

Chapter Three

The government today is the Broederbond and the Broederbond is the government.¹

The Broederbond

Just as it was the white man's way to think and dream for the Africans, the Broederbond (1918–1990) already a state within a state by the end of the 1940s, saw it as its mission to think and dream for the Afrikaners. How had I come so far in the struggle with such little knowledge of their collective mindset; of their national-socialist consciousness and of their influence on the body politic? Who were the Broederbond whose distorting signature was imprinted on the pages of the laws I was supposed to have contravened, and in whose secret cells the country's policies were debated? These were the questions I asked myself, albeit too late, when I was already their prisoner.

For most of its existence it was almost impossible to separate the thinking of the Broederbond from the policies of the National Party in its united, re-united and purist organizational forms. The majority of its leading members belonged to both organizations and were tied to the Broederbond's decisions. On the occasion of its half centenary, one of the Broeders explained the organization's thinking aptly: "Take the Broederbond out of Afrikanerdom, and what remains ... for the Kingdom of God? Who is going to serve the cause, if Afrikanerdom is no longer there?"² Here, in all its fanaticism, was the belief that the ideas of service, nation and duty to God were created according to the Broederbond's thinking; the National Party in all it said and did simply disseminated that message.

"Imagining Afrikanerdom" was a theme that fascinated me over approximately four years of my imprisonment in the 1960s. I had enough time on my hands to reflect on this and knew that I was the prisoner of a vastly repressive state rather than of any race or group, but I was also the captive of an offensive "white" consensus in which, for the present, the extreme values of the Broederbond predominated.

Bram Fischer, Marius Schoon and John Laredo, all of them fellow prisoners in the mid-sixties and proud Afrikaners (Marius and John were a generation apart from Bram), spoke of their family alienation as they turned their backs on racist traditions. Since then I have had the opportunity to learn from more recent histories what I did not know at that time, but no tome could compete with the lively conversations I had with Marius, John and Bram in the prison exercise yard. They brought to life the sense of confusion within

Afrikaner families who perceived them as the black sheep of the family; *boere seuns* who had wandered from the fold to embrace a comprehensive notion of nationhood rather than the primacy of Afrikaner ethnicity. For the more traditional Afrikaners, this heresy threatened the volk at large, creating frustration and confusion where the ideas espoused were repellent and split families apart. The descriptive name for this inner-family confusion was *broedertwis*.

It would take another 30 years before the concept of nationhood could mean anything more than the unity of the Boer nation to Afrikaners. Later, the vision of a “rainbow nation” opened a path for people of all colours to begin to find each other as South Africans. It was the antithesis of that vision that preoccupied my attention while in prison and my curiosity about how the country had been brought to the point where under the National Party the ideology of apartheid had become the official vision. It was part of the “mind game” I invented in my prison cell to try to reconstruct the little I knew of the enigmatic histories of these institutions of Afrikaner history and to piece together their origins and links with National Socialism, their connections with the street fighters of the 1940s and the effects of the Broederbond’s silent power on the country. It helped to pass the time. But 54 days in solitary confinement, a year awaiting trial and a three-year sentence were not enough to uncover what was in truth a dark history, which has still largely to be written. Only later was I able to piece together the fragments of invention, supposition and assumption that I had made in prison and establish a more comprehensible history for myself. What had begun as the mind game to while away the time in prison had become something of a mission to unravel all the strands of the Broederbond’s odious history. This assignment was (unsurprisingly) more extensive than I had realised, but from the limited picture I was able to construct, it is apparent that no account of the struggle years from 1918 to the early 1990s seems plausible without reference to the Broederbond’s ominous presence.

The two significant Afrikaner nationalist organizations that most interested me were the National Party and the Afrikaner Broederbond. I read of their respective histories when I was technically beyond the reach of the security police as a sentenced prisoner or in exile. It seemed that chronic disunity and confusion had always been an obstacle to the attainment of political power for the Afrikaners; a volk’s curse, delaying their political deliverance. Initially, I understood little of the Broederbond’s history and what I knew was impressionistic, and insufficient to make me realise the danger of a clandestine state within a state, that would touch all our lives with its neo-Nazi poison.

