S O U T H A F R I C A A N D

T H E C O M M O N W E A L T H

THE ORIGINS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S BREAK WITH THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS IN 1961

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF M.A.

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by

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PREFACE

During the course of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of 1961 South Africa's request to remain as a republic within the Commonwealth was rejected. This thesis attempts to trace the course of events and the development of the forces that were to lead to the unprecedented situation where a member of the organization of the Commonwealth of Nations was forced to resign. An attempt is also made to recount exactly what happened during the four days of the 1961 Conference when all these developments reached a climax, and to assess the part played in the crisis by the statesmen representing the nations concerned.

The period covered by the investigation is a long one but this has been found necessary in order to trace the development of the forces within South Africa that were to contribute to the dénoument, and at the same time to comment on the other deciding factor, that of the changing world situation. On the early period, the unpublished letters of Sir Patrick Duncan, who was intimately concerned with the political events of the 1939 crisis of South Africa's relations with the Commonwealth, were useful since they shed revealing light on the personalities involved. But an infinitely more valuable original source was the collection of unpublished letters of General Smuts, for the use of which I am indebted to the custodian of the Special Collections Department in the Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town. Smuts can be considered to be South Africa's unique connection with the Commonwealth. The letters which he wrote during the last years of his life (and in particular those to Winston Churchill) reveal how acutely aware he was that the Commonwealth that had flourished during his lifetime was heading for a crisis, brought on by the almost simultaneous advent of the first non-White member joining the organization and of the Nationalist Party coming to power in South Africa.

Unfortunately it is impossible to know the private views of either Hertzog or of Malan on the events of this period since their papers have not yet been made available. A few Malan manuscripts

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may be seen in the display cabinets of the D.F. Malan Museum at the Carnegie Library, University of Stellenbosch.

There are special problems attached to research on Commonwealth topics. For example, the meetings of the Premiers are always held in private, with the result that one must rely on the subsequent reports to the respective Parliaments and Assemblies of some of the Ministers, and the occasional statement to the Press, and quite a lot of press speculation. Autobiographies take a long time to appear but Harold Macmillan's Pointing the Way and Robert Menzies' Afternoon Light have proved very valuable. Dr. Verwoerd's point of view is well documented in the collection of his speeches edited by A.N. Pelzer, Verwoerd Speaks.

Within South Africa the attempt to undertake research into contemporary history is beset by its own particular problems. Newspapers and other material giving opinions to the left of the political spectrum are conspicuously missing from the scene. Those that were published during the earlier part of this period (for example, The Guardian of Cape Town) can be seen only with special permission. The most recent political material is also difficult to obtain, and some of the journals and works on the new leaders of Africa and Asia have not yet reached South Africa. For this reason many of the lacunae had to be filled in overseas; I am grateful to the custodians of the libraries of Rhodes House, the Commonwealth Institute and the India Institute, Oxford University, for the use of their collections. I should also like to thank Dr. A.F. Madden of Oxford for his very helpful comments and criticisms on a draft of this thesis during his short visit to Cape Town in September, 1973.

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ABBREVIATIONS

HAD	Union of South Africa House of Assembly Debates
JPC	Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth
JPE	Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire
PCP	Patrick Duncan Papers
SPL	Smuts Private Letters

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CHAPTER I

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE BRITISH CONNECTION

On 26th May, 1948 South Africa went to the polls to vote in the first post-war election. The United Party under General Smuts, who had been Prime Minister throughout the war years, was defeated and the Nationalist Party, in Opposition since 1939, headed by Dr. D.F. Malan, took over the government of the country. The Nationalists were, on the whole, professed republicans with strongly anti-British traditions, and their election presaged a possible new approach to South Africa's membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

South Africa had been a founder member of the Commonwealth, together with Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the Dominions whose growing sense of national identity had been stimulated by their individual contributions and sacrifices in World War I. By 1918 the term "British Empire" was already falling into disrepute. A New Zealander had written as early as 1911, "Do what you will with the term 'Empire' you will not rid it of an ungrateful harshness". (1)

During the First World War a good Saxon word "Commonwealth" began to be used in place of Empire. Men and ideas of a wide diversity had a hand in the forging of what was to become a new association capable of embracing both Nationalism and Imperialism. Radicals, Unionists, Gladstonians and even Fabian Socialists have been named in connection with the origin of the idea of Commonwealth. (2) In 1916 as a result of the work of the Round Table Study Group, Lionel Curtis published The Problem of the Commonwealth and The Commonwealth of Nations; both had an important influence on the development of the idea of a British Commonwealth of Nations and did much to popularise the word. Curtis argued that the British Commonwealth stood

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(1) W.D. McIntyre, Colonies into Commonwealth (London, 1966) 130.

(2) A.F. Madden, "Changing Attitudes and Widening Responsibilities, 1895-1914", The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. III, (Cambridge, 1959) 404.

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for government of men by themselves, but this principle must remain unfulfilled unless and until the Commonwealth created for itself a central parliament and executive with "sufficient powers of decision in issues of war and peace". (1)

General Smuts was one of the principal influences behind the idea of the Commonwealth. He first developed this at a banquet on 15th May, 1917, given by members of the House of Commons in his honour. The constitutional changes he visualised then were to form the basis of the Statute of Westminster twelve years later. He spoke of the Empire being, not a stationary system of states but a dynamic one. The Dominions, with their independent governments evolved on the principles of the British Constitutional system were almost independent states belonging to a community of nations which he preferred to call "The British Commonwealth of Nations". (2)

Smuts was well aware of the antagonism of many of his countrymen to the British connection, but hastened to refute any possible objections saying that there was to be no question of moulding so many different peoples of the Empire into one pattern. Even nations like South Africa, who had fought against Britain in the past must feel that their cultural interests, their language and their religion would be safe under the British flag.

> "You do not want to standardize the nations of the British Empire" he declared, "you want to develop them towards greater, fuller nationality.... You want them to develop freely on principles of self government, and therefore your whole idea is different from anything that has ever existed before....
> This British Commonwealth does not stand for standardization or denationalisation, but for the fuller, richer and more various life of all the nations comprising it". (3)

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(1) Sir Keith Hancock, "Empire, Commonwealth, Cosmos and His Own Place" Round Table, No. 240, November, 1970.

(2) Greater South Africa, Plans for a Better World. Speeches of the Rt. Hon. J.C. Smuts (London, 1942), 27.

(3) ibid.

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To Smuts the question of how this Commonwealth of diverse nations was to be kept together would rely on two main factors. The first and most important was hereditory Kingship. The King was King of every nation comprising the Commonwealth. This presupposed that there was no possibility of any of the nations of the Commonwealth acquiring republican status. This point was to be modified later to suit the changing requirements and climate of the times and became one of the major issues around which South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth revolved. But in 1917 this possibility seemed remote.

The second factor that was to unite the diverse nations of the new organisation was to be the continuance of the common consultations that had been provided by the old Imperial Conferences. Smuts proposed yearly meetings of the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth. During the Second World War this was to prove itself and the Commonwealth Premiers continued to meet in a different form, in the context of the war. Mr. McKenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada called it "The most perfect continuing conference of cabinets that any group of nations would possibly have". (1)

In June, 1921 Smuts submitted a memorandum to the Conference of Prime Ministers in London in which he emphasized the urgency of completing the constitutional changes that would turn Empire into Commonwealth. The consciousness of nationhood of the Dominions had received considerable impetus from their part in the war, and unless Dominion status was settled soon in such a way that would satisfy the national aspirations of the young nations Smuts feared the rise of separatist movements. He proposed a General Declaration of Constitutional Rights. (2) Furthermore a new name, he felt, would now be opportune to mark this epoc-making departure. He put forward for consideration the name British Commonwealth of Nations and suggested that some symbol should mark the entry of the Dominions into this new association. This, he felt, could best be done by each country adopting their own distinctive national flag in addition to the Union Jack as the common symbol

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(1) Nicholas Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience, (London, 1969) 289.
(2) W.K. Hancock, Smuts, Vol II, (London, 1950) 44.

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of allegiance. (1) The Smuts memorandum was to pave the way for the Balfour Declaration of 1926 into which most of Smuts' proposals were embodied. (2) The question of secession was however, never settled. Smuts maintained that no change could be made in the settlement without the consent of the British Parliament and all the Dominion Parliaments. His opponents declared that this invalidated the declaration of the Imperial Conference of 1926, and the Balfour Declaration and that, in consequence the association of the Commonwealth was not free but based on force. (3)

The Commonwealth concept of "Unity in Diversity" was the only way Smuts could see of bringing South Africans of both English and Afrikaans language groups together in continued association with Britain. The English language group was united behind Smuts but the Afrikaans group was split between the followers of Smuts and those of J.M.B.Hertzog, leader of the Nationalist Party. (4) After his victory in the General Election in 1924 Hertzog had pledged to secure the Union's independent status in the world and the Balfour report of the Imperial Conference of 1926 with its assertion of the formal equality of status of the Dominions and Great Britain seemed to Hertzog a satisfactory settlement.(5) The clause accepting the new constitutional situation read:

> "The National Party accepts the declaration of the Imperial Conference of 1926 and agrees that it amounts to the attainment of Sovereign Independence and of the power to exercise our state functions according to our own wishes." (6)

By 1933, however, Smuts and Hertzog had formed a coalition government which ushered in one of South Africa's most prosperous years and gave the country relative political peace. In 1933 Dr. D.F. Malan

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(1) H. Duncan Hall, "The Genesis of the Balfour Declaration of 1926", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, 169.

(2) R.M. Dawson (ed.), The Development of Dominion Status, 1900-1936 (London, 1937) 411.

(3) Ibid. 429.

(4) Michael Roberts and A.E.G. Trollip, The South African Opposition 1939-1945 (London, 1947) 181, 188.

(5) Dawson (ed.), The Development of Dominion Status, 329.

(6) D.W. Krüger, The Making of a Nation, A History of the Union of South Africa 1910-1961 (Johannesburg, 1969) 152.

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and his followers repudiated Hertzog, forming a new party which was called the Purified National Party. Malan did his best to undermine the Smuts-Hertzog coalition, going so far as to try to win Hertzog away from Smuts by offering to re-unite his breakaway party with that of Hertzog. To this end he went so far as to appear to approve of the coalition. Patrick Duncan, then Minister of Mines wrote to Lady Selborne on 2nd March, 1934 from the House of Assembly,

> "Politically the fog continues. Dr. Malan who went on a mission to the T.V. to hearten the faithful remnant of Nats. by telling them that he had got Gen. Hertzog in agreement with him that any combined party must declare for the right of secession and neutrality in time of war in which the Empire was engaged and various other republican principles, has come back saying that none of these things really matter. It means that he is not prepared to go into Opposition. I am sorry for his conversion because our people are willing to swallow much as long as they do not have to swallow Dr. Malan, but he is as unassimilable as Jonah was to the whale." (1)

A week later Duncan was writing to Lady Selborne on the subject of what he called "Dr. Malan's great strategic attack on the Hertzog-Smuts agreement, which was for the purpose of scaring off the British section from having anything to do with it. Instead of attacking the agreement Malan's strategy was to profess that the agreement gave him everything he wanted, including neutrality and the way open to a republic." (2)

The Coalition Articles of Agreement contained a mutual statement that the two leaders agreed to differ on the point of what action they would take if Britain went to war. There was no reason to believe that Hertzog would later insist on neutrality. (3)

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(1) Duncan to Lady Selborne, 2.3.34., Patrick Duncan Papers, File I D5, 294.

(2) Ibid.

(3) B.K. Long, In Smuts' Camp, (London, 1945), 39.

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By April, 1934 the constitutional developments embodied in the Balfour Declaration and the Statute of Westminster were due to be debated in the South African Assembly in the form of the Status Bill. Smuts, now Minister of Justice spoke of the historic importance of the changes that the Act would bring about,

> "We have a system of States, equal, autonomous, free, none subject to the other; we are a free association in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and we owe common allegiance to the Crown...
> As far as we are concerned only an act of our own Parliament will bind South Africa in the future. If there is a British Act and it has to have any relation to us we must make it our own Act". (1)

It was plain that under the Status Act the Parliament of the Union of South Africa had undisputed sole executive authority in both foreign and domestic affairs. Henceforth the Union was entitled to participate in international politics on an equal footing with other powers. (2) In the event of any future war, if South Africa became involved or not would now depend solely on the advice which the government of the Union gave the Governor General. This would, in turn, depend on a Parliamentary majority.

Significantly during the passage of the Status Bill Smuts experienced more trouble from the right wing of his own party than from the Opposition. In Natal, one of the Smuts' strongholds, the Bill was denounced as the end of the British Empire. (3) The Opposition in Natal were not alone in this assumption. Hermann Rauschning, German geo-politician noted in 1939 that the Balfour Declaration in his opinion was a symptom of

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(1) Speeches of the Rt. Hon. J.C. Smuts, 78.

(2) Denis Worrall (ed.), South African Government and Politics, (Pretoria, 1971), 287.

(3) Dawson (ed.), The Development of Dominion Status, 422.

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an ageing Empire grown tired, with an inclination to pacifism. This, according to Rauschning, signified a flagging English will to rule in the old genuine sense, constituting a "conspicuous surrender of power, implying passive renunciation of world dominion". (1)

On 12th April, 1934 when the Status Bill was before the House Patrick Duncan wrote to Lady Selborne,

> "The Opposition now turns on argument as to the divisibility of the Crown and the position of the Empire if England or one of the Dominions should be involved in war. The second reading will pass with less than half a dozen dissentients. But the debate has been remarkable in other ways in the speeches of the members who belong to the republican section of the Nationalist party. Several of them have said that while they retain their republican ideals they recognise that they are not to be realised at present and they are therefore willing to bury the hatchet and accept together with their British fellow citizens the status of South Africa as a member of the Empire." (2)

However, as the Status Bill was being debated in the Union House of Assembly events in Europe presaged a turn of events that was to provoke yet another crisis in the British connection with South Africa. The rise of National Socialism in Italy and Germany was followed with considerable interest by republicans in South Africa. At the Fifth Imperial Press Conference in February, 1935, Oswald Pirow, then South African Minister of Defence, reported to the delegates on South Africa's defence arrangements. Patrick Duncan observed to Lady Selborne on 7th February,

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(1) Hancock, Smuts II, 256.

(2) Duncan to Lady Selborne, 12.4.34., PDP, File I, D5, 294.

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"the speech by Pirow about South African defence arrangements startled some of them (the delegates) very much. He said forcibly that public opinion here would not tolerate the idea that we could be automatically drawn into a European war in which England was engaged. Some of the visitors regarded this speech as treason.... after all, much would depend on how the war came about. The Dominions have obligations as members of the League which might conceivably involve them in a war". (1)

Lest this statement had been misunderstood, on 6th May, 1936 Pirow, in a further statement, authorised by the Prime Minister General Hertzog, intimated that South Africa was not bound directly or indirectly to take part in any war in Africa or elsewhere. South Africa, according to him, would only take part in a war when the true interests of South Africa made such participation inevitable and even then only after the people, through its representatives in Parliament had, by means of the largest possible measure of unanimity, given "unambiguous instructions to that effect". (2)

At this time a new and persistent voice in favour of republican status for South Africa began to make itself heard. Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd was to become one of the most determined advocates of a complete break with Britain. Whereas Hertzog was prepared to compromise and consider a republic for the Union within the Commonwealth Verwoerd was uncompromising. The influential Chief Editor of the Johannesburg Afrikaans newspaper Die Transvaler, mouthpiece of the breakaway "purified" Nationalists, began a long standing campaign for the republican ideal and was to play a significant role in the ideological warfare that preceded the introduction of the republic of South Africa.

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(1) Duncan to Lady Selborne, 7.2.35., PDP, File I, D5, 294.

(2) Amry Vanderbosch, South Africa and the World. The Foreign Policy of Apartheid, (Kentucky, 1970), 95.

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In Verwoerd's words, "the Transvaler has come with a calling - it has come to serve a nation by making the voice of loyal and sublime nationalism resound to the farthest reaches". (1)

By 1938 Verwoerd was claiming that the Crown had always stood in the way of the much desired national unity and that a republic was the proper method of eliminating the divided love and loyalty of so many people. This was a theme that was to be reiterated again and again and was one of the main tenets of his philosophy. In 1960 as Prime Minister, when the republic was on the verge of becoming a reality he was still claiming that in the republic the tug-of-war between the English and the Afrikaans speaking people would come to an end and South Africa would grow into one nation. (2) After the republic was approved by the referendum Verwoerd expressed the belief that the conflict of nationalities had ended. South Africans in consequence need never again feel "like two nations in one state". (3)

There was no unanimity however, in the Afrikaans camp. In January, 1939 Professor A.C. Cilliers of Stellenbosch University published a pamphlet Quo Vadis, outlining the differences between the United Party of Hertzog and Smuts and the Purified Nationalist Party of Malan. He advocated, on the subject of the British connection, that South Africa should remain within the British Commonwealth, provided that the Crown was divisible and that the Union's right of neutrality was recognised.(4)

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(1) A.N. Pelzer (ed.), Verwoerd Speaks: Speeches 1948-1966 (Johannesburg, 1966) XIII.

(2) Verwoerd Speaks, XXV.

(3) Nicholas Mansergh, South Africa 1906-1961. The Price of Magnanimity (London, 1962) 59.

(4) A.C. Cilliers, Quo Vadis (Stellenbosch, 1939).

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But a political crisis was fast approaching. By 1939 South Africa's constitutional independence was almost complete except for the commitment to the British Crown. The spiritual connection however, remained, and the major part of South Africa's foreign policy was still dictated from London. Munger claims that this attitude was "partly realistic and partly sentimental". (1) South Africa, from a defence and trade point of view was still heavily reliant on Britain and many English speaking South Africans still looked on Britain as their spiritual home. While Smuts remained Prime Minister South Africa's ties with the Commonwealth were strengthened and the greatest measure of political, military and economic security was enjoyed. (2)

On the subject of foreign policy the Balfour Declaration had stated that though every Dominion was, and must remain the sole judge of the nature and extent of its co-operation, "no common cause would thereby be imperilled". (3) And it was on this premise that the foreign policies of the independent nations of the Commonwealth were based before the outbreak of World War II. In 1939 the time for testing this in the fires of war was fast approaching.

Hitler's march on Czechoslovakia finally persuaded the peoples and governments of the British Commonwealth, with minimal exceptions, that there was no alternative to war. International appeasement formerly accepted as good Commonwealth policy, was recognised to have failed. The German march on Prague on 14th March, 1939 was the catalyst that changed forever the attitude of the majority of the peoples of the British Commonwealth towards Nazi Germany.

Towards the end of August with the situation daily deteriorating in Europe, South Africa began to prepare for a state of National emergency. All permanent Force and Police Force leave was cancelled

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(1) E.S. Munger, Notes on the Formation of South African Foreign Policy, (California, 1965) 16.

(2) Worrall (ed.), South Africa: Government and Politics, 288.

(3) Mansergh, Survey, 10 and Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 107.

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and essential services and key industries were guarded. Parliament was not in session and the Prime Minister was on his farm. A special session of Parliament was summoned to extend the life of the Senate due to expire on 5th September, and incidentally to discuss the serious situation overseas. (1) By September all the recalled Members were in Cape Town and the Prime Minister called a Cabinet Meeting at Groote Schuur where he outlined his policy, declaring that he advocated neutrality and under no circumstances would allow South Africa to enter the war. The discussion lasted for several hours during which a split in the Cabinet emerged. Havenga, Pirow, Kemp, Fourie and Fagan supported the Prime Minister. Reitz, Collins, Henderson, Lawrence, Stuttaford and Clarkson supported Smuts, (2) D.F. Malan had agreed beforehand to support Hertzog. In a letter to Hertzog offering him last minute backing Malan said

> "Tomorrow or the day after you will make a serious declaration in Parliament on South Africa's attitude towards the European war. What the contents will be I do not know, but if it will mean that South Africa will be drawn into it even indirectly or gradually, the result will be that the European races in our country will be kept apart for many years and will be driven further apart, and that the already existing division between our Afrikaans speaking people will become deeper and more bitter and perhaps completely irreparable.
> For many years both you and I held the unambiguous viewpoint that South Africa has the right, in an international situation, to declare itself neutral, no matter what the position of England or any other Dominion may be.
> In this critical period in our people's history, in view of the circumstances of the struggle overseas, I wonder if it is not our duty, in our own interests, to exercise that right in a practical way.

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(1) C.F.J. Muller, (ed.), 500 Years. A History of South Africa, (Cape Town, 1969), 373.

(2) For a full discussion of this important Cabinet Meeting cf. Rosemary F. Gates, "South African Attitudes towards Participation in the Second World War and the Immediate Reaction to the Decision". (University of Cape Town, 1969) 44-47.

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> Considering the divided opinions in our country I fully realise what a declaration of neutrality may mean to you as leader, and that this consideration cannot be treated lightly. Unanimously supported by my Party Caucus, I have already given you a written assurance on Saturday, that if you accept a policy of neutrality, you may depend on our whole-hearted support. I want to add that if we can get this assurance, for which we hope, in my opinion the way will be opened for fruitful discussions on the possibility of a wider co-operation on a sound basis, which was reflected by the centenary, as the deepest desire of our people. If you deem it advisable to go further into the matter with me, I shall gladly put myself at your disposal. (1)

On Monday morning, 4th September, the issue of whether South Africa should remain neutral or declare war on Germany was debated in the House of Assembly. General Hertzog informed the House of the split in the Cabinet which he considered irreconcilable. He moved that South Africa remain neutral during the war whilst discharging her obligations with regard to the Commonwealth by allowing the use of South Africa's ports to the ships of Commonwealth countries. (2) General Smuts then moved an amendment that it was in the interests of the Union that its relations with the German Reich should be severed and that South Africa should refuse to adopt an attitude of neutrality in the conflict. He called upon the House to affirm that the Union would carry out obligations to which it had agreed and continue its co-operation with its friends and associates in the Commonwealth. He proposed further that the Union should take all necessary measures for the defence of South Africa except that it should not send forces overseas. His amendment concluded -

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(1) Malan to Hertzog, 3.9.39., D.F. Malan Museum, Carnegie Library, Stellenbosch, and Hancock, Smuts II, 320.

(2) Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), Documents and Speeches on Commonwealth Affairs Vol. I, 1931-1952, (London, 1953), 494.

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This House is profoundly convinced that the freedom and independence of the Union are at stake in this conflict and that it is therefore in the true interest to oppose the use of force as an instrument of national policy". (1)

During the debate Hertzog made an impassioned speech in favour of neutrality. He maintained that although South Africa belonged to the Commonwealth there were principles which must guide her in this decision. Primarily it was a question of the Union's free and independent status. He argued that nobody could blame Britain for declaring war without consulting anybody, but this was a war in which South Africa's interests were not involved. Britain had declared war on Germany only because of her obligations to Poland. There was no proof of the allegation that Hitler sought world domination. He could understand the feelings of humiliation of the German people after Versailles - "I know for I have been through the mill myself", he concluded.(2)

Hertzog alienated many potential allies by this apology for Hitler. He repeated this point of view again in January, 1940 when he became leader for a moment of a re-united Nationalist Party. He moved in the House of Assembly that the Union end the state of war with Germany, arguing that the true origin of the war lay in the German desire for lost territory and authority "so scandalously dislocated and broken up by the Treaty of Versailles. The war is a crime" he continued, "by which international murder and robbery were elevated and legalized to a national virtue, in the interests of the British Empire." (3)

Hertzog moved that the House approve and accept that the existing relations between the Union of South Africa and the various belligerent

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(1) Union of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates, Vol. 36, col. 17-23.

(2) C.M. van den Heever, General J.M.B. Hertzog (Johannesburg, 1946) 280

(3) Mansergh, Survey, 34.

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countries should persist unchanged and continue as if no war were being waged, upon the understanding that the existing relations and obligations between the Union, Great Britain and the Commonwealth regarding the Naval Base at Simonstown should be maintained. No one should be permitted to use Union territory for the purpose of doing anything which might in any way impair these relations and obligations. (1)

It has been said that what Hertzog proposed was qualified neutrality, what Smuts proposed, qualified belligerency. A course of qualified neutrality was quite unknown in international law and Smuts believed it would present South Africa with grave problems. (2)

The Smuts amendment was adopted by eighty votes to sixty seven and South Africa was brought into the war on the side of the Commonwealth. Before tendering his resignation to the Governor General, Sir Patrick Duncan, Hertzog approached him on the evening of 4th September. He proposed to Duncan that Parliament should be dissolved so that public opinion on the question of neutrality could be tested by means of a general election. Duncan wrote to his wife in the midst of this crisis,

> "I am holding over acceptance (of Hertzog's resignation) until I hear from General Smuts that the country may not be left without a Government. If Oom Jannie succeeds in forming a Government it will be rather a queer one as it will have to include Dominionites and Labourites if the prospects of office will tempt them to come in."

He did not see, he concluded, how he would be justified in rejecting the decision of the House if General Smuts was able to form an alternative government.(3)

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(1) HAD, Vol. 36, Col. 17-23, and Hancock, Smuts II, 285.

(2) Van den Bosch, South Africa and the World, 101.

(3) Duncan to Lady Duncan, 5.9.39., PDP, File II, 10t., 294.

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Duncan wrote that he found the Prime Minister throughout the whole business "most considerate and charming". Hertzog had told him that he left the decision with him with complete confidence which all his colleagues shared, that he would do what he thought best for the country.

> "I was quite touched by his attitude" wrote Duncan, "and told him what a real pleasure it had been for me to work with him." (1)

Duncan's opinion of Hertzog would appear to have changed since the early years of their association. In 1932 he had written that it was difficult to see what there was about Hertzog that held people's allegiance. Certainly, he said, it did not come from intellectual endowment, for when Hertzog tried to argue some point a rising fog seemed to envelop himself and his hearers alike. He was the apostle of the short view sharing with his followers the same latent sense of racial grievance which made him cherish memories of wrongs and look for slights. "To all he responds like a tuned string" he concluded in a letter to Lady Selborne. (2)

On 5th September, 1939 the Governor General replied to Hertzog by letter saying that he had given careful consideration to the proposal, but that he considered that there was a general feeling , which he shared, that an election at the present moment would lead to great bitterness and even violence. That situation would have to be accepted however if there was no constitutional alternative. He continued,

> "The present Parliament was elected in May last year. The question of South Africa's participation in a war in which England was involved was at that time clearly before the people, and the policy of the Government proclaimed by you and your ministers was that the question would be decided

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(1) Duncan to Lady Duncan, 5.9.39, PDP, File II, 10t, 294.

