parents and educationists and an appropriate form of consultation with senior students. This should be reflected in the role the profession plays in the design and control of education and in a new realization that teaching depends on the educator as an autonomous, competent and responsible professional, someone whose promotion, for instance, should not depend on his deference to authority and someone whose initiative should not be undermined by bureaucratic directives. Only if this condition is met will there be a real decentralization of control and the desirable degree of variety and experimentation.

OUR ATTITUDE TO OTHER TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS:

The ideal would be for them to establish a single professional body, but not in the form of a federation of bodies which would perpetuate the divisions between us and continue to weaken the profession. Could they but decide to they could establish the body we need in a very short time. If some of them decide to we will have a strong professional body and our National Convention on Education that much sooner.□

ORGANISED BLACK POLITICAL RESISTANCE 1912–1950.

PART 2 1930 - 1950

from a talk to NUSAS by Tom Lodge

(Part 1, 1912 - 1930, was published in REALITY vol 13 no 2 March 1981)

The 1930s was a decade when both the ANC and the CPSA reached the lowest point in their influence. The Communists, from being the best organised, most militant grouping active amongst black South Africans, were to lose much of their popular following. This was partly a consequence of the sytematic policy of harassment pursued by the state, and particularly the Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow, but the Communist decline was not simply a result of more energetic repression. From 1933, with the ascendency of Nazism in Germany, Communist parties throughout the world in conformity with the advice of the Communist International formed so-called 'popular front' alliances with reformist anti-fascist groupings. In South Africa, confronted with the attempts by Afrikaner nationalist forces to capture the white Labour Movement, Communists from the mid-thirties concentrated on combating what they perceived to be fascist tendencies amongst white workers. An all-white 'Peoples Front' was established and tacit support offered to the Labour Party. Symptomatic of their approach was a pamphlet addressed to white workers entitled 'Communism and the Native Question'. Part of it read:

> 'If the Kaffir Boetie jibe doesn't get home, such people will follow up with the shameless assertion that it will end up by all the races getting mixed up and 'How would you like your sister to marry a native?'. This sort of talk shows a great want of confidence in South African women and is a cheap and unworthy insult to them. It overlooks the fact that neither race **wants** to mix with the other. Where racial intercourse (sic) does take place, it is largely due to the poverty and backwardness of the native women which leaves them without self-respect'[28]

Party newspapers carried less African news, and according to the memories of some of its African members, increasingly they felt that with its strivings for a particular type of respectability it was no longer **their** party[29]. Revival was only to come slowly with the transfer of the party's headquarters to Cape Town in 1937 and its reintegration into the Cape radical tradition which had begun amongst African and coloured workers a decade earlier[30].

Meanwhile an ever-shrinking Congress floundered its way through the 1930s. Under the leadership of Pixley ka Izaka Seme tensions between different leadership cliques increased and Congress's popular impact dwindled. Seme's approach and the reason for Congress's decline are apparent in this quotation from an article written by him in 1932:

> I wish to urge our educated young men and women not to lose contact with your own chiefs. You should make your chiefs and your tribal Councils feel that education is a really good thing. It does not spoil their people nor detribalise them. Most of the miseries which our people suffer in the towns and the country today is

due to this one factor, no confidence between the educated classes and their own uneducated people. The former cannot open any business relations amongst the latter and get good support because to be able to establish a business anywhere you want confidence. The Indian trader succeeds because he makes friends with all classes and ever tries to win their confidence. You should try and do likewise. . . . Congress can make us learn how to produce our own wants as a nation. We can learn to grow cotton and wool and make our own leather boots and blankets in our factories . . .[31]

As well as reflecting the increasing difficulty the ANC was having in maintaining the allegiance of a chieftaincy ever more dependent for its position on the good will of the authorities the economic message in the speech is also interesting. The general good is identified totally with the fortunes of an aspirant African commercial class. Seme's economic nationalism is also an interesting predecessor to some of the more reactionary themes of Africanism in the 1940s, as well as, more recently, those businessmen who have tried to advance their own fortunes under the catch-all concepts of Black Consciousness. Translated into practical terms, Seme's policies involved the wooing of chiefs and the establishment of African Congress Clubs, which would function as savings organisations with the power to make loans and provide cheap wholesale goods for businessmen. To ensure their smooth operation ex-employees of the Native Affairs Department would handle Congress Club revenues[32].