The Broederbond was formed in 1918 and within less than 25 years became the strategic centre point for the promotion of Afrikaner nationalism. Ultimately it would all but subsume the National Party, control the Calvinist clerics in the Dutch Reformed Church and every significant sphere of Afrikaner political, economic and cultural

expression in the country.³ Its origins were modest. While the constituency and membership of the nationalist movements were often rurally based, the founders of the Broederbond were largely from the urban centres. Its youthful initiators consisted of railway clerks from poor Afrikaner families, policemen and priests in the Transvaal province and (after 1921) Afrikaans teachers who were anxious to defend the Afrikaans language in schools and in the public service. While the defence of language was worthy enough in principle, the social philosophy of the movement was steeped in National Socialism: Afrikaners saw themselves as the sole beneficiaries of God's purpose, to whom the rights of language, speech and culture applied exclusively.

Both the Broederbond and the National Party had a similar genesis; both grew out of a period of confusion and despair, the NP preceding the Broederbond by about five years. Famine and rural drift into the towns after the South African War had left many Afrikaners indigent and politically abject. It is therefore not surprising that even at this low ebb of Afrikaner fortunes there was a sense of desperation in the Broederbond's mission "to sweep Afrikanerdom to power". That it managed to do this (albeit with great stealth) within three decades of its formation is in a way extraordinary, but what is astonishing is how completely the principal professional politicians in the ruling National Party (almost all of them secret members of the Broederbond) implemented the policy of the Broederbond and, in so doing, reconfigured the political and social landscapes of the country within a decade and half of achieving state power. In the course of this process it was assisted by the influential Afrikaner institutions it infiltrated. It was always a matter of supposition that the influence of the organization was deep and wide but its overwhelming impact on our public life and political culture was not understood. The awesome nature of its grip on our institutions was only documented in 1979, and even then, bold as the reporters were, its exposure was constrained by the limitations of newspaper coverage and fear of political intimidation. Only a handful of books have chronicled the growth of the Broederbond since then; few have marked its corrosive effect on our political system which claimed to be a parliamentary democracy.

Initially confined to the then Transvaal, the Broederbond was relatively directionless, pious, Masonic and culturally oriented, but capable of focusing its attention on matters political when expedient. Their efforts in the 1930s and 1940s to preserve the Afrikaans *taal* helped to mobilize many Afrikaners in support of the nationalist cause. Behind its linguistic and cultural aspirations was the desire to gain parity with the English language in the cities, in commerce and in industry, as well as gaining access for Afrikaners in the education and the public service sectors. Frantz Fanon, speaking of all colonized people in the world, noted the burning fervour of dispossessed people to become their own masters: "Every people", he wrote, "in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality, finds

itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation ...”⁴ But the Broederbond’s struggle for the preservation of the Afrikaans language was part of a wider bid for an exclusive Afrikanerdom; a project which, in the explicit words of the Bond’s highest executive authority, had as its object “the Afrikanerising (*verafrikaansing*) of South Africa in all aspects of its life”.⁵

The Broederbond-centred association of cultural organizations, the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK) was entrusted with the leadership of the cultural “front” of the struggle (it was sometimes as much a political front as it was cultural, and the entire project was virtually projected as a war.⁶) Young academics, many from the Calvinist University of Potchefstroom, placed themselves at the head of this movement and soon replaced the teachers as leaders of the organization. The Broederbond grew relatively rapidly for an elitist movement. In 1927 it had a membership of less than 200 enthusiasts scattered throughout the country; this increased to almost 1 400, distributed over 80 clandestine cells during the depression in 1933/34. At this time the National Party under General J.B.M. Hertzog fused with the South African Party under Smuts, causing Hertzog’s National Party to split into two main groups.⁷ A consequence of this was that the Broederbond used the space within a divided Afrikanerdom to place itself above the political parties and “speak” for the whole of the volk.⁸ In 1933 it tightened its organization and internal discipline as it increasingly infiltrated its members into key positions in the cultural and educational sectors of the country. At the parliamentary level, it placed its recent recruits, D.F. Malan, then leader of the new (purified) National Party and J.G. Strijdom and C.R. Swart (provincial party leaders) at the head of what was effectively a Broederbond cell in parliament.⁹