(2) Duncan to Lady Selborne, 28.4.32., PDP, File I, D5, 294.

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> by the chosen representatives of the people in Parliament. When war broke out the Government placed the question before Parliament for decision, but was divided on the recommendation that should be made to the House."

Sir Patrick concluded that since the two opposing motions of Hertzog and Smuts had been submitted to the House and that it had decided by a considerable majority to adopt that of General Smuts the matter was "settled as far as he was concerned". (1)

Duncan's decision was constitutionally correct, and not without precedent. (2) But there were those in South Africa who felt that the decision was unconstitutional, and rumours circulated that General Hertzog had threatened that as a result of Duncan's decision, he would do everything in his power to get the office of Governor General abolished. These rumours became so strong that eventually Patrick Duncan instructed his Secretary to write a letter to the Press, emphasizing that General Hertzog's attitude upon this occasion had been scrupulously fair and correct.

Hertzog's "considerate and charming" attitude to the neutrality issue did not last long. By 4th November he was saying at Smithfield that co-operation with the Commonwealth had recieved a severe blow which would be a powerful weapon in the hands of those who wished to break away from Britain. The South African Jingo was helping to bring this about by

> "the stupid discourtesy of the provocative demand for Afrikaner participation. The British Jingo can take it from me" he continued, "That either South Africa is ruled as an independent free country or its membership of the British Commonwealth will be of short duration". (3)

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(1) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1931-1952, 511. cf.van den Heever, Hertzog, for reply to this letter.

(2) In Canada in 1926, a similar situation had arisen. The Governor General, Lord Byng, acting on his own authority, had refused to dissolve the Canadian Parliament when advised to do so by the Prime Minister Gates: "South African Participation in the Second World War", 64.

Mackenzie King

(3) Van den Heever, Hertzog, 285.

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He was not prepared, however, to go the length of suggesting secession from the British Commonwealth for the time being anyway. Neither, he claimed, did he wish to be included in the category of persons advocating a republican form of government. (1) Hertzog's attitude to the Commonwealth connection was ambiguous. On being challenged by Malan after the election of May, 1938 as to whether he would follow him or Smuts in case Britain should be in danger Hertzog had replied that when the time came the people would decide, and it would all depend on "who had the most authority and whom the people trusted most". (2) A measure of this ambiguity can be judged from the fact that in 1939 he allowed one of his Cabinet colleagues, Senator Clarkson, who was fighting a by-election in Natal when the war between Britain and Germany was in the offing, to tell a public meeting that there was no doubt of the Cabinet's full support of Great Britain if war did break out. (3)

Meanwhile the rest of the Commonwealth was falling into line. In Australia the Prime Minister, R.E. Menzies, without consulting the Federal Parliament declared in a broadcast that Britain was at war and therefore Australia was at war. There was one King, one flag and one cause. (4) Two years later Menzies was criticized for bringing Australia into the war without consulting Parliament, which was considered to be an abandonment of Australia's independant nation status. (5) In New Zealand the call to support Britain and the Commonwealth met with immediate approval. (6) In Canada, however, the Prime Minister, Mackenzie King never departed from his decision that Parliament should decide the matter. No one would be able to say that Canada was dragged into a war in support of British Imperialism.(7)

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(1) Van den Heever, Hertzog, 285.

(2) Star, 4.11.39.

(3) Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire, 1939, XIX, 122.

(4) B.K. Long, In Smuts' Camp, (London, 1945), 39.

(5) JPE, 1938, XIX, 551-62.

(6) Sir Robert Menzies, Afternoon Light, (London, 1967), 15.

(7) Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 114.

(7) Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience, 295.

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English speaking Canada widely endorsed his view but there were strong protests from a few French speaking Canadians who objected to being involved in another European war. (1) When the vote came in the House, fewer than five members opposed the motion. (2)

In India on the other hand, the outbreak of war underlined the obvious fact that India was considered by the British to be very far from acquiring independence. The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, declared war on behalf of the country without calling into consultation the leaders of the principal Indian political parties, the Congress and the Muslim League. Constitutionally this was correct but politically it was considered by Congress to be a violation of their rights. Pandit Nehru, the Congress Leader contrasted the position of some other Dominions, including Ireland, which were free to ask their Parliaments whether or not to declare war, with that of India which had been committed to war without any reference to its representative political bodies. In the other Dominions the decision was taken by popular representatives after full debate. "Not so in India", wrote Pandit Nehru, "and it hurt". (3) Nehru felt that there was something fundamentally wrong with a system under which one man, and he a foreigner, could "plunge four hundred million people in Asia into a European war without any reference to them". (4) The outbreak of war in Europe intensified the Indian demand for independence and sharpened the struggle for the end of the British Raj. Indian independence was to become one of the key factors in the story of South Africa's break with the British Commonwealth, and the vital part India was to play in the war opened the way to stronger moves for independence.

In South Africa the first result of Hertzog's defeat was to unite behind him many who had formerly opposed him. There was no doubt that few other things would so quickly and effectively have consolidated

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(1) JPE, 1939, XX, 386-87.

(2) Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience, 295.

(3) Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (New York, 1946), 432.

(4) Nehru, Discovery of India, 432.

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English speaking Afrikanerdom. (1) Patrick Duncan commented wryly that his action in refusing to acceed to Hertzog's request for a General Election had led to the republican movement being "much strengthened". (2) Hertzog crossed for floor to join the Opposition taking with him forty Members and bringing to an end his uneasy alliance with Smuts. According to Sir Patrick Duncan Hertzog had expected a small majority. If it was very small, two or three he said, Hertzog would probably ask him to dissolve Parliament and have a General Election. (3) At the time of the vote there did exist a slim possibility that Hertzog might get a small majority. In consequence of the General Election of 1938 the number of pre-1934 Nationalists in the Caucus of the United Party had fallen from fifty five out of one hundred and seventeen before the election to forty three out of one hundred and eleven after. With the promise of Malan's support which he had in his pocket, which brought another twenty nine Purified Nationalists onto his side Hertzog could have made a total two short of a majority. (4) Black opinion was represented in Parliament by three White Native Representatives. These three helped General Smuts to gain his slender majority because they believed that Hitler represented dictatorship, racialism and aggression. Many Africans were prepared to enlist but when it became apparent that they were to be restricted to non-combatant units there was less enthusiasm. The African National Congress endorsed the war resolution in December, 1939, but at the same time urged that all races in South Africa be admitted to full citizenship with equal rights as well as duties. (5) Margaret Ballinger, who was at the time a Native Representative claims that with few exceptions the African people were simply not interested in the war. The general attitude was, if they went to war in defence of democracy would they get back the right to buy land and the right to vote? (6)

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(1) Van den Heever, Hertzog, 283.

(2) Duncan to Lady Duncan, 5.9.39., PDP, File II, 10t, 294.

(3) Duncan to Lady Duncan, 4.9.39., PDP, File II 10t, 294.

(4) Star, 4 November, 1939.

(5) Edward Roux, Time Longer than Rope (New York, 1964), 305.

(6) Margaret Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, A Trek to Isolation, (Cape Town, 1969), 115.

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From the point of view of the Commonwealth as a whole the outbreak of war against the totalitarian Nazi régime was a landmark in its history. Self-government and decentralization as the goal of the British Colonies who had not yet attained independence had a new setting - that of total war. This had important consequences in the post-war world, hastening independence and bringing new members into the Commonwealth. Total war brought fresh stresses and strains to the organization. As Mansergh points out, the question was how to reconcile autonomy with unity, diversity with strength. There was also the question of how far the British Commonwealth, whose capacity for waging all out modern warfare was dependent on a diverse group of states, all of whom, except India, were autonomous, was fitted both politically and materially to withstand this challenge. (1)

In South Africa the neutrality vote and the consequent split between Hertzog and Smuts and the realignment of forces which followed had important consequences and mark a watershed in South African relations with the Commonwealth. The Union went to war a bitterly divided nation and the forces of nationalism and republicanism, held in check by the years of co-operation between Hertzog and Smuts, gained new life and momentum.

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(1) Mansergh, Survey, 5.

CHAPTER II

WORLD WAR II AND COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

Smuts saw no alternative to declaring war on Germany. He felt that what he most valued could be lost and therefore had to be defended and he believed that South Africa had a vital part to play in the survival and continuity of the Commonwealth.

> "For me personally", he wrote in January, 1940, "there was no other way. I am a firm believer in the Commonwealth, not only for its own sake and that of South Africa, but as the first tentative beginnings of great things for the future of the world. I was not going to desert or betray that great cause." (1)

This theme of the vital part the Commonwealth was to play in world affairs recurred constantly in Smuts' letters, many of them to his close friend the British Cabinet Minister, Leo Amery. Amery also felt strongly that the Commonwealth was probably the best single nucleus around which some form of world government would be built. (2)

The question in 1939 was - with whom was South Afria going to stand in a dangerous world, the old and tried friends of the British Commonwealth or the Axis powers? The question was not directly raised by the neutrality issue but it underlay the whole problem. South Africa could not vote for neutrality without asking where it would lead her. To Smuts the issue was clear. There was no longer any possibility of secession from the British connection and isolation was an impossible illusion in the present circumstances. (3)

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(1) Round Table, No. 240, 445.

(2) Amery to Smuts, 24.3.47. Smuts Private Letters, Vol. 81 (A-E) and Hancock, Smuts II, 444.

(3) Speeches of the Rt. Hon. J.C. Smuts, 111.

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Eric Walker points out that there was really very little choice open to South Africa, a weak isolated country which possessed so valuable and vulnerable a half-way house between Europe and the East; the Union must, in times of danger look for a protector in a world where weak states usually go under first. (1) From the point of view of Smuts and his followers the Commonwealth may have been British, but at least it was a large organization of countries whose combined influence on the international scene would make up for individual weaknesses of member nations. From the point of view of the Commonwealth the Cape was once again of strategic importance, as so often before. Without the Cape route the Commonwealth could hardly have survived the war and without the Commonwealth the Russians and Americans would have had the greatest of difficulty in winning it. (2)

In actual numbers however, South Africa's contribution was small.(3) Unlike the other Commonwealth countries her forces were tied to the African continent so that until the war theatre moved into North Africa there was little active participation. South Africa was also grossly unprepared for war. During his term of office as Minister of Defence pre-1939, Oswald Pirow, according to Smuts, had failed to fulfil any of his plans for the reorganization of South Africa's defences announced in 1937,

> "all his grandiose, all his great plans", claimed Smuts, "have remained in the air, and that after the six years that he has been Minister of Defence, they have still remained plans, and they have not got beyond that". (4)

In the early years of the war, with things going badly for Britain and the Commonwealth, the Opposition in South Africa took full advantage

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(1) Eric Walker, A History of Southern Africa, (London, 1962), 691.

(2) Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience, 376.

(3) cf. Appendix I.

(4) Round Table, June, 1940, 712-716.

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of the situation. It appeared to many that Britain, whether in the form of Empire or Commonwealth was doomed. If Germany won the war as there were every signs it would, to belong to the Commonwealth might now be seen to be dangerously disadvantageous to South Africa. According to some, now was the time to shake off the bonds of Empire and Commonwealth and make plans for a bright republican future for the Union.

Patrick Duncan was gloomy about the prospects and wrote to Lionel Curtis on 5th September, 1940 "Old England is being battered as she never has been before, but she can stand up to it". In South Africa, he continued, the Opposition politicians were being rushed by the extreme republican section on the idea that the defeat of Britain was imminent and that they must be ready to claim their republic before Hitler could come and claim them. Hertzog was keeping his position as leader from which the "immediate action" men wanted to oust him and was justifying their confidence by violent and bitter attacks on Smuts. " But he is saying nothing about a republic." (1)

This equivocation was to lead to Hertzog's eventual break with the party and to the triumph of the extremist republican nationalists led by Malan. The provision whereby party members were obliged to be avowed republicans had been deleted from the party programme in 1936, but Hertzog would have liked the republican issue to be confined to individual members being allowed to make propaganda for or against the republic within the party. The Malanites insisted that the party was a republican party with a free and independent republic the most urgent and important aim. (2)

At this stage Patrik Duncan was hopeful that if the Hertzogite section had energetic and capable leadership and came out openly it

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(1) Duncan to Lionel Curtis, 5.9.40., PDP, File II, 41, (acb), 294.

(2) Roberts and Trollip, S.A. Opposition, 24.

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would still prove a real force in the issue. He wrote to Lionel Curtis from Government House, Pretoria, in November, 1940, saying that the root cause of the difference between the Hertzogites and the Malanites was over the republican programme of the party. A great effort he said, was made in 1939 when Hertzog resigned and went over to the Opposition with the Malan Nationalists, to bring them into a reunited party representing Afrikanerdom against the "imperialist and capitalistic Jew-ridden Government party". To this end, he continued, Hertzog and Havenga and their followers, apparently with some hesitation, subscribed to a republic as the primary object of a hoped-for new party. Hertzog's idea was that this should be attained constitutionally by the will of the majority of English and Afrikaans speaking voters. Duncan called this Hertzog's "mental reservation" - which did not suit the out and out republicans. Hertzog, he said, had assured him when he resigned in 1939 that he would "continue to work for English-Afrikaner unity and would have nothing to do with any political party that would drive them into two camps". (1)

General Hertzog walked out of the "mud pool of party politics" late in 1940 because he was convinced that his opponents in the party were not prepared to give equal rights to the English speaking people of South Africa. N.C. Havenga, his friend and disciple who had been his Minister of Finance in the Fusion Government said of the split "We have been asked to swallow our principles and subscribe to racial domination which we have consistently repudiated". (2)

Hertzog could not be called a Commonwealth man in the sense that Smuts was a Commonwealth man, but neither was he unequivocally against the connection that he had helped to bring about. His resignation at this stage and over this issue was yet another nail in the coffin of the British connection and from now on compromise became impossible.

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(1) Duncan to Curtis, 5.9.40, PDP, File II, 41, (acb), 294.

(2) Rand Daily Main, 9 November, 1940.

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The Opposition were already mobilizing for the early introduction of a republic modelled on National Socialism. (1) National Socialism exerted a considerable attraction to a number of Afrikaners. In rejecting democracy and capitalism as being British manifestations they saw in National Socialism a return to the virtues of Boer republicanism, and the basic principles embodied in the constitution of the Old Orange Free State. (2)

Dr. Otto du Plessis, Enlightenment Secretary for the Nationalist Party and subsequently Editor of Die Volksblad enlarged on the type of republic that South Africa should have in Die Nuwe Suid-Afrika: Die Revolusie van die Twintigste Eeu, published in 1940. Nationalist Afrikanerdom, he claimed, longed for the death of democracy. Afrikanerdom, the only real nation in the Union, had, under the imported British system, not known full political, economic or social freedom. It consequently pined for a new system, a New Order which would bring it true freedom in all spheres of life. No matter what the result of the war would be Afrikanerdom was determined that South Africa's destiny was a free republic completely divorced from the British connection. (3)

Meanwhile how the republic was to be brought about involved some highly complicated permutations. The Transvaler claimed that regarding the final step in the declaration of a republic, that is to say whether by national vote or by parliamentary resolution there might still be some differences of opinion, but this would ultimately be determined by circumstances. (4) This was suitably vague, but by 1940 in a speech at Cradock Dr. Malan was reported as saying that the Afrikaner on the whole would welcome a republic, but a portion of Afrikaners would only accept a republic under compulsion, which would be nothing less than high treason. (5)

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(1) From Round Table Archives, PDP File II, 41, (aeb), 2941.

(2) cf. D.F. Malan, Afrikaner Volkseenheid, (Cape Town, 1959), 31.

(3) Henry Gibbs, Twilight in South Africa, (London, 1950), 186

(4) Transvaler, 21 November, 1939.

(5) United Party Election News, 1948.

By 1941 the Transvaler was beginning to be concerned about this "portion who would only accept a republic under compulsion" and how to eliminate them to clear the way for a majority vote. The paper asserted that only those who had faithfully shown full and exclusive loyalty to South Africa would be entitled to vote. (1) "What sort of state does one get if one gives the franchise to everyone indiscriminately irrespective of his attitude to South Africa", asked Dr. Malan in September, 1941; the answer was "a state without a set course and character". One of the maintenets of the party since 1936 had been that a republic would be founded op die breë grondslag van die volkswil. This no longer suited the needs of the party for it was claimed, in this case, a majority would have to be obtained amongst the English and amongst the Jews. The right of veto to decide about a republic could not be given to any section which was not "imbued with the real Afrikaner spirit". (2)

The cat was out of the bag and the enemy had been named. Die Republikeinse Orde, a pamphlet published by the Nationalist Party in 1940, which embodied the official statements of the leader of the party, Dr. Malan, the Federal Council of the party and resolutions of the Nationalist Party Congresses spoke of these unnational elements,

> "a large portion of the population of the Union is a fifth column of a foreign nation and therefore the republican government will have to protect the republic with a firm hand". (3)

The tone had changed since June, 1936 when Malan had said that one could not discriminate between the Jewish race and any other race. All Europeans in South Africa, he said, ought to stand on an equal footing politically and otherwise. (4)

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(1) Transvaler, 16.6.41. and 1.1.41.

(2) Burger, 7.3.41.

(3) Die Republikeinse Order: Partyse Toekomsbeleid deur dr. Malan uiteengesit, Cape Town, 1941, 22. cf. also D.F. Malan Glo in U Volk (Cape Town, 1964) 43-64.

(4) HAD, Vol. 27, col. 6247.

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During the election campaign of 1948 the Editor of the Cape Times raised the question of Dr. Malan and his party's attitude to British parliamentary democracy and South Africa's position as a democracy within the British Commonwealth, quoting some of his wartime speeches. Dr. Malan was asked to explain what he meant by saying that the new republic the nationalists intended to introduce when the Allied forces collapsed would start off with dictatorial powers "for a substantial period, and unnational elements disenfranchised". (1) The reply to this Editorial came a few days later from Professor A.C. Cilliers of Stellenbosch University who defended Malan's wartime speech as being made necessary by the uncertainty of the time. If, as a result of the war, he said, South Africa were to become a republic then the new government, to establish and maintain law and order would "have to assume authoritarian powers for a time". (2)

In furtherance of the plan to introduce a republic Die Kruithoring, a propaganda periodical published by the Nationalist Party outlined the "wonderful social and economic policy" that would obtain under the New Order. The whole economic life of the country would be regulated by a Central Economic Council and all key industries and banking would be controlled by the State. (3) The New Order opened an office in Pretoria and hired a national organizer. The ubiquitous Oswald Pirow became its leader. (4)

The dichotomy of National Socialism and democracy within the Nationalist Party was brought to a head by the development of an organization within the party which became known as the Ossewabrandwag. The Ossewabrandwag was founded at Bloemfontein in October, 1938, the Centenary of the Great Trek, its formal constitution dated from May and its first congress was held in July, 1940. (5) The aims of the

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(1) Cape Times, 8.4.48.

(2) ibid. 14.4.48.

(3) Die Kruithoring, official fortnightly paper of the Nationalist Party.

(4) Friend, 31.10.40.

(5) Mansergh Survey, 78.

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O.B., as it came to be called, were to perpetuate the spirit of the oxwagon in South Africa, maintaining and giving expression to the traditions and principles of the Dutch Afrikaner, promoting patriotism and national pride and harnessing and uniting all Afrikaners to endorse these principles and to carry them out. (1)

The Ossewabrandwag had a definitive role to play in the struggle for a republic in South Africa and the breaking of all ties with the British Commonwealth. With its para-military organization it was able to give its more militant members a cause, ostensibly devoid of party politics, for which their patriotism could find active expression. In this way the historic struggle against the British could again be experienced with uniforms, military titles and commandos, which had become part of Afrikaner folklore from the heroic days of the wars of independence. In Paarl in December, 1941, Malan admitted that the O.B. leaders were openly talking about obtaining a republic by rebellion and storm troopers had been told to prepare for it.(2) The South African Police was apparently infiltrated by members of the O.B. and several hundred were arrested and interned. Weapons and bombs were found in the Headquarters of what appeared to be a Stormjaer (Storm Troop) division of the O.B. (3)

Active steps to force a republic were outwardly repudiated by the Ossewabrandwag. The organization claimed that they stood for a "free independent Christian National republic" but that the determination of steps to be taken towards that goal was the function of a political party and therefore outside the scope of the activities of the O.B.(4)

The O.B. was daily growing more powerful. Dr. Malan claimed that the fact that three to fourhundred thousand people had joined it proved

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(1) Roberts and Trollip, S.A. Opposition, 231, and Hancock, Smuts II, 368-9.

(2) United Party Election News, April, 1945, 25.

(3) Cape Times, 26.1.42.

(4) Roberts and Trollip, S.A. Opposition, 233.

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that it had a place in the hearts of the people. (1) But by 1942 it was openly seeking the realization of National Socialism and the Revolution of the Twentieth Century in South Africa. But a break between the Malan Nationalists and the Ossewabrandwag was imminent and began as early as 3rd July, 1941, when the organization took upon itself to circulate one hundred thousand copies of a letter, Uniale Omsendbrief, which contained details of a proposed republican constitution. The O.B. had publicly entered the political arena in opposition to the Nationalist Party. (2) This time they had been seen to have gone too far and the Nationalists were galvanized into action. At Stellenbosch on 24th August, 1941 Malan delivered an ultimatum - the O.B. must withdraw the offending Uniale Omsendbrief or they would be declared hostile to the Nationalist Party and all members of the Party would have to resign from the O.B.

The O.B. obliged and withdrew the document and the whiphand was once more with the Malanites. But the message was clearly that when and how the republic and the final break with Britain were to come about would be decided by the Nationalist Party only.

The Nationalist Party published a Draft Republican Constitution of its own in January, 1942, drawn up for the purpose of assisting with the necessary preparatory work for the actual founding of a republic.(3) Though claimed by both the Transvaler and the Burger at the time of publication to be a tentative declaration, the Draft Constitution must be accepted as the official statement of the Party.

Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd began his rise to power during this period. When he became Prime Minister he was able to accomplish what no other Nationalist politician had been able to do - make South Africa a

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(1) Alexander Hepple, Verwoerd (London, 1967), 94.

(2) For a full explanation of this incident cf. N.M. Stultz "The Electoral Revival of the Nationalist Party in South Africa, 1934-1948" (Boston University Graduate School, 1965).

(3) Rand Daily Mail, 28.8.42. The Draft Constitution was reproduced in the British Africa Monthly, June, 1948.

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republic outside the British Commonwealth. For this reason his attitude to republicanism in South Africa deserves some investigation "Nobody", he said, "will want to be in the shoes of any political leader who, when the Afrikaner obtains political power, does not use every effort to bring about a Republic".(1)

He saw to it that he was not in those shoes and as Editor of the Transvaler during the war years he used the paper in the interests of the republican cause. Even Dr. Malan, as a Director of the Transvaler had to take him to task for his over-enthusiasm, whereupon Verwoerd threatened to resign immediately as he could not see his way clear to making anything but a strong republican note heard in the paper. The Chairman of the Board defended him and he was able to carry on and in the following years make the Transvaler the advocate par excellence of the republican ideal. (2).

Verwoerd's wartime republicanism waxed even hotter than that of Malan for he and his followers believed that the German victory would come about in a matter of weeks, not months. The republic was imminent. He indicated that constitutional procedures inherited from the "capitalist-liberal" parliamentary democracy of the British were not going to be allowed to stand in the way of attaining a republic in South Africa. If Germany won the war and the opportunity suddenly arose to choose between becoming a German or Italian colony or to establish a free republic, and action had to be taken at once to decide, then the "special and definite instructions of the people and the broad will of the people cannot be obtained through plebecite.... this would be slavery to the letter of the constitution and could perhaps cost the Union its freedom".(3)

Verwoerd had his own ideas of what kind of republic he wanted for his country. In his Editorials he spoke of the great radical change

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(1) Roberts and Trollip, S.A. Opposition, 44.

(2) Hepple, Verwoerd, 69.

(3) Transvaler, 27.7.40.

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that the republic would bring, both in regard to government and in the way national problems were tackled. The power of the capitalists in industry and their domination of the Press must disappear. It must not be a capitalist republic, "great riches shall not, and great poverty must not exist". (1) When the Draft Constitution appeared in 1942 it was given prominence by Verwoerd in the Transvaler. Article I of the Draft Constitution envisaged a republican constitution in which British Kingship over British subjects in the republic was totally abolished. Article II relegated English to a secondary or supplementary language with Afrikaans as the first official language. (2). The Burger also published the Draft claiming that the Nationalist Party had accepted the scheme in principle and in broad outline. (3)

South African politics have always been highly susceptible to overseas political developments. They were more than usually sensitive during the early stages of the war in Europe. In January, 1942 the tide of war was still running strongly against the Allies. 1942 saw the surging Japanese advance in the East, Malaya fell, the Phillipines, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, Burma and New Guinea were next and the war came nearer to South Africa. In Europe the Germans recovered from their defeat at the gates of Moscow and were regrouping for their summer offensive and by June they had captured Sebastopol and Rostov across the Don and were thrusting towards the Caucasian oil wells. Visions of a German link up with the Japanese began to haunt the Allies. The Axis powers seemed to have gained the initiative permanently.

But the tide was about to turn. In the summer Rommel's offensive in North Africa brought him to El Alamein, but lack of supplies led to the collapse of the offensive and this battle, in

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(1) Transvaler, 16.7.40.

(2) Transvaler, 23.1.42.

(3) Mansergh, Survey, 157.

