

WHITE POLITICS AND THE GARMENT

WORKERS' UNION: 1930 - 1953

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fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts

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Daar vind n verskuiwing plaas van die
platteland na die stede. Twee-derdes
van ons blanke bevolking sit in die
stede en die mag is daar. Indien ons
wil sorg dat daar hoop is vir die
toekoms van die Afrikaner, moet ons die
stad inneem. Indien ons dit wil doen,
dan moet ons die werkers wen.

Dr. A. Hertzog, 1937.

PREFACE

The years after 1930 witnessed the emergence of the present-day National Party and its eventual victory in the 1948 general election. However, little literature has appeared on the white labour movement, the Labour Party and the trade union activities of the Afrikaner nationalists during the period.

The Garment Workers' Union was a Witwatersrand-based trade union with a dominant Afrikaner membership. The thesis examines the Garment Workers' Union's political history between 1930 and 1953. The case study was designed to contribute to an understanding of the Afrikaner worker and the trade union movement.

As the Garment Workers' Union and the Trade Union Council of South Africa Collections have been sorted and resorted respectively since I carried out my research, it would be futile to provide box or file references for the material cited in the thesis. I am unable to provide box references for the material cited from the Labour Party Collection.

I wish to express my gratitude to those who, unlike many others, allowed me to interview them. As part of a quid pro quo they remain anonymous.

My appreciation is extended to the officials of the Garment Workers' Union for their assistance on my numerous visits to their offices.

I also wish to thank Mrs. A. Cunningham and Miss M. Jacobson for allowing me special access to the Garment Workers' Union Collection after they had closed it for sorting.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Professor D. Welsh, who took over the supervision of the thesis towards the end of the study, for his guidance and advice.

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INTRODUCTION

A number of organisations ranging from the Communist Party (C.P.) to Afrikaner nationalist groups have interested themselves in the white working class on the Witwatersrand. The various organisations viewed the labour movement as a means of mobilising the workers behind their respective banners.

Although numerous communists held prominent positions in the trade union movement, the C.P. was never able to gain much support among the rank and file members. The ideological struggle for the support of the Afrikaner worker was primarily one between white class politics and Afrikaner nationalism.

Many newly urbanised Afrikaner workers were enrolled as trade union members. The Afrikaner working class began to show an inclination for white class politics and newly won Afrikaner support contributed to the Labour Party's (L.P.) limited revival on the Witwatersrand during the 1930's.

Afrikaner nationalists viewed the trend with increasing concern and from the mid-1930's Afrikaner nationalist groups began to focus their attention on winning the Afrikaner worker to 'Afrikanerdom'. The Afrikaner nationalists' trade union activities operated at two levels. At the one level, the Afrikaner nationalists attempted to wean the workers from ideologies of class. At the other level, the Afrikaner nationalists endeavoured to establish or to reform trade unions on what they called christian-national lines. The Afrikaner

nationalists' campaigns against specific trade unions in, inter alia, the mining, building and clothing industries, achieved limited success. The Afrikaner nationalists, for example, finally gained control of the Mine Workers' Union at the close of the 1940's, but were never able to unseat the leadership of the Garment Workers' Union (G.W.U.).

The Afrikaner worker from the beginning of the 1940's increasingly abandoned - although he was not necessarily weaned from - ideologies of class. Afrikaner working class support helped the National Party (N.P.) to win the 1948 general election and to consolidate its position in the 1953 general election. The N.P. government launched an assault on the trade union movement. It used the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 as amended in 1951 to remove numerous trade unionists from their posts - e.g., E.S. Sachs, the general secretary of the G.W.U. (1928 - 1952).

From the mid-1930's the G.W.U. had a predominantly Afrikaner membership. The G.W.U. enrolled a large number of non-whites into a separate branch of the Union during the 1940's. However, the G.W.U. remained exclusively under the control of the white membership until 1953 when the non-white members were enfranchised.

Although he remained an ardent communist, Sachs had been expelled from the C.P. at the beginning of the 1930's. During the early 1930's the C.P. attempted to discredit and unseat the Sachs leadership.

From the mid-1930's the Sachs leadership propagated a white working class ideology and guided the G.W.U. into active participation in white class politics (e.g., the G.W.U. affiliated to the I.P. in 1947).

This broad political case study of the G.W.U. focuses its attention on two themes. An attempt will be made to explain why the Afrikaner workers on the Witwatersrand from the beginning of the 1940's increasingly threw their support behind the N.P., and why they turned away from the L.P. and the United Party. It will be argued that the rapid erosion of the L.P.'s Afrikaner support base was to a considerable extent the consequence of the L.P.'s abandonment of the ideological struggle.

The reasons for the Afrikaner nationalists' limited success in their trade union activities in general and their failure to unseat the G.W.U. leadership in particular are analysed in detail. The question why the Afrikaner nationalists failed to dislodge the G.W.U. leadership requires a broad analysis of the G.W.U.'s history. The leadership, constitution, colour policy and democratic character of the G.W.U., and the Afrikaner nationalists' campaigns against the G.W.U. leadership are examined. The garment workers' experiences during the early 1930's help one to understand their views and attitudes over the subsequent years.

There is virtually no literature available on the L.P.'s history after the early 1930's¹. Limited literature has appeared on the Afrikaner nationalists' trade union activities. A. Hepple and more recently D. O'Meara have examined the Afrikaner nationalists' trade union activities generally². Hepple blurs crucial distinctions between the various Afrikaner nationalist organisations, while

1. For example, scattered references can be found on the L.P. in H.J. Simons's and R.E. Simons's Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950. I.L. Walker's and B. Weinbren's Two Thousand Casualties has a short section on the L.P.

2. A. Hepple, Trade Unions in Travail; D. O'Meara, "Analysing Afrikaner Nationalism: The 'Christian-National' Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa, 1934-1948", in African Affairs, vol. 77 no. 306, January 1978, pp. 45-72.

O'Meara overemphasises the 'economic' and tends to squeeze events and his conclusions into inaccurate time sequences. Neither writer has carried out more than superficial research into the G.W.U.'s history. O'Meara was probably misled in his analysis of the G.W.U. by the G.W.U.'s 1953 election results cited in Hepple's work. Hepple fails to inform the reader when he provides the election results that the G.W.U.'s non-white members were enfranchised¹.

H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons deal briefly with the Afrikaner nationalists' trade union activities in their joint work². One of the Afrikaner nationalist organisations, the Nasionale Raad van Trustees, has published an account of its struggle to gain control of the Mine Workers' Union³. E.S. Sachs's two books on his experiences in the G.W.U. are superficial in content and avoid numerous issues⁴. Consequently, the thesis makes a significant contribution to an understanding of Afrikaner nationalism and class politics on the Witwatersrand.

The paucity of literature on the areas covered in the study necessitated a somewhat unconventional structuring of the thesis. Conclusions tend to precede the comprehensive discussions on which they are based.

The first part of the thesis deals with the structures and colour policy of the G.W.U.

-
1. A. Hepple, op. cit., p. 50.
 2. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit.
 3. L. Naudé, Dr. A. Hertzog, Die Nasionale Party en die Mynwerker.
 4. E.S. Sachs: Rebels Daughters; The Choice before South Africa.

The second part examines the G.W.U.'s history during the first half of the 1930's with the emphasis on the C.P.'s African Federation of Trade Unions.

The third part examines the Afrikaner nationalists' campaigns and propaganda against the G.W.U.

The final part examines the L.P., and the G.W.U.'s activities in white class politics generally.

PART ONE

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The South African clothing manufacturing industry emerged with the twentieth century. In 1929 there were forty clothing factories in the Witwatersrand and Pretoria area ¹. The principal clothing manufacturing regions were the Witwatersrand and the Western Cape which in 1938/1939 manufactured roughly 52,7 percent and 33,8 percent of the country's production respectively.

TABLE 1

ROUGH PERCENTAGES OF THE REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLOTHING MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY ²

YEAR	WITWATERS-- RAND	WESTERN CAPE	EASTERN CAPE	DURBAN	REMAINDER OF COUNTRY
1938/1939	52,7	33,8	1,0	7,5	5,0
1952/1953	52,0	31,3	2,2	8,1	6,4

A large number of the manufacturers were Jews (many of whom - generalising from an anecdote or two - were former tailors) ³.

Clothing factories could be established with relatively small initial capital investments and in 1937/1938 only 3 percent of the

1. H.A.F. Barker, The Economics of the Wholesale Clothing Industry of South Africa 1907 - 1957, pp. 13-15.

2. Ibid., p. 101 table XI.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, October 1939; Informal interviews, 1978.

country's clothing factories were owned by public companies ¹.

The workforce of the emergent Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry was primarily white ². In the mid-1920's a white Johannesburg tailors' trade union organised the white workers of the Johannesburg clothing manufacturing industry into a separate section of the Union. In the late 1920's the Union organised the white workers in the nearby Germiston clothing factories into a branch of the Union. In 1934 the tailors withdrew from the G.W.U. (as the Union was now known) and established an independent trade union, the Tailoring Workers' Industrial Union ³.

The G.W.U. during the subsequent decades organised the eligible non-white workers on the Witwatersrand into a number two branch of the Union; and organised the local (apparently white) millinery workers and makers of men's hats into separate branches of the Union ⁴.

The comparatively low wages of the clothing manufacturing industry's workforce outside the Witwatersrand inhibited the G.W.U.'s ability to obtain wage increases for its members. The G.W.U. endeavoured to improve the wage standards of the industry's workforce outside the Witwatersrand.

1. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 196 table XX, 201.

2. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

3. Ibid., p. 372.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1951.

TABLE 2

MINIMUM WEEKLY WAGE RATES (INCLUDING COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE) OF QUALIFIED FEMALE MACHINISTS AS PRESCRIBED BY INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL AGREEMENTS ¹

YEAR	TRANSVAAL	WESTERN CAPE	EASTERN CAPE	NATAL
1938	55 ^s	45 ^s		49 ^s 6 ^d * 45 ^s
1940			47 ^s 6 ^d	
1946	90 ^s	70 ^s 11 ^d	76 ^s 11 ^d * 69 ^s 11 ^d	78 ^s * 70 ^s
1953	134 ^s 2 ^d	93 ^s 6 ^d	96 ^s 9 ^d	88 ^s 10 ^d

* Reflect two categories of qualified female machinists.

The G.W.U. organised the unorganised garment workers of Port Elizabeth (in 1937), East London (shortly thereafter), Kimberley and Bloemfontein (both in 1947) into branches of the G.W.U. ²

The G.W.U. established branches in Kingwilliamstown and Potchefstroom

1. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 383-386 table XXXIV; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1953. It must be noted that numerous variables (e.g., hours of work a week and ratio provisions between qualified and unqualified workers) make a comparison between regional wage rates only a rough index of the actual regional disparities.

2. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., p. 372.

during the 1930's¹.

1. Minutes of G.W.U. Potchefstroom Branch General Meeting, 28 January 1938. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 5 October 1937. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Die Vaderland, 14 June 1937; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1951. With the exceptions of the Port Elizabeth, Potchefstroom and Western Cape branches I have not conducted research into the non-Witwatersrand branches. The Port Elizabeth and (probably) the East London branches were organised on a multi-racial basis. The racial composition of the two branches varied substantially over the years (see the racial percentages of the Eastern Province industry in table 3 p. 11). The Bloemfontein branch probably had separate sections for its white and non-white members. The Kimberley and Potchefstroom clothing industries employed essentially coloureds and whites respectively. The Potchefstroom branch enrolled only white members. Black workers were largely prohibited by industrial legislation from belonging to registered trade unions (e.g., the G.W.U.). The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1947, September/October 1947; H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 289-290 table XXVII; The Potchefstroom, Port Elizabeth and Western Cape branches are discussed elsewhere.

TABLE 3

RACIAL PERCENTAGES OF THE CLOTHING MANUFACTURING
INDUSTRY'S WORKFORCE IN FOUR CENTRES¹

YEAR	PERCENTAGE WHITES				PERCENTAGE COLOURED AND ASIATICS				PERCENTAGE BLACKS			
	WIT- WATERS- RAND	WEST- ERN CAPE	DURBAN	EAST- ERN PRO- VINCE	WIT- WATERS- RAND	WEST- ERN CAPE	DURBAN	EAST- ERN PRO- VINCE	WIT- WATERS- RAND	WEST- ERN CAPE	DURBAN	EAST- ERN PRO- VINCE
1936	88,7	46,4	28,9	91,5	2,0	52,9	66,8	7,1	9,3	,7	4,3	1,4
1946	54,0	22,1	6,8	47,2	22,1	76,3	82,8	50,5	23,9	1,6	10,4	2,3
1955	32,6	12,9	5,0	17,1	29,3	85,2	39,0	78,9	38,1	1,9	6,0	4,0

1. "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour on the Clothing Industry, Union of South Africa", dated 1 May 1956, p. 18 table 3. An. 704 1956.

The G.W.U. endeavoured over the years to bring about co-operation among the garment (i.e., the workers employed in the clothing manufacturing industry), tailor and textile workers' trade unions in South Africa. It focused its attention on establishing a national garment workers' trade union (or a consultative committee as a step towards its establishment) with the Durban and Western Cape garment workers' trade unions¹.

The G.W.U. also engaged in a number of 'direct' campaigns in the Western Cape. The G.W.U. established two ephemeral branches in competition with the Garment Workers' Union of the Cape Peninsula (1930-1931, 1935-1938). The latter campaign included an endeavour to infiltrate workers who favoured close co-operation - i.e., 'national unity' - with the G.W.U. into the Garment Workers' Union

1. e.g.: E.S. Sachs to C.E.C., 28 January 1938. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Secretary, Tailoring Workers' Industrial Union, 2 December 1936. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to J. Bolton, 23 September 1935, 22 November 1938, 15 November 1943. G.W.U. Collection; J. Bolton to E.S. Sachs, 26 January 1943, 30 January 1945, 7 May 1947. G.W.U. Collection; President, Vice-President and General Secretary to Secretary, Garment Workers' Industrial Union (Natal), 8 September 1936. G.W.U. Collection; Honorary Secretary to E.S. Sachs, 12 October 1936. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Secretary, G.W.U.C.P., 2 December 1936. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Executive Committee, G.W.U.C.P., 15 February 1939. G.W.U. Collection; R. Crawford to General Secretary, G.W.U., 12 November 1951. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of Second National Conference, Garment Making Trade Unions, 26 January 1943. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of First Session of the National Conference of Textile and Clothing Workers' Trade Unions, 30 August 1947. G.W.U. Collection.

of the Cape Peninsula's (G.W.U.C.P.) leadership¹. The G.W.U. subsequently took the nascent Cape Millinery Workers' Union under its wing as a branch of the G.W.U. and in time launched a campaign among Cape Town's garment workers promoting 'national unity' (1943-1945); and later engaged in a campaign to mobilise support among the G.W.U.C.P.'s rank and file for 'national unity' (1954-1955)².

The G.W.U. was faced with numerous obstacles in its opposition to the authoritarian G.W.U.C.P. which espoused a cautious, parochial and tepid type of trade unionism. The G.W.U.C.P. enjoyed the

1. The 1930-1931 campaign is discussed at pp. 50-56. For the 1935-1938 campaign, e.g.: Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of the S.A.G.W.U., 6 April 1936, 30 May 1936, 22 June 1936, 23 November 1936, 30 December 1936. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to E. Weinberg, 23 May 1935, 18 June 1935. G.W.U. Collection; Report of E. Weinberg to the First General Members Meeting of the S.A.G.W.U., 3 June 1935. G.W.U. Collection; Pamphlet issued by the C.D.C. and addressed "To All Trade Unions, Trade Unionists and Workers" (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 16 August 1938. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 April 1938, East London, see list of affiliated trade unions. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. 1943-1945 campaign, e.g.: P. Podbrey, Secretary, Cape Millinery Workers' Union to Secretary, Millinery Association (Cape), 14 January 1944. G.W.U. Collection; P. Podbrey to E.S. Sachs, 29 October 1943, 2 December 1943, 27 September 1944. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to P. Podbrey, Secretary, Cape Millinery Workers' Union, 15 May 1944, 22 June 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Circular advertising meeting in Cape Town on 25 July 1945. G.W.U. Collection; Secretary, Western Province Local Committee T. & L.C. to Members of the N.E.C.T. & L.C., 5 November 1945. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1945, July/August 1945; 1954-1955 campaign, e.g.: The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, Edition of Saamtrek, 14 May 1954, 21 May 1954, 28 May 1954, 3 September 1954, 18 April 1955, 6 May 1955.

active support of the clothing and millinery manufacturers in its organisational struggles with the G.W.U.¹ The only success the G.W.U. achieved in its various 'direct' campaigns was in 1955 when the G.W.U.C.P. agreed to establish a consultative committee with the G.W.U. and the Durban garment workers' trade union².

The G.W.U.'s experiences in the Western Cape reflected the general difficulty of successfully undermining a trade union or its leadership. Although the G.W.U.C.P. was largely moribund during the G.W.U.'s 1930-1931 campaign, a discussion on the campaign in part two of the thesis has been extended to provide an example of one of the G.W.U.'s 'direct' activities in the Western Cape³.

This first part of the thesis examines the origins, constitutional development, colour policy, and the leadership structures and personalities of the G.W.U. on the Witwatersrand.

1. R. Stuart to Minister of Labour, 26 October 1946. G.W.U. Collection; M. Nicol, "The Garment Workers' Union of the Cape Peninsula and the Garment Workers' National Unity Movement 1927-1955", Economic Honours, University of Cape Town, pp. 19, 34-36, 38-42, 48-49, 57, 60-61, 73, 76-77, 90-93, 95, 100. For a rough indication of the G.W.U.C.P.'s racial composition see table 3 (p.11).

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, Edition of Saamtrek, 24 June 1955, 15 July 1955.

3. See p.50.

CHAPTER II

E. S. SACHS'S STRATEGY FOR THE
WHITE WORKING CLASS

E.S. Sachs was born in 1899 in (according to A. Scheepers) Latvia, and in 1914 - presumably with the rest of the family - journeyed to South Africa to join his father who had arrived on the Witwatersrand a number of years previously ¹. The following years saw Sachs employed in a bookstore, in a trade store catering for blacks (he was obliged to leave the trade after playing a prominent role in a strike in 1920), sit for the London matriculation examination in 1921, enter the Witwatersrand University in 1924 as an engineering student, and become involved in leftist politics (e.g., he joined the Young Communist League in the early 1920's). Sachs dropped out of university - according to him due to lack of means - and in 1925 left South Africa and spent ten months in Britain and the Soviet Union ².

On his return to South Africa, Sachs re-entered the Witwatersrand University at the beginning of 1927 to study law and economics

1. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 549, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk." Court record no.: W.L.D. (Trial) 107 of 1942; J. Lewis, "Solly Sachs and the Garment Workers' Union", in Southern African Labour History, ed. E. Webster, p. 181.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1951; E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, A Political Biography, p. 63.

and obtained part-time employment as the secretary of the Witwatersrand Master Tailors' Association¹. The Association was an employers' organisation which comprised approximately one hundred craftsmen who were independent contractors and who had their own workshops and employees². It would appear that Sachs's predecessor as secretary, a member of the Witwatersrand Tailors' Association (W.T.A.), had withdrawn from the post after the W.T.A. had requested him to resign from the trade union for the duration of his secretaryship³. Nevertheless, Sachs, still a student and secretary of the employers' Association, successfully contested the election for the vacant full-time post of general secretary of the W.T.A. in November 1928⁴. The W.T.A. was renamed the G.W.U. in 1930⁵.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1951; Petitioner's Replying Affidavit, 22 November 1932. E.S. Sachs vs. O. Pirow, T.P.D., p. 22. Witwatersrand University Library.

2. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 23; C.F. Glass, General Secretary to H. Myers, 7 February 1927. G.W.U. Collection; H. Myers Lee, Witwatersrand Master Tailors' Association to C.F. Glass, Secretary, W.T.A., 8 March 1927. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs, Secretary, Witwatersrand Master Tailors' Association to Secretary, W.T.A., 23 March 1928. G.W.U. Collection.

3. H. Myers Lee, Witwatersrand Master Tailors' Association to C.F. Glass, Secretary, W.T.A., 8 March 1927. G.W.U. Collection; C.F. Glass, General Secretary to H. Myers, 7 February 1927. G.W.U. Collection; Petitioner's Replying Affidavit, 22 November 1932. E.S. Sachs vs. O. Pirow, T.P.D., p. 22, op. cit.

4. Petitioner's Replying Affidavit, 22 November 1932. E.S. Sachs vs. O. Pirow, T.P.D., p. 22, op. cit.; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 23.

5. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 550, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

In the early 1920's Sachs opposed the admission of blacks to the Young Communist League and argued that they be organised in a separate association ¹. Sachs became a leading member of the C.P.

In the late 1920's the C.P. adopted a 'Native Republic' policy. In terms of the 'Native Republic' policy the C.P. was committed to establishing "an independent South African Native Republic as a stage towards the Workers' and Peasants' Republic" ².

Despite his expulsion from the C.P. in 1931 for "reformist" trade union activity and the subsequent intrigue directed by the Party at his G.W.U. administration, Sachs, in his rhetoric during the early 1930's, cited the C.P. as the only Party for the working class ³. He further called for the organisation of trade unions on militant working class lines and de-emphasised the role of 'race and colour' in trade union organisation ⁴.

Towards the middle of the 1930's Sachs began to express views which were more consistent with the policies he was obliged to enforce in the W.T.A. His views remained consistent for the rest of his period in office. Sachs remained a committed communist and a

1. E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, p. 63.

2. S.P. Bunting, Imperialism and South Africa - Report on Behalf of the Delegates of the South African Communist Party 1928, p. 52. For a detailed examination of the 'Native Republic' policy see H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 386-415.

3. Umsebenzi, 4 September 1931; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C.: 26, 27, 28 March 1932, Port Elizabeth, p. 18; 1, 2, 3 April 1934, Johannesburg, p. 67. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C.: 4, 5, 6 April 1931, Durban, p. 36; 26, 27, 28 March 1932, Port Elizabeth, p. 22. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

firm admirer of the Soviet Union. However, he differed with the South African C.P. (which advocated a multi-racial policy) over racial strategy. He also at times argued that the following stage in South Africa was one of progressive capitalism (i.e., the industrialisation of the country under capitalism).

Sachs became a protagonist of the formation of parallel and sectional trade unions as a means of building up the militancy of, and of slowly unifying the white, coloured/asiatic and black workers. On the political level the immediate task was to win the white worker to white working class politics. He believed that it was an exercise in futility to try to win the white worker directly to the cause of the multi-racial working class.

'Racism' between members of the white community (e.g., anti-semitism), as distinct from cultural nationalism, was condemned outright. Sachs argued that if the Afrikaner was to be won to the cause of the white working class it was necessary to take his nationalist sentiments into consideration. In 1938 Sachs wrote that the labour movement had

failed to realise that the vast masses of Afrikaners may enjoy full rights of citizenship abstractly, but in concrete practice they feel as an oppressed nation, as a nation which was deprived of its independence by violence, as a people which suffered cultural, economic and political oppression, and the wealth of whose country has been

and is being plundered by foreign capitalists ¹.

1. For general statements of his views: The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, August 1938 (Quote in text), September 1938, January 1939, March/April 1941, July/August 1943, September/October 1943, November/December 1943, March/April 1944; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Fourteenth day, 13 September 1945, pp. 1186, 1194-1195, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez." Court record no.: W.L.D. (Trial) 1003 of 1945; Reply of E.S. Sachs to the Report Submitted by A.J. Downes. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 April 1936, Cape Town, pp. 80, 86. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; E. Roux to Editor, Forward, 3 April 1936; E.S. Sachs to Editor, Forward, 17 April 1936; Minutes of the Full Committee of the Campaign for Right and Justice, 1 December 1944. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

CHAPTER III

CONSTITUTIONAL AND RELATED RESPONSES TO
ETHNIC/RACIAL CHANGES IN THE WORKFORCE

A. The Early Years

A large proportion of the tailors on the Witwatersrand at the dawn of the twentieth century were eastern European Jews. From the close of the nineteenth century ephemeral combinations of master tailors emerged on the Witwatersrand and in 1913 the W.T.A. was established at Johannesburg ¹. Although the W.T.A. experienced a few breakaways over the years, it remained the primary tailors' union in the area and obtained registration as a trade union under the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 ².

1. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 25; E. Gitsham and J.F. Trembath, A First Account of Labour Organisation in South Africa, p. 110.

2. E. Gitsham and J.F. Trembath, op. cit., p. 110; [?] to J. Goodman, Chairman, Transvaal Garment Workers' Union, 26 May 1923. G.W.U. Collection; Convenor to the Committee to J. Goodman, 19 June 1923. G.W.U. Collection.

Whites, coloureds and asiatics - in contrast to blacks - were eligible for membership of registered trade unions. When published an industrial council agreement (i.e., negotiated by a registered trade union(s) and a registered employers' organisation) had the force of law and regulated the entire industry's wage rates and conditions of employment in the area concerned. Blacks, unless expressly provided for, were excluded from an industrial council agreement's provisions. A Wage Board Determination did not apply to workers whose wages, etc., were regulated by an industrial council agreement. An unsatisfactory feature of a Wage Board Determination was that the Determination's provisions (e.g., wage scales) remained static until either replaced by a fresh Determination or displaced by an industrial council agreement.

The W.T.A.'s inclusive and exclusive endeavours to protect its members' wages and conditions of employment are reflected in the following examples. On the one hand, the W.T.A. enrolled the white workers of the emergent clothing manufacturing industry into a separate section of the Association in the mid-1920's, and contemplated enrolling coloureds and asiatics as members on a few occasions during the second half of the 1920's¹. On the other hand, an industrial council agreement in the mid-1920's prohibited blacks from performing certain operations, and the W.T.A. requested the Minister of Labour in about 1930 to halt the further influx of foreign tailors who were entering the country in large numbers. The W.T.A. complained that the enforcement machinery was inadequate and that a large number of newly arrived immigrant tailors worked under sweated conditions in contravention of the tailors' industrial council agreement's provisions².

From at least 1928 a closed shop provision was included in both the W.T.A.'s bespoke (i.e., tailoring industry) and factory (i.e.,

1. J. Lewis. "The New Unionism: Industrialisation and Industrial Unions in South Africa 1925-1930", in The South African Labour Bulletin, vol. 3 no. 5, March/April 1977, p. 44; Minutes of W.T.A.C.E.C. Meeting, 21 February 1929. G.W.U. Collection; E. Gitsham and J.F. Trembath, op. cit., p. 110.

2. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 335; Memorandum Submitted by the W.T.A. to the Minister of Labour in Respect of (A) Immigrant Tailors, (B) Bespoke Tailoring Work in Clothing Factories, (C) Amendments to the Industrial Conciliation Act (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection. Between January 1926 and May 1929 497 white tailors (many of whom were from eastern Europe) assumed domicile in South Africa. A large number settled on the Witwatersrand. Memorandum Submitted by the W.T.A. to the Minister of Labour, op. cit.

clothing manufacturing industry) industrial council agreements¹. The W.T.A. bespoke section's membership was estimated to be about five hundred in 1928². In February 1931 2 097 whites (of whom 1 915 were female); 489 blacks, 124 coloureds and 7 asiatics were employed in the Witwatersrand and (virtually non-existent) Pretoria clothing manufacturing industry³. While the bulk of the white manufacturing industry's workforce comprised newly urbanised Afrikaner females (employed as operatives), the majority of the small number of male workers consisted of eastern European immigrants⁴. The Afrikaner female garment workers lived in poverty, particularly as many of them sent portions of their meagre wages to relatives in the rural areas⁵.

In addition to the central executive committee (c.e.c.) which consisted of an equal number of bespoke and factory members, the bespoke and factory sections had their own committees. The patronising attitude of the skilled members to the Afrikaner women operative members coupled with the Afrikaner's lack of interest in the

1. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 562, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. Ibid., p. 552; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, pp. 24, 27.

3. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Bespoke Tailoring and Clothing Manufacturing Industries", dated 23 October 1931, table 4. Ans. 82 1931-1932.

4. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 552, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, Edition of Saamtrek, 25 August 1978; "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Garment Making Trades", dated 12 April 1935, p. 19. Ans. 99 1936.

trade union resulted in the latter playing a minimal role in the W.T.A./G.W.U.'s decision-making processes. For example, the 1930 c.e.c. appears to have had only one Afrikaner member (who was a male) ¹.

The 1931 and 1932 general strikes in the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry depleted the G.W.U.'s financial resources ². The failure of the 1932 strike resulted in, inter alia, the abolition of the closed shop in the manufacturing industry ³. Participation in the strikes mobilised a number of Afrikaner female factory members who began to agitate for a greater say in the affairs of the Union ⁴. Sachs's support for the Afrikaner women activists can be explained by his genuine sympathy for their cause and his manoeuvring to strengthen his support base in the face of a challenge to his leadership by a C.P. "fraction" in the G.W.U. ⁵ The bespoke section withdrew from the G.W.U. in 1934 with an agreed portion of the

1. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 24; Minutes of W.T.A. General Meeting, 14 January 1930. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 27 January 1931. G.W.U. Collection; Interview, Johannesburg, 29 August 1978.

2. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 18 February 1932. G.W.U. Collection. For the 1931 and 1932 general strikes see p. 57.

3. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 562, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

4. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, pp. 99-100; Forward, 7 April 1933; Interview, Johannesburg, 29 August 1978.

5. Interview, Johannesburg, 29 August 1978.

Union's funds and formed an independent trade union ¹. Sachs remained general secretary of the G.W.U.

B. Pressing and Unequal Pay for Equal Work

During the 1930's blacks performed those jobs (e.g., pressing, packing) in the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry which were not generally done by the white workers ². A Wage Board Determination for the industry published in 1932 brought black pressers on the Witwatersrand under a wage regulating instrument for the first time and resulted in a substantial increase in their wages. An endeavour by a number of manufacturers to replace the black pressers - who had hitherto done nearly all the pressing in the industry - with white male youths met with limited success as the white pressers tended to drift to jobs which offered better wages, advancement opportunities, etc. ³

A closed shop provision was restored to the G.W.U.'s industrial council agreement in 1935 ⁴. In 1935 a number of presser (and cutter) members of the G.W.U. approached the Union over blacks performing their occupations on the 1932 Wage Board Determination

1. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 100; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, pp. 550, 563, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. "Interim Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour, The Bespoke Trade and Clothing Manufacturing Industry", dated 20 July 1931, p. 3. Ans. 56 1931-1932.

3. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Garment Making Trades", dated 12 April 1935, pp. 16-17, 28-29. An. 99 1936.

4. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 562, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

wage scale which was proving detrimental to their wage position¹. The G.W.U. turned to the South African Clothing Workers' Union (formerly the Native Clothing Workers' Union) and provided various forms of assistance (including financial loans) to help revitalise the black union. The G.W.U. hoped that the black union, albeit unregistered, would be able to negotiate wages superior to the Determination's wage rates with the Transvaal Clothing Manufacturers' Association (T.C.M.A.)². The G.W.U. unsuccessfully attempted on at least one occasion during the latter 1930's to have the black pressers incorporated into the industrial council agreement³.

The wages of the black pressers remained at the 1932 Wage Board Determination rates throughout the 1930's. Although the white pressers obtained slight wage improvements (and the differential between their and the black pressers' wage rates increased) as the decade progressed, their position did not improve. Manufacturers increasingly tended either to dismiss the white pressers or to seek

1. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Ninth day, 18 December 1941, p. 621, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit. For the operation of Wage Board Determinations see p. 20 footnote 2.

2. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Ninth day, 18 December 1941, pp. 621-622, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; G. Makabeni to E.S. Sachs, 20 June 1935. G.W.U. Collection; A. Scheepers to G. Makabeni, 18 August 1948. G.W.U. Collection; Judgment of Murray J., delivered 3 February 1942, E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerpers Bpk., W.L.D., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1942, p. 14.

3. Proposals for a New Agreement for the Clothing Industry Transvaal Submitted by the G.W.U. at a Joint Meeting with Representatives of the T.C.M.A., 15 March 1938. G.W.U. Collection.

exemption for them from the industrial council (which comprised representatives from the G.W.U. and the T.C.M.A.) from the operative wage scale's top rates ¹.

C. Coloured Labour and Demands for Representation

During the 1930's coloureds formed an insignificant portion of the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry's workforce. For example, in 1936 coloureds and asiatics comprised 2 percent of the industry's workforce (i.e., 125 coloureds and 5 asiatics) ². The coloureds were employed in a few factories where - it would appear - they did work normally performed by the white workers ³.

The G.W.U. had contemplated organising the coloureds and asiatics into the Union on a few occasions during the latter 1920's ⁴. A provisional draft of the constitution which applied during the first portion of the 1930's contained a provision for a separate section for non-white members ⁵. Sachs claimed that the G.W.U. successfully established a separate section (i.e., the number

1. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Investigations into the Garment Making Trades, Second Objection Stage", dated 12 July 1940, p. 4. An. 15 1940-1941; E.S. Sachs to D. Colraine, T.C.M.A., 23 June 1938. G.W.U. Collection.

2. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. The Garment Making Industry", dated 21 February 1938, p. 5 table 1. An 190 1938.

3. Minutes of W.T.A.C.E.C. Meeting, 21 February 1929. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 118.

4. Minutes of W.T.A.C.E.C. Meeting, 21 February 1929. G.W.U. Collection; J. Lewis, "The New Unionism", op. cit., p. 44.

5. Constitution Adopted 2 July 1929, Garment Workers' Union Transvaal, sec. 4(B). G.W.U. Collection. I was unable to find a copy of the constitution in its final form.

two branch) for the coloured and asiatic workers in the mid-1930's¹. However, although a number of coloureds were enrolled into the G.W.U., it would appear that the number two branch never really got off the ground². The G.W.U.'s 1937 constitution was colour-blind and the branches envisaged in its provisions were undoubtedly geographical in character³.

The South African clothing industry experienced expansion as the Second World War gained momentum. However, a fair number of white garment workers on the Witwatersrand left the industry - the females to more lucrative employment in munition factories and a relatively insignificant number of males to the armed forces⁴.

If the manufacturers were unable to obtain sufficient labour at 'reasonable' wage rates, the Witwatersrand industry would stagnate and some manufacturers would move to the coastal areas. Large numbers of coloureds (particularly women) were absorbed into the Johannesburg industry. The proportion of coloureds and asiatics in the Witwatersrand industry rose from 2 percent in 1936 to 22,1 percent a decade later (to approximately 202 asiatics and 2 782

1. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, pp. 118-120.

2. Ibid.; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1949.

3. G.W.U. Constitution (n.d.), sec. 11. G.W.U. Collection.

4. "Proceedings of the Commission of Enquiry into the G.W.U." (Hereafter referred to as G.W.U. Proceedings): J. Breytenbach's evidence, 28 March 1949, p. 1873, A. Knoetze's evidence, 20 January 1949, pp. 478-479. G.W.U. Collection; A. Scheepers's evidence. Third day, 8 December 1941, p. 131, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.; J. Cornelius's evidence. Eleventh day, 10 September 1945, pp. 888-889, T.J. Evens's evidence. Thirteenth day, 12 September 1945, pp. 1121-1125.

coloureds) ¹.

The G.W.U. would have been faced with numerous difficulties if an independent coloured and asiatic trade union was established. In 1941 the G.W.U. decided to revive the number two branch and the coloured and asiatic workers became subject to the closed shop provision ².

While the G.W.U. made no move to amend its constitution, it restricted its non-white members to activity within their branch and control of the Union remained exclusively in the hands of the (white) membership. Johannesburg general meetings were the final arbiter of G.W.U. affairs ³. In terms of section 10(D) of the constitution:

Unless otherwise stated, "general meeting" or "meetings" shall mean a meeting of the members of the Union employed in the Magisterial District of Johannesburg or residing in that District. Members of the Union residing or employed outside that district may be present at all meetings with full rights of membership ⁴.

The constitution contained no restrictions and only if the words

1. "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour on the Clothing Industry, Union of South Africa", dated 1 May 1956, p. 18 table 3. An. 704 1956; H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 289-290 table XXVII. The entire coloured population in the Transvaal in 1946 was 59 986 (of which 29 802 were female). Union Statistics for Fifty Years 1910-1960, p. A4.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1949. Unless otherwise stated, all references to leadership, cadre, shop stewards' meetings, general meetings, members, etc., are of the white 'section' of the G.W.U.

