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AGRICULTURAL CRISIS AND

RURAL ORGANISATION IN THE CAPE:

1929 - 1933

by

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degree Master of Arts in Economic History
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To

Elliot Tonjeni

and

Bransby Ndobe

who

"were prepared to walk through fire for freedom".

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between rural struggles and popular organisation in the Cape between 1928 and 1933. It focuses on the attempts by militants in the ANC(Western Province) and later the Independent ANC to organise in the rural areas during a period of crisis for agriculture.

In the first chapter the history and trends in the nationalist movement before 1930 is discussed. It is argued that the conservative petty bourgeoisie dominated the organisation for much of the time, but that more militant positions were adopted on a few rare occasions.

The second chapter endeavours to show that the transition to capitalist agriculture had been completed in the Western Cape. It then examines the specificity of the crisis in agriculture during the Depression: a crisis which was manifested in the form of an acute labour shortage on the farms, combined with unemployment in the towns. This, it is argued, provided a fertile ground for organisation.

The third chapter examines the rural struggles in the Western Cape. It analyses the alliance in the ANC(WP) between the moderate Garveyists and the militants linked to the Communist Party, and the reasons for the subsequent breakdown of this alliance. It discusses both the success of the organisation in coping with violent repression, and its failure to cope with the state's more subtle strategies.

The militants were eventually expelled from the ANC. Most rural branches then broke away to form the Independent ANC. Chapter 4 discusses the formation of the IANC and raises some questions about the nature of its political programme. It then proceeds to focus on organisation in the Southern Cape where all the branches had joined the IANC.

The fifth chapter discusses the organisation in the Midlands

area of the Eastern Cape. It attempts to explain the lack of success in Graaff-Reinet. It then proceeds to examine the organisation in Middelburg where it appears that it had learnt to cope with at least some of the problems experienced in the Western Cape.

The sixth chapter analyses in some detail the issues that were taken up by the IANC in the Midlands, and how these were reflected in its discourse. Among the issues raised are unemployment, resistance to passes and local control measures, the problem of women's participation and the struggle that was waged against the conservative petty bourgeoisie in the ANC.

The seventh chapter first discusses organisation in Cradock. It then proceeds to describe how the struggle in the Midlands built up to a climax at the end of 1931, until massive repression smashed the organisation. Thereafter the organisation continued only at a low level.

The conclusion attempts to draw together some of the themes raised above. First, it discusses the relationship between the petty bourgeoisie and the militants. Second, it argues that the organisation's approach was essentially "agitational", and that this accounts partly for its effectiveness, as well as many of its weaknesses. Lastly an attempt is made to evaluate the significance of the organisation.

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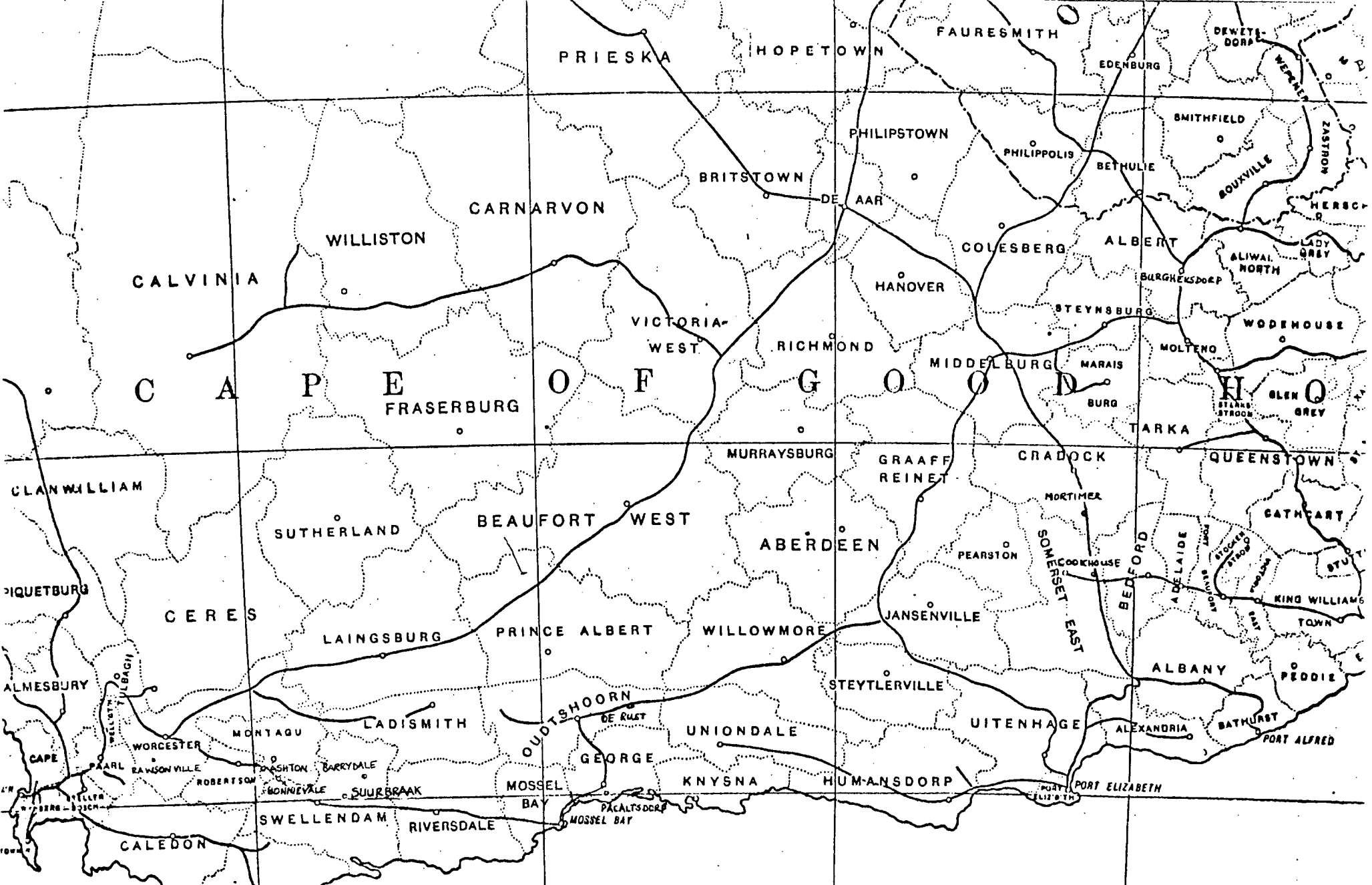
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ABBREVIATIONS

AME	-	American Methodist Episcopal (Church).
ANC	-	African National Congress
ANC(WC)	-	ANC(Western Cape)
ANC(WP)	-	ANC(Western Province)
APO	-	African Political Organisation/African People's Organisation
BLS	-	Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland
CAC	-	Cape African Congress - the Eastern Cape provincial section of the ANC
CACC	-	Co-operation and Agricultural Credit Commission.
Comintern	-	Communist International
Compol	-	Commissioner of Police
CP	-	Communist Party
CPAA	-	Cape Province Agricultural Association
CPSA	-	Communist Party of South Africa
Decompol	-	Deputy Commissioner of Police
Distcompol	-	District Commandant of Police
IANC	-	Independent ANC
ICS	-	Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries.
ICU	-	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IICU	-	Independent ICU
ISL	-	International Socialist League.
IWA	-	Industrial Workers of Africa
JC	-	Joint Council
JUS	-	The archives of the Department of Justice in the Central Archives Depot (SABA) in Pretoria.
KABA	-	Cape Archives Depot in Cape Town
KWV	-	Koöperatiewe Wynbouers Vereeniging
LAB	-	Location Advisory Board

MJ - Minister of Justice
NA - Archives of the Native Affairs Department held in the Central Archives Depot (SABA) in Pretoria.
NAD - Native Affairs Department
NCWA - Native and Coloured Women's Association
NTS - Archives of the Naturellesake (Native Affairs) Department held in the Intermediary Archives Depot (TBPA) in Pretoria.
OFS - Orange Free State
SAAU - South African Agricultural Union
SJ - Secretary of Justice
SL - Secretary of Lands
TNC - Transvaal Native Congress
UNIA - United Negro Improvement Association
VC - Vigilance Committees



PRIESKA

HOPETOWN

FAURESMITH

EDENBURG

DEWETSDORP

WEPER

SMITHFIELD

PHILIPSTOWN

PHILIPPOLIS

BETHULIE

BOUXVILLE

ZASTROF

HERSCHE

BRITSTOWN

DE AAR

CARNARVON

COLESBERG

ALBERT

ALIWAL NORTH

LADY GREY

WILLISTON

HANOVER

BURGHENSDORP

WODEHOUSE

CALVINIA

VICTORIA WEST

RICHMOND

MIDDELBURG

MARAISBURG

MOLTENO

C A P E O F G O O D H O P E

FRASERBURG

MURRAYSBURG

GRAAFF REINET

CRADOCK

QUEENSTOWN

CLANWILLIAM

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GATHART

STUT

DIQUETBURG

CERES

LAINGSBURG

PRINCE ALBERT

WILLOWMORE

JANSENVILLE

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TOWN

ALMESBURY

WORCESTER

MONTAGU

LADISMITH

QUOTSHOORN

UNIONDALE

STEYTLERVILLE

UITENHAGE

ALBANY

BATHURST

PORT ALFRED

CAPE

PAARL

RAWSONVILLE

DASHTON

BARRYDALE

SUURBRAAK

GEORGE

KNYSNA

HUMANSDORP

PORT ELIZABETH

WELLS

WELLS

ROBERTSON

MONNEVILLE

MOSSSEL BAY

MOSSSEL BAY

PACALTSDOORP

MOSSSEL BAY

PORT ELIZABETH

PORT ELIZABETH

CALEDON

SWELLENDAM

RIVERSDALE

MOSSSEL BAY

MOSSSEL BAY

PORT ELIZABETH

PORT ELIZABETH

PORT ELIZABETH

PREDSBORP

PREFACE

This work has been many years in the making and there are a vast number of people who have contributed in some way to its completion. Here I can obviously only thank a few of them.

My greatest debt is due to Debbie Budlender for many years of encouragement and support, for many valuable comments on innumerable drafts, and for typing most of those drafts! I am also indebted to my supervisor, Dave Kaplan, for many years of pushing, prodding and patience. I have learnt a great deal from his help and incisive comments. Thanks also to Ian Phimister who supervised the early stages of my thesis, and to William Beinart for some very useful comments.

This thesis would obviously never have seen the light of day were it not for the many helpful and patient librarians scattered all over the country, especially the staff at the South Africa Public Library, the African Studies Division and Manuscript section of the Jagger library at U.C.T., and the Archives in Pretoria.

Lastly, I would like to thank all my friends who have been very supportive over the years, and especially so over the last few days when the inevitable last-minute proofreading had to be done. Thanks also to Kathy Gurney who turned a chaos of drafts into an immaculately typed thesis.

* * *

I have tried, wherever possible, to avoid "racial" categorisation in this work but unfortunately we live in an extremely divided and stratified society. The various groups in society often have widely divergent traditions, backgrounds or interests, and it is sometimes important to give an indication of the background of a particular person or group of people when discussing some or other feature of

the organisation that is the subject of this study. When this was necessary I have, for the sake of convenience, opted for the use of those terms commonly used in our society, without, I hope, bestowing on them any intrinsic validity. I also make use of the term "black" to indicate all those groupings that are not classified as "white" by the state.

This work traces the emergence and development of a militant popular organisation in the rural areas of the Cape between 1929 and 1933.

Initially organisation was established in the Western Province and Southern Cape under the auspices of the Cape Town based ANC(Western Province). But the militants who spearheaded the organisation in the rural areas, soon clashed with both the local and national leadership of the ANC. This eventually resulted in their expulsion. Almost all the rural branches of the ANC(WP) then broke away to form the Independent ANC which organised in the Southern Cape, and especially in the Midlands area of the Eastern Cape.

This study is essentially a history of a rural organisation which has been much neglected in South African historiography. The struggles in the Western Cape are at least mentioned in most histories of the liberation movement, but the organisation by the IANC in the Southern Cape and Midlands at present languishes in almost total obscurity.

(1) I have been able to find remarkably rich sources on the activities of the ANC(WP) and the IANC, most notably in the archives of the Department of Justice in Pretoria.

They contain a great number of reports by the police and local magistrates on the meetings and activities of the militants. In addition the local newspapers in some of the rural towns gave relatively generous coverage of the IANC, and they contain a wealth of information.

Unfortunately, though, this material gives a view almost exclusively from the "outside" and at present no substantial sources exist which provide one with an "insider" view. The only possible exception is the newspaper Umsebenzi which functioned for a while as the informal mouthpiece of the militants in the ANC(WP). However, this paper covered only the later period of the ANC(WP) organisation, and its coverage of the IANC and events in the Midlands was very poor. Thus the emphasis in this study is inevitably on the public activities of the ANC(WP) and IANC, rather than on the internal dynamics of the organisations - though when an examination of the available evidence does yield new and important insights, these are discussed in some detail.

The struggles that emerged in the rural areas of the Cape raise a number of important issues which will be addressed in this study.

Firstly, there is the issue of the extent to which the rural protests and forms of organisation were structured by the nature of capitalist development in the rural areas. There are two factors to be considered here. First at a general level there is a question as to the extent to which capitalist relations of production prevailed in these areas. Second, and more particular to the period under consideration, one needs to consider the effects of the Great Depression on agriculture and the rural working class. How the popular struggles intersected with these factors and the extent to which the specificity of agriculture in these areas determined the nature and form of these struggles, form the first focus of this study.

Secondly, it is clear that the organisation by the militants generated a great surge of popular excitement and support, and was successful in many ways. This raises a whole series of issues concerning the nature and form of the organisation, for example the strategies and organisational methods that were employed, the issues that were taken up, and the discourse and ideology of the ANC(WP) and IANC.

These issues will be addressed throughout the main body of this study, and in the conclusion an attempt will be made to evaluate the effectiveness and weaknesses in the approach adopted by the organisation.

A third, and less central issue, concerns the nature of the nationalist movement at the time. The interaction between the militants and the main nationalist movement, the ANC, makes clear the necessity of a conception of the ANC which stresses the existence of different tendencies within the movement.

Lastly, there are questions as to the significance of these struggles. This study will explore the extent to which the militants organised within prevailing conceptions of popular organisation, and in what respects they advanced such conceptions in a more progressive direction. The fact that the organisation was based in the rural areas is also of crucial importance. The liberation movement in South Africa has, with few exceptions, been characterised by an overt lack of attention to the question of rural organisation, both in practice and in theory. Though this situation has been remedied somewhat in the last few years, there are still large gaps in our knowledge of the dynamic of rural struggles. I hope that this study will make a small contribution towards increasing our knowledge of the potentialities and limits of rural organisation.

NOTES

1. For accounts of the struggles in the Western Cape, see eg Roux 1978, p231 ff; 1972, p101 ff; 1944, p118; Simons and Simons 1969, p431 ff; Benson 1966, p56 ff; Walshe 1971, p182-3; Lodge 1983, p8-9; Bundy 1984, p19. Most authors mention only the formation of the IANC, and the fact that it was "shortlived". The only reference I have found to the IANC's organisation in the Midlands is two sentences in Bundy 1984, p19.

CHAPTER 1

CONSERVATIVES, MODERATES AND MILITANTS: THE ANC AND POPULAR STRUGGLES BEFORE 1930

Before examining the campaigns of the ANC (Western Province), to organise in the rural areas of the Cape, it is important to situate these campaigns in the context of the history and development of the national movement, and the ANC in particular.

This chapter attempts to draw out three distinct tendencies in the development of the early ANC and the provincial organisations that preceded it. The tendencies are characterised fairly broadly in relation to their attitude towards popular struggles.

The first tendency favoured only moderate methods of struggle and actively opposed any mass popular struggles. A second tendency also favoured moderate means, but was sympathetic and willing to lend some support to mass struggles, although it was not in favour of active participation in such struggles. The third tendency favoured the active involvement of the ANC in popular struggles, both in a supportive and organising role. These tendencies can broadly be labelled as conservative, moderate and militant.

The development of the ANC can be periodised, to some extent, in terms of the emergence and dominance of these tendencies. It must be emphasised, however, that this was not a simple linear process and no tendency ever completely superceded a previous one. Rather these tendencies co-existed uneasily within the ANC, and their relative degrees of dominance were often determined by class struggles outside the organisation.

I 'CONSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION': CONSERVATIVE DOMINANCE IN THE PERIOD UP TO 1914

The ANC was founded on 8 January 1912 at a conference in Bloemfontein. This conference was attended by nearly a hundred delegates from various African organisations, as well as by most of the influential chiefs in the Union and the "Territories" (the BLS countries). (1)

The formation of the ANC was not a sudden and unexpected event - rather it was the culmination of years of struggle by the African petty bourgeoisie who were "striving for personal as well as national advancement," (2) but found their way increasingly blocked.

Before 1909, there were "Native" congresses in all the provinces, but there was very little co-operation or even communication between these organisations. The main reason was the fact that the differences in "native" policies, especially between the Cape and elsewhere, tended to divide the largest section of the African petty bourgeoisie, the enfranchised Africans in the Cape, from the masses in the Cape and from all Africans elsewhere. This isolation was overcome to some extent in 1909 when most of these organisations united to protest against the content of the proposed Union of South Africa, especially against the failure to extend the Cape franchise to the other provinces. All the provincial congresses held well-attended conferences to protest against the Union and this was followed by the meeting of the South African Native Convention in Bloemfontein in March 1909. Virtually all important leaders attended this conference, with the notable exception of John Tengo Jabavu who had become increasingly afraid of any effort to organise a political movement which might antagonise the white population. (3)

The conference itself remained bound by a tradition of constitutional opposition and protest. This was partly a result of its almost exclusively petty bourgeois composition and partly a conscious reaction to the failure of the last traditional armed uprising, the Bambatha rebellion in 1906. (4) It is reflected in the fact that the only challenge it offered to the proposed Union was a delegation to London to appeal to the British Crown, a body which no longer had either the political will or the right to intervene in the internal affairs of the "advanced colonies." (5)

Thus, at a time when the Indian community under the leadership of Gandhi was already exploring new ways of mass opposition through passive resistance and defiance (6), the African petty bourgeoisie failed to take any note of this and remained within a sterile tradition of constitutional opposition. Needless to say, the delegation was a total failure, although the conference remained an important landmark in the development of a national movement in South Africa.

After the establishment of the Union, the African petty bourgeoisie was further alarmed at the amount of discriminatory measures passed or proposed by the new government. These included the Native Labour Regulation Act (1911) which changed a breach of contract by African workers into a criminal offense, the Mines and Works Act (1911) which allowed job reservation by regulation, and the proposed Land Bill (1910). (7) Not all of these measures affected the petty bourgeoisie directly; but a large section of the petty bourgeoisie was astute enough to realise that increased national oppression of Africans at any level would also affect the petty bourgeoisie.

In the course of 1911, a group of young lawyers, recently returned from overseas studies, started to organise a conference. They planned to form a South African Native Congress to give a focus to this diffuse unease and to consolidate the gains of the National Convention. Pixley ka

I Seme was especially prominent in this group, and was supported by Alfred Mangena and Richard Msimang. According to Simons and Simons, it soon became clear that

Nearly all the leaders and greater chiefs supported the movement for a congress that would give them an effective means of making their grievances known to the government and South Africa at large. (8)

Thus it was not long before the group's efforts culminated in the founding congress of the ANC described above.

Initially the ANC was an almost exclusively urban petty bourgeois movement. But there were concerted attempts to draw in the rural petty bourgeoisie, especially the chiefs, by granting them special privileges within the ANC, and by acknowledging their traditional leadership position in the rural areas. The composition of the first congress is an indication of the domination of the petty bourgeoisie, and especially the urban petty bourgeoisie - those who attended were chiefs,

ministers, teachers, clerks, interpreters a few successful farmers, small scale traders, compound managers, estate and labour agents - they were not trade unionists, nor were they socially radical. (9)

Walshe is perhaps overcritical on the issue of working class representation as, firstly, there probably were no African trade unionists at the time, as the working class was still relatively undeveloped and consequently very weak and disorganised; and secondly some prominent members of the ANC had been involved in the limited working class struggles that had taken place. In Cape Town, for example, Mangena was prominent as an adviser and "secretary" to the

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stevedores when they fought a series of bitter struggles over wages, living conditions and control over the labour process at the turn of the century. He was also involved in the struggle against the imposition of a location in Cape Town in the 1900's. (10)

Initially the ANC was almost exclusively petty bourgeois in composition and essentially conservative in character. The early ANC continued the traditional methods of 'constitutional' opposition: the

approved methods of struggle were to ventilate grievances at public meetings and through the press, and make representations for redress by means of resolutions and deputations. (11)

Typically then, the first action of the newly formed ANC was to send a delegation to Cape Town to protest against the Squatters Bill. Like many, if not all, subsequent delegations, this effort ended in total failure. (12)

The first major issue that the ANC had to face was the Land Act of 1913, which provided for the segregation of rural landholding and attempted to prevent the independent reproduction of the African peasantry. (13) The drastic effects of this Act aroused mass opposition and the ANC grasped the opportunity to consolidate its support, and its leadership of the national struggle. (14)

It led much of the opposition against the Land Act, a struggle that elicited much wider support from Africans than any previous political campaign launched in South Africa. This is clear, inter alia, from the fact that the ANC membership expanded considerably, even to include numbers of poorer peasants, and from the amount of money it was able to collect. (15)

In the opposition to the Land Act, moderate methods again

prevailed. At the July 1913 conference a proposal to send a delegation to Britain to protest against the Act and to request the British parliament to veto it, was received enthusiastically and confirmed at the next conference. Much of the ANC's subsequent efforts were directed towards organising this delegation. It did in fact travel to London - at vast expense - but the mission was as futile as the 1909 delegation. The British Crown was no longer willing to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Union. (16)

The opposition of the Land Act was further conditioned by the fact that some ANC leaders were prepared to accept some segregation, provided that it was "fair" and restricted to the rural areas. (17) This dithering on a fundamental issue in the national struggle was only decisively defeated at the 1916 conference and shows the lengths to which sections of the petty bourgeoisie were prepared to go to avoid any confrontation with the bourgeoisie. It is also, however, a reflection of the very different material conditions in the reserves, as Beinart has shown in the case of Pondoland. There a relatively high degree of independence had been preserved from the capitalist sector and there was substantial support for the Land Act as it would prevent the further encroachment of the white farmers onto the Reserves. (18)

II 'GUARDED SUPPORT': MODERATES SUPPORT MASS STRUGGLES FROM 1914 ONWARDS

It is in the influx of new members into the ANC that we find the emergence of a challenge to the conservatives' total hegemony within the ANC. As the ANC and its influence expanded, it became less exclusively petty bourgeoisie, both in composition and character. Furthermore, the very logic of a mass organisation required the petty bourgeoisie leadership to at least support popular struggles in order to retain their leadership of the national movement. This strengthened the moderates within the ANC.

For most of the period up to 1940 there was little conflict between the conservatives and the moderates as both groupings were in favour of moderate means of struggle, of constitutional opposition. There was conflict though, when popular mass struggles erupted and the ANC had to define its position vis-a-vis such struggles. These tensions surfaced for the first time at the July 1913 conference when there was considerable support for a motion "associating" the ANC with the strikes of the African mine workers, and it was only after determined intervention by Sol Plaatje that it was rejected and the ANC "dissociated" itself from the strike. (19)

For the conservatives there could be no question of any involvement in mass struggles. As Seme argued in 1912, the ANC was formed precisely

to provide a representative and responsible outlet for African opinion, and to so avoid the exploitation of Native fears and grievances by irresponsible agitators. (20)

The conservatives realised that the petty bourgeoisie had specific class interests that could not be conflated to those of the working class. In particular it was vital for the petty bourgeoisie to retain control of the national movement. Losing control would probably mean that a more militant national struggle would be launched, which would ultimately force the petty bourgeoisie to make an open choice between an alliance with the bourgeoisie or the working class.

During the post-war upheavals this perspective found a clear and conscious expression in Sol Plaatje's dealings with De Beers, which were underpinned by

a distinct note of concern on Plaatje's part about the threat that the strength

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of the 'black Bolsheviks' ... posed to his own class position and credibility.

(21)

The moderates, on the other hand, were more inclined to support popular struggles. They argued, somewhat simplistically, that the national movement was an undivided whole, and that there was no conflict amongst the various classes constituting the national movement. This group stated that the ANC's task was merely to establish "a mandate from the people" (22) - in other words they wished to draw the working class into the national movement, but assumed implicitly that the petty bourgeoisie would continue to exercise their "natural" leadership of the movement.

(23)

There was, however, a contradiction in the moderate position which would become more significant later. Once popular struggle built up to a certain level, the moderates were in fact forced to make the choice that the conservatives sought to avoid: they had to participate in the struggles or join the conservatives in opposing them.

At the same time as these developments in the ANC, there were signs outside the organisation of the emergence of new methods of popular struggle, although the ANC did not (or would not) directly participate in these struggles.

As early as 1911 African mineworkers on the Rand went on strike, and this was followed by a series of strikes in July 1913 and January 1914, during the white miners' strikes. (24). As described above, there was a considerable amount of sympathy for the strikers within the ANC.

New methods of struggle also emerged in the struggle against passes in the Orange Free State. In the early part of the century, the Orange Free State was the only province where African women were legally required to carry passes. It was only after Union that the local government tried to enforce

these regulations. Both the ANC and the African Political Organisation protested against these laws through their usual channels of deputations and petitions. In about 1912, a Native and Coloured Womens Association was formed in Bloemfontein. This body played a crucial role in organising the anti-pass campaign and in devising new methods of mass resistance to the pass laws. In addition, it was also a significant advance on earlier forms of organisation both in the sense that it was not restricted to one ethnic group, and in that most earlier organisation had totally excluded women. In fact, according to Walker, there was some degree of resentment by the ANC and APO at the degree of independence of the NCWA. (25)

The NCWA utilised the old methods of delegations and petitions, but these were eventually exhausted and the women lost their patience. In June 1913 several women were arrested while handling a petition to the Bloemfontein mayor. Up to that time there had been some unorganised mass resistance in the form of a refusal to take the new passes. Now, however, the struggle against passes became much more militant. 600 women marched on the Magistrates Court and Town Hall to protest against the arrests, breaking through a police cordon on the way. This

was the beginning of a widespread campaign of passive resistance which spread to all the major Free State towns. (26)

Hundreds of women went to gaol for refusing to carry passes, and in a number of towns the gaols were reported to be overflowing.

Widespread evictions under the 1913 Land Act were taking place at the same time and were a further factor contributing to the militant nature of the anti-pass campaign. Walker describes the campaign, but is not very clear on its duration. It seems that it stopped at

some stage during the war, although there were still sporadic incidents in 1920.

The campaign was extremely successful and the attempt to introduce passes was eventually defeated. In fact opposition was so strong that it made the state extremely wary of any attempt to extend the system to other provinces. (27) It was only in the 1950's that the state again attempted to extend the pass system to women.

Although the ANC did not take any direct part in the mass campaign, its impact had a profound influence on some sections of the ANC leadership, strengthened by the relative success of the campaign. This contributed further to the dilution of the dominance of the conservatives in the ANC. In contrast to its attitude during the 1913 miners' strike, the majority in the ANC was now prepared to lend support to popular struggles, although it was still wary of direct participation in such struggles.

The outbreak of the war in 1914, however, negated much of the progress that the ANC had made towards becoming a more militant mass movement. For the next few years, much of the ANC's actions were tempered by the need to assure the government of the loyalty and support of the African population - a need which obviously precluded the organisation of any resistance to government measures. It was one of the essential elements of the African petty bourgeoisie ideology that they would be duly rewarded, if only they could convince the government of their loyalty and the war presented them with a golden opportunity. The ANC gave its unconditional support to the war effort, helping, inter alia, to recruit Africans to serve in the labour corps attached to the army, despite the fact that the government steadfastly refused to even consider recruiting black soldiers. (28) Thus it was not surprising that by 1917 many people regarded the ANC as a purely elitist organisation consisting of

Exempted natives, shareholders, and a couple of lawyers ... {who} organise themselves so as not to have their lands and exemption certificates taken away from them. (29)

This trend was only reversed towards the end of the war, under pressure from a series of mass struggles.

III 'INVOLVEMENT IN POPULAR STRUGGLES' - MILITANTS AND THE POST-WAR PERIOD ON THE RAND

Prelude

Initially the left wing movements in South Africa were only interested in organising white workers, but gradually a realisation took root amongst the most progressive sections of the left that

craft unionism and prejudice, in perpetuating the exclusion of African labour from organisation encouraged the sacrifice of the most revolutionary workers. This removed the motive force of the revolution. The revolution then no longer depended on the white workers, but on the black workers joined by the white workers. (30)

Led by Sidney Bunting and David Ivon Jones, the International Socialist League broke with the Labour Party's segregationist 'native' policy and became actively involved in organising African workers and co-operating with black organisations. Although there were still important elements in the ISL that had doubts about this course, (31) the more progressive wing had a clear majority by 1916 and began to take the first tentative steps towards co-operating with Africans. The ANC and ISL held a joint protest meeting against the Native Administration Bill, while the ISL began

to lay the groundwork for a black trade union. In 1917 it organised regular weekly meetings with African workers to instruct them in socialism in semi-secret conditions. (32) The core of the Industrial Workers of Africa, the first African trade union in South Africa, emerged from these meetings.

From the end of 1917, there were a number of joint meetings between the IWA/ISL, the Transvaal Native Congress and the APO. At these meetings the TNC stated that they

would remain independent of the labour movement since their business was to get the rights of black people and 'to unite the native chiefs' but the TNC was 'heartily willing to join and assist the working movement as best they can'.

(33)

Although there was still a lot of mistrust of the ANC in the IWA/ISL, especially given some of the extremely reactionary statements made by some of the TNC leaders (34), a certain amount of co-operation continued to take place.

The mass struggles on the Rand between mid-1918 and 1920 were an extremely significant turning point in the development of the national liberation struggle in South Africa. For the first time a whole series of mass struggles erupted on a scale which forced the ANC to become actively involved in popular struggles, or to be left behind. As will become clear below there were some within the TNC leadership who preferred the latter course, but for a period at least, the TNC committed itself to active participation in popular struggle. For the purposes of this work, it is extremely important to look at this period in some detail, as it was the only other time before the Second World War that a section of the ANC was directly involved in mass struggles.

As early as 1911 African mineworkers had gone on strike demanding better wages and working conditions, while in 1913 more than 13 000 black mineworkers struck during the white miners strike. Although all the strikes were severely repressed, significant improvements in working conditions were won as the state and capital attempted to defuse the situation. (35) There were also a few smaller strikes in January 1914 and towards the end of 1915, but as argued earlier, mass struggle was at a low ebb during the war. (36)

The 'Bucket' strike

The first indication of an upsurge in the level of popular struggle came in January 1918. The increasing level of prices in mines stores, led to an organised boycott of these stores which

quickly spread, and soon developed into an organised and disciplined campaign ... along the entire eastern Rand .. {but} police action and the promise of a Commission of Enquiry brought the movement to a halt. (37)

In May there was a successful strike by some black Railway workers, which won them a 3d per day increase. Shortly afterwards followed a strike and a number of demands for increased wages by municipal workers. The Council's refusal to grant any increases led to the famous 'bucket' strike after 50 night soilmen had been arrested when they refused to work. The other workers refused to scab and eventually 152 workers were arrested and callously sentenced to continue doing their own work under armed guard. (38) The black community was outraged at these sentences and a series of mass protest meetings were held all over the Rand. The TNC were in the forefront of organising the protests, although the IWA and APO also played a prominent role and co-operated closely with the TNC. (39) Although several members of the IWA and ISL were charged with organising the

bucket strike, they were all found not guilty and it is not clear to what extent the IWA was involved in the strike itself. In fact a joint IWA/TNC Committee of Five was set up

to find ways how we are going to get our rights, and if we do not get them, what shall we do to starve the white men.

(40)

Almost immediately it became clear that there were two distinct strategies in the TNC for dealing with the crisis. On the one hand, there was the traditional ANC view which repudiated any mass action and wanted to continue assuring whites of the loyalty of blacks. Isaac Bud Mbelle argued that

We must extinguish the fire when we see it burning outside ... the Congress at Bloemfontein decided that its sentiments were against any form of strike. We have therefore also to be careful about what we do and must avoid putting our people in trouble ... If we do not stop the strike the whole of Johannesburg will be in flames. (41)

On the other hand, there emerged a new militant line, not clearly defined or articulated as yet, which realised the importance of mass action and was willing to support or even advocate such action. This line was most consistently espoused by the IWA, but even in the TNC there was a growing group of moderates who were under severe pressure to support this line. At times this line even had majority support within the TNC. Thus Maghato, president of the TNC, replied to Bud Mbelle by advocating mass action: if

the blacks just folded up their arms and stopped work, they would surely hurt the

white man! (42)

It seems that this group of militants almost immediately started to make preparations for a general strike and in the series of mass meetings in June they were almost totally dominant. (43) Certainly the conservatives were sufficiently worried about their position to appeal to the state for help. Bud Mbelle telegraphed to the Minister of Justice in regard to those who had been arrested, that

the government would strengthen our hands considerably by extending its clemency to the prisoners, and by altering Mr McFie's (the chief magistrate - WH) decision before the weekend. (44)

The most significant protest meeting took place on 19 June when over a thousand Africans from all parts of the Rand gathered and a demand for a 1s a day increase was formulated. According to Bonner, it appears

that no decision was actually taken on the question of a strike, although this was clearly the sanction that was at the back of the people's minds if the 1/- request was rejected. (45)

At any rate, many people came away from the meeting thinking that a strike had been decided on. Even before the end of June a number of strikes took place, although it is not clear to what extent these were organised or spontaneous reactions to the new militant atmosphere on the Rand.

The leaders were, however, still lagging behind their followers. The committee of five did very little by way of active organisation. As 1 July drew closer, and it became clear that there might well be a general strike, many leaders began to express doubts, arguing for example, that

employers should be given time to respond to the demands before the strike began. (46) The tremendous impact of the working class struggles on the TNC leadership, is however, evident from the fact that very few of the latter argued that there should not be a strike at all - the debate was primarily about questions of timing and strength.

At the same time, the state, which had initially taken an extremely hard line on the strike, began to feel sufficiently threatened to change its line and make some concessions as part of a more co-optive strategy aimed at the petty bourgeoisie. Firstly, Bud Mbelle's appeal to release the municipal workers was heeded and they were released pending a review of the case by the Supreme Court. Like almost all the other concessions, it was arranged in a way that would strengthen the position of the conservatives to the greatest extent possible. (47)

Secondly, it was announced that prime minister Botha had agreed to receive a delegation from the TNC to air the grievances of blacks, and it was promised that a Commission of Enquiry would be held. At a TNC meeting of thousands of people on 30 June it was announced that the Moffat Commission had been appointed and that the strike had been called off.

Despite these concessions and the advice of both TNC and IWA/ISL leaders, there were a number of strikes on 1 July, most notably on the mines. According to the Johannesburg Town Inspector,

Practically all the natives employed by the various firms ... put forward an application for an increase of wages at a rate of 1/- a day and were waiting for a reply. ... all disclaimed any intention of striking, but I very much doubt whether they will continue that attitude were they to meet a general

refusal. (48)

The strike was brutally put down on the mines and elsewhere the movement temporarily fizzled out as the TNC leaders fell back on their more comfortable and conventional role of preparing memoranda and evidence for their meetings with Botha and the Moffat commission. (49)

The Anti-Pass Campaign

When the road of moderation and deputations once again proved to be a dead end when the Moffat Commission announced only minor concessions, pressure again began to build up for more militant mass action. Despite the absence of an immediate victory in July 1918, the 1/- a day demand continued to be made. After a lull caused by the 1918 influenza epidemic and the negotiations with the government, a new wave of mass struggles swept the Rand in March/April 1919.

Increasingly the link was drawn between the pass system and low wages. Passes were increasingly seen as an essential element in the repressive labour system in South Africa particularly insofar as they could be used to crush strikes and victimise strikers.

It seems that the campaign started on 31 March, when a large crowd gathered at the office of the Acting Chief Pass officer. A delegation told him that they would refuse to carry passes and cease work on there had been no wage increases. At a mass meeting afterwards, hundreds of passes were collected. Pickets collected about 2 000 more passes in the afternoon. The next morning 3 000 blacks met in Johannesburg, all without passes, and decided on a variety of steps to spread the campaign and strike to the mines and the rest of the Southern Transvaal. At that stage the police did not have enough men to intervene in the proceedings, but when reinforcements arrived the next day, the police arrested the strike leaders at a meeting. A

large crowd followed the arrested to the charge office. Here further demonstrations took place and further arrests were made. (50)

Another big demonstration took place the next day outside the courtroom, but this time the police were even better prepared and mounted police charged into the crowd, injuring dozens of people. Sporadic incidents continued throughout the Rand for much of April and in Johannesburg alone, more than 700 people were arrested. (51)

Soon after the protest started, a new element was introduced into the working class/petty bourgeoisie alliance, viz the lumpenproletariat. The latter had even greater grievances against the pass laws and joined wholeheartedly in the demonstrations. They introduced an element of instability and violence into the struggles, which up to then had been almost totally non-violent.

The petty bourgeoisie were frightened at this increasing level of violence in the campaign. Simultaneously, the state again made a determined attempt to defuse the situation by offering more (minor) concessions, and promising to consider others. Once again a substantial section of the TNC leadership was enticed into negotiations. At a meeting on 1 July they even agreed with the Director of Native Labour, Colonel Pritchard, that

A great blunder had been made by them in starting the 'Throw away passes' agitation. (52)

This time, however, they had a hard time convincing the rank and file, and in a series of stormy reportback meetings the leaders were forced to backtrack to some extent, after being accused of selling out. (53)

Although there is evidence of the continued militancy in the middle ranks of the TNC, the leadership continued to drift to the right in the period that followed, especially when the TNC tried to enter into a closer alliance with the chiefs. (54)

The 1920 Miners' strike

The last big manifestation of the militancy in the ranks of the TNC was the African mineworkers strike of 1920. After the events of 1919, Bonner argues, "the growing militancy of black workers" had forced the Chamber of Mines to grant wage increases in November 1919 and February 1920.

These increases were, however, too late or too unevenly implemented to defuse the growing militancy of the mineworkers. From November 1919 to February 1920 a series of struggles took place on various mines, ranging from protest marches about food and boycotts of mine stores, to actual strikes and armed clashes with the police. (55)

These struggles reached a climax after 16 February when a wave of strikes swept through the mines in the second half of the month:

By Saturday, 28 February, when the strike finally ended some 71 000 workers had taken part in the stoppage, with over 30 000 being out on 6 consecutive days - and a further 25 651 on Wednesday the 25th ... Of a total of thirty-five mines, twenty-one had been affected, and not far off a half of the black work force had participated. (56)

In fact, when one includes the preceding struggles, it emerges that the majority of mineworkers participated at some stage and "that there was scarcely a mine that emerged completely untouched." (57)

The extent of TNC involvement in the strike is not clear. What is certain is that elements in the leadership were very much against the strike, while other individuals were extremely active in organising the struggles. There was also a lot of sympathy for the strikers amongst the TNC rank and file. (58)

IV THE STRUGGLE FOR DOMINANCE

The ANC and the ICU

The struggles on the Rand mark a decisive turning point in the history of the national movement in South Africa. For the first time there was the emergence of the third tendency identified above, viz for the national movement to identify with and participate in popular struggles. As Bonner concludes:

... for the Congress leadership at least, and probably also for the mass of the African working population, these events provided the first full realisation of the strength of the organised working class .. {and} there were those {in the TNC - WH} whose outlook was profoundly transformed by this period of working class mobilisation. (59)

For a considerable time the militants attained a position of dominance within the TNC. The participation of the TNC in the struggles demonstrated the importance of the existence of a wider organisation. Despite the vacillations of the TNC leadership, its participation strengthened the fairly disparate popular struggles by giving them a greater coherence and sense of direction.

Of course, this is not to argue that the third tendency can be used to characterise the ANC at that time. Although it

was undoubtedly a force within the TNC at that time, in the ANC as a whole the other tendencies were still dominant. Even in the TNC the more militant tendency almost disappeared after the defeat of the popular struggles of 1917 to 1920 removed the radical impulse pushing the petty bourgeoisie into a more militant position. At the same time the state and capital launched a concerted campaign aimed at the co-optation of the petty bourgeoisie. The combination of these two factors, in Bonner's words, left the petty bourgeoisie

to sink into the cosy complacency of the
1920's ANC. (60)

There is some evidence of continued organisation by the ANC, notably by the TNC in the Transvaal rural areas, but the available evidence is so scanty that it is difficult to draw any conclusions. (61) Bonner suggests that the movement was fairly conservative and that it came increasingly under the influence of the chiefs. In any event, it did not last for very long and left behind a legacy of bitter disillusionment.

The only other case of some active organisation by the ANC during the next decade was in the Western Cape in the late 1920's, which will be examined in Chapter 3.

For the greater part of the 1920's the popular organisation that took place was under the banner of the ICU. This movement, up to 1925-26, was largely working class in leadership and composition. (62) Thereafter it rapidly changed into a mass based popular movement operating primarily in the rural areas of Transvaal and Natal. (63)

Bradford has shown that this process was again accompanied by the radicalisation of a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie. Apart from the long term process of undermining the position of the African petty bourgeoisie, there was, after 1922, a re-assessment by the state and

capital of the costs attached to the strategy of incorporation that followed the post-war struggles on the Rand. (64) Especially under the Pact government, this re-assessment lead to

a direct attack on the economic base,
the political rights and the ideological
role of the African middle class. (65)

The lower sections of the petty bourgeoisie were affected particularly harshly and responded to the ICU to such an extent that its leadership soon became dominated by these strata. There developed a polarisation of the petty bourgeoisie similar to that described by Bonner, except that this time the two sections were in separate organisations. While the marginalised sections of the petty bourgeoisie came to dominate the ICU, the ANC remained firmly in the hands of the more prosperous section of the petty bourgeoisie. (66)

The Conservatives Organise - A Case Study

It is necessary to examine in some detail an important article by Willan (67) as it sheds much light on the struggles that were taking place in the ANC and TNC at the time, and particularly on the conscious way in which conservatives tried to combat the influence of the militant tendency in the ANC.

Both Bonner and Bradford analyse the cleavages that develop within the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie when mass struggles erupt around it and they trace the polarisation of the petty bourgeoisie as a result of such struggles.

Willan's focus on the other hand, is slightly different - the conservative leadership of the petty bourgeoisie in Kimberley was not threatened by the eruption of mass struggles in Kimberley itself but rather by the more militant form of organisation that had developed in the

Transvaal. He shows that in the absence of a radical impulse from below, the petty bourgeoisie is particularly susceptible to liberal bourgeois ideology and that there is much scope for a fruitful alliance between them and the liberal bourgeoisie to avert the perceived challenge to the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie.

In Kimberley there was already a long history of collaboration between De Beers and a section of the African petty bourgeoisie, although it was on a fairly limited scale. (68) The key figure in Kimberley was Sol Plaatje - the first secretary-general of the ANC and one of the most senior leaders within the organisation. In fact he was offered the presidency of the ANC in 1917, but declined the position.

During the course of World War I two developments occurred that were to cement the alliance. Firstly, Plaatje became converted to the Brotherhood Movement - a movement founded in England by a section of big capital with the explicit aim of introducing the "spirit of Brotherhood" into the conflict between capital and labour.

The second, and more pressing development, was the eruption of the series of mass struggles on the Rand that was examined above. De Beers felt especially threatened by the potential industrial unrest as it could not rely on the coercive support of the state to the same extent as the gold mines. It had to rely more on wages and "ideological" measures to attract sufficient labour. This paved the way for a much closer alliance with the African petty bourgeoisie, exemplified by the frank appeal from De Beers to Plaatje:

For God's sake keep them (natives) off
the labour agitators. (69)

Plaatje was also concerned about the increased level of mass

struggles as he realised that it would threaten the dominance and leadership of the petty bourgeoisie in ANC. In his account of the struggles in the Transvaal, there is a clear realisation that the conservative petty bourgeoisie might lose its leadership of the ANC if it did not ally itself much more closely with the working class and its demands:

During the past year or so Mr Msane became very unpopular among the younger native workers on the Reef. The cause was extraordinary. A small band of white men, the Industrial Workers of the World, boldly and openly sympathised with the natives in the long hours they had to work and on the niggardly pay as well as the bad housing conditions on the Witwatersrand. Naturally their programme appealed to the native labourers. But, rightly or wrongly, Mr Msane held that it would be suicidal for the helpless natives to ally themselves with an insignificant body of white extremists who are in the bad books of the government and very unpopular with Boers and English alike, and each time there was a clash Mr Msane threw the whole weight of his influence on the side of the authorities, and earned thereby the name among the labourers of 'Isita-sa Bantu' (Enemy of the Natives).

(70)

Although the threat was less severe in Kimberley, Plaatjie was concerned enough about it to write to De Beers that

there is a belief among some of the population here that I am in the employ of De Beers - employed to keep them

quiet. (71)

Plaatje was caught in a dilemma - on the one hand he wanted a closer alliance with De Beers - on the other hand, to retain his leadership role he needed to be seen to put pressure on De Beers and to win concessions from them. Willan argues that there was

a conscious attempt on his {Plaatje's - WH} part to respond to such changes by allying himself more closely with De Beers, and in so doing making clear to the company the advantages that due recognition of the special role that he could play offered to the company itself ... and to suggest to them the consequences that would follow from an eclipse of his position of influence and that of the moderate natives in general.

(72)

Under the particular conditions in Kimberley, such a solution was actually feasible as De Beers was willing to make some concessions and to let these be used to strengthen the hands of the "moderates" in the ANC.

It was with the deliberate intention of helping to prevent the spread of industrial unrest that De Beers took the decision to enlist the support of influential 'moderate natives' ... De Beers was at the same time conscious of the ideological investment they were making in the future because the Brotherhood Movement, as outlined to them by Plaatje, promised much for the future in the way of diverting the aspirations of their work force from immediate, militant demands, and in substituting an alternative ideology,

which, if pervasive, could do much to prevent their effective organisation along class lines in the way that had caused so much concern on the Rand.

(73)

Thus De Beers decided to grant a request by Plaatje to use a disused tram shed as a hall for the Brotherhood Movement and more general meetings, and even decided to contribute £100 to the costs of renovation. There were immediate benefits to both sides as a result of this gift - both sides managed to extract the maximum publicity out of the ceremony to hand over the hall, even to the extent that the Governor General was present at the personal insistence of the Prime Minister. On the whole, however, Plaatje was the main beneficiary of the closer alliance. His position within the ANC both in Kimberley and at a national level was immensely strengthened - a flood of letters and telegrams from other leaders congratulated him and many of these saw in the Kimberley events new hope for a moderate solution to the "native problem". Plaatje did try though, to mobilise this support on issues that were very much in the interest of De Beers. At a national level, he tried to counter the demands for a more militant national struggle, especially from the TNC, as is clear from the following letter he wrote to De Beers in August 1918.

I had to attend the Native Congress at Bloemfontein to prevent the spread among our people of the Johannesburg Socialist propaganda. ... The ten Transvaal delegates came to the Congress with a concord and determination that was perfectly astounding to our customary native demeanour at conferences. They spoke almost in unison, in short sentences, nearly all of which began and ended with the word 'strike'. It was not difficult to

understand the source of their backing, for they even preceded the Congress and endeavoured to poison the minds of delegates from other parts. It was only late in the second day that we succeeded in satisfying the delegates to report, on getting to their homes, that the Socialist method of pitting up black against white will land our people in serious disaster, while the most that could happen to the whiteman would be but a temporary inconvenience. When they took the train for Johannesburg, at Bloemfontein station, I am told that one of them remarked that they would have 'converted Congress had not De Beers given Plaatje a Hall'. This seems intensely re-assuring as indicating that Kimberley will be about the last place that these black Bolsheviks of Johannesburg will pay attention to, thus leaving us free to combat their activities in other parts of the Union.

(74)

At the local level the stronger position of the conservatives and their closer alliance to De Beers, is demonstrated by a meeting held in the tram shed,

convened by the more moderate natives with the object of forstalling a movement which is on foot amongst the natives to secure an increase by means of a general strike. (75)

In Kimberley, this alliance proved to be a lasting one, and by 1929 it was reported that Plaatje was trying to counter the influence of the CP in Kimberley.

V CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter attempts to draw together the differing responses of the conservative petty bourgeoisie in the various areas, and to come to some conclusions about its significance. Here it is only necessary to mention some of the trends and issues which also proved to be important in the campaigns in the Cape.

In the first place there was a significant amount of co-operation between African and coloured people. On the Rand APO co-operated fairly closely with the TNC and IWA as is evident from their joint meetings. In addition the IWA also had a number of coloured members and organisers that played an important role in the campaigns. Thus this co-operation, especially in the IWA, was an important beginning to efforts to unite all the oppressed into one organisation over the next decade, notably in the ICU and especially in the ANC(WP) and IANC.

A second point to emerge was the ability of the ANC as a nationalist and political movement to cohere and give added impetus to relatively diffuse popular struggles. The ANC played a vital role in uniting various struggles, in giving overall direction. Later the ICU, ANC(WP) and IANC would again demonstrate the importance of having a political movement to strengthen and broaden popular struggles. In turn, of course, these movements would themselves be strengthened by their participation in these struggles.

In the third place, though, these struggles also showed the strength of the conservative and moderate elements within the ANC. Although they lost their earlier unquestioned dominance within the organisation, they were still able to regain hegemony within a relatively short time when conditions became more favourable. As happened later in the Western Cape, the reassertion of conservative dominance was achieved only at the expense of the almost total abandonment

of involvement in popular struggles, leading to the total inactivity by the ANC in, respectively, the early 1920's and 1930's.

Fourthly, there was the high level of state repression and violence during the struggles. This frightened many members of the petty bourgeoisie who were concerned to be seen as 'respectable citizens'. Although the participation of the lumpenproletariat served to broaden the movement in general, it exacerbated these tensions by its almost casual acceptance of violence. Many people also had doubts about even a loose alliance with the lumpenproletariat.

In the Cape this phenomenon would be repeated, albeit in a more ameliorated form. There the lumpenproletariat was much smaller, and thus it generated less tension within the movement.

NOTES

1. Initially the organisation was called the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), but this was changed in 1925 to the South African African National Congress (SAANC), commonly shortened to ANC. There seems to be a great deal of confusion about the renaming and the details here are from Walshe (p204). Simons and Simons state that the name was changed to SANC in 1925 (p137), Roux talks about the SANC (p112), while Kuper simply says that the name was changed to ANC in 1923 (p443). For the sake of uniformity, this work always refers to the national organisation as the ANC.
2. Walshe 1970, p36.
3. For details see Walshe 1970, p20-36; Odendaal 1984.
4. See Marks 1970 for details.
5. Walshe 1970, p23.
6. Tayal 1983; Simons and Simons 1969, p72; Roux 1978, p105-8.
7. Walshe 1970, p31.
8. Simons and Simons 1969, p133.
9. Walshe 1970, p34.
10. See eg Saunders 1979; Budlender n.d.; Baskin - oral communication; Dubow 1981.
11. Simons and Simons 1969, p136.
12. Walshe 1970, p38.
13. See eg. Morris 1979; Moodie 1982; Bundy 1979.
14. Walshe 1970, p45-6
15. Walshe 1970, p48-52
16. Walshe 1970, p48-50
17. Walshe 1970, p48
18. Beinart 1982, p124-5
19. Willan 1977, p212

20. Walshe 1970, p37.
21. Willan 1977, p207. See also below.
22. Dube and Mapikela quoted in Walshe 1970, p40.
23. See eg. the discussion of Willan's work on Plaatjes below, and Willan 1977, p207-9.
24. Simons and Simons 1969, p156 et seq.
25. See Walker 1982, p27-32 and Wells 1980 for details.
26. Walker 1982, p31.
27. Walker 1982, p181 ff.
28. Walshe 1970, p52-3
29. Quoted in Johnstone 1979, p251
30. Soudien 1978, p4.
31. See eg Soudien 1978, p3.
32. Ironically, no fewer than 4 police spies regularly attended these meetings and it is from their reports that much of our knowledge of this early period stems.
33. Johnstone 1979, p260.
34. Johnstone 1979, p251, p260; Soudien 1978, p4-5
35. Simons and Simons 1969, p160 et seq; Johnstone 1976, p169-72
36. Bonner 1979, p275.
37. Bonner 1979, p276
38. Roux 1978, p130-1; Bonner 1980, p23-4.
39. See eg Johnstone 1979, p263; Soudien 1978.
40. Quoted in Johnstone 1979, p263.
41. Quoted in Bonner 1980, p24.
42. Paraphrased in Bonner 1980, p24.
43. See Bonner 1982, p291 ff.