Ardent Broeders like Malan and Strijdom later became prime ministers of the country and Swart was appointed as the first state president of the South African Republic of 1961. Their function was to stiffen their party’s caucus when it came to implementing Broederbond policy. By the time Malan became premier in 1948 dependable members of the Broederbond were carefully selected to project its programme. The organization’s twelve-member Executive Council vetted every member to secure secrecy and ideological purity. Qualifications for membership were rigorous: candidates entering the Bond had to be of unimpeachable character, Afrikaans-speaking, financially sound (indicating the upward mobility of its newer recruits) and sworn to actively promote the primacy of the Afrikaner nation with its own language and culture.¹⁰ Four years before the NP attained (whites-only) electoral power, the Broederbond’s dedicated membership consisted of the most prominent personalities within the church, the legal profession, the FAK, the media, agriculture and parliament. Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom, the historians of the organization’s history, noted in the late 1970s that “no Afrikaner government can rule

South Africa without the support of the Broederbond, and no nationalist Afrikaner can become prime minister unless he comes from the organization's select ranks."¹¹

This was, for the most part, true. An obvious weakness was in the financial sector despite the growth of the so-called Afrikaner economic movements such as the Reddingsdaadbond and Helpmekaar organizations, both of them spawned by the "Bond". Already in 1944, the Broederbond was described as the foremost institution of rising capitalists and professional men in South Africa; "Afrikaner capital striving for economic and political domination".¹² In the Cape, the nationalist entrepreneurs in the Broederbond had already begun to mobilize capital through local Afrikaner savings to promote Afrikaans business interests. In the north, the Broederbond was poised to do the same. Throughout the 1940s the organization promoted the notion of a volk's economy to develop an economic movement designed to marshal Afrikaner savings. This was particularly evident in the thinking of L.J. du Plessis, for whom political power would end British domination and sever the "golden chains of imperialism". In his view the Afrikaners' economic dependency on the English imperialists could be broken by mobilizing Afrikaner savings.¹³ But the weaknesses of Afrikaner capital was a historical and structural insufficiency, which could be remedied fully only after the Afrikaner nationalist conquest of power in 1948. (Before then, the economy was dominated by the English-speaking section of the population). Meanwhile, the Broederbond set up commissions in the social, economic, educational and industrial sectors to deal with almost everything that was politically sensitive. Individual members were secretly mandated to work through the various legal "front organizations" to promote the organization's position. The result was an extensive network through which they penetrated all regions and most sectors, including the cultural sphere.

At the party-political level, the organization was strongest in the provinces of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal – where the "purified" National Party was weakest. One of the chief ideologues of the Broederbond at this time was Du Plessis, who went on to share a place in the organization's Ivy League of fascists with racist fanatics like N. Diederichs, P.J. Meyer and H.F. Verwoerd. A fifth uncompromising neo-Nazi extremist, Albert Hertzog (son of General J.B.M. Hertzog, prime minister from 1924 to 1939) was a self-professed Nazi supporter who concentrated on the labour movement, especially the Afrikaans-speaking miners on the Witwatersrand. Earlier, the leadership was enhanced by the presence of I.M. Lombard and J.H. Griebe, prominent in the organization's economic movements. They were extraordinarily influential and helped to define the Afrikaner's place in the market economy and bring nationalism into the service of the growing class of small capitalist Afrikaner entrepreneurs.¹⁴

In their book published in 1979, Wilkins and Strydom described the awesome power of the Broederbond, detailing empirically what many surmised. “The [Broederbond]”, they wrote,

has infiltrated members into town and city councils, school boards, the ... state controlled radio and television networks, industry and commerce, banks and building societies ... into the provincial administrations, the departments of education, planning, roads and works ... the quasi state corporations, the civil service, the National Party caucuses ... through Parliament and the seat of government, until it finally reaches its apex in the offices of the Prime Minister ... Government today is the Broederbond and the Broederbond is the Government.¹⁵