3. G.W.U. Constitution (n.d.), sec. 6(a). G.W.U. Collection.

4. Ibid., sec. 10(D).

"unless otherwise stated" were interpreted to mean as stated by the c.e.c. (or previous general meeting) could such meetings be legally restricted to specific branch(es) or race(s).

The number two branch executive committee considered the de facto position of its branch members to be untenable and towards the latter half of 1943 commenced an agitation for a say in the affairs of the Union ¹. In a letter to the number two branch executive committee the c.e.c. conceded that the request for representation on the c.e.c. and the industrial council was reasonable from the point of view of trade union principle. However, the c.e.c. asserted that the overwhelming majority of (white) rank and file members were undoubtedly opposed to the requested representation. The c.e.c. added that

Whilst the committee recognises the necessity of educating the masses of European workers to a clear understanding of the necessity of complete unity in the ranks of the workers, to force so called "unity" upon the masses of workers would only result in the enemies of the Union being given a handle with which to undermine the Union with disastrous results to both European and non-European workers ².

The leading number two branch activists were J. Phillips (the chairman of the branch executive committee), Moodley and Naidoo

1. Discussion between the Representatives of the C.E.C. and the Executive Committee of the Number Two Branch, 20 October 1943. G.W.U. Collection; Memorandum Submitted by E.S. Sachs to the Liquidator, 14 December 1950, pp. 11-12. G.W.U. Collection.

2. E.S. Sachs, General Secretary to Secretary, Number Two Branch, 14 September 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

(the G.W.U. claimed that the latter two were members of the C.P.)¹. The activists were assisted by a leftist member of the G.W.U. office staff and had some kind of contact with Johannesburg C.P. members generally². The G.W.U. expelled Moodley and Naidoo from the Union (one of them was readmitted to the Union a few months later) and dissolved the number two branch executive committee in late December 1943/early 1944³.

The Afrikaner nationalist onslaught against the G.W.U. in 1944 over the inclusion of coloureds in the Union and their employment as operatives in the industry facilitated an improvement in relations between the G.W.U. leadership and the number two branch. A number two branch shop stewards meeting elected a new branch executive

1. Memorandum Submitted by E.S. Sachs to the Liquidator, 14 December 1950, p. 12. G.W.U. Collection; Circular addressed to all G.W.U. Number Two Branch Shop Stewards, 11 June 1953. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 16 May 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Interview, Johannesburg, 29 August 1978; A. Scheepers's evidence, 11 May 1949, p. 2293, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. Minutes of Special Meeting of the G.W.U.C.E.C. and Shop Stewards of the Number Two Branch, 27 May 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Memorandum Submitted by E.S. Sachs to the Liquidator, 14 December 1950, pp. 12-13. G.W.U. Collection; Discussion between the Representatives of the C.E.C. and the Executive Committee of the Number Two Branch, 20 October 1943. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs, General Secretary to Secretary, Number Two Branch, 14 September 1943. G.W.U. Collection; Interview, Johannesburg, 29 August 1978.

3. Joint interview, Johannesburg, 3 July 1978; Memorandum Submitted by E.S. Sachs to the Liquidator, 14 December 1950, pp. 12-13. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1944; E.S. Sachs's evidence, 30 November 1948, p. 342, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

committee in about mid-1944 (many of the members of the dissolved executive committee were re-elected) ¹.

D. Black Women Become Members

The proportion of blacks in the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry's workforce increased from 9,3 percent in 1936 to 23,9 percent in 1946 ². Notwithstanding the racial tensions in the Union, the G.W.U. leadership in 1944 turned its attention to the black workers in the industry. After pressure from the G.W.U. the industrial council caused proceedings to be initiated in the Transvaal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court. In December 1944 the Court held - contrary to the general belief and practice - that there was a loophole in the law and that black women in the Johannesburg area essentially fell within the ambit of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937. Although the Court restricted its attention to black women in the Johannesburg area, it would appear from the judgment that black women generally were essentially eligible for membership of registered trade unions ³. Friction had previously erupted between coloured and black workers in the industry and there was some resistance among the coloured members to the G.W.U.'s decision to organise the eligible black women - who

1. Minutes of Special Meeting of the G.W.U.C.E.C. and Shop Stewards of the Number Two Branch, 27 May 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Joint interview, Johannesburg, 3 July 1978. The word cadre is utilised to denote the core and chief Johannesburg activists and ideologues in the G.W.U. leadership. The work leadership is used to describe the c.e.c. and the Union's leading officials as a unit. For an examination of the leadership and cadre see pp. 36-40.

2. "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour on the Clothing Industry, Union of South Africa", dated 1 May 1956, p. 18 table 3. An. 704 1956.

3. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, pp. 115-116, 126; Judgment of Solomon A.J.P., delivered 22 December 1944, W. Baloyi and C. Okolo vs. The Industrial Council for the Clothing Industry (Transvaal), T.P.D., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1945, pp. 5-8.

then became subject to the closed shop - into the number two branch ¹.

E. Towards a New Constitution

By the close of 1945 the outline of a new constitution had been drawn up and a c.e.c. sub-committee had been appointed to draft the constitution ². However, it was only in 1949 that attention was given to its introduction. The proposed constitution which was approved by a shop stewards meeting in mid-1949 sought in practice to provide for a multi-racial franchise while preserving the segregated structure of the Transvaal branches ³.

From the mid-1940's the Germiston branch's members increasingly opposed the G.W.U. leadership's policies and views and leaned towards the N.P. The Germiston branch executive committee (G.b.e.c.) was dissolved by the c.e.c. in 1948 ⁴. The G.W.U. cadre's decision to press ahead with the constitution was probably influenced by the weakening of its support base (albeit still considerable) among the (white) membership and the growing loyalty of the number two branch leaders to it ⁵.

1. E.S. Sachs's evidence, 8 February 1949, p. 989, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.; H. du Preez, Organiser Number Two Branch. Report on Organisation, 2 March 1943 - 29 June 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of a Joint Meeting of a Sub-Committee of the G.W.U.C.E.C. and the Number Two Branch, 6 December 1945. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 7 May 1949, 4 June 1949. G.W.U. Collection. The number two branch was granted representation on the industrial council in late 1948/beginning of 1949. E.S. Sachs's evidence, 7 February 1949, p. 957, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

4. See pp. 126-165.

5. Joint interview, Johannesburg, 3 July 1978.

One of the three constitutional amendments approved at a special general meeting in February 1950 empowered a national congress, which would comprise delegates from all the G.W.U.'s branches, to amend the constitution ¹. Afrikaner nationalist activists apparently failed to appreciate that the G.W.U.'s constitution contained no racial restrictions and that the Union's non-Transvaal branches had a predominantly non-white membership; for, while mention was made of the three amendments, the national congress amendment drew no criticism ². As required by the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937, the industrial registrar considered the amendments and - relevant to the discussion - duly approved and registered the amendment in regard to the national congress ³.

Delegates from most of the G.W.U.'s branches - white, non-white and mixed - attended the national congress which was held at the close of 1950. The number of delegates per branch was determined by their membership strength ⁴. As no G.b.e.c. existed to elect the branch's four delegates, a ballot was held among the branch's membership ⁵. White delegates retained a numerical edge at the

1. E.S. Sachs to Registrar of Trade Unions, 3 January 1950. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1950.

2. Die Transvaler, 10 February 1950.

3. Secretary of Labour to E.S. Sachs, 17 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1951.

5. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 20 November 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

congress ¹.

The draft constitution was colour-blind. It was (apparently unanimously) approved by the congress ². The constitution provided for branches, according to their numerical strength, to elect delegate(s) to an all-powerful national council. The national council would in turn elect the c.e.c. The general secretary was to be elected by a ballot of the membership ³. The constitution's provisions were aimed at confining white/non-white contact largely to the central leadership level. A motion proposed after the adoption of the constitution that the constitution be submitted to the (white) members of the Witwatersrand for consideration received only the support of the two Germiston delegates who had moved it ⁴.

Two more national congresses were subsequently held to approve a number of minor amendments to the constitution required by the industrial registrar ⁵. The industrial registrar could not legally refuse to register a constitution which complied with the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937. Whether by design or otherwise, the constitution was only registered in February 1953 ⁶.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1951.

2. Ibid.

3. Draft Constitution of the G.W.U. of South Africa, 1 December 1950, secs. 6(1), 6(3), 6(5)A, 8(1), 9-10. G.W.U. Collection.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1951.

5. Minutes of the National Conference of Delegates of Branches of the G.W.U., 24 January 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

6. Constitution of the Garment Workers' Union of South Africa. Approved by the Industrial Registrar on the 13th February 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

F. Black Women are Removed from the Ambit of the
Industrial Conciliation Act.

Within months of the registration of the new constitution, the black women members were compelled to withdraw from the G.W.U. on the promulgation of the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953. The Act, which did not recognise black trade unions, regulated the position of black workers and removed black women from the ambit of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937¹.

Although the South African Clothing Workers' Union was in existence, the black women garment workers established an independent trade union, the Garment Workers' Union of African Women².

1. The Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes Act), No. 48 of 1953, passim.

2. Minutes of the G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 31 January 1955, 18 April 1955. G.W.U. Collection.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNAL MECHANICS AND ADMINISTRATION

A. The Garment Workers' Union Leadership

With one or two exceptions, the women who entered the industry around the first years of the 1930's and who were to play leading roles in the affairs of the G.W.U. during the following decades were Afrikaners¹. D. Hartwell (the future Mrs. Sachs) had an English father and an Afrikaans mother². Sachs tried to influence the emerging women leaders and also sought over the years to encourage the election of likely leftist G.W.U. members into leadership positions³.

The cadre which emerged after the withdrawal of the bespoke section from the G.W.U. in 1934 was - with the exception of Sachs - female. During the 1930's various members of the cadre engaged in organisational activity outside the clothing industry (e.g., among white tobacco and sweet workers) and visited the Soviet Union as G.W.U. (or in the case of Hartwell as a nominal Sweet Workers'

1. M. Begg to Editor, Rand Daily Mail, letter dated 17 May 1952. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1951.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, Edition of Saamtrek, 25 February 1955.

3. For an example of a Sachs protégée see p. 102 footnote 1.

Union) delegates ¹. On their return from the Soviet Union a few of the delegates shared their impressions with the membership at factory meetings, in articles in the organ of the G.W.U. (The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker), etc. ² The Cornelius sisters played prominent roles in the Anti-Fascist League which was in existence roughly between 1934 and 1937 ³. A. Scheepers and D. Hartwell became firmly rooted in the socialist tradition, while the Cornelius sisters, Hester and Johanna, adopted far left views ⁴. J. Cornelius is known to have joined the C.P. ⁵

1. Minutes of the First Meeting of the Combined Shop Committees of the G.W.U., 12 September 1938. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs's evidence, 9 February 1949, p. 1011, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 March 1940, Cape Town, pp. 23-24. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January 1939, February 1939; Report of Meetings Held at Germiston Factories during January, 15 February 1939, S. Venter. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U. Potchefstroom Branch General Meeting, 24 January 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Forward, 15 February 1935, 31 January 1936, 24 April 1936; League Against Fascism and War, Transvaal Committee 1936, Natal Campaign. Report by H. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection.

The Anti-Fascist League which directed its attention to the Grey-shirt organisation and similar bodies was established by and was initially under the direct control of the South African Trades and Labour Council. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 16 October 1934. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C.: 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 April 1935, Durban, pp. 57-58, 98; 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 April 1939, Kimberley, pp. 92-95. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. e.g., The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, February 1939, May 1939, October 1939, November/December 1941; Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 30 April 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Louw, Liquidator to J. Cornelius, 27 February 1952. G.W.U. Collection.

The G.W.U. held political training classes at least during 1935¹. For a few years from 1938 the Cornelius sisters gave a number of lectures based on Leontiev's Political Economy².

Sachs and H. Cornelius were the respective editors of the English and Afrikaans sections of The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker which first appeared in late 1936. The journal, particularly up till 1945, lauded the Soviet Union and propagated communism. However, the journal paradoxically declined to endorse multi-racialism; it supported white class political organisations and favoured sectional and parallel trade unionism. On occasion the journal attacked the Afrikaans churches and their clergy for their attacks on the G.W.U.³

The G.W.U. constitution of 1937 remained in force until February 1953. In terms of the constitution the management of the G.W.U. was

1. E.S. Sachs to Editor, Die Republikein. G.W.U. Collection.
2. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 10 January 1940. G.W.U. Collection; H. Cornelius's evidence. Fourteenth day, 13 September 1945, pp. 1177-1178, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.; Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 335-336. U.G. 16 1950.
3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, e.g., August 1938, January/February 1941, March/April 1941, September/October 1943, November/December 1943, March/April 1944, May/June 1944, September/October 1944, March/April 1946, January/February 1947. In the judgments of two successful defamation actions brought by Sachs (in 1941/1942 and 1945) the use of the journal to propagate communism and to laud the Soviet Union was criticised. Judgment of Murray J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1942, p. 13; Judgment of Neser J., delivered 24 October 1945, E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez, W.L.D., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, November/December 1945, p. 17.

vested in the c.e.c. which comprised a general secretary (who had no vote), a president (who had a "deliberative" vote), a vice-president and twenty other elected members. Co-optation was permitted and the c.e.c. always co-opted a number of Germiston branch members¹.

The key cadre members were Sachs, A. Scheepers (president), and J. Cornelius (national organiser). Sachs had a pervasive and dominant influence in shaping G.W.U. policy and inspired the Union's political activities which ranged from the Union's establishment of the Independent Labour Party in 1943 to the Union's affiliation to the L.P. in 1947. Scheepers and J. Cornelius either supported or acquiesced in the G.W.U.'s political activities².

Although the c.e.c. on occasion showed resolve, it was in general unlikely to go against the policy adopted by the cadre. C.e.c. members in general and cadre members in particular on a few occasions challenged Sachs at c.e.c. meetings even on relatively insignificant issues; acrimonious exchanges occurred between Sachs and other cadre members. Although Sachs was the dominant personality in the G.W.U. leadership, he was certainly no autocrat³.

The G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry during 1948/1949, and the

1. G.W.U. Constitution (n.d.), secs. 6(a), 6(B), 6(D), 6(I), 8(A). G.W.U. Collection. It would appear that the G.b.e.c. elected the members who were co-opted to the c.e.c.

2. Interview, Johannesburg, 29 August 1978; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 28 February 1940. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 27 July 1936, 27 September 1939. G.W.U. Collection; A. Scheepers's evidence, 11 May 1949, pp. 2308, 2310, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.; Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 47. U.G. 16 1950.

Industrial Legislation Commission during 1950 delved into the G.W.U.'s financial affairs. Neither of the commissions could unearth any financial illegality on the part of the G.W.U. leadership¹. A number of loans (most of them interest free) had been made to G.W.U. officials, and large amounts had been paid out of the officials' provident fund (established in 1947) from May 1948². The latter payments probably reflected the concern among the cadre over the N.P.'s victory in the May 1948 general election³.

A few of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry's 'non-financial' criticisms of the G.W.U. leadership's conduct, such as the refusal to admit Germiston members to the September 1948 Johannesburg general meeting, were justified⁴.

1. "Proceedings of the Industrial Legislation Commission of Enquiry": 15 July 1950, pp. 12 856-12 382; 21 July 1950, Auditor's Supplementary Report. G.W.U. Collection; Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 28, 47-49, 51-52, 55-56, 59. U.G. 16 1950.

2. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 47, 49, 56. U.G. 16 1950.

3. For the consternation that the N.P.'s victory caused among the cadre see p. 143.

4. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars.: (A. Knoetze) 84-85, 87, 89-92, 106-108, 110, 112; (September 1948 meeting) 182-183, 188-191, 194-197, 383-410; (affiliation to the I.P.) 214-223; (bribery) 289-293, 297-308. U.G. 16 1950. For the September 1948 meeting see p. 146.

B. Democracy and the Constitution

Besides its Western Cape activity, the only branch which the G.W.U. had when the 1937 constitution was being drawn up was the nearby Germiston branch which had been established in 1928¹. The constitution utilised Johannesburg general meetings as the means whereby the membership maintained control over the G.W.U.

The G.W.U.'s constitution provided that the c.e.c. (with the exception of the general secretary) was elected by a ballot at a general meeting for a one to three year period "as the meeting may decide"². The general secretary was elected at a general meeting for a three year period (no mention was made of a ballot)³. The general secretary was in practice elected by a show of hands.

General meetings were to be held at least once every three months⁴. A special general meeting could be requisitioned by twenty members signing a request⁵. A general meeting could by a majority vote recall the c.e.c. or any of its member(s) and could demand the resignation of any paid employee of the Union - provided that at least two hundred members supported the majority vote⁶. The general secretary could also be discharged by the c.e.c.⁷

1. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 577, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. G.W.U. Constitution (n.d.), sec. 6(B). G.W.U. Collection.

3. Ibid., sec. 8(E).

4. Ibid., sec. 10.

5. Ibid., sec. 10(A).

6. Ibid., sec. 8(F).

7. Ibid., sec. 8(E).

An industrial agreement had to be approved by a special general meeting ¹. Affiliation to any organisation had to be approved by five-sixths of the members present at a special general meeting "called for the purpose of discussing affiliation to other bodies" ². The c.e.c. was granted "full control over the affairs of branches, shall define the area of jurisdiction of branches and may dissolve any branch if it deems it necessary" ³.

The constitutional provision which required that general meetings be held every three months was not adhered to from at least the mid-1940's as the membership was reluctant to attend meetings unless important issues, such as a new industrial council agreement, were to be discussed ⁴. Elections for all the G.W.U. positions were poorly contested and not infrequently all the candidates for the c.e.c. found themselves appointed to the executive ⁵. The general show of hands means of voting at general meetings on motions of confidence, political issues, etc., inhibited opposition to the G.W.U. leadership.

1. Ibid., sec. 15(A).

2. Ibid., sec. 21. The affiliation provision was not adhered to when the G.W.U. affiliated to the Labour Party in 1947. See p. 208.

3. G.W.U. Constitution (n.d.), sec. 11(B). G.W.U. Collection.

The dissolution provision was generally utilised in practice to dissolve branch executive committees (and not the branches themselves).

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1949.

5. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 1 October 1942, 14 September 1943, 5 October 1944, 17 February 1948 (Minute in the form of a statement), 19 March 1951. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1947.

C. Conditions of Service

Little industrial unrest occurred in the industry over economic issues after the 1932 strike. The most serious unrest was in 1943 when the T.C.M.A. responded to a go-slow strike by enforcing a short-lived lockout in the industry ¹. The 1932 arbitration award reduced the wage rates in the industry by 10 percent ². For example, the wage rate of qualified female machinists (female machinists were the main group in the industry) was reduced from fifty shillings a week -- a wage paid before Sachs became general secretary -- to forty-five shillings ³. The reduction was subsequently made up by two equal wage increases of two shillings and sixpence a week and in 1937 a 10 percent wage increase came into operation which lifted the wages of qualified female machinists to fifty-five shillings a week ⁴. The real wages of the workers remained relatively static as the last

1. I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., p. 301.

2. Report by Arbitrator. Appointed by Representatives of the Employers and Employees as Members of a Conciliation Board Appointed by the Minister of Labour to Consider and Determine a Dispute between the T.C.M.A. and the G.W.U. (Transvaal) (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minority Report by A. Scheepers, p. 5, in "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour on the Clothing Industry, Union of South Africa", dated 1 May 1956. An. 704 1956; "Government Notice", 1408, 17 August 1928. During the initial period of employment the minimum wage rate slowly increased in terms of a sliding scale until the "qualified" rate was reached.

4. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Investigations into the Garment Making Trades, Objection Stage", dated 19 August 1939, p. 11. An. 11 1940; "The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1937.

years of the 1930's saw the retail price index ("all items") for the Witwatersrand edge up for the first time during the decade ¹. The members obtained other benefits such as an unemployment benefit fund introduced at the close of the 1930's ².

The weekly wage of qualified female machinists was 55^s in 1938, 90^s in 1946 and 134^s/2^d in 1953 ³. The length of the work-week was steadily reduced and in 1948 an arbitration award granted a forty hour work-week ⁴. Although the retail price index ("all items") for the Witwatersrand rose from 100 in 1938 to 132,5 in 1946 and 189,8 in 1953, the wage improvements reflected a substantial real increase in the wage rates ⁵.

1. Union Statistics for Fifty Years 1910-1960, p. H23.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, June 1939, July 1939, October 1939.

3. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 382-383 table XXXIV; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1953.

4. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 382-383 table XXXIV; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1948.

5. Union Statistics for Fifty Years 1910-1960, p. H23.

PART TWO

GENERAL HISTORY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS
ON THE AFRICAN FEDERATION OF TRADE
UNIONS: 1930 - 1934

CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis examines the G.W.U.'s history between 1930 and 1934. In particular, the role of a number of C.P. members in G.W.U. affairs, and the C.P.'s attempt to discredit and unseat the Sachs administration are discussed. Although the two occurred at different times, the C.P.'s intrigue against the Sachs administration provides a comparable example to the Afrikaner nationalists' attempts to unseat the G.W.U. administration.

This chapter examines the C.P.'s trade union policy and organisations; and introduces a number of C.P. members who were active in G.W.U. affairs.

In December 1926 the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union's (I.C.U.) National Council (i.e., its executive) narrowly approved a resolution which required Union officials who were members of the C.P. either to relinquish their Party membership or to resign their office in the I.C.U. Three of the five C.P. members on the National Council declined to resign from the Party. The three were summarily expelled from the I.C.U. They were the Cape provincial secretary, J. Gomas (a coloured), the general secretary, J. La Guma (a coloured), and the finance secretary, E.J. Khaile. The annual conference of the I.C.U. in early 1927 approved a motion that prohibited its

members from identifying themselves in any way with the C.P.¹

The C.P. responded to its difficult position in the I.C.U. by engaging in an intensive organisational campaign among black workers on the Witwatersrand. The chief organisers were B. Weinbren (a Latvian immigrant who had arrived in South Africa as a child) and T.W. Thibedi. During 1927 the two established a number of small black trade unions².

Early in 1928 the I.C.U. split, with the Natal branches breaking away to form an independent organisation, the I.C.U. Yase Natal. Numerous other splits and breakaways followed throughout the country³.

On the other hand, the C.P.'s trade union activists continued to establish black trade unions. In March 1928 a South African Federation of Non-European Trade Unions was established on the Witwatersrand. Weinbren became the chairman, and Thibedi the chief organiser cum secretary of the Federation. Towards the close of 1928 Weinbren put the membership of the Federation's affiliates at approximately ten thousand⁴. While in no way concealing its political sympathies the Federation concentrated on general trade union matters⁵.

1. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 266, 354-355; E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 172; P.L. Wickins, The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa, p. 107.

2. E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, p. 82; I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., p. XX. A notable feature of the period was the number of eastern European immigrants who participated in leftist politics.

3. E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, pp. 185-186.

4. Ibid., p. 218; H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 400; E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, pp. 82-83; Forward, 21 April 1944.

5. J. Lewis, "The New Unionism", op. cit., p. 43.

Much to Thibedi's displeasure La Guma was brought up from Cape Town in late 1928 to be secretary of the Federation. By late September 1929 Thibedi was back as secretary, La Guma having been suspended from the C.P. for "political unreliability" ¹. Weinbren resigned his Federation post in January 1930 when he accepted a trade union job in Cape Town ².

Black trade unionism declined on the Witwatersrand. The Federation was revived in 1931 as a broad militant movement which arranged or participated in, among other things, demonstrations of the unemployed and pass burning campaigns. The African Federation of Trade Unions' - as the Federation was renamed - neglect of general trade unionism ensured that the revival endeavour achieved minimal success. At the beginning of 1932 only two trade unions were affiliated to the Federation, the Native Clothing Workers' Union (N.C.W.U.) and the African Laundry Workers' Union ³.

The C.P. broadly followed a 'go it alone' policy at the beginning of the 1930's ⁴. On the labour front white and non-white trade unions were to be brought under the leadership of the Federation. The trade unions were to adopt a revolutionary stance and play a vital role in bringing about the 'Native Republic' ⁵. "Industrial conciliation" (i.e., working within industrial legislation) was rejected and the Federation was to place an alternative

1. E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 218; The South African Worker, 30 September 1929 (Quote in text).

2. The South African Worker, 31 January 1930; E.S. Sachs's evidence, 3 May 1949, p. 2028, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

3. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 444-445, 457.

4. Ibid., pp. 438-465.

5. Umsebenzi, 20 February 1931, 7 August 1931.

"revolutionary leadership" before the factory, mine and farm workers ¹. By working within 'class collaboration' legislation the "reformist" trade union leaders retarded the revolutionary potential of the workers. In September 1931 a number of "reformist" trade unionists, who were engaged in white trade union activity, were purged from the C.P. Those expelled from the Party were E.S. Sachs, W.H. Andrews, C. Tyler, B. Weinbren and F. Klenerman (Mrs. F. Glass) ².

1. Ibid., 4 September 1931, 18 September 1931 (Quotes in text), 20 October 1931. Black trade unions were in any event excluded from the Industrial Conciliation Act's machinery.

2. Umsebenzi, 4 September 1931.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPE TOWN CAMPAIGN: 1930-1931

Although this chapter is closely related to the C.P. theme, the Cape Town campaign is discussed in detail to provide an example of one of the G.W.U.'s 'direct' campaigns in the Western Cape ¹.

The comparatively low wages of the Western Cape clothing manufacturing industry's workforce weakened the G.W.U.'s ability to obtain wage increases for its members ². With the G.W.U.C.P. virtually moribund there was little prospect of a worthwhile increase in the Western Cape industry's wage rates ³.

At the turn of the decade the Western Cape clothing manufacturing industry obtained the bulk of government contracts by

1. For a short summary of the G.W.U.'s 'direct campaigns' see pp. 12-14.

2. The Western Cape industry was regulated by a Wage Board Determination of 1928 which provided, for example, a wage of forty shillings a week for qualified female machinists. The comparative wage on the Witwatersrand was fifty shillings a week. Government Gazette, 8 June 1928, cited in M. Nicol, op. cit., p. 130; "Government Notice", no. 1408, 17 August 1928; Minority Report by A. Scheepers, p. 5, in "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour on the Clothing Industry, Union of South Africa", dated 1 May 1956. An. 704 1956; "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Investigations into the Garment Making Trades, Objection Stage", dated 19 August 1939, p. 11. An. 11 1940.

3. M. Nicol, op. cit., p. 17.

undercutting its Witwatersrand counterpart ¹. In January 1930 the G.W.U. decided to establish a garment workers' trade union in Cape Town in the hope that it would obtain increased wages, etc., for the workers. In late January 1930 Weinbren resigned as chairman of the Federation when he accepted a post as the G.W.U.'s organiser in Cape Town ².

The general employment of coloureds in the Western Cape as artisans and factory workers was reflected in the largely multi-racial (i.e., white - coloured) character of the local trade union movement - e.g., the G.W.U.C.P. In February 1931 there were 715 whites, 2 blacks, 39 asiatics and 1 920 coloureds employed in the local clothing manufacturing industry ³.

On his arrival in Cape Town Weinbren set about organising garment and laundry workers; he established a new garment workers' trade union, the South African Garment Workers' Union (of which he became secretary), and a laundry workers' trade union (of which he became chairman) ⁴.

Although there is evidence that the Cape Province Federation of

1. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Bespoke Tailoring and Clothing Manufacturing Industries", dated 23 October 1931, pp. 4-5. Ans. 82 1931-1932; Cape Times, 20 December 1929.
2. The South African Worker, 31 January 1930; E.S. Sach's evidence, 3 May 1949, p. 2028, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.
3. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Bespoke Tailoring and Clothing Manufacturing Industries", dated 23 October 1931, table 2. Ans. 82 1931-1932.
4. Forward, 19 May 1944.

Labour Unions (to which the G.W.U.C.P. was affiliated) endeavoured to revive the G.W.U.C.P. during 1930-1931, the local garment workers' trade union remained largely moribund¹. Weinbren later recalled that he was engaged in an "uphill" struggle with the Cape Province Federation of Labour Unions (C.P.F.L.U.) in his organisational activity and he blamed the Federation for a rumour that the South African Garment Workers' Union (S.A.G.W.U.) was out to oust the coloured workers and to replace them with (Johannesburg) whites. The rumour was fanned by a coloured speaker at an African National Congress (A.N.C.) meeting on the Grand Parade². The speaker may have sought to discredit the C.P. as a result of the factionalism within the Western Cape A.N.C.³

The 'creeping' depression hindered Weinbren in his organisational campaign. Employers made their opposition to the S.A.G.W.U. clear to their workers and the Cape Wholesale Clothing and Shirt Manufacturers' Association refused to have anything to do with

1. Statement by E.S. Sachs (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection; Nineteenth Annual Report, Cape Federation of Labour Unions. R. Stuart's Report, 31 December 1931. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Forward, 19 May 1944; B. Weinbren to E.S. Sachs, 24 July 1930. G.W.U. Collection. The proportion of whites in the Western Cape clothing manufacturing industry's workforce increased from 12,85 percent in February 1926 to 26,7 percent in February 1931. "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour, Clothing Manufacturing Industry", dated 20 July 1929, p. 8. An. 145 1929 Second Session; "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Bespoke Tailoring and Clothing Manufacturing Industries", dated 23 October 1931, table 2. Ans. 82 1931-1932.

3. The A.N.C. drew support from the coloured community. For footnote and text see P. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa. The African National Congress 1912-1952, pp. 179-182.

the Union ¹.

In the above circumstances the S.A.G.W.U. had little prospect of any organisational success. In September 1930 the S.A.G.W.U. had a paying membership of 110 ². Weinbren resigned his post in early 1931 when he accepted an offer to become secretary of the Reef (Native Trade) Assistants' Union ³. He was succeeded as secretary by J. Gomas, a tailor by trade, who had been involved with the S.A.G.W.U. for a considerable period ⁴. J. La Guma became president of the Union probably towards the middle of the year ⁵.

In 1930 the South African Trade Union Congress (to which the G.W.U. was affiliated) induced the parochially-minded C.P.F.L.U. to endorse its plan for a national trade union 'all-in' conference to discuss the formation of a national trade union federation. At the 'all-in' conference held in October 1930 and attended by thirty-eight

1. B. Weinbren to E.S. Sachs, 24 July 1930. G.W.U. Collection; B. Weinbren to Secretary, Cape Wholesale Clothing and Shirt Manufacturers' Association, 27 August 1930. G.W.U. Collection; J. Laite, Secretary, Cape Wholesale Clothing and Shirt Manufacturers' Association to B. Weinbren, 30 August 1930. G.W.U. Collection.

2. B. Weinbren to E.S. Sachs, 11 September 1930. G.W.U. Collection.

3. I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., p. 181.

4. J. Gomas, Secretary, S.A.G.W.U. to E.S. Sachs, 15 August 1931. G.W.U. Collection; H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 383.

It is doubtful whether Gomas as secretary received a wage from the G.W.U.

5. Cape Times, 27 October 1931. It is probable that La Guma's presidency (and indeed his involvement with the S.A.G.W.U.) dates back to his full reinstatement in the C.P. around about June 1931. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 449.

trade unions it was decided to form a national trade union federation, the South African Trades and Labour Council (T. & L.C.). The South African Trade Union Congress dissolved itself at the close of 1930 with a recommendation to all its affiliates to affiliate to the T. & L.C., and also transferred its funds to the new federation; the C.P.F.L.U. declined to take any steps in this regard and in February 1931 a member of its executive launched a slashing attack on the T. & L.C. In August 1931 the T. & L.C. established a Cape district committee of the T. & L.C. (C.d.c.) in competition with the C.P.F.L.U.¹

The Wage Board Determination was breached in spirit and in fact². In August 1931 the S.A.G.W.U. blundered by organising a strike at the African Clothing factory. The issue involved a small number of relatively well-paid male workers in a large factory and the strike call was only partially successful (the strike subsequently ended ignominiously)³.

Gomas had appealed to the G.W.U. for financial assistance in anticipation of the strike⁴. Once the strike had begun Gomas wired the T. & L.C.'s national executive committee (T. & L.C.n.e.c.) for

1. K.H. Williams, "The Resolution of Cape-Transvaal Conflict in the Trade Union Movement of South Africa", pp. 5-8. University of Cape Town Library.

2. J. Gomas to E.S. Sachs, 24 June 1931. G.W.U. Collection; Cape Times, 25 August 1931.

3. J. Gomas to E.S. Sachs, 15 August 1931. G.W.U. Collection; Cape Times, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 August 1931.

4. J. Gomas to E.S. Sachs, 15 August 1931. G.W.U. Collection.

financial assistance¹. The G.W.U. despatched two of its officials (the vice-president, M. Miller, and the organiser, G. Malan) to Cape Town and contributed approximately four hundred pounds to the strike fund². The T. & L.C. issued an appeal to all its affiliates for financial assistance for the S.A.G.W.U.³

Evans, the secretary of the G.W.U.C.P., condemned the strike as an unjustifiable disturbance of a portion of the industry at a time of serious depression⁴. A C.P.F.L.U. executive meeting dissociated itself from Evans's statement "after a lengthy and heated discussion"⁵. Far from grasping this limited show of support the strike protagonists responded by vilifying the C.P.F.L.U.⁶ The T. & L.C. had thrown its weight behind the strike and the prestige of the T. & L.C. and the S.A.G.W.U. rested on its success.

Lack of material makes it difficult to give an accurate account of the C.P.'s doctrinal dispute over its 'go it alone' policy which spilled over into the S.A.G.W.U. The C.P. at the time was largely

1. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 25 August 1931. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. Report by M. Miller on Position in Cape Town, 4 September 1931. G.W.U. Collection; Statement by E.S. Sachs (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 22 September 1931. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; W. Andrews, T. & L.C., to Secretary, B.W.I.U., 29 August 1931. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. M. Nicol, op. cit., p. 26.

5. C.P.F.L.U. Executive Minutes, 27 August 1931, cited in M. Nicol, op. cit., p. 131.

6. Cape Times, 29 August 1931; Circular, 29 August 1931, cited in M. Nicol, op. cit., p. 26.

under the de facto control of D. Wolton and to a much lesser extent L. Bach, a recent Latvian immigrant to South Africa ¹. Bach actively assisted in the strike and was one of the two C.P. members who, to the dismay of the chairman of the C.d.c., opposed the broad appeal for assistance made by the S.A.G.W.U. ² Bach appealed to the C.P. headquarters in Johannesburg for support for his stand. It would appear that the C.P. headquarters instructed the S.A.G.W.U. leadership (i.e., Gomas and La Guma) to "pursue an independent line" and to refuse aid from any "non party" trade union. La Guma filed a counter-complaint against Bach and was expelled from the C.P. in October 1931 ³.

Although Sachs was expelled from the C.P. in early September 1931 there is no evidence that the G.W.U.'s post-strike loss of interest in the Western Cape venture was involuntary - i.e., that relations were broken off by the S.A.G.W.U. as a result of the C.P.'s 'go it alone' policy ⁴. Since Weinbren's departure the S.A.G.W.U. had gone its own way and the G.W.U. became preoccupied with its industrial difficulties on the Witwatersrand. In any event, the struggling S.A.G.W.U. soon became extinct.

1. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 448; E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, pp. 128, 135.

2. A. Forsyth, C.D.C., to W. Andrews, Secretary, T. & L.C., 3 September 1931. G.W.U. Collection; Cape Times, 2 September 1931.

3. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 449-450.

4. Umsebenzi, 4 September 1931; J. Gomas, Secretary, S.A.G.W.U. to E.S. Sachs, 18 September 1931. G.W.U. Collection.

CHAPTER VII

THE 1931 AND 1932 STRIKES ON
THE WITWATERSRAND

Faced with a depression intensified by the competitive thrust of the Western Cape industry, the T.C.M.A. in 1931 sought substantially to reduce the wages of their white, coloured and asiatic workers. Negotiations for a new industrial council agreement broke down and shortly before the Christmas season the G.W.U. called its factory members out on strike. Given the differential in occupations between the white and black workers the strike brought the industry to a virtual standstill and the black workers were locked out ¹. After approximately three weeks the T.C.M.A. agreed to renew the old industrial council agreement for a further nine months ². Approximately five thousand pounds had been spent on the strike and the G.W.U.'s resources were severely depleted ³.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, October 1936; H.L. du Plessis, "Die Vakbondwese in Suid Afrika met Spesiale Verwysing na die Klerewerkersunie". For Master of Commerce, Potchefstroom University, 1955, pp. 185-186; The Hammer, November 1931.

