemate with regard to a new acceptable constitution for South Africa."⁸³ Hendrickse tried to quell the mounting disaffection, but insisted that the party would only be satisfied with direct representation in parliament for all South Africans.⁸⁴ Although he railed against the new proposals, many in the party were not all that

⁸¹S. Roothman and D.W. Schutte, Onderzoek na die Aanvaarbaarheid van die Presidentsraad onder 'n groep Kleurlinge in die RSA (Pretoria: HSRC, 1983), 15.

⁸²Argus, 12 June 1981.

⁸³P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 27-28, December 1981; Cape Times, 6 February 1982.

⁸⁴P.A.29, Allan Hendrickse, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 27 December 1981.

certain that non-participation was a good idea.

Acting on the "negotiation" resolution, several leading members of the Labour Party requested a meeting with the Prime Minister in February 1982. David Curry indicated that the Labour Party was tired of being merely a "post office" for government decisions and that it wanted to start serious negotiations.⁸⁵ In July 1982, after the interim report on the constitutional proposals had been presented by the President's Council, the NEC invited the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Chris Heunis, to a meeting in order to gain clarification on the constitutional guidelines. The guidelines were then sent to branches throughout the country for study and comment. Branches were instructed to "examine them for any aspects which could be used to achieve the Party's objectives."⁸⁶ However, despite mounting pressure within the party to negotiate with the government, the party leadership continued to present a defiant public face, but it was becoming apparent that they were out of step with the direction which the rank-and-file wanted the party to take. However, the "moderates" did not appear to be influential enough at that stage to force a change in the party's position.

As the participation of Indians and coloureds was needed for the successful implementation of the new dispensation, it was essential for the government to win the support of those parties or groupings which appeared to exert the greatest influence in, or represent the greatest number of, people from their respective communities. As the Labour Party had overshadowed all other parties in the CRC, that party became the target for the government's agents. Chris Heunis was entrusted with the task of selling the new constitutional

⁸⁵Cape Times, 6 February 1982.

⁸⁶Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 1984, 158-59; John Nash, interview, 31 August 1992.

dispensation to the Indian and coloured parties, and it was therefore his job to woo the Labour Party.⁸⁷ Heunis recruited the "Young Turks" in the National Party, a younger and more liberal breed of National Party MP who had entered parliament after the 1977 and 1981 general elections, to assist in this task.⁸⁸ A public relations firm, Communitel, also entered the fray and worked undercover for the National Party to promote the new constitution.⁸⁹ Directors of the firm, Piet Coetzer, Kobus du Plessis and W.A. (Wimpie) de Klerk approached the Labour Party with an offer to help raise funds and act as consultants to run workshops.⁹⁰ It would not cost the party anything and Communitel's fundraising fee would be covered by a percentage from funds raised. Communitel's offer was especially attractive to the Labour Party because the party had always "battled financially," and it was therefore not surprising that they succumbed to Communitel's "smooth talk," which included assurances such as "money is no object" and "no strings attached."⁹¹ The party accepted Communitel's assurances that they were neutral and that no conditions were attached to their offer of assistance. Although some leaders were sceptical of the offer, Allan Hendrickse assured them that he would "take money from the devil, if it would benefit us."⁹²

Communitel was productive in the promotion of the tricameral

⁸⁷Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 230.

⁸⁸Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

⁸⁹Willie Meyer, interview with author, Stellenbosch, 21 January 1994. Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, maintains that Communitel was a government and Broederbond front.

⁹⁰Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994. After the Labour Party had decided to participate in the tricameral parliament, Communitel ran workshops on how to organise and run their election campaign.

⁹¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

⁹²Ibid.

system and with seemingly unlimited funds, conducted seminars, held parties, and "wined and dined" members of the Labour Party.⁹³ The Labour Party appears not to have been aware initially of Communitel's motives,⁹⁴ but if that is indeed the case, then it showed astonishing naivete for a party with eighteen years of experience in politics, and which had already witnessed at first hand the Machiavellian machinations of the National Party during that period. If indeed, the Labour Party had no idea of what Communitel was up to, then the penny dropped two years later when Piet Coetzer was appointed by the National Party to the President's Council as a renowned "Hotnotkenner" - the basis for his appointment was his "inside knowledge" of the Labour Party and coloured people.⁹⁵ As far as the promise of raising vast amounts of money for the Labour Party, the party hardly got anything out of the arrangement and, in fact, ended up paying money to Communitel when it went beyond its budget.⁹⁶

While Communitel was working in the open to influence members of the Labour Party, Heunis and his assistants were working behind the scenes. Private meetings between the "Young Turks" and members of the Labour Party had taken place in 1981 already, but Heunis's first official contact with the Labour Party came in July 1982, after the interim report on the constitutional proposals had been presented to the government. The NEC invited Heunis to a meeting in Lansdowne, Cape in order to gain clarification on the constitutional guidelines.⁹⁷ This meeting with Heunis, coupled with the conciliatory tone of some Labour Party leaders, the

⁹³John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993; Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994.

⁹⁴Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

⁹⁵Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

contradictions of others, and reports of dissension among party members caused disquiet in the ranks of the party's allies. The president of SABA, Mangosuthu (Gatsha) Buthelezi of Inkatha, was concerned that the Labour Party might be wavering and convened the meeting in November 1982 to establish the position of the members of the alliance.⁹⁸ The Labour Party delegation included Jac Rabie, a former Federal Party leader noted for his pro-participation and pro-government stance. Rabie tried to convince SABA members that it would be good for all concerned if the Labour Party participated because, by going in, the party would be able to look after the interests of blacks.⁹⁹ However, his argument elicited such vehement reaction that Allan Hendrickse had to allay fears and assure alliance members that the party had not changed its position on the proposed tricameral system. The assurances appeared to dampen disquiet and ease fears.¹⁰⁰

Immediately after the SABA meeting, the NEC of the Labour Party met on 9 and 10 December to discuss matters pertaining to the Labour Party national conference due to be held at Eshowe on 1 January 1983. At this meeting the NEC closed ranks and confirmed, without dissent, that the party was not considering participation in the tricameral system.¹⁰¹ This decision disturbed Heunis whose behind-the-scenes work to sway the Labour Party appeared to be hanging in a delicate balance. He immediately arranged for an urgent meeting with some of the NEC members, among them, Allan Hendrickse, David Curry and Jac Rabie. The party's deputy-leader, Norman Middleton, was deliberately not informed of the meeting. Buthelezi, as SABA president, had for a long time been concerned that the Labour Party might be wavering and eventually throw in its lot with

⁹⁸Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 353.

⁹⁹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁰⁰"Labour Party - A constitutional Decision?" in Work in Progress, No. 25 (1983), 9.

¹⁰¹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

Botha and the new dispensation. Middleton, a consistent opponent of the tricameral proposals and an ardent admirer and staunch supporter of Buthelezi, had regularly kept the latter apprised of Labour Party decisions regarding this matter. After the NEC meeting, he had assured Buthelezi that the Labour Party would publicly declare at the Eshowe conference its irrevocable refusal to participate. Heunis was wary of Middleton, not only because of the latter's vehement opposition to participation, but because he feared Middleton would tell Buthelezi who would promptly try to undermine Heunis's influence. Heunis wanted the discussions, and whatever decision came out of it, to remain secret. Middleton was therefore deliberately left out of the discussions.¹⁰²

It was not for nothing that Heunis had been selected to court the Labour Party. He was noted for his endless patience and his ability to find answers to the fears of a group which had every reason to be "suspicious of a government which thirty-odd years before had spared few scruples to remove coloured voters from the common roll."¹⁰³ Heunis clearly possessed "formidable powers of persuasion."¹⁰⁴ Nash, who attended many of the meetings at which Heunis was present, describes him as "a real diplomat, very smooth, and very persuasive,"¹⁰⁵ At this meeting Heunis drew on all his skills and made out a convincing case for the acceptance of the constitution; that it was only a beginning, and that further reforms would follow. What was important was that the country was making a fresh start and other improvements were likely to follow. However, Heunis refrained from making any binding

¹⁰²Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁰³H. Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1991), 334.

¹⁰⁴Ibid. See also Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 230.

¹⁰⁵John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

commitments.¹⁰⁶ According to Van Zyl Slabbert, Heunis used the meeting to "plead, beg and cajole." He "hinted, suggested and implied, but not once was a definite public promise extracted or a definite shift in Nationalist policy offered."¹⁰⁷ Lockey states that Heunis, while not making any specific promises, continually assured the Labour Party that the government was acting in good faith; that important reforms were just over the horizon if the Labour Party participated; yet hinted darkly that the government would find and appoint its own coloured leaders if the Labour Party declined the offer to participate.¹⁰⁸ This veiled threat should not of course have carried any weight with the Labour Party. The creation and failure of the UCCA in 1959 was a stark indication of what could happen if the government attempted to foist "coloured leaders" on an unwilling community. Packing the CRC with defeated Federal Party candidates in 1969 had all but destroyed the CRC as a credible attempt at providing an instrument of separate political representation which would be acceptable to the majority of coloured people. The attempt to create a nominated CPC in 1980 after the demise of the CRC failed when the government itself acknowledged that it would not be a viable substitute. Furthermore, the only party which could have provided candidates for such a move, the Freedom Party, had all but disintegrated in 1980 and virtually the entire membership defected to the Labour Party. Thus, a threat to find its own "leaders" and appoint them to the House of Representatives, was a threat of little substance. Yet, it appeared to have been sufficient for Labour Party leaders to consider changing their position. It appeared as if some of them had been planning to participate all along and needed a telling reason to consider a change in stance.

¹⁰⁶Kennedy, Power, Pride and Prejudice, 334.

¹⁰⁷F. van Zyl Slabbert, The Last White Parliament (Johannesburg, 1986) 109-110.

¹⁰⁸Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994.

By the time the meeting was over, Labour Party leaders had resolved upon an amazing volte face and decided to change their position. Unfortunately, minutes were not kept of this secret meeting and none of the members present were inclined to give an indication of what was discussed,¹⁰⁹ but after the party leaders had decided to change their position, they went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the conference would support their about-face. They refused to tell Norman Middleton that they had met with Heunis. As deputy-leader and NEC member, he was entitled to know. This was done to keep the decision secret until it was discussed at the conference and so forestall the mobilisation of opposition to the decision. They also did not want Buthelezi to hear about it because he would have released the news to the media. An angry Buthelezi was more than they could handle at the time.¹¹⁰ However, shortly before the conference, Middleton realised that something was amiss and contacted Hendrickse about rumours of a secret meeting and a switch in policy. Hendrickse assured him that the meeting had not been an actual meeting but a "chance meeting for tea." Regarding rumours of a switch in policy, Hendrickse was evasive and advised Middleton not to listen to idle talk.¹¹¹

As the party's national conference was to be held in Natal, the Labour Party paid Buthelezi, as Chief Minister of KwaZulu and leader of the Zulu cultural organisation, Inkatha, the courtesy of inviting him to address the conference as the keynote speaker. Unaware of the Heunis meeting and the switch in policy, and armed with Middleton's assurance that the Labour Party had unequivocally put to rest any possibility of participation, Buthelezi addressed the delegates with

¹⁰⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1993, and Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989, were both present at the meeting but neither gave an indication of what was actually discussed.

¹¹⁰Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

¹¹¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

confidence, lauded the party for its wisdom in rejecting participation, and lambasted the government and the new constitutional proposals.¹¹² It therefore came as a shock to him when, soon after his address, Labour Party leaders entertained discussion on the new dispensation and urged the delegates to accept Heunis's invitation to participate. After a lengthy and heated debate, the conference voted to participate in the tricameral system.¹¹³ Buthelezi's reaction was immediate and explosive. He felt that he had been insulted. Buthelezi had the kind of personality which did not accept insults, rebuffs and refusals.¹¹⁴ He angrily rounded on the Labour Party for making a fool of him, and there and then expelled the party from SABA. Middleton too was furious that he had been betrayed and summarily resigned from the Labour Party, taking with him all the members of the Natal branch.¹¹⁵ Thus, even before parliament voted to accept the tricameral system, and even before the white electorate had accepted it in a referendum, the Labour Party declared its acceptance of the new dispensation and indicated its decision to participate. P.W. Botha was so pleased with this decision that he immediately invited a delegation of party leaders to meet with him so that he could congratulate them and explain how matters would work from then onwards. An indication of the concern at the potential of Middleton's disruptive influence on the participation question was given when Botha enquired as to Middleton's absence in the delegation. When

¹¹²Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 159.

¹¹³Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

¹¹⁴Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 159; Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

¹¹⁵Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992. Sylvia Landers, interview, 17 September 1994, states that she pleaded with Middleton not to resign, but according to Luwellyn Landers, interview, 17 September 1994, Middleton was adamant because he had personally assured Buthelezi that the party would not participate, and he now felt that the latter had been slighted.

told that he had resigned from the Labour Party, Botha's reaction was: "Thank God!"¹¹⁶

The question which immediately came to the fore after this somersault was why the Labour Party, which had always been vehemently anti-apartheid; which had vociferously opposed institutions of separate representation; and which had consistently and publicly disavowed the new dispensation, did such an abrupt about-turn and become partners of the very government which it had opposed for almost twenty years. Nothing in the Labour Party's official attitude and public utterings had ever given an inkling that it would want to participate in what Justice Minister Jimmy Kruger had long ago admitted, were only going to be "talking shops."¹¹⁷ Although the Labour Party had become increasingly vulnerable in the years following the dissolution of the CRC, and the promises held out by participation became increasingly tempting to those who considered the Labour Party to be on the brink of disintegration, it still came as a shock to many when the party suddenly, and without public warning, accepted the constitutional proposals and decided to participate in the proposed tricameral system.

As the party's volte face came under scrutiny, the role of certain leaders began to loom large. It became apparent that many of those who had been at the forefront of public opposition to the constitutional proposals, were, in fact, the driving force behind the party's decision to change its

¹¹⁶Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994. Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992, and Sylvia Landers, interview, 17 September 1994, confirm that Middleton was the most vehement and aggressive opponent of participation and the only leader whose attitude to the question of participation never changed throughout the six years of debate within the party.

¹¹⁷P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Oudtshoorn, 27-28 December 1977.

position.¹¹⁸ This suggested three possibilities: either, the leaders had undergone a dramatic change of heart; or, they had not been projecting an honest image in the years of opposition to the proposals; or, Heunis possessed extraordinary powers of persuasion.¹¹⁹ Further examination tends to indicate that the second possibility was the more likely one. For example, Hendrickse's somersault was the most astounding of all. He had been the most vociferous and consistent opponent of apartheid, political separation and separate institutions of representation since entering the CRC in 1969.¹²⁰ Prior to, and for years after his election to the party leadership in 1978, Hendrickse was at the forefront of opposition to the constitutional proposals.¹²¹ Moreover, he had long been regarded as the leader of the "militants" in the Labour Party and had forged close links with the ANC, even publicly declaring his support for that organisation in 1978.¹²²

¹¹⁸Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993; Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993; Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹¹⁹Rumours have done the rounds in coloured political circles for a number of years that Heunis, on behalf of the National Party, made Labour Party leaders "an offer which they could not refuse"; that this was in the form of "perks" which were too good to turn down, or blackmail and some threats, or perhaps a combination of all three. Despite conjecture and discussion and suspicions voiced by Labour Party members themselves over the years, no one has ventured any concrete evidence.

¹²⁰Evidence of Hendrickse's stance in the ten years of the existence of the CRC can be studied in greater detail in Du Preez, "Role and Policies of the Labour Party"; Mina, "The CRC"; Saks, "The failure of the CRC".

¹²¹Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice, 334.

¹²²p.A.29, Allan Hendrickse, Labour Party National Conference, Bloemfontein, 27 December 1978. In 1977, Hendrickse, who at the time was the minister of the Congregational Church in Uitenhage, received a letter from Nelson Mandela in which he asked Hendrickse to call on coloureds and Indians to reject the Botha constitutional proposals. Fear of Security Police interference led Hendrickse to read the letter from the safety of his pulpit during a church service. Immediately afterwards,
(continued...)

Hendrickse had also been a supporter of the black consciousness movement and this factor, together with his anti-government stance in the CRC, reportedly led to his arrest and detention in August 1976.¹²³ He had had a hand in the dismissal of two former Labour Party leaders because they had talked with the government, and claimed the credit for scrapping the CRC in 1980.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Hendrickse had also been offered a lucrative appointment to the President's Council in 1980 but had turned it down because he was "not prepared to sell out his people."¹²⁵ As late as August 1982, five months before the Eshowe meeting, Hendrickse had still assured the public that he was not in favour of accepting the proposals,¹²⁶ and in November that year, he was the leader of a delegation which assured SABA delegates that the party would not participate. Three weeks before the Eshowe conference, he attended an NEC meeting which confirmed the party's rejection of the proposals and its refusal to participate.

However, it appears that while Hendrickse was presenting a public face which advocated rejection, in private, he was reconsidering his position.¹²⁷ According to Lockey,

¹²²(...continued)
the letter was destroyed. Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

¹²³Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 13, 93-95; Gastrow, Who's Who (1990), 105. The Labour Party leadership have always tried to claim affinity with the liberation movement because their leader had also been a detainee. However, questions have been raised over Hendrickse's detention and subsequent release. He was released before the majority of other detainees, after he had given a written undertaking to disassociate himself from extra-constitutional agitation and denounce the "violence" unleashed during the Soweto riots. It has even been suggested that the seeds of participation were planted when Hendrickse was in detention. See SASPU National (March, 1983).

¹²⁴Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 125, 127.

¹²⁵Ibid, 146.

¹²⁶Natal Witness, 4 August 1982.

¹²⁷Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 140, 151.

Hendrickse was personally opposed to the constitutional proposals at the outset and this was borne out by his public and consistent statements opposing acceptance. However, as leader, he had to be sympathetic and responsive to the views of his members, as well as take into account what was best for the party. Because of the groundswell of opposition within the party to the public stance of the leaders, Hendrickse began to consult knowledgeable and influential persons inside and outside of the party regarding the way to go.¹²⁸ One of those he consulted with was Franklin Sonn, rector of the Peninsula Technikon and chairman of the influential Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA), the largest coloured organisation of its kind in South Africa. Sonn and others urged Hendrickse to participate.¹²⁹ However, says Lockey, when Hendrickse subsequently pushed for participation based on the advice and promises of support by these "outside supporters," they "dropped him" and refused to stand by the party's decision.¹³⁰ Many of them later became strident critics of the party and Hendrickse during the tricameral years.

Norman Middleton, however, insists that Hendrickse was the "prime mover" in the Labour Party to get it to join the tricameral system. He suggests that the turning point in Hendrickse's stance came when the "carrot was dangled in front of him that he would be the first 'coloured' prime minister." From that moment, contends Middleton, Hendrickse began to work behind the scenes to get the Labour Party to accept participation.¹³¹ John Nash, Mohammed Dangor and Willie Meyer, are also unequivocal in their view that Hendrickse was the

¹²⁸Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994; Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 161.

¹²⁹James Swigelaar, interview with author, Oudtshoorn, 17 October 1994.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

driving force behind the conference's decision to participate and that he relentlessly set out to ensure that such a decision would be favourable. Events during the participation debate also lends credence to such a view. At moments of deadlock during the debate, Hendrickse and Jac Rabie would leave the conference hall and "rush over" to Empangeni to confer with Heunis, who was staying at a hotel for the duration of the conference. Bolstered by advice and armed with strategies from Heunis, they would return to the conference and attempt to break the deadlock.¹³²

David Curry was another of the leaders who had been even more strident in expressing public opposition to the constitutional proposals than Hendrickse had been. He had long been regarded as one of the "militants," and, as party chairman after 1978, Curry had often articulated the party's hard-line approach to the new constitution. However, his public stance often appeared to be contradictory. For instance, in June 1981 Curry told government ministers that the party would only support a new constitution if it provided for a universal franchise within a single political system, and if Africans were allowed to participate at all levels.¹³³ Then in February 1982, he turned around and informed the Prime Minister that the Labour Party wanted to start serious negotiations.¹³⁴ Yet, at a SABA meeting in November 1982, barely a month before the party's volte face at Eshowe, Curry castigated the constitutional proposals, calling it a "a clever and sophisticated scheme for entrenching white baasskap," and slating it as a "new version of the old recipe for conflict that we had in the old Coloured Representative Council."¹³⁵ However a study of the Labour Party's private

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Argus, 12 June 1981; Race Relations Survey (1981), 13.

¹³⁴Cape Times, 6 February 1982.

¹³⁵"Labour Party - A constitutional Decision?" Work in Progress No. 25 (1983), 9.

and public response to the constitutional proposals between 1977 and 1982 gives evidence that Curry had his feet in both camps. While he made some of the most telling attacks on the President's Council and the constitutional proposals, he was not consistent and often made strong calls at the same time to consider participation. At Eshowe, he appeared to be the most eager of the leaders to ensure that the conference voted to participate.

The leader who appeared to work hardest at ensuring participation, was Jac Rabie. Rabie was a leading member of the Federal Party until a leadership clash in the party led to his resignation in 1977. After taking his place as an independent, he joined the Labour Party in 1978. He immediately gathered around him defectors from the Federal Party and "moderates" who advocated acceptance of the CRC and instruments of separate representation. When the Federal (Freedom) Party fell apart after the demise of the CRC in 1980, former members flocked to the Labour Party. This immeasurably strengthened Rabie's power base.¹³⁶ Between 1981 and 1983, Rabie tried unsuccessfully to wrest the leadership of the Labour Party from Hendrickse.¹³⁷ However, he continued to work as a shadowy figure in the background, influencing and urging members to support a decision for participation.¹³⁸ In preparation for a successful decision on participation at Eshowe, Rabie and his supporters had "done their homework," ensuring that pro-participation regions made plans to send

¹³⁶Norman Middleton is of the opinion that Rabie canvassed members of the Freedom Party in 1980 and encouraged them to join the Labour Party en masse with the intention of taking control of the party.

¹³⁷Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹³⁸Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, suggests that Rabie made a deal with the National Party to influence the Labour Party from the inside. Middleton points to the fact that Rabie and all the former Federal Party members who assisted him in this task, were later rewarded in the House of Representatives for "services rendered to the National Party".

delegates; that pro-participation members were elected as delegates to the conference; that transport and accommodation was arranged to ensure their presence.¹³⁹ Thus, while the Labour Party publicly voiced rejection of the constitutional proposals between 1977 and 1982, Rabie and his supporters worked in private to ensure support for participation.

It therefore becomes apparent that elements in the leadership were certainly more eager to push for participation than they had admitted in public, and were prepared to go to any lengths to ensure a positive vote by delegates at the Eshowe conference. Accusations were also levelled that a "power clique" consisting of party leader, Allan Hendrickse; party chairman, David Curry; Transvaal leader, Jac Rabie; and Western Cape leader, Carter Ebrahim, "rigged" the conference to ensure a "yes" vote.¹⁴⁰ Firstly, it transpired that the congress was "loaded" with delegates from rural branches who were more acquiescent and amenable to a vote for participation. In former years rural branches had been unable to afford the costs of sending delegates to annual conferences.¹⁴¹ Now, suddenly, a poverty-stricken Labour Party found the money to bus in delegates from remote rural areas, and in numbers not seen at previous conferences.¹⁴² In

¹³⁹Miley Richards, 29 June 1992; Sylvia Landers, 17 September 1994; Norman Middleton, 10 October 1994.

¹⁴⁰Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 235.

¹⁴¹Statistics of the CRC elections of 1969 and 1975 showed that rural coloureds were more in favour of parties which advocated collaboration, than their urban counterparts. See, also Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 236.

¹⁴²James Swigelaar, interview with author, Oudtshoorn, 22 April 1994, states that funds from the South African Defence Force were channelled to the Labour Party throughout the tricameral period as the government attempted to create as favourable an opportunity as possible for the Labour Party to influence coloured voters to support the tricameral system. Financial support was especially forthcoming at election time. Funds for the Eshowe Conference might also have come from the National Party or Broederbond, but channelled through Communitel
(continued...)

fact, only 60 of the 350 delegates at the conference were from the Cape which contained 65-70% of the coloured population. This later led to accusations that the decision did not adequately represent the feelings of the whole Labour Party.¹⁴³ Landers states that many in the Labour Party were not happy about participation and it never even entered their minds that the party would make a decision at Eshowe to participate. The pro-participation group, on the other hand did their homework. They bused in supporters and ensured that they had majority support.¹⁴⁴ Secondly, the resolution on participation was put to the conference in such a way that many delegates did not understand what they were voting for. Thirdly, a vote was called for without the chairman, David Curry, first calling for amendments or objections.¹⁴⁵ The full resolution, the phrasing of which critics felt was deliberately ambiguous, reads as follows:

The Labour Party of South Africa believes in the effective participation of all South Africans, irrespective of race, colour or creed in the councils of the nation at all levels. The party does not see the proposals of the National Party as being the answer to the constitutional demands of the people. Because of the exclusion of the greatest number of people, the Africans, it is not the answer to the constitutional demands of our time. It entrenches ethnicity. We reiterate our demands for, and belief in one man, one vote in a unitary system, the latter being negotiable.

However, the Labour Party believes that its participation in the tricameral parliament and subsequent standing

¹⁴²(...continued)
to avoid accusations of contravention of the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968.

¹⁴³Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 96; Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 236.

¹⁴⁴Sylvia Landers, interview, 17 September 1994; Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁴⁵Abrahams, "'Coloured' Politics", 255. Freedberg maintains that the resolution was pushed through the conference by the "power clique" of Hendrickse, Curry, Rabie and Ebrahim. Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 235.

councils can assist us in the achievement of our goals and constitutional objectives, and further instructs its leaders to continue on the road of negotiation with the government of the day.¹⁴⁶

Accusations were made that the resolution was deliberately worded in a way that delegates could not understand what they were voting for. While they were rejecting the principles of the proposals, because they did not go far enough, they were also voting in favour of participation in the elections for the coloured House of Representatives.¹⁴⁷ Dissenters urged the party not to take a decision on participation before the implications of such a decision had been examined, and certainly not before the constitution had been finalised and passed by parliament.¹⁴⁸ Many members conceded that participation "had to happen but the timing was wrong."¹⁴⁹ However, the proponents of participation stymied them by quoting the Labour Party's constitution which stated that the party should negotiate with the government of the day.¹⁵⁰ The debate swayed back and forth; each side appearing to gain the upper hand over the other. Speakers made impassioned and emotional pleas for the party to consider either one or the other decision. Whenever the meeting deadlocked, one or more

¹⁴⁶"Labour Party - A Constitutional Decision?" Work in Progress No. 25 (February 1983), 9; P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Eshowe, 1-3 January, 1983.

¹⁴⁷Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 235-36; Race Relations Survey (1983), 29.

¹⁴⁸Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992. Richards states that there were eleven dissenters to the Eshowe decision, among them, members of the Executive and others who were provincial leaders and long-serving CRC members such as Mohammed Dangor, Luwellyn Landers, Norman Middleton, Charles Redcliffe, Miley Richards and Sam Solomon. Other sources put the figure at nine. See Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 97; Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice, 334; Rand Daily Mail, 6 January 1983.

¹⁴⁹Sylvia Landers, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹⁵⁰Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3, "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 8 April 1972, preamble to the Constitution (ii), 1.

of the leaders would drive the short distance to Empangeni to confer secretly with Chris Heunis. Armed with new ideas, they would return with suggestions to break the deadlock.¹⁵¹ At the end of the day-long debate, David Curry made the final speech which he used effectively to sway doubting and uncommitted delegates. Curry's speech appeared to be the decisive one.¹⁵² Immediately thereafter, the resolution was put to the vote. The proponents carried the day and the resolution was passed. Thus, if one bears in mind the clandestine nature of the Heunis meeting three weeks earlier, the exclusion of Middleton from that meeting, the secrecy surrounding the discussions and decisions taken, and the stratagems employed at the conference to ensure a positive decision, it becomes apparent that elements in the party leadership were particularly keen to deliver their constituents into the hands of Heunis and the National Party.

The Eshowe decision elicited a wave of condemnation by a variety of coloured organisations and leaders. Allan Boesak, chaplain at the University of the Western Cape, immediately embarked on a series of interviews and lectures in which he stridently and eloquently condemned the Labour Party for electing to participate.¹⁵³ He stated that the Labour Party's decision would mean that "apartheid would cease to have a white face" and that coloured people would become "junior partners" of the government and share responsibility for the implementation of apartheid such as, for example, the creation of the homelands and the resettlement of people.¹⁵⁴ In a speech which typified his attitude to the constitutional

¹⁵¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁵²Peter Hendrickse, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹⁵³E.G. Pedro, "Dr Allan Aubrey Boesak: 'n Breë Agtergrondskets en Sy Aandeel in die Stigting van die United Democratic Front" (M.A. Dissertation, University of the Western Cape, November 1989), 69.

