[30/1/58]

This memorandum may be described as a study in political heresy. By heresy is meant here the affirmation of values and concepts that are inconsistent with the established order of social relationships. The repudiation extends further than an opposition to prevailing State policies in the accepted parliamentary sense. The political heretic not only opposes these policies but repudiates the organisation of the State itself and the framework of the society in which the State functions.

As the memorandum will show political heresy in S.A. takes diverse forms and follows different concepts of the future society that is entertained as the ideal, in contrast to the existent order. One of the aims of this study is to trace the origin and the course of the various trends and the inter-relationships between them. Before doing so however, a word or two might be usefully said about the broad distinctions between the streams of political thought that had contributed to the evolution of the dissident group.

The dominant factor is the composition of the population and the structure of the society, the nature of this is well understood and can therefore be taken for granted. It is sufficient to point out that South Africa presents a typical example of oligarchy in the classical sense in which superior status and privilege are the monopoly of a pigmentocracy. Further, that the concentration of power in the White group is the consequence of a long process of historical development, and the occurance of cultural inequalities associated with colour differences that existed in the early formative years in society and persisted down to the present time.

It is a common place that the distinguishing cultural differences which constituted the original source of inequality have tended to disappear with the growing absorption of the various racial groups into a common society. Much of the tension and conflict of our present period and indeed

much of the political heresy referred to earlier take their origin in the contrast between the growth of a common society and the recognition with values and standards shared by members of all racial groups and on the other hand, the perpetuation of inequalities and discriminations of an earlier and more primitive period in our history.

Stated in more precise terms, our system of social differentiation, based on the original significant contrast between White immigrants and African tribesmen, Coloured slaves and Indian labourers, no longer corresponds to the socio-economic distinctions in terms of such factors as occupation, income, education, that cut across ethnic-divisions. Status distinctions based on colour do not coinside with social class divisions. Some Africans, Indians and Coloured are superior to some Europeans in terms of the ordinary class bearing indicies, but all Africans, Coloureds and Indians are inferior at law and in terms of political power to all Europeans.

It could be shown at length and with adequate documentation that the South African system of social differentiation is inconsistent with all dominant practices and values current in contemporary world. For purposes of brevity, however, discussion on this aspect will be limited to the observation that South African social rigidities are incompatable with the class structure of capitalist society and the classless pattern of socialism. Furthermore, that the "South African way of life" is denounced no less severely by theories of nationalism, anti-colonialism, to related and significant political trends current in the present age.

The South African political heretic is therefore able to draw on a wide and diverse range of political, social and ethical concepts for justification of his opposition to the established order. The adherents of laisser-faire

capitalism, classical liberalism, 19th century nationalism or socialism can find common ground with one another and with persons who repudiate race or colour discrimination.

However much they might disagree amongst themselves as to their ideal of a future society to replace the present one, it is this wide common front of concepts and action between many divergent trends of political thought and interests that make the pattern of South African heresies complicated and often difficult to unravel.

The basic postulate in which all dissident groups agree is the principal of equality before the law for all persons irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex. This is the formula of classic liberalism. It denies the moral validity of differences of status attached to heredity, whether of class or race and recognises the claims of every citizen, regardless of his origins to attain to any position in the social hierarchy in accordance with his abilities and achievements.

There are profound disagreements between opponents of the colour-class structure as to the extent to which the principle of equality should be carried. On the one hand are those who wish to limit it to the legal and political sphere; on the other hand are the socialists, who would make it applicable also to property relationships and the economic order. All heretics as defined in this memorandum agree however on the principle of legal equality for all colour groups. Some would qualify it by some test, which can be broadly described as the test of divilisation; others wish to extend it to all persons who have reached the age of maturity. These are however differences of opinion to application and do not affect the basic principle of equality before the law for all persons irrespective of race of equal worth.

The measure of agreement on this score is most vividly expressed by contrasting it with the other principle that underlies the organisation of the South African society, and which is most sharply formulated in the notorious formula of the South African Republican constitution of 1856; no equality between Black and White in Church or State. This is one of the dominant traditions which has gained the ascendancy over the other contrasting principle since Union.

It must not be forgotten however, that the principle of equality, at least for "civilised" men is also an authentic and indeed the older South African tradition. It was implicit in the policy of the first administration under the Dutch East Indian Company towards "free" men of colour; it was embodied in the first parliamentary constitution of the Cape Colony in 1854; and it was subscribed to by all political parties in the Cape prior to Union. It is the realisation of this principle that forms the minimum basis of co-operation between the heretical political groups and distinguishes them from all parties that accept the validity of and seek to perpetuate the existing State order.

Having set out the main line of political demarcation between the two most important streams of political thought current in the Union we shall now proceed to trace the growth and interactions of the various tendencies that comprise the opposition to the State as constituted today.

The proper starting point for an enquiry into South African doctrines of equality is the Cape, where as we have seen the claim for equal rights for all divilised persons was enshrined into the constitution. To proclaim it was therefore no heresy; all parties agreed to maintain it and differed only in their opinion as to the method and extent of its application. There were no political heretics in the Cape under parliamentary government before Union, but there were

parties that urged an extension of political rights on a more generous scale than that contained in the Franchise Law, and the removal of racial discrimination.

Pass laws, location regulations, liquor laws were the subject of constant criticism in Imvo Zabantsundu (African-Opinion), the first African political newspaper published from 1884 onwards under the editorship of Tengo Jabavu, an early product of missionary education and Cape liberalism.

The impact of Northern racialism on Cape liberalism became acute after the South African war, when unification loomed close and a choice had to be made between the two conflicting principles. The failure of the British Colonial office to guarantee political and civil right for Coloured and African peoples in the defeated Republics caused indignation and alarm amongst the Coloured in the Cape Colony and galvanised them into independent political activity. The formation of the African Peoples Organisation in 1902 under the leadership of Dr. A. Abdurahman, the outstanding Coloured politician, marked the beginning of a new trend in South African affairs.

It was followed seven years later by the assembly of African delegates in the first "Native Convention" under the presidency of Dr. Walter Rubasane, the only African ever to have been elected to a Provincial Council. The Convention was held during the course of a campaign against the colour bar in the South Africa Act, which excluded persons of colour in Transvaal and Orange Free State from the Franchise, and prohibited anyone other than a European from taking a seat in Parliament. Jabavu and Rubasane had been members of a deputation that went to London to protest against these provisions; a mission which brought about the same time, other Non-European leaders such as Dr. Abdurahman and Gandhi to visit Downing Street. Their protest failed. Out of this agitation emerged the South African Native National

Congress, in 1912, later to be known as the African National Congress.

The grant of responsible government to the Transvaal in 1907 was followed, as Responsible Government in Natal 1893, had been followed, by legislation discriminating against Indians. The Transvaal Asiatic Law Amendment Act of 1907 making the registration of Asians compulsory, lead to the first organised "passive resistance movement" under the leadership of Gandhi, who called on the Indians to refuse to register and undergo the penalty of imprisonment. Other discriminatory laws followed, including the Immigration Registration Act of 1908; this also produced mass resistance on the part of Natal Indians who crossed into the Transvaal in defiance of the Act. Many of them were imprisoned. Some were deported to India. With these experiences in mind, Indians like Africans and the Coloured regarded the prospect of Union with dismay and sent a deputation under Gandhi to put their case to the British Government. Passive resistance continued after Union to culminate in the great political strike and defiance of Provincial restrictions by Indians in November, 1913.

These events, and the great interest shown by the Indian National Congress of India in the trails and struggles of the South African Indians paved the way for the formation of a South African Indian Congress, consisting of the Transvaal British Indian Association and other similar provincial bodies. The Congress held it's first meeting in Johannesburg to protest against Act 37 of 1919 which prohibited Asians from acquiring fixed property in the Transvaal after the scheduled date.

In the preceeding outline of political movements attention had been focussed wholly on organisations and

actions directed against racial discrimination. We must now look at another significant source of political heresy, namely the working class and socialistic tradition.