2. H.L. du Plessis, op. cit., p. 186; J. Lewis, "The Germiston By-election of 1932: The State and the White Working Class during the Depression", University of the Witwatersrand African Studies Seminar, 20 March 1978, p. 5. Witwatersrand University Library.

3. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 18 February 1932. G.W.U. Collection.

The C.P. press's (Umsebenzi, The Hammer) stand at the close of 1931 was inconsistent with the Party's policy during the S.A.G.W.U. strike in Cape Town earlier in the year. The C.P. press criticised the T. & L.C. for excluding the communists Gomas, Bach and La Guma when the Council had paid the fines of the picketers who had been arrested during the Cape Town strike ¹. The C.P. press also castigated the G.W.U. for its failure to form a united front with the black workers in the Witwatersrand strike and for not providing - in the words of The Hammer - "a penny relief ... to the native workers ... despite the fact that many other unions have contributed money towards the strike fund" ².

Contact had occurred over the years between the N.C.W.U. and the G.W.U. ³ The Secretary of the N.C.W.U., G. Makabeni, was expelled from the C.P. in March 1932. The C.P. stated that Makabeni had opposed the Party's suggestion that the N.C.W.U. sever its links with the G.W.U., and that he had also consistently championed the cause of S.P. Bunting who had been expelled from the C.P. in September 1931 ⁴. Makabeni led the N.C.W.U. - whose membership had dwindled as a result of the depression, etc. - out of the African Federation of Trade Unions (A.F.T.U.) ⁵.

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1. Umsebenzi, 13 November 1931; The Hammer, November 1931.
 2. The Hammer, November 1931; See also Umsebenzi, 13 November 1931, 27 November 1931.
 3. Minutes of W.T.A.C.E.C. Meeting, 12 August 1929. G.W.U. Collection; The Hammer, November 1931.
 4. Umsebenzi, 4 March 1932; E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, pp. 135, 138-139, 141-142.
 5. E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, pp. 141-142.

Although the industrial council agreement had been extended, no truce prevailed in the industry. The manufacturers viewed the G.W.U. with hostility and an attempt was made to establish a rival 'bosses yellow ticket union'. The industrial council agreement was breached in fact as well as in spirit ¹.

While the economy in general by mid-1932 was on the way to recovery, the publication of a depression-influenced Wage Board Determination for the South African clothing manufacturing industry exacerbated the wage differential between the Western Cape and the Witwatersrand. The Determination's wage rates were substantially inferior to those in the G.W.U. - T.C.M.A. industrial council agreement. However, the Determination brought the semi-skilled black workers in the Witwatersrand industry under a wage regulating instrument for the first time and resulted in a substantial increase in their wages ².

The T.C.M.A. refused either to negotiate a new industrial council agreement with the G.W.U. or to renew the old one. Instead the G.W.U. was presented with a fait accompli: a 10 percent reduction in wages from the 1st September 1932. The old industrial council agreement expired on the 15th August 1932 and a few manufacturers in Germiston and Johannesburg declined to wait for the new month before reducing wages. Strikes immediately broke out

1. J. Lewis, "The Germiston By-election", op. cit., p. 5.

2. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Garment Making Trades", dated 12 April 1935, pp. 16-17, 28. Ans. 99 1936; "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. Garment Making Trades", dated 21 February 1938, pp. 51-52. An. 190 1938; H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., p. 19; M. Nicol, op. cit., p. 28.

at these factories ¹.

The serious unemployment position in the industry had greatly hampered the G.W.U.'s efforts to rebuild its funds after the 1931 strike. The G.W.U.'s members were also deeply divided over the strike question. Consequently, the G.W.U. initially allowed the strike to develop on a piecemeal basis. It later called a general strike in the industry ².

Numerous G.W.U. members, particularly at Germiston, scabbed. The result was a stream of clashes between the picketers on the one side and the scabs and police on the other ³.

An important parliamentary by-election was scheduled in Germiston towards the end of the year and the ruling National Party (N.P.) feared the effects of a protracted strike on its election prospect. The connection suggested by Sachs and J. Lewis between the brutal conduct of the police and the government's wish to end the strike seems unlikely ⁴. The police's conduct undoubtedly damaged the government's cause.

1. E.S. Sachs to Axel, 18 August 1932. G.W.U. Collection; Circular issued by the G.W.U., 24 August 1932. G.W.U. Collection; Cape Times, 19, 23, 24 August 1932.

2. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, pp. 87, 89-91.

3. Cape Times, 19, 23, 24, 30 August 1932, 1, 2, 6, 9 September 1932; Rand Daily Mail, 23 August 1932, 9 September 1932, 10 September 1932.

4. J. Lewis, "The Germiston By-election of 1932", op. cit., pp. 5-6; E.S. Sachs, The Choice before South Africa, p. 74. The N.P. was not the same N.P. which won the 1948 general election. See p. 73.

Leading members of the N.P. worked behind the scenes in an effort to settle the dispute. Sachs was warned that if he obstructed the peace efforts he would be deported ¹. The Germiston manufacturers added another ingredient to the unrest by threatening to move their factories to the coastal areas. A worried Germiston Town Council despatched a deputation to O. Pirow, the Minister of Justice and the acting Minister of Mines and Industries ². Pirow personally intervened in the strike during the first week in September 1932. Although his proposal was tentatively accepted by the parties, it was not brought to fruition ³.

By the second week in September the strike was in some organisational difficulty, with a hardcore of approximately five hundred workers holding out on strike in Johannesburg ⁴. The Minister of Labour, F. Creswell, intervened and managed to bring the G.W.U. and the T.C.M.A. together with an agreement to submit the wage issue to an arbitrator to be appointed by him ⁵.

A C.P. "fraction" was established in the G.W.U. in 1930 and strengthened (or possibly revived) towards the end of 1931 (under the A.F.T.U.'s wing). The "fraction" advocated opposition to the

1. Affidavit by G. Malan, 14 November 1932. E.S. Sachs vs. O. Pirow, T.P.D., p. 14, op. cit.; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 93.

2. Cape Times, 2 September 1932.

3. Ibid., 5, 6, 7, 8 September 1932; Rand Daily Mail, 5 September 1932, 7 September 1932. I am unable to be more specific in regard to the above.

4. Cape Times, 3, 7, 8, 9 September 1932.

5. Ibid., 9 September 1932, 12 September 1932; Rand Daily Mail, 9, 10, 12 September 1932.

Sachs administration and a militant line in regard to wages and conditions of employment ¹. Leading white communists - e.g., E. Roux, I. Diamond, M. Wolton - provided assistance in Johannesburg during the strike ². The C.P. press criticised the Sachs administration for its failure to broaden the strike and to involve the locked out black workers ³. The A.F.T.U. opposed the arbitration and Bach and members of the "fraction" (including Ray Adler and Kitty Keiser) distributed pamphlets and alleged that "Sachs is a crook; he is selling us to the bosses" ⁴.

The arbitrator, the chief magistrate of Johannesburg (H. Britten), granted the maximum reduction in wages stipulated in his terms of reference (i.e., 10 percent). He based his decision on the differential in wages between the Witwatersrand and the coastal areas ⁵.

1. Umsebenzi, 21 August 1931, 27 November 1931; Minutes of Mass Trial against Members of the G.W.U. (Transvaal), also Members of the A.F.T.U., 6 April 1933. G.W.U. Collection; J. Breytenbach's evidence, 28 March 1949, p. 1874, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. Rand Daily Mail, 10 September 1932; Minutes of Mass Trial against Members of the G.W.U. (Transvaal), also Members of the A.F.T.U., 27 March 1933, 6 April 1933. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Umsebenzi, 10 September 1931.

4. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Tenth day, 19 December 1941, p. 723, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit. (Quote in text); D. Hartwell's evidence, 18 May 1949, p. 2340, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

5. Report by the Arbitrator. Appointed by Representatives of the Employers and Employees as Members of a Conciliation Board Appointed by the Minister of Labour to Consider and Determine a Dispute between the T.C.M.A. and the G.W.U. (Transvaal). G.W.U. Collection; Rand Daily Mail, 12 September 1932.

On the 5th November 1932 Sachs together with four members of the C.P. (I. Diamond, E. Roux, J. Kalk and D. Wolton) were banished from the Witwatersrand for a year under the Riotous Assemblies Act for creating hostility between the races. Pirow justified his conduct in terms of the C.P.'s 'Native Republic' policy and the propaganda used in pursuit thereof. However, Pirow was hard pressed to link Sachs to the above, Sachs having been expelled from the C.P. in 1931. In the event Pirow denied the genuineness of Sachs's expulsion from the C.P. ¹

The C.P. was agitating at the time among Germiston's blacks and the banishments could have been a ploy designed to bolster the N.P.'s prospect in the by-election ². Sachs's banishment was interpreted by some - e.g., M. Kentridge M.P. - as part of the quid pro quo between the clothing manufacturers and the administration for the settlement of the dispute ³.

Ever since the police violence in the early days of the strike the G.W.U. had called for opposition to the government's candidate in the by-election. At one stage the G.W.U. seriously considered entering its organiser, G. Malan, as a protest candidate. The bitter strike and its aftermath alienated many of the N.P.'s traditional supporters (the garment workers, their families, friends, etc.). This and other factors contributed to the N.P.'s defeat at the hands of

1. Forward, 11 November 1932; Respondent's Replying Affidavit, 18 November 1932. E.S. Sachs vs. O. Pirow, T.P.D., op. cit.

2. E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, pp. 267-270; H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 460-461.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March 1937; Forward, 11 November 1932, 18 November 1932.

the South African Party (S.A.P.) in the by-election which was held on the 30th November 1932¹.

1. Forward, 11 November 1932; J. Lewis, "The Germiston By-election of 1932", op. cit., passim. In the previous election, the 1929 general election, the two factions of the L.P. contested the seat in a straight fight. The Creswellite faction of the L.P. which enjoyed a formal electoral alliance with the N.P. in the general election easily won the seat. B.M. Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings in Suid Afrika, p. 161; H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 351. By the time of the by-election the labour factions had, to an extent, reunited.

The result of the by-election was:

J.G.N. Strauss	S.A.P.	4 257
H.J. Schlosberg	N.P.	3 076
W.J. Dalrymple	L.P.	132
F.P. Steinhobel	Economic Bond	51
M. Hill	Centre party	33

Forward, 2 December 1932

CHAPTER VIII

THE AFRICAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
PLAYS ITS HAND

Sachs was granted three months leave from the G.W.U. and spent a while in Britain ¹. His banishment order was never enforced and on his return to South Africa in March 1933 he set about reviving the G.W.U. ² The 1932 debacle had left the G.W.U. without a closed shop in the manufacturing industry and the factory section's membership had dwindled to a "couple of hundred" ³. The bespoke section's members (not materially affected by the 1932 strike save to see their Union's resources exhausted) continued much as before and undoubtedly provided the glue that kept the G.W.U. intact during its dark months ⁴.

Relations with the A.F.T.U. remained sound. The G.W.U. actively participated (late March/early April 1933) in an extraordinary "Mass Trial" organised by the A.F.T.U. of four white A.F.T.U. members engaged in the garment industry. 'Charges' ranged from a failure to display sufficient militancy during the 1932 strike to a foreman who was alleged to have 'speeded up' his workers. It was stated at the

1. Cape Times, 13 January 1933.

2. E.S. Sachs's evidence, 9 February 1949, p. 1010, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 98.

3. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 558, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

4. E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 98.

trial that the A.F.T.U.'s policy was to build a revolutionary faction in the G.W.U. The faction's function was to agitate against the reformist G.W.U. leaders. Nevertheless, Sachs, who sought to refurbish his links with the C.P., lauded the A.F.T.U. in his address. Sachs described the A.F.T.U. as providing a militant spirit in the G.W.U. which would ginger up the membership and strengthen the Union's ranks ¹.

The G.W.U. was, in spite of the reorganisation endeavour, still very weak when negotiations commenced towards the end of the year with the T.C.M.A. for a new agreement. The T.C.M.A. refused to consider restoring the wage cut unless the coastal industry's wage rates were improved ².

The G.W.U. enlisted the help of the T. & L.C. in preparation for the expected dispute with the T.C.M.A. and accepted an offer from the A.F.T.U. to "mobilise all its forces to actively assist the garment workers in their struggles" ³. The industrial council had been de-registered as part of the 1932 agreement and a conciliation board (in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act) was established to negotiate a settlement. The T.C.M.A. eventually compromised and

1. Minutes of Mass Trial against Members of the G.W.U. (Transvaal), also Members of the A.F.T.U., 27 March 1933, 6 April 1933. G.W.U. Collection; Umsebenzi, 27 May 1933.

2. G.W.U. circular, 12 September 1933. Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

3. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 26 September 1933. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; J. Gomas, Secretary, A.F.T.U. to Secretary, G.W.U., 28 September 1933 (Quote in text). G.W.U. Collection; General Secretary to Secretary, A.F.T.U., 4 October 1933. G.W.U. Collection.

agreed to restore half the wage reduction of the previous year ¹.

The majority of the c.e.c. members rejected the compromise negotiated by their representatives on the conciliation board (Sachs, Malan; and W. Andrews who represented the T. & L.C.). The c.e.c.'s attitude was that if the T.C.M.A. refused to restore the full wage cut, strike action should be adopted. Sachs argued that the G.W.U. had neither the financial resources, nor the forces (its factory membership was approximately six hundred) to engage in strike action. It was decided to put the issue to the members ².

Bach and approximately four hundred (presumably factory) members attended the general meeting. Sachs urged the workers to accept the compromise. Keiser got up and claimed that "Sachs is a crook. He misleads the proletariat and takes money from the bosses". Bach apparently uttered similar sentiments. When put to the vote the T.C.M.A.'s offer was accepted by about two-thirds of the audience ³. An agreement was duly signed with the T.C.M.A. ⁴

1. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 10 October 1933. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Rand Daily Mail, 12 September 1932.

2. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Tenth day, 19 December 1941, pp. 720-721, 723, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 99; Report. Conciliation Board. Clothing Manufacturing Industry, 9 October 1933. G.W.U. Collection.

3. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Tenth day, 19 December 1941, pp. 721 (Quote in text), 723-724, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk." op. cit.; E.S. Sachs, Rebels Daughters, p. 99.

4. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 562, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 10 October 1933. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

Under Bach's guidance the A.F.T.U. continued its agitation against the Sachs leadership among the membership. Adler led the "fraction" in the G.W.U. Secret meetings were held and pamphlets distributed ¹. An additional factor in the discontent during 1934 was the proposal to dissolve the G.W.U. into its constituent sections. This move was opposed, inter alia, by the "fraction" ². Sachs probably viewed a split as a means to divide his opponents.

In mid-1934 the c.e.c. cracked down on the increased agitation in the G.W.U. Approximately four leading G.W.U. members (including the chairperson of the factory section, Keiser, and a c.e.c. member, Adler) were suspended from the Union for a year. Other members were warned to stop their subversive activities or face disciplinary action. The livelihood of the suspended members was not affected as no closed shop operated in the industry ³.

Subsequent C.P. intrigues in the G.W.U. - excluding the number two branch agitation in the early 1940's - may have occurred ⁴. However, I have found no hard evidence of this.

1. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Tenth day, 19 December 1941, pp. 721-722, 724, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. Pamphlet addressed to "All Workers in the Clothing Industry and Bespoke", 9 June 1934. Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

3. Ibid.; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Tenth day, 19 December 1941, pp. 721-722, 724, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

4. For the number two branch agitation see p. 26.

PART THREE

AFRIKANER NATIONALISM AND THE GARMENT
WORKERS' UNION

CHAPTER IX

INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis examines the Afrikaner nationalists' activities and propaganda against the G.W.U.

The first chapter examines the Afrikaner nationalists' activities in the trade union movement generally. An attempt is made to explain why the N.P. from the early 1940's gained the electoral support of a substantial number of Afrikaner workers on the one hand, and why the Afrikaner nationalists' attempts to establish or to reform trade unions achieved limited success on the other.

CHAPTER X

AFRIKANER NATIONALISM AND THE WHITE WORKING
CLASS ON THE WITWATERSRAND

A Industrial and Labour Background

The large scale urbanisation of rural Afrikaners had been in progress since the last years of the nineteenth century ¹. South Africa experienced substantial industrial expansion during the 1930's and 1940's - especially during the Second World War ². As a result of the greater mechanisation of industry the close of the 1920's saw the commencement of an increasing displacement of the skilled/unskilled division of labour with an intermediate group of semi-skilled operatives. This trend provided the newly urbanised Afrikaner workers, who were generally unskilled, with some prospect of upward occupational mobility ³.

The traditionally Anglophone-dominated craft unions resented the intrusion of lower-paid operatives into occupational spheres which were previously their preserve. Although Afrikaner youths, despite obstacles, increasingly entered crafts as apprentices, the bulk of the Afrikaner workforce found its occupational mobility

1. Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission, pp. 13-14, U.G. 37 1935; S. Pauw, Die Beroepsarbeid van die Afrikaner in die Stad, pp. 127 table IX, 135.

2. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", *op. cit.*, p. 47.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48, 51.

limited by the apprenticeship system¹. In 1939 almost 40 percent of all male Afrikaners were found in the four occupational categories of unskilled labourer, miner, railway worker and bricklayer (compared with just 10 percent of "other whites")².

Coupled with the Afrikaner's comparatively disadvantaged position in the white labour force, was his very limited entrepreneurial role in the capitalist economy - with the traditional exception of commercial agriculture. By 1938/1939 Afrikaner-controlled enterprises contributed just over 8 percent to total turnover in commerce, 3 percent of industrial output, 1 percent of mining and 5 percent of finance³.

While the total number of white production and related employees in private industry increased from 59 027 in 1933/1934 to 144 768 in 1952/1953, the number of non-white workers increased from 104 962 to 501 736 (whites as a proportion of the workforce decreased from 36 percent in 1933/1934 to 22,4 percent in 1952/1953)⁴. With full white employment during the Second World War large numbers of blacks

1. Ibid., pp. 48, 51; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 29, 30, 31 March, 1, 2 April 1937, Port Elizabeth, p. 36. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. S. Pauw, Die Bercepsarbeid van die Afrikaner in die Stad, p. 235, cited in D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 51.

3. Volkshandel, 11, September 1950, cited in D. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond 1927-1948: Class Vanguard of Afrikaner Nationalism", in Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 3 no. 2, April 1977, p. 174.

4. Union Statistics for Fifty Years 1910-1960, p. 68.

and coloureds moved into semi-skilled occupations as operatives ¹. The semi-skilled white workers were faced with the danger that their wages and conditions of employment could be undercut by their non-white colleagues.

B. Afrikaner Nationalist Ideology and the
National Party's Labour Policy

The N.P. 'fused' with the S.A.P. in mid-1934 to form the United Party (U.P.). 'Fusion' split the N.P. and the Cape N.P. together with individual branches and members in the Transvaal and Orange Free State established the breakaway N.P. (then called the Gesuiwerde Nationalist Party) ². Although the new N.P. was very weak in the Transvaal (only one of the nineteen M.P.'s who joined the Party came from the Transvaal), much of the Province's Afrikaner intelligentsia remained out of the U.P. ³

The earlier N.P. had defined Afrikaners as those whites who endorsed the principles of sovereignty, language equality, and the economic nationalism of 'South Africa first' ⁴.

1. Board of Trade and Industries (BTI), Report no. 282, "Investigation into Manufacturing Industries in the Union of South Africa" (1945), pp. 42-46, cited in D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 47. For a rough indication of the experience in the clothing manufacturing industry see table 3 p. 11.

2. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 54.

3. Ibid., p. 54; D. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond", op. cit., pp. 169-170.

4. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 54.

There was a basic consensus among the various streams of the Afrikaner ideological debate after 'fusion'. Afrikanerdom was re-defined to exclude the English speaking members of the community. Nations constituted the basic unit of social organisation. Nations, each of which had an allotted task, were products of divine will and distinguished from each other by culture in its widest sense. There was a need to win Afrikaners - in particular the workers - to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism, to build a niche for themselves within and to mould the industrial economy to their requirements, and to seek the establishment of a republic¹. Although there were different views as to the role of the state, the overriding thrust was towards a strictly (state) regulated society².

Within the Afrikaner nation, workers, who were expected to work hard, were entitled to a "fair" wage. Entrepreneurs, in turn, had a duty to provide "service" in return for their profits. This state of affairs did not exist in South Africa, particularly as the capitalists were 'foreigners' and the white workers primarily Afrikaners.

'Foreign' trade union leaders dominated the trade union movement. The 'foreign' capitalists entered into alliances with the

1. Ibid., pp. 54, 60; D. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond", op. cit., pp. 175-176; Ekonomiese Volkskongres, 3, 4, 5 October 1939, Bloemfontein: P. du Toit, pp. 20-30, L.J. du Plessis, pp. 31-37.

2. T. Dunbar Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom, passim; M. Roberts and A.E.G. Trollip, The South African Opposition 1939-1945, pp. 73-177; The Road to a New South Africa. Programme of Principles of the National Party (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection.

'foreign' trade union leaders (e.g., the closed shop provision) to their mutual pecuniary benefit - at the expense and exploitation of the Afrikaner workers. Illogically, the Afrikaner nationalists also argued that the 'foreign/communist' trade union leaders propagated a class struggle irrespective of race and sought to bring down the capitalist system ¹.

In their pursuit of material gain the Afrikaner workers undermined their ethnic heritage. The ideologues stressed (to borrow an expression of Sachs's) "cultural foods" and de-emphasised the material needs of the workers. Some activists such as Dr. A. Hertzog appreciated the need to focus attention on the material welfare of the workers ².

The N.P. proposed the introduction of a quota and job reservation system to protect the white workers and to enable them to receive a higher minimum wage than their non-white colleagues ³. During the 1940's the N.P. promised the workers in the "key"

1. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., pp. 59-62; Ekonomiese Volkskongres, op. cit.: W. Nicol, pp. 8-11, A. Hertzog, pp. 176-186; H.P. Wolmarans, Kommunisme en die Suid Afrikaanse Vakunies, pp. 3, 7, 11-13, 25-26, 32-39, 42-44, 46-47, 50-52, 54; Forward, 10 December 1937, 25 November 1938, 6 April 1939, 5 May 1939.

2. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 62; Forward, 12 September 1952; Inspan, April 1947; Die Blanke Werker, April 1946; Die Volksblad, 29 May 1937, 3 June 1937; Die Vaderland, 1 June 1937; Ekonomiese Volkskongres, op. cit., A. Hertzog, pp. 179-180.

3. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 516; O. du Plessis, The New South Africa. Social-Economic Reform Scheme of the Reunited National Party, pp. 6, 9; The Road to a New South Africa, op. cit., p. 20.

industries that they would share in the profits of their respective industries (the gold-mining industry would be the first industry to fall under the scheme) ¹.

The N.P.'s 1943 general election manifesto proposed the virtual destruction of the trade union movement. Collective bargaining was said, among other things, to cause class conflict, restrict to a "small privileged group" the opportunity to become skilled workers, and to enable the state to "evade its responsibility in connection with the fixing of proper wages" ². Consequently, the system of collective bargaining would be replaced by a "system of state responsibility" ³.

A labour board would be established. The board's functions would include the determination of wages and conditions of employment for all workers ⁴. Trade unions would be converted into "workers associations". The "workers associations" would fall under the direct control of the labour board; and would have the right, inter alia, to negotiate with employers over "purely personal matters" ⁵.

Although the N.P.'s 1948 general election manifesto proposed

1. O. du Plessis, op. cit., pp. 6, 10; The Road to a New South Africa, op. cit., p. 21.

2. O. du Plessis, op. cit., p. 10.

3. Ibid., p. 9.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 11.

"that the system of collective bargaining be SUPPLEMENTED by a system of state responsibility" (my emphasis), the Party's labour policy remained largely unaltered. The labour board retained all its functions and trade unions were to fall under the direct control of the board ¹.

C. Afrikaner Nationalists and the
Trade Union Movement

(I) 1936 - 1942

With the weak parliamentary position of the N.P. in the Transvaal, the Afrikaner Broederbond (not to be seen as synonymous with the N.P.) came to dominate northern Afrikaner nationalism ². The Afrikaner Broederbond (A.B.) was a policy-making co-ordinating body. Its policies were implemented either through front organisations such as the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (F.A.K.) or by individuals ³.

In 1930 the A.B. contemplated establishing a railway workers' trade union ⁴. A countrywide railway industrial union (unskilled labourer to clerical staff), the Spoorbond, was established in 1933 by a founder of the A.B., H. Klopper (a railway official) ⁵.

1. The Road to a New South Africa, op. cit., pp. 18-21, 20 (Quote in text).

2. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 54.

3. D. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond", op. cit., pp. 166-167, 186.

4. A.N. Pelzer, Die Afrikaner Broederbond: Eerste 50 Jaar, p. 150.

5. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 65; Die Skakel, December 1933.

In late 1936 a Nasionale Raad van Trustees (N.R.T.) was formed by Dr. A. Hertzog, Dr. P. Meyer (the assistant secretary of the F.A.K.), Dr. N. Diederichs and C.F. de Wet (a manager of the A.B. founded Volkskas bank). The N.R.T.'s board included the chairman and secretary of the A.B., J.C. van Rooy and I.M. Lombard respectively ¹. Although the A.B.'s official history conceded that all the N.R.T.'s founders (as distinct from members of the board) were members of the A.B., it denied that the A.B. as an organisation had a role in the N.R.T.'s establishment ².

According to the N.R.T.'s official history, the organisation was established with the interlinking aims of forming "right-minded" trade unions - so called christian-national trade unions - and of winning the Afrikaner worker to 'Afrikanerdom'. The major objective was to wean the Afrikaner worker from the L.P. ³

Difficulty was experienced in raising the necessary funds for the N.R.T.'s organisational activities. On two occasions A. Hertzog unsuccessfully approached his father, General Hertzog (the Premier), for financial assistance ⁴. The necessary finance (a donation of

1. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 55.

2. A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

3. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 27, 257-258.

4. Ibid., pp. 29-30; Hansard, Assembly Debates, vol. 29, 8 April 1937, cols. 4435-4436.

two thousand pounds) was eventually obtained from a sympathiser in the Western Cape ¹. The source of the finance was indicative of the general support of northern commercial agriculture for the ruling U.P. ²

The development of Afrikaner capital formed a major policy thrust of the A.B., particularly from towards the close of the 1930's. The development of Afrikaner capital was, in a sense, complementary to the organisational activity among the Afrikaner workers; for the latter's savings, consumer spending and trade union dues comprised an important source of capital, etc. ³

The number of white women employed in the Witwatersrand ready-made clothing industry was 5 174 in 1936 and 7 801 in 1952 ⁴. The garment workers' views of the trade union movement, L.P., U.P. and N.P. were synthesized, in part, through their menfolk's experiences in the trade union movement. The political influence of miners on their dependents in the clothing and other industries was apparently appreciated by the N.R.T. ⁵ Naudé claimed that in 1936 over 90 percent of the approximately twelve thousand white underground miners

1. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

2. D. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond", op. cit., p. 172.

3. Ibid., pp. 183-184; D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., pp. 56, 58-59.

4. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. The Garment Making Trades", dated 21 February 1938, p. 5 table 1. An. 190 1938; H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., p. 329 table XXX.

5. L. Naudé, op. cit., p. 174.

on the Witwatersrand were Afrikaners¹. The Mine Workers' Union (M.W.U.) catered for the interests of the white underground miners.

The N.R.T. focused its attention on the garment and underground mine-workers on the Witwatersrand (with the emphasis on the latter)². The N.R.T. also engaged in organisational activity among textile workers on the Witwatersrand and in the 'rural' Western Cape, semi-skilled building workers in the 'rural' Transvaal, unskilled road workers in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, the non-craftsmen at the South African Iron and Steel Corporation's Pretoria plant, and probably among transport workers (e.g., tramway workers) on the Witwatersrand³.

The N.R.T. had little to show for its campaign when it petered out during the early years of the Second World War. Despite much organisational success, it had failed to dislodge the M.W.U. leadership⁴. The Pretoria-based Iron and Steel Trades Association's

1. Ibid., pp. 18-19. A considerable part of the white underground miner's work comprised the supervision of black labour. The conceptual status of 'white workers' is an issue I have deliberately sidestepped in the thesis. See H. Wolpe, "The 'White Working Class' in South Africa", in Economy and Society, vol. 5 no. 2, May 1976, pp. 197-240.

2. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 32-178.

3. Forum, 18 July 1938; Die Volksblad, 30 June 1937; General Secretary, T. & L.C. to General Secretary (R. Stuart), C.P.F.L.U., 3 September 1938. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 19 October 1937, 5 July 1938, 12 July 1938, 26 July 1938, 16 August 1938, 11 July 1939. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 April 1938, East London, p. 51. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; L. Naudé, op. cit., p.53; A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., pp.151-152; Forward, 14 April 1938, 13 June 1941.

4. L. Naudé, op. cit., passim.

enrol workers into the Arbeidslaer ¹. The O.B. declared that its labour front was "an attempt not to wean the worker from his Union but rather to anchor him and his Union in nation-wide support" ².

The establishment of the Arbeidslaer partly inspired the N.P.'s organisational activity among workers which was tentatively commenced at the beginning of 1944 ³. During 1944 the N.P. established a Blanke Werkers se Beskermingsbond (B.W.B.B.) on the Witwatersrand and a Blanke Werkers Federasie (B.W.F.) in the 'rural' areas of the Western Cape. According to the A.B.'s official history moral and financial support was given to the B.W.B.B. but not the Arbeidslaer ⁴.

The B.W.B.B. was established in June 1944 ⁵. Its articles restricted membership to white Protestants ⁶. The B.W.B.B. endeavoured to enrol members from the Afrikaner society generally ⁷. According to its constitution the B.W.B.B. sought the assistance of all sections of the white community in solving workers' problems ⁸.

1. Die O.B., 20 October 1943.

2. Some Facts About the Ossewa Brandwag, p. 46.

3. Die Kruithoring, 5 January 1944; Die Transvaler, 31 January 1944.

4. A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., p. 152.

5. Die Blanke Werker, November 1946.

6. Constitution and Articles of Die Blanke Werkers se Beskermingsbond, art. 1. G.W.U. Collection.

7. Die Blanke Werker, November 1946.

8. Constitution and Articles of Die Blanke Werkers se Beskermingsbond, sec. 3(1) E. op. cit.

The B.W.B.B. would endeavour to obtain just wages ("toereikende" literally "adequate") and a share of the profits for the workers ¹. Support would be given to all attempts to extend employment opportunities through the establishment of South African owned undertakings ². It wanted a clear determination of the separate occupational spheres of white and non-white workers, and sought the prohibition of mixed (i.e., white/non white) trade unions ³. Like the Arbeidslaer it was committed to fight communist influences and to improve rural/urban relations between whites ⁴.

During 1944 the Afrikaner nationalists focused their trade union activities on Pretoria and towns on the Witwatersrand. It is likely that O.B. and N.P. sympathisers clashed while jockeying for position in the branches of various trade unions and in the Breë Kerklike Komitee. The Komitee arose over the employment of coloured machinists in a Germiston clothing factory and the subsequent expulsion from the G.W.U. of two of the factory's white workers ⁵. The Afrikaner nationalists' trade union activities had generally

1. Ibid., sec. 3(1) C.

2. Ibid., sec. 3(1) F.

3. Ibid., secs. 3(2) J1, 3(2) J3.

4. Ibid., sec. 3(1) D; T. Dunbar Moodie, op. cit., pp. 231-232; The New Era, 14 June 1945. For a further discussion on the B.W.B.B. and for membership figures see pp. 139-140, 143.

5. Minutes of the Iron Moulders' Society of South Africa Executive Committee Meeting, 14 July 1944. Iron Moulders' Society of South Africa Collection; The Labour Bulletin, Mid April 1944, Mid June 1944, Mid August 1944, January 1945; Forum, 17 June 1944.

lapsed by early 1945. However, the struggle to unseat the M.W.U. leadership, which had been largely dormant during the war years, was subsequently revived.

Two major strikes of white workers occurred during 1947. The Witwatersrand miners strike was part of the continuous effort to unseat the M.W.U. leadership while the Pretoria and Witwatersrand builders strike was over economic issues ¹. G. Beetge, of the Pretoria branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, played a prominent role in the political 'factionalism' which occurred during the builders strike ². The B.W.B.B. interested itself to an unknown extent in both strikes ³.

The B.W.F. engaged in organisational activity among numerically small groups of Afrikaner workers. In contrast to the B.W.B.B., the B.W.F. established trade unions and capitalised on any organisational

1. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 66; See B.W.I.U.'s circulars and minutes for 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. Circular to All B.W.I.U. Branches, 22 October 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Circular to All B.W.I.U. Branches, 17 November 1947. Pretoria Branch, B.W.I.U., Report on Building Industry Strike 1947 in the Pretoria Area. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Report on the Meeting of the Building Workers of the East Rand Held at the Benoni Town Hall, 30 August 1947. G.W.U. Collection; Pamphlet titled "Building Workers on Strike. Do You Know??" G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 24, 25, 29, 30, 31 March, 1 April 1948, Cape Town, p. 67. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

3. Die Blanke Werker, November 1947; J. Loubser's evidence, 23 February 1949, p. 1215, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

success by applying for its trade union's registration ¹. The B.W.F. began its organisational activity in the 'rural' areas of the Western Cape and its focus remained centered on the region ². By 1948 the B.W.F. had extended its sphere of interest to Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Oudtshoorn ³.

In Bloemfontein in 1947 the B.W.F. engaged in organisational activity among at least the garment and building workers ⁴. The B.W.F. competed with the nascent Bloemfontein branch of the G.W.U. for members and in November 1947 made application for the registration of a garment workers' trade union (the outcome of the application is uncertain) ⁵.

1. V.E. Hanneman to Secretary, T. & L.C.N.E.C., 4 February 1948. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; V.E. Hanneman to Industrial Registrar, 4 March 1948. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 15 August 1944, 25 September 1945, 10 December 1946. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.
2. L. Rossouw to Secretary, T. & L.C.N.E.C., 15 August 1944. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; M.D. Arendse, Secretary, Cape Meat-Trade Employees Union to All Affiliated T. & L.C. Unions, 8 May 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; V.E. Hanneman to Secretary, T. & L.C.N.E.C., 23 June 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Memorandum Submitted by the Federation of White Workers to the Industrial Legislation Commission. Industrial Legislation Commission, microfiche portfolio 21, memorandum 28, Witwatersrand University Library; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 15 August 1944, 25 September 1945, 10 December 1946. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.
3. V.E. Hanneman to Secretary, T. & L.C., 4 February 1948. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Memorandum Submitted by the Federation of White Workers to the Industrial Legislation Commission, op. cit.
4. Circular to all B.W.I.U. Branches, 25 August 1947. Report from Orange Free State Organiser, J.D. Morton, for August 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Industrial Registrar to Secretary, G.W.U., 18 February 1948. G.W.U. Collection.
5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1947; Industrial Registrar to Secretary, G.W.U., 18 February 1948. G.W.U. Collection.

With the victory of the N.P. in the 1948 general election, the B.W.F. - after giving evidence before the Industrial Legislation Commission in early 1949 - faded from the scene ¹.

(III) 1948 - 1953

The admission of black trade unions to the T. & L.C. remained a contentious issue among the Council's constituent members. In March 1947 the T. & L.C.'s national executive committee dissolved its Pretoria local committee on account of the latter's refusal to admit blacks to its executive ².

A motion to bar Council membership to black trade unions was defeated at the annual T. & L.C. conference held in April 1947. The delegates from a number of Pretoria-based trade unions, including the South African Iron and Steel Trades Association and the Pretoria Match Workers' Union (whose delegate was G. Beetge), thereupon withdrew from the conference ³. A new trade union federation, Die Ko-ordinerende Raad van Suid Afrikaanse Vakverenigings, was subsequently established in Pretoria ⁴.

The Reddingsdaadbond (R.D.B.) was established at the close of

1. Evidence given by Blanke Werkers Federasie van Noorder Paarl before the Industrial Legislation Commission. Industrial Legislation Commission, microfiche portfolio 1, pp. 992-1018, op. cit.; J.J. van Rooyen, Die Nasionale Party. Sy Opkoms en Oorwinning - Kaapland se Aandeel, p. 234.

2. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 4 March 1947, 27 May 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

3. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 April 1947, Port Elizabeth, pp. 30-31. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., pp. 234-235.

the 1930's by the Economic Institute of the F.A.K. The worker formed a key element in the R.D.B.'s endeavour to mobilise support for the emergence of Afrikaner capital (i.e., to persuade Afrikaners to support Afrikaner undertakings). In addition to its cultural activity, the R.D.B. offered cheap life assurance schemes, established trade schools and a work placement bureau ¹.

By 1948 the R.D.B. had taken the B.W.B.B. under its wing ². The B.W.B.B.'s G.W.U. campaign of 1948 and its subsequent participation in the proceedings of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry (1948-1949) cost a great deal of money ³. The R.D.B. found its financial obligation onerous and, probably towards the close of 1949, withdrew its financial crutch from the B.W.B.B. ⁴ J. Loubser, the organising-secretary of the B.W.B.B., moved over to Die Ko-ordinerende Raad van Suid Afrikaanse Vakverenigings as its organising-secretary ⁵. Loubser continued, in part, his former activities ⁶.

The faction in the M.W.U., which was supported by the N.R.P.,

1. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., pp. 58-59.

2. J.C.B. Schoeman's evidence, 23 February 1949, pp. 1252-1253, 24 February 1949, p. 1306, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

3. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1194, 1201-1202; J.C.B. Schoeman's evidence, 25 February 1949, pp. 1333-1334.

4. E.P. du Plessis, in Volk Staans Op. Die Ekonomiese Volkskongres en Daarna, p. 196.

5. Die Transvaler, 15 February 1950.

6. Ibid., 15 February 1950, 20 February 1950.

finally gained control of the M.W.U. in late 1948. The faction gained victory with the assistance of English speaking miners disgruntled with the corrupt and dictatorial M.W.U. leadership¹. In early 1950 the M.W.U. formed a publishing company. The company's board of directors comprised A. Hertzog, now a N.P. M.P. (as the chairman of the board and editor-in-chief), an attorney and three members of the M.W.U.²

The company published the official organ of the M.W.U. and separate newspapers directed at the garment and building workers. While Die Klerewerkersnuus opposed the G.W.U. leadership, Die Bouwerker concentrated its attention on discrediting the leadership of the largest building trade union, the countrywide Building Workers' Industrial Union. Much of the material utilised by Die Bouwerker and Die Klerewerkersnuus was supplied to the actual editor of the three newspapers, Gleisner (who had been one of the N.R.T.'s activists in the campaign against the M.W.U. leadership), by Beetge and Loubser respectively³.

A. Knoetze (an expelled G.W.U. member) assisted in the

1. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., p. 66.

2. Report of the Mine Workers' Union Commission of Enquiry, par. 36. U.G. 52 1951; Judgment of Ramsbottom J., delivered 26 June 1951, "P.J. Huyser vs. Die Werkerspers Uitgewers ... Beperk", W.L.D., p. 6. Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Die Werkerspers Uitgewers ... Beperk". Court record no.: W.L.D. (Application) 1091 of 1952.

3. Report of the Mine Workers' Union Commission of Enquiry, pars. 5, 36. U.G. 52 1951; Judgment of Ramsbottom J., delivered 26 June 1951, "P.J. Huyser vs. Die Werkerspers Uitgewers ... Beperk", W.L.D., pp. 6, 10, 21. Exhibit op. cit.

distribution of the Klerewerkersnuus¹. Sachs obtained the liquidation of the publishing company - which was a company of straw - in 1952 when it failed to pay him the £2 900 plus costs awarded to him in a defamation action in 1951².

An action committee was apparently established by the assistant-secretary of the A.B.'s executive committee, G.L.H. van Niekerk (who was shortly to become secretary of the F.A.K.) in April 1950. Van Niekerk became secretary of the committee which comprised members of the leading "Volks" organisations, the Afrikaans churches, R.D.B., F.A.K. and M.W.U.³

The committee, which had full as well as part-time organisers, focused its attention on the Witwatersrand and Pretoria garment, building and carpentry workers⁴. Beetge was, at least initially, the leading activist in the campaign directed at the building and carpentry workers⁵. The committee achieved little success in its activities⁶.

1. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 2 May 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

2. A. Hepple, op. cit., p. 44; Judgment of Clayden J., delivered 30 May 1951, E.S. Sachs vs. Die Werkerspers Uitgewers ... Beperk, W.L.D., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1951, p. 10.

3. Circular by G.L.H. van Niekerk, 15 June 1952. G.W.U. Collection; A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., p. 154.

4. A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., p. 155; Die Vaderland, 5 June 1951.

5. Judgment of Ramsbottom J., delivered 26 June 1951, "P.J. Huyser vs. Die Werkerspers Uitgewers ... Beperk", W.L.D., p. 22, op. cit.

6. A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., p. 155.

D. Political Success but Trade Union
Failure: Some Reasons

The L.P. traditionally drew its support from the English speaking working class. It is difficult to gauge the extent of Afrikaner working class support for the L.P. during the 1930's. The L.P. outpolled the N.P. in numerous Witwatersrand mining constituencies in the 1938 general election ¹.

Whatever prospects the L.P. showed at the close of the 1930's of establishing itself as a major political force on the Witwatersrand were dashed on the rocks of its participation in the wartime coalition government (which emphasised the Party's British 'connection') and its subsequent parliamentary electoral alliances with the 'capitalist' U.P. in the 1943, 1948 and 1953 general elections. The L.P.'s hesitant move from the mid-1940's towards a softer colour policy caused serious dislocation within the Party; at a time when the white working class watched with unease the influx of non-whites into industry and their employment as operatives ².

From the beginning of the 1940's the N.P., with its promise to protect the white worker, was well placed to gain the support of the Afrikaner working class. The single member constituency, first-past-the-post, electoral system veiled the N.P.'s electoral support on the Witwatersrand in the 1943 general election. In the 1943 general election the N.P. polled 35,1 percent of the total Witwatersrand (excluding the Johannesburg area) vote but failed to win a seat. In

1. See pp. 184-185.

2. For a detailed examination of the L.P. see part 4.

TABLE 4

SELECTED GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS: 1938-1953

N.P. ELECTION RESULTS	1938 GENERAL ELECTION			1943 GENERAL ELECTION		
	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won
				N.P. A.P.	N.P. A.P.	N.P. A.P.
WITWATERSRAND, EXCLUDING JOHANNESBURG AREA					35,1	0
JOHANNESBURG AREA					18,2	1
TOTAL TRANSVAAL	45	23,7	1	54	34,3	11
I.P.-U.P. ALLIANCE ELECTION RESULTS	1938 GENERAL ELECTION			1943 GENERAL ELECTION		
	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won
	U.P. I.P.	U.P. L.P.	U.P. L.P.	U.P./ L.P.	U.P. / L.P.	U.P./ L.P.
WITWATERSRAND, EXCLUDING JOHANNESBURG AREA					63,3	15
JOHANNESBURG AREA					74,4	17
TOTAL TRANSVAAL	60	23	57	59	60,5	53

Note (1) "Seats contested" include unopposed seats.

(2) There were no electoral alliances between the L.P.-U.P. in the 1938 and between the N.P.-A.P. in the 1943 general elections.

TABLE 4 (CONT.)

SELECTED GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS: 1938-1953

N.P. ELECTION RESULTS	1948 GENERAL ELECTION			1953 GENERAL ELECTION		
	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won
	N.P./ A.P.	N.P./ A.P.	N.P./ A.P.			
WITWATERSRAND, EXCLUDING JOHANNESBURG AREA		40,2	6		47,7	10
JOHANNESBURG AREA		21,2	2		31,1	3
TOTAL TRANSVAAL	50	44,6	36	58	50,9	43
I.P.-U.P. ALLIANCE ELECTION RESULTS	1948 GENERAL ELECTION			1953 GENERAL ELECTION		
	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won	Seats Contested	Percentage of Votes Cast	Seats Won
	U.P./ I.P.	U.P./ I.P.	U.P./ I.P.	U.P./ I.P.	U.P./ I.P.	U.P./ I.P.
WITWATERSRAND, EXCLUDING JOHANNESBURG AREA		51,9	11		51,6	8
JOHANNESBURG AREA		65,1	16		66,9	14
TOTAL TRANSVAAL	60	49,9	30	59	48,1	24

K.A. Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970, pp. 21-23, 39-41, 60, 62-63;
 F.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 237, 271, 302, 334.

the 1948 general election the N.P. (in the same area) polled 40,2 percent of the total vote and returned six M.P.'s while in the 1953 general election the Party polled 47,7 percent of the total vote and returned ten M.P.'s¹

* While the U.P. and wartime coalition governments' conduct helped to limit the success of the Afrikaner nationalists' trade union activities, their action also alienated members of the Afrikaner electorate. It is necessary to make a cursory examination of the reasons why the Afrikaner nationalists' trade union endeavours met with limited success².

Numerous English speaking trade unionists, including Sachs, had only a poor knowledge of Afrikaans³. While influencing the overall perception, one must be careful not to equate the presence of an English speaking secretary or president, etc., with a distinct Anglophone bias in the particular trade union.

The success of the Spoorbond in attracting members was facilitated by the Anglophone character of at least some of the railway trade unions⁴. On the other hand, the G.W.U.'s leadership was essentially Afrikaans; and the G.W.U. largely neutralised the mystic appeal of

1. See table 4 pp. 91-92.

2. The analysis is sketchy as the examination is based on limited primary research material.

3. A.A. Moore's evidence. Tenth day, 19 December 1941, p. 751, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; Judgment of Ramsbottom J., delivered 26 June 1951, "P.J. Huyser vs. Die Werkerspers Uitgewers ... Beperk", W.L.D., p. 18, op. cit.

4. See e.g., general editions of The Salstaff Bulletin.

Afrikaner nationalism by promoting Afrikaner culture within the ambit of the Union ¹.

Friction often erupted between trade unions when their spheres of membership either overlapped or when a trade union entered the membership territory of another. On the railways, for instance, artisans belonged either to their respective craft unions, the South African Railways, Airways and Harbours Artisan Staff Association, or to the Sporbond ².

Since the late 1930's the railway administration had considered demarcating the specific sectors of workers which the various railway trade unions would represent ³. When the so called "Identity of Interests" scheme was finally introduced in 1941, the Sporbond declined to forfeit sections of its membership and preferred to have its recognition withdrawn by the Railway administration. The Sporbond's membership was to have been restricted to the lower grades of workers ⁴.

At the time when the "Identity of Interests" scheme was introduced, the Sporbond's membership stood at approximately 27 500 ⁵. Its membership steadily dwindled over the following years ⁶. The

1. See e.g., pp. 36-39, 108-111.

2. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 12 July 1938. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; The South African Railways, Airways and Harbours Artisan Staff Magazine, December 1935, January 1941; The Headlight, October 1941; The Salstaff Bulletin, May 1941; Die Skakel, February 1940.

3. Die Skakel, February 1938, March 1938, April 1938, September 1938, April 1940.

4. Ibid., July 1941, October 1941, November 1941, December 1941.

5. Ibid., October 1941.

6. Ibid., February 1944, March 1944.

Spoorbond gave up its industrial character in 1949 and formally took over the representation of a section of the railway workers ¹.

In late 1936 the N.R.T. established a trade union to compete with the M.W.U. ² In April 1937 the Chamber of Mines entered into an agreement with the M.W.U. and several craft unions (which had members employed in the mining industry). In return for the introduction of a closed shop in the industry the trade unions undertook "to discourage and prevent any actions of their officials and members which may have the effect of causing unrest and undermining discipline" ³.

With closed shop provisions in the mining and garment industries, the N.R.T. in 1938 established factions in the M.W.U. and the G.W.U. ⁴ The closed shop provisions hampered the N.R.T. in its organisational activities in the two industries, for expulsion from the Unions meant automatic loss of employment.

It took a decade of struggle to unseat the M.W.U. leadership which was dictatorial, corrupt and displayed little interest in the

1. Ibid., March 1950; J.A. Adam, Wheels within Wheels and Trade Unionism on the S.A.R. & H., pp. 103-104, 129.

2. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 32-33, 70; Die Burger, 27 November 1936.

3. I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, The Super-Afrikaners. Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond, p. 112; Memorandum of Agreement Entered into between the Gold Producers Committee of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines ... and the Mining Unions' Joint Committee ... Representing the Following Registered and Recognised Trade Unions (n.d.), (Quote in text). T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 69-70; For the faction in the G.W.U. see p. 108.

welfare of its members. The M.W.U. leadership rigged elections, falsified minutes and withheld copies of the constitution from the membership ¹.

The U.P. and wartime coalition governments were perceived by miners to be in cahoots with the M.W.U. leadership. For example, during the Second World War the state suspended elections in the M.W.U. until the cessation of hostilities (the M.W.U. was the only trade union thus affected) ².

The Building Workers' Industrial Union (B.W.I.U.) was a country-wide trade union which had approximately twelve thousand members in 1949 ³. Although the B.W.I.U. had both coloured and mixed (i.e., white/coloured) branches outside the Transvaal, the Union limited membership to whites in the Transvaal ⁴. The B.W.I.U. consistently

1. Findings and Recommendations of the Mine Workers' Union Commission (1941), passim. G.W.U. Collection; L. Naudé, op. cit., passim; Mine Workers' Union Commission of Enquiry, passim. U.G. 36 1946.

2. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 133-178; A. Rosenberg's statement, 8 February 1949, p. 984, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

3. Memorandum Submitted by the B.W.I.U. to the Minister of Labour on the Native Building Workers' Bill (1949), 15 November 1949. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. Minutes of the B.W.I.U. Combined Organisers and Sub-Committees Meeting, 18 September 1947. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of B.W.I.U. Executive Council Meeting, 6 December 1947, 13 March 1948. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

opposed the training of blacks as building artisans¹. The Afrikaner nationalists failed to dislodge the B.W.I.U.'s leadership.

The G.W.U., on the other hand, established the number two branch and eventually enfranchised its non-white members. It will be noted in the case study that the G.W.U.'s policy caused deep resentment among many (white) members. However, the substantial wage increases obtained in the Witwatersrand industry during the 1940's assisted the G.W.U. leadership in retaining the support of (white) members.

The N.P. won the Germiston constituency from the L.P. in the 1948 general election. While the members of the G.W.U. Germiston branch at the close of the 1940's increasingly opposed the G.W.U. leadership, they were unable to unseat the latter which drew its support from the (white) Johannesburg membership.

1. W. Blake, General Secretary, B.W.I.U. to General Secretary, T. & L.C., 21 November 1949. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Memorandum Submitted by the B.W.I.U. to the Minister of Labour, op. cit.; The Building Worker, January/February 1946, March/April 1946; The Star, 6 July 1948.

CHAPTER XI

A. PARTISAN PRESS

A. The Wage Board Recommendation and
Other Matters

Afrikaner nationalist critics of the G.W.U. during the early 1930's stated that the Union propagated a class struggle irrespective of race and that it sought to lead its members into the fray ¹.

In 1934 the Potchefstroom Youth Council's vigilance committee (dominated by Afrikaner clergymen) organised the white workers at the town's only clothing factory into a workers' society. The vigilance committee's activity was partly (if not wholly) motivated by the wish to keep the workers out of the clutches of the "bolshhevik" G.W.U. which was engaged in organisational activity among the town's garment workers ². The G.W.U. successfully established a branch at Potchefstroom in 1938 ³. The branch became defunct in about 1944 when the factory ceased operations ⁴.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1949; Die Vaderland, 19 November 1935.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, April 1937, March/April 1949.

3. Minutes of G.W.U. Potchefstroom Branch General Meeting, 28 January 1938. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 22 May 1940. G.W.U. Collection.

4. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., p. 400.

A Wage Board Recommendation became operative IF published by the Minister of Labour as a Determination. A Wage Board Determination published in 1932 regulated the wages and conditions of employment of the Western Cape clothing industry's workforce ¹. In 1935 the G.W.U. agitated against the non-publication of a fresh Wage Board Recommendation for the South African clothing industry which provided for substantially higher wages than the 1932 Determination ².

In a letter to the pro-N.P. newspaper, Die Republikein, J. Cornelius (in her capacity as president of the G.W.U.) criticised the Recommendation's non-publication and called upon voters to support the N.P. against the big business orientated U.P. in the Delarey parliamentary by-election ³. Die Vaderland, a newspaper which supported the Afrikaner fusionists under General Hertzog in the U.P., did not consider the difficulties occasioned by a large differential in wages between the clothing manufacturing regions. The newspaper noted that the Recommendation's wage rates were inferior to those of the G.W.U. - T.C.M.A. industrial council agreement and attributed a protest procession organised by the G.W.U. to dark bolshevik aims of agitation among the workers ⁴.

1. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. The Garment Making Trades", dated 21 February 1938, passim. An. 190 1938.

2. "Report to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare by the Wage Board, Objection Stage", dated 20 August 1935, passim. An. 99 1936.

3. J. Cornelius to Editor, Die Republikein, 15 November 1935.

4. Die Vaderland, 19 November 1935. For the difficulties occasioned by differentials in the regional wage rates see pp. 8-14.

B. The Christian-National Trade Union
Movement on the Defensive

Shortly after the establishment of the N.R.T. in late 1936 A. Hertzog unsuccessfully approached H. Cornelius with an invitation to join their organisation as a paid organiser¹. A general meeting of the G.W.U. in January 1937 passed a motion which condemned the efforts to split the trade union movement on "racial" (i.e., Afrikaners - other whites) lines. The motion warned G.W.U. members "that any association with the splitters will be considered as treason to the workers and will be dealt with accordingly"².

In mid-1937 the christian-national trade union movement was on the defensive. At a meeting in Bloemfontein in late May 1937 L. Cronje, the chairman of the N.R.T.'s Afrikanerbond van Mynwerkers, described the dire threat faced by his Union as a result of the scheduled introduction of the closed shop provision in the mining industry from the 1st June 1937. He also made reference to the difficult lot of the Afrikaner female worker employed in the industrial sector on the Witwatersrand³. According to Die Volksblad (a pro-N.P. Bloemfontein newspaper) he added that "Afrikanermeisies is nou al verplig om danslesse aan naturelle te gee omdat hulle ook moet leef"⁴. In a disjointed report Die Vaderland (which by this time largely associated the christian-national trade union movement

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March 1937.

2. Ibid.

3. Die Volksblad, 29 May 1937; Die Vaderland, 1 June 1937.

4. Die Volksblad, 29 May 1937.

with organisational drives by the N.F.) reported Cronje as saying that "die dogters van die Vrystaat gaan na Johannesburg om daar met die kaffers te dans"¹.

A few days later Die Volksblad carried a report of a speech made by P.J. Kock, the organising-secretary of the Spoorbond, at a cultural evening at a rural village, Morgenzon. Kock warned that the pernicious influence of the G.W.U. would cause the 'denationalisation' of all the Afrikaner females employed in the Witwatersrand clothing industry. He claimed that whites and blacks mixed freely at dances organised by the G.W.U.'s "communist" leaders. He had indeed seen

blanke dogters in die arms van swart kaffers ... dans
.... As daar van die meisies is wat weier om hulle so
te verlaag en hul siel en liggaam aan die base te
verkoop word hulle ontslaan soos in die geval van

1. Die Vaderland, 1 June 1937.

Mev. Bekker¹.

Faced with a storm of criticism - discussed below - Cronje (in regard to Die Vaderland report) and Kock denied the accuracy of the press reports but warned of the pernicious multi-racial influence of

1. Die Volksblad, 3 June 1937. Assisted by the G.W.U., M.H. Bekker, then a garment worker at the Potchefstroom factory, gave evidence before the Industrial Legislation Commission in 1934. She adopted a militant line in her evidence. Sachs, always on the lookout for potential cadre material, obtained a more lucrative position for her in a Johannesburg factory. In early 1935 Sachs's protégée was elected to the c.e.c. at the G.W.U.'s annual general meeting and elected as vice-president by the new c.e.c. But Bekker soon disapproved of the leftist leanings and relatively tolerant racial attitudes of the G.W.U. cadre; and within a few months her position in the Union had reached a nadir. It was in this atmosphere that she was summoned before the c.e.c. in 1935 for a hearing on a number of disciplinary charges and suspended from the Union for a year. She was convicted of - and was undoubtedly guilty of - having slandered Sachs; failed to set up a home for homeless Potchefstroom garment workers, yet retained the ten pounds loaned to her for the purpose; telephoned an employer in her capacity as vice-president and attempted to induce him to dismiss a worker (she apparently wanted the job). Although not charged on the issue, there is a possibility that Bekker was involved in channeling G.W.U. information to other organisations. After her suspension Bekker went to work in the Blackshirt organisation's printing office and wrote an article or two for their journal, Ons Reg. M.H. Bekker's evidence. Fifth day, 10 December 1941, pp. 276, 289-290, 292, 294-299, 306, 313-316, 320-321, 335, 342-343, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, April 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Vaderland, 18 June 1937.

the G.W.U.¹ Kock also convened a meeting outside a house in Germiston. At the meeting Kock again denied the accuracy of the press reports. He was given a rough reception by the sixty to seventy garment workers present and was obliged to withdraw to the stoep of the house with his supporters².

The unfavourable fallout from Kock's and Cronje's speeches may have influenced the Potchefstroom Youth Council's decision towards the middle of June 1937 to reverse a former resolution and to revive its clothing workers' society as an independent organisation outside the ambit of the N.R.T.'s Afrikanerbond van Werknemers³.

During the latter portion of June 1937 Bekker wrote a number of anti-G.W.U. letters to the press and the N.R.T. issued a press release highly critical of the G.W.U.⁴ It is problematic whether Bekker was associated with the N.R.T. during her press campaign; but she was soon brought by the N.R.T. into the fray in some capacity.

The N.R.T. stated in its press release that in order to retain his control of the G.W.U. Sachs had obtained benefits for the members. Sachs, who exercised a dominant influence in G.W.U. affairs, favoured a gradualist policy in achieving the communist goal of a black republic. The G.W.U. was criticised for not enforcing segregation

1. Die Vaderland, 10 June 1937, 15 June 1937; Die Volksblad, 15 June 1937, 17 June 1937.

2. Die Vaderland, 15 June 1937; Die Volksblad, 15 June 1937.

3. Die Vaderland, 14 June 1937; Die Volksblad, 8 June 1937; The Star, 13 April 1937; Rand Daily Mail, 14 April 1937.

4. M. Bekker to Editor, Die Burger, 7 May 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Vaderland, 18 June 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Volksblad, 23 June 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Republiein, 25 June 1937; Die Volksblad, 21 June 1937, 22 June 1937; Die Burger, 21 June 1937.

at its offices and in the clothing factories ¹. In her letters Bekker emphasised the Cornelius sisters' and Sachs's lack of racial intolerance ².

Kock's and Cronje's speeches were turned into a propaganda weapon against the christian-national trade union movement and the N.P. Die Vaderland claimed that investigations refuted Kock's allegations and both the newspaper and the U.P. condemned Kock and Cronje for their vile propaganda in pushing their cause ³.

The speeches caused much anger among the garment workers. The G.W.U. had never advocated a multi-racial policy, particularly in internal matters, and did not scruple to utilise the speeches in an attempt to discredit the christian-national trade union movement. The contents of the speeches were denied and denounced at two G.W.U. meetings at Johannesburg. M.J. Van den Berg, a L.P. M.P., addressed both meetings and identified the christian-national trade union movement with the F.A.K. He claimed that the F.A.K. drew sympathy and support from N.P. M.P.'s and other members of the Party. At one of the meetings he urged the workers to support the L.P.'s candidate

1. Die Volksblad, 21 June 1937, 22 June 1937; Die Burger, 21 June 1937.

2. M. Bekker to Editor, Die Burger, 7 May 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Vaderland, 18 June 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Volksblad, 23 June 1937; M. Bekker to Editor, Die Republikein, 25 June 1937.

3. Die Vaderland, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 22, 26 June 1937.

in the Fordsburg parliamentary by-election ¹.

A public protest meeting was organised by the G.W.U. in Gernis-
ton for the benefit of the local garment workers ². The G.W.U.
despatched a number of letters to Die Vaderland angrily refuting the
allegations made in the speeches ³.

The G.W.U. also organised a few other public protest meetings.
Opponents of the G.W.U. leadership often attended the meetings and
pestered the speakers about 'Sachs, the Jew communist', communism in
the G.W.U. and so on ⁴. The overwhelming majority of the audience
(which included Bekker, Cronje, J. du Pisanie and the Rev. Bruwer)
which attended a public G.W.U. meeting in Nigel in late September
1937 were antagonistic to the G.W.U. The meeting accepted Cronje's
assertion that he had been incorrectly reported by the press ⁵.

After the meeting the G.W.U. leaders present (D. Hartwell, M.
Kruger and H. Cornelius) had coffee with Du Pisanie, the Rev. Bruwer
and others. The latter group attempted to win the three G.W.U.
leaders over to their cause, but were (in the words of Hartwell)
"told ... their fortune in a very outspoken manner" ⁶.

1. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 3 June 1937. G.W.U. Collection;
Minutes of G.W.U. Special General Meeting, 1 July 1937. G.W.U.
Collection.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1937.

3. Die Vaderland, 11 June 1937, 12 June 1937.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1937; Forward, 20
August, 1937; D. Hartwell to E.S. Sachs, 23 September 1937. G.W.U.
Collection.

5. D. Hartwell to E.S. Sachs, 23 September 1937. G.W.U. Collection.

6. Ibid.

Despite the adverse criticism which Kock's and Cronje's speeches had evoked, a major N.P. thrust during the 1938 general election campaign was that widespread miscegenation would result from the U.P. policy of allowing mixed (i.e., white-non-white) marriages. The U.P. was thus given another opportunity to claim that Afrikaner women had been slighted ¹.

C. Die Transvaler and the 1938
General Election

Unemployment was widespread in the South African clothing manufacturing industry in 1938 ². The G.W.U. threw its weight behind the L.P. in the 1938 general election. In his addresses to factory meetings in Germiston Sachs urged the G.W.U. members to support the L.P. He added that those who supported the N.P. were enemies of the workers as the N.P. was out to destroy the G.W.U. ³

The c.e.c. during this period considered taking disciplinary steps against certain members. Disciplinary action was contemplated against members who had disrupted a (presumably L.P.) meeting at Germiston which had been addressed by G.W.U. cadre members in their capacity as G.W.U. officials ⁴. The c.e.c. also contemplated taking disciplinary action against members who were associating with the

1. T. Dunbar Moodie, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, December 1938.

3. Forward, 27 May 1938.

4. Ibid.; The Star, 27 May 1938; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Ninth day, 18 December 1941, p. 677, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

Blackshirt organisation, and reprimanded a male member who had associated with the Blackshirt organisation ¹.

Die Transvaler and Die Oosterlig were pro-N.P. newspapers on the Witwatersrand and in Port Elizabeth respectively. About a week after the general election in which the U.P. was swept back into office Die Transvaler carried inaccurate reports to the effect that a number of Germiston members who had ignored Sachs's warning that if they supported and voted for the N.P. they would be dismissed from their jobs had indeed been sacked (thus implying collusion between the Jewish manufacturers and Sachs) ². The allegations were repeated in an article in Die Oosterlig ³. The articles went beyond expressing a suspicion which may have existed among recently retrenched garment workers. The anti-semitic character and patent inaccuracies in the articles throws doubt on Die Transvaler's bona fides ⁴.

The alleged political dismissals caused some discontent among the G.W.U. membership and "quite a number of resignations" were reported from the Union's Port Elizabeth branch ⁵.

1. Forward, 27 May 1938; The Star, 27 May 1938; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 606, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; E.S. Sachs to D.J. Jansen, 24 May 1938. Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. Die Transvaler, 25 May 1938, 27 May 1938.

3. Die Oosterlig, 27 May 1938.

4. Ibid.; Die Transvaler, 2 April 1938, 25 May 1938, 27 May 1938; D.J. Jansen to E.S. Sachs, 21 May 1938. Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; E.S. Sachs to D.J. Jansen, 24 May 1938. Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

5. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to E.S. Sachs, 8 July 1938 (Quote in text). G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.P.E.B.E.C. Meeting, 1 June 1938, 18 June 1938. G.W.U. Collection.

CHAPTER XII

THE GARMENT WORKERS' UNION KAPPIE
KOMMANDO AND THE CHALLENGE DEBATE

A. The Garment Workers' Union Kappie Kommando

Some time after the mid-1938 general election the N.R.T. launched a campaign against the G.W.U. and introduced two organisers, Bekker and D.B.H. Grobbelaar (a non garment worker), into the fray. Grobbelaar attempted to form a faction within the G.W.U. He set about making contacts, holding house meetings and establishing cells of garment workers ¹.

Celebrations occurred during the second half of 1938 to mark the centenary of the Great Trek. Numerous communities organised Kappie Kommandos (i.e., the women would wear Voortrekker clothing) to participate in the various celebrations. A number of ox wagons toured the country to commemorate the centenary. The arrival of the ox wagon(s) at cities, towns, and villages was the occasion for celebration. The refusal of the N.P. to endorse Premier Hertzog's proposed laying of the Voortrekker monument's foundation stone at the main centenary celebration near Pretoria in December 1938 caused ill-feeling within Afrikanerdom ².

1. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 78-79, 84; M.H. Bekker's evidence. Fifth day, 10 December 1941, p. 332, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. See Die Transvaler and Die Vaderland for the period; Forum, 7 November 1938, 28 November 1938.

In accordance with its policy of promoting Afrikaner culture and tradition within the ambit of the Union, the G.W.U. decided in early October 1938 to establish a Kappie Kommando at Germiston and Johannesburg to participate in the various centenary celebrations¹. Sachs played a limited role in the establishment of the Kappie Kommando². Members of the Sweet Workers' Union and the Tobacco Workers' Union were also enrolled into the Kappie Kommando³.

The Germiston Organising Committee resolved to despatch a delegation to the G.W.U. in an attempt to dissuade the G.W.U.'s Germiston Kappie Kommando from participating in the celebration when the ox wagons reached the town. The Germiston Organising Committee feared that, as reported in Die Transvaler,

ontoelaatbare moontlikheid dat die publiek van Germiston tot skande gemaak kan word deur 'n newe-organisasie wat weens die onkunde van die kant van sy leiers aangaande Afrikaanse volksfeeste, die pragtige gees ... gruwelik geweld kan aandoen⁴.

Generally the Afrikaner nationalists who opposed the formation of the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando argued that it would introduce class into the celebrations and that the Union's leadership was abusing

1. G.W.U. circular quoted in a pamphlet by D.B.H. Grobbelaar titled "Kommuniste Wil Deelneem aan Eeufees". Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

2. G.W.U. pamphlet addressed to "Aan die Volk van Suid Afrika", signed by M. Kruger and J. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May 1939.

3. Die Transvaler, 1 November 1938.

4. Ibid., 21 October 1938.

the traditions of the Afrikaner worker. The G.W.U. leadership's communist goal was, after all, the eradication of Christianity and the colour bar ¹.

In a pamphlet distributed at clothing factories Grobbelaar attacked the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando. He told the workers that they were welcome to attend the grand finale celebration near Pretoria provided that they did not come under the auspices of the G.W.U. ²

Among the Afrikaner nationalists who objected to the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando were P.J. Kock and the Rev. Boneschans (a member of the Germiston Organising Committee and the N.P.'s unsuccessful candidate in Germiston South in the 1938 general election) ³.

Die Vaderland took exception to L. Cronje's opposition to efforts made to have the Voortrekker monument's foundation stone laid by General Hertzog ⁴. The political complexities around the centenary celebrations caused Die Vaderland to lean slightly in favour of the G.W.U. when the Germiston Organising Committee came out against the local G.W.U. Kappie Kommando ⁵.

1. P.J. Kock to Editor, Die Transvaler, 21 October 1938; Die Transvaler, 21 October 1938, 28 October 1938; Pamphlet by D.B.H. Grobbelaar titled "Kommuniste Wil Deelnem aan Eeufees". Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; G.W.U. pamphlet addressed to "Aan die Volk van Suid Afrika", signed by M. Kruger and J. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Pamphlet by D.B.H. Grobbelaar titled "Kommuniste Wil Deelnem aan Eeufees". Exhibit in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, October 1938; P.J. Kock to Editor, Die Transvaler, 21 October 1938; Forward, 20 May 1938.

4. Die Vaderland, 11 October 1938.

5. Ibid., 25 October 1938.

The Germiston Organising Committee's stand on the G.W.U.

Kappie Kommando was apparently perceived by some Afrikaners as an attempt to exclude members of the working class from the celebrations¹. Representatives of the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando held a meeting with the chairman of the Witwatersrand Centenary Festival Pageant Committee². By the time representatives of the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando and the Witwatersrand Centenary Festival Pageant Committee held a meeting with less extreme members of the Germiston Organising Committee, the Germiston Organising Committee had withdrawn its opposition to the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando³.

Venter, a member of the Germiston Organising Committee, invited the local G.W.U. members to attend his folksong classes⁴. The Witwatersrand Centenary Festival Pageant Committee, in particular its chairman, assisted the G.W.U. Kappie Kommando in raising funds⁵. A G.W.U. Kappie Kommando of approximately four hundred members attended the grand finale celebration near Pretoria in December 1938⁶.

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1. Die Transvaler, 28 October 1938.
 2. Ibid., 1 November 1938; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, November 1938.
 3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, November 1938.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid., December 1938.
 6. Ibid.

B. The Challenge Debate

Grobbelaar had earlier formed a Bondswag which Naudé described as the "military wing" of the struggle against communists in the trade union movement ¹. The Bondswag, for example, participated in fights at a number of meetings (e.g., a miner's meeting) ². The Bondswag established an espionage section which, according to Naudé, was very successful at one period in the G.W.U. ³

A sense of expectancy arose among Afrikaners as the time drew nearer for the main Voortrekker centenary celebration outside Pretoria. Grobbelaar and others of his ilk began wildly to consider the possibility of a coup d'état ⁴.

At the time when his pamphlet was being distributed Grobbelaar sent a copy to Sachs with a covering letter in which he warned that the thousands of Afrikaner daughters whom you have in your clutches will settle with you The day when we Afrikaners begin to settle with you Jews, you will find out that Germany is a Jewish paradise compared with what South Africa will be ⁵.

In his reply to Grobbelaar Sachs stated that he was "quite prepared to allow the thousands of 'Afrikaner daughters' to settle

1. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

2. Ibid., pp. 61-62, 82-85.

3. Ibid., p. 82.

4. N.G.S. van der Walt, diary entry 13 November 1938, quoted in T. Dunbar Moodie, op. cit., p. 182.

5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, November 1938.

with" him. He challenged Grobbelaar to a debate to be attended by G.W.U. members at which a motion of confidence in him (Sachs) would be put ¹. Both letters appeared in full in the November 1938 edition of The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker ². By the close of January 1939 negotiations on the terms and date of the debate had been completed ³.

Grobbelaar and his supporters visited members in their homes and held numerous house meetings ⁴. Probably as a result of the N.R.T.'s increased organisational activity and the Bondswag's espionage endeavours, the G.W.U. in early February 1939 organised a number of Johannesburg and Germiston members into a Union Guard. The Union Guard's primary duties were to maintain order at Union meetings and to keep a watchful eye for any subversive activity directed at the membership ⁵.

The Germiston branch's annual general meeting which was held in mid-February 1939 was attended by 503 members. The meeting overwhelmingly passed a motion of full confidence in Sachs ⁶. G.W.U.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. L. Naudé, op. cit., p. 85.

4. Judgment of Grindley-Ferris J., delivered 28 August 1939, E.S. Sachs vs. D.B.H. Grobbelaar, W.L.D., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September 1939, p. 10; Fourth Lunch-time Meeting Held at Germiston Factory, 6 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, February 1939, March 1939.

6. Minutes of G.W.U. Germiston Branch General Meeting, 20 February 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

leaders organised meetings at the Germiston factories. At the factory meetings representatives were elected to attend the challenge debate ¹. Unforeseen transport difficulties on the day of the debate, the 9th March 1939, resulted in a reduced number of Germiston members setting out for Johannesburg ².

G.W.U. Medical Aid Society cards had to be produced to gain admission to the challenge meeting ³. The meeting was attended by well over two thousand, enthusiastically pro-Sachs, members.

Sachs was the first speaker and a few members heckled him for addressing the meeting in English. Sachs recalled how they had built up the G.W.U. and had struggled to obtain the existing wage rates and conditions of employment. Grobbelaar and his associates, on the other hand, were trying to break the trade union movement and had adopted a strategy of slander, lies, "racial hatred" and "Jew baiting". They drew their inspiration from Czarist Russia and Nazi Germany while he drew his inspiration from the contemporary Soviet Union.