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which South African troops fought, became the turning point in the war in North Africa. In Europe the Axis advance was halted in September at the gates of Stalingrad and the long bitter seige began that was to last until February, 1943. Thus German armies were held both in the Northernmost reaches and in the South. On 25th September Patrick Duncan wrote in happier mood from Government House, Pretoria saying that Malan now contemplated that Hitler might be defeated and so would not be in a position to give him his republic. He noted that Malan would attend a Peace Conference to put forward his claims for complete independence. Malan's real trouble, according to Duncan was that he could only get his republic by disenfranchising most of the British and a good many Afrikaans voters. He ended, "it really is a comic situation, but this 'Pickwickian leader' is a great asset to the Smuts side". (1)

Nationalist politicians varied in their reactions to the new situation. A.C. Cilliers had made clear his opinion in 1942 when he claimed that an Afrikaner who was not frightened of a victory for Hitler and the Axis was "blind, stupid or himself a Nazi by inclination". (2) J.G. Strijdom said that now that the German victory that some expected to liberate them was uncertain, it was said that the Nationalists would never come to power. But his Party would rule irrespective of Russian, German or British victories because "the Lord had placed them there with that intention".(3) Undoubtedly National Socialism appeared as a less promising card of introduction to any peace makers, and considerable back-pedalling was done. 1943 was for the Nationalist Party in South Africa, a year of clear defeat.

South Africa was not unique in her wartime disunity. In India the Indian National Congress at its Ramagarh Sessions in March, 1940

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(1) Duncan to Lady Selborne, 25.9.42. PDP. File I, D5, 294.

(2) A.C. Cilliers, Afrikaners Ontwaak (Stellenbosch, 1942) 25.

(3) Mansergh, Survey, 159.

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passed a resolution to the effect that Britain was carrying on the war fundamentally for Imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which was based on the exploitation of the people of India as well as Asia and Africa. Nothing short of complete independence said the would be accepted by the people of India; even Dominion status within the Imperial structure was wholly inapplicable to India and "not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation". (1)

The second World War set both India and South Africa on their separate roads to becoming independent republics. That a post-war independent Indian republic within the Commonwealth was going adversely to affect South Africa's membership would hardly have been foreseen. At this stage the Commonwealth of Nations was still the familiar British-centred association of respectable White Dominions. The post-war world was to see a radical change in the organization.

In South Africa Smuts was able to hold back the forces of republicanism as long as he remained in power. Republicanism hibernated, waiting the end of the war and the opportunity to return candidates to power democratically. In the first post-war election they succeeded, and the next great step towards the goal of a republican South Africa and the end of the British connection was achieved.

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(1) Mansergh, Documents add Speeches, 1931-1952, 607

CHAPTER III

THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE 1948 ELECTION

The first post-war elections in South Africa were held in 1948 and the resulting victory for the Nationalist Party was to take South Africa into yet another phase in her relationship with the British Commonwealth of Nations. The anti-British sentiments of the early war years died down once it became evident that the Axis powers were not going to win the war. The Allied victory was due in no small measure to the part played by the combined Commonwealth countries, and the nations of the Commonwealth, including South Africa, basked in the reflected glory of the Allied victory. (1) 1948 brought to an end the isolationist period of the Parliamentary Opposition and the Party's energies were now directed towards the attainment of the republic by democratic means.

That isolation was not the best election propaganda had become apparent to the Nationalist Party. An analysis of previous elections showed clearly that disappointing results were registered at the polls when an election was fought on issues such as republicanism and the British connection. (2) That the colour issue was more dynamic was evident from the results of the elections of 1924 and 1929, which were overwhelmingly successful for the Nationalist Party and had both been fought on the colour issue. The lessons learnt from these figures was to be put to use in the 1949 election, and the republican ideal and the question of South Africa's continued membership of the British Commonwealth were put into cold storage. The twin issues of colour and communism dominated the first post-war general

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(1) Round Table, No. 240, 447.

(2) cf. Appendix II, and Hancock, Smuts II, 499.

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election. That South Africa's continued membership of the Commonwealth could become directly dependent on the colour issue in South Africa could have been foreseen by few, if anyone at that stage. J.H. Hofmeyr, Smuts' deputy and designated successor believed that apartheid, the Nationalist's answer to the colour problem, would lead to the territorial Balkanisation of South Africa. (1) He also believed that if the Nationalists once came to power "they would not be got out again". (2) He could not have visualised that the combination of these two factors would lead ultimately to the end of South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth.

The election propaganda battle got off to a slow start. The Nationalist Party published its election manifesto on 21st April, barely a month before the nation was due to go to the polls, with significantly no mention in it of the Commonwealth. (3) A decision on this point had apparently been taken in 1944 or 1945. The republican issue was much discussed in the Nationalist press in late 1943 and 1944, and in March, 1944 the Party began a campaign to collect "Republican Battle Funds". (4) Hofmeyr challenged the Malanites on use of these funds to fight a General Election. They could not, he said, deny that this election was being fought for a republic because they could not deny that they were using the Republican Battle Funds to further their election campaign. They did not deny it - they ignored it.

Opinions vary as to whether the republic as an issue in the election was played down in 1948. Hofmeyr felt that it was, Horace Flather, then Editor of the Johannesburg Star, in a letter to the author, felt that it was not. (5) Senator Paul Sauer, who was at the time Chief Whip of the Nationalist Party, claims that although the

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(1) Cape Times, 21.4.48.

(2) Ballinger, From Union to Apartheid, 223.

(3) Cape Times, 21.4.48.

(4) Star, 26.5.48.

(5) Horace Flather to the author, 17.7.72.

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republican issue was not deliberately played down, it was not one of the cardinal points for the 1948 election. (1) It could be said that with the highlighting of the issues of colour and communism in Nationalist election propaganda, the question of the republic went by default, whether deliberately or not is difficult to tell. But the official ruling on the question of whether the Nationalists would declare a republic if they were returned to power was revealed in a statement made by Dr. Malan as early as 1946. Should the Nationalists win the next election, he said at Worcester, they would seek no mandate on the constitutional question. The issue for or against a republic could only be decided at a "special election or a popular referendum, not in consequence of an ordinary General Election". (2)

The United Party Election Manifesto appeared on 21st April, four days after that of the Nationalist Party. It dealt briefly with the issue of the Commonwealth, stating that the United Party stood for full co-operation in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the preservation of South Africa's present constitutional position.(3)

On 26th April, exactly a month before the date of the election, the Editor of the Cape Times wrote the only Editorial of his campaign on the question of a republic and South Africa's place in the Commonwealth. He referred to the United Party's reaffirmation of democratic principles being more attractive than Nationalist threats of breaking with the British parliamentary democracy. In an anxious world, he said, no one wanted anything but co-operation with the Commonwealth and the continuance of the status quo. Least of all did anyone want "Nationalist republicanism and isolationism". (4) In fact, however, the Nationalists were not threatening to break with the British Parliamentary system in 1948. It should be noted that much of the United Party's election propaganda consisted of speeches made by the Opposition during the early war years. United Party Election News was a collection, in the main, of war time statements made by the Nationalists.

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(1) Paul Sauer to the author, 22.8.72.

(2) Star, 28.9.46. (3) Star, 7.5.48.

(4) Cape Times, 26.4.48. cf. Also Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience, 376.

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By the beginning of May it had become apparent that the Nationalist Party were intent on wooing the English voter, and on 6th May a rather belated Editorial in the Cape Times expressed concern over this. The Nationalists knew, said the Editor, that they could not win the election without the support of the English-speaking voter and so the utmost care was being taken not to upset his susceptibilities in any way. This was contrasted with the anti-British and pro-republican propaganda propounded between elections. (1)

The strongest statements came from Jan Hofmeyr. There were reasons for this. The 1948 election was notable for the persistence of the attacks of the Opposition on the Deputy Prime Minister. Hofmeyr was a liberal and the Nationalists believed that liberalism was as dangerous, if not more so than communism, and Hofmeyr accordingly must be silenced. During the debate on the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill Hofmeyr had made a remark which the Opposition was to use repeatedly against him in the propaganda battle. "I take my stand", he said, "for the ultimate removal of the colour bar from our constitution". (2) Hofmeyr had welcomed the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill because it halted the process whereby the rights of the Indian people in South Africa were being gradually whittled away, but on the other hand, he disliked the colour bar in Parliamentary legislation which precluded Indians from electing Indians to represent them in Parliament. But his statement challenged the deepest prejudices, not only of the Opposition, but of a considerable number of the members of his own party as well who were later to saddle him with the responsibility of having, in consequence, lost them the election.

The hypothetical removal of the colour bar in Parliament became, to the Afrikaans press, the removal of all colour bars and as

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(1) Cape Times, 6.5.48.

(2) Alan Paton, Hofmeyr, (Cape Town, 1964), 424.

(3) Vote Against Hofmeyr and Save South Africa from Ruin, written and published by the Nationalist Party Information Office (Cape Town, 1948).

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Hofmeyr was expected to succeed Smuts this, according to his opponents, would lead to equality and would be the downfall of South Africa. (1) Furthermore, Hofmeyr and his Liberals, according to the Volksblad would bring about the overthrow of European civilization and "they were the people who were dictating to the United Party". (2)

Hofmeyr countered these attacks by reminding the Opposition of their tradition of trusteeship of the non-White people of South Africa, claiming that the Nationalists were in fact abandoning the principles that made European civilization worth while and were acting under a "tyranny of prejudice and fear". (3) The Editor of the Cape Times was also of the opinion that the Opposition's outlook was coloured by "fear of the world, the Commonwealth, the native, the coloured people, immigration and Jan Hofmeyr". (4) That Smuts was aware of this is apparent from a letter written by him to one of his supporters. "Apartheid propaganda however disastrous for South Africa, unfortunately makes a fear appeal to South Africans which they find difficult to resist. It is being exploited with all the known technique. (5)

The United Party did its best to make republicanism an election issue. As early as 1947 at the United Party Congress in Pietermaritzburg, F.L. Sturrock, the Minister of Transport, had called on the electorate to remember that the Nationalists' main objective, a republic out of the Commonwealth, should not be forgotten on polling day (6) and overseas the Oppositions' stand on the issue did not go unnoticed. The Economist remarked that for the past ten years Dr. Malan had been preaching the gospel of a republic with a State President answerable only to God and his conscience and not to

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(1) Vote Against Hofmeyr and Save South Africa from Ruin, Written and published by the Nationalist Party Information Office, Cape Town, 1948.

(2) Volksblad, quoted in Forum, 15.5.48.

(3) Cape Argus, 26.4.48.

(4) Cape Times, 15.5.48.

(5) Smuts to McGregor, 14.2.49., SPL, Vol. 91 (R-JCS).

(6) Star, 9.12.47.

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Parliament; but during the campaign he had kept the republican ideas of his followers well in the background. (1)

As the election drew closer it became clear that the revival by the United Party of speeches made by the Opposition during the war were not going to sway the electorate. The Government found itself more and more on the defensive. The United Party newspapers of the period were filled with denials; denials that Hofmeyr preached equality of the races, denials that Smuts was making South Africa a breeding ground for Communism, and denials that Smuts was handing over Natal to the Indians.

Indian representation in the House of Assembly was a particularly sensitive issue. Before the election Dr. Malan challenged the Smuts Government in a no confidence motion which called specifically for the repeal of the Indian franchise instituted in 1946. (2)

> "A vote for Jan Smuts is a vote for Joe Stalin and the eventual establishment of a black republic"

claimed Die Kruithoring, political bulletin of the Opposition in the Cape (3) and the Communist Danger published in 1948 by the Nationalist Party's Enlightenment Office and written by Eric Louw, future Foreign Minister of the Union proclaimed that the Communists believed in racial equality and miscegenation and were atheists and so constituted a threat to the survival of White civilization. The United Party was accused of allowing this menace to get out of hand by virtue of "letting things develop". (4)

It was considered by some that Smuts' stand on racial policy was ambivalent. Malan ascribed Smuts' electoral failure in 1948 to

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(1) Economist, 5.6.48.

(2) HAD, Vol. 62, Col. 62 et seq. and Hancock Smuts II, 459

(3) Stultz, "Electoral Revival of the National Party", 271

(4) HAD, Vol. 60, Col. 120.

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to the fact that "on the colour problem he never sounded a clear note". (1) This ambiguity was evident in a letter written by Smuts to a supporter, Mr. Howard Browne, in 1949. Smuts acknowledged then that he and other party leaders had repeatedly declared that up to a point apartheid was common ground and the traditional policy of South Africa; but that the Nationalist Party was proceeding far beyond that policy. "All this Nationalist doctrine is very explosive stuff", he concluded.

Meanwhile in the House, Malan had named the Springbok Legion an organization of ex-servicemen, as communist, reminding the members that Smuts had opened their Conference in September, 1947 and Harry Lawrence, a Member of Smuts' Cabinet, was discovered to be a patron of the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union. (2)

Whether it was Russian Communism or British Imperialism disguised as the Commonwealth the Opposition claimed that those who opposed them were tools of a foreign power or foreign financial interests. The Trade Unions and the Springbok Legion were said to oppose the Nationalist Party in the interests of Russian Communism. The United Party did so in the interests of British capitalism or British plans for her Empire in Africa. (3) Paul Sauer made this attitude clear when he predicted that there would be an outcry if the Nationalists advocated the severance of the British connection, but that "the Union was being made the scene of a new policy of British expansion. The British had lost India and were now seeking new spheres of expansion and British capital, brains and business were now making South Africa their base of operations". (4) J.G. Strijdom, leader of the Nationalist Party in the Transvaal, accused Smuts of subordinating South Africa's interests to those of Britain, of failure to put South Africa's case adequately at the United

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(1) Smuts to Howard Browne, 26.9.49., SPL, Vol. 91 (R-JCS).

(2) HAD, Vol. 63, Col. 3214.

(3) Star, 14.5.48.

(4) Star, 17.5.48.

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Nations and of being dictated to by Britain. (1)

The communist menace was seen in perspective only after the election, when it was found that in 1943 the Communist Party had contested seven seats and in 1948 only three. The total number of votes polled by the Party in 1943 was 2481 and in 1948 1775. (2)

Of the English language newspapers the Johannesburg Star seemed to be more aware of the possibility that the United Party might lose the election and what this would mean to the country in terms of their Commonwealth membership. Forceful cartoons and articles on the dangers of apathy in the United Party began to appear in the English press from 5th May onwards. The Election first made front page news on 18th May, when General Smuts delivered a major policy speech. Thereafter the election was relegated to the middle pages of the newspaper until 22nd May, four days before the election. The Cape papers were even slower. The feeling that an election of more than usual importance was about to take place was missing from all the English language newspapers. J.W. Mushet, Minister of Economic Development claimed that he was too busy to indulge in politics and wished that the election was over so that he could "get back to his job". (3)

On the face of it the United Party did seem to be in a strong position. They held ninety out of one hundred and fifty seats and it seemed that it would not be easy for Dr. Malan to secure the thirty seats needed to give him a majority.(4) Not everyone was optimistic however, Mrs. L. Jonker, United Party Election Organizer for Gardens in Cape Town pointed out that the Opposition was organising night and day and that unless the United Party roused itself it might find itself in a "fools' paradise" on 26th May. Two days before the election the Editor of the Cape Times pointed out that

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(1) Star, 18.5.48.

(2) cf. Appendix II.

(3) Cape Argus, 5.5.48.

(4) Journal of the Royal Empire Society, Vol. XXXIX, 1948, No. 2.

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General Smuts need lose only twelve seats to have lost election, that fifteen seats were held by fewer than six hundred votes in electorates of ten thousand and that apathy of only three hundred voters in each constituency could "decide the fate of the country for generations". (1) Smuts seemed not to see the threat to his party in 1948. Opinions vary as to whether at this time he overlooked South African affairs for the limelight of international fame. Senator Paul Sauer wrote that he felt strongly that Smuts had neglected the Union's problems because he was lionized overseas. He felt that Smuts "holistic" philosophy inclined him to put the problems of South Africa second to those of the whole of the Commonwealth.(2) The black viewpoint was put by Selope Thema, of the Natives Representative Council, who said that the Prime Minister was busy building peace in the world, whereas what was needed was the "building of peace where he lived". (3)

There were some members of the United Party who felt that Smuts leaned too heavily towards Britain and the Commonwealth. Before he crossed the floor to join the Opposition, H.F. Pieterse, United Party Member for Pretoria North Central, said that the Prime Minister unfortunately showed by his example that he was more British than the British. (4) However, in spite of this, as long as Smuts remained Prime Minister the Union was able to bask relatively unchallenged in the reflected glory of his international reputation. Smuts was responsible for shielding South Africa and gaining time for her in the post-war world. Once he was out of office, the international limelight began to illuminate much that had gone unnoticed by the world. Politicians familiar only to South Africans and without Smuts' charisma, replaced him just at the time when colour discrimination began to be unacceptable in world affairs.

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(1) Cape Argus, 5.5.48.

(2) Senator Paul Sauer to the author, 28.8.72.

(3) Ballinger, Union to Apartheid, 133.

(4) Cape Times, 18.3.48½

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Smuts' last message to the electorate was curiously flat and uninspiring. He spoke of "eschewing idle wrangles on the Constitutional question", whether they reflected Commonwealth relations or South Africa's free Parliamentary system; the country had had enough of republicanism and secession and secular disputes, he concluded. (1) Dr. Malan was meanwhile delivering himself of a far more moving appeal to the voters. He reminded them that the fate of their children and their descendants was in their hands. What happened at the election could be irrevocable. If things went on as they were now, what would become of the European race's mastery, civilisation and purity. "If Communist aggression was not stopped," he continued, "what will become of South Africa's holiest traditions, freedom and religion". (2)

It is significant that three days before the election Smuts gave an interview to the British Broadcasting Corporation, not, as might have been expected, on the South African election, but on the effect on the Commonwealth of Britain's imminent entry into the Western Union. (3) The idea of a Western Union appealed to Smuts as the first step in creating large Western blocks to preserve world peace. (4) He felt that the United Nations was never going to be wholly successful. "We must concentrate on creating, with the co-operation of the British Commonwealth and a United Europe an intermediate whole for the preservation of world peace", he had written to Amery. (5) In his broadcast he called the Commonwealth the most successful experiment in world government ever made, which still held good after "the bloody test of two world wars". The Commonwealth stood, he said, as proof that human government on a world scale was possible. (6) In spite of the imminence of the election, Smuts was still preoccupied with his role as international statesman.

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(1) Cape Times, 18.3.48.

(2) Star, 24.5.48.

(3) Hancock, Smuts II, 449.

(4) "The Changing Concept of the British Commonwealth and Empire", recorded for broadcast on 23.5.1948.

(5) Smuts to Amery, 10.4.47., SPL. Vol. 81, (A-W) and Hancock, Smuts II, 410.

(6) Star, 24.5.48.

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In 1948 the part Smuts had played as a statesman of international standing was in fact nearly over. In 1947, G. Heaton Nicholls, Union Ambassador in London, could still say that, with the nerve strings of the world held together in London, South Africa had been intimately associated with all policies and purposes by virtue of the world status of the Prime Minister. Few in South Africa, he claimed, could appreciate the steady flow of telegrams that emanated from Smuts on every facet of foreign affairs to influence the conduct of world politics, and few realised how seriously his advice was weighed and valued in the councils of the British Commonwealth. (1) In 1947 Smuts was still preoccupied with attempts to form, with the Commonwealth as its nucleus, the new whole that was to preserve world peace. (2) Leo Amery, Duncan Sandys and Lionel Curtis and Smuts were the prime movers and Winston Churchill had been marked out by them as the only suitable candidate to head the organization. With his leadership, they felt, there was nothing they could not accomplish. An organic union of Western democracies was envisaged that would be so strong that no aggressor would think of attacking it, and under Churchill, or in other words, under British leadership, they hoped to see it accomplished. Churchill's voice and no other could reach all nations and be listened to, Lionel Curtis wrote in a letter to Duncan Sandys. (3) The idea had begun in wartime discussions. Churchill had seen it as a possible international organization, but he later abandoned the idea when the American government veered towards a world-wide security organization guaranteed by the Great Powers. (4)

But at the United Nations in San Francisco although Smuts was revered for his contribution to victory, respected and listened to whenever he intervened in debate, to many he left the impression of being a relic of the past. Almost alone of all the delegates he

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(1) Broadcast by G. Heaton Nicholls, 4 February, 1947. SPL 1947, Vol. 83 (N-S).

(2) Mansergh, Commonwealth Perspectives, 40.

(3) Lionel Curtis to Duncan Sandys, 21.12.47., SPL, Vol. 81 (A-F).

(4) Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 138-9.
for an elaboration of the theme cf. Sir Edward Grigg, The British Commonwealth (London, 1943) Chs. XII & XIV.

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wore military uniform, and his age was apparent amongst the younger generation who had emerged into prominence during World War II. (1) In his public statements in South Africa, and in his general attitude to the election, Smuts would not appear to have entertained the possibility that he might lose the election. But privately, in his letters to his friends overseas his tone was less optimistic. In February he wrote to Field Marshal Montgomery that a "critical general election will soon take place in South Africa. Much for the future would depend on it, and he did not feel too sanguine with the fate of other post-war governments before him". (2) He also wrote to his friend Brendan Bracken to the effect that he hoped they had a chance of winning, but that he himself was "not very hopeful". (3) Some insight into Smuts' attitude to South African politics and his role as an international statesman can be gleaned from the letter he wrote to Leo Amery after he had lost the election. Soon after his defeat he fulfilled a long standing engagement to return to his University Colleges at Leiden and Christ's College, Cambridge, to receive academic honours. Cambridge and Leiden had done him good, he said and made him feel a man and not a worm in spite of the rebuff from his own people. "The pity is", he continued, "that for some years to come my time and energy will be taken up with this miserable party strife, but how could I do otherwise in the circumstances. My lifework is at stake and I must defend my own while I have the power to do so."(4) The "miserable party strife" obviously took second place in Smuts' life.

The election of 1948 was lost and South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth became doubtful overnight. Smuts' insight that his lifework was at stake had come too late. The triumph of the Nationalist Party in 1948 was to set the scene for the eventual end of South Africa's Commonwealth membership.

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(1) B. Cockram, General Smuts and South African Diplomacy, (Johannesburg, 1970) 7

(2) Smuts to the Rt. Hon. Field Marshal Montgomery, 10.2.48. SPL, Vol. 87 (N-S)

(3) Smuts to the Rt. Hon. Brendon Bracken, 3.2.48., SPL, Vol. 88, (JCS-Y) and Hancock, Smuts II, 496

(4) Smuts to Leo Amery, 2.7.48., Vol. 87 (R-S), and Hancock, Smuts II, 508.

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CHAPTER IV

THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMONWEALTH

The London Daily Mail published a telephone interview with the new Prime Minister of South Africa on 29th May, 1948. Dr. Malan was asked by their reporter, Graham Stanford, whether, now that he was in power he retained his anti-British sentiments of the war years and whether South Africa would now leave the Commonwealth. Dr. Malan replied that he was not an enemy of Britain and that severance of South Africa's ties with the Commonwealth had not been an issue in the election. All he worked for was the "future peace and prosperity of South Africa and the world". (1)

The new government that took office in the middle of 1948 was unprepared for victory, the extent of which surprised even those few who expected it. Ben Schoeman, who became Minister of Labour in the new Government claimed that in 1948 the Nationalist Party were not optimistic - they did not expect to do more than give General Smuts a "good go". (2) As it turned out the Nationalists had won no less than sixteen seats from the United Party, in addition to nine new seats, and the Afrikaner Party under Havenga, who had allied with them, won another seven. The grand total was seventy nine seats for the Nationalists and sixty five for the United Party to which, for practical purposes could be added three Native Representatives and six Labour seats. (3) This was a narrow though working majority, but hardly a victory for the Nationalists in terms of popular votes for the United Party polled nearly fifty per cent of the votes cast as against less than forty percent for the Nationalists

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(1) Star, 29.5.48.

(2) Quoted in Sunday Times Magazine, 18.2.73.

(3) Round Table, No. 152, September, 1948.

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and the other Parties combined. (1) The result of South Africa's most momentous election since Union was thus decided by a minority vote. The explanation of this lay in the high urban vote of the United Party and secondly in the delimitation system in South Africa which gave different weights to country and city votes. Smuts could have righted this anomaly while in power, but consistently refused to do so saying that it had its roots in a pact of good faith in the Union of 1910 which had created the constitution and should therefore be maintained. (2)

Quite naturally, the question now uppermost in Commonwealth circles was the extent to which Dr. Malan would be prepared to co-operate with that organization. The London Sunday Times claimed that General Smuts' political overthrow could have disturbing repercussions in the Commonwealth generally and noted that a new Commonwealth, different from that which General Smuts had done so much to create, was already developing. The Times concluded that the new situation would need a philosopher and champion as great as Smuts if it was to be successful. (3) The Sunday Chronicle was concerned that Dr. Malan make clear that he was willing to take his place at the Commonwealth Conference Table and claimed that his anti-British past would not stop Britain from extending a hand of friendship and partnership. It was also suggested that the projected Prime Ministers' Conference be hastened, for the sooner the new member of the "Commonwealth Board of Governors exchanged views with his colleagues the better". (4)

The Economist saw in the election results, danger signals, for under the guidance of General Smuts the drift away from Britain could have been stopped. (5) The New Statesman unwittingly hit the nail on the head, When it claimed that the Commonwealth was going to

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(1) Van den Bosch, South Africa and the World, 127. cf. also Appendix II.

(2) Hancock, Smuts II, 509.

(3) Quoted in Cape Times, 31.5.48.

(4) Ibid

(4) Economist, 5.6.48.

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to get a new look, and it looked as if Dr. Malan's government would have a lot to say as one of the "fashion designers". (1) That this new design was not to come about in Dr. Malan's time, and a full thirteen years were to elapse before a more simple-minded and dynamic personality was to bring about what was feared, could not at that time have been foreseen.