For our present purpose it is sufficient to trace the class element in South African egalitarianism from the beginning of the present century. Unlike the other movements described and which were aimed primarily against race discrimination, the working class movement was not an indigenous growth, It came to this country from overseas through the medium of immigrant trade unionists and socialists schooled in the traditions of British, German, American or Australian working class. It took the form initially of a struggle for protection against exploitation but soon acquired a political complexion, frequently tinged with colour prejudices that reflected the South African social structure.

From the end of the South African war to, say, the advent of the Nationalist-Labour Pact Government of 1924, the organised conscious Labour Movement followed two interrelated and yet conflicting aims. On the one hand it stood for the interests of the "working man" against employers and more generally the capitalist class. In this respect it conformed to the orthodox standards of socialist movements in Europe. Its immediate aims included such objectives as the recognition of trade unions, the 8-hour working day, workmen's compensation and higher wages. Straight-forward, uncomplicated class issues of this kind lead on occasions to severe social conflict, of which perhaps the best examples are the big strikes of 1913 and 1914. It was in response to this challenge by the White working class that the Union Parliament made the first serious inroad on civil liberties in the form of the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1914.

For the most part however, the White workers' struggles were deeply affected by his relationship with the Africans

as well as with the employing class. These were closely inter-related. The persistent tendency on the part of employers to make the widest possible use of Africans appeared to the White worker to threaten his standard of living and indeed prospects of employment. His conflict with the employing class was seen more often than not as a conflict with the non-White worker.

The White miners of the Witwatersrand were more acutely sensitive to this danger than any other group of workers. The importation of Chinese indentured workers in 1904, followed by the use of Africans to break a strike on the New Kleinfontein Mine in 1907, as well as the organisation and division of labour on the mines, contributed to the growth of strong race prejudices in the White miners, which played a notable part in the armed uprising of 1922. With broad exceptions in the Cape and Natal where a significant number of Coloured and Indian artisans dominated certain trades, the White trade unionist of the first quarter of the century was a racialist who accepted the principle of White domination and identified himself with the White ruling class.

This approach was contrary to the principles of inter-national socialism. Consequently as the South African Labour Party which was founded in 1909-10, based it's appeal to the exclusively White electorate of Transvaal and Natal largely on the issue of colour bar in industry, it correspondingly abandoned its earlier socialist aims. It's complete assimilation to the outlook of White domination was marked by its coalition with the Nationalist in 1924. This event may be said to have completed the abandonment by the Labour Party and the White working class as a whole of the ideal of an international non-racial labour movement, embracing workers of all races in a common class front

against capitalism. Since then the Labour Party and the White trade union movement have been junior partners in the White ruling class.

The principle of internationalism and socialist equality was kept alive however by another strain in the Labour movement; this made itself felt as an independent force during the first World War on the issue of the war itself. Starting with the "War on War League" (South Africa), the members of the Labour Party and their followers who opposed participation in the war, went on to establish in 1915 the International Socialist League as an independent party. Its subsequent development was greatly influenced by the Russian Revolution and the consequent spread of Marxist ideas. In 1921 the I.S.L. merged with a number of other radical socialist groups to form the Communist Party of South Africa. The Communist Party began as a predominently White organisation, and leaned heavily to the side of the White worker and his interest for instance in 1922 the Communists identified themselves with the struggle of the White miners even though the latter went on strike over the issue of the colour bar and the status of the African worker on the mines. The Communist Party however never abandoned its socialist objective and adherence to Marxism. It attracted growing numbers of Coloured, Indian and African workers and became the first genuine non-racial political party, wholly identified with the concept of a single common South African nation, organised under socialism and extending identical rights to all workers irrespective of race.

This combination of the doctrines of socialism and equality distinguished the Communist Party from such organisations as the A.N.C., A.P.O. or S.A. Indian National Congress. These too, as we have seen, espoused the cause of equality but not of socialism. They were, to use the phrase now commonly employed, "National movements", as distinguished from

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class organisations. They were opposed, not to private property, and exploitation, but to racial discrimination. Their aim was to achieve equality for their communities within the framework of a capitalist liberal order.

In the following discussion "communism" would be used to describe the organisation and ideas associated with that section of the labour movement which was identified with the doctrines and teachings of Marxism, and more particularly with the form of the Marxist doctrine adhered to by the International Communist movement. The term includes the Communist Party of S.A., but not the Labour Party, for it has never explicitly or indirectly espoused the doctrines of Marxism and International Communism.

The word "nationalism" will be used in contrast to describe the organisations and aspirations of Africans, Coloured and Indians through which they express their opposition to race discrimination and their goal of equality with the White section of the South African population. The term as used here is broadly equivalent to the phrase "national liberatory movement" or the "congress movement"; but it embraces political groups and tendencies that, though persuing the aim of equality might not at any one time co-operate with the "congresses" or some other section of the "national liberatory front". The All-African Convention and the Unity Movement are examples of nationalist bodies that do not form part of the congress movement.

On the other hand "nationalism" as here described must be sharply distinguished from "Afrikaner nationalism", the differences are widely understood and need not be persued here. It is sufficient to add that the use of "nationalism" without a qualificative, describes political movements and attitudes that correspond to the concept of "colonial nationalism" as widely employed today to define political agitation against

racial or cultural domination. It does not follow however that nationalist movements in South Africa have the same ambitions or follow the same methods as those associated with "Colonial nationalism".

The common purpose in communism and nationalism is the opposition to race or cultural domination and discrimination. Since such discrimination is one of the conspicuous features of the South African society it will be readily appreciated that communism and nationalism in spite of the important differences between them are likely to find numerous occasions for co-operation and the expression of similar ideas and aims. Similar or even identical formulations of policy do not necessarily result from deliberate and organised co-operation; they may result from independent reactions to social situations.

Communist and Nationalist spokesmen therefore tended to express similar notions and often used similar language without collusion since the early days of the period under discussion. For example, Dr. Abdurahman addressing the 10th National Conference of the A.P.O. in 1913 contrasted the "theoretical equality" of the old Cape Colony constitution with the position in the Northern colonies, where he said, "the history of the treatment of the Blacks north of the Orange River is one long and uninterrupted record of rapine and greed, without a solitary virtue to redeem the horrors which were committed in the name of civilisation .... cruelty and oppression amounting to serfdom were and still are the out-standing features of the Free State ... in the north the denial of civil right produced a state of virtual slavery and the recent denial of the complete enfranchisement of the Coloured people in the Union has similarly resulted in the passing of an Act - the Natives Land Act, which means nothing less of the partial enslavement of the races throughout the Union." He then proceeded to denounce the Act of Union as having sounded "the death-knell of political equality for the Coloured races."

He repeated his warning given in 1911 "that when Europeans were ready they would enter upon a war of extermination" and and declared that "a long list of tyrannical acts of persecution" pointed to "but one conclusion and that is that the Whites are determined at all hazards to repress all aspirations of the Coloured people for a higher life, to deny all opportunities for betterment, to keep them politically, civilly and industrially as slaves and even to force those who have risen back into a state worse than slavery". He described "the feeling of violent hostility" that had sprung up in the Coloured people, who he said, were "nursing a sullen revengeful humour of revolt against the White rule". (S.T. Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa, pages 134 - 140).

This lengthy quotation is intended to show two things. On the one hand, admittedly conservative Coloured leaders like Abdurahman brought up in the Cape tradition and atmosphere reacted strongly to the deterioration in the political and social status of the Coloured people that set in after Union. Secondly, strong and even violent language was used to denounce race discrmination many years before the communist expression of opposition made its impact.

Where common language is used by different organisations, the outsider is likely to assume that they share a common purpose and are jointly responsible for events that follow or seem to result from activities associated with the language used. An incident of this type took place in Johannesburg in 1919 when five leaders of the A.N.C. were prosecuted together with 3 members of the International Socialist League on a charge of having incited African municipal workers to strike. All accused were acquitted; but the significant feature of the trial for our present purpose is that evidence disclosed that while the members of both organisations had actively taken part in organising African wage earners and had actually assisted the strikers, neither organisation was directly responsible for the actual outbreak of the strike.