1. Fourth Lunch-time Meeting Held at Germiston Factory, 6 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 9 January 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Germiston Branch Secretary's Report as from 15th February to 3rd March 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U. Germiston Branch General Meeting, 20 February 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Germiston Branch Secretary's Report as from 1st March 1939 to 28th March 1939, H. Cornelius, 28 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to System Manager, S.A.R. & H., 7 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection; P.D. Troskie, System Manager, S.A.R. & H. to E.S. Sachs, 14 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

3. G.W.U. circular, 21 February 1939, signed by A. Scheepers and J. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection.

Grobbelaar struggled to obtain a hearing when it was his turn to speak. His claim that the G.W.U. had paid for members' visits to the Soviet Union was denied by A. Scheepers, who was in the chair. She stated that the amounts had been made up of voluntary contributions. Grobbelaar then argued that Sachs had been banished in 1932 not for trade union activity but rather for inciting racial hatred.

Grobbelaar had spoken for only four of his allotted fifteen minutes when the two hundred strong Germiston contingent (with their pro-Sachs banners) arrived at the meeting. Their arrival caused such a favourable commotion among the audience that Grobbelaar was unable to continue his address. The commotion continued unabated and the ballot-papers were distributed in a disorderly manner. Consequently, the motion was put to a hand vote. The audience enthusiastically threw its support behind Sachs and Grobbelaar received no more than twenty votes ¹.

A new worker in the industry, W. van Wyngaardt, had earlier been unmasked as a paid organiser of the N.R.T. The c.e.c. had refused her G.W.U. membership two days prior to the debate (normally a worker automatically became a member on entering the industry) ².

Shortly after the debate the c.e.c. adopted a motion that any member of the G.W.U.

associating with Grobbelaar or with any other person who

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March 1939; Die Transvaler, 10 March 1939; Die Vaderland, 10 March 1939; Germiston Branch Secretary's Report as from 1st March 1939 to 28th March 1939, H. Cornelius, 28 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, April 1939; Extracts from Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meetings, 7 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

or organisation which aims at the splitting of our Union; (B) slandering the Union or any official of the Union; (C) spreading falsehoods about the Union; (D) preaching racialism in order to split the ranks of the Union; (E) doing anything which is calculated to cause division in the ranks of the workers ... will be considered as a traitor to the Union and expelled forthwith ¹.

Disciplinary action was initiated against at least two garment workers for "disruptive" activity ². An attempt was also made to stamp out rumours which reflected adversely on the G.W.U. For example, a member was forced to withdraw the remark that she was not going to attend the G.W.U.'s dance as the Union had blacks and coloureds at its meetings ³. Numerous pro-Grobbelaar faction members of the G.W.U. either withdrew their active support or went further underground ⁴.

Die Transvaler conceded in mid-April 1939 that the garment workers of Germiston viewed their position in the white community in rough class terms and that at least 80 percent of them stood firmly behind the Sachs leadership. For example, one garment worker told a Die Transvaler reporter that "Ons is nie van julle soort nie. Ons is maar arme fabriekwerksters" ⁵.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March 1939.

2. E.S. Sachs to J. Kotze, 24 April 1939. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to P. Ponnieso, 24 April 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Delarey to Dippenaar, 1 April 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

4. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

5. Die Transvaler, 13 April 1939.

Rejected by the Johannesburg and Germiston membership the N.R.T. sought an oblique strategy in its campaign against the G.W.U. leadership. Its attention was focused on the struggling Port Elizabeth branch of the G.W.U.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NASIONALE RAAD VAN TRUSTEES

PORT ELIZABETH CAMPAIGN: 1939

In 1937 the Eastern Province (excluding East London) clothing manufacturing industry comprised basically four factories, one in Kingwilliamstown (King Clothing) and three in Port Elizabeth (Mosenthal, Teikandas and the somewhat smaller Steeldrill). The depression-influenced Wage Board Determination of 1932 regulated the wages and conditions of service of the Eastern Province industry's workforce ¹. In March 1936 there were 539 whites, 19 asiatics, 24 coloureds and 9 blacks employed in the Port Elizabeth ready made clothing industry ². No garment workers' union had been established in Port Elizabeth.

The G.W.U. participated in the annual conference of the T. & L.C. at Port Elizabeth in early 1937, and took the opportunity to establish a mixed branch of the white, coloured and asiatic garment workers, the Port Elizabeth branch of the G.W.U. (G.W.U.P.E.) ³.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1937.

2. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board. The Garment Making Trades", dated 21 February 1938, p. 5 table 1. An. 190 1938.

3. Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of G.W.U.P.E., 1 April 1937. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, April 1937, July 1937.

The G.W.U.P.E. faced difficulties in its endeavours to conclude an industrial council agreement with the local manufacturers ¹. Although an industrial council for Port Elizabeth and Kingwilliamstown was registered by 1939, it was only in December 1939 that an industrial council agreement was published ². It is unknown whether any 'gentlemen' agreements operated in the industry prior to the publication of the industrial council agreement.

The widespread unemployment in the Port Elizabeth clothing industry and the resignations from the G.W.U.P.E. as a result of the press reports that garment workers in Germiston had been sacked for supporting the N.P. in the general election contributed to the Branch's decline during 1938 ³. Towards the end of the year there was a "slight danger" that the G.W.U.P.E. would go out of existence ⁴.

Maggie Gerber had been an active member of the G.W.U.P.E. since 1937 and in early 1939 she was the vice-chairperson of the Branch ⁵. She did not share the political views of the G.W.U. cadre and in

1. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 21 September 1937, 5 October 1937, 12 October 1937. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. "Report to the Minister of Labour by the Wage Board on the Clothing Industry, South Africa", dated 7 May 1948, pp. 1-2. An. 67 1949.

3. Minutes of G.W.U.P.E.B.E.C. Meeting, 1 June 1938, 18 June 1938. G.W.U. Collection; Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to E.S. Sachs, 8 July 1938. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, December 1938; Programme of Work and Policy for the Year 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

4. Programme of Work and Policy for the Year 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Unidentified statement on Port Elizabeth dispute. G.W.U. Collection.

early March 1939 turned down an offer to become the Branch's paid organiser ¹. Towards the end of March 1939 she attended a public meeting addressed by A. Hertzog and P. Bothma in Port Elizabeth. According to Gerber, she approached A. Hertzog and discussed the position of the local garment workers with him ².

The N.R.T. despatched two organisers, Bekker and L. Naudé, to Port Elizabeth during April 1939 ³. Grobbelaar arrived in the city a little while later ⁴. The initial strategy of the N.R.T. group appears to have been to engineer the secession of the G.W.U.P.E. from its parent union and then to gain control of the independent local union. A petition sponsored by Gerber and two other garment workers which called for the secession of the G.W.U.P.E. was circulated at least at Mosenthal ⁵.

The N.R.T. group launched a campaign against "communism" in the city. At two meetings of garment workers organised by the N.R.T. group Gerber described Sachs as a dictator. She added that Sachs and his satellites propagated the establishment of a black republic ⁶.

In response to the N.R.T. group's activity in Port Elizabeth the G.W.U. appointed Eli Weinberg, the secretary of the Cape Town branch of the Sweet Workers' Union and a former G.W.U. organiser in

1. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to E.S. Sachs, 22 March 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by M. Gerber, 30 September 1941. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Die Oosterlig, 27 March 1939; Affidavit by M. Gerber, 30 September 1941. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to E.S. Sachs, 28 April 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Die Oosterlig, 28 April 1939, 5 May 1939.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1939.

5. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to E.S. Sachs, 28 April 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

6. Die Oosterlig, 28 April 1939, 5 May 1939.

Cape Town, as organiser of the G.W.U.P.E.¹ The G.W.U. despatched K. Viljoen to assist Weinberg and J. Cornelius paid a short visit to the city². A. Scheepers also spent a while in Port Elizabeth³:

In mid-May 1939 a Vereniging van Klerewerkers was established at a meeting attended by approximately thirty-one garment workers. Gerber was elected chairperson of the Vereniging's provisional committee⁴. The Vereniging's constitution restricted membership to white garment workers. In terms of the constitution the Vereniging undertook simultaneously to bring about an improvement in employer/employee relations and in the conditions of service in the industry⁵.

The G.W.U.P.E. maintained a cordial link with the miniscule Port Elizabeth branch of the L.P. (whose racial views were more moderate than the official party line)⁶. The G.W.U.P.E.'s relationship with the Steeldrill management was sound. However, the

1. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to E.S. Sachs, 28 April 1939. G.W.U. Collection; G.W.U. pamphlet, 12 May 1939, signed by B. Meyer, B. Bowen, E. Weinberg and J. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection; J. Cornelius to E. Weinberg, 19 July 1939. G.W.U. Collection; The Eastern Province Herald, 25 August 1939; E.S. Sachs to E. Weinberg, 18 June 1935. G.W.U. Collection.

2. G.W.U. pamphlet, 12 May 1939, signed by B. Meyer, B. Bowen, E. Weinberg and J. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection; K. Viljoen to C.E.C., Johannesburg, 15 May 1939. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1939; The Eastern Province Herald, 11 May 1939.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1939.

4. K. Viljoen to C.E.C., Johannesburg, 15 May 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Die Oosterlig, 15 May 1939. Gerber was thereupon formally expelled from the G.W.U.P.E. Affidavit by E.S. Sachs (n.d.). G.W.U. Collection.

5. Constitution of Die Vereniging van Klerewerkers. G.W.U. Collection.

6. Minutes of L.P.P.E. Branch Committee Meeting, 5 May 1937, 30 March 1939, 31 July 1939, 7 December 1939. L.P. Collection.

managements of Teikandas and Mosenthal were not well disposed towards the G.W.U.P.E.¹ The Vereniging concentrated its organisational activity on the latter two factories².

In late May 1939 delegates from a number of Port Elizabeth trade unions met to consider ways to counter the influence of "racialism" in the local trade union movement - i.e., probably the N.R.T.'s general activity in the city³. A rally was subsequently held in late June 1939 ostensibly to celebrate sixty years of trade unionism in South Africa. A multi-racial audience - though the whites and non-whites were separately seated - of over three thousand people attended the rally. The speakers at the rally included Weinberg, W.J. de Vries (the general secretary of the T. & L.C.), and J.J. Venter (the president of the Johannesburg Transport Workers' Union)⁴. Venter also addressed a number of meetings outside Mosenthal and Teikandas⁵.

The demeanour of a number of pro-Vereniging supervisors at Mosenthal inhibited the G.W.U.P.E.'s membership drive as the factory's workers feared victimisation if they associated with the

1. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to General Secretary, 16 June 1939. G.W.U. Collection; K. Viljoen to C.E.C., Johannesburg, 15 May 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to General Secretary, 16 June 1939. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1939.

3. The Eastern Province Herald, 27 May 1939.

4. Ibid., 30 June 1939; Die Oosterlig, 3 July 1939.

5. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to General Secretary, 8 July 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

G.W.U.P.E. ¹ While the Vereniging enrolled a "large number" of members at Mosenthal and "quite a number" at Teikamdas neither the Vereniging nor the G.W.U.P.E. could overall gain the upper hand in their membership drives among the white workers ². The coloured and asiatic workers proved reluctant to join the G.W.U.P.E. and at one stage Mrs. Gool (from Cape Town) was expected to come and assist the Branch in recruiting non-white members ³.

Sachs and Weinberg had initiated defamation actions against Grobbelaar and Bekker respectively ⁴. The N.R.T.'s Port Elizabeth

1. Organising Secretary to M. Gerber, 1 June 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Organising Secretary to F. Van der Berg, 29 May 1939. G.W.U. Collection; Statement by the G.W.U. Submitted to the Committee of Enquiry Appointed by Agreement between the Union and the P.E. Clothing Manufacturers' Association to Consider and Determine All Matters in Dispute between the Union and the Employers and Complaints from Employees and Employers, P.E., September 1941. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by J. Grobler, 18 September 1941. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by I.E. Van der Walt, 18 September 1941. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit S.J.M. Manley. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by M. Gerber. G.W.U. Collection; Findings of Commission. Draft of Settlement of Strike. Statement, p. 6. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to General Secretary, 16 June 1939 (Quotes in text). G.W.U. Collection; Statement by the Eastern Province Clothing Manufacturers' Association Submitted to the Commission of Enquiry Appointed by Agreement between them and the G.W.U., September 1941. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by M. Gerber. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Secretary, G.W.U.P.E. to General Secretary, 16 June 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

4. Judgment of Grindley-Ferris J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September 1939, pp. 10-12; The Eastern Province Herald, 25 August 1939.

campaign came to an end when its last two organisers in the city, Grobbelaar and Bekker, either withdrew or were withdrawn from the fray in early September 1939. Grobbelaar volunteered for military service and disappeared from the scene (sic) ¹.

In January 1940 Weinberg reported to the c.e.c. that the G.W.U.P.E. was making progress vis-a-vis the Vereniging which was "in the process of disintegration" ². The managements of Teikamdas and Mosenthal consistently opposed the inclusion of a closed shop provision in the industrial council agreement and the Vereniging (which had never obtained registration) continued a twilight existence ³.

Mosenthal and Teikamdas finally conceded the closed shop in late 1941 after Sachs had led the G.W.U.P.E. members out on strike at the two factories. A 'gentleman's' closed shop had been in operation at Steeldrill for some time ⁴.

1. Affidavit by M. Gerber. G.W.U. Collection.

2. E. Weinberg to C.E.C., Johannesburg, 8 January 1940. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Affidavit by S.J.M. Manley. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by M. Gerber. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by C. Bouwer. G.W.U. Collection; Memorandum Submitted by the G.W.U. to the Industrial Council for the Clothing Industry P.E. on the Subject of the Proposals of the Union for a New Agreement, April 1940. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to J. Dock, 19 September 1941. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by R.G. Teikamdas, 30 September 1941. G.W.U. Collection.

4. Dispute in the Clothing Industry P.E. Statement by the G.W.U. Submitted to The Eastern Province Herald by E.S. Sachs on the 13th September 1941. G.W.U. Collection; Reply from Mr. J. Dock to the Statement Made by Mr. Sachs to The Eastern Province Herald, Clothing Trade Dispute. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1941; The Eastern Province Herald, 16, 17, 18 September 1941.

CHAPTER XIV

COLOURED LABOUR AND THE WITWATERSRAND CLOTHING
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY: 1939 - 1946

A. The Influx of Coloured Labour

It has been noted elsewhere that a large number of coloureds were absorbed into the Johannesburg clothing manufacturing industry during the Second World War¹. The coloureds were generally employed as machinists - an occupation that was previously the virtual preserve of white women.

The G.W.U. insisted that the coloured workers be segregated from their white colleagues². In addition, from August 1941 factory inspectors could enforce segregation by means of a factory regulation³. However, segregation was applied in the industry in a haphazard manner⁴.

The white workers resented the 'infiltration' of coloureds into

1. See pp. 27-28.

2. Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 13 August 1942. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Factory Regulation of 28 August 1941, quoted at ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 685-686, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.

4. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: J.F. Terburgh's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 659-664; Festenstein's statement. Ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 701-701A.

the industry ¹. By 1942 the G.W.U. was engaged in constant endeavours to persuade recalcitrant white workers to accept the employment of coloureds in their respective factories ². The G.W.U. officials drummed into the white workers the need for a tolerant attitude to the coloureds in the industry. Sachs emphasised that the coloured workers of the Western Cape would not agree to the establishment of a national garment workers' trade union if the white workers continued their hostile attitude to their coloured colleagues ³. It would appear that Sachs and other G.W.U. officials attempted to sugar the pill by stating that the coloureds would be employed on a temporary basis during the war years until the white labour supply improved ⁴.

B. The Germiston Rebellion

In December 1941 Sachs estimated the Germiston membership of the G.W.U. at 1 650 ⁵. Until 1943 there were few, if any, coloureds employed in the Germiston clothing manufacturing industry.

Separate wild-cat strikes erupted at the factories Germiston Clothing and Avondale during August 1943 over the introduction of

1. Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 13 August 1942. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 23 July 1942. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of 1st Meeting of Shop Stewards of the G.W.U. Fordsburg Branch, 20 August 1942. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 23 July 1942. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 15 July 1948.

5. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Eighth day, 17 December 1941, p. 576, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.

coloured pressers. While the white workers at Germiston Clothing objected to the employment of coloured pressers per se, the white workers at Avondale demanded segregation between the coloureds and whites employed in their factory ¹.

At a special G.b.e.c. meeting H. Cornelius, the influential branch secretary, insisted that the branch act in accordance with the G.W.U.'s coloured labour policy. K. Meyer thereupon resigned as branch chairman in protest at coloureds being employed in the Germiston industry ².

With the approval of H. Cornelius, the Germiston Clothing management took the initiative in the Germiston industry and at the beginning of 1944 introduced a handful of coloured machinists in the factory ³. The coloured machinists were completely segregated from the white workers in the factory. However, the white workers resented the employment of coloureds as machinists and a wild-cat strike broke out in the trouser section of the factory on the 9th February 1944. The unrest spread to the rest of the factory when H. Cornelius

1. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 7 April 1943, 11 August 1943, 18 August 1943. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of Special Meeting of G.W.U.G.B.E.C., 13 August 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of Special Meeting of G.W.U.G.B.E.C., 13 August 1943. G.W.U. Collection. Blacks were, of course, employed in the Germiston industry as pressers (although not necessarily at Avondale and Germiston Clothing). Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 18 January 1939. G.W.U. Collection.

3. H. Cornelius's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, p. 1018, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.

arrived later that day to mediate in the dispute. Order was restored at the factory when the management agreed to dismiss the coloured machinists ¹. The occupation of machinist remained the virtual preserve of white women in the Germiston industry until 1957 ².

M. Moll and E. Nel had played the leading roles in the disturbance at Germiston Clothing. Nel had led the strike in the trouser section while Moll had given H. Cornelius a rough time when the branch secretary had addressed the workers. The chairperson of the branch, Sophia Meyer (the sister of K. Meyer), worked at Germiston Clothing. She had been abused by the workers, in particular by Nel, when she

1. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Freez", cp. cit.: M. Moll's evidence. Sixth day, 3 September 1945, pp. 471-477, seventh day, 4 September 1945, pp. 491-536, 538-578, eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 584-601, eleventh day, 10 September 1945, p. 949; E.J.S. Nel's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 604-658; G.E. Laboyre's evidence. Ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 728-733; E.M. Opperman's evidence. Ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 734-746; S. Meyer's evidence. Eleventh day, 10 September 1945, pp. 958-982, twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 985-1006; H. Cornelius's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 1018-1064; M.E.M. Prins's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 1103-1104, 1113-1116.

2. First Private Agreement Entered into by Certain Members of the Germiston Number One Branch ... and the Germiston Employers, November 1957. G.W.U. Collection. There are signs that the Germiston industry stagnated over the years. For example, the Germiston industry's share of the country's production of men's and boys' outwear decreased from 28 percent in 1938/1939 to 17 percent in 1952/1953, while the Johannesburg industry's share increased from 38 percent to 45 percent. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., p. 101 table XI.

had refused to support them in their agitation against the employment of coloureds as machinists ¹.

Moll and Nel were summoned to a disciplinary hearing before the G.b.e.c. Sachs and J. Cornelius attended the disciplinary hearing. Sachs favoured a lenient penalty being imposed on Moll and Nel. Nevertheless, the G.b.e.c. resolved to take a firm stand and to expel the two women from the G.W.U. ²

Two members resigned from the G.b.e.c. presumably in protest at the G.b.e.c.'s decision. H. Cornelius anticipated a surge of discontent in the branch over the expulsions. The Germiston branch election was scheduled to take place at a general meeting on the

1. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: M. Moll's evidence. Sixth day, 3 September 1945, pp. 471-477, seventh day, 4 September 1945, pp. 491-536, 538-578, eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 584-601, eleventh day, 10 September 1945, p. 949; E.J.S. Nel's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 604-658; G.E. Laboyre's evidence. Ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 728-733; E.M. Opperman's evidence. Ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 734-746; S. Meyer's evidence. Eleventh day, 10 September 1945, pp. 958-982, twelfth day, 11 September, 1945, pp. 985-1006; H. Cornelius's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 1018-1064; M.E.M. Prins's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 1103-1104, 1113-1116.

2. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: M. Moll's evidence. Seventh day, 4 September 1945, p. 493; E.J.S. Nel's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 610-612; J. Cornelius's evidence. Tenth day, 7 September 1945, pp. 869-872, eleventh day, 10 September 1945, pp. 896-897; S. Meyer's evidence. Eleventh day, 10 September 1945, pp. 966-967, 972, 998-999; H. Cornelius's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, p. 1027; E. Roberts's evidence. Thirteenth day, 12 September 1945, pp. 1131-1133; L. Jordan's evidence. Thirteenth day, 12 September 1945, pp. 1138-1140; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Thirteenth day, 12 September 1945, pp. 1166A-1168, fourteenth day, 13 September 1945, pp. 1268-1275.

29th February 1944. H. Cornelius postponed indefinitely the general meeting ¹.

A five day work-week operated in the industry. The letters notifying Moll and Nel of their expulsion were delivered on the Friday afternoon (the 25th February 1944) in an attempt to avoid as far as possible any unrest at Germiston Clothing ².

Moll sought to interest influential persons on her and Nel's behalf. On the Saturday, after an abortive visit to a candidate in the municipal election, she called on a local estate agent, J. du Pisanie (an Afrikaner nationalist activist). Du Pisanie immediately contacted his parish clergyman, the Rev. J.J. Fick (a member of the O.B. and a former wartime emergency regulations internee) ³.

The G.W.U.'s conspiratorial interpretation of subsequent events is based on an alleged meeting on the Sunday evening attended by Du Pisanie, J.S. de Wet (the secretary of the Reform Organisation within the M.W.U.), Moll, Nel and others. According to the G.W.U. the two were instructed to return to work the following morning. It was hoped that the Germiston Clothing management would abide by the closed shop provision and eject the two women from the factory. The

1. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 24 February 1944. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Judgment of Nesor J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, November/December 1945, p. 10.

3. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: M. Moll's evidence. Seventh day, 4 September 1945, pp. 558-560, 562; J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, pp. 330, 333; J.C. du Plessis's evidence. Fourth day, 30 August 1945, p. 266.

other workers at the factory, incensed at the management's conduct, would come out on strike. The "Reformers" would covertly spread the agitation and organise a general strike throughout the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry. The Afrikaner churches were to supply the overt support for the campaign. The G.W.U. leadership, tainted by its refusal to fight the "black menace", would accordingly become vulnerable to removal from office ¹.

Moll and Nel returned to work on the Monday morning. Although the Germiston Clothing management was aware of Moll's and Nel's expulsion, it allowed the two women to work at the factory on the Monday and Tuesday (the 28 and 29th February 1944) ².

The Rev. Fick established an action committee on the 28th February 1944. Its members comprised Du Pisanie (as secretary), the Rev. Fick and a number of other Afrikaner clergymen from Germiston. Three of the clergymen (Boneschans, J.C. du Plessis and S. de Villiers) as members of the Germiston Organising Committee in 1938 had opposed the G.W.U.'s Germiston Kappie Kommando's participation

1. Johannesburg Report no. 1559, 28 February 1944, Special. G.W.U. Collection; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: E.S. Sachs's evidence, 9 February 1949, p. 1015, 25 March 1949, p. 1848; Phillip's statement, 23 February 1949, p. 1267. The factions established by the N.R.T. within the M.W.U. and G.W.U. in 1938 were known as the Reform Organisations within their respective trade unions - e.g., the Reform Organisation within the M.W.U. The word "Reformers" was later loosely used to describe Afrikaner nationalist activity in the trade union movement generally.

2. Judgment of Nesar J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/ Die Klerewerker, November/December 1945, p. 10.

in the town's Voortrekker centenary celebration ¹.

Moll and Nel were dismissed from their jobs on the 1st March 1944. The workers at Gemiston Clothing immediately came out on strike. G.W.U. officials and members of the industrial council visited the factory and warned the strikers that the strike was in contravention of both the emergency war regulations and the Industrial Conciliation Act. The G.W.U. officials also promised to convene a joint meeting that afternoon between the G.b.e.c., members of the c.e.c., Moll, Nel and some thirty representatives from the factory. The strikers returned to work ².

At the meeting Moll and Nel rejected an offer that if they recanted and undertook to be loyal members they could apply for re-admission to the G.W.U. ³ (An identical offer had been made in the

1. J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, pp. 330-331, 333, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, October 1938.

2. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: M. Moll's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 585-586; J. Cornelius's evidence. Tenth day, 7 September 1945, pp. 874-875, 879, eleventh day, 10 September 1945, p. 894; S. Meyer's evidence, eleventh day, 10 September 1945, pp. 977-978.

3. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: M. Moll's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 584-586; J. Cornelius's evidence. Tenth day, 7 September 1945, pp. 875, 879, eleventh day, 10 September 1945, p. 893; S. Meyer's evidence. Eleventh day, 10 September 1945, p. 979, twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 1001-1006; H. Cornelius's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, P. 1040; A. Scheepers's evidence. Twelfth day, 11 September 1945, pp. 1086-1088. It is unclear whether the G.W.U. intended to retain the right to refuse admission to the Union even if the two women recanted.

letters notifying the two women of their expulsion) ¹.

The action committee held a mass protest meeting in Germiston on the 3rd March 1944. The Rev. S.P. Van der Walt, a director of a Johannesburg clothing factory and an executive member of both the O.B. and the A.B., was in the chair. The speakers included P.J. Meyer, the "temporary" leader of the Arbeidslaer. The resolutions passed at the meeting requested the Germiston manufacturers to discontinue the closed shop agreement with the G.W.U., called for a white garment workers' trade union, and for a go-slow strike in the Germiston clothing manufacturing industry as a means of obtaining the reinstatement of Moll and Nel in their jobs ².

Industrial council agreements had the force of law and could not unilaterally be varied or revoked by the manufacturers. The people who drafted the resolutions either had no knowledge of industrial law or were merely interested in fanning the discontent among the G.W.U. membership.

Petitions which called upon manufacturers not to honour the closed shop provision and to refrain from concluding any new industrial council agreement with the G.W.U. were circulated at

1. J.C. du Flessis's evidence. Fourth day, 30 August 1945, p. 268, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.

2. Die Transvaler, 4 March 1944; Die O.B., 15 March 1944; To the Controller of Censorship. Report on Nasionale Instituut vir Opvoeding en Onderwys. Hastings Beck. G.P.O. Cape Town, 29 November 1944. Hofmeyr Collection; "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, pp. 348-349; M. Moll's evidence. Eighth day, 5 September 1945, pp. 588-589.

Germiston factories ¹. The go-slow strike failed to spread to all the Germiston factories. The action committee's successor, the Breë Kerklike Komitee (B.K.K.), called off the strike on the 15th March 1944 ².

Sachs was absent from the Transvaal between the 26th February 1944 and the 19th April 1944 ³. The G.W.U. distributed a number of pamphlets primarily at Germiston in which it described the people assisting Moll and Nel as, inter alia, "Fascists", "O.B.'s" and "Hitler agents" ⁴. The G.W.U. held factory meetings at Germiston and Johannesburg to counter the propaganda being spread against the Union's leadership and to dissuade the Germiston membership from supporting the petition ⁵.

The G.W.U. convened a special general meeting at Johannesburg for the 16th March 1944. The G.W.U. arranged with the T.C.M.A. that the Union's members be permitted to leave work early on the day of the meeting (without loss of wages). According to the B.K.K.,

1. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 14 March 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Die Transvaler, 7, 8, 9 March 1944.

2. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 14 March 1944. G.W.U. Collection; "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, pp. 350-351; M. Moll's evidence. Seventh day, 4 September 1945, p. 509.

3. Judgment of Nesor J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/ Die Klerewerker, November/December 1945, p. 11.

4. Ibid.

5. Minutes of G.W.U. Fordsburg Branch Executive Committee Meeting, 9 March 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of the G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 14 March 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Forward, 10 March 1944.

the Germiston manufacturers were subsequently informed that the agreement did not apply to the Germiston industry¹. Consequently, any Germiston member who wished to attend the meeting was obliged to obtain her employer's permission to leave work early that day and to forfeit a pro-rata portion of her wage².

The special general meeting was attended by approximately four thousand members. Only a handful of Germiston members attended the meeting. Moll and Nel surreptitiously gained admission to the meeting, presumably by producing the required G.W.U. Medical Aid Society card. About sixteen Afrikaner clergymen (who included Fick, Boneschans and Bruwer) attempted to attend the meeting to explain the Afrikaner churches' stand on the coloured labour issue. The clergymen were refused admission as they were non-members. The clergymen were addressed in vituperative language and an attempt was made to remove the Rev. Pienaar's trousers. Although the meeting was somewhat unruly a motion of confidence in the G.W.U. leadership was overwhelmingly passed³.

The action committee was extended to form the B.K.K. in early March 1944 in order to be more representative of the Afrikaner churches. The B.K.K.'s members were drawn from the Witwatersrand

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1. Pamphlet titled "Blank Suid Afrika Red Uself", quoted at 23 February 1949, p. 1239, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.
 2. Brink's statement. Sixth day, 3 September 1945, p. 451, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.
 3. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 16 March 1944. G.W.U. Collection; Die Transvaler, 17 March 1944; J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, p. 341, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.

and comprised two clergymen from each of the three Afrikaner churches' Synodal Commission for Social Evils, other Afrikaner clergymen and a number of laymen. The lay-members included Du Pisanie (as secretary), J. de Klerk and B. Schoeman. (Schoeman was the chairman of the N.P. on the Witwatersrand) ¹. Boneschans, the deputy chairman, replaced Fick as chairman when the latter resigned from the B.K.K. during the first half of April 1944 ².

The B.K.K. consistently denied any political colouring or influence and claimed that its stand was based on the Afrikaner churches' support for segregation ³. The B.K.K. opposed the employment of non-whites in operations performed by the white garment workers. However, non-whites could perform such operations within their own "communities". The B.K.K. favoured separate factories for white and non-white workers ⁴.

The B.K.K. adopted as a broad objective the reformation of the G.W.U. on a christian-national basis. The B.K.K. stated that it wanted to transform the G.W.U. into a white garment workers' trade

1. Die Transvaler, 10 March 1944; B. Schoeman, My Lewe in die Politiek, p. 116; "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: J.C. du Plessis's evidence. Fourth day, 30 August 1945, p. 266, fifth day, 31 August 1945, p. 300; J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, pp. 330-331.

De Klerk and Schoeman were later to serve as cabinet-ministers in N.P. governments.

2. J.J. Fick's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, pp. 338-339, 343E, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit. For the reasons for Fick's resignation see p.139 footnote 2.

3. Die Transvaler, 10 March 1944, 16 March 1944.

4. Ibid., 10, 18, 25, 27 March 1944.

union free of communist influences ¹. The B.K.K. distributed pamphlets and held a few mass meetings in Germiston during the first half of 1944 ². The B.K.K. had no prospect of its sympathisers in the G.W.U. gaining control of the Germiston branch. H. Cornelius was in no hurry to hold the branch election and vacancies on the G.b.e.c. were filled by co-optation ³.

During the first half of 1944 the government bowed to pressure from a B.K.K. delegation and N.P. M.P.'s in parliament and agreed to inquire into the Germiston unrest. In late August 1944 W. Madeley, the Minister of Labour, convened a joint meeting between himself, the B.K.K. and the G.W.U. The G.W.U. viewed Madeley and the B.K.K. with disdain and boycotted the meeting. At the meeting A. Hertzog, on behalf of the B.K.K., placed a number of requests relating to the G.W.U. before the Minister. Madeley was requested not to publish any new industrial council agreement unless the closed shop provision

1. Ibid., 10, 16, 27 March 1944; Pamphlet titled "Garment Workers! Your Future Is in Danger! The Circumstances under Which You Work Are in Danger! Your Union Is in Danger!", issued by the Joint Church Committee. G.W.U. Collection; "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: J.C. du Plessis's evidence. Fifth day, 31 August 1945, p. 300; A.J. Pienaar's evidence. Sixth day, 3 September 1945, p. 454.

2. Pamphlet titled "Garment Workers! Your Future Is in Danger! The Circumstances under Which You Work Are in Danger! Your Union Is in Danger!", issued by the Joint Church Committee. G.W.U. Collection; Die Transvaler, 10, 16, 22, 27 March 1944; J.C. du Plessis's evidence. Fourth day, 30 August 1945, pp. 285-288, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.

3. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 12 December 1944, 18 April 1945. G.W.U. Collection.

was suitably qualified; to inquire into alleged financial irregularities; to reinstate Moll and Nel in their jobs and to provide government supervision of elections ¹.

The Labour Department had in the past endeavoured to induce industrial councils to include black workers in their industrial council agreements (even if at different wages, etc.) ². In early 1945 the G.W.U. was informed that unless black males were included and the closed shop provision qualified, the Labour Department would refuse to publish the new T.C.M.A. - G.W.U. industrial council agreement. The Labour Department wanted a clause added to the industrial council agreement which would enable the Minister of Labour to exempt workers, whom the G.W.U. had either expelled or suspended, from the closed shop provision ³. However, the industrial council agreement was subsequently published without the industrial council having acceded to either demand ⁴.

An examination of the B.K.K.'s membership and the speakers at its public meetings indicate that the campaign was conducted within the 'sphere' of the A.B. ⁵ According to the A.B.'s official

1. Die Transvaler, 26 August 1944, 3 April 1945.

2. See p. 193 footnote 1.

3. Minutes of T. & L. C.N.E.C. Meeting, 6 February 1945. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. Die Transvaler, 3 April 1945.

5. J.C. du Plessis's evidence. Fourth day, 30 August 1945, pp. 266, 285-288, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.; To the Controller of Censorship. Report on Nasionale Instituut vir Opvoeding en Onderwys. Hastings Beck. G.P.O. Cape Town, 29 November 1944. Hofmeyr Collection.

history, the A.B. gave moral and financial support to the B.K.K.¹ Common allegiance to the A.B. and a shared wish to discredit and unseat the G.W.U. leadership enabled the B.K.K. to function with a divided N.P. and O.B. membership. There are signs of intrigue between the two groups in the B.K.K.²

The establishment of the Arbeidslaer in September 1943 and the intrigue within the B.K.K. contributed to the N.P.'s decision to establish the B.W.B.B. In his political autobiography B. Schoeman stated that when he discerned that the B.K.K. would achieve little success he decided to launch a more potent and wider organisation which would interest itself in the Afrikaner worker generally³. The B.W.B.B. was formally established on the 29th June 1944 after an abortive attempt on the 20th April 1944⁴. There was an overlap between the B.W.B.B.'s executive and the B.K.K. (e.g., the Rev. Pienaar and Du Pisanie). J. de Klerk was appointed secretary of the B.W.B.B.⁵

1. A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., p. 152.

2. For example, Fick stated that he resigned from the B.K.K. as a condition of his release from internment had been that he refrain from participation in politics. However, it is possible that the restriction had already been withdrawn by the time Fick resigned his position. J.J. Fick's evidence. Ninth day, 6 September 1945, pp. 338-339, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 16 May 1944. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

3. B. Schoeman, op. cit., p. 116.

4. Die Blanke Werker, November 1946.

5. Ibid.; B. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 116-117; J.J. Odendaal's evidence. Sixth day, 3 September 1945, p. 397/400, in "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.

Unlike the B.K.K., the B.W.B.B. sought to enrol rank and file members from the Afrikaner society generally ¹. A number of garment workers enrolled as members of the B.W.B.B. ² An organiser of the G.W.U., H. de Wet, joined the B.W.B.B. in an attempt to engage in undercover activity ³. In April 1945 the B.K.K. submerged itself into the B.W.B.B. ⁴ By the close of June 1946 the B.W.B.B.'s membership had reached 2 366 of which 1 308 were professional men, farmers, housewives, pensioners and others while the rest were workers employed in seventy-two occupations ⁵.

Approximately three thousand members attended a G.W.U. general meeting at Johannesburg on the 7th June 1945 which was called to consider the proposed industrial council agreement. A motion was passed at the meeting with one dissenting vote (A. Knoetze) that association with or membership of the B.W.B.B. would result in expulsion from the G.W.U. ⁶

The G.b.e.c. associated itself with the meeting's motion and H. de Wet visited most of the Germiston factories to inform the

1. Die Blanke Werker, November 1946.

2. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: S.I. Ernst's evidence, 31 January 1949, p. 825, 1 February 1949, p. 826; B. Van Coller's evidence, 14 March 1949, p. 1599.