¹⁵⁴Cape Times, 24 January 1983.

proposals, he accused the government of opportunism by attempting to use coloured people to bail it out of its present difficulties:

The P.C. proposals are trying to co-opt Coloureds and Indians to make the Apartheid machine run more smoothly, and were a move by the government to meet the economic, military and political crisis it faces And now, all of a sudden, the government's problems have become our (the coloureds') problems. Apartheid's crisis has become our crisis. All of a sudden, we are told that we are no longer "lepers", that we too are people with dignity that we "belong" with "the whites".¹⁵⁵

Boesak was supported in his opposition and condemnation by the Cape Housing Action Committee(CAHAC), representing 22 civic organisations in the Western Cape, church groups and a number of trade unions such as the South African Allied Workers' Union(SAAWU), the Federation of South African Trade Unions(FOSATU), the Food and Canning Workers' Union(FCWU), and the General Workers' Union(GWU).¹⁵⁶ CAHAC stated that the Labour Party's decision represented the views of only a "tiny fraction" of the "so-called coloured community."¹⁵⁷ Out of this groundswell of criticism emerged the idea of a united front to oppose the new dispensation, culminating in the formation of the United Democratic Front(UDF) in August 1983 in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, to oppose the tricameral elections.¹⁵⁸ Many trade union members and others who previously supported the Labour Party terminated their relationship with the party.¹⁵⁹ A number of coloured leaders who, in earlier years had been well-disposed to the Labour

¹⁵⁵New York Times, 23 February 1983.

¹⁵⁶Rand Daily Mail, 7 February 1983.

¹⁵⁷Survey of Race Relations (1983), 31.

¹⁵⁸Pedro, "Dr Allan Aubrey Boesak", 69; Nazeem Howa, interview with author, Cape Town, 20 July 1994; Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 354; Gastrow, Who's Who (1990), 105.

¹⁵⁹Venter, South African Government and Politics, 136.

Party turned their backs on it. Allan Boesak, who had been the keynote speaker at the Labour Party's National Conference in 1977,¹⁶⁰ refused to appear on the same platform as David Curry at a symposium at the University of Cape Town in 1983.¹⁶¹ Adam Small, a lecturer at the University of the Western Cape and a noted coloured poet who had applauded the Labour Party leaders' acceptance of the BCM in the mid-1970s, condemned the Labour Party for its decision: "How, at this point in time, can any black group join a dispensation in which the only base from which negotiation is possible remains the philosophy of apartheid."¹⁶² In an article in Work in Progress, the Labour Party was accused of betraying the black cause and the liberation effort by legitimising the constitutional proposals. It was called the "junior partners of apartheid, (which) from now on will share the responsibility for apartheid, for the creation of yet more homelands, for the resettlement of black people, for the rape of our human dignity."¹⁶³

After the decision to participate had been taken, Hendrickse became the party's chief apologist with much of the justification for his and his party's decision to participate contained in his biography which was published the year after the Eshowe decision.¹⁶⁴ Soon after the Eshowe decision,

¹⁶⁰Rashid Seria Accession, Acc 154, Allan Boesak, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 3 January 1977.

¹⁶¹Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 237.

¹⁶²Star, 15 January 1983.

¹⁶³"Labour Party - A constitutional Decision", Work in Progress (1983), 11.

¹⁶⁴Awaiting Trial: Allan Hendrickse. What is significant is that this book was written by Piet Coetzer, head of Communitel. In the light of Hendrickse's role in the Eshowe volte face, Coetzer's new role in "selling" Allan Hendrickse and the Labour Party's Eshowe decision to the South African public and the coloured people, comes into sharp focus.

Hendrickse set out to clarify his position, and the Labour Party's decision to participate:

The decision taken by the Labour Party at its National Conference in January 1983 was an act of faith. I don't care who says what, but in the six months prior to taking that decision I was on my knees every night praying for guidance.¹⁶⁵

Even though the decision led to the resignation of a number of Labour Party national and regional leaders such as Norman Middleton, deputy-leader of the Labour Party and Natal leader; A. Solomon, national treasurer; George du Plessis, NEC member; E. Lucas, Natal deputy-leader; Sam Solomon, former Transvaal leader; Mohammed Dangor, Transvaal deputy-leader; Louise Boesak, chairwoman of the Carnarvon branch; M. Isaacs, secretary of the Cape Peninsula region, as well as the resignation of the entire Natal and Worcester branches of the party, and precipitated a split with Buthelezi and SABA,¹⁶⁶ Hendrickse persisted that the decision to participate was the correct one:

I have no doubt about the rightness of the decision we took at Eshowe We seriously want the new dispensation to succeed, we will do our best to ensure that it does. But whether the Government likes it or not, I say in all seriousness that I'll give the new dispensation five years to see if it delivers the goods If there are no positive results, the government can forget about further Labour Party co-operation.¹⁶⁷

In a further address to the party's national conference in 1984, Hendrickse again defended his and the party's decision to participate:

¹⁶⁵Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 156.

¹⁶⁶Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 159; Race Relations Survey (1983), 30; Rand Daily Mail, 6 January and 8 January 1983.

¹⁶⁷Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 162. See also Star, 13 April 1984; Rand Daily Mail, 17 April 1984.

The new constitution did not meet the demands of the party and of our time because of the exclusion of the largest section of the South African community. The party also declared its belief in the effective participation of all South Africans in all processes of lawmaking but decided to participate in the new system not as an end in itself but as a means towards an end. We have clearly stated that the new constitution had to be seen as a point of departure and not as a place of arrival.¹⁶⁸

In trying to explain what he meant by "a means towards an end," and "point of departure," Hendrickse quoted William Cobbett: "Tactically speaking, some reform is better than no reform." He then explained the Labour Party's stance based on Cobbett:

Dat 'n gematigde mate van hervorming aanvaar moes word, want dit sou dan makliker wees om verder treë op die pad van hervorming te neem. Cobbett's approach was historically correct for later governments were to amend the constitution until they have in Britain today a real representative government. So, I believe history will prove our decision a correct one.¹⁶⁹

Hendrickse thus believed that the tricameral system, although not any near meeting the requirements of the unfranchised, was nevertheless a start on the road to a non-racial democracy. Throughout the tenure of the tricameral system, Hendrickse continued to insist that the Labour Party was right to participate.¹⁷⁰ Even after he announced in September 1993 that he would retire from active politics and the leadership of the Labour Party, Hendrickse still maintained: "I am certain we made the right decision to 'go in'. Our approach was one of 'oortuigingspolitiek'. We saw our role as one of convincing the NP to grant political rights and to scrap

¹⁶⁸p.A.29, Allan Hendrickse, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Kimberley, December 1984.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989.

apartheid."¹⁷¹ David Curry supported such an argument: "It is within the system that we must take the initiative because our people are not strong enough to change the system alone from outside."¹⁷²

However the Labour Party had other motives for participating and the philosophical arguments were developed later and tailored to suit their decision. The Labour Party had no historical basis for trusting the National Party and believing that the government was truly committed to reform and democracy. The experience of coloured people with the CAC in 1943, the UCCA in 1959 and the CRC in 1969 did not provide any basis for believing that the government could be sincere when it spoke of reform. The National Party had also dealt horrendously and treacherously with coloured people since 1948 and had immorally removed them from the voters' roll in 1956.¹⁷³ Even while the National Party was promoting the CRC as the solution to coloured political aspirations, more petty apartheid laws affecting coloured people were passed between 1969 and 1975 than at any other time during the National Party's term of office.¹⁷⁴ Despite this, the Labour Party still decided to trust the National Party and accept its bona fides.

It was always on the cards that the Labour Party would go along with the tricameral system. Its involvement in the CRC between 1969 and 1979 had shown a marked shift from its original policy of confrontation. Although it was openly confrontational after its formation in 1966 and during the first few years in the CRC, the Labour Party had gradually

¹⁷¹Allan Hendrickse, interview with Lester Venter, Agenda, TV1, 20 September 1993.

¹⁷²Adam and Moodley, South Africa without Apartheid, 79.

¹⁷³The National Party's treatment of coloured people is dealt with at length in Du Pré, Separate but Unequal, chs. 4-13.

¹⁷⁴See Joyce, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid, 69-84.

allowed itself to be coopted. Its election victory in 1975 and the decision to accept the chairmanship, seats on the executive and nominated seats in the council, despite an earlier undertaking never to do so,¹⁷⁵ was a decisive shift from opposition to cooperation with the concept of separate representation. Although it kept up a facade of confrontation by indulging in anti-government and anti-CRC rhetoric, the Labour Party's continued support of a discredited and ineffectual institution, despite threats since 1969 to walk out and cripple the CRC, had laid it open to charges of collaboration.¹⁷⁶ Even its acceptance of the government's offer in 1979 to scrap the CRC was not above suspicion. The Labour Party realised that the electorate was disenchanted with its presence in the CRC, the ineffectiveness of that body, and the party's deviation from its principles. Thus, an election in 1980 would have proved embarrassing for the Labour Party.¹⁷⁷

Furthermore, it had become evident that the attractive salaries, lavish perks and accompanying prestige and status, had ensnared CRC members and caused them to waver in their opposition to that body.¹⁷⁸ Many had given up their jobs to stand as councillors. A number were close to receiving full government pensions for life. The closure of the CRC meant that members had to forfeit their annual incomes of R15 000.¹⁷⁹ Longer-serving members were able to claim a

¹⁷⁵Cape Times, 10 November 1969; Mina, "The CRC", 108.

¹⁷⁶Sunday Times, 16 November 1975; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 56.

¹⁷⁷Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 27.

¹⁷⁸Sonny Leon Papers, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1 January 1975; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 479.

¹⁷⁹A considerable sum then, when one considers that the starting salary of a teacher was half that.

government pension of half their annual salary.¹⁸⁰ Members were also deprived of the prestige, status and power to give patronage which membership of the CRC had afforded. Others found themselves unemployed after the closure of the CRC, while some were even unemployable.¹⁸¹ Thus, the scrapping of the CRC in 1980 caused a devastating imbalance in their lives. Membership of the CRC's proposed replacement, the House of Representatives, would restore them to their former positions with even greater advantages. The ordinary member of parliament would receive R43 000 per annum, a generous housing and car allowance, 36 free air tickets per annum, a substantial pension and "golden handshake" after serving for 7 1/2 years or two parliaments, and numerous other perks.¹⁸² For those who had participated and remained in the CRC because of prestige, status and financial self-interest, it was not very difficult for them to make a "principled" decision in 1983 to participate in the tricameral system.¹⁸³

An examination of the party's attitude to the final constitutional proposals also reveals glaring inconsistencies. When the new constitutional proposals were first presented in 1977, the Labour Party had rejected them out of hand.¹⁸⁴ At the time, the NEC issued the following statement:

The proposals are designed to entrench Apartheid in the constitution by preserving the so-called ethnic divisions

¹⁸⁰Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 27.

¹⁸¹Ibid, 136-37.

¹⁸²P.A.29, circular from W.F. Rousouw to members of the House of Representatives, (n.d.); Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 137; Die Nasionalis, March 1986.

¹⁸³B. Pottinger, The Imperial Presidency: P.W.Botha, the First Ten Years (Johannesburg, 1988), 158. Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, states that after 1975 the government started "throwing money at the Labour Party" and made membership of the council particularly lucrative.

¹⁸⁴Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 10 September 1977.

of "coloureds, Indians and whites." We see the plans as a subterfuge for using "coloureds" and "Indians" as tools to entrench exclusive National Party rule The plans are solely and exclusively those of the government and as such do not in any respect accord to the democratic principle that all the people of South Africa could, through their authentic representatives, have an effective say in designing a new constitution The only solution acceptable to us would be the holding of a National Convention representative of all South Africans.¹⁸⁵

Yet, the 1982 constitutional proposals, which were essentially the same as those of 1977, were accepted by the party.¹⁸⁶ And when these proposals were released, David Curry described them as a "clever and sophisticated scheme for entrenching baasskap."¹⁸⁷ Yet, six weeks later, this same Curry rose at Eshowe and urged delegates to accept the proposals, which were essentially the same as those of 1977. Although there were some minor differences, these were not significant enough to warrant such an about-face.¹⁸⁸ Thus further reasons have to be sought for the participatory somersault. It was not the changes in the 1982 proposals which caused the Labour Party to change but the altered political climate and the Labour Party's position after the demise of the CRC. Firstly, the Labour Party had begun to show signs of disintegration and dormancy after the closure of the CRC in 1980. Apart from financial considerations, the Labour Party, as a political party, began to realise that the lack of an institutional platform would lead to its demise. The party had been formed to operate within the "system." That was the reason for its existence. Like a fish out of water, the Labour Party could not function or survive outside of the "system." Deprived of

¹⁸⁵"Labour Party: A Constitutional Decision?" Work in Progress No. 25 (February 1983), 6-7.

¹⁸⁶Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice, 334.

¹⁸⁷Abrahams, "Coloured Politics", 255.

¹⁸⁸Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 222; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC," 229.

its platform, the Labour Party stagnated and showed signs of disintegrating. Participation was therefore essential for its continued survival. In fact, participation in institutions for political representation was its only reason for existence.

Secondly, Prime Minister Botha's decision to entertain the notion of the tricameral system had led to a breakaway by the National Party right wing and the formation of the Conservative Party. The Labour Party leadership perceived Botha's willingness to risk the breakaway as "proof" of his political sincerity and commitment to reform.¹⁸⁹ The split in the National Party provided the legitimacy and the excuse for the Labour Party to rejoin the "system" because it proved the "sincerity" of the reforms.¹⁹⁰ Already in 1980, Hendrickse had shown admiration for Botha as a reformist. At a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Labour Party in August 1980, Hendrickse saw Botha as being genuine in his efforts to initiate reform. He agreed that non-violent change would only come about through "communication, consultation and negotiation."¹⁹¹

However, more importantly, the Labour Party's apparent about-face was merely a continuation of the tradition of collaboration which had come to characterise coloured politics since the beginning of this century.¹⁹² The government's offer of a "New Deal" in the 1920s,¹⁹³ the CAC in 1943, the separate voters' roll in 1958 and the UCCA in 1959, found support amongst a significant percentage of coloured people.

¹⁸⁹Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 157.

¹⁹⁰Adam and Moodley, South Africa without Apartheid:, 77.

¹⁹¹Gastrow, Who's Who (1990), 105.

¹⁹²Alexander, "Non-Collaboration in the Western Cape", 181-82.

¹⁹³See Lubbe, "Vergeet die Arbeiders", 15-28.

In 1969, five of the six parties contesting the CRC election supported the policy of separate development.¹⁹⁴ Even the anti-apartheid Labour Party had gradually allowed itself to be coopted and make the CRC work. All of the parties, individuals or organisations which participated in government structures over the years advanced the same arguments which the Labour Party eventually used to justify its participation in 1983.¹⁹⁵ Thus, the strong trend towards collaboration in the coloured community eventually caught up with the Labour Party in 1983,¹⁹⁶ and it became clear that its volte face at Eshowe was not really so surprising after all.

It may appear inconceivable that such a publicly vociferous anti-government party could become collaborationist in such a short time. However, this can more easily be understood when one realises that the Labour Party which decided in 1983 to participate in the tricameral system was no longer the Labour Party of the 1960s. By 1983, most of its members were former supporters of the old Federal Party. Over the years defections from the Federal Party and other pro-apartheid parties in the CRC had continued at a steady pace. After the dissolution of the CRC in 1980, virtually the entire Federal (Freedom) Party defected and joined the Labour Party. By then, most of the founders and early leaders of the Labour Party, who had promoted and fostered the militant anti-apartheid stance, had resigned, retired or withdrawn from

¹⁹⁴Hugo, Quislings or Realists, contains a number of documents highlighting these issues.

¹⁹⁵These arguments are dealt with at length by Rowan Elliot, "The Politics of Collaboration," Bandwagon, No.5 (April, 1975), 4-5.

¹⁹⁶The reasons for this phenomenon are too detailed to be dealt with here but are discussed in greater detail by, among others, Du Pré, Separate but Unequal; Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes; H.F. Dickie-Clark, The Marginal Situation: A Sociological study of a Coloured Group (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

active involvement in the party.¹⁹⁷ Therein lies one of the major reasons behind the gradual but systematic shift in the Labour Party, from vigorous confrontation in 1969 to acquiescent collaboration in 1983: the Labour Party had been systematically infiltrated, and eventually taken over, by pro-government collaborationists.

The collaborationist tendencies of coloured people, but more particularly, the Labour Party in this instance, came in for some harsh criticism from Allan Boesak, the Islamic Council of South Africa, the Cape Areas Housing Association and a number of other community organisations.¹⁹⁸ Trevor Abrahams summed up the criticism thus:

It should come as no surprise that at this very moment when confronted with the demise of the terrain which in the past had constituted their stomping grounds, that the L.P. has now shed its radical veneer and exposed their anachronistic opportunism and racial political leanings. Personal ambition and opportunism have long been a part of the tradition of collaborationist politics and no doubt this stigma is as strong as ever in the L.P.'s decision.¹⁹⁹

The Labour Party undoubtedly found itself in a dilemma in 1983. It wanted to give the appearance of opposition, yet was drawn into a situation which it had no ideological basis for resisting. Dr Mohammed, chairman of the Ad-Hoc Anti-P.C. Committee summed up the Labour Party's dilemma :

¹⁹⁷W.J.Bergins, former leader of the Federal Party stated that the Labour Party of 1983 was walking the same road as the Federal Party did in 1969. See Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 240. Norman Middleton even suggested at Eshowe that the Labour Party change its name as it no longer subscribed to the aims and objects of the party as stated in its constitution. Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹⁹⁸See for instance, Argus, 25 February 1983; Cape Herald, 15 January 1983; Cape Times, 1 February 1983.

¹⁹⁹Abrahams, "Coloured Politics", 251.

I think that the Labour Party was faced with a problem at Eshowe. It was not sufficient just to reject the proposals. To gain credibility within the country it would have to throw in its lot with the whole democratic struggle. And I think it has not got the stomach for that difficult struggle ahead. The easiest way out was to go in, to delude people and to say we are going in, in an attempt to produce changes from within.²⁰⁰

One of the puzzling aspects of the Labour Party's approach to the new dispensation was the acceptance of the government's offer of participation without any pre-conditions. Such an action appears inexplicable in view of the fact that the Labour Party appeared to have the upper hand in 1983. The National Party desperately needed the tricameral system to work and it had been obvious to its strategists at the outset that coloured participation was critical to the success or failure of the new dispensation. Thus, it had to have the Labour Party's cooperation.²⁰¹ The importance of coloured support for the constitutional proposals had already been highlighted in 1978 when the Transvaler commented: "A wide measure of agreement among different peoples and groups will be necessary to introduce a new structure to make it endure."²⁰² Thus, the Labour Party already had prior knowledge of the importance of coloured support for the new dispensation. Given that, if the Labour Party was determined to participate, it could at least have attempted to exact government agreement on a number of issues, e.g. the creation, or promise of, a "black" chamber; a timetable for the abolition of apartheid and introduction of universal suffrage; unbanning of the liberation organisations, etc. as pre-conditions for participating in the tricameral parliament. Hendrickse had in fact stated in 1980 that the Labour Party would not participate "unless certain conditions are met.

²⁰⁰Speak, March 1983.

²⁰¹Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 225; Kenney, Power Pride and Prejudice, 333.

²⁰²Transvaler, 18 February 1978.

Among these were that blacks be included and that laws such as the Group Areas Act and Mixed Marriages Act be scrapped."²⁰³ David Curry even added: "I have no hesitation in saying that we will keep our word on this."²⁰⁴ Yet, the Labour Party reneged on its promises and decided to participate unconditionally, even though it knew that the new dispensation could not function without its support.²⁰⁵ Moreover, at the time of the Eshwe decision, the constitution had not yet been presented to parliament as a bill, neither had the government given any intention that it would dismantle apartheid. The opportunity was there for the Labour Party to put pressure on the government to make major additions or adjustments prior to final acceptance. In its eagerness to participate, the Labour Party ignored its obvious indispensability to the new dispensation, not even bothering to push for any terms and conditions under which it would entertain participation.

A deeper investigation of the Labour Party's volte face, the quiet abandonment of its pre-conditions for participation, and its timid reaction to the long wait before the election, unearthed some disturbing facts. According to Van Zyl Slabbert, the Labour Party leadership were so eager to become a part of the government's "gravy-train" that they did not even know what the structures of the tricameral system were when they decided to participate.²⁰⁶ Even more puzzling was the fact that they did not even wait for the results of the white referendum, nor, for that matter, parliament's acceptance of the tricameral bill, before indicating their willingness to participate; neither did the Labour Party

²⁰³Argus, 22 September 1980.

²⁰⁴Ibid.

²⁰⁵Africans were never included in the tricameral system. The Mixed Marriages Act was only abolished in 1988 and the Group Areas Act in 1991.

²⁰⁶F. van Zyl Slabbert, interview on Agenda, South African Broadcasting Corporation, 26 May 1991.

express any objection to the decision of the government not to hold a referendum for coloureds.²⁰⁷ Allan Hendrickse later confessed that the Labour Party made a mistake in taking the decision so early. They had evidently expected the tricameral elections to take place in 1983.²⁰⁸ Miley Richards confided that a number of Labour Party leaders, while agreeing in principle to participate, vigorously opposed making a decision before the referendum and before parliament had accepted the proposals, but that they were "overrun" in the party's eager rush to participate.²⁰⁹ Nash, who missed the Eshowe meeting because of illness, considered that the Labour Party took a needless risk by not considering the possibility, and the embarrassing consequences of the "white" electorate and parliament rejecting a dispensation which the "coloured" Labour Party had already accepted.²¹⁰ Ismail Omar, a member of the House of Delegates observes that "in its eagerness to set the machinery into motion, the government acted with undue haste, insufficient co-ordination and not much strategy."²¹¹ It appears that the Labour Party was as hasty and as insufficiently prepared as the government. In its eagerness to accept the tricameral system, the party compounded the government's error by itself acting with undue haste and very little strategy.

The Labour Party also made no attempt to examine the implications and consequences of its decision, nor did it even try to find experts to analyse the new constitution. This

²⁰⁷Leach, South Africa, 65.

²⁰⁸Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 161. Luwellyn Landers, interview, 17 September 1994, indicates that the Labour Party expected the election to be held within three months of the Eshowe decision.

²⁰⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

²¹⁰John Nash, interview, 31 August 1992.

²¹¹I. Omar, Reform in Crisis: Why the Tricameral Parliamentary System has failed (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1988), 22.

constitution was obviously flawed, a fact which the Labour Party itself had pointed out often enough in its criticism of the proposals since it was first introduced in 1977, and up till November 1982. The tricameral system was not designed to share power because each chamber only had jurisdiction over its own affairs. General affairs would be subject to the final approval of a President's Council which was controlled by whites. The state president, who, according to the new proposals would be an executive president in the place of the present prime minister, was to be elected by an electoral college consisting of 50 whites, 25 coloureds and 13 Indians.²¹² Thus the state president would always be the nominee of the white ruling party. No matter which way they looked at the new constitutional proposals, it still spelt "white domination."²¹³ In fact, in a 1991 Report on Constitutional Models, the SA Law Commission condemned the 1983 tricameral constitution as lacking "substantive principle, constitutionalism, and even a regard for the law."²¹⁴ Furthermore:

It also failed to protect individual human rights, showed a fundamental lack of democracy, lacked an independent judiciary in the broad sense of the word, did not have adequate checks and balances, had no minority protection and gave excessive power to the president.²¹⁵

At the time that it made its decision to participate, the Labour Party had access to the opinions of a number of academics whose views were later published in a book, Bridge or Barricade. This book was rushed into print by the publishers so that it would be available before the 1983 referendum. The arguments exposed serious flaws in the constitution and by and large militated against its

²¹²Moodley, "Structural inequality", 218;

²¹³Van Zyl Slabbert, The System and the Struggle, 63.

²¹⁴Sunday Times, 23 February 1992.

²¹⁵Ibid.

acceptance. A selection of some of the arguments gives an idea of the tone of warnings: Lawrence Schlemmer argued that because too great an emphasis was placed on race identity "this constitution before Parliament is basically a document for whites, drawing in a few but not all of the others."²¹⁶ Marinus Wiechers contended that the new constitution was designed by the National Party "to consolidate its own political strength for the purposes of limiting power sharing with Coloureds and Indians," and that the concepts "own affairs" and general affairs" were simply alternative phraseology for the "largely discredited ideology of separate development."²¹⁷ André Thomashausen warned that the tricameral system did not allow for powersharing: "Building a system of government on the naive hope that antagonistic groups will peacefully 'share' power of government, resembles those Utopian dreams that a society could exist without criminal law merely by appealing to the conscience of potential criminals."²¹⁸

A number of academics and other opponents of the tricameral constitution also warned the Labour Party of the perception amongst other "non-white" groups that participation would be construed as support for and the strengthening of apartheid structures. Africans would see the decision as betrayal of the cause of the oppressed. Oscar Dhomo of Inkatha bluntly stated that "Indians and Coloureds who accept participation in the proposed tricameral Parliament will accept the status of partners in propping up white supremacy and they will be

²¹⁶L. Schlemmer, "Bridges that have to be built", in Bridge or Barricade? The Constitution, a first appraisal, ed., F. de Villiers (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball with the Sunday Times, 1983), 62.

²¹⁷M. Wiechers, "The New Constitution: Can it be Salvaged", in Bridge or Barricade?, 56.

²¹⁸A. Thomashausen, "Power-sharing is it a Utopian Dream", in Bridge or Barricade?, 106.

rightly regarded as co-oppressors."²¹⁹ Herman Giliomee warned that the new constitution "introduces coloured and Indian representatives into Parliament in such a manner that they will be unable to change the apartheid structures built into the constitution itself but will be held responsible for whatever Parliament decides."²²⁰ Bhadra Ranchod added: "What worries moderates is that the Group Areas Act and race classification are to form the cornerstones of the new dispensation. A positive response could be interpreted as acceptance and support for racial discrimination."²²¹

Van Zyl Slabbert slated the tricameral proposals in words which were to prove prophetic:

The tragedy for South Africa is that at a time when the voters have come to acknowledge the need for such reform, the National Party has come forward with a plan that is so defective and ill-conceived that if implemented will set back the process of reform for at least a decade.²²²

Even Van der Ross, the founder of the Labour Party and a supporter of the principle of participation in government structures, stated at the time: "The great value of the constitutional proposals now before the country is that they cannot work."²²³ He implied that when the tricameral system failed, as it inevitably would, only then would an acceptable constitutional dispensation emerge. Thus, if the Labour Party

²¹⁹O. Dhlomo, "Inkatha and the Reform Proposals", in Bridge or Barricade?, 126.

²²⁰H. Giliomee, "The Road to a Dictatorship is Paved with Good Intentions", in Bridge or Barricade?, 112.

²²¹B. Ranchod, "Reform or Change", in Bridge or Barricade?, 73.

²²²Leach, South Africa, 54.

²²³R.E. van der Ross, "In this failure lies our Hope", in Bridge or Barricade?, 117. In an interview with the author, Belhar, Cape Town, 9 September 1992, van der Ross supported this statement but agreed that the Labour Party, in spite of shortcomings in the constitution, was right to participate.

had done even some rudimentary homework in 1983; if it had taken time to examine the fears and disquiet expressed by the many experts, it would have been able to make a much more informed decision. It would have had a greater understanding of the flaws in the tricameral system and the implications and consequences if this dispensation was implemented. However, it apparently did not want to know this because it wanted to join the tricameral system, come what may. By doing so, the Labour Party continued a tradition of collaboration which had come to characterise coloured politics since the beginning of this century.²²⁴

After making its decision in January 1983, the Labour Party had to wait until August 1984 for the elections for the House of Representatives to take place. This long delay enabled the opponents of the new dispensation to rally their forces. Thus, having obtained a commitment of support, the government threw the Labour Party "to the wolves."²²⁵ Hendrickse expressed his bitterness at having to endure the escalating opposition and criticism which came his way during the long wait before the election.²²⁶ This in itself should have been a warning to the Labour Party that perhaps the government was not being honest with them and that it merely wanted their support to make the tricameral system work. This is not surprising when one considers that the National Party had a long history of using the coloured people for its own ends and then abandoning them when they had served their purpose.²²⁷ The Labour Party tried to hold meetings but these ended in disarray. A meeting hosted by Allan Hendrickse and David Curry in Stellenbosch, the latter's home town, ended in a

²²⁴Alexander, "Non-Collaboration in the Western Cape," 181-82.