The London Times' City Reporter meanwhile was noting that South African securities on the Stock Exchange fell heavily at the unexpected defeat of Smuts and gloomily predicted that the situation would yet worse. Reassuring features, according to the Times, were that the more extreme proposals such as secession from the Commonwealth and nationalization of the mining industry had been dropped from the election programme. (2) It was also noted in London Times that a disturbing fact of the Nationalist victory was that the Nationalist Party had dropped the cry for an independent republic, and by so doing had achieved their aim of detaching from the United Party many English-speaking voters. The people who had been won over from the United Party would not countenance any move towards a republic out of the Commonwealth, but they shared with the Nationalists the widespread belief that an improvement in the status of the Black people of South Africa would be a threat to White civilization. According to the Times the victory of these advocates of apartheid could only be looked upon as a set back for the ideas and ideals upon which the Commonwealth had been founded, but it could not be assumed however, that the Nationalists intended to pursue the matter of taking South Africa out of the Commonwealth. (3) The London Observer felt that the immediate effect would be slight but would in the long run impair the prospects of co-operation within the Commonwealth and weaken it as a factor in world affairs by rendering it less secure.

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(1) Quoted in Forum, 12.6.48.

(2) Times (London) 29.6.48.

(3) Times (London) 24.6.48.

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"It should be taken as a warning" concluded the Observer, "how vulnerable a loose informal association was to the sways and swings of political feeling in any one of its member countries". (1)

Dr. Malan attended his first Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in April, 1949 saying that he was there in the interest of good understanding and co-operation between members of the Commonwealth. (2) After the Conference, on 28th April Malan, in a B.B.C. talk summarized the Union Government's attitude to the changes envisaged at the 1949 Prime Ministers' Conference. A new conciliatory policy towards Commonwealth relations was apparent in his speech.

> "It has been assumed that the Commonwealth will not interfere with the self-governing rights of separate members of the Commonwealth which they now possess much more definitely than before. As long as that is the case I have no objections to remain, together with the members of the Commonwealth, within a society which will consult about common problems, as far as South Africa's interests are concerned and point in that direction, also to co-operate with them." (2)

The Prime Minister went on to enlarge on the fact that in the present uncertain state of the world all nations should strive towards co-operation and for this reason South Africa would not subscribe to a policy of isolation. Within the framework of

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(1) Observer, (London) 30.5.48.

(2) The New Formula, Dr. Malan defines South Africa's Position in the Commonwealth, South Africa House (London, 1949), 2.

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friendly nations, continued Malan, there was the inner circle of the Commonwealth with which South Africa had special ties. These nations were sovereign independent states, freely associated with each other and "so long as there is no infringement of South Africa's rights, even the right to become a republic, South Africa has no intention of leaving the Commonwealth". (1)

In June the Nationalist government was inaugurated in Cape Town In the Prime Minister's first statement on foreign policy the tone regarding the Commonwealth was again diplomatic. Dr. Malan said that his government recognised the uniquely friendly relations existing between South Africa and the United Kingdom and the other countries of the Commonwealth, and it was the desire of his government that these relations should continue. South Africa, he said regarded herself as so free and independent however, that should she wish to become a republic, she had the right to do so and no limits or restrictions could be placed on her in this respect". "To become a republic was one of her free independent rights". (2)

Before leaving for the Prime Ministers' Conference in April, 1949 Malan once again emphasized his government's desire for South Africa to remain in the Commonwealth and stressed that his party was not in favour of isolation. Yet it was only seven years since he had said at the 1942 Union Congress that association with Britain could not give freedom and that the British connection had to go. (3) It was noted in South Africa in the months after the election that the new government was trying to assure English-speaking South Africans that they had nothing to fear in the future. Constant references were being made to the alleged thousands of English-speaking voters who had voted for the Nationalists in the election.(4) It was clear that one way that the slender majority the Nationalist

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(1) The New Formula, 5.

(2) Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa, Statement by the Hon. D.F. Malan, (Pretoria, 1948).

(3) D.F. Malan, Glo in U Volk, (Cape Town, 1964), 47.

(4) ?

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Party achieved in 1948 could be increased was by luring the English-speaking voter away from his traditional political party, the United Party. Over the issues of colour and communism there was a great deal of agreement between the United Party and the Nationalists. A major issue of disagreement was however, the republic and South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth. In order to remain in power, by maintaining and enlarging their slender majority in Parliament, it was necessary, at this stage to show the English-speaking voters that they had no need to fear that South Africa would leave the Commonwealth. (1) Malan gave the impression of trying to create an image of himself as a good Commonwealth man during the period after the election. He attended all the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conferences willingly, maintained cordial relations with all the other member states, and even attended the Queen's Coronation in 1953 with every sign of enjoyment. The republican issue was kept in the background.

Smuts was well aware of this and made his views known to Churchill, also out of office after a shock post-war defeat at the polls. The campaign for a republic was coming, wrote Smuts, and might be in full spate when he was no longer there to combat it. He wrote "It will tear up South Africa, and though it might succeed on the Indian model of a republic within the Commonwealth, it will not stop there. The fight since the First World War had been for secession and Malan would not be able to control his republican extremists. The danger is therefore very real".(2)

About this time an interesting exchange of views took place between Churchill and Smuts. During the war years they had developed the habit of sending cables to each other using a suitable pseudonym for security purposes. Churchill was "Colonel Warden" or at other times "a former Naval person" and Smuts was "Henry Cooper". (3)

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(1) Guardian, (Cape Town) 2.6.48.

(2) Smuts to Churchill, 3.5.49. SPL, Vol. 91, (R-JCS).

(3) cf. Winston Churchill, The Second World War, Vol IV, (London, 1951), 674. Henry Cooper was Smuts' Private Secretary.

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Hancock remarks on the exhilaration that Churchill and Smuts experienced during the war in the face of danger, which was perhaps the closest bond between them. Smuts loved the exuberant greetings which were sent to him by Churchill when the fighting was hottest; they were comrades together in difficult times, boosting each other's morale. (1) Now, defeated at the polls, and with everything he believed in at stake Smuts felt once more that "the danger was very real". He communicaated his fears and sense of urgency to Churchill in a series of cables. Churchill replied reassuringly "Amongst the White minority Malan now seems not to intend any violence.... every good wish to you and yours, my lifelong friend and companion. I should welcome a letter". (2) Further long cables concern the position of India as a republic within the Commonwealth, over which Churchill and Smuts differed. The telegrams appear to have petered out soon after this. The situation was, to Churchill at least, not very dangerous.

Yet as the months passed no move was made by Malan and the Nationalist government to implement their republican ideals. The significance of this did not go unnoticed in London. Leo Amery wrote to Smuts saying that though he realised the dangers of the republican issue being forced through by the new government, so far Malan had taken the line of saying that "so long as he can be a republic when he wants it, he does not want it". (3) Furthermore Dr. Malan continued to attend Commonwealth Conferences and generally co-operate with the organization, even going so far as to say that the reason why the Commonwealth would remain a force in world affairs in spite of changes and developments, was that it had shown an ability to adapt itself to changing conditions in a changing world.(4) This question of the adaptibility of the Commonwealth was a favourite theme of Leo Amery, arch-protagonist of the Commonwealth ideal.

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(1) Hancock, Smuts II, 356.

(2) Churchill to Smuts, undated, SPL, Vol 89, (A-G).

(3) Amery to Smuts, 2.5.49. ibid.

(4) Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa.

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WITH CHURCHILL IN CAIRO, 1942. (Courtesy Argus).

As early as 1947 he had written to Smuts that the structure of the Commonwealth was so flexible that the United States could join it tomorrow. (1) Ironically it was the ability of the Commonwealth organization to adapt itself to the changes in the post-war world that eventually contributed to driving South Africa out of the Commonwealth. But in 1947 this was still a remote possibility.

Malan conceded that an outstanding feature of the Commonwealth had always been freedom, granted in accordance with the growth of nationhood of the former colonies of Empire, until they reached the stage of complete equality of status and independence now possessed by all the members of the Commonwealth. "There might be ties", he said, "but there were no fetters" (2) Then on 19th September, 1950 at the opening of the Congress of the Nationalist Party in Durban in a message to English-speaking South Africans called "Common Ground for National Unity", Malan enlarged on the new racial harmony between English-speaking and Afrikaner under the Nationalist Government. Furthermore the republic would not be forced on the country but would only come about if it was broadbased on the people's will and as a result of a special mandate of the people. (3) The Party was once more back to the 1936 cry that the republic would be founded op die breë grondslag van die volkswil.

In pursuance of Malan's new policy towards the Commonwealth Patrick Gordon Walker, British Minister of Commonwealth Relations was invited to South Africa in 1951. In a cordial speech at a dinner given in his honour at Kelvin Grove in Cape Town Malan assured Gordon Walker that the Union appreciated the value of the Commonwealth connection in the present dangerous world situation, pledging to continue the co-operation and make it as fruitful as possible. (4) Gordon Walker, in his reply, stressed that Britain and South Africa

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(1) Amery to Smuts, 24.3.47., SPL, Vol. 61, (A-F).

(2) Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa.

(3) Malan, Glo in U Volk, 64.

(4) Notes for a speech by Dr. D.F. Malan at Kelvin Grove, 9.2.51., D.F. Malan Collection.

were both members of an association in which they were equal in every respect; equally sovereign, equally independent, but bound together by the intangible links that held the members of the Commonwealth in free association. The absolute right of each member to control its own affairs, he continued, carried with it the consequence that each was free to adopt whatever internal constitution it wished. "This is part of the unfettered sovereignty that each member enjoys" he concluded. (1) The new atmosphere of co-operation was noted by the South African Press as early as October, 1948. (2)

At the same time the world situation was deteriorating rapidly and was once more impinging on political attitudes in the Union. Smuts had begun to sound warnings on the state of the post-war world. "The international situation is dangerous", he said. "A shadow is moving forward over Europe and already covers a number of countries. It looks almost as if instead of peace and security and the maintenance of ideals for which the West had fought, there was now danger and mischief." (3) In a letter to Lord Salisbury he wrote that the world was passing through a great transition in its history and he felt humble and anxious about it. In his letters to Churchill he was even more pessimistic, complaining that there had been a decline in Britain's world position since 1945. In the world revolution that was now in progress it was essential he felt that the Commonwealth should pull its full weight. "Surely we have not won the war only to appear to lose our proud position and our face before the world", he finished. (4)

In this situation South Africa would not afford a policy of isolation. The Commonwealth might be British, but it was large and still powerful enough to protect its members. As the Cold War grew daily worse, republicanism and a break with the Commonwealth were no longer spoken of.

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(1) Guardian (Cape Town), 21.10.48.

(2) Cape Argus, 23.3.48.

(3) Smuts to Salisbury, 31.1.49. SPL, Vol. 91 (R-JCS).

(4) Smuts to Churchill, 3.5.49., SPL Vol. 91 (R-JCS) and Smuts to Hon. D.S. Senanayake, 9.4.48., SPL, Vol. 88, (JCS-Y).

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The beginning of the Cold War can conveniently be set at 5th March, 1946, with Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, Missouri. "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent" claimed Churchill, and called for an alliance of English-speaking peoples who, with their combined resources and naval and air bases all over the world could provide overwhelming security on this half of the curtain. (1) That South Africa would have an important part to play in this was obvious. Her role would be as vital as it had been in 1940. This time, however, the enemy would be different. The Truman Doctrine was followed by the Marshall Plan and the year the Nationalists came to power brought strife in Europe, the Czechoslovakian coup and the Berlin Blockade. 1949 saw the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a new aggressive fighting force for the Western Powers. In November the successful conclusion of the Chinese Revolution brought home to the West the fact that the Communist dominated world was no longer one sixth but one third. (2) The 1950 Colombo Conference was, according to Noel Baker, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, well timed because of these great events in China. Relations between East and West, he said, were in the forefront of world affairs and the Commonwealth system was a unique bridge between the free peoples on both sides of the world.(3)

By November, 1949 Russia had perfected the atom bomb and Smuts wrote "The Russian bomb has speeded everything up and we shall have to put on our thinking cap once more". (4) 1950 was no better. In June the war in Korea broke out and the Cold War entered a new and more dangerous phase. Amory wrote to Smuts that he was concerned that although it seemed obvious to him that the Americans had done the right thing in Korea yet the general situation was growing daily more alarming; not only because America was becoming increasingly

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(1) David Horowitz, From Yalta to Vietnam, (London, 1967), 62.

(2) For Cold War chronology cf. D.F. Fleming, The Origins of the Cold War, Vol. II, (New York, 1961), 1038.

(3) Memo of conversations at All Souls College, Oxford, on 8 and 9 January, 1950 between Sir Arthur Salter, Lord Boyd Orr, Lionel Curtis and Noel Baker. SPL, 1949, Vol. 91, (R-JCS).

(4) 24.9.49. SPL, Vol. 91, (R-JCS).

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involved in Korea but also because the West was tending to lose face as a result of the success of a hitherto despised Asiatic race. 1950 promised to be an eventful year, he could only hope that the structure of the Commonwealth would stand the strain and relations with the United States become closer; on this, he felt, the future of the world largely depended. (1)

On this point Malan felt much the same. The Commonwealth was no longer seen as a menacing extension of British Imperialist aims. More worrying still was the intention of India of becoming a republic. The Prime Minister was now saying that the impression in the world could be that the Commonwealth was disintegrating and no longer a powerful force in a dangerous world situation in which war threatened, (2) world events had brought Malan to the same stand point on Commonwealth relations as Smuts, within the space of a few years.

The anti-Communist crusade fitted in well with the Nationalist Party's ideological outlook. This, after all, was what they had been preaching all through the war years when the Western Allies had looked upon Stalin as an ally. It now appeared to them that South Africa could play her part fully. The Cold War was welcomed by the Government as an issue which could unite White South Africa. As Malan said, previous wars had divided the White races in the Union, but now if war broke out South Africa had the opportunity of presenting a united front to the world.(3) South Africa's anti-Communist stand was reiterated by Eric Louw, the Foreign Minister, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly. The Communist Party had been banned in South Africa, he said, the Soviet Consul General asked to leave the country and Consular Representation terminated since the Nationalist Government took office. (4)

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(1) Amery to Smuts, 8.9.50., SPL, Vol. 93 (A-G) and N.B. Foot to Smuts, 29.8.49., SPL, Vol. 89, (A-G).

(2) Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa.

(3) ibid.

(4) H.H. Bierman (ed), The Case for South Africa. Public Statements of Eric H. Louw (New York, 1963), 63.

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It is noteworthy that the Cold War had surprisingly little effect on South Africa's defence budget. The Union still sheltered under the wing of Britain's defence arrangements and the umbrella of Commonwealth protection. After World War II the South African Defence Force was drastically reduced in numbers. In 1946 its armaments consisted of old equipment left over from the war, but during the ensuing fourteen years no new equipment was acquired beyond a number of Centurian Tanks in 1952 and two squadrons of Sabre aircraft in 1955, which were purchased as a result of discussion with Great Britain for the defence of the gateway to Africa.(1) Nothing was done about improving South Africa's Defence Force until 1960 when it was decided to modernise and expand it. In 1960-1961 expenditure by the Department of Defence represented 0,9% of the gross national product. By 1969-1970 this had increased to 2,4%. (2)

In 1950 Malan regarded the Middle East as one of the danger spots. (3) So did Smuts and Leo Amery. (4) It was clear that the Suez canal was vulnerable and in view of this the Cape route might once more be vital to anti-Communist forces. The N.A.T.O. powers would thus need South African co-operation. It was considered by some that South Africa might need help from the Western Nations in return to help them combat dangers at home. (5) However, the active part that South Africa eventually took in the Cold War was minimal. In 1948 a contingent of airmen were sent to assist the United States and Britain in the Berlin airlift. Malan reasoned that nothing would be able to stop the Communist tidal wave in Europe if the Allies had to withdraw from Berlin and for this reason the Union sent aid. In 1950 the United Nations called on member nations to send military contingents to Korea. South Africa was one of the sixteen members that responded by sending one fighter squadron. (6) South Africa was playing her part, however small, in the Western Nations anti-Communist crusade. The Minister of Justice, C.R.Swart,

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(1) Bierman, (ed) Case for South Africa, 63.

(2) State of South Africa, 1972.

(3) Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa.

(4) Amery to Smuts, 5.6.50., SPL, Vol. 93, (A-G).

(5) Van den Bosch, South Africa and the World, 132.

(6) Bierman, (ed) Case for South Africa, 21 and Oxford History of South Africa II, 521.

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defended the decision saying "We have strengthened our position in the United Nations". (1)

Smuts died in September, 1950. Shortly before his death he wrote:

> "Racialism is once more raising its head in a country where, for the first time since Union, men of only one race are in control and forcing the pace ruthlessly. Colour policies are being pursued that have started a fresh wave of distrust and alienation between European and non-European. The only basis - that of good will and understanding - on which a multi-racial society, such as South Africa, can successfully function, is being undermined and there is today more colour antagonism on both sides than has been known for a long time. Such are the fruits of Nationalist rule after less than two years in power." (2)

Smuts died convinced that his country under the Nationalists was becoming increasingly isolated by virtue of her apartheid policies in spite of the government's co-operation with the Commonwealth and integration into the Western defence system. If he had lived he would have seen much of what he feared take place for in spite of attempts at maximum co-operation with the Commonwealth two factors mitigated against South Africa's continued membership. The first, as the increasing isolation of the Union by virtue of the institutionalization, with maximum publicity, of her Apartheid policies, in a world in which racial segregation was fast becoming unacceptable and where colonialism, imperialism and paternalism were were looked upon with approbation.

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(1) cf. Appendix.

(2) Smuts to Douglas Smit, 20.2.50., SPL, Vol. 95, (R-JCS) and Hancock, Smuts II, 490.

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The second factor arose out of the first. As the former colonies attained their independence in rapid succession the Commonwealth took on a new look. Smuts did not approve of India becoming a republic within the Commonwealth, doubtless because he felt it was the thin edge of the wedge. It was, and it is practically certain that he would not have approved of the resultant Commonwealth of new independent nations which were rapidly outnumbering the original White members.

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CHAPTER V

SOUTH AFRICA, INDIA AND THE NEW COMMONWEALTH

It could hardly have been foreseen, when Patrick Duncan wrote to Lady Selborne in 1931 on the Indian question, that this would one day have important repercussions on South Africa's position in the Commonwealth. "I would like someone to tell Congress politicians" he wrote, "that British life and treasure are not going to be wasted on holding India by force. Furthermore I do not believe in Dominion Status for India, India will never be a Dominion like the rest of the Dominions". (1)

Less than forty years later, however, Harold MacMillan, elder statesman of the Commonwealth could say that, while it could not have been foreseen how quickly Dominion Status for India would come about, yet "it was realised that the process was inevitable and right". (2) World War II heralded the swan song of the British Raj in India; Indian demands for independence increased, and in view of the strategic importance of India to Commonwealth security, the British ability to hold out against independence weakened. India was so vital to the Allies that even America took an interest in Britain's relations with India. As the Japanese advance spread westward in Asia "Former Naval Person" wrote to Roosevelt that in pursuance of their plan to keep the U.S.A. informed, about policy in India, he should know that a very serious situation was developing in India. The enemy was "battering at the gates" and the Punjab supplied half of all the fighting troops that could take part in the defence of

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(1) Duncan to Lady Selborne, 12.9.31., PDP, File I, D5, 294.
(2) Round Table, No. 240, November, 1970, 463.

University of Cape Town

India. Roosevelt advised in reply the expedition of Indian unity which could help people to forget hard feelings and become more loyal to Britain. (1)

For many years there had been vigorous debate in India as to whether Dominion Status was acceptable or whether India should end all connection with Britain. The opinion of Congress as expressed by their militant leader Jawaharlal Nehru was that Dominion Status would never mean full independence but only a continuation of the same old structures and maintenance of the status quo. (2) He wrote to Gandhi saying that it passed his comprehension how a national organization could have Dominion Status as an ideal and a goal. (3) Membership of the Commonwealth was similarly looked upon as a continuation of visible and invisible bonds.

But World War II brought a change of heart to the Indian nationalist leaders. In the early years of the war, the crisis of Japanese advance in the East had necessitated the rallying of all forces in India to the defence of the country, and as India became daily more vital for the defence of the Western Allies the road to Indian unity and independence gradually became clear. By 1947 India became the first non-White nation to achieve Dominion Status. India became a member of the Commonwealth forthwith, apparently automatically and no questions were asked about her changed status within the Commonwealth.

Smuts appeared at this stage to be in accord with the decision, and he was careful about what he said in public. In March, 1947 Robert Fahs, United Press correspondent in South Africa cabled Smuts asking him, along with other world leaders, to make a statement on the future of India as an independent country. Smuts cabled back that the matter was too much a subject of controversy for one in his position to express an opinion on. (3)

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(1) Churchill, The Second World War, IV, 186.

(2) Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 141.

(3) The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXXV, (New Delhi, 1969), 522.

(4) Smuts to Fahs, 1.3.47., SPL, Vol. 82, (G-M).

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In June, however, he was ready to make a grudging public statement, indicating that in spite of what he called "India's recent attitude towards South Africa" he was "deeply interested" in the settlement.(1) The world was passing through troublesome stormy time, he continued, and India should be congratulated on starting her career in the "grand Community of the Commonwealth, with all the stability and good will that fact implied". (2)

In private Smuts' attitude was very different. Leo Amery and Smuts had similar views on the Indian independence issue. Amery wrote to the Oubaas from London saying that so far he had refrained from any criticism of the present government with regard to India, but, as Smuts knew, he had never shared Churchill's "purely negative attitude" on Indian affairs. He felt sure though that he would have to "come out with criticism of their latest policy which was dictated by undue compliance to Nehru, who was being driven forwards... in the direction of civil war".(3)

"Strong winds are blowing all over Asia" Nehru had said at the opening of the Inter-Asian Conference at New Delhi in March, 1947, (4) and these winds were to reach South Africa before very long. Now that India was a Dominion, one of the chief aims of Indian and Pakistan foreign policy was to fight racial discrimination in the world. It was noted in India that in South Africa racial prejudice dominated legislation for Indians. India should have no link, it was suggested, with a Commonwealth harbouring such members. (5) Furthermore India had decided in January, 1947 to become a republic, the only form of government, it was felt, which would give India full sovreign independence (6) and it was hoped that India could remain as a republic in the Commonwealth. The reconciliation of the twin

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(1) Hancock, Smuts II, 447, and Mansergh, Documents and Speeches 1931-1952, 705.

(2) Times (London) 5.6.47. and Mazrui, Anglo-African Commonwealth , 31.

(3) Amery to Smuts, 24.3.47., SPJ., Vol. 81, (C-F).

(4) Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience, 327.

(5) ibid. 328.

(6) Miller, Britian and the Old Dominions, 141 .

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issues was to absorb the energies of statesmen of the British government for the next two years.

Settlement of the problem of a republic within the Commonwealth meant reconciling the position of the Crown with republican status. Churchill did not feel that the majesty of the Crown or the personal dignity of the King was going to be impaired by the conditions under which India could remain a republic within the Commonwealth

> "I am unfeignedly glad" he wrote in 1949, "that an impossible gulf has not opened between the new India and the British Empire and Commonwealth, between our famous past in India and our anxious present all over the world. (1)

Smuts was not convinced. To him the King was a reality in the system, not just a symbol. (2) As early as 1940 he wrote in an article in the London Times "there is no middle course between Crown and republic, between 'In' and 'Out' of the Commonwealth. You are either in or out and if you choose to be out you are entirely out and not out on terms that can be devised".(3) Over the issue of Indian independence he complained to Churchill that the arrangement had given the Nationalists in South Africa the very opportunity they had been praying for, that was "some half-way house to complete secession". He considered that the Malan government would now see the problem of a republic within the Commonwealth had been solved. Churchill, he continued, would appreciate how much more difficult it had become to fight republicanism in the Union. "I have done my best to make it appear an exceptional accommodation for India", he concluded, "but the Nationalists are maintaining stoutly that it is a complete change of policy". (4)

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(1) Hall, Commonwealth, 863.

(2) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches 1931-1952, 873 and Miller, Commonwealth and the World, 55.

(3) Times (London) 16.5.40.

(4) Smuts to Churchill, 3.5.49., SPL, Fol. 91, (R-JCS).

University of Cape Town

This change of policy did not go unnoticed in Nationalist circles in South Africa. In 1955, J.G. Strijdom made this clear when speaking in the House of Assembly in the No Confidence debate he traced back the history of the republican movement in South Africa. The republican clause, he said, had been incorporated in the Nationalist Party Constitution since 1936 and it stood clearly for a republic divorced from the Commonwealth. But in 1949 there was an "interesting development" in the Constitution of the Commonwealth. It was decided, continued Strijdom, that if a member country, like India, wanted to become a republic it could still retain its membership of the Commonwealth. "In view of this development the Nationalist Party had reconsidered its whole approach to Commonwealth membership. It was decided that while the party's republican ideal remained unchanged the question of becoming a republic and Commonwealth membership would become two separate questions." (1)

Smuts was right - it was a complete change of policy. That this was made inevitable by the issue of India was made clear by Sir Alan Lascelles, the King's Private Secretary, who saw that the Commonwealth was now at "a fork in the road". He was of the opinion that if the Commonwealth followed one arm and told India that unless she paid allegiance to the Crown she must go, she would go, with unforeseeable consequences. If the other arm was followed and it was admitted that a "common allegiance to the Crown" was no longer the sine qua non of membership then it was possible for republics that did not recognise the Crown to belong to the Commonwealth.(2) Sir Robert Menzies, who was Prime Minister of Australia at the time points out that the precedent of Indian republicanism in one stroke cut the bond of common allegiance which was the crown. "The British Commonwealth became the Commonwealth" he wrote.(3)

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(1) JPC, 1955, Vol. 36, 191.

(2) Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience, 334.

(3) Robert Menzies, Afternoon Light, 188.

University of Cape Town

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of 1949 was an important one. From it emerged republican India, formally accepted as a full member of the Commonwealth. It was the first non-White member. This was to have consequences for South Africa that would only be fully appreciated in 1961 when the Union was forced to leave the organization. Smuts' friends thought that the decisions might have been otherwise had he been in office and present at the Conference. Viscount Simon feared that the Conference might end in achieving Stafford Cripps' ambition to "liquidate the British Empire".