3. H. de Wet's evidence, 9 May 1949, pp. 2172, 2185, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

4. Die Blanke Werker, November 1946.

5. Ibid.

6. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 7 June 1945. G.W.U. Collection; A. Knoetze's evidence, 19 January 1949, pp. 464-465, 469, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

members of the motion ¹. The B.W.B.B. halted its enrolment of G.W.U. members in order to prevent their possible 'victimisation' ².

The Germiston branch returned to a semblance of normality during the early months of 1946. Nel was re-admitted as a G.W.U. member after having recanted; and the first branch general election since the 1944 unrest occurred ³. The general meeting at which the election occurred was not well attended ⁴. H. Cornelius defeated a former member of the B.W.B.B., S.I. Ernst (a member of the Germiston branch), for the post of branch secretary ⁵.

1. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 13 June 1945, 22 June 1945. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Die Blanke Werker, November 1946.

3. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 5 February 1946, 13 February 1946, 14 March 1946. G.W.U. Collection.

4. Ibid., 14 March 1946.

5. S.I. Ernst's evidence, 31 January 1949, pp. 807-808, 818-819, 825, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

CHAPTER XV

THE 1948 BLANKE WERKERS SE
BESKERMINGSBOND CAMPAIGN

A. The 1948 General Election

The G.W.U., affiliated to the L.P., came out in support of the L.P. - U.P. electoral alliance in the May 1948 general election. H. Cornelius issued a G.W.U. pamphlet in support of the L.P.'s Germiston candidate. The N.P.'s candidate in the constituency, Du Pisanie, replied with a pamphlet addressed to the Germiston garment workers in which he denied that he was an opponent of trade unionism. He was opposed to the abuse of the closed shop provision and of large sums of the G.W.U.'s money being used (inter alia) to pay the parliamentary election campaign costs of G.W.U. officials; to further equality between white and non-white; and to propagate communism. He also made reference to the L.P.'s electoral pact with the 'capitalist' U.P. ¹

K. Meyer, the chairman of the G.W.U. Germiston branch, supported the N.P. and attended one of Du Pisanie's election campaign meetings. The audience, which included numerous garment workers, opted for Meyer when requested to choose the meeting's chairman ².

1. Circular issued by J. du Pisanie and addressed to all the garment workers of Germiston. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 1 July 1948. G.W.U. Collection.

The N.P.'s narrow victory in the general election caused consternation among the G.W.U.'s cadre. J. Cornelius fled to Southern Rhodesia with her husband, a Jewish refugee from Germany. They were later deported from Rhodesia and J. Cornelius returned to her post of national organiser ¹. Sachs withdrew his resignation as general secretary after the c.e.c. agreed that, should the N.P. government take action against him, half his salary would be paid to his dependents until the scheduled expiration of his tenure of office in 1950 ².

B. The Campaign

(I) The campaign is opened

The B.W.B.B.'s executive, which had lost many of its prominent N.P. members (e.g., B. Schoeman and Du Pisanie), met only sporadically during 1948 ³. The B.W.B.B. had an estimated membership of between three and four thousand in late 1948 ⁴. The B.W.B.B. had two full-time officials, J. Loubser (the organising-secretary), and a typiste ⁵.

H. Cornelius had been elected unopposed as Germiston branch

1. Die Transvaler, 17 August 1948; The Garment Worker/Die Klere-werker, July/August 1948; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 9 November 1948. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. Die Transvaler, 17 August 1948; The Garment Worker/Die Klere-werker, July/August 1948.

3. J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1145, 1156/7, 1165, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

4. Ibid., p. 1175.

5. Ibid., pp. 1144-1145.

secretary in 1947 and 1948¹. K. Meyer convened a 'semi-secret' meeting at Moll's house in June 1948 after a number of Germiston members had approached him about removing H. Cornelius from her post². The meeting was attended by Loubser³.

A rumour circulated the Germiston factories that K. Meyer would be expelled from the G.W.U. for chairing Du Pisanie's meeting and for organising the 'semi-secret' meeting⁴. Despite the holding of three joint meetings between the c.e.c. and the G.b.e.c. during the first half of July 1948 no conciliation between Meyer on the one side and the c.e.c. and officials (including H. Cornelius) on the other was achieved⁵.

The G.b.e.c. resolved at the final joint meeting on the 17th July 1948 to retain H. Cornelius's services and not to press for the removal of non-whites from the industry. The G.b.e.c. also decided

1. Minutes of Germiston Branch General Meeting, 22 March 1947. G.W.U. Collection; K. Meyer's evidence, 26 January 1949, p. 785, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 1 July 1948. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of the Combined Meeting of the C.E.C. and Executive Committee of the Germiston Branch in Germiston, 17 July 1948. G.W.U. Collection; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1146-1147; D. Hartwell's evidence, 18 May 1949, p. 2345.

3. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: K. Meyer's evidence, 1 February 1949, p. 841; J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, p. 1146

4. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 1 July 1948. G.W.U. Collection; K. Meyer's evidence, 26 January 1949, pp. 785-786, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

5. K. Meyer's evidence, 26 January 1949, pp. 793-795, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

that the Germiston branch would not participate in politics ¹.

In 1946 G.H. Van der Walt, who was about twenty-three years of age, began work in a Johannesburg clothing factory ². He held leftist views ³. He served on the c.e.c. during 1947 and in February 1948 was elected vice-president of the G.W.U. ⁴ By mid-1948 Van der Walt had become secretary of the Van Brandis branch of the I.P. ⁵

However, unknown to his contemporary associates, Van der Walt had previously been convicted (inter alia) of theft and assault with intent to murder. He had also been detained on several occasions for observation in mental asylums ⁶. His lack of a formal education was somewhat offset by his natural ability and intelligence ⁷.

Van der Walt's relations with the G.W.U. cadre began to sour for

1. Minutes of the Combined Meeting of the C.E.C. and Executive Committee of the Germiston Branch in Germiston, 17 July 1948. G.W.U. Collection. On the question of the removal of non-whites from the industry see p. 147.
2. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 123, 127. U.G. 16 1950.
3. Ibid., pars. 129-130; Hansard, Assembly Debates, vol. 65, 20 September 1948, col. 2804.
4. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 127. U.G. 16 1950.
5. G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 23 November 1948, p. 138, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.
6. Ibid., 22 November 1948, pp. 108-119, 24 November 1948, pp. 256-257.
7. Ibid., 24 November 1948, p. 200; Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 126. U.G. 16 1950.

unknown reasons in March/April 1948¹. In June 1948 the c.e.c. turned down Van der Walt's application for the post of national organiser, in part, on account of his fondness for the female sex².

On his application being rejected, Van der Walt covertly joined forces with Loubser while overtly continuing as a loyal leftist member of the G.W.U. leadership³. Van der Walt, who had been unemployed for some time, received a wage from the B.W.B.B.⁴ Loubser and Van der Walt surreptitiously commenced a campaign in Johannesburg against the G.W.U. leadership⁵. A number of sympathetic garment workers were brought into the fray to assist them⁶.

(II) The special general meeting

In 1946 whites constituted 54 percent, coloureds and asiatics 22,1 percent and blacks almost 24 percent of the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry's work-force⁷. The establishment of the number two branch of the G.W.U. remained a contentious issue

1. G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 23 November 1948, p. 146, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 133-134. U.G. 16 1950.

3. Ibid., pars. 129, 132.

4. J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1151-1153, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

5. Ibid., pp. 1153, 1178.

6. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: P.C. Moolman's evidence, 21 January 1949, pp. 646, 656, 661-663, 24 January 1949, pp. 690-691; H. de Wet's evidence, 5 May 1949, pp. 2171-2172.

7. See table 3 p. 11.

among the (white) members ¹.

The audience enthusiastically supported a member (Mrs. Delpert) at a Johannesburg general meeting in mid-July 1948 who expressed the view that the coloured and black workers should be removed from the industry. Delpert added that G.W.U. officials had earlier assured them that the coloured workers would be employed only for the duration of the war. Sachs reminded the audience that it was in their economic interests to support the non-white workers in the industry. He emphasised that he was not prepared to engage in "kaffer-koolie [i.e., racist] politics" and called for a vote of confidence in his leadership. The approximately three thousand strong audience overwhelmingly passed a motion of full confidence in the Sachs administration ². Van der Walt supported Sachs in the confidence motion ³.

A. Knoetze was an ardent opponent of the G.W.U. leadership who had made her views known at general meetings since 1944 ⁴. She was

1. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: D. Vosloo's evidence, 21 January 1949, p. 632; S.I. Ernst's evidence, 31 January 1949, p. 312.

2. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 15 July 1948. G.W.U. Collection; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: D. Vosloo's evidence, 20 January 1949, pp. 533-536, 21 January 1949, pp. 624-625; P.C. Moolman's evidence, 21 January 1949, pp. 653-654.

3. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 132. U.G. 16 1950.

4. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 13 July 1944, 7 June 1945, 9 July 1946, 17 February 1948 (Minute in the form of a statement). G.W.U. Collection; Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 84. U.G. 16 1950.

summoned before the c.e.c. for causing a disturbance at the mid-July 1948 general meeting ¹. A previous charge against her, a dubious allegation that she had defamed Sachs, was revived ². The c.e.c. convicted her on both charges and expelled her from the G.W.U. ³ It is unclear why the G.W.U. leadership decided to expel Knoetze. The two charges against her undoubtedly constituted a pretext to remove her from the Union.

In late July 1948 the G.W.U. leadership stumbled across a path which led to Van der Walt being unmasked as an intriguer against them ⁴. The c.e.c. duly charged Van der Walt with engaging in 'disruptive' (sic) activity and set a date for his disciplinary hearing ⁵.

Loubser and Van der Walt journeyed to Cape Town at the expense of the B.W.B.B. They held a discussion with Du Pisanie who was in Cape Town attending the parliamentary session. The two also visited the offices of the G.W.U.C.P. as Van der Walt wished to obtain an anti-Sachs pamphlet distributed by the Western Cape trade union on

1. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 89, 92. U.G. 16 1950.

2. Ibid., pars. 90-91, 110; E.S. Sachs to Freedman, 26 February 1948. G.W.U. Collection; Windram, Wainstein, Freedman and Co. to E.S. Sachs, 11 March 1948. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Windram, Wainstein, Freedman and Co., 8 April 1948. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 92, 112. U.G. 16 1950.

4. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: A. Maisels's statement, 23 November 1948, pp. 184-185; G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 23 November 1948, pp. 185-187.

5. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 137. U.G. 16 1950.

the Witwatersrand in late 1945¹.

Once the G.W.U. had initiated proceedings against him, Van der Walt came out openly against the Sachs administration. However, he denied that he had any connection with the E.W.B.B. He accused Sachs of being dictatorial and stated that while he did not favour the removal of non-white workers from the industry, he believed that whites and non-whites should be organised into separate trade unions. He would use a constitutional provision to obtain a special general meeting at which a motion of no confidence in the Sachs leadership would be moved².

Separate requisitions were circulated in Johannesburg and Germiston. The requisitions called for a special general meeting within fourteen days of their mutual date, the 9th August 1948. It is unclear when the requisitions were handed to the G.W.U. The Johannesburg and Germiston requisitions held thirty and seventy signatures respectively³.

A day or two PRIOR to Van der Walt's scheduled disciplinary hearing on the 14th August 1948 the G.W.U. distributed a pamphlet in which it promised to convene a special general meeting to consider a confidence motion in the Union's leadership. The membership was

1. J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1154-1156/7, 1194-1198, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. Die Transvaler, 7, 10, 30 August 1948; G.W.U. pamphlet, 12 August 1948. G.W.U. Collection.

3. A. Maisels's statement, 24 November 1948, pp. 218-219, 221-222, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

reminded that association "with people or organisations which have for their aim the disruption of the G.W.U." was prohibited. Van der Walt was to the G.W.U.'s "certain knowledge working hand in glove with the B.W.B.B." ¹.

Van der Walt attended his disciplinary hearing ². He was duly convicted of engaging in disruptive activity and expelled from the G.W.U. ³

By September 1948 the G.W.U. had announced that a penalty general meeting would be held at Johannesburg on the 16th September 1948 to hear reports on the arbitration (for the new industrial council agreement) and the expulsion of disrupters, and to consider a motion of confidence in the Union's leadership ⁴.

The Van der Walt group distributed pamphlets and held numerous meetings and factory meetings at Germiston, Johannesburg and in the suburbs ⁵. The speakers at the meetings included Van der Walt,

1. G.W.U. pamphlet, 12 August 1948. G.W.U. Collection.

2. A. Maisels's statement, 23 November 1948, p. 184, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

3. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 140. U.G. 16 1950.

4. G.W.U. circular advertising the 16 September 1948 meeting, signed by A. Scheepers and E.S. Sachs. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Circular signed by G.H. Van der Walt and A. Knoetze. G.W.U. Collection; Die Transvaler, 3, 10, 11 September 1948; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: A. Knoetze's evidence, 19 January 1949, p. 453; J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1156/7-1159; A. Scheepers's evidence, 10 May 1949, p. 2277; G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 24 November 1948, pp. 223-224.

Knoetze and Nagel (of the South African Iron and Steel Trades Association)¹. While Loubser provided much organisational assistance, he did not address any meetings². K. Meyer addressed Van der Walt group meetings in Germiston. The Germiston members were urged to attend the general meeting³.

The G.W.U. leadership viewed the efforts to mobilise the Germiston membership with increasing alarm. In a G.W.U. circular dated the 13th September 1948 the Germiston membership was cautioned against leaving work early to attend the general meeting as no arrangements had been made with the Germiston manufacturers. The members were warned that a worker who left work early without her employer's permission faced severe penalties including summary dismissal from her job. The circular added that according to the constitution every branch managed its own affairs, and that the hall could not accommodate all the Witwatersrand members⁴.

When his attention was drawn to the circular K. Meyer separately approached Scheepers and H. Cornelius in an unsuccessful attempt to

1. Die Transvaler, 3, 10, 11 September 1948; A. Hepple, op. cit., p. 56; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 24 November 1948, pp. 223-224; A. Knoetze's evidence, 19 January 1949, pp. 448-450, 453; K. Meyer's evidence, 2 February 1949, pp. 848-849. There is no evidence that Knoetze was associated with Van der Walt prior to her expulsion.

2. J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1156/7-1159, 1178, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

3. Die Transvaler, 3 September 1948, 11 September 1948; M. Begg's evidence, 2 March 1949, p. 1402, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

4. Circular addressed to the garment workers of Germiston, 13 September 1948, signed by A. Scheepers and E.S. Sachs. G.W.U. Collection.

obtain permission to hold a Germiston branch general meeting on the 15th September 1948¹. K. Meyer went ahead and convened a general meeting for the 15th September 1948. H. Cornelius issued a pamphlet in which she explained that the meeting had not been called by the G.W.U.²

A few hundred members attended the Germiston general meeting organised by K. Meyer. The meeting passed a motion of no confidence in Sachs, Scheepers and H. Cornelius. It was also decided that the Germiston members would attend the Johannesburg meeting³.

The Johannesburg general meeting was scheduled to begin at 5 P.M.⁴ Only approximately two hundred Germiston members caught a special train organised by Loubser which enabled them - at least some of whom were able to complete a full day's work - to make the Johannesburg meeting more or less on time⁵. However, when the Germiston contingent arrived at the meeting at about 5.20 P.M. they

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1. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: K. Meyer's evidence, 25 January 1949, p. 757; J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, p. 1159; A. Scheepers's evidence, 11 May 1949, p. 2289.
 2. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: K. Meyer's evidence, 25 January 1949, pp. 757-758; S.C. Snyman van Heerden's evidence, 2 February 1949, p. 861.
 3. Die Transvaler, 16 September 1948; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: S.C. Snyman van Heerden's evidence, 2 February 1949, p. 861; L.C. Scheepers's evidence, 16 February 1949, p. 1108; J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, p. 1160; H. de Wet's evidence, 9 May 1949, pp. 2208-2211.
 4. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 183. U.G. 16 1950.
 5. Ibid., pars. 183, 391; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: A. Maisels's statement, 23 November 1948, p. 145; K. Meyer's evidence, 25 January 1949, p. 759; J. Loubser's evidence, 22 February 1949, pp. 1200-1201; M. Begg's evidence, 2 March 1949, p. 1403; A. Scheepers's evidence, 10 May 1949, p. 2280.

found the doors closed and were refused admission ¹.

Nagel, Loubser and J.C.B. Schoeman (the acting chief of the R.D.B.) were among the crowd of bystanders which had gathered outside the hall ². Van der Walt addressed the crowd in a provocative manner ³. The crowd pushed against the doors ⁴.

The arbitration award was like the curate's egg ⁵. The motion of confidence was the first matter on the agenda to be considered by the meeting which was attended by approximately three thousand members ⁶. Approximately seventy-three members voted in favour of a motion of no-confidence in the Sachs leadership ⁷.

1. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 183, 395. U.G. 16 1950.

2. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 24 November 1948, p. 213; A. Knoetze's evidence, 19 January 1949, pp. 448-449; J.C.B. Schoeman's evidence, 23 February 1949, pp. 1252-1253, 24 February 1949, p. 1315.

3. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 398-399. U.G. 16 1950.

4. Ibid., par. 395.

5. The arbitrators had granted a forty hour work-week but had declined to grant an increase in wages or to give the green light for the establishment of a provident fund for the workers. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1948.

6. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 16 September 1948. G.W.U. Collection; Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, par. 401. U.G. 16 1950.

7. M. Hart's statement, 2 March 1949, p. 1402, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

The general clamour outside the hall caused by the struggle to gain entry to the meeting resulted in numerous members of the audience becoming hysterical ¹. After the confidence vote Scheepers prematurely closed the meeting ². The doors were opened and limited clashes occurred between the opposing groups ³. Nagel and K. Meyer, among others, subsequently addressed a crowd outside the hall ⁴.

C. The Germiston Branch and the Garment
 Workers' Union Commission of Enquiry

The following day at lunchtime K. Meyer led approximately one thousand members to the Germiston branch office to demand a branch general meeting. The branch staff initially refused to open their office door but H. Cornelius eventually agreed to draw up a requisition for a branch general meeting ⁵.

The c.e.c. at a lunchtime meeting that day resolved to dissolve the G.b.e.c. and despatched J. Breytenbach to deliver the dissolution letter to K. Meyer. Breytenbach returned to Johannesburg with the requisition which held approximately ninety-five signatures ⁶.

No branch general meeting was ever organised by the c.e.c. in

1. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 395-396. U.G. 16 1950.

2. Ibid., pars. 401-402.

3. Ibid., pars. 401-407.

4. K. Meyer's evidence, 2 February 1949, p. 848, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

5. Ibid., 25 January 1949, pp. 762-763.

6. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 210-211. U.G. 16 1950; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: K. Meyer's evidence, 25 January 1949, p. 763; J. Breytenbach's evidence, 28 March 1949, p. 1904.

response to the requisition ¹. An unofficial branch general meeting was held on the 22nd September 1948. K. Meyer emphasised at the meeting that the Germiston members would not hive off from the G.W.U. A motion was passed thanking B. Schoeman (now Minister of Labour) for the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the G.W.U. (discussed below). The meeting elected a branch chairman (K. Meyer), secretary and executive committee ².

Although requested by both Van der Walt and the G.W.U. the police authorities had declined to provide police protection for the 16th September 1948 meeting ³. Scheepers wired the Minister of Justice after the meeting. She requested him to institute a public enquiry (inter alia) into why the Johannesburg police had refused to provide police protection for the meeting and why a special train had been placed at the disposal of the Germiston membership ⁴.

While the Minister of Justice declined to take any steps in the matter, B. Schoeman announced the appointment of a commission of enquiry. The commission was to inquire into the disturbance at the meeting, the circumstances which gave rise to the disturbance, and the administration and affairs of the G.W.U. (in particular, the suspension and expulsion of members and the administration of the Union's funds) ⁵.

1. K. Meyer's evidence, 25 January 1949, p. 763, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. Die Transvaler, 23 September 1948.

3. M. Zimmerman's statement, 17 March 1949, p. 1688, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1949.

5. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, p. 1. U.G. 16 1950.

During the parliamentary debate in which he announced the appointment of the commission, B. Schoeman recalled a 1948 general election canvassing visit to Van der Walt's home. Schoeman described Van der Walt as "not only ... extremely left labour but more communistically inclined than Sachs" ¹. In an interview with Die Transvaler Van der Walt explained that as a loyal member of the L.P. he had been obliged to defend the ultra-left group in the Party. He had never shared such views and his sympathy now lay with the N.P. ²

The G.W.U. engaged in a preliminary legal skirmish and Van der Walt, during the latter half of November 1948, was the first witness to give evidence relevant to the commission's terms of reference ³. The G.W.U.'s counsel, A. Maisels, immediately exposed the former vice president's criminal and mentally unstable past ⁴. Van der Walt was duly eased out of the anti-G.W.U. leadership struggle.

1. Hansard Assembly Debates, vol. 65, 20 September 1948, col. 2804.

2. Die Transvaler, 22 September 1948.

3. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 18-20. U.G. 16 1950.

4. G.H. Van der Walt's evidence, 22 November 1948, pp. 108-119, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

CHAPTER XVI

UNDER A NATIONAL PARTY GOVERNMENT

A. The Struggle Continues

The G.W.U. suffered harassment during 1949. The G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry continued its investigations into the administration and affairs of the G.W.U. The N.P. government refused to issue passports to and withdrew passports from a number of G.W.U. leaders (white and coloured) ¹. The government also declined to publish the industrial council agreement (which embodied the September 1948 arbitration award). The authorities objected, in part, to the closed shop provision in the industrial council agreement ².

The T.C.M.A.'s members adhered to the provisions of the unpublished industrial council agreement. An industrial council agreement was published in early 1950 ³. Although the published agreement contained no closed shop provision, the T.C.M.A.'s members apparently continued to deduct G.W.U. dues from all the eligible workers. A

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1949, July/August 1949, September/October 1949; Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 4 June 1949. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Re Publication of Industrial Agreement. Ex Parte G.W.U. Opinion by S. Kentridge, 10 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Secretary for Labour, 10 May 1949. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minutes of Special Meeting of G.W.U.C.E.C., 21 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

qualified closed shop provision was restored to the industrial council agreement in 1951. In terms of the new closed shop provision a G.W.U. member who resigned or was expelled from the Union could continue in her employment ¹.

Separate action committees, which were opposed to the G.W.U. leadership, were established in Johannesburg and Germiston in late 1948 ². The action committees consisted of members and expelled members (i.e., Knoetze and Van der Walt) of the G.W.U. ³

The Germiston action committee was under the chairmanship of K. Meyer and possibly comprised the unofficial G.b.e.c. which had been elected at the 22nd September 1948 meeting ⁴. The Germiston action committee was more active than its Johannesburg counterpart during 1949 ⁵. The G.W.U. resorted to a mixture of financial bribery and a threat to expose his family as 'play whites' - i.e., coloureds masquerading as whites - in a largely abortive attempt to induce Meyer to halt his opposition activity ⁶.

1. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 13 August 1951. G.W.U. Collection.

2. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: D. Vosloo's evidence, 21 January 1949, p. 587; S.E. Snyman van Heerden's evidence, 2 February 1949, pp. 871-872; K. Meyer's evidence, 2 February 1949, p. 848.

3. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: A. Knoetze's evidence, 19 January, 1949, p. 429; D. Vosloo's evidence, 21 January 1949, p. 583; P.C. Moolman's evidence, 24 January 1949, pp. 707-708; S.I. Ernst's evidence, 31 January 1949, pp. 824-825.

4. Circular issued by the Action Committee, 29 August 1949, signed by K. Meyer, W. Van der Nest and C. Spies. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Ibid.; Minutes of G.W.U. Germiston Branch General Meeting, 30 August 1949. G.W.U. Collection.

6. Report of the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry, pars. 289-293, 297-308. U.G. 16 1950.

By the close of 1949 the Johannesburg action committee had ceased to function. However, it would appear that the Vigilance Committee which emerged with the new year was the lineal descendant of the Germiston action committee. The G.W.U. leadership reluctantly accepted the presence of an opposition group in the Union and on occasion during 1950 allowed representatives of the Vigilance Committee (who were often shop stewards) to address shop stewards meetings ¹.

The G.W.U. leadership moved to restrict the ability of the opposition members to oppose the Union's administration. The G.W.U. convened a general come special general meeting at Johannesburg for the 18th February 1950. Sachs's terms of office was due to expire and a general secretary was to be elected at the general meeting. The special general meeting would consider three proposed constitutional amendments (i.e., that attendance at Johannesburg general/special meetings be limited to members either resident or employed in the city, that the minimum support for a requisitioned general meeting be increased from twenty members to a quarter of the membership, and that a national congress comprising delegates from all the G.W.U.'s branches be empowered to amend the constitution) ².

Loubser (now organising-secretary of Die Ko-ordinerende Raad van

1. Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 11 February 1950, 19 August 1950, 23 September 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

2. E.S. Sachs to Registrar of Trade Unions, 3 January 1950. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 11 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection. The constitutional amendments have been discussed in part at pp. 33-34.

Suid Afrikaanse Vakverenigings) was closely associated with the Vigilance Committee ¹. Knoetze may have been employed as an organiser of Die Ko-ordinerende Raad van Suid Afrikaanse Vakverenigings.

Loubser denied a rumour that he would oppose Sachs for the post of general secretary. He stated that the election was by a hand vote and that the hall which could only accommodate a portion of the membership was "packed" at election meetings with G.W.U. leadership supporters. Consequently, the "anti-communist" opposition would not contest the election ².

A week before the 18th February 1950 meeting two representatives of the Vigilance Committee addressed a shop stewards meeting and submitted a petition signed by approximately fifty members. The petition requested that the general secretary and president be elected by a ballot of all the (white) members. The two representatives were informed that the constitution made provision only for elections at general meetings ³.

Loubser and Knoetze addressed members in Germiston and urged them to arrive outside the hall well before the meeting's scheduled commencement time (the 18th February 1950 was a Saturday) ⁴. Loubser and Knoetze arrived at the hall well before the meeting was scheduled to begin. Knoetze addressed their supporters and instructed them to

1. Die Transvaler, 15 February 1950.

2. Ibid.; Die Vaderland, 15 February 1950.

3. Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 11 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 13 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

4. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 13, 20, 27 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

support a motion that the general secretary be elected by a ballot of all the (white) members ¹. It is uncertain why this initiative was pursued in the light of the answer received by the two representatives of the Vigilance Committee.

Approximately two thousand members attended the meeting. The motion that the general secretary be elected by a ballot of all the (white) members was proposed by a representative of the Vigilance Committee, a Mrs. De Swardt (Moll's sister). Sachs parried the motion. He acknowledged that it was a reasonable demand. However, he pointed out that it required a constitutional amendment and promised to bring it before the proposed national congress ².

As Sachs was the only candidate for the post the election took on the form of a motion of confidence in his administration. Approximately fifteen members opposed Sachs's re-election as general secretary. The three constitutional amendments were unanimously approved by the meeting ³. After the meeting clashes occurred between Sachs's supporters and opponents ⁴.

The industrial registrar refused to register the amendment which

1. Die Vaderland, 18 February 1950.
2. Die Transvaler, 20 February 1950; Die Vaderland, 20 February 1950; W. de Swardt's evidence, 14 March 1949, pp. 1582-1583, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.
3. Die Transvaler, 20 February 1950; Die Vaderland, 20 February 1950; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1950; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 20 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection.
4. Die Transvaler, 20 February 1950; Die Vaderland, 20 February 1950; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1950.

sought to limit attendance at Johannesburg general/special meetings to members either resident or employed in the city ¹. The G.W.U. eventually obtained the registration of an amendment which increased the minimum support for a requisitioned general meeting to a thousand members ². The national congress amendment has been discussed elsewhere ³.

B. The Suppression of Communism Act

During mid-1950 the G.W.U. leadership strenuously opposed the introduction of the Suppression of Communism Act ⁴. K. Meyer and another garment worker, on the other hand, organised a meeting in a Germiston park which adopted a motion of full confidence in the Minister of Justice ⁵.

Sachs had successfully resorted to judicial procedure to regain his passport which the administration had earlier withdrawn ⁶.

Sachs spent three months in Europe during which time he attended the British Commonwealth Conference of Trade Unions as an elected T. & L.C.

1. Secretary of Labour to E.S. Sachs, 17 February 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 8 October 1951. G.W.U. Collection.

3. See pp. 33-34.

4. Minutes of C.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 15 May 1950, 5, 12, 19 June 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Ibid., 19 June 1950.

6. Judgment of Watermeyer C.J., delivered 14 March 1950, E.S. Sachs vs. Donges, No., A.D., South African Law Reports, 1950, vol. 2, p. 265.

delegate, gave a number of interviews, and wrote several articles for British newspapers ¹.

In mid-July 1950 the c.e.c. discussed Sachs's position in the G.W.U. J. Cornelius, the acting general secretary, argued that it was futile to ask Sachs to return to South Africa as the N.P. government would prevent him in some way from continuing his G.W.U. duties. However, the c.e.c. reaffirmed an earlier decision that Sachs was to return in August 1950 to assist them with the arbitration for a new industrial council agreement ².

Shortly after his return to South Africa in early September 1950 Sachs was threatened with "listing" under the Suppression of Communism Act ³. The coloured organiser of the number two branch, H. du Preez, was also threatened with "listing" under the Act ⁴. The government, however, halted its general activity under the Act until the Act could be strengthened and loopholes closed. For example, there was some doubt as to the retrospective character of the Act ⁵.

Renewed efforts were made to mobilise the membership against

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1. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 2 May 1950. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1950.
 2. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 17 July 1950. G.W.U. Collection.
 3. Ibid., 11 September 1950; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1950, November/December 1950.
 4. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 18 September 1950, 25 September 1950. G.W.U. Collection.
 5. Judgment of De Villiers J.P., delivered 17 November 1950, Kahn vs. Louw, No. and Another, C.P.D., South African Law Reports, 1951, vol. 2, p. 194.

the G.W.U. leadership¹. Garment workers were invited to attend a meeting in Germiston in early September 1950. According to the G.W.U. the meeting was addressed by Du Pisanie, S. Botha (of the N.R.T.), and F. de Wet (of the M.W.U.). The prospective general secretary of the G.W.U., a Mr. G.L.H. van Niekerk, was introduced to the meeting². Van Niekerk, it will be recalled, was the assistant-secretary of the A.B.'s executive committee³.

An action committee was apparently established by Van Niekerk in April 1950. Van Niekerk became secretary of the action committee⁴.

A G.W.U. general meeting was convened at Johannesburg for the 19th March 1951. A president, vice-president and c.e.c. were to be elected for a three year term of office at the general meeting. A firm of auditors was hired to supervise the election⁵.

The action committee complained in a press release that the early scheduled commencement time of the general meeting prevented the Germiston, Benoni and Kempton Park members from participating in the election. The action committee added that although it had declined to nominate any candidates, a number of garment workers who supported the action committee were contesting the election in an

1. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 25 September 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Ibid., 11 September 1950.

3. A.N. Pelzer, op. cit., p. 154.

4. For the action committee see p. 89.

5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1951.

The three year period had to be approved by the general meeting. See p. 41.

'unofficial capacity'. It urged all the members who supported the action committee to attend the general meeting ¹. Sachs replied in a press statement that the meeting's agenda had been so arranged that even if the Germiston members arrived a little late, they would be able to participate in the election ².

Although Scheepers and M. Begg were not opposed for the positions of president and vice-president respectively, the nomination of an unusually large number of candidates (fifty-one) for the twenty seats on the c.e.c. suggest an organised take-over attempt by the action committee ³. Much to the G.W.U. leadership's chagrin, the auditors permitted Van Niekerk and Knoetze to observe the ballot papers being counted ⁴. Despite all these efforts the elected c.e.c. remained firmly in the Sachs camp ⁵.

1. Die Vaderland, 16 March 1951.

2. Press Statement by E.S. Sachs, 27 March 1951. G.W.U. Collection; Reply to Die Transvaler by E.S. Sachs, 12 March 1951. G.W.U. Collection.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1951.

4. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 27 March 1950. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Ibid.

CHAPTER XVII

E. S. SACHS FALLS VICTIM TO THE
SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM ACT

Mid-1952 found South Africa in a tense political climate. Besides non-white unrest and agitation, the government's attempt to violate the constitution in an endeavour to remove the Cape coloured from the common voters roll caused tension in the white community. A United Front comprising the L.P., U.P. and the Torch Commando sought to build up a momentum which would sweep the N.P. government out of office at the forthcoming general election. Marches of the Torch Commando, and unruly meetings were the order of the day ¹.

The Suppression of Communism Act as amended in 1951 was used by the N.P. government both to remove militant trade unionists from their posts and to intimidate others to toe the line. Although they were both threatened by the administration with "listing" under the Act, neither Scheepers nor J. Cornelius was ever "listed" ².

On the 19th May 1952 Sachs was informed that his name had been "listed" in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. He was instructed to resign his post as general secretary within thirty days.

1. See the Rand Daily Mail and Die Transvaler for the period.

2. Louw, Liquidator to A. Scheepers, 26 September 1951. G.W.U. Collection; Jansen, Secretary for Justice to General Secretary, G.W.U., 25 January 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Louw, Liquidator to J. Cornelius, 27 February 1952, 23 April 1952, 29 October 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 4 May 1953, 22 June 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

With some exceptions he was immediately prohibited for a period of two years from attending any gathering in South Africa. He was permitted to attend only gatherings of a "bona fide religious, recreational or social nature". On the expiration of the thirty day grace period he was prohibited from engaging in any G.W.U. activity and restricted to the Transvaal for two years ¹.

Sachs addressed a number two branch and a white shop stewards meeting on the 20th May 1952. The number two branch shop stewards meeting endorsed the white meeting's resolution that a protest strike be held in the industry. However, the number two branch meeting deleted the words "one day strike" from the resolution as several of the shop stewards considered that the strike should last at least a week. The two shop stewards meetings also resolved to hold a protest meeting at the Johannesburg city hall steps on the Saturday morning ².

Sachs approached an advocate for advice and was informed that there was some doubt as to the validity of his listing order (e.g., how could Sachs continue his G.W.U. activity for thirty days if he was prohibited from attending any Union meeting?) ³. The

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1952.

2. Ibid.; Minutes of Special Emergency Meeting of Shop Stewards of the G.W.U., 20 May 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Rand Daily Mail, 21 May 1952.

3. Minutes of Special Meeting of G.W.U.C.E.C., 20 May 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Judgment of Centlivres C.J., delivered 12 December 1952, E.S. Sachs vs. Rex, A.D., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1953, p. 4.

administration informed Sachs's attorney on the Saturday morning that Sachs could participate in G.W.U. meetings during his grace period ¹.

It is uncertain whether Sachs was aware of the administration's concession when he attended the Saturday morning protest meeting. The meeting was attended by between eight and twelve thousand white and non-white garment workers, public supporters and bystanders. The speakers at the meeting included H. Davidoff (a L.P. M.P.) and S. Tighy (a U.P. M.P.). As soon as Sachs attempted to address the meeting he was arrested and hustled away. The crowd grew incensed and the police charged them with batons. Numerous people were injured ². Sachs was released from custody that evening and

1. Judgment of Centlivres C.J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1953, p. 6.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1952; The Star, 24 May 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 26 May 1952.

The militant chairman of the number two branch, J. Phillips, later complained that the number two branch executive committee had not been consulted about the meeting. He opposed such multi-racial meetings. Problems might have arisen as a number of his members had wished to have speakers from their branch on the platform (he apparently assumed that the white garment workers would have objected to non-white speakers). Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 26 May 1952. G.W.U. Collection. This cautious approach contrasted sharply with Phillips's general political activities. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 18 August 1952. G.W.U. Collection.

instructed to appear in court on the Monday morning ¹.

The c.e.c. met in special session immediately after the protest meeting and decided to hold a protest strike in the industry on the Monday ². The strike brought the Johannesburg, Kimberley and Port Elizabeth industries to a halt but most of the Germiston factories remained open ³. The Minister of Economic Affairs, E. Louw, subsequently rebuked those manufacturers who had closed their factories during the one day "political" strike notwithstanding that some of their employees had been prepared to work. Such manufacturers, warned Louw, should not come to him for import permits ⁴.