²²⁵Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

²²⁶Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 162.

²²⁷See, for example, R.H. du Pré, "Beware of the Fox in the Coloured Chicken Coop", South, 2 May, 1992.

brawl.²²⁸ In Vredenburg, members of the FCWU took over a meeting called by the Labour Party, stating that workers had never given the party a mandate to negotiate with the government on its behalf.²²⁹ At a meeting in East London, hecklers accused the Labour Party of "selling out".²³⁰ When it could no longer hold meetings in the Cape, the Labour Party shifted its focus to the more historically-collaborationist Transvaal but even there it had to abandon its plans when it had to receive police protection at some meetings.²³¹ Meetings in Johannesburg could only be held with the aid of a strong police presence.²³² At Reiger Park, police armed with machine guns arrested opponents and in Eldorado Park, teargas had to be used to break up fighting. The party even considered forming a military wing, which Jac Rabie explained would deal with "opponents who disrupted meetings",²³³ and although the idea received full government sanction, it never materialised.²³⁴

Eventually, the Labour Party stopped holding meetings in the main urban centres because it feared a similar negative response. Hendrickse expressed his bitterness at having to

²²⁸Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 236.

²²⁹Race Relations Survey (1983), 31.

²³⁰Ibid.

²³¹Debates of the House of Assembly (11 February 1983), cols. 816-17; House of Assembly: Questions and Replies, vol 110 (4 March 1983), 517. Edelstein's What do the Coloureds think provides insight into the Transvaal coloureds tendency to collaboration. Election statistics in 1969 and 1975 showed consistent support for pro-apartheid parties in CRC and HoR elections in the Transvaal.

²³²Debates of the House of Assembly (11 February 1983), cols. 816-17; House of Assembly: Questions and Replies, vol 110 (4 March 1983), 517.

²³³Race Relations Survey (1983), 31.

²³⁴House of Assembly: Questions and Replies, Vol 110, 25 February 1983, 315.

endure the escalating opposition and criticism which came his way during the long wait before the election:

It is a pity the government did not show a greater appreciation of our position. We got the short end of the stick through this delay The time lost allowed those opposing our decision to marshal their support. It seemed as though once our support was assured, less attention was given to our needs and wishes.²³⁵

Once the Labour Party and the Indian parties decided that they would participate, the forces opposing participation began to mobilise. The ANC-aligned United Democratic Front(UDF) and the black consciousness-orientated National Forum(NF) were formed in 1983 for the specific purpose of opposing the establishment of the tricameral system and the elections for the coloured and Indian Houses.²³⁶ These two organisations, along with the New Unity Movement(NUM), adopted a non-collaborationist approach and called for a total boycott of the August 1984 elections. These organisations used a variety of arguments to urge people to boycott the forthcoming tricameral elections, while the NUM aggressively appealed for non-collaboration using the language that the Educational Journal adopted in the 1940s in its opposition to the CAC.²³⁷ The Labour Party, which had throughout the existence of the CRC, staunchly defended the use of the boycott, now had the painful and unenviable task of explaining why people should

²³⁵Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 162.

²³⁶Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 359-60; Readers' Digest, Illustrated History of South Africa, 472.

²³⁷Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 281-83. The Labour Party P.A.29 also contains a selection of pamphlets by the New Unity Movement and the UDF (e.g. the UDF News, 1984) and associated organisations such as the Muslim Students Association and Cape Action League, which called for a total boycott of the elections.

not heed the call to boycott the elections.²³⁸ David Curry put it succinctly: "You either boycott yourself out of existence or the government boycotts you out of existence."²³⁹ Thus, the debate for or against an election boycott became the real election campaign for the 1984 election and overshadowed the actual campaign for supremacy at the polls.²⁴⁰ Because the coloured electorate had been denied the opportunity of accepting or rejecting the tricameral system by means of a referendum, the elections became, in effect, the coloured referendum. Participation in the elections was equated with a "yes" vote and a boycott that of a "no" vote.²⁴¹

As the election drew near, the government realised that the boycott campaign was gaining in strength and might seriously jeopardise the credibility of the election. It belatedly recognised the problems which the Labour Party had to contend with and tried to assist where it could. The Labour Party subsequently had to contend with accusations that it was getting assistance from the National Party. The marketing company, Communitel, handled the Labour Party's campaign and allegedly helped to raise one million Rand from white businessmen.²⁴² The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) also came out in support of the Labour Party, which led to complaints by other coloured parties that they were allocated a limited number of minute-long advertising spots on television while Allan Hendrickse had been allowed two half-

²³⁸ P.A.29, "Labour Party of South Africa, Election Manifesto"; election pamphlet, "Hervorming versus Rewolusie", 1984; Steadfast, (n.d. probably March 1984).

²³⁹Race Relations Survey (1982), 16.

²⁴⁰See for example, "Labour Party: A Constitutional Decision?" in Work in Progress, No 25 (1983), 11; Cape Times, 23 March 1983; Sunday Times, 27 May 1984.

²⁴¹Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 108.

²⁴²Grassroots, August 1984. Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994, confirms that Communitel conducted workshops on how to organise an election and conduct a campaign.

hour appearances.²⁴³

Whereas the government had decided on a referendum to enable whites to decide on the new constitution, no such opportunity was afforded coloureds and Indians, despite considerable demand therefore.²⁴⁴ The government was keenly aware of the possibility that it could suffer a defeat if such a referendum was held. This would then present the ticklish problem of how to press ahead with reform if the very people it was designed to help had rejected it. The Labour Party, which had endured months of hostility and vigorous opposition orchestrated by the UDF, NF and NUM, agreed that a referendum should be dispensed with and that the government should proceed directly with elections.²⁴⁵ This move by the Labour Party to avoid a referendum indicated that it could not hope to win a "yes" vote.²⁴⁶ The denial of this opportunity unleashed hidden elements of bitterness and anger on such a scale that the government was forced to detain opponents of the elections. On the eve of the elections, the government detained 18 UDF and Indian Congress leaders and prohibited the publication of any statements by detained persons.²⁴⁷ The Solidarity Party contesting the Indian elections threatened to withdraw from the election if the detainees were not released.²⁴⁸ The Labour Party's Natal leader, Albie Stowman, however, fully supported the detentions, adding that the "UDF backroom boys should have been picked up long ago." He also accused the UDF

²⁴³Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 107.

²⁴⁴Davenport, South Africa, 471.

²⁴⁵P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Port Elizabeth, 3 January 1984; Race Relations Survey (1984), 26; Leach, South Africa, 65.

²⁴⁶Argus, 5 January 1984.

²⁴⁷Davenport, South Africa, 471.

²⁴⁸Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 105.

of "subverting the democratic process."²⁴⁹ Such was the vehemence of the opposition that coloured and Indian parties had to abandon the holding of public meetings when a number of earlier meetings were disrupted by violence.²⁵⁰

A total of 207 candidates stood for election to the House of Representatives.²⁵¹ The Labour Party put up candidates in all 80 constituencies and won 76. It immediately interpreted this as an overwhelming vote in favour of participation. However, when the full results were analysed, the boycott lobby claimed a resounding victory²⁵² (See table 6). From a total of 881 984 registered voters (approximately two-thirds of the coloured electorate), only 272 854 actually voted.²⁵³ This represented a 30.9% poll. However, if the percentage poll is

Table No. 6.²⁵⁴

<u>Region</u>	<u>Potential Voters</u>		<u>Registered Voters</u>		<u>No. who voted</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Poll</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Poll</u>	
Transvaal	141 408	24,9	81 523	43,2	35 197
Natal	54 647	15,7	33 649	25,5	8 595
OFS	32 999	18,8	11 139	55,6	6 193
Cape Province	1 317 554	16,9	755 673	29,5	222 869
- Peninsula	504 950	4,9	226 706	11,1	25 154
- (excl. Peninsula)	812 602	24,3	528 967	37,4	197 715
<u>Total</u>	1 546 607	17,6	881 984	30,9	272 854

calculated on the basis of the number of persons eligible to

²⁴⁹Rand Daily Mail, 6 September 1984.

²⁵⁰Race Relations Survey (1983), 31.

²⁵¹Star, 30 July 1984.

²⁵²Leach, South Africa, 66.

²⁵³See Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 357.

²⁵⁴E. Patel, "Legitimacy and Statistics: A critical analysis of the first tri-cameral parliamentary elections, August 1984", Saldru Working Paper No. 61 (Cape Town: SALDRU, 1985), 13.

vote (1 546 607), then it drops to 17,6%.²⁵⁵ The boycotters interpreted this as a massive rejection of the tricameral system.²⁵⁶ Although the Labour Party won 73,2% of the total poll, its share of a meagre turn-out could not be interpreted as overwhelming support for the party's decision to participate in the tricameral parliament.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, as in preceding elections, the Labour Party only increased its support at the expense of other parties. It never managed to rally the majority of the coloured people to its banner. The results in all CRC and House of Representative elections confirmed the Labour Party's inability to attract more than 20% of the support of coloured people.²⁵⁸ Its share of the eligible vote started out at 16,2% in 1969 and steadily declined to 15,2% in 1975 and 14,2% in 1984. The statistics therefore appear to belie the Labour Party's claim that it was the representative of the coloured people and that its victory in 1984 was an endorsement by coloured people of the tricameral system. In fact, the percentage poll as well as the actual number of votes cast in 1984 was lower than in the 1969 CRC election. In 1969, 300 918 votes were cast in a 49,1% poll of registered voters and a 35,7% poll of potential voters. Thus, with every successive election, even though the size of the coloured electorate increased, fewer and fewer people were inclined to support institutions of separate representation and those parties which cooperated with them.

Table 7 - Comparative Results for the three election years.²⁵⁹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Eligible Voters</u>	<u>Registered Voters</u>	<u>Actual Votes Cast</u>	<u>Votes cast for Labour Party</u>
-------------	------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------------

²⁵⁵Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 356; Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 108, 111;

²⁵⁶Davenport, South Africa, 471.

²⁵⁷Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 112.

²⁵⁸Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 238.

²⁵⁹Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 357; Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.1.3.2., 26 September 1980.

1969	843 973	637 587	300 918	136 845
1975	994 191	521 557	251 631	151 410
1984	1 546 607	881 984	272 854	219 397 ²⁶⁰

Having decided to take part in the elections, the Labour Party was now irrevocably bound to the new dispensation. Although Hendrickse had provided for an escape route when he promised earlier that he would give the new dispensation "five years to deliver the goods," this was a not a serious threat as the mood within the Labour Party caucus would have militated against any decision to withdraw.²⁶¹

The significance of the Labour Party's decision to participate in the tricameral system must be seen against the background of its attitude to the CRC. The Labour Party had always expressed its opposition to this body which it saw as an unacceptable substitute for direct parliamentary representation. It had consistently voiced its intention of destroying the CRC and when this body was dissolved in 1980, the party claimed that it had achieved its goal. Yet, in 1983, the Labour Party settled for the House of Representatives which was little more than an extension of the system it had so vociferously opposed; the House of

²⁶⁰Behrens uses N.J.J. Olivier's calculations which includes the uncontested seats. The actual votes cast would then increase to 292 039. The votes received by the Labour Party would also include those in uncontested seats. See Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 108.

²⁶¹Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 162. Nash states that the Labour Party never ever considered the possibility that it would withdraw at some stage in the future. This would have entailed too great a sacrifice. He explains that one of the reasons why Hendrickse had to apologise after he swam at a whites-only beach in 1987 in defiance of the Separate Amenities Act, was that P.W. Botha threatened to call an election if Hendrickse refused to apologise. Labour Party members pressured Hendrickse because they were "hocked to the teeth" for their cars, houses and other items. If there was an election and members lost their seats, many would have been ruined for life. John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

Representatives was merely an upgraded version of the CRC.²⁶² Therefore, the party's reasons for participation in the two bodies can be justifiably compared. In 1969 The Labour Party defended participation on the grounds that if it did not, the government would use the pro-apartheid coloured parties to implement its policies. The Labour Party also argued that it was only participating in order to destroy the CRC and after the collapse of the CRC in 1980 it claimed, with some justification, the credit for the dissolution of the CRC. However, the same arguments could not be advanced in 1983 for participating in a system which was merely a refined version of the CRC. There were no pro-apartheid coloured parties of substance left by that time.²⁶³ Even the Federal Party, its main opposition, had changed its name to the Freedom Party in 1978 to get away from the pro-apartheid stigma. Its pro-government leadership had long since been ousted and most of the old Federal Party members had joined the Labour Party.²⁶⁴ The fact that the Labour Party subsequently won 76 of the 80 elected seats in the 1984 election bears testimony to its dominance and the negligible influence of its opponents. In comparison therefore to the 1969 argument of participating in order to destroy the CRC, the decision of the Labour Party to participate in the House of Representatives actually ensured that the tricameral system came into existence.

No matter how much Hendrickse insisted that the Labour Party's participation was a starting, not an end point, it could not disguise the fact that the government's coloured policy had reached its highest level of success to date and that the policy of establishing separate, but powerless, instruments of political representation for coloured people had attained its

²⁶²Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 237.

²⁶³Ibid, 234.

²⁶⁴Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 39.

most sophisticated form yet.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 238.

Chapter 6

THE ROLE OF THE LABOUR PARTY IN
COLOURED POLITICS, 1965-1984

The role of the Labour Party in coloured politics in the 1960s and 1970s must be seen against the background of the political and social position of coloured people at the time. By the time of the formation of the Labour Party in 1965, coloured people had been subjected to a host of discriminatory legislation such as the Mixed Marriages Act (1949), Population Registration Act (1950), Group Areas Act (1951) and Separate Amenities Act (1953). Furthermore, they had been removed from the common voters roll (1956), the provincial roll (1956) and were about to lose the municipal franchise as well (1972). Moves to prohibit coloureds from belonging to the same political party as whites were also afoot (1966, and accomplished in 1968). At about the same time, Group Areas removals in the Cape had begun in earnest (from 1965), especially the removals from District Six in the Cape which later became a rallying point for opponents of apartheid.

From 1948 onwards, coloured people had been steadily denied the opportunity to express their opposition to government policy. Legislation ensured that there was no protest and voices of dissent were silenced by the threat of detention and imprisonment.¹ Because coloureds had been removed from the voters' roll in 1956, the vote could not be used to express their feelings. Although they were provided with the UCCA in 1959, it was an irrelevant and despised "Uncle Tom's" body consisting of government appointees.² The CRC which they were

¹Bunting, Rise of the South African Reich, 194-243, gives a detailed account of the steps taken by the government between 1948 and 1967 to eliminate all opposition to its rule and policies.

²Articles and letters in The Torch in 1959 give some indication of the attitude of coloureds to this body. Some of these articles and letters are found in Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 673-78.

now being offered was not what they wanted. Thus in 1965, a group of coloureds decided to establish the Labour Party and use this government-created apartheid platform to express the bitterness and frustration of coloured people. The Labour Party in this period was the tangible manifestation of that section of the coloured people who were not happy with their second-class status but who were also not sure how to bring about the desired change in that status.³ The formation of the Labour Party in 1965 was an attempt to fill a gap. It was the aim of the founders to establish an organisation which would look after the interests of coloured people in the Cape who had been deprived of the franchise in 1956, and those in the other provinces who had never had the vote. By establishing a broad-based mass movement, the Labour Party hoped to attract as many coloured people as possible, intending for them to serve as a strong pressure group to force the government to take heed of the grievances of the coloured community and to restore them to political equality with whites.

At its inaugural meeting in July 1966, the Labour Party realised the need for strong grassroots support and made provision in its constitution for the establishment of a broad-based party organisation.⁴ That the Labour Party failed to do so can be attributed to a variety of reasons. Firstly, coloured people did not have much experience in organised electoral politics. The first coloured political organisation, the APO, had not been a political organisation in the sense that it was formed to contest elections. It was an organisation of intellectuals mainly concerned with attempts to protect the existing coloured franchise in the

³Adhikari, "Protest and Accommodation", 106; Karis and Carter, From Protest to Challenge, 162.

⁴P.A.29, "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, July 1966; P.L. Berger and B. Godsell, A Future South Africa: Visions, Strategies and Realities (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1988), 182.

Cape and to extend the franchise to coloureds in the northern provinces.⁵ In the late 1930s and 1940s, a number of coloured organisations such as the New Era Fellowship (NEF), National Liberation League (NLL), Anti-CAD movement and Train Apartheid Resistance Committee (TARC) were formed,⁶ but these were mainly aimed at preventing the erosion of coloured political rights. Up to 1968, coloureds were members of existing white political parties,⁷ but as they were not allowed to select candidates for parliament, they were merely "voting fodder" for white political parties.⁸ Even when they were placed on a separate roll in 1956, they had to elect white candidates to fill "coloured" seats in parliament.⁹ Furthermore, the various political bodies provided by the government prior to 1969 were nominated and not elected. The CAC in 1943 was a fully nominated body. The UCCA in 1959 was intended to be partly elected, partly nominated, but due to opposition from a small but vociferous group of coloured people, mainly in the Western Cape, it became a fully nominated body.¹⁰ Thus, by the time the CRC Act was introduced in 1964, no coloured party had ever been formed to contest an election. The leaders of the Labour Party therefore did not have experience in organised party

⁵M. Adhikari, "Protest and Accommodation", 94; R.E. van der Ross, The Founding of the African People's Organisation in Cape Town in 1903 and the Role of Dr Abdurahman (Pasadena: Munger Africana Library Notes 28, 1975), 11.

⁶Alexander, "Non-Collaboration in the Western Cape", 182-83; Mina, "The CRC", 31; Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 24; Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 88; Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 208; I. Goldin, "The Reconstitution of Coloured identity in the Western Cape", in The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa, eds. S. Marks and S. Trapido (London: Longman, 1987), 169; Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 44.

⁷Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989; Mohammed Dangor, interview, 6 December 1993.

⁸South, 2 May 1992.

⁹Ballinger, Union to Apartheid, 468; Muller, 500 Years, 476.

¹⁰Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 45.

politics. In addition, almost all political activity up to 1965 had been confined to the Cape. Because coloured people in the rest of South Africa did not have the franchise, there had been no need to belong to political parties, nor take part in organised electoral politics.

Secondly, a year after the Labour Party was officially established in 1966, the founder and driving force behind its formation, Richard van der Ross, resigned to accept a post in the Department of Coloured Affairs. Van der Ross was the most experienced and capable coloured leader at the time and "one of the more prominent and articulate representatives of the moderate faction of the coloured elite."¹¹ Van der Ross was a highly-educated academic with degrees in education, which included a Ph.D from the University of Cape Town.¹² He became involved in politics through his father's role in the CAC,¹³ and continued his involvement in the 1950s and 1960s through SACPO and the Convention Movement.¹⁴ Thus, the resignation of such an astute leader was a loss for the fledgling party. To compound their problems, four of the five founder members had resigned by 1968. That the Labour Party had not yet recovered from these losses at the time the first CRC election was due in 1969 is evident from the fact that the party had no election and organisational machinery, nor finances, which it could utilise to organise its election campaign. It was left to the new leader, Martin Arendse, who with Sonny Leon and Arthur Stanley embarked on a nation-wide recruiting campaign. Virtually all the candidates were personally recruited in this

¹¹M. Adhikari, "Responses to Marginality: Twentieth-Century Coloured Politics", S.A. Historical Journal, 20 (1988), 116.

¹²Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, cover. See also Appendix II.

¹³Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, 212.

¹⁴Richard van der Ross, interview, 9 December 1992.

way.¹⁵ In contrast to Van der Ross, the later leaders of the Labour Party, although willing and enthusiastic, were poorly-educated and lacking the skills needed to deal with the kind of politician found in the National Party in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶

However, one of the main reasons why the Labour Party subsequently failed to build a broad-based mass movement with strong grassroots support was because it considered that its anti-apartheid platform, which set it apart from the other pro-separate development coloured parties, was sufficient to attract support. It therefore relied on its anti-apartheid rhetoric and confrontationist posturing to keep it in the public eye, and on the support of the press to rally the electorate to its side. By the time of the 1975 election, the Labour Party had still not broadened its support base nor strengthened its organisational machinery. The Theron Commission reported in 1976 that one of the reasons for the low registration of eligible voters was the lack of effort and success on the part of political parties in registration drives.¹⁷ Barely a month before the election, very few election candidates had held public meetings to air their views.¹⁸ Candidates left most of the electioneering and speeches to party leaders.¹⁹ Fred Peters, the party's secretary, also blamed the regions for the low percentage poll. He suggested that had all regions done their work methodically, the party would have won thirty-five seats,

¹⁵Sunday Times, 16 November 1975; Sonny Leon, interview, 25 September 1985; Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

¹⁶Allan Hendrickse, interview, 23 May 1989; Richard van der Ross, interview, 9 September 1992. See also Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 208.

¹⁷Theron Report, (R P 38 -1976), 361.

¹⁸Sunday Times, 2 February 1975.

¹⁹Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 4-7 September 1975.

instead of thirty-one, and achieved far more impressive polling figures. He added: "Elections are not won on personality or sentiment alone. It is won on good organisation - organisation that is prepared long before the day of the elections."²⁰

Because of the lack of a grassroots organisation, the Labour Party was not able to sustain its popularity and hold on to supporters for any length of time. For example, in March 1975, it basked in its election victory but the euphoria was short-lived. Shortly after, leaders were battling to keep the party together as dissension and division threatened to tear it apart at a caucus meeting held in April 1975.²¹ The NEC meeting in July 1975, barely four months after the party's electoral success, was marked by a high degree of absenteeism on the part of caucus members.²² The budget crisis of September 1975 and Sonny Leon's dismissal in November that year rescued the party and it enjoyed a surge in popularity. Clearly, Leon's refusal to pass a discriminatory budget, and his adjournment of the CRC struck a responsive chord.²³ Disillusioned voters who had seen the Labour Party renege on an election promise to boycott and cripple the CRC, looked to the budget crisis with renewed hope. Many who had abstained from voting felt that the Labour Party was going to do what it had promised to do in 1969, viz. destroy institutions of separate representation by refusing to allow them to work. Radicals saw in the budget crisis an opportunity to confront the government and force it to come forward with an acceptable political solution to the problem of coloured political

²⁰Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.4., Secretary's Report to Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976.

²¹Sonny Leon Papers, C.1.5., Minutes of Labour Party Caucus Meeting, 2 April 1975.

²²Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC meeting, 19-20 July 1975. Sees also Minutes, 4-7 September 1975.

²³See chapter 3 for the response of coloured people to Leon's dismissal.

rights. Yet, while the budget crisis gave the Labour Party an opportunity to recapture the spotlight and keep itself in the public eye,²⁴ it did not capitalise on this groundswell of support and the party's popularity soon dissipated. Deputy leader David Curry had been paid a monthly salary of R200 to organise branches but was accused by party members of not doing so. Party secretary, Fred Peters was castigated by the Cape region for "doing nothing to build up the party in the area where the majority of the Coloured people live," despite being paid a salary of R300 per month to look after the party's interests.²⁵ Charles Domingo, secretary of the region, alleged that "ambitious men in high positions" were running the party as if it were their property, and accused the party leaders of relying on the number of seats the party had in the CRC "to keep it alive, when in fact we should be a grassroots party spread across the country and actively engaged in the life of the community at every level."²⁶

Thus, ten years after its formation, the Labour Party had still not developed a solid electoral base, relying instead on its anti-apartheid image, the feelings of the coloured people in general towards separate development and separate representation, and the support of the press to sustain it. This approach appeared to continue until the dissolution of the CRC in 1980. When it lost its political platform, the Labour Party soon began to stagnate. When the CRC disappeared, the Labour Party also disappeared from public view. The confrontationist posturing and the anti-government rhetoric no longer had a public forum and the Labour Party lost the regular press coverage which had kept it in the public eye. The grassroots support which could have sustained the Labour Party at this time was non-existent. It is therefore not surprising that the issue of participation in

²⁴Star, 20 November 1975.

²⁵Sunday Times, 18 July 1976.

²⁶Ibid, 1 August 1976.

the proposed tricameral system became such an enticing prospect for the Labour Party.

Because of the lack of grassroots support throughout the 1970s, the Labour Party stumbled from crisis to crisis, often seeking confrontation to justify its existence and its presence in the CRC.²⁷ The party had often been accused of having no policy and no grassroots organisation.²⁸ This resulted in major policy decisions being taken which had little chance of success due to lack of grassroots support. As a result, the party veered "from pillar to post," initiating and then abandoning actions, depending on their acceptance or rejection by supporters.²⁹ A dissident member stated:

Instead of looking at the whole party structure, its double standards, its failure to establish a mass grassroots organisational machine and its increasingly obvious inability to come to grips with the political situation and the trends in the country, the leadership are again looking for scapegoats The simple and honest truth is that the Labour Party has relied too long on newspaper publicity and emotive issues to project an image of militance and anti-apartheid.³⁰

The lack of popular support was the crucial weakness of the Labour Party, which therefore had to resort to other measures to gain and retain some sort of power base and maintain credibility in the CRC. Because of its tenuous support base, the party was very sensitive to criticism. Its leaders openly attacked sections of the press which criticised the party's policies and exposed its internal affairs. For example, at a meeting of the Labour Party NEC in September 1975, it was

²⁷Sunday Times, 10 November 1975.

²⁸Sunday Times, 1 January, 16 January and 28 March 1976; Argus, 27 March 1976.

²⁹Argus, 27 March 1976.

³⁰Sunday Times, 28 March 1976.

resolved that "reporters who were not well-disposed to the Party should be ignored out of existence."³¹ This resolution was mainly directed at the party's severest critic, Howard Lawrence of the Sunday Times who during the 1970s had dedicated himself to exposing every policy and action of the Labour Party.³² Eventually, the Labour Party could bear his probing no longer and had him barred from the sessions of the CRC.³³

The question arises that if the Labour Party had no grassroots organisation, had no policy, was ambivalent and indecisive and increasingly allowed itself to be coopted into the system, why then did so many coloured people support the party? Molteno explains that, to the extent that the party retained any credibility among people, "has to be understood partly in terms of the apparent lack of effective alternative political organisation and leadership; partly also in terms of the political backwardness of those who still have not learnt the historical lesson of the barrenness of collaborationist strategy."³⁴ He accused the Labour Party of being opportunists and of exploiting coloured people:

The Labour Party capitalised on the apparent leadership void that had been left by the ruthless repression of the people's organisations in the period after Sharpeville. Under these conditions, the Labour Party, protected by their collaboration in the CRC, presented itself as the only vehicle for organising the Coloured section of the oppressed in the people's political struggle.³⁵

³¹Sonny Leon Papers, Minutes of Labour Party NEC Meeting, 4-7 September 1975.

³²P.A.29, Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1 January 1975. See also chapter 3.

³³See Debates of the CRC, vol. 36 (22 October 1976), 1360.

³⁴Molteno, "The Coloured Representative Council", 16.

³⁵Ibid.

With the banning of the ANC, PAC and other organisations after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the suppression of black political activity throughout the 1960s, the Labour Party presented itself as an alternative and genuine representative of the oppressed peoples. This encouraged many coloureds to lend their support to the party. For those who resented apartheid and wished to regain political equality with whites, the Labour Party appeared to be the vehicle which could be utilised to fulfil those aims.³⁶ For those who hankered after a closer association with whites, the Labour Party's participation in the CRC gave them the hope that, by taking the little favours which came their way, they could improve the position of coloured people as a whole and restore them to the position they once held vis-à-vis the whites. In fact, this appeared to be one of the underlying factors influencing coloured support for the Labour Party in the 1970s. Van der Ross referred to this penchant by coloured people to seize upon any opportunity to move closer to whites. He spoke of the "childish optimism which had led the Coloured people ... to believe that their political destiny lay with that of Whites."³⁷

The Labour Party's efforts to rally the majority support of coloured people in the 1970s was complicated by the fact that the statutory coloured population group was not a homogeneous group.³⁸ Thus the party could not appeal to their national spirit or on the basis of a common culture. The only way the Labour Party could unite coloured people behind its banner was to appeal to a common factor which bound them together. This

³⁶Adhikari, "Responses to Marginality", 116.