Even the eventual passage of the Hertzog legislation in 1936, which removed Africans from the common roll, created for them a new set of segretationist political institutions, including White 'Native Representatives' in Parliament and an elected advisory 'Native Representative Council', as well as entrenching the unequal distribution of land, did not provoke a dramatic response from African politicians. True, after, a conference in Bloemfontein, a new political organisation was established, the All African Convention, with the original purpose of uniting opposition to the legislation, but in the face of reluctance by establishment politicians to boycott the new institutions (a motion which was prompted by left wingers from Cape Town) the AAC and its constituent organisations including Congress settled down into a familiar routine: wordy protests through consultative machinery, delegations, vague calls for African unity, and national days of prayer. The AAC was to be dominated until the war by conservatives: its protestations were to be punctuated by affirmations of loyalty to South Africa and the Crown, and its policy documents, despite some attention to general socio-economic concerns, largely thought out within the premises of Cape Liberalism[33].

I will now make a small jump to the 1940s, an important transitional period in the history of both nationalist and revolutionary movements in South Africa. All I can do here is to skate over the basic features of an exciting decade, which unlike the one that preceded it has attracted a lot of recent interest from researchers[34]. First of all, let me give you an essential outline of the socio-economic characteristics of the 1940s. The Second World War, through necessarily more complex import substitution as well as the development of production geared to military demands, provided an immense boost to local industrialisation. By 1943 manufacturing had oustripped mining as the largest single contributor to South Africa's gross national product; three years later the industrial and commercial workforce was also beginning to outnumber the mining industry's. This had imprtant implications for the development of African resistance movements. First of all during the second world war there was a rapid growth in the employment of black semi-skilled workers – who by virtue of their experience and because of the growth in production during the war were in a stronger bargaining position than black workers had ever been before. Secondly, women began to enter the industrial workforce in large numbers – and it is in the early 1940s that there was the first significant attempt to organise women within Congress. Thirdly, there was a large increase in the black urban population – a doubling between 1939 and 1952 – and of this population the migrant component was decreasing – we are talking about families settled permanently in towns. This rise in the rate of urbanisation was the consequence of both the availability of more attractive employment (through the 1940s both mining and agriculture were complaining of labour shortages), as well as the quite desperate conditions that prevailed in the reserves. There is some debate as to whether the sharp wartime decline in reserve production was a structural feature – or more the effect of the terrible series of droughts in the early 1940s that affected especially the Ciskei and the Transkei[35], but in this context the question is rather academic. What is in no doubt was that in many parts of rural South Africa people were starving and the towns provided the only opportunities for some sort of survival. To swell the flood to the cities were people evicted from white-owned land where previously they had existed as squatters or labour tenants: a boom in wartime food prices increased the impetus towards rural proletarianisation in white agriculture. Within urban centres conditions were also harsh. The war and the years following it witnessed sharp inflation (the cost of staple foods went up by 91 per cent in the years 1940 – 44) outstripping concurrent wage rises in the industrial sector. The chaos in world markets just after the war, as well as local natural disasters, created acute food shortages in the mid 1940s. In East London in 1946 6 out of every 10 children born were to die in their first year, usually from diseases which had their origin in malnutition[36]. Symptomatic of rural distress (exacaberated by arbitrarily implemented 'betterment schemes' as well as population increases from evictions in 'white' areas) was a tide of fairly violent protest or confrontation with the authorities – this was especially marked in the Northern Transvaal (Vendaland) as well as round Witzieshoek.

The overall political context of this period is also important for any understanding of its importance as a turning point in black political perceptions. The wartime period, especially during the first three years of the War when the position of the Allies remained fairly critical, witnessed a variety of attempts to avoid confrontation and maintain African political quiessence. For example, influx control was briefly suspended (from March 1942 to April 1943) before being reimposed with considerable ferocity: 11 000 were arrested in 13 days of pass raids in Johannesburg in mid 1943. A few social welfare reforms were implemented: free school meals for African schoolchildren, pensions for certain categories of black employees, increased expenditure on education, and so forth. All these measures should be seen in the context of a government increasingly influenced by the requirements of secondary industry for a permanent urbanised and stable workforce. These, as well as Smuts's declaration in 1942 that 'Segregation had fallen on evil days' naturally aroused expectations as well as orienting African politicians away from the theme of economic self help which had been fashionable in the 1930s: welfare state thinking became increasingly evident

in African nationalist ideology. Expectations and political excitement were also stimulated by the international environment: the war itself, declarations endorsing any peoples right to self-determination by Allied Leaders (here I am thinking particularly of the 1943 Atlantic Charter), the United Nations, the proliferation of anti-colonial movements, the independence of India and so on. Any hope or expectations these things provoked were doomed to rapid disappointment: African strikes were banned from late 1942 (though they continued), influx control was extended to many towns in the Cape Province, the Natives Representative Council, established in 1936, was ten years later demonstrably ineffective in influencing Government policy — a 'toy telephone' as one of its members put it, Indian trading and land tenure rights were savagely curtailed in the 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure Act, and finally, in 1948, those politicians who advocated a hesistant programme of reforms based on the needs of advanced industry were swept out of power by a Nationalist Party reflecting the joint concerns of labour starved farmers, white workers confronted with competition with black skills, and smaller and weaker businesses and manufacturers more inclined to coercion rather than co-option.