The white and non-white members assembled at different places in Johannesburg on the morning of the strike. Sachs's case was remanded till June 1952 and Sachs went immediately to the city hall steps. As soon as he attempted to address the crowd of approximately eight thousand (white) members and bystanders he was rearrested and was obliged to spend the night in jail ⁵. A G.W.U. delegation failed to persuade the government to rescind Sachs's listing order ⁶.

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1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1952.
 2. Minutes of Special Meeting of G.W.U.C.E.C., 24 May 1952. G.W.U. Collection.
 3. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 26 May 1952, 6 June 1952. G.W.U. Collection; The Star, 24 May 1952, 26 May 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 26 May 1952, 27 May 1952; Die Transvaler, 6 June 1952.
 4. Die Transvaler, 9 June 1952.
 5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 27 May 1952, 29 May 1952.
 6. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1952.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court eventually conditionally suspended for three years the Magistrate Court's sentence of six months hard labour imposed on Sachs for the contravention of his listing order. The Appellate Division held (inter alia) that mass G.W.U. meetings did not fall within the ambit of the administration's concession, and that in any event the city hall step meetings had been public ones ¹. Sachs left South Africa for exile in Britain.

On Sachs's removal from office, the action committee engaged in an organisational campaign which lasted for about two months. Petitions were circulated among the Johannesburg and Germiston garment workers. The petitions supported the Minister of Justice's action against "communist" trade unionists; called for the establishment of a white garment workers' trade union; requested the Minister of Labour to supervise G.W.U. elections and not to register the G.W.U.'s new constitution ². The action committee held a few meetings in Johannesburg and Germiston ³.

The action committee called for the establishment of a white garment workers' trade union and for the removal of the G.W.U.'s

1. Judgment of Centlivres C.J., op. cit., quoted in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1953, pp. 6-7.

2. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 16, 23, 30 June 1952, 21 July 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Die Transvaler, 13 June 1952, 30 June 1952; Petition dated June 1952. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 23 June 1952, 21 July 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Report on Meeting of Anti-Communist Garment Workers at Braamfontein, 19 July 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Die Transvaler, 21 July 1952.

leadership. It warned against the growing influence of the non-white members in the G.W.U. If the non-whites were restricted to the unskilled work in the industry there would be no danger of a separate non-white trade union undercutting their wage rates ¹.

1. Die Transvaler, 5 July 1952, 21 July 1952, 16 August 1952; Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 5 August 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 23 June 1952. G.W.U. Collection; Circular issued by C.L.H. van Niekerk advertising a meeting at Braamfontein on 19 July 1952. G.W.U. Collection.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GARMENT WORKERS' UNION 1953 ELECTION

The Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry experienced economic difficulty during 1953¹. In October 1952 there were 8 232 whites, 6 140 coloureds and asiatics, and 2 817 black women employed in the industry². Many of the white workers had been employed in the industry for a considerable period³. The G.W.U.'s non-Witwatersrand membership was predominantly non-white⁴.

The G.W.U.'s new constitution was registered in February 1953⁵. The c.e.c., which had been elected under the 1937 constitution, retained its authority until the national council elected a new c.e.c.⁶ The c.e.c. delimited the Witwatersrand industry into a

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1952, November/December 1952, January/February 1953.

2. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 329-330 table XXX.

3. "Report by the Wage Board to the Minister of Labour on the Clothing Industry, Union of South Africa", dated 1 May 1956, p. 19. An. 704 1956.

4. There are no employment figures according to race available for the early 1950's. For employment figures according to race in 1946 and 1955 see H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 289-290 table XXVII.

5. Constitution of the Garment Workers' Union of South Africa. Approved by the Industrial Registrar on the 13th February 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

6. Ibid., sec. 6(5) E.

number of regions. In each region a number one and two branch for white and non-white members respectively were established ¹. The non-Witwatersrand branches remained as they were.

The c.e.c. decided that for the first election under the new constitution, the president in addition to the general secretary would be elected by a ballot of all the members ². Each branch executive committee was permitted to nominate a maximum of two candidates for each post ³. With the exception of the Germiston/East Rand number one branch (G/E.R.n.I), the incumbents (J. Cornelius and Scheepers) were the only candidates nominated by the branches. The G./E.R.n.I nominated four candidates for the two positions: J. Cornelius and G.L.H. van Niekerk for the post of general secretary, and Scheepers and K. Meyer for the post of president. Van Niekerk and Meyer had received less support than the incumbents when the G./E.R.n.I executive committee had voted to elect the branch's candidates for the election ⁴.

A firm of auditors was hired to conduct the election ⁵. The election roughly coincided with the April 1953 general election. The G.W.U. election was staggered and the ballot was held at various

1. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 16 March 1953, 23 March 1953. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of Special Joint Meeting of G.W.U.C.E.C. and the Number Two Branch Executive Committee, 28 February 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1953.

3. Constitution of the Garment Workers' Union of South Africa. Approved by the Industrial Registrar on the 13th February 1953, sec. 8(1). G.W.U. Collection.

4. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 20 March 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

5. Ibid.

places at different times ¹.

Meyer and Van Niekerk must have appreciated that with no non-white candidates to split the vote they had very little prospect of unseating the incumbents. Meyer had grave reservations about the election generally on account of the multi-racial franchise ².

Van Niekerk stated during his election campaign that he was a member of the N.P. He warned of the danger of coloured ascendancy in the G.W.U. He supported the establishment of separate trade unions for whites and non-whites ³.

The pro-apartheid Transvaalse Kleurling Volksbond had been active among the coloured members on the Witwatersrand and in Kimberley during the latter half of 1952 ⁴. It is highly unlikely that this largely unknown coloured body's organisational activity resulted in coloureds supporting Meyer and Van Niekerk in the election. In Kimberley, for example, Meyer and Van Niekerk polled three votes each in the election ⁵. Although the election results on the Witwatersrand were given per region and not per branch, it is safe to assume that Van Niekerk and Meyer drew their support exclusively from the (white) membership.

1. Ibid., 20 March 1953, 7, 13, 27 April 1953.

2. Minutes of G./E.R.N.I Executive Committee Meeting, 12 March 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Die Transvaler, 20, 26, 31 March 1953; Report on Meeting Held by G.L.H. van Niekerk in Germiston on 30 March 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

4. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 18 August 1952, 25 August 1952, 2 September 1952, 22 September 1952. G.W.U. Collection.

5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1953.

Scheepers and Cornelius easily defeated their opponents in the G.W.U. election: Scheepers polled 13 029 votes to Meyer's 3 569 while Cornelius polled 12 970 votes to Van Niekerk's 3 679¹. The incumbents gained virtually all the non-Witwatersrand votes².

A solid majority of the (white) members of the G./E.R.n.I gave their support to Meyer and Van Niekerk³. However, Meyer and Van Niekerk failed to obtain the support of the bulk of the white members on the Witwatersrand⁴. The results indicate that the

1. Ibid.

2. For example:

East London branch

J. Cornelius 82

G.L.H. van Niekerk 3

Port Elizabeth branch

A. Scheepers 1 226

K. Meyer 9

Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 20 April 1953, 27 April 1953. G.W.U. Collection. The clothing factories in Potchefstroom and Bloemfontein had ceased operations.

3. The Germiston/East Rand region result was:

G.L.H. van Niekerk 1 135

J. Cornelius 736

K. Meyer 1 112

A. Scheepers 775

Minutes of the G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 7 April 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

While the position in the East Rand industry is unknown, there were probably less than 150 black females and coloureds employed in the Germiston industry. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., p. 320.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1953; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 7, 13, 27 April 1953. G.W.U. Collection.

The percentage poll of the white garment workers on the Witwatersrand is, of course, unknown.

incumbents would have been hard pressed to defeat their opponents in a 'whites only' election on the Witwatersrand. It is doubtful whether Meyer and Van Niekerk would have drawn the same support if the non-white members had not been enfranchised.

PART FOUR

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE GARMENT
WORKERS' UNION

CHAPTER XIX

INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis examines the L.P.'s Afrikaner support base in detail (the major findings have been summarised earlier in the thesis) ¹. Attention is also focused on the L.P.'s relations with the trade union movement in general and the G.W.U. in particular; and on the G.W.U.'s activities in white class politics generally.

Little attention is paid to the L.P.'s English speaking supporters, and the study must not be construed as an attempt to explain the 'rise and fall' of the L.P.

1. See p. 90.

CHAPTER XX

THE LABOUR PARTY: 1920 - 1939

A. The Pact Government and the Labour Party Split

The L.P., which advocated a white supremacist policy, drew its support during the 1920's from the urbanised Anglophone working class in general and from the English speaking artisans in particular. The L.P. won twenty-one seats in the 1920 general election and nine in the 1921 general election ¹.

The 1922 Witwatersrand miners' strike arose primarily over an attempt to replace a portion of the white miners with (cheap) black labour. The strike and related events served as the catalyst for the L.P.-N.P. electoral pact which was negotiated in a determined effort to unseat the S.A.P. administration ². The electoral pact parties secured a majority of seats in the 1924 general election and formed a coalition government. The S.A.P. won fifty-two seats, the N.P. sixty-three and the L.P. eighteen (two Cape, three Natal, one Orange Free State and twelve Transvaal) ³.

1. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 95, 124.

2. E.A. Walker, A History of South Africa, pp. 583-586; A.G. Barlow, Almost in Confidence, pp. 177-178; T. Boydell, 'My Luck Was in', with Spotlights on General Smuts, pp. 191-205.

3. A.G. Barlow, op. cit., pp. 177, 187-188; B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., p. 144.

The W.T.A. was affiliated to the L.P. from 1925 until just before the end of the decade ¹. The second half of the 1920's saw the L.P. racked by internal dissension. A term of the electoral alliance had been that the N.P. would refrain from attempting to bring about a republic. However, the pact government's compromise of the British 'connection' - e.g., the flag issue - caused tension in the L.P. Personal animosities arose among the L.P. M.P.'s over the sharing of the plums of government; and the L.P.'s national executive demanded that the Party's parliamentary caucus accept its directives in parliament ².

The L.P. split into two warring factions in 1928. The two factions contested the 1929 general election as separate groups. In mid-1931 the two factions came together and unsuccessfully called upon Creswell and Sampson - of the L.P. faction with whom the N.P. had continued the electoral pact in the 1929 general election - to resign their ministerial posts ³.

1. The Star, 25 March 1925; E.S. Sachs's evidence, 10 February 1949, pp. 1029-1030, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

2. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 348-349; I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., pp. 323-324; A.G. Barlow, op. cit., pp. 177, 188-191, 207-208; M. Kentridge, I Recall, Memoirs of Morris Kentridge, pp. 152-154; M. Creswell, An Epoch of the Political History of South Africa in the Life of Frederic Hugh Page Creswell, pp. 109-118, 130-131.

3. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 348-351; I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., pp. 324-325; M. Kentridge, op. cit., pp. 156-157; M. Creswell, op. cit., pp. 131-139; Cape Times, 29 June 1931.

B.

A Limited Revival

The S.A.P. and the N.P. subsequently formed a coalition government, and entered into an electoral pact for the 1933 general election. In terms of the electoral pact the two parties would not oppose each other in constituencies ¹. The L.P. which propagated a policy of COMPLETE separation between white and black put up a credible performance in the eight seats it contested in the general election and won two ².

The internecine strife in the L.P. during the previous years left the Party organisationally weak and with few members ³. The rapid influx of Afrikaners into the urban areas continued to reduce the proportion of the Anglophone electorate in urban constituencies ⁴. A politically fluid situation was brought about by the N.P.-S.A.P. coalition government and the subsequent fusion of the two parties in mid-1934 and the formation of the breakaway N.P. ⁵. The L.P. struggled to capitalise on the opportunity and to adapt itself to meet the aspirations of the Afrikaner electorate. In December 1933 the L.P.'s annual conference injudiciously rejected a motion which acknowledged divine guidance in the affairs of men. Many Afrikaner

1. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 180-181, 185-202.

2. Ibid., pp. 185-202; Forward, 6 January 1933.

3. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 471.

4. Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission, pp. 13-14. U.G. 37 1935; S. Pauw, Die Beroepsarbeid van die Afrikaner in die Stad, pp. 127 table IX, 135.

5. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 176-181, 203-206.

(including several eminent) members resigned from the Party in protest and an initial press report put the figure at fifty-six¹. The L.P.'s traditional craft interests were in contradiction with the aspirations of the generally semi-skilled and unskilled Afrikaner workers who viewed the dilution of trades, etc., as a means to further their skills (and obtain wage increases).

The L.P. wished to be regarded as the political expression of the (white) labour movement. It sought to avoid co-operation with radical organisations such as the C.P. and was reluctant to submerge its identity among nebulous organisations and political parties. Hence, while it condemned fascism, the L.P. declined to participate - although a few of its branches did attend one conference - in the various anti-fascist conferences and campaigns organised through the T. & L.C.² The L.P. also refused to send delegates to a 'Workers' and People's Front' conference which was arranged by the T. & L.C. as a result of a successful motion by Sachs at the 1936 annual T. & L.C. conference. Although he denied it on occasion, Sachs envisaged a 'Farmers and Labour Party'

1. Cape Times, 15 January 1934; Forward, 5 January 1934, 19 January 1934.

2. Report of the First South African National Conference against Fascism and War, 19, 21 April 1935, Durban. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 22 July 1936. L.P. Collection; Minutes of Joint Meeting of the Executives of the L.P. and the T. & L.C., 23 August 1936. L.P. Collection; H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., pp. 471, 480-481; Cape Times, 6 October 1934, 31 December 1934.

arising out of the proposed all-white 'Workers' and People's Front'¹.
A conference was held but the Front immediately faded into oblivion².

The political flux of the period facilitated the L.P.'s success in two Witwatersrand parliamentary by-elections, one in early 1934 and the other in mid-1936³. The N.R.T. was established in late 1936. Its major objective was to wean the Afrikaner worker from the L.P.⁴

It was against this background of an attempt to divide the white workers on ethnic lines that the G.W.U. in early 1937 came out in full support of the L.P.⁵ Sachs simultaneously continued to push for unity and in an address to the L.P.n.e.c. called for unity in the labour movement and for the nomination of "industrial" candidates (i.e., not necessarily members of the L.P.)⁶. Early in 1938 a G.W.U. general meeting at Johannesburg overwhelmingly approved a motion in

1. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 April 1936, Cape Town, pp. 80-81, 83. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 7 July 1936. L.P. Collection; Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 25 September 1936. L.P. Collection; E. Roux to Editor, Forward, 3 April 1936; E.S. Sachs to Editor, Forward, 17 April 1936.

2. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 29, 30, 31 March, 1, 2 April 1937, Port Elizabeth, p. 58. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

3. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 214, 216. In late 1933 D. Burnside retained a Durban seat for the L.P. in a parliamentary by-election. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 189, 214.

4. See p. 78.

5. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March 1937, April 1937; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 29, 30, 31 March, 1, 2 April 1937, Port Elizabeth, p. 63. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

6. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 2 August 1937. L.P. Collection.

a ballot (652 to 36) to support L.P. candidates in the forthcoming general election ¹.

The trade union movement did not put its weight behind the L.P. in the 1938 general election ². Indeed, A.A. Moore, in his presidential address to the annual T. & L.C. conference in April 1938, called upon the workers to support the U.P. as the immediate issue confronting the workers was one of dictatorship versus democracy ³.

The L.P. continued to propagate a policy of complete separation between white and black ⁴. The general election underlined the L.P.'s peripheral role in a single member constituency, first-past-the-post, electoral system. In the Transvaal the L.P. contested twenty-three seats and obtained 9,3 percent of the total vote. The L.P. outpolled the N.P. in a number of Witwatersrand constituencies including several with a substantial mining electorate. The L.P. polled 8,9 percent of the total Natal vote. The L.P. returned three M.P.'s: two from the Witwatersrand (W. Madeley and M.J. Van den Berg), and one from Natal (the Rev. Miles Cadman). The U.P. won 111 seats, the Dominion Party 8, the Socialist Party 1 and the N.P.

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, December 1938, May/June 1942.

2. See Forward for the period generally.

3. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 April 1938, East London, pp. 12-13. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

The new T. & L.C.n.e.c. dissociated itself from Moore's statement. Forward, 13 May 1938.

4. Forward, 7 January 1938, 14 April 1938.

27¹.

The N.R.T. had opened its campaign against the M.W.U. in late 1936². During 1938 M.J. Van den Berg reversed his former defence of the M.W.U. and commenced a slashing attack on the constitutional practice and administration of the Union. He castigated the M.W.U. leadership for the extraordinary phthisis agreement negotiated by the Union³.

At the close of 1938 the Mining Unions' Joint Committee, which comprised the M.W.U. and several craft unions whose membership

1. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 216-237. In the Transvaal the N.P. contested forty-five seats, obtained 23,7 percent of the total vote and returned one M.P. The N.P. won twenty seats in the Cape and six in the Orange Free State. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 236-237.

The Socialist Party contested three seats and returned Burnside in his Durban constituency. Burnside duly rejoined the L.P. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 220, 236-237; See p. 183 footnote 3.

2. L. Naudé, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

3. Hansard, Assembly Debates: vol. 29, 8 April 1937, cols. 4447-4488, vol. 30, 29 April 1937, cols. 5732-5739, vol. 32, 9 September 1938, cols. 2507-2511; Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 29 December 1938. L.P. Collection; Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Sub-Committee Meeting, 5 January 1939. L.P. Collection; Die Transvaler, 29 November 1938; The Mine Worker, September 1938, November 1938.

During the early 1930's M.J. Van den Berg, then the East Rand organiser of the M.W.U., had been one of the few Afrikaners in the L.P. hierarchy. It was through lobbying by the M.W.U. that he obtained the L.P. nomination in the Krugersdorp parliamentary by-election in 1934. He won the seat for the L.P. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 9 February 1934. L.P. Collection; Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Adjourned Meeting, 16 February 1934. L.P. Collection.

extended to the mining industry, condemned M.J. Van den Berg's campaign as a flagrant interference in the domestic affairs of a trade union¹. The L.P.n.e.c. defended Van den Berg's strictures of the M.W.U. leadership and criticised the Mining Unions' Joint Committee's constituent trade unions for their lack of support for the L.P. Reference was made to Moore's (the general secretary of the Reduction Workers' Union) speech at the annual T. & L.C. conference just prior to the general election, and to J. Van den Berg (the president of the M.W.U.) who had appeared on the election platform of M.J. Van den Berg's N.P. opponent in the Krugersdorp constituency (sic)². The L.P.n.e.c. underlined its full - if perhaps reluctant - confidence in M.J. Van den Berg by electing him to the new positions of deputy chairman and deputy leader of the Party³. Trade unionists generally argued that M.J. Van den Berg's campaign assisted the Afrikaner nationalists in their endeavours to undermine the M.W.U. leadership⁴.

Afrikaner nationalists viewed the L.P.'s tentative move (it never went beyond this point) to challenge abuses in the trade union movement with alarm. The general election clearly indicated that future N.P. success in Witwatersrand working class constituencies depended, to an extent, on a weakening of the L.P.'s influence among

1. Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 23 December 1938. L.P. Collection.

2. Ibid., 29 December 1938; Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Sub-Committee Meeting, 5 January 1939. L.P. Collection; The Star, 11 May 1938.

3. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 11 January 1939. L.P. Collection.

4. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 April 1939, Kimberley, pp. 137, 140-141, 143. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; See also Amalgamated Engineering Union Monthly Report, June 1939.

the Afrikaner electorate. Miners who supported the N.R.T. undermined mining committees established by M.J. Van den Berg, and the period witnessed a campaign to win Afrikaner L.P. leaders to the N.P. Among the converts to the N.P. was Dr. V. Odendaal, the 1938 chairman of the L.P. in the Transvaal ¹.

The U.P. was deeply divided over the question of South Africa's participation in World War II. In September 1939 the Smuts faction of the U.P. supported by the L.P., Dominion Party and the three black representatives - by a majority of eighty votes to sixty-seven - obtained parliament's approval for the country's participation in the war on Britain's side. Smuts formed a coalition government with his faction of the U.P., the Dominion Party and the L.P. The L.P.'s representative in the cabinet was Madeley, who was appointed Minister of Labour ². The L.P.'s participation in the war coalition government compromised its socialist objectives and policy, and emphasised its British 'connection'. The result was undoubtedly a reduction in the L.P.'s Afrikaner support base.

1. See Die Transvaler generally for the period; L. Naudé, op. cit., p. 63; Forward, 20 January 1939; Cape Times, 9 January 1939, 13 January 1939.

2. M. Roberts & A.E.G. Trollip, op. cit., p. 20.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF ACTION

The G.W.U. cadre, in particular Hartwell, assisted in the establishment of the national Sweet Workers' Union (S.W.U.). Hartwell was a member of the S.W.U. cadre and the G.W.U. enjoyed much influence in S.W.U. affairs ¹.

A new Wage Board Recommendation for sweet workers was considered totally inadequate and the S.W.U. decided to despatch a delegation to the Minister of Labour, Madeley. The S.W.U. delegation met Madeley on the 6th December 1939 and urged him to publish the Recommendation for objection in the hope that the Wage Board would recommend increased wages in its objection report. Madeley declined to comply with the request and published the Recommendation as a Determination ².

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July 1937, February 1939; I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., p. 303; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 March 1940, Cape Town, p. 23. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of the G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 22 May 1940. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of Special Meeting of I.P.N.E.C., 9 February 1940. L.P. Collection; Minutes of I.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 17 February 1940. L.P. Collection. There were 'objection stage(s)' after the Wage Board's initial Recommendation. The employer organisations and trade unions in the industry concerned were given an opportunity to appear before the Wage Board to state their objections to the proposed Recommendation. After considering the objections the Wage Board made a final Recommendation to the Minister of Labour. See also p. 99.

Against this background the G.W.U. established a Trade Union Council of Action to campaign against the unsatisfactory Wage Board and for a decent minimum wage for all workers. Protest meetings were held at Brixton, Turffontein, Vrededorp, Fordsburg, etc.¹ A mass 'Trade Union Rally and Pageant for a Living Wage' was held at Johannesburg on the 22nd February 1940. Members of a number of trade unions and of the Bezuidenhout Valley and Berea-Yeoville branches of the L.P. participated in numerous satirical skits performed on the stage. The Rally was anti-war in character and in her address Hartwell emphasised that the workers had their own war to fight - a war for decent wages².

Sachs and Hartwell had meanwhile attended a L.P.n.e.c. meeting on the 9th February 1940 where the sweet workers issue was discussed. Sachs declared that "they" would fight Madeley to the bitter end.

1. Forward, 16 February 1940; Rand Daily Mail, 23 February 1940; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 31 January 1940, 14 February 1940. G.W.U. Collection; Affidavit by E.S. Sachs, 16 February 1940. G.W.U. Collection. The T. & L.C.n.e.c. later dissociated itself from the Trade Union Council of Action. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 30 April 1940. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.
2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, February 1940; Rand Daily Mail, 23 February 1940. The G.W.U.'s opposition to the war was based on the leftist rationale. The Union came out in full support of the war effort once the Soviet Union entered the war. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C.: 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 March 1940, Cape Town, pp. 67-71; 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 April 1942, Port Elizabeth, pp. 38-39. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 28 February 1940. G.W.U. Collection.

A number of the n.e.c. members felt that Sachs had good cause to feel aggrieved and a resolution was passed for the n.e.c. to meet Madeley on the question ¹. Madeley's own L.P. branch, Benoni, despatched a letter to the n.e.c. in which it condemned the Minister's conduct in publishing the Determination ².

When he met the L.P.n.e.c. delegation Madeley assured them that he did not consider the Determination's wage rates as adequate. He added that he had published the Determination in order to improve the wages in the industry. After a discussion Madeley undertook that a fresh Wage Board inquiry would be held in the industry within twelve months ³.

In March 1940 the L.P.n.e.c. resolved that the sweet workers controversy be cut short and that strong measures be adopted against members of the Party who supported the Trade Union Council of Action ⁴.

The Berea-Yeoville branch supported the Trade Union Council of Action and the branch's newsletter Advance implicitly both opposed South Africa's participation in the war and criticised Madeley for his conduct in regard to the Determination. It would appear that the branch was under the chairmanship of the leftist E.J. Burford,

1. Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 9 February 1940. L.P. Collection.

2. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 17 February 1940. L.P. Collection.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 11 March 1940.

the national secretary of the S.W.U.¹ The L.P.n.e.c. dissolved the Berea-Yeoville branch (whose members included Colin Legum) in June 1940². A Yeoville branch was established towards the end of 1941³.

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1. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Investigating Committee Meeting, 11 June 1940. L.P. Collection; Report of the Sub Committee Appointed by the L.P.N.E.C. to Inquire into Certain Alleged Improper Propaganda and Activities within the Party (n.d.). L.P. Collection.
 2. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 20 June 1940, 19 December 1940. L.P. Collection.
 3. Ibid., 20 November 1941.

CHAPTER XXII

THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

In early 1942 the L.P. launched a campaign to bring about co-operation between the L.P. and trade unions ¹. A motion which called for collaboration with the L.P. was passed at the T. & L.C.'s annual conference in April 1942. The G.W.U. abstained from the vote while Hartwell, who attended the conference as the representative of the African Laundry Workers' Union, opposed the motion ².

It was later emphasised at a T. & L.C.n.e.c. meeting that "collaboration" was distinct from "affiliation" ³. A collaboration committee was established with delegates from the L.P. and the T. & L.C. The committee remained in existence for a number of years ⁴.

In May 1942 the G.W.U. asked the L.P. to receive a delegation to discuss collaboration between the Union and the Party ⁵. In June 1942 a G.W.U. deputation attended a L.P.n.e.c. meeting. Sachs took

1. C.L. Henderson to E.S. Sachs, 5 March 1942. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 April 1942, Port Elizabeth, pp. 23-24. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

3. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 21 July 1942. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

4. Minutes of the National Labour Collaboration Committee Meeting, 22 June 1945. L.P. Collection; The Labour Bulletin, February 1943.

5. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 21 May 1942. L.P. Collection.

an aggressive line and detailed his Union's complaints against Madeley and the Labour Department: two years had elapsed since Madeley's unfulfilled promise to appoint a Wage Board within twelve months to re-inquire into the sweet making industry; the publication of the G.W.U.'s industrial council agreements were "always" held up; the registration of the G.W.U.'s East London branch and the publication of the branch's industrial council agreement had been delayed for eight months; the Labour Department's handling of confinement allowances was deplored and its refusal to de-register 'Henochsberg's' Union was denounced. Sachs sought the dismissal of the Wage Board's members and the Secretary for Labour. He threatened that if the G.W.U.'s complaints were not redressed within fourteen days, the Union would attack and smash the L.P.¹

1. Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 11 June 1942. L.P. Collection.

The Manufacturing Tailors Workers' Association and Sick Benefit Society was a long established 'company' type trade union at Henochsberg clothing factory. Attempts to have it de-registered had been in progress since 1926. General Secretary, T. & L.C. to Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 22 December 1926. T.U.C.S.A. Collection. The confinement allowance issue revolved around approximately eight women. Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 11 June 1942. L.P. Collection. Sachs was aware of the reason why the publication of the G.W.U.-T.C.M.A. industrial council agreement was being delayed. The Labour Department was engaged in a deliberate policy of delay in order to induce industrial councils (such as the G.W.U.-T.C.M.A. industrial council) to include black workers in their industrial agreements (even if at different wages, etc.). Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 3 December 1940, 10 February 1942. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 11 June 1942. L.P. Collection.

The L.P.n.e.c. despatched a delegation to Madeley. Madeley angrily refuted the complaints and stated that he had received much abuse from the G.W.U., particularly as regards confinement allowances. The L.P. delegation was satisfied with the Minister's answers ¹.

The G.W.U. subsequently adopted a line which Sachs had taken at a T. & L.C.-L.P. meeting three days prior to the L.P.n.e.c. meeting at which Sachs had delivered his ultimatum; i.e., notwithstanding severe criticism, particularly with regard to Madeley's department's handling of confinement allowances, the G.W.U. gave the L.P. grudging support. The G.W.U. declined an invitation to send fraternal delegates to the Transvaal provincial conference of the L.P. but agreed to a Yeoville branch request for electoral assistance for C. Legum ².

During the early part of 1943 the G.W.U. grew increasingly incensed over the war measure provisions which restricted the rights of the workers - e.g., strikes and lockouts had been declared illegal in the industry. Sachs resigned from the T. & L.C.'s Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister after an earlier move to cause its dissolution had failed. Scheepers resigned as a member of the

1. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 18 June 1942. L.P. Collection.

2. Minutes of a Meeting between the T. & L.C. and the L.P., 8 June 1942. L.P. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Secretary, Transvaal Provincial Executive, 10 July 1942. G.W.U. Collection; Honorary Secretary, Yeoville Branch, L.P. to E.S. Sachs, 16 August 1942. G.W.U. Collection; E.S. Sachs to Honorary Secretary, Yeoville Branch, L.P., 28 August 1942. G.W.U. Collection.

T. & L.C.-L.P. Collaboration Committee ¹.

Disillusioned with the L.P., Sachs returned to his theme of a united labour front and held informal talks with members of the L.P. and C.P., trade union leaders, etc. Although Sachs's proposal for a united labour front received minimal support, the G.W.U. arranged a National Labour Conference for the 1st May 1943 (the day after the scheduled expiration of the annual T. & L.C. conference which was being held that year at Johannesburg) ². In a circular despatched to its affiliated trade unions the T. & L.C. n.e.c. expressed the view that the G.W.U.'s move to establish a new political organisation would "not only harm the war effort", but would "destroy [the] existing unity of the working class". The circular called upon all workers "to preserve the solidarity of the Labour Movement by ignoring and refusing to participate in any meeting or conference called by" the G.W.U. ³

An increasing number of industrial unions were affiliating to the T. & L.C. The industrial unions were generally associated with the 'left'. Very broadly, the craft unions, who were supported by

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1942, January/February 1943, March/April 1943; Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 23 February 1943, 2 March 1943. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1943, July/August 1943; Circular, an invitation to the National Labour Congress, addressed "To All Trade Unions, Trade Union Branches and All Other Labour Organisations in South Africa", signed on behalf of the G.W.U. by E.S. Sachs, A. Scheepers and J. Cornelius. G.W.U. Collection.

3. Minutes of T. & L.C.N.E.C. Meeting, 20 April 1943. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; De Vries, Secretary to Secretaries of Affiliated Trade Unions, 21 April 1943 (Quote in text). G.W.U. Collection.

trade unions such as the South African Society of Bank Officials and the M.W.U., held the dominant position in the T. & L.C. The card-vote system at T. & L.C. conferences assisted the craft unions and their 'allies' in repulsing the challenge of the industrial unions ¹.

Sachs warned the delegates at the 1943 annual conference of the T. & L.C. that if a proposed motion for the abolition of the card-vote in the election of the T. & L.C.n.e.c. was unsuccessful, the G.W.U. would withdraw from the conference. The motion failed and the G.W.U. staged a lonely walkout; even J. Cornelius, who was in attendance as a Tobacco Workers' Union delegate, remained at the conference. The G.W.U.'s protest walkout was deplored by

1. See minutes of the Annual Conferences of the T. & L.C. for the period generally. T.U.C.S.A. Collection. A trade union's card-vote strength was determined by the numerical membership on which it affiliated to the T. & L.C. The affiliation fees were determined by the numerical affiliated membership (the larger the affiliated membership, the higher the affiliation fees). Consequently, a trade union's affiliated membership was determined as much by its financial position as by its actual membership.

the communists W. Andrews and I. Wolfson¹.

Sachs later denied that the G.W.U. had an ulterior motive in its motion and conduct at the conference. It had been alleged that the G.W.U. hoped that the issue would precipitate a split in the T. & L.C. which would result in the proposed National Labour Congress gaining the support of a major section of the trade union movement².

The majority of the approximately one hundred delegates who attended the National Labour Congress on the 1st May 1943 were representatives of G.W.U. members in various factories. There was also a sprinkling of delegates from a few trade unions which the

1. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 April 1943, Johannesburg, pp. 22-29. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; Forward, 30 April 1943. The card-vote issue was a contentious theme at T. & L.C. conferences during the 1940's. Sachs was a major figure in the dispute. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C.: 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 April 1941, Durban, pp. 47-51, 60-67; 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 April 1944, Cape Town, pp. 36, 41; 3, 4, 5, 6 April 1945, East London, pp. 32, 34-35; 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 April 1946, Durban, pp. 32-33; 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 April 1947, Port Elizabeth, pp. 32-34. T.U.C.S.A. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1945, January/February 1947. Concessions in connection with the election of the general secretary and the n.e.c. were finally made at the 1948 annual conference of the T. & L.C. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the T. & L.C., 24, 25, 29, 30, 31 March, 1 April 1948, Cape Town, pp. 31, 34, 37, 44-49, 53. T.U.C.S.A. Collection.

2. E.S. Sachs to Editor, Rand Daily Mail, letter dated 29 April 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

G.W.U. had assisted in establishing ¹.

In his address to the Congress Sachs explained that while he fully supported the war effort, he believed that the workers should set out immediately to win the peace - and not wait till the cessation of hostilities ².

In the draft programme adopted by the Congress a demand was made for the implementation of a Workers' Charter as a first step towards the 'New World'. The Charter laid down conditions of employment, minimum wage rates and innovations such as a body with at least 50 percent worker representation to administer all labour laws.

The programme held that the ultimate aim was socialism "which alone can guarantee real happiness, culture, progress and security for all". In the meanwhile it called for the end to profiteering; the supremacy of the rule of law; the eradication of "all forms of racialism"; and for progressive industrial development. "Those laws, customs and other obstructions" which inhibited industrial

1. Rand Daily Mail, 3 May 1943; The Labour Bulletin, Mid July 1943.

The trade unions which the G.W.U. had assisted in establishing were not identified in the press reports. The trade unions referred to were probably the S.W.U. and the Tobacco Workers' Union. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker claimed that the Congress was attended by 120 delegates who represented thirty thousand factory workers, railway workers, engineers, builders, transport workers and "other sections". The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1943.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1943.

progress were to be abolished; industry and agriculture were to be reorganised on a modern technological basis - "if necessary by applying the most drastic measures " ¹. The programme reflected the influence of Sachs's Marxist conception that the following stage in South Africa was one of progressive capitalism ².

The Congress also decided to contest three working class constituencies in the forthcoming general election under the banner of the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.). It was agreed that J. Cornelius, Scheepers and Sachs would contest Germiston, Fordsburg and Jeppe respectively ³.

The I.L.P. came in for much criticism for omitting all reference to the non-white issue in its programme. Sachs, when subsequently pressed, stated that he considered the system of representation of non-whites in parliament as inadequate. He proposed that the

native people should be given power to govern their own lands. The Bunga system is a mockery of democracy. Our complicated multi-national problems can only be solved on the basis of granting self-government to the native territories ⁴.

1. Draft Programme to be Considered at the National Labour Congress, 1 May 1943 (Quotes in text). G.W.U. Collection; Programme of the I.L.P. G.W.U. Collection.

2. E.S. Sachs's evidence. Ninth day, 18 December 1941, pp. 618-619, in "E.S. Sachs vs. Voortrekkerspers Bpk.", op. cit.; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, July/August 1943.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1943.

4. E.S. Sachs, Organising Secretary to Chairman of the Committee, 26 June 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

Sachs argued that in order to win the workers to 'labour', it was necessary for the I.L.P. to acquiesce in the racial intolerance (i.e., white-non-white) of the electorate ¹. In a general election pamphlet the I.L.P. stated that it stood for

A UNITED LABOUR MOVEMENT, BASED ON SOUTH AFRICAN CONDITIONS, FREE FROM RACIAL DIVISION, independent of all capitalist parties, and co-operating with all other progressive forces [My emphasis] ².

The I.L.P. had entered into an electoral pact with the U.P.

A specially called penalty general meeting at Germiston in early May 1943 overwhelmingly approved the G.W.U.'s participation in the general election ³. The G.W.U.'s participation in the general election was subsequently unanimously endorsed by approximately three thousand members at a Johannesburg general meeting (the meeting had been called to discuss the proposed industrial council agreement) ⁴.

K. Meyer assisted J. Cornelius in her canvassing and also chaired her meetings ⁵. The G.b.e.c. members provided J. Cornelius with

1. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1943, November/December 1943.