³⁷Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 78. At a special meeting held to discuss the dissolution of the Labour Party, Lockey castigated those members who supported the National Party, despite what it had done to them in the past: "Die kleurling se liefde vir die witman is altyd groter as hulle liefde vir hulself." Desmond Lockey, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

³⁸Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 5.

the Labour Party identified as rejection of apartheid, political inequality and separation between white and coloured. However, the CRC and tricameral system were only able to rally support from a small section of the coloured population - that section which, as far back as 1919, traditionally provided a reservoir of support for white governments, white political parties and institutions of separate representation. This group had been variously referred to on the one hand as "realists, pragmatists and gradualists" and on the other as "quislings, sell-outs and collaborationists."³⁹ The challenge facing the Labour Party was to break the mould and appeal to coloured people outside of the traditional collaborationists. The extent to which it failed or succeeded also determined the extent to which the Labour Party was to succeed or fail as a relevant force in coloured and South African politics. That the Labour Party never succeeded in drawing more than 16,2% of the potential coloured vote throughout the history of its involvement in institutions of separate representation indicates that it failed in this respect.⁴⁰ By claiming that it was supported by more coloureds than any other party, the Labour Party simply ignored the fact that the majority of coloured people consistently refused to participate in institutions of separate representation and had begun to channel their political activity into organisations outside of the government's program of separate development.⁴¹

Yet within that narrow range, many coloured people voted in CRC elections and, for the same reasons, accepted the tricameral system in 1983. The fear of being swamped by Africans motivated many, especially those in the rural areas

³⁹See for example, Hugo, Quislings or Realists, 44; Whisson, "Coloured People", 56, Torch, 27 October and 10 November 1959.

⁴⁰Star, 15 January 1983.

⁴¹Frédberg, "Changing Political Identity", 238; Adhikari, "Between Black and White", 107.

and the northern provinces, to support the CRC and vote for the Federal Party.⁴² By the 1980s, the influx of Africans into the Western Cape meant that the coloured numerical and economic dominance in that region came under threat. Prior to the 1984 election, coloureds in the Cape were numerous enough not to fear being swamped by Africans. They had also long been protected by legislation which declared the Cape a coloured labour preference area, by which only coloured people could be employed.⁴³ This made it easier for many to embrace black consciousness and oppose government policy. As the coloured labour preference policy fell into disarray, more coloureds were encouraged, by 1984, to accept the status of "coloured" and their current second-class citizenship, rather than risk losing their advantages over Africans.⁴⁴ Because the Federal Party had all but disappeared, these coloureds supported the Labour Party in 1984. Whereas they had looked to the CRC and the Federal Party in 1969 to protect what they already had and try to gain equality with whites, these same people now looked to the tricameral system and the Labour Party to protect their position and prevent Africans gaining equality with them.

The main problem confronting the Labour Party in the 1960s was the powerlessness felt by many coloured people. They had been marginalised to such an extent that many felt that opposing the government was an exercise in futility. Others felt that any policy or institution which improved their lot was better than nothing.⁴⁵ Apathy, despair and frustration characterised

⁴²Lily Slinger, interview, 13 December 1993.

⁴³Goldin, "The Reconstitution of Coloured Identity", 171-72; Goldin, Making Race, 151-52; Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, 217.

⁴⁴Cohen, Muthien and Zegeye, Repression and Resistance, 8; Lemon, Apartheid: A Geography of Separation, 142.

⁴⁵Adhikari, "Between Black and White", 106-7.

coloured politics in the 1960s.⁴⁶ Because the government had no particular concern for coloured interests, decision after decision was made on the political future of the coloured people without allowing coloureds themselves to take part in this decision-making process. This fact was highlighted in parliament by Harry Schwarz after the introduction of the CRC Amendment Act in March 1975 which allowed the government to take over the powers of the CRC in the event of a Labour Party boycott of the council. Schwarz observed:

I think that the most significant part of this debate today is ... that we, here as Whites, elected by Whites to a White Parliament, are debating the future of the Coloured people, while not a single representative of the Coloured people sits here with us in order to participate in this debate. This is what will strike the Coloured people; this is what will strike all people of colour in South Africa; this is what will strike the people in Africa as a whole; this is what will be discussed in the world - that we here, as Whites, take it upon ourselves solely to debate the future of the Coloured people of South Africa while they have no part in the decision-making process which, in fact, is taking place here.⁴⁷

This observation perhaps encapsulates the attitude of the National Party and government policy to coloured people since 1948: the government had no particular concern for the problems of coloured people and they were only a factor when they had an impact on white and Afrikaner concerns. For instance, the ideological feud which raged in the National Party in the 1960s over the future of the coloured people was not concerned with their welfare or political destiny but how best to prevent them from acquiring political power.⁴⁸ At stake was the survival of the Afrikaner.⁴⁹ Because of its

⁴⁶Highway, 5 December 1975.

⁴⁷Debates of the House of Assembly (25 March 1975), col. 3340.

⁴⁸Venter, Coloured, 535.

⁴⁹F.Å. van Jaarsveld, conversation with author, Pretoria, 8 December 1994.

fixation with keeping coloureds out of parliament, the government was not particularly concerned with finding a solution to the political future of coloured people. For example, when the government's coloured policy was in danger of crumbling after the adjournment of the CRC, the budget crisis and Sonny Leon's dismissal in the latter part of 1975, Vorster refused to consider solutions to the coloured problem and instead, invited future generations to solve this problem.⁵⁰ However, as long as white Afrikaners kept the Nationalist government in power, there was no pressing reason nor obligation to find a political niche for coloureds. This obsession with maintaining power by denying coloureds political rights led the Nationalist government to seek ways to find alternative methods of representation and political expression for coloured people.⁵¹ These methods would always involve the suppression of the clamour for equal rights. It was only when members of the National Party began to realise that they were alienating coloureds to the extent that they might throw in their lot with Africans, that the government decided to look at ways to meet coloured political aspirations but still ensure that coloureds would pose no threat to Afrikaner hegemony and white supremacy.⁵² However, this obsession with depriving coloureds of direct representation in parliament became the rallying point for those who formed the Labour Party in 1965 and those who supported it throughout the 1970s.

The formation of the Labour Party also brought to the fore a recurring problem in coloured politics - whether to collaborate or not with the government in the implementation of coloured policy. Van der Ross speaks of this problem as:

... the compromise of a marginal, powerless population

⁵⁰Eastern Province Herald, 13 December 1975.

⁵¹Muller, 500 Years, 477.

⁵²Attwell, Background to the Crisis, 119.

group, tormented on the one hand by its sense of powerlessness, encouraged on the other hand by the promise of better things to come. Trustingly, it put its faith in vague, undefined forces, and in its belief in the intrinsic justice of its cause.⁵³

The divisive nature of this issue was evident in the struggle within the leadership of the Labour Party. Ongoing friction in the leadership had sapped the party's energy throughout the 1970s. This was mainly caused by the ideological struggle in the party over the issue of dialogue with the government as against a policy of confrontation and non-cooperation. These tensions affected the leadership of the party as some leaders advocated a collaborationist approach while others opted for confrontation with, and opposition to the government. This could be seen to great effect in the number of leading members who joined the Labour Party and participated in the CRC as avowed opponents of the government and the concept of separate institutions, but in later years became vocal proponents of dialogue with the government and supporters of cooperation with institutions of separate representation. From the early leaders in the CRC, to those who participated in the HoR, virtually every leading member of the Labour Party succumbed and eventually collaborated with the government in the implementation of its coloured policy. For example, Martin Arendse joined the Labour Party and stridently opposed the government in the run-up to the 1969 election. However, soon after the election, he held secret talks with Vorster on the implementation of the NPs coloured policy.⁵⁴ After he was ousted, Arendse alternatively sat as a backbencher or independent and supported the approach of the "moderates" to participation. Sonny Leon, a founder-member of the party was

⁵³R.H. du Pré, Strangers in their Own Country: A Political History of the "Coloured" People of South Africa (Johannesburg: Southern History Association, 1992), 124. See also Adhikari, "Responses to Marginality", 115.

⁵⁴John Nash, interview with author, 31 August 1993; Whisson, "Coloured People", 55.

elected as a fiery and outspoken opponent of the government and the CRC but by 1975 had drawn closer to the Federal Party's position on participation. After 1975, he was the leading proponent of participation in the CRC and the cabinet council, and supported the constitutional proposals from the outset.⁵⁵ Between 1975 and 1978, his overtly pro-government attitude led to his resignation as leader. Because of his unhappiness with the party's rejection of the constitutional proposals and the President's Council, Leon resigned from the party in 1980 and took up an appointment as a member of the PC.⁵⁶ Les du Preez had been infiltrated into the party by the BCM in 1969 and was considered one of the "militants." In 1975, he was appointed chairman of the CRC and in 1977 chaired the CRC Committee on Alternative Constitutional Proposals which condemned the government's proposals, including the PC. By 1979, he had completely turned around and was a leading "moderate." He resigned from the party in 1979 because it refused to cooperate with the Schlegelbusch Commission and subsequently accepted an appointment to the PC which his own committee had condemned.⁵⁷ Don Mateman was infiltrated into the Labour Party by the ANC in 1969, but by the early 1980s the ANC-aligned Progressive Teachers' Union in the Transvaal was campaigning against him because of his pro-government role in the HoR.⁵⁸ By 1983, even hard-liners Curry and Hendrickse were advocating policies similar to those whom they had removed in earlier years for advocating such positions.⁵⁹ The shifts and changes in the position of leading Labour Party members between 1965 and 1984 from one of confrontation and opposition to collaboration, can clearly be seen in the fact

⁵⁵Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

⁵⁶Cape Times, 6 February 1982.

⁵⁷Sunday Times, 30 December 1979; Cape Times, 6 February 1982.

⁵⁸Ron Swartz, interview, 9 December 1993.

⁵⁹See chapter 5.

that Martin Arendse was ousted as leader in 1970 because he advocated dialogue with the government and cooperation with the concept of separate institutions. Yet, in 1975, the Labour Party adopted the very same position over which they had deposed Arendse. Between 1975 and 1978, Sonny Leon advocated negotiation with the government and acceptance of the tricameral system. For that he was worked out of his post as leader. Yet, by 1984, the party adopted everything that he had advocated.

The struggle in the Labour Party over the issue of whether to collaborate or not, or to what extent it should or not, was reflected in the party's attitude to the CRC. When the CRC was abolished in 1980, the party claimed the credit for its dissolution.⁶⁰ However, the Labour Party had always only paid lip service to the aim of destroying that body. In fact, its entire approach to the council was ambivalent. In spite of rejecting the CRC, it took part in elections and accepted posts in the council. At times it boycotted various council proceedings and then used the council as an arena for confrontation. The Labour Party also urged voters on occasion not to register, then encouraged them to vote for the Labour Party in order to demonstrate their rejection of apartheid. Party officials accepted posts on the CRC executive but were unwilling to fulfil the minimum obligations required of the position. However, the Labour Party's participation appeared to have some benefits. Its participation in the CRC certainly contributed to the ideological debate within the ruling party. By infiltrating the government's structures of separate representation, ultimately taking them over, the party made it impossible for the government to claim that its policies were supported by the majority of coloured people. The Labour Party's incessant clamour for equal rights for coloureds also

⁶⁰This claim was repeated as recently as 17 September 1994 by the leader of the Labour Party, Miley Richards, in an address to the Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

meant that the demands of coloured people for citizenship rights continued to receive media exposure.⁶¹ Even though the government ignored these calls for equality and did not even bother to acknowledge the recommendations which came from the CRC, white opposition members often took these matters up in parliament, contributing to the eventual reappraisal of the government's coloured policy. The Labour Party also succeeded in thwarting the government's attempts to build up a strong conservative coloured body with a distinct ethnic orientation in order that it might become a focus and channel for coloured aspirations, without challenging white supremacy.⁶² The most notable attempt, the Federal Party, had failed dismally because the Labour Party had not only consistently beaten the Federal Party at the polls, but had managed to discredit and demoralise it during CRC sessions. Eventually, the Federal Party itself began to adopt a confrontationist stance and in 1975 removed all references to separate development in its constitution.⁶³ Between 1976 and 1980, the government finally lost its hold over the Federal Party.

The government could not ignore the Labour Party because the latter had built up a significant constituency, using the very structures which the government had hoped would win coloured people over to its side. In fact the government had always claimed that most coloured people supported separate development and that opposition was confined to a small group of radicals. The Labour Party's success at the polls discounted those assertions. The party successfully exploited this support, even though it was but a small percentage of the potential coloured electorate, and used the CRC as a vehicle to articulate coloured grievances, challenge discrimination

⁶¹Berger and Godsell, A Future South Africa, 181.

⁶²Similar attempts had already been made in the 1920s with the formation of the ANB, the CAC in 1943, UCCA in 1959 and the support given to the Federal Party from 1969 onwards.

⁶³Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements", 231.

and demand equal rights for coloured people, this at a time when other anti-apartheid opponents were silenced by draconian security legislation. Reality reflected that "the Labour Party has made the Council into a vigorous and outspoken body, where more truths have been spoken than have been heard ... since the Liberal Party was made illegal."⁶⁴ Although the Labour Party could not force the government to pass legislation to meet its demands, it had considerable nuisance value by embarrassing the government. The policy of boycotts and walkouts frustrated what the government had hoped would be a subservient and passive body quietly representing the political aspirations of coloured people. The Labour Party's confrontational attitude not only sabotaged the smooth working of the CRC but ensured the non-implementation of other bodies intended to supplement or supersede it. Thus the liaison committee and cabinet council failed, the 1977 Botha proposals were never implemented, and the nominated CPC of 1980 never functioned. Although other factors also influenced the change in the National Party's coloured policy, it is fair to say that the Labour Party did play some role in the decline in the status of the CRC as an effective instrument of the government's coloured policy.

Because the Labour Party was initially perceived by a large number of coloured voters as the most effective vehicle for securing certain rights, the party enjoyed a short honeymoon with the coloured electorate in its early years, but it increasingly came in for severe criticism and vilification by a wide spectrum of the coloured community. The reason for this attitude must be seen in the light of the party's claim to be the spokesman for coloured people. As such, the Labour Party promised to reflect the views and feelings of the people and to seek on their behalf full citizenship and equal political rights. To that end, the party sought a mandate to get elected to the CRC with the object of boycotting the

⁶⁴Reality, Vol.3, No.1 (March 1971), 2.

council, thereby "destroying it."⁶⁵ This the Labour Party did not do. It took its seats in the council in 1969; remained there in 1975 even though it by then had the power to cripple it, and only withdrew from the CRC when the government itself decided to dissolve that body in 1980.⁶⁶ The Theron Commission uncovered wide-spread opposition to the CRC and revealed that most coloureds wanted direct representation in parliament. Thus, by remaining in the CRC, the Labour Party was acting contrary to the wishes of the majority of coloured people. This was also reflected in low registration figures and low percentage polls. The Labour Party also elected to serve in the House of Representatives (HoR), a body which was merely an "upgraded version" of the CRC,⁶⁷ but the coloured response to the tricameral system indicates that the majority did not accept the HoR either as a response to their desire for equal political rights. By participating in "dummy institutions",⁶⁸ the Labour Party estranged itself from coloured people. In 1975, Norman Daniels, a trade unionist and former Cape Town Councillor summed up the party's position:

There can be no question about what the Labour Party must now do. They must get out of the CRC and end this era of puppet institutions It was impossible for a so-called anti-apartheid organisation to take part in a pro-apartheid institution. More people supported this view than those who voted in the CRC elections. The Labour Party ... (does) not have a mandate from the majority of the Coloured people to participate in the CRC, because the opposition to the CRC is overwhelming In spite of this opposition, the Labour Party still went into the CRC. They have done a lot more harm to the Coloured people's cause ... because they made the institution respectable They, in fact breathed life into a

⁶⁵Sunday Times, 16 November 1975.

⁶⁶The Argus, 22 February 1980; Cape Times, 23 February, 1980; Rapport, 24 February 1980.

⁶⁷Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 237.

⁶⁸Cape Times, 10 November 1969.

still-born institution.⁶⁹

Molteno uttered similar sentiments when he wrote that instead of the Labour Party being instrumental in the closure of the CRC, the party had in fact assisted in getting a still-born body off the ground: "The CRC had the Labour Party's participation to thank for ever enjoying any credibility at all. Without the Labour Party, the CRC would never have been able to weigh anchor, let alone wait around to be wrecked."⁷⁰ According to the Educational Journal, the CRC was killed at the first election in 1969 already:

The plain and palpable fact about the recent dummy election is that it killed the Coloured Representative Council at the starting post. The owners, trainers, punters, Uncle Tom, ... and all are pretending that an exciting and vital race is taking place and the so-called Coloured community is awaiting the result with bated breath. But they know and everybody knows that there is no race, there never was and never will be one: the only horse in the race is dead.⁷¹

Thus, according to the journal, for ten years the Labour Party had been "riding a dead horse."⁷²

Elliot suggested one way in which the Labour Party could have served its people. He argued that it should have abandoned the CRC and used the platforms of the people - organisations such as trade unions, ratepayer's associations, consumer organisations and teacher and student bodies, which fulfilled the needs of day-to-day living problems. He pointed out that

Genuine protest is always directed at the people themselves and the government reacts to the force of the people and not to the empty talk of self-appointed

⁶⁹Sunday Times, 16 November 1975.

⁷⁰Molteno, "The Coloured Representative Council," 16.

⁷¹"Riding A Dead Horse", Educational Journal (October-November, 1969), 1.

⁷²Ibid.

"leaders." Protest can be addressed from any platform of the people, and not only from the platform created by the government - in this case, the CRC.⁷³

Hommel refers to the CRC as a "pophuis parliament," suggesting that while coloureds were "playing parliament," the government was going its own stubborn way, vigorously implementing its race policies.⁷⁴ The Educational Journal called the CRC a "political obscenity."⁷⁵ However, the CRC was important to the Labour Party because it owed its birth in 1965 to the formation of that body. The party's existence and present political standing was closely tied up with the council. Yet, the attempt to participate as an anti-apartheid group within an apartheid body was its undoing. The party was criticised from the right and from the left - by the government and pro-participation coloureds for its non-cooperativeness and by Africans and anti-government coloureds for being part of the white-controlled political system.⁷⁶ With the dissolution of the CRC in 1980, the Labour Party lost its political platform and its protection. For the first time since 1969, the Labour Party had to share the political wilderness with the rest of the oppressed. Stripped of the protection afforded by its participation in the CRC, it was not long before the Labour Party showed signs of dormancy and disintegration.

Despite its claim to have "destroyed" the CRC, that body failed not because of the efforts of the Labour Party but because the government's coloured policy as manifested in the CRC contained the seeds of its own destruction. The coloured

⁷³R. Elliot, "The Politics of Collaboration", Bandwagon, no. 5, (April 1975).

⁷⁴M.W. Hommel, "The Organisation and Evolution of Coloured Political Movements in South Africa." (Ph.D thesis, York University, 1978), 300.

⁷⁵"Colouredism: The Last Grovelling", Educational Journal, (January-February 1977), 6.

⁷⁶Thompson and Prior, South African Politics, 11.

policy of the government was designed to ensure that coloured people would never enjoy political equality with whites, as this would lead to social equality and "biological assimilation" between white and coloured and ultimately with Africans.⁷⁷ According to Verwoerd, political equality threatened the existence of the Afrikaner nation. Thus, the CRC was never intended to improve the political and social standing of coloured people, and views which conflicted with that policy were never going to be entertained, nor allowances made to meet the wishes of opponents of that policy. The government was therefore only going to allow the CRC to operate within the narrow constraints imposed by the policy of separate development. This also meant that the CRC would never be given any power to effect change. Van der Ross likened the CRC to a "new vehicle" which coloured people "eagerly mounted" only to find that it was "stationary". Moreover, "you pedalled a great deal, but you got no further."⁷⁸ Therefore, those looking for signs of a movement towards greater rights for coloured people were never going to be satisfied with the CRC. The CRC concept therefore suffered because the vast majority of coloured people would not accept it, a fact borne out by low registration and even lower percentage polls in both elections. In fact, the Labour Party prolonged the life of the CRC because its involvement in the elections ensured a higher percentage poll than would have been the case if only the pro-apartheid parties had been involved. The Labour Party's participation attracted a large number of coloured people who were opposed to the CRC and the government's coloured policy but who saw in the Labour Party a medium through which they could express their opposition. Had the Labour Party not participated, these persons would arguably have abstained and the resultant poll would have been so low as to have rendered the results ridiculous. It would then probably have caused the government to rethink its policy

⁷⁷Heard, General Elections in South Africa, 123.

⁷⁸Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 98.

and strategy that much earlier. Such a precedent already existed in the formation of the UCCA in 1959 which met with such opposition that, by 1961, the government was already contemplating another body to replace it.⁷⁹

The CRC also failed because of the ideological struggle within Nationalist circles. Many members lost faith in the CRC as a long-term solution. Others found it unacceptable that two parliaments co-existed in the same geographical area, one with superior powers to the other. Since parallel development, which meant that coloureds would always be in a position of inferiority,⁸⁰ was morally and practically indefensible,⁸¹ the ultimate solution had to be either the creation of an independent homeland or political reintegration with whites.⁸² By 1980, the latter view appeared to have found favour with the majority of Nationalists. The National Party, in which a more progressive wing appeared to have gained control, began to distance itself from the CRC as the solution to the problem of coloured political accommodation. They now saw the solution as coopting coloureds into the white power structure rather than "overseeing their development in completely separate institutions."⁸³ In 1978, P.S. Marais, National Party member for Moorreesburg, explained his party's new policy approach as being "the granting of full and equal citizenship ... within a single political dispensation to people of another colour in a way that would eliminate group domination"⁸⁴ He therefore foresaw the end of an

⁷⁹Theron and Swart, Kleurlingbevolking, 206; Alpha, 6, No.6 (June 1968), 9.

⁸⁰Debates of the Senate (20 May 1968), col. 3169.

⁸¹Burger, 1 July 1971.

⁸²See for example, Argus, 9 July 1971; Debates of the House of Assembly (26 May 1978), col. 7923.

⁸³Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 173.

⁸⁴Debates of the House of Assembly (26 May 1978), col. 7923.

institution such as the CRC.

The effect of this debate can also be seen in the announcement in November 1980 by Ben Schoeman, South Africa's longest-serving cabinet minister and a former Leader of the House of Assembly, that he had remained silent long enough. Coloureds had to be restored to the common voters' roll, he declared, as part of the process needed to ensure white survival and a peaceful future for the country. Coloureds spoke the Afrikaner's language, practised their religion, and shared their culture. They were, in truth, a highly civilised and refined people. Schoeman made the following admission:

Ek was self verantwoordelik daarvoor dat hulle op 'n aparte kieserslys gekom het, maar toestande het nou verander. Kleurlinge het destyds net vir die Sappe gestem, maar as ons hulle ordentelik behandel, sien ek geen rede waarom hulle nie vir ons sal stem nie.⁸⁵

Schoeman's conciliatory (and paternalistic) tone can of course not be taken at face value. He was not expressing remorse for the way his party had treated coloured people since 1948, neither was he apologising for the way coloureds were immorally removed from the common roll in 1956. On the contrary, he was acknowledging that coloured people had been pawns in a white power struggle - the attempt by Afrikaners to secure supreme political power and domination in South Africa. In his statement, he was still arguing from the standpoint of a white Afrikaner Nationalist and continued to envisage coloured people in a subordinate role - expecting them to vote in such a way as to ensure white survival. Nevertheless, Schoeman's statement highlights the fact that whites were at least beginning to think about their actions in respect of coloured people. However, whites and the government still did not accept that coloureds should be their political equals. The sudden concern for coloureds mostly stemmed from the

⁸⁵Rapport, 2 November 1980. See also B.J.Schoeman, "The long silence", in Cape Times, 3 and 4 November 1980.

potential they had to constitute a threat on the one hand (if they joined with Africans to "gang up" on whites) or allies on the other to offset the numerical advantage of the African.

The fear of a "coloured-African" alliance had occupied the minds of the National Party since the 1920s already.⁸⁶ After the NP came to power in 1948, African resistance to government policies had a sobering effect on government thinking and it felt it necessary at that early stage already to adopt new strategies to counteract this threat. One of the strategies involved the cooptation of coloured people. In the 1960s, the government sought to recruit or conscript coloureds to assist in the military defense of apartheid. To this end, the government introduced legislation in 1968 to force coloured youth in the Western Cape to register for paramilitary training. Known as the Cadet system, it had three aims in mind - to prepare coloureds for military conscription, develop the preferential labour system in the Western Cape, and exercise political and social control over coloured youth.⁸⁷ The reasons for the introduction of the Cadet system for coloureds was not altogether clear at the time. However, the CRC was introduced a year later and after its collapse was followed by the tricameral system. The Prime Minister, P.W. Botha had declared on a number of occasions that the time would come when it would be necessary to include coloureds and Indians in the military as part of the strategy to avoid them "going behind the backs of our (white) sons to fight on the side of the (black) enemy."⁸⁸ Thus, the Cadet system, the CRC and tricameral system were attempts by the government to utilise the hearts and minds of coloured people as junior

⁸⁶See for example, National Party pamphlet, The Segregation Problem, 10; Burger, 6 March and 17 May 1929.

⁸⁷G. Cawthra, Brutal Force - the Apartheid War Machine (London: IDAF, 1986), 66-67.

⁸⁸Sun, 11 April 1982.

political and military partners.⁸⁹

Prior to the implementation of the tricameral system, motives such as the following had already been clearly spelt out: "A close affinity between the Whites, Coloured and Indians can only strengthen the ranks of the Whites and can increase the confidence with which they can work for a peaceful solution of the 'Bantu problem'."⁹⁰ In this respect, the 1976 Soweto uprising played a significant role. The 1970s had witnessed the emergence of the black consciousness movement and a growing radicalisation of the youth. The rebellious mood among coloured youth and their support for their African counterparts in 1976 took the government by surprise. Even though it had dealt harshly with coloured people in the past twenty-eight years, it never conceived of the idea that the placid, politically apathetic coloureds would ever dream of rioting. The liberal Cape Nationalists saw the special relationship with, and closeness to coloured people wane. The old fear of a growing alignment between coloured and African once again began to surface.⁹¹ The effect that coloured and Indian support for the Soweto protesters had on the government was clearly demonstrated when just days after the riots, P.W. Botha made an impassioned plea for adjustments to be made to official policy in order to forge stronger white links with coloureds and Indians.⁹² The fear of coloured alienation and the possibility of this resulting in a "non-white front" drove the government and its supporters into various stages of panic. David Bond indicates the effect that the unrest had on Afrikaner thinking:

The evidence of combined African, Coloured and Indian

⁸⁹Cawthra, Brutal Force, 66-67.

⁹⁰Moodley, "Structural Inequality", 221.

⁹¹Goldin, Making Race, 174, 182.

⁹²Cape Times, 25 June 1976; Burger, 26 June 1976.

protest posed a potentially strong threat to White dominance. The boycotts placed pressure on the government which led to a re-assessment within Afrikaner ranks.⁹³

Thus, by removing coloureds and Indians from their intermediate position in South African society and taking them into the white fold, the government attempted to negate any chance there might be of a black alliance, which would have the added advantage of allowing it to pursue its "bantus" policy without hindrance.⁹⁴

Despite the acceptance of the government's bona fides and the Labour Party's subsequent explanations regarding participation, the tricameral system was clearly just another facet of the National Party's coloured policy which was dominated by the concept of separate political institutions in a white-dominated society. The establishment of the tricameral system was not a spontaneous response to the Theron Commission's recommendation 178 nor was its birth a reflection of a political conversion in Nationalist ranks on the "race" question. Nationalist thinking had long been dominated by the intermediate position of coloured people in white society. Behind the discussion and debate had always been the fear of black domination, and the government's coloured policy over the years had always had in mind the larger view of winning the hearts and minds of coloureds in order to bind them as allies to offset the numerical superiority of the African majority. This would also ensure that a coloured-African alliance which could challenge Afrikaner hegemony, would not be formed.⁹⁵ Thus the tricameral system fitted perfectly into the apartheid design. Whether the Theron Commission had made

⁹³D.F.D. Bond, "Coloured Education Struggles in South Africa: Education Boycotts in the Western Cape, 1976" (M.Soc.Sc dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1984), 160.

⁹⁴Moody, "Structural Inequality", 221.

⁹⁵Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 228.

the relevant recommendation or not, a system would always have been devised to fit that framework. The trick was to ensnare coloureds into accepting the government's plans. By participating in the CRC, coloureds had almost been successfully coopted, had it not been for the spoiling tactics of the Labour Party. However, by accepting the tricameral system, the Labour Party played into the hands of the government. If the party honestly believed that the tricameral system was designed to give coloured people equal political rights then the government had succeeded admirably in concealing its true intentions.

