

THE DECLINE OF THE UNITED PARTY

1970 - 1977

BY

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PREFACE

When research is undertaken into the field of contemporary political history the investigator is soon acutely aware of the many special problems which present themselves. The decline and dissolution of the United Party is a recent event which has, as yet, merited only limited attention. One of the main reasons for this is a lack of readily available and indexed sources. Since 1969 the University of South Africa has become the official repository of the papers of the United Party and is in the process of arranging them in an orderly manner. With the demise of the Party in 1977 the amount of material which has been deposited at the University has increased substantially. Some forty percent of the papers, dating back to the days of the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape, have thus far been catalogued. They include material of every description, ranging from private donations to political cartoons, minutes of meetings and taped recordings.

The Institute of Contemporary History at the University of the Orange Free State has extensive holdings of private political papers and also a register of private documents on the political history of South Africa which dates back to 1902. Included in its archives are, for instance, the private papers of Catherine Taylor, Bill Deacon and Bill Sutton, all former United Party parliamentarians during the 1970's.

The University of the Witwatersrand has little that is relevant to this period. The David Friedmann memoirs which have recently been donated to it and the University of the Orange Free State had not arrived at either University by the end of September, 1982. The only original material in

this/....

this field of research in the Cory library, Rhodes University, was a small collection of papers donated by Bill Deacon, the former M.P. for the Albany constituency.

Although the records at the University of South Africa remain incomplete and uncatalogued, with new donations continuing to arrive, this University remains the major source of contemporary United Party history and it was a rewarding experience for me to be allowed to consult certain files which had a bearing on this dissertation. Equally interesting was a short interview with Prof. W A Kleyhans, one of South Africa's leading political analysts who generously agreed to comment on the work which I had done and to point out the difficulty of establishing, with any degree of certainty, various facts relating to some of the problems which beset the United Party, such as the numerical strength of its branch structures.

My major source of information was the private papers of John Wiley, M.P. Soon after the dissolution of the United Party he gave me permission to make use of them. They are in four large suitcases crammed with every type of political material. The collection was, in many ways, a replica of the University of South Africa's archives in miniature and many of the documents in Wiley's files are also to be found in Pretoria. Included in his papers is a comprehensive record of press cuttings relating to the affairs of the Party between 1970 and 1977. This record, the owner claims, is the most extensive compiled by any politician in South Africa. It was without any doubt a mine of information. Care had to be taken, when making use of this material, to sift political fact from comment, but by comparing reports of the same events by newspapers holding diametrically opposing political viewpoints/....

viewpoints, it was possible to reach reasonably unbiased conclusions. Wiley's papers will in due course be donated to the University of South Africa (or possibly to the University of the Orange Free State) and will then formally become part of the United Party archives. The same will happen to documents which I made use of but which belong to Senator Horak. Thus, many of the private manuscript sources listed under the names of the present owners and either still in their possession or in mine, will be donated to the University of South Africa to be added to the United Party Collection.

Other than making use of these sources I was fortunate to be able to interview some of the leading figures who played important roles in the affairs of the United Party prior to its dissolution. These consultations were most revealing, providing as they did wonderful first-hand accounts of events. The interviews in each case were taped and took the form of a question and answer session which lasted between one and a half to two hours. Those who generously participated were Sir De Villiers Graaff, national leader of the Party, Senator Horak, its general secretary, Myburgh Streicher, the Cape leader and his deputy, John Wiley. The interviews took place after the bulk of the research into the decline of the Party had been completed. I was, thus, in a position to question the participants on their interpretation of those events which had done the Party most harm. As the questions did not vary to any marked degree, it was possible to determine from the separate responses whether the politicians were in general agreement as to the causes of the Party's decline. The answers elicited were surprisingly similar, which seemed to indicate that they were aware of the problems, but were powerless to deal effectively with them.

One disappointment was the refusal of Harry Schwarz, leader of the Young Turk movement and founder of the breakaway Reform Party, to be interviewed. Appointments were broken and in a final attempt to obtain his views, I submitted the same set of questions through the post for consideration. Unfortunately, Mr Schwarz was not prepared to answer them and thus an opinion which may have differed substantially from those of the others was not forthcoming.

I also relied heavily for information upon official parliamentary publications such as Hansard and various commissions, particularly the 'Schlebusch' Commission, on which the Party served. In addition, the United Party Division of Information and Research provided a great deal of material by way of general releases. Admittedly, this was largely political propaganda but, nevertheless, was very informative and gave a clearer insight into official Party thinking.