44. Quoted in Bonner 1980, p26.
45. Bonner 1980, p28.
46. Bonner 1980, p28.
47. Bonner 1980, p29-30.
48. E. Berg, Town Inspector quoted in Bonner 1980, p31.
49. Bonner 1980 p32-4.
50. Bonner 1980, p36.
51. Roux 1978, p119-20.
52. Quoted in Bonner 1980, p37.
53. Bonner 1980, p38.
54. Bonner 1980, p39-40.
55. Bonner 1979, p278-9.
56. Bonner 1979, p274.
57. Bonner 1979, p279.
58. See eg Bonner 1979, p282.
59. Bonner 1980, p33.
60. Bonner 1979, p289.
61. See eg Bradford 1983a, p132-3; Bonner 1982, p304-5.
62. Wickens 1978, p113 ff.
63. Bradford 1980, 1981, 1983c.
64. Bradford 1984b, p296 ff; Bonner 1979, p296-7 and Willan 1984, p285-7 all examine this process in some detail.
65. Bradford 1983b, p9.
66. Bradford 1983b, p20.
67. Willan 1977.
68. See eg Willan 1977, p198, 205, 211-14. Unless

otherwise indicated, the details below are from this article.

69. Willan 1977, p205, p195.
70. Willan 1977, p207.
71. Willan 1977, p208.
72. Willan 1977, p208.
73. Willan 1977, p204.
74. Willan 1977, p206.
75. Willan 1977, p205 quoting the Protector of Labour.

CHAPTER 2

CAPITALIST FARMERS IN A RECESSION:
THE SPECIFICITY OF WESTERN CAPE FARMING

The next chapter will examine the involvement of the ANC(WP) in the rural struggles that emerged in the Western Cape after 1928. It is necessary, though, to place these struggles within the broader context of the development of capitalist agriculture in the Western Cape. More specifically, it is necessary to examine the effects on agriculture of the great international capitalist crisis in the early 1930s.

The evolution of the productive forces has always been one of the key factors in a historical materialist understanding of the process of history. Meiskins Wood has stressed that this does not mean that one accepts a "mechanically determined and unilinear history" - the level of development of the productive forces only serves to establish the "limits of the possible" within a specific social formation. (1)

Thus, while

the outcome of class struggle is not predetermined, the specific nature, conditions, and terrain of struggle, and the range of possible outcomes, certainly are historically determinate: struggles between wage labourers and industrial capitalists over the extraction of surplus value are, needless to say, necessarily different from struggles between peasants and feudal landlords over the appropriation of rent. (2)

This chapter traces the development of capitalist agriculture in the Western Cape and stresses the relatively high level of development of the productive forces. It also argues for the specificity of the set of productive relations that evolved in the area.

More specifically, the chapter goes on to examine the effects on Western Cape agriculture of the great international capitalist crisis of the early 1930s. An attempt is made to draw out the specific effects which had a material influence on the conditions of class struggle in the area.

I THE TRANSITION TO CAPITALISM

It has been argued, that in general, it is necessary to emphasize the specificity of capitalist development in the Western Cape. (3) Unfortunately there has been no analysis of the specificity of the development of capitalism in agriculture - even Morris' seminal work on the transition to capitalism in agriculture is focused almost exclusively on the developments in the rest of the country. (4) His few comments on the Western Cape are, as will be shown below, not an adequate basis for the conceptualisation of the development of capitalist agriculture in the Western Cape.

The following are some of the features that distinguish agriculture in the Western Cape and even in the Cape in general, from the rest of the country.

One of the central features of the process of colonisation in the Cape was the almost total displacement and/or extermination of the indigenous population consisting of Khoi and San. (5) In the northern areas, on the other hand, the indigenous population was much stronger and was

merely conquered and deprived of ownership of their land. On the vast majority of farms the original inhabitants simply stayed on as squatters and labour tenants. Until the rise of the Witwatersrand market, the northern farmers were not powerful enough to deprive the indigenous producers of their possession of the land. This fact, coupled with the massive intervention of the state on behalf of the settlers, was one of the central determinants in the transition to capitalist agriculture along the Junker road in the north. (6)

A second, related feature was the relative absence of large land companies, which in both Natal and Transvaal had bought up extensive areas of the country. (7) These often rented out their lands to tenants. In the Cape, and especially the Western Cape, farms were largely occupied directly by the farmer.

The third important feature of agriculture in the Western Cape was that it had almost right from the beginning access to a home market. Lenin, in the Development of Capitalism in Russia, stresses the vital role that commodity production and the home market plays in the development of capitalism both in industry and in agriculture. Indeed he went so far as to subtitle his study "The Process of the Formation of a Home Market for Large-Scale Industry". (8) Lenin argued that the

**home market appears when commodity
production appears; it is created by the
development of this commodity economy,
and the degree to which the social
division of labour is ramified determines
the level of its development; it spreads
with the extension of commodity
productions from products to labour**

power, and only in proportion as the latter is transformed into a commodity does capitalism embrace the entire production of the country ... the 'home market' for capitalism is created by developing capitalism itself, which deepens the social division of labour and resolves the direct producers into capitalists and workers. (9)

This dialectical process was somewhat disarticulated in the Cape. The initial spur to commodity production came as much from an external market as from the home market. A market was created before the transformation of labour power into a commodity had proceeded far enough to satisfy the demands of the commodity producers. The shortage of labour was aggravated by the almost total displacement of the Khoi and San. An external solution to this crisis was available, however, in the form of the importation of slaves.

In fact, external factors have had a profound influence on the development of capitalism in the Western Cape in general, and the trajectory of capitalist development was often shaped decisively by the precise way in which these "externalities" were internalised. (10)

Initially the Cape market was fairly small and limited to supplying the needs of the inhabitants of Cape Town and of passing ships. (11) By 1800 Cape Town had a population of about 15 000 which represented a fairly substantial market. (12)

The importation of slaves on a fairly large scale up to 1807 reflected both the absence of an indigenous squatter/tenant group which could be coerced into labour, and the relatively high level of commodity production. In turn, the capital

investment represented by slaves acted as a further spur to the production of marketable commodities. By 1800 there were about 18 000 slaves in the Cape, the vast bulk of them in the Cape Town and Stellenbosch districts. (13)

The home market continued to grow during the nineteenth century, and its extent is illustrated, for example, by the fact that during the 5 years of drought ending in 1868, wheat and flour to the value of £560 000 had to be imported. This was some £400 000 greater than in the following 5 years. It was estimated that grain production in the Western Province alone was some 815 000 bushels in 1865. (14)

Despite the importance of the local market, the external markets were still of crucial importance. Firstly, there was the overseas market. Although, by 1800, the

farmers of the west were still closely tied to the markets of Cape Town, (15)

the lifting of trade restrictions by the British led to the creation of an export market. During and after the Napoleonic wars Cape wines enjoyed favourable duties in the British market and exports grew rapidly, until by 1859, almost a million gallons of wine was exported yearly. (16) The resilience of commodity production was shown two years later when exports virtually came to a halt due to a change in British duties. Most exports were disposed of locally and it seemed that the industry suffered little more than a temporary hiccup. (17)

From the 1840's the Cape had also built up a big export trade in wool and by 1862 wool and skins accounted for £1,4m of the Cape exports. The next largest export was copper with a value of only £94 000. (18) The wool boom also

strengthened the home market significantly by increasing the wealth of farmers and consequently, the demand for local products.

The major "external" factor in the expansion of the home market was, of course, the discovery of minerals in the interior. In the case of fruit the home market was some 1 300 tons in the Western Cape. When the railway reached Kimberley in 1885, it became possible to rail fruit there. In 1886 nearly 1 300 tons of Cape fruit were railed to Kimberley virtually doubling the size of the home market. (19)

The rapid development of the fruit industry is epitomized by the formation of Rhodes Fruit Farms in 1895. The diamond monopoly spent £250 000 to buy up 29 farms and planted 200 000 fruit trees within 2 years. Partly in response to this, local capitalist farmers launched the Cape Orchard Company which owned about 150 000 trees in the Hex River valley by 1899. (20)

The wine industry benefitted even before the railways were opened, as its products were less perishable. Wine and brandy prices increased and production increased to new heights. (21)

Wheat benefitted similarly from the expansion of railways, and by 1900, total production was about 750 000 bags each of wheat and oats, and about 400 000 bags of rye and barley. The vast bulk was produced in the Western Cape. (22)

In summary, one cannot but agree with Morris that

**the Western Cape was already a well
established commercial agricultural
district by the early decades of the 19th**

century ... {and that the} existence of production primarily for exchange was already well rooted in parts of the Cape Colony in the mid-nineteenth century.

(23)

But Morris is on more shaky ground when he describes the capitalist farmers in the Western Cape as "Junkers". (24) An extensive analysis of the path of transition is beyond the scope of this work and the data presented is anyway too sketchy to be able to present a detailed examination of the precise path of the transition of capitalist agriculture. Despite these shortcomings, it is necessary to attempt to draw some preliminary conclusions about the nature of the transition to capitalism in the Western Cape.

The farmers in this area do have some of the characteristics of landlords, for example ownership of slaves in the early period. But overall there is also a fair amount of correspondence with the "farmer" or "American" road analysed by Marx and Lenin, and described by De Janvry as follows:

This road originates from a proliferation of small farmers who constitute a petty bourgeoisie. These small farmers or free peasants are created either by a violent elimination of the feudal landowning class through revolution or land reform or through the colonization and homesteading of new lands. Thus on the farmer road, 'the peasant predominates, becomes the exclusive agent of agriculture and evolves into capitalist farmers' ...

Since the emerging rural bourgeoisie cannot gain hegemonic control of the

state, this road of development prevents the existence of absolute rent and thus cheapens food prices. By formenting the emergence of a national bourgeoisie it favors, but in no way ensures, articulated and democratic forms of government. (25)

One can argue that many of these characteristics were in fact present in the Western Cape. This is, however, contrary to Morris' conclusion that, by the 1880's

Boer junkers in the Cape, where the process was most clear, were therefore pressing for the capitalisation of agriculture from above along the Prussian path. (26)

Morris does not, however, analyse the transition in the Cape in the same depth as in the rest of the country and often tends to conflate developments in the Western and Eastern Cape. This is particularly evident in the main argument advanced, namely the efforts by Cape farmers, and especially the Afrikaner Bond, to accelerate

the transformation of the feudal landlordism into landlord capitalism through the intervention of the State against the African squatter peasantry. (27)

It is beyond the scope of this work to investigate to what extent such measures were implemented, and what their effects were, but it is certain that the Western Cape farmers had very little interest in the question. From the previous discussion it is clear that the farmers did not

need to fear competition from such peasants, and Morris does not suggest this either. His argument is rather that farmers needed labour, but as the table below indicates, the issue of African labour, and particularly African tenants, could not have been very immediate in the Western Cape:

TABLE 1: AFRICAN POPULATION IN WESTERN CAPE - 1890 (28)

District	Male	Female	% Total Population
Caledon	15	9	.20
Cape	1030	302	1.37
Malmesbury	159	32	.82
Paarl	203	72	1.29
Robertson	91	18	.96
Stellenbosch	164	66	1.82
Tulbagh	28	6	.61
Worcester	201	44	1.94
TOTAL	1891	549	

The total number of African people in the Western Cape was only just more than 2000 of which the majority were resident in Cape Town and thus unlikely to be farm workers. The low proportion of females, 22.5%, makes it clear that these people were mostly contract workers. One can safely conclude that there was no significant African squatter peasantry in the Western Cape.

Thus one can draw the following, rather tentative, conclusions. Firstly, one can support Morris' conclusion that the transition to capitalist farming in the Western Cape was already well under way by the mid-nineteenth century, and that this process was merely accelerated by the dramatic increase in the size of the home market after the discovery of diamonds and gold.

Secondly, while the Western Cape farmers had some similarities with landlords, the transition to capitalist agriculture had important features of the American path. Certainly, there is a correspondence with many of the characteristics outlined by Lenin and De Janvry: there is an initial "proliferation of small farmers", created through "colonisation and homesteading of new lands". Furthermore, it is also clear that this "emerging rural bourgeoisie {did} not gain hegemonic control of the state". For example, Cooper shows that mining capital had extremely close links with the pro-imperialist Cape government, exemplified by Rhodes' position as prime minister of the Cape. In fact, she goes as far as to argue that mining capital was hegemonic within the Cape state, although agricultural capital

had become a sufficient economic and political force to necessitate the accomodation of its interests. (29)

Up to 1900 there does not appear to have been any massive intervention of the state on behalf of capitalist farmers in the Western Cape.

Thus it would appear to be incorrect to characterise the Western Cape farmers as Junkers as suggested by Morris. Furthermore, to describe them in the same terms as farmers in the rest of the country also obscures the very different nature of capitalist agriculture in the Western Cape. It is necessary to stress, rather than de-emphasize, these differences if one is to understand the very different way in which agriculture developed in the Cape.

II SOUTH AFRICA AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

As outlined above, agriculture in the Western Cape had

completed its transition to capitalism relatively early. Wine, fruit and wool farming were all characterised by production for the market, and to differing degrees, by production for the world market. Thus those farmers were particularly vulnerable when the international capitalist system was struck by a severe depression in the late 1920s.

Some indication of the impact of the Depression can be gauged from the fact that National Income dropped nearly 12% below its average level for the five years from 1924 to 1928. The biggest decline was from £274,1 million in 1928 to only £217,1 million four years later, a decrease of more than 20%. (30) But, as Kaplan has convincingly argued:

the Depression in South Africa was not a 'generalised crisis of Capitalism' - its uneven impact was its central feature. The Great Depression had ended a long period of steady growth ... particularly in respect of secondary industry and agriculture...

The Depression was thus very much an 'external' phenomenon, not an 'indigenous', crisis and as such it had effects which reflected South Africa's particular incorporation into the world economy ... {a}s a primary production exporter ... {with} exports averaging almost 30% of her national income in the years before the Depression. (31)

It was above all those sectors that were closely incorporated into the world market that suffered the worst decline.

The manufacturing industry was relatively shielded from the

effects because it was not export-orientated, and it accounted for only 1% of exports in 1932 and 2% in 1933.

(32) Kaplan calculates that net output declined by about 18% and employment by about 12% between 1930 and 1933. (33) These declines were, however, relatively minor and both Net Output and manufacturing's contribution to Geographical Income never fell below the average for the five years from 1924 to 1928. (34)

Mining was probably the sector of the economy that was most completely integrated with, and dependent on, the imperialist world market. Gold mining was, of course, not affected by the Depression at all as it had a stable market and a fixed price, while it enjoyed some of the fruits of lower price levels. In fact there was a slight expansion in gold mining during the Depression. (35)

The rest of the mining sector was less fortunate, though, and overall the contribution of mining to National Income fell significantly. The devastation that resulted in the mining industry as a result of its close integration within the world economy is especially clear once one removes the stabilising effects of gold and coal. The Total Sales Value of other minerals decreased by no less than 72,6% between 1929 and 1932. (36)

The commercial sector was the worst hit of the non-agricultural sectors and its contribution to Geographical Income declined by 41% between 1929 and 1932. Its fate was closely linked with that of agriculture and external trade, both of which declined precipitously, the latter by more than 60% between 1929 and 1932. (37)

After mining, agriculture was the economic sector most closely dependent on the world market, either through production for export, or through competition with imported

foodstuffs.

On the world market, the value of agricultural exports fell by no less than 64% between 1926 and 1933, while in South Africa demand was virtually stagnant and prices fell by 30% to 40%. (38) The overall effect on agriculture is summarised below.

TABLE 2: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (39)

Year	Geographical Income			Gross Value		Volume	Price
	£m	Index	% Tot	£m	Index	Index	Index
1924-28	47,3	100	19,3	57,598	100	100	100
1929	46,4	98,1	17,2	61,848	107,4	113	76
1930	35,2	74,4	13,9	51,143	88,8	127	63
1931	30,5	64,5	13,0	42,534	73,8	118	55
1932	28,9	61,1	13,3	38,128	66,2	125	50
1933	30,6	64,7	12,3	37,425	65,0	113	82
% Change	-42,3 (1928-32)			-42,2 (1929-33)			

Net income for farming fell by about 35-40% below pre-Depression levels while the gross value of production fell by about 35%. Even these figures do not give the full effect of the Depression. As Wilson (40) has pointed out, small and competitive capitals almost invariably try to mediate the effects of a fall in prices by producing even more. Thus during the Depression agricultural production was on average about 20% higher than in the preceding five years.

It is only when one looks at the index of prices that the full extent of the crisis in agriculture becomes apparent. During 1931 and 1932 agricultural prices were just over half of the average for the five years preceding the Depression.

The crisis of overproduction induced by the Depression was mediated to some extent by the worst drought of the century in South Africa, but only at the cost of burdening the stricken farmers even further with financial losses. (41) The Secretary for Agriculture described the period as 'the darkest and most difficult experienced for the last 30 years', while O'Meara's assessment is probably not too strong:

... these were years of desperate struggle for economic survival against the seeming merciless attempts of both the market and nature to drive farmers off their land. (42)

But O'Meara has pointed out that even within agriculture,

the impact of the Depression was extremely uneven. Farmers producing for export were generally worse off than those producing for the internal market. (43)

This is clear from the table below.

TABLE 3: AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS (44)

Year	Volume	Price
	Index	Index
1925-28	100	100
1929	112,9	84,6
1930	123,8	58,2
1931	96,7	48,1
1932	132,8	36,5
1933	113,5	54,0

By 1932 export prices had fallen by 63,5% from their relatively stable level between 1925 and 1928.

Before examining the impact of the Depression on the specific sectors of capitalist agriculture in the Western Cape, it is necessary to place it within a wider political context and to examine some of the development at the level of the state.

Kaplan and others have argued that the Pact government represented a shift in hegemony from 'foreign' capital to national capital. (45) Previously the Botha/Smuts government had been unwilling to intervene decisively to aid farmers. Although it encouraged capitalist agriculture in general through measures such as the Land Act of 1913 and the formation of the Land Bank in 1912, its overall policy was "operative within the context of the hegemony of mining capital". (46) Thus its policies often adversely affected agriculture and in no case was effective protection given against "unfair" competition from outside. (47)

This position, it is argued, changed with the establishment of the hegemony of national capital. Henceforth agricultural capital benefited much more directly from state intervention and the process of intervention was intensified. (48) Kaplan gives a number of examples of this process and stresses the qualitative changes in respect of the new types of intervention, viz. price regulation and subsidisation. (49)

These new interventions occurred in a climate that was largely favourable to agriculture, (50) but with the advent of the Depression and the resultant devastation in agriculture, there were renewed demands for increasing state intervention. Thus, soon after the start of the Depression, virtually every major commodity was

subject to a wide range of effective price subsidisation measures and controlled marketing. (51)

The demands took three forms - firstly for domestic agriculture there were demands for compulsory price regulation and quantitative controls. Secondly, for those sectors which had to compete indirectly on the world market, there were demands to protect the local market by charging high import duties. Thirdly, for those sectors who had to compete directly on the world market, there were demands for export subsidies. Thanks to its powerful position in the power bloc, agricultural capital was able to secure a number of these demands.

Richards, (52) for example, lists no fewer than 31 Acts passed by Parliament between 1930 and 1935 rendering some kind of assistance to farmers. Among these were acts controlling the dairy, wheat, maize and tobacco industries. These measures were fairly successful in stabilising prices, and in some cases raising prices well above world levels. (53)

Furthermore, agricultural capital also benefitted from massive direct aid which was largely financed from increased revenue from the gold mines. (54) The Export Subsidies Act of 1931 provided for a direct export subsidy of 10% on all exports excluding gold, diamonds and sugar. A few months later, in 1932, subsidies were increased to 20% and 25%. (55) £650 000 was paid out in 1931/32 and nearly £2,6m the following year. (56)

There were also indirect subsidies in the form of lower railage rates, as well as increased expenditure on agricultural services and emergency aid. (57)

There are unfortunately, very few reliable estimates on the total transfer of resources to the agricultural sector. Richards attempted to calculate the direct and indirect costs of subsidies and higher prices for the year 1933. He arrived at a figure of nearly £7,5 m out of a total production of £30,6 m. (58) Kaplan argues that even this figure is too low as it excluded what he called "permanent measures", such as relief on Land Bank loans, special relief measures, etc.

Related to the crisis in agriculture was the increasing realisation by farmers of the importance of 'cooperation'. In 1922 there were only 54 cooperatives with 12878 members. By 1933 there were 416 cooperatives with 85697 members. (59) This can be attributed partly to the fact that, as the Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission (CACC) reported, many members only joined to try to get higher prices. When this failed to materialise they often left again. (60) Despite this the massive increase in the strength of organised agriculture added to its already substantial political influence, and was an important factor in the winning of its demands.

This then is the overall context that one must bear in mind when one considers agriculture in the Western Cape, viz. that agriculture as a whole was in a state of crisis, especially those sections that depended on the world market; that agricultural capital had been able to a considerable extent to win its demands for state intervention; and that the latter fact reflected the considerable power of agricultural capital with-in the power bloc.

III WESTERN CAPE AGRICULTURE AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

What then were the conditions in which Western Cape

agriculture found itself in the late twenties? Tinley summarises the position in 1935 as follows:

the Southwest Region has only 7 per cent of all farms and 4.3 per cent of all land in farms in South Africa, (yet) it has 72 per cent of all vines, 44 per cent of all deciduous trees, 33 per cent of the total area of wheat, and 40 per cent of the total area in barley, rye and oats in the country. (61)

These figures exclude the districts of Robertson and Montagu which fall under the South Karroo region. (62) If they are included, the Western Cape had more than 90% of all vines, about 50% of all deciduous fruit trees, and about 35% of the area under wheat. (63)

Thus agriculture in the area was dominated by the wine, fruit and grain producers. There was also a fairly significant presence of woolled sheep - as many as in many woolgrowing districts. (64) But it was not an independent sector in the Western Cape as most of the sheep were on wheat farms. It did not have the domination of the national scene achieved by the other three sectors - only 4,3% of woolled sheep were in the region. (65) Nor did wool dominate the regional scene as happened in the Karroo and Eastern Cape.

Wine

The wine industry was the first sector of agriculture to cooperate on a large scale. The KWV was formed on a voluntary basis in 1917 to try to increase the very depressed prices of as low as £2 10s to £3 per leaguer. Initially it had great success: 95% of producers and

merchants joined and it managed to stabilise prices for the next two years. (66)

In 1920 there was an unprecedented boom during which speculators drove the price up to £30 per leaguer. But during the next two years over-production led to a massive surplus, much of which had to be destroyed, while the price again dropped to £3.

In 1923 the merchants left the KWV and the situation became chaotic until the state intervened in 1924. It passed the Wine and Spirits Control Act which gave the KWV a monopoly over the pricing and distribution of distilling. As this was the major part of the market, it effectively also gave the KWV control over the wine and raisins markets.

The KWV's pricing policy, however, soon created problems. The CACC concluded that

it is very evident that the very problem which the control measure was instituted to overcome, viz., overproduction, has been accentuated and aggravated through control. Complete control over the industry at once created in the minds of producers the psychological atmosphere for expansion, an aspect which was further strengthened by the price policy ... (67)

The KWV charged a fixed price of £7 18s 9d per leaguer to the merchants, but because of the increasing overproduction, the producers' price fell rapidly at the onset of the Depression. The position is summarised in the table below.

TABLE 4: WINE (68)

Year	Prod Price		Surplus %	Total Production		Gross Value	
	£.s.d	Index		Leaguers	Index	£000	Index
1924-28	4.16.4	100	39,4	136 308	100	637	100
1929	4.15.3	98,9	40,0	159 722	117,2	753	118,2
1930	3.19.5	82,5	50,0	175 586	128,8	722	113,4
1931	3.11.6	74,2	55,0	165 948	121,7	598	93,9
1932	3.3.6	65,9	60,5	207 421	152,2	655	102,9
1933	3.3.6	65,9	60,5			662	104,0
% Change	-36,8 (1929-32)			+29,9 (1929-32)		-27,0 (1928 -31)	

Within four years of the start of the Depression, production had increased by over 50% above the average of the previous five years. This, moreover, part of a long term trend, as production in 1932 was nearly 80% higher than in 1924.

For the years 1924 to 1928 nearly 40% of the crop was surplus production. During the Depression this percentage rose to over 60%, due to the falling local demand and increasing overproduction, causing the producers' price to fall by nearly 35%. Overall, though, the industry was not too badly affected. The fact that it was able to maintain the domestic retail price meant that the gross value of production remained relatively stable. The 27% decrease from 1928 was only because production was exceptionally high in 1928. Some of the surplus was destroyed, but the bulk which had been paid for already, was available to make inexpensive fortified wines, and was used to capture overseas export markets as shown in the table below.

TABLE 5: SPIRITS USED IN FORTIFICATION (69)

Year	Leaguers	Index
1927	128 866	100,0
1928	187 908	145,8
1929	302 204	234,5
1930	388 360	301,4
1931	538 652	418,0
1932	526 514	408,6

The CACC analysed the reasons behind the long term increase in production as follows:

There does not exist the least doubt in the mind of the Commission that the policy followed by the Vereniging definitely encouraged the production of an inferior article. This applies particularly to the newer areas of wine production, viz., Montagu, Robertson and Worcester, where lower land values and high yields made distilling wine prices very lucrative to these districts as compared with the older wine districts. (Paarl, Stellenbosch, Malmesbury, Ceres, Tulbagh, Cape and Caledon). Without the necessary capital outlay for fustage and storage accommodation and for proper wine-making equipment, the majority of these producers merely became producers of distilling wine. In most cases cement tanks in the vineyard, where the pressing and wine-making are done, represent the only capital outlay ... Wine production for distilling purposes was thus made extremely attractive for these areas and,

with no penalization as regards quality, it is not to be wondered at that plantings increased year after year and that production grew proportionately. These areas are cited because of the fact that the main increase in production had been in these newer districts, but it should be noted that the same conditions apply in respect of production in some of the older areas. (70)

The commission's analysis is borne out by the tables below:

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF VINES (71)

Year	Old Districts			New Districts		
	Total	Increase	% Total	Total	Increase	% Total
1927	42,83m	-	60,2%	28,92m	-	39,8%
1929	40,64m	-5,1%	53,8%	34,89m	19,1%	46,2%
1932	45,98m	13,1%	51,7%	42,95m	23,1%	48,3%
Total increase				7,4%		
				51,9%		

TABLE 7: QUALITY OF WINE (72)

Quality	Old Districts		New Districts	
	Leaguers	Proportion	Leaguers	Proportion
Superior	4885	7,5%	842	2,3%
Good	29563	45,3%	4192	11,6%
Distilling	30754	47,2%	31192	86,1%
Total	65502	100,0%	36226	100,0%

At least part of this massive increase in production in the new areas, 50% within 5 years, can be attributed to the

effects of the Depression on the deciduous fruit industry as will become clear later.

From the evidence to the CACC and the above figures, it would seem that the wine farmers in the new areas were not particularly badly affected by the Depression. Production was increasing rapidly and they probably received an increasing share of the total revenues of the wine industry. At least one effect of the rapid increase in production, which will merely be noted here, was a massive labour shortage. The Farmers Weekly reported in mid-1929 that

in the Hex River valley ... the orchards and vineyards must be prepared for the coming deciduous fruit season, but work is almost at a standstill because the labour shortage has reached unprecedented proportions. (73)

Wheat

Wheat was not as important as wine and fruit in the areas where the ANC (WP) organised, so a brief overview will be sufficient. Wheat was also subject to very different constraints. Local production was far from sufficient and South Africa imported wheat on a large scale. Thus, although wheat was integrated in the world market in the sense that it had to compete against imports, it was also relatively easier to take effective countermeasures in the form of import duties.

TABLE 8: WHEAT PRICES (74)

Year	Liverpool spot		SA Wheat Price		Premium	
	s/d	Index	s/d	Index	s/d	% world price
1924-28	23/7	100	26/1	100	2/6	12,7
1929	20/2	85,5	22/3	85,3	2/1	10,3
1930	15/5	65,4	20/2	77,3	4/9	30,8
1931	11/0	46,6	21/8	83,1	10/8	97,0
1932	11/10	50,2	20/11	80,2	9/1	76,8
1933	10/8	45,2	17/7	67,6	6/11	64,9

As the table indicates, the world price fell by more than 50% within three years. The farmers demanded protection against this 'unfair' competition, and in response the government increased the duty on imported wheat to bring its effective price up to 22/6 per bag. (75) As in the case of wine, the stabilised price led to a tremendous increase in production, which in turn produced a crisis of overproduction and a decrease in the local price of wheat. (76) This is demonstrated in Table 9:

TABLE 9: WHEAT PRODUCTION (77)

Year	Volume		Value		Imports	
	m bags	Index	£m	Index	m bags	Index
1924-8	1,968	100	2,773	100	1,876	100
1929	1,958	99,5	2,415	87,1	2,398	127,8
1930	2,981	151,5	3,214	115,9	1,473	78,5
1931	2,379	120,9	3,020	108,9	1,094	58,3
1932	3,754	190,8	4,303	155,2	0,510	27,2
1933	2,838	144,2	2,803	101,2	0,038	2,0

In the years prior to the Depression nearly 50% of wheat was imported. By 1932 the local crop had nearly doubled and was more than local consumption, while imports decreased to

negligible amounts. Total value of production was well above the pre-Depression levels.

This did not mean that wheat farmers benefitted from the Depression to the extent shown in the figures. Many farmers had switched from other crops to wheat because of its 'artificially' high price (78) and the total revenue had to be shared amongst many more farmers. The increase in production also meant that farmers had higher expenses. But the overall prosperity of the wheat farmers is shown by the fact that land values in the wheat growing areas stayed relatively stable during the Depression - in fact there was even a slight increase. (79)

Fruit

It is rather more difficult to make an accurate assessment of the position of the deciduous fruit industry as the figures are often combined with other fruits in published statistics.

TABLE 10: FRUIT PRODUCTION (80)

Year	Value		Volume	Price
	£m	Index	Index	Index
1924-28	2,981	100	100	100
1929	3,592	120,5	112,4	107,2
1930	3,694	123,9	143,5	86,3
1931	2,829	94,9	131,6	72,1
1932	3,280	110,0	143,5	76,7
1933	3,291	110,4	155,5	71,0

The table show that, overall, the price of fruit fell by nearly 30% from its pre-Depression levels. Farmers were able to increase production to a significant degree - an average increase of 9,2% per year - during the Depression,

and consequently the gross value of production was relatively stable.

Both citrus and deciduous farmers were aided by the steep increase in exports. In this case separate statistics were kept for deciduous fruit and one can be fairly sure that it applies to the Western Cape. This region supplied about 98% of all deciduous fruit exports in the 1920s and early 1930s. (81)

South Africa had earlier started to make big inroads into the British market. After the disruption caused by the World War, exports reached a new peak in 1920 and continued to grow at a rate of nearly 20% per year for the next eight years. Overseas prices were remarkably stable, and exports continued to increase at nearly the same rate as during the 1920s. (82)

TABLE 11: DECIDUOUS FRUIT EXPORTS (83)

Year	Value		Volume		Price
	£000	Index	Tons	Index	Index
1924-8	356,7	100	21662	100	100
1929	407,9	114,4	23312	107,6	106,3
1930	609,0	170,7	39297	181,4	94,1
1931	509,9	142,9	31252	144,3	99,0
1932	653,8	183,3	40394	186,5	98,3
1933	873,1	244,8	55394	255,7	95,7

Thus the Western Cape farmers were effectively protected from the ravages of the Depression - in fact they were probably more prosperous after the Depression than before.

Fruit farmers were not particularly well organised in comparison with other sectors. Although a fruit cooperative was established prior to 1926 to market fruit,

it soon became clear that separate organisations were required to cater for the very different needs of citrus and deciduous fruit farmers. (84)

Thus the two sectors split in 1926 and a SA Cooperative Deciduous Fruit Exchange was formed. (85) It also ran into problems quickly in its attempts to deal with inland marketing and to develop new overseas markets. These were financial disasters, and had to be abandoned. By 1931/32 it was concentrating merely on the supply of packing materials and on an attempt to set up a coordinated distribution system. Even these efforts were not very successful and the Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission recommended that the industry needed to be reorganised from scratch. (86)

In the case of fruit farming, one is fortunate in being able to draw on a very detailed study by Tomlinson and Van Wyk of the actual conditions prevailing on the farms. They studied 56 fruit farms in the Stellenbosch, Ceres and Elgin areas in 1933, and concluded that:

the farms are of the most intensive and specialized in the country. (87)

They cite several indicators of the degree of intensive farming. The average size of the farms was only 103,2 morgen, as against the average of nearly 600 morgen for the whole of the Western Cape and a similar figure for the rest of the country, excluding the Cape. (88) Nearly 33% of the land was under cultivation, as against the average of only 15% in the Western Cape and 11% in the rest of the country. (89)

The extent of specialisation is shown by the fact that 81% of cultivated land was for the production of fruit, and by

the fact that farmers derived no less than 97% of their cash income from the sale of fruit. Unfortunately there are no comprehensive figures to indicate the extent to which the farmers were dependent on the world market. Certainly those farmers producing grapes in the Stellenbosch districts were extremely dependent on the world market as more than 85% of their production was exported. Another, unrepresentative, sample for all fruit was reported in Die Burger:

TABLE 12: FRUIT MARKETING OF FRANSCHHOEK CROP (90)

Consigned to	Tons	Proportion
Cape Town	902	37,6%
Export	660	27,5%
Jam	740	30,8%
Inland	99	4,1%

It was also reported that 80% of the raisin crop was exported. (91) Fruit farmers who exported were extremely dependent on the world market as they produced a quality product which sold for high prices overseas. It was a perennial complaint of the farmers that there was virtually no local demand for their products, as consumers were used to paying very low prices for inferior fruit. (92)

A further indication of the extent of production for the market is the very high land values. The average value of the farms were £7700, or nearly £75 per morgen. This compares with average land values in the maize producing areas of the inland plateau of some £6 per morgen. (93) The high land value was clearly a further imperative towards commodity production as the interest charges, at 5%, amounted to some £385 per year on an average farm. It is important to bear in mind, though, that these values were purely notional, and only represented the actual capital outlay by the farmers who had recently acquired their farms.

Nevertheless, fruit farming demanded a considerable outlay of capital for the establishment of orchards and vineyards, probably much more so than for other kinds of farming. This factor is reflected by the fact that the value of orchards represented about 58% of the total value of the farms. Buildings accounted for a further 25%.

Thus it is not surprising that farms produced a considerable cash income. The average value of production sold on the market was over £1600 per annum, while production for own use was valued at only £50 per year. Again this figure compares favourably with the Highveld average production, for market and subsistence, of some £1000 per farm, generated by farms over seven times larger. (94)

The total net income of farmers, allowing for the value of their own time and for the value of income in kind, was about £470 per year. (95) This represents a return of 6,1% on their notional capital invested, and probably much more on the actual capital invested. The return was, in any case, well above the cost of capital of some 5% per year.

A few other interesting aspects also emerged from the study. Although Tomlinson and Van Wyk do not give the figures for the actual number of workers employed, they say that on average there were about 5 permanent workers. During the season they would be joined by up to 15 or more temporary workers. On the basis of a wage - in cash and kind - of about 3s per day, they calculated that about 10 man years of labour was required on each farm. Wages, including that of the manager, was the single most important item in the expenses, amounting to about 42,5% of the total.

They also found some evidence of a labour shortage, especially in the intensively farmed area of Stellenbosch. Farmers were often reported to be employing more permanent

workers than they needed

in order to be sure of having good labourers when in great demand during the busy season. (96)

Altogether, about half of the labour needs of the farmers were met by casual labour and about 75% of all workers were casuals. In their case the wage form was clearly predominant and payments in kind was restricted to supplying food and "tots" during working hours.

In the case of permanent labourers, payments in kind was more important and included housing and, probably, the right to grow some food on a small scale. No accurate figures are supplied for payments in kind and an imputed figure is simply included under miscellaneous income. But even using this full figure of £17,5 per year, the value of payments in kind averages only about 3,6% of the total wage bill. (97) Even if one excludes the wages of casual workers and the manager, it is clear that payments in kind were extremely small and that even for permanent workers the wage form predominated. (98)

III CONCLUSION

One can draw two broad sets of conclusions from the above - firstly around the nature and specificity of Western Cape agriculture, and secondly around the effects of the crisis in agriculture.

Firstly, there can be no doubt that the transition to capitalist agriculture had been completed. Agriculture was characterised by the production of commodities and the wage form predominated, even in the case of permanent labourers on the farms.

The specific form of capitalist agriculture and the crisis did much to shape the nature of rural organisation. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to compare rural organisation in the Western Cape with that elsewhere in the country, it is clear from the above that it rested on a very different material basis. The most successful rural organisation elsewhere in the country was undertaken by the ICU in Natal and Transvaal. As Morris and especially Bradford have shown, the ICU was most successful precisely in those areas where the peasantry was particularly threatened by the specific form of the transition to capitalist agriculture. (99)

The specificity of capitalist agriculture in the Western Cape lies firstly in the specific path taken by the transition, and secondly in the fact that the transition had largely been completed by the 1930's. This had important effects on the nature of class struggle in the rural areas, especially as regards the form of organisation, and the tactics and demands that emerged out of the rural struggles in the Western Cape.

Secondly, it would appear that in the main sectors of agriculture in the Western Cape, there was no question of a severe recession. Agriculture in the region came through the Depression relatively unscathed and some sectors were probably even better off than before. Nevertheless, one should stress the specifically capitalist nature of the Depression and solutions that were adopted. The impact of the Depression should also not be under-estimated. Farmers were faced with falling prices, a general climate of crisis and uncertainty prevailed (100) and they were forced to act to maintain their material situation. This they did by exerting pressure on the state for direct assistance, by organising themselves, by expanding production, and by

attempting to cut costs.

Furthermore, some of these solutions brought new problems in their wake, especially in the form of an aggravated labour shortage at a time when farmers were attempting to cut wages. (101)

Although the crisis in agriculture created fertile conditions for organisation, it is important not to fall into the reductionist trap of attempting to explain every twist and turn in the progress of rural organisation in terms of the crisis. At most the crisis produced a situation in which a militant mass movement could find a ready response, viz mass dissatisfaction on the farms, large-scale seasonal unemployment and overcrowding in the rural towns, and the farmers hamstrung to some extent by a labour shortage.

NOTES

1. Meiskins Wood 1984, p105.
2. Meiskins Wood 1984, p105.
3. Nicol 1982.
4. Morris 1979.
5. See e.g. Wilson 1969.
6. Morris 1979, p19.
7. See e.g. De Kiewiet 1968, p71-3, 192-3; Slater 1975.
8. Lenin 1977. See e.g. p317.
9. Lenin 1977, p69-70.
10. Nicol 1982.
11. Van Wyk 1935, p2; De Kiewiet 1968, p8-10; and various articles in Farming in South Africa, 27(312), 1952.
12. Houghton and Dagut 1972, p45.
13. Houghton and Dagut 1972, p6; Van der Merwe 1952, p140; Nel and Retief 1952, p141; Ross 1983c, p287-90.
14. Houghton and Dagut 1972, p45.
15. Houghton and Dagut 1972, p6; Ross 1983c, p287.
16. Theron 1952, p130.
17. Houghton and Dagut 1972, p47.
18. De Klerk 1952, p163.
19. Black 1952, p118; see also Van Wyk 1935, p2.
20. Stander 1983, p13-14.
21. Houghton and Dagut 1972, p27, 47.
22. Sim 1952, p112.
23. Morris 1979, p21.
24. See e.g. Morris 1979, p23.
25. De Janvry 1981, p107-8 quoting Lenin.
26. Morris 1979, p26.

27. Morris 1979, p24-5.
28. Cape of Good Hope, Statistical Register, 1890.
29. Cooper 1979, p40-41. See also p84, Trapido 1980 and Davenport 1966.
30. See Appendix 1.
31. Kaplan 1977b, pl19. See also O'Meara 1983.
32. Kaplan 1977b, pl20; Bosman 1938.
33. Kaplan 1977b, pl20.
34. See Appendix 2.
35. Kaplan 1977b, pl20-1.
36. See Appendix 3.
37. See Appendix 4.
38. O'Meara 1983, p36.
39. Union Statistics for 50 Years, Table H29, I23, I27, S3. % change is the difference between the minimum and maximum values during the period 1928 1933. The period in brackets indicates the period over which the change occurred. The value for 1924-28 is the average annual value in the 5 years preceding the Depression.
40. Wilson 1971.
41. O'Meara 1983, p36.
42. O'Meara 1983, p37.
43. O'Meara 1983, p36.
44. Schumann 1938, p369.
45. This section relies heavily on the analysis in Kaplan 1977b, p77ff.
46. Kaplan 1977b, p213.
47. A number of examples are cited in Kaplan 1977b, p216-8.
48. Wilson 1971, pl36ff.
49. Kaplan 1977b, p219ff.
50. Schumann 1938, pl50ff, p226ff.

51. Kaplan 1977b, p225; also Wilson 1971, p138.
52. Richards 1935, 372-3.
53. Wilson 1971, p140ff.
54. See e.g. Horwitz 1967; De Kiewiet 1968; Houghton 1973; and especially Kaplan 1977b and 1976.
55. Kaplan 1977b, p226-7.
56. Tinley 1942, p271.
57. Kaplan 1976; 1977b, p226.
58. Richards 1935, p380ff.
59. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 19.
60. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 84-85.
61. Tinley 1942, p88-9.
62. Appendix 5.
63. Derived from Tinley 1942, p265-6.
64. See Tinley 1942, p258-262.
65. Tinley 1942, p264.
66. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 487ff for details below.
67. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 499.
68. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 482, 499; Union Statistics for 50 Years, Table I24.
69. Paarl Post 7.5.1930.
70. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 497.
71. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 480.
72. Agricultural Census 9, 1926.
73. Farmers' Weekly 10.7.1929.
74. Kaplan 1977b, chapter 5, Table 7.
75. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 279.

76. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 321.
77. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 278; Union Statistics for 50 Years, Table I23. Volume is the net production and excludes the amount used for seeds.
78. Tinley 1940, p253-5.
79. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 324.
80. Union Statistics for 50 Years, Table I23, I28.
81. Van Wyk 1935, p11; Department of Agriculture Bulletin, 95, p109, 154.
82. Farming in South Africa, 7(79), 1932, p280.
83. Department of Agriculture Bulletin, 95; Union Yearbook, 1925-1933.
84. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 418.
85. See Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 437ff for details.
86. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 477.
87. Tomlinson and Van Wyk 1935, p18. The remainder of this chapter draws heavily on this study. All the statistics quoted have been calculated by adding the totals for each separate district from their figures, and then obtaining a new average for all three areas.
88. Calculated from Tinley 1942, p263 .
89. Calculated from Tinley 1942, p263 .
90. Die Burger 8.3.1930.
91. Die Burger 10.3.1930.
92. See e.g. Cooperation and Agricultural Credit Commission, para 421.
93. Department of Agriculture, Agro Economic Survey of the Union, 1948, p30.
94. Department of Agriculture, Agro Economic Survey of the Union, 1948, pp26, 31.

95. Calculated as follows :

Gross income	£ 1 639,9
Plus Value of income in kind	135,4
Minus Expenses	1 141,4
Minus Value of own labour	<u>162,7</u>
	471,2

96. Tomlinson and Van Wyk 1935, p33.

97. This figure is rather low, but appears to be correct in terms of the definitions in the study.

98. This is not to argue that control over housing was not important as a means of procuring labour and of social control. For a more detailed discussion see Chapter 3 and Bothman 1984, p51 ff.

99. Bradford 1980 and 1981; Morris 1979.

100. See e.g. Die Burger 7.1.193) for fruit.

101. See e.g. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.8.1929.

APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL INCOME

Year	£m	Index
1924-28	245,62	100.0
1929	270,5	110,1
1930	253,2	103,1
1931	234,1	95,3
1932	217,1	88,4
1933	236,9	96,4
% Change	-20,8 (1928-32)	

Source : Union Statistics for 50 Years, Table L4

See note 39 for an explanation of the table.

APPENDIX 2: MANUFACTURING

	Geographical Income		Net Output		Gross Output	
	£m	Index	£m	Index	£m	Index
1924-28	30,68	100	29,056	100	68,9158	100
1929	38,2	124,5	34,194	117,7	78,425	113,8
1930	39,1	127,4	-	-	-	-
1931	37,2	121,3	-	-	-	-
1932	33,5	109,2	30,700	105,7	67,332	97,7
1933	32,0	104,3	36,401	125,3	82,448	119,6
% Change	-18,2 (1930-33)		-10,2 (1929-32)		-16,5 (1928-32)	

Source : Union Statistics for 50 Years, Tables L3, S3

APPENDIX 3: MINING

	Geographical Income		Total Sales Value		TSV excl Gold	
	£m	Index	£m	Index	£m	Index
1924-28	44,46	100	58,34	100	15,386	100
1929	45,0	101,2	62,6	107,1	18,371	119,4
1930	43,8	98,5	56,7	97,2	11,180	72,7
1931	39,4	88,6	53,3	91,4	7,094	46,1
1932	39,2	88,2	54,8	93,9	5,034	32,7
1933	56,4	126,9	74,6	127,9	5,913	38,4
% Change	-22,1 (1928-32)		-14,9 (1929-31)		-72,6 (1929-32)	

Source : Union Statistics for 50 Years, Tables K4, K5, K15, S3

APPENDIX 4: COMMERCE

	National Inc		Exports		Imports	
	£m	Index	£m	Index	£m	Index
1924-8	37,6	100	41,025	100	71,197	100
1929	43,7	116,2	44,189	107,7	81,849	116,4
1930	36,7	97,6	30,247	73,7	64,181	90,1
1931	32,3	85,9	20,725	50,5	52,440	73,7
1932	25,8	68,6	17,900	43,6	32,209	45,2
1933	29,1	77,4	22,441	66,9	48,443	68,0
% Change	-41,0 (1929-32)		-59,5 (1929-32)		-61,1 (1929-32)	

Source : Union Statistics for 50 Years, Tables N2, N4, S3.

TABLE 2

PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN EACH REGION (1936-37)

Region No.	Region and district	Pastoral		Field crops		Fruit and nut trees	
		Product	Number	Product	Number	Product	Number
			1,000 head		1,000 morgen		1,000 trees
CAPE PROVINCE							
I	<i>Southwest</i> Bredasdorp, Bellville, Caledon, Cape Ceres, Hopefield, Malmesbury, Paarl, Piquetberg, Riversdale, Simons Town, Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Swellendam, Tulbagh, Wellington, Worcester, Wynberg.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	119 32 52 113 896 1,538 48 3 153	Wheat..... Barley..... Oats..... Rye..... Mealies..... Potatoes..... Beans (dried)..... Vegetables..... Lucerne..... Tobacco.....	361 22 150 28 3 2 5 1 5 1	Orange..... Other Citrus..... Apple..... Apricot..... Peach and nectarine..... Pear..... Plum..... Quince..... Nut..... Cherry and other..... Vines.....	200 66 947 1,358 1,045 806 881 143 96 52 119,233
II	<i>Northwest</i> Britstown, Calvinia, Carnarvon, Clanwilliam, Frasersburg, Hopetown, Kenhardt, Namaqualand, Prieska, Van Rhynsdorp, Sutherland, Victoria West, Williston.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	68 19 9 63 10 124 2,982 1,695 5 784	Wheat..... Barley..... Oats..... Rye..... Mealies..... Lucerne.....	60 3 9 13 2 9	Orange..... Other Citrus..... All deciduous..... Nut..... Vines.....	269 12 157 7 3,188
III	<i>South Coast</i> Albany, Alexandria, Bathurst, George, Humansdorp, Knysna, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Ultenhage.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	233 11 6 22 26 518 637 89 73 122	Wheat..... Barley..... Oats..... Mealies..... Potatoes..... Beans (dried)..... Vegetables..... Lucerne..... Tobacco.....	27 5 10 22 4 2 5 2 1	Orange..... Grapefruit..... Other citrus..... Apple..... Other deciduous..... Nuts..... Vines.....	740 164 31 247 123 48 205
IV	<i>South Karroo</i> Aberdeen, Calitzdorp, Janenville, Ladismith, Laingsburg, Montagu, Oudshoorn, Prince Albert, Robertson, Steyterville, Uniondale, Willowmore.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	50 10 8 35 16 220 1,035 446 347 315	Wheat..... Barley..... Oats..... Mealies..... Potatoes..... Beans..... Lucerne..... Spinless cactus..... Tobacco.....	27 3 4 4 1 2 26 1 4	Orange..... Other citrus..... Apple..... Apricot..... Peach and nectarine..... Other deciduous..... Nuts..... Vines.....	69 7 490 115 155 188 31,918
V	<i>Central Karroo</i> Beaufort West, Graaff Reinet, Middelburg, Murraysburg.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	24 6 2 14 3 50 1,508 248 33 76	Wheat..... Oats..... Mealies..... Lucerne..... Spinless cactus.....	6 1 2 12 1	All citrus..... All deciduous..... Vines.....	14 146 238

TABLE 2 (continued)

Region No.	Region and district	Pastoral		Field crops		Fruit and nut trees	
		Product	Number	Product	Number	Product	Number
			1,000 head		1,000 morgen		1,000 trees
VI	<i>CAPE PROVINCE (continued)</i> <i>North Karroo</i> Colesberg, De Aar, Hanover, Philipstown, Richmond, Venterstad.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	25 7 1 11 2 42 1,582 137 3 22	Wheat..... Lucerne..... Spinless cactus.....	4 4 1	All deciduous	30
VII	<i>East Karroo</i> Bedford, Cradock, Maraisburg, Pearston, Somerset East, Steynsburg.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	56 10 3 14 5 92 1,874 140 118 89	Wheat..... Barley..... Oats..... Mealies..... Lucerne..... Spinless cactus.....	6 1 3 4 13 1	All citrus..... All deciduous	28 266
VIII	<i>Bechuanaland</i> Gordouia, Kuruman, Mafeking, Taung, Vryburg.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	429 29 5 95 24 196 429 488 3 403	Wheat..... Mealies..... Kaffir-corn..... Cowpeas..... Lucerne.....	11 58 16 7 2	Orange..... Other citrus..... Peach and nectarine..... All other deciduous..... Vines.....	197 1 128 39 8,421
IX	<i>Griqualand West</i> Barkly West, Ilay, Herbert, Kimberley.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	139 24 2 29 5 64 478 854 4 286	Wheat..... Mealies..... Lucerne..... Spinless cactus.....	1 2 1 1	All deciduous Vines.....	105 255
X	<i>Border</i> Adelaide, Cathcart, Fort Beaufort, Glen Grey, Keiskammahock, Kingwilliamstown, Komgha, Middeldrift, East London, Peddie, Queens-town, Sterkstroom, Stockenström, Stutterheim, Tarka, Victoria East.	Cattle..... Horses..... Mules..... Donkeys..... Pigs..... Poultry..... Woolled sheep..... Non-woolled sheep..... Angora goats..... Other goats.....	506 29 1 12 43 531 2,921 36 24 264	Wheat..... Barley..... Oats..... Rye..... Mealies..... Kaffir-corn..... Potatoes..... Beans..... Vegetables..... Lucerne..... Cactus.....	11 4 16 1 4 2 1 2 1 4 1	Orange..... Other citrus..... Apple..... All other deciduous..... Tropical and semitropical	365 31 92 103 25

CHAPTER 3

**GARVEYISTS, MILITANTS AND THE RURAL POPULAR CLASSES
THE ANC IN THE WESTERN CAPE, 1928 - 1931**

I GARVEYISTS AND MARXISTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

The ANC in the Western Cape was not particularly active in the period up to the mid-twenties, but by the late 1920's it was by far the most active and militant branch of the ANC. This transformation was largely the result of a very specific combination of black nationalism and marxism, combined with the crisis in capitalist agriculture which was examined in chapter 2.

The black nationalists - in the guise of militant Garveyists - started to organise in the ANC(WP) in 1924 when James Thaele was elected as president. He was, according to all accounts, a rather flamboyant figure:

something of an opportunist and
dilletante ... attracting attention as
an agitator and on account of his
flowery language and sartorial
affections: 'white sun helmet, white
suit, white spats, white gloves' and a
walking stick. (1)

Much of the secondary and primary sources on the period characterise him in similar terms, including Roux who knew him personally and describes him as a rather "facile" person. (2) Though his actions certainly lend themselves to appellations such as "opportunist", such terms fail to come to grips with the complexity of the dilemma which faced the radicalised petty bourgeoisie. The chapter below will avoid such terms and try to demonstrate that insofar as Thaele's actions were "opportunist", they were also largely compatible with his class position.

Thaele had studied in the United States for fifteen years prior to his return in 1922. On his return he started a night school in Cape Town and became involved in local politics. He joined the ICU (3) and soon became a fairly regular contributor to the Workers' Herald. He also produced his own, rather periodic, newspaper called the African World.

Thaele had become a Garveyist overseas and his newspaper articles were permeated with Garveyist rhetoric. As a result of his efforts and that of an American negro, Arthur McKinley, Cape Town was almost certainly the most important centre of Garveyist influence in South Africa, although there were also branches of the UNIA in Johannesburg and Natal. (4)

Thaele, his brother Kennon and McKinley also worked in the ANC(WP), especially once the ICU started to decline in Cape Town. After Thaele's election as president, they set about re-organising the ANC(WP) and expanding its influence. Regular lunch-time meetings were held on the parade and they even organised in some of the nearby rural towns.