> "I wish you would let me know" wrote Simon to Smuts, "whether you with your imaginative insight, see what the new thread is that is to keep this incomparable association going". (1)

Smuts felt strongly enough about the accession of India to differ even from his "lifelong friend and comrade", Winston Churchill. This is evident from the cables that passed between them in 1949. "Colonel Warden" cabled "Henry Cooper" in Cape Town that he was distressed to find himself taking a different line from his ffiend about the Indian question, but that Smuts knew his views on the subject. As Conservative Leader he felt it his duty to look forward. (2) Churchill cabled reassuring messages to Smuts. Smuts, he said, knew that he had to have a policy that would not place the Conservative Party in a position of antagonism to the new Indian Government. But, he concluded, "I will strongly repudiate any move by the Union to repudiate the Crown, but I do not think the Nationalists will make this move". (3)

Smuts was not convinced. Already according to him, a good many loyal English people in South Africa were asking what harm there was in a republic. The total secession of India, he wrote to Churchill, would mean a very serious loss of face for the Commonwealth and

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(1) Simon to Smuts, 20.4.49., SPL, Vol. 91 (R-JCS) and Hancock, Smuts II, 447.

(2) Churchill to Smuts, 22.5.49., SPL, Vol. 89, (A-G).

(3) Churchill to Smuts, date indecipherable, SPL, Vol. 91, (R-JCS).

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"deepen the impression of decline to the outside world" (1)

The Declaration of London followed the Indian settlement and with it brought the solution to the problem that so exercised Smuts the question of allegiance to the Crown in the case of a country becoming a republic. The government of India, as a sovereign independent republic wished to retain her full membership of the Commonwealth and as such accepted the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent members and thus the Head of the Commonwealth. (2) This solution suited South African republican plans admirably. The only change made by the Declaration was to waive the allegiance of the Crown in the case of India, which continued to accept the King as a symbol of the free association. (2) For South Africa and the members of the Commonwealth, other than India, there was absolutely no change in their status. (3) This has been called "constitutional hairsplitting". As a result India was now free to recognise the King as a symbol of the free association of the members of the Commonwealth. Thus both parties were satisfied. (4)

In India the Declaration of London was welcomed. India was now entirely indipendent and in no way subordinate to any other state.

> "We shall go on our way and they will go on their way" Nehru said, "But our way, unless something happens, will be a friendly way.... and the fact that we have begun this new type of association with a touch of healing will be good for us, good for them, and I think, good for the world". (5)

The successful conclusion of the Chinese Revolution had profound implications for India. From being a troublesome, second class non-White nation India became, during and after the Second World War,

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(1) Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 143.

(2) ibid. 144. and Duncan Hall, Commonwealth, 863.

(3) Miller, Commonwealth and the World, 35. and H. Victor Wiseman, Britain and the Commonwealth (London, 1905) 32.

(4) Duncan Hall, Commonwealth, 861.

(5) Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 142.

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the bastion of Western power in the East and as such of major strategic importance in the Cold War. That this was of more importance than South Africa becoming a republic whether in or out of the Commonwealth never really made an impact on Smuts. Smuts was prepared to admit only grudgingly that Communism might be overall more dangerous than republicanism in South Africa. He wrote to Churchill,

> "Of course, as you say, the future overall menace may be communism, on that issue even the republicans will stand by the Commonwealth, as I imagine India is likely to do".(1)

Malan on the other hand saw Communism advancing from the East as the most pressing problem in the immediate future. In a statement on the Foreign Policy of the Union on his return from the 1949 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference he spoke of the vast territory of India and her population of four hundred million. If the Commonwealth lost India, he said, then India would seek her friends elsewhere. India was anti-Communist, and in the present dangerous world sitation that meant a great deal. (2) Malan and Churchill were, ironically more in accord at this stage on the Indian issue than Smuts and Churchill. "When I asked myself the question, would I rather have them in even on these terms or let them go altogether, my heart gave the answer I want them in", Colonel Warden had cabled to Henry Cooper. (3) It was less a matter of the heart, however, than yet another compromise in the Cold War. India could, if handled with care, be safely counted on to stay within the Western orbit, and opposition to Communism afforded a growing bond of unity in a world of realigning forces. By 1950 Patrick Gordon Walker, then Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, was saying

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(1) Smuts to Churchill, 3.5.49., SPL, Vol. 91, (R-JCS); cf. Hancock, Smuts II, 446.

(2) Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa.

(3) Churchill to Smuts, date indecipherable, SPL, Vol. 89, (A-G).

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"We are today as much an Asian as a Western Commonwealth". (1) This implied that no African country was yet a member, South Africa being regarded not as an African member, but a White Western member, in accordance with South Africa's own image of herself as an outpost of Western civilization.

Indian independence set the ball rolling and the pace of independence in Africa during the 1950's was memorable. Britain had been accused of jettisoning her responsibilities in Africa and handing over with indecent haste to the indigenous peoples of her former Empire. A speech by the Colonial Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker in 1951 not only welcomed in advance the Gold Coast as a member of the Commonwealth, but also announced the British Government's intention to continue its policy of converting the British Colonies, one by one, into free and independent self-governing countries which would then be eligible to apply for Commonwealth membership.(2) Dr. Malan gloomily referred to the "preposterous absurdity in existing Commonwealth relations" that in a group of free and equal members there should be no discussion regarding admission of new members. Acting on her own accord, without consultation with other Commonwealth members, Britain had recently added India, Pakistan and Ceylon to the Commonwealth. She intended to continue the process without limitation. "This could affect the character of the whole group". (3)

Patrick Gordon Walker answered this charge in the House of Commons on 7th June, 1951, claiming that the responsibility for internal constitutional developments in the Colonies depended entirely on the United Kingdom but that the question of whether a country became a full member of the Commonwealth did not automatically

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(1) Speech at Royal Empire Society, 12.10.50., United Empire, Journal of the Royal Empire Society, Vol. XLII, No. 6, 1950, 333-4.

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had gone forever, and South Africa found the new Commonwealth inimical to her interests. Indian independence and her admission as a republic to full membership of the Commonwealth was significant not only because it proved to the world that it was possible for a colonial non-White dependency to rid itself of its White overlords, but also because India, as a result, took its place side by side and on equal terms in an organization still dominated by Whites. This fact was immediately grasped by Nationalists in other Black countries.

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CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS A REPUBLIC IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1954 Malan resigned. He did not designate a successor and the result was an internal struggle within the Nationalist Party of unprecedented bitterness. (1) J.G. Strijdom who became the new Prime Minister was known as "The Lion of the North" and had the reputation of being an uncompromising republican.

During the No Confidence Debate in the House of Assembly in January, 1955, J.G.N. Strauss, Leader of the Opposition recalled that in 1949, Mr. Strijdom, then Minister of Lands, had said "The National Party policy is clear. It is the eventual creation of a republic spearated from Britain and the Empire.... we should proceed gradually in this direction so that we can carry a safe majority with us in the process". Strijdom, he claimed, had continued to say that it had become possible to take a further step to get a republic in that it was not necessary now to owe allegiance to the Monarchy. The road had been made easier by the fact that it was no longer a question of complete separation from the Commonwealth or from the Crown "we can take the step that India has taken"(2) Strauss challenged Strijdom, claiming that this new government, even more than its predecessor was moving away from "the path of true South Africanism". The Prime Minister, he said, was preparing to launch South Africa on the sea of republicanism. (3)

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(1) Cf. Beaumont Schoeman, Van Malan tot Verwoerd (Cape Town, 1973) for details.

(2) JPC, 1955, Vol. 36, 179.

(3) ibid.

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necessary, he and other Nationalists felt that this did not "fulfil the necessary spiritual independence" that the Afrikaner wanted. (1) 1958 On 18th September, 1948 during the First Session of the Twelfth Parliament the Leader of the Opposition said that he was relieved to note that the Prime Minister had indicated that it would be his aim to maintain the country's democratic institutions but that he entertained some doubt whether "the Prime Minister had the same concepts of democracy in mind as the people of the Western world and for that matter people on the opposite side of the House."(2)

The question of the kind of republic envisaged by the Nationalists and how the people were to register their opinion for or against the projected constitutional change was still uncertain. Since the publication of the Draft Constitution in 1942 no further statements had been forthcoming on the form the proposed republic was to take. Up to 1960 anti-republicans could, with some justification tell their supporters that a republic as envisaged by the Nationalists would be based on the Draft Constitution of 1942 which would bring with it major constitutional changes.(3) But on 20th January, 1960 in the House of Assembly Dr. Verwoerd announced that the republic would be based on the South Africa Act. English and Afrikaans would be the two official languages which would be entrenched in the constitution and the Governor General would become the President. There would be no radical changes and he called upon all English-speaking South Africans to support the new republic.

The first move to alert her fellow members of the Commonwealth of South Africa's impending change of status was made at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London in 1960. South Africa was represented by the Foreign Minister, Eric Louw. Macmillan had suggested to Dr. Verwoerd that it would be in the interests of South

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(1) Transvaler, 6.10.58.
(2) JPC, 1959, Vol. 40, 76.
(3) cf. above, 31.

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Africa if the Premier himself could attend this important meeting. Politically it was vital because it preceded the Summit meeting with the Soviet leaders, and constitutionally it was important because it would decide whether Ghana would remain in the Commonwealth after becoming a republic, and whether Nigeria would be admitted to full Commonwealth membership on attaining independence. Macmillan apparently hinted that he would like Dr. Verwoerd to have informal talks with the Premier of Australia, Robert Menzies and John Diefenbaker of Canada. (1) Verwoerd was unfortunately still recovering from an attack by a would-be assassin and so was unable to attend.

assassin

According to Macmillan's account during his visit to South Africa in February, 1960, Verwoerd had asked him whether he advised raising, on a hypothetical basis, at the forthcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Premiers, the question as to whether South Africa could remain in the Commonwealth if she became a republic. Macmillan replied in writing giving the opinion that all other countries which had remained in the Commonwealth as republics had asked, before the formal step of constituting a republic, whether the other members would be content if they remained in the Commonwealth. If,therefore it was likely that the UNion would become a republic within, say, the next two years, it would be in accordance with precedent that the matter should be raised on a hypothetical basis at the May meeting. He continued "I realise that in South Africa's case there is a double hypothesis, first that the country will vote for a republic and secondly that having become a republic it would desire to remain in the Commonwealth. Nevertheless there are advantages in raising the matter in May, when it can be done orally rather than be settled by correspondence at a later date". (2)

When the matter was raised at the Conference, Macmillan adopted a somewhat different attitude. He told the Commonwealth Premiers

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(1) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 154-5.

(2) ibid.

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view that the choice between a monarchy and a republic was entirely the responsibility of the country concerned. In the event of South Africa deciding to become a republic and if the desire was subsequently expressed to remain a member of the Commonwealth, the meeting suggested that the South African Government should then ask for the consent of the other Commonwealth Governments, either at a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, or, if this were not practicable, by correspondence.

"Whilst reaffirming the traditional practice that Commonwealth Conferences do not discuss the internal affairs of member countries, Ministers availed themselves of Mr.Louw's presence in London to have informal discussions with him about the racial situation in South Africa. During these informal discussions Mr. Louw gave information and answered questions on the Union's policies, and other Ministers conveyed to him their views on the South African problem. The Minister emphasized that the Commonwealth itself is a multi-racial association and expressed the need to ensure good relations between all member states and peoples of the Commonwealth". (1)

It was clear that the bland language of Commonwealth communiqués was covering a situation that was deteriorating. There were apparently, heated exchanges between Eric Louw and some of the Prime Ministers at private meetings leading to the issueing of a press statement about the unreasonableness of Louw by the Turku Abdul Rahman of Malaya, who said he would have no further talks with the South African Foreign Minister. (2)

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(1) Quoted in J.D.B. Miller "South Africa's Departure", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. I, No. 1, 57.

(2) Times (London), 14.5.60.

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Dr. Verwoerd was reported to have said at a republican rally in Sea Point that if the republicans lost they would not abide by the result, but strive more bitterly to reach their goal. (1)

By the time the electorate went to the polls on 5th October, 1960 both pro- and anti-republicans were so highly geared to win the support of the Union's 1 850 000 White voters that the result was a record average poll of approximately 90,5%. The republicans obtained decisive majorities in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and South West Africa, as well as a small lead in the Cape Province. Natal alone produced a substantial majority for the anti-republicans. The referendum was unique in the history of South Africa in that individual votes and not constituency results were the deciding factor. (2)

1960 was to be a momentous year in South Africa. The question of the republican status of the Union was to prove more explosive than could have been imagined. Die Burger perceptively commented that the republican referendum had started a political ferment which had already produced results which would assume greater proportions, adding, "we are moving into interesting political times". (3)

"Interesting" was a euphemism. The day after the Premier announced the referendum South Africa experienced the worst mining disaster of its history, on 24th January in riots in Cato Manor, a suburb of Durban, nine policemen were killed; on 27th January, Harold Macmillan, the British Premier gave his "winds of change" speech in Cape Town and on 29th January a boycott of South African produce began in London. On 21st March further African riots broke out in the Transvaal and at Sharpville, near Vereeniging, sixty nine Africans were killed and a hundred and eighty six wounded. On

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(1) Argus, 17.2.61.

(2) Round Table No. 201, Dec. 1961, 83, cf. also Appendix IV.

(3) Burger, 21.1.61; Ballinger, Union to Apartheid, 423.

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25th March unauthorised meetings were banned throughout the country and on 28th March, in spite of this ban, mass marches of Africans took place in all parts of the country. Passes were symbolically burned in front of Magistrates Courts. (1) There were strikes in a number of cities and a march of 30,000 into the centre of Cape Town. The government ordered mass arrests and declared a state of emergency in eighty districts. The Unlawful Organisations Bill was rushed through Parliament and the African National Congress and Pan African Congress declared unlawful organisations. (2)

Worse was yet to come. On 9th April at the Rand Easter Show a White farmer attempted to assassinate the Prime Minister. (3) It was not until 31st May, with the Premier well enough again to address a vast crowd at the Union Festival in Bloemfontein that the state of emergency was repealed. (4)

During this period the South African economy had suffered severely from the precipitous flight of overseas capital. These events appeared to presage a collapse of public order. Capital from overseas sources left the country to the tune of over twelve million rands monthly during 1960 and the early part of 1961. Reserves of gold and foreign exchange were reduced by a half. (5) In the circumstances, it was felt in some quarters, the present serious situation was not the time to be considering any constitutional change which might threaten the economy still further because of the possible loss of Commonwealth preferences. Britain was one of South Africa's best customers and trade might be affected. (6)

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(1) Hepple, Verwoerd, 153; J. Krüger, The Making of a Nation, 324-326.
(2) 500 Years, 391; JPC, 1960, 227-8.
(3) JPC, 1960, 228-9.
(4) Verwoerd Speaks, 396.
(5) Denis Austin, Britain and South Africa (London, 1966), 43.
(6) Round Table, No. 201, 83.

Mr. Harold Macmillan and Mr. Eric Louw, Cape Town, 1960. (Courtesy Argus)

To the British Conservative Party, however, their mission in Africa had taken on the nature of a crusade. Mazrui comments on the image that the British have of themselves. They like to distinguish themselves from the rest of mankind, he claims, by their quality of pre-eminent political sophistication with all its wealth of mature experience in government and diplomacy. They visualize themselves playing "Greeks" to the American "Romans". This "myth of sophistication" was represented in Britain pre-eminently by Harold Macmillan.(1)

Macmillan was found of quoting Macaulay to illustrate his attitude to Africa.

> "Many politicians in our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free until they are fit to use their freedom. This maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water until he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty until they become wise and good in slavery, they made indeed wait forever." (2)

In 1960 the British were at turning point in their relations in Africa. (3) The dichotomy of Tory policy, with its traditional ties with the White settlers as opposed to the increasingly necessary support for the newly independent Black states was becoming daily more difficult to support. Africa, as a relatively uncommitted continent was becoming a pawn in the Cold War. The conflict from the British point of view centred upon the Central African Federation. That the two views were irreconcilable is evident from the breakdown of the Rhodesian Federation and eventual Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Southern Rhodesia. (4).

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(1) Mazrui, Anglo-African Commonwealth, 82.

(2) Quoted in Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 718.

(3) David Goldsworthy, Colonial Issues in British Politics, 1945-1961 366. et seq. cf. Debate on the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech in the House of Commons, 3 November, 1960, JPC 1961, 8, et seq.

(4) For Macmillan's version of developments cf. Pointing the Way, for Sir Roy Welensky's, Welensky's 4000 Days, (London, 1964.)

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tide of Nationalism in Africa, which was "similar to what had happened in Asia at the end of the war". The British government had then decided not to stifle or restrain the national aspirations of their former British dependencies, he said, and that as a result India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Malaya all now stood as free and equal partners in the Commonwealth. Britain was now faced with a "similar situation" in Africa. (1)

Britain has been accused in some quarters of abdicating her responsibilities in Africa. During the Federation cricis Sir Roy Welensky told the visiting Duncan Sandys that with resolution and a firm exercise of authority it would not be difficult to keep Nyasaland peacefully in the Federation. To which remark, according to Sir Roy, Sandys had replied that it would not be possible because Britain had "lost the will to govern". (2) The opposite view was taken by the British Ambassador, Sir John Maud, who spoke on 19th April, 1963 at a meeting in the Union on the progressive steps that had been taken by Britain to encourage the growth of South African political maturity, so that by 1854 Crown Colony Government could be replaced by representative government, which in turn gave place to responsible government. When Britain took these steps, he said, she was not then accused of "abdicating her responsibilities in Africa". (3) It has similarly been argued by Mansergh, that the granting of responsible self-government first to the Transvaal in December, 1906 and then the Orange River Colony in June, 1907 by Campbell Bannerman less than five years after the end of the Boer War was, "a miracle of trust and magnanimity". (4) The question of independence to the former British territories of Africa in the nineteen-sixties can be looked upon in the same light.

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(1) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 145.

(2) Sir Roy Welensky, Welensky's 4 000 Days, (London, 1964), 319.

(3) Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 2., No. 1, 53.

(4) Mansergh, Price of Magnanimity, 15-18.

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What value did the newly emerging African States place on Commonwealth membership? At an unofficial study conference held in Lagos in 1962 the attitudes of the old Commonwealth countries were compared to those of the new. Consultation was seen as the chief benefit of the organization to original Commonwealth members, but the new African and Asian members saw the organization as an instrument for co-operative assistance. The consultation, so much prized by the old members was seen by some of the new as treading nowhere, avoiding all topics that might give offence and concerned only with the maintenance of "style" in conversation. Another speaker used the epithets "innocuous and elusive" to describe Commonwealth consultation and asked whether a time might come when too much strain would be put upon assumptions which were "nothing more than assumptions". The theory of Britain as the mother country was also criticised; speakers claimed that they wanted no more "mothering". (1)

The question of aid within the Commonwealth orbit is without doubt the main value of the organization to the developing countries of Africa. Kwame Nkrumah claimed to be convinced that the Commonwealth had a part to play if it genuinely addressed itself to the great problems confronting Africa in a critical time. Co-operation, in the task of creating conditions that make for dignity, self respect and material prosperity were the priorities. The Commonwealth, he claimed, was a modern flexible and adaptable institution in which free and independent nations could co-operate to "abolish the poverty ignorance and disease within its orbit". (2)

As early as 1959, the Queen had made this new role of the CommoN-wealth clear. In the Speech from the Throne in October she spoke of the urgent concern of her government being the improvement of conditions of life in the less developed countries of the world and the promotion of economic co-operation between nations and financial

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(1) C.E. Carrington, The Commonwealth in Africa, Report of an Unofficial Study Conference held in Lagos, Nigeria, January, 1962, (Oxford, 1962)

(2) Kwame NKrumah, I Speak of Freedom, (London, 1961) 204 and 224.

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and technical assistance. (1) In pursuance of this aim United Kingdom Government Assistance to underdeveloped countries increased from a total of sixty one million pounds in 1951-1952 to one hundred and thirty eight million pounds in 1959-1960. (2)

Macmillan arrived in Johannesburg on 27th January. He had been under some fire in London for accepting the invitation to visit South Africa and by so doing appears to have condoned apartheid. The occasion was the 50th Anniversary of the Union of South Africa and Macmillan had been asked to address the two Houses of Parliament and this speech was expected to consist of the usual congratulations applicable to the occasion. (3) Verwoerd was to claim later that he was never granted the usual courtesy of seeing the speech beforehand. (4)

Macmillan spoke in the House of Assembly in Cape Town on the growth of national consciousness that was so noticeable in Africa - "the winds of change are blowing through the continent - we must accept it as a fact and our national policies must take account of it", he said. Britain realised that granting independence to African countries must have inevitable consequences for the Union, but opportunity for increased political power and responsibility must be given he continued. How were the new nations going to ally themselves? In this shrinking world the internal politics of one might affect another. Britain rejected the idea of the inherent superiority of one race over another and for this reason, although Britain as a member of the Commonwealth desired to give South Africa support and encouragement, there were aspects of her policies which made it impossible to do so without being false to Britain's convictions. (5)

The speech was unexpectedly frank. Verwoerd in replying explained South Africas policy of separate development once more.

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(1) Command Papers relating to the British Commonwealth, 1960-1962. Cmnd. 974, (London 1960), 5.

(2) ibid. 6.

(3) Anthony Sampson, Macmillan, A Study in Ambiguity (London, 1968) 184.

(4) Krüger, Making of a Nation, 323.

(5) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches 1952 to 1962, 347 - 351; JPC, 1960, 122-127.

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Macmillan's "Wind of Change" speech clearly demonstrated that even a British Conservative government was no longer prepared to stand by White South Africans. (1) Krüger considers that the Nationalists then turned to the republican ideal as the only alternative. (2) But the Prime Minister had probably put the matter in its true perspective when he spoke in the House of Assembly on 23rd January, 1961, when he introduced the historic Bill to constitute the Republic of South Africa.

> "From the Afrikaners' point of view", he said, "it" (the republican Bill) was something which would inevitably stir his deepest feelings. Right through history he had been by nature a republican. For that republic he was prepared to make sacrifices....." (3)

Three days later, at a Press Conference in Cape Town Macmillan was to say that South Africa and Britain had had a very long association and it would be a tragedy if, because of disagreements in various matters, they could not live together in the Commonwealth each playing its part. (4)

Dr. Verwoerd personally piloted the Republican Constitution through. On 23rd January, 1961, in the House of Assembly, he moved that leave be granted to introduce a Bill to constitute the Republic of South Africa. In the ensuing debate Sir de Villiers Graaf, leader of the Opposition moved an Amendment that the legislation should not be introduced unless and until it was unequivocally established that the proposed republic would remain in the Commonwealth and that assurances be given that legislation would be provided guaranteeing basic rights which would advance national unity in South Africa. He continued that the Prime Minister knew, or ought to know that South Africa's future membership was not a certainty.

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(1) Economist, 25.3.61.

(2) Krüger, Making of a Nation, 329.

(3) JPC 1961, 166.

(4) Argus, 3.2.61. Mac was in SA in 1960 !!

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He asked what steps the Government had taken to see that South Africa's case was put before the Press and public of other Commonwealth countries. The Government could have produced evidence that the Natives, Coloured people and Indians wished South Africa to remain in the Commonwealth. (1)

The Minister of Finance, Dr. T.E. Dönges replied that the Government would go ahead with the establishment of a republic whether or not South Africa was then expelled from the Commonwealth. If they did not they would be giving their enemies both at home and abroad, and Ghana and Malaya, the means of preventing South Africa becoming a republic for all time. Dr. J. Steytler, Leader of the Progressive Party wanted the republic to be introduced only when assurances had been given that there would be protection of minority rights and participation of all responsible citizens in the government of the country irrespective of race or colour.

The Prime Minister replied that a multi-racial republic with a multi-racial Government was not wanted by the public. He went on to say that for a long time membership of the Commonwealth had not been recognised by Nationalists as being one of the characteristics of a South African republic. Membership had only been accepted as one of the ways in which the people could be welded together into one nation in the new republic. This was the price that the Afrikaner was prepared to pay just as the price of "saying farewell to the Monarchy" was being paid.(2)

Natal was represented by D.E. Mitchell who said that Natal would not accept the republic, they rejected it and would have no part of it. From now on they considered themselves ruled by force, without their consent, under a hostile Government. They would seek the first opportunity to make their own laws. Dönges replied that this was irresponsible as a majority decision had been made and demands and conditions could not now be made. Mr. A. Bloomberg, Coloured

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(1) JPC 1961, 165.
(2) ibid., 166.

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Representative, moved an amendment that the House decline to pass the Second Reading of the Constitution Bill because the Coloured voters had been excluded from the referendum, franchise rights had not been entrenched in the new Constitution and the government was unable to guarantee that the proposed republic would remain in the Commonwealth, which was the desire of the vast majority of the population of the country.

The Prime Minister replied that he believed that common sense would triumph at the Commonwealth Conference and he firmly believed that South Africa would remain a member of the Commonwealth, unless the Commonwealth changed its character and particularly if some of the newer non-White states adopted a hostile attitude, and persisted to such an extent that the older members would be forced to choose between South Africa and the new states. If the choice went against South Africa the Commonwealth would then have taken on a character in which the outlook of Britain and the older countries no longer prevailed. South Africa would not feel at home in that Commonwealth and would prefer not to be a member. But he had promised to do all he could, without sacrificing principles, to make it possible for South Africa to remain a member. With all possible tact and by "appealing to common sense and calm councils" he would try to make co-operation possible, but "if folly prevailed he would be powerless."

On 12th April, 1961 Dr. Verwoerd moved the Third Reading of the Draft Constitution "with a prayer that the Republic of South Africa will bring prosperity and happiness to every section of our country's population". (1) The way was no open for the last stages of South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth.

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(1) Verwoerd Speaks, 488.