It repeatedly professed to be a cultural organization and used its extensive network in the political, social and economic spheres to spread its message. But despite the denial of its political aims, the future advancement of Afrikanerdom was the emphasis of its mission. In 1934, the year after Hitler’s ascendancy, the Broederbond’s chairman, J.C. van Rooy, summed up its fervent purpose: “Brothers, the key to South Africa’s problems is not whether one party or another shall obtain the whip-hand but whether the Afrikaner Broederbond shall govern South Africa.”¹⁶

The consolidation of the National Party’s electoral position had much to do with the Broederbond’s mobilizing strategies and its obsessive struggle for the ideological hegemony of the Afrikaner movement. At this stage of its history, it was difficult to know who the stolid but prickly nationalists were and who the more strategically gifted *broeder*-ideologues were. The former were the professionals in the NP, using whatever means their dour leader (D.F. Malan) and his lieutenants in the Transvaal and Orange Free State had to keep the party’s members together, and avoid alienating their seemingly irreconcilable constituencies. The *broeder*-ideologues, on the other hand, were usually mindful of the larger view that their struggle for the unity of Afrikanerdom was not an end in itself, but a means towards state power.

To achieve this, the main focus of the Broederbond was always the ethnic unity of Afrikaners. During a defining decade of nationalist political expression, harmony among Afrikaners was seen to be imperative for winning political power and entrenching racial segregation. This unity would not be the “broad”, white-fronted “South Africanism” of the “renegade” prime minister, J.B.M. Hertzog, but the unity of Afrikaners within the National Party, encompassing those English-speaking white South Africans who wished to accept Afrikaner paramountcy on its own terms. According to the collective mindset of

the NP and the Broederbond, black workers were there to do the work that white workers would not do. The tendency of all wage earners (including black workers) to combine to improve their wages and working conditions was inimical to ethnic cohesion. Any attempt to obliterate national differences flouted God's natural law, and the organization of Afrikaners on class lines undermined ethnic solidarity. Solly Sachs, trade unionist, member of the CPSA in the thirties and one of the nationalists' arch-enemies, experienced at first hand the Bond's divisive attempt to detach Afrikaner women from his trade union. For the Broederbond, he noted, "the Trade Union Movement was a 'foreign' institution and inimical to the interests of the Afrikaners as the latter wanted to divide the Afrikaners into employers and employees, workers and capitalists".¹⁷ The Broederbond's response to this was that the trade unions were communist inspired, that the trade union movement as a whole was "entirely controlled by Jews" and that the English-speaking workers were subjectively oriented to Mother Empire and had different loyalties from those of Afrikaners.¹⁸ If the Afrikaner volk was to be preserved and Afrikanerdom protected from alien influences, ethnic solidarity was an essential factor in the development of the Afrikaners' relationship to the volk and state – along with their relationship to fatherland, history, politics and culture.

The Broederbond's strategy was therefore to detach Afrikaners from all so-called alien institutions to prevent any dilution of ethnic solidarity. In this they were most successful in the gold mining industry in the 1940s, where it fell to Albert Hertzog, the Nazi-inspired son of the erstwhile prime minister, to urge Afrikaans-speaking miners to leave their existing trade union and join an exclusively Afrikaner trade union movement, more acceptable to the Broederbond. It was ironical that Afrikaans-speaking white workers should opt to be organized on tribal lines at this time, when African miners had already shown a preference for the ethnically inclusive African Mineworkers' Union (AMWU), despite the influence of traditional leadership and the constraints of customary authority.¹⁹