Before turning to organised political reactions to these conditions let us first very briefly mention some of the more popular responses. The desperate conditions in the towns where municipal authorities were reluctant to provide anything approaching adequate housing or services for the expanding black population together with inflation combined to bring subsistence issues into the forefront of popular consciousness. Expecially in Johannesburg (where wages were lower than almost every other major urban centre in the Union) the 1940s were years of effective and popular protest concerning bus fares, the lack of housing, rents and the cost of food. These were manifested in rent strikes, bus boycotts, squatters movements and food riots — as well as the more complex incidents of urban unrest that had as their general background the knife-edge quality of social insecurity in which people lived out their lives: bloody riots in Randfontein, Newlands, Krugersdorp, Sophiatown, Newclare, Pretoria and Durban. In all these events political organisations played at best a peripheral role — stepping in to take part in negotiations, submitting evidence to Commissions — and so forth. Socialist groupings, not altogether surprisingly, were rather more adept at attempting to consolidate some of the emotion and energy unleashed on these occasions, than African nationalists, who still tended to hold themselves aloof from many of the preoccupations of the urban poor — or at best play a defusing role. But even so, their contribution was relatively unimportant in the genesis and course of these outbursts, and tended to be limited to the work of a few isolated and enterprising individuals: Guar Radebe, Josiah Madzunya, Vincent Swart, Baruch Hirson, H.M. Basner — to mention a few.

A more significant role was played by political organisations, especially the Communists and Trotskyites in the formation of trade unions. As we have seen this was a time when black labour had considerable bargaining power and the decade was marked by extensive unionisation, and, despite Government prohibition after 1942 (and Communist hostility to strike action after the entry of Russia into the war), industrial action. Trotskyites, and in particular Max Gordon had stepped into the void left by Communists pursuing their popular front policy in the late thirties, and began organising black unions from 1935 onwards. They were joined by Communists from 1941. By 1945 the Council for Non European Trade Unions had 119 affiliates representing a membership of over 100 000 workers. A mark of their relative success was that during the forties black workers' wages rose at a faster rate than whites'. Most important of all in the context of labour organisaions was the unionisation of Mineworkers from 1941 as the result of initiatives taken by ANC and CP members. Mineworkers were particularly exposed to economic hardship: unlike industrial workers, despite inflation their wages remained static and they received no cost of living allowance. In addition their families were affected by the severe contractions in reserve production that occured in the wartime period. After a series of essentially moderate demands had been rebuffed mineworkers came out on strike in 1946. The strike was savagely put down at a cost of at least twelve dead and 1 000 wounded. The miners had to wait until 1949 for their wage increase, but the government's response and in particular its insensitive handling of the consultative machinery it had established, contributed to a reorientation in the political attitude of middle class African political leaders.

Having sketched out this backdrop we can now discuss briefly the developments within and between the African National Congress and the Communist Party of South Africa. In each case I will look first at ideology before considering the strategic and organisational implications.

The two most important developments at the ideological level as far as the ANC was concerned were, first, the rise of the African National Congress Youth League and the accompanying influence of a new assertive philosophy of 'Africanism', and secondly, the effects of the influence of African Communists within Congress leadership. The origins of the Youth League lay with a small number of young men centred in the Johannesburg townships. Their own imagination was inspired by a variety of currents around them: the consolidation of a powerful nationalist movement amongst Afrikaners around populist concerns; the racial romanticism of Hitler's fascism; the spontaneous popular protests and mass movements of the war years; the increasing awareness of the potential power of the black working class. Also important in influencing their outlook was that, unlike the earlier generation of African political leaders, these were men who had never been educated outside South Africa. In addition to this it has been suggested that their rural upbringing and background may have influenced them to perceive the world in terms of a racial dichotomy uncomplicated by the softening influences of inter-racial contact in liberal institutions[37]. The Youth Leaguers, of whom this group formed the original nucleus in 1944, were very critical of the African political establishment. As they put it in their manifesto it could be said with some justification that:

> 'Congress was forced to play the dual role of being an unconscious police to check the assertion of the popular will on the one hand, and on the other, of constantly warning the authorities that further curtailment of the priviliges of the few would compel them, the priviliged few, to yield to the pressure for the avalanche of popular opinion which was tired of appeasing the authorities . . .[38]