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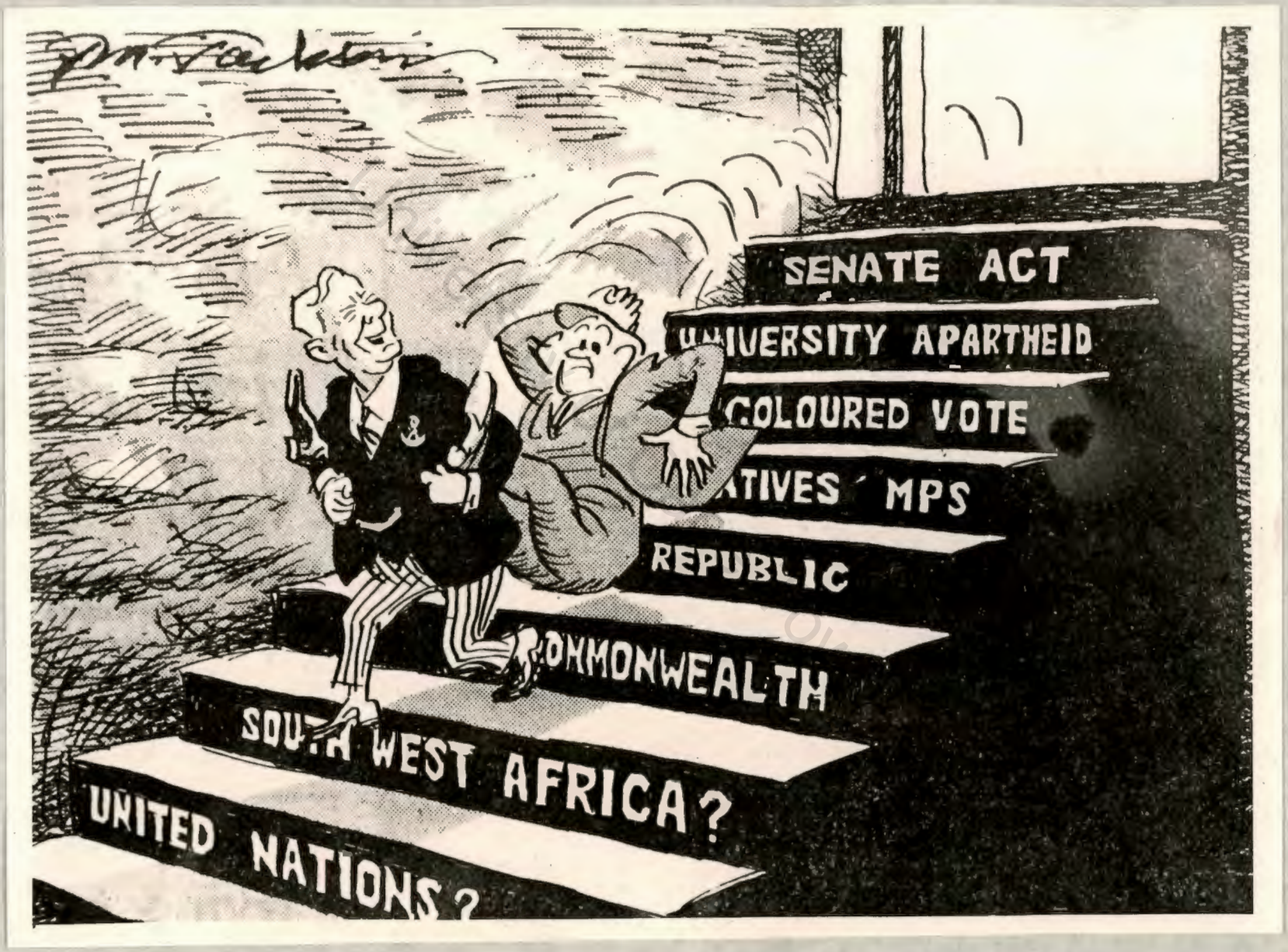

"Just one more bump". March, 1961. (Courtesy Argus)

CHAPTER VII

THE PRELUDE TO THE 1961 COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

1961 got off to a fair start with the Prime Ministers' New Year broadcast to the nation. Dr. Verwoerd reiterated his plea for greater unity between the English and Afrikaans speaking peoples of South Africa; which he felt would come about with the establishment of the republic when the "historic and constitutional" obstacles to a closer relationship fell away. On the Commonwealth connection he repeated his wish for South Africa to remain a member provided there was no interference in the country's domestic policies, on which the Nationalist Government had been repeatedly re-elected since 1948. Attacks on the moral foundation of the country's colour policy would have to be met continuously in 1961 but any form of political multi-racialism or so-called partnership would however ultimately "rob the White man in South Africa of his rightful heritage". (1)

The White man's chance of survival in Southern Africa in late 1960 and early 1961, did seem to be doubtful. "All Africa is in flames" trumpeted Sir Roy Welensky from the ruins of Federation. (2) Margery Perham was of the opinion that the White man's precarious position in Africa was due to African hunger for human dignity. Faced with the task of creating states out of arbitrary tribal maps, the White man was becoming "obstructive or irrelevant". White minorities could no longer hope to dominate African majorities she claimed except, as in South Africa, by increasingly resorting to

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(1) Cape Argus, 3.1.61.

(2) Star, 22.2.61.

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methods which would in the end invalidate White civilization's claim to moral leadership. (1)

1961 saw the introduction in the Union Assembly of the Defence Amendment Bill to aid the swift call up of the Defence Force for war or for the prevention or suppression of internal disorder. Civil war raged in the Congo and with the murder of Patrice Lumumba, the Prime Minister, the situation deteriorated still further. White refugees poured across the borders into Rhodesia and South Africa and horror stories were widely reported in all the papers in the Union. A.G. Menzies, Star correspondent in London wrote that the situation in the Congo had the effect of lessening some British enthusiasm for hasty concessions to African politicians. It had been demonstrated to the British people that there was "nothing facile about the transfer of political authority from Whites to Blacks in Southern Africa". (2) The United Nations was finally mobilized and voted to use force in the Congo to avert civil war, under Article 42 of theUnited Nations Charter. (3)

Within South Africa trouble in Pondoland resulted in the despatch of detachments of Police to the area. (4) Further information was not available as the Press were banned from Pondoland. But in February a report that political refugees were streaming out of the Union into neighbouring territories and becoming a problem in Dar-es-Salaam made it clear that the situation in South Africa was far from stable.

In Cape Town a young African who was to figure in a small way in the final dénoument between South Africa and the Commonwealth, broke bail and failed to appear at a resumed hearing in the Regional Court in Cape Town, on charges of inciting. Phillip Kqosana,

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(1) Perham, Colonial Sequence, 222.

(2) Star, 23.2.61.

(3) Austin, Britain and South Africa, 180.

(4) Star, 22.2.61., also discussed in Govan A. Mbeki, South Africa The Peasants' Revolt (London, 1964)

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leader of a march to the city centre of Cape Town in 1960, when the anti-pass campaign was at hits height, was a member of the banned Pan African Congress. He fled from the Union via Basutoland, where he hoped to escape from Africa by air and reach London in time for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of 1961. The Pan African Congress intended to use him in the propaganda battle that was being planned against the continued membership of South Africa. (1) It was felt that Kqosana would prove more effectively than words or pamphlets or demonstrations that "South Africa was a nation in chains" and the exiles of the Pan African and African National Congresses in London claimed that one way to exert pressure on the Nationalist government was to drive South Africa out of the Commonwealth. To this end representative delegations were being sent by them to India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Malaya, to urge that a firm stand be taken against the continued membership of South Africa. Memos were submitted to the Premiers of Australia, New Zealand, Ghana and Nigeria according to Mr. Mehono of the P.A.C. (2) It was reported in the Manchester Guardian that the African Nationalist movement in the Union, and exiles abroad had been increasingly concerned with the possibility that Dr. Verwoerd and the Nationalist government might score a victory by default if South Africa remained as a republic in the Commonwealth. The view of the exiles in London was that "the only way to exert pressure on the South African government was to see them driven out of the Commonwealth". (3)

Meanwhile Dr. H. Muller had assumed office in London as South Africa's High Commissioner. He claimed that he was particularly concerned that South Africa should establish friendly diplomatic relations with the newly independent African states. "South Africa cannot afford to stand alone", he said. (4) Dr. Verwoerd had reiterated this standpoint, just before the Commonwealth Prime Ministers'

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(1) Argus, 14.1.61.

(2) ibid.

(3) ibid.

(4) Argus, 16.1.61.

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Conference claiming that it was completely untrue that the Union would not be able to work on a basis of complete equality with African and Asian states. (1) But, in fact, as Nehru pointed out, the newly independent African and Asian nations would not have the usual diplomatic missions in South Africa because they were of a different race. Separate amenities would be provided for them. Dr. Verwoerd, he said, had denied that this was racial inequality, saying that it was "separate development". (2)

In a letter to Dr. Verwoerd written on 2nd July, 1960, the Australian Premier, Robert Menzies, expressed his concern about the implications of the diplomatic missions from African States. His letter is worth quoting in full as an indication of the attitude of a moderate White leader and potential ally of South Africa.

> "Nkrumah is obviously hurt by the current failure to receive a High Commissioner from Ghana at Pretoria. As I understand it, you don't receive Diplomatic Missions from what I will call "coloured countries'. This, I think is regarded as disagreeable and unco-operative by our colleagues and I spoke very earnestly to Eric Louw in private about it. He said that if such Missions were received and in consequence a considerable number of Asian and African diplomats and their staffs were established in Pretoria and Cape Town, it would run counter to the policy of separateness.... I do want to tell you that my personal opinion is that if you found yourself able to invite the other Commonwealth countries to establish Diplomatic Missions in South Africa, and were able to assure them that they would be received and treated in exactly the same way as representatives of Great Britain or Australia, a lot of heat would be taken out of the present conflict." (3)

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(1) Transvaler, 6.3.61.

(2) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962 and Miller, Britain and the Old Dominions, 256.

(3) Menzies to Verwoerd, 2.7.60, Afternoon Light, 201., for Verwoerd's reply cf. 206.

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President NKrumah's relations with South Africa during the years preceding 1961 have considerable bearing on the resulting crisis. In March, 1957 Ghana became independent and at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of 1957 NKrumah took his place and was, according to Colin Legum an "immediate success" and was even reported to be in harmony with the South African Foreign Minister, Eric Louw on the "danger of Communism" in Africa. (1) That NKrumah thought highly of the Commonwealth connection is obvious from evidence of his diplomatic overtures to South Africa, even going so far as to invite Eric Louw to visit Ghana when they met at the United Nations in 1959. Eric Louw was to use this invitation to demonstrate to his opponents that apartheid did not lead to international friction. The visit was eventually cancelled because the Ghanaian Cabinet insisted that one of their Ministers in turn be invited to visit South Africa. "I have never heard of an invitation with a condition attached to it" was Louw's reaction. (2) This minor but telling point of exchange of diplomatic missions was brought up at the vital Commonwealth Conference in 1961 and was to prove yet another nail in the coffin of South Africa's continued membership.

That NKrumah at the same time made every attempt to be in the forefront of the opposition to South Africa is evident from his speeches in the Ghanaian National Assembly and at the United Nations General Assembly.

According to a Ministerial statement in the Ghanaian National Assembly on 29.7.61. the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ako Adjei claimed that at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1960 Dr. NKrumah had warned Eric Louw "in the strongest possible terms" that if the Union Government did not abandon its policy of racial discrimination they might one day "set the entire continent of Africa on fire". (3)

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(1) Observer, (London), 30.6.57.

(2) W. Scott Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1961, Diplomacy, Ideology and the New State, (New Jersey, 1969), 76.

(3) JPC, 1960, 320.

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And in 1961 at the United Nations he described apartheid as "a policy of racial discrimination and persecution which in its essential inhumanity surpasses even the brutality of the Nazis towards the Jews." (1) But earlier, in September, 1960, according to Macmillan, he had written to him saying that he felt it would not be wise for him to object to South Africa's application because of the "very real threat of a split in the Commonwealth". (2) NKrumah has been accused by his critics of hypocracy on the South African question. Trade links with South Africa continued to flourish and in particular, the Black Star Shipping Line, owned by Ghana, continued its trade with South African ports. Other African leaders maintaining sanctions against South Africa felt that Ghana made fewer sacrifices than their own states. (3) This ambivilence of NKrumah in his dealings with South Africa was evident during the Commonwealth Conference crisis in 1961. When he arrived NKrumah was quoted as saying that he would have to bring up the question of South Africa if no one else did but added "Personally I wish for no show down with South Africa".(4) A few days later he had apparently changed his mind and was reported to have said that South African membership and the Commonwealth were incompatable. (5) This remark is considered by some to have been the deciding factor that swayed the Commonwealth Prime Ministers against continued membership for South Africa.

Within South Africa, as the date of the Conference drew nearer there was speculation in the press as to the opposition that could be expected to South Africa's further membership of the Commonwealth as a republic. Opposition was expected from Ghana, Malaya, Nigeria and India, based on the grounds, not that the Union was making a fundamental constitutional change in its form of government, but on the grounds of its race policies. (6) Some of the strongest

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(1) Keesings, 1961-1962, 17872.
(2) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 288.
(3) Scott Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy, 416.
(4) Times, (London), 10.3.61.
(5) Scott Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy, 416.
(6) Argus, 13.2.61.

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opposition was to come from Nigeria. As early as 1960, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had made clear in the Nigerian House of Representatives, what the Commonwealth meant to his country.

> "For us, the Commonwealth stands for the equality of men be they White, red or yellow. It stands for justice and fair play and the more we make this principle clear the more people will appreciate the benefits of being a member of this great brotherhood of nations". (1)

Sir Abubakar was apparently under strong pressures at home to oppose the continued membership of South Africa. (2) On 24th and 25th November, 1960 foreign policy had been debated for the first time in the House of Representatives of an independent Nigeria, and the Prime Minister had made his country's foreign policy in Africa clear; that is to fight for the liberation of all states in Africa still under colonial rule, "equality of treatment for all mankind - that is what we are out for" concluded Sir Abubakar. (3) Furthermore he intimated that it would be the duty of Nigeria "in partnership with Malaya and any other Prime Minister" to see that South Africa was not "readmitted" to the Commonwealth. (4) When Sir Abubaker arrived in London in March, 1961 for the Conference of Commonwealth Premiers he was described as being "especially difficult" and was quoted by the Daily Mail as saying that he was prepared to take the initiative in a move to see South Africa out of the Commonwealth.(5) Furthermore, on his return to Nigeria after the Conference he told the House of Representatives that as long as one member openly advocated racial discrimination it was impossible to accept that the Commonwealth was an association of free and equal nations, but that what had happened in London in March had, in his eyes "literally purged the Commonwealth" and he now believed that it would be a

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(1) JPC, 1960, 322.

(2) J.D.B. Miller, "South Africa's Departure", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. I, No. I, 56.

(3) Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria Speaks, Speeches made between 1957 and 1964, (London, 1964) 72.

(4) JPC, 1961, 64.

(5) Star, 6.3.61.

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powerful influence for good in world politics. He continued that in spite of South Africa now being out of the Commonwealth his country would continue to press for the reversal of its race policies. "For myself", he concluded, "I see nothing but trouble ahead in South Africa if the present government refuses to face facts and learn from what has happened in other parts of the world". (1)

Clearly South Africa could expect no support from Nigeria. Malaya was equally anti-South Africa. At the 1960 Conference the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman had apparently been so incensed by "unreasonable" statements made by the South African Foreign Minister, Eric Louw at a press conference that he publicly announced that he had broken off further informal talks with the South Africa representative. (2) But by October, Macmillan claims, Tunku Abdul Rahman was also writing to him expressing the same opinion as NKrumah, that he felt it would not be wise for him to object to South Africa's application because of the threat of a split in the Commonwealth. (3) There was little doubt, however, by 1961 which way Malaya could be expected to vote. A statement had already been made by the Premier that he intended to raise the question of South Africa's racial policy at the forthcoming Prime Ministers' meeting and that if South Africa consequently chose to leave the Commonwealth it would be a "good riddance".(4)

Nehru's view on South Africa was so well known that there was no question of the stand he would take. As the first non-White member of the Commonwealth he was now considered as an elder statesman of the organization, leader of the Asian and African block and a long standing antagonist of the South African government. In a speech at the Conference of Nonaligned Nations in Belgrade after the fatal 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference he claimed that South

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(1) Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria Speaks, 91

(2) Times (London) 6.5.60.

(3) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 288.

(4) Peter Harnetty, "Canada, South Africa and the Commonwealth", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. II, No. 1,

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Africa was the "supreme symbol of racial arrogance and racial discrimination" which was intolerable and un acceptable. (1) In a statement on 27th March to the Rajya Sabha referring to the referendum and request of South Africa to continue in the Commonwealth as a republic, India, he said, approved of the republican form of government, but because South Africa had made the application to remain in the Commonwealth as a republic the allied question of racial relations in South Africa was discussed. While India had no objections to a republic being taken into the Commonwealth, he continued, many of the members had stressed the incompatibility of a country being a member of the Commonwealth which followed racial policies such as those of the Union of South Africa. ".... the main thing is that in South Africa this is an official policy... it is not the failure of an official policy. This matter was discussed... and it became a question, practically speaking, of whether the South African Union Government should continue in the Commonwealth or whether a number of other countries should continue in the Commonwealth". (2)

Nehru had stressed the crux of the matter. India had been accepted unanimously and virtually automatically as a republic in the Commonwealth; the republican form of government was generally approved of, but successful institutionalisation of apartheid as the official policy of the Union, which could not be written off as the "failure of an official policy" had led to a situation where South African membership had become incompatible with Commonwealth membership. It was a case of South Africa resigning or the majority of the members of the Commonwealth resigning. This situation already obtained before the 1961 Prime Ministers' Conference began.

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(1) Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, September 1957 - April, 1963 Vol. IV, (Bombay, 1964), 364.

(2) Nehru's Speeches, Vol IV, 338.

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Of the original White Dominions of the Commonwealth, it appeared at first that the opinions of the Premiers of New Zealand and Australia were similar. Robert Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia claimed that Keith Holyoake of New Zealand agreed with him in principle, although he was not so "openly and zealously wedded to the idea of non-interference in the internal affairs of member nations". (1) Holyoake, however, was to refute this later. In a statement issued at the end of the 1961 Conference he claimed that South Africa's racial policy seemed to most of the delegates to be incompatible with the multi-racial character and principles on which the Commonwealth was founded. "I believe" he continued, "that the decision taken will in the long run strengthen the Commonwealth and enable it to continue expanding and embracing within its membership the new and emergent nations of all races that are rapidly approaching independence. It is a decision which we in New Zealand, with our multi-racial population and our opposition to racial discrimination cannot cavil at". (2) Even some of the White Premiers were beginning to equivocate.

Robert Menzies attitude was that South Africa's policy of apartheid was a domestic matter and that in a multi-racial country such as the Union it was a question of political judgement whether the country developed along the lines of integration or separation. The whole question being of great importance to the future of the Commonwealth he felt that he should not "get on the bandwagon" of those opposing the South African system. (3)

There was a long exchange of letters between Dr. Verwoerd and Robert Menzies in 1960. (4) Menzies wrote to Verwoerd expressing his concern about the effect that South Africa's racial policies could have on the unity of the Commonwealth. Couched in mild

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(1) Menzies, Afternoon Light, 213.

(2) External Affairs Review, Vol. X, No. 5, 25.

(3) Menzies, Afternoon Light, 194.

(4) These letters are quoted in full in Menzies, Afternoon Light, 198-210.

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terms his letters did not condemn South Africa. "I had not approved of it (apartheid)" he wrote, "I had simply said nothing about it". (1) Menzies was attacked on this point later; in September, 1961, J.F. Cairns, Opposition member for Yarro claimed that the Premier's failure to express an opinion on apartheid had allowed the rest of the world to think that Australia was associating herself with that policy, which according to him was not the case. (2)

In his reply the South African Prime Minister explained in detail the country's race policy. (3) In a further letter to Verwoerd Menzies brought up the point that if South Africa was expelled from the Commonwealth a great section of the electors who opposed the government, and nine million Bantu "whose only hope for the future was the Commonwealth" would be punished. (4) It was clear that Robert Menzies was concerned about maintaining the status quo in the Commonwealth organization. (5) That he saw himself in the light of mediator in the dispute and felt that his position carried some weight in Commonwealth circles is clear from one of his letters to Verwoerd in which he claimed "People like myself are not without personal influence with our colleagues".

The Prime Minister of Canada, John Diefenbaker was to have one of the most crucial roles to play in the developing crisis. His attitude to the Commonwealth connection had, in the past, been similar to that of Menzies. On his arrival in London for the 1960 Conference he stressed that "the spirit of the Commonwealth denies that the Prime Ministers' Conference should in effect become the judge and jury on the actions of other members of the Commonwealth". (6) At the same time he was well known for his opposition to racial discrimination in any form. (7) During the 1960 Conference Diefenbaker was reported to have had two lengthy discussions with Eric Louw, apparently leaving the South African Foreign Minister in no doubt as to his antipathy for the Union's race policies. (7)

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(1) Menzies to Verwoerd, 2.7.60., Afternoon Light, 199.
(2) JPC, 1961, 23.
(3) Verwoerd to Menzies, 24.8.60., Afternoon Light, 202.
(4) Menzies to Verwoerd, 6.9.60., ibid. 209.
(5) JPC, 1960, 211, 1961, 151.
(6) Times, (London), 30.4.60.
(7) Harnetty, "Canada, South Africa and the Commonwealth"

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The reactions of the other Asian and African Premiers at the 1960 Conference must also have had some influence on Diefenbaker for in November, 1960, he wrote to Macmillan saying that he felt he ought to let him know that unless significant changes occurred in South Africa's racial policies, Canada "could not be counted on to support South Africa's readmission. On this point Macmillan wrote "John Diefenbaker is going to be troublesome about South Africa, he is taking a 'holier than thou' attitude which may cause us infinite trouble". (1)

In January, 1961, the Editor of the Argus pointed out that the pressure on Diefenbaker to veto South Africa had been enormous, ever since that Dominion was antagonised by the detention of a Canadian journalist in Durban in 1960. "On such a small thread can hang the fate of a nation" pontificated the Argus. (2) The Canadian journalist was Norman Phillips, Foreign Editor of the Toronto Star, one of Canada's foremost newspapers. He flew to South Africa the day after the Sharpeville shootings, but after the declaration of a State of Emergency shortly after, he was detained and questioned by the police before being deported. On his return he published The Tragedy of Aparthoid, a strong indictment of South Africa's racial system.

Peter Dempson, Star correspondent in Ottawa, noted on 6th March that Canadians in general were becoming more hostile to South Africa. Hardly a day went by, as the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference drew nearer, without leading articles, mostly hostile, appearing in the Canadian press on the South African question. Dempson put this hostility down to a recent leading article in the influential Toronto Telegraph calling on Canadians to reject apartheid and calling on the Premier to show the way at the Conference.(3) Also to

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(1) Macmillan, Pointing the Way. 131.

(2) Argus, 31.1.61.

(3) Star, 6.3.61.

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a widely reported speech at Queen's University in Kingston by J.T. Thorson, President of the Exchequer Court of Canada urging the government to oppose South Africa's continued membership unless it abandoned apartheid. A resolution against South Africa passed by the United Church of Canada with a membership of four million showed the general trend in Christian circles. (1) In South Africa Eric Louw had said that Mr. Diefenbaker was "pandering to the anti-South African campaign in the Canadian press and clerical and ultra-liberalist circles because he was losing ground in Canada". (2)

The general climate of opinion in Canada appears to have favoured the attitude adopted by Diefenbaker. (3) Harry Lawrence in his Political column in the Argus pointed out that the Canadian Premier had been consistently hostile to "Verwoerdian apartheid" and might be anticipating that a major split was developing between the members of the Commonwealth and that in "the content of the Cold War he felt that Canada would side with the Afro-Asian countries".(4)

Mr. Diefenbaker early in the year had successfully piloted a Canadian Bill of Rights through Parliament in his own country. In February, 1961 he could contemplate the realization of his ideal that "law and justice and morality can be put in words and perpetuated in Statute".(5)

It would appear that Diefenbaker was considering proposing to a Commonwealth Conference the adoption of a declaration of basically accepted principles of human rights similar to that passed by the Canadian Parliament in 1960 and for which Diefenbaker had been campaigning for years. This Bill of Rights envisaged "the recognition and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms....., without discrimination of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex". (6) It is logical to suppose that the Canadian Premier

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(1) Star, 6.3.61.

(2) Harnetty, "Canada, South Africa and the Commonwealth".

(3) For a full discussion of Canada's attitude to apartheid between 1952 and 1960 cf Douglas C. Anglin, "Canada and Apartheid", International Journal, 122-37

(4) Argus, 13.2.61.

(5) Harnetty, "Canada, South Africa and the Commonwealth", 38.

(6) Ibid.

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was considering applying this to the Commonwealth and some substance is given to this opinion by the reply the Premier gave to the Leader of the Opposition in the Canadian House on March 1st, 1961. Asked if he intended to sponsor a Bill of Rights at the Conference he replied that while he felt it would be difficult to obtain unanimity "it would be a desirable object if it could be attained". (1)

Canada had many economic ties with the emerging states of Africa which should not be overlooked when assessing her role in the Commonwealth. Furthermore in 1960 Canada was experiencing a trade crisis, export markets were in jeopardy and many industries finding difficulty in obtaining markets; a severe recession was predicted. (2) In consequence trade ties with friendly countries were more than usually important. Economic and technical assistance to less developed nations, in particular those of the Commonwealth had for some time been considered a priority in Canada's economic planning, both on humanitarian grounds and on reciprocal economic development grounds. (3) Ghana in particular considered Canadian aid and friendship to be the consequence of Commonwealth links. (4) In 1961 economic and technical aid was being given to Ghana in the form of Canadian Hydro-engineers to carry out the Volta River dam project, Canadians were busy in Nigeria on aerial and topographical mapping of the country involving a projected two years work and costing over a million dollars. A Nigerian delegation visiting Canada received warm assurances of the basic underlying strength of their respective country's Commonwealth membership.(5)

Aid to the newly independent French-speaking African states from the Canadians took the form of an educational assistance plan, separate from the existing Commonwealth education programme. French Canadians felt they were in a unique position to offer this service. (6)

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(1) JPC, 1960, 100.

(2) Keesings, 1961-1962, 17987.

JPC, 1960, 100.

(4) Richard Akwei, "Brief on Ghana's Foreign Policy" quoted in W. Scott Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy.

(5) ibid. 97.

(6) ibid. 386-7.