The most explicit exposition of the relationship of Afrikaners to the volk and to the state was elaborated in 1936 by N. Diederichs (Minister of Finance after 1948) in a lyrical rendering of Afrikaner moral philosophy,²⁰ subsequently popularized by H.F. Verwoerd in the *Transvaler* newspaper. Similar views were expressed by other ideologues in an Afrikaans student union review entitled *Wapenspkou* (Review of arms), a rich repository of offensive National Socialist ideas. The Bond's ideas informed the sermons of the dependable theologians of the Dutch Reformed Church. Their pious lessons regularly provided parishioners with the inspired notion that salvation would come to the Afrikaner volk in fulfilment of its divine solidarity as a nation. Just as God had looked upon the Israelites in biblical times with benevolence, He would look upon the Afrikaner volk with

compassion in the future, provided they remained an ethnically intact community, rendering undiluted devotion to His will.²¹

Sermons were delivered by the priesthood as well as the laity, and during my detention in the sixties, I had the dubious privilege of watching one of the lay preachers, a tall, sinewy official of the security police, named Van Rensburg, compose his tract for church on Sunday. For him, the whites in South Africa, especially pious Afrikaners like himself, occupied the moral high-ground. His inspiration for this was Malan, “high priest” of the Nationalist Party, who had said a decade earlier that God had placed before each people a unique calling and that the Afrikaners were the direct recipients of this message. Malan, (Albert) Hertzog, Pirow, Strijdom, Verwoerd and Vorster were the most crudely overt Nazi followers, but there were many others who were equally sympathetic to the national socialist philosophy, although less prominent. In the economic sphere, men like L.J. du Plessis and I.M. Lombard stand out clearly above their peers.

It took the National Party in its “purified”, united and re-united forms 30 years to evolve into a viable parliamentary party before it could claim – in the late 1940s – that it was largely representative of Afrikanerdom. This it was able to do because of the unifying strategies of the Broederbond. The ANC, Afrikanerdom’s nemesis, was formed in 1912 a year before the NP (and six years before the Broederbond), but the modern histories of the two nationalisms were poles apart and intersected dramatically from the 1950s onwards. In time, the Broederbond was reinforced in its view that it was Afrikanerdom’s moving spirit and that the National Party was its major manifestation in parliament. At the outset, membership crossed freely between the two organizations but steadily increased in stringency. The NP was headed in the Orange Free State by the republican champion, General J.B.M. Hertzog, who was critical of the Broederbond. Soon after its formation in the OFS, it was established in the Transvaal under Strijdom and in the Cape Province by D.F. Malan. However, the party’s social base, political experience and quality of leadership differed in all three provinces, causing its parts to relate with the utmost difficulty to the whole. Its constituency in the Orange Free State was rural while the other two provinces were less homogeneous, which enabled the Broederbond to be more influential in the provinces where the party was weakest. The party’s first foray into government was in 1924, when, under Hertzog, it entered into an electoral pact with the all-white Labour Party, defeating Smuts’ in the election that followed the 1922 miners’ strike. The Pact Government, as it was called, almost immediately began a process of social engineering that was matched only in its repressive severity by Malan and Verwoerd after 1948. Hertzog’s government almost instantly built on the discriminatory economic and social practices of the past by entrenching them in acts of parliament.

Notoriously, it introduced the so-called “civilized [white] labour policy”, privileging white employment over black. It amended the Mines and Works (colour bar) Act, for the first time entrenching the legal principle that skilled work was the prerogative of white workers. Not least, it enacted legislation that played havoc with the limited rights that Africans still enjoyed in the urban areas, and more controversially, embarked on a protracted programme of removing the small number of Africans from the common voters’ roll. These were the so-called Hertzog Bills, first promulgated in 1925, but introduced into parliament in 1935. There were originally four such bills, but only two (concerning the franchise and land) were eventually passed into law in 1936.

After considerable debate, the first bill proposed that no more Africans could be added to the 11 000 African voters already on the electoral roll in the Cape Province, the only province where Africans could vote.²² Instead, Africans countrywide would be allowed to elect four (white) senators to parliament by indirect means. (Margaret Ballinger, Hyman Basner, Sam Kahn and Brian Bunting were some of the most eloquent spokespersons for African rights elected under this provision between 1936 and 1958. Their contribution to the struggle is well known and dealt with in subsequent chapters in this book).