The so-called 'bucket strike' of 1919 marked the emergence of a new development. This was the beginning of modern industrial organisation among Africans who, though still migrant workers for the most part, had been sufficiently long in contact with urban life and European trade unionism to appreciate the advantages of organised action for the improvement of wages and conditions. This was not the only strike of Africans workers in the period of inflation and disturbance that followed the end of the war. The strike wave affected all sections of the urban working class and contributed to the rise of the first big African trade union, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union. (I.C.U.).

Beginning as a trade union with primarily economic objectives, the I.C.U. soon developed into an African mass political movement, including many coloured members in the Cape Province and establishing branches in large numbers of towns and even in rural areas.

The quick and wide support given to the I.C.U., especially in the Cape, revealed the desire in the African and Coloured masses for an active and militant organisation. that would take up their demands not only for higher wages but also for relief from pass laws and other colour laws. By 1925 the I.C.U. had become a mass movement of varied interests and political trends. The dominant element in the leadership was conservative and inclined to follow conciliatory and persuasive methods, but there was also a militant group led by Coloured and African members of the Communist Party whopressed for 'direct action' in the form of mass meetings, demonstrations, and strikes.

Friction between these two tendencies was accentuated by external pressure from the police, the political, religious and and humanitarian leaders who strengthened the preference of the conservative wing for a policy of caution and compromise. At a meeting of the National Council in 1926, Kadalie, founder of the I.C.U. and leader of the conservative faction, secured a slender majority for a resolution instructing the communists in the I.C.U. to resign from the Communist Party and facing them with expulsion from the I.C.U. if they refused so to resign.

This incident is of interest because it illustrated the latent and often expressed conflict between communists and nationalistx leaders in protest movements and organisations. More will be said later about this conflict.

The split in the I.C.U. marked the beginning of the organisation's decline. It continued to exist for several years, but only as a shadow of its former self. The organisation of trade unions among African, Coloured and Indian workers was undertaken from then onwards not by the I.C.U. but by individuals with a marked working class outlook, most of them inspired by communist ideals.

Unlike the I.C.U. which was a trades union taking in workers irrespective of their occupation, trade or industry, the new organisations were for particular industries or trades and conformed more closely to the modern idea of a trade union. The organisers regarded them as a class organisation with a predominantly economic function. They were seen as part of the trade union movement and not as part of the national movement as the I.C.U. had tended to be.

Consequently the tendency was to affiliate these newly formed trade unions of the Coloured, African and Indian workers to the S.A. Trades and Labour Council, the national trade union organisation, and from the 1930's onwards the delegates representing these unions, all of them consisting of operatives and semi-skilled workers in secondary industries, formed an increasing proportion of the Trades and Labour Council conferences. By the 1940's these unions had begun to play such an important part in the proceedings of the TLC that the more conservative section of that body representing the predominantly White artisan class attempted to consolidate their previously unquentioned control by introducing a card vote. At no stage, however, did the conservative wing seek the expulsion of the new unions either on grounds of colour or political affiliation.

The right of affiliation to the TLC was open also to African trade unions; few, however, did affiliate. One of the major obstacles was their poor financial state and the difficulty of paying affiliation fees. Also many African trade unionists did not feel at home at the TLC conferences , where English and European members predominated. Segregation tradition, particularly in the North, encouraged the formation of a separate 'non-European' trade union centre in the Transvaal. First in 1928, and then again in 1938, in spite of its name it consisted almost wholly of African trade unions.

In the mid-thirties, heretical organisations consisted of three racially orientated national organisations: the A.N.C., the APO and the S.A. T.C ; a non-racial working class party, the communists; a number of trade unions of African, Indian and Coloured workers led by men and women with national or communist tendencies.

By this time the CP had changed greatly since the first years of its existence. Instead of consisting mainly of White trade unionists and intellectuals, it was now largely non-European in membership. Instead of appealing as it had done in the early 1920's to the White workers for support, it now addressed itself mainly to the non-European and indeed mainly to the Africans. The adoption in 1928 of the Black Republic objective was a significant indication of this change. This development reflected two social tendencies: on the one hand was the change in the status of the skilled White worker, the miner and engineer and other similar groups which had been in frequent and acute conflict with employees and the state in earlier years. The victory of the Nationalist-Labour Pact government of 1924 had marked the absorption of this section of the workers into the ranks of the White ruking class. On the other hand, the process of industrialisation was producing a large non-European proletariat, a genuine African, Coloured and Indian working class which provided a base of action for both the socialists in the communist party and the nationalists in the congresses.

Although potentially competitive the communist party and the congresses seldom came into open conflict. First of all they differed not only in outlook but also in organisation and type of activity. The communists stood much closer to the type of political party that had been evolved in Europe, namely a party that attempted to keep its members active throughout the year by organising them in branches, and maintaining continous contact with the people. The congresses were more in the nature of annual conferences that met once a year to listen to speeches and adopt resolutions.

Secondly, both communists and congresses were weak and so far removed from the prospect of obtaining political power that there was ample room to exist side by side. Thirdly, they were threatened by the same dangers of political repression. Legislation such as the Hostility provision of the Native Administration Act of 1927, or Riotous Assemblies Amendment Act of 1930 was directed against congress, ICU and communist leaders. Communists like Bunting, Africans like Kadalie, and trade unionists like Solly Sachs, were all victims of one or other of these statutes.

As the discriminatory laws, passed by the Nationalists and later by the United Party government of the 1930's came before the people, an increasing need and opportunity arose for amity between the groups that were opposed to colour bar and racialism.

They were drawn together also by their common opposition to actions of Afrikaner nationalism, such as the adoption of the Union Flag Bill in 1928, which produced a joint demonstration in Cape Town on the part of the African National Congress and the communist party in Cape Town. The field of amity was widened on occasion to include the remnants of the Old Cape liberal tradition. The introduction of the Hertzog 'Native Bills' in 1926 gave rise to a long agitation on a broad front in which White liberals lie Sir James Rose-Innes participated as well as the congresses and the communists. The removal of Cape Africans from the common roll in 1936 had other consequences, which deserve closer attention.

The African National Congress had been the main mouthpiece of African opposition. The widespread opposition to the Hertzog (now Fusion Government) bills of 1935 inspired

an overwhelming desire for a still more representative and powerful medium of protest, and led to the summoning of a People's Convention in December 1935, attended by over 500 delegates from urban and rural areas throughout the Union, and even the High Commission territories. There followed in 1937 the formation of the All African Convention as a permanent co-ordinating body of African organisation whose office bearers included the leaders of the African National Congress such as Dr. Xuma, Dr Moroka and Prof. Matthews.

The founders of the Convention had no clear conception of its role or of its organisational form other than that it was to demonstrate vigorously the people's opposition to the Hertzog Bills. The preamble to the constitution adopted in 1937 stated that 'it is expedient in view of the situation created by the 'Native' policy of segrgation, discrimination and other repressive measures definitely adopted by the government and parliament of the Union of S.Africa, that the African races of S.Africa as a national entity and unit should henceforth speak with one voice, meet and act in all matters of natib nal concern.' The objects of the Convention, as described in the Constitution, did not present a positive account of the kind of society demanded by African aspirations . The Convention was merely a)'to act in unity in developing the political and economic power of the African people; b) to serve as a medium of expression of the united voice of the African people on all matters affecting their welfare; and c) to formulate and give effect to a national progress for the advancement and protection of the interests of the African people.'

~~Such~~ A positive programme was not framed until 1943, when the A.A.C. was revived and adopted what has come to be known as the "Ten Point Programme.'

The formation of the All African Convention was not of great immediate significance. It had been intended to bring together all African organisations - churches, sport clubs, welfare bodies as well as political - on the widest possible basis in protest against the abolition of the Africans' common franchise with other voters in the Cape. In effect, the All African Convention (A.A.C.) was doing the work that the A.N.C. had always claimed to do, namely represent the interests of Africans as a people. The participation by the A.N.C. in the conferences convened by the A.A.C. showed that the two bodies did not regard themselves as being in conflict. Indeed, in later years leaders of the A.A.C. were strenuously to claim that it was a federal body without individual members but embracing organisations of which the A.N.C. was one.

It is not necessary to examine in detail here the history of the A.A.C. or of its relation to other political organisations. Its failure to prevent the enactment of the Representation of Natives Act of 1936 and the compromising policy adopted by some of the leaders, especially Sabata Jabavu, in negotiations with the government, went far to discredit the organisation in the eyes of politically minded Africans. It was a subsequent development coming from an entirely different quarter that gave the A.A.C. a new lease of life and makes necessary its inclusion in this survey.