The discourse of the ANC(WP) at that time was characterised by a fairly militant Garveyism. The slogan of "Africa for the Africans" was popularised, there was a stress on the need for "racial pride" and a separatist churches, and even talk of non-cooperation with the authorities. At the same time, there were two factors which tempered their particular brand of Garveyism, which were to prove of crucial importance in the latter evolution of the ANC(WP).

In the first place, the traditional Garveyist emphasis on blackness and racial purity was somewhat muted in the particular conditions of Cape Town where coloured people had always belonged to the ANC(WP). (5) Thus coloured people were usually included in the definition of "Africans". The fact that the Thaeles themselves had a coloured mother was probably not irrelevant to this re-definition. However that

may be, it certainly opened up the possibility of organising in the surrounding rural areas.

Secondly, in the Western Cape the Garveyist hostility towards socialist organisation was also rather muted. (6) In fact Thaele at times displayed a remarkable respect for the Communist Party. When he addressed students at the CP night school in Johannesburg in 1929 he

congratulated them on belonging to the intelligentsia of the African race who understood the meaning of exploitation and could get down to work. His sympathies were entirely with the Communist Party. It was the party destined to bring forward in the near future a far reaching change in social conditions. He did not believe in compromising in matters of principle and what he was saying here he did not hesitate to say elsewhere. The people of Russia who formerly groaned under Tsarist tyranny, now enjoyed freedom and they could appreciate the fact. Communism meant the emancipation of the struggling workers and the levelling of the oppressed races. (7)

This can be partly explained by the fact that Garvey's hostility to socialist movements rested primarily on their domination by whites. Vincent argues that there were several cases where Garveyists co-operated with indigenous socialist organisations in the Third World. (8) Thus the specific form that Garveyism took in the Western Cape facilitated the establishment of an alliance with the socialists in the CPSA.

At the same time the CPSA had also been going through a process of transformation which would bring it much closer to the black nationalists in theory and in practice. In

1925 it had "begun to break out of its isolation from Africans" by adopting a (still relatively undemocratic) programme of reforms. At the Fifth Congress of the party in 1927 it was further resolved to form African branches and to train a "cadre of class conscious workers". (9)

It seems, from the available evidence, that the Cape Town branch was one of the prime movers behind these measures. (10) At the 1924 conference the Cape Town branch in alliance with the Young Communist League and Bunting, had initiated the process of reorientation towards black politics. (11) Several members of the branch were already active in the ICU, notably John Gomas and James la Guma. (12) Although there were still periodic attacks on Thaele in 1926, it appears that their attention was shifted to the ANC(WP) as the ICU declined in Cape Town. By 1928 and 1929 Johns reports that the activity of the CP in Cape Town was at a low ebb as the majority of its black members were devoting most of their time to the ANC(WP). (13)

This "movement" received added impetus when La Guma visited the USSR in 1927. He had extensive consultations with the Executive Committee of the Communist International and it was probably here that the slogan of a "Black Republic" was first formulated. (14) This is not the place to enter the debate surrounding the slogan and its eventual adoption at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, (15) other than to note the concrete effects of the debate and the implementation of the slogan in Cape Town.

The most important results were that the Cape Town branch was strengthened by its "victory" in the debate and reinforced in its belief that the slogan was correct. It also meant that there was now an important group within the ANC(WP) that was committed to mass mobilisation and, in theory, to the leadership of the working class in the struggle for national liberation.

Thus the CP began to see the Cape as the new centre of revolution:

Here in the Western Province is a growing revolutionary ferment, based primarily on the increasing discontent of thousands of Native and Coloured workers and peasants groaning under the iron heel of British and Boer imperialism, as expressed in the Pirowcratic dictatorship. The main strength of the revolutionery movement lies in the bitterly exploited rural workers ... whose land was stolen a century ago by the white plutocracy.

In Cape Town, the only large urban centre in this area, there is a Non-European industrial proletariat, working in the docks, railways and factories. These town workers are slightly better off than their country brothers and at the same time more politically conscious and educated.

The CP believed that there even existed amongst the coloured people a nascent national bourgeoisie which was required for an application of the Black Republic theory:

This relatively small but important class desires the support of the masses in order to gain its own demands: modification of colour bar and the right to share the privileges of the Europeans of the same social class. But these ladies and gentlemen do not want to see a revolutionary upheaval involving the liberation of the toiling masses in the town and country, including their own servants and employees. Consequently

they 'seek to head the movement in order to behead it'. (16)

In Cape Town, at least, the adoption of the slogan had largely positive results and it provided a fairly coherent basis for a fruitful alliance between the CP and the Garveyists in the ANC. Within the ANC(WP) this took the form of an alliance between militants like Elliott Tonjeni, Bransby Ndobe, Johnny Gomas and Arnoth Plaatjes who all had close links to the CPSA, and the moderates like James and Kennon Thaele who were convinced Garveyists. As will become clear later, most of the actual organisation took place under the ANC banner, while the ANC in Cape Town more or less adopted the CP political programme of a "Black Republic".

The ANC(WP) had expanded gradually under the leadership of the Garveyists, but it was only in the late 1920's that it was transformed into a militant mass movement as the alliance between the black nationalists and socialists took shape in practice. Most of the impetus came from the appointment of two young and dynamic organisers who had close links with the CPSA: Bransby Ndobe was appointed as organiser during Thaele's absence in the Herschel district in late 1927 and later became provincial secretary, while in 1929 Elliot Tonjeni was appointed as assistant provincial secretary. (17) Although they had close links with the CPSA, they apparently were not particularly vociferous in their support for the CPSA, especially not in Cape Town. (18) In fact the CPSA organ reported in 1929 that both Tonjeni and Ndobe had been "lost" to the party in the course of the year - it is unclear whether they had resigned or been expelled. (19)

Although there was a leftward movement in the ANC at a national level with the election of Josiah Gumede as President-General and Eddie Khaile as Secretary-General in 1927, an alliance between the CP and the ANC was never formalised or extended on a national level. The Cape Town

branch continued to push for an open alliance, for example in their motion at the 1928 conference urging the executive

to explore every avenue towards the
closest co-operation with the Communist
Party. (20)

But they never succeeded. Only a few members of the ANC outside the Cape were prepared to co-operate with the CP, although they included the influential Gumede.

II A SPARK AT PAARL

The actual move of the ANC(WP) into the rural areas, was sparked off by an incident in Paarl at the end of 1927. The official police version of the incident was that

Saturday night Constable Bleeker on duty Paarl heard screams found four natives attacking coloured girl he asked them desist X was attacked with {sic} and knocked down and in self defence drew revolver fired three shots killing one native wounding another ... reported dying. (21)

Few people, however, believed this. The following morning, Sunday 18 December, the

native locations around Paarl were in a state of ugly forment ... signs of unusual anger were evident amongst the native population and shortly before nine o'clock the police station was besieged by natives who demanded to see constable Bleeker. (22)

Many people also gathered at the hospital to see the wounded Samuel Tshitsha, but their demands were refused and police

were called in to control the crowd. At lunch time unsuccessful efforts were made to get Bleeker to come to the Island Street location, but it was reported that "the constable was removed to a place of safety". (23) Later in the afternoon

the native quarter in Island Street was the scene of an unprecedented demonstration in which several hundred natives participated. (24)

The ANC(WP) soon became very active in the protest. The Huguenot branch at Paarl was one of the oldest in the ANC(WP) (25) and Walshe states that it was one of the 4 branches established in the Western Cape in 1920. (26) It is not clear how active the branch was by 1927, or even whether it survived the slump in the ANC during the early 1920's. Roux seems to imply that it did survive, at least. It is not known to what extent it was involved in the protests that erupted on the Sunday after the shooting, but by the next day Ndobe, secretary of the ANC(WP), was reported to be in Paarl attending the inquest. (27) At the same time or soon afterwards, Stanley Silwana and John Gomas (who was secretary of the CP) also arrived in Paarl to help Ndobe organise the protest. From this time the ANC was clearly the dominant force in the protests.

They even managed to have the trial postponed so that they could obtain the services of an attorney to represent them in court (28) and proceeded to organise a series of well attended protest meetings.

The first was held at Huguenot station on Sunday, 25 December. According to the Paarl Post

Die toesprake het gewemel van
uitdrukkings soos 'onreg' en
'uitbuiting', en alle nieblankes is
aangeraai om te organiseer sodat hulle

deur middel van 'n algemene staking - hul enigste wapen - die regering op sy knieë kan dwing. Hierdie wapen moet dien as 'n strydmiddel teen die georganiseerde blankes wat mag in the hande en masjien-gewere en alle moderne wapens in besit het. (29)

About 300 Africans and a few coloured people and whites attended the meeting. (30) Another big meeting was held on the 27th to collect money for the Cape Town attorney and it was clear, stated the Paarl Post, that the "Opgewondenheid ... het nog nie bedaar nie".

Another meeting was held at Huguenot the following Sunday at which Arthur McKinley was the main speaker. He stressed the need for unity and organisation:

... ek hoop dat elke gekleurde man gedurende die nuwejaar sal aansluit by die Afrikaanse Nasionale Kongres - wanneer ons na die Paarl kom, kom ons nie om te veg nie, maar om te organiseer. Die witman wil die samewerking - die gemeenskap tussen die naturel en die kleurling verhoed. Maar die Afrikaanse Nasionale Kongres sal alles in sy vermoë doen om samewerking en gemeenskap teweeg te bring. (31)

The other speakers were Joseph Manuel and Johannes Letsalu from Paarl and about 250 people attended. After these meetings, it seemed that the main effort was directed at the court hearings which were attended by crowds of up to 400. (32)

The protests had considerable effect in Paarl, and were probably directly responsible for Bleeker being charged with culpable homicide. Initially the state had tried to hold an

inquest, as the police argued that he was justified in his action, (33) but the attempt was abandoned after a few days. Bleeker was committed for trial in February, but was subsequently found not guilty by an all white jury, and acquitted.

At the same time the state tried to repress the protests. Gomas, Ndobé and Silwana were charged under the notorious hostility clause of the new Native Administration Act. (34) Their arrest and subsequent heavy sentences in the Paarl Magistrate's court led to further demonstrations, (35) but there is little evidence that the effects on organisation in Paarl. Their subsequent appeal in Worcester, however, had one important immediate effect - apparently they used the opportunity to organise a branch in Worcester.

III WORCESTER AND ORGANISATIONAL METHODS

Worcester was at that time the largest of the towns in the Boland. The local magistrate reported that it seemed

to be a suitable centre for the
congregation of non-Europeans.

Nearly 5 000 Coloured people and about 400 Africans lived in the Parker Street area, often under conditions of desperate overcrowding and squalor. (36) Every weekend the population of the town was further swelled by an influx of

Natives and lower class coloured
population from all the farms
surrounding {sic}. (37)

From 1929 onwards the overcrowding and poverty were aggravated by the beginning of the crisis in agriculture, leading to further discontent.

When the ANC(WP) started to organise in Worcester early in 1929, it seems that they were very successful. A branch was

set up, and a local building worker, Adam Paul, was elected as secretary. Soon it had more than 300 members and had collected enough money (about £200) to buy a plot of land and build a small hall (17' x 32') and to employ Paul full-time. (38)

The idea of building or buying halls were very pervasive in the ANC(WP) and over the years a number of properties were bought. (39) This seems to have been based fairly directly on the Garveyist tradition of buying Liberty Halls. (40)

Worcester soon became the most active branch in the whole of the ANC, and it served as a centre for the subsequent organisation of other Boland towns - stretching from Rawsonville to Robertson, Bonnievale and Montagu, and even as far as Barrydale, Suurbraak and Swellendam. By May 1929 the ANC(WP) could claim more than 2 000 members in Cape Town and the Boland, while new members were still flocking to join the organisation. (41)

The methods of organisation in Worcester were much the same as elsewhere. They consisted firstly of broad, but relatively superficial, organisation. One or more of the important leaders visited the town and arranged public meetings where they spoke and urged people to join the ANC. The meetings were always held outside in a prominent place so as to attract as many passersby as possible.

Members had to pay a membership fee of 1s per month (6d for women), while new members had to pay an entry fee of 2s 6d. (42) This money was used for a variety of purposes - to pay the full-time organisers, to acquire land and/or buildings for offices, to pay local officials, to pay the cost of numerous court cases, etc. The entry fee was a common feature of popular organisations at the time and was related to the methods of organisation. Organisers often had to travel long distances between towns and would arrive in a new town with little or no money. The relatively high entry fee helped to provide them with subsistence as well as their

travel expenses to the next town. (43)

After a few meetings, and when sufficient people had joined the organisation, a branch would be set up and local officials elected. At this stage organisation usually became more in depth. Regular house visits were made at which issues could be discussed in greater detail and the branches tried to have regular weekly branch meetings. (44)

However, public meetings retained their place as the primary method of organisation. Meetings were usually held every Sunday afternoon and, in the more active branches, on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons as well. The timing of these meetings was of critical importance. Not only were the townspeople able to attend the meetings, but many workers from the surrounding farms were able to attend meetings regularly as they usually came to the town over the weekend. Many farm workers joined the ANC and played an active part in the organisation, while at the same time extending the ANC's influence even further.

In Worcester and other strong branches, the ANC also set up an ANC bodyguard or police. These were trusted ANC members who were dressed in uniforms and carried "two thick assegai wood batons" up their sleeves. (45) Their main function was to keep order at meetings, but they also played an important role in protecting the more prominent leaders against assaults.

By early 1930 the ANC(WP) claimed to have over 800 members in Worcester itself, plus another 200 on the surrounding farms. (46) It had been able to forge a significant unity between the struggles on the farms and in the towns, a unity which was reflected in the issues and demands that were taken up by the ANC(WP).

As indicated earlier, the ANC(WP) more or less took over the CPSA political programme of a "Black Republic" and campaigned actively under this slogan. But it is more

important to stress that this indicated little more than an acceptance of a broad direction - it did not necessarily entail a commitment to the detail of the CP programme. In practice the slogan came to be used almost synonymously with "Mayibuye" (Let it, i.e. Africa, return), a more general rallying cry to "give back our country". There was little, if any, discussions of the fact that the Black Republic would only be a "stage towards a Worker's and Peasant's government", and that there would be "full protection and equal rights for all national minorities." This was the case even in the pages of the CPSA organ, Umsebenzi itself. (47)

Although the Black Republic programme was very important in giving coherence and direction to the organisation, it was the immediate oppression and demands of the rural proletariat that dominated the discourse and practice of the ANC(WP). Outside Cape Town itself, the organisation was almost entirely working class in character. There simply was no African petty bourgeoisie in the rural areas, other than the occasional minister, while the "coloured" petty bourgeoisie remained almost entirely antagonistic towards the ANC(WP) as it threatened their traditional, informal leadership within their communities. (48) The only significant petty bourgeois element within the organisation in the rural areas was in fact the paid officials who were mostly of petty bourgeois origin. Thus in the rural areas the ANC(WP) articulated primarily the economic demands of the rural proletariat, namely low wages, unemployment, the tot system, passes and to a lesser extent, housing and the use of convict labour.

There were continual demands for higher wages, and even demands for the Wage Board to set minimum wages for farm labour. (49) In contrast to the almost millenarian wage demands of the ICU in the Transvaal and Natal rural areas, the ANC demanded a wage of 5s per day as against current wages of 2s to 2s 6d per day. (50) Sometimes the emphasis on economic demands were such that even the authorities described an ANC meeting as

not a political one but it was organised by the African National Congress and dealt with the economic questions of the Country, more especially with the wage question. (51)

It has already been pointed out that farmers were badly affected by the Depression and they attempted to reduce costs and protect their profits by reducing wages. There was fairly widespread, but largely individual resistance to these measures, mostly in the form of a refusal to work for lower wages. Many people left their jobs on the farms and went to the towns in the hope of finding better paid employment.

This had two major consequences. In the first place it aggravated the unemployment in the towns, although wages still remained much higher than on the farms. It also brought about increasing conflict over the instruments of labour control, viz. passes and the tot system. However, the former affected only African people and as such never became a very major issue in the Boland.

The tot system, on the other hand, was a well entrenched method of social control backed by the organised political power of the wine farmers. Furthermore, the farmers also viewed it as a vital outlet for their products and they made continual attempts to extend the system to other provinces. The importance of the tot system can be seen from the following figures for Worcester magisterial district:

No of regular workers:	880 white and
	2 282 black
Total viticulture production:	16,65m litres
Wine for own use:	0,69m litres (52)

This means that more than 4% of the viticultural crop was consumed on the farm itself. Although the figures leave out

casual labour, the average consumption of wine per working day of 0,7 litres per person! At that time tots consisted of one pint of wine and were given 4 or 5 times a day. (53)

IV THE FARMERS COUNTER-ATTACK

Once established in Worcester, the ANC(WP) rapidly organised throughout the Boland and branches were established as far afield as Carnarvon, George and Ladismith. From the beginning, however, it had to overcome some great obstacles that are peculiar to organisation in the rural areas.

The farmers were not only more reactionary than the bosses in the towns, but they were also more powerful. Politically agricultural capital was organised into the National Party, and the farmers from the Western Cape formed a particularly powerful block within the party. (54) Thus agricultural capital formed a critical part of the alliance between national capital and the white working class that constituted the power bloc in the late 1920's. (55)

As a class they were well organised in numerous farmers associations, while they all knew each other personally. Thus it was easy for them to combine to take collective action against ANC members.

They were also able to dominate the local state fairly effectively, especially the town councils. Their influence over the local representatives of the state was, however, less direct and on several occasions there were conflicts between the farmers and these representatives, as will be shown later.

One of the major obstacles faced by the ANC was direct repression by farmers who were afraid that an organised labour force might force them to pay higher wages and abandon the tot system. The farmers also complained bitterly that this "agitation" was primarily responsible for increasing shortages of black labour

that their labourers are being influenced to stay away from work. (56)
The agitators were reported to be particularly bitter in their attitude towards farmers. (57)

The first common tactic tried by the farmers in their struggle against the ANC(WP) was the use of victimisation. Thus it was reported that

The majority of farmers have spoken seriously to their labourers regarding association with the Congress organisation. (58)

As the class struggle in the rural areas intensified, more direct methods were used. For example, farmers would search their workers to

see whether they wear under their clothing a badge or other indication of their connection with the most hated organisation in Worcester

while the Railways at Worcester was reported to be using photographs of ANC meetings to identify members. (59)

Several farmers' associations also attempted to institute a blacklist of ANC members, but this tactic was less successful because of the critical labour shortage. (60)
Only in one case was it reported that a farmers' association had decided to proceed with a blacklist, viz in Villiersdorp.

Of course, there were cases of individuals being victimised by farmers and the ANC did not have any coherent strategy for dealing with this. In at least one case about 30 farm workers on two farms near Robertson came out on strike when

some of their fellow workers were sacked for attending an ANC meeting, but they were all dismissed and it seems that the strike failed. The strikers and their families were all evicted from their houses on the farms. (61) In the cases of victimisation, the local branches tried to look after the dismissed people, providing them with housing and food in the towns. (62) In this case, the Robertson branch looked after them as "guests of honour", until they were evicted as vagrants by the municipal sanitary inspectors.

Another common tactic was to attempt to intimidate the ANC and its leaders into abandoning the rural struggle. In many of the smaller towns the farmers attempted to keep out the ANC by threats and even brute force. In early 1929, Bransby Ndobe was organising in Worcester and Swellendam

where he stirred up much feeling by
loose talk and was warned to leave.

(63)

This was a popular way for farmers to intimidate ANC organisers and it soon became clear that these threats had to be taken seriously. It is worthwhile to examine the events at Robertson at some length, as it gives considerable insight into the bitterness with which the rural struggle was waged.

After Ndobe was forced to leave Swellendam, he organised in Robertson where he "stirred up" feelings again. The farmers became increasingly upset about the

Native agitators addressing meetings
there, as they content that it causes
dissatisfaction among labourers and aggravates the
farm labour shortage. (64)

Ndobe received several threats to leave Robertson, but he ignored them all. However, when, in early April, he tried to attend the court hearing of an ANC member who had been

arrested after a stone-throwing incident, he was surrounded by a hostile crowd of white people - the two estimates are 40 and 500! The police arrested him and after interrogation at the local police station, he was taken to the local station and warned to leave the area immediately. Before he could do so, however, he was attacked and assaulted by the crowd. (65)

At this stage it seemed that the ANC(WP) started to formulate a strategy to deal with this kind of intimidation. It decided to return "in force" with several hundred ANC members from Cape Town and Worcester and to hold a meeting on Saturday 24 May. Elliott Tonjeni outlined the plan at a meeting in Worcester. He

declared that May 24 would be a memorable day and told all those dissatisfied with their lot to meet him and to go over to Robertson. They would then show the 'ignorant backvelders that we will not be intimidated'. (66)

On Friday May 23, 1 500 whites met in the Robertson Town Hall to discuss plans for the following day. At the same time the

people in Robertson are arming themselves in preparation for tomorrow. Relatives have been summoned from surrounding districts and are arriving in motor cars. (67)

It was clear that the ANC would have to hold their meeting in the face of some very determined opposition.

The local ANC made "lavish preparations" for Ndobe's visit and a crowd gathered early to wait for him. (68) There were setbacks in both Cape Town and Worcester. In Worcester the ANC was unable to obtain lorries as the owners had, as a

gesture of solidarity with the Robertson farmers, agreed not to hire them out to the ANC. In Cape Town, Ndobe was interrogated by the police and his departure was delayed for several hours.

Ndobe, Tonjeni, Thaele and Brown were also forced to sign statements that they were going to Robertson at their own risk. They eventually arrived in Robertson with three crowded lorries (presumably they picked up some of the Worcester members along the way) and said that the meeting would start at 12 midday. A "number of determined looking Europeans" approached, but the police persuaded them to keep their distance.

Wilson Tsekwe, a member of ANC executive, opened the meeting of about 150. He, and several of the other speakers, referred to the massacres at Bulhoek, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg, and made it clear that repression and intimidation would not stop the black people from organising.

'I was flogged at Robertson and lost my property', said Ndobe, 'because I spoke the truth. I do not blame the Europeans because history will repeat itself. There must be martyrs. But I have taken the pledge to spread the gospel of the African National Congress.'

The meeting continued fairly quietly and was eventually closed. The crowd, which had grown to about 200, started to disperse and Ndobe left with the three lorries from Cape Town. The Worcester lorry was still there when the whites

surged forward and police reinforcements were summoned. One native sneered at a Mr le Roux who afterwards said that he knocked the native down. Then someone threw a brick. Immediately big stones

and half-bricks whistled through the air, and knives were flashed.

In the ensuing fight, several whites were stabbed before police reinforcements arrived from Worcester and

before the stout attack of the police and civilians, the coloured crowd fell back ... A few natives urged an{nother} attack

but this did not materialise and the crowd eventually dispersed.

That night the local township, Jubelsdorp, was in a state of revolt. According to reports, the township had gone "beserk" and "hooligans" were breaking lights and stoning cars in Robertson. Two policemen who ventured into the township to arrest a stone-thrower, Hans Marais, were attacked by a crowd and only escaped after threatening the crowd with their revolvers.

The police, however, soon had the situation under control, and as far as can be ascertained, the ANC(WP) did not try to provoke another confrontation. Nevertheless, they had made their point. It seems that the ANC was now able to organise relatively freely in Robertson and by June it claimed to have many members in Robertson. (69)

V AN UNEASY TRUCE

For the rest of 1929, there was something of a lull as both sides reassessed their positions and strengths. From the available evidence it seems that the ANC(WP) was able to continue its organisational activity, although it tried to keep a low profile. Thus by October the Worcester Standard and Advertiser reported that the ANC(WP)

has now established branches in nearly

every town in the Western Province and the South Western Districts. (70)

Unfortunately, there is little evidence available on this period, at least partially due to the conscious conspiracy of silence in the bourgeois press. The Worcester Standard and Advertiser summed up its and the farmers' attitude, when it wrote that

{n}aturally the more publicity the affair is given, the better pleased the Natives will be - and that is what they are after.

The ANC(WP) did hold a conference of all its branches in the new hall at Worcester in October. The delegates gathered under banners proclaiming

You were shot down under these flags
{the Union Jack and Vierkleur - WH}.
Remember Bulhoek, Port Elizabeth and
Johannesburg. Down with capitalism.
(72)

But the political programme that emerged from the conference was much more nationalist than socialist in character, stressing firstly, non-cooperation with whites, and secondly, the secession of blacks from white churches. From the scant evidence of the conference, it is dangerous to attempt any definitive analysis of this programme, especially as one does not know which points were not reported. They do emphasise, though, the importance of the influence of Gandhi and the missionaries in South Africa.

In the speeches of the Congress leaders there were often references to the Indian national struggle which was being fought with great bitterness at this stage and which received much publicity in the local press. Thus in his speech after the conference, Tonjeni said that he felt

like going beyond all reasonable boundaries today ... It is foolish to be loyal to a disloyal people. So long as I live I will organise until I am satisfied that I have aroused the non-Europeans. You will remember Gandhi's policy of non-cooperation with the whites. It was caused through oppression and he would not be holding these meetings but the oppression of the African race. (73)

But the slogan of non-cooperation with whites was at best a compromise within the ANC(WP). The militants interpreted it as passive resistance to "white" laws, whereas the moderates and Garveyists saw it as not co-operating with white organisations. The latter interpretation would in fact be used later to attack the militants for their links with the "white" CPSA. (74)

Attacks on white churches and the call for separatist black churches were, in fact, an important element in the discourse of the Garveyists. (75) The church was often discussed at ANC meetings and the white churches came in for heavy fire. But very few people attacked religion as a whole and some black churches like the Volkskerk were even regarded as part of the struggle and lent moral support to the ANC. (76) In fact it was even reported that the ANC had established the Volkskerk as its own church, but this seems doubtful.

Throughout 1929 the economic crisis worsened, particularly on the farms where the labour shortage grew increasingly worse. Although this was due in a large measure to the organisation of the ANC(WP), there were also other contributory factors.

The most important of these, as noted in Chapter 2 was the fact that production was expanding rapidly and consequently

farmers required more labour. Secondly, it appears that the demand for labour by the municipalities and railways was also increasing. Wilson has pointed out that the labour shortage in the Western Cape was traditionally more acute than elsewhere, partly because of the absence of a large African population, and partly because of the competition for labour from the railways and docks. (77)

This was aggravated, ironically, by the various relief measures undertaken by the State for so-called "civilised labour", which benefitted coloured people to some extent. In the early 1920's the National Party, and especially the Cape party, had an assimilationist policy towards the coloured people - at least at an economic level. As Marais notes, correctly, there was little notion of the coloured people constituting a separate group in society. (78) The National Party even started the Afrikaner Nasionale Bond as a political party to mobilise the support of coloured people.

Thus the measures adopted under the civilised labour policy seldom discriminated against coloured people in theory, although in practice the enforcement of the rate for the job tended to favour white labour at the expense of coloured labour. (79) The small benefits derived by coloured labourers from the civilised labour system became even more limited as the National Party dropped its assimilationist policy in the late 1920's. (80)

Work in the towns was both more regular and better paid than agricultural labour. The latter paid about 2s to 2s 3d per day without food or 1s 6d per day with food. In addition the hours of work were much shorter than on the farms. As the labour shortage increased, some Worcester businessmen even suggested that a few farmers were "deliberately exploiting" their labourers, and that this practice was giving farming a bad name. As a case in point they mentioned a labourer charged with desertion who had been paid 5s per month. (81)

The town councils did everything in their power to assist the farmers. They tried to stop the steady migration to the towns. The Worcester council announced that in future it would only employ "raw natives" and would refuse to employ people who had lived on farms before. (82) Later the Council also stated that it would not build any more houses in the overcrowded Parker Street area, as any alleviation of the housing shortage would further aggravate the farm labour shortage. (83) Housing was an important way in which farmers were able to obtain labour. Some farmers even built houses in town and rented them out on condition that the head of the household work on the their farm during the season. (84) However, even when employment or housing were not directly available, many people still left the farms to live in the towns. The precise nature of this contradiction i.e. a labour shortage on the farms and widespread urban unemployment, still needs to be researched in greater depth.

VI SQUATTERS IN CARNARVON: THE FARMERS ATTACK

With the continuing crisis and the increasing level of ANC organisation, it is clear that the comparative lull of the second half of 1929 could not last. The first incident in the renewed onslaught on the ANC(WP) occurred at Carnarvon in January 1930.

There had been a long period of struggle at Carnarvon about the position of African squatters and occupiers on the outer commonage at Schietfontein. In the mid-19th century, Sir George Grey had granted grazing, sowing, and limited occupation rights on the commonage to a number of Africans. These rights were gradually alienated to whites, mainly through indebtedness, but many Africans remained as squatters on the commonage. An attempt by the government to evict them proved unsuccessful in 1914 when the Supreme Court ruled that it was a civil matter between the new owners and the squatters. (85)

The legal position is very unclear, but it seems that an Act

was passed in 1926 (86) to transfer ownership to the land back to the Crown. The government now subdivided the commonage as a prelude to evicting the 300 to 400 squatters. (87)

This was still the position when ANC members in Carnarvon sent a deputation to the ANC in Cape Town to ask for help. James Thaele was sent to investigate the problem, as well as complaints about the strict, but vague location regulations. (88) He was also to try and strengthen the organisation at Carnarvon.

After his arrival he met with the location superintendent, the town clerk, the local police and the magistrate to attempt to clarify the issues, but met with very little success. The reportback meeting on the Saturday was much more successful, though, and about 200 people attended. He expounded at great length on the need for unity amongst all the black people, and on the various ways in which whites tried to subvert this unity:

There are only two colours never mind the shades, I am going to call you all my people ... the 'witman' ... goes to the Native and tells him he must not associate with the Hottentot and Bushmen they are below your social standing, the Native turns away from the Bushman and Hottentot with his head blown up with very great ideas that he is better than they are, because the white man said so. The same white man goes to the Hottentot and Bushman and tells them that they must not take notice of the Coolie because he has just come here to fill his pocket with money and then he clears off to his country, the Bushman and Hottentot likewise turn away with the same great idea that he is better than

the Coolie because the white man said so. This is the same white man who tells you that there is only one bible and one heaven, he merely tries his best to keep you apart and to prevent you from organising, while at the same time the Jew, Italian, Irishman, Scotchman and Hollander all stick together and do their best to organise. (89)

Although he praised the resistance of the people of India and China to colonial rule, his ideas for the liberation of South Africa were a rather vague mixture of passive resistance and millenarianism:

Slow but sure Africa is coming to you. Let the white man make all his machine guns, airoplanes {sic} and submarines it is his business, and when he comes with these to you put your hands in your pocket.

We will have a Black Republic and black government in Africa before long, and without guns, only continue to sing that one song and watch the African National Congress, there is no other power between heaven and earth to upset it ...

We must call a convention, and by constitutional means, in another 20 to 35 years time we will put all the whitemen into one pot and whip them with the double whip with which they are whipping us today, and will then tell them to go back to where they came from.

About 20 white civilians attended the meeting, and at one stage they tried to break it up, but they were restrained by the policemen who also attended.

Thaele addressed at least two other meetings during the weekend, one on Saturday evening at a private house and the other a public meeting attended by 250 to 300 people. Again there were about 20 whites present who

were dissatisfied with the utterances and made some very strong remarks about it.

On Monday morning Thaele had an appointment to see the Mayor, Colonel van Zyl, about the land issue. It is of interest to note that Colonel van Zyl, an attorney who had been Mayor for 30 years, was in his own words,

the largest Opstalhouer. On the Carnarvon Outer Commage there are a large number of native squatters who have no right on the Commonage. Unfortunately these men squat on a portion of the land which will belong to me when the survey is completed. (90)

Thus he had been in the forefront of the struggle to evict the squatters and there was little love lost between him and the squatters. When Thaele arrived at the Mayor's office with a following of 150 people mostly women and children, he was referred to the municipal office. The mayor delivered a lecture on the "uneducated natives", but refused to listen to Thaele unless he first apologized for his speeches. Thaele refused, and was attempting to explain his actions when

uproar {broke out} ... started by some Europeans who tackled Thaele. The natives {outside - WH} used knobkieries and smashed the door of the office. Two natives hit out at the Mayor who had time to dodge but received a cut on the

forehead. Thereupon a fight ensued in which many natives and Europeans were hurt. (91)

Many of the whites were armed with pickaxe handles and railway droppers which they collected outside, while chairs and knobkieries were freely used. The fighting ended when the blacks retreated from the office and gave the police an opportunity to separate the groups. Soon thereafter, according to the local police commander,

the whole town was full of reckless youngsters with rifles issued to them by the {Defence - WH} Rifle Association, and school cadets, ... I ... had considerable trouble with the Europeans who at this stage just wanted to attack.
(92)

Although the police managed to avert the attack on the location by threatening to arrest the whole crowd, the magistrate added to the tension by commandeering about 30 people to serve as "special constables". They joined dozens of armed whites roaming the streets, "guarding" the town against attack.

By the evening, however, the District Commandant of Police arrived from Beaufort West and almost immediately took steps to restore peace. Interestingly these measures fell most harshly on the white population. The special police were disbanded the next morning, and the police

collected a number of rifles from men, who were walking about the streets with them. (93)

The only immediate measures taken against the blacks, were to hold meetings in the location where they were assured that there would be no attack on them from the whites, and warned not to offer any provocation. Two blacks were also

arrested for their part in the violence, allegedly to prevent white vigilantes from trying to arrest them and causing trouble. Once peace had been restored, however, Samuel de Bruyn and several others were charged with public violence and assault, (94) despite the fact that a later police report clearly stated that

It is, I think, common knowledge that the riot of 13/3/1930 was largely due to European interference. (95)

Thaele and 10 others were also charged with incitement to public violence. (96) In the second trial, all the accused were found not guilty as the State failed to prove intent. (97) The outcome of the first trial is not known. Thaele was further charged under the hostility clause of the Native Administration Act, (98) found guilty and sentenced to a fine of £15 or three months hard labour. (99)

Although there were periodic visits by ANC organisers after these events, (100) it seems that the organisation remained at a low level inbetween these visits. In the course of 1930, there were, nevertheless, a number of "scares" with rumours circulating that the "natives ... are threatening to take certain people's lives". (101)

VII RAWSONVILLE: 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE'

The fighting and the relative lack of success of the legal apparatus to deal with the ANC, only increased the resolve of the farmers to smash the ANC(WP) by violence. Thus the Cape Times commented that it was clear that the "Europeans are determined to stand no further nonsense from the natives". (102)

The ANC(WP) on the other hand, renewed its resolve not to be intimidated. A large meeting at Worcester expressed its dismay that "white hooligans" who often started the fighting, were seldom "brought to book" and decided that

it should in the future be the policy of the African National Congress to adopt the Mosaic policy of retaliation - 'tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye'.

(103)

Although Carnarvon was too far away to take effective countermeasures, this new resolve would be evident at the next confrontation at Rawsonville.

In February the ANC(WP) held a meeting at Rawsonville at which the usual demands were voiced, especially for increased wages. The current wage of 2s 6d per day was much too low, they declared, and their wives had to work as domestics to supplement the family income. The time had come for white housewives to do their own dirty work. (104) Eventually some whites broke up the meeting on the village ground, but it was continued at a nearby black church. A spokesperson for the farmers declared that

Naturally this {demand for increased wages - WH} upset our townsfolk and they decided that these gatherings would have to cease. (105)

The police, however, refused to stop the meetings and the farmers then decided that they would take matters into their own hands. (106) The ANC was equally determined to have another meeting and again tried the tactic of bringing supporters from Worcester and Cape Town. They managed to hire three lorries and packed them with 60 people for a meeting on 9 March. The meeting was successful, although a large group of about 60 whites arrived and ordered the meeting to disperse. This warning was ignored and the meeting eventually ended peacefully. But as people were about to leave, the whites, described by the Worcester magistrate as "irresponsible European lads", assaulted a coloured man who allegedly swore at them. Soon stones were

thrown and knives flashed as a full scale fight erupted in which one white man was nearly throttled and 13 were injured. Two coloured men were also injured. (107)

A more serious development was the claims by Peter Vumazonke, new secretary of the Worcester branch, and Martin Runeli, leader of the ANC "bodyguard", that they were shot at by civilians. (108) One of the farmers admitted that he "fired two shots in the air", although the police reported him as saying that "ek gaan hulle nou skiet". (109) But as was almost invariably the case, it was only the ANC members that were prosecuted. The leader of the ANC at Rawsonville, David Cornelius, and his son, August, were arrested and charged with public violence. The charges were later withdrawn. (110) No whites were charged, although the newspapers reported that

the police report throws the blame for
causing the trouble on the Europeans.

(111)

At the same time another incident occurred that made it clear that the farmers were on the offensive.

Tonjeni arrived at Barrydale with 20 ANC members from Montagu to hold meetings. (112) The local policemen warned him not to hold any meetings until police reinforcements could be summoned to keep the peace. Tonjeni refused and the meeting began under a barrage of heckling from about 30 whites, restrained only with difficulty by the single policeman. Eventually the meeting was adjourned till the next day. The next morning Tonjeni was pulled out of bed by 50 armed farmers and given two hours to leave town or be killed. He ignored the warning, despite the policeman's plea that he was unable to protect him. Soon thereafter a lorry and several cars filled with whites abducted him at gunpoint and dropped him several miles outside Barrydale with a warning never to return.

The battle lines were now clearly drawn. On the one hand were the farmers who stated that

In future ... we will not allow any organisation to hold political meetings on Sundays. If our farmers mishandled their employees or were underpaying them, there might have been some excuse. The agitator's allegations are totally unfounded and the {Rawsonville Village Management - WH} Board is determined, law or no law to prohibit any gatherings of natives on Sundays more especially when the purpose of such a meeting is to incite our employees to insubordination.
(113)

A hundred Rawsonville farmers, determined to take matters into their own hands, met to discuss the situation. They rejected the proposal of the Worcester District Commandant of Police that the whole matter should be left in the hands of the police. But they were unable to come up with a coherent strategy of their own. Several farmers suggested a blacklist of all farm labourers belonging to the ANC, but others pointed out that this would be "unpracticable" due to the farm labour shortage. (114)

The confidence of the farmers was, however, boosted when the Minister of Justice authorised the Worcester magistrate to ban meetings over the next weekend in Rawsonville, Barrydale and Bonnievale. (115)

The ANC, on the other hand, was determined to return to Barrydale and Rawsonville in force, while meetings were also planned for Montagu, Robertson, Swellendam and Worcester. (116) But the pressure of the farmers and the consequent escalation in violence were beginning to tell on the alliance between the militants and moderates. (117) Apparently on his own initiative, James Thaele had assured

the Worcester District Commandant that no further meetings would be held and that

he had instructed all natives and branch secretaries, as well as his brother, Kennon, that the meetings {planned for the weekend - WH} were to be stopped at any costs, as they did not want trouble.
(118)

The militants, and even Kennon Thaele, were not at all happy about this action, arguing that such a decision should be made by the full "cabinet" (executive) of the ANC(WP), comprising the Thaeles, Ndobe, Tonjeni and Jacobus Darries from Bonnievale. (119) They were determined to carry on as planned.

There were also divisions about whether the ANC should try to organise in Rawsonville again. Tonjeni and Kennon Thaele were determined that a branch should be opened, but it was reported that many people, presumably led by the moderates, were against further attempts. (120)

The divisions in the leadership, combined with the bans on the meetings and the mass intimidation, took their toll. No meetings took place, except in Worcester where Tonjeni and Kennon Thaele held the usual meeting in defiance of both James Thaele and the fact that

{m}ounted police, armed with revolvers, patrolled the Worcester streets. (121)

Armed police and civilians were, in fact, much in evidence everywhere. Many farmers were declaring that no meetings of the ANC would be allowed, and were "openly threatening to kill native agitators". Barrydale farmers even managed to find a new method of intimidation - a "shooting competition" was hastily arranged and 200 heavily armed farmers came to the town to take part. They defied a call by the police to

disperse and eventually a compromise was reached whereby the farmers were allowed to watch and take action if the police did not do so!

The bourgeois press immediately seized on the lack of meetings and proclaimed that the end of the ANC was at hand. (122) In fact the ANC was never seriously weakened by the direct repression and intimidation of farmers. It might even have served to strengthen the organisation, giving it a greater sense of cohesion and a clear, identifiable enemy to tackle. Certainly its defiance of farmers and the personal bravery of its leaders merely enhanced its prestige.

VIII THE STATE INTERVENES

The farmers were also weakened by the fact that the state had maintained a relatively neutral stance in the struggle up to that stage. The police were mostly concerned with keeping the peace when things became violent. They often ignored appeals from farmers to act against ANC members, stating that it was perfectly legal and even desirable for them to state their views and grievances openly. Thus even after the fighting in Robertson, the Worcester police decided not to request a ban on all meetings - they wanted rather to attend meetings to find out what the grievances were. (123) It was only when physical violence broke out, that the police fought on the side of the farmers and showed where their sympathies lay by prosecuting only ANC members.

The Worcester magistrate banned a meeting for the first time as late as March 1930, and even then banned both black and white meetings as he was concerned not to give the impression that he was taking sides in the struggle between the farmers and the ANC, and

to show the natives that no
discrimination is being made between
white and black.

Even the Minister of Justice, the notorious Oswald Pirow, did not grant permission for bannings lightly and wanted confirmation that it was really necessary. (124) It is not quite clear why the state took this attitude. At this stage one can only suggest some possibilities.

In the first place one can point to a dislocation between the upper and middle ranks of the state apparatus. With the change in hegemony in the state in the 1920's, the National Party had taken control of the upper levels of the state administration. It was not possible, however, to transform the whole state apparatus within a few years, and many lower level officials were still imbued with the ideology of previous hegemonic class, viz imperialist capital. In this ideology, the legitimation function of the state (125) was still extremely important, especially as the struggle in the rural areas did not pose an immediate threat to their interests.

Beinart has also pointed out the specificity of the local state in the Cape in contrast to the rest of the country: he argues that in the Cape one can talk of a tradition of a 'listening state'. Local representatives of the state, and especially magistrates, played a crucial role in keeping the central state in touch with the mood and demands of the rural popular classes and in shaping the responses to any attempt at popular organisation. (126) In general this is how the Worcester magistrate saw his role and even the police tended to share this conception.

This ideology was strongly supported and reinforced by the capitalist press which attacked "irresponsible actions" by white civilians and urged the state to remain neutral. (127) This attitude would change later as the rural struggle became increasingly violent.

In the second place, the farmers were initially confident of their ability to repress the organisation on their own, and did not exert very great pressure on the state to intervene

on their behalf.

This situation began to change as the rural struggle escalated when the ANC attempted to resist the intimidation. As showed above, during the weekend of 15 and 16 March three meetings were banned and the police patrolled many towns to "keep the peace". The farmers were also beginning to realise that despite all their use of force and intimidation, they could not defeat the organisation on their own. The ANC went from strength to strength despite the weight of repression.

However, the farmers were also a powerful section of the ruling class, and they were able to exert great pressure on the state to intervene on their behalf. As early as September 1929 the political representatives of the farmers had pushed through a motion at the Cape Congress of the National Party urging the state to take stricter steps against the ANC. (128) This pressure was one of the main factors in the introduction of the amended Riotous Assemblies Bill at the beginning of 1930. (129)

At the same time the relative neutrality of the middle levels of the state apparatus also began to change gradually under the pressure both from the farmers and the increased hostility of the ANC(WP). As late as the beginning of 1930 the police at Carnarvon had been able to report that they were

pleased to say that the Public generally
- Europeans, Natives and Coloured have
the greatest confidence in the Police,
who therefore have every reason to be
optimistic about matters in general.
(130)

From the side of the ANC(WP) itself there was at least a tacit recognition that the police were relatively neutral. While the farmers were frequently abused at meetings,

similar attacks on the police were much less common in that period. Even when the police were criticised, it was mostly for their role in prosecuting ANC members with greater vigour than white offenders. (131) There were even cases where organisers reported their presence to the police when they arrived in a town. (132)

The attitude of the ANC(WP) began to change as the police became more directly involved in repression and by the end of 1930 the police were regularly referred to as "Pirow's dogs". The events that precipitated this dramatic worsening of relations were connected especially with discontent at the role of the police in the enforcement of unpopular laws.

The most unpopular of these laws were the various liquor laws prohibiting home brewing of beer and the consumption of hard liquor by Africans. This resulted in widespread illegal brewing of beer and illegal sales of hard liquor. These laws were the source of much discontent and had already resulted in a widespread boycott of municipal beer halls in Durban in 1929. (133). Regular liquor raids were needed to enforce these laws, especially in the Western Province where the entrenched tot system had resulted in widespread alcoholism. The farmers were prepared to go to great lengths to maintain their monopoly over the supply of liquor. (134)

On the whole the ANC(WP) had a rather ambiguous policy on liquor. Many of the leaders like Tonjeni were teetotallers and they condemned "intemperance and loose living" on the part of Congress officials. (135) At almost every meeting they agitated for the abolition of the tot system and condemned the evils of alcohol. The demand for the abolition of the tot system gave rise to a rather ironic situation with some farmers arguing that the African and Coloured people would never co-operate since the Africans were against the tot system! (136) On the other hand the ANC recognised that prohibition was not feasible and they regarded the traditional home brewed beer as preferable to

other forms of liquor. Thus the ANC always condemned liquor raids as yet another form of oppression.

One such raid was to precipitate the more direct involvement of the state in repression. On Saturday 5 April the police conducted a routine early morning raid in the Parker Street "location" in Worcester. The four unarmed policemen and 2 civilians expected to find the location asleep. But an ANC tea party had just ended and the "location was still astir". (137) The raiders soon met with resistance

and in a few minutes the narrow street was crowded with a belligerent crowd of natives and coloureds. A fight started and bottles, knobkieries and sticks were freely used by the mob. (138)

Apparently the sergeant had sent the other 2 policemen ahead with 3 prisoners. He and the civilians were trying to retrieve their bicycles from the yard of a certain James Bob, when the crowd attacked them. Bob was later found guilty of leading the attack. (139) They narrowly escaped after one of the civilians had fired a dozen shots at the crowd. The sergeant suffered 3 deep cuts in the head and several bruises, while 2 Africans were seriously injured. One of them, Johnson Jidi, an ex-ANC member, died 2 weeks later. The shots angered the crowd even more,

and only the intervention of Elliot Tonjeni ... prevented a strong body of natives there and then from swarming into the European quarters to 'avenge the corpses of our compatriots'. (140)

The next morning in the location

the street was {still} crowded with natives and coloured people carrying

sticks and knobkieries. They were in a truculent mood.

But the crowd was fairly quiet when Tonjeni was present as he appeared

to have absolute authority over the location residents.

Tonjeni alleged that one of the civilians returned after the fighting and tried to kill him and some other people. The man was in fact later convicted of firing at Tonjeni and discharging his rifle in a public place. The magistrate praised him for his public spiritedness and he received a token fine of 5s, perhaps as Tonjeni commented later, not for shooting at him, but for missing! (141)

In the aftermath of the fighting, the level of militancy in the location was increased even further. When Captain Barter with eight well-armed policemen came to collect the mangled bicycles, they were greeted with "shouts of abuse instead of the usual silence".

In the aftermath of the raid, the police were actually forced to announce that they would not be entering the location for fear of provoking the inhabitants. The whole affair gave the police a sense of insecurity as it seemed that

no police constable dare to enter this locality during the weekend debauch, without running a great risk of attack and subsequent trouble (142)

and it seems that it was at this stage that the state and especially the police started to press for firmer action against the ANC(WP).

IX 'ALL QUIET ON THE WORCESTER FRONT'

After the liquor raid and the subsequent fighting, the situation in Worcester was extremely tense. Although whites were reported to be "not uneasy", a new record number of permits for fire-arms and ammunition was issued by the Worcester magistrate each week. Special police detachments were stationed in Worcester, Rawsonville and Barrydale, while special telephone lines were arranged for the use of the police. In fact, Umsebenzi could say with some justification that the Boland was being turned into an "armed camp". (143)

The ANC on the other hand, continued to organise in new areas. Tonjeni was invited by 40 people in Ladismith to form a new branch there. He was also active in the Barrydale area where he claimed 30 new members, while he was

said to have secured the support of practically all the men {sic} of Zuurbraak, a coloured village 15 miles away. (144)

The militants were also anxious to return to Rawsonville and Barrydale in force and they planned to use the long weekend over Easter, 18-21 April, for this purpose. Once again deep divisions emerged within the ANC over this issue. James Thaele opposed the holding of meetings at Rawsonville and Barrydale, as this would probably lead to a confrontation with the farmers. He wanted to consult with Pirow before any hasty decisions were made. A lengthy meeting attended by branches from "Simonstown to Swellendam" was held at Worcester on Thursday night, 17 April, but it was unable to resolve the issue and another meeting was scheduled for the next night. The position of the militants was, however, weakened by the absence of Tonjeni and Ndobe who were the official delegates of the ANC(WP) at the ANC national conference in Bloemfontein. (145)

Although Thaele's "influence" was reported to be "waning", he managed to force a compromise that a meeting would be held at Barrydale only. However, it turned out that the hire of lorries would be prohibitively expensive and the plan was dropped. Eventually it was decided to walk the approximately 15 km to Rawsonville to hold a meeting there, but this idea was also abandoned as it was already too late. (146) It is not clear why an earlier plan to make use of the cheaper excursion fares on the Railways was not followed up.

These divisions also affected meetings in the other centres and in Worcester it was reported that the meetings were poorly attended. Again the press hopefully proclaimed the end of the ANC under headlines like "All quiet on the Worcester front", a reference to the popular film at the time, "All Quiet on the Western Front", based on the remarkable book by E. Remarque. The military analogy illustrates the level of bitterness which both sides were waging the rural struggle at the time.

But this "collapse" of the ANC was no more than wishful thinking on the part of the bourgeois press. As soon as Tonjeni and Ndobe returned from Bloemfontein, the ANC resolved to show its strength.

The local, mainly coloured, petty bourgeoisie had sought to capitalise on the defeat of the ANC by arranging a public meeting at which the Mayor and other prominent white citizens would address the coloured community on the need for co-operation and "for a better understanding". (147) The meeting was held in the Town Hall under the chairmanship of one of the organisers. (148)

Contrary to rumours that it would boycott the meeting, the ANC decided to turn it into a show of strength and turned up with hundreds of supporters. As the meeting commenced, Tonjeni demanded that English and Xhosa interpreters be provided. The mayor declared that the meeting was only for

coloured people, but this caused an uproar amongst the 500 strong audience and a Xhosa interpreter was eventually provided. The mayor was, however, forced to stop his speech when he was "howled down", and a similar fate befell his deputy when he refused to answer "political" questions put by Tonjeni. After a few more speeches had been disrupted or stopped by the crowd, Tonjeni and Ndobe rose and "harangued" the crowd for 15 minutes.

When ordered to stop, they declared their intention of not trying to pacify the crowd and left the meeting. Mounted on the benches, the crowd sang the Congress' anthem and shook knobkieries threateningly and derisively at Europeans on the platform. (149)

The platform speakers were warned to leave by the police and were smuggled out through the back door, while the chairman spent the night at the police station for fear of being attacked. The crowd then marched back to the location, singing the Congress anthem and allegedly assaulting a group of white youths.

The next day was 1 May and the ANC had arranged a meeting for the evening to celebrate May Day and protest against the Riotous Assemblies Act. Samuel Hendricks had applied for permission for the ANC to hold the meeting in Parker Street and to stage a protest march. (150) The latter request was refused, but when the meeting started in a heavy drizzle at half past six, there were apparently no police present to enforce the ban. (151) Despite the ban and the rain, the ANC was determined to march:

'We will march through the streets' said one {speaker - WH} 'and if anybody interferes with us, we will kill him. Rather let us die under the Congress

banner than in the slavery of the Europeans'. (152)

As the crowd marched through Parker Street, it quickly grew from about 100 to about 400 people. Apparently a certain Mr Lange angered the crowd when he attempted to drive through the procession. He and the other two occupants narrowly escaped after the crowd attacked the car. The crowd then briefly went on the rampage, breaking the windows of several shops and houses, before dispersing of its own accord at about eight o'clock. (153)

These events further increased the determination of the police to take tougher action. The next day, on Friday 2 May, a senior police officer, Major Thomas, was sent from Cape Town to investigate the position. It was clear that he had instructions to enforce a tougher policy against the ANC(WP) - for example in his evidence at the subsequent inquest into the fighting that erupted on May 4:

The Magistrate: Why was it so necessary {to arrest an African who had taken a leading part in an attack on the police - WH} - Because Worcester had been a storm centre. Many disturbances had arisen and there was a dangerous spirit in the location. This man with his companion had constantly flouted the authority of the police and it was necessary to assert this authority. We had taken every measure to conciliate them without avail. It was necessary to show them that we were not afraid to enter the location to arrest people on a serious charge ... If the 15 men and the District Commandant cannot in broad daylight go into the location to make an arrest there is a pretty bad state of affairs. (154)

When Thomas attended an ANC meeting on Sunday morning, he was clearly determined to find an opportunity to reassert the authority of the police. He found the opportunity soon enough, when it was reported to him that a certain "chief" Manzini had earlier paraded on the outskirts of the meeting with a rifle. (155) It emerged later that Manzini had earlier been a member of the CID for some years, leading to allegations that the police had in fact set up the whole incident. The truth will probably never be known, but Manzini was subsequently released without being charged, so that at least in one sense, it was a deliberate provocation. (156)

Thomas ordered Manzini's arrest, but he was obviously aware of the provocative nature of this act, and proceeded carefully. The police enticed Manzini (who no longer had the rifle) away from the crowd of about 300, then bundled him into a car and took him to the police station, while Thomas and one policeman remained behind. But the crowd had noticed the capture of Manzini and became angry.