An advantage which the implementation of the tricameral system had for the government was that it could defuse and deflect domestic and international criticism regarding white domination. By replacing overt white domination with covert domination by using coloured and Indian surrogates to do its work,⁹⁶ it gave the appearance that whites were ruling South Africa with their fellow-South Africans. Of course this was not so as David Welsh, Professor of African Studies at the University of Cape Town pointed out at the time:

The new constitution is an exercise in co-optation. It seeks to incorporate the Coloured and Indian categories into the white-controlled structure so that their incorporation will strengthen that structure, but without jeopardising white power.⁹⁷

The tricameral system had a veneer of democracy but below the surface, it was still Afrikaner domination, white supremacy and Herrenvolkism.⁹⁸ Prior to its implementation, Ken Andrews warned that "this dispensation provides for no powersharing.

⁹⁶Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 151.

⁹⁷D. Welsh, "How can Coloureds be an Ethnic Affair?", in Bridge or Barricade, 85.

⁹⁸ See Van Zyl Slabbert, The System and the Struggle, 58-67. Slabbert gives a detailed analysis of the constitution and indicates the extent to which it was designed to maintain white domination.

It is unfortunately not even a new beginning. It is a desperate last attempt to keep as much of the discredited apartheid master plan alive as possible."⁹⁹ Thus, if the Labour Party had not been so eager to accept the tricameral arrangement when it did, the tricameral system would not have been inaugurated and the government would have had to continue its search for a more acceptable plan to accommodate people of colour in parliament.¹⁰⁰ Multi-party negotiations and the momentous political events of 1990 and 1991 which saw the unbanning of black liberation movements, the release of Nelson Mandela and the abolition of apartheid, might, conceivably, have taken place earlier. Thus, the tricameral system probably delayed an early transition to a non-racial democratic society. Tragically, the implementation of the tricameral system precipitated a chain of events which had devastating consequences for the country.¹⁰¹ In fact, the tricameral system was only introduced because it posed no threat to apartheid,¹⁰² and the Labour Party was coopted into the system to assist the government in the more efficient application of that policy.

Nadine Gordimer heaped the ultimate insult on the tricameral system when she referred to the Houses of Representatives and

⁹⁹Debates of the House of Assembly (11 February 1983), Col. 801.

¹⁰⁰Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994, is unequivocal in his view that had the Labour Party stayed out, the tricameral system would not have functioned.

¹⁰¹Argus, 9 April 1994; Leach, South Africa, 54. Many historians and political commentators have pointed to events in South Africa after 1984 which began with the boycott campaign against the tricameral elections, and which led to various states of emergency, the "Rubicon" fiasco of 1985, the collapse of the JSE and the currency, sanctions and disinvestment, school boycotts, the ANC's "armed struggle" and the collapse of the South Africa economy, as evidence of the destructive consequences of the implementation of the tricameral system.

¹⁰²S.M. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1987), 163.

Delegates as the "outhouses of parliament."¹⁰³ To others, the tricameral system was a political fraud. It did not share power or grant coloureds and Indians equal political rights. It did, however, prolong white supremacy and enabled the National Party to hang onto power just a little while longer and delay the inevitable. Blacks had to endure life under apartheid for a few more years but that extra period of delay was crucial for South Africa. The SA Law Commission's Report on Constitutional Models stated in 1991: "It need hardly be argued that the problems being experienced by our country (today) are due at least in large measure to the shortcomings of the existing constitution."¹⁰⁴

At the beginning of the tricameral dispensation, the Labour Party sought to justify its decision to participate. When it later came to appreciate the enormity of the opposition to the new constitutional dispensation, it began to adopt a public position of defiance and opposition to the government. However, in private, the Labour Party continued to remain close to the National Party. For example, at the high point of confrontation with the government in 1988,¹⁰⁵ the party privately declared its intention of seeking and maintaining closer links with the National Party.¹⁰⁶ However, the Labour Party had expected that while it cosied up to the National Party in private, it would continue to criticise the National Party in public in order to show its supporters that it was not a submissive puppet. The Labour Party always felt it necessary to justify its participation in the House of Representatives and thus public criticism of the National

¹⁰³Behrens, "The Other Two Houses," 1.

¹⁰⁴Sunday Times, 23 February 1992.

¹⁰⁵See chapter 7.

¹⁰⁶P.A.29, Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Pretoria, 28-30 December 1987.

Party was necessary to support its position.¹⁰⁷

While critics of the Labour Party generally disparage the role played by the party in coloured politics and suggest that it wasted the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the political life of the coloured people, a number of key-note speakers at various Labour Party conferences over the years made references to a role which they believed the Labour Party should have played. In an address to the party's regional conference in the Transvaal in 1975, Gerald Braam, rector of the Rand College of Education in Johannesburg, called on the party to abandon its "obsessive confrontation politics stance" and adopt a policy of reconciling the masses, of bringing white and black together.¹⁰⁸ Braam saw that South African society had become polarised and, because coloureds occupied a unique position in South African society (having both African and European ancestry), they could span the gulf between black and white. Thus Braam saw the Labour Party, a "Coloured" organisation, undertaking the task of reconciling black and white to create a united South Africa in which all peoples could live in peace. However, by participating in the CRC, the Labour Party was perceived to be allying itself with whites. The party had thus sacrificed its neutrality which made it difficult to accomplish the role of "reconciler."¹⁰⁹ Kenneth Mopeli, Chief Minister of Qwa Qwa, in an address to the Labour Party's national conference in 1978, also likened the party to a bridge between black and white. He appealed to the Labour Party to take on the role of reconciling black and white.¹¹⁰ Enos Mabusa in an address to the Labour Party's 1980 conference, covered the same ground:

¹⁰⁷Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

¹⁰⁸post, 7 December 1975.

¹⁰⁹Gerald Braam, interview with author, Johannesburg, 27 October 1986.

¹¹⁰Labour Party Collection, Kenneth Mopeli, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Bloemfontein, 27 December 1978.

There is an important conciliatory role you (coloured people) can play in bridging the gap between the fears of Whites and the aspirations of Blacks. Yours is the significant role of bringing together the Whites and the Blacks to the realisation that they are one great nation.¹¹¹

However, by maintaining its ties with the CRC and other separate structures, it was impossible for the Labour Party to perform this role. On the other hand, David Curry in 1975 spelt out the role that the Labour Party saw itself playing: "We are just a passing phase. We wish to transport the Black people along the road for we know that ultimately, when this land will be free from the shackles of greed and hate, the role of the party would have been played."¹¹² In 1977, Allan Boesak posed the question: "And does the Labour Party have a future? That is not important and frankly, I don't really care. As long as the Labour Party has honestly worked for a genuine, free and just future for this country and all of its people."¹¹³ Although members of the Labour Party will argue that they did exactly that, their critics will argue just as vehemently that the Labour Party actually delayed the transition to a "genuine, free and just" society.

Throughout much of the Labour Party's existence, it was slated by critics as a party of ruthless, calculating opportunists who exploited the ignorance, political backwardness and gullibility of their people for power, prestige and the furthering of their own pecuniary interests. Yet, when one speaks to many of the founders of the Labour Party and others who knew them, one gains the overwhelming impression that those who started out with the Labour Party were generally well-intentioned people who were genuinely concerned about the

¹¹¹Enos Mabusa, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Johannesburg, 27 December 1980.

¹¹²Post, 7 December 1975.

¹¹³Rashid Seria Accession, Acc 154, Allan Boesak, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 3 January 1977.

parlous position of coloured people. This of course is to be expected as respondents would not portray themselves or their friends in a bad light. However, one cannot ignore the fact that all of them had lived in pre-apartheid South Africa where discrimination was already a fact of South African life, but which was nevertheless free of the harsh and brutal nature which characterised the apartheid era from 1948 onwards. Most of the founders were from the Cape and they remembered with nostalgia the days when they voted on a common roll; when they could live the way they wanted to; where they enjoyed an unfettered relationship with neighbours of various colours, nationalities and creeds. They had been witness to, but also victims of, the changing political atmosphere in the country.¹¹⁴ Whereas the United Party of Smuts had practised a benevolent form of race discrimination, that of the National Party was crass, crude and humiliating. After 1948 the government introduced harsh and draconian legislation to protect Afrikaner hegemony. Opponents were harshly dealt with and the police kept a watchful and vengeful eye on "agitators." Those who opposed the government and the policy of apartheid were considered traitors.¹¹⁵ Van der Ross describes the effect these changes and actions had on coloureds who would later emerge as leaders in the 1960s:

This has been a traumatic period in the history of the country and of the Coloured people. It would never be forgotten that those Coloured people who are now in leadership positions, men in their fifties and sixties and older ... are men who have lived through this period of political emasculation. They have seen their rights whittled down from meaningful participation individually and considerable potential collectively, to nothing at all Few who have lived through the past thirty years ... would wish to re-live the tensions and anxiety of the constitutional crisis of the 1950s Not only was the toll heavy in regard to schisms between English and Afrikaans-speaking Whites ... but it had a severe effect on the Coloured people It brought about grave divisions within the ranks of the Coloured people

¹¹⁴Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 77-78.

¹¹⁵Bunting, South Africa Reich, 194.

The effects of those divisions still linger on in the political attitudes and actions of the Coloured people today.¹¹⁶

It would be unfair therefore to simply write off the founders of the Labour Party as cold, calculating, political mercenaries. In the 1960s they were part of a "down-trodden, humiliated, belittled, ignored and manipulated minority group squeezed between rival nationalisms and denied their role in the destiny of the country to which they have shown so much loyalty."¹¹⁷ In addition, the majority of coloured people were poorly-educated and lived in a state of poverty.¹¹⁸ In the midst of all this, the founders of the Labour Party tried to devise methods to keep coloured hopes alive. The formation of the Labour Party was one such attempt.

Financial inducements, perks and prestige have often been cited in criticism of, and as reasons for, the party's participation in the CRC, but these were not an issue in 1969 as evidenced by the fact that the Labour Party had great difficulty finding candidates to stand for the first election. Modest salaries and meagre perks in the first CRC were not enough of an inducement for one to assume that this was the reason for the sudden concern for the plight of the coloured people. Although salaries of R150 per month for councillors were higher than those of the average coloured wage-earner, most of it went on travelling and other expenses as councillors tried to maintain fragile contacts with their far-flung constituencies.¹¹⁹ It was only when CRC salaries were increased to R500 per month in 1975 that suddenly, a new breed of councillor came to the fore. Higher salaries, increased

¹¹⁶Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 77-78.

¹¹⁷Saks, "The Failure of the CRC", 240.

¹¹⁸Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 10.

¹¹⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992; Arthur Stanley, interview 10 September 1992; John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

perks, the opportunities for self-enrichment and the power to give patronage became the draw-card.¹²⁰ Middleton states that after 1975 the government "threw money at the members of the CRC."¹²¹ However, the extravagant salaries and perks provided to induce coloureds to participate in the House of Representatives in 1984 saw the rise of the coloured political mercenary. The majority of Labour Party members who entered the HoR in 1984 were far removed from the calibre of men who formed the Labour Party in 1965 and who fought against overwhelming odds in the 1969 election. Thus, when Molteno accuses the Labour Party of opportunism, this would probably apply to many of the CRC councillors who entered the council in 1975, but more properly, to the majority of those who stood for election in 1984:

The Labour Party of South Africa was the only party that claimed to be opposed to apartheid. From the outset, in fact, its prime dilemma was explaining just why it was in the running. The actual explanation was of course that it was a party of opportunists entirely lacking in any strategic sense.¹²²

Despite this condemnation of the Labour Party, a study of its role in the period 1965-1984 indicates a heightened awareness of the position of coloured people in South African society.¹²³ The vociferous condemnation of the government, instruments of separate representation and the policy of separate development by the Labour Party at the outset and later, to a lesser extent by the Federal Party, focused the attention of the white electorate on coloured people in their

¹²⁰Sonny Leon, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1 January 1975.

¹²¹Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

¹²²Molteno, "The Coloured Representative Council", 16.

¹²³Thomas, "Coloured People and the Limits of Separation", 158.

midst and contributed to a debate in white political circles and an increased awareness of the claims of the coloured people to full citizenship in the land of their birth.

The question must nevertheless be asked whether the Labour Party had any relevance in coloured politics in the period under discussion? Yes, to the extent to which the party was able to verbalise the feelings and frustrations of a section of the coloured people. The Labour Party represented that section of the coloured community who resented their second-class status, who were opposed to apartheid and institutions which were designed to entrench the principle of separate representation, who were frustrated at the lack of avenues for the free expression of their feelings, and uncertain about how to bring about the desired change in their status.¹²⁴ Even though its support came from a small percentage of the coloured electorate, the party's highly-publicised criticism of and confrontation with the government and its policies led the government to continue to look at alternative methods of satisfying the political aspirations of the coloured people. Herein lies the Labour Party's major contribution: It played a role in the government's re-evaluation of its coloured policy. Between 1969 and 1984, the government devised the CRC, a liaison committee, cabinet council, new constitution, President's Council and eventually, the tricameral system to provide for the political aspirations of coloured people. In addition, the government had appointed the Theron Commission which focused not only on the political, but also the social and economic position of coloured people.

However, although the Labour Party appeared to prod the government, it did not succeed in influencing the government in the right direction. The declared aim of the Labour Party was to strive for equal citizenship and the restoration of full political rights for coloured people. In order to

¹²⁴Karis and Carter, From Protest to Challenge, 162.

achieve this, it planned to oppose apartheid and all instruments of separate representation designed to keep whites and coloureds politically separate. As such, it planned to hamstring the CRC and oppose all other institutions of separate political representation. Yet, by participating in separate institutions such as the CRC, the Labour Party negated its lofty ideals. It lent credibility to a body which it supposedly rejected and had vowed to destroy. Instead of forcing the government to abandon separate development, the Labour Party assisted in its implementation. Although the Labour Party played a role in causing the government to look at alternative methods of satisfying coloured political aspirations, those alternatives were simply alternatives within the framework of the policy of separate development and not a departure therefrom. Furthermore, the Labour Party failed to secure full citizenship for coloureds, but on the other hand, by allowing coloureds to be coopted into government structures, it succeeded in earning for coloured people the enmity of their fellow-oppressed.¹²⁵

Whereas the Labour Party was formed in 1965 to frustrate the government in the implementation of its policy of separate development, by 1984 it had consciously elected to fully collaborate with the government and assist in the implementation of that very policy.¹²⁶ From a position where it was considered an important component of the liberation struggle in the 1960s and early 70s, and a vociferous and credible opponent of the government and its policy of apartheid; by 1984 the Labour Party had turned full circle and became a junior partner of the same government - labelled by the liberation movements as a collaborator and fellow-oppressor.

¹²⁵O. Dhlomo, "Inkatha and the Reform Proposals" in Bridge or Barricade?, 126.

¹²⁶P.A.29, Statement by the Honourable H.J.Hendrickse: Chairman of the Ministers' Council, n.d. (probably 1994). Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 162.

Chapter 7EpilogueTHE LABOUR PARTY, 1984-1994

The decision by the Labour Party to participate in the House of Representatives was the logical culmination of its decision to participate in the CRC in 1969. Having once decided to cooperate with the government in its plans for separate political representation for coloured people, the Labour Party had no moral basis for refusing participation in the tricameral system. The decision to cooperate in 1969, albeit qualified, led inevitably to the decision to participate in 1984. By the time it took part in elections for the House of Representatives in August 1984, the Labour Party had dispensed with any notions of "confrontation" or "confrontation through dialogue" which had been its policy throughout much of the 1970s, and committed itself to fully collaborate with the same government it had purported to oppose for so long.

In the 1984 election, the Labour Party was opposed by a number of parties, none of which constituted any major threat. The Freedom Party (FP) had suffered defections to the Labour Party after the demise of the CRC in 1980, and, in addition, experienced a leadership crisis shortly before the election when it replaced its leader, Charles Julies with Arthur Booysen. The party contested all ten seats in the Transvaal and twelve in the rest of the country.¹ It failed to win a single seat, but tied with the Labour Party in Bosmont, Booysen's seat. After court action by the Freedom Party against the Labour Party for electoral fraud, the seat was allocated to Booysen.² Julies left the FP after he was

¹The Transvaal had always been the stronghold of the Freedom (formerly Federal) Party. See chapters 2 and 3.

²Beverley Booysen, interview with author, Johannesburg, 24 April 1989. The author was also a teacher in a school situated in this constituency in 1984, and followed the proceedings as part of preparation for an earlier research study on the Labour Party.

deposed and formed the Reformed Freedom Party (RFP). The RFP fielded eleven candidates in the election and adopted an "unashamedly Coloured Nationalist" position, similar to that of the Federal Party in 1969.³ The party failed to capture a single seat and all its candidates lost their deposits.

The main opposition to the Labour Party in the 1984 election came from the People's Congress Party (PCP), a party to the right of the Labour Party. The PCP started out as the Congress of the People, a body concerning itself with the social welfare of coloured people in the northern suburbs of the Cape Flats in the Cape Peninsula.⁴ Its leader, Peter Marais was a former member of the Labour Party who had been suspended from the party in 1978. Although the party fielded 59 candidates in the August 1984 election, and two former Labour Party leaders, Sonny Leon and Les du Preez actively supported and campaigned on its behalf, only one PCP candidate, Dennis de la Cruz of Ottery, was elected. A further candidate, Soheir Hoosen of the Tafelberg constituency, was declared the winner by the Supreme Court after it found that the Labour Party candidate, former leader Martin Arendse, had bribed four pensioners with money and christmas gifts.⁵ Hoosen then joined the Freedom Party, bringing its representation in parliament to two.⁶ When the Labour Party's 76 candidates took their places in the House of Representatives for the first session,⁷ they were faced with an opposition consisting of four members: two FP, one PCP and

³Race Relations Survey (1984), 31.

⁴Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 42.

⁵Citizen, 8 August 1985.

⁶Beverley Booysen, interview, 24 April 1989; Trevor George, interview, 6 May 1994.

⁷Because of the number of candidates elected to the HoR, the Labour Party was able to nominate its candidates to all five nominated seats, bringing its total complement in the House to 81 out of 85 members.

one independent. When the first session of the HoR met in January 1985, a new party, the Democratic Worker's Party (DWP) constituted the official opposition. This party was formed after a breakaway from the PCP and consisted of three members: the independent and the PCP member elected in August 1984, and a further PCP member elected in a by-election in December 1984.⁸ These all joined the DWP before the first HoR session.

Within the Labour Party itself, a realignment also took place. The 1983 decision of the Labour Party to participate led to the resignation of those who were opponents of participation. After the party's victory in the 1984 election three groupings in the party caucus came to the fore. The groupings largely reflected similar divisions within the party rank-and-file. A loyalist grouping consisting of older MPs gathered around Allan Hendrickse, the party's leader. The majority of these members had served in the CRC. For them, participation was a success in itself. As far they were concerned, the Labour Party had fought long and hard for representation in "the councils of the nation," for "membership of Parliament" and "other instruments of central and local government."⁹ Even though all South Africans did not yet have this privilege, these members felt that this was at least a beginning. Although a minority in the party, the Hendrickse loyalists had greater influence and dominated the party's decision-making process. This can largely be ascribed to the fact that these members were more experienced in politics, having served in the CRC.

A second grouping, dubbed the "coloureticians,"¹⁰ emerged

⁸Cape Times, 15 January 1985.

⁹P.A.29, "Objects of the Party" 2(c), "Constitution of the Labour Party of South Africa", as amended, 9 July 1966.

¹⁰Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 36.

under the leadership of David Curry and Carter Ebrahim.¹¹ It was Ebrahim who, in 1972, had presented a paper at the party's East London conference which spelt out the Labour Party's attitude to participation in the CRC, and which had committed the party unequivocally to acceptance of the council as a body in which the party could realise its aims and objectives.¹² Ebrahim was also one of the "power clique" which pushed the party towards the decision to participate at Eshowe in January 1983.¹³ When he was appointed Minister of Education and Culture in 1984, the "coloureticians" grouped around Ebrahim. This group consisted of the social worker-type MP who was generally older and from a rural background. Many of them had come into the HoR in 1984 from a background of long service to the community. Among them were teachers, community workers, members of Management Committees and public service employees. These members were content to busy themselves with the upliftment of the coloured community. To them, parliament was to be used to improve social, educational and economic conditions for coloured people. Thus, they saw it as their duty to content themselves with providing community facilities such as halls, creches and old age homes; improve pensions and other grants; build more schools; and improve conditions in coloured areas.¹⁴ These MPs were more ethnically oriented and were less concerned with national or non-racial politics.¹⁵ This group constituted the majority within the Labour Party caucus but did not initially exert themselves. Their initial reticence can be ascribed to the lack of experience and the subsequent insecurity felt by those who had just been elected to the HoR in 1984. This group's main opposition within the

¹¹See chapter 5 on Curry's role in the Eshowe volte face and Appendix II for a biographical profile.

¹²See chapter 3.

¹³Freedberg, "Changing Political Identity", 235.

¹⁴Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994.

¹⁵Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 36.

Labour Party was the "young turks," a grouping of younger, urban, more well-educated MPs.¹⁶ Although they shared with the supporters of the progressive movements operating inside and outside the country, a commitment to a non-racial democracy, they differed on the strategy of how best to achieve this goal.¹⁷ This group was a very small, but brash minority consisting of less than a dozen MPs, and generally grouped around spokesmen like Desmond Lockey, son-in-law of Allan Hendrickse.¹⁸ This group most often opposed the "coloureticians" and sought to keep them out of influential positions in the party and the HoR.¹⁹

As soon as the Labour Party took office in the House of Representatives, it had to deal with country-wide student boycott which arose out of the campaign against the tricameral elections in August 1984.²⁰ The government had to declare a state of emergency to deal with the unrest which accompanied the boycott. The boycotts were mainly confined to the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape in 1984 but moved to Cape Town in July 1985 after the government had declared a second state of emergency in other parts of the country.²¹ The focal point of the first wave of unrest in the Western Cape was provided when a march planned from Athlone Stadium and Hewat College of Education in Athlone to Pollsmoor prison to demand the release of Nelson Mandela, was banned. Allan Boesak, the founder and patron of the UDF was detained while attempting to lead the

¹⁶Peter Hendrickse, 18 September 1994.

¹⁷Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 37.

¹⁸Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994.

¹⁹Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994.

²⁰Van der Ross, Rise and Decline, 355, 359-60; Du Pré, Separate but Unequal, 181-84; D. Reed, Beloved Country: South Africa's Silent Wars (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994), 21.

²¹Race Relations Survey (1985), 24.

march.²² The banning of the march and the police reaction to the marchers unleashed a wave of violence. The actions of students in coloured schools in the Peninsula led the Labour Party to close all coloured schools and colleges in the Cape Peninsula.²³ Parents and teachers challenged the Labour Party's educational policies and accused the party of supporting government actions against its "own" people. Ebrahim's actions were challenged in the Supreme Court, and although some his regulations were declared invalid,²⁴ he insisted that he would continue to take a hard line in order to re-establish law an order in coloured schools.²⁵ With the closure of schools, thousands of coloured pupils took to the streets. Coloured suburbs resembled war-zones as pupils taunted and battled the police.²⁶ When student unrest began to subside in 1986, the Labour Party was faced with a rebellion in colleges of education under its control. Students demanded the end of "apartheid education" and disparities in bursaries and the allocation of resources.²⁷

At the same time, the party was accused of trying to increase party membership by only making posts available in HoR educational institutions to party members. This accusation first surfaced in the Cape Herald in December 1985 and was repeated throughout the tenure of the Labour Party as the

²²Du Pré, Strangers in their Own Country, 137.

²³Star, 7 October 1985.

²⁴Argus, 28 October 1985.

²⁵Race Relations Survey (1985), 25.

²⁶C. Bundy, "'Action Comrades, action!': The Politics of Youth-Student Resistance in the Western Cape, 1985", in The Angry Divide, 210-11.

²⁷At the time, the author was a lecturer at a college of education controlled by the HoR, and served between 1987 and 1990 as the college's representative on a number of committees dealing with the crisis in "coloured" colleges.

governing party in the HoR.²⁸ Willie Meyer states that files were kept at the party's head office of every constituency. When an application was made from a teacher or lecturer, the MP for that constituency was asked to investigate and report whether the candidate was a member, supporter, critic or opponent of the Labour Party. Preference was then given to Labour Party members and supporters. Meyer states that Hendrickse called this "affirmative action".²⁹ At a conference of the Labour Party in September 1994, Allan Hendrickse also referred to the Labour Party's role in promoting "affirmative action" stating that the Labour Party during the HoR period looked after "its own people." He clarified this to mean that the party was looking first to promote coloured people.³⁰ However, teachers over the years openly accused the Labour Party of favouring Labour Party members when it came to making appointments. Ron Swartz, chairman of the Progressive Teachers' Union in Johannesburg between 1985 and 1992, reports that this was common knowledge and he and his organisation received countless complaints regarding this practice.³¹

At the outset, the Labour Party came under attack for the calibre of its members in the HoR. Fred Peters, the party's long-serving secretary had warned the party since the early 1970s against accepting every "Dick, Tom and Harry" as candidates in the various elections. After the demise of the CRC in 1980, he tried to screen prospective members, but was

²⁸Cape Herald, 14 December 1985; Argus, 28 March and 3 October 1987.

²⁹Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994.

³⁰Allan Hendrickse, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

³¹For example, Ron Swartz, interview, 9 December 1993; Matilda Cairncross, interview with author, Oudtshoorn, 22 April 1994. Du Pré, Separate but Unequal, 116, describes this practice in greater detail.

overruled by party leaders eager to increase membership.³² In 1984, Peters became concerned about the type of candidate the Labour Party was putting up for election,³³ but was stymied by a problem the Labour Party had not foreseen: it could not find suitable candidates to stand for the party. There was no shortage of persons eager to stand, but the Labour Party was seeking to encourage recognised community leaders, well-known educationists, businessmen and educated persons of standing to accept nomination to candidacy. In this way the party hoped to broaden its support and increase its acceptability among the coloured electorate. However, the vociferous criticism which the party faced after its Eshowe decision, the mobilisation of forces to protest the election, the stridency of the boycott lobby, and the growing prospect of a violent reaction to the implementation of the tricameral system deterred many prospective candidates. In the end the party struggled right up to the election to find suitable candidates. Having failed in this endeavour, the party had to "take whatever it could get."³⁴

Soon after the August 1984 election results confirmed a Labour Party victory, Hendrickse was appointed as chairman of the Minister's Council of the HoR and cabinet minister without portfolio.³⁵ From 1984 until 1987, when Hendrickse left Botha's cabinet, the Labour Party followed a policy of acquiescence. It hardly opposed the National Party and concerned itself mainly with matters pertaining to the

³²Sylvia Landers, interview, 17 September 1994; Norman Middleton, 10 October 1994.

³³Lockey indicates that even though he was Allan Hendrickse's son-in-law, he was rigorously questioned by Peters regarding his background, his motives for wanting to stand as a candidate, and his suitability for the party. Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994.

³⁴Allan Hendrickse, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

³⁵Race Relations Survey (1986), 156.

administration of the HoR. Much of this political inertia had to do with the protest and school boycotts which arose out of the protest to the tricameral elections in August 1984, and which simmered for years after. Much of the action against the protests was borne by the government's security police, but the HoR and Labour Party had to bear the brunt of the schools boycott which reached a crescendo in coloured schools in the Cape in 1985.³⁶ The Labour Party tried to keep a low profile and preferred to wait for directives from the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. When the Labour Party tried to get involved in the process of government, it most often succeeded in strengthening the hand of the government in the application of apartheid policies. Labour Party members constantly found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, the tricameral system had given them positions of power; on the other, they were required to implement government policy and bear responsibility for it. For example, the party helped to place new apartheid legislation on the statute book, e.g. the Regional Services Councils Act.³⁷ While serving in the cabinet, Hendrickse found it difficult to oppose government policy. The only known case in which he distanced himself from a cabinet decision was over the question of independence for KwaNdebele.³⁸

Hendrickse's departure from the cabinet in 1987 was precipitated when he and twenty-five supporters swam at Humewood, a whites-only beach in Port Elizabeth on 4 January, 1987 in defiance of the Separate Amenities Act.³⁹ However, the party had not reckoned on the consequences of what it had

³⁶Bundy, "Action comrades, action!", 211.