This development came about in the Cape in 1943 with the institution by the Smuts government of a Coloured Advisory Council and of a special section in the Department of Social Welfare for dealing with Coloured people, the forerunner of the present Coloured Affairs Department. The proposed separation of 'Coloured Affairs' from the general administration produced a violent

reaction in an important section of the Coloured population, particularly the teachers and students. They organised an 'anti- C.A.C' -- later known as the 'Anti- CAD' - campaign, the main target of the attack being the Coloureds who accented office in the Coloured Advisory Council, or who later collaborated with the Coloured Affairs Department.

These events had a twofold significance. On the one hand, they were ~~xxrtkyx~~ the result partly of a combination between two of the political tendencies in the heretical camp. One of these tendencies is commonly described as 'Trotskyist Socialism' because of the link between leaders of the 'Anti-CAD' movement and a 'Trotskyist' group that had come into existence in the early 1930's and then disintegrated soon after the outbreak of the war. Prominent members of this group, all of them Marxists in opposition to Stalinism and Soviet government policy became leaders of the 'Anti-CAD' ~~xx~~ movement and so brought about a fusion of a kind between their Marxist concepts and the other important political trend - the national and colour feelings of the non-European population.

These leaders were not content to limit their activities to the Coloureds. Their political outlook led them to the view that the Coloureds could not defend themselves unaided against segregation or race discrimination. They believed that the 'natural' allies of the Coloured were the oppressed Africans and also the Indians; and that it was the historical role of the Coloured intellectual to develop the consciousness of the African masses and organise them for political action. In effect the Coloured intellectual was beginning to play the part that had hitherto been filled by the White liberal or socialist.

For this purpose the leaders of the Anti-CAD attempted to put new life into the moribund All African Convention as a medium of communication with the African people. There resulted a long and often bitter rivalry between the AAC and the ANC, which was paralleled by a conflict between the Anti-CAD (subsequently merged in what came to be known as the Unity Movement) andthe communist party.

Two important things flowed from these events. One was the growth of sympathy an co-operation between the African National Congress andthe communist party. There were other conditions that contributed towards this state of co-operation. For instance the active part played by communist party branches and members in the anti-pass campaign organised by Congress in 1943-44 was the outcome of long established and firmly held communist policy regarding the pass laws. But there is no doubt that the activities of the Unity Movement (U.M.) - AAC combination fostered tendencies within the ANC that made it more sympathetic to communist party policies and methods.

A second notable consequence of AAC - U.M. activities was the 'boycott' weapon. The idea of 'boycott' was born during the attacks on the members of the Coloured Advisory Council; they were to be isolated, ostracised, placed in moral and social exile.

As a corollary, the Coloured people were told to have nothing to do with appointments and elections to the Coloured Advisory Council. This institution was to be boycotted.

Subsequently when the Unity Movement extended the field to include Africans, boycott was advocated also as a

weapon against the Native Representative Vouncil (NRC) on which sat prominent ANC members like Dr. Xuma, Dr. Moroka, and Prof. Matthews.

The boycott movement received a great impetus when the African members of the Native Representative Council adjourned in August 1946 for an indefinite period, the immediate occasion being the refusal of government representatives to allow a discussion on the African Mine Workers' strike and related government policies. At an emergency conference of Africans held under the auspices of the ANC in October 1946, and attended by 511 delegates, a resolution was adopted by 495 votes to 16 approving of the action taken by the NRC and calling upon the African people to boycott all elections under the Act and to struggle for full ~~x~~ citizen rights. This was followed by a similar resolution adopted by the ANC at its annual conference in December 1946, instructing the Executive Committee to conduct a nation-wide campaign for a 'boycott of all elections under the 1936 Act and a demand for representation on municipal councils, provincial councils , and parliament through a common franchise.'

By this action the ANC had in effect joined hands with the UM-AAC in the matter of the boycott. It is now necessary to examine the policy of the C.P. in this regard.

The Communist Party, with its non-racial membership and a tradition of a political struggle taken over from the international working class movement, had never identified itself with the boycott. The party regarded the boycott as a from of struggle and not a principle; it was to be applied or not according to circumstances. Generally influenced in the main by the writings of Lenin and other communist

theorists, the Party had always participated in elections, wherever possible, to such bodies as the advisory boards, municipal councils, the Native Representative Council, provincial council, parliament.

The collapse of the NRC and the adoption of the boycott by the ANC presented the Party, especially those of its members who belonged to the ANC, with the necessity of arriving at a decision on the matter. In January 1947 the C.P. national conference passed a resolution supporting the decision of the Bloemfontein ANC conference 'to boycott completely the farcical representations' under the Representation of Natives Act, and expressing the readiness of the Party 'to participate in ~~xxtxx~~ any active campaign to make this decision effective.'

The General Secretary of the Party, M.Kotane, pointed out at that time that the Party had 'for 10 years opposed the boycott and that its decision of Jan 1947 was one of supporting a decision taken by various representative African organisations' (Freedom, Sept.-Oct.-1947, pages 15-17).

The Party evidently did not regard itself as being firmly bound by its resolution, for in 1948 it nominated Sam Kahn as its official candidate in the election of a Native Representative in the Cape Western Division.

Another important form of political struggle adopted during the 1940's was the Passive Resistance movement by the Indians in Natal in 1946 against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. The strategy of 'passive resistance' was consciously derived from Gandhi's 'Satyagraha',so effectively employed in India and orinally evolved by Indians in South Africa. As a method of struggle it was alien to the traditional

techniques of European working class organisations and was regarded with mixed feelings of sympathy and doubt by the Communist Party. Among the leaders were some prominent Indian communists, and many Indian communists joined the resisters, but passive resistance as such was neither initiated nor organised by the Communist Party.

The Party, however, in addition to welcoming passive resistance, saw in it a method of struggle that could be applied widely by other sections of the population. 'The Passive Resistance Movement,' stated the central committee of the C.P. in August 1947, 'has performed a great service to South Africa by pointing the way for all non-European peoples towards active opposition to all oppressive and discriminatory legislation.'

In 1946 there occurred the strike of African miners on the Witwatersrand which resulted in conviction of members of the Johannesburg District Committee of the C.Pand the abortive prosecution of members of the Central Committee on a charge of sedition. These trials indirectly threw much light on the relationship between the Communist Party and the trade union movement. Communist Party policy regarding trade unions was closely scrutinised by the prosecution during the preparatory examination. This showed that members of the Communist Party played a prominent role in organising trade unions among the lower paid, largely non-White workers; but the prosecution failed to substantiate its assertion that the Communist Party as an organisation had determined the policy of individual unions, or had taken upon itself the responsibility of calling workers out on strike.

It is convenient at this stage to examine also the relationship between the Communist Party and the National organisations.

As has been emphasized in this memorandum, the C.P. found itself on common ground with the ANC and other national movements in the opposition to colour or race discrimination. Inevitably and as a matter of policy, attempts were frequently made to develop joint action, as on the occasion of the anti-pass campaignalready mentioned. Such events were often cited by opponents of the C.P. or the ANC to support allegations that the ANC was dominated by communists, just as in an earlier period the ICU had been accused of being 'communist'-dominated. For instance the AAC - U.M. group made this allegation a central feature of their campaign against the ANC. Dr. Xuma, the President of the ANC between 1940 and 1949 was accused of having'become a tool in the hands of the Communist Party'.(I.B. Tabata, The All African Convention,1950, page 129). Similarly, the Party was said to have instigated and controlled the boycott of the parliamentary by-election for the Native Representative in Transkei in 1947, and of the Indian Passive Resistance Movement 1946-47.

This is a distortion of the actual relationship. The C.P. was a political organisation entirely diffemnt in structure, method of work and aims from the national movement. It alone constitued a political party in the European working class tradition, that insisted upon continuous activity from its members, and a disciplined adherence to policy decisions. The primary purpose of the Party was to build itselt, and to establish itself as the leadership of the people to whom it directed its appeals. While co-operating,as has been explained

previously, with national organisations on particular issues, the Party retained its separate identity and formulated its politics in accordance with its own theories and principles.