No sooner had the motor car disappeared than the crowd rushed the police officers who were compelled to make a dash for safety and seek shelter in cottages on Grey Street. (157)

Although they were armed with one revolver, even Thomas acknowledged that their lives were probably saved by Plaatjes and three of the ANC "bodyguard" (Hendrik and David Aspeling and Norman) who came to their aid and enabled them to seek shelter in a cottage. They were eventually rescued under a hail of stones by the returning police car.

The police now decided to take firm action. All 18 policemen in Worcester were gathered and issued with rifles and bayonets. Barter ordered that

each man was to take deliberate aim at a

man attacking the police and to fire to hit him. (158)

There was to be no warning shots, or shooting over the heads, as it might "injure innocents"! The police then fixed bayonets and marched down Parker Street towards the crowd which had grown to about 500, (159) with the intention of arresting Abel Simpi who had been in the forefront of the previous attack. Apparently he was a habitual criminal who had been out of jail for less than five years since 1906, and was a new arrival in Worcester. He subsequently became something of a folk hero in the Boland, hiding from the police and supported by farm workers for more than 10 weeks despite a massive manhunt. His presence was eventually betrayed by a young child in return for some sweets. (160)

The crowd was obviously in an angry mood and was shouting "Kom aan! Die pad is oop". (161) Then

Constable Walters, who had been injured in the fight following the police raid, and another constable went forward to arrest a native {Simpi - WH} They handcuffed him and Walters was stabbed just below the ribs. His assailant fell a second later with a bullet in his body. A volley was fired at the crowd, which was composed of men and women ... The crowd rushed the police, who poured a steady volley at them. Here one fell, there another, some kicking and screaming, others lying very still. Captain Barter, who was in the front of his men, was felled to the ground and a native flayed one side of his face from ear to ear with an axe. The native was shot ... A native woman hit Captain Barter across the throat, but the police surrounded their chief, and drove the

crowd back with bayonets. Stones were raining on them, but they assisted Captain Barter to his feet and half carrying him and Walters, they slowly retreated. (162)

The crowd did not try to follow the police. The affair had started at about five and was over within 10 minutes. The firing had lasted only about two minutes and 32 rifle and 33 revolver shots had been fired at the crowd.

The injuries of the wounded were terrible - arms had been shattered, legs fractured and heads partially shot away. (163)

Five people, all except one ANC members, were killed, 16 seriously injured and many slightly injured. Another person died some weeks later. (164)

Afterwards the whole of Worcester was in uproar and repression reached unprecedented levels. The state was mobilising all its resources. Police reinforcements were secretly rushed in from Cape Town, Paarl and other areas and by midnight there were over 90 policemen in Worcester. A hundred armed civilians, members of the Defence Rifle Association were also on standby.

Hundreds of white civilians also gathered at the police station during the night and demanded that further action be taken. But they were also quite prepared to take the law into their own hands. Umsebenzi reported that:

a mob of armed white hooligans took charge of the town. They assaulted a number of Native and Coloured people but their main object seems to have been to lay their hands on Ndobe and Tonjeni. (165)

Later that night one of the police drivers who had rushed police reinforcements to Worcester returned to the police station. He reported that he had been "stormed" by a group of Africans when he stopped at a culvert outside Worcester, but had managed to escape. A group of 50 white civilians then commandeered this lorry and charged the culvert, where stones were thrown at them, but they were unable to find their assailants. Eventually they came upon an African man and woman with a motor-cycle and proceeded to beat up the man until the police came to his rescue.

Early the next morning, the first of a series of "shows of strength" took place, when 50 armed police and a tear gas bomber accompanied by a mass of armed civilians, raided Parker Street in search of the "ringleaders" whom they wanted to capture "at all costs." (166)

It is a tribute to the strength of the ANC organisation in Worcester that Ndohe and Tonjeni were able to hide for the next four days while

citizens, white detectives and coloured
'trap boys' prowled about trying to
establish their whereabouts. (167)

Eventually they were smuggled out of Worcester by 2 Cape Town communists, Eddie Roux and Johnny Gomas in the boot of a borrowed car. (168) In fact, they were remarkably lucky to escape with their lives as threats to lynch them abounded and they were unable to venture into Worcester for several weeks afterwards. They and Plaatjes had been at the ANC hall at the time of the fighting, which was fortunate for them as they were well known to the police who had explicit instructions to shoot at the so-called "ringleaders".
(169)

In the following weeks the massive onslaught on the ANC continued at all levels. The police held daily parades in Parker Street to encourage those "intimidated by ANC

members", and also made the first ever daylight liquor raid carried out by 36 armed police and a teargas bomber. (170) The Railways at Worcester were reported to be dismissing all ANC members but they later denied this. The farmers intensified their searches of their labourers to try and identify ANC members, but as pointed out earlier, only one Farmers' Association was reported to have instituted an official blacklist. (171) Even the nurses at the Worcester hospital became involved in the struggle. The Matron said that

she and her staff were determined not to look after non-Europeans wounded in the fight, and were even prepared to resign their positions if ordered to do so.
(172)

Initially the weight of the repression had some effect. During the first police raid it was reported that Parker Street was very quiet and that nobody was wearing ANC badges, armbands or hatbands. But within a week the ANC was again able to hold a meeting in Worcester in spite of the repression and intimidation. Although the meeting started with a mere 10 people, the crowd increased rapidly, only to dwindle again when 26 police armed with rifles and fixed bayonets paraded around the meeting. Kennon Thaele continued with the meeting, however, and after half an hour, the police left. Although there were still many armed civilians about, the crowd increased again to over 200 people, many sporting ANC badges. The determination of the ANC to continue the struggle was expressed by Peter Vumazonke:

If you want to get your rights, you must be prepared to wash your hands in blood instead of water. (173)

Tonjeni, addressing a big protest meeting on the Parade also made it clear that the ANC would not be deterred by

repression. He

urged his audience to cultivate in itself the realisation that no subject race in the world has been freed from bondage without bloodshed.

He said that they would all die anyway and should not grieve for the Worcester dead who gave their lives for liberty.

(174)

The next week the ANC again held a meeting at Worcester. This time the people were not cowed by the presence of 20 armed police and soon there were well over 200 people present. (175) The Worcester Standard and Advertiser even suggested that it was the biggest ANC meeting to date, (176) but this seems doubtful. The speakers were mainly concerned with the findings of the inquest which had absolved the police of all blame, and they demanded another inquest.

The symbolic importance of these meetings can be gauged from the fact that when there was no meeting the next weekend, probably because of the absence of the ANC leaders, the Cape Times again suggested that the ANC was "waning", except perhaps amongst the women, who were the "most loyal supporters". In fact James Thaele held a meeting in Robertson while Tonjeni and Ndobe - still afraid to return to Worcester - spoke at a protest against the Riotous Assemblies Bill in Ndabeni. (177)

Thereafter the ANC continued to organise and despite the continued presence of armed police and civilians and the press reported that "record crowds" were flocking to ANC meetings. (178)

X NEW FORMS OF REPRESSION: THE RIOTOUS ASSEMBLIES ACT

However, there were two developments that would lead to a serious decline in the fortunes of the ANC(WP) in the

Boland. Firstly, the state and the farmers began to realise that sheer repression and violence would not crush the ANC(WP), and that it was necessary to try a new strategy. Secondly, there was the increasing breakdown in the alliance between the moderates and the militants.

As discussed above, the Cape Congress of the National Party had already advocated sterner measures against the ANC in 1929. This pressure, combined with those of the Natal farmers who were worried about the ICU, led to the amendment of the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1913 during the course of 1930. (179)

The amendment made provision for more subtle methods of repression to be used against popular organisations - instead of trying to crush them directly, the state could now prevent them from holding meetings or could bar their leaders from certain areas.

From the introduction of the Bill, the ANC campaigned actively against it. It was raised at virtually all meetings and numerous resolutions were passed condemning the Bill. This was part of a campaign encompassing the whole of the left - from the Labour Party to the CP, but unlike most of the other organisations, the ANC(WP) intended to take militant action to prevent the implementation of the Act. Tonjeni told the Cape Times that

{a}t the present time and for some months past our organisation has been accumulating funds for a general strike of non-Europeans. Our resistance, however, will be purely passive. We are strong enough to disorganise the country without resorting to force, and an industrial and agricultural strike will be our protest against the proposed blow at the freedom of speech. (180)

The ANC(WP) delegates also made this proposal at the national ANC conference in Bloemfontein in April, but it was overwhelmingly rejected. (181) This strike was apparently planned to start on Saturday 31 May, to coincide with the passing of the Act, but in the press there is little mention of any further planning for the strike except to say that it did not materialise. (182)

The ANC(WP) also pressed the the ANC to take part in the campaign and proposed a strike, but without success. In the Western Cape there were a number of protest meetings against the Act, followed by a big demonstration outside Parliament. (183)

It is to these "new" methods of repression provided by the Riotous Assemblies Act that the state turned in the struggle against the ANC(WP). As soon as the Act was passed in June 1930, the Minister of Justice banned all political meetings on Sundays in the Boland, i.e. in the magisterial districts of Worcester, Robertson, Montagu, Barrydale and Swellendam as from Sunday 22 June. (184) In view of the importance of Sunday meetings to the organisation, (185) it was essential that the ANC find an effective strategy to deal with these bans.

The ANC was clearly determined that the ban would be resisted in some way. Kennon Thaele declared that

We have been sent out to see that those meetings will be held. We have property in Worcester, and will hold our meetings. I want the authorities to put me in gaol, so that I can organise the non-Europeans there. (186)

The eventual strategy that they decided on was one of arranging a big show of strength, but no direct confrontation with the state. This was to be achieved by holding a meeting on the first day of the ban, 22 June at

the ANC hall. As this was private property, it was not affected by the ban on public meetings. The ANC had earlier purchased several properties in anticipation of a ban on public meetings. (187)

Meetings were held nearly every night that week in preparation for the Sunday meeting and it was reported that "enthusiasm was at a high pitch". The meeting proved to be the high point of the ANC organisation in Worcester. (188) Between 500 and 800 people attended the meeting, which spilled over into the street adjoining the hall. The opposition also came out in force. Despite repeated requests from the police and magistrate that no whites should attend, more than 500 whites, many of them armed, gathered on the fringes of the meeting and had to be constantly controlled by the many policemen present.

At about five o'clock, nearly three hours after the meeting started, the police moved in and arrested James Thaele who was the speaker at the time. Thaele agreed to leave quietly with the police, after first closing the meeting and appealing to the crowd to remain calm. He blamed his arrest on members of the ANC bodyguard which had permitted whites to enter the grounds and thus making the meeting a public one.

When he appeared in court the next day, there was a big crowd present. However, policemen surrounded the court and proceeded to arrest another three people who had spoken at the meeting - Kennon Thaele, Peter Vumazonke and Jacobus Oosthuizen, who had been chairperson. They were also charged with addressing an illegal gathering and bail was fixed at a prohibitive figure of £100 each. (189) With the arrest of Lester the next day (190) and Jacob Conscience a month later, it meant that virtually the entire Worcester leadership was in gaol or unable to return for fear of arrest. The gaoled people were only released a month later after the bail had been reduced to £25. Even then they were only released on condition that they did not address any

meetings at all for the duration of their trial, which eventually ended in mid-September, when they were acquitted. (191)

Initially the defiance of the Riotous Assemblies Act seemed to be successful, despite the arrest of the Worcester leadership. An enthusiastic meeting on Tuesday night, 24 July, resolved to continue with the daily meetings and to have the usual meeting the following Sunday. (192) In Cape Town a mass demonstration was planned the next Sunday to demand the release of the ANC leaders and to start a defence fund for them. (193) Arnoth Plaatjes wrote a defiant letter from Bonnievale supporting this idea and saying that

{n}o members or agitators of the African National Congress who come under the provisions of the Riotous Assemblies Act, will be bailed, and no fine will be paid to the Government, as we realise that the Government is trying to break down the work of our good organisation. This cannot be done anymore.

Furthermore, I, Plaatjes, notified the Government to be prepared for many expenses from now on in the line of food for non-Europeans, gaolers and agitators. The black man is prepared to go to gaol under this Bill {sic} introduced by Mr Pirow, Minister of Machine Guns. The black man's eyes are open. (194)

Although many historians argue that the bans did not hinder the ANC, (195) this optimism seems misplaced. The ANC found it virtually impossible to continue organising while the ban remained in force and it only attempted to hold another big meeting in Bonnievale at the end of August. (196) It is not clear whether newspaper reports referring to this as the first meeting after the one at Worcester at the end of June

refer only to Sunday meetings, or to all meetings. There are, at any rate, no reports of any other meetings, which probably indicates that no large meetings were held.

The meeting at Happy Valley in Bonnievale illustrates some of the problems that the ANC encountered at this time. Apparently Tonjeni, who was organising in the town at the time, announced at an ANC bazaar that he would hold a religious meeting the next Sunday at the local ANC hall. The reference to religion was probably no more than a ploy to get around the banning of meetings. When Tonjeni returned from the Eastern Cape at the end of July, he had apparently conceived of the idea of holding religious services: he told a meeting in Cape Town that he

dienste gaan lei en uit die Bybel gaan
hy sy politiek put. (197)

The incident does, however, demonstrate the extent of religious ideology at the time. Not only did Tonjeni deliver his entire speech as a sermon, but his translator, Moseleba, was the chairman of the local Dutch Reformed Mission Church and an ex-chairman of the local ANC. (198)

The police, however, were not fooled. Soon after the end of the meeting they moved in and arrested Tonjeni. Tonjeni thus became embroiled in yet another court case. He was released on £25 bail on condition that he did not address any meetings in the Boland.

Therefore one cannot argue that the ban on meetings had little effect on the ANC. Clearly the ban and subsequent enforced inactivity of most of the important leaders managed to bring to a virtual halt one of the most important ways in which the ANC(WP) organised. This led to a significant decline in the ANC activity and seriously weakened the organisation.

XI THE ALLIANCE BREAKS DOWN

The ANC(WP) never really recovered from these heavy blows. Their effects were aggravated by and in turn aggravated the divisions within the organisation. Some of the divisions within the leadership of the ANC(WP) have already been indicated above. It is now necessary to delve more deeply into these divisions.

To some extent the division corresponded to a growing division between militants and moderates/conservatives in the ANC as a whole. In January 1930 the whole national executive had resigned in protest against the "radical" policies of Gumede. (199) A special conference was held in Bloemfontein over Easter to elect a new executive at which the right wing won a total victory, some allege through the unscrupulous use of the chair. Even Die Vaderland reported that

The left wing is not being allowed to speak much and their propositions are nipped in the bud by the Speaker. (200)

The conservative Seme was elected as the new President of the ANC and he surrounded himself with a like-minded executive. The ANC then lapsed into total inactivity until it was revived at the time of the All African Convention in the mid-1930s. (201)

The ANC(WP) had been represented at the conference by Tonjeni and Ndobe, the most influential of the militants. On their return they launched a scathing attack on the proceedings at Bloemfontein in an open letter to the National Executive:

Complaints are made that Congress did not probe into any of the fundamental problems relating to the life of the natives, such as housing conditions,

adequate educational facilities, and the conditions of employment in the mines, in the factories and in domestic service. Moreover, the 'militant' delegation from the Western Province and others were stated to have been 'malignantly abused'.

Congress praised and pandered to the exploiters who are perpetrating crimes against us. Many bona fide delegates from such organisations as the Federation of non-European Trade Unions, the League of African Rights, and the Communist Party were deprived of their right to vote. The new Executive Committee represents only a small group of usurpers and pretenders and has no mass following. The cry of 'Moscow' and 'Moscow gold' was used as a camouflage in order to disguise the hand of London and the gold of the owners of the Rand mines.

Vital proposals such as the struggle for a South African native republic, were ignored. (202)

The defeat of the militants at the national level also increased the strength and confidence of the moderates in Cape Town. Thaele and other moderates were becoming increasingly anxious over the level of violence in the rural areas. They tried to avoid confrontation and seek some accommodation with the police. Thus even after the Worcester massacre, Thaele was unwilling to attack the police as it was "too early to put the blame on either side," (203) while later he put part of the blame on the militants. (204)

The moderates now felt strong enough to start harrassing the militants. Thaele repeatedly postponed the militants'

reportback from the ANC conference which, as far as can be gathered, never took place. This caused much dissatisfaction, especially when on 19 May a large crowd turned up at the ANC hall to hear the reportbacks, only to be told that they had been postponed again. A heated debate took place, but Thaele as chairman, was able to overrule all objections. (205) Nevertheless, a resolution pledging support for Gumede was accepted by over 200 votes to 3. (206)

The dispute came out in the open at the beginning of June when Thaele attempted to bar members of the CPSA from speaking on the ANC platform on the Parade. Umsebenzi reported that this attempt was rebuffed by the rank and file members who wanted to hear the CPSA speakers, especially Johnnie Gomas, Brown and J. Ngedlane. (207) In practice, however, the militants were increasingly excluded from the ANC platforms. While the CPSA was confident that

**Thaele will not be able to clear out the
Bolsheviks like Kadalie did (208)**

they underestimated his position of power in the Cape Town branch. Within two weeks he succeeded in barring CPSA members from official ANC platforms. (209) The Cape Times (210) reported that all CPSA members "and their supporters" had been expelled, but this seems improbable as there is no mention of expulsions in Umsebenzi and certainly no large scale expulsions took place.

After this relations deteriorated rapidly. Umsebenzi reported that Kennon Thaele has been sent to Worcester and other branches in the Boland to discourage them from buying Umsebenzi. (211) The two groups also held rival meetings on the Parade on Sunday 15 June at which over 1 000 people were present, but there is no indication as to the relative support of the two meetings. Thaele made it clear that he was not prepared to compromise - the ANC could not work with the CPSA

as the white man and Moscow were at the back of Communism whereas the Congress had no time for white men and was out to claim Africa for the Africans. (212)

The CPSA, in return, issued a pamphlet which attacked Thaele:

{O} ur good boy, Prof Thaele, continued to play the role of pacifist clamping down the fighting spirit of the people and working hand-in-hand with the police. He spreads the idea that Worcester non-Europeans were responsible for the trouble last month and that such butcherings by the police can be avoided by good boy leadership. He fails to draw attention to the fact that the police and the government by the policy of colour justice and incitement are guilty of the crime of May 4. (213)

The pamphlet also called for

civil disobedience in calling for a million Africans to refuse to pay the poll tax. (214)

In Thaele's reaction one can clearly see some of the contradictions in regards to the earlier motions adopted by the ANC(WP) which called for non-cooperation with whites. (215) Thaele denounced the pamphlet and denied that the ANC(WP) wanted civil disobedience. The pamphlet was the work of a "well-meaning member" who had been "used as a tool" by the CP. (216) But he did moderate his stand on the party and

said the African National Congress was opposed to the Communist Party as a

party, but upheld its principles ...
 'Our aim is a black South African
 republic, or, if possible, Africa for
 the negro race.'

Thus the ANC would not co-operate with any whites, including the CP. The dissident group consisting of Gomas, J Ngedlane, T N Faka, J Mphahlele, GJ Mayo and M Adam made it clear "that it is not our desire to cause a split". The rival meetings had only been held because Thaele had barred them and other "radical" members of the ANC(WP) from speaking from the official platform and they would stop their separate meetings as soon as they were allowed back on the ANC platform. (217)

At this stage events were overtaken by the arrests in Worcester. The organisation was again united in organising protest meetings and a defence fund and a "better spirit" prevailed in which communists were again allowed onto ANC platforms. There were still occasional attacks on the CPSA, but these were overruled by the

many members {who} are saying that at the present time when Congress is suffering violent police persecution it would be suicidal to continue domestic squabbles. (218)

Umsebenzi even expressed the hope that Thaele "has now been forced to play a revolutionary role". (219) This newfound unity was, however, shortlived. Almost as soon as the leaders were released from prison, the moderates resumed their offensive, especially Thaele who made several speeches "in which the usual incoherent attacks were made on the Communist Party". (220) As Roux pointed out,

Thaele's strength was on the Parade where the Congress held daily meetings. Ndobe and Tonjeni, away on organising

work in the country, could speak there only occasionally, whereas Thaele was always on the stump and had become well-known to audiences. The burden of his refrain was that the communists were the agents of the 'white man'. (221)

Thaele's influence in Cape Town, which still housed the official head office of the ANC(WP) was a great advantage. The most important militants, Tonjeni and Ndobe, felt too isolated to defend the communists forcefully, in Cape Town itself, although they continued to work closely with them. Umsebenzi commented that it had

warned the Cape radicals against allowing matters to slide.

Unfortunately our warning has not had the desired effect. The good boys have been ceaselessly at work trying to discredit Ndobe, Tonjeni, Gomas and other radicals, urging the more backward members not to read 'Umsebenzi'. (222)

It is probably true that Tonjeni and Ndobe had little stomach for the political infighting that was taking place in Cape Town. In the months following the beginning of the split in June, there is only one report of their presence in Cape Town, to attend a "banquet" in their honour in the City Hall. (223) The rest of the time they spent in the rural areas, trying to rally existing branches, and, even, to organise in new areas. Thus while on his way to stand trial in the Eastern Cape in June, Tonjeni spent a month in Graaff-Reinett laying the foundation for the IANC's later efforts to organise in the area. (224) Matters soon came to an open break again with rival meetings on the Parade and even an attempt by Thaele's followers to break up communist meetings. (225)

Throughout all these struggles, there were persistent

rumours that the moderates, especially Thaele, were working closely with the CID. (226) While there is no hard evidence to suggest that he was actually employed as an agent by the police, Thaele had talks with them on many occasions and often made statements in which their common interest in "preserving the peace" was stressed. (227) It is interesting to note though that Thaele should have been deported for his conviction in the Carnarvon case, but that he appealed successfully to the Minister of Native Affairs for its suspension by submitting

as a bona fide statement my past record for your consideration, Sir as well as my dealings with the local authorities for the last ten years, the Native Affairs Department, the Police Department and the CID. (228)

The local Deputy Commissioner of Police supported his application in terms which make it quite clear that

The presence of Thaele in Capetown undoubtedly has a restraining influence on the leaders of the African National Congress, and he has given assistance in dealing with native agitators, he is perfectly frank with members of my Suspect Branch. (229)

His less than proud record was further blemished by the fact that despite

his almost daily Parade harangues against the white men in general and communists in particular, the Professor yet found time to appear on the municipal election platform in support of a European, a Mr Bloomberg, and he had Bloomberg's election posters stuck

up in the windows of the Congress Hall.
(230)

Soon the moderates felt strong enough to move against Ndobe and Tonjeni themselves - again Thaele arranged the confrontation in such a way as to derive the maximum benefit from his control of the Cape Town branch, and therefore the central committee. He was able to convene "bogus" meetings, pack them with his own supporters and expel all members in Cape Town who disagreed with him. (231) Ndobe was summoned at short notice from Riversdale where he had been organising

to appear before the executive meeting
and answer to charges of Communist
tendency preferred against you. (232)

Predictably Ndobe refused to "attend such a 'bioscope'". Instead he left for Bonnievale to assist Tonjeni who had been organising there and had recently been arrested. The so-called executive meeting was held on 7 September and was little more than a farce as

{a}ll who were known to have radical
sympathies were either banned from
attending or, if they did attend (as in
the case of Leepile) were not allowed to
speak. (233)

Furthermore, only a few of the country branches, including Worcester, were able to attend the meeting, because of the short notice. At this meeting, which lasted for several hours, a motion was adopted suspending Ndobe for one year

owing to his constant advocacy of the
policy of the Communist Party, by the
spreading of Communist literature in
spite of repeated warnings and his
action in applying for a passport to
travel to Moscow without the knowledge

of the officials and rank and file of the Congress. (234)

In an apparent effort to consolidate their position, the moderates also pushed through the following resolution

Having noticed the spread of Bolshevistic tendencies among the non-Europeans in the Western Province, Congress is of the opinion that leaders and progagandists of Communist doctrine should not be allowed to address meetings organised by the Congress. Further that the sale of literature published by the Communists should be prohibited on premises owned by the Congress, and that copies of these resolutions be sent to all branches in the Western Province. (235)

Despite their success at the meeting though, it seemed that the moderates still did not feel strong enough to purge all the militants. In fact they felt it was necessary to attempt to divide the militants by appointing Tonjeni as Ndobe's replacement as provincial secretary.

The militants refused to accept the suspension. Ndobe argued that there was no provision for a temporary suspension or a suspension without a fair trial in the constitution. The only reason for his suspension was that

Thaele has the fear of his arrest at Carnarvon and Worcester before his eyes, it will be remembered that when he was arrested at Worcester, he told the police that his arrest was unfortunate and, as usual, he blamed his people. In order to win the sympathy of his 'boss' (Mr O. Pirow) James Thaele has gone as

far as to be a tool of the oppressor, and to assist by all available means to get rid of the radicals who are prepared to launch a militant struggle against the 'top dogs'.

'I am called upon by all the branches of the African National Congress to continue my activities, as there is no time for good boys'. (236)

Tonjeni similarly made it clear that he had no intention of taking over Ndobe's job. (237) Although there was much agitation in both Cape Town and the rural areas against the suspension, Thaele's control of the Cape Town branch made it virtually impossible to challenge the decision constitutionally. Many of the local ANC branches refused to enforce the ban on selling Umsebenzi. J.H. Fortuin, the secretary of the Montagu branch, wrote that

We do not want to be bluffed. We are prepared to support solidly the paper that is prepared to fight for the emancipation of the black race and starving masses. We who have to slave fourteen hours a day for eight pence on the farms are waking up. (238)

In the wake of the split, there was

a ding dong battle between the radicals and the reactionaries in half a dozen dorps in the Western Province. In some centres, where the radicals are in the majority on the local Congress committee, the paper is being sold at meetings. In other centres the Thaelites hold the reign of government and the sale of the paper is officially prohibited.

In these latter areas some individuals still tried to sell Umsebenzi. Sometimes the balance of power even changed from week to week, and Umsebenzi would be distributed one week, and not the next.

The growing disarray within the ANC(WP) was aggravated when the state implemented that next stage in its new strategy of legalistic repression. As mentioned above, the strategy of banning public meetings on Sundays had been extremely effective, though its effectiveness was threatened when the Supreme Court acquitted the Worcester accused and ruled that meetings on private ground were still legal. (239)

Although this ruling only affected those areas where the ANC(WP) owned some property, there was an outcry from the farmers around Worcester who were particularly unhappy about the verdict. (240) At least partly as a result of the farmers' demands for firmer action, the Minister of Justice decided to use his new powers under the Riotous Assemblies Act (241) to ban individual ANC leaders from entering the Boland.

Ironically, James Thaele was the first person to be banned, because of his prominent role in the Worcester trial. Within days of the acquittal of the Worcester leadership, Thaele was served with an order banning him from the Worcester and Swellendam magisterial districts. (242) Predictably this did little to harm the cause of the militants within the ANC(WP) and it was reported that the Worcester branch regarded it with "more amusement than consternation". (243)

Tonjeni had been trying to re-organise the Worcester branch in the wake of the banning of meetings, the arrests of the leadership and the demoralisation that accompanied the incipient split within the ANC(WP). He had already visited there at the end of July and again at the end of August. (244)

It seemed that the Worcester branch was still solidly behind the militants. Umsebenzi reported that Worcester had asked for an increased supply of the paper, and that when Thaele attempted to hold a meeting at the beginning of October he faced a "hell of an opposition" and his "long jawbreakers cut no ice with the Worcester workers". (245) It is not clear whether it was James Thaele who had already been banned from entering the area, or his brother, Kennon.

When Tonjeni arrived back in Worcester in the middle of October (246) it looked as though this might herald a revival of the ANC there, but the state acted swiftly to stamp out this threat. On 14 October, 17 people were arrested on charges of public violence in connection with the fighting in May. (247) During the course of the next week 15 more people were arrested, including at least 6 from the surrounding farms. Although the majority of them were eventually acquitted, 6 men and 4 women were given sentences ranging from 1 to 6 months with hard labour. (248) It was also reported that the police arrested everybody who abused them, and that this had had a "salutary effect". (249)

A week after the first arrests an even heavier blow was struck against the militants within the ANC(WP) when Tonjeni and Ndobe were both banned for six months from most of the Boland areas, viz the magisterial districts of Robertson, Wellington, Montagu and Swellendam. (250)

XII CONCLUSION : SOME WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

This conclusion will only be a brief assessment of some of the organisational weaknesses and strengths of the ANC in the Western Cape. A more detailed assessment of the nature and importance of the organisation is made in the final chapter.

The removal of the top leaders and the banning of meetings were heavy blows to the organisation of the Boland, blows

from which it never recovered fully. For the first time the ANC was not able to come up with an effective strategy to counter the state. Why did this happen?

It is not easy to give a definitive answer and one can only suggest some reasons here. One of the main weaknesses in the organisation was an over-reliance on leaders and public meetings. Little attention was devoted to grassroots organisation. Thus the organisation lost direction when the leaders were removed, as there did not seem to be enough people to carry on their work. This problem was aggravated by the fact that no new methods were found to mobilise people effectively once it became more difficult to hold meetings openly.

Although the lack of grassroots organisation was a serious problem, one should not be overcritical of the ANC(WP) for its failure to cope with it. Almost the whole of the national struggle in South Africa up to the 1950s and 1960s was characterised by this weakness, and it has only been partially overcome today.

Another weakness was that the fragile alliance between the militants and moderates in the ANC(WP) came under increasing strain as the level of violence escalated. It reached breaking point when many leaders (including moderates) were first arrested, and then banned. The hand of the moderates was strengthened by the rightward swing of the ANC at a national level in 1930 and especially by their control over the Cape Town branch, which still housed the head office. Thus when the moderates decided to move against the militants, they were able to pack meetings called at short notice, and successfully expel the militants. Thereafter much energy was devoted to infighting between the two groups at the expense of expanding the organisation.

In conclusion, though, it is necessary to re-emphasise the very real advances that were made in popular organisation at the time. Unlike the ANC at a national level, the ANC(WP)

also allowed women to join the organisation and managed to involve them to the extent where the Cape Times reported that women were "the most loyal supporters" of the ANC. (251) Unfortunately there is frustratingly little information on the subject, but as far as can be ascertained, no women were ever elected to any positions higher than the less important posts on local executives. Thus there were certainly limits on the involvement of women.

One of the great strengths of the organisation in the Western Cape was that it organised both African and coloured people. In fact the great majority of the ANC members in the Western Cape were coloured people and the ANC successfully resisted all attempts by the farmers and the state to divide people along racial lines. Both the farmers and the state were very aware of the importance of this unity and one of the measures proposed to deal with it in Worcester was

to proclaim a Native Location ... which would keep these natives under proper control and segregate them from the Coloured ... population entirely. If the natives refused to live there, they could at once be repatriated. It would also, to some extent, remove them from the influence of the African National Congress agitators and the present combination of natives and low coloured, against law and order would be broken up. (252)

NOTES

1. Walshe 1970, p166. See also Cape Times 21.4.1930.
2. Roux 1978, p236; Karis and Carter 1973, p154-5.
3. Simons and Simons 1969, p307; Wickens 1977, p66 et seq.
4. Vincent 1976, p177.
5. Vincent 1976, p26-7; Walshe 1970, p166
6. Vincent 1976, p24-8
7. Umsebenzi 31.6.1929. See also eg Thaele's comments on the 1928 ANC conference (Cape Times 10.4.1928).
8. Vincent 1976, p 26-7.
9. Simons and Simons 1969, p388.
10. Simons and Simons 1969, p388, 395; Roux 1978, p 201-2; Johns 1965, p323.
11. Johns 1965, p311-23.
12. Roux 1978, p66-7.
13. Johns 1965, p393, 515.
14. Simons and Simons 1969, p390-5; Legassick 1973, p11 ff.
15. See for example Bunting 1928, Budlender 1976, Bunting 1975, Legassick 1973.
16. Umsebenzi 4.7.1930.
17. For details of Thaele's activities in the Herschel district, NTS 7603 25/328, Sworn statement by J.S.M Thaele, 4.3.1931.
18. Roux 1978, p238-9.
19. South African Worker 31.12.1929
20. Simons and Simons 1969, p402
21. NTS 7603 42/331, Decompol, Western Cape to Compol,

- 19.12.1927. Tonjeni later alleged that it was Bleeker's girlfriend and that he was jealous. JUS 582 311/31, Report to the Distcompol, Middelburg, 14.2.1931.
22. Paarl Post 24.12.1927.
 23. South African Worker quoted in Roux 1978, p204.
 24. Paarl Post 7.1.1928.
 25. Roux 1978, p233.
 26. Walshe 1970, p 225.
 27. Paarl Post 24.12.1927.
 28. Paarl Post 24.12.1927. A Mr Baskin who was later replaced by Barnett.
 29. Paarl Post 31.12.1927.
 30. Paarl Post 11.2.1928. The total African population of Paarl was about 400 to 700 people.
 31. Paarl Post 7.1.1928.
 32. Paarl Post 21.1.1928.
 33. See for example NTS 7603 42/331, Decompol, Western Cape to Compol, 19.12.1927.
 34. Clause 29(1), Act 38 of 1927.
 35. Cape Times 10.4.1929, Roux 1978, p 204. They were sentenced to 3 months imprisonment without the option of a fine.
 36. JUS 558 1655/30, Magistrate, Worcester to MJ, 20.5.1930.
 37. NTS 7666 52/332, Magistrate, Worcester to SJ, 15.5.1930.
 38. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 6.7.1929; Cape Times 3.7.1929; NTS 7603 24/328, Assistant Native Commissioner, Cape Town to Secretary of Native Affairs, 15.9.1938 - Annexure (a). Findings of the {ANC} Board of Arbitrators.
 39. See NTS 7603 25/328, Sworn statement by J.S.M Thaele.

40. Vincent 1976, p166.
41. Cape Times 24.5.1929.
42. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 6.7.1929.
43. Roux 1978, p233.
44. JUS 558 1665/30, Report from Magistrate, Worcester to MJ, 20.5.1930.
45. Argus 23.6.1930.
46. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 15.3.1931.
47. See for example Umsebenzi 26.9.1930; Roux 1978, p232; Bunting 1928; Bunting 1975.
48. See for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.5.1930; Cape Times 26.4.1930; Cape Times 26.5.1930; Simons and Simons 1969, p431; JUS 584 3342/31, Distcompol, Calvinia to Decompol, Cape Town, 3.2.1932.
49. JUS 558 1451/30, Magistrate, Worcester to SJ, 18.3.1930.
50. See for example Cape Times 17.3.1930; for the ICU see Bradford 1980, 1983a, 1984a.
51. See for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 1.2.1930.
52. Agricultural Census 8, 1925 and 11, 1928.
53. Marais 1937, p269. Bothman 1984, p45 et seq.
54. O'Meara 1983, p31.
55. See eg Davies et al 1976; Davies 1979, Kaplan 1977b.
56. NTS 7666 51/332, Report to Distcompol, Worcester, 10.3.1930. See also Cape Times 24.5.1929.
57. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 29.6.1929. Also see Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.8.1929.
58. Cape Times 1.4.1930.
59. Cape Times 8.5.1930. This latter report was later officially denied. See also Cape Times 1.4.1930; Cape Times 15.4.1930.

60. See for example the case of Rawsonville below and Cape Times 18.4.1930.
61. Cape Times 19.3.1930. See Bothman 1984 for an analysis of the importance of housing on the farms as a form of control over labour.
62. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 29.3.1930.
63. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 19.4.1929.
64. Cape Times 24.5.1929.
65. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 19.4.1929.
66. Cape Times 21.5.1929. Unfortunately the details of their deliberations are not available as I had to rely on the Cape Times for this period. The S.A. Public Library does not have copies of the Worcester Standard and Advertiser for the 2 months from 22.4.1929.
67. Cape Times 24.5.1929.
68. See Cape Times 24.5.1929 for details.
69. Cape Times 3.7.1929.
70. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 12.10.1929.
71. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 12.4.1930.
72. See Worcester Standard and Advertiser 12.10.1929 for details.
73. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 12.10.1929.
74. See for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 12.10.1929, 28.6.1930, 20.9.1930.
75. Vincent 1976, p18.
76. The discourse of the militants in the Midlands was much more anti-religious. See Chapter 6.
77. Wilson 1971, p118.
78. Marais 1939, p283; Roux 1978, p356, Davenport 1980, p196.
79. Marais 1939, p264-6.

80. Davenport 1980, p209.
81. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.8.1929.
82. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 29.6.1929.
83. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.8.1929.
84. Bothman 1984, p54-5.
85. For details see JUS 550 159/30, esp Magistrate Carnarvon to SJ, 14.1.1930; SJ to Secretary for Lands, 20.2.1930 and Distcompol, Beaufort West to Decompol, Cape Town, 2.4.1930.
86. Act 17 of 1926.
87. Cape Times 14.1.1930.
88. See NTS 7603 25/328, Court Record, p31ff for details.
89. JUS 550 159/30, Report by Police, Carnarvon, 14.1.1930. Unless otherwise indicated, the information below comes from this source.
90. JUS 550 159/30, Sworn statement by CJ van Zyl, 14.2.1930. See also Cape Times 14.1.1930 for details of the meeting.
91. Cape Times 14.1.1930.
92. JUS 550 159/30, Report by Police, Carnarvon, 14.1.1930.
93. JUS 550 159/30, Magistrate, Carnarvon to SJ, 14.1.1930.
94. JUS 550 159/30, Distcompol, Beaufort West to Decompol, Cape Town, 20.1.1931.
95. Cape Times 23.1.1930.
96. Cape Times 23.1.1930, 20.2.1930, 26.3.1930, 16.9.1930, 29.9.1930.
97. Cape Times 19.9.1930, 20.9.1930.
98. Section 29(1) of Act 38 of 1927.
99. Oudtshoorn Courant 17.9.1930; NTS 7603 25/328, Rex v James Thaele, Evidence.

100. JUS 550 159/30, see eg Distcompol, Beaufort West to Decompol, Cape Town, 6.5.1930; Town Clerk, Carnarvon to MJ, 18.12.1930 and in JUS 581 3101/31, Report to Distcompol Beaufort West 6.3.1931.
101. JUS 550 159/30, Magistrate, Carnarvon to Secretary for Lands 31.1.1930. See also GB van Zyl to SL 5.2.1930, Distcompol, Beaufort West to Decompol, Cape Town 4.6.1930, and references cited in previous footnote.
102. Cape Times 14.1.1930.
103. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 1.2.1930.
104. Cape Times 11.3.1930.
105. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 15.3.1930, also for further details, as well as Cape Times 10.3.1930.
106. Cape Times 10.3.1930.
107. NTS 7666 51/332, Report to Distcompol, Worcester, 10.3.1930.
108. Cape Times 11.3.1930.
109. NTS 7666, 51/332, Report to Distcompol, Worcester, 10.3.1930.
110. Cape Times 5.4.1930.
111. Cape Times 11.3.1930.
112. Cape Times 14.3.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 15.3.1930.
113. Cape Times 12.3.1930. Emphasis is added.
114. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 22.3.1930.
115. JUS 558 1451/30, Magistrate, Worcester to SJ, 18.3.1930 and "House of Assembly, the Minister laid on the table".
116. Cape Times 15.3.1930.
117. See Bonner 1980, p37 for an interesting parallel on the Rand.
118. District Commandant of Police quoted in Worcester

- Standard and Advertiser 22.3.1930.
119. Cape Times 17.3.1930.
120. See for example Cape Times 17.3.1930; Cape Times 22.3.1930.
121. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 22.3.1930. See also Cape Times 17.3.1930 for details below.
122. See for example Cape Times 17.3.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 22.3.1930.
123. Cape Times 29.3.1929.
124. JUS 558 1451/30, Magistrate, Worcester to SJ 18.3.1930. See also notes by SJ on correspondence. For another case see correspondence about Carnarvon in JUS 550 159/31.
125. Poulantzas 1975, p173 ; 1978, p221-7, 308-17. On the change in hegemony, see Davies et al 1976; Kaplan 1977b; Kaplan 1974.
126. Beinart 1984.
127. Cape Times 11.3.1930. See also Bradford 1984a, p147 for a parallel in the case of the ICU in Natal.
128. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 21.9.1929.
129. See for example HAD, 1930, col 737 and col 2345ff; Cape Times 14.2.1930.
130. JUS 550 159/30, Distcompol, Beaufort West to Decompol, Western Cape, 2.4.1930.
131. See for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 1.2.1930 and material cited in footnotes 109-111 above.
132. See for example Cape Times 3.12.1930.
133. Roux 1978, p189 et seq.
134. See eg Worcester Standard and Advertiser 9.3.1929, 23.3.1929, 21, 9.1929.
135. See for example Cape Times 2.4.1930.
136. See for example Cape Times 18.4.1930.

137. Cape Times 7.4.1930; see also Worcester Standard and Advertiser 12.4.1930 for details. Tea parties and bazaars were held regularly serving both as a form of fundraising and as an informal meeting - see for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 29.3.1930.
138. Cape Times 7.4.1930.
139. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 10.5.1930.
140. Cape Times 7.4.1930.
141. Cape Times 12.5.1930.
142. JUS 589 1775/30, Magistrate, Worcester to MJ, 20.5.1930.
143. Umsebenzi 25.4.1930. See also Cape Times 19.4.1930.
144. Cape Times 17.3.1930, 2.4.1930.
145. Cape Times 19.4.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 19.4.1930, 3.5.1930.
146. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 26.4.1930.
147. Cape Times 26.4.1930.
148. See Cape Times 1.5.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.5.1930 for details.
149. Cape Times 1.5.1930.
150. Cape Times 1.5.1930.
151. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.5.1930; see also Cape Times 3.5.1930.
152. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.5.1930.
153. Cape Times 3.5.1930.
154. Cape Times 13.5.1930. See also transcript of inquest in NTS 7666 52/332. Emphasis added.
155. See Cape Times 5.5.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 10.5.1930; NTS 7666 52/332, Transcript of inquest.
156. Roux 1978, p236.

157. Cape Times 5.5.1930.
158. Cape Times 13.5.1930.
159. Cape Times 14.5.1930.
160. Roux 1978, p236, Cape Times 2.8.1930, 15.8.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 2.8.1930, 16.8.1930.
161. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 10.5.1930.
162. Cape Times 5.5.1930.
163. Cape Times 5.5.1930.
164. The following people were killed: Paul Sylvester, Koos Sas, Roman Roman, James Gwaben, Daniel Mkota. The doctor supplied the following list of injured people: Carl Jaftha, Quetta Chatham, Annie Machoba, Nicolaas Plaatjes, Jacoba Vermeulen, Jacob Baartman, Gert de Kock, Piet Fouche, Sophia Fouche, Moses Cupido, Maria Carolus, William Banzi, Carolus Ruiters. NTS 7666 52/332, Inquest proceedings, Annexure B. George Sebaga died later from his wounds - Worcester Standard and Advertiser 27.9.1930.
165. Umsebenzi 16.5.1930.
166. Cape Times 5.5.1930, 6.5.1930.
167. Umsebenzi 16.5.1930.
168. Roux 1972, p102-105.
169. NTS 7666 52/332, Inquest proceedings, evidence of Thomas Thomas.
170. Cape Times 10.5.1930.
171. Cape Times 8.5.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 10.5.1930.
172. Cape Times 7.5.1930.
173. Cape Times 12.5.1930.
174. Cape Times 12.5.1930.
175. Cape Times 19.5.1930.
176. Cape Times 24.5.1930.

177. Cape Times 26.5.1930.
178. See for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 24.5.1930; Cape Times 16.6.1930.
179. See for example House of Assembly Debates 1930, col 737 and col 2345 ff; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 21.9.1929.
180. Tonjeni quoted in Cape Times 2.4.1930.
181. Cape Times 21.4.1930.
182. Cape Times 2.6.1930.
183. Cape Times 6.3.1930.
184. Cape Times 14.6.1930.
185. Section III above.
186. Cape Times 16.6.1930. The reference to gaols seems to be in line with a new, and temporary, attempt to organise people in gaol. Tonjeni said that he wanted to go to Roeland Street gaol for a month to investigate the conditions there, (Cape Times 14.6.1930) while at this same meeting Vumazonke related how he and Johannes Lester had organised the Worcester convicts while they were awaiting trial on a poll tax charge (Worcester Standard and Advertiser 21.6.1930).
187. Cape Times 20.5.1930.
188. See Worcester Standard and Advertiser 28.6.1930 and Cape Times 24.6.1930 for details.
189. Cape Times 24.6.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 28.6.1930.
190. Cape Times 26.6.1930.
191. Cape Times 23.7.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 26.7.1930, 27.9.1930.
192. Cape Times 26.6.1930.
193. Umsebenzi 27.6.1930.
194. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 28.6.1930.
195. See eg Roux 1978, p240 and Simons and Simons 1969,

p431.

196. See Cape Times 9.9.1930 and Worcester Standard and Advertiser 13.9.1930 for details.
197. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 2.8.1930.
198. Others active in Bonnievale were Absolom Soldaat, the present chairman of the ANC branch, and Jacobus Baartman, a member of the local executive - Worcester Standard and Advertiser 2.8.1930.
199. Cape Times 7.1.1930, 16.1.1930.
200. Umsebenzi 2.5.1930.
201. Roux 1978, p289 and Simons and Simons 1969, p489 ff. See also chapter 6, Section IV.
202. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 3.5.1930.
203. Umsebenzi 9.5.1930.
204. NTS 7603 25/328, Sworn statement by J.S.M. Thaele, 4.3.1931.
205. Umsebenzi 23.5.1930.
206. Roux 1978, p238; Umsebenzi 23.5.1930.
207. Umsebenzi 6.6.1930 and Roux 1972, p238.
208. Umsebenzi 13.6.1930.
209. Umsebenzi 20.6.1930.
210. Cape Times 16.6.1930.
211. Umsebenzi 20.6.1930.
212. Cape Times 16.6.1930.
213. Cape Times 16.6.1930.
214. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 21.6.1930.
215. See for example Section V above and Cape Times 5.10.1929.
216. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 28.6.1930.
217. Umsebenzi 20.6.1930.

218. Umsebenzi 4.7.1930.
219. Umsebenzi 27.6.1930.
220. Umsebenzi 8.8.1930.
221. Roux 1978, p238.
222. Umsebenzi 5.9.1930.
223. Umsebenzi 8.8.1930.
224. See Chapter 5.
225. Umsebenzi 22.8.1930; Roux 1978, p238-239.
226. Roux 1978, p236-237.
227. See for example Umsebenzi 13.6.1930.
228. NTS 7603 25/328, Thaele to Minister of Native Affairs, 7.8.1931.
229. NTS 7603 25/328, Decompol, Cape Town to Compol, 19.5.1932.
230. Roux 1978, p240, Umsebenzi 29.8.1930.
231. Umsebenzi 21.11.1930.
232. Quoted in Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.9.1930.
233. Umsebenzi 12.9.1930.
234. Umsebenzi 12.9.1930.
235. Quoted in Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.9.1930.
236. Ndohe in Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.9.1930.
237. Umsebenzi 19.9.1930.
238. Umsebenzi 3.10.1930.
239. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 27.9.1930.
240. See for example Worcester Standard and Advertiser 4.10.1930.
241. Section 1(12) of Act 27 of 1914 as amended by

section 1 of Act 19 of 1930.

242. Cape Times 30.9.1930.
243. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 9.10.1930.
244. See Umsebenzi 8.8.1930, 5.9.1930.
245. Umsebenzi 10.10.1930.
246. Cape Times 25.10.1930.
247. Cape Times 15.10.1930.
248. Cape Times 15.10.1930, 25.10.1930, 8.11.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 18.10.1930, 25.10.1930, 8.11.1930; JUS 558 1655/30, Distcompol, Worcester to Decompol, Cape Town, 7.11.1930 gives their names as: Dampie Dourie, Alex Beukes, Cronje Prince, Christiaan Prince, Slips M'beso, Freek Vermeulen, Jacoba Vermeulen, Rosie Elias, Katie van Wielen, Annie Machaba. Amongst those found not guilty were W. Siboto and Pieter Roman - Worcester Standard and Advertiser 25.10.1930.
249. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 18.10.1930.
250. Cape Times 24.10.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 25.10.1930.
251. Cape Times 26.5.1930.
252. NTS 7666 52/332, Magistrate, Worcester to SJ, 15.5.1930. My emphasis.

CHAPTER 4

'A MILITANT AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT':
THE FORMATION OF THE INDEPENDENT ANC
AND ORGANISATION IN THE SOUTHERN CAPE

I THE FORMATION OF THE IANC

The previous chapter indicated how the ANC(WP) had become increasingly divided, especially after the suspension of Ndobe in September 1930. In the ensuing struggle for control between the militants and moderates, the former won over most of the country branches. (1)

Initially they were confident that

the branches supported this militant policy and Thaele with his good boy tactics would find himself kicked out of the Congress before two months were over. (2)

Thaele was able, however, to retain nominal control of the ANC(WP) by the unscrupulous use of his position as chairman and his control over the Cape Town branch. (3) After a last effort at reconcilliation between the sides had failed in early November, (4) the militants decided to form their own organisation as

the present African National Congress has lost all fighting spirit on account of its corrupt 'good boy' leadership and has become a mere tool of the Government, sabotaging the attempts of the masses to free themselves. (5)

Thus they founded the Independent ANC at a meeting in Cape Town on 17 November 1930 (6) and Tonjeni was elected as

acting provincial chairman. It is not clear whether this step had the support of all the militants, as Plaatjes and Vumazonke were expelled (or resigned) from the ANC(WP) only about a month later. (7) Possibly they supported the IANC, but still attempted to work in the ANC(WP). It would seem that those of the rural branches that did not join the IANC lapsed into total inactivity, as there is only sporadic evidence of continued organisation by the ANC(WP). (8)

The new organisation resolved:

that the time has come for the formation of a militant African liberation movement which will not bow the knee to British and Boer imperialism, but will lead the oppressed slaves of Africa in earnest struggle against the Pirowcratic government of South Africa and its obnoxious laws. (9)

To this purpose it adopted the CP program of a "Black Republic" as a basis for urging

A militant struggle ... against the Government ... by means of agitation and mass demonstrations and organisation aimed at securing a general stoppage of work and civil disobedience if our demands are not granted.

This "programme of action" was by far the most militant programme to emerge out of the national movement until the late 1940's. Several of the demands went much further than the policies of the other nationalist movements in that period.

Firstly, there was the unambiguous call for a majority rule government - the Black Republic. It is not clear whether the IANC in fact advocated a universal franchise as there

was simply a call for "equal voting rights", but when this is read with the call for a Black Republic, it clearly went beyond the call of the ANC for the extension of the Cape franchise to the other provinces.

Secondly, the call for the "return of the land to the Africans" clearly articulated the demands of the peasantry. Although this demand was of some propaganda value, it was of less importance in the day to day work, as the IANC organised primarily in those areas where the proletarianisation of labour was relatively advanced. Certainly in practice the ICU in Natal and the Transvaal organised more directly around this demand. (10)

The other demands, for example, the abolition of pass laws, colour bars and better education were all standard demands of the national movement. But the methods to be used in the struggle - "mass demonstrations, ... a general stoppage of work and civil disobedience" were much more militant than those in the programme of other nationalist organisations.

A weakness in the programme of the IANC is the fact that it was not made clear who the "African people" were. Although it is probable that the Indian and "Coloured" people were to be part of the struggle, this is never made explicit. In the document it is implicitly accepted that only African people would fight for liberation. The position of other oppressed groups were left somewhat unclear - at times they are clearly included when the term "non-European" is used, but it is not always clear that they were also included under the rubric "African". This omission or, at least, lack of clarity, is particularly strange given the fact that the militants had been organising mainly coloured people up to that time. Nevertheless, it seems to have had little effect on the organisational practices of the IANC, which continued to be non-racial.

A second weakness of the programme is its lack of socialist content. The "programme of action" is very close to the CP

line at the time and is an indication of the close co-operation between the two bodies in the Western Cape. (11) In this document the emphasis is clearly on the national demands, on "the liberation of the African people". No specifically socialist demands are made, or even acknowledged, and there is no mention of the working class beyond a vague, general promise of

assistance ... to all African trade unions with the object of improving the conditions of the African workers.

In fact, even this promise meant very little in practice as there was virtually no contact between the IANC and the organised working class.

However, the IANC must be given credit for being one of the first organisations to recognise that, at that stage, the urban working class would not be able to accomplish any fundamental change without an alliance with the peasantry and agricultural labourers, and to carry this recognition into political practice. But the nature of their organisation resulted in an increasing isolation from the urban working class.