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Aid to India was perhaps the most comprehensive and involved Canada with a consortium of countries in the financing of India's third Five Year Plan. Canada's commitments alone consisted of twenty eight million dollars for the first two years; over and above this Canada would provide grants of wheat to India.(1) It was noted by Lester Pearson, Leader of the Opposition in the Canadian House that this kind of international co-operation was extremely important both politically and economically. (1) Perhaps the most ambitious project in 1961 was the inauguration of the Canadian-Indian atomic reactor near Bombay. (2)

That these economic ties were beneficial to the country's economy is obvious from a speech in the Canadian Parliament on the 21st November, 1960. The Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker was able to announce that the Canadian economy was showing signs of improving. Exports were now at a record level and the adverse balance of payments had been reduced. The economic contacts with the Afro-Asian countries were having the desired effect. (3)

Before he left Canada to attend the 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference Diefenbaker was careful however to say that he was making no predetermination of mind on the South African issue. He was going with an open mind. (4) The Diplomatic correspondent of de London Times saw in the Canadian Premier a "doubtful quality and a key man". On 9th March two of the key figures, Diefenbaker and Verwoerd arrived in London. They were reported to have begun discussions immediately. (5) Diefenbaker was later to claim that "as discussions proceeded the basis of compromise dissolved and it was impossible to find language capable of bridging the gulf."(6)

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(1) JPC, 1961, 348.
(2) Keesings, 1961-1962, 17885
(3) JPC, 1961, 18.
(4) Star, 6.3.61.
(5) Transvaler, 9.3.61.
(6) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952 - 1962. 368.

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Britain's position, as head of the Commonwealth, had come under fire both at home and in the United Nations. As early as December, 1960 in the House of Commons an Opposition motion was debated which declared "strong disapproval of racial intolerance and discrimination" and calling on the Government "to act on all occasions, particularly at the United Nations, in a manner wholly consistent with this declaration". Mr. James Callahan, Labour Member of Parliament for South East Cardiff had spoken of the fact that the policy of racial discrimination and intolerance was dividing the Commonwealth more than anything else. If there was one thing which united the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and South America, it was the position taken up by a country with regard to racial discrimination. The Prime Minister should make it clear where the United Kingdom stood. "It was a sorry position to reach in which the actions of one member of the Commonwealth were leading people to claim that it would be an advantage if that member were to leave the Commonwealth". (1) There were two aspects to British policy toward South Africa and the Commonwealth connection. Firstly, maintenance of the status quo in an organization whose very existence as a group of nations with little else in common than a shared heritage as British colonial dependents was in itself a remarkable example of British diplomacy. No British government would wish to see this arrangement upset. Secondly the emotional ties with White South Africans of British stock who still looked upon Britain as "home" would be at risk if South Africa abandoned the Commonwealth. This would also be an unpopular move.

At the United Nations General Assembly too the United Kingdom had found itself on the defensive, attempting to justify its image as the bearer of freedom and independence to its former colonial possessions. In the debate on Colonialism in the United Nations

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(1) JPC, 1960, 18.

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the Soviet Premier, Nikita Kruschev had accused Britain of sending troops and machine guns to quell the "turmoil" in Rhodesia, Kenya and other British colonies and of "tightening the noose around the necks of the colonial peoples". (1) In reply to Kruschev, Diefenbaker defended the Commonwealth, claiming that the organization now embraced ten nations, all free voluntary members from all continents and of all colours and creeds comprising one fifth of the world's population. The process, he continued, was a continuous one for Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, would be the next to achieve independence within the "Commonwealth family". (2) Lord Home, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was of the opinion that this Russian intervention in colonial matters had done "infinite harm" because of its mischief value. "If we know that law and order is the true foundation of independence in our territories.... we have the moral fibre and physical determination to follow courses which we know to be right and which the experience of our Commonwealth has proved to be well founded." (3)

Less than 10 months was to go by before the start of the decisive meeting in March, 1961, but the attitudes of the respective Prime Ministers were already emerging and a close observer of the Commonwealth could readily have predicted that the 1961 session was going to be a stormy one.

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(1) Keesings, 1961-1962, 17931.
(2) Ibid. 17874.
(3) JPC, 1961, 12.

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CHAPTER VIII

SOUTH AFRICA BREAKS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH

The Tenth Conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers was held in London at Lancaster House in March and was attended by:

H.Macmillan - Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Presiding.

J. Diefenbaker - Prime Minister of Canada.

R.G. Menzies - Prime Minister of Australia.

K.J. Holyoake - Prime Minister of New Zealand.

H.F. Verwoerd - Prime Minister of South Africa.

Jawaharlah Nehru - Prime Minister of India.

Field Marshall Ayub Khan - President of Pakistan.

Mrs. Sirimaro Bandaranaike - Prime Minister of Ceylon and the first woman to participate in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

Tengku Abdul Rahman - Prime Minister of Malaya.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah - President of Ghana.

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa - Prime Minister of Nigeria.

Sir Roy Welensky - Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Archbishop Makarios - President of Cyprus who joined during the Conference after Cyprus had been admitted to Commonwealth membership. (1)

On 3rd March, Dr. Verwoerd left South Africa for the Conference. His task was to put forward South Africa's claim to remain as a republic within the Commonwealth. It is considered almost certain that as he set off he certainly believed that the advantages of retaining Commonwealth membership outweighed the disadvantages. (2)

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(1) Keesings, 1961-1962, 17987.

(2) James Barber, South Africa's Foreign Policy, 1956-1970, (London, 1973), 184.

University of Cape Town

The Premier was accompanied by Mrs. Verwoerd, Eric Louw, Minister of Foreign Affairs and C.P. Jooste, Secretary for Foreign Affairs. (1) In a speech before he left he claimed

> "No Prime Minister has probably ever undertaken a task overseas about which so much agreement exists. It is indeed stirring and also refreshing to leave on a mission in the interests of our Fatherland in the midst of so many good wishes from all over the country". (2)

The Editor of the Star claimed that the Premier had the backing of almost the whole country. (3)

On 23rd February, A.G. Mackenzie, writing from the Johannesburg Star's London Office had forecast "What Dr. Verwoerd can expect in London" (4) but in his speech before he left the Prime Minister shrugged off the possibility of hostile demonstrations. Such demonstrations took place regularly in London, he said, and not much notice need be taken of them. In London, it was easy to gather large groups consisting of ignorant persons and inexpert fanatics, professional and politically motivated demonstrators and frequently leftist exiles from other countries. "These represented neither the heart nor mind of the British people". (5) Nor would this deter him from "doing his duty". (6)

Demonstrators waited at the airport for Dr. Verwoerd to arrive. The airport was ringed by police and six armed guards were detailed to look after the South African Premier during his stay in London. (7) The South African Freedom Association organised the welcome and

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(1) Verwoerd Speaks, 496.
(2) ibid.
(3) The Star, 3.3.61.
(4) ibid. 23.2.61.
(5) JPC, 1961, 166.
(6) The Star, 4.3.61.
(7) Die Transvaler, 6.3.61.

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Mr. Sam Kahn, former South Africa Member of Parliament, banned under the Suppression of Communism Act was seen in the crowd. So was Mr. Ronald Segal, one time editor of Africa South in Exile who bore a large South African flag with the Union Jack cut out of it. (1) The United Front was represented by Dr. Yussuf Dadoo. This organization had advertised the fact that the exclusion of South Africa from the Commonwealth would be a "resounding victory for their people and mark a historic step forward in the struggle against apartheid and for democratic rights". (2) The United Front hoped to bring about a situation whereby Dr. Verwoerd had either to agree to new concepts on race relations or be forced out of the Commonwealth. (3) Their attitude was

> "the free world outside South Africa will not have Dr. Verwoerd's apartheid policy at any price. It is a stink in the nostrils of the Commonwealth nations. It is the polecat of international politics." (4)

Mr. M.J. Kozonguizi represented the South African National Front at the arrival of the South African Premier at London airport. Mr. Kozonguizi had recently had a letter published in the London Times advocating that South Africa be refused continued membership at the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. In reply, Dr. Muller, South African High Commissioner in London, claimed that Kozonguizi had been quoted on Peking Radio twice during 1960. (5) In exile in South Africa, the banned Leader of the African National Congress, Chief Albert Luthuli, cabled the London Times, adding his voice to the advocates of South Africa's ejection from the Commonwealth. (7) The Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr. Joost de Blank also

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(1) Die Transvaler, 6.3.61.

(2) Race Relations News, April, 1961. (3) Golden City Post, 19.3.61.

(4) The World, 25.3.61.

(5) cf. Times (London). Over the period of the Conference March 8-17, 1961 the correspondence columns carried numerous letters for and against South Africa's continued membership from the Bishop of Johannesburg, Mr. Gaitskell, the Bishops of Exeter and Manchester, Prof. A.J.Ayer, Father Michael Scott, the General Secretary of the United Society for Christian literature, Field Marshall Auchinleck and Lords Brand and Fraser and the Dean of Grahamstown. There were also statements from Professors Manoergh, Manning, Kirkwood and Sir Keith Hancock.

(6) Star, 8.3.61.

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wrote to the London Times on the question of the exiles in London.

> "Certain young Black men are actively engaged in pressure politics in London and elsewhere. They are not the leaders of the people. If they were they would not agitate for the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth. They are self-appointed and have no locus standi whatsoever." (1)

Phillip Kyosana was not, after all, among the crowd, did he ever reach London to play his intended role in the propaganda battle against South Africa's continued membership of the Commonwealth. He was still making his tortuous way out of Africa via Dar-es-Salaam.

There was a considerable amount of lobbying of the Prime Ministers before the Conference. The exiles took their stand from the fact that the Nationalists had not consulted the Black people at the referendum. They considered that the majority of them would have been against a republican form of government. (2)

The Press played an important role in the events surrounding the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. The Burger noted as early as 2nd March that as negotiations at the Conference were held behind closed doors it was a foregone conclusion that the foundation of public opinion would be laid by agitation in the Press. (3) Dr. Verwoerd was already being seen as "bogeyman No. 1". The British Press had decided this long before the Prime Minister arrived and before the British people had heard or seen him and been able to make up their own minds. (4) However, in spite of this the South African Press were on the whole hopeful at this stage that there would be a satisfactory outcome; the British Prime Minister had made it clear that he wanted to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth. (5)

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(1) Reported in Star, 1.3.61.
(2) Hepple, Verwoerd, 179; JPC 1960, 217-8.
(3) Burger, 2.3.61.
(4) Transvaler, 6.3.61.; Argus, 6.3.61.
(5) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 298.

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South Africa's point of view had been put to Macmillan in the form of twelve pages of text delivered personally by Eric Louw to the British Premier while he was resting prior to the Conference at the home of Gavin Astor in Scotland. In it Dr. Verwoerd claimed that during the referendum campaign the Opposition had argued that if South Africa became a republic her request to stay in the Commonwealth would be vetoed by Ghana or Malaya. The Premier repeated his sincere desire for South Africa to remain in the Commonwealth but, according to Macmillan, threatened to "blackball" in return if South Africa was "blackballed". (1)

Prior to the opening of the Tenth Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London Macmillan had discussions with the Commonwealth statesmen at Chequers, his country home, and at Admiralty House. Between 5th March and 9th March it was understood that the South African situation was exhaustively discussed, but no statement was issued. (2) Macmillan writes of the plan he had to persuade his fellow Prime Ministers to accept the membership of the South African Republic in accordance with established precedent, but to issue at the same time a "firm affirmation of the principle of multi-racialism and consequent rejection of apartheid". (3) This was more or less the same as the communiqué issued after the 1960 Conference. (4) Apparently Macmillan had failed to appreciate the changed climate of opinion against South Africa. Events of 1960 in the Union had received maximum publicity in the Press of the world, and the forum offered by the United Nations had been used against South Africa with increasing effect. Robert Menzies of Australia was also incapable of appreciating that attitudes had hardened since the last meeting. The very Prime Ministers, he complained, who attacked South African policy (in 1961) had, at the previous Conference agreed that South Africa was not unwelcome as a monarchy. "Yet

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(1) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 286-290.

(2) Keesings 1961-1962, 17987.

(3) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 288-9; Burger, 15.3.61.

(4) cf. above, p. 77.

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here they were, mostly republics saying that South Africa would be unwelcome as a republic". (1)

9th March was the first full day of the Conference but the debate on South Africa was not due until Monday, March 13th and there was an unknown quantity inbetween, The British Prime Minister's guest week-end at Chequers. There was speculation in the Press about the change in the draft guest list for the week-end which was being eagerly watched as one of the few overt signs of what was going on at the Conference. On 7th March the draft list had shown Diefenbaker and Tunku Abdul Rahman as amongst Dr. Verwoerd's fellow guests. Now the plan showed that Mrs. Banderanaike and Mr. and Mrs. Diefenbaker would stay at Chequers from Friday evening to after lunch on Saturday. Dr. and Mrs. Verwoerd, Robert Menzies and his wife, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the Commonwealth Colonial Secretary, Duncan Sandys would stay from Saturday evening till after lunch on Sunday. Nehru was invited to come on his own on Sunday night. (2) Nehru, according to one newspaper had been sending Indian representatives to the other delegates over the week-end to urge a firm decision one way or another which may have accounted for both NKrumah's "new and sudden resoluteness of purpose". (3) It is difficult to believe that there was no colusion about Nyerere's important article that was to appear in the Observer on March 12th.

The change in the arrangements for the Chequers Week-end could be interpreted as indicating that the South African Prime Minister was being kept away from the men most likely to confront him at the resumption of the Conference after the week-end. The British Prime Minister was obviously not going to risk any major clashes at his country residence. Sir Abubakar was patently outnumbered.

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(1) Menzies, Afternoon Light, 214.
(2) Star, 10.3.61.
(3) Guardian, 13.3.61.

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Dr. Verwoerd and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in London, 1961. (Courtesy Argus)

The South African Press were in a hopeful mood. The Star claimed that the indications were that South Africa would remain in the Commonwealth. Macmillan, according to their reports, had successfully persuaded the other Premiers that there was more to lose than gain by expelling South Africa and there was also apparent agreement that the question of South Africa's membership should be dealt with as a constitutional formality, leaving the issue of apartheid to general discussion, which, according to rumour, Dr. Verwoerd had agreed to, provided it was kept on a "mature level". (1) Dr. Verwoerd had in fact agreed to discussion of apartheid,(2) but the day before the Conference was due to debate the South African issue the London Sunday Times carried a dispatch from Johannesburg which quoted a member of the Nationalist Party as saying that what other countries did not realise was that most Afrikaners regarded that by being members of the Commonwealth they were conferring a favour on the organization. "I believe", the dispatch continued, "that this is Verwoerd's own feeling, and if when the Union's racial policy comes up for discussion in London, he thinks he is being heckled, harassed and humiliated, he is quite capable of walking out of the meeting. He is not a man to cling to Commonwealth membership at the cost of his county's prestige." (3)

There seems to be evidence that the South African delegates were, however, hopeful of success. Piet Meiring, who was in charge of South African Press relations for the visit claimed that "our great comrade at arms", Robert Menzies had told them the previous evening that there was every hope of pulling off the match in spite of the intensive lobbying of the Afro-Asians. Even Macmillan had given them reason for confidence. (4)

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(1) Star, 8.3.61.

(2) JPC 1961, 273. cf. p. 120 above for his reasons.

(3) Sunday Times (London), 12.3.61.

(4) Piet Meiring, Inside Information (Cape Town, 1973), 165.

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On 11th March it was noted by the Press that a meeting had taken place with Diefenbaker and Bishop Reeves, ex-Bishop of Johannesburg and well known as an opponent of the South African government policies and M.J. Kozonguizi of the South African National Front. Kozonguizi said of this meeting that they had put their case for the exclusion of South Africa from the Commonwealth and that Diefenbaker had left them with the impression that he had deep feelings about the situation. They had told him that if Dr. Verwoerd went home successful in the issue of South Africa's Commonwealth membership conditions in South Africa would become "much worse for the Black people". (1)

On 12th March, however, an article appeared in the London Observer that was to have important consequences. Julius Nyerere, Prime Minister of Tanzania intimated that his country would not seek Commonwealth membership when it became independent if the Commonwealth Conference re-elected a State which deliberately and ruthlessly pursued a racialist policy.

> "We believe" continued the article, "that the principles of the Commonwealth would be betrayed by an affirmative answer to the South African application for readmission as a republic. Inevitably therefore we are forced to say that to vote South Africa in is to vote us out - the world would take the readmission of South Africa as a condonation of her policies, or at least, a cynical dismissal of the principles of human political activity. No one realizes better than we, who have been looking forward to our admission, that this question could wreck the very structure of the Commonwealth. But if this happens it will be the result of South Africa's attitude, not of ours. Her policies are a daily challenge to the basic concepts of the Commonwealth. Neutrality is not possible".

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(1) Star, 10.3.61.

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He went on to say that the Tanzanian government could not afford to have any relations with the South African government and it must support all those who struggled against the system of apartheid. (1)

Nyerere's intervention was apparently resented by some of the Premiers, including NKrumah and Balewa and regarded as wholly improper intervention by a non-member of the Club. This caused a temporary reaction in South Africa's favour. (2) The article, however, put forward clearly the case for the anti-South Africa lobby. The Times commented that Mr. Nyerere's position as a leader of the most politically advanced East African territory made his views of considerable importance. (3) And there was no doubt that this article, coming as it did at a cruicial period in the negotiations ranked as powerful propaganda.

The importance of the declaration lay not so much in the context as in the fact that a Black leader had committed himself and his country in writing in the British Press to repudiating Commonwealth membership if South Africa remained in the organization. It is probably no coincidence that the following day NKrumah also confirmed that if South Africa were to stay in the Commonwealth Ghana might leave.(4) It was considered that Ghana had especial significance to the Commonwealth because it was the first African country to become a republic within the organization and so represented the evolution of the "New Commonwealth", emphasizing its multi-racial nature. (5) To have Ghana give notice to the Commonwealth would have been tantamount to admitting the defeat of the whole new multi-racial purpose of the organization. The Burger commented that clearly NKrumah and Nyerere had brought new tensions to the arena. "The future of the Commonwealth is now in the melting pot", it concluded. (6)

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(1) Observer (London) 12.3.61.

(2) I am indebted to Dr. A.F. Madden of Oxford for this information.

(3) Keesings, 17987.

(4) Star, 13.3.61.

(5) JPC 1961, 32.

(6) Burger, 13.3.61.

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Dr. Verwoerd's account of what happened atLancaster House on the Monday morning was told later to the South African House of Assembly.(1) It was clear, he said, that when discussions started on Monday, 13th March the other countries wanted to link up the question of policy with the constitutional issue and discuss it immediately. He had agreed with this, he said, in order to avoid hitches over what would have been described by some as a technical objection and an unreasonable attitude on his part. Dr. Verwoerd thereupon put forward South Africa's case to the Conference.

> "I wish to inform the Meeting that the Union of South Africa will shortly become a republic, and request the Meeting to accept the wish of the Union of South Africa to continue to be a member of the Commonwealth. The referendum held on 5th October, 1960 has resulted in a majority in favour of a republic, and this result has now been generally accepted as the final decision on this question. The necessary legislation has received the second reading in the South African Parliament and there is every expectation that it will be passed in the course of April. It is the intention of my Government that the Republic of South Africa shall be formally instituted on 31st May. (2)

But the constitutional issue was bypassed and a debate ensued in which the domestic policies of South Africa were treated as matters which should determine the right of the country to continue membership of the Commonwealth. Menzies considered that this departure from the recognised procedure "proved to be fatal". (3) Of the first day of the Conference the diplomatic correspondent of the London Times noted that South Africa's racial policy had come under "persistent heavy fire from all the other Commonwealth Premiers". (4) The

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(1) The British Prime Minister's account came in reply to a question asked in the House of Commons on 16.3.61., Commonwealth Survey 1961, 363.

(2) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962, 381.

(3) Menzies, Afternoon Light, 213.

(4) Keesings, 17987.

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London Daily Telegraph, commenting on the 13th March Meeting said that the Tunku Abdul Rahman had presented a fourteen page indictment of South Africa and that Diefenbaker and NKrumah had "added their criticisms to those of the Tunku". Dr. Verwoerd had however, given a "genial and patient exposition of his country's racial policy", but made it clear that he would "brook no interference". Diefenbaker had apparently continued to press his claim for a Bill of Rights consisting of a fundamental declaration of principles to which all members could subscribe. (1)

Discussions were continued on Tuesday. According to Dr. Verwoerd's account two draft proposals were put forward during that day. The first proposal was divided into two parts. The first dealt with the constitutional question and concluded that there was nothing technically to prohibit South Africa's remaining a member. The second part stated the criticism of those who rejected South Africa's policy and was couched in such terms that it acquired the character of laying down the rules and principles of the Commonwealth.

> "I stated very explicitly that it would mean that, if it were to be accepted in this form, no country could honourably remain a member unless it subjected itself to these principles. It would mean that South Africa would have to change its policy, and that we would not be prepared to do so", said Verwoerd. (2)

There was a second draft proposal. This time it was reworded not to appear as a formulation of principles, but as a summing up of the opinion of those against South Africa. At the same time the draft stated unequivocally that from the constitutional point of view there was no obstacle in the way of South Africa's continued membership as a republic. It was also suggested that Dr. Verwoerd

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(1) Keesings, 17988. Menzies claimed that Diefenbaker presented his views with "immense emotion". Afternoon Light, 213.

(2) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962, 383.

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would give a brief résumé, in his own words, of his side of the case for incorporation in the draft proposal. This reworded draft the Prime Minister of the Union accepted. (1)

The Daily Telegraph in London reported generally on the search for a formula acceptable to both parties on Tuesday 14th March. Apart from Macmillan, who as Chairman often took the lead in the proceedings it was reported that John Diefenbaker was the most active of the White Premiers urging his proposals for a Commonwealth Bill of Rights. Dr. Verwoerd had accepted a "watered-down" draft formula.(2)

The South African Press reported on Wednesday, 15th March that the issue of South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth had been shelved "until later" for further redrafting of the proposals before the delegates returned to the matter. The Star felt that by the time the Session had begun it was clear that most of the Prime Ministers had reached a broad base of agreement. They proposed to issue a statement of principles for which the Commonwealth stood, including the principle of racial equality. They hoped in this way to get Dr. Verwoerd to modify his apartheid policies if he chose to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth. This procedure had the advantage, in the view of the eleven Prime Ministers who subscribed to it, of not forcing South Africa out. (3)

The conviction that South Africa was going to remain in the Commonwealth brought an immediate upswing in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. (4) And the Burger saw the Prime Minister involved in a titanic struggle, standing firmly opposed to interference in South Africa's internal affairs. (5)

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(1) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962, 383; cf also Verwoerd Speaks, 532-53.

(2) Keesings, 17988.

(3) Star, 15.5.61.

(4) ibid.

(5) Burger, 15.3.61.

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But dramatic moves were going on behind the scenes. The issue was not to be shelved "until later". During an adjournment in the discussions the Afro-Asian members had decided against acceptance of the second Draft and reverted to the first. Nehru seems to have been largely responsible for the reversal according to Macmillan, Menzies and Verwoerd. Menzies wrote later that no sooner had Verwoerd said that he would accept the draft than Nehru was heard to say that he would not, and that he was not prepared to temporize and would never let the matter rest but raise it not only at Prime Ministers' Meetings but at every opportunity that presented itself. (1) The British Premier, recalling later the various issues which accumulatively had prevented him from achieving the compromise he hoped for and believed to be possible, lists as one of the most crucial, the decision made by Nehru to urge the Afro-Asian premiers to refuse readmission to South Africa "while lying pretty low himself". (2) Nehru had made his point of view very clear. Racial inequalities and segregation policies were utterly out of tune with the spirit of the age, he felt. South Africa was taking an extraordinarily rigid stand "which we dislike intensely and always have" he concluded.(3) Dr. Verwoerd recalled that it was at this stage in the proceedings that Nehru said that he regarded South Africa's policy as "inconsistent" with the basic principles of the Commonwealth. The South African Premier then warned the Conference, according to him, that if there were any talk of reserving rights he must also reserve certain rights. "I would have to reserve the right to attack Ghana if she did not practice democracy, which I in turn regard as one of the basic principles of the Commonwealth, if there are in fact basic principles". (4)

"At this stage", wrote Harold Macmillan, "I was forced to the conclusion that neither his plan nor any would succeed". (5) The diplomatic correspondent of the London Times noted that it was becoming

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(1) Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates 11.4.61. Cols. 649, 656; Verwoerd Speaks, 500.

(2) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 298.

(3) Star, 16.3.61.

(4) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962, 385.

(5) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 299.

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clear that any form of words would be merely a hollow agreement. It was evident that South Africa's racial policy was not compatible with Commonwealth ideals and that it would not be modified. The ideals of the Commonwealth might not be practiced everywhere but at least everyone wished to live up to them whereas in South Africa "racial discrimination was preached as a virtue". (1)

It was now becoming obvious to Macmillan that both Nehru and Mrs. Bandaranaike were equally ready to force the issue. He felt that at all costs he must avoid a vote because this would put the United Kingdom in great difficulty as only Australia and New Zealand would have voted with her. (2)

The Burger remarked that it was clear at the afternoon sitting that many of the Afro-Asian countries came only to criticise. NKrumah and Balewa were particularly "acrimonious" with Diefenbaker not far behind. (3) Verwoerd called the Prime Minister of Canada's attitude to South Africa "immature". (4) The afternoon of 15th March was the climax of the attack on South Africa with what the Prime Minister called "unbridled and often insulting language". (5)

Macmillan, as Chairman, again adjourned the Meeting, and Verwoerd and Macmillan had an unofficial meeting before the general debate began again, in order to make one more attempt to resolve the deadlock. (6) Dr. Verwoerd said of this "it was perfectly clear to me that we had arrived at the critical moment where it was necessary for me to take my stand...."

Dr. Verwoerd later said that he was faced with four alternatives at this stage. The first to concede that South Africa would start making certain policy changes to bring her into line with what the

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(1) Keesings, 17988.