The C.P. undoubtedly exercised a great influence on the national movements, both by its propaganda to the people at large and by the work of its members who belonged to such bodies as the ANC and the Indian National Congress. The latter were avowed, known communists who expressed and sought support for the party policy within the national organisations. These, however, were never appendages of the Communist Party, nor were they ever so regarded. They had a different structure and a diffe ent objective, and communists, recognising these differences, had no intention of converting them into 'communist front' organisations. In this respect the national movements stood in the same relationship to the C P.as did the trade unions that were led by individual communists.

In the national movements as in the trade unions the communists formed only a small minority of the membership and could carry communist policy only so far as they were able to persuade the majority. This was the position even in such organisations as the Natal Indian Congress where communist influence was at one time exceptionally evident.

The C P was at all times acutely conscious of the need to define its relationship with the national organisations. This topic was a perrenial one at C P conferences, which regularly adopted resolutions pledging support for the 'national liberatory movements'. Apart, however, from calling upon eligible members to join and be active in these bodies - an appeal similar to that which was made to workers in relation to their

trade unions - little was or could be done to give effect to such sympathetic resolutions. The C P never entertained the thought of giving financial or organisational support to these organisations.

Indeed, apart from the element of rivalry inevitable between organisations operating in the same field and appealing for allegiance to the same groups of people, the C P. was inclined to view the national organisations from the standpoint of communist theory as worked out by Lenin, Stalin and other Marxists theorists. According to these concepts, a 'national' movement was essentially dominated by the 'bourgeoisie' who would lead it along progressive lines only in so far as these coincided withits own class interests, which were inherently different from the conflict with the basic interests of the working class.(For a comprehensive survey of communist attitudes towards national organisations see the Report of the Central Committee to the National Conference of the C P Jan.1950)

The dissolution of the C P. in 1950 in anticipation of the enactment of the Suppression of Communism Act brought about a significant change in the political heretical camp. From then onwards there was no Marxist party in the political field. Indeed, there was no working class party pursuing an avowed socialist objective and basing its outlook on the recognition of irreconcilable class differences in the society. The field was occupied wholly by national organisations , and later, after the formation of the liberal party, by a non-racial organisation that accepted the ideal of equality before the law for persons of all races, but within the framework of a capitalist class society.

Before discussing the ideological and organisational consequences of this development, we should look briefly at some of the political events of 1950 and 1951. It is perhaps hardly necessary to point out that the decisions and actions here outlined were taken in a continuous process of interaction between legislative or administrative policies and opposition groups, which constantly adopted new forms of struggle and protest in response to new pieces of apartheid legislation or attempts by the adminstration to counteract the campaigns and activities on the part of the extra parliamentary opposition.

When for instance the government announced in January 1949 that it intended to abolish the NRC, members of the Nrc, including such moderates as Selope Thema, were stung into threatening non-cooperation. 'We cannot', he declared,'cooperate with a people which tramples on us.' Dr. Moroka, who was to be elected President General of the ANC in December of the same year, told government representatives:'We want nothing less than complete equality.'

Shortly after the meeting of the NRC, Africans in Durban attacked Indians and inflicted heavy damage on life and property. This critical evidence of deep-seated animosities among Africans towards the Indians produced a conscious and serious desire on the part of leaders of both communities to bring about goodwill through active cooperation. The executive committees of the NAC and SA.I.C. issued joint statements on the need for unity and undertook to present evidence jointly to the judicial commission that enquired into the riots.

Repressive government policies and an extension of discriminatory practices and legislation caused reactions in

the national organisations that added appreciably to the state of tension and set up repercussions in a number of directions; for instance, bans placed on well-known political leaders such as Sam Kahn & Yussuf Dadoo in 1949 from addressing political meetings in specified areas, the introduction of post-office apartheid in Cape Town and apartheid on the Johannesburg railway station. A movement in the Trades and Labour Council to exclude African trade unions had the effect of arousing mass protests and accentuating inter-group conflicts. The Prime Minister's announcement in September 1949 that action would be taken to remove Coloured voters from the common roll had the same kind of response that resulted from the attacks during the 1930's on the African vote. In April of that year the NAC and AAC renewed their efforts to find a basis for unity; in June the Natal Indian Congress called for a united democratic front against apartheid; and in December the ANC annual conference decided interalia on a one day general strike of Africans at some future date in protest against apartheid, white domination and non-collaboration. This decision was adopted under pressure from representatives of the Congress Youth League and against the advice of the President General Dr. Xuma. He was unseated as a result of his stand, and Dr. Moroka, who pledged support for the boycott, was elected in his stead.

The widespread desire for united action against government bans on political leaders and threats against organisations was reflected in the holding of a 'free speech convention' in Johannesburg in March 1950 under the joint auspices of the Tvl ANC, the Indian Congress, the APO and the CP. The gathering adopted a resolution calling for a national convention later in the year and declaring that May 1st.

would be celebrated as 'Freedom Day', when people would be asked to demonstrate everywhere against pass laws, for full franchise and repeal of colour-bar laws.

Eighteen Africans died in clashes with the police on the Rand on May 1st. The ANC executive meeting at Thaba 'Nchu in the same month decided on a national day of protest against the attacks on civil liberties and as a day of mourning for 'all the Africans who have lost their lives in the struggle for liberation.' June 26th was eventually nominated and observed as the day of protest.

It was organised by a coordinating committee including representatives of the ANC, SA.I.C, the APO and the C.P. Its main target was the Suppression of Communism Bill which had been published originally under the name of the Unlawful Organisations Bill, and against the Group Areas Bill, both introduced in Parliament during May.

Protests against these Bills were not confined to the organisations mentioned but were voiced also by the Civil Rights Cape Town, the Students' Liberal Association of the Witwatersrand, the Trades and Labour Council of the Cape Indian Congress, the Tvl Council of NE Trade Unions, and the Youth League of the ANC.

The Suppression of Communism had passed the third reading and the Communist Party had dissolved itself ~~kmmfw~~ before June 26th. By then, however, the issues involved were recognised by many people far removed from communism as affecting all persons who opposed race domination and accepted the idea of equality for South Africans irrespective of colour. Mrs Ballinger told a conference of Advisory Boards

from Reef towns in August 1950, regarding the threat to remove Sam Kahn from Parliament that 'today we are threatened people. The Europeans have a citizenship which is no longer secure. The Europeans had freedom of speech. Now no longer. The government have given us common things to fight for.' Moroka, opening a conference of AA.I.C in September denied that Africans wished to see the repatriation of Indians and claimed that Africans wanted freedom for all races on the basis of equal rights and mutual respect.

In Capetown a number of trade unions representing almost exclusively Coloured and African workers took the initiative in October in launching a protest against the threat to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll.

At about the same time the liquidator appointed under the Suppression of Communism Act sent 'naming' letters to hundreds of ex-members and supporters of the C.P.. In November the offices of the Guardian newspaper throughout the country were raided under an authority issued in terms of the Suppressions of Communist Act. In December the African members of the NRC summoned at the instance of Sen.Verwoerd to explore the possibility of a compromise, decided to adjourn indefinitely, and two leading members of the ANC, Dr.Moroka and Prof.Matthews, told the annual conference of the Congress that they had tendered their resignations from the NRC. In his presidential address Dr. Morkoa said,'In 1949 the African people decided on the road of non-collaboration.....by this they signified their rejection of white baasskap and their resolve to rally the people to their own institutions and popular liberatory movements.

The year 1951 opened with the formation in Capetown

of the Franchise Action Council, consisting of representatives of the APO. ANC, Cape Indian Congress and individuals who included some named under the Suppression of Communism Act, to organise opposition to the removal of Coloured voters from the common roll. Once again an attack on the franchise was proving to be the lever that of different political tendencies into common action.

A similar effect resulted from action taken by the government that foreshadowed attempts to suppress the Guardian. Freedom of the Press Conference, embracing a wide front of liberals, labour unionists, members of Churches, trade unionists and municipal councillors was held to discuss ways and means.