Several factors gave rise to this isolation. The most important one was probably the increasing isolation of the CP from the urban working class. In 1930 an authoritarian, sectarian faction under the Woltons and Lazar Bach achieved almost total dominance in the party. (12) This is not the place to discuss this development in detail. It is only necessary to mention that a series of expulsions, authoritarian decisions and the absence of a "mass line" left the CP virtually defunct by 1932. The decline was relatively more severe in Cape Town as Umsebenzi was moved to Johannesburg, where the party was being centralised. While the militants had been working closely with the CP, they had concentrated almost exclusively on the rural areas. At that stage there was probably some justification for this

as the CP was organising several African unions in Cape Town, and a duplication of organisation was unnecessary. However, as the CP declined and began to lose contact with the IANC, it meant the latter had few direct links with the urban working class.

Secondly under the influence of the ultra-left swing of the Comintern, the CP consciously distanced itself from the IANC. Umsebenzi pointed out that it would not give unqualified support to the IANC:

Perhaps our policy in the past ... has been a little too uncritical of the 'opposition'. Perhaps we have seen a struggle between 'lefts' and 'rights' between 'militants' and 'reactionaries' where there has in reality only been a squabble between rival aspirants for leadership and where certain leaders have found it politic to adopt radical phraseology in order to win support of the rank and file ...

We will support Ndobe and Tonjeni and other African leaders so long as they pursue a clear-cut policy of struggle against the Government of the white dictatorship and slave laws ... when they make mistakes we will criticise them. (13)

Thirdly, it is possible that the leaders of the IANC regarded the rural struggle as so important, that they deliberately ignored the towns. It is certainly significant that when they were banned from a rural area, they always went to a new one to organise. They did come to Cape Town occasionally, but mostly only to "recuperate". (14) In fact, as they were banned from more and more rural areas, they were in effect restricted to the major urban areas of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. (15)

Lastly, given the preference of the militants in the IANC for organising in the countryside, the pattern of bannings forced them further and further away from Cape Town. This led to practical problems of maintaining communications and co-operation.

Thus it is somewhat paradoxical that the IANC was increasingly identified as "the communists" in the press, although it hardly ever made socialist demands and certainly did not have a coherent socialist programme.

After a hectic interlude during which the IANC was very active in the Southern Cape, the IANC held its first congress in the Bethel Institute in Hanover Street in Cape Town. (16) Unfortunately there is very little available on the deliberations at the congress, other than the agenda and the opening speeches by Tonjeni and Ndoobe. These sources confirm many of the points raised in connection with the political programme of the IANC. The agenda included the following points:

- (1) Oorlog teen die verbanning van die Afrikaans {sic} leiers
- (2) Veldtog vir die bestryding van die Paswet.
- (3) Belastings en werkloosheid. (17)

In his speech Tonjeni declared that the IANC would not co-operate with any other political organisation or party.

(18) It is not clear whether this statement applied to all other groups, or only to the "good boys". It would certainly be strange if the CP was included as Tonjeni still had close links with them. Furthermore, one of the main points in the programme of the IANC was that

Existing organisations agreeing to a militant programme to be asked to affiliate on an equal basis.

co-operation (sic) with all bodies
having as their object the liberation of
the African people.

Certainly, later in his speech, Tonjeni referred only to the ANC when he argued against co-operation:

'Ons is gedwing tot slawerny in die land
van ons voorvaders en weier beslis om
met ons vyande saam te werk ... Die IANC
wat afgeskei het van die ANC omdat
laasgenoemde met die blankes wil
saamwerk, is die geswore vyande van alle
onderdrukkers van die naturelle en ons
sal stry vir die regte van die
naturelle; ons sal seëvier'.

Most of his speech was devoted to stressing the nationalist nature of the IANC's struggle, for example, by likening the struggle of the IANC to that of the nationalist movements in India, China and Japan. Even when he spoke about the economic oppression of the Africans, he regarded the remedy for this to be the regaining of their political rights in the land of their ancestors.

Both in his speech, and it would appear in the congress as a whole, there was little discussion of the specific problems and demands of the working class (with the possible exception of the discussion of unemployment).

This is not to argue that this subordination of socialist demands to nationalist demands was invariably the case. There were occasions when the IANC expressed a clearer understanding of the class nature of their struggle and did not reduce it simply to a nationalist struggle. Thus Ndobe wrote in an open letter to Pirow that

The growth of the African National
Congress in the Western Province has

been due to the terrible conditions under which non-European farm labourers are groaning. The exploited suffer from terribly low wages, long hours, bad food and deplorable housing conditions ... the legitimate attempts of the African labourers to organise to secure better working and political conditions has been met by brutal suppression by the white farmers and their agents, and these in turn have been assisted by the armed forces of the Government ... Your attempt, on behalf of your class, to crush the spirit of the African masses by banning their leaders will not succeed. (19)

The congress apparently decided that the IANC should concentrate its efforts in the Midlands area as afterwards few of the leaders were active in the Southern Cape. This decision was probably the result of the fact that Tonjeni, Ndobe and Plaatjes had all been banned from the Southern Cape (20) and it seemed unlikely that the bans would be allowed to expire (bannings were usually for periods of between three and six months). The Midlands will be dealt with in the next few chapters as it had many distinctive features, but first the rest of this chapter examines the campaigns of the IANC in the Southern Cape.

II ORGANISATION IN THE SOUTHERN CAPE

Initially the IANC concentrated its efforts on the areas that had been covered by the ANC(WP), and especially those areas where the leaders and meetings had not yet been banned. These areas comprised most of the Southern Cape: it included some well-organised branches, as well as others where only preparatory work had been done.

Agriculture in the area was based largely on the production

of grain and wool. (21) Both these industries are analysed in greater detail elsewhere in the work (22) and the analysis is also applicable to the Southern Cape. Here one only need to point out that the grain farmers were fairly successful in combating the effects of the crisis by increasing production and preventing cheap imports, while the wool industry was almost totally devastated by the Depression. As a result the crisis in the Southern Cape was more severe than in the Western Cape, but not as deep as in the Eastern Cape. (23)

A writer to Umsebenzi outlined the plight of the farm workers:

Op die Karo {sic} is die Gekleurde mense, ons susters en broers, in 'n kondisie van slawery.

Hulle is veewagters, en kry van 10/ tot 15/ in die maand. As die Vaalpens (die baas) by die kraal kom, in plaas van om te vra 'Hoe gaan dit?' sê hy 'Is my skape almal?' of 'Is hulle nog mooi vet?'

As die veewagter dan meer geld vra, antwoord die Vaalpens hom 'Jy het dit te lekker by my, en is doodgevreet aan die brood'.

Die arme werker kry net 'n half sak meel maandeliks. (24)

Herdsman were only allowed to keep five live animals on the farm (excluding chickens) and at ploughing and harvest time, they were expected to work on the lands from 7 in the morning till 7 at night, while their children had to look after the sheep.

Like both the Western Province and Midlands, the Southern Cape was characterised by a labour shortage on the farms and unemployment in the towns, as agricultural labourers refused

to accept the decreased farm wages. It was a general complaint that

baie werklose kleurling in die dorpe lê
 wat nie will werk nie, onderwyl die
 boere nie genoeg werksmense het nie.
 (25)

The resistance of the agricultural labourers helped to create objective conditions that were favourable for a militant mass movement like the IANC.

Riversdale

Organisers from the ANC(WP) had been active in Riversdale from as early as 1929 and the South Western Echo reported that the town was a "happy hunting ground" for agitators.
 (26)

Tonjeni and/or Ndoobe organised in the area in March and April 1930, but the main attempt to organise came in August after they had effectively been excluded from organising in the Western Cape. (27) Ndoobe had been in the area since some time in July and apparently he stayed there more less continuously until he went to George in the middle of September.

The ANC(WP) immediately clashed bitterly with the church, and it seems that especially the Lutheran's Reverend Backman made

veel bitter sprakies oor die A.N.K.
 adviserend die gekleurde werkers van
 Riversdal om teen die kaffers te wees.
 (28).

He said that money should go to the Lutheran god, while the ANC's "god is die kaffer". To this Louis Saayman of the ANC replied that:

Ons mense, swart en bruin, moet saam organisier {sic} en saam veg teen blanke imperialisme. Die Naturel moenie sê dat hy 'n nasie is nie, en dus nie gemeenskap kan maak met die bruinmense nie. En die Bruinman moenie dink dat hy (met sy witter fel {sic} en langer haar) sy eie pad kan volg nie. Ons moet weet dat ons altwee onder dieselfde blanke regering ly. (29)

It seems that a concerted campaign was launched to intimidate people away from the ANC. Johannes Jansen, the local secretary, was expelled from the school - it is unclear whether he was a teacher or a pupil - the church refused communion to some ANC members and prohibited attendance at ANC meetings. On at least one occasion a list was read out in church of all those who had attended an ANC function. (30).

Some indication of the methods used to organise in the area can be gleaned from the discussion between the local MP and the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Western Cape.

Tot hiertoe besoek g'n blanke persone die vergaderings nie, maar hulle, so verklaar Mnr. Badenhorst, dreig om sulks te doen as sulke vergaderings nie deur die outoriteite gestop word nie, en dit had die beoefening van al sy gesag nodig gehad om hulle te belet om sulks in the verlede te doen.

Die uitinge waarvan gekla word is die waarin No. 195 Bransby Ndobé verklaar dat nie-Europeane net so goed is as Europeane en hul nie nodig het om hul hoede vir hul by ontmoeting te lig nie,

dat die Europeane die land gesteel het van die naturelle, aan wie dit regverdiglik behoort, en dat die nie-Europeane die plase behoort te verlaat en in die stede kom bly ... Mnr. Badenhorst het ook verklaar dat meeste van die moeilikhede veroorsaak word deur die persoonlike stemwerwery van die Oproermakers, en nie as die gevolg van die toesprake by die vergaderings gegee {sic}. Die waarde van die vorige manier in vergelyking met die laasgenoemde is nadruk op gele {sic} deur Mnr Badenhorst van sy ondervinding in verband met Parlementere verkiesings.

Die Posbevelhebber te Riversdal, het gerapporteer dat die Poliesie g'n moeilikheid gehad het in verband met die vergaderings, en hy dit nie verwag nie. Hy verklaar dat opelug vergaderings gehou word op 'n stuk gehuurde grond, sonder omheining, en omtrent 200' x 200' groot is {sic}, en in die nie-Europeane grond van die dorp, of in 'n gehuurde saal, en dat omtrent 50 persone 'n goed bygewoonde vergadering uitmaak. (31)

Another example of the insubordination preached by the ANC of which Badenhorst complained, was that the police were experiencing problems in making arrests

as agitators have advised the coloured people that if arrested they must protest and take the number of the policeman and report to them, when their expulsion from the force will be ensured. (32)

The local press, with vivid and effective malapropism,

reported that the farmers

are eloquent in their apprehension over the inflammatory speeches made by agitators, who are growing in boldness, as their influence spermeating {sic} through the district. (33)

The pressure of the farmers on their parliamentary representatives soon paid dividends and at the end of October Ndobe and Tonjeni were both banned from the area. There is some ambiguity though, as at the end of November a deputation consisting of

a large section of the Coloured population ... and ... nearly 100 Europeans

went to complain to the major about Ndobe's presence in the town. (34) It seems that Ndobe was able to ignore his banning order for some time when the Supreme Court held that it was necessary for the Minister to sign each order personally. (35)

At any rate, Ndobe left shortly afterwards to help Tonjeni organise in George and Oudtshoorn and after that there is only sporadic evidence of activity from the area. (36) Early in 1931 one of the IANC organisers, Leepile, spent well over a month organising in the area, until he too was banned from Riversdale. (37)

Swellendam and Zuurbraak

In the weeks following the formation of the IANC, there was an increase in the efforts to organise the countryside. All the leaders could again devote their energies to organising after the internecine struggles of the previous few months. The first evidence of this is Plaatjes' efforts to resume organisation in Swellendam and Zuurbraak. (38)

In February 1930 Plaatjes and a certain Cupido had spoken at Zuurbraak (39) and they were "lelik toegetaken" by a crowd of whites before the police took them to Swellendam. On 7 November, apparently after continuing organisation by the ANC(WP), some of the few white inhabitants had met with "responsible" blacks and the meeting of over 200 people resolved that all future ANC meetings would be stopped as they were inflaming "die gemoedere van die gekleurdes". (40) A warning to this effect was pinned on a tree near the post office on 13 November. (41)

Plaatjes and Ross (from Swellendam) intended to hold a meeting on Sunday 23 November, and when they arrived on Saturday, they expressed their determination not to be intimidated. (42)

The most comprehensive account of the incident was given by the Worcester district commandant:

On the arrival of Arnold Plaatjes and {sic} Ross (not Moses as previously stated) the rioters were called together probably by telephone in the case of those living outside and a large batch of Europeans and non-Europeans took possession of the village and started to hunt the agitators.

The N.C.O. of Police, who was along at the time, did what he could but the rioters apprehended two local officials of the African National Congress and went in search of Plaatjes and Ross driving these men before them. The N.C.O. managed to get them away and took them to the Police Station grounds but after a short parley the rioters forced their way in and again took them into custody and continued the man hunt, eventually securing the persons of

Plaatjes and Ross who were manhandled and driven from the village, the local officials seeking refuge in the mountains until such time as the storm had abated. The rioters, after threatening to destroy the house which had given Plaatjes and Ross shelter, gradually dwindled and eventually order was restored. (43)

Apparently Plaatjes and Ross then went to Swellendam where they were due to address a meeting at Bulawayo, the location, the next evening, Monday. (44) It seems that Swellendam was a well organised branch of the ANC and held regular meetings. In a subsequent trial, an IANC member "admitted" that

she usually attended meetings of the ANC leaders, at which Europeans are reviled and blamed for 'enslaving the coloureds', and where they sang songs published in their paper, called Umsebenzi. (45)

Again the district commandant takes up the story:

The Swellendam affair was on a large scale.

When it was heard that Plaatjes and Ross were in Swellendam and proposed holding a meeting there, the Swellendam rioters were evidently organised, began to collect pending the arrival of detachments from various parts of the District. I have not yet ascertained how they were called in but several motor-lorries arrived with parties of Europeans who joined the local detachment and the whole body (about 150

to 200 people - WH (46)) then moved towards that part of the town of Swellendam known as 'Bulawayo'.

In this instance a fairly strong detachment of Police had been drafted to where it was Plaatjes' intention to hold his meeting but he and Ross had become alarmed and fled.

The rioters advanced in a body assaulting any non-Europeans they met without ascertaining where their sympathies lay and an ugly position arose.

The rioters demanded the production of Plaatjes and Ross, but as stated, they had gone.

Defeated in their object, they went to the house which had given Plaatjes and Ross shelter and to various other houses including that of one Willem Prins, local Secretary (Swellendam) of the Congress and stones began to fly.

A number of persons on both sides sustained injuries and several cottages were damaged.

Sergeant Edwards, who was in charge of the Police detachment, did all in his power to restore order but was abused and treated with contempt and threatened with bodily injury should he interfere.

Under all the circumstances Sergeant Edwards considered it unwise to arrest the leaders as it would have been quite impossible to hold them against the crowd in the state of mind they were then in and would only have led to Police casualties whereas evidence would have been difficult to obtain and once the Police had been knocked out there

would, no doubt, have been further excesses on the part of the rioters some of whom were obviously under the influence of liquor...

Authority was flouted and in the Swellendam instance, threatened with injury by members of the assembly.

The gravity of the position lies in the established fact that the riots were carefully organised and openly carried out. (47)

Two days later 34 whites were charged with assault and public violence. This led to heated protests and threats of more violence, especially when several coloured people, including Willem Filander and Jan Prins - the ANC chairman and secretary - were called to give evidence. (48) It is perhaps no coincidence that soon after these threats were made, one witness changed his testimony and denied that he had been assaulted. It came as no surprise when the magistrate ruled that there was insufficient evidence against the accused and they were acquitted, even though several had been positively identified.

George/Oudtshoorn

The militants in the ANC(WP) had attempted to organise as far afield as George and Oudtshoorn as early as September 1930.

Tonjeni arrived in the Rosemoor location at George on Wednesday 17 September and held a meeting the same evening. (49) By the next evening the police were in attendance but the meeting was rained out. Ndobe joined Tonjeni and another meeting was held on Saturday, but unfortunately no details were given, except that Umsebenzi reported that they were received enthusiastically. (50)

The next day they went off to organise in Oudtshoorn, where

Tonjeni was described as a

vreemde jong kaffer, uitgedos in 'n blou pak met bruin skoene en 'n wandelstok in die hand. (51)

They held a meeting in the Vaaldraai location attended by 300 people and several policemen at which Tonjeni urged all black people to stand together. He also said that Hertzog and Smuts

were even worse than the devil in as much as that Satan showed no discrimination of our colour. (52)

Some more meetings were held the next weekend, and Charles Makambi was recruited to distribute Umsebenzi in Oudtshoorn. He later became the IANC's local secretary. (53) Ndobe and Tonjeni returned to George after the weekend, whence Ndobe reported that they were promised the support of thousands of people. (54) They apparently remained in George until they returned to the Western Cape later in October.

After the banning of the ANC(WP) leaders and the formation of the IANC, Tonjeni returned to Oudtshoorn in late November 1930. By then it was "the only town of importance still open to him". (55) Even to get to Oudtshoorn, he apparently had to deceive the police who thought he was on his way from Wellington to Cape Town.

In the meantime a branch had been formed in Oudtshoorn which had about 200 members. (56) It seems that Tonjeni wanted to stay in Oudtshoorn for about 4 weeks until his banning order expired. He also wanted to have a rest "as Pirow's dogs were running full speed behind him". Neither of these intentions were, however, destined to be fulfilled.

Tonjeni held meetings almost every day during his brief stay. The first meeting at Vaaldraai - "the poorer part of town", was attended by a crowd of about 300, most of them

coloured people. He spoke about the intended campaign on Dingaan's Day when

he spoke about the proposed burning of native passes on the day as a protest against the Native Pass Laws. Those who did not care to burn the passes themselves, he said, could send them to him and he would do the needful {sic} and send them to h...(57)

Although many people drifted away from the meeting, it was reported that "a good number were enrolled". In the course of the next few days Tonjeni addressed several meetings in the North End and West Bank areas and new members joined the IANC. (58) It seems as though the IANC break with the ANC was not yet total, as Tonjeni was still selling ANC badges!

As had been the case elsewhere, there was by now "a growing feeling of hostility on the part of certain Europeans". (59) They had been attending the IANC meetings and decided to disrupt the meeting scheduled for Thursday, 27 November. The magistrate had to call in the assistance of

a certain European to use his influence with the European section not to resort to any violence as he informed me that they certainly would do on the Thursday night. (60)

Eventually

the Europeans accepted the assurance which I {the Magistrate - WH} had given them that the authorities were acting quickly in the matter and they promised me not to resort to any violence but they would not undertake to abstain from attending the Meeting. (61)

Thus when the North End meeting started at 6 o'clock on Thursday, the big crowd of 650 people included about 50 whites and

many of the Europeans who were openly hostile, were armed ... they appeared to be determined to break up the meeting. (62)

Everything was quiet while Tonjeni spoke and most of the whites left when he finished and Ndoobe started speaking.

Both speakers delivered their usual attacks on the Police and the Government ... They repeated their intention of demonstrating and downing tools on Dingaan's Day when all passes would be burnt as a protest against the Native Pass Laws. Tonjeni himself would be in the Transvaal leading a 'big army'.

Before Ndoobe could finish his "very fiery" speech, the fifteen remaining whites started to stone the crowd. They were quickly surrounded by the crowd and the police had "great difficulty" in checking the whites "who were by now in a bellicose mood".

Soon afterwards fighting started and police reinforcements were rushed in from the police station where they were on standby. The 34 "fully armed" policemen only managed to restore order 2 hours later. (63) Three whites were slightly injured, while Ndoobe and Tonjeni managed to disappear "although they were closely watched". They were reported to be organising at De Rust on Friday and had planned a meeting at Dysselsdorp for Saturday afternoon.

"Pirow's horses" were, however, catching up on the IANC. On Friday Pirow instructed the local magistrate to ban all

meetings held by Ndobe and Tonjeni "or their supporters" (64) until the end of the month, i.e. Sunday. It appears that further banning orders had already been signed for Tonjeni and Ndobe and were on their way to Oudtshoorn.

On the same day a tear gas bomber arrived from Worcester (65) and Tonjeni was arrested in Vaaldraai for some debt he had incurred in the Transkei.

Probably as a result of Tonjeni's arrest, the police had to rush first to Vaaldraai and then to another part of town as blacks stoned whites. It seems quite likely that these incidents were the result of Tonjeni's arrest, but none of the newspapers make this connection. Meanwhile Jacob Janse, the secretary of the IANC Riversdale branch, and Plaatjes, from Worcester, had arrived to help Tonjeni. (66) Tonjeni was bailed out by the local secretary, Makambi, on Saturday morning and it was decided to ignore the banning and hold a meeting at North End that afternoon, but this plan had to be abandoned because of heavy rain.

On Sunday afternoon, however, a successful meeting addressed by Tonjeni, Janse and Makambi was held in a private house in North End, after Tonjeni had informed the police about the meeting earlier. (67) But the farmers were determined that the IANC would be stopped, and a crowd of 100 whites and 300 coloured people gathered outside. The whites,

composed mostly of the irresponsible type, were evidently determined to prevent Tonjeni from holding any meeting at all

and they attempted to storm the house. (68) Eventually the police intervened and dispersed the crowd. They warned Tonjeni to leave Oudtshoorn and he was taken to the police station, allegedly at his own request, after several attempts to assault him had been warded off.

Ndobe, Tonjeni and Plaatjes were then served with orders banning them from the Oudtshoorn district. Tonjeni had already been banned from George (69) and the next morning, he and Plaatjes left for Cape Town. It was believed that he would go to the Rand soon to lead a "big army" on Dingaan's Day. Makambi was reported to have disappeared.

Ndobe, in the meantime, had returned to George where he addressed a big meeting on Sunday. (70) The next day he held a smallish meeting in Pacaltsdorp which was attended by about 100 people and 12 policemen from George and Oudtshoorn. (71) His speech is of interest chiefly because it is one of the few reported occasions when a speaker of the IANC outlined a clearly socialist position:

There were two classes of people in the Union, he alleged, those who toiled from sunrise to sunset, and 'those who lived in palaces, who never know how to toil, and are living by exploiting the working classes. Between these two classes there was never peace ...' The non-Europeans in S.A., he declared, were faced with a double struggle; they were oppressed as a nation and as a working class

They must adopt a philosophy expounded hundreds of years ago, said Ndobe, that they have nothing to lose, but the world to gain. (72)

Ndobe continued to organise in the area, until he returned to Cape Town for the Dingaan's Day demonstrations and the IANC congress.

By this time it was reported that the "whole of the South-West is seething with unrest". (73) The tense atmosphere is illustrated by the wild rumours that were

spread. For example, many newspapers reported the "fact" that hundreds of blacks were marching on Swellendam from Zuurbraak and Buffelsjag. (74) This proved to be totally unfounded, but not before police reinforcements had been rushed to Swellendam. (75) Soon afterwards police were also rushed to Heidelberg where "trouble" was expected, (76) but it is not clear whether this was another rumour. It would seem to indicate that the IANC was in fact organising in Heidelberg.

Soon afterwards the "trouble" died down, however, as many of the leaders of the IANC assembled in Cape Town for Dingaan's Day (77) and the anti-pass campaign. This turned out to be a non-event, but as the IANC's first congress was due to be held at the end of December, most of the leadership stayed in Cape Town.

After the congress, Tonjeni and Ndobe resumed their activity in the Southern Cape. Tonjeni had already been banned from George and Knysna and early in January 1930 he was arrested at the George station on his way to organise in Knysna. He was sentenced to one month imprisonment but eventually released on £50 bail pending an appeal, after spending four days in the Knysna gaol. (78) Ndobe was still not banned from George, and he returned there in January. (79) He continued to organise and held regular meetings on Sundays and some weekdays. (80)

It was in Oudtshoorn that the ANC(WP) tried for the first time to challenge the dominant position of the IANC in the rural areas. Two of its organisers, Thomas Faku and Arthur McKinley, arrived in George to oppose the IANC, but when they tried to speak at an IANC meeting, they were shouted down by the women with cries that "Tonjeni is ons man - ons het nie tyd vir Pirow se honde nie". (81)

It seems that Faku and McKinley were largely unsuccessful in their efforts. Umsebenzi reported that they were driven from the location, while the police advised them not to hold

meetings.

Ndobe left soon afterwards to help Tonjeni organise in the Midlands (82) and it seems that organisation continued over the next few months under local leaders. At one such meeting, addressed by Darries, Marthinus Davids and Albert Ndada, it was announced that Tonjeni would return to George on 16 March even if it meant bloodshed. (83) This date fits in with Tonjeni's return from the Midlands, but there is no subsequent evidence that he organised in George. He was still banned from the area, although the status of the banning order was unclear as Tonjeni appealed successfully against his conviction for being in the area in January. (84)

Evidence of subsequent IANC organisation in Oudtshoorn is rather sporadic. Despite the exodus and subsequent absence of the better-known IANC leaders, it seems that the organisation continued. At the end of March the police tried to clear away a crowd that was obstructing the traffic, and were stoned. Seven coloured people were arrested and received fines of 15s or 21 days. (85) About the same time, Lee Thelesko Leepile, described rather picturesquely as the "speurder" of the IANC arrived in Oudtshoorn. At a meeting of 300 blacks on Friday 3 April, he threatened to bring an army of agitators to Oudtshoorn and it seemed that this was the start of a renewed attempt to create a strong local branch. (86) It appears that the ANC(WP) was also still trying to organise in the area, because Faku and Mathope Matule, were gaoled for failing to pay their poll tax. (87)

A few months later, towards the end of July, 5 policemen raided for liquor at Suikerbult (near Oudtshoorn), a "stronghold" of the IANC. (88) Four men and two women were arrested. A third woman tried to free them but failed and then returned with an axe to attack the police. She was also arrested, but then a crowd of about 200 blacks "in an ugly mood and very hostile" surrounded the police and

bombarded them with stones and knobkieries. One policeman fired a shot which appeared to "calm" the crowd and the police then managed to escape.

After this it seems that little open activity took place at Oudtshoorn, as no further meetings were reported in the course of 1931. Of course, this does not mean that no further organisation took place, but the newspapers seldom reported on meetings unless something particularly "noteworthy" occurred. Thus it seems quite likely that a branch operated in Oudtshoorn until well in 1932, gradually losing influence and members of the IANC declined in the Cape. Much the same probably applies to Swellendam where there was also no further reports of meetings.

NOTES

1. See eg Worcester Standard and Advertiser 9.10.1930.
2. Umsebenzi 31.10.1930.
3. See Chapter 3 Section XI.
4. Umsebenzi 7.11.1930.
5. Preamble to IANC constitution - see appendix 1.
6. Cape Times 21.11.1930.
7. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.12.1930.
8. See eg Cape Times 16.12.1931, 4.7.1933, 20.7.1931.
9. See Appendix 1. All references to the programme of the IANC comes from this document, unless they are otherwise attributed.
10. See eg. Bradford 1980, 1981.
11. See also Chapter 3 Section I.
12. See eg Roux 1978, p255 ff; Simons and Simons 1969, p438 ff; Roux 1944.
13. Umsebenzi 21.11.1930.
14. See eg Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.12.1930.
15. See Chapter 5.
16. Die Burger 23.12.1930. Organisation in the Southern Cape is discussed in the second part of this chapter.
17. Die Burger 23.12.1930.
18. Die Burger 27.12.1930; also for details below.
19. Open letter to Pirow in Cape Times 24.10.1930.
20. Cape Times 5.1.1931.
21. Die Burger 20.1.1930, 19.12.1930.

22. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of grain and chapter 6 for wool.
23. See eg. Die Burger 30.5.1930, 20.1.1930, 19.7.1930.
24. Umsebenzi 3.10.1930.
25. Die Burger 20.1.1930.
26. The South Western Echo 30.11.1929.
27. Umsebenzi 1.8.1930; Worcester Standard and Advertiser 10.5.1930.
28. Umsebenzi 8.8.1930.
29. Umsebenzi 30.1.1931.
30. Umsebenzi 8.8.1930; See also The South Western Echo 20.9.1930.
31. JUS 582 3111/31, Decompol, Western Cape to Compol 29.9.1930.
32. The South Western Echo 18.10.1930.
33. The South Western Echo 18.10.1930.
34. The South Western Echo 29.11.1930.
35. See eg. Oudtshoorn Courant 26.3.1931, 7.4.1931.
36. See eg. 30.1.1931, 27.5.1932.
37. JUS 582 3108/31, Report to Distcompol, Oudtshoorn, 23.2.1931; SJ to Compol, 30.3.1931.
38. It seems that Plaatjes was still officially a member of the ANC(WP) - see Chapter 3, Section XI.
39. Die Burger 26.11.1930; Die Middeler 3.12.1930.
40. Letter to Die Burger 4.12.1930.
41. JUS 583 3139/31, Distcompol, Worcester to Decompol, Western Cape, 28.11.1930.
42. Cape Times 24.11.1930.
43. JUS 583 3139/31, Distcompol, Worcester to Decompol, Western Cape, 28.11.1930.

44. Die Burger 29.11.1930; Cape Times 26.11.1930.
45. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 13.12.1930. Plaatjes was organising in the area as early as May 1930 (Worcester Standard and Advertiser 31.5.1930).
46. Die Burger 29.11.1930; Cape Times 26.11.1930.
47. JUS 583 3139/31, Distcompol, Worcester to Decompol, Western Cape, 28.11.1930.
48. For details see Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.12.1930; Cape Times 20.12.1930; Die Burger 9.12.1930, 18.12.1930. Other ANC members to give evidence were Eva Moses, Henry Niemand, Johannes Jacobs, Nellie Prins and Rachel Matthys.
49. George and Knysna Herald 24.9.1930.
50. Umsebenzi 3.10.1930.
51. Die Burger 2.10.1930.
52. Die Kango Bode 27.9.1930.
53. Umsebenzi 14.11.1930.
54. Die Kango Bode 27.9.1930; Umsebenzi 10.10.1930.
55. Oudtshoorn Courant 24.11.1930.
56. Oudtshoorn Courant 24.11.1930.
57. Oudtshoorn Courant 24.11.1930.
58. Oudtshoorn Courant 24.11.1930, 26.11.1930, 28.11.1930. It seems as though the IANC break with the ANC was not yet total, as Tonjeni was still reported to be selling ANC badges.
59. Oudtshoorn Courant 26.11.1930.
60. JUS 585 113/32, Magistrate Oudtshoorn to SJ, 2.12.1930.
61. My emphasis.
62. See Oudtshoorn Courant 28.11.1930 for details below.
63. Die Bürger 28.11.1930.

64. See Oudtshoorn Courant 1.12.1930, 29.11.1930; JUS 583 113/32, SJ to Compol, 7.12.1930; Cape Times 28.11.1930 for details below.
65. Cape Times 28.11.1930.
66. Oudtshoorn Courant 28.11.1930 talks about Sol Plaatjes - the well-known ANC leader from Kimberley - presumably it was actually Arnoth Plaatjes.
67. Cape Times 3.12.1930. It is not clear whether this was a legal requirement - on previous occasions this had also been done.
68. See Cape Times 3.12.1930 for details below.
69. JUS 583 3114/31, SJ to MJ, 24.3.1931.
70. Oudtshoorn Courant 1.12.1930.
71. Die Kango Bode 3.12.1930.
72. George and Knysna Herald 3.12.1930.
73. Cape Times 8.12.1930.
74. See eg. Die Burger 29.11.1930.
75. Die Burger 1.12.1930.
76. Die Burger 9.12.1930.
77. See eg. Worcester Standard and Advertiser 20.12.1930.
78. Umsebenzi 30.1.1931; Oudtshoorn Courant 16.1.1931.
79. Umsebenzi 6.2.1931.
80. George and Knysna Herald 28.1.1931; 25.2.1931.
81. Umsebenzi 6.2.1931; George and Knysna Herald 28.1.1931.
82. See chapter 5.
83. George and Knysna Herald 25.2.1931. Darries may have been Darries from Bonnievale, an executive member of the ANC(WP) before he joined the IANC.

84. Oudtshoorn Courant 7.4.1931; George and Knysna Herald 15.4.1931. Apparently the copy of the banning order that he received had not been signed by the Minister of Justice - see also Oudtshoorn Courant 26.3.1931.
85. Oudtshoorn Courant 30.3.1931.
86. Oudtshoorn Courant 10.4.1931.
87. Oudtshoorn Courant 29.5.1931, 2.6.1931.
88. Oudtshoorn Courant 27.7.1931.

APPENDIX 1

Independent African National Congress

18-11-30

P R E A M B L E

WHEREAS the African people are slaves in the land of their birth, suffering under pass laws, poll tax, master and servant laws, etc. and whereas they are denied representation in the government of the country, and whereas the Government has sought fit to pass repressive legislation aimed at the annihilation of the African liberation movement by gagging the whole nation with the Riotous Assemblies Act;

Whereas the present African National Congress has lost all fighting spirit on account of its corrupt "good boy" leadership, and has become a mere tool of the Government, sabotaging the attempts of the masses to free themselves;

THEREFORE we, the suffering masses, declare that the time has come for the formation of a militant African liberation movement which will not bow the knee to British and Boer imperialism, but will lead the oppressed slaves of Africa in earnest struggle against the Parowcratic government of South Africa and its obnoxious laws.

We therefore place the following programme before the the African people:-

(1) The organisation to be known as the Independent African National Congress, and branches to be established throughout the Union. Existing organisations agreeing to a militant programme to be asked to affiliate on an equal basis. Cooperation with all bodies having as their object the liberation of the African people.

(2) Assistance to be rendered to all African trade unions with the object of improving the conditions of the African workers,

assisting them in the struggle against wage-cuts.

(3) A militant struggle to be waged against the Government under the slogan of a Black Republic, by means of agitation and mass demonstrations and organisation aimed at securing a general stoppage of work and civil disobedience if our demands are not granted. Dingaan's Day to be observed as African Liberation Day throughout the Union and on this day the African people to be called upon to down tools and burn passes as a first stage in the campaign of civil disobedience.

P O L I T I C A L

P R O G R A M M E

(1) Return of the land to the Africans. Abolition of the Native Land Act.

(2) Abolition of all colour bar laws, pass laws, etc.

(3) Equal voting rights for all men and women irrespective of colour. ~~Admittance of Non-Europeans to sit in Parliament and hold government office.~~ The right of Non-Europeans to sit in Parliament and hold government office. Abolition of the Act of Union.

(4) Free compulsory primary education for all children irrespective of colour. Admittance of ~~to~~ Non-Europeans to all high schools and universities.

(5) Abolition of the present white jury system. The right of Non-Europeans to sit on juries.

Elliot Louren
Acting Provincial Chairman

CHAPTER 5**'AGITATORS ARE AT WORK' : ORGANISATION IN
GRAAFF-REINETT AND MIDDELBURG**

The previous chapter showed that the militants in the ANC(WP) did not confine their organising efforts to the Western Cape and organised extensively in the Southern Cape. In fact they went even further afield. In the course of 1930, there were sporadic attempts to organise in the Midlands area in the Eastern Cape.

In 1931 the IANC launched a concerted campaign to organise in the Midlands. This seemed to be part of a new thrust to widen the base of the organisation beyond the Western Cape, which had already resulted in an organising campaign in the South Western Districts.

The new attempt was at least partially determined by the fact that the principal organisers of the IANC had all been banned from the Western Cape and, subsequently, from the South Western Districts. However, there were also a number of other determining factors. While the militants were organised in the ANC(WP) they had had to pay at least lip service to the existence of the Cape African Congress, CAC, and any attempt to organise in the Eastern Cape would have exacerbated the on-going jurisdiction disputes between the ANC(WP) and the CAC. It is significant that even the sporadic attempts in 1930 came only after the break in the ANC had come into the open. Obviously these constraints fell away completely when the IANC split from the ANC(WP) at the end of 1930. Furthermore, the crisis in agriculture had created a discontented rural proletariat which could be mobilised against the existing relations of production in the countryside. Both these factors will be examined in greater detail later.

The main thrust of the IANC campaign in the Midlands was in

the Middelburg/Cradock/Graaff-Reinett area. The first part of this chapter discusses the early attempts to organise in Graaff-Reinett and the reasons for the relative lack of success in that area. Events in Graaff-Reinett were seldom reported and anyway took a very different path from elsewhere in the Midlands. Thus they will be dealt with separately and not be integrated into an analysis of the Midlands as a whole.

The second part of the chapter gives a brief chronology of the events in Middelburg and then continues to examine in some detail the way in which the initial IANC organisation in the area took place.

The next chapter examines some of the issues and themes that arose from the organisation in the Midlands. Chapter 8 resumes the chronological account of the struggle in the Midlands, including an account of the start of organisation in the Midlands.

I. ORGANISATION IN GRAAFF-REINETT

It seems that the militants in the ANC(WP) first tried to organise in the Midlands when Tonjeni arrived in Graaff-Reinett on 12 June 1930. (1)

Graaff-Reinett had a black population of about 6 000 made up as follows:

	Men	Women	Children	Total
coloured people	1 109	1 089	747	2 945
Africans	1 158	1 138	906	3 202
Total				6 147 (2)

Tonjeni immediately started to hold regular meetings on Sundays and Wednesdays (3) and had soon organised a local branch of the ANC(WP) with its own elected executive. Soon afterwards he was joined by Martin Runeli and together they organised against some of the local location regulations.

Shortly afterwards the location superintendent ordered them to leave the location, but, as Tonjeni reported in Umsebenzi,

men and women among the non-Europeans came forward with spirit and told me not to move an inch. (4)

By the end of June the police estimated that about 75 people, almost all African, had joined the ANC. But the influence of the ANC was almost certainly much greater than this. The Midlands News and Karroo Farmer reported, for example, that there was increasing anxiety about the "growing impudence and hostility" of many blacks in the Midlands:

It appears from reports that agitators are at work amongst the non-Europeans over a wide area, and that even farms have been visited, and both Natives and Coloured are listening to doctrines that hitherto have been foreign to their ears. (5)

As happened in the Western Cape, the farmers and the town's white inhabitants got very upset about these meetings. Later we will look at some of the structural determinations of this conflict, but for the moment we examine only the conflict itself. The local MP, Dr Karl Bremer, raised the matter in Parliament, while an angry letter to the local press claimed that the police seemed unable to stop the meetings:

Kan die stadsraad van Graaff-Reinett dan nie sulke persone ... belet om hier te kom nie? ... Die naturel {Tonjeni - WH} gebruik oproerige taal en probeer om die naturelle op allerhande maniere op te sweep. Ek verstaan dat daar alreeds 'n

hele klomp beloof het om die oproermaker
te ondersteun. (6)

As in the Western Cape, there were often differences about how the "agitators" should be dealt with, differences which were underpinned by very different material bases. These differences came to the surface for the first time when the local town council requested the local magistrate to ban Tonjeni from the area. The local police argued strongly that the ANC was not causing any unrest as yet, and that Tonjeni seemed to be heeding a stern warning by the local police chief. They were convinced that

It will be a great mistake to commence
any repressive measures here under
prevailing conditions ... (because it)
would only result in formenting trouble.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police in the Eastern Cape, on the other hand, disagreed with this strategy, and urged the Minister of Justice to ban Tonjeni from the area. But it seems that the strategy of the local police prevailed - they persuaded the town council of the correctness of their view and no action was taken against Tonjeni. (7)

Apparently Tonjeni left Graaff-Reinett after about a month of organising, while Runeli continued to organise at least until the end of July. (8) There is only sporadic evidence of activity in the town until the beginning of 1931 when the IANC launched a concerted campaign to organise in the Midlands.

From the available evidence it is not clear whether these early efforts were the beginning of a planned strategy of expansion into the Eastern Cape, or whether it was merely an independent act by Tonjeni who was on his way to the Transkei for a court case. (9) The length of his stay and the arrival of Runeli seems to indicate that a fairly concerted organising campaign was launched. But there were

certainly no attempts by the ANC(WP) to follow up their efforts in Graaff-Reinett or to organise elsewhere in the Eastern Cape until the beginning of the following year.

Even before Tonjeni returned to Graaff-Reinett late in January 1931 to build on his earlier efforts, there were indications of the effects of these efforts. It seems that a fairly well organised local branch existed as there was much paranoia in December 1930 about a possible "'opstaan" van die naturelle" on Dingaan's Day. Extensive precautions were taken and a record number of arms were sold in the town. On Dingaan's Day itself, African people were reportedly afraid to come to town, because "die boere wil ons skiet". (10) Shortly thereafter the ANC called a "monster mass meeting " on January 11 for the purpose of

'exposing and opposing Elliot Tonjeni and others' and shewing Bolshevistic tactics are not the right methods to adopt to gain emancipation of the 'oppressed African people'. (11)

It would seem that this meeting was in fact called by representatives of the ANC(WP), probably Thomas Faku and Archie McKinley, who had just arrived in the area to combat the influence of the IANC. In the words of Faku, the first people

once and for all to oppose and expose its existence amongst our non-European people's were we: will not leave no stone unturned in whipeing out its dangerous Policy, were ever - ever we set our foot no Communist can Compete, we don't care who he is. (12)

Tonjeni and Arnoth Plaatjes held their first meeting in the Cape location a week later, on Friday 23 January, and they were given a very sympathetic hearing by a crowd of about

150 people. In their speeches they attacked the pass laws, and stressed that

**Those that follow us must not only be
prepared to eat fire, but walk on fire.**

Tonjeni also launched an attack on Faku and McKinley and threatened to "play Rugby with them" at their next meeting on Sunday. (13) On the Sunday the two groups started off having separate meetings and, according to the police report, most of the people went to the ANC meeting. Apparently under pressure from the crowd, Willem Hendricks (Velapi), a member of the local IANC, met with the local ANC chairman James Ngendana, and they decided that a joint meeting should be held. This was arranged, but it soon broke up in disorder when Ngendana refused Tonjeni permission to speak. The IANC again resumed their own meeting, followed, it seems, by a large majority of the crowd. (14).

Tonjeni attacked the ANC and accused it of working "hand in hand with the CID". He again reaffirmed his determination to

make a movement to abolish the Poll Tax
... {and} passes ... {He planned} to
lead a demonstration here in
Graaff-Reinett with the native women of
this location ... to follow me at night
and see if the Police dogs will demand
their passes ...

As far as is known this march never took place, probably as a result of the disputes between the IANC and the ANC. The pass issue seems to have been a particularly burning grievance in the Midlands. In addition to the payment of various levies and taxes which were enforced through these laws, there was also much bitterness about the nightly raids for passes. Time and again it was stated that

these Police dogs they make love to you
 {i.e. the women - WH} when they ask your
 passes at night time, they put you up
 the family way and when the child is
 born and they don't own up as the father
 of the child but call it a bastard.
 (15)

For the moment it seemed as if the IANC had gained the upper hand in Graaff-Reinett as Tonjeni and Plaatjes held two further successful meetings during the following week, attracting crowds of 200 and 250 people respectively. At the second meeting, the new IANC flag was hoisted, probably for the first time. (16)

But the next week both Tonjeni and Plaatjes left to organise in Middelburg (17) and when they returned to Graaff-Reinett two weeks later, only about 30 people attended their first meeting - most people were attending a meeting of the ANC. (18) It is not clear whether the IANC leaders were discouraged by this fact alone or whether other developments had taken place, but Tonjeni and Plaatjes left again for Middelburg a few days later and the IANC never again attempted serious organisation in Graaff-Reinett.

Certainly Faku attempted to claim the credit for this setback when he wrote to the Secretary for Justice that

For instance in Graaffreinet 1931 last when the Municipal authorities were being threatened with a critical trouble because of the Revolutionary teachings of Elliot Tonjeni, I got out from Cape Town, only to find Graaffreinet in a restless position, owing to Tonjeni's teachings, I at once set upon him and explained matters both to the authorities and the resident Natives and Coloured, and within three successful

weeks Tonjeni was obliged to catch a midnight train and leave Graaffreinet ... B.R. Ndobe also attempted a Campaign in Graaffreinet but, I got him out rapidly. (19)

Faku continued to organise in Graaff-Reinett and he was joined by another ANC(WP) organiser, Mathope Mputle, soon afterwards. They held regular meetings which attracted crowds varying between 100 and a maximum of 300.

It is necessary to attempt to answer the question as to why the ANC(WP) was successful in its campaign against the IANC. Firstly, as showed earlier, there is some doubt about the level of commitment to organise in Graaff-Reinett by the IANC organisers. They all seemed to be fairly fully occupied in organising in Cradock and Middelburg. Although Faku was also organising in Aberdeen and Willowmore, he spent most of his time in Graaff-Reinett and it certainly seems as though the ANC(WP) worked much harder in organising in Graaff-Reinett.

Secondly, Graaff-Reinett was first organised under the banner of the ANC(WP) and this would give an advantage to the latter, especially as Graaff-Reinett was far removed from the causes of the divisions in Cape Town. In fact there seemed to have been a great degree of confusion about the various organisations and the reason for their existence, as is evidenced by the following question by one Japie Gazea at one of the first meetings:

'he asked why there was today and. {sic} I.C.U., African National Congress, and Independent National Congress, which is correct and which must be followed, this was not answered ... (20)

This factor was probably only partially outweighed by the

fact that the charismatic Tonjeni had joined the IANC, as Runeli, who had done the early organising with him, had remained in the ANC(WP).

Thirdly, and most important of all, was the fact that the ANC(WP) organisers in the Midlands took up and articulated the demands of the rural proletariat in a way that was virtually indistinguishable from the IANC. Although there were some attacks on communism, the ANC(WP) reserved its harshest words for the white government. It took up the popular issues of beer brewing, unemployment, high rents and bad conditions in the location, and even, on occasion demanded a black republic. (21)

Thus Faku continued to organise successfully in the area during the next year. By May 1930 the police reported that the local branch of the ANC had a "supposed membership of some 250 native and coloured people", including the members of a branch of the ICU which had gone over to the ANC en bloc. (22)

But the methods by which the ANC(WP) achieved this success had highly contradictory consequences for it. On the one hand, it was able to defeat the IANC. But on the other hand, the militance of the ANC(WP) meant that eventually it would be exposed to the same repression as its rival. Faku wrote to the Minister of Justice that he could not understand how,

now when I am now finished with getting the Communist out, the authorities turn on me in such a repressive and harsh way, (23)

and that

it would by no means benefit the people of the Country in which we live, to be out and suppress moderate, and

Constitutional propoganda ... (24)

But the farmers were more concerned about the political practice of the ANC(WP), than about the need to combat a "communist threat" that had already been defeated.

This tension was already in evidence as early as April. The provincial secretary of the ANC led a delegation to the mayor to discuss rents and unemployment in the location at a time when it was reported that there were 348 unemployed "coloured people" in the location. (25) The LAB immediately held a special meeting where it

recommended that the Council be asked to try and find a way of stopping, legally, the political meetings held in the location by agitators on behalf of certain bodies, viz African National Congress, I.C.U. etc.

That nothing of this nature be allowed in this vicinity again either or indirectly, {sic} for the following reasons:

1. They have taken advantage of the ignorance of the location people.
2. Have divided the inhabitants into different bodies and each is dead against the other.
3. Are trying to blacklist some of the orderly men, especially the more prominent ones.
4. Most of these illiterates who are followers have so much interest in these meetings held almost every Sunday and Wednesday afternoons that they have become lethargies {sic} in the line of working for their own lining. {sic}
5. There is a remarkable drop, in consequence of this, in the records of the Location revenue.
6. Engendering a spirit of hostility between their followers and the following:

Municipal Authorities and the

Advisory Board Members,
which is worst of all.

The Board earnestly requests the Authorities, if approving of this, to see that it is carried through as soon as possible and that these political meetings are brought to a stop at an early date. (26)

Faku had already been banned from the Willowmore district at the beginning of April, (27) but the District Commandant was loath to extend this ban to Graaff-Reinett:

The holding of these meetings ... has not been prejudicial to the good order of the Location as far as known to the Police and at present I see no reason for prohibiting them. (28)

It was only much later, in January 1932, that matters came to a head. Apparently this was after some meetings had ended in stone-throwing incidents. (29) A more important consideration was probably that the ANC(WP)'s organisation in nearby Aberdeen and Willowmore had been becoming progressively more militant and it had apparently just launched a very successful rent strike in the former town. (30)

To smash the organisation, the authorities proceeded in much the same way as they had dealt with the IANC. Faku was expelled from the Graaff-Reinett location and then charged and convicted of entering the location without a permit. The Council also passed additional location regulations enabling it to ban meetings if it so desired. (31) The ultimate solution of a banning order was used a while later against Faku, the principal organiser. (32) After this it seems that organisation in these areas collapsed.

II MIDDELBURG

After the initial efforts to organise in Graaff-Reinett, the organisers of the IANC concentrated their efforts on Middelburg where they achieved great success. Most of the main organisers of the IANC was active in Middelburg in February and March 1931. By the end of March, however, the outside organisers had all been banned from the area and the local leadership had to survive on its own.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the early organisation in Middelburg. It examines in some detail the ways in which the IANC tried to organise in the area, the importance of public meetings, the elements in discourse of the IANC and the development of local leadership.

One of the most interesting aspects was the fact that the IANC organised in much greater depth than in the Western Province. It seems that at least some of the lessons had been learnt from the experience of repression there.

The importance of Meetings and the Discourse of the IANC

As elsewhere the primary method of organisation was through public meetings. Tonjeni and Plaatjes arrived from Graaff-Reinett in February 1931 and started to organise in Middelburg. They initially held a spate of public meetings to establish the IANC in the town. Within a month or so, the IANC had settled down to the usual pattern of regular meetings on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons. These meetings were usually attended by between 200 and 500 people, although there were much larger crowds of up to 1 000 people on several occasions. The people present seemed to have been fairly equally divided between African and Coloured people, while there were almost always more women than men present. Later the extent of the participation by women will be examined in greater detail, but a rough indication of the overall level of support for the IANC is indicated by the statistics for Middelburg's adult black population:

	Male	Female	Total
African	599	409	1 008
Coloured	728	484	1 212
Total	1 327	893	2 220

(33)

Thus between 10% and 25% of the population regularly attended IANC meetings. It is notable that the Middelburg location was less than half the size of that of Graaff-Reinett. The population also would seem to be less settled as, unlike in Graaff-Reinett, there is an imbalance in the sex ratio. A possible explanation might be that more unemployed people had come to Middelburg. The unemployment issue was certainly taken up much more actively than in Graaff-Reinett.

Because of the vital role of public meetings, it is important to discuss the meetings and the discourse of the IANC, especially the way they were used to mobilise the people.

Tonjeni and Plaatjes started their campaign in Middelburg when they held an impromptu meeting in the location on the 6th of February, a Friday night, attended by about 60 people. (34) The meeting was opened by singing Nkosi Sikelala IAfrika after which Tonjeni spoke,

saying I cannot call you Ladies and
Gentlemen as you are worth being so
called therefore I will say You Slaves
of Africa.

He emphasised the need for organisation and unity, common themes in all the speeches of the militants and attacked tribal divisions:

Why should we be distinguished as Xhosas,
Bushmen and Korranas and not Africans in

the whole of our Country given to us by God.

At a four hour long meeting the next day Tonjeni went on to take up local grievances such as the Poll tax, the dictatorial powers of the Location Superintendent and the lack of a LAB. (35) He again stressed that it was only through organisation that these grievances would be overcome - that Africa must liberate itself:

In 1912 a Congress went over to get Freedom from King George, King George informed them that they must go back to S. Africa because he cannot give them freedom, but he did not mean us to sit down and drink wine.

When in Port Elizabeth and Umtata the Prince of Wales was approached he said that your freedom lies in your own hands. He meant you to make as Gen. Smuts and Hertzog to lead your own people.

The message was brought home by the liberal use of metaphors rooted in the everyday experience of the people:

the white man milks you, you have no more milk, now it is your chance to kick over the bucket ... 'a chicken does not wait for a hen to break the shell, but kick itself free. You must do likewise or else you die in it'.

Two things that cannot be bought for money is Land and Freedom, the only way is to shed blood.

At times these metaphors became more violent:

If a flea, bug or slow walker bites you,
what do you do, you kill it. Why not
kill these two leg Flies.

This is in sharp contrast to the earlier stress on non-violent passive resistance. (36) By the next day, more than 60 men and 100 women, "Natives and coloured", attended the IANC meeting. At this meeting Tonjeni raised the ire of the conservatives when he

... went over to communistic ideas and explained that the communist party were out to break up Native Slavery. He appealed to all Coloureds and Natives to come together and to stand together and raise funds to further the purpose of the communist party. (37)

This led to a heated argument and was the beginning of a long conflict between the IANC and conservatives grouped in the CAC. This conflict is one of the themes which is discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.

By the next Saturday the IANC attracted over 350 people to its meeting and the next day an even larger meeting was held attended by about 1 000 people. (38) At this meeting a special

'African flag' was hoisted under the singing of the Native National Anthem.

The Union Jack ... was then also hoisted ... Tonjeni then proceeded to explain the meaning of the flags. He said the Red in the Union Jack represented the blood that were shed by the whites. The blue represents the ocean which they crossed to come here and rob them (the natives) of their

country, this country and the white he said indicates the white man.

He then proceeded to explain the colours of the Native flag the red he said represented the blood of the Natives butchered by the whites, the green the grass of Africa, the yellow the ripe wheat and gold of Africa, and the black, the Non-Europeans of Africa ...