The second bill (known as the Land and Trust Act), together with the 1913 Land Act, was at the centre of African nationalist grievances throughout the apartheid regime. This act added a meagre percentage of land to the so-called native reserves, “allowing” Africans a total of 13% of the land surface in South Africa. A further bill provided for the introduction of a Natives Representative Council (NRC). This act was introduced as a sop to liberal opinion to compensate for the removal of Africans from the common voters roll. As seen in the chapter below, it turned out in its application to be what I have referred to as a case study of a paternalistic and post-colonial institution, designed to ensure that even the most conservative of African opinion would see the futility of securing fundamental reform from within government institutions.

Hertzog’s regressive programme of “reform” was interrupted by the economic and political crisis of the early 1930s during which droves of Afrikaners drifted to the towns in search of work and a major political realignment or “fusion” of the white political parties took place. “Fusion” was a euphemism for a new understanding between the mining and farming sectors (characterized in the 1970s by revisionist historians as the political union of the interests of gold and maize). The reconstituted governing party was described as the South African National United Party, once again under the leadership of General Hertzog, who became prime minister, with the astonishing phenomenon of Smuts serving in the same cabinet. This was more than the hard core nationalists could swallow, and was probably a setback for the Broederbond that seemed to have little control over Hertzog. He had, in their eyes, been co-opted by the vague neo-imperial concept of “co-

operative imperialism”, which rendered his ideas on republicanism too inclusive of English-speaking whites for the more ardent Afrikaner nationalists.

With the National Party in disarray, it was a fractious moment for the unity of Afrikanerdom. This provided an opportunity for the Broederbond to take full advantage of the moment to assert its leadership. It strategically arranged for the nationalist splinter organizations to find each other and facilitated the formation of the re-united National Party (the Herenigde Nasionale Party – the HNP). That the Broederbond was behind this move was made apparent in a speech in Smithfield in 1935 by the prime minister, J.B.M. Hertzog, whose policies were not in line with the Broederbond’s thinking on republicanism or on imperialism. In a hard-hitting reference to the Broederbond, Hertzog spoke of storm clouds gathering over the country, where “the secret Afrikaner Broederbond is nothing less than the Purified National Party busy working secretly underground” and that the Purified National Party was “nothing but the secret Broederbond which conducts its activities on the surface.”²³

The newly “re-united” National Party rapidly consolidated itself under a few paramount provincial leaders, all of them dedicated members of the Broederbond. These included the stalwarts C.R. Swart in the Orange Free State, Strijdom in the Transvaal, and D.F. Malan (in the Cape) as the party’s overall leader. It took a while for the different elements to cohere but the newly constituted party found its feet in the early forties. Those nationalists who (before the 1943 general elections) were the least sanguine that they would attain power through the ballot box, devoted their energies to the para-military formations such as the Ossewa Brandwag, the Boerenasie, the Republican Front and the Greyshirts. With the exception of the New Order Group (which had no military wing) these were “the street fighters” referred to in a previous chapter, whose ideas reflected the National Socialist thinking that menaced the entire decade of the 1940s. Proverbially, they lost the street battles but won the ideological war.

War ended Hertzog’s government in 1939, in what amounted to a parliamentary coup. General Jan Smuts, a member of Hertzog’s government, seized the opportunity to enter the war on the side of Britain by rallying a small majority of parliamentarians in support of the war. Hertzog, desperate to keep South Africa out of the war, hastily opted for the dissolution of parliament and fresh general elections. This tactic was weak on constitutional grounds and failed because the governor-general promptly rejected Hertzog’s claim to govern and called on Smuts, the most ardent protagonist of the war, to form a government. Thus, in the see-saw succession of leadership changes that took place in the decade, Smuts once again took over the reigns of power. His party was popularly known as the United Party and dominated the political scene until 1948.