In February a FRAC conference was addressed by Pres. Moroka of the ANC, Pres. Dadoo of the SA I C, and Pres. Rabin of the A.P.O. In the same week the Tvl ANC, APO and SA.I.C. agreed to cooperate with the Tvl. Peace Committee under the chairmanship of Rev. Thompson to sponsor the Peace Conference.

FRAC branches and committees were set up throughout the Cape Province. At a conference held in April a decision was taken to call on the people to stage a 'political strike' on May 7th.

In May in addition to the strike there had also occurred a national protest organised by ex-servicemen in a movement known as the Torch Commando against the Representation of non-Europeans/Voters Bill, culminating in demonstrations outside parliament and serious clashes with the police.

In the following month Luthuli was elected president of the Natal ANC, while the FRAC conference in Capetown resolved 'to carry on the struggle for votes for all and to press for the early achievement of united concerted action by national organisations with a view to a nation wide resistance and struggle against the entire apartheid system.'

This proposal was reechoed shortly after by the National Executive Committee of the ANC meeting when parliament had before it the Bantu Authorities Bill. The ANC decided to invite other national organisations to discuss a civil disobedience campaign and general strike against oppressive policies and laws, in particular pass laws, Stock limitation, Group Areas Act, and Separate Representation Act. Thiw was followed in August by a joint conference, convened by the ANC and attended by representatives of the SAIC and FRAC to plan a mass campaign for the repeal of these laws and also the Suppression of Communism Act and the Bantu Authorities Act.

The year closed with the holding of a conference in the Transvaal to protest against the threatened ban on the Guardian; the launching of a campaign by Natal Indians against the Group Areas Act, and the adoption by the annual ANC Conference of a report proposing the defiance of unjust laws as recommended by the Joint Planning Council of the ANC and SA.I.C. In January 1952 the SAIC similarly adopted the same report.

The campaign to defend the Guardian was taken a stage further by large conferences held in Capetown and Johannesburg on freedom of the press and attended by persons of varying political views.

This intense political activity on the part of the

extra-parliamentary opposition was stimulated further by new acts of the government such as the introduction in February of the Native Laws Amendment Bill to tighten up the urban pass laws, a statement by the Minister of Justice that he would proceed to have Kahn and Carneson unseated, and a letter to the ANC rejecting its demand for the repeal of the discriminating laws. In March the ANC and SAIC announced that April 6th (the day on which the tercentenary of Van Riebeeck's landing was to be celebrated), would be turned into a day of protest. In the same month the Appellate Division ruled that the Separate Representation of Voters Act was invalid, and FRAC pledged its support for the defiance campaign. Similar pledges were given by large crowds at meetings held on April 6th . In the following weeks leaders of the ANC and SA.I.C outlined tentative proposals for the definance of unjust laws campaign.

In May the government banned the Guardian; Kahn and Carneson were expelled from parliament and Provincial Council; Kotane, Dadoo, Bopape, Harmel, and Solly Sachs and others were served with notices under the Suppression of Communism Act calling them to resign from organisations and prohibiting them from attending gatherings.

Resistance soon followed. A new paper, the Clarion, was issued in Capetown to take the place of the Guardian. Five leaders - Dadoo, Kotane, Marks, Bopape, and Nguewela- announced that they would defy the Minister's bans; Harmel, of the Transvaal Peace Council, and Solly Sachs follwed suit; and the executives committees of the ANC and S.A.I.C. at a joint conference in Port Elizabeth announced that the defiance of unjust laws campaign would begin on June 26th.

Defiance campaign began as scheduled on June 26th. Its

subsequent course will not be dealt with here except in so far as necessary to throw light on other events that are significant for our survey. The preceding resume will have shown that the decisions regarding the campaign had been taken after a long period of action and interaction, and that the ground for the campaign had been prepared by long ~~series~~ series of political events involving all sections of the non-European people. It will have been noticed in particular that the defiance campaign had been preceded by close and continuous cooperation between the ANC and SAIC, together with organisations representing the Coloured people, over a period of time that began long before the dissolution of the Communist Party.

On August 26 th a preparatory examination was opened of Moroka, Dadoo, and 18 other leaders of the ANC and SAIC and trade unions on a charge of contravening the Suppression of Communism Act. In September 14 prominent members of the ANC and Indian Congress in the Eastern Cape were arrested on a similar charge.

Race riots in Port Elizabeth on October 18th revealed the high tension that developed in the Eastern Cape. The ANC leadership, in a statement condemning the use of violence, placed the blame on the police and called for a judicial commission of inquiry. Following the P.E.'s City Council's request for a curfew and ban on meetings, Africans in P.E. came out in a general strike of protest. In the same week Bunting was elected to Parliament to fill the seat from which Kahn had been expelled.

The defiance campaign proceeded unabated. As the num-

number of defiers increased in different parts of the country the White population showed a growing awareness of the conflict and the deterioration in relationships between White and non-White communities. Those Europeans who accepted the concept of equality in some form or other took steps to demonstrate their sympathy with non-Europeans and their desire for action to alleviate grievances. A manifesto issued by 20 leading liberals in October foreshadowed the formation of a Liberal Party on the basis of the principle 'equal rights for all civilised men; the Labour Party appealed to the government to abandon its present attitude of unyielding authority; and 200 Europeans met in Johannesburg in November in response to an invitation from the National Action Committee of the ANC and SAIC to consider how to demonstrate European sympathy for non-European aspirations. Non-European leaders told the gathering that their people were dismayed at the silence of European democrats on the issues involved in the defiance campaign and were rapidly reaching the conclusion that all Whites were hostile to them. Only positive demonstration of support for the non-Europeans could prevent the situation from being transformed into a racial struggle. The gathering agreed to form an organisation to mobilise support for the abolition of discriminatory laws and for equal rights for all South Africans. There followed action to recruit Europeans to take part as volunteers in the defiance campaign.

The 40th annual conference of the ANC held in Johannesburg in December 1952 had been preceded by banning notices served on 52 members of the organisation in the Eastern Province, and on 6 members of the National Executive, and a proclamation prohibiting meetings of more than 10 Africans.

The conference elected Luthuli as the new president and delegated extraordinary powers to the National Executive Committee to take such action as it might think necessary to continue the struggle in any shape or form.

Early in the new year Europeans in Johannesburg, acting in accordance with the decision taken at the meeting convened in November by the ANC-SAIC, formed an organisation called the S.A. People's Congress with a constitution that rejected segregation and White supremacy and adopted the aims of equal civil liberties and rights for all persons.

The introduction of the Public Safety Bill and Criminal Laws Amendment Bill at about the same time put a term to the defiance campaign, and presented the national organisations with the problem of finding a new method of demonstrating opposition to segregation policies. Sizulu, Secretary General of the ANC, called for 'a great extra-parliamentary struggle to save democracy.' This was followed by an appeal by Kotane for ' a mass struggle'of the people outside parliament against the bills. A non-European conference under the auspices of the African and Indian congresses held in Johannesburg decided on a day protest strike and the intensification of the defiance campaign.

A conference of trade unionists, congress leaders in Capetown, convened to discuss the bills took the first steps in the formation of an organisation later known as the Democratic League to defend civil liberties. Protest also came from the Trades and Labour Council, which however rejected the proposal for a one day strike put before an emergency conference held in February.

On the eve of the general election in 1953, the extra-parliamentary opposition, it will be noticed, had widened considerably, but it had also been pushed on the defensive both by police action and ministerial interdicts against leading members of organisations and by new legislation intended to impose severe penalties on persons who violated the law for purposes of political protest. For a time attention was focussed on the elections. These resulted in an increased majority for the nationalist government and were followed by renewed activity on the extra-parliamentary front.

The executives of the ANC and SAIC and FRAC, meeting to discuss the election results, noted that it demonstrated the support of the White voters for a policy of White supremacy. The meeting, addressing itself to the non-White peoples, urged them to demonstrate their resentment ato White supremacy and apartheid, and to make the policy of apartheid unworkable in all spheres. It further called on those Europeans who still treasured freedom and democratic traditions to join the non-White people's struggle for 'fundamental rights.' The Congresses did not at this meeting decide on a specific type of action. Individual leaders such as Luthuli declared that the work of Congress would go on and would not be hindered by government repression. They stated that their objective was the defeat of the Nationalist government, but they gave no indication as to the nature of organisational steps to be taken to achieve this end.