It was under this flag {the Union Jack - WH} that the Police were sent under Capt. Barter by Pirow to butcher the Natives at Worcester, but said he, referring the Native Flaf {sic}, I am pleased to say that it was also under this flag that Capt. Barter's head was chopped open. (39)

After listing the many injustices that the black people had suffered under the Union Jack, Tonjeni and Plaatjes ceremoniously burnt the flag. Plaatjes

... then referred to the 'African flag' and said 'I am pleased I am standing under my own flag. The Africans will be ruled under it.

Thereafter the flag remained an important element in the discourse of IANC organisation in Middelburg.

In a speech a few months later, Plaatjes elaborated on some of the thinking behind the imagery:

Dear slaves of Africa I call you so and not Ladies and Gentlemen because you are slaves in your own country. The foreigners are called Ladies and Gentlemen but not you, you are worse off

than slaves because slaves always had plenty to eat. Slaves always had homes.

These themes - the fact that Africans were "slaves" in the land of their birth; that "foreigners" were enjoying all the good things; the need for all black people to unite irrespective of tribal or other divisions; the idea that the oppressors would only listen to the oppressed if they were organised and strong; the liberal use of metaphors and imagery, often religious; and the attacks on the conservatives - remained characteristic of the discourse of the IANC throughout the time it organised in the Midlands.

The emergence of Local Leadership

One of the lessons that was seemingly learnt from the IANC's experience in the Western Cape, was the need to train and to rely on local leaders. Already at their first meeting, Tonjeni had warned that

'I can see that here I am going to be arrested'. (40)

From the beginning Tonjeni and Plaatjes were subject to constant harrassment. They were unable to obtain the necessary visitor's permits to stay in the location after 9 p.m. and were forced to sleep at the outspan outside Middelburg for the whole of their stay. Within a week of their arrival they were charged with entering the location illegally and contravening this regulation. They were fined 5s (or 7 days) and 10s (or 14 days) on the 2 charges. Later they were again charged, this time for staying in the town itself, but charges were dropped, apparently when they proved that they were registered voters. Later Plaatjes was again charged for being in the location, but was acquitted. (41)

By the middle of March Tonjeni had to leave Middelburg to stand trial in Cape Town, (42) while Ndobe who arrived in

Middelburg in the middle of February, had to leave a week later. (43) Furthermore orders banning Tonjeni and Ndobe from Middelburg, Graaff-Reinett and the surrounding areas had already been signed and were served on them shortly thereafter. (44)

The greater awareness of the problems facing the organisation when its leadership was subjected to repression was translated into an effort to train local leaders and speakers. Within a week three local speakers appeared on the platform with Tonjeni and Plaatjes, viz. Charles Heeuw, James Ntame and Charlie January. A local executive was also elected with Ntame as chairman, Andries Louw as secretary and January as organiser. (45)

At the end of March the local leadership was also reinforced by the arrival of William Hendricks, also known as Velapi Matiyase, who was IANC secretary at Graaff-Reinett. He had also organised in Colesburg and Naauwpoort, but thereafter spent most of his time in Middelburg. It is not clear whether he became the local secretary or not, (46) but his help was sorely needed as Plaatjes and January, the most active local leaders, were served with banning orders at the end of March and this led to the emergence of some tension within the local IANC. It is instructive to look at the ensuing crisis in some detail.

January had already been upset by the violent demonstration of the women on 23 March (see below) and he now had second thoughts about his involvement in the IANC. At the next IANC meeting, he did not sit on the platform and when called on to speak he replied that

'I am not prepared to make a speech and I do not want you people to look up to me as a leader. I have to leave Middelburg, the place of my birth, but I am not saying good-bye to you yet. My experience is a hard one and I have only

myself to blame for it and I want to say to you today is, men use your common sense and see what happened to me and think what what {sic} you are doing before you try to go too deep into this case ...

I have nothing further to say today.

I may have more to say to you later.

(47)

The reason for his reticence is clear from the letter he wrote to the District Commandant of Police on the same day. He pleaded for the lifting of his order and claimed that he had been misled by Tonjeni, Ndobe and Plaatjes, but had now seen the light. He now promised his assistance to the police in return for his freedom:

Since the trouble with the women on 23.3.1931 I on several occasions used my influence to stop people to attend these open air meetings which I know causes a lot of grievance in town and I have also gained the confidence of the Chairman and Secretary of the association whom I can assure you will assisty {sic} me to keep away from Middelburg all suspected agitators. (48)

The Commissioner of Police in the Eastern Cape thought that

if the operation of the Minister's Order is suspended for a month it will have the effect of getting him to use his influence against the Independent African National Congress. With this view in mind I would recommend the suspension of the order for that period, and provided his conduct during that period is considered satisfactory by the

Police, I will then be prepared to recommend the cancellation of the order ... (49)

A few days later January made a public break with the IANC. At an IANC meeting he first asked for and received a vote of confidence in himself and then tried to persuade the audience to denounce the IANC in a speech that was remarkable chiefly for its subservience towards the rulers and paternalism towards the oppressed:

Many things that had been said at the meetings by Plaatjes, Ndoobe and Tonjeni are right for we all work for the advance of the Native and Coloured man, but I must tell you that many a thing had been said by these men on {sic} these meetings here which are very wrong ... Not for my own sake because I am going away . {sic} Friends for your own sake and because it is my duty as a leader ... I tell you these meetings can serve no good purpose and must be stopped. Many of you get the sack through these meetings ... If any of you were bosses and those whom you employ always curse you what will you do? ... If you look up to me as a leader, you must have no further meetings and if you want anything righted go to the proper official and ask for it. We are sufficiently organised to get everything right in a nice manner ... I dont {sic} tell you to do as I say you must use your own heads, but remember many of you are uneducated (Here an old man shouted out, "Never mind the uneducated" at the same time disputes commenced at several places ...

The crowd became so noisy that January was unable to continue and a brief tussle for control of the platform ensued. Although the police thought that about half the crowd of 300 people supported him, only about a quarter of the people left with January when he stalked out of the meeting. (50)

The incident also revealed that the leadership of the IANC still clung to many of the traditional notions of the role of leaders. This was articulated most clearly by January when he told a meeting after the march that it

was a big mistake for those women and children to have gone through to Town like they did. We have told you before that if there is anything that you want you must come to us. If you want any rights you must go and ask for it. Come to us and ask us to go and get it for you. You must not go and try to get things by force. The position is that we leaders get the blame for what you have done. (51)

However, this elitist conception of the role of leadership was shared by some of the other speakers on the platform. Andries Louw, the local secretary said:

We came here to try to develop {sic} and to make plans for improvement but not to take drastic actions. The Rulers must Rule.

In was only Plaatjes, the last of the more experienced leaders still in Middelburg, who refused to condemn the marchers and stressed that the pass laws were to blame for the trouble. Nevertheless he pointed out that

we always tell you to follow your
leaders and not go to in front of them.

Although it is not clear what the immediate effects of the bannings and the split were, it seems that the IANC continued to organise successfully in Middelburg. By August the local press reported that the IANC had at least 300 paid up members in Middelburg. In addition, a remarkable number of local speakers and leaders emerged, many of them with seemingly little previous political involvement. An example was John Mana who first spoke at a meeting in May:

I am shivering when I am called upon to
speak as already I am warned that if I
speak at these meetings, I will be
sacked from my work. (52)

In the course of the next six months, the police reports listed well over 20 local speakers, (53) as well as a number of others whom they could not identify. Although the main and more articulate speakers like Ndoobe and Camba were of petty bourgeois origin, it is evident that a number of these speakers were of working class origins - thus John Mana was a labourer at the Grootfontein school of Agriculture, while John Sholoba and somebody identified only as Charlie, are described simply as "local unemployed native(s)". (54) Even William Hendricks, one of the full-time organisers, was described as "an uneducated sort of man and not much of a speaker". (55)

The way in which the IANC survived this, and subsequent crisis in the leadership was a tribute to the strength of the organisation. It had become a clearly mass based organisation and could not simply be destroyed by removing the leadership or creating divisions within the leadership.

It was able to survive the removal of the top leadership

despite, or perhaps because of, the tremendous popularity of some of the IANC leaders. Tonjeni was probably the most popular leader. It was reported at one meeting that, after Ndobe and Plaatjes had already spoken, Tonjeni announced that he

did not wish to make a speech, but shouts from everywhere that he must speak and that they would not go until he made a speech, changed his mind.
(56)

After he left there were still continual references to him in speeches. Some of the new leadership even regarded him as a near God:

I am willing to die for the truth brought to us by Tonjeni through God. Iw {sic} will die with Tonjeni, I recognise him as my king through God. Through God is he our king, The Kings of Kaffirland are depressing us, they are no good. (57)

He was often called "King Tonjeni", he had been "sent by God", and was compared to Moses or Noah. (58)

This adulation was, however, tempered by the realisation that liberation would only come through their own efforts that

Tonjeni, Plaatjes and N'dobi {sic} are not rifles. We must stand and organise ourselves ... It is not Tonjeni's organisation but yours. These pigs oppressing us says it is Tonjeni's ... Today we must ourselves get up and organise. (59)

Thus the IANC was able to survive despite the repression of individual leaders. When one leader was banned, there was usually someone else to step into the breach "for the leaders of the ANC are as many as ants". (60)

It was only later in the next year, when the state stepped in with massive repression, that it was able to crush the IANC.

NOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all the information below comes from the following documents in JUS 582, 3111/31: Town Clerk, Graaff-Reinett to Magistrate, Graaff-Reinett, 19.6.1930; Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett to Magistrate, Graaff-Reinett, 20.6.1930; Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol, 23.6.1930; Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 7.7.1930.
2. Ons Koerant 4.6.1931.
3. Cape Times 23.6.1930.
4. Umsebenzi 11.7.1930.
5. Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 16.7.1930.
6. Ons Koerant 23.6.1930; JUS 582 3111/31, Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 9.7.1930.
7. JUS 582 3111/31, Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 9.7.1930.
8. Umsebenzi 1.8.1930.
9. Cape Times 14.6.1930, 30.7.1930.
10. Ons Koerant 18.12.1930.
11. Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 14.1.1931.
12. JUS 581 3103/31, Faku to SJ, 26.1.1932 - sic omitted to avoid repetition.
13. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 25.1.1931.
14. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 26.1.1931. Also for details below.
15. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 26.1.1931.
16. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 1.2.1931, 2.2.1931. See below for more details of the flag.
17. See Section II below.

18. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 11.2.1931.
19. JUS 581 3103/31, Faku to SJ, 26.1.1932 - sic omitted.
20. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 26.1.1931.
21. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 26.3.1931, 1.4.1931; JUS 581 3103/31, Report to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 23.3.1931.
22. JUS 581 3103/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol, 21.1.1932.
23. JUS 581 3103/31, Faku to MJ, 26.1.1932.
24. JUS 581 3103/31, Faku to MJ, received 11.4.1931.
25. Ons Koerant 9.4.1931.
26. JUS 582 3111/31, Report of a special meeting of the Location Advisory Board held on 17th April, 1931.
27. JUS 581 3103/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol, 21.1.1932.
28. JUS 582 3111/31, Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett to Magistrate, Graaff-Reinett, 4.5.1931.
29. Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 4.2.1932.
30. The struggles in Aberdeen are beyond the scope of this work, but see for example JUS 581 3103/31, NCO Aberdeen to Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett, 2.5.1931, 16.1.1932; Extracts from Speeches 19.12.1931, 20.12.1931, 28.12.1931, 2.1.1932, 10.2.1932; Distcompol, Graaff-Reinett to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 18.1.1932.
31. Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 4.2.1932; JUS 581 3103/31, Faku to SJ, 26.1.1932.
32. JUS 581 3103/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol 21.1.1932.
33. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 17.5.1931.

34. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.2.1931.
35. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.2.1931.
36. See Chapter 3 above.
37. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 8.2.1931. It is a rather interesting aspect of the ideology of the IANC that, although it was often identified as "the communists" by others, this statement is one of only two that I was able to find where IANC leaders explicitly supported the CPSA. In the other statement Plaatjes referred to the leaders of the IANC as "We young communists" (JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 11.3.1931).
38. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 14.2.1931, 15.2.1931. Also Die Middeler 18.2.1931, Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 18.2.1931 for details. The police estimated the crowd at 500 to 600 people.
39. The origin of this flag is somewhat obscure - it was obviously a variation of the ANC flag, but it is not known when the red was included. It was probably only after the formation of the IANC, and perhaps as a result of the influence of the CPSA. The flag was possibly a variation of the flag of the short-lived League of African Rights, formed in 1929 by the CPSA and then disbanded on orders of the Comintern. Its flag was green, black and red. (Roux 1944, P114). As far as I can gather it was first used in Riversdale and Graaff-Reinet in 1931 - see Chapter 4 and above.
40. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 6.2.1931. See also JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 6.6.1931 for Cradock.
41. JUS 582 3111/31, Compol to MJ, 11.3.1931; Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 18.2.1931 and Die Middeler 18.2.1931.
42. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 18.3.1931.
43. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 18.2.1931, 18.3.1931.
44. JUS 582 3111/31, Compol to MJ, 14.3.1931 and

Decompol, Western Cape to SJ 27.3.1931. The other areas were Aberdeen, Jansenville, Murraysburg, Pearston, Willowmore, Albert, Colesburg, Hanover, Maraisburg, Molteno and Steynsburg.

45. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 14.2.1931; JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 18.2.1931.
46. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 25.3.1931.
47. JUS 583 3139/31, January to Distcompol, Middelburg, 30.3.1931.
48. JUS 582 3107/31, January to Distcompol, Middelburg, 30.3.1931.
49. JUS 582 3107/31, Decompol Eastern Cape to Compol, 31.3.1931.
50. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 2.4.1931.
51. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 25.3.1931.
52. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 17.5.1931.
53. See Appendix 1.
54. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 22.7.1931, 27.7.1931, 30.7.1931.
55. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 25.3.1931.
56. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 18.2.1931.
57. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 4.8.1931.
58. See for example JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 12.8.1931, 28.9.1931.
59. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 28.9.1931.
60. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 30.3.1931.

APPENDIX 1

Speakers at IANC meetings in Middelburg

Bacela, July
Bokveld, Antonie
Camba, Douglas
Charlie
Hendricks, William (Velapi Matiyase)
Huigh, Fanie
January, Charlie
Johnson (Fobe), Willie
Jones, Sarah
Klaase, Jim
Louw, Andries (Harry?)
Louw, James (J.S.)
Maduna, Jan
Mana, John
Manas, Johnson (or Manas Johnson?)
Minnaar, Hermanus
Miles, Pop
Ngenze, Elizabeth
Ndaba, Eddie
Ngqakayi, Jim
Nkabi, David (= Swartbooi?)
Nkabi (September), Swartbooi
Ntame, James
Ntsikane (Rai), Jack
Qobo, John
Qobo, Stephanus (= John?)
Sholoba, John
Spandiel, Karel
Tiger, John
Uithaler, Sarah
Windvoel, Jacob

CHAPTER 6

'THE HARDSHIP HAS INCREASED ON US':
THE ISSUES TAKEN UP BY THE IANC IN THE MIDLANDS

This chapter examines the way in which the IANC responded to the immediate issues facing its members, notably unemployment, low wages, passes, bad living conditions as well as the domination of "political" organisations by the conservative petty bourgeoisie. It also examines the way in which the IANC's response to these issues was articulated in its discourse.

In this respect there are several striking differences between the organisations in the Western Cape and in the Midlands.

Firstly, there was a much more significant presence of Africans in the Midlands than in the Western Cape. In the towns they usually formed about half the population. This factor made it somewhat easier for the IANC to organise as it was still seen as a primarily "African" organisation. It is important to emphasize though, that there is no evidence whatsoever of any "racial" tension within the IANC. In fact the unity that it was able to forge between the different groups was one of its most important achievements.

Secondly, the two areas were fundamentally differently affected by the Great Depression. In the Western Cape farmers were largely able to combat the effects of the Depression and there was no serious crisis in agriculture. In the Midlands the opposite was the case. Although the development of capitalism in agriculture was probably less advanced in the Midlands, agriculture was almost totally dependent on the world market which was devastated during the Depression. The effect was to produce a profound crisis in agriculture in the Midlands.

The combination of these factors had important effects on the possibilities of organisation, as well as on the issues that were taken up.

I FARM LABOUR AND THE CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE

The Effects of the Depression

Agriculture in the Eastern Cape was dominated by sheep farming, and especially by wool farming. The next most important sector was probably the production of mohair, while there was also some grain and fruit farming. (1)

Wool farming had been well established in the area since the mid-19th century. Farmers were totally dependent on the overseas market as almost the whole of the wool crop was exported to Britain for processing. By 1860 wool accounted for about 70% of the exports of the Cape Colony, and until the early 1880's the value of wool exports rivalled those of diamonds. (2)

The wool industry had a renewed upsurge during World War One. By the end of the war wool was again the single most important export excluding gold, accounting for about a third of all exports. (3)

However, the dependence on the world market devastated the wool industry during the Depression - the position is summarised in the table below:

TABLE 1 - WOOL SOLD (4)

YEAR	VALUE SOLD		VOLUME	AVERAGE PRICE	
	£m	Index	Index	d per lb	Index
1924-28	15,042	100	100	17,7	100
1929	16,418	109,1	130,6	14,5	82,0
1930	11,298	75,1	141,7	9,2	52,0
1931	7,475	49,7	131,8	6,5	36,8
1932	5,433	36,1	139,6	4,5	25,5
1933	6,799	45,2	156,6	5,0	28,3
CHANGE	-70,6 (1928-32)		+19,9 (1929-33)	-79,2 (1925-32)	

The price of wool fell dramatically on the world market, dropping to half its previous level by 1930, and halving again by 1932. Farmers responded characteristically by attempting to increase production as much as possible and production during the depression was on average nearly 40% above pre-Depression levels. The increase in production could, however, do no more than ameliorate the effects of the price fall and the value of wool sold decreased by nearly 65% during the Depression years.

But even these figures probably do not reflect the full impact of the crisis. As the Farmer's Weekly commented in 1929:

When wool goes down thirty-three percent, does the railway carry it at a third less rate? Do the shipping people do so? Do the brokers charge a third less for pressing, handling, commission, etc? Go through the whole string of those who live on the industry and see if any section, other than the farmer, bear any part of the thirty-three per cent reduction. Do the workers take

less pay, or work longer hours? Do the cloth merchants sell at a lower figure? and finally, do the tailors charge less for a suit? The The {sic} answer is: 'No' every time. (5)

Die Burger calculated in 1930, when the price of wool had fallen by 50% that farmers had suffered a much greater decrease, as these "middlemen" were well organised and unwilling to reduce their rates. It gave as an example that a crop worth £2 500 to the farmer in 1929, was worth less than £800 in 1930. (6)

The situation was further aggravated by the vast increase in production. The doubling of production between 1925 and 1933 lead to a great overgrazing crisis and in the four years after 1930, more than 30% of wooled sheep died. (7) The Cape was not quite as badly affected as other areas, but still suffered losses of more than 25%.

The crisis was thus more serious for wool farmers than for those producing food. Part of the reason for this was that wool was not a necessity and purchases of clothes could be postponed temporarily. In fact wool was becoming a luxury as the cost of production of synthetic fibres was decreasing rapidly. Thus the demand for wool tended to decrease, or, at least, increase more slowly than general demand. (8)

The mohair farmers found themselves in very much the same position as wool farmers, and in the Eastern Cape they were probably often the same people. Almost all mohair wool was produced in the Eastern Cape as is shown by the fact that about 90% of exports went through the Port Elizabeth harbour. (9)

The mohair producers were also totally dependent on the world market as almost the entire crop was exported. The mohair producers were in a stronger position than the wool producers as they produced about 20% of the world output,

but this advantage was offset by the fact that the mohair market was not well established. Even before the Depression it was subject to violent fluctuations in price due to fashion changes and speculation. (10) The effect of the Depression is shown in the table below:

TABLE 2: MOHAIR EXPORTS (11)

YEAR	VALUE		VOLUME		AVERAGE PRICE	
	£000	Index	lb(000)	Index	d per lb	Index
1924-28	850	100	10 950	100	18,9	100
1929	643	75,6	10 038	91,7	15,4	81,5
1930	295	34,7	6 874	62,7	10,3	54,5
1931	229	26,9	5 443	49,7	10,1	53,4
1932	96	11,3	6 435	58,8	3,6	19,0
1933	330	38,8	15 743	143,8	5,0	26,5
%CHANGE	-70,6 (1928-32)		+101,1 (1925-33)		-79,2 (1925-32)	

It is clear that the mohair industry was even more badly affected than the wool industry. By 1932 the price was less than 20% of its previous level, while demand even at the lower prices had collapsed to 50% to 60% of previous levels. The combined effect on the value of production was disastrous: in 1932 production was worth barely one tenth of pre-Depression levels.

Farm labour in the Eastern Cape

Clearly then, agriculture in the Eastern Cape was in a crisis by 1930. This crisis stemmed primarily from the nature and extent of its integration into the world market. This chapter will not attempt a detailed analysis of the development and the precise nature of capitalist agriculture in the area, but will merely attempt to give some indication of the extent of the development of the wage form.

Van der Horst in her study of those areas where African

labour was used extensively, concluded that the

amount of land allotted to Native labourers for growing crops ... appears to be least in the eastern Cape Province, where it is often less than 1 morgen. (12)

Another contemporary study of the Border region concluded that labour tenancy as a system was disappearing rapidly. In fact not one labour tenant was found in the process of selecting a sample. (13) Similarly Hunter found labour tenants on only one of the 29 farms she studied in the Eastern Cape. (14)

The limited extent of subsistence production on white farms in the area is further illustrated by the following table prepared by the Native Farm Labour Committee in 1935/36.

TABLE 3: PRODUCTION PER AFRICAN FAMILY ON WHITE FARMS, 1935/36 (15)

Area	Number of families (1000s)	Maize (200 lb. bags)	Sorghum ('Kaffir corn') (200 lb. bags)	Cattle	Goats	Woolled sheep
N.W. Natal	13	1.5	0.3	3.9	2.8	..
N. Natal	13	2.1	0.7	7.3	5.5	..
S.E. Transvaal	27	3.5	0.6	5.1	3.8	0.2
N.W. Transvaal (Waterberg)	8	3.8	1.8	4.4	1.2	..
W. Transvaal (Lichtenburg)	5	10.6	2.1	2.1	0.2	0.5
Northern O.F.S.	15	9.7	..	3.5	0.03	0.9
Central O.F.S.	16	6.1	..	2.3	..	0.8
Southern O.F.S.	2	0.06	..	0.7	0.7	3.1
Eastern Cape (coastal)	11	1.6	0.2	3.7	1.1	0.002
N.E. Cape (Elliot, etc.)	5	0.003	..	1.6	0.2	3.0
Inland Cape (Cradock, etc.)	6	1.6	1.4	0.8
Griqualand West (Hay, etc.)	6	0.6	0.4	0.8	5.9	1.4

There was no grain production for subsistence purposes, while ownership of stock was extremely limited - substantially less than any other province, except for parts of the OFS.

Although the labour tenancy system had disappeared for all practical purposes, the wage form was not dominant. Haines found that the average wage in kind was substantially higher than the cash wage - 27s 6d as against 13s 10d per month. He argues that wages in kind tend to immobilise labour and that it retards the full development of capitalist relations of production. However, he stresses that payment in kind was decreasing in the Cape and that it is

likely that in the Cape competition is freer ... than in the rest of the Union. Farmers must compete with employers in small towns for their seasonal labour supplies. (16)

There was, however, a significant sector of the rural proletariat for whom the wage form was much more highly developed. The sheep shearers formed a relatively skilled seasonal labour force that lived in the towns and the reserves. During the season they travelled from farm to farm to shear. Thus they had a great measure of independence, which was increased by the skilled nature of their work. (17)

The independence and strength of the shearers had enabled them to win relatively high wages. At this time their wages were about 12s to 15s per 100 sheep, (18) which works out to about 4s to 5s per day for a skilled worker.

Although they usually also received some food, it is an indication of the extent of their proletarianisation that they had to buy the bulk of their food from the farmer at shop prices. (19)

The position of the shearers were threatened somewhat by the

class/fraction, becoming increasingly aware of its collective class interests and willing to organise to achieve these interests (of course not only in this period). This process was neither smooth nor without contradictions as will become clear later. But there was certainly an awareness of the need for unity and a conscious concern not only with individual reproduction, but even with the extended reproduction of agricultural capital as a whole. This is evident, albeit in a limited and confused way, in the presidential address by Major Hunt at the congress of the South African Agricultural Union:

When we consider the manifold difficulties which confront our industry in our own society; when we cast our eyes overseas and contemplate what has happened in Russia, where the private ownership of land has disappeared, and what is happening in Spain, where landowners are being deprived of their estates if obtained by heir {sic} ancestors under Crown Grant; when we consider the terrible economic conditions of the world at large, we must realise the criminal folly of allowing narrow minded racial and party political strife to divide us. (22)

The membership of farmer's associations increased dramatically during the period, (23) as did the membership of co-operatives. The number of shareholders in the mohair co-operatives virtually doubled from 8 145 in 1927/28 to 13 976 in 1931/32. (24) The percentage of the total wool clip handled by the 2 major co-operatives increased rapidly and by 1931/32 was estimated at 38%.

The organisation of the farmers revolved around two aims. Firstly, to increase the price farmers received for their wool, and secondly to decrease the cost of production.

Although the organisation proceeded fairly well, the farmers were hampered by several objective conditions in their efforts to increase the price they received. Firstly, as was pointed out earlier, the local woolbuyers and the international shipping companies were so well organised that they were well able to resist efforts to reduce their rates. (25) The co-operatives were able to win some concessions, such as reducing selling commission from 2.5% to 1.5%, curbing malpractices in broking, and offering a more efficient service to their members. (26) They were not, however, able to win major reductions to costs.

Secondly, the world market was dominated by Australia where farmers produced wool more efficiently than their South African counterparts. (27) The South African farmers, who produced almost exclusively for the world market, were consequently unable to exert any significant influence on the world price.

These factors were aggravated when Australia went off the gold standard in March and Britain in September 1931. Wool farmers selling at 20d/lb in Britain would now receive only 5.5d per lb in South Africa as against the 9d per lb in Australia. (28)

The structural inability of the wool farmers to influence the price level of their product, forced them to turn to the state for assistance. Like much of the rest of agriculture, the wool farmers were able to extract fairly substantial concessions from the state. In 1931 railage on wool was reduced by one third and wool farmers received advances from the Land Bank. Soon afterwards a direct subsidy of 10% was introduced on wool and mohair exports and this was increased to 25% and 20% respectively in 1932. (29)

But these measures, dramatic as they were in terms of contemporary economic theory were of little help. Most of the farmers' efforts to increase the price they received

went into a desperate, concerted campaign of protest against the government decision to stay on the gold standard. Unlike other sectors of agriculture, the position of the wool farmers became so desperate that they came out in open opposition to the government position. Even the official party organs of the National Party in the area lent the farmers tacit or even open support. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander summed up the desperate disbelief of the farmers who could not understand how the Australian farmers could now get even more for their wool, while the English paid less - it simply had to be nonsense. (30) By that time the Australian pound was worth less than 10s and the British pound about 14s.

It would seem that the Midlands was one of the main centres of the agitation against the gold standard, (31) but it achieved little success. The gold standard was only abandoned late in December 1932 when some of the other, and more important, fractions of capital came out in support of this move. (32)

The more immediate benefits of organisation were thus found only to a limited extent in an increased price paid to the farmers. The major effort of the farmers went into a sustained offensive to reduce costs and especially wages. Wages had become particularly important as the farmers characteristically responded to a decrease in price by increasing production. (33) Increasing production meant increasing labour requirements and it was feared that the increased demand for labour would lead to higher wages. (34)

One way in which wage costs could be reduced was by increasing the intensity of labour, as was pointed out by a lecturer at an agricultural school:

The reduction in costs may come about by a better organisation of labour, by so planning it that time is not lost in

beginning the days's duties; that there is no waste of time and effort in moving from one job to another, that two units are not despatched when one can do the job in a unit of time; that three boys (sic) are not assigned to a plough where one and an umfaan can equally manage; that an extra boy is not assigned to transport jobs, and is carried around as an ornament. (35)

But as Mr Trollip pointed out in a lecture to the Schoombie Farmers Association, farmers were also concerned about other developments which were tending to increase the wages. He pointed out that

the civilised world had run for ages on the basis of masters and servants - servants with the masters to care for, feed and pay them. Slavery had been rightly abolished, but what about servants? Were they trying to abolish or blot themselves out? Is there no longer any honour in being a good servant - no dignity of labour? ... (It was a change in) one of South Africa's greatest assets, in that, with a few exceptions, the native now asks for piece or day work. Happy is the master today who secures a servant whose mind is not poisoned against the good old-fashioned ways of work. 'Either they want higher wages, or each wants a specified job, shorter hours, better food, etc: and when all their likes and dislikes have been met, one only receives inefficient service and very little thanks in return'.

Fortunately the Government had

recently passed certain Acts (i.e. Riotous Assemblies and Masters and Servants ? - WH) but, said the speaker, he was afraid it was too late. The disturbers of peace are here and are likely to remain. (36)

This lecture demonstrates some of the contradictions in the development of capitalist agriculture in South Africa. The wool farmers were operating in a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production which was rapidly dissolving the remnants of precapitalist relations of production in the countryside, especially in the "white" areas. The farmers were increasingly forced, and unable, to compete with industry for the available "free" labour. (37) As a result many capitalist farmers still hankered after the coercive control over labour that was characteristic of the pre-capitalist mode, and there were often demands to limit the "freedom" of the workers. For example at the 1931 annual congress of the Cape Provincial Agricultural Association

it was agreed that it would be made compulsory for all white and coloured {unemployed - WH} labourers to show a dismissal notice from their {previous - WH} employers to the police or prospective employers on demand ... In the event of the labourers concerned being unable to find employment within one month, they should be compelled to apply to the police to find work for them. (38)

They would be punished if they failed to do this. There was, however, no further mention of such drastic steps and it would seem that these were not required. In any event the new Native Service Contract Act of 1932 fulfilled many of the demands of the farmers. (39)

Most of the activity, however, centred around efforts to reduce the general level of wages and organising farmers to adhere to these agreed levels even when they suffered from a shortage of labour. A beginning was made when, in May 1930, the Pearston Boerevereniging decided to keep wages for shearers to the same level as the rest of the district, viz. a wage of 12s 6d per 100 sheep, a "slagding" per 1 000, plus coffee in the morning and afternoon. (40)

Organising the farmers was, however, neither smooth nor easy as agricultural capitalism was relatively competitive at that stage and there was often a contradiction between the individual and collective interests of the farmers. Organisation was further hampered by mutual suspicion between the different farmers associations. Many woolgrowers were particularly unhappy with the CPAA which "seemed to be governed by the Western Province." (41)

The experience of the Somerset East Farmers Association is instructive. In July it accepted the same maximum wages as in Pearston and publicised the decision in the press. (42) But at a poorly attended meeting 3 months later, the chairperson

spreek sy teleurstelling uit dat die lede die besluit van die Vereeniging gebreek het. Hyself was ook onder the omstandighede daartoe verplig. Dit lyk asof die skeerders beter georganiseer is as die boere. (43)

It seems that most farmers were still forced to pay 15s to get their sheep shorn. Soon thereafter Die Burger reported that a "stormy meeting was held to try again to determine shearing wages". Many differing levels were suggested and some farmers were unwilling to accept any maximum wage at all. Eventually, a wage identical to that in Pearston was accepted, although many doubted that it would be effective.

(44)

One speaker pointed out that many farmers wanted to supply free food:

{Hy} sê die vergadering behoort alleen die loon en nie die kos vas te stel nie. Die boere het baiekeer mielies of onverkoopbare skaap waarvan hulle graag wil ontslae raak en hy kan nie sien waarom dit nie vir die skeerders gegee kan word nie. (45)

Others gave free transport to the shearers. Even the chairperson of the PFA had his doubts:

Die omstandighede verskil te veel om 'n loon vas te stel. Die groot saak is tog maar om jou skaap geskeer te kry.

It was reported that the Albert Boerevereniging had similar problems and for several months they were unable to agree on a proposed wage. (46) Eventually it was decided to shelve the proposed maximum wage

aangesien die meeste boere weier om hulle in die saak te laat voorskrywe en eenparigheid nie behaal kon word nie. (47)

Some "progress" was made, however, in lowering wages even further. In March 1931, the executive of the Jansenville Boerevereniging decided

om by boere aan te dring om nie so hoog as 1d per bok te betaal nie. (48)

Soon afterwards a much bigger meeting was held where this wage was confirmed, the sheep shearing wage further reduced

and many other wages agreed upon. The demands of the farmers were set out in the following letter which appeared in many Eastern Cape newspapers: (49)

Neem tog die volgende op in u blad vir informasie vir u lesers.

'Op 'n konferensie gehou te Richmond op 25 April 1931 waarop die Boere-verenigings van Middelburg, Hanover, De Aar, Britstown, Victoria-Wes, Murraysburg en Richmond afgevaardigdes gehad het, is die volgende besluit eenparig aangeneem, en alle boere word gevra om die besluit aan te neem en uit te voer ter bevordering van kooperasie

- lone vir skaapskeer 10s per 100 vlokskape; 12s 6d per 100 stoetooie; 2 looitjies vir vlokramme teen 10s per 100; 3 looitjies vir stoetramme teen 12s 6d per 100; 8s 4d per 100 vir angorabokke.

KOS (i.e. the price to be charged for food supplied to the workers - WH)

10s per slagskaap; 3s 6d vir boermeel, 2s 6d vir mieliemeel, en 2s vir mielies per emmer. Koffie ens. Winkelprys.

GRAANSNY - 2s per 100 gerwe, alle graan, in gerwe gelewer

DORSMASJIEN - Koring 2s; gars ens 1s 6d per sak kafsny.

Koring 12s 6d, gars ens. 1s per sak vir lank strooi. Kos dieselfde as by skapeskeer. Opsit van masjien 60s. Geen geld vooruit gee aan skeerders nie, ens

BOERE KO-OPENAAR ! {sic}

Vir die Richmond (Kaap) Boerevereniging
C.A. Visser
Sekretaris

Soon afterwards the Mortimer Farmers Association reported that

the committee appointed to investigate the question of day boys reported that they had approached all those employing such and had asked them to reduce the wage to 1/6 per day. The Lucerne Co-operative had already fallen into line. The Committee had also written to influential people throughout the Valley asking them to co-operate in this matter and had met with a great measure of success. (50)

Several months later these attempts were still continuing, but there are indications that they had not been totally successful. Towards the end of October the Midlands Farmers Association felt it necessary to announce

that after publication of this notice, the maximum rate of paying shearers be reduced to 10s per 100; (51)

implying that this had not yet been achieved. The Cradock Joint Council estimated that farm wages had been reduced by 5 - 25% during 1931. (52) This shows both the success and partial failure of the farmers to impose their new wage levels. The "problem" was that these reductions were strenuously resisted by the workers, often led by the IANC. This is clear from a speech made by the Mayor of Middelburg who told a deputation of unemployed blacks that the wages they were demanding

onbillik is - 12/6 per 100 en dan nog boonop kos ... Die boere mense {sic} soek skeerders en vra waar is die mense wat werk soek. (53) 'If you are hungry and want work, you should be prepared to work for a smaller wage than in prosperous times, and if you refuse to do that it does not seem as if you are starving!' (54)

Much of the activity of the IANC was directed at low wages and against unemployment. This is discussed in greater detail below.

The Response of the popular classes.

How then did the organisational effort of the IANC interact with the crisis in agriculture - a crisis characterised by the fact that many farmers dismissed some of their workers and attempted to reduce the wages of the others? On the one hand, as had happened in the Western Cape, the presence of the IANC intensified the crisis. It gave a more articulated form to the revolt of the agricultural proletariat against these conditions. Die Middellander summed up the situation as follows:

Daar heers in die laaste tyd 'n gees onder die naturelle wat vër van gesond is en hierdie gees is in hulle aangewakker deur die agente van die IANC was nou al maande lank onder die naturelle in hierdie streke arbei. Hul is besiel met 'n gees van vyandigheid teenoor die blankes en die boerestand veral' ondervind meer las van hul naturelle bediendes dan ooit tevore die geval was. In baie gevalle is hul onwillig om te werk, nors en in sekere gevalle selfs brutaal en verlaat hul

diens indien hulle nie in alles hul sin
kan kry nie en kom dan hier in die
lokasie lê. (55)

On the other hand, the IANC was itself strengthened by the conditions produced by the crisis. There were many complaints about

die duisende naturelle wat na die
lokasies trek en daar gaan leeglê. (56)

At Somerset East the local ratepayer's association even held a special meeting to discuss the "leeglêers in die dorp en die lokasie". They agreed

dat die toestand onuithoudbaar is en dat
die boere baie swaarkry daaronder. Die
plaasvolk stroom die lokasie in en die
boere sit sonder hulp. (57)

The IANC was especially strong in the towns where the unemployed congregated, many of them unwilling to go back to the farms at starvation wages. Here it took up the grievances of the unemployed, especially the demand for work in the towns. Before we look at that in more detail, it is important to note that the other issues taken up by the IANC also affected the unemployed farm workers severely. The location permits were a particular source of grievance as they were often unable to obtain permission to sleep in the location, or else they were unable to afford the high fees. Like the IANC leaders, they were forced to sleep at the outspan outside the town. (58) July Bacela described how

the hardship has increased on us. The
white people has encamped the roads with
netting and after that they put the
people out of work to live between these
nettings along the roads. You have
nowhere to {sic} to go but to town then

they come and ask you for money {for lodger's permits - WH} where are you to get the money from. (59)

Demonstrations were the principal means used to mobilise the unemployed and to bring their plight to the attention of the authorities. Almost immediately after his arrival in Middelburg, Tonjeni led a demonstration to the office of the Mayor, to protest against the widespread unemployment, as well as the harassment of Tonjeni and Plaatjies under the Location Regulations. (60) The Mayor promised that he would try to find work for the unemployed. The IANC was not convinced

as he cannot possibly find work for 500 people in Middelburg all at once. (61)

Eventually the interview developed into a slanging match in which the mayor

... told them that they are being misled {sic} and that in the case of any trouble he had enough men to go to the Location and kill the lot of them. (62)

A few weeks later the IANC organised a second demonstration, this time led by Charlie January. (63) In August another big crowd of unemployed marched on the Mayor's office, to demand work as

many of them could find no work and were starving, and unable to pay their house rent and poll tax. (64)

The mayor replied that though he sympathised with them, times were hard and even the white man was suffering:

He also told them a few plain truths and said that the farmers needed shearers, but because of the unreasonable demands of the natives {'12/6 per 100 en dan nog boonop kos' according to the Die Middellander (65)} they were unable to employ them. 'If', said Mr Minnaar, 'you are hungry and want work, you should be prepared to work for a smaller wage than in prosperous times, and if you refuse to do that it does not seem as if you are starving!' The Mayor also told them that when they were in trouble, they wanted the white man to help them, yet they never tired of blackguarding the white man twice a week at their meetings in the location, and that unless they refrained from that practice he would not be prepared to do anything further for them.

Hendricks who led the demonstration replied that they

'werk wil hê hier op Middelburg en op geen ander plek nie'. (66)

Eventually under pressure from the crowd the Mayor advised all those wanting work to give their names to the Vigilance Committee, perhaps in an attempt to strengthen the authority of that body. However,

Upon mentioning the name of this Committee some of the natives exclaimed that the council had bought the Vigilance Committee for a shilling and that they would not have anything to do with the committee.

The mayor then refused to continue the meeting and the crowd

eventually dispersed. Two days later a list of 200 names was handed in, it is not clear whether to the Vigilance Committee or the LAB. (67) However, the mayor refused to accept the list as no addresses were given. Eventually a new list of 40 names was submitted. In the meantime about 300 farmers had been circularised and a total of 61 job offers had been received.

As we have seen, however, the unemployed were in the towns precisely because they refused to submit to the reduced wages on the farms, and no more than 5 people accepted jobs. (68) The wages and conditions offered were probably much the same as those offered to the Cradock unemployed a month later, viz

Accommodation, wood and water;
10s, 1 lb sugar, 1 lb coffee and a roll of tobacco per month;
2 lb mealies and 1 lb meal per day;
and a quarter sheep every 8 days. (69)

In March the next year, another demonstration took place when a "crowd of non-Europeans" marched to the Mayor's office to demand work and food. This time the mayor was less conciliatory. He merely promised to do his best, and then ordered the crowd to disperse. This they refused to do and eventually the police had to be called in to disperse the crowd. Die Middellander complained that the blacks in the location were still "brutaal" and that even the townspeople had difficulty in finding labour. The workers were becoming increasingly arrogant with a "onafhanklike houding" and a "gees van opstandigheid" which made things difficult for their bosses. (70)

The widespread unemployment created a number of problems for the organisation. It made it easier for the farmers to victimise members of the IANC and other workers who resisted the wage cuts. Thus it was reported that

One of our farmers who for years past always employed a number of natives on his farm, recently found it necessary to dismiss several of them, as since they began attending the meetings, they became sulky, dissatisfied and unwilling to work. Some of these natives have been on the farms for years and today they possess a number of stock as well as money ... We fear that that will be the fate of many more natives on farms who lent their ears to these agitators.
(71)

In this particular case African workers were replaced by coloured workers, but there are no indications as to whether this was a widespread strategy by the farmers, and how the IANC responded to this action. One can merely reiterate the earlier statement that there is little or no evidence of any "racial" divisions within the IANC.

Victimisation by individual employers remained a problem and IANC speakers frequently complained that

you cannot get work through having a green card in your possession (72)

or that

Many of you get the sack through these meetings. (73)

Nevertheless, it seems that the resistance to working on the farms was so great that the farmers were consistently short of labour and this prevented them from taking any concerted action against IANC members.

II PASSES AND PASSIVE RESISTANCE

The abolition of passes was always one of the main demands of the IANC program. At times there was a fairly clear political understanding that this and other similarly limited demands were not simply ends in themselves. Thus Umsebenzi argued that the campaign against the poll tax

will be a campaign not merely against the Poll Tax {and other passes - WH} though that tax is important, being the basis of the whole forced labour system today);{sic} for it will develop into mass political strikes and far-reaching upheavals of the downtrodden slaves to abolish the whole system of white imperialism and colour-bar justice in this country. (74)

There were regular pass raids in the locations to enforce the pass laws. In one such raid in the Graaff-Reinett location no less than 40 people were arrested, while in a raid in Middelburg 16 people were arrested. (75)

Thus it is not surprising that it was one of the first issues to be taken up by the IANC at Middelburg. At one of the first meetings, Tonjeni

started on explaining the Pass Laws in South Africa. He said there were 17 kinds of passes. He named each kind and explained each, and then challenged any man to come forward to dispute what he had said, as he said, the day before one Ngobko {sic} had told them that the people in the Cape do not carry passes. He told the gathering that the Location Superintendent had the cheek to warn him for {sic} Court for being the Location

without permission. (76)

At a later meeting at Tarkastad Tonjeni listed 11 of the passes that African people had to carry:

Identification pass in Natal; Station Pass, required to get a ticket at the station; Poll Tax Pass (called a Receipt); Six day Special, when looking for work; Monthly Pass, to be carried by monthly labourers; Daily Labourers Pass; Day's special; Night's Special, required when in streets after 9 pm; Trek Pass; Location P ass {sic} (Site permit); Lodger's Permit; Passof children over 18 years. in house; '... {in original - WH} even if you have ten of these passes and you haven't got the eleventh one, the Police arrest you and you go to gaol'. (77)

The IANC was committed to continue organising the anti-pass demonstrations on Dingaan's day started in 1930 (78) and a week later Tonjeni

told the gathering that the Wars on the Pass Laws are being continued and that on 16th December, 1931 (Coming Dingaan's Day) Natives all over South Africa are going to demonstrate and burn all passes and Tax receipts, and, said he, 'I appeal to the Native Police not to shoot us on that day, but to rather turn their rifles against the oppressors, like Manie Maritz did during the Great War. (79)

There were initially plans for demonstrations and pass burnings in Middelburg on Friday 6 March, declared by the Comintern as International Unemployment Day. (80) These plans were cancelled at the last moment, apparently as there had been little organisation in the rest of the country.

(81)

In Middelburg it was especially the lodger's permits that caused resentment. All visitors or lodgers, including children over the age of 18, had to pay 1s for a permit and renew it every week. The major complaints were the exorbitant cost of the permits and the frequent raids that were necessary to enforce them. As in Graaff-Reinett, a continual grievance was the sexual harassment of women during these raids: (82)

... the Police came and searched your house every Saturday and arrest you for petty offences like being in the Location without a lodgers permit. It looks to me as if the Police often come and look for girls and then if they hear a row simply go and arrest. (83)

Speakers also complained that the police

come and pull off the blankets from you and your wives. (84)

Thus it is not surprising that it was the anger of the women against pass raids that caused the first spontaneous outburst of mass action and precipitated a crisis in the local leadership. On Monday 23 March, the police launched a big raid in the location "to collect lodgers' permits".

(85) The police arrested 16 men without permits but then they

were attacked by native women and stoned, some received nasty bruises. The native women and children then marched in procession to the police barracks, shouting, singing and using obscene language in some cases. At the

police barracks they halted and demanded to see the Commandant. Here the stone throwing was continued and later on the doors of the barracks were bombarded with stones. After much persuasion on the part of Captain Gould the natives left again for the location.

In the wake of the march, the town was in uproar and Die Middellander demanded "fermer" action against the IANC. Although only women and children marched,

dra {dit} dan seker ook in die volste mate die goedkeuring weg van 'n groot gedeelte van die manlike naturelle ... {Daar is} 'n seker {sic} gedeelte van die naturelle ... wat hul nie vereenselwig met die sienswyse van die opstokers, maar hulle skyn magteloos te staan teenoor die oorwig van die volgelinge van Tonjeni en Ko. (86)

It was clear that the conservative petty-bourgeoisie had lost "control" over the location residents and that it would be some time before they would regain it again. Thus the authorities decided that firmer measures were necessary to keep the location under control. Firstly, two of the women in the march had already been arrested and fined £10 each. Now another 22 women were charged with public violence. At the trial extra police were brought in from outside to prevent any trouble. The defendants were all convicted and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment or £5, suspended for 1 year. (87) It was also decided that the town's police would reinforce the location police on Wednesdays and Sundays when the IANC meetings were held.

The town council also passed additional location regulations to control the holding of meetings, and to impose a curfew between 9 o'clock at night and 6 o'clock in the morning.

Apparently the Department of Native Affairs refused to accept these regulations and they were referred back to the council. Unfortunately no reasons were reported for this action, but it is another indication that there was a lack of a co-ordinated strategy by the state to deal with the IANC. (88) The regulations were eventually altered only much later. (89) Interestingly a similar situation emerges from Julie Wells's work on pass resistance in the Potchefstroom location. There a similar difference of opinion existed between the NAD and the local council. (90)

Closely related to the pass issue, were the issues of poll tax and rent. As Jim Ngqakai pointed out when he urged people to attend a demonstration at the magistrate's office:

We are all out of work and we must go to the magistrate or the Commandant and ask for work. We cannot pay our rents and has {sic} hardly anything to eat. On what are we going to live? If you do not pay your house rent the Magistrate sends you a summons. Go to him and tell him that you have no money to pay your tax and house rent. Go to him tomorrow, so when you go and break into stores then you know that you had been to him. (91)

The IANC continually attacked the poll tax:

There is a Poll Tax the Blackmans {sic} hell. This you have to pay whether you are out of work and if you go to a Magistrate to complain that seeing that the time for paying Poll Tax is near you find it better to report that you are out of work and unable to pay, he will tell you that you are lazy. (92)

Speakers were particularly aggrieved at the discriminatory nature of the tax

... why should I pay a Tax in my own country and the Foreigner the white people only pays an income tax if their income amounts to £300 a year. (93)

They continually demanded that poll tax be abolished and that rents be reduced as people were simply unable to afford them. From the beginning Tonjeni warned that the IANC

will call upon you one of these days as in Cape Town not to pay rent. We will fight against it unless demands {for lower rents? - WH} are met with. (94)

Rents in the Graaff-Reinett location *were* 4s 6d per month even though the occupants had to build their own houses. (95)

The IANC leaders always stressed that housing was a right; that

no person or no council has the right to drive poverty-stricken workers out of their own homes. (96)

It was not long before the IANC started to organise a passive resistance campaign against both the poll tax and rents. The town clerk reported that

daar altyd maar min hure agterstallig was, maar sodra die agitators Tonjenie {sic} en Plaatjie {sic} onder die naturelle gekom het, het die hure vinnig agterstallig geraak.

Thus in May 1931, no fewer than 90 summonses were issued

within a week. (97) There is, however, no evidence that the council proceeded to evict any tenants in 1931, except for James Ntame, who was one of the most prominent IANC members at the time. (98) It seems that the authorities were wary of provoking a violent reaction by large-scale evictions. Thus it was reported, for instance, that the magistrate refused to convict pensioners for failing to pay their rent. (99)

Part of the reason for this lack of repression was probably the fact that the rents campaign was never a very concerted one, and did not invoke an absolute refusal to pay rent. Most people were probably still paying some rent, but were becoming further and further in arrears. It was only later in 1932 as part of a general increase in repression that the council felt able to clamp down on tenants refusing to pay rent. (100)

The IANC also consistently attacked the poll tax:

The white man is leading you to misery.
When you tell them that you are starving
they turn round and say 'You bloody
nigger, you must pay your Poll Tax .
(101)

Thus Tonjeni

urged the natives to refuse to pay poll
tax like himself and the women must
assist their husbands in the fight.
(102)

At a later meeting Eddie Ndaba told the crowd that

We must unite and not pay this poll tax.
I will never again pay poll tax. Pirow
can pay it for me. (From the crowd -
'Let them come to the location for the

poll tax'). Any policeman who come to me for poll tax will have to be prepared. Pirow can go to hell with his poll tax. We must not pay it. (From the crowd - 'We won't pay it')

This campaign was remarkably successful as the table below shows:

TABLE 4: COLLECTION OF POLL TAX IN MIDDELBURG (103)

Year	Collections	Index (1928-30 =100)
1926	757	82,4
1927	501	54,5
1928	932	101,5
1929	918	99,9
1930	906	98,6
1931	442	48,1
1932	555	60,4

The low level of collection in 1927 might have been the result of ICU organisation. At any rate, it is clear that there was a big drop in tax collections after the IANC started to organise in the area. The local magistrate appears to be correct in his assessment that

the depression was respsi ble {sic} to a certain extent but the main cause was agitation by the African Independent Congress {sic}. (104)

As in the case of the rents campaign, the poll tax was not too strictly enforced, even though it was reported that

the police have been taking energetic steps to round up defaulters. (105)

People convicted of failing to pay their tax were often not even fined on condition that they pay their arrears within

two weeks. (106) The rather lax enforcement was at least partly due to the keen awareness of the farmers that the tax had a direct effect on the cost of reproducing labour power and consequently on wages. (107) Many farmers saw it as "an undesired tax on the employer". Many farmers spoke out against the poll tax and advocated its abolition, at least for the duration of the Depression. (108) Thus many workers were probably aided by their employers when they tried to evade the tax.

A last, somewhat confused element in the passive resistance campaign of the IANC was health. The IANC was extremely cynical about all welfare work done by whites, as it was only done "to swell the slave market." (109)

Although it seems that health never became a very big issue, it is likely that the effects of the passive resistance to the white man's laws spilled over into this area. Certainly the Medical Officer of Health devoted considerable attention to the IANC in his annual report for 1931. He reported that infant mortality in the location was more than 40% in 1930/31 compared to about 25% previously, while the rate for whites was only about 6% to 7%. He argued that the

... increase in 1931 is due to the
communism which was introduced in the
location during the second half of 1930.

(110)

There is, however, considerable room for doubt. The MOH's main grounds for making this assertion was the fact that women had to attend two three hour meetings each week and were thus less able to look after their children and visit the clinic. He totally ignored the effects that the Depression and unemployment had on the health of the people. Certainly elsewhere in the Midlands the same pattern occurred. For example, in Cradock infant mortality, "normally" between 40% and 50%, shot up to 75.3% in 1930/1, while in Graaff-Reinett it was over 100% in 1930/1. (111)

Perhaps the location nurse at Cradock was closer to the truth when she reversed the causality and argued that

Extreme poverty is suitable soil for native agitators and the sight of starving children drives parents to any lengths. (112)

Although the IANC on occasion attacked the

conditions of the Lavatories and Baths in the Location condemning the Health Officer as a man who does not know his work, (113)

there is no evidence of any concerted campaign against the health authorities. In fact it is rather ironic that the secretary of the IANC was himself the victim of an infectious disease. This led to an angry demonstration when the location superintendent disinfected the house and locked all the IANC's papers into the house. Die Middellander reported that the police had to be called in to rescue the location superintendent from the crowd. (114)

III ORGANISING WOMEN

One of the most significant features of the IANC was the attention that was given to the organisation of women. Other popular organisations at the time, excluded women, either explicitly like the ANC or tacitly like the ICU. (115) The IANC actively encouraged women to join and to become active in the organisation.