For the Left, in the Communist Party and among the ANC, this prompted the obvious question: what purpose is there to be served in giving legitimacy to the country’s

all-white elections by engaging in this undemocratic process? Questions were also raised on the form of struggle we needed to wage. How were we ever to overturn a state as solidly entrenched and as potentially violent as this one? *Satyagraha* in the period before the First World War, passive resistance in 1946, the campaigns of civil disobedience against unjust laws (in 1952) and ultimately armed struggle (in 1961), were options that were eventually undertaken but in 1943 and 1948 the realities were more austere. The Party leadership, through the columns of the *The Guardian* newspaper, summed it up well on the threshold of the National Party victory:

There was mighty little to choose between the UP and the Nationalist [sic] Party ... their policies differ in degree ... but the realities of the present situation must be faced. The alternative to the UP is government by fascists ... [T]here is very considerable difference even for the most oppressed, between the present reactionary government and open fascism. Government by the nationalists would mean the suppression of the trade unions, of such freedoms as the press and speech as we possess. It would mean complete segregation of the non European [and], more restrictions on freedom of movement.²⁴

The path to power of the reunited National Party (HNP) was reasonably short and swift. A war-time election was held in 1943, but the outcome was a forgone conclusion. At first glance it seemed that Malan had little hope of achieving political power in the near future. The National Party won 43 seats out of a possible 153 and was (ostensibly) thrashed by Smuts' United Party (UP). However, the trend should not have given cause for celebration. Malan took 36% of the ballot with 362 000 votes. The nationalists actually increased their strength by 71 000 votes, gaining five seats in parliament, becoming the sole opposition to the United Party (UP). They had reason to be optimistic, despite their loss of most urban constituencies and many rural ones to Smuts' party. They had increased their rural support in the OFS and the Transvaal provinces where Strijdom, (who was the sole NP member of parliament from the Transvaal in the 1938 elections) now had a team of eleven nationalist MPs. In the OFS, the rural heart of Afrikaner nationalism, the HNP held thirteen of the fourteen constituencies: in 1938 they had only six.

Nationally, Smuts' UP, together with the Labour Party and the outmoded Dominion Party, controlled 42 of the 82 rural seats in the all-white parliament and almost all the seats in the urban constituencies except those in the few "white" working class constituencies, where Afrikaners were primarily concentrated.²⁵ Overall, the UP, together with the Labour and Dominion Parties, (plus the so-called native representatives and two

independent MPs), increased the UP's majority from 87 seats in 1938 to 105 in 1943. But what was generally overlooked in our analyses of these election results was that the overall percentage vote for the Smuts government had actually decreased in 1943 from 42% to 32% and that the rural constituencies were beginning to defect to the National Party.

The years between 1933 and 1943 were formative years in the Broederbond's crusade to influence the mindset of Afrikaners. It was both a politically fractious period and a time of National Party re-formation. During this time the Broederbond acted as the strategic think tank for the Afrikaner nationalist movement: it would be the kingmaker of the National Party, but remained distinct from it; its power was recognised by the professional politicians (its members in the party), but institutionally it remained above the party – emperor rather than monarch. If the Broederbond was not the sole architect of apartheid in the formative years of that policy, it must have approved the plans and overseen its foundations, while its members were the leading strings in the country's power structures and the administration. Sam Kahn said as much in the country's parliament. Flanked by *broeders* on all sides of the House of Assembly in 1950, he told them: "Parliament is a rubber stamp to facilitate progress from Broederbond to Bill ... [T]he individual nationalist MP may just as well stay on his farm and telephone his vote through from time to time between cups of coffee."²⁶ Sparkling as the rhetoric was, it made no impact on the *broeders* in parliament. Their strategy was to tighten their personal discipline and continue to direct their members to prominent positions in the various fronts through which the Bond covertly presented itself. Secrecy (in membership and the organization's agenda) enabled its spokespersons in the "front" organizations to make sure that the policy decisions of the bodies they infiltrated were consistent with those of the Broederbond. With such power, the organization dominated the National Party, and later, the country's legislature and the national cabinet.