³⁷Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 213.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Vincent Baartman, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994; Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994; Race Relations Survey (1987/88), 738; Kenney, Power Pride and Prejudice, 386; Star, 5 January 1987.

hoped would have been an opportunity to enhance its leader's standing as a defiant opponent of apartheid. While Hendrickse got support for his action from the so-called Eminent Person's Group, a delegation from the Commonwealth Conference which had recently visited the country to help negotiate a settlement within South Africa,⁴⁰ his action stirred up conservatives, especially in Port Elizabeth. The Herstigte Nasionale Party threatened to send its members to Port Elizabeth to patrol white beaches and ensure that the Labour Party and coloureds never came to swim there again.⁴¹ Of greater significance was the reaction of President Botha who accused Hendrickse on television and in the press of contravening his ministerial oath to uphold the laws and the constitution of the land.⁴² Hendrickse was given three choices: that he and the Labour Party MPs involved in the swim publicly apologise for deliberately breaking the law by swimming on a white beach; that he resign from the cabinet and as chairman of the Minister's Council; face the dissolution of the House of Representatives followed by new elections in May that year.⁴³ Hendrickse loyalists were not keen for him to resign as chairman lest he be replaced by one of his conservative rivals. MPs were also reluctant to lose their positions, privileges and perks, and face the electorate in a general election. Hendrickse responded by stating that what he had done had been in accordance with the dictates of his conscience and the policy of the Labour Party, and therefore, no apology was necessary. However, Nash states that Labour Party members "pressured" Hendrickse into apologising because they were "hocked to the teeth" for their cars, houses and other items. "If there was an election and members lost their

⁴⁰Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice, 364-65.

⁴¹Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 October 1994.

⁴²Sunday Times, 2 June 1991; Kenney, Power, Pride and Prejudice, 386.

⁴³Race Relations Survey (1987/88), 738.

seats, many would have been ruined for life."⁴⁴ Hendrickse thereupon apologised for any "unintended" affront to the President or "any impression that might have been created to that effect."⁴⁵ The apology was aired on national prime time television.

The repercussions of the "swimming incident" did not end there. In a series of Management Committee by-elections throughout the country, the Labour Party lost support.⁴⁶ Hendrickse's apology had further consequences for the party in a by-election held in the Bosmont constituency in March 1987. Trevor George, an independent,⁴⁷ ensured his victory by making constant reference to Hendrickse's apology.⁴⁸ In the same month, five Labour Party MPs in the HoR resigned from the party and crossed the floor to sit as independents. One of the defectors, Peter Mopp, explained that the Labour Party had "gone off the rails" and had become an "appendage" of the National Party. Furthermore, Hendrickse's apology had "crucified the image of the party because man does not apologise for what God has given you." Moreover, the Labour Party had reached the stage where it was no longer "fighting apartheid but entrenching it."⁴⁹ The Labour Party however accused them of leaving because of unfulfilled personal ambitions.⁵⁰ In April 1987, the Labour Party suffered a major

⁴⁴John Nash, interview, 31 August 1993.

⁴⁵Star, 21 January 1987; Cape Times, 22 January 1987; Citizen, 22 January 1987.

⁴⁶Sunday Times, 3 May 1987 and 9 August 1987.

⁴⁷Trevor George campaigned for Federal Party candidates throughout the CRC period and had supported Arthur Booysen, the Freedom Party leader who defeated the Labour Party in the Bosmont constituency in 1984. Beverley Booysen, interview, 24 April 1989.

⁴⁸Trevor George, interview, 6 May 1994.

⁴⁹Business Day, 25 March 1987.

⁵⁰Sunday Times, 3 May 1987.

blow with the resignation of the party's deputy-leader, and leader in the Transvaal, Jac Rabie in April 1987.⁵¹ Rabie cited the lack of leadership and the "authoritarian actions" of Hendrickse as his reasons for leaving, but indicated that Hendrickse's timid apology to the State President was the main reason.⁵² Rabie's resignation created concern in the Labour Party because of his role as traditional leader of the former Federal Party faction in the Labour Party. However, Rabie's departure was more for personal reasons than for reasons of principle. He had tried to wrest the leadership of the party ever since he joined in 1978.⁵³ Even though he had the support of the "moderates" in the party who constituted a majority by the time of the Eshowe decision in 1983,⁵⁴ Rabie was not able to translate that support into votes for a bid to gain election as leader. This was largely because Allan Hendrickse had shifted his position by that time and his stance on participation in the tricameral system was in line with that of the "moderates." In addition, Hendrickse was the more experienced of the two in political leadership. Moreover, he had a much higher political profile after the Eshowe decision and was feted by President Botha, Chris Heunis, the National Party and its supporting press. His biography by Piet Coetzer had also reached "bestseller status."⁵⁵ "Moderates" saw Hendrickse as competent enough to achieve their political aims and were thus content to rally behind him. There was therefore no reason to want to replace him with Rabie when the differences between the two leaders had in

⁵¹Natal Mercury, 28 April 1987.

⁵²Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 48; Natal Mercury, 28 April 1987.

⁵³Desmond Lockey, interview, 17 September 1994.

⁵⁴Norman Middleton, interview, 10 October 1994.

⁵⁵Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994. As this information was supplied by Allan Hendrickse's son, one would have to bear in mind that this statement might be reflecting subjective reality.

any event become blurred. Rabie, however, chafed at his inability to improve his position in the party. Although he was deputy-leader of the party, he had not been appointed to the five-man Minister's Council in the House of Representatives (the coloured cabinet).⁵⁶ After Rabie's resignation in April 1987, the five MPs who had earlier resigned from the Labour Party formed the Democratic Party (DP) and became the official opposition in the HoR, replacing the DWP.⁵⁷ Rabie however did not join the DP but sat as an independent. However, in late 1987, the DP merged with the PCP and, together with Rabie, formed the eight-member United Democratic Party (UDP) with Rabie as leader.⁵⁸

After the white election in May 1987, relations between the Labour Party and the government deteriorated steadily. P.W. Botha strained relations even further in a speech in the House of Representatives on 19 August 1987 in which he criticised coloured MPs for making insulting remarks about himself, the government and Afrikaners, and advised them to be grateful to the National Party, claiming that if it were not for Afrikaners and the government, "the coloured would not be in his privileged position in South Africa today."⁵⁹ He added: "This is the nearest you have ever come in your lives to governing South Africa. This dispensation is the nearest the

⁵⁶The members of the Minister's Council were Allan Hendrickse (Chairman), David Curry (Local Government, Housing and Agriculture), Andrew Julies (Budget), Chris April (Health Services and Welfare) and Carter Ebrahim (Education and Culture).

⁵⁷Sunday Times, 26 April 1987; Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 46. The Democratic Party in the HoR had no connection with the Democratic Party which was formed by white political parties before the 1989 general election. The HoR DP had already ceased to exist by then.

⁵⁸Weekly Mail, 27 March 1988.

⁵⁹Debates of the House of Representatives, vol. 10 (17 August 1987), cols. 2281-95.

Coloured population has ever come to governing South Africa."⁶⁰ Desmond Lockey retorted that Botha's claim that coloured people should thank Afrikaners for their advancement was "paternalism at its worst."⁶¹

Stung by the humiliation it had endured at the hands of Botha over the "swimming incident," the subsequent criticism, loss of support, and the remarks by Botha in the HoR, the Labour Party began to assert a more confrontational stance. On 22 August 1987, Hendrickse told a party congress that the party would demand the repeal of the Group Areas Act in exchange for its assent to the government's plans to postpone the 1989 elections.⁶² Hendrickse had however been party to a cabinet decision to postpone the 1989 elections to 1992 and Botha considered Hendrickse's statement as reneging on an agreement. He wrote to Hendrickse informing him that his membership of the cabinet was unacceptable. On 24 August 1987, Hendrickse announced his resignation from the cabinet.⁶³ In his resignation letter, he stated that the State President was not prepared to "acknowledge the feelings and perceptions of others if that perception is not in line" with that of himself and his party.⁶⁴ The events surrounding Hendrickse's resignation then took a bizarre twist. While Hendrickse was announcing his resignation on SABC television, Botha telephoned the director-general of the SABC, Riaan Eksteen, to

⁶⁰Pottinger, The Imperial Presidency, 412-13. See also Race Relations Survey (1987/88), 740.

⁶¹Debates of the House of Representatives, vol 11 (24 August 1987), col. 2367.

⁶²Cape Times, 20 August 1987; Sunday Times, 2 June 1991; Race Relations Survey (1987/88), 739-40. In terms of the tricameral constitution, all three Houses would dissolve in 1989 and a general election would have to be held. However, if all three Houses assented, it could be postponed.

⁶³Ibid, 25 August 1987 and 2 June 1991.

⁶⁴Star, 25 August 1987; Allan Hendrickse, interview, 17 September 1994.

inform him that he was not satisfied with the way Hendrickse's resignation was being portrayed.⁶⁵ Botha was annoyed that the SABC was presenting Hendrickse's resignation as if it had been his own initiative, rather than having come from the State President.⁶⁶ He berated Eksteen for allowing Hendrickse to appear on television news to explain why he had left the cabinet.⁶⁷ As a result of Botha's intervention, Freek Robinson, an SABC political correspondent, suddenly appeared on television after the weather report, which followed the news, had been presented. He then read in full the correspondence which had passed between Botha and Hendrickse on the cabinet membership issue, as well as a hastily-prepared statement by the Office of the State President on the matter. This was repeated twice in the following twelve hours.⁶⁸ After the dramatic intervention, Botha insisted that Eksteen be dismissed but the chairman of SABC board resisted the demand.⁶⁹ However, in April 1988, Eksteen was effectively dismissed and given a "golden handshake" and his full pension.⁷⁰ His dismissal was linked to the "Hendrickse incident."⁷¹ Botha later confirmed his role in the incident and proclaimed that he would do the same thing again under similar circumstances.⁷² Opposition spokesman, Dave Dalling, contended that the "president misused the office of the presidency in manipulating news in this instance - what is astounding is that he seems to be proud of it."⁷³

⁶⁵Race Relations Survey (1987/88), 740.

⁶⁶Star, 28 August 1987.

⁶⁷Ibid, 27 August 1987.

⁶⁸Race Relations Survey (1987/88), 845.

⁶⁹Citizen, 28 August 1987.

⁷⁰Star, 21 April 1988.

⁷¹Citizen, 21 April 1988; Weekly Mail, 22 April 1988.

⁷²Business Day, 16 September 1988; Star, 16 September 1988.

⁷³Eastern Province Herald, 16 September 1988.

The heavy-handed way in which Botha handled Hendrickse's resignation evoked a great deal of bitterness in the Labour Party. The party decided to embark on a program of "aggressive opposition" and warned that if any member of the party accepted an offer by the State President to take Hendrickse's place on the cabinet, it would result in the immediate expulsion of that member. Peter Hendrickse uttered a threat which the party was to repeat often in the next few years:⁷⁴

If the NP maintains its present attitude and refuses to clearly outline its mandate as far as the Group Areas Act, Separate Amenities Act and Population Registration Act are concerned, then our principle of continued participation in the tricameral system will have to be seriously considered.⁷⁵

The Labour Party had been tagged "a junior partner of the government" since it entered the HoR and Hendrickse's appointment as cabinet member in 1984.⁷⁶ Now that Hendrickse was no longer a member of the cabinet, the Labour Party adopted the position that it was in opposition to the government and embarked on a policy of obstruction. During the remaining weeks of the 1987 parliamentary session, the party rejected more bills than it had in the previous three years. It not only opposed all bills passed as part of apartheid legislation but bills relating to local authorities, regional services and others which were of a technical nature, i.e. bills relating to parliamentary procedure.⁷⁷ In previous years, all bills of this nature had been passed by the party. During the next parliamentary session, the Labour Party announced that it would boycott the Dias Festival, the

⁷⁴For example, Allan Hendrickse, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Pretoria, 28 December 1987.

⁷⁵Natal Witness, 26 August 1987.

⁷⁶Business Day, 7 January 1987.

⁷⁷Ibid, 6 October 1987.

commemorative festivities of the Great Trek and the arrival of the Huguenots, because they failed to constitute a reason for "any self-respecting person of Colour" to celebrate.⁷⁸

Towards the latter part of 1987 relations between the Labour Party and P.W. Botha and the National Party broke down completely. Adverse reaction by the government to the Labour Party's increasingly confrontationist stance led Allan Hendrickse to accuse the government of a "total onslaught" against the party.⁷⁹ When the party announced in November that it would block any attempt by the National Party to postpone the 1989 general election, the National Party is alleged to have attempted to "bribe" coloured MPs to support their move.⁸⁰ Carter Ebrahim expressed support for a postponement of the election during the party's national conference in Pretoria in December 1987, but his call received very little support in the party.⁸¹ However, because of his openly pro-NP stance, the party sought to relieve him of his post as Minister of Education and Culture, but the request was turned down by the State President. This led to accusations that Ebrahim was a government agent, trying to cause a split in the party.⁸² At the same conference, Hendrickse told delegates that the party had come to the crossroads regarding its future in the tricameral system. He openly attacked the government for continuing to strengthen apartheid, and called on the party to seriously consider its continued participation in the HoR. In a call to white South Africans, Hendrickse stated: "Ek wil vanaand in 'n mate van bitterheid aan die blanke Suid-Afrikaner sê, hou op om net aan jouself te dink.

⁷⁸Argus, 18 January 1988.

⁷⁹Ibid, 19 October 1987.

⁸⁰Ibid, 7 November 1987.

⁸¹Star, 30 December 1987; Business Day, 31 December 1987; Citizen, 31 December 1987.

⁸²Minutes of Labour Party National Conference, Pretoria, 28-30 December 1987; Argus, 29 December 1987.

Suid-Afrika bestaan nie net uit witmense...."⁸³

During the 1988 parliamentary session, the government sought to make amendments to group areas legislation by introducing "free settlement areas" where persons of any population group could purchase land, build and live. The Labour Party however insisted that the Group Areas Act be abolished, and the HoR subsequently refused to discuss the bills. The Houses of Delegates and Representatives then forced the legislation to be discussed in a joint session. Hendrickse used the opportunity to launch an emotional attack on the Group Areas Act. In a lengthy speech, he outlined to members present the personal effect this bill had had on him and his family.⁸⁴ The government however pressed ahead with the legislation and referred the bills to the President's Council for ratification. Hendrickse responded by resuming the debate within the party on withdrawal from the tricameral system. Hendrickse's increasingly confrontational stance was a result of the personal humiliation he felt at having been publicly berated by Botha over his "swim," and being forced to apologise in public. Furthermore the Labour Party had had to face stinging criticism of the party's handling of the schools crisis between 1985-87, and of its powerless role in the tricameral system. The party felt peeved that, while the government appeared to respond and react to organisations involved in protest and boycotts, its participation in the HoR had not been rewarded. Hendrickse declared: "At great risk

⁸³Allan Hendrickse, Address to Labour Party National Conference, Pretoria, 28 December 1987.

⁸⁴House of Representatives, Group Areas Act: An excerpt from the Parliamentary Debate of 28 September 1988 by the Chairman of the Minister's Council of the House of Representatives, the Rev. Allan Hendrickse (Cape Town: Public Relations Department, Administration: House of Representatives, 1988); Sunday Times, 2 June 1991. The consequences of the application of the Group Areas Act is dealt with in detail by D. Pinnock, Breaking the Web: Economic Consequences of the Destruction of Extended families by the Group Areas Relocations in Cape Town (Cape Town: Second Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, 1984).

and sacrifice we are participating in this particular structure, but sometimes one gets the feeling that it is better to throw stones outside"⁸⁵

However, despite the adoption of a stridently confrontational posture and expressions of disenchantment with the tricameral system after 1987, the Labour Party never at any stage took a conscious decision to rethink its participation in the HoR. As much as members complained about the way they were being treated by the State President and the National Party, the Labour Party did not even consider taking into account the sentiments expressed by Allan Hendrickse soon after the Eshowe conference in 1983: "My intentions and indeed the Labour Party's intentions, are sincere and honest, but if cognizance is not taken of this fact, the new constitutional dispensation will not succeed."⁸⁶ He had also issued a veiled warning at the time that the Labour Party would give the new dispensation five years to see if it "delivers the goods" and that if they saw no positive results by then, the government could forget about "further Labour Party co-operation."⁸⁷

However, while Hendrickse had committed the party to five years for the tricameral system to "deliver the goods,"⁸⁸ as early as three years into the tricameral system, the party was already weighing up its participation in the tricameral system. In 1987, a confidential study was undertaken by the Labour Party regarding the state of the party. The report, entitled "From Eshowe to St James", outlined the responses of members of the party's caucus to a questionnaire. Among the

⁸⁵Debates of the House of Representatives (1987), col. 874.

⁸⁶Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 162.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸At the Labour Party's National Conference in Pretoria, 28-30 December 1987, congress reaffirmed the party's 1983 decision to stay in the tricameral system for the full five years. See Minutes.

findings were that the party's participation in the tricameral system, the pre-occupation with "coloured affairs", and the strength of extra-parliamentary groups were the major threats to the party. While the report also discussed problems of a personal nature within the party, MPs were mostly concerned that they had very little credibility in the community because people believed that the party was collaborating with the government. MPs flinched at criticism that while the achievements of participation in the tricameral system had been few, the material gains had been many.⁸⁹ However, no-one in the party had the courage or desire to suggest that the party withdraw from the HoR. At that stage, the party held 74 of the 85 seats in the House. The withdrawal of the Labour Party would have dealt the tricameral system a crippling, though short-term blow. More importantly, it might have had the effect of forcing the government to speed up reform and hasten the end of the present constitutional dispensation which had never made any provision for Africans. However, the Labour Party balked at the thought of abandoning the House of Representatives. The material benefits, prestige and power to give patronage militated against giving consideration to matters of principle and the opprobrium heaped upon them by their communities and extra-parliamentary organisations. The only other way to extricate themselves from an uncomfortable position was to adopt a confrontational and obstructionist approach, a tactic which they had used in the days of the CRC when faced with a similar dilemma.⁹⁰ Thus, it is not surprising that from 1987, the Labour Party began to adopt a highly publicised confrontational stance and leaders increasingly began to issue threats that the party would reconsider its position in the HoR. Miley Richards confirms that the Labour Party's confrontational posturing after 1987 was mainly designed to deflect criticism from outside the tricameral system: "During the tricameral period, it was

⁸⁹Eastern Province Herald, 5 October 1987.

⁹⁰See chapter 3.

necessary for the Labour Party to impress the extra-parliamentary opposition."⁹¹

While the confidential report gave caucus members an opportunity to indulge in some introspection as far as the vulnerability of the Labour Party was concerned, their attitude to the party leadership was understandably not indicated. However, by 1988, dissatisfaction with the leadership of Allan Hendrickse began to surface. The decision in 1984 to allow his son, Peter Hendrickse and son-in-law, Desmond Lockey to be nominated as candidates for election caused unhappiness in the party.⁹² MPs accused him and his family of constituting the party's core decision-making unit. Members also complained of Hendrickse's "autocratic" style of leadership.⁹³ However, despite the unhappiness of these MPs, none of them wanted to leave the party at that stage. With an eye on the 1989 election, they realised that their continued survival as MPs depended on their membership of the Labour Party. Because of the size of the Labour Party and the powerful position it occupied in the HoR, independents or members of the weaker opposition parties stood little chance of gaining re-election to the House.⁹⁴ Thus, it was not in their best interests to leave the party or to antagonise Hendrickse. As a result, splinter parties like the UDP failed to attract significant support from MPs in the HoR and by mid-1988, began to fall apart. One by one, members resigned, resumed their independent status and then, shortly before the 1989 election, rejoined the Labour Party in time to be

⁹¹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

⁹²In the 1989 election, another son, Michael stood successfully for the Labour Party.

⁹³Daily Dispatch, 8 March 1991; Sunday Times, 3 January 1993.

⁹⁴Willie Meyer, 21 January 1994. See also Citizen, 4 November 1986.

nominated as candidates for their respective seats.⁹⁵

In the 1989 general election, the Labour Party again won the election for the HoR, albeit with a reduced majority. Having secured their places in parliament for a further five years, and with it their pensions and other benefits,⁹⁶ many MPs who had been unhappy in the party now had little reason to remain. An exacerbating factor was that the Labour Party had received a 1/4 million Rand donation towards its election costs, but did not disclose where it came from. All that members were told was that it came from an anonymous source. Richards indicates that this was a major cause of unhappiness in the party and contributed to its downfall. Besides the suspicion that the money came from a government source and that it was intended to "buy them off,"⁹⁷ an exacerbating factor was that this money, which came from a secret source, also went into a secret fund and was secretly disbursed. No attempt at establishing any form of accountability was made. Those MPs who were disenchanted with Allan Hendrickse began to sow discord within the party. They were soon dubbed the "Silver Forties," because they were drawn from the older MPs.⁹⁸ After President De Klerk announced on 2 February 1990 that he was unbanning all opposition movements and releasing Nelson Mandela, the National Party switched its attention to negotiations with the ANC. Hendrickse and the Labour Party were increasingly sidelined and the "Silver Forties" felt emboldened to increase their attacks on Hendrickse whom they now saw as vulnerable. De Klerk's announcement on 1 February 1991 that all apartheid laws would be repealed also meant that people would be free to join any political party. Party

⁹⁵Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994.

⁹⁶Parliamentarians received a full pension and a "golden handshake" if they served in two parliaments, or for 7 1/2 years.

⁹⁷Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

⁹⁸Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994; Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994.

dissidents then began to entertain thoughts of joining another party. Discussion revolved around the possibility of joining the Democratic Party which had been formed by the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and certain independent parties just before the 1989 general election. However, the Labour Party had had an uneasy relationship with the PFP since it decided in 1983 to participate. The PFP had heaped scorn on the party for participating, and during the tricameral years had treated Labour MPs with disdain.⁹⁹ As a result, MPs decided against seeking membership of the DP.

Events in parliament eventually overtook the debate within the ranks of the dissidents. In May 1991 the government set about demolishing the "pillars" of apartheid, viz. the Group Areas Act which had provided for residential segregation; the Population Registration Act which had classified and racially labelled all South Africans; and the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 which had restricted Africans to 7% and 13% of the land respectively. The United States demanded that these laws be removed from the statute books by 30 June 1991 if South Africa wished to have sanctions lifted.¹⁰⁰ However, the government devised five new laws to replace those laws. De Klerk promised that the replacement laws would only pass through parliament if all the participating Houses agreed with it. This of course was not necessary as any law which was held up by a House could be forced through parliament by the rubber-stamp of the National Party-dominated President's Council. However, mindful of the time frame imposed on it by the USA, and hesitant to use the PC to pass these laws which many perceived to be new apartheid laws, the government hoped that none of the three Houses would hold up the process. Thus the Labour Party's unhappiness with one of the new laws, the Residential Environment Bill, caused great consternation in government ranks. After much opposition inside and outside

⁹⁹Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994.

¹⁰⁰Du Pré, Strangers in their Own Country, 187.

parliament, the government dropped the bill and substituted it with the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Bill.¹⁰¹ At the heart of both these bills was an attempt by the government to grant communities the opportunity to uphold "norms and standards."¹⁰² Simply put, communities would be able to decide who could and could not live in their suburbs. The government was merely giving the communities themselves the right to enforce the provisions of the old Group Areas Act. Hendrickse described these laws as "thinly disguised racial discrimination and a protection of white rights."¹⁰³ When the Labour Party steadfastly refused to support this bill because of the "racial" clauses, the government was left with the option of "bludgeoning" it through the President's Council. This would have meant delays and lead to unwanted and damaging publicity for the government. Besides, the government had promised the Labour Party that it would not force the bill through the President's Council. Having painted itself into a corner, the government was forced to find another way around its dilemma.

Earlier that year, De Klerk had already intimated that the National Party was considering opening its doors to other races but no attempt had yet been made to begin that process. When the government ran into opposition in May 1991 over the replacement bills, it conceived of the idea of attempting to influence as many HoR members as it could to vote for the bills.¹⁰⁴ The NP was aware of rumblings of discontent in the Labour Party and of the tentative discussions by dissidents with the Democratic Party with a view to joining. The idea of influencing HoR members then turned into a full-scale attempt

¹⁰¹Weekly Mail, 30 May 1991.

¹⁰²Weekly Mail, 30 May 1991; Daily Dispatch, 20 June 1991.

¹⁰³Daily Dispatch, 20 June 1991.

¹⁰⁴Evening Post, 17 October 1991.

to encourage members to defect to the NP.¹⁰⁵ The drive to win over HoR members was led by leading members of the National Party caucus, Barend Du Plessis and Hennie Bekker.¹⁰⁶ HoR members faced an "orchestrated attack" as virtually the entire NP caucus set out to influence them.¹⁰⁷ Members were "accosted" and canvassed in elevators, parking garages, parliamentary dining rooms and telephoned at home.¹⁰⁸ For example, according to Chris Leander, MP for Dal Josaphat, pressure was brought to bear on him by Hennie Bekker to "walk over." The implication was: "If you walk over, there will be something for you."¹⁰⁹ John Scholtz, a Ministerial Representative, was told that if he joined the NP, his tenure would be assured. When he refused, his post was terminated a month before he qualified for full pension.¹¹⁰ Hendrickse later referred to the entire "recruitment" campaign as "tantamount to bribery."¹¹¹

The group in the HoR which the NP singled out for attention were those who had been elected to the HoR after 1984, i.e. those who had not yet served a full parliamentary term. The NP raised with them the question of the life-span of the HoR and the matter of pensions. They were given assurances that the minimum life-span of the HoR would be determined by that chamber. However, as long as Hendrickse was in charge, he

¹⁰⁵Daily Dispatch, 20 June 1991.

¹⁰⁶Chris Leander, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹⁰⁷Daily Dispatch, 21 June 1994.

¹⁰⁸John Scholtz, interview, 17 September, 1994; Luwellyn Landers, interview, 17 September 1994; Desmond Locky, interview, 17 September 1994; Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994.

¹⁰⁹Chris Leander, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹¹⁰John Scholtz, interview with author, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹¹¹Daily Dispatch, 19 June 1991.

would determine the life-span of the HoR. However if dissident members joined the NP and the NP gained control of the House, they could determine the life-span of the HoR. The life-span of the House influenced the size of, and eligibility for, a pension, but "if you're in charge, you determine the life-span of the HoR and you decide that your pensions are assured."¹¹² However, the "89ers",¹¹³ as these members were called, were not sufficient in number for their defection to break the Labour Party's control of the House. The NP then tried to influence longer-serving members who were disgruntled with the party and its leader. Together with independents in the HoR, they were offered an opportunity to gain control of the House with the added bonus of being able to take control of the Minister's Council, free from the control of the Hendrickse family and loyalists. With the final assurance that De Klerk and the NP would "look after them,"¹¹⁴ Labour Party members took the plunge and resigned, while independents crossed over and joined the NP. The majority of the defections took place over a period of four days in the last week of May 1991.

As the count of defectors began, the NP discovered that they had not yet gained a majority. Defectors then went in search of members who had remained, in order to influence them to defect. Labour Party loyalists had to mount a guard outside the homes of wavering members "to prevent the Nationalist scavengers from 'getting' to them."¹¹⁵ When the Abolition of

¹¹²Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

¹¹³The majority had entered parliament after the general election of 1989.

¹¹⁴A number of members state that promises were made that if they joined the NP, their pensions would be guaranteed. For example, Willie Meyer, interview, 21 January 1994; Chris Leander, interview, 17 September 1994; John Scholtz, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹¹⁵Daily Dispatch, 20 June 1991.

Racially Based Land Measures Bill eventually came before parliament on 5 June 1991, the Labour Party, which had threatened to block passage of the bill, suddenly withdrew its threat to vote against it. This was an amazing somersault, considering that the party's initial objections to the bill began the chain of events which led to the split in the Labour Party. However, because of the tenuous hold the party had on its majority in the HoR and threat of further losses, this step was taken to avoid further splitting the party, so giving control to the National Party.¹¹⁶

On June 18, 1991, the "brown" Nationalists in the House of Representatives, who in the meantime had been dubbed "Hotnats",¹¹⁷ attempted a final takeover of the House by forcing a motion of no-confidence in the Labour Party. In the face of a determined onslaught, the Labour Party survived by a 43 votes to 40. Relieved members responded by singing "We shall overcome."¹¹⁸ As the 1991 parliamentary session came to an end soon after, the Labour Party survived as the majority party in the HoR. According to Richards the members in the HoR who left the party were those who were not eligible for pensions, and who only moved over because of guarantees of a longer period in order to qualify.¹¹⁹ Hendrickse concurred: "Those who crossed (to the NP) are those who had sought assurances and guarantees from me, that they would be part of parliamentary structures in the future; those who had no pensions; and (those) who had carrots dangled in front of them."¹²⁰ However, an interesting facet was that the longer-serving defectors, i.e. those who did not cross over because

¹¹⁶Star, 5 June 1991.