A decline ensued in the range and intensity of political activity, arrested by such events as the threatened removal of Africans from the Western Areas, a new spate of

banning notices, police raids in June on Congress offices and the homes of individuals under warrants that specified treason, sedition, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Laws Amendment Act. June 26th, though declared a national day of dedication to freedom, passed quietly, in marked contrast to the manner of commemoration in previous years.

Renewed attempts on the part of the government to remove the Coloured voters from the communal roll once again stimulated political protest in the Coloured community in the Cape during July 1953. In the same month the Liberal Party held its first conference and declared its faith in a common citizenship for all South Africans, and its intention to win the confidence and support of the non-European people. For the first time since the dissolution of the CP a political party had been formed on a non-racial basis with membership open to all persons regardless of colour. Significantly, however, this new non-racial organisation represented a deliberate attempt to revive the traditions of the old Cape liberalism and seek equality within the framework of capitalist society. It was explicitly opposed to Marxist socialism and in open opposition to the kind of equality conceived by Marxian socialism. The events that had made the existence of the latter a legal impossibility had at the same time contributed directly to the re-emergence of this other and older form of heresy.

1953

The altered condition of political actions as fixed by government and parliament inevitably affected also the perspectives and modus operandi of the Congresses, and allied organisations. There could be no revival of the defiance campaign or any other form of action such as passive resistance and boycott, where these entailed a breach of law. The leadersof the extra-parliamentary opposition were compelled by their own

traditions, habits of thought, the nature of their organisations and the state of mind of the people to express their opposition to government policy by methods that would conform to legal requirements. It is out of this situation that new organisations were developed and that the congress of the people emerged.

The process of interaction between popular movements and the administration continued to shape the immediate course of events, or rather to determine the form in which underlying trends manifested themselves. In July 1953, for instance, an increase in bread prices produced a sharp reaction, particularly among women, and led to a campaign that succeeded in securing a concession from the government. This incident was to contribute to the formation of the Federation of South African Women in April,1954.

1953

In August the Minister of Labour introduced the Native Labour Settlement of Disputes Bill. At about the same time the government began to carry out its policy of removing 'named' trade union officials from office. Both happenings subsequently played an important role in the divisions that occurred within the trade union movement and led to the formation of the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, (SACTU) in March, 1955.

1953

The renewed attack on the Coloured franchise, produced, as previously, a sharp reaction in the Cape, where a people's convention met in August to form a national organisation under the leadership of well-known liberals and trade unionists such as Dr.v.d.Ross, Edgar Dean, S.Rahim, as well as trade representatives of FRAC, now merged in a new body given the name of S.A.Colboured People's Organisation (SACPO) under a constitution adopted Saturday 12th September.

1953 This was followed in October by the formation of the South African Congress of Democrats (COD) established in Johannesburg at a conference convened by Capetown Democratic League, the Johannesburg Congress of Democrats (previously known as S.A.People's Congress) and the Springbok Legion. The new organisation based its programme on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and set itself the aim of securing 'for all South Africans, regardless of race, creed or colour, equal civil liberties, equal political rights, equal economic opportunities, and equal social status'. The founders of COD intended from the outset to recruit its members from the European population and create sympathy among them for the aims and struggles of the Congresses. The representative of the SAIC told the conference that 'we look to the new organisation to forge bonds of democratic unity between Europeans and non-Europeans.'

COD, like SACPC, was significant of a new development in the extra-parliamentary opposition. Coloured and European communities were to have their own 'national' organisations, parallel to those of Africans and Indians, and working in close cooperation with them,but nevertheless retaining their separate identities. This was a type of organisation deliberately adopted in preference to the non-racial type preferred by the Liberal Party and characteristic of the dissolved Communist Party. This new organisational form represented a complete breaking away from the traditional structure and aims of Marxian socialism. Also in August the first peace conference meeting in Johannesburg established the S.A.Peace Council with the Rev. Thompson, one of the founders of the S.A. Peace movement, as its president and leaders of the Labour Party, ANC, SAIC among its vice-presidents.

1953

1953

The emphasis on inter-racial action in defence of civil liberties and against discrimination was maintained by Luthuli, then banned from moving outside his home district, in a presidential address to the Natal Provincial Conference of the ANC. He appealed for a strengthening of the 'African front by the unification of the African tribes under the banner of African nationalism', and the creation 'of a strong multi-racial of all freedom loving people in South Africa.

The announcement by the Appellate Division in December that it had quashed the conviction against Johnson Ngwevela, convicted at Capetown for defying the ban on attending public gatherings, brought temporary respite to many scores of banned leaders, and produced a significant revival in political activity. Mass rallies organised throughout the country heard speeches from men and women previously prevented by the bans from attending public meetings, and formed a prelude to the 41st annual conference of the ANC in Queenstown on December 18th. The conference was addressed by the presidents of COD and the SAIC and by a representative of the Liberal Party, all of whom emphasised the unity between their communities and the African people in the common struggle.

Conference instructed the Executive to formulate a Freedom Charter and for this purpose to convene a national conference of progressive bodies and individuals to plan 'a new South Africa.' This was the genesis of the Congress of the People (C.O.P.)

The idea of calling a 'multi-racial' conference was evidently in the air, for towards the end of 1953 the Institute of Race Relations had indicated an intention to hold a national conference representing 'all the peoples of South Sfrica' to review and analyse the position of the non-Europeans. The Congresses evidently felt that their proposal might overlap with that of the Institute for the SAIC wrote to Institute in January asking it to abandon its idea at that time 'thus avoiding any possible confusion and misunderstanding.'

It is not clear what the Congress leaders had in mind when they suggested the summoning of a People's Congress, but at any rate in the early stage their intention appears to have been to focus the widest possible attention on the deterioration in race-relations, opposition to government segregation measures, the restriction of civil liberties and the aspirations of the non-European people. It is perhaps not far off the mark to say that initially the proposed conference was to have fulfilled the rold played in 1956 by the Interdenominational Ministers Conference and in 1957 by the Multi-racial Conference.

While the plan for the COP was endorsed by the different Congresses early in 1954, it was not till May of that year that the project was given a definite organisational shape. The executives of the ANC, SAIC, and COD adopted 'the call to the people of South Africa, Black and White! in which all and sundry were invitied to contribute their ideas (the phrase used was 'submit their demands) for the Freedom Charter as 'the first phase of the Congress of the People.'

The nature of this appeal leads one to suppose that the organisers at this stage had extrenely vague ideas as to

what the proposed Congress was to be or do. The invitation to 'submit demands' had the effect of transferring the initiative and even the formation of policy to the rank and file; they were to decide what the next stage in 'the struggle for equality' was to be. Congress leaders painstakingly affirmed the legality of their intentions and actions, as on the occasion when Sisulu, on behalf of the ANC, in July 1954 challenged the accuracy of statements by the Police Commissioner that the Congresses were controlled by ' a communist dominated master planning council'.

Detailed plans issued in August for a campaign leading to the Congress showed firstly that attempts were being made to widen the basis. In addition to ANC, SAIC C6D representatives of SACPO and also observers from the Liberal Party attended the joint meeting. Secondly, the organisational steps outlined were almost wholly concerned with propaganda designed to arouse enthusiasm for the project. For this purpose the Congressed appealed for 'volunteers' to take the message of the Congress into 'factories, streets, churches, sporting and cultural clubs'.

In a message preceding the holding of the ANC national conference, Luthuli in November referred to 'the confusion that had arisen between the tasks of these volunteers and the volunteers of the deficance campaign'. The latter, he pointed out, had been terminated; the volunteers now called for were not to defy the law but to enlist support for the COP and arouse opposition against apartheid. These were separate but interrelated tasks. Congress, he added, 'is still a legal body and it is no offence in law to be its member'.

The whole approach surely indicated the desire to widen the scope of activities and at the same time to make them more popular - to eliminate, that is to say, any element of illegality, any suggestion of a ' threat' to the administration. In fact, any feature that would give the police an occasion for adopting repressive measures. The very scale of the operation as conceived by those that planned it was inconsistent with a repetition of the clashes and turmoil characteristic of the defiance campaign.