Women must join the organisation, they are as much exploited as men. Women have to go early to work and scrub floors. See them carry heavy bundles. Washing gives colds and ironing consumption. (116)

The IANC allowed women to join on the same basis as men and this was a tremendous advance for the time. But it does not seem to have been coupled with much notion of the specificity of the oppression of women, and of the need for women to be liberated in their own right. Although the women had regular meetings in their own, (117) the issues raised were much the same as at other IANC meetings. The emphasis was simply shifted to those issues that affected women more directly.

The only specifically women's issue that was raised regularly at meetings, was the question of sexual assaults on women during pass raids as well as the plight of those women who were forced by economic conditions to become prostitutes. (118) The other feature of women's organisation was that it was mostly about issues of national oppression - rather than class or sex oppression. Although there is not enough evidence to substantiate this argument fully, it seems that women were very involved in the campaigns against passes and rents which did not affect the working class only. There was much less involvement of women in the campaign against unemployment, which was essentially a working class issue.

It is unclear what the significance of these differences were in practice, but it probably reinforced the tendency within the IANC to give more prominence to national demands. As seen earlier, very little emphasis had been placed on the socialist demands that were implicit in the Black Republic programme.

There were however, issues on which the women took action or were asked to take action as women. The most dramatic of these was the anti-pass demonstration in March (119) where the women took the initiative. Another incident took place at nearby Naauwpoort

when the Location Superintendent could

not stop him {Plaatjes - WH} or Tonjeni from holding a meeting a black Policeman ran and called his bosses and they came rushing up to us as if they were dealing with monkeys, and the women rushed at them and we had trouble to save their lives. (120)

There were often appeals to women to act as they were regarded as more fearless than the men. Thus at the same meeting Tonjeni urged the woment to lure the black policemen into a trap, (121) while at a later meeting Ndaba appealed

to you women to see that when Hendricks comes here no man is to arrest him, unless they can give a reason why Hendricks cannot stay here any more. I know you women can do a thing while men are still thinking. (122)

In addition, the women probably enjoyed some tactical advantage over the men, as in any direct action the police was probably less inclined to use indiscriminate force against them. This did not always hold true, though, and women also had to bear the brunt of some of the severest repression. The following is a description of an incident at Cradock which was not reported in the press,

On 2/8/1931 our womenfolk were brutally assaulted andtorn {sic} by the Pirow dogs who were in private clothes, 40 boer constables and 50 detectives. Three of our men who were dragging a wagon on which was our flagwere {sic} brutally assaulted and they are spitting blood through these dirty white people they who assault native females. No blackman would assault a whitewoman.

These whites have children amongst us.
(123)

Throughout the organisation in Middelburg women, in the words of the police, remained "well to the fore" (124) in the IANC. However, although women were more often than not in the majority at meetings, the top leadership remained almost exclusively male. Nevertheless, some efforts were made by the top leadership to advance the position of women in leadership positions. In August it was announced that

... from instructions received from Capetown Wednesday {sic} we have to give the sisters a chance to speak, moreover, there is going to be a female conference during this month in Johannesburg called by the female branch of the IANC of Johannesburg. I cannot say on what date but we will have to send delegates there. (125)

The conference was in fact called by the newly formed women's department of the CPSA in connection with the campaign against passes for women in Johannesburg. (126)

It is not clear whether the delegates ever attended the conference but after this women spoke on the IANC platform fairly regularly, especially Sarah Jonas, Sarah Uitlander and Pop Miles. (127)

The important role the women played, as well as the limitations of their role is clear from a report drawn up by the local District Commandant. On his list of the "known agitators" who should be banned from the area, there were four women amongst the 17 names. (128)

IV THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION

The ANC and CAC in the early 1930's

One of the crucial issues confronting the IANC in the Midlands area was the existence of the local affiliate of the ANC, viz. the Cape African Congress. The relationship between the CAC and the organisers from the ANC(WP) had already been soured by a bitter dispute about areas of jurisdiction, as CAC considered itself as representing the whole of the Cape Province. This dispute dragged on for many years (129) and probably had its origins in Thaele's initial militancy (see previous chapter). Even after he made a conservative turn in 1930, the dispute continued and was only settled by the intervention of the ANC in 1936. (130)

These problems were aggravated when the ANC(WP) and later the IANC started to organise in the backyard of the CAC in 1930. Before we look at the CAC though, it is necessary to look more closely at the state of the ANC as a whole in the early 1930's. The situation is perhaps best summarised by Mahabane, secretary-general of the ANC, when he admitted in 1930 that the ANC as a whole "is at present is {sic} in a state of lamentable disorganisation". (131) This was mostly the result of a reassertion of its strength by the right wing at the 1930 congress in Bloemfontein and the extremely conservative policies followed by its central leadership. For example, after his election as president general in 1930 Seme, declared that

Die blankes is ons vriende. Ons strewe
na vryheid en die blankes is die ware
boodskappers van hierdie vryheid. (132)

It was reported that at the congress

moes hy aanhoudend tussenby kom om
drastiese besluite teen die Regering te

keer en die Kommunistiese groep onder die afgevaardigdes te gebied om die orde te handhaaf. Hy versoek die Regering om geen onderdrukkende maatreëls teen die naturelle te neem nie. Hy sal alles in sy vermoë doen om hulle in bedwang te hou.

The main demand put forward during 1930 and at the 1931 congress of the ANC was the appropriately petty bourgeois one that the Africans should have the "vryheid" to obtain trading facilities in their own areas so that they could develop on their own. (133) The lack of any popular demands was aggravated by the fact that, as Seme reported,

'Die vorige kongres het my opdrag gegee om te reorganiseer en die opstandige leiers het ek uit die bestuur uitgesluit ... Ek wil 'n span hê wat gewillig is om saam met my te werk.' (134)

Consequently it is hardly surprising to find even the official organs of the National Party singing the praises of the ANC leadership. Seme, for example, was described as

die waardige leier van die naturelle in die Unie ... {and as} 'n buitengewone gematigde naturel ... uiters besadig en {hy} oefen 'n kalmerende invloed op sy volgelingen uit. (135)

The "lamentable disorganisation" of the ANC is illustrated by the fact that when delegates arrived in Bloemfontein for the 1931 Congress, they were unable to find the local branch as it had ceased to exist. (136) The accounts of historians confirm these contemporary accounts (137) and it would not be an exaggeration to say that the ANC hardly existed as a national organisation. Even some of the conservatives agreed with this verdict. Selope Thema wrote at the

beginning of 1932 that

Since 1912 and during my nineteen years of service in the cause of Bantu freedom, I have never witnessed such inactivity and apathy on the part of our leaders as now. (138)

Sol Plaatje, another noted conservative agreed with Thema.

The CAC, on the other hand, at least seems to have been fairly well organised in the sense that it was a well-entrenched "bureaucracy" in the Eastern Cape. Its members dominated local bodies like the Location Advisory Boards (LAB) and the Vigilance Committees (VC), the petty bourgeois organisations such as the Cape African Voters Association, the various teachers and ministers association, as well as the Cradock Joint Council.

The class interests and methods of this group was personified in the ubiquitous figure of the Reverend James Calata. He was already an important figure in the CAC. (139) He had joined the ANC in 1930 and in the same year he was elected as the president of the CAC. In 1936 he became secretary-general of the ANC. Although he was one of the signatories to the 1949 Programme of Action, he already had severe reservations about the new militant direction of the ANC and resigned both as secretary-general and as president of CAC. He continued to serve on the executive of the ANC till 1956. (140) All this he seemed to have achieved without any substantial change from his position in 1932.

In Calata's presidential address to the Midlands African Teachers Conference at Cookhouse in 1931, he declared that

At Middelburg and Cradock the seed of Communism has been sown; but thanks to education, the intelligent Bantu have denounced it in no uncertain terms.

However, it had got hold of the ignorant masses and is threatening the churches ... I do not mean that we must not agitate for our rights. Let us by all means agitate and agitate; but agitation can produce beneficial results only when it is done constitutionally.
(141)

The attitude is argued even more strongly by the Middelburg (black) churches who wrote that

The Bible teaches us to be loyal and submissive to those who administrate the affairs of the country on behalf of the Government. (142)

The natural result of this strategy was that any acknowledgement by the ruling class of its "moderation" was welcomed by the CAC and encouraged it further on the road of "constitutional opposition", while giving it an illusion of success. Thus, when the mayor of Cradock opened the 1930 CAC congress, he welcomed the delegates and praised their moderation. But, said the MNKF,

The question presses itself on one whether this type of leader is receiving the type of support he deserves {from the white community - WH} (143)

As discussed earlier, when the IANC started to make inroads into the traditional stronghold of the ANC in the Eastern Cape, even the official organs of the National Party did not hesitate to support the conservatives in the ANC when it seemed that they might lose control. In his reply to the mayor, professor Jabavu

remembered the time when the Congress used to be regarded as a dangerous

thing. Today the same congress was regarded as a moderate body, and had to fight with its back to the wall against Bolshevism. (144)

The bourgeois press were not slow to recognise the value of the CAC in controlling black opposition and supported it actively in its "fight" against the militants. Thus the Midlands News and Karroo Farmer gave much publicity to the CAC. It reported fully on the 1930 congress of the CAC and praised the speeches which were

in striking contrast to the fire-eating speeches made by the Communists and other agitators ... {Although there was some plain-speaking} the delegates' utterances were tempered with a feeling of responsibility and a desire to say and do nothing that would bring their cause into disrepute. (145)

Thus the scene was set for a bitter struggle between the CAC and the IANC. The battleground would be overwhelmingly political/ideological jurisdiction.

The Conflict between the IANC and CAC

The conservatives were very well organised in Middelburg, although their relationship with the local town council was not as happy as it could have been. Although there was a VC and a LAB, it appears that the latter did not really function, and it was only revived later under the threat of IANC militancy.

From the beginning the IANC clashed with both African and coloured conservatives at their meetings. At this second meeting, Tonjeni was asked whether,

if we join the A.P.O. are we wrong?

Yes Abdurahman is a coward. At this the meeting became slightly rowdy and some people leaving {sic} the spot. (146)

At the next meeting the IANC came under a concerted attack from the conservatives, especially Piet Ngoboko, when Tonjeni

went over to communistic ideas and explained that the communist party were out to break up Native Slavery. He appealed to all Coloureds and Natives to come together and to stand together and raise funds to further the purpose of the communist party. (147)

After this relations with the conservatives deteriorated still further. Die Middelerlander reported that

The natives seemed to have been stirred up to a high pitch and are divided into two camps. (148)

Supporters of the IANC refused to allow the conservatives to speak at their meetings and Rev. Sishuba narrowly escaped assault when he tried to question the speakers at a meeting. Especially members of the LAB and VC were

in very bad odour with Tonjeni's followers and are regarded as traitors to the natives. (149)

At a meeting of 700 people on Sunday, 22 February, Tonjeni

said he was pleased to see that so many people were interested. He said the 'Goodboy' Mapekele {sic} of Bloemfontein openly declared himself in favour of the present Pass Laws and that he,

(Mapekele) like Rev. Sishuba (Agitator 135) and one Ngoboko (a Middelburg native), who say that the existing pass laws are good, are traitors to their own blood, traitors who are responsible for the taxes and traitors who hang on to the tails of the whites and who are satisfied with the crumbles {sic} of the white man's table and continued thus 'Sec 29 of the Natives Administration Act prohibit me to say anything which would promote {sic} feelings of hostility between white and black people, but not between black and black and I therefore tell you to hate black traitors, traitors ought to be burned alive. (150)

The IANC was not willing to negotiate and compromise like the ANC leaders, and they constantly advocated a policy of direct opposition to oppressive laws. They were particularly scornful of the ANC's

Policy of 'Natives only' and pointed out that Coloured people are prohibited of {sic} becoming Officers of the party of the 'Goodboys'. (151)

In the meantime the organisations of the conservatives were in total disarray. In the wake of the women's demonstration, the town council alleged that the LAB had never brought any grievances to its attention. Piet Ngoboka, secretary of the VC issued a heated denial, saying that the LAB had sent a letter outlining their grievances to the council in August 1930, and it had resigned en bloc when there was no response. Even the local press was particularly perturbed about the fact that the conservatives

skyn magteloos te staan teenoor die
oorwig van die volgelinge van Tonjenie
en Ko. (152)

The town council now decided to take active steps in an effort to help the VC and the LAB to regain some of their lost credibility with the inhabitants of the location. New LAB elections were called for the end of May, but they were ignored by the IANC. In the elections Eddie Ndaba, Herman Minnaar and Isaac Buy were elected, while Ngoboka was nominated by the council as its representative. (153)

The new LAB was supposed to concern itself with the grievances of the VC, but it seemed to have achieved very little and was unable to play any significant role until much later when the IANC had been suppressed. Even the efforts of the council to force the IANC to deal only with the LAB appears to have failed. (154)

Part of the reason for this collapse probably stems from the fact that Eddie Ndaba, one of the LAB members defected to the IANC soon after his election and became one of its most prominent organisers. Soon afterwards Minnaar apparently also joined the IANC as he spoke at one of its meetings (155) and the council's strategy seems to have collapsed at that point. It was only in the course of 1932 that the council again tried to strengthen the LAB by giving it (unspecified) additional powers. (156)

The weakness and the fear of the conservatives were graphically demonstrated by two events. Firstly, when elections were held for the LAB in 1932 there were no nominations. Eventually the council had to nominate 3 well-known conservatives to the LAB. They requested that a meeting be held in the location to elect the other three members, but this meeting never took place. (157)

Secondly, the conservatives sometimes felt unable to oppose the IANC directly on matters of policy. Rather they

concentrated their attacks on the particular tactics it was using. Thus Ngoboka wrote in Die Middellander

I am not against the Organisation, but the fact remains that policy is too high for the uncivil and uneducated non-Europeans. We as a black population expect and wish to be led by civil men, law-abiding men ... like Sishuba, Nyovume and Minnaar ... How many a time have the above mentioned respectable men succeeded in settling the grievances of the location inhabitants by approaching the local authorities respectfully ... Surely when we approach one of these gentlemen {the Mayor or District Commandant of Police - WH} with our grievances, they are sure to listen and try accede {sic} to our wishes. What more could be expect? (158)

But the disagreements with the conservatives went deeper than differences over tactics - it reflected a fundamental difference in the class basis of the CAC and IANC. Clues as to these differences have already emerged in the analysis above. The CAC leaders repeatedly referred to themselves as "responsible men". They differentiated themselves sharply from the mass of the population - "the ignorant masses" or the "uncivil and uneducated non-Europeans". (159) Although there were a number of petty bourgeois leaders in the IANC, they were probably outnumbered by the leaders from a working class background. Certainly the organisation as a whole represented the rural proletariat and there was a profound distrust of the petty bourgeoisie, and sometimes even a conscious realisation that their class interests were fundamentally different from those of the rural proletariat:

It is through the educated native that we get hell today. They want to be

foremans on the farms and so on, just to get positions and depress us. (160)

This distrust, combined with the long and bitter struggle waged against the "good boys", ruled out any possibility of an alliance, or even co-operation, between the IANC and the petty bourgeoisie.

Most of the venom of the IANC was reserved for the urban petty bourgeoisie. It is a notable and somewhat surprising, feature of the discourse of the IANC that the traditional petty bourgeoisie was hardly even mentioned. There is no evidence of the complex interaction between the urban and traditional leadership that was such a distinctive feature of the Independent ICU in nearby East London and, to a lesser extent, of the ICU in Natal and Transvaal. (161) When the traditional leaders were mentioned, it was only to dismiss them as "sellouts".

You should not wait for your Chiefs to say the word. They are all getting bags of money from the Government, what do you expect from them? They are only engine drivers of the Government. (162)

A detailed discussion of the rupture between the IANC and the traditional leaders is beyond the scope of this work, but one can suggest some possibilities:

Firstly the material conditions in the Midlands were very different from the other areas, where the interaction had been based on a real coincidence of interests between the traditional and urban leadership.

Secondly, the IANC leadership had had a relatively radical political education and they tended to despise traditional conservatism represented by the chiefs. In the Eastern Cape most of the chiefs that had some kind of political involvement, probably supported the CAC or even more

conservative bodies. (163)

Ministers and the Church

Closely related to the struggle against conservatives, was a struggle against the conventional church.

The ambivalent position of the IANC is summed up in Runeli's report on the organisation in Graaff-Reinett:

You will always find the Church fighting
against the freeing of the people ...
{especially} the Rooi Baadjies. (164)

But, he added that the AME and the Ethiopian or "Poqo" churches supported and worked with the IANC.

Quite often the church and religion was condemned outright. Thus people like Plaatjes and Hendricks often stated that they were not believers and there were regular attacks on the church. (165) At one meeting Tonjeni described how at Naauwpoort

they were chased out of a house by one Native Minister called Belwana ... He said that he told the gathering all this in order that they should be on their guard against the Native Ministers of Religion whom he referred to as traitors who would sell their own people to the whitemen ...

{Plaatjes} then pointed out to the gathering that all along while they were attending Church and being preached to the whiteman stole your gold and diamonds from out underneath you ... You must watch the Black Ministers, they

are all bloodsuckers like the whites.
 They, the shepherds, say 'Bass {sic} you
 can shear, I'll collect the pennies'.
 (166)

They attacked the hypocrisy of the churches, especially the
 white churches, who

told you to look up to God and while you
 are doing that they stole your Country
 and that is why I don't even close my
 eyes when I pray. (167)

Speakers from the IANC stressed the secular nature of their
 struggle for liberation. They rejected the churches who
 told the black people that even though they are poor on
 earth,

you will go to heaven when you die.
 They themselves, however, said he, will
 rather go the best Doctor in Europe or
 do anything else than to die and go to
 heaven.

Therefore, said he, let us rather also
 have something on earth and go to hell.
 (168)

The point was made again and again. At a later meeting
 Hendricks emphasised that

die koninkryk van die verlossing is aan
 kom. Nie die koninkryk van die Hemel
 nie. (169)

while Tonjeni said that

you have been told to look up to Heaven
 above, but we should make it right here
 on earth. (170)

The IANC did not, however, completely escape the very pervasive influence of the church at that time. Even those leaders that constantly attacked the church, seldom if ever proposed that the IANC as a whole should be against religion. They also regularly drew on biblical imagery to drive home their points. Thus Ndoobe

told the gathering ... how Noah built the Ark and how people then laughed at Noah and said he was a drunken fool or a lunatic and refused to join him until it was too late, and continued that those who still hesitate to join his organisation will find themselves in the same position as the people in the time of Noah. (171)

Another popular biblical parallel was

the story of Mose, {sic} Pharoah and the Israelites. Moses would not agree to the Israelites being exploited and he performed miracles, one of which was blood shed in Egypt. We are faced with a Pharoah. (172)

Mostly it was the IANC itself that was cast in the role of Moses, but on occasion some of the more popular leaders were regarded as "Moses's". (173)

This religious imagery became much more common after the Reverend Douglas Camba a minister in the Church of Christ (a breakaway? Baptist church) joined the IANC in July. He soon became a regular speaker on the platform and preached something of a "black Theology".

If I have my own way I would have no Black man in any English Church, I would

say get into a Pondo Church, but there is no Pondo (Entirely native) church.
(174)

The IANC, though, continued to be virulently against the established churches. The effectiveness of this campaign can be gauged from the fact that it was reported that churches in Middelburg were deserted in 1931, and only started to fill up again once the IANC had been crushed by the increased repression. (175) The success of this campaign is remarkable when one bears in mind the pervasiveness of religious ideology amongst African people, especially in the Eastern Cape where the missionaries had a disproportionate influence. (176)

The tamnannies

If the leaders of the IANC despised the conservatives, there are few words to describe their feelings towards the black policemen, Koma and Cinjimbo. They attended all IANC meetings to take notes, as well as following the leaders around to check that they left the location at 9 o'clock. On several occasions they arrested the IANC leaders, sometimes unjustly. (177) They were also partly responsible for enforcing the unpopular location regulations.

Tonjeni launched the first public attack on the police after Plaatjes was charged for allegedly being the location after nine.

There is Cinjimbo, he knows that his own people are suffering yet he goes and tell a deliberate lie in Court against my friend Plaatje {sic} ... My friends these men are dangerous ... You women can easily get these two men, they are very fond of liquor you can easily get them, and they go to certain houses in the Location ... 'My friends, these men

are traitors, I will say nothing about the white Police as they are known to be enemies but men like Cinjimbo and Koma are more dangerous and I appeal to you to get them for me ... I leave the Location at five to nine each evening and if I see Koma or Cinjimbo I will shout 'Here is Koma' or 'Here is Cinjimbo' and you must all come out.
(178)

As the police became more involved in repression, verbal attacks on traitors became a common theme at meetings:

... the oppressor must be killed. I appeal to you my friends these Tamnannies (Informers) must be killed, in the war the English used to have them dig their own graves, blindfold them and then tell them to pray with their backs to the grave and then shot them. (179)

Thus they were often grouped with the conservative petty bourgeoisie:

They may have a good education but he {sic} is nothing but a baboon and he has no sense. You may pray under him but he will arrest so as to become a good boy. These black detectives and our Ministers are the most oppressors to our people.
(180)

These traitors were classed with the conservatives

... like Pokomela and Calota {sic} of Cradock ... who ought to be killed for carrying lies to the Europeans. I know that even here now there are tamnannies

(reporters or informers of the Europeans). At this stage Nqwameshe and others intervened saying they want to assault these tammanies. Shouting out, here is Koma too! Why leave him? here is a Pirow dog and informer to the white people. Why not assault him first: ... (181)

These verbal attacks were undoubtedly popular with the rank and file members who were very bitter about the injustices they suffered at the hands of these men. On at least one occasion it seems that the superintendent was physically attacked, but Ndaba apparently intervened to help him:

Brider the superintendent is a dog and you must chase him out of here ... It is a pity I stopped you the other day when you wanted to give him a hiding and I also include the inspector (From the crowd 'we will still wring their necks for them'). (182)

Equally popular was the frequent abuse that was heaped upon authority. In an admittedly extreme example, Andries Louw attacked

die 'Bloody fool' van 'n Superintendent, die 'Bloody fool' Brider ... Hy en die 'Bloody fool' van 'n Poliesieman Billy hulle doen net wat hulle wil, en se {sic} die 'Council se {sic} hulle moet dit doen ... of die 'Bloody Council' of the 'Bloody fool' Brider lieg'. (183)

The police reported that they

noticed that the applause was always much more prolonged when one of the

Speakers referred in scathing terms to Generals Hertzog and Smuts and the Minister of Justice, also when the Superintendent and the Town Council was referred to in the same terms. (184)

This was not merely mindless abuse, although it did reflect the deep-seated bitterness of the IANC members. It was also a positive effort to break down the servility that had been drummed into the oppressed masses over many years, to show them that their "masters" were just ordinary people who could be abused and challenged. Frantz Fanon has already eloquently argued the importance of breaking down the servility of the "colonised" before any liberation struggle can be successful. (185)

In the South African context Helen Bradford has also argued that

The growth of awareness that white authority could be overtly and successfully challenged - whether through legal victories or through ICU officials booming out accusations while the Boers sat silently in their cars - was potentially extremely serious.
(186)

As in the case of the ICU, these speeches were a major element in the growth of widespread insubordination - or "insolence" as it was arrogantly described in the discourse of the ruling class. It is very difficult to give any precise content to this term, but it encompassed a variety of activities ranging from not looking "happy" to refusing to accept lower wages. For instance, Die Middellander complained in 1932 that labourers were "brutaal", that housewives were unable to find labour and when they found workers, they turned out to be arrogant. (187) In general it complained that the "gees van opstandigheid" and

"onafhanklike houding" of the workers made life very difficult for their bosses.

The Courier reported another case where 5 shearers - all "good shearers" - were sentenced to £3 or 14 days for deliberately injuring about 400 sheep while shearing them. (188) In yet another case it was reported that "kwaaddoeners" went round Middelburg during the night and opened the taps in all the gardens, apparently in protest against the shortage of water and poor sanitation facilities in the location. (189)

V A COMPARISON WITH THE ICU IN EAST LONDON

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to discuss briefly the work of Beinart and Bundy on the discourse of the Independent ICU in East London. (190)

There are many parallels between the discourse of the IANC and that of the IICU, but it is the differences that are especially noteworthy. The greatest difference was that there was little or no appeals to traditionalism by the IANC. This was partly because of the fact that the traditional culture was much more remote in the Midlands. Although the towns were smaller than East London, the population was definitely more settled and homogeneous than the "fragmented, varigated population of East London". (191) There were few migrant workers and it is clear that tribal values and structures were much less important than they were in East London.

In addition, one of the major characteristics of the IANC was that it organised both coloured and African people. Consequently, it could of necessity not appeal too much to narrow cultural traditions. Furthermore, there was also a profound distrust of the role of the traditional political authorities, and here there was never any attempt to co-operate with them, as the IICU did in East London. (192)

Many themes were common to the discourse of both the IANC and IICU, such as the need for organisational loyalty and discipline, the need for class solidarity but especially for national solidarity, the use of often violent religious imagery, the need for independent black churches, and the appeals to a relatively recent history of resistance.

But even where there were common themes, there was usually a marked difference in emphasis. Although religious imagery permeated the discourse of both organisations and both virulently condemned the established churches, the IICU did not condemn religion outright (193) as the IANC often did.

In general it is also true that the need for national, rather than class solidarity was stressed by the IANC. As in the case of the IICU there were, for example, frequent references to the successful nationalist struggle of the Afrikaners under Hertzog, and it was often held up as an example worth emulating. (194) But within the IANC there was far more stress on the particular issues affecting the popular classes, rather than on broad nationalist demands.

Thus, while the similarities between organisation in East London and the Midlands were striking, the differences in emphasis and approach serve to indicate the specificity of the organisation in the Midlands.

NOTES

1. See chapter 2 appendix 5.
2. De Klerk 1952, p162; Houghton and Dagut 1972, p136, p326.
3. Union Statistics for 50 Years, Table N4.
4. Union Statistics for 50 Years, Tables I25, I26. See Chapter 2 note 39.
5. Farmers Weekly 17.7.1929, p462.
6. Die Burger 27.11.1930.
7. The Handbook of Agricultural Statistics, 1904 - 1950, p25.
8. See eg Tarka Herald 7.7.1931.
9. CACC para 617.
10. CACC paras 635, 618-24.
11. Union Statistics for 50 Years, Tables I25, I26. See Chapter 2 note 39.
12. Van der Horst 1942, p282.
13. Haines 1935, p59.
14. Hunter 1969, p509.
15. Quoted in Wilson 1971, p159.
16. Haines 1935, p68.
17. Haines 1935, p66.
18. These wages were still relatively low for the highly skilled work - in Australia shearers got between 40s and 45s, while elsewhere in the Commonwealth the wage was about 4ls. Farmers Weekly 13.3.1930, p2623.
19. See eg The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 7.5.1931.
20. South Western Echo 30.8.1930, Tarka Herald 22.9.1931.
21. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 25.11.1931.

22. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 30.10.1931.
23. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer, Die Middellandsche Afrikaander numerous issues in 1930 - 31. See also Wilson 1971.
24. CACC para 593.
25. Die Burger 23.1.1930.
26. CACC para 597-600.
27. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 23.11.1931.
28. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 23.11.1931.
29. Kaplan 1977b, p226.
30. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 8.1.1932.
31. See eg. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer from November 1931 to January 1932; Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 8.1.1932; Kaplan 1977b, p128.
32. This will not be discussed more fully here as it is beyond the scope of this work, but see eg. Kaplan 1977a, O'Meara 1983.
33. See eg. Wilson 1969, p136ff.
34. Die Burger 1.2.1930.
35. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 9.11.1931.
36. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 18.12.1930.
37. The reasons for this unequal development between town and country has been analysed in numerous works from Marx onwards. See eg. Morris 1979, p20ff.
38. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 9.9.1931.
39. See Lacey 1981, 169ff; Morris 1979, p211ff.
40. Die Burger 12.5.1930.
41. Farmers Weekly 5.3.1930, p2541.
42. See eg. Die Voorligter 30.7.1930.
43. Die Voorligter 8.11.1930.

44. Die Burger 22.12.1930; Die Voorligter 10.12.1930.
45. Die Voorligter 10.12.1930.
46. Grens Pos en Nuus 18.2.1931 and 6.8.1930.
47. Grens Pos en Nuus 22.4.1931.
48. Jansenville Chronicle 12.3.1931.
49. See eg Die Middeler 6.5.1931; The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 7.5.1931; Ons Koerant 7.5.1931.
50. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 22.5.1931.
51. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 31.10.1931.
52. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 5.12.1931.
53. Die Middeler 19.8.1931.
54. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 24.8.1931.
55. Die Middeler 19.8.1931.
56. Die Voorligter 15.10.1930.
57. Die Voorligter 1.10.1930.
58. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 30.3.1931. See also JUS 583 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
59. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 17.8.1931.
60. See Chapter 5, Section II, Die Middeler 18.2.1931.
61. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
62. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 18.2.1931.
63. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 8.3.1931.
64. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 24.8.1931.
65. Die Middeler 24.8.1931.

66. Die Middeler 24.8.1931.
67. Die Middeler 9.9.1931, The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 31.8.1931.
68. Die Middeler 26.8.1931.
69. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 24.9.1931.
70. Die Middeler 6.3.1932.
71. Die Middeler 11.3.1931. The fact that "some" workers owned cattle appears to be contrary to an earlier conclusion, but it is difficult to assess as there was no attempt to quantify the number of either the "natives" involved or the "stock".
72. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 17.5.1931.
73. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompal, Middelburg, 2.4.1931.
74. Umsebenzi 4.7.1930. The Poll Tax operated as a pass as it was compulsory to carry the receipt on one's person.
75. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 17.9.1930, Die Middeler 25.3.1931; see also The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 10.9.1931.
76. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.2.1931. Piet Ngoboko was one of the most prominent conservatives in the town.
77. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Queenstown 27.6.1931.
78. Roux 1972, p 243-255.
79. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
80. Umsebenzi 6.2.1931.
81. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 5.3.1931.
82. See chapter 5 Section I.
83. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Moddelburg, 2.4.1931.

84. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 10.8.1931. See also 30.7.1931; JUS 583 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.2.1931.
85. See JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol Eastern Cape, 23.2.1931, Die Middeler 25.3.1931, The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.3.1931 for details.
86. Die Middeler 25.3.1931.
87. Die Middeler 15.4.1931.
88. Die Middeler 12.8.1931.
89. See Chapter 7.
90. Wells 1980.
91. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 13.8.1931.
92. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 9.7.1931.
93. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.2.1931.
94. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 8.3.1931.
95. Umsebenzi 11.7.1930.
96. Umsebenzi 11.7.1930.
97. Die Middeler 13.5.1931.
98. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 13.8.1931, 17.8.1931.
99. Die Middeler 7.10.1931.
100. See Chapter 7, Section II.
101. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 1.3.1931.
102. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.2.1931.
103. KABA, 1/MDB: 17/4/2/1-6, Magistrate's Annual Reports, 1926-1932.

104. KABA, 1/MDB: 17/4/2/5, Magistrate's Annual Report, 1931.
105. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 8.7.1931.
106. Die Middeler 20.10.1930; see also the evidence of the police in a later court case in The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 10.9.1931.
107. Tarka Herald 8.7.1930, also see The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 10.8.1931.
108. See eg Jansenville Chronicle 12.3.1931; Die Middeler 18.6.1930, Farmers Weekly 30.10.1929.
109. Die Middeler 7.10.1931.
110. Die Middeler 7.10.1931.
111. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 11.8.1931, 19.8.1931.
112. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 25.7.1931.
113. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 2.4.1931.
114. Die Middeler 30.9.1931; JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 28.9.1931.
115. See eg Walker 1983, Chapter 2; Bradford 1984b, p301.
116. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 1.3.1931.
117. See eg JUS 583 32888/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 22.7.1931, 10.8.1931.
118. See Section II above.
119. See Section II above.
120. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 4.3.1931.
121. See Section IV below.
122. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.9.1931.
123. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 13.8.1931. See also 10.8.1931.

124. JUS 581 3102/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol, 30.10.1931.
125. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 6.8.1931.
126. Walker 1983, p51.
127. See eg JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 13.8.1931, 10.9.1931.
128. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 21.11.1931.
129. See for example Kingwill 1977, p33ff and The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 25.6.1930 where CAC protests about the existence of the ANC(WP) and the ANC (Griqualand West) without its consent.
130. Kingwill 1977, p34.
131. Letter to CAC congress in The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 27.6.1930.
132. Die Burger 24.4.1930. Also for next quote.
133. See for example Die Burger 18.2.1930, 12.7.1930, Die Middeler 14.1.1931.
134. Die Middeler 14.1.1931.
135. Die Middeler 14.1.1931 and Die Burger 24.4.1930. See also Die Burger 17.1.1930, Ons Koerant 12.1.1930.
136. Die Middeler 14.1.1931.
137. See for example Simons and Simons 1969, p452-53.
138. Simons and Simons 1969, p452.
139. I am indebted for the following biographical details to Karis and Carter 1982, p16-17.
140. Benson 1966, p239.
141. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 10.10.1931.
142. Die Middeler 2.12.1931.
143. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 1.8.1930.
144. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 24.6.1930.

145. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 1.7.1930.
146. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.2.1931.
147. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 8.2.1931.
148. Die Middeler 18.2.1931.
149. Die Middeler 18.2.1931.
150. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
151. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
152. Die Middeler 25.3.1932.
153. Die Middeler 17.6.1931.
154. See section I above.
155. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 10.8.1931.
156. Die Middeler 3.2.1932.
157. Die Middeler 16.3.1932.
158. Die Middeler 10.8.1932.
159. See Bradford 1984b, p298 for the importance of this interpellation as "educated" in the case of the petty bourgeoisie in the ICU.
160. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.9.1931.
161. Beinart and Bundy 1982, p8-9, Bradford 1980, 1983a.
162. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 6.6.1931. See also 7.6.1931.
163. See for example Beinart 1982, p155.
164. Umsebenzi 1.8.1930.
165. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 5.3.1931. See also JUS 583 3139/31, Report to the

- Distcompol, Cradock, 7.6.1931 and JUS 583 3288/31, Report to the Distcompol, Middelburg, 16.7.1931.
166. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 5.3.1931.
167. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 7.6.1931.
168. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 18.2.1931.
169. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 16.7.1931.
170. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 7.6.1931.
171. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
172. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 1.3.1931.
173. See for example JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 17.8.1931.
174. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 22.7.1931.
175. See for example Die Middelerlander 17.2.1932, 2.3.1932.
176. See for example Walshe 1971, p7ff.
177. See for example JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 5.3.1931.
178. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 5.3.1931.
179. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 10.8.1931.
180. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 13.8.1931.
181. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 9.7.1931. See also 5.8.1931, 10.8.1931, 13.8.1931.
182. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 28.9.1931.

183. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 30.7.1931. Billy was the newly hired location policeman.
184. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.6.1931.
185. Fanon 1979, Chapter 7.
186. Bradford 1983a, p137.
187. Die Middelande 16.3.1932.
188. The Courier 18.12.1929.
189. Die Middelande 1.7.1930.
190. Beinart and Bundy 1982.
191. Beinart and Bundy 1982, p9.
192. Beinart and Bundy 1982, p9.
193. Beinart and Bundy 1982, p4.
194. Beinart and Bundy 1982, p3; see eg Chapter 5 notes 35-36.

CHAPTER 7

**REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE :
ORGANISATION IN CRADOCK AND THE DECLINE OF
THE IANC IN THE MIDLANDS**

The previous chapter examined some of the major themes that arose out of the activities of the IANC in the Midlands. It concentrated on developments in Middelburg, although it also drew on some material from other centres.

Once the IANC was well established in Middelburg, however, it made continued efforts to organise elsewhere in the Midlands. These efforts were directed especially at Cradock, the only other large town in the Midlands, but the organisers from Middelburg also travelled to Naauwpoort, Tarkastad, Hofmeyr and other towns. (1)

The first part of this chapter concentrates on the development of organisation in Cradock up to 1931. The rest of the chapter discusses developments in the Midlands after September 1931 when the authorities adopted an increasingly hard line towards the IANC.

I THE START OF ORGANISATION IN CRADOCK

This section concentrates on the development of the organisation at Cradock. Events there were to precipitate a vastly increased level of repression in the Midlands area. Furthermore, Cradock is also of particular interest for the light it throws on the role of the petty bourgeoisie.

The population of the Cradock Location was nearly 5 000 people, about half of them African people. (2) The conservative petty bourgeoisie were particularly well organised in Cradock. In addition to the usual LAB and Vigilance Committee there was the Non-European Association, while Cradock was one of the few places in the country to

boast a Joint Council of Europeans and non-Europeans. (3)

The local paper had reported as early as June 1930 that it appeared

that agitators {were} at work amongst
the non-Europeans over a wide area

in an apparent reference to Tonjeni's visit to Graaff-Reinett. (4) It is not clear whether he organised in Cradock itself, but there was certainly no concerted attempt to organise there until much later. Nevertheless the CAC had started organising against possible "invasions" by the militants soon after the CAC Congress in June 1930. A "mass meeting" was held in the location to prepare the ground.

At this meeting 16 men and seven women joined the Cape Congress, the majority of whom were members of the local Vigilance Association it being made clear by those joining that there must be no Communist propoganda in Cradock.

(5)

The VC with AK Pokomela as chairman and John Sitela as secretary was revitalised and used as the major instrument of the conservatives in their struggle against the IANC. It was decided that the VC would affiliate directly to the CAC and that public and committee meetings would be held every two weeks. (6) Attempts were made to recruit more members and 50 people joined the VC in the months after the Cape Congress.

The VC was helped in its struggle by the Non-European Association of the Rev. James Calata and Lucas Afrika, the LAB (Sitela, Afrika and others) and the local Joint Council. The conservatives decided that they

should use all the influence they had with the younger generation, who had not their character, who did not share their beliefs and whose methods were not wise in all things. They trusted they would not listen to those with Communistic ideas and that they would have nothing to do with the men who came from Russia ... {They} had only one object and that was to promote harmony and good feeling between the Europeans and the residents of the location. (7)

When the IANC started to organise in Middelburg and Tarkastad, the VC reaffirmed

that they had no sympathy with the Communist agitators and have no belief in their doctrine. They do not desire their coming into the location. (8)

When Tonjeni and Plaatjes visited Cradock a while later, they were unable to hold any meetings and they were refused permission to enter the location. The mayor convened a special meeting to discuss the issue. In attendance were the LAB, the VC of the CAC, the JC, "a few leading inhabitants of the Cradock location", the mayor, the town clerk and the district commandant of police. A motion, moved by Calata, was unanimously adopted, that

the local Municipal Council and the Police be kindly but urgently requested not to permit any agitators whether Non-Europeans or native, to enter the Location for in their opinion they have always been treated by the authorities in a very reasonable manner and should they at any time have any grievances they are quite capable of looking after

themselves without the assistance of agitators. (9)

Unfortunately for the Council, it turned out that they did not have the authority to ban meetings. Tonjeni and Plaatjes were able to return to the Midlands by June. They immediately started to organise in Cradock as this was the only major town from which they had not been banned. By this time the conservatives had been organising in preparation for the arrival of the IANC for nearly a year.

The IANC started to organise in Cradock when they held two meetings outside the location. Their fame had obviously spread before them, because when Tonjeni, Plaatjes and Hendricks (from Middelburg) arrived on Saturday, 6 June, they addressed a massive meeting of 500 to 800 people in the afternoon - about a third of the crowd were "coloured people". (10) The meeting was held on a football ground outside the location to avoid problems with permits.

Tonjeni opened the meeting, speaking in English which he himself translated into Xhosa and Plaatjes translated into Afrikaans. In his speech he raised many of the standard IANC demands. He urged the crowd to adopt passive resistance methods, and in particular to refuse to pay their poll tax as

'We are not represented ... I never paid the poll tax. I have been summonsed three times. My idea is to resist this damnable law and all coloured people must do it ... the government listens only to a few rich people. The Government would never say to them 'Here is your country: they would never do it'...' (He) went on to urge the need of a united front ... 'there must be no Hottentots, Coloured or Natives or Indians. You must all be United, You

should not wait for your chiefs to say the word. They are all getting bags of money from the Government, what do you expect from them? They are only the engine drivers of the Government.'

'Long have you been slaves, and the time is ripe for your emancipation' ... {and he} quoted a man named Makana as saying let us drive the White man into the sea, 'But I say let us drive these dirty laws into the sea ... We are not out to claim a district; we want the whole continent', he concluded.

According to the police, the meeting eventually ended fairly quietly, but the next afternoon an even bigger meeting was held attended by 1 000 blacks and 30 whites. Tonjeni again spoke and said that

the Natives were paying for passes and the poll tax to feed the old Boers, {'oud stryders' from the Boer War - WH} and that they were sacked from the railway to give the Boers work and that the White people told them to look up to God whilst they were stealing their country. (11)

The meeting was much livelier than the previous one and, according to the superintendent, Wilken

Judging from the applause they {the crowd - WH} seemed to like the speeches. He heard some young Natives saying 'Now we'll show the white people! whilst one young Native girl called out, 'Nou sal ons hulle opdonder'.

Despite a warning from the police that they needed a permit

Tonjeni, Plaatjes and Velapi went into the location after the meeting "to have a cup of tea" as Tonjeni did not "think the police will be so foolish as to arrest me". The police, however, arrested them:

Daar was groot opgewondenheid toe die
beskuldigdes na die poliesie kantoor
geneem is en het honderde kaffers en
gekleurdes Tonjeni en sy makkers na die
'charge office' gevolg. (12)

A crowd of about 500 people gathered outside the police office and

A strong force of police was necessary
to disperse an excited crowd. (13)

The full weight of the repressive apparatus of the state was now brought to bear. Hundreds of black people gathered again at the magistrate's court the next day to hear the IANC leaders charged with contravening the Location regulations and with inciting hostility under the Native Administration Act. (14) Tonjeni and Plaatjes were each sentenced to two months hard labour on each of two charges and Hendricks who had acted as interpreter, to one month suspended for a year. (15) Tonjeni was also charged with inciting others not to pay poll tax and fined one pound (or seven days). (16)

At the request of the local police and magistrate, Tonjeni, Ndobe and Plaatjes were banned from the whole Midlands area - Cradock, Middelburg, Graaff-Reinett and the surrounding towns - soon afterwards. (17)

But this was not enough to crush the new branch at Cradock. Although there is little information on organisation in the area, it appears from the Middelburg evidence, that organisers from Middelburg regularly visited Cradock to organise there.

As mentioned above, Willem Hendricks had accompanied Plaatjes and Tonjeni on their original trip to Cradock while it seems that Andries Louw also went along. (18) Tonjeni and Ndobe also continued to organise in Cradock for the duration of the trial, although they were apparently based in Middelburg. (19) For example, they arrived back in Cradock on 19 June, disguised in red blankets, and managed to get permits from the location superintendent. The next day they held a big meeting, attended by about 500 people and on the 24th they held another meeting. When Hendricks was evicted from the Middelburg location in mid-July, he again organised in Cradock and Naauwpoort and Graaff-Reinett before returning to Middelburg at the end of the month. (20)

Soon after he left Ntame and Camba were organising in Cradock. They immediately ran into problems with the local police; Douglas Camba tells the story:

The District Commandant at Cradock called us to his office and asked us what do we speak at our meetings, he addressed us as 'My friends'. We told him that we are not his friends. We said you had a man at our meeting yesterday and you can send one again, he said where are you from? we {sic} told him that we came from Middelburg. He asked me what payment I get for preaching Tonjeni's policy, we refused to speak - but we told him that we are holding a meeting this afternoon, he said you must speak nicely to the people and do not warm their blood, he had four other whites with him. I said when you cook a fire under the pot and you expect it to boil, do you not? He then took off his coat and chased us out. (21)

When pure intimidation failed, the police tried to resort to more subtle methods:

The Sergeant asked how much this man (Ntame) gets, whether he gets £3. He offered Ntame £5 to drop Tonjeni's policy, Ntame said I refuse even a {illegible word} to drop Tonjeni's Policy.

The organisers had to use a good measure of cunning to get into the location:

I then went to the location, I hid Ntame as he is known to the Superintendent, when I got to the Superintendent he asked me if I were not one of Tonjeni's men, I told him that I did not belong to Tonjeni's sect. He said we have decided to arrest all Tonjeni's people and you will be arrested too. I said I am going to church I have a congregation here and I have a right to enter the location, he said I am Superintendent of the location and if I refuse then you cannot enter have you got a preacher's card? I said yes, he said go in but do not hold any meetings. I went in the location and preached but I preached for the Organisation, I said that Satan was better than the Government because he wants both white and black but Pirow sends only blacks to hell and that is why I say unite.

It seems that the IANC branch in Cradock was fairly successful. By December the Joint Council reported that:

twice a week mass meetings are held on the outskirts of the location which are largely attended. The success of this movement points to the necessity of more educational and social workers in the location. (22)

II INCREASED REPRESSION IN CRADOCK AND MIDDELBURG

In the meantime, the police in Cradock were becoming increasingly concerned about the organisation: by September it was reported that as a

result of the Native propoganda in the Native Locations at Cradock the police have recently experienced some difficulty in carrying out their arduous duties in a certain part thereof. (23)

Soon thereafter the police decided that firm action was necessary to re-establish their authority. On the evening of 8 September a "strong police patrol" of six mounted police, 15 foot police and 5 civilians went to the Rooi Laer part of the location after a previous patrol had been "obstructed during the tax check". (24) The police supposedly had orders

to refrain from anything like provocative action, ... {but within} two minutes they arrested one of the ringleaders ... {This was} bitterly resented by the natives, many of whom immediately became excited, and quickly appeared on the scene, armed with sticks to prevent any further arrests. Lining themselves up against the houses they defied the foot men, consequently it was necessary for the mounted men to charge them.

During the charge seven people were arrested from the crowd of about 200.

The native women lost complete control of themselves, and rained sticks stones and tins at {sic} the police.

Their commander, "not knowing the strength of the attack", decided to retreat.

All the time stones were falling around them and it became so bad that fearing some of the foot men might be injured, he ordered a second charge of the mounted men.

This time they managed to disperse the crowd and the police could complete their withdrawal.

Such a state of affairs could not, of course, be tolerated. The authorities were determined to stamp out any resistance to "established order" and the following day an even stronger patrol raided the location to arrest the "rioters". Thirteen people were arrested for public violence and twenty for tax offences, while three gave themselves up voluntarily. All 11 men and six women who were charged with public violence were found guilty and received sentences of between two weeks and six months. (25)

The authorities now sought to drive home their advantage and to attempt to drive the IANC out of Cradock altogether. The location regulations were tightened up at the request of the police in an attempt to exclude all "agitators" from the location. (26) Under the new regulations, inter alia, "visitors" would not be allowed to stay in the location for more than 3 hours without a permit. This measure was used against IANC organisers, as well as the unemployed in the location who had flocked to join the IANC. The IANC organised a petition to protest against the new regulations,

but the Mayor was firm in his assertion that

We cannot allow loafing in the Location
and the regulation must be put into
force. (27)

A month later the public prosecutor was reported to be about to institute prosecutions against a number of unemployed people. (28)

The violence in Cradock precipitated a similar clampdown in Middelburg. At the end of September the police started to prepare a case against several of the IANC leaders, allegedly for making inciting remarks at a meeting. (29) It is not clear whether this case ever took place.

At about the same time Jacob Windvoel was summonsed to appear in court, apparently about some problem with the IANC office in the location. The concerted campaign of repression took further shape when the magistrate ordered Hendricks' removal to his "home", the Graaff-Reinett location, in terms of the Urban Areas Act of 1923. (30) Apparently this was allowed as Hendricks had been convicted under the hostility clause of the Native Administration Act in July. (31) This was in fact no more than a legalistic manoeuvre because it had been decided to ban Hendricks under the Riotous Assemblies Act should his appeal against his conviction succeed.

Early in November the amended location regulations came into force. They required anybody who wished to hold a meeting in the location, to obtain prior permission from the Location Superintendent and the District Commandant of Police, either of whom had the power to change the date or venue of a meeting, although they were unable to ban or cancel it. (33)

The IANC did not take this wave of repression lying down, it was determined to fight the state every inch of the way.

When Windvoel was apparently ordered to hand over the keys to the IANC office, Ndaba urged a meeting to protest:

You have given orders to the chairman not to hand over the key and now he is summoned for it. Do you think it is right? It shows they were after your books. On Wednesday you must go with the chairman. The magistrate must know that if he convicts this man (Windvoel) there will be bloodshed and it will be on the head of the magistrate. (From the crowd - 'blood must be spilt on Wednesday') (and then some of the women shouted 'Why don't they arrest us. They kay do {sic} not belong to windvoel but to us. They are afraid of us'). (34)

When Hendricks was ordered to leave the location, the IANC decided to defy the order. Four hundred residents organised themselves into pickets to guard the location gates and prevented the police from entering the location. (35) The local press reported that:

'die Maandagaand was die lokasie feitlik beleër deur die naturelle om te verbied dat die polisie daar sou inkom om hul held te arresteer' . (36)

It seems that the police were unable to enforce the banning, until Hendricks eventually left three days later "op sy eie dooie gemak". By this stage the location was in a state of revolt and it was becoming increasingly difficult to govern. The superintendent and the conservatives were often surrounded and threatened by IANC supporters. Further

Met die polisie word ook opelik {sic} die spot gedryf en die Tonjeni volgelingen verklaar opelik dat die

polisie {sic} bang is om die lokasie binne te kom en hulle biermakery te stop. (37)

It was in this explosive atmosphere that the new location regulations were introduced in early November. (38)

Douglas Camba launched a bitter attack on the regulations at the next meeting:

Die boer vra niemand om vergaderings te hou. Ons moet dit doen want ons is swart. Alles wat ons hier praat is waar. Hierdie ding is nie gedoen vir die boer nie maar alleenlik vir die kaffir. Jy moet nou gaan vra 'asseblief baas mag ek 'n vergadering hou' ... As ons die Superintendent of die Kommandant gaan vra om vergaderings te hou, sal hulle weier ... As jullie {sic} nie georganiseer is nie sal die papier jullie win ... Dit is nie my organisasie nie. Dit is jullie organisasie. Die leeuw en did tier le {sic} op die pad na Afrika, en hulle brul nou, en die wie bang is sal nie daar kan verby nie.

Other speakers also emphasised that

Those who say we must not hold meetings must go with us to our office and hand in their tickets from today up to Sunday. (39)

Thus the IANC resolved to defy the regulations and to refuse to apply for the necessary permission. In retrospect this did not seem a particularly wise tactic as it exposed a great number of the formal and informal leadership to police repression, with little or no chance of waging a successful struggle against the regulations. There was also no

possibility of mass resistance to the regulations, as it would only involve speakers at the meetings. The authorities in any event, did not have the discretion to stop meetings altogether, but could merely change the venue and/or time.

Thus the IANC arranged their usual meeting the next Sunday without applying for permission. After the meeting the seven speakers were arrested and charged. Again the IANC resolved to fight back. A big demonstration was organised outside the court building on the day of the trial. When the trial started at 10 o'clock the court was filled with IANC supporters. By the time it eventually finished at eight o'clock in the evening:

het 'n groot aantal naturelle voor die
magistraats kantoor vergader, in baie
gevalle goed gewapen met allerhande
soorte gevaarlike wapens en 'n
oorverdowende lawaai opgeskop, singende
wat hul noem hul volkslied. (40)

The District Commandant of Police reported that

The hearing of the case being continued so late gave an opportunity for a number of natives to gather in the vicinity of the Court in addition to a full Court of natives who remained present for the hearing of the case. It was evident that they were in sympathy with the accused {sic} and I arranged for all available members of the Force to be within the precincts of the Court Buildings. After the sentence the Court was cleared and I then became aware of the intentions of the crowd who defied the Police to take the prisoners to Gaol saying they also were at the meeting and

would go to Gaol with them - In the forefront were all irresponsible young - native girls and boys - though females predominated, they shouted, screamed and sang alternatively. On the outskirts of the crowd were the male native adults in groups, a few stones were thrown on the Court House roof in front of which a number of europeans had congregated and a few of these were armed with revolvers and were impatient ...

It was out of the question to make any effort to remove the prisoners to Gaol and whilst I was tempted to disperse the mob with the Police I had on hand, I realised that if I did I could not control the {white - WH} civilian element and a serious clash would then have been unavoidable. (41)

Thus the prisoners were allowed to pay fines of 10s each and were released to join the crowd:

onder gejuig en geskel op die blankes
het hul vertrek na die lokasie. (42)

The police did not attempt to control the crowd of several hundred people who stoned several houses on their way back to the location.

In Benede Coetzee straat het feitlik geen enkele huis vrygespring nie. In die lokasie aangekom, het hulle ook 'n kerk en die pastorie bestorm en die naturellepredikant moes veiligheid by die poliesie {sic} gaan soek. (43)

In the wake of the march, the "public" feeling in Middelburg was enraged at the lack of police action. A public meeting

was called the next evening in the town hall, which

was crowded and while there was a number of middle aged and older residents present, the meeting was principally composed of younger people, all eager for retaliation on Location ...