¹¹⁷Daily Dispatch, 19 June 1991; Evening Post, 17 October 1991.

¹¹⁸Daily Dispatch, 19 June 1991.

¹¹⁹Miley Richards, interview, 29 June 1992.

¹²⁰Allan Hendrickse, interview on Agenda, TV1, 22 October 1991.

of fears regarding their pensions, were mainly former Federal Party members, and those who had been members of opposition parties between 1984 and 1991. The bulk of the members who were left behind were Labour Party stalwarts from the CRC era. Thus, in June 1991, the Labour Party was "returned to its original owners."¹²¹

In October 1991, the Labour Party joined the Patriotic Front, formed in Durban of all organisations opposed to the National Party government.¹²² The invitation to join came from the PAC.¹²³ Explaining the Labour Party's decision, Hendrickse stated: "Joining the Patriotic Front is not expediency. It is identifying with people who were absent all the years and whose ideals we always supported." He added: "I believe the victims of apartheid must get together. That was the reason for the South African Black Alliance in 1978. Those who out of conviction belong together, should be together."¹²⁴ At the Labour Party's national conference in Durban in December 1991, Hendrickse suggested that the Labour Party take a decision to form an alliance with the ANC but this move was met with resistance by members.¹²⁵ A decision was left to the following conference to be held in Port Elizabeth in December 1992.¹²⁶

When parliament resumed in January 1992, the Labour Party lost

¹²¹R.H. du Pré, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹²²Evening Post, 17 October 1991.

¹²³Allan Hendrickse, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹²⁴Allan Hendrickse, interview on Agenda, TV1, 22 October 1991.

¹²⁵Cape Times, 28 December 1991; Sunday Times, 29 December 1991.

¹²⁶Sunday Times, 3 January 1993. At the Port Elizabeth conference, the party declined to endorse such an alliance with the ANC. This step was only taken at a conference in October 1993.

control of the House of Representatives by 44-40 during the no-confidence motion on 30 January.¹²⁷ Labour Party members responded to this defeat by again singing "We shall overcome." As they left the chamber they shouted "Viva Labour" and "Viva Codesa." Later that evening they celebrated their "liberation" with a braai. Allan Hendrickse explained that the defeat was actually a "rebirth" for the party. Peter Hendrickse added that the loss was a "liberating experience for the party" which now no longer had to "accept responsibility for everything. The guys are on a high, but the struggle continues."¹²⁸ Having won control of the House, the National Party in the HoR was invited to form the Minister's Council. At a meeting in the backyard of the Cape Town home of one of the Labour Party defectors, Nic Isaacs,¹²⁹ Barend du Plessis and Jac Rabie discussed the composition of the new Minister's Council. On the back of a matchbox, Du Plessis wrote out the names of the five-member council and presented it to Rabie who was listed as the chairman.¹³⁰ The names of the council members were then presented to the new HoR NP caucus as a fait accompli.¹³¹ The Labour Party subsequently lost interest in the HoR and concentrated its efforts on the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) which had been constituted in December 1991.¹³² The Labour Party's negotiating position, which it had already adopted in 1985, was that a federation was the only feasible constitutional possibility for South Africa and that such a federation should be on geographic and not ethnic lines. A

¹²⁷Star, 3 February 1992.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Isaacs was one of the leading dissidents who tried to secure the defection of his colleagues. See Weekly Mail, 30 May 1991.

¹³⁰Lester Sampson, interview with author, Cape Town, 25 April 1994; Trevor George, interview, 6 May 1994.

¹³¹Trevor George, interview, 6 May 1994.

¹³²Sunday Times, 3 January 1993.

system of proportional representation was advocated.¹³³

As the NP and ANC increasingly began to dominate the political scene after the latter was unbanned in 1990, the Labour Party sought to strengthen its position in South African politics. Allan Hendrickse again raised the question of an alliance with the ANC. Despite a decision by the Labour Party conference in 1991 not to pursue links with the ANC, Hendrickse was keen to form an alliance and in June 1992, after his party lost the Diamant by-election to the NP, he expressed the view that the Labour Party's future lay with the ANC and not the NP and he saw the Labour Party's role as "weaning" coloured people away from the NP.¹³⁴ At a conference in Kuils River in September 1993, the Labour Party eventually announced that it would form an alliance with the ANC in the forthcoming general election. Hendrickse also announced that he wanted to step down as leader, whereupon he would join the ANC. He also urged members to join the ANC.¹³⁵ Conference delegates successfully prevailed upon him to hold back his resignation as leader until after the general election in April 1994. At the same time, the Labour Party admitted that it was probably too late to take all its members into the ANC camp as the National Party had already made great strides in its efforts to win the support of coloured people. Ironically, the Labour Party inadvertently assisted the National Party in its recruitment drive. In December 1993, the Labour Party held its annual conference at the Goodwood showgrounds in Cape Town. Party leaders invited the leaders of the NP, ANC and PAC to address the meeting. Only the NPs F.W. de Klerk attended. Richards considers this "one of the greatest mistakes of the Labour Party ever made. 5000 people turned up. FW was speechless.

¹³³Allan Hendrickse, Address to Labour Party Conference, Cape Town, 2 January 1986; Cape Times, 4 January, 1986; Race Relations Survey (1986), 156-57.

¹³⁴Weekly Mail, 26 June 1992.

¹³⁵The Labour Party allowed dual membership.

He used the meeting effectively to canvass the coloured people. Those who were weak went with De Klerk. The strong remained. By inviting FW, the Labour Party delivered the coloured people to the NP."¹³⁶

In February and March 1994, Labour Party members were elected to the ANC's election lists both for the national assembly and the provincial legislatures. After the election results were confirmed, only four Labour Party members were elected to parliament: Luwellyn Landers, Peter Hendrickse, Desmond Lockey and Miley Richards.¹³⁷ At a meeting of the party's NEC immediately after the election, Hendrickse resigned as party leader and Miley Richards was elected acting leader until the party's next national conference. Hendrickse was subsequently nominated to the Senate. However, the same NEC meeting also discussed the future of the party and decided to call a special conference in September 1994 to discuss whether the party should continue to operate, or whether it should dissolve.

A special conference of the Labour Party was held in Uitenhage, near Port Elizabeth, on 17 September 1994. Party chairman, Luwellyn Landers, was confident that delegates would vote to dissolve and that the Labour Party would be buried that day: "We have come to a funeral," he declared¹³⁸ During the debate, members from the Western Cape made an impassioned plea for the party not to dissolve. The gist of the anti-dissolution argument was that none of the parties in parliament had the interests of coloured people at heart, and coloured people needed a voice in the various institutions "to

¹³⁶Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹³⁷Minutes, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹³⁸Luwellyn Landers, interview, 17 September 1994

represent our people."¹³⁹ A Western Cape delegate summed up the feeling of opponents of dissolution: "If the Labour Party goes now, then where are we? In a gemors."¹⁴⁰ The pro-dissolutionists, led by Miley Richards, argued that small formations would not survive in the present parliament¹⁴¹ and that the Labour Party should now disband because it had achieved its goals.¹⁴² Speakers called for members not to fear the ANC and to stand with Africans to build a better future. Sylvia Landers stated: "Coloureds must not fear Africans. This is what the LP fought for (a constitutional dispensation which includes Africans). We got it now let's disband."¹⁴³

After an emotional four hour-long debate characterised by nostalgic reminiscences, tears and accusations, a vote was finally taken on the matter. Members voted by 96 to 5 that the party should dissolve. After 29 years, the Labour Party came to the end of the road.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹Anonymous Western Cape Delegate, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹⁴⁰Mr Gordon, Western Cape Delegate, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹⁴¹Miley Richards, Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹⁴²Mr. Botes, Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.

¹⁴³Sylvia Landers, interview, 17 September 1994.

¹⁴⁴Immediately after the decision to dissolve was taken, some Western Cape members decided to form a new party, also called the Labour Party. This party, under the leadership of Dougie Josephs, a former Labour member of the HoR, positioned itself to fill the void left by the disbanded Labour Party of South Africa and to continue to represent the interests of coloured people.

Appendices

Appendix I
Constitution of the Labour Party
of South Africa

LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

T H E
CONSTITUTION OF THE PARTY
A N D
PREAMBLE
1966
.....

Price 10 cents

LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICACONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION

WHEREAS the Labour Party of South Africa is a political party in the Republic of South Africa, unaffiliated to any other political party; and whereas the Labour Party is dedicated

- i) to promoting and advancing the dignity, rights, socio-economic and cultural well-being of all South Africans, through responsible negotiation with the Government of the day;
- ii) to furthering the economic, social and cultural advancement of all South Africans, and to assist wherever possible in stimulating and developing their capacities in the widest manner possible;
- iii) to vigorously opposing Communism in all its forms, believing that the fundamental method of defeating Communistic influence is the positive maintenance of a free democracy, and totally rejecting all forms of political totalitarianism as immoral in theory, and doomed in practice;
- iv) to opposing all forms of racial discrimination which undermine the civil liberty and social justice of the individual;
- v) to the belief that the right of the individual is paramount, and that the State exists to serve the individual;
- vi) to support the rule of just law;
- vii) to opposing forced labour and the exploitation of cheap labour;
- viii) to working tirelessly towards a national economy based on the full production, full employment and equal opportunity for all people in the Republic;
- ix) to seeking the introduction, maintenance and extension of social security for all, with special provision for the aged and infirm regardless of income status;
- x) to advocating a free national educational system devised to enable all able students of all races an equal opportunity of receiving the highest specialised training.

Now therefore, the Labour Party of South Africa adopts as its Constitution the following:

1. NAME OF THE PARTY

The name of the Party shall be the "LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA".

2. OBJECTS OF THE PARTY

- a) To organise and maintain a political party in South Africa.
- b) To raise the status of all workers in the Country by working for the provision of:-
 - (i) minimum basic wages at a civilised level;
 - (ii) working conditions at accepted civilised standards;
 - (iii) adequate pensions, sick benefits, etc.;
 - (iv) adequate and compulsory education for all according to age, aptitude and ability;
 - (v) housing at economic standards, with home ownership;
 - (vi) equal opportunity for all people in all spheres of life in accordance with their ability;
- c) To strive for the effective participation of all people in the government of the country, by participation in the councils of the nation, in particular by ensuring that all persons attaining prescribed qualifications shall vote for, and be eligible for membership of Parliament, Provincial Councils, Municipal Councils and other instruments of central and local government.
- d) To work for the elimination of the colour bar in legislation, as well as the practical application thereof.
- e) To develop a political arrangement in the country such that all sections of the population are treated fairly and justly, so that the rights of all groups are protected; and in particular to ensure that all those qualifying for membership of the Party shall not be disqualified from full citizenship, or from participation in politics as in (c) above by reason of race or religion.
- f) Generally to promote, the Political, Social and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for their means of life.
- g) To promote the above aims by such methods as the Party shall from time to time decide, provided that only such methods may be employed as are constitutional and legal by South African Law.

3. LANGUAGES

The Official language of the Party shall be English and Afrikaans.

4. COLOURS AND SYMBOLS OF THE PARTY

The colours and symbols of the Party shall be: A gold anchor imposed on a white and brown shaped diamond, the colours running diagonally.

5. HEAD OFFICE

The Head Office of the Party shall be situated at Cape Town.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- a) As it is the intention of the Party, in the first instance, to consolidate the position of the Coloured people in South Africa, and as there are legislative restrictions on the activities of political parties according to their membership, the Party can admit to membership only such persons as will not prevent it from carrying out its avowed aims (above) in regard to the Coloured people. Provided, that nothing shall prevent the Party from reviewing this restrictions as conditions in the country change.
- b) Subject to Section (a) of this Clause, membership shall be open to persons, male and female, who have attained the age of 18 years, and who is prepared to accept the Constitution of the Party.
- c) Party membership shall be individual only.
- d) No one shall be admitted to membership of the Party who is a member of any other political party or any other political group whose aims are inconsistent with aims of the Party.

7. FINANCE (HEAD OFFICE)

- a) Branches shall pay Head Office each month 25% of monies received from members of the Branch for Head Office expenses.
- b) The Party may also raise money by any other lawful means, and receive donations.
- c) All monies collected by the Treasurer, on behalf of the Party, shall be deposited in a bank, decided upon by the officers of the Party, within seven days of receipt thereof. An audited balance sheet and statement of income and expenditure shall be prepared at the end of each financial year, and shall be made available to members of the National Executive Committee.

8. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The National Executive Committee of the Party shall consist of a National President, National Vice-President, National Secretary/Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and Trustee, together with the Chairman of each Provincial Executive.

The National President, National Vice-President, National Secretary/Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and Trustee shall be elected by the Annual Conference.

The National Executive Committee shall meet at least three times a year at a place to be decided upon by the National President.

The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the Executive Committee members. They shall have powers to co-opt.

9. PARTY CONFERENCE

- a) The Party conference shall be the supreme authority and the policy making body of the Party.
- b) Members of the Branches in each area shall, voting by ballot, elect 4 members to represent their branch to the Annual Conference of the Party. All Branches shall be given at least 3 months notice of the date and venue of the Conference.
- c) Resolutions and any proposed alterations, amendments or additions to the Constitution shall be forwarded by Branches at least 60 (sixty) days before Annual Conference.

10. PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION

- a) The Provincial Division of the Party shall comprise of the following:-
Western Cape Region with H.Q. in Cape Town.
Northern Cape Region with H.Q. in Kimberley.
Eastern Cape Region with H.Q. in Port Elizabeth.
Transvaal, Natal, Orange Free State.
- b) In each Provincial Division there shall be a Provincial Executive which shall consist of:-
A Provincial Chairman.
A Provincial Secretary.
Chairmen of Branches.
- c) A Provincial Congress shall be convened annually where the Provincial Chairman and Secretary shall be elected unless the Provincial Executive shall otherwise determine.
- d) The expenses of a Provincial Congress shall be borne by branches of that Division.

11. BRANCHES

- a) A Branch may be established in any area provided that there are not less than 10 persons aged 18 years or more - present.
- b) At the inaugural Branch meeting, the following office-bearers shall be elected; Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, Trustee and at least three members to the Branch Executive.
- c) Branch Executive Committee meetings shall be held at least once in every three months, and Branch general meetings at least once every six months.
- d) An entrance fee of 25c shall be paid on acceptance of membership and thereafter a minimum monthly fee of 10c or R1.00 per annum payable on the first month after enrolment to the Branch.
Branches on receipt of the 25c entrance fee shall forward 15c thereof to their respective Provincial Division.
- e) Constituencies Committees.
These will consist of representatives from all Branches within a particular Constituency as delimited for the particular election concerned. They will be specially concerned with these elections, the registration of voters, and the actual conduct of the elections. They shall have an important voice in the selection of candidates.
- f) Branches may establish committees who could deal with fund raising propaganda etc.
- g) Branches may do anything that is in the interest of the Party, provided that all their actions are constitutional and legal by South African Law.
- h) Branches shall forward to both Head Office and the Provincial Secretary monthly progress reports.

Appendix IIBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF LABOUR PARTY LEADERSMARTIN D. ARENDSE

Martin Arendse became involved in politics as a student at the Livingstone High School in Cape Town in the 1930s. During World War II, he helped to build fortifications on the West Coast but was court-martialled when he stirred up coloured workers by telling them that they were building boats and fortifications for the South African Defence Force but they were not allowed to vote.¹

In 1959 Arendse was nominated as a member of the UCCA and joined the Labour Party after it was formed in 1965. Although he was not a founder-member, he was elected deputy-leader at its inaugural conference in 1966 and succeeded Richard van der Ross as leader in 1967. In 1970, Arendse was replaced by Sonny Leon amidst accusations that he was having secret talks with the prime minister on the future of coloured people. Arendse then became a backbencher, resigned and then returned to the party before the 1975 election. However, he was not nominated as a candidate and again resigned from the party. In 1984, Arendse stood for the Labour Party in the Tafelberg constituency but was removed from his seat by the Cape Supreme Court after allegations that he had bribed four pensioners.² His seat was given to Soheir Hoosen of the PCP. Martin Arendse is deceased.

DAVID CURRY

David Curry was a teacher in Stellenbosch when he stood as a candidate for the Labour Party in 1969. He immediately

¹Arthur Stanley, interview, 10 September 1992.

²Citizen, 8 August 1985; Behrens, "The Other Two Houses", 40.

attracted attention for his stridently public opposition to the government and the CRC. He was generally regarded as one of the "militants" in the Labour Party. He was elected deputy-leader in 1970 and after serving as acting leader for three months in 1978, became party chairman. Curry had often taken the lead in articulating the party's hard-line approach to the constitutional proposals between 1977 and 1982. However a study of the Labour Party's private and public response to the proposals gives evidence that Curry had his feet in both camps. While he made some of the most telling attacks on the President's Council and the constitutional proposals, he was not consistent and often made strong calls at the same time to consider participation. At Eshowe, he appeared to be the most eager of the leaders to ensure that the conference voted to participate. His closing speech as chairman was considered by many who were present, as the deciding factor in the eventual outcome.³

After the Labour Party won the election in 1975, Curry served as a member of the CRC executive in charge of local government and housing, a position he also held in the Minister's Council of the HoR. After the Labour Party lost control of the HoR in 1992, David Curry joined the Democratic Party and was elected to parliament on the DPs election list in 1994.

HELENARD J, (ALLAN) HENDRICKSE

Allan Hendrickse was a minister of the Congregational Church when he was recruited in 1969 to stand as a candidate for the Labour Party. At the outset he became the most vociferous and consistent opponent of apartheid, political separation and separate institutions of representation. In 1970, he was elected chairman of the party. When the party won the 1975 election, Hendrickse was elected to the CRC executive and given the portfolio of education. He had long been regarded

³Peter Hendrickse, interview, 18 September 1994.

as the leader of the "militants" in the Labour Party and had forged close links with the ANC, even publicly declaring his support for that organisation in 1978. Hendrickse had also been a supporter of the black consciousness movement and this factor, together with his anti-government stance in the CRC, led to his arrest and detention in Grahamstown in August 1976. He had a hand in the dismissal of two former Labour Party leaders because they had talked with the government, and claimed the credit for scrapping the CRC in 1980. Hendrickse was also offered an appointment to the President's Council in 1980 but turned it down because he was "not prepared to sell out his people."⁴ Prior to, and for years after his election to the party leadership in 1978, Hendrickse was at the forefront of opposition to the constitutional proposals, but by the time of the Eshowe conference in 1983 supported participation.

When the Labour Party won the 1984 election for the HoR, Hendrickse was appointed chairman of the Minister's Council and Cabinet Minister without Portfolio. In 1988, he took over the Education and Culture portfolio from Carter Ebrahim. Hendrickse became leader of the Opposition when the NP gained control of the HoR and Minister's Council in 1992. In July 1994, Hendrickse stood down as leader of the Labour Party and was succeeded by Miley Richards. After the 1994 general election, he was nominated by the ANC to the Senate.

LIONEL S. (SONNY) LEON

Leon was the son of a cabinet-maker and attained the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major in World War II. Despite his lack of formal education, he became involved in politics in the 1940s and established a close relationship with the United Party in Kimberley. He was also an active member of the "Coloured" Ex-Servicemen's League. Leon took part in trade

⁴Coetzer, Awaiting Trial, 146.

union activities and served on the Kimberley City Council until coloureds were removed from municipal representation in 1972.

Leon was a founder-member of the Labour Party and was elected deputy-leader in 1967. In 1970, he succeeded Arendse and proved to be a charismatic and popular leader. In March 1975, the Labour Party won the election and Leon was appointed chairman of the CRC executive but was dismissed in November of that year because of his refusal to sign the CRCs budget. In 1978, Leon resigned as leader after being accused of being too friendly with the government. In 1980, he resigned from the Labour Party and became a member of the President's Council. In 1984, he campaigned on behalf of the PCP in the HoR election. Sonny Leon is deceased.

NORMAN S. MIDDLETON

Norman Middleton came from a trade union and sports background and was a founder-member and chairman of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) which campaigned for world organisations to boycott South African sport because of apartheid. He was a member of the Coloured Ex-Servicemen's League at the time of the formation the Labour Party in 1965. In 1970, Middleton was elected deputy-chairman of the party and deputy-leader in 1978. When the party won the 1975 election, Middleton became a member of the CRC executive in charge of Social Welfare and Pensions.

Middleton was regarded as one of the "militants" in the party and adopted a pro-black stance. He was the party's most ardent supporter of the BCM and was instrumental in pushing the party into an alliance with Buthelezi in 1978. Middleton was strongly opposed to participation in the tricameral system and when the decision was taken in 1983 to participate, he resigned from the party. He thereupon resumed his trade union activities in the Trade Union Congress of South Africa (TUCSA)

and in SACOS.

JACOBUS (JAC) RABIE

Jac Rabie was elected to the CRC as a member of the pro-government, pro-apartheid Federal Party in 1969. Between 1969 and 1975, he travelled back and forth between the Federal Party and the independents. In 1975, he again stood for the Federal Party but when he lost to Willie Bergins in a struggle for the leadership of the party, he resigned and became an independent. During his tenure as a Federal Party member in the CRC, Rabie forged close links with the government and attended a number of meetings called by the prime minister. Between 1973 and 1976, Rabie served on the Theron Commission, the only CRC member to do so. In 1978, he joined the Labour Party and after the dissolution of the CRC in 1980, was instrumental in encouraging the rump of the Federal Party to defect to the Labour Party. During the Eshowe conference in 1983, Rabie is widely regarded as having engineered the victory in the debate on participation. He was apparently the "mastermind" behind the packing of the conference with pro-participation supporters.

In April 1987, Rabie resigned from the Labour Party and became an independent, then joined the newly-formed United Democratic Party (UDP) in the latter part of that year, becoming its leader. He then served as the leader of the opposition in the HoR until the UDP disintegrated in 1988. Rabie won election to the HoR as an independent in 1989 and in 1991 joined the National Party. In January 1992, the National Party won control of the HoR and Rabie was appointed chairman of the Minister's Council. In 1993 he was appointed to the cabinet as Minister of Population Development and in the 1994 general election, was elected to parliament on the NPs election list.

ISMAIL (MILEY) RICHARDS

Miley Richards was elected as a Labour Party candidate in the Rus-ter-Vaal constituency in a by-election in 1973 and was re-elected in 1975. In 1982, he became deputy-chairman of the party and Leader of the House of Representatives in 1984. In July 1994, he succeeded Allan Hendrickse as party leader. In the April 1994 general election, Richards was one of only four Labour Party MPs to be elected to parliament on the ANC's election list.⁵

RICHARD ERNEST VAN DER ROSS

Van der Ross occupied a prominent position in coloured political and academic circles since the 1940s. In 1953 he founded the South African Coloured Peoples' Organisation (SACPO); was a co-leader of the Convention Movement in 1961; founded the Labour Party in 1965; served as editor of the Cape Herald in 1969 and 1970, and became rector of the University of the Western Cape in 1975. Between 1973 and 1976, he served as a member of the Theron Commission.

In the early 1960s Van der Ross became discouraged by the futility of opposition to the basic direction of the government's coloured policy and argued that apartheid should be opposed and demands made within this framework. He advocated a policy of working within the system and supported the Labour Party's decision to participate in 1983, but did not foresee the tricameral system as a permanent arrangement.

Van der Ross retired as rector in 1986 and was succeeded by Jakes Gerwel. In 1992, he joined the Democratic Party and in the 1994 general election was elected to parliament on the DP's election list.

⁵The others were Peter Hendrickse, Luwellyn Landers and Desmond Lockey.

Appendix IIILABOUR PARTY MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE COLOURED
PERSONS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL IN 1969⁶

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----|----------------|
| 1. | M.D. Arendse | 14. | P. Meyer |
| 2. | R. Arendse | 15. | W.J. Meyer |
| 3. | D. Curry | 16. | N. Middleton |
| 4. | E. Domingo | 17. | J.E. Nash |
| 5. | E.D. Dunn | 18. | J. Oosthuizen |
| 6. | L.V. du Preez | 19. | F.E. Peters |
| 7. | M.T. Fakier | 20. | J.D. Pietersen |
| 8. | G.J. Fortuin | 21. | N. Potts |
| 9. | H.J. Hendrickse | 22. | E.G. Rooks |
| 10. | W. Johannes | 23. | F.W. Theron |
| 11. | E.F. Jones | 24. | V. Sass |
| 12. | G.I. Julies | 25. | J.L. Siegers |
| 13. | L.S. Leon | 26. | A. Stanley |

⁶Tom Swartz Collection, "Table of Results".

Appendix IVA. LABOUR PARTY MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1984⁷

1. L.C. Abrahams	28. N.M. Isaacs	55. N.J. Padiachy
2. Mr. T. Abrahams	29. P.S. Jacobs	56. F.E. Peters
3. A. Adriaanse	30. L.J. Jenneke	57. J. Pilcher
4. B.J. Andrews	31. A.F. Johannes	58. A.E. Poole
5. C.J. April	32. J.D. Johnson	59. J.A. Rabie
6. E.P.C. Buis	33. D.W. Josephs	60. A.E. Reeves
7. G.M.E. Carelse	34. A.A. Julies	61. C.R. Redcliffe
8. W.J. Christians	35. C.J. Kippen	62. I. Richards
9. D. Curry	36. P.J. Kleinsmidt	63. G. Rooskrans
10. W.J. Dietrich	37. C. Koeberg	64. H.P. Ross
11. L. Dewrance	38. J.B. Krieger	65. P.T. Sanders
12. L. Douw	39. R.J. Lackay	66. V. Sass
13. E.D. Dunn	40. L.T. Landers	67. J.J.A. Smith
14. C. Ebrahim	41. K.H. Lategan	68. I. Solomons
15. F.L. Erasmus	42. C.L. Leeuw	69. A. Stanley
16. I. Essop	43. M.R. Lewis	70. J.J. Swartz
17. M. Friedberg	44. D. Lockey	71. M. Swartz
18. A. D. Goosen	45. S.K. Louw	72. M.H. Swartz
19. C.E. Green	46. D. Mateman	73. C.S. Sweetland
20. B. Grobler	47. G.J. Mcalagh	74. J.D. Swigelaar
21. P.S. Harmse	48. P.C. McKenzie	75. J.G.v/d Heever
22. P. Harris	49. W. Meyer	76. G.R. Wessels
23. H.J. Hendrickse	50. W.J. Meyer	77. A. Williams
24. P.A. Hendrickse	51. P. Meyer	78. R. Williams
25. C.B. Herandien	52. G.N. Morkel	79. C. Wyngaardt
26. F.G. Herwells	53. P. Mopp	80. D. Young
27. L.J. Hollander	54. J.C. Oosthuizen	81. R. O'Reilly

B. LABOUR PARTY MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AS AT THE LAST SESSION OF THE TRICAMERAL SYSTEM, APRIL 1994⁸.

1. T. Abrahams	15. C.J. Leander
2. B.J. Andrews	16. D. Lockey
3. J. Douw	17. M. Loonat
4. A. Essop	18. J.C. Oosthuizen
5. A.D. Goosen	19. S.S. Oosthuizen
6. B. Grobler	20. R. O'Reilly
7. H.J. Hendrickse	21. I. Richards
8. M.A. Hendrickse	22. H.P. Ross
9. P.A. Hendrickse	23. J.D. Swigelaar
10. D.W. Josephs	24. M.M. Theron
11. J.D. Kriegler	25. E.J. Twynham
12. I.J. Kruger	26. S.H. Verveen
13. L.T. Landers	27. G.R. Wessels
14. K.H. Lategan	

⁷P.A.29, "List of Members of the Labour Party serving on Standing Committees", 8 October 1984. The total of 81 members are made up of 76 elected members and 5 nominated members.

⁸Supplied by James Swigelaar, Labour Party MP for Dysselsdorp, 21 April 1994.