It must be borne in mind that at about the same time under discussion many political groups and individuals outside the congress movement were drawn into collaboration against specefic aspects of government policy. For instance, members of such widely different organisations as the Torch Commando, Labour Party, Liberal Party, and Federal Party, found it possible to meet with members of COD to plan a campaign against the Resettlement of Natives Bill and the proposed removals from the Western Areas. Under the conditions then prevailing barriers were being down between different sections of the opposition, but this was possible only because of the readiness of the 'Left' to adopt methods of struggle and objectives that were acceptavle to more conseirvztive views.

Close and continuous association between these diverse political views was bound to bring about a certain pooling of ideas, arms, and even language. If the Left was affected in organisation and outlook, so did it in turn transmit some ot its own concepts to the others engaged in the common enterprise. One is struck by frequent use at about this time by Congress leaders of phrases and even methods of analysis that hadpreviously been characteristic of socialists and communists. Sisulu, back from a visit to Europe and Asia, told a meeting

Alexandra Township in February 1954, that they were pledged to oppose 'tyranny and fascism'. In the same week the ANC issued a statement describing the session of parliament then in process as one ' devoted mainly to an attempt on the part of the government to consolidate its fascist power by legislative means', and described the Nationalists Party's programme as 'the prgramme and techniques of the German Nazis adapted to South African conditions'.

The sequence of events does not disclose the existence of a comprehensive long term programmedadopted by Congress leaders to guide the extra-perliamentary opposition along clearly defined channels. On the contrary, the observer is forced to conclude that particular projects campaign formulations of poliy even organisational developments, were invented and initiated as expedient under a constantly changing set of conditions, and represented a series of adaptations. Indeed some of the organisations associated with the Congress movement came into existence independently of it, and acquired their own momentum.

This organisation has already been mentioned in connection with a protest made in 1953 against increased bread prices. The contributory factors operated earlier and on a wider range than this particular incident. Women had been drawn into political activity in large numbers during the passive resistance movement of 1946. in Natal, and later in the defiance campaign. Hundreds of Indian, African and Coloured women with little or no previous experience of political activity had been made acutely aware of the powerful currents agitating their communities.

This growth of consciousness gained stimulus and strength from similar trends among women in other countries such as India,

China, France, and Eastern Europe, where great social changes were having the effect of transforming the lives of millions of women, drawing them into the stream of social and economic processes outside the home and investing them for the first time with political rights. These developments were crystallised in the formation in the Women's International Democratic Federation (W.I.D.F.),in the active participation of women in the peace movement and the role played by women in international organisations such as the United Nations.

A more immediate incentive to organise women in South came fromlegislative and administrative measures to extend the pass law restrictions to women. The African Women's Association meeting in Durban in February 1954 protested against the issue of identity cards under the Population Registration Act; and askd for the repeal of the disabilities imposed on women by the Natal Native Code. Women in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, shortly afterwards tore up and burnt their location permits. Women of all races meeting in Johannesb rg on April 17th, 1954, representing a wide variety of organisatio ns throughout the Union, adopted a charter of women's rights and agreed to form a new organisation of South African Women's organisations.

D^elegates from the various congresses aswell as from trade unions, churches and other bodies, participated; but the venture was not started by the congresses, nor did they organise the conference. Indeed, prominent members of the ANC were inclined to view the new body with doubt and see in it a ~~possible~~ potential competition.

The mass demonstration of women at Pretoria during

October, 1955, to present to members of the Cabinet a petition against passes for women and other legislation , in conformity with resolutions adopted at the inaugural conferencex , played a part in gaining approval for the Federation amongst members of the ANC.

In January, 1956,however, the ANC itself called for a campaign against the extension of pass-laws to women then contemplated by the administration in the introduction of the reference book system. But it was the Federation of S.A. Women that undertook the planning and execution of the second great demonstration of women in Pretoria in August, 1956.

Care wasstaken by sponsors and leaders of the Federation to avoid any appearance of rivalry with the Congresse. No provision was made in the constitution for individual members, since leaders of the ANC Women's League insisted that there should be no attempt to draw their members away into the new organisation. It therefore has remained a federal body, operating through its affiliated organisations, and therefore bound to act in conformity with their policies and methods of work.

The formation of the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) also resulted from events that took place outside the immediate orbit of the Congresses. The galvanizing agencies were the offensive of the government against trade union leaders and the reaction of the trade unions to this policy. Following the banning of 'named' officials previously referred to, the government introduced ~~the~~ its Industrial Conciliation Bill, with provisions for the compulsory segregation of wage earners into racial groups. While the great majority of trade unions showed great opposition to these measures they

were instrumental in maturing splitting tendencies that had been manifested for a considerable period. Protesting trade unions met in separate trade union conferences during May,1954. One of these, summoned by a joint committee representing the S.A.Trades and Labour Council and the Federation of S.A.Trade Unions excluded non-registered , namely African unions. These met separately together with some registered trade unions under the auspices of the Transvaal Council of N.E. trade unions.

This division foreshadowed a split that was to become permanent. The Trades and Labour Council dissolved itself in October, 1954, and a new organisation known as the S.A. Trade Union Council (S.A.T.U.C.) with a constitution that limited membership to registered trade unions. This step, taken after many years of conflict over the non-racial character of the Council, produced a strong reaction amongst those unions that were opposed to the adoption of a colour bar. Fourteen of them declared their intention of setting up a separate non-racial trade union centre. The new body, known as the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, was set up in March, 1955.

The antecedent of its constitution and programme showed that it began not as a political but as a trade union organisation with the aim of espousing the principle of non-racial coordination that had previously been a characteristic feature of the dominant national trade union centres. Its overwhelming non-European membership, the absence of any large body of skilled higher paid workers, the restrictions imposed upon Africans by the industrial legislation, the handicaps suffered by all non-European workers and the artisan group - all these factors, however, combined to give SACTU a much more pronounced political slant than other similar trade union bodies possessed. The principle 'no politics in the trade unions'

that had become the unofficial motto of the SATUC and SAF of TU, was ruled out for SACTU by the circumstances in which it operated. It is therefore not surprising that the first conference expressed its sympathy with the COP and the incorperation of workers' demands in the Freedom Charter.

The future historian is likely to reach a similar conclusion regarding other organisations, decisions and events surveyed in this memorandum. They do not reveal the signs of a central plan or master planner, chartering a course in advance and steering the Congresses and their associated bodies along defined paths in accordance with a definite if undisclosed scheme. The net work of organisations and campaigns was rather the result of a continual process of improvisation and adaptation to meet new situations, many of these being imposed from without by state policy and activity.

It is evident even from this cursory outline of events that the congresses moved steadily away from the drastic methods represented by the defiance Campaign, the general strikes and pass burnings, of the earlier period to the relatively mild type of demonstration of opposition represented by the multi-racial conference of December, 1957. The determining factor in this process was the nature of the legal framework within which the extra-parliamentary opposition was defined. The desire to operate within the law was shared by all sections including those persons who represented the remnants of the communist party and the Marxist tradition.

In conclusion, therefore, one might say that it was the traditional aims and policies of the Congress movement

adapted to new conditions and changed to a long period of intensive social conflict that eventually dominate the extra-parliamentary struggle. It is not the ex-communists who 'captured' the Congress movement; it is rather the Congress movement that absorbed and set the pace for the ex-communist. In the last resort all heretics have limited their claims to the conception of equality as understood by nineteenth century liberalism; equality before the law for persons of all races within the framework of a class soceity.

Methods, as well as aims, reveal a steady shifting away Communist concepts. Passive resistance and boycott, as we have seen, were invented by non-Communists, and indeed, were regarded with some doubt by the C.P. The Defiance Campaign of 1952-3 may be said to have combined features of both passive resistance and boycott; and certainly was not characteristic of communist techniques. After Defiance had come to an end, the Congresses , persistently adapting themselves to legal requirements, adhered rigidly to forms of political action, such as meetings, demonstrations, petitions, and conferences, that are common to all political movements, including the staunchest defenders of existing institutions.

30.1.1958.