In place of appeasement, of gradualism, of pleas for the integration of the deserving into white society, Congress should substitute, the Youth Leaguers, said, a policy of confrontation and principled non-participation in degrading segregationist institutions. Congress should articulate a clear unequivocal message of nationalism, of cultural pride, of racial assertiveness. Only such a message would have the

psychological force to break through the internalised habits of inferiority and subservience – the pathological condition that Africanists contended was the first barrier to any effective liberation. Already in spontaneous demonstrations the masses were showing their potential power and receptivity to leadership: the most important pre-condition for the rise of a powerful popular political movement was a militant ideology which reflected the natural nationalism of an oppressed race. The implications of this were clear: Congressites should refrain from collaborating with apparently sympathetic whites, be very careful about any association with Communists (Africans were oppressed as a race not as a class – Marxist analysis merely confused the issue), and embrace a Programme of Action based on confrontationist tactics: strikes, civil disobedience and boycotts. Organisation could come later – too often lack of effective organisation had served as an excuse for compromises by Congress in the past. Africanists, with their belief in spontaneity, in the force of the general will, were in any case contmptuous of organisation. This was in part a function of their class background: these men were intellectuals: students, teachers, doctors, lawyers. They were not themselves active in any of the popular struggles of the 1940s. Their self appointed role was that of interpreters of the popular will. Their relative degree of isolation from working class experience inevitably led them to romanticise it.

Nevertheless, whatever the limitations of their world view, their rise in the ranks of Congress, itself having been restructured and given some organisational rigour by its autocratic and brilliant President, A.B. Xuma, was rapid. Internal reforms apart, Congress was reactivated in the 1940s, its still highly conservative leadership being edged into embracing more militant tactics as the result of the evident failure of persuasion and conciliation – as well as threats to its own class position after the accession to power of another strain of petty-bourgeois nationalism in 1948. By 1943, Congress was claiming in a document inspired by the Atlantic Charter, the right of all Africans to the vote, by 1944, prompted by the reimposition of urban influx control, Congress leaders were laying the basis for future collaboration. Indians were at that point engaged in a civil disobdeience campaign against the Indian Land Tenure Bill. The campaign did not succeed in repealing the bill but it did demonstrate the efficacy of Gandhist tactics in arousing mass political participation – by 1947 the Natal Indian Congress had swelled from a small organisation of a few hundred to a membership of 35 000. Finally, in 1949, the ANC adopted as its own a watered-down version of the Youth League's Programme of Action. Though riven by ideological and personal clashes, though still organisationally very weak, Congress had been resurrected.

The Communist Party had also been through a similar phase of reorientation. Increasingly it paid less attention to issues involving white labour (though it was until 1945 to toy with the idea of an alliance with the Labour Party) and to focus its attention on the organisation of black industrial unions.

A rise in black membership and increasing party involvement in communal as well as industrial activity (Communists were peripherally involved in one or two of the squatters movements and there was even an all-peasant party branch in Zoutpansberg) encouraged the party to participate in and sometimes instigate campaigns which had more general appeal than those concerned purely with the situation of industrial workers: passes, free speech, universal suffrage. Cooperation with reformist organisations became more possible – though the relationship between the ANC and the CPSA was never any easy one[39].

Some of the older African Communists were now members of the ANC establishment: with their predilection for organisation as an essential precondition to any activity, with their mistrust of spontaneity, they could find common ground with the established old guard ANC leaders under attack from the Africanist young men. By 1949, the influence of romantic nationalists on the ANC's NEC was fairly evenly balanced by that of social revolutionaries. The seeds for the conflicts and achievements of the next decade were beginning to germinate. □

See Footnotes on page 17.

E. V. MAHOMED

A Tribute by Mrs. J.F. Hill.

Chief Albert Luthuli was a great man, and the world acknowledged his greatness and honoured him with the Nobel Peace Prize. Mr. E.V. Mahomed who died in his home at Stanger on March 3rd 1981, was less well known; but all who loved and honoured Chief Luthuli owe a debt of gratitude to one of the best friends any man ever had.

When Chief Luthuli was banned and restricted in his movements, the one town he was free to visit was Stanger, and one home where he was always a welcome and honoured guest was E.V. Mahomed's. In fact, E.V. became Chief Luthuli's main link with the outside world, arranging interviews for individuals who wished to meet this great African leader. When news of the Nobel Prize award broke, journalists from all over the world clamoured to meet or speak with the prize-winner. Arrangements of various kinds had to be made in preparation for the journey overseas to receive the prize. And in his joy at the honour accorded to his friend, E.V. set aside his own book-keeping business, and turned his office over to Chief Luthuli's business, with himself as unpaid private secretary, coping at his own expense with all the phone calls and telegrams that came pouring in. I was roped in during the last hectic week, to help answer the hundreds of letters; so I saw for myself something of the unstinting way in which E.V. gave himself. This was typical of the man. All his life he gave himself, to his family, his friends, to those in need, and to the cause in which he believed, the cause of justice and freedom, the cause for which Chief Luthuli worked and suffered. I saw something of the warm human relationship between these two men, each of whom had in abundance that quality of ubuntu, of open-hearted warmth, knowing no barriers of language, race or class; that quality which our sad and troubled world so desperately needs. □