In the second half of the century, the ambitious National Party members in parliament, the cabinet and the military, industrial and clerical establishments all served the Broederbond. The president became its puppet and the cabinet a conduit for policy. Its clandestine decisions affected every important facet of our lives, making it the single most significant policy-making structure in the country. It dreamed up ideas for new racist legislation in the formative phases of National Party rule and refined the existing discriminatory ones, seemingly calibrating their ideas with those of the Nuremberg decrees in the Nazi Reich.²⁷

By 1948 the NP, together with the Afrikaner Party, a small off-shoot of Hertzog's party, garnered sufficient votes to win a narrow majority in parliament. (This is discussed in the chapter entitled, "The Road to Fascism", below.) Electoral power might have

passed to the National Party, but its leaders were hostage to the will of the Broederbond, whose end came only 40 years later, prior to the formal collapse of the apartheid regime. The organization was buried without ceremony, but not before it attempted to negotiate with the ANC in exile in the 1980s, hoping that the NP would broaden the base of the state to share power with a (co-opted) black majority government. In this respect, the Bond's ideas were eventually adopted by the ruling National Party who far from co-opting the ANC virtually negotiated itself out of power. The NP's demise occurred less than a decade after the collapse of the Broederbond and with it, everything that was earlier embodied in its Nazi inspired myth of a National Socialist Afrikanerdom.

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- 1 Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond* (Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1979), p. 2.
 2. Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 347. The speaker was Henning Klopper.
 - 3 For early reports of the Broederbond see *The Guardian*, 07.09.44. A pamphlet entitled *Mandate for Right and Justice, 1946–76* (CRJ, London, 1976), contained a section dealing with the Broederbond which included information gleaned from a dossier acquired in the 1940s by Rev. Michael Scott. The dossier was compiled by Military Intelligence under the Smuts government and therefore could not be published in South Africa. It was published in London in 1976 as part of the pamphlet, *Mandate for Right and Justice*. The section is entitled “The Afrikaner Broederbond: A ‘State within a State’”. The most informative documented account of the Broederbond is, however, by Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*. O’Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, is also immensely informative.
 - 4 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove Press, New York, 1967).
 - 5 Cited in Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 60. Letter directed to all members of the Broederbond by Prof. J.C. van Rooyen (chairman) and I. M. Lombard (general secretary), 16 January 1934.
 - 6 Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 659–61.
 - 7 Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 47.
 - 8 O’Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p. 62.
 - 9 J.G. Strijdom was NP leader in the Transvaal and C.R. Swart, leader in the Orange Free State province.
 - 10 O’Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p. 63.
 - 11 Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 1. For the sweep of the organization’s presence, see pp. 1, 2 and 47.
 - 12 *The Guardian*, 07.09.44.
 - 13 O’Meara’s *Volkskapitalisme* is the most informative on this subject and inter alia provides a class analysis underlying the projected notions of the concept of “Afrikanerdom”.
 - 14 O’Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p. 65.
 - 15 Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, pp. 1, 2, 47. They record only one AB cell in 1920 consisting of 37 members. By 1977 there were 810 cells with 12 000 members.
 - 16 Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 2.

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- 17 E.S. Sachs, *The Choice before South Africa* (Turnstile Press, London, 1952), p. 169.
- 18 See Sachs, *The Choice before South Africa*, pp. 186–87 for an interesting analysis of the nationalists and the trade unions.
- 19 It was only in 1942 when the white-dominated trade union federation turned its back on the African trade unions, that Africans mobilized on a black multi-ethnic basis into the Non-European Council of Trade Unions. This ethnically retrogressive step was reversed a decade later when a broader class-based unionism was adopted.
- 20 The work was authored by N. Diederichs and entitled *Nationalism as Weltenshauung*. Its impact was uncertain but the editorials and newspaper articles were clearly influential. See O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.70.
- 21 O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, pp. 69–75.
- 22 For the differing views of political parties during the debates on this question within the Joint Select Committee appointed by parliament to consider the bill, see T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, Third edition (Macmillan, Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 309–314.
- 23 Wilkins and Strydom, *The Super Afrikaners*, p. 64. For the Smithfield speech see *ibid*, pp. 57–63.
- 24 *The Guardian*, 11.03.48.
- 25 Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich*, p. 122.
- 26 *The Guardian*, 01.06.50.
- 27 There is a striking comparison of some of the harsher apartheid laws with the Nuremberg decrees. See the introductory notes to the permanent exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Cape Town.

Chapter 4