2. General election pamphlet by the I.L.P. G.W.U. Collection.

3. "E.S. Sachs vs. A.B. du Preez", op. cit.: G.W.U. Germiston branch circular quoted at eleventh day, 10 September 1945, p. 929, twelfth day, 11 September 1945, p. 1007; E.S. Sachs's evidence. Thirteenth day, 12 September 1945, p. 1153i; A. Scheepers's evidence, 11 May 1949, p. 2296, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

4. Minutes of G.W.U. General Meeting, 18 May 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

5. K. Meyer's evidence, 24 January 1949, p. 728, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.; Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 23 June 1943. G.W.U. Collection

little support and many did not even attend her campaign meetings ¹. A portion of the small number of garment workers who attended a campaign meeting expressed their disapproval of her candidature and policies by heckling and boicing. Most of these girls were in their late teens and leaned towards the N.P. After the general election an angry H. Cornelius, who had been her sister's electoral agent, brought a number of the girls before the G.b.e.c. for disciplinary hearings ². The G.W.U. leadership indicated its disapproval of the disciplinary hearings and they were discontinued. The members who had already been tried, none of whom had yet been penalised, received - if at all - letters which rapped them over the knuckles for their conduct ³.

In its requests to clothing manufacturers for financial assistance for the I.L.P.'s election campaign the c.e.c. emphasised shared interests such as protection for clothing factories against overseas competition ⁴. In order to preserve cordial relations with the G.W.U. a number of manufacturers made small contributions to the election fund ⁵.

The I.L.P. was heavily defeated in the general election.

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1. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 23 June 1943. G.W.U. Collection.
 2. Ibid., 23 June 1943, 24 August 1943, 1 September 1943; Minutes of Special Meeting of G.W.U.G.B.E.C., 19 August 1943. G.W.U. Collection.
 3. Minutes of G.W.U.G.B.E.C. Meeting, 24 August 1943, 1 September 1943, 7 September 1943. G.W.U. Collection.
 4. G.W.U.C.E.C. to Sir/s, 1 June 1943. G.W.U. Collection.
 5. A number of covering letters from manufacturers to the G.W.U. See G.W.U. Collection.

Cornelius polled 202 votes, Scheepers 281 and Sachs 475¹. The I.L.P. probably drew the bulk of its support from G.W.U. members.

1. The results in full were:

Germiston		
A.C. Payne	L.P.	4 134
W.P. Boshoff	N.P.	3 380
J. Cornelius	I.L.P.	202
J.C. de Wet	A.P.	40
Fordsburg		
D. Burnside	L.P.	4 170
A.S. van Hees	N.P.	1 441
A. Scheepers	I.L.P.	281
Jeppe		
B. Solomon	U.P.	4 833
H.J. Waldeck	N.P.	1 237
E.S. Sachs	I.L.P.	475
W.H. Immelman	A.P.	261

B.M. Schoeman, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-256, 258.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SOCIALIST PARTY

The annual conference of the L.P. in January 1943 approved the continued participation of the Party in the coalition government ¹. In April 1943 a specially convened L.P. conference gave the green light for an electoral pact with the U.P. in the general election later that year ².

A number of L.P. members continued to voice their opposition to the Party's "collaboration" with the U.P.; they supported the war effort but were opposed to the compromise of the L.P.'s socialist principles in its pursuit. The issue came to a head when the L.P. hierarchy turned down the parliamentary candidature of Jessie Macpherson, a Johannesburg city councillor. At a meeting of L.P. "progressives" a resolution was passed by thirty-three votes to eight to leave the L.P. and to establish the Militant Democratic Party. Numerous members of the L.P.'s Transvaal provincial executive and its Johannesburg district committee resigned from the L.P. Macpherson was a leading figure in the breakaway move but soon returned to the L.P. fold ³.

1. Forward, 8 January 1943.

2. Ibid., 16 April 1943; The Labour Bulletin, April 1943.

3. Forward, 16 April 1943, 4 June 1943; The Labour Bulletin, Mid July 1943; Cape Times, 1 June 1943.

The rationale behind the L.P.'s electoral pact with the U.P. was to avoid a split in the pro-war vote (the N.P. opposed South Africa's participation in the war). In its election campaign the L.P. emphasised that the freedom of the workers and indeed mankind was dependent on victory over the Axis powers¹. In the general election the L.P. was successful in the nine seats it was allocated in terms of the electoral pact. Six of the seats were on the Witwatersrand; and included M. Cilliers, the vice-president of the M.W.U., in Mayfair, and A.C. Payne, the chairman of the district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, in Germiston. The U.P. won eighty-nine seats, the N.P. forty-three and the Dominion Party seven².

Workers Civic Leagues were separately established in East London and Port Elizabeth. The Leagues, which apparently nominated their own candidates, fared well in municipal elections³. In August 1943 the local committee of the T. & L.C. (T. & L.C.l.c.) decided to sponsor the formation of a similar body to contest the forthcoming Johannesburg municipal election⁴. The I.L.P. indicated its support for such a League⁵. However, in September 1943 the I.L.P. lost its independent existence when it merged with the Militant

1. General election pamphlet by John Christie. G.W.U. Collection; K.A. Heard, op. cit., p. 16.

2. K.A. Heard, op. cit., p. 17; B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 251-271; The Labour Bulletin, June 1943.

3. e.g., The Labour Bulletin, August 1943, Mid September 1943.

4. Fleet to Secretary, I.L.P., 19 August 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

5. E.S. Sachs to Honorary Secretary, T. & L.C., 24 August 1943. G.W.U. Collection.

Democratic Party to form the Socialist Party (S.P.). Senator H. Basner, who represented blacks in parliament, became one of the S.P.'s two vice-presidents¹. The proposed League did not come to fruition and the S.P., L.P. and C.P. competed against one another in the February 1944 Johannesburg municipal election. All the S.P.'s candidates, who included Dr. Leibman (a sitting councillor who had resigned from the L.P. on the Militant Democratic Party's formation) and Hartwell, were defeated².

Routed in the election, the S.P. took the initiative and proposed joint action by left wing parties and trade unions on a common socialist programme in Johannesburg municipal elections³. Negotiations with the L.P. and T. & L.C.l.c. continued for a few months but collapsed in September 1944 when the L.P. refused to have anything to do with four out of the five T. & L.C.l.c. delegates to a proposed joint T. & L.C.l.c. - L.P. - S.P. committee. The L.P. accused the four delegates of being members of the C.P. which, in contrast to the S.P., proposed to nominate candidates in the October 1944 municipal election⁴.

1. Forward, 1 October 1943; E.S. Sachs to L. Szur, 27 July 1943. G.W.U. Collection; Circular by the S.P. G.W.U. Collection. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1943.

2. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1944, March/April 1944.

3. L. Szur, Secretary, S.P. to General Secretary, I.P., 13 April 1944. L.P. Collection.

4. H.C. Ackerman to Secretary, S.P., 8 May 1944, 27 May 1944, 13 June 1944, 19 September 1944. L.P. Collection; L. Szur to Acting General Secretary, 7 June 1944. L.P. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1944.

With Nazi Germany defeated, the L.P.n.e.c. issued a statement shortly before the municipal election in October 1945 that Madeley was to withdraw from the cabinet ¹. The L.P. contested the election without any electoral pact and won five wards (which increased its representation in the council by two). The L.P. with a total of eighteen seats took shaky control of the forty-two member council. J. Macpherson was elected mayor ².

1. H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, op. cit., p. 549.

2. Illustrated Bulletin, 7 November 1945, 14 November 1945.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GARMENT WORKERS' UNION AFFILIATES
AND OTHER MATTERS

A. The Split

The divisive racial views held in the L.P.'s hierarchy were largely neutralised by the Party's preoccupation with the Second World War. After the war members like M.J. Van den Berg began to edge towards the N.P.¹

Early in 1946 the section of Smuts's Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill which provided for token indirect representation for asiatics in parliament precipitated a crisis in the L.P.'s parliamentary caucus which rebounded into the Party's structures. Madeley (the parliamentary leader), and M.J. Van den Berg resigned from the L.P.: Van den Berg joined the N.P. while Madeley duly established an ephemeral labour party with an anti-asiatic bias². The resignation of three other M.P.'s from the L.P. (Sullivan, Burnside and the Rev. Miles Cadman) during the following twelve months reflected the general disarray in the Party.³

1. The Socialist Review, August 1945; Cape Times, 26 November 1946.

2. Illustrated Bulletin, Mid August 1946; Cape Times, 10, 15, 17 April 1946, 2, 6, 11, 17 May 1946, 25 July 1946, 27 July 1946, 5 August 1946, 6 August 1946; Rand Daily Mail, 17 April 1946, 29 April 1946, 4 May 1946; The Star, 16 April 1946.

3. Cape Times, 23 January 1947, 7 March 1947, 1 July 1947.

The L.P.'s colour policy was revised at a specially convened conference in November 1946. The adopted programme proposed the development of the "Native" areas to curb the flow of migrant workers and urbanisation generally. It reaffirmed the Party's support for social and residential segregation, and defended the colour bar in industry on the ground that it was in reality a cheap labour bar. The contemporary method of indirect representation of blacks in parliament was endorsed and in a cautiously worded section Smuts's Asiatic Act was approved. After the adoption of the programme a motion was successfully moved that the L.P. convene a conference with the other parliamentary parties to formulate a common non-white policy¹. The other parliamentary parties would, however, have nothing to do with the idea².

B. The Garment Workers' Union Affiliates

The L.P. drew a portion of its electoral support from the Afrikaner working class. Although Afrikaners were brought into the Party machine and elected under the Party's banner, the L.P.'s structures remained essentially Anglophone in character. This disjuncture contributed to a tendency of elitist isolation on the part of the L.P.'s leadership and public representatives. In addition, branches, where they existed at all, had few members and there was a

1. L.P. Non-European Policy as Adopted by the Special Conference, 10 November 1946. G.W.U. Collection; Minutes of the Special Conference of the L.P. to Consider a Draft Non-European Policy, Johannesburg, 10 November 1946, p. 13. L.P. Collection.

2. e.g., D.F. Malan to A. Hepple, 16 December 1946. L.P. Collection.

dearth of organisational efforts to mobilise the workers behind the L.P.¹.

Trade union affiliation to the L.P. was beneficial in a number of ways. For instance, the affiliation fees provided the L.P., which was habitually in financial distress, with much needed funds². A handful of trade unions were affiliated to the L.P. (e.g., The South African Cinematograph Operators' Union, and the Motor Transport Workers' Union)³.

Sporadic attempts were made by the L.P. hierarchy to link the Party to the trade union movement through contact at the leadership level. In August 1945 the G.W.U. was one of forty-nine trade unions which attended a 'Labour Unity Conference' organised by the L.P. The conference resolved to set up a joint committee of L.P. and trade union representatives for the purpose of bringing about complete co-operation between the trade union movement and the L.P. Sachs was elected a member of the joint committee⁴.

1. [?] to Secretary, L.P., 20 September 1944. L.P. Collection; J. Dancer to Comrade, 27 April 1945. L.P. Collection; The Labour Bulletin, February 1943; The text is also based on an overall impression of the L.P. correspondence and minutes of the period. L.P. Collection.

2. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the L.P., 2, 3 January 1943, Johannesburg, p. 3. L.P. Collection. The affiliation fees and card-vote strength of trade unions were determined in the same way as in the case of the T. & L.C. See pp. 196 footnote 1, 215.

3. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 21 May 1942. L.P. Collection.

4. Report on Labour Unity Conference on 19 August 1945, dated 21 August 1945. L.P. Collection; Minutes of Labour Unity Committee Meeting, 10 September 1945. L.P. Collection.

The joint committee sought, among other things, to bring about trade union affiliation to the L.P. and circulars were distributed to this effect ¹. Contact was made between the G.W.U. and the L.P. in January 1946. However, despite a willingness on both sides to continue the dialogue the matter fell away ².

L.P. and G.W.U. representatives discussed co-operation at a meeting on the 10th May 1947 ³. The c.e.c. later unanimously decided to affiliate to the L.P. ⁴ On the 27th May 1947 the question of affiliation was raised without prior notice at a meeting of approximately two hundred Johannesburg and Germiston shop stewards. Little opposition was raised to the proposed affiliation. One Wolmarans from Germiston opposed the affiliation while D. Alexander stated that she preferred support being given to the C.P. Although present, K. Meyer raised no objection to the proposed venture ⁵.

Having obtained the shop stewards' approval, Sachs immediately made application to the L.P. for affiliation on the basis of a

1. Minutes of Labour Unity Committee Meeting, 10 September 1945. L.P. Collection; Circular by the Labour Unity Committee titled "Labour Must Become Politically Strong. An Appeal to the Trade Union Movement of South Africa". L.P. Collection.

2. E.S. Sachs to General Secretary, L.P., 10 January 1946. L.P. Collection; J. Dancer to Secretary, G.W.U., 21 January 1946. L.P. Collection.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1947.

4. Ibid.

5. Minutes of G.W.U. Shop Stewards Meeting, 27 May 1947. G.W.U. Collection; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1947; "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: K. Meyer's evidence, 26 January 1949, p. 787; A. Scheepers's evidence, 11 May 1949, p. 2292.

thousand members. In his letter of application Sachs emphasised the need to find a political home for the white workers. He added that

While a correct labour policy and tactics can be formulated only on the basis of existing conditions, any attempt to secure support by pandering to the racialists [which he accused certain leaders of the L.P. of being] is not only contrary to the true principles of labour and democracy, but must result in the strengthening of the forces of reaction and the weakening of the forces of labour.

Sachs concluded that the G.W.U. would abide by majority decisions ¹. The G.W.U.'s application, on an affiliated membership of one thousand, was formally approved by the L.P. in early July 1947 ².

The May/June 1947 edition of The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker gave full coverage of the affiliation issue (the application letter was quoted in full) ³. Posters which urged workers to join the L.P. were erected at numerous clothing factories ⁴.

Advertisements which gave notice of a penalty general meeting to be held at Johannesburg on the 22nd July 1947 to discuss (inter alia) the proposed industrial council agreement made no mention of the

1. E.S. Sachs and A. Scheepers to General Secretary, L.P., 28 May 1947. G.W.U. Collection.

2. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 6 July 1947. L.P. Collection.

3. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, May/June 1947.

4. D. Vosloo's evidence, 21 January 1949, p. 588, in "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.

affiliation issue. The question of affiliation to the L.P. was raised at the meeting after the completion of the advertised agenda - by which time members had begun to leave. L.P. representatives addressed the meeting and urged that affiliation be endorsed. When put to the vote affiliation was endorsed by almost the entire audience ¹.

The affiliation procedure adopted by the G.W.U. leadership was constitutionally irregular. The constitution provided that affiliation had to be approved at a special general meeting "called for the purpose of discussing affiliation to the other bodies" ².

C. Miscellaneous Elections

The Second World War left an inheritance of austerity and shortage ³. The L.P.'s debacle over the Asiatic Act and its revised colour policy alienated erstwhile supporters and left the Party machine in a badly shaken state. Allegations of communist influence in the L.P. were made with increasing intensity and reached a crescendo in the months before the mid-1948 general election. Reference was made to Scheepers's, the L.P.'s candidate in the

1. "G.W.U. Proceedings", op. cit.: A. Knoetze's evidence, 14 January 1949, p. 374; D. Vosloo's evidence, 20 January 1949, pp. 520-523; E.S. Sachs's evidence, 10 February 1949, p. 1030.

2. G.W.U. Constitution (n.d.), sec. 21. G.W.U. Collection.

3. K.A. Heard, op. cit., p. 30.

Turffontein provincial by-election in early 1948, visit to the Soviet Union as a G.W.U. delegate ¹. The L.P.'s demise is best reflected in its dismal performances in Johannesburg municipal elections ².

The L.P. entered into an electoral pact with the U.P. for the 1948 general election ³. Writing in The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker Sachs commented that the G.W.U. was not "enamoured" of the pact, but that the Union did not "oppose it" ⁴.

In the general election the N.P./Afrikaner Party (A.P.) alliance gained a precarious plurality of seats, albeit with a minority of votes. The N.P./A.P. alliance returned seventy-nine M.P.'s (N.P., seventy; A.P., nine) to the U.P.'s sixty-five and the L.P.'s six. There were also three M.P.'s representing the blacks ⁵. The three M.P.'s representing the asiatics had not yet been elected ⁶.

Negotiations between the L.P. and the U.P. for an electoral pact for the 1949 provincial elections failed ⁷. The L.P. proved unable

1. Cape Times, 7 March 1947, 3 November 1947; See Forward generally for the period, e.g., 27 February 1948, 25 March 1948, 7 May 1948.

In the by-election Scheepers polled 846 votes to her U.P. opponent's 1 872. Forward, 24 October 1947, 19 March 1948.

2. Forward, 7 November 1947; Cape Times, 22 September 1949.

3. Cape Times, 15 March 1948, 17 March 1948.

4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, March/April 1948.

5. K.A. Heard, op. cit., pp. 37-38; B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., p. 300.

6. The asiatics had completely rejected the proposed representation. K.A. Heard, op. cit., p. 31.

7. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 23 July 1948, 4 March 1949. L.P. Collection; Minutes of Special Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 5 December 1948. L.P. Collection.

to muster a team of candidates for the election ¹. The L.P. won two of the three Transvaal seats it contested ².

In 1951 negotiations between the L.P. and the U.F. for a Johannesburg municipal electoral pact failed ³. The nomination of Scheepers, J. Cornelius and Sachs as L.P. candidates in the election was approved by the c.e.c. and a G.W.U. shop stewards meeting ⁴. The c.e.c. provided considerable finance for the three candidates' campaigns ⁵. Sachs criticised a number of the c.e.c. members for failing to assist in canvassing ⁶. All seventeen L.P. candidates were defeated and the Party's meagre representation in the council was eliminated ⁷.

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1. Minutes of a Joint Meeting of L.P.N.E.C. and the Transvaal Provincial Executive Committee, 14 January 1949. L.P. Collection.
 2. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 4 March 1949. L.P. Collection; I.J. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., p. 334.
 3. Circular by E.S. Sachs, 24 September 1951. G.W.U. Collection.
 4. The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, September/October 1951.
 5. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 20 August 1951. G.W.U. Collection.
 6. Ibid., 3 September 1951.
 7. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Adjourned Meeting, 7 November 1951. L.P. Collection; Cape Times, 2 November 1951.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FINAL YEARS

An examination of the influence of cadre members of affiliated trade unions on the one hand and branch members on the other on L.P. policy at conferences, etc., falls outside the scope of this thesis. The affiliated trade unions held a maximum of half the total card-vote strength at L.P. conferences ¹. The card-vote system caused a degree of dissatisfaction in L.P. ranks ². Senator Duthie unsuccessfully proposed a motion at a L.P.n.e.c. meeting in September 1949 that

in view of the existence of communist and crypto communist influence [e.g., Sachs] in certain trade unions, coupled with the card-vote system of election of officers of the Party, resolve to affiliate no more trade unions and calls upon unions now affiliated to the Party to withdraw their existing affiliations ³.

G.W.U. delegates were elected to the n.e.c. at the annual L.P. conferences. Sachs was elected Party treasurer at the 1951 and 1952

1. Forward, 25 March 1948.

2. Cape Times, 6 August 1946.

3. Minutes of Joint Special and Ordinary Monthly Meeting of L.P.N.E.C., 22 September 1949. L.P. Collection.

annual conferences ¹. The G.W.U.'s (with a powerful card-vote) ' capacity materially to influence decisions at conferences grew as trade unions continued to disaffiliate from the L.P. ² Dr. B. Wilson, a member of the L.P.n.e.c., resigned from the Party in January 1952 on the ground that the remaining couple of affiliated trade unions held half the voting strength at L.P. conferences ³.

The G.W.U. threw its weight behind the United Front which was formed in an attempt to oust the N.P. government in the 1953 general election. The G.W.U. set aside one hundred pounds to assist the L.P. in its campaign and six members of the c.e.c. undertook to assist the L.P. candidate in the Gormiston constituency ⁴.

In its election campaign the L.P. warned that the N.P. administration proposed to shackle the trade union movement and was poised for an assault on the constitution (i.e., the Cape coloured franchise). The Party reaffirmed its support for residential and social segregation and stated that it believed that blacks could be given opportunities to improve their lot without endangering white skilled standards ⁵. In the general election the N.P. returned ninety-five

1. Forward, 9 January 1948; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, January/February 1951, January/February 1952.

2. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 31 August 1951. L.P. Collection.

3. Cape Times, 7 January 1952.

4. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 19 January 1953, 2 February 1953. G.W.U. Collection; J. Cornelius to National Treasurer, L.P., 4 February 1953. L.P. Collection. For the United Front see p. 166.

5. General election pamphlet by the L.P. G.W.U. Collection.

M.P.'s to the U.P./L.P. alliance's sixty-one (U.P., fifty-seven; L.P., four) ¹.

In early 1954 the G.W.U. promised financial support to the L.P. in its provincial election campaign ². In June 1954, while J. Cornelius and Scheepers were in Cape Town, a request was received by the c.e.c. inviting the two to stand as L.P. candidates in the provincial election. The c.e.c. refused the request on the ground that J. Cornelius and Scheepers had no time to engage in a campaign ³. The election eliminated L.P. representation in the Transvaal provincial council ⁴.

In contrast to the U.P., the L.P. moved haltingly towards a more enlightened policy. L.P. conferences continued to bring their colour policy under focus. At its 1954 annual conference the L.P. adopted a new non-white franchise policy. The policy basically envisaged (as a first stage) the extension of both the Cape coloured franchise and the limited right of Cape blacks to elect parliamentary representatives to the other provinces ⁵.

1. The election in a constituency which the L.P. was contesting in terms of the electoral pact was postponed as a result of a candidate's death. The L.P. won the by-election and increased its representation in parliament to five. For footnote and text: B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., p. 333.

2. Minutes of L.P.N.E.C. Meeting, 28 February 1954. L.P. Collection.

3. Minutes of G.W.U.C.E.C. Meeting, 21 June 1954. G.W.U. Collection.

4. I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, op. cit., p. 334.

5. Composite Resolution on National Convention at 42nd Annual Conference of the L.P., 10, 11 January 1953. L.P. Collection; L.P. Non-European Franchise Policy, 14 January 1954. L.P. Collection.

The G.W.U. remained affiliated to the L.P. until it was forced to disaffiliate in early 1957 in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956¹.

The two seats the L.P. contested in the 1958 general election were on the Witwatersrand. The U.P. defeated the L.P. in both constituencies². Within a short while the L.P. disappeared from the political arena.

1. J. Cornelius to Secretary, L.P., 25 February 1957. L.P. Collection.

2. B.M. Schoeman, op. cit., pp. 347, 360, 365-366.

CHAPTER XXVI

SUMMARY

The chapter provides a systematic analysis of the factors which enabled the G.W.U. leadership to turn back the challenge of the Afrikaner nationalists. It touches upon O'Meara's brief analysis of the reasons for the Afrikaner nationalists' limited success in their endeavours to establish or to reform trade unions (Hepple never comes to grips with the issue). The G.W.U.'s experience during the 1950's is also examined.

1. Sachs was no enigma. He was first elected general secretary at a time when the G.W.U. was dominated by immigrant tailors. Like many of the tailors Sachs was a Jewish immigrant from eastern Europe. It is hardly inconsistent with trade union history in South Africa and abroad that a trade union leader should hold views further to the left than the general membership. By the time the bespoke section withdrew from the G.W.U. in 1934, Sachs had entrenched himself among the factory members. The Afrikaner leaders of the G.W.U. who emerged during the 1930's became firmly rooted in the socialist tradition. (*left orient*)

2. The newly urbanised Afrikaner garment workers lived in dire poverty during the early 1930's. Their experiences in the industry during the period (e.g., the strikes and the reduction in the wage rates) contributed to the development of a class awareness among them.

3. The members' wage rates and conditions of service gradually improved over the following years. The Sachs leadership was perceived by the membership as a militant administration which obtained the best possible wages, etc., for the members from the T.C.M.A. Sachs's political and trade union history contributed to this perception.

4. The C.P. during the early 1930's agitated against the Sachs administration. The C.P. gained a toehold among the G.W.U. membership and even obtained the support of a few Afrikaner garment workers. Some garment workers may well have been somewhat nonplussed at subsequent Afrikaner nationalist propaganda that Sachs was an arch-communist intriguer.

5. With the Afrikaner fusionists under General Hertzog in the U.P., the Afrikaner nationalists (i.e., the N.R.T. and the N.P.) struggled to convince the Afrikaner worker that they were the authentic representatives of 'Afrikanerdom'. The essentially Afrikaner G.W.U. leadership played the Afrikaner nationalists at their own game. The G.W.U. promoted Afrikaner culture within the ambit of the Union (e.g., the Kappie Kommando), and did not scruple to play on the racial prejudices of its members to discredit the Afrikaner nationalist trade union activists (i.e., the 'kaffer dancing' episode).

6. The G.W.U.'s political activities did not directly affect the membership. Consequently, the members did not concern themselves unduly with the G.W.U.'s political activities. The Sachs leadership guided the G.W.U. into active participation in white class politics. Numerous members endorsed the content of the political motions; others probably viewed the motions as a form of confidence vote in

the Sachs leadership's general trade union activities and were prepared to allow the Union's administration a degree of latitude in its political endeavours.

7. The Second World War brought about profound changes in the political and industrial spheres. Large numbers of non-whites were absorbed into expanding industries and often employed as operatives. Although the U.P. split over the war issue, no united Afrikaner front emerged. The disputes between the various Afrikaner nationalist organisations (e.g., the O.B. and the N.P.) weakened the appeals to the Afrikaner worker for volksseenheid; and also hampered the endeavours to gain control of trade unions (e.g., the apparent intrigue between O.B. and N.P. sympathisers in the B.K.K.).

8. The (white) G.W.U. membership's initial opposition to the employment of coloureds as operatives and the revival of the number two branch was based more on a feeling of 'status reduction' than from a fear of being eased out of the industry or of losing the dominant position in the G.W.U.

9. The G.W.U. was faced with numerous difficulties over its sectional trade union policy. Afrikaner nationalists and communists fanned the discontent over the G.W.U.'s colour policy among the (white) members and the number two branch members respectively. The Sachs leadership resorted to authoritarian conduct to lessen the divisive strains among the white and non-white members which were threatening the existence of the Union as a single unit. While the G.W.U. administration brought a heavy hand to bear on the Germiston branch to stifle the discontent among the branch's members, it also quietly acquiesced in the informal reservation of the occupation of

machinist for whites in the Germiston industry.

10. G.W.U. election results and motions of confidence at Johannesburg general meetings indicate that the Sachs leadership retained the confidence of the (white) Johannesburg members during the 1940's. It is submitted that the (white) members increasingly viewed political motions - e.g., affiliation to the L.P. - as a form of confidence vote in the Sachs leadership's general trade union activities.

11. After approximately two decades in office many members must have viewed the Sachs administration as an inseparable part (for better or for worse) of the G.W.U. The show of hands means of voting on motions of confidence, etc., inhibited opposition to the Sachs leadership; while the lack of alternative candidates for the cadre positions over the years weakened potential opposition to the Sachs leadership. For example, it made little sense to turn Sachs out of office when there was no one suitably equipped to take his place.

12. Whatever their emotional inclinations may have been, numerous (white) members probably vaguely appreciated that the G.W.U.'s colour policy was designed to protect their positions and conditions of service in the industry. A substantial majority of the (white) Johannesburg members continued to support their longstanding leadership which successfully cared for their economic needs in the industry (note the substantial wage increases obtained in the industry during the 1940's).

13. The N.P. government harassed the G.W.U. leadership after it came to power in 1948 (e.g., the G.W.U. Commission of Enquiry). The G.W.U. leadership moved to restrict the ability of the opposition members to mount an offensive against the Union's administration

(e.g., the attempt to restrict Johannesburg general/special meetings to members resident or employed in the city).

14. There was a reluctance among the Afrikaner nationalists to put their credibility at stake and to engage in a full scale and overt campaign to topple the G.W.U. leadership at a Johannesburg election general meeting (even when the meeting was held on a Saturday and the Germiston members could attend without any hindrance).

15. By the early 1950's the Afrikaner nationalists had united behind the N.P. which had largely established itself as the authentic representative of 'Afrikanerdom'. The G.W.U.'s 1953 constitution enfranchised the non-white members at a time when the N.P. government was moving to restrict the rights of non-whites in the society generally.

16. The adoption by the national congresses of the G.W.U.'s 1953 constitution and the G.W.U.'s 1953 election results indicate that the G.W.U. cadre retained the confidence of the lower echelon leaders and a considerable proportion (if perhaps a minority) of the (white) rank and file membership.

17. However, it is clear that the G.W.U.'s sectional trade union policy did not result in any form of unity between the white and non-white membership at the political level. Indeed, if anything, the G.W.U.'s sectional trade union policy would appear to have contributed to members supporting the N.P.

18. The G.W.U. administration (notwithstanding the racial prejudices of its white members) propagated a broadly racially inclusive trade union policy. The G.W.U.'s colour policy reflected not only the political views of the Union's administration, but also the position of the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry in the economy.

The competitive thrust of the coastal industry (where coloured and asiatic workers were freely available at wage rates considerably lower than those provided for in the G.W.U.-T.C.M.A. industrial council agreements) virtually necessitated that the G.W.U. administration adopt a moderate colour policy in regard to coloured and asiatic workers. If the manufacturers had been unable to obtain sufficient labour at 'reasonable' wage rates, the Witwatersrand industry would have stagnated and some manufacturers would possibly have moved elsewhere. The G.W.U. also sought over the years to establish links with the coastal garment workers. There was a limited number of coloureds and asiatics living in the Transvaal. Consequently, one must be cautious about drawing any general conclusions about the interrelationship of the coastal and the Witwatersrand labour and industrial sectors from the G.W.U.'s experience.

19. The G.W.U. maintained contact with the black workers during the 1930's (e.g., the pressing episode), and in the mid-1940's enrolled all the eligible black workers into the number two branch of the Union. The G.W.U.'s history indicates that it was the state (i.e., through industrial legislation) rather than the G.W.U. administration who was responsible for the 'fractionalization' of the workers employed in the Witwatersrand clothing manufacturing industry.

20. Hepple never focuses his attention on why Afrikaner workers were attracted to christian-national trade unionism. Besides making passing reference to the Afrikaner nationalists' views on the question of non-white workers (e.g., the need for a job reservation or quota system, and for separate white and non-white trade unions), Hepple's work clearly assumes that Afrikaner nationalism had an

inherent appeal for the workers ¹.

21. O'Meara de-emphasises the role of Afrikaner nationalism in attracting workers to christian-national trade unionism. He traces the Afrikaner nationalists' successes and failures in their endeavours to establish or to reform trade unions to the nature of the workers' occupation in their respective industries (e.g., see number 23), and to other economic factors (e.g., the ability of the various trade unions to care for their members' economic needs) ².

22. (A) Although the material examined in the thesis supports O'Meara's general thrust, it also points to a number of criticisms in his analysis (which is based essentially on an examination of the M.W.U., the G.W.U. and the Spoorbond) ³. Hepple and O'Meara fail to mention the fact that the G.W.U. had non-white members ⁴.

(B) Given his preoccupation with economic issues, O'Meara underplays the role of Afrikaner culture, tradition and language in the struggle to attract workers to christian-national trade unionism. For example, he fails to state that while the Anglophone character of at least some of the railway trade unions assisted the Spoorbond in enrolling members, the essentially Afrikaner character of the G.W.U. leadership helped the G.W.U. to turn back the challenge of the Afrikaner nationalists. Although O'Meara examines the M.W.U. at some

1. A. Hepple, op. cit., passim.

2. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., passim.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.; A. Hepple, op. cit., passim.

length (e.g., the corrupt and authoritarian character of the M.W.U. leadership), he fails to discuss trade union structures in general and the difficulty of successfully undermining a trade union or its leadership ¹.

23. H. Wolpe and others have drawn the distinction between workers who were direct producers of surplus value (i.e., productive workers) and workers who were primarily engaged in the supervision of productive labour. The fact that the white and non-white garment workers were both productive workers did nothing per se to lessen the antagonism of the white garment workers to their non-white colleagues. O'Meara appears to assert the contrary (for a more cogent factor see numbers 8 and 12) ².

24. (A) The white garment workers on the Witwatersrand received little assistance from the N.P. government during the 1950's. The Witwatersrand industry experienced grave economic difficulties during the decade; and in the mid-1950's the wage rates were lowered for all new workers in the industry ³. Few whites entered the industry and the white workforce dwindled from 8 232 in October 1952 to 3 179 in August 1959 ⁴.

1. D. O'Meara, "Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa", op. cit., passim.

2. Ibid., pp. 46 footnote 3, 64, 67, 69-70.

3. "Report to the Minister of Labour by Division B of the Wage Board. Clothing Industry. Certain Areas", dated 19 April 1961, pp. 29-30. An. 946 1961; The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker, Edition of Saamtrek, 10 June 1954, 14 September 1956.

4. H.A.F. Barker, op. cit., pp. 328, 329-330 table XXX.

(B) The Witwatersrand industry experienced competition from the coastal factories as well as from an increasing number of inland factories. With the exception of factories in places such as Kimberley, the inland factories were established in rural areas where no wage regulating instrument applied during the 1950's (and where a largely black workforce was employed at very low wages) ¹. The establishment of the rural clothing factories broadly fitted into the government's policy of decentralising industry in general to white areas bordering the black reserves ². The Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act made the effective organisation of the black garment workers in the rural factories impossible.

(C) Du Pisanie considered that the government was taking insufficient steps to lessen the competitive thrust of the rural clothing factories vis-a-vis the Germiston industry (the job reservation and quota provisions of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 were never used to lessen the competitive thrust of the coastal and rural clothing factories vis-a-vis the Witwatersrand industry). Du Pisanie clashed with the N.P. leadership over the question of the competitive thrust of the rural factories and was apparently eased out of his parliamentary seat in 1961 as a result ³.

1. "Report to the Minister of Labour by Division B of the Wage Board. Clothing Industry. Certain Areas": dated 29 September 1958, pp. 4, 8. An. 146 1959; dated 19 April 1961, pp. 29-30. An. 946 1961.

2. Report of Speech given by the Minister of Labour, J. de Klerk, 24 April 1959. G.W.U. Collection; The Star, 16 March 1955; Rand Daily Mail, 10 September 1958, 6 November 1959.

3. The Sunday Times, 5 March 1961, 30 April 1961; The Star, 4 August 1961; Rand Daily Mail, 22 February 1961.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.	Afrikaner <u>Broederbond</u>
A.F.T.U.	African Federation of Trade Unions
A.N.C.	African National Congress
A.P.	Afrikaner Party
B.K.K.	<u>Breë Kerklike Komitee</u>
B.W.B.B.	<u>Blanke Werkers se Beskermingsbond</u>
B.W.F.	<u>Blanke Werkers Federasie</u>
B.W.I.U.	Building Workers' Industrial Union
c.e.c.	central executive committee of the Garment Workers' Union
C.d.c.	Cape district committee of the South African Trades and Labour Council.
C.P.	Communist Party
C.P.F.L.U.	Cape Province Federation of Labour Unions
F.A.K.	<u>Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings</u>
G.b.e.c.	Germiston branch executive committee of the Garment Workers' Union
G./E.R.n.I	Germiston/East Rand number one branch of the Garment Workers' Union
G.W.U.	Garment Workers' Union
G.W.U.C.F.	Garment Workers' Union of the Cape Peninsula
G.W.U.P.E.	Port Elizabeth branch of the Garment Workers' Union

G.W.U.P.E.B.E.C.	Port Elizabeth Branch Executive Committee of the Garment Workers' Union
I.C.U.	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
L.P.	Labour Party
L.P.n.e.c.	national executive committee of the Labour Party
M.W.U.	Mine Workers' Union
N.C.W.U.	Native Clothing Workers' Union
n.e.c.	national executive committee
N.P.	National Party
N.R.T.	<u>Nasionale Raad van Trustees</u>
O.B.	<u>Ossewa-Brandwag</u>
P.E.	Port Elizabeth
R.D.B.	<u>Reddingsdaadbond</u>
S.A.G.W.U.	South African Garment Workers' Union
S.A.P.	South African Party
S.A.R. & H.	South African Railways and Harbours
S.P.	Socialist Party
S.W.U.	Sweet Workers' Union
T.C.M.A.	Transvaal Clothing Manufacturers' Association
T. & L.C.	South African Trades and Labour Council

T. & L.C.l.c. local committee of the South African Trades
and Labour Council

T. & L.C.n.e.c. national executive committee of the South
African Trades and Labour Council

T.U.C.S.A. Trade Union Council of South Africa

U.P. United Party

W.T.A. Witwatersrand Tailors' Association

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