Judging from the attitude and remarks of the younger men, many of whom were armed, the most of them with sticks, the wish to come to blows with Natives, was father to the thought that Coloured inhabitan {sic} intended general violence. (44)

The Deputy Commissioner of Police in the Eastern Cape was summoned to the meeting and managed to pacify the crowd. In private the Deputy Commissioner expressed his dissatisfaction that

It remains a fact however that Middelburg for some two years appears to have been a hatching ground for Native agitators and it has, unfortunately, been allowed to go on until recently when action has been instituted against several of the leaders of the Native Congress. (45)

The local police, possibly to prove their zeal to the Deputy Commissioner, were also determined to break the power of the IANC:

The native and coloured element here require a sharp lesson to put a final end to their riotious propensities and a display of Force under discipline is required to put an end once and for all to their present insolent and defiant

attitude.

I suggest a complete round up of the Municipal Location with a house to house search for concealed weapons accompanied by a Minister's Order banning certain known agitators from this Police District. The persons I propose should be the subject of a Minister's Order are:

MALES

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. July Bacela | 2. Willie Johnson |
| 3. Jim Ngqakayi | 4. Eddie Ndaba |
| 5. Douglas Camba | 6. Jim Klaase |
| 7. David Nkabi | 8. Stephanus Qobo |
| 9. John Mana | 10. John Tiger |
| 11. James Louw | 12. James Ntame |
| 13. Jack Ntsikane | |

FEMALES

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Poppie Miles | 2. Sara Uithaler |
| 3. Sara Jones | 4. Elizabeth Ngenze |
- (46)

However, even the Deputy Commissioner thought that this was excessive, and recommended that only Ndabe and Camba be banned from addressing public meetings in the Middelburg district.

Plans for this repression got underway immediately - police reinforcements were secretly rushed in from Cradock and kept in hiding in the police barracks as a special reserve.

The IANC planned to hold another meeting in defiance of the new regulations the next day. On the morning of the meeting, the leaders of the IANC were summoned to the police office and threatened with summary arrest if they proceeded with the meeting. Furthermore, no further Sunday meetings would be allowed, and they were told to have fewer meetings

during the week. (47)

The police also arrested four leaders of the IANC on charges in connection with the demonstration and they received heavy gaol sentences from the magistrate. (48) Three weeks later the Minister of Justice banned all meetings in the location, other than religious and sports meetings. The bannings, the arrest of leaders, and especially the banning of meetings, dealt the IANC a severe blow. It was severely disorganised, to the extent that it was not able to mount any significant demonstration on Dingaan's Day. (49)

At the same time repression was also stepped up on other fronts. The town council decided to take firmer action against people who refused to pay rent. The mayor stated that they had tried to avoid a confrontation, but

daar sou nou geen verdere onderhandeling
plaasvind om 'n botsing te vermy

Accordingly, the council started to evict people who were behind with their rent. (50) Die Middellander recognised that undifferentiated evictions might also weaken further the tenuous ideological hold of the conservatives, as the "innocent" (i.e. those who did not support the "oproermakers", but were still in arrears with their rent) would also suffer,

want nou dat die Raad sy tande vir die
oproermakers gewys het, nou kan daar nie
onderskei gemaak word tussen
skuldenaars.

Thus by a combination of police repression aimed at the leadership and evictions by the council aimed at the mass of members, the authorities were able to bludgeon the IANC into silence, if not acquiescence.

The conservative petty bourgeoisie also joined in this

attack - e.g. in a combined letter to the press the local churches attacked the IANC for being against religion, and urged their members to fight against the IANC. (51) Their somewhat incoherent letter to Die Middellander seemed to condemn the IANC mainly on the grounds that black people do not have enough guns to fight the white man, and thus the IANC would

leave them to the exposure of a strong nation like white people to devour them like a vulture falling on his prey.

However, they also forcefully argued that

the Bible teaches us to be loyal and submissive to those who administer the affairs of the country on behalf of the government.

The council attempted to strengthen the hand of the conservatives by changing the Location regulations to give the LAB unspecified additional powers. (52)

All these measures had some success. It was reported that the churches were slowly recovering their position after having been deserted during the previous year. (53) The Church of Christ had also rejoined the other churches after Camba was banned from the town. (54)

However, the IANC was not yet defeated. It was able to organise against the LAB so effectively that nobody was even prepared to stand in the elections in February. (55) The nominated members of the LAB eventually asked the council to call a public meeting in the location to elect the other members, but from the evidence it appears that this meeting never took place.

Other organisational activity also continued, albeit at a much lower level than before. In March 1932 the IANC again

organised a march of unemployed workers to demand jobs from the mayor. (56) He promised to do his best, but the crowd refused to disperse and eventually the police were called to disperse the crowd.

In Cradock it seems that a similar process of repression and resistance developed. These matters came to a head at the end of January 1932 when a strike was called. Although details are sketchy and sometimes contradictory, the Middellandsche Afrikaander reported that, on Sunday morning,

toe kaffer meide en mans na hul werk in die dorp wou kom is hul teengestaan deur andere en ... baie huise was Saterdag en Sondag sonder hulle bediendes daar hul deur een seksie van die kaffers verbied is om na hul werk te gaan. Hulle word voorgestaan en geslaan as hul nie na hul hutte teruggegaan het nie. (57)

The "strikers" seem to have been mostly younger people from the Rooi Laer and Cape Sheep areas while their opponents were mostly from the Tulu part of the location. (58)

Fighting soon broke out between the two groups. After the police were initially powerless to intervene, they eventually acted to disperse the crowd and arrested a number of the militants. But skirmishes between the two groups continued throughout the night and it was only two days later that the location quietened down.

Initially the press sought to dismiss the affair as merely an annual bout of "faction fighting". However, as will become clear, there was a clear perception that the causes went far deeper than this. The events in Cradock are chiefly of interest, though, because it demonstrates that the ruling class did not rely on repression alone to preserve its hegemony. In Cradock there was also a

conscious effort by the ruling class to preserve its hegemony through ideological means. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer commented that

If this sort of thing is to be prevented in the future, there must be engendered far sounder public opinion in the location and more evidence of a desire to work with the authorities. (59)

The ideological hegemony of the ruling class had been accepted in the past, but now a crisis had developed:

It is generally admitted that the Communist doctrines which have now been preached locally for some time past are responsible for not a little of the increased lawlessness. (60)

The chief of police endorsed this view and linked it directly to the weakness of the petty bourgeoisie:

In 1929 the Rev Mr Calata worked with the location superintendent and with the police, and to a certain extent, he was a link with the people, and kept them from faction fights. {sic} But the complaint is that since these meetings started this control has been lost. (61)

Much thought was given to the question of how "this control" could be re-established. The magistrate's view was somewhat crude: He expressed his regret that

for the first conviction for this offence there was a maximum fine of £2 or 14 days imprisonment, with spare diet. And the fine must be according to

the ability to pay. (62)

Furthermore, only offenders under the age of 17 years could be whipped. But the magistrate also realised that more than brute force was necessary:

What is needed is the force of public opinion in the location, otherwise these children are going to take control of the location.

This call was taken up and echoed by other elements of the local ruling class. The Midlands News and Karroo Farmer editorialised that "there must be engendered far sounder public opinion in the location". (63)

A concerted campaign was now launched to restore the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes, a campaign in which the conservative petty bourgeoisie played a crucial role. Nobody personifies this role more than Rev. Calata. We have already seen that the police regarded him as a "link with the people", as a "means of control". The police now intervened directly to attempt to restore this control by trying to strengthen the conservative petty bourgeoisie. Mass meetings were organised in the location at which the chief of police and Calata addressed the inhabitants and appealed for order and responsibility. The police also appointed four "responsible men" in each of the six sections of the location to report any disturbances to them. (64)

The authorities, however, did not rely only on ideological means to re-establish their control.

Fifty-six young people, 22 males and 34 females, were arrested and spent the night in gaol singing "their communist songs". (65) They were charged with public violence and sentenced to 14 days imprisonment or a fine of £1. (66) The next day another 40 people were also arrested

and received similar sentences.

A campaign of victimisation was also launched against the local IANC leadership. Bles Mahali was charged with holding a meeting on the "coloured" recreation ground on 22 January without written permission, and convicted. (67) A week later Mahali was again charged for a meeting on 31 January. This time George Camies, the local chairman was also charged, and they were sentenced to a £2 fine or 7 days imprisonment. After this, there is little evidence of concerted organisation in Cradock. On May Day the IANC was able to organise a march of 600 unemployed under banners proclaiming "We want food", "Cradock Unemployed" and "Down with the Native Service Contract Bill". (68) The crowd marched round the town and then went to the mayor demanding work or food.

The police tried to disperse the crowd, but were initially driven off and the mayor was forced to go into hiding. Eventually the crowd was dispersed and 16 people were arrested. This seems to have been the last of the big public mobilisations in Cradock, although some form of organisation continued to exist at least until 1934. (69)

In Middelburg the activities of the IANC also seemed to have been contained by the mass of repressive measures adopted at the end of 1931. (70) In early June 1932, however, the ban on public meetings expired and Eddie Ndaba's banning order ran out.

The IANC immediately started to organise publicly again. Meetings were held on the 1st and 5th June. (71) Ndaba also returned to Middelburg and addressed smallish meetings of about 100 people on the 12th and 15th. (72) Before the latter meeting, he was called in by the police, and warned not to proceed with the meeting. (73) However, he decided to ignore the warning and at the meeting it was resolved to continue with meetings without asking for permission. (74)

The next day the police acted. Six of the IANC leaders - Ndaba, Qobo, Huigh, Ntame, Tiger and Johnson were charged with addressing the meeting on 12 June and the first three were also charged for the meeting on 15 June. (75) Ndaba and Qobo were sentenced to £4 or 40 days, Huigh to £2 or 20 days and Ntame to £1 or 10 days.

The fines were not paid, but when the police attempted to remove the prisoners to gaol, they were attacked by a crowd of about 50 people who attempted to free the prisoners. (76) "Die poliesie is lelik toegetakel". Several civilians rushed to the aid of the police

en 'n verwoede geveg het plaasgevind
waarin kieries, klippe, bakstene, ens.
gebruik was.

Eventually, the attackers were beaten back and fled. Apparently it had been decided before the time to free the IANC leaders if they were convicted. (77) Four members of the IANC, were arrested and sentenced to between 9 and 12 months in gaol. Ntame was convicted of inciting the attempted rescue and sentenced to a further 2 months. Three other people were still being sought by the police. The final act of repression was to ban Ndaba to Cape Town for a year when he was released from gaol. (78)

III THE DECLINE OF ORGANISATION

These events appear to have been the last major attempt at mass mobilisation in the Midlands by the IANC. Thereafter, there is little evidence of the large public meetings, demonstrations and passive resistance that characterised the initial period of organisation.

Some form of organisation did, however, survive for the next few years, albeit in a somewhat muted form. Only a brief outline of later developments will be presented as the available evidence is very patchy. The most important

source is Umsebenzi, the CPSA newspaper. In the course of 1933 and 1934 it devoted an inordinate amount of attention to developments in the Midlands and it had a number of correspondents in the area.

The most prominent correspondents were Jim Mti (79) from Tarkastad and Simon Batwa, the secretary of the CP at Cradock. Of the earlier IANC leaders only Willem Hendricks is mentioned. He was still active in Graaff-Reinett, although there was no formal organisation there. (80)

The precise nature of the relationship between the IANC and the CP is not at all clear. Certainly, the CP claimed to have branches in the Midlands - in fact in 1933 Cradock and Tarkastad were reported to be the only functioning branches outside Cape Town and Johannesburg. (81) These branches were almost certainly a legacy from the IANC and were probably the remains of the IANC branches.

The conversion of IANC branches to CP branches unfortunately happened at a time when the South African CP had been almost totally "bolshevised" in accordance with the Stalinist conception of organisation then prevalent in the Comintern. (82) Thus, the local organisers of the CP spent much of their energy in futile attempts to apply the correct "bolshevik" methods in the rural areas. Branches of the Young Communist League, the African Federation of Trade Unions and Ikaka Labasebenzi - the Workers' Defence - were all formed with an almost total disregard of the actual organisational needs in the area. (83)

Unfortunately, the reports in Umsebenzi are in the vernacular and had often been badly written and/or translated. Thus, it is often difficult to make much sense of them. Most of the reports are very general in nature and, where details of organisation are given, they are often unclear or contradictory. The very absence of information about the day to day functioning of branches probably indicates that they were fairly inactive. This tentative

conclusion is supported by the lack of evidence of attempts at mass mobilisation.

Many of the issues discussed earlier were still of considerable importance - low wages, unemployment, passes and attacks on religion all feature prominently in the Umsebenzi reports - but there is little indication of any organised response to these issues. (84)

It appears that the more militant forms of organisation in the area eventually faded away, but it did leave something of a legacy. Although it was Calata's CAC that survived in Cradock, the legacy of the more militant form of organisation in the IANC probably had some influence on the fact that the Cradock branch was to become one of the stronger branches of the ANC.

NOTES

1. See eg JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg 6.8.1931, 17.8.1931.
2. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 10.7.1931. It is not clear whether this figure refers to the adult population only.
3. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 5.12.1931.
4. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 16.7.1930.
5. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 27.6.1930. The women presumably joined the women's section of the CAC.
6. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 29.7.1930, 1.8.1930.
7. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 31.1.1931.
8. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 11.3.1931.
9. JUS 583 3139/31, Minutes of a meeting held in the Council chamber on 23rd March {1931 WH} of the Location Advisory Board, the Local Native Vigilance Society of the Cape African Congress, the Joint Council of European and Non-European and a few leading inhabitants of the Cradock Location.
10. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 15.6.1931. See also 16.6.1931 and JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 6.6.1931, 7.6.1931.
11. A reference to the civilised labour policy.
12. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 12.6.1931.
13. Cape Times 9.6.1931.
14. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 12.6.1931; Sec 29(1) of Act 38, 1927.
15. Cape Times 4.7.1931.
16. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 2.7.1931, 3.7.1931.
17. See Chapter 5 Note 44 above for a full list of magisterial districts.
18. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg,

9.7.1931.

19. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 26.6.1931 for details.
20. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 9.7.1931, 16.7.1931, 27.7.1931, 6.8.1931.
21. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 10.8.1931.
22. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 5.12.1931.
23. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 9.9.1931, 10.9.1931 for details.
24. Two policemen were attacked according to the Cape Times 11.9.1931.
25. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 25.9.1931.
26. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 7.9.1931.
27. Quoted in The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 24.9.1931.
28. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 31.10.1931.
29. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Cradock to Decompol Eastern Cape, 2.10.1931.
30. Apparently section 17 of Act 21/1923. See JUS 581 3103/31, Compol to MJ, 23.10.1931.
31. Section 29(1) of Act 38/1927.
32. JUS 581 3102/31, SJ to Compol, 2.11.1931.
33. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Cradock to Decompol Eastern Cape, 21.11.1931.
34. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 28.9.1931.
35. Umsebenzi 30.10.1931.
36. Die Middelandier 21.10.1931.
37. Die Middelandier 28.10.1931.
38. Administrator's Notice No. 463 (Cape) dated 5.11.1931 published in the Provincial Gazette 1353, 6.11.1931.

39. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 13.11.1931.
40. Die Middeler 25.11.1931.
41. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, Eastern Cape 21.11.1931.
42. Die Middeler 25.11.1931.
43. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 27.11.1931.
44. JUS 583 3288/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol, 23.11.1931.
45. JUS 583 3288/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol, 23.11.1931.
46. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, Eastern Cape 21.11.1931.
47. JUS 583 3288/31, Decompol, Eastern Cape to Compol 23.11.1931.
48. Die Middeler 25.11.1931.
49. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 18.12.1931; Die Middeler 9.12.1931.
50. Die Middeler 9.12.1931.
51. Die Middeler 2.12.1931.
52. Die Middeler 3.2.1932.
53. Die Middeler 17.2.1932.
54. Die Middeler 2.3.1932.
55. Die Middeler 3.2.1932.
56. Die Middeler 16.3.1932.
57. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 29.1.1932.
58. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932.
59. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932.
60. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932
61. Quoted in The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer

26.1.1932.

62. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932.
63. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932.
64. Die Middellandsche Afrikaander 5.2.1932.
65. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 2.2.1932.
66. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932.
67. The Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 6.2.1932.
68. Umsebenzi 13.5.1931. The report states that the march was under the leadership of the CP but this seems unlikely. The crowd estimate might also be over-optimistic.
69. See below for details.
70. Die Middeler 15.6.1932.
71. Die Middeler 15.6.1932.
72. JUS 583 3289/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 12.6.1932; JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.6.1932.
73. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg 15.6.1932.
74. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg 15.6.1932.
75. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, 16.6.1932.
76. Die Middeler 15.6.1932. The account referred to in note 75 is less dramatic and reported only 12 attackers.
77. Die Middeler 15.6.1932; JUS 583 3288/31, Compol to MJ, 27.6.1932.
78. JUS 583 3289/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, 24.6.1932; JUS 583 3289/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Magistrate, Middelburg, 30.9.1932; Die Middeler 27.7.1932.
79. He was referred to at various times as James Mti, Jim Mtu and James Mtu, and apparently also wrote

under the name D.J. Dingaana .

80. See for example Umsebenzi 1.3.1933, 3.2.1934, 10.3.1934, 26.5.1934, 25.8.1934, 20.10.1934 and undated cutting.
81. Roux 1978, p269.
82. See eg Roux 1978, p255 ff; Simons and Simons 1969, p438ff.
83. See eg Umsebenzi 1.7.1933.
84. See, for example, for wages: Umsebenzi 20.1.1934, 17.2.1934, 5.5.1934; for passes: Umsebenzi 30.11.1933, 6.1.1934; for religion: Umsebenzi 6.1.1934, 10.2.1934.

CHAPTER 8CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is necessary to draw together some of the many strands that have emerged from this study. Three broad themes are discussed in this chapter. Firstly, the relationship between the petty bourgeoisie and popular struggles are re-examined in the light of the history of the ANC(WP) and IANC. Secondly, an attempt is made to evaluate the effectiveness and weaknesses of the strategies and organisational methods of the militants in the ANC(WP) and IANC. Thirdly, an overall assessment is made of the significance of the organisation in relation to the broader struggle for liberation in South Africa.

The Petty Bourgeoisie and Popular Struggles

In Chapter 1 it was argued that the most useful conception of the ANC is one that stresses the existence of different tendencies within the ANC. It is singularly unhelpful to conceive of the ANC as simply an organisation of the conservative petty bourgeoisie that has no interest in mass struggle and in national liberation. It is equally unhelpful to analyse the ANC in terms that imply an uninterrupted and continued resistance to the racial state - tendency which is particularly evident in some of the literature that emanates from the exiled liberation movement or its ideologues.

For much of the period up to World War II the ANC was indeed dominated either by the tendency which eschewed popular mass struggle, or by the tendency which was only prepared to lend tacit support to such struggles. It is important, though, to stress the existence of a third tendency within the ANC which advocated active participation in popular struggle. This tendency emerged for the first time in the post-war struggles on the Rand and surfaced again in the struggles in

the Cape.

In terms of this conception, it is clear that the militant tendency emerged in the ANC relatively early, and it was even able to attain dominance in certain branches which became actively involved in organising and broadening mass struggles.

This fairly rapid development from the ANC's earlier elitist nature followed, at least partially, from the very imperatives of constituting the national movement formally. When mass struggle erupted, as they did in the post-war period, the petty bourgeois leadership of the organisation faced the unenviable choice of either participating in such struggles, or being left behind. Of course, neither of these courses followed in a predetermined fashion. Bonner has shown how within the TNC the petty bourgeoisie polarised into two camps advocating the different courses. From Bradford's work it is clear that in the 1920's the upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie in the ANC by and large refrained from participation in mass struggles. Consequently the leadership of the national movement shifted decisively towards the ICU. (1) A similar process occurred in the Cape after the militants were expelled from the ANC.

Before examining the position of the petty bourgeoisie in greater detail, it is necessary to stress the limitations of the militants within the ANC. In neither the struggles on the Rand nor in the Western Cape, were the militants able to challenge the hegemony of the conservatives and moderates at a national level. They were only able to attain dominance within specific areas, and even then this dominance was only of short duration.

Willan, Bonner and Bradford all attempt to correct one of the serious lacunae in South African historiography, viz the lack of any serious analysis of the relationship between the African petty bourgeoisie and popular struggles. Marxist historians have often tended to submerge working class and

petty bourgeois struggles into one undifferentiated nationalist struggle, thus obscuring the fact that these struggles were often underpinned by very different class interests. (2)

From his study of the petty bourgeoisie in Kimberley, Willan argues forcefully that there is no automatic identity of interests between the different classes in the nationalist movement. He describes a situation where the petty bourgeoisie's leadership of the ANC is threatened by the emergence of mass popular struggles (3). Plaatje, one of the most prominent ANC leaders in the country, responded to this threat by entering into an extremely close alliance with part of the ruling class. The alliance operated at a number of levels, but was manifested especially in concerted action to counter the influence of the militants. Willan shows just how susceptible the petty bourgeoisie are to a strategy of co-optation by capital and the state, and argues that this susceptibility is a direct result of fact that the African petty bourgeoisie had its own specific political and ideological class interests.

Bonner and Bradford are more concerned with those situations in which the petty bourgeoisie became actively involved in popular struggle. Both identify a tendency amongst the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie to identify "downward". This they attribute to the relative closeness to the working class, and the precarious nature of the class position of these layers due to the specific trajectory of capitalist development in South Africa. (4) Bonner in fact argues that this tendency is a characteristic response by the petty bourgeoisie in a colonial situation, but an exploration of that issue is beyond the scope of this work.

Both Bonner and Bradford do, however, emphasise the fractured nature of the response of the petty bourgeoisie: Bonner argues that in the course of the struggles on the Rand,

The ideology of one wing of the petty bourgeoisie was clearly disarticulated and re-articulated to that of the working class. A middle section vacillated continually and experienced an identity crisis ... and the more established affluent and reactionary section sustained, with occasional deviations, an ideology articulated with that of the ruling class. (5)

In Bradford's analysis of the rural ICU, the line of cleavage seemed to correspond even more clearly to the relative class positions of the two sections of the petty bourgeoisie:

the great bulk of ICU organisers were being squeezed out of, or at best clinging to, their petty bourgeois class positions. In this they differed markedly from ... large-scale traders, successful building contractors, cane farmers, rackrenting landlords, school principals, lawyers and the like: nearly all such men and women held aloof from Union leadership positions. (6)

What is clear from the above is the multi-faceted nature of the petty bourgeoisie's response to the various upsurges in the popular struggles after World War I. It is never possible simply to read off the political actions of a class from its class position in a mechanistic fashion. This is doubly so in the case of the petty bourgeoisie which in Marxist theory is characterised as a class which stands between the two major contradictory classes in capitalist society, and which at a political level oscillates between them. (7)

The various responses were shaped by the complex interplay

of a number of factors, such as class determination, the structural security of their position, shared experiences of "national" oppression, the balance of forces in the class struggle, and the pervasiveness of the dominant ideology. Class determination was often the major, or even dominant, factor as was the case in Kimberley, but even there one can argue that the response would have been different had there been greater pressure on the petty bourgeoisie from local popular struggles. In other cases, though, it is impossible to speak of a coherent response by the petty bourgeoisie as a class. Class determination still played a role to the extent that there was a distinctly different response from the upper and lower levels of the petty bourgeoisie, but the decisive factors were often the other factors mentioned above.

At the most general level one can state that the same lines of cleavage developed in the Cape, but clearly some important qualifications are necessary, both in the case of the Western Cape and of the Midlands.

In the Western Cape the African petty bourgeoisie was not as significant a social force as it was elsewhere in the country. In fact it hardly existed in the Western Cape rural areas, although Cape Town itself was a possible exception with a significant, albeit small, African petty bourgeoisie.

The Cape Town petty bourgeoisie was subject to some of the wild swings that Bonner describes. Although Cape Town has not been the focus of this study and the evidence presented is somewhat scanty in consequence, one can safely conclude that a major section of this petty bourgeoisie was drawn into support for the popular struggles. But there was little active participation as most of the struggles took place in the rural areas.

In the course of 1930, the African petty bourgeoisie "drew back from the brink" as their counterparts had done in the

struggles on the Rand. In Cape Town, the petty bourgeoisie did ~~not~~ merely withdraw from the mass struggles and attempt to reach an accommodation with the state, but went even further to join the state in a campaign to crush the militants within the ANC(WP) and the IANC. The militants were expelled from the ANC(WP), they were denounced from public platforms and were blamed for the violence that occurred. (8) In Cape Town itself, Thaele sought to emphasize the distance between the petty bourgeoisie leadership and popular struggles when he described how

I have personallyx {sic} warned all speakers to be very moderate in their speeches and if any member is found to be going to extremes, he is immediately pulled up and the matter is reported to the Committee. If such a member disregards the warning he is suspended and if necessary his expulsion would follow. (9)

For many months afterwards the leaders of the ANC(WP) spent much of their time and energy in fighting the influence of the militants. They even travelled as far afield as Graaff-Reinett to counter the influence of the militants who were organising in the area. (10)

As regards the coloured petty bourgeoisie, the situation was very different. It was a significant force not only in Cape Town, but also in many of the small rural towns in the form of teachers, ministers, small craftsmen and even traders. Although there were individual exceptions, the coloured petty bourgeoisie were not drawn into the ANC(WP). As the Worcester magistrate remarked on several occasions, it was the "low coloured" who joined the ANC(WP). (11)

One of the reasons for this is that the coloured petty bourgeoisie was certainly less oppressed and more prosperous than its African counterpart. At no time during the early

twentieth century was it subject to the onslaught faced by its African counterpart and state policy remained broadly incorporationist even after 1924. In fact it even benefitted to some extent from the Nationalist Party's civilised labour policy. (12). Furthermore, there were already political organisations attempting to cater for the coloured petty bourgeoisie, namely the APO and the Afrikaner Nationale Bond, the coloured wing of the Nationalist Party. Thus, the ANC(WP) ended up organising very much against the established parties. It is also likely that there was an element of racism in the antipathy towards the ANC(WP) - the more privileged layers of the coloured petty bourgeoisie often tended to aspire to, and identify with, the values of the ruling classes. (13) The identification of the ANC with African nationalism and its predominantly African leadership gave rise to the accusation that, for the ANC, "god is die kaffer". Many of the "respectable" coloured people were reluctant to identify with those who were perceived to be below their social standing. (14)

Thus, in the case of Worcester, for example, the coloured petty bourgeoisie came out in open opposition to the ANC(WP). They even organised a meeting in an attempt to counter the ANC(WP) and reassert their own leadership of the "coloured" community. (15)

Consequently the process of interaction between mass struggles and the petty bourgeoisie - both African and coloured - is somewhat dissimilar from that described by Bonner. In the case of the Rand the petty bourgeoisie tended to go along with the mass struggles, even if this was sometimes with obvious reluctance. There was never an open and organised opposition to these struggles. The position in the Western Cape bears more similarity to that in Kimberley, where the petty bourgeois leadership consciously organised against the perceived threat to its leadership and ended up in open alliance with the ruling class. There were important differences between the situation in the Midlands and that in the West.

In Chapter 6 it was pointed out that there was a relatively strong African petty bourgeoisie in the Midlands, which was well organised in a number of local bodies like Location Advisory Boards, Vigilance Committees, the CAC and even a Joint Council in Cradock. Thus when the IANC started to organise in the area it was doing so in direct opposition to the established CAC, and the ensuing conflict was even sharper than in the Western Cape. The petty bourgeoisie in the CAC had no compunction in making an alliance with the ruling class. In fact it welcomed the opportunity to prove its moderation, as Prof. Jabavu stressed in a keynote address to the 1930 CAC conference:

He remembered the time when the Congress used to be regarded as a dangerous thing. Today the same congress was regarded as a moderate body, and had to fight with its back to the wall against Bolshevism. (16)

In the CAC's fight against the militants in the IANC which threatened its undisputed leadership, it could rely on the support of most organs of the ruling class, most notably from the press where even the official mouthpiece of the National Party gave the CAC unreserved support. (17) Leaders of the CAC, such as Calata, even went as far as to work out joint strategies for maintaining "law and order" with the police, and to appear on public platforms with the police to appeal for calm and denounce the IANC. (18)

Despite the formidable alliance ranged against it, the IANC was successful in winning over the vast majority of the population to its position. The bourgeois press reflected on the increasing isolation of the moderate leaders and concluded that they had lost "control" over the location. (19) The IANC even won over some important members of the petty bourgeois leadership, notably Eddie Ndaba in

Middelburg. (20)

Overall then, the developments in the Midlands correspond even more clearly than the Western Cape to the process that Willan describes in Kimberley. Unlike the situation in the Western Cape, there was no initial period of participation in the popular struggles by the CAC. On the contrary, its members organised strenuously against the threat to its leadership presented by the IANC and it was in the forefront of attacks on the IANC. Although the CAC was in considerable disarray, it was never defeated and it continued to provide a rallying point for the conservative petty bourgeoisie. There is no evidence to suggest that a significant section of the petty bourgeoisie joined the IANC, and the continued verbal attacks by the IANC leadership on the "educated" would seem to indicate the contrary.

Strategy, organisational methods and ideology

In any analysis of the strategy of an organisation by the militants in the ANC(WP) and the IANC it is important to stress the limits of such an analysis. Most of our knowledge of the organisation comes from "outsider" sources such as newspaper and police reports. These naturally tended to focus on the more spectacular aspects of the organisation such as public meetings, confrontations, demonstrations and marches. Although there is some evidence about the internal workings of the organisation, few details are given even in the few "insider" sources such as Umsebenzi, the CPSA newspaper. Though the available evidence was taken into account in the analysis below, it is possible that the extent of an "agitational" approach in the organisation is overstressed.

Below it is argued that the militant's approach was essentially agitational - basically they sought to "agitate" the rural popular classes sufficiently to rise up and throw off the yoke of oppression. As Tonjeni expressed it: "The

anger of the people must be kindled". (21) The main method of mobilisation was through public meetings which were usually held twice a week. Typically the leaders, and often even individual members, would stand up and enumerate the many injustices suffered by the black people focussing on local issues. Their constant message was that it was time for black people to take action to win their freedom, and that as a first step they should join the IANC.

Once popular anger had increased sufficiently, the organisation would then try to draw the masses into some form of concerted action. The major method means of mobilising people for action was through demonstrations and defiance of unpopular laws. In this area the IANC had rather mixed success. On the one hand, none of the bigger campaigns were ever successful. In particular, despite repeated proposals and agitation, it was unable to organise a general and concerted pass burning campaign on Dingaan's day. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it was always fairly clear that such a campaign was not being taken up all over the country and that it would only be a limited success, and this tended to demotivate branches. Secondly, and more importantly, it was easier to organise against the specific manifestations of the pass system, than against passes in general. The coloured people were not directly affected by passes, while for Africans there was never a single pass system in the Cape: the 'pass system' consisted of a series of disparate measures ranging from poll tax receipts to lodger's permits. In fact, Tonjeni on occasion listed no fewer than 17 kinds of passes. (22)

Much more successful were the attempts so mobilise at a local level. In the Western Cape this was done so effectively around the unpopular liquor laws, low wages and the attempts by the farmers to intimidate the IANC, that the location in Worcester became virtually ungovernable for a time. In the phrase of the press, the IANC enjoyed 'absolute authority' in the location. (23)

In the Midlands local mobilisation also proved to be particularly effective, especially in Middelburg. There was large-scale defiance of the local authorities over a whole range of issues. (24) Rents rapidly fell into arrears, the poll taxes remained unpaid, and lodger's permits were ignored. More direct means of mobilisation were used regularly, for example marches and demonstrations to protest against unemployment, high rents and evictions. Sometimes these demonstrations bordered on the insurrectionary as when a crowd attempted to rescue their leaders from police custody, or when pickets from the IANC prevented the police from removing Hendricks from the location for over a week.

Of course the approach of the IANC was not purely agitational. At least some time was spent in house to house organisation in all the areas where it established itself. There is some evidence of ongoing organisational activity such as branch meetings. Even public meetings fulfilled some more mundane organisational functions. It was a regular and convenient way to draw together a large portion of the members of the organisation and facilitated regular feedback from the leadership and the obtaining of mandates.

Overall, though, it is clear that the IANC was characterised by an agitational approach. While this enabled it to mobilise the popular classes very effectively, it also had some drawbacks. The most important was the heavy reliance that was placed on high profile leaders and the way in which this shaped the response of the IANC to repression.

It is clear that the farmers always regarded the IANC as a grave threat to their interests. In the Western and Southern Cape there were frequent indirect and even direct attacks on the organisation. Soon farmers were resorting to brute force to break the organisation, but they were almost totally unsuccessful. The increasing pressure from the farmers and the escalating level of violence forced the state to abandon its initial relative neutrality in favour

of a more interventionist approach. (25)

The lower level of direct attacks by the Midlands farmers can probably be attributed to the fact that by that stage the state was already committed to interventionism.

The IANC was able to resist the attacks of the farmers successfully, and in fact used it as a further issue around which they organised and mobilised people. As long as the state's intervention remained purely intimidatory, it did not present a grave threat to the organisation, even when five people were killed and 18 injured in a fight with the Worcester police.

Once the state shifted to the more subtle strategy of isolating the leadership from its base, (26) the shortcomings of the agitational approach were painfully exposed and the IANC was never able to find effective measures to counter the state. When meetings were banned, the IANC merely tried to circumvent (in the Western Cape) or defy (in the Midlands) the ban. It was not able to find other means of mobilising the popular classes in the rural areas.

The absence of the top leadership through bannings or gaoling was an even greater blow in the Western Cape. The tactics chosen to cope with the ban on meetings aggravated the situation as it was the leaders who were prosecuted for their part in organising the meetings, or addressing them. The problem stemmed from the fact that the top leaders played a crucial and ongoing role in the organisation of most branches and there was not enough attention given to the development of local leadership. For example in Worcester, Tonjeni remained by far the most popular figure and he was the only person who had "absolute authority" over the residents in the location. Thus when Tonjeni, Ndobe and Plaatjes - the most able of the local leaders - were banned, it was a heavy blow from which the IANC never recovered in the Western Cape.

In the Southern Cape the pattern was largely similar, but in the Midlands the IANC was able to overcome these problems to a greater extent. This was, at least partially, due to a conscious realisation by the top leadership that they would only be allowed to organise for a relatively short time before they would be banned. (27) Thus there was a determined effort to build up a local leadership, that was able to continue and develop the organisation for a considerable time when the top leaders were forced to leave the area.

A further important element in the strategy and organisational methods of the IANC was the almost total absence of a millenarian message. The discourse of the IANC was remarkable for its emphasis on the need for the oppressed masses to struggle for their own liberation. The only exception was the Western Cape. There the Garveyists in the ANC(WP) often adopted millenarian positions, but Lodge overstates the case when he speculates, that

the millenarian accent of Garveyism
would have reverberated strongly in the
Western Cape. (28)

As argued earlier, the IANC won the support of the rural popular classes largely by organising around those issues that directly affected them.

The non-millenarian flavour of the IANC's discourse represents an almost complete break with previous populist movements in the rural areas which almost always had a heavily millenarian flavour, notably the ICU and the Wellingtonites. (29) This difference can be partly explained by the very different backgrounds of the leaders of the various movements. The leadership of previous movements had almost always come from an essentially conservative background which was shaped decisively by a mixture of traditionalist values, religion and mission

education. (30) These leaders usually regarded themselves as a cut above the rank and file members, and were not inclined to believe that action by the masses could bring about significant change. Thus they were particularly susceptible to millenarian ideologies which stressed that God, the Americans or even the leaders themselves would play a decisive role. (31)

The IANC leaders, on the other hand, had received an important part of their political education from the CPSA in Cape Town and its newspaper Umsebenzi and they were often against religion, at least insofar it was practised by the white churches. Furthermore, the IANC owed its very existence to its differences with the conservative petty-bourgeoisie and it was thus unlikely to ape its practices in these respects.

However important this factor might have been, the crucial determinant of the difference in ideology was the very different class bases of the organisations. As Bradford has pointed out, the millenarian ideology in the ICU was strongest precisely in those regions where proletarianisation was least advanced. (32) It was the squatter peasantry that embraced millenarian ideologies with particular fervour. The squatter peasantry was particularly threatened by the path along which capitalist agriculture was developing in South Africa and millenarian ideologies which promised to reverse the development along that path, found a great resonance amongst the peasantry. (33)

Interestingly enough, the IANC in Middelburg had to deal to some extent with the deep disillusionment that follows the collapse of a millenarian movement, as the ICU had organised in the area earlier. Already at their second meeting, the ANC leaders were closely questioned about the ICU and Kadalie. Tonjeni denounced Kadalie as a traitor and was then asked whether the IANC also collected money. He replied,

Yes but do not take it away I leave it with you in your Town {sic} If we get into trouble do we use this money? No not for drunkenness but for Agitation and throwing away of passes and kicking against these bad laws. (34)

The IANC which organised primarily in areas where proletarianisation was relatively far advanced, did not come under the same pressure to articulate the millenarian illusions of the peasantry. Although the land question was important and was raised regularly by the IANC, the day to day organisation revolved around much more specific issues. The IANC took up issues like liquor raids, unemployment, passes and high rents - all related to the direct experience of the rural popular classes. Even when all the experienced, outside leaders of the IANC were forced to leave Middelburg after less than two months of organising, this lack of millenarianism persisted and the IANC discourse remained firmly rooted in the realities of rural existence.

Despite the personal popularity of Tonjeni and the many remarks that he had been sent by God, the IANC always stressed that liberation will come only if

you ... organise. If you want anything you must work for it and seek for it. Freedom will not come if you do not seek it. (35)

There was the occasional promise that freedom was imminent, that

We have our foot on Africa and it is for us to lift just that one foot and Africa will be ours. Whether the boer likes it or not, next year the sheep on their farms will belong to us. They will have to shear for us. (36)

or that

... the Boers will still have to say "Baas" to you and you will keep them under your feet like they are keeping you under their feet, and if they do not do their work you will kick their backs as they kick yours. Organise and get freedom it may be in this year. We also want to wear good clothes and high collars. (37)

But generally the IANC stressed that the struggle would be a long and hard one. Tonjeni often warned that a country can only be "won through blood". The whites

tell you to get property, but {sic} property and thus become landowners, but I tell you money cannot buy land, land can only be bought with blood. If you buy land you only the holder of the deeds and not the landowners and if you are in arrear with your Poll Tax the Govt Robbers can take back the land, or if another Nation come and take South Africa you lose your land because that nation then bought it with their blood. Gen. Hertzog and Smuts cannot show a receipt for South Africa, they did not buy it with money, they can only show you rifles and say it was bought with blood. (38)

Often there was even a realisation that freedom might not come even in their own lifetime, that

even if he {the speaker - WH} will not see it ... the children present will.
(39)

The emphasis on fighting for the sake of one's children and grand-children was repeated again and again:

To shed blood means the freedom of our children or grandchildren. I may be imprisoned for a year but my blood will be the freedom of my children or grandchildren. (40)

Although the political practice of the IANC must be sharply differentiated from the millenarian visions of some earlier populist movements, its agitational approach did create problems which can be related to a "crisis of expectations". The constant agitation and mobilisation and the terms in which the struggle was couched, created the expectation of increasing struggles, of a looming and decisive conflagration. A strategy of mass mobilisation requires a constant impetus, the level of mobilisation must be constantly increased. To some extent the masses themselves provided this impetus by, for example, initiating attacks on the police. But such initiatives also dramatically increased the level of repression by the state and brought new problems in its wake. An even more severe problem, though, was the fact that this increasing level of mass mobilisation was not mirrored elsewhere in the country. Although the IANC usually organised a whole region, it quickly became clear that very little was happening in the rest of the country and that liberation was still very far away. Under such conditions, i.e increased repression combined with a measure of despondency about the lack of activity elsewhere, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a high level of mobilisation and as a result enthusiasm and eventually organisation slowly declined.

Significance

Having examined the various aspects of organisation by the militants in the ANC(WP) and the IANC, one can now attempt

to make an overall assessment of its significance.

At the most obvious level, it is clear that the militants "failed" in that they were quite unable to organise the national revolution that they professed to be their task. Organisation was limited to a relatively small part of the country, and even in these areas it was not strong enough to lead successful local revolts.

The obvious failure of the IANC must not, however, be allowed to obscure its very real achievements. In many areas of the Western and Southern Cape it was the first time that any concerted organisation took place. As Ross has pointed out, other coloured political movements have, until recently

centred around the educated and upwardly
mobile, who have tended to distance
themselves from the mass of rural
labourers. (41)

The characterisation is probably somewhat harsh on the ICU which certainly did not centre around the 'educated and upwardly mobile', but otherwise it is correct. However, even the ICU ignored the rural labourers in the Western Cape. Thus for the majority of the rural popular classes in the Southern and Western Cape, the IANC represented their first experience of collective action and of the potential collective strength of the rural popular classes.

Although there is little evidence concerning the legacy that the IANC left in the consciousness of the rural popular classes, the ease with which the Food and Canning Workers Union was later able to organise in the Western Cape rural areas suggests that at least some awareness of the value of organisation had been developed. There is also some fairly direct continuity in some areas. For example, the Worcester and Cradock branches of the ANC continued to function throughout most the thirties and forties and were amongst

the strongest ANC branches in the fifties. Obviously there was a continuing interaction between these branches and the militants that remained from the IANC organisation, but the exact dynamics of this process is not clear.

Probably the most significant feature of the IANC was the extent to which it challenged some of the conventional wisdoms of the national movement, and organised in new and progressive ways. In the first place the IANC organised non-rationally. Although its membership was exclusively black, it was prepared to work with white militants in the CPSA. But more importantly, it organised all the oppressed into a single organisation, building on a tradition of non-racial organisation in the Cape, for example by the ICU and the ANC(WP). The militants in the ANC(WP) extended this tradition significantly when they ventured into the rural areas and transformed the ANC(WP) into a predominantly coloured organisation.

The non-racial nature of its organisation is even more impressive when one compares it with other ANC branches, where the only contact with coloured people was at leadership level. Even this was limited to attendance of the annual Non-European Conferences called by the APO. (42) At times the rhetoric of the ANC even bordered on the racist, for example the speech given by Dr Xuma - a prominent ANC figure - to students at Fort Hare in 1930:

As we intent to build bridges between white and black, we can di\$miss the case of the coloured man by stating that the missionaries fought and secured some of the rights for the Hottentots until the Coloured man of today is, in principle, accepted as a White man politically, industrially, economically and educationally.

The Indian in South Africa does not fall within the purview of our

discussion, because, according to the Rt. Hon S. Sastri, the Indian cannot make common cause with the African without alienating the right of intervention on their behalf on the part of the Government of India. (43)

Once the IANC started to organise in the Midlands, it had to confront such attitudes directly. It publicly attacked the ANC's

Policy of 'Natives only' and pointed out that Coloured people are prohibited of (sic) becoming Officers of the party of the 'Goodboys'. (44)

The success of the IANC in this respect was a reflection of, and was in turn reflected in, the fact that it never organised around narrowly nationalistic lines. In its discourse there was an almost total absence of traditionalist elements, of appeals to traditional authorities and a traditional past. The only and relatively minor, exception was the fairly regular invocation of a tradition of resistance. (45).

Chapter 6 suggested some of the reasons why the IANC differed from most contemporary political organisations, such as the very specific political background of the leadership, the different class basis of the IANC and a lack of any substantial common interest with the traditional leadership. As for the coloured people, there has never been a nationalist movement, largely due to the diffuse and artificial nature of this group. Most authorities agree that there was very little material base for any kind of nationalism as

no 'Coloured' man or woman would ever claim that the 'Coloured' group was anything but a legal category imposed by

the oppressors from above. (46)

Interestingly the IANC did draw on one neglected element in the consciousness of the Cape rural population, viz slavery. Ross argues that the other political movements in the Cape always tended to deny the slave past. (47) The IANC broke decisively with this tradition and slavery was a constant theme in its discourse. The IANC militants tried to relate the slave past to the contemporary position of black people: they emphasised that the black people were still 'slaves in the country of their birth'. They told the rural masses that in some ways they, especially the unemployed, were worse off than slaves - at least the slaves had housing and food. This theme is repeated in both the IANC constitution and in the Afrikaans version of Mayibuye, which became the most popular song in the Cape rural areas:

Ons bruin mense, seuns van slawe,
Vra one eie land terug,
Wat gesteel is van ons vaders
Toe hul in die donker sug.

Gee dit t'rug nou!
Gee dit t'rug nou!
Weg met al die slawery
Pirow kan ons nie ophou nie:
Afrika sal vryheid kry
(48)

Another area in which the IANC went well beyond the existing conceptions of popular organisation was in the area of women. Unlike other organisations, such as the ANC and ICU, the IANC allowed and encouraged women to become full members of the organisation. Although women by no means played an equal role in the leadership, their participation was extremely significant. In Worcester, for example, women were reported to be "the most loyal supporters" of the ANC(WP) and they were often in the forefront, even when direct action was taken. (49) In the Midlands the

situation was similar, except that women played an even more active role. For example, women often predominated at public meetings, they also held regular meetings on their own, and at one stage there was even a conscious effort to foster women's leadership. (50) Nevertheless, women still did not play an equal role at leadership level as is illustrated by the fact that there were only four women amongst the 17 IANC leaders recommended for banning by the Middelburg police. (51)

A further, and somewhat surprising, area in which the IANC found itself well to the left of other popular organisations, was that of religion. None of the popular organisations like the ICU or ANC had ever been against religion as such (52). There had sometimes been virulent attacks against the established (white) churches, but these had always been from the standpoint of support for the independent churches.

The ANC(WP) started off from very similar premises. In the Western and Southern Cape it tended to attack the established churches and advocate joining independent churches. But by the time the IANC began to organise in the Midlands, the organisation was characterised by a stridently anti-religious discourse. The church was constantly condemned, the leaders even declared themselves to be atheists, and black ministers were accused of being "bloodsuckers like the whites". (53) These attacks on religion were only slightly softened by the fairly regular use of religious imagery, and the fact that one of the regular IANC speakers in Middelburg was a minister from an independent church. (54)

These attacks on religion were particularly significant, as it has become something of a commonplace of the left that no popular organisation can succeed without an accommodation with the churches. (55) Yet the IANC in Middelburg isolated the churches almost totally, and for over a year the churches were virtually empty. The success of this

anti-religious campaign demonstrates the need to re-evaluate such truisms.

Finally, there is a more general question that needs to be raised, namely the fact that the liberation movement in South Africa has traditionally paid only scant attention to rural organisation, both in theory and in practice. As Bundy argues,

from the 1920's to the late 1950's the various organs of the national liberation movement linked only fitfully and unsystematically with a wide range of localised rural movements. (56)

The various liberation movements have tended, with a few notable exceptions, to concentrate on urban areas where they saw the working class as the main revolutionary force. Even on those rare occasions, however, that the issue of rural organisation was tackled practically or theoretically, the liberation movement proved singularly unable to bridge the gap between urban and rural struggles. (57) In the few cases where links were established between the broader liberation movement and rural struggles, the latter tended to remain isolated and localised and there was little integration with urban struggles.

It is in this context that the rural organisation undertaken by the militants in the IANC and ANC(WP) must be analysed. At a theoretical level the somewhat reluctant adoption of the Black Republic program, despite its theoretical inadequacies, (58) at least posed the problem of organisation in the rural areas. But, as argued above, in Cape Town it was the practical effects that were more important than the theoretical insights. (59) The program reflected in large measure the practical commitment of the Cape Town militants to rural organisation, and its adoption reinforced this commitment and placed it within a more coherent political framework.

The militants were able to overcome the isolation of disparate rural struggles to a certain extent. The ANC(WP) and IANC functioned as fairly coherent political organisations with meetings of branch representatives and regular contact between branches at leadership level. Sometimes, this contact extended down to a mass level in solidarity actions, for example when lorries of ANC members from other branches attended a meeting at Robertson in an attempt to counter the intimidation by the local farmers. (60)

A further interesting feature of organisation in the Cape was the fact that the militants often organised in "urban" ways. There was a great emphasis on marches, demonstrations, pass burnings and even strikes as means of achieving their goals. Many of the issues around which they organised were not specifically rural either: issues like wages, unemployment, passes and location controls were also burning issues in the urban areas. But this did not mean that the militants had completely overcome the divide between urban and rural struggles. In fact, as argued in Chapter 4, the IANC became increasingly isolated from the struggles in the major towns as its focus shifted further east. Its "urban" approach reflects rather the political education of the main leaders and, more importantly, the fact that they were organising in those areas where proletarianisation was well advanced. Thus there were relatively large populations in the rural centres who had broken their ties with the land. Though many of them still worked as seasonal workers on the farms, the problems they faced were primarily those that affected their day to day existence in town.

Of course, the above argument does not imply that the militants did not focus at all on the traditional "rural" issues such as access to land and cattle, and opposition to various improvement schemes. Although some of these issues were obviously totally inappropriate in the areas where they

organised, there were, for example, fairly regular calls for a return of the land to the African people. But these demands were subordinate to the demands that affected the rural popular classes more directly .

To conclude, it is clear that the militants in the ANC(WP) and the IANC made significant progress in resolving some of the problems of rural organisation, and in overcoming the divisions between rural and urban struggles. But these problems continued to exist and were at least partially responsible for the eventual demise of the IANC. Despite its ultimate "failure", it is clear that the history of the rural organisation in the Cape can help to increase our understanding of the dynamics of rural struggles. It is hoped that this study has made some contribution to increasing our knowledge in an area that is vital to the future of the liberation movement.

NOTES

1. Chapter 1 Section 4.
2. See eg Simons and Simons 1969, p210-14. This criticism is made eg in Willan 1977, p185 ff and Bonner 1982, p271.
3. See Chapter 1 Section 4.
4. See Bonner 1980, p3, p9 ff; Bradford 1984 b, p296 ff
5. Bonner 1982, p289.
6. Bradford 1983b, p20.
7. See eg Poulantzas 1975, p297-99; Laclau 1979, p111 ff.
8. Chapter 3 Section XI
9. NTS 7603 25/328, Sworn statement by J.M. Thaele, Cape Town, 4.3.1931. The Deputy Commissioner of Police also testified to Thaele's value and confirmed his statement - see NTS 7603 25/328, Decompol, Western Cape to Compol, 19.5.1932.
10. See eg Chapter 5.
11. See eg JUS 558 1655/30, Magistrate, Worcester to MJ, 20.5.1930; NTS 7666 52/332, Magistrate, Cape Town to SJ, 15.5.1930.
12. See Chapter 3 Section V.
13. See eg. Simons 1975; Simons and Simons 1969, p541 ff; Marais 1938, P275 et seq.
14. Umsebenzi 8.8.1930.
15. See Chapter 3 Section IX
16. Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 24.6.1930.
17. See Chapter 6 Section IV.
18. See Chapter 7 Section III.
19. See eg Die Middellander 18.2.1931 for Middelburg and Midlands News and Karoo Farmer 26.1.1932 for Cradock.

20. See Chapter 6 Section IV.
21. JUS 582 3107/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 8.3.1931.
22. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.2.1931.
23. Cape Times 7.4.1930.
24. See Chapter 6 for details.
25. Chapter 3 Sections VIII, IX, X.
26. Chapter 3 Section X.
27. Chapter 5 Section II.
28. Lodge 1983, p9.
29. For the ICU, see various works by Bradford, especially 1981, and Beinart and Bundy 1982. Edger 1976 discusses the Wellington movement. See also Beinart 1984 and Beinart and Bundy 1985 for a more general discussion of rural movements.
30. See eg. Bradford 1984b, p298; Beinart and Bundy 1985, p6.
31. See eg. Bradford 1981.
32. Bradford 1983, p139.
33. See also Bradford 1981, p18.
34. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.2.1931.
35. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 7.9.1931. For references to God, see Chapter 6 Section IV.
36. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg 11.10.1931.
37. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 19.7.1931.
38. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.2.1931.
39. JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 18.2.1931.

40. JUS 583 3288/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 9.7.1931. See also eg JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 15.2.1931.
41. Ross 1983b, p120.
42. Roux 1978, p174.
43. Karis and Carter 1972, p219.
44. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg, 23.2.1931.
45. See eg JUS 583 3139/31, Report to Distcompol, Cradock, 6.6.1931.
46. Ross 1983b, p121. See also Marais 1939.
47. Ross 1983b, p120.
48. Roux 1978, p233.
49. Cape Times 26.5.1930. See Chapter 3 Section XII
50. Chapter 6 Section III.
51. JUS 583 3288/31, Distcompol, Middelburg to Decompol, Eastern Cape, 21.11.1931.
52. See eg Bradford 1983a; Wickens 1978; Walshe 1971.
53. JUS 582 3111/31, Report to Distcompol, Middelburg 5.3.1931. See chapter 6 Section IV.
54. See Chapter 6 Section IV.
55. See eg Roux 1978, p276-77 for the CPSA view in the 1930's.
56. Bundy 1984, p28.
57. Bundy 1984, p28.
58. Morris 1979, p189 ff.
59. Chapter 3 Section I.
60. Chapter 3 Section IV.

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The Courier	(Beaufort West, weekly)
The Frontier Post	(Aliwal North/Burghersdorp, twice weekly)
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The Oudtshoorn Courant, Farmers Friend etc.	(Oudtshoorn, thrice weekly)
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