(2) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 299. Macmillan was wrong. Only Australia would have voted with the United Kingdom to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth. cf. above

(3) Burger, 16.3.61.

(4) Times (London) 21.3.61.

(5) Verwoerd Speaks, 500

(6) Star, 15.5.61.

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Commonwealth countries wanted. The second was to agree to the demands being written into the draft but without any intention of carrying out any changes of policy. This manoever would enable South Africa' to remain in the Commonwealth. The third was to let the Conference continue and take a vote which would have placed Britain in a critical position. The fourth alternative was to withdraw South Africa's membership. (1) Harold Macmillan considered, on the other hand, that it was Dr. Verwoerd's attitude and method of arguing his case as well as the "dogmatic inflexibility of his position" that led to the impasse. He was of the opinion, for instance, that regarding the acceptance of diplomatic representatives of African States without subjecting them to the indignity of separate treatment, there was no possibility of compromise in the South African approach. (2) Dr. NKrumah pointed this out after the Conference, saying that Dr. Verwoerd had made it quite clear that the South African government would never accept diplomatic representatives from any indigenous African State. (3)

During the course of the afternoon session Dr. Verwoerd withdrew South Africa's application to remain in the Commonwealth once she became a republic. A statement was issued claiming that South Africa was one of the senior members of the Commonwealth who had in the past co-operated with its fellow members. In view of the degree of interference shown in South Africa's domestic affairs South Africa had no wish to retain membership of what was now becoming a pressure group.

> "In the circumstances", continued the Premier's statement, "I wish formally to withdraw my request for South Africa to remain a member of the Commonwealth after she becomes a republic on 31st May. My request was made in the expectation that it would be willingly granted... as was done by South Africa in the previous cases of India, Pakistan,

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(1) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches 1952-1962, 385-7.

(2) Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 299.

(3) Mansergh Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962, 400. Piet Meiring refers to this point as "the little matter" on which Dr. Verwoerd had refused to compromise. Meiring, Inside Information, 165.

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> Ceylon, Ghana and Nigeria, in spite of our great differences with them which we were prepared to subordinate to co-operation in matters of common concern. Furthermore we were influenced by what we considered to be the genuineness of the sentiment expressed at last year's Conference of Prime Ministers, namely that South Africa was welcome as a member of the Commonwealth, when her racial policies were the same and equally well known".

The Prime Minister went on to say how much he regretted having to take this step and hoped that in future there would continue to be co-operation with all those members of the Commonwealth who wished to retain good relations with South Africa. People would appreciate that national pride and self respect allowed of no other course for a sovereign independent state. "I must admit" continued the Premier's statement, "that I was amazed and shocked at the spirit of hostility and at the last meeting, even of vindictiveness shown toward South Africa in the discussions, in spite of the lengths to which we were prepared to go in the various draft communiqués suggested. It is clear that, in the view of the majority of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers after the lead given by a group of Afro-Asian nations, South Africa will no longer be welcome in the Commonwealth after 31st May, when she becomes a republic. The character of the Commonwealth has apparently changed completely during the last year".

Verwoerd continued that the Opposition was based on the "alleged discrimination and oppression of the non-White peoples of South Africa". He considered it ironic that these allegations came from Prime Ministers in whose countries oppression and discrimination were openly practiced and where "basic principles of democratic government were flouted", and that the step taken today marked the beginning of the disintegration of the Commonwealth. This free association could not hope to survive, if the practice of interfering in each others' affairs continued. (1)

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(1) Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, 1952-1962, 387-89.

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Share prices tumbled. A special edition of the Star carried the headline "Verwoerd walks out of Conference. South Africa has withdrawn her application to join the Commonwealth after fifteen hours spent in vain attempt to reconcile the views of the opponents of apartheid". (1) "Too much for a land with self respect" headlined the Burger. Mr. Louw said that he had heard much rude and insulting language at the United Nations but that he did not think things would turn out at the Commonwealth Conference the way they had done. (2) The Transvaler headlines in huge type put the news concisely "S.A. is uit" and continued to develop the theme that far from being a disaster this event could be looked upon as one of the best things that could happen to the country. And Eric Louw told Piet Meiring "this is not the end of the world. I would rather call it good riddance to bad company". (3) The Transvaler claimed that the majority of voters in the Union would certainly not shed a tear over the fact that their land, when it became a republic on 31st May, would no longer be a member of the Commonwealth. It could be unequivocally stated that the Commonwealth was "finally doomed and a thing of the past". "The Commonwealth is dying because it has become an arena for dissent. An organization such as the Commonwealth can only be united if the leaders have the same ideals and points of departure and a willingness to play down contentious issues. For a long time now the Commonwealth has not stuck to these principles". (4) Inadvertently the Transvaler had put its finger on the crux of the matter. An organization such as the Commonwealth could undoubtedly only be united if the leaders had the same ideals and points of departure - South Africa was now almost entirely alone among the nations of the Commonwealth in maintaining and legislating for a system of racial separation, and by 1961 this had become totally unacceptable in Commonwealth circles. The Commonwealth was now "sticking to its

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(1) Star, 15.3.61. ; The Economist, 25.4.61.

(2) Burger, 16.3.61.

(3) Meiring, Inside Information, 166.

(4) Transvaler, 16.3.61.

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principles" but they were the new principles of the new Commonwealth based on the equality of men irrespective of class, colour or creed.

Meiring recalls that he was called in by Verwoerd shortly after breakfast next day. The Premier seemed relaxed and cheerful but had a job for him to do. "I want you to get on the first plane to South Africa. Tell Jack Steyl (Secretary of the Nationalist Party) that he must lay on a big show when we arrive. There must not be any doubt about the outcome of the Conference". Meiring and Steyl did a thorough job. Dr. Verwoerd was given a hero's welcome on his return home from the 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Convoys of motor cars, a fly past of Sabre Jets and scenes of wild enthusiasm greeted the Premier when he arrived at Jan Smuts Airport, Johannesburg on 21st March. (1) The Administrator of the Transvaal, Mr. F.H. Odendaal assured Dr. Verwoerd, in his welcoming speech, that it was imperative for English and Afrikaners to stand united against the "onslaught on our beloved country". (2) This was not a defeat, he claimed. "It is a happy day for South Africa. What has happened is no less than a miracle. So many nations have had to get their complete freedom by armed struggle...." (3) Defeat was turned into victory, and for South African public consumption the Commonwealth connection was once more relegated by the Nationalists to its traditional role, that of a dispensable encumbrance.

The attitude of the Afrikaans Press had been expressed by the Transvaler much earlier. There was to be no more talk of the

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(1) Meiring, Inside Information, 168.
(2) Cape Argus, 20.3.61.
(3) ibid. 21.3.61.

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British Commonwealth of Nations in the future. It had become simply an organization where the non-White peoples had the dominant say. In this factor lay the basic failure of the Commonwealth. (1) Eric Louw claimed that the Afro-Asian-Canadian bloc had come to the Commonwealth Conference determined to oust South Africa from the organization unless the government had agreed to change its policies. (2) This was the first admission in public of the role that Canada could have played in the denoument. T.E. Dönges said of South Africa's new role outside the Commonwealth "I do not like the idea, but, like sailing on a Friday, it is not necessarily fatal".(3)

The post mortem went on for many weeks. Menzies was the most vocal of the Old School. At the Australian Club he enlarged on Dr. Verwoerd's personal integrity and courtesy saying that while he did not agree with the South African Premier's policy, the genius of the Commonwealth was tolerance, agreement to disagree and never passing judgement on each other. "He (Dr. Verwoerd) believes that all this will work out very nicely. I don't think it will. The more the policy succeeds the more he raises the Bantu up the more intolerable they will find it to be second class citizens. The ultimate conflict will be bloody and devastating. Why cannot we disagree with South Africa's policy without pushing South Africa out? And believe me she was pushed out". (4) In his report of the meeting to the Australian House of Representatives on 11th April Mr. Menzies said that he thought the Commonwealth had been "injured and not strengthened" by the departure of South Africa. Technically, he said, Dr. Verwoerd withdrew, but in substance he had to withdraw unless he was prepared to abandon policies which, however criticised were the settled doctrine of his government. (5) Menzies did not get off lightly, however, from his Parliamentary Opposition who claimed that he had done a great disservice to Australia by .... ?

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(1) Transvaler, 16.3.61.
(2) Cape Argus, 21.3.61.
(3) ibid. 16.3.61.
(4) ibid. 21.3.61.
(5) JPC 1961, 251.

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President NKrumah's opinion was fundamental. "This is no struggle between Black and White" he declared, "it is a fight between right and wrong, between good and evil". (1) White opinion in Central Africa, on the other hand, saw it rather differently. The Nationalist leader in Rhodesia, Sir Roy Welensky and Sir Edgar Whitehead freely predicted the break up of the Commonwealth as a result of South Africa being forced to withdraw. (2)

Black opinion within South Afrkn generally welcomed the break, not perhaps for the obvious reasons, but for a more emotional one that it represented a considerable defeat for the Nationalist Government on an international level. For the first time in history the South African (Nationalist) Government had been publicly defeated on a great issue and it was seen as a triumph of the non-racial idea; Commonwealth and apartheid had been found to be incompatible. (3) It did not go unnoticed in the Black Press that Dr. Verwoerd's determination not to compromise in any way had brought about the split. "Dr. Verwoerd has only his obstinacy to blame" said the African Mail "He refused to change. He is now reaping the fruits of his refusal". (4)

The World noted that the free world outside South Africa would not have Dr. Verwoerd's apartheid policy at any price. "It is a stink in the nostrils of the Commonwealth nations. It is the polecat of international politics".(5) The World continued, however, to warn that Dr. Verwoerd was no broken bitter man. He might be returning after failure, but, such was the mood of Nationalist Afrikanerdom that his very failure would be turned into a triumph". No African should doubt that whether or not they exulted over South Africa's exit from the Commonwealth, or believed in sorrow that a vital link with the free world had been severed, it was plain that

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(1) Cape Argus, 21.3.63.
(2) Rhodesia Herald reported in Cape Argus, 20.3.61.
(3) Contact, 23.3.61.
(4) African Mail, 21.3.61.
(5) The World, 25.3.61.

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Dr. Verwoerd had strengthened his position among White South Africans". (1)

Of the various organizations that played an important part in bringing about a situation where Dr. Verwoerd had either to agree to new concepts of race or pull out, the United South Africa Front based in London, was given most of the credit. According to the Golden City Post this showed that it was capable of materially affecting the future of South Africa. "Black power and Afro-Asian influence have asserted themselves." (2)

One reaction to the Commonwealth decision, according to Councillor George Peake of the South African Coloured Congress was an intensified feeling of fear and insecurity. The Government, it was felt would now go all out to further implement their policies and ideologies to "show up the rest of world opinion". (3) Indian Opinion pointed out that one of the most important implications of the withdrawal was that non-Whites should now be prepared to face a worsening future in South Africa. (4)

There was optimism, however, in many of the opinion columns of the Black Press. The Editor of The World commented that time was on the side of the African. It was precious time that was running out for Dr. Verwoerd and his racial policies. (5) Most Black leaders expressed a determination to bring South Africa back into the Commonwealth. It was pointed out that the challenge was for all races to work for a non-racial South African democracy which would one day regain its "proved place in the Commonwealth family and take its rightful place as leader of the African continent". Paul Mosaka, former President of the African Chamber of Commerce felt that it was in the interests of Africans generally to remain in the Commonwealth

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(1) The World, 25.3.61.
(2) Golden City Post, 19.3.61.
(3) Indian Opinion, 24.3.61.
(4) The World, 25.3.61.
(5) Race Relations News, April, 1961.

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because "the British connection has been part and parcel of the African way of life in his Christian and educational upbringing". (1)

The Leader of 24th March perhaps expressed the most positive and hopeful Black viewpoint to be voiced in South Africa, which plainly posed the answer to the future of the Commonwealth today - "The Commonwealth now stands out as a power for good and is destined to play an even more important role on the world stage, and we hold to be mere wishful thinking Dr. Verwoerd's view that this is the beginning of the end of the Commonwealth". (2)

As early as 1960 it had become apparent to most observers of the Commonwealth that, as Calvocoressi puts it, the Commonwealth, in order to survive and develop as a force in world politics must be an "ideological as well as a historical community". (3) This South Africa failed to recognise and make allowances for and led inevitably to the end of her relations with an organisation which has continued to expand and develop along the new multi-racial lines that are in line with current world thinking.

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(1) Race Relations News, April, 1961.

(2) Leader, 24.3.61.

(3) P. Calvocoressi, South Africa and World Opinion (London, 1961) 13.

C O N C L U S I O N

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate that factors within South Africa combined with developments in the world at large militated against South Africa's remaining as a republic within the Commonwealth in 1961.

Within South Africa the decades that preceded the break were marked by extremes of both co-operation and rejection of the Commonwealth connection which came to a head in the 1939 neutrality crisis. The Second World War brought dissension over the connection and while the followers of Smuts loyally fought for the future of the Commonwealth, the Opposition bitterly opposed it, even hoping that a Nazi victory would open the way to a republican South African divorced from the Commonwealth. Peace and victory for the Western Allies was a triumph for the association of the Commonwealth, now at its apogee; and in South Africa the new Nationalist post-war government turned once more, in the chilly international climate of the Cold War, towards the safety of Commonwealth co-operation.

At the same time, however, the Nationalists embarked on a much publicised programme of "separate development" which was destined to bring its domestic policies into the forum of world opinion, gaining for South Africa general opprobrium. Almost simultaneously the Commonwealth itself was beginning the radical change in the composition of its membership that was to prove the second deciding factor in the situation developing between the Commonwealth and South Africa.

It has been suggested that the history of the Commonwealth can be divided into three phases. Firstly the era of the all White Dominions, secondly the phase of the Asian countries' admission to membership, beginning with Indian accession in 1949, and thirdly the period of the admission of the Black African members. (1)

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(1) cf. Ali A. Mazrui, The Anglo African Commonwealth.

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The end of the Second World War heralded the Asian phase of the Commonwealth. The admission of India as a republic was possibly the most important event in the recent history of the Commonwealth relations. Not only was India the first non-White member to join, but she joined as a republic within the Commonwealth, an unprecedented move that was to have far reaching consequences. Not only that but she brought with her over four hundred million people - more than all the rest of the Commonwealth member countries' populations put together. There was no doubt that the Commonwealth had acquired a formidable shot in the arm, but it was not a shot in the arm that was to the liking of all its members; in South Africa in particular Smuts foresaw possible dire consequences. But the realities of international politics and the balance of power between the Communist and non-Communist countries in the post-war period had made Indian admission of vital importance to the West. That Smuts was reluctant, initially, to welcome it showed his inability to come to terms with the new realities of the post-war power struggle.

The accession of India to the Commonwealth was disturbing to Smuts and Malan alike, but worse was to come. With alarm the Union government watched Britain dispensing independence with prodigal generosity to her former colonies and protectorates. It seemed to them to be irresponsible, unnecessary, unjustifiable, and in the long run would bring about the early demise of the Commonwealth. It did, in fact, prove the end of the "old" Commonwealth of Smuts and Menzies; the White-oriented, exclusively British-centred Club. It was now the Commonwealth of Nyerere and NKrumah and Nehru and the great Brown and Black masses of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. It was still largely dominated by Britain, however, and for this reason in 1961 Harold Macmillan's task was to retain the initiative as the kingpin of the organization. To have thrown in his lot with South Africa against the majority would have put Britain's position at risk.

That the new Commonwealth was inimical to South Africa's continued membership was already plain by 1960, although not publicly recognised. In theory the ten months that elapsed from the end of

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the Prime Ministers' Conference of 1960 until the start of the crucial meeting of 1961 could have been a period of realigning forces. In fact, it is clear that, with a minority of exceptions, all the countries involved had stated their respective positions regarding South Africa in 1960. The intervening period merely led to a hardening of these attitudes. To a close observer of the Commonwealth the 1960 meeting was merely a "warming up" for what took place in 1961. By 1960 all the Black and Brown countries had declared themselves to be anti-South African. The enigmatic role of Canada as éminence gris could not perhaps have been foreseen but the extent to which Canadian support of the Afro-Asian countries was the deciding factor in the issue has been stressed only by South Africa. The decision would have been the same undoubtedly even without Canadian support.

The end came swiftly, and to the general public seemingly unexpectedly. Now with the benefit of hindsight it is possible to see that the inexorable process had begun before Smuts died. It was basically an issue of Black vs. White. Black was to win in 1961 because of the realities of the "new" Commonwealth. The leaders of the great Black and Brown nations of the "Commonwealth family" felt, with all the intensity of their newly acquired independence, that they could not happily continue to belong to an organization which harboured a member who daily denied Black people equality.

At the unofficial Conference in Lagos in 1965, one of the few White delegates delivered the epitaph of the "old" Commonwealth to which South Africa had belonged - "We of the old Commonwealth shall miss this single minded concentration on consultation, on the metaphysics of our association. We have loved our scholastic debates and the smug satisfaction we have derived from contemplating the paradoxes on which we thrive". (1) It would appear then that the majority non-White members of the Commonwealth were correct in their assumption that the official Nationalist Government policy of

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(1) C.E. Carrington, The Commonwealth in Africa, 44

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apartheid and membership of the Commonwealth were incompatible. If South Africa had remained a member in 1961, her presence would have been a focus of further strife and dissension in the organization, and, without doubt an attempt to eject her would have been made at each subsequent Conference. The issue was brought to a head, and having rid itself of the "black sheep of the family" the Commonwealth settled back to deal with the pressing new problems threatening its existence.

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APPENDIX I

COMMONWEALTH FIGHTING FORCES AND CASUALTIES IN WORLD WAR II

	FIGHTING FORCE	KILLED
UNITED KINGDOM	5,896,000	264,443
CANADA	724,023	37,476
AUSTRALIA	938,277	23,265
NEW ZEALAND	205,000	10,033
INDIA	2,500,000	24,338
COLONIES AND OTHER DEPENDENCIES	473,250	6,877
SOUTH AFRICA	200,000	6,840

SOURCE: Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience. 286

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APPENDIX II

ELECTION RESULTS ANALYSIS, SOUTH AFRICA 1915 - 1943

	1915	1920	1921	1924	1929	1933	1938	1943
Nationalist Party Seats won	27	44	45	63	78	75	27	43

SOURCE: Hancock, Smuts, Vol. II, 499

COMPARISON OF COMMUNIST PARTY ELECTION RESULTS 1943, 1948

	1943	1948
Hillbrow	741	279
Troyeville	575	495
Cape Flats	1 165	1 009

SOURCE: Forum, 5.6.48.

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APPENDIX III

COMMONWEALTH GROUND BATTLE CASUALTIES IN KOREA

	KILLED	WOUNDED	MISSING	TOTAL
AUSTRALIA	261	1,034	37	1,332
CANADA	294	1,202	47	1,543
INDIA	-	- 4	-	4
NEW ZEALAND	22	79	1	102
SOUTH AFRICA			1	1
UNITED KINGDOM	686	2,498	1,102	4,286

SOURCE: Barclay, The First Commonwealth Division, Appendix E Quoted in T.B. Millar, The Commonwealth and the United Nations, (Sydney, 1967) 59

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APPENDIX IV

RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM OF 1960

90,73% of the electorate voted.

850,458 or 52,05% were in favour of a republic.

775,874 or 47,49 were against a republic.

i.e. The result was a 4% majority in favour of a republic.

PROVINCIAL RESULTS

	YES	NO
TRANSVAAL	406,632	325,041
CAPE PROVINCE	271,418	269,784
ORANGE FREE STATE	110,171	33,438
SOUTH WEST AFRICA	19,948	12,017
NATAL	42,299	135,598

SOURCE: Verwoerd Speaks, 410

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APPENDIX V

TRADE BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA, THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1961

I M P O R T S

Imports into Countries of the Commonwealth and Sterling Area by Direction

	£ Thousand
South Africa from the United Kingdom	146,672
from other Commonwealth Countries	70,292
From the United States of America	88,335
from the European Economic Community	102,362
from the European Free Trade Area excluding the United Kingdom	24,109
from other non-Commonwealth Countries	71,041

E X P O R T S

Exports from Countries of the Commonwealth and Sterling Area by Direction

	£ Thousand
South Africa to the United Kingdom	156,067
to other Commonwealth Countries	82,383
to the United States of America	38,856
to the European Economic Community	84,871
to European Free Trade Area excluding the United Kingdom	8,007
to other non-Commonwealth Countries	57,718

SOURCE: The Commonwealth and the Sterling Area, Statistical Abstract, H.M. Stationery Office, (London, 1962) 10, 11. (No. 82, 1962).

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APPENDIX V (Contd.)

TRADE BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1961

I M P O R T S

Imports into Countries of the Commonwealth and the Sterling Area by Direction

		£ Thousand
From the United Kingdom to	Australia	230,737
	Canada	217,723
	India	152,835
	New Zealand	144,098
	South Africa	146,672
	Ghana	51,835
	Nigeria	86,155

E X P O R T S

Exports from Countries of the Commonwealth by Direction

To the United Kingdom from	Australia	162,958
	Canada	324,250
	India	122,622
	New Zealand	143,837
	South Africa	156,067
	Ghana	22,427
	Nigeria	76,598

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APPENDIX VI

THE EFFECTS OF THE EVENTS OF 1960-1961 ON THE ECONOMY OF SOUTH AFRICA

GOLD

Percentage of dividends payable inside and outside the Republic.

1959 - 60	72,0
1960 - 61	74,1
1961 - 62	72,3
1962 - 63	73,3

IMMIGRATION

	IMMIGRANTS	EMIGRANTS	GAINS/LOSSES	
1948	35,631	7,534	28,097	
1960	9,789	12,612	2,823	LOSS
1961	16,309	14,903	1,406	
1962	20,916	8,945	11,971	
1963	37,964	7,156	30,808	
1964	40,965	8,092	32,778	

BUILDING PLANS PASSED

After rising steadily through the years prior to 1959

1959	122,9	(Rands per million)
1960	124,4	
1961	80,4	
1962	84,3	
1963	136,9	
1964	206,9	
1965	251,0	

The steady rise continued after 1965.

SOURCE: The State of South Africa, 1972.

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APPRENDIX VII

MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN 1960

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Canada

The Commonwealth of Australia

New Zealand

The Union of South Africa

India

Pakistan

Ceylon

Ghana

The Federation of Malaya

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

SOURCE: Great Britain Commonwealth Office Commonwealth Relations Office List. Vol. 10. 1960.

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NOTE ON SOURCES

THE PATRICK DUNCAN PAPERS

The Selborne Papers in the Patrick Duncan collection in the Special Collections Department of the Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town have provided valuable original source material for this thesis.

Patrick Duncan came to South Africa as Private Secretary to Lord Milner, and at the first election after Union in 1910 he stood as candidate for the Unionist Party. For a decade he sat on the Opposition side of the South African Parliament, but his part in South African history only became crucial in 1939 when, as Governor General he was intimately concerned in the neutrality issue.

Duncan has been described as "reticent and self contained" inspiring respect rather than any other emotion, and "cold and efficient as a machine". (1) This description is not borne out however, by the Selborne papers - a collection of over seven hundred letters which he wrote between 1907 and 1943 to Countess, Lady Maud Selborne. This remarkable collection is basically political in content and represents a unique personal and original insight into historical events and personalities in South Africa at a time when she still held an unchallenged position in the Commonwealth.

In a letter to the author of 23.3.73., Mrs. Lionel Hitchens, widow of Lionel Hitchens of Milner's Kindergarten throws light on the relationship between her friend Lady Selborne and Patrick Duncan -

> "As the daughter of the Marquis of Salisbury, the British Prime Minister, she had been brought up in a family who all took the keenest interest in public affairs and when

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(1) L.E. Neame, Some South African Politicians, (Cape Town, 1929), 112.

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she lived in South Africa it was wonderful for her to find a group of young men who, in their different ways and different ages, were all able and interesting personalities and they must have all come and gone constantly to Government House, both on formal and informal social occasions.

I think the fundamental link between Lady Selborne and Patrick Duncan was a deep interest in public affairs, as they were evolving in South Africa and the desire of Lady Selborne to be fully informed of what went on. But there was also a link on what one might term the maternal side as he also looked on her as a second mother. His own mother, I think, was dead, if not when the correspondence began, then certainly fairly soon after. I remember distinctly my husband saying to me that he had always felt that Lady Selborne was a second mother to him."

The letters contain much valuable information for researchers on contemporary South African history and as such should be published.

SMUTS' PRIVATE LETTERS

The Smuts Papers are housed in the Archives in Pretoria but the Special Collections Department of the Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town has assorted letters and papers, chronologically arranged, on microfilm. These are indexed but the index does not correspond to the numbers on the microfilms.

In view of the fact that the letters for the period under review have not so far been published, these microfilms represent a valuable source of primary material.

Editing of the Smuts papers has so far got no further than 1919 (Sir William Keith Hancock, and J. van der Poel, The Smuts Papers (London, 1956). Hancock's biography of Smuts Vol. II which covers some of the period under review but uses only one of the letters mentioned in this thesis. There remains a huge body of unused

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material, of which the author has extracted only that which is of relevance to South Africa and the Commonwealth. Further potential research could be done on Smuts' philosophical and botanical interests and his special relationship with the Greek Royal Family and the position of Greece in the post-war world, to mention but a few possibilities from this vast untapped source.

D.F. MALAN COLLECTION

This collection, housed in the Carnegie Library in Stellenbosch consists of a small museum and a comprehensive collection of papers relating to the life of D.F. Malan.

The museum has momentoes presented by the Malan family as well as several valuable letters on display. The museum was opened in 1967 and makes up a rounded picture of the man and his work.

The collection of papers was opened in 1969 and consists of about 5,000 items. These range from early family documents dating from 1837 to material after Malan's death in 1959. The collection is made up of a valuable record of private letters, state documents, family correspondence, political pamphlets, newspaper cuttings, photos and tape recordings. It is minutely catalogued and a great deal of secondary material relevant to the years Malan was prominent in the political life of South Africa is available on request.

Owing to the strict enforcement of the fifty year Archival Rule in this case, application to use these letters must be made to the Trustees. This is a valuable and important collection which is unfortunately not generally available.

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