BIBLIOGRAPHYA. PRIMARY SOURCESI. Collections:a. University of South Africa

Federal Coloured People's Party Collection
 Labour Party Accession
 N.P. Arends Accession
 Rashid Seria Accession
 Sonny Leon Papers
 South African Black Alliance Accession
 Tom Swartz Collection

b. University of Western Cape

Labour Party Accession (P.A.29)

c. University of the Witwatersrand

Papers of the South African Institute of Race Relations

d. Private Collections

Trevor George Private Collection (Johannesburg)
 L.S. (Sonny) Leon Private Collection (Kimberley)
 Willie Meyer Private Collection (Cape Town)
 Arthur Stanley Private Collection (Cape Town)
 James Swigelaar Private Collection (Oudtshoorn)

II Official Publications

- a. Hansard: Debates of the House of Assembly
- b. Hansard: Debates of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council

- c. Hansard: Debates of the House of Representatives
- d. Hansard: Debates of the Senate of the Republic of South Africa
- e. House of Assembly: Questions and Replies
- f. Republic of South Africa: President's Council Reports
- g. Minutes of proceedings of Parliament, 1985-1990
- h. South African Parliament: Senate Sessional Committees and Joint Committee Reports
- i. Republic of South Africa: Select Committee Reports
- j. Government Gazettes: various editions
- k. Report of the Committee on Alternative Constitutional Proposals (March 1979)
- l. Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union, U.G. 54-1937 (Wilcocks Commission)
- m. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured Population Group, RP 38-1976 (Theron Commission)
- n. Summary of Chapters of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry Into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group (1976)
- o. Witskrif oor die verslag van die Kommissie van Ondersoek na aangeleenthede rakende die kleurlinbevolkingsgroep (1977)
- p. Interim Memorandum: Provisional comments by the government on the recommendations of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured population group (1976)
- q. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into riots at Soweto and elsewhere from 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977
- r. Interim Report of Commission of Inquiry on the Consitution (Schlebusch Commission), R.P. 68/1980
- s. Republic of South Africa: Bulletin of Statistics

III NewspapersArgusDie BeeldDie BurgerBusiness DayCape HeraldCape TimesCitizenDaily DispatchDaily NewsDiamond Fields AdvertiserEastern Province HeraldEvening PostGraphicHighwayHoofstadDie NasionalisNatal WitnessNew York TimesPostRand Daily MailRapportRealityS.A. DigestSASO NewsletterSouthSteadfastStarSunSunday ExpressSunday TimesSunday TribuneTorchTrustTransvalerVolksblad

Worcester Standard and Advertiser
Zulu Voice

IV. Interviews

- Neville Alexander (former Robben Island detainee), George, 15 October 1994.
- Rhona Arendse (Former Federal, Labour and National Party organiser; Bosmont constituency, Johannesburg), Johannesburg, 13 December 1993.
- Vincent Baartman (Chairman, Uitenhage Labour Party Youth Organisation), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Beverly Booysen (daughter of the late Arthur Booysen, leader of the Freedom Party in the House of Representatives), Johannesburg, 24 April 1989.
- Gerald Braam (Rector, Rand College of Education), Johannesburg, 27 October 1986.
- Matilda Cairncross (Lecturer, South Cape College of Education), 22 April 1994.
- Mohammed Dangor (member of the CRC between 1975 and 1980; deputy-leader of the Labour Party in the Transvaal, 1983), Johannesburg, 6 December 1993.
- Lynette Davenport (Federal Party Organiser, 1969 and 1975), Pietermaritzburg, 8 October 1994.
- Chris Drake (Congregational Church Minister and School Principal), Fort Beaufort, 17 July 1994.
- Ingram du Preez (vice-chairman, Kuils River Management Committee, 1986-1992), Cape Town, 30 April 1993.
- Colin Dweba (Former member of Non-European Unity Movement), Butterworth, 11 November 1994.
- A.C. Fortuin (Member of Labour Party for Idutywa during CRC), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Trevor George (Member of the Federal Party, 1969-1987; HoR MP, 1987-1994), Johannesburg, 6 May 1994.
- Allan Hendrickse (Member of the CRC, 1969-1980; leader of Labour Party, 1978-1994; chairman of the 'Ministers' Council, House of Representatives, 1984-

- 1991), Cape Town, 23 May 1989 and Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Terry Hendrickse (Wife of Allan and mother of HoR MPs Peter and Michael Hendrickse), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Peter Hendrickse (HoR MP, 1984-1994), Uitenhage, 18 September 1994.
- Nazeem Howa (Sunday Times [Extra] reporter), Cape Town, 20 July 1994.
- Alathea Jansen (chairman of the Executive of the CRC, 1975-1980), Cape Town, 6 January 1994.
- Luwellyn Landers (Member of CRC 1975-1980, HoR MP, 1983-1994, Deputy Minister of Population and Development, 1978), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Sylvia Landers (wife of Luwellyn Landers), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Chris Leander (HoR MP, 1989-1994), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Sonny Leon (Founder-member of the Labour Party; LP deputy-leader, 1967; Leader, 1970-1978; Member of President's Council, 1981), Kimberley, 25 September 1985.
- Desmond Lockey (HoR MP, 1984-1994), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Patrick McKenzie (HoR MP, 1984-1994), Cape Town, 25 April 1994.
- Willie Meyer (member of the CRC, 1969-1980; HoR MP, 1983-1994), 21 January 1994.
- Norman Middleton (Founder-member; deputy-chairman, 1970 - 1978, and deputy-leader of the Labour Party, 1978-1983; CRC member 1969-1980), Pietermaritzburg, 10 October 1994.
- John Nash (CRC member for Eastern Cape, 1975-1980; chairman of the Cape Region of the Labour Party, 1982), East London, 31 August 1993.
- Wessel Rabbets (Town Planner, Oudtshoorn Municipality), Oudtshoorn, 18 October 1994.

- Miley Richards (CRC member 1973-1980; HoR MP, 1983-1994; deputy-leader of the Labour Party of South Africa, 1982-1993; leader of the Labour Party, 1994), Johannesburg, 29 June 1992.
- "Toens" Rooy (Resident and oldest member of the Congregational Church in the Kat River Valley), Balfour, 17 July 1994.
- Lester Sampson (HoR MP, 1989-1994), Cape Town, 25 April 1994.
- John Scholtz (Ministerial Representative, HoR, 1989-1991), Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Lily Slinger (Organiser for the Federal Party [1969-1978], Freedom Party [1978-1989], Labour Party [1989-1991], and National Party [1991-1994], on the Witwatersrand), Johannesburg, 13 December 1993.
- Arthur Stanley (Founder-member of the Labour Party; Trustee; Member of the CRC, 1969-1980; HoR MP 1983-1989), Cape Town, 10 September 1992.
- Ron Swartz (Chairman, Progressive Teachers' Union, 1985-1990; vice-President of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, 1990-1991), Johannesburg, 9 December 1993.
- James Swigelaar (HoR MP, 1984-1994), Oudtshoorn, 22 April 1994 and 17 October 1994.
- Richard van der Ross (Founder of the Labour Party, 1965; former Rector of the University of the Western Cape), Cape Town, 9 September 1992.
- Floors Van Jaarsveld (Professor Emeritus, University of Pretoria), Pretoria, 8 December 1994.
- L.P.O. Wagenaar (Labour Party Member of President's Council, 1988-1993), Oudtshoorn, 19 December 1992.
- Abe Williams (HoR MP, 1984-1994; Deputy-Minister of Education in the House of Representatives, 1989-1991; Secretary of the Labour Party, 1989-1991; Minister of Education of the House of Representatives, 1992-1993; Minister of Sport, 1993-1994), Cape Town, 23 May, 1989.

V. Speeches

- Boesak, A.A. Address to the Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 3 January 1977.
- Du Pré, R.H. Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Ebrahim, C. Address to Labour Party National Conference, East London, 7 April 1972.
- Hendrickse, H.J. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, December 1981.
- _____. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Eshowe, 3 January 1983.
- _____. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Kimberley, December 1984.
- _____. Address, Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 2 January 1986.
- _____. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Pretoria, 28 December 1987.
- _____. Address to Joint Session of Parliament, 28 September 1988
- _____. Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Leon, L.S. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Durban, 20 April 1973.
- _____. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Umtata, 1-3 January 1975.
- _____. Address to the Labour Party National Conference, Upington, 6 January 1976.
- _____. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 3 January 1977.
- Mabusa, E. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Johannesburg, 27 December 1980.
- Mopeli, K. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Bloemfontein, 27 December 1978.
- Richards, I. Address to Labour Party Special Conference, Uitenhage, 17 September 1994.
- Swartz, T.F. Address to Annual Conference of Federal

Party, Kroonstad, 1-8 July 1967.

_____. Address to Federal Party National Conference, Durban, 5-7 June 1971.

Van der Ross, R.E. Address to Labour Party National Conference, Cape Town, 9 July 1966

Vergotine, A. Address to Annual Conference of Cape Teacher's Professional Association, Oudtshoorn, 25 June 1994.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

I. Books and Pamphlets

Adam, H. and H. Giliomee. The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power. Cape Town: David Philip, 1979.

_____ and K. Moodley. South Africa without Apartheid: Dismantling Racial Domination. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1986.

Alhadeff, V.A. Newspaper History of South Africa. Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1985. (2nd edition).

Anti-CAD Committee. War on Traitors. Cape Town, 1943.

Attwell, M. Background to the Crisis. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986.

Balia, D.M. Christian Resistance to Apartheid. Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989.

Ballinger, M. From Union to Apartheid: A Trek into Isolation. Cape Town: Juta, 1969.

Barthop, M. The Anglo-Boer Wars, 1815-1902. Durban: Bok Books, 1987.

Bax, D.S. A different Gospel: a Critique of the Theology behind Apartheid. Johannesburg: Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1979.

Berger, P. L. and B. Godsell. A Future South Africa. Visions, Strategies and Realities. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1988.

Boeseken, A.J. Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977.

- Blumenfeld, J. ed. South Africa in Crisis. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1987.
- Botha, D.P. Die Kleurling en ons Kleurlingbeleid. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys, 1977.
- _____. Die Opkoms van die Derde Stand. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1960.
- Bredenkamp, H.C. Van Veeverskaffers tot Veewagters. Bellville: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1982.
- Brookes, E.H. Apartheid: A Documentary Study of Modern South Africa. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.
- Brown, D. Against the World: a Study of White South African Attitudes. London: Collins, 1966.
- Bunting, B. The Rise of the South African Reich. London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1986.
- Butler, J. and L. Thompson, eds. Change in Contemporary South Africa. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.
- Cameron, T., and S.B. Spies. An Illustrated History of South Africa. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988.
- Carter, G. M. The Politics of Inequality: South Africa since 1948. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977.
- Cawthra, G. Brutal Force - the Apartheid War Machine. London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1986.
- Cell, J.W. The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Churchill, R. White Man's God. New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962.
- Cilliers, S.P. Appeal to Reason. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers, 1971.
- Coertze, P.J. Die Afrikanervolk en die Kleurlinge. Pretoria: HAUM, 1983.
- Coetzee, J.H. The Coloured Challenge. Potchefstroom:

- Institute for South African Politics, 1975.
- Coetzer, P. Awaiting Trial: Allan Hendrickse. Alberton: Librarius, 1984.
- Cohen, R., Y. Muthien and A. Zegeye. Repression and Resistance: Insider Accounts of Apartheid. London: Hans Zell, 1990.
- Cruse, H.P. Die Opheffing van die Kleurlingbevolking: Aanvangsjare, 1652-1795. Stellenbosch: Christelike-studentevereniging van Suid-Afrika, 1947.
- Davenport, T.R.H. South Africa: A Modern History. Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1987.
- Davies, R.H., D. O'Meara, and S. Dlamini. The Struggle for South Africa: A Reference Guide to Movements, Organisers and Institutions. London: Zed, 1984.
- Davis, S.M. Apartheid's Rebels. Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1987.
- Dean, W.H.B., and D. van Zyl Smit. Constitutional Change in South Africa. The Next Five Years. Cape Town: Juta, 1983.
- De Gruchy, J.W. The Church Struggle in South Africa. Cape Town: David Philip, 1986.
- De Kiewiet, C.W. A History of South Africa: Social and Economic. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- De Klerk, W.A. The Puritans in Africa - A Story of Afrikanerdom. London: Rex Collings, 1975.
- Department of Information. Progress of a People. Pretoria: Department of Information, n.d.
- De Villiers, C.C., and C. Pama. Geslagregisters van die ou Kaapse families. Cape Town: Balkema, 1981.
- De Villiers, F. ed. Bridge or Barricade? The Constitution, a First Appraisal. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball with the Sunday Times, 1983.
- Dickie-Clark, H.F. The Marginal Situation: a Sociological Study of a Coloured Group. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Du Plessis, O. Afsonderlike Verteenwoordiging van Kiesers. Cape Town: Information Committee of the

- National Party, 1954.
- Du Pré, R.H. The Making of Racial Conflict in South Africa: The Origins of Black/White Confrontation in South Africa; An Introduction. Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1992.
- _____. Strangers in their Own Country: A Political History of the "Coloured" People of South Africa. Johannesburg: Southern History Association, 1992.
- _____. Separate but Unequal: The "Coloured" People of South Africa; a Political History. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994.
- Du Preez, A.B. The Scriptural Basis for Race Relations. Pretoria: N.G.Kerk Uitgewers, 1955.
- Du Toit, A. and H. Giliomee. Afrikaner Political Thought: Analysis and Documents. vol 1. Cape Town: David Philip, 1983.
- Edelstein, M. L. What do the Coloureds think? Johannesburg: Labour and Community Consultants, 1974.
- Elphick, R. and H.Giliomee. The Shaping of South African Society. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1986.
- Fage, J.D. A History of Africa. London: Hutchinson, 1978.
- Fisher, J. The Afrikaners. London: Cassell, 1969.
- Frederickse, J. South Africa - A different kind of War: From Soweto to Pretoria. Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986.
- Frederickson, G.M. White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Furlong, P.J. The Mixed Marriages Act: An Historical and Theological Study. Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1983.
- Gastrow, S. Who's Who in South African Politics. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985.
- _____. Who's Who in South African Politics. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1990.
- Gell, C.W.M. Papers: Racial Issues in South Africa - article on the elimination of Coloured voters from the rolls and the forthcoming elections of 1953. Rustenburg, 1953.

- Gerhart, G. M. Black Power in South Africa, the Evolution of an Ideology. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978.
- Giliomee, H. The parting of the ways: South African politics 1976-1982. Cape Town: David Philip, 1982.
- _____ and L. Schlemmer. From Apartheid to Nation-building: Contemporary South African Debates. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Goldin, I. Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987.
- Hancock, W.K. Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950. Vol 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- Harrison, D. The White Tribe of Africa: South Africa in Perspective. Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1981.
- Heard, K.A. General Elections in South Africa, 1943-1970. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Heese, H.F. Groep sonder Grense: Die Rol en Status van die Gemengde Bevolking aan die Kaap, 1652-1795. Bellville: Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, 1984.
- Heese, J.A. Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner, 1657-1867. Cape Town: Balkema, 1971.
- _____ and R.T.J. Lombard. South African Genealogies. Vols 1 and 2. Pretoria: HSRC, 1986 and 1989.
- Hirson, B. Year of Fire, Year of Ash. The Soweto Revolt. Roots of a Revolution. London: Zed, 1979.
- Hommell, M., ed. Contributions of Non-European Peoples to World Civilization. Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989.
- Horrell, M. Action, Reaction and Counter-Reaction: A Brief Review of Non-White Political Movements in South Africa. Braamfontein: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1971.
- House of Representatives. Group Areas Act: An excerpt from the Parliamentary Debate of 28 September 1988 by the Chairman of the Minister's Council of the House of Representatives, the Rev. Allan Hendrickse. Cape Town: Public Relations

- Department, Administration: House of Representatives, 1988.
- Hugo, P. Quislings or Realists: A documentary Study of "Coloured" Politics in South Africa. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978.
- James, W. G., and M. Simons, eds. The Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape. Cape Town: David Philip, 1989.
- Johnson, R.W. How Long will South Africa Survive? Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1977.
- Joyce, P. The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: The Chronicle of a Divided Society as told through South Africa's Newspapers. Cape Town: Struik, 1990.
- Karis, T., and G.M. Carter. From Protest to challenge: A documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964. Vol 4. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977.
- Kirkwood, K. The Group Areas Act. Braamfontein: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1951.
- Kleynhans, W.A. Suid-Afrikaanse Algemene Verkiesingsmanifeste 1910-1981. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1987.
- Kruger, D.W. The Age of the Generals: A short political History of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1948. Johannesburg: Dagbreek, 1958.
- _____. The Making of a Nation: A History of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961. Johannesburg: MacMillan, 1969.
- Labour Party of South Africa. 1966 And All That. Cape Town: LPSA, 1994.
- Le Roux, J.G. Hugenotebloed in ons Are. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1988.
- Lapping, B. Apartheid: A History. New York: Braziller, 1987.
- Leach, G. South Africa. London: Methuen-Mandarin, 1989.
- _____. The Afrikaners. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Lemon, A. Apartheid: A Geography of Separation. Farnborough: Saxon House, 1976.
- Lewis, G. Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African "Coloured" Politics. Cape Town: David

- Philip, 1987.
- Lodge, T. Black Politics in South Africa since 1945.
Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983.
- MacMillan, W.M. The Cape Colour Question: A Historical Survey. London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927.
- _____. Bantu, Boer and Briton: The Making of the South African Native Problem. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- _____. The Cape Colour Question: A Historical Survey.
Cape Town: A.A.Balkema, 1968.
- Marais, J.S. The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937.
Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1968.
- Marks, S. and S. Trapido, eds. The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa. London: Longman, 1987.
- Marquard, L. The People and Policies of South Africa.
London: University Press, 1962.
- Meintjies, J. The Voortrekkers. London: Cassell, 1973.
- Meiring, P.G.J. Generaal Hertzog, 50 Jaar daarna. Cape Town: Perskor, 1986.
- Mezerik, A.G., ed. Apartheid in the Republic of South Africa. New York: International Review Service, 1967.
- Motlhabi, M. The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: A Social-Ethical Analysis. Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987.
- Muller, C.F.J., ed. Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa. Pretoria: Academica, 1984.
- Munger, E.S., ed. The Afrikaners. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979.
- National Party pamphlet. The Segregation Problem. National Party, n.d.
- Neame, L.E. General Hertzog, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa since 1924. London: Hurst and Blackett, n.d.
- New Unity Movement. A Declaration to the People of South Africa. April 1985. Lansdowne: The Movement, 1985.
- Naidoo, J. Tracking down Historical Myths. Johannesburg:

- Ad. Donker, 1989.
- Ngubane, J.K. An African Explains Apartheid. London: Pall Mall, 1963.
- Ngcokovane, C. Demons of Apartheid. Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989.
- Omar, I. Reform in Crisis: Why the Tricameral Parliamentary System has Failed. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1988.
- Pampallis, J. Foundations of the New South Africa. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1991.
- Parsons, N. A New History of Southern Africa. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Patterson, S. Colour and Culture in South Africa. London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1953.
- Pinnock, D. Breaking the Web: Economic Consequences of the Destruction of Extended families by the Group Areas Relocations in Cape Town. Cape Town: Second Carnegie enquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, 1984.
- Pottinger, B. The Imperial Presidency: P.W.Botha, the first ten years. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988.
- Price, R. M., and C. G. Rosberg, eds. The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Domination. Cape Town: David Philip, 1980.
- _____. The Apartheid State in Crisis. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Randall, P. ed. Anatomy of Apartheid. Johannesburg: SPROCAS, 1971.
- _____. ed. South Africa's Minorities. Johannesburg: SPROCAS, 1970.
- _____ and P.C. Burrow. Johannesburg's Coloured Community, with special reference to Riverlea. Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations, 1968.
- Readers' Digest. Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story. Cape Town: Readers' Digest Association, 1988.

- Reed, D. Beloved Country: South Africa's Silent Wars.
Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994.
- Rhodie, E. Die Ware Inligtingskandaal. Pretoria: Orbis,
1984.
- Rhodie, N.J., ed. South African Dialogue: Contrasts in
South African Thinking on Basic Race Issues.
Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1972.
- _____. Kleurlinge se Persepsies van die Eerste
Verkiesing vir die Huis van Verteenwoordigers op 22
Augustus 1984. Pretoria: HSRC, 1986.
- _____, C. De Kock, and M. Cooper. Coloured Perceptions of
Socio-political change in South Africa. Pretoria: HSRC,
1987.
- Roothman, S. Ondersoek na die Aanvaarbaarheid van die
Presidentsraad onder 'n groep Kleurlinge in die RSA.
Pretoria: HSRC, 1983.
- Roux, E. Time longer than Rope: A History of the Black
Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa.
Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972.
- Scher, D.M. Donald Molteno: 'Dilizintaba-He-who-Removes-
Mountains'. Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1979.
- Schoeman, B.M. Parlementere Verkiesings in Suid-Afrika,
1910-1976. Pretoria: Aktuele Publikasies, 1977.
- Scholtz, G.D. Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke
van die Afrikaner. Deel VI, 1901-1924. Johannesburg:
Voortrekker Pers, 1979.
- Schrire, R. South Africa: Public Policy Perspectives. Cape
Town: Juta, 1982.
- Serfontein, J.H.P. Brotherhood of Power: An Expose' of
the Secret Afrikaner Broederbond. Bloomington and
London: Indiana University Press, 1978.
- Shaw, E.M. The Hottentots. Cape Town: South African Museum,
1982.
- Simons, H.J., and R. E. Simons. Class and Colour in South
Africa, 1850-1950. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
- Slabbert, F. van Zyl. The Last White Parliament.
Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1986.

- _____. The System and the Struggle: Reform, Revolt and Reaction in South Africa. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1986.
- _____ and D. Welsh. South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power. Cape Town: David Philip, 1979.
- Social Democratic Party Bulletin, No. 2, July 1972.
- South African Institute of Race Relations. A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa. Braamfontein: SAIRR. (copies covering the years 1969 to 1976).
- _____ Race Relations Survey. Braamfontein: SAIRR. (copies covering the years 1977 to 1993).
- Tatz, C.M. Shadow and Substance in South Africa: A Study in Land and Franchise Policies affecting Africans, 1910-1960. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1962.
- Theal, G.M. History of the Boers in South Africa. Cape Town: Struik, 1973.
- Theron, E. and J.B. Du Toit. Kortbegrip van die Theron-verslag. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1977.
- _____ and M.J. Swart. Die Kleurlingbevolking van Suid-Afrika. Stellenbosch: University Publishers, 1964.
- Thompson, L. A History of South Africa. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990.
- _____ and A. Prior. South African Politics. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Thompson, L.M. The Cape Coloured Franchise. Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1949.
- _____. The Unification of South Africa, 1902-1910. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.
- _____. Politics in the Republic of South Africa. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966.
- _____ and M. Wilson. The Oxford History of South Africa. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Tobias, P.V. ed. The Bushmen. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1979.
- Van der Horst, S.T. The Theron Commission: A Summary of the Findings and Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured

- Population Group. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1976.
- Van der Merwe, H. W., and C.J. Groenewald, eds. Occupational and Social Change among Coloured People in South Africa. Cape Town: Juta, 1976.
- _____ and Robert Schrire, eds. Race and Ethnicity. South African and International Perspectives. Cape Town: David Philip, 1980.
- Van der Ross, R.E. A Political and Social History of the Cape Coloured People, 1880-1970. Bellville, 1973. (4 vols.)
- _____. The Founding of the African People's Organisation in Cape Town in 1903 and the Role of Dr Abdurahman. Pasadena: Munger Africana Library Notes 28, 1975.
- _____. Myths and Attitude: An Inside Look at the Coloured People. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979.
- _____. The Rise and Decline of Apartheid. A study of Political Movements Among the Coloured People of South Africa, 1880-1985. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986.
- Van Jaarsveld, F. From Van Riebeeck to Vorster, 1652-1974. Johannesburg: Perskor, 1976.
- Venter, A. J. Coloured: A Profile of Two Million South Africans. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1974.
- Venter, A., ed. South African Government and Politics. Johannesburg: Southern, 1989.
- Walshe, P. The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa. The African National Congress, 1912-1952. London: C. Hurst, 1970.
- Watson, G. Passing for White: A Study of Racial Assimilation in a South Africa School. London: Tavistock, 1970.
- Whisson, M.G., and H.W. Van der Merwe, eds. Coloured Citizenship in South Africa. Cape Town: Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies, University of Cape Town, 1972
- Wilkins, I. and H. Strydom. The Super-Afrikaners. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978.
- Wollheim, O.D., ed. Theron Commission: Comment. Cape

Town: n.p., 1977

Worrall, D. ed. South Africa: Government and Politics.

Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1971.

Ziervogel, C. Brown South Africa. Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1938.

II. Articles and Papers

Abrahams, T., "'Coloured Politics' in South Africa: The Quislings' trek into the Abyss", Ufahamu, 1983.

Adhikari, M., "Responses to Marginality: Twentieth-Century Coloured Politics", South African Historical Journal, 20, 1988.

_____. "Between Black and White: The History of Coloured Politics in South Africa", Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol. 25., No. 1, 1991.

_____. "Protest and Accommodation: Ambiguities in the Racial Politics of the APO, 1909-1923", Kronos, No.20, November 1993.

Dollar, S. "R.F.A. Hoernle (1880-1943) and the Segregation Debate (1923-1943): A Brief Biography", Unpublished Paper, Rhodes University, 1992.

Educational Journal, "The C.A.D's Labour Party", October 1965.

_____, "Riding A Dead Horse", October-November 1969.

_____, "Colouredism: The Last Grovelling; The End of a Political Obscenity", January-February 1977.

Elliot, R. "The Politics of Collaboration", Bandwagon, No.5, April, 1975.

Gailey, H.A. "John Philip's Role in Hottentot Emancipation", Journal of African History, III, No. 3, 1962.

Lemon, A. "The Indian and Coloured elections: co-optation rejected?", South Africa International, vol. 15, no. 2, October 1984.

Lubbe, H. "Vergeet die Arbeiders en wen die Kleurlinge: The 'Swartgevaar' Election of 1929", Kronos, No. 18, October 1991.

Molteno, F. "The Coloured Representative Council: Its place in

the evolving strategy of South Africa's Rulers", Africa Perspective, No. 10, April 1979.

Ntebe, S., L. Levetan, G. Kraak and N. Rousseau, "Soweto and After: A Diary of Urban Unrest in 1976", South African Outlook, February 1977.

Patel, E. "Legitimacy and Statistics: A Critical Analysis of the First Tri-Cameral Parliamentary Elections, August 1984", Saldru Working Paper No. 61, Cape Town.

Work in Progress, No. 25 (1983), "Labour Party - A Constitutional Decision?"

III. Unpublished theses and dissertations

Behrens, G. "The Other Two Houses." Ph.D Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989.

Bond, D.F. de Beer. "Coloured Education Struggles in South Africa: Education Boycotts in the Western Cape, 1976." M.Soc Sc. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1984.

Brown, G.C. "The Abolition of the Non-racial Municipal Franchise in the Cape, 1958-1972." B.A.Hons essay, University of Cape Town, 1981.

Bundy, C.J. "The Colour attitudes and policies of the United Party, 1948-1960." A long essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Honours degree in History, University of Witwatersrand, 1967.

Cameron, J.T. "An analysis of Smuts' attitude to Hertzog's Native Bills from 1926 to 1936." M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1982.

Du Preez, R.H. "The Role and Policies of the Labour Party of South Africa, 1975-1978." M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1987.

Du Toit, A.B. "Politics and Ethics in South Africa: A Study in the identification and evaluation of political alternatives." PhD thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1974.

- Freedberg, J. "Changing Political Identity of the 'Coloured' People of South Africa: A Political History, 1652-1982." PhD Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1987.
- Hommel, M.W "The Organisation and Evolution of Coloured Political Movements in South Africa." Ph.D thesis, York University, 1978.
- Hugo, P.J. "A Study of Arguments used in support of a policy of political differentiation between White and Coloured in South Africa." M.A. dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 1972.
- Mina, B. "The CRC - Ten Years Hard Labour." B.Soc.Sc. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1978.
- Molteno, D.F. "The Schooling of Black South Africans and the 1980 Cape Town Student's boycott: A sociological interpretation." M.Soc.Sc dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1983.
- Pedro, E.G. "Dr Allan Aubrey Boesak: 'n Breë Agtergrondskeits en Sy Aandeel in die Stigting van die United Democratic Front" (M.A.Dissertation, University of the Western Cape, November 1989),
- Roth, M. "The formation of the Natives' Representative Council in 1937." M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1979.
- Saks, D.Y. "The Failure of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council and its Constitutional Repercussions, 1956-1985." M.A. Dissertation, Rhodes University, 1991.
- Scher, D.M. "The Disenfranchisement of the Coloured Voters, 1948-1956." D Litt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa, 1983.