As far as unpublished theses were concerned, only a handful touched on the topic under consideration and only two proved really useful. Dr S.L. Barnard's 'Politieke Orientasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse Opposisie sedert 1958' is a major work dealing with all opposition groupings from 1958 to 1975. It did not deal solely with the United Party although the major part of the thesis concerned it. The work also terminated two years prior to the Party's demise. It was interesting to discover that where our research co-incided we did not differ materially as to our views on the United Party. The other thesis, that of H. du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1977', provided useful statistical information on the election results of that year.

A more definitive version of the decline of the United Party will probably be written as material hitherto in private hands emerges and the task of arranging the United Party papers at the University of South Africa reaches completion.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.C.	-	Anglo American Corporation
A.G.M.	-	Annual General Meeting
C.I.	-	Christian Institute
C.N.A.	-	Central News Agency
C.P.C.	-	Cape Peninsula Council
D.P.	-	Democratic Party
G.R.O.W.	-	Get Rid of Wiley
H.N.P.	-	Herstigte Nasionale Party
I.U.P.	-	Independent United Party
M.E.C.	-	Member of the Executive Council
M.P.	-	Member of Parliament
M.P.C.	-	Member of the Provincial Council
N.P.	-	National Party
N.R.P.	-	New Republic Party
N.U.S.A.S.	-	National Union of South African Students
O.F.S.	-	Orange Free State
P.F.P.	-	Progressive Federal Party
P.P.	-	Progressive Party
P.R.P.	-	Progressive Reform Party
R.P.	-	Reform Party
S.A.A.N.	-	South African Associated Newspapers
S.A.B.R.A.	-	South African Bureau for Racial Affairs
S.A.I.R.R.	-	South African Institute of Race Relations

S.A.P.	-	South African Party
S.A.P.A.	-	South African Press Association
S.A.S.O.	-	South African Student Organization
S.A.T.V.	-	South African Television
S.R.C.	-	Student Representative Council
S.W.A.	-	South West Africa
U.C.M.	-	University Christian Movement
U.N.I.S.A.	-	University of South Africa
U.O.F.S.	-	University of Orange Free State
U.P.	-	United Party
Y.S.A.	-	Young South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

I do not boast when I say that the United Party was in a great measure my work - my best work for South Africa, my pride and honour. It was an ideal for which I sacrificed everything, for which I sacrificed my personal interests.

I did everything I could to ensure long life to the Party.

There was only one wish I had for my old age - to see that the Party remain as strong as a rock for South Africa, and after I had disappeared, the generation who would follow would have an impregnable foundation on which to build.¹ General J.C. Smuts

It is widely believed that Smuts sacrificed the premiership when the United Party was formed in 1934. He could possibly have won the 1933 election for the South African Party but in the interests of a greater vision he made peace with his arch political rival General J.M. Hertzog in order to promote national unity in a time of crisis, and was prepared to serve in the lesser capacity of deputy prime minister.² The ideal for which he sacrificed so much was a broader South Africanism in which both English and Afrikaans speaking citizens could be reconciled in a spirit of national unity.³ It was the same goal as that of Gen Louis Botha before him but which had been battered by an unfortunate war, a rebellion and a burgeoning and resentful Afrikaner nationalism. The ideal, however, remained and on Botha's death in 1919 Smuts continued his life's work:

... aan sy vriend was die bitter lot beskore om hom te begrawe en om te bly by die taak, wat selfs vir hom amper te swaar was.⁴

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1. Sunday Times, 26.6.77, Gen J.C. Smuts to the National congress of the United Party, Bloemfontein, 3.11.39.
 2. J.C. Smuts, Jan Christian Smuts (London, 1952), pp. 326-327.
 3. W.K. Hancock, Smuts - The Fields of Force 1919-1950 (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 245-248.
 4. F.V. Engelenburg, Genl. Louis Botha (Pretoria, 1928), p. 363, from Smut's funeral oration at Botha's graveside.

The circumstances which brought about coalition in 1933 made possible the merger between the National and South African parties in the following year and provided the opportunity to heal the wounds of the past. Conciliation had again become an attainable ideal in the United Party under Hertzog's leadership.

The United Party governed until 1948 but its unity of purpose was destroyed before then when yet another disastrous war splintered it on a matter of principle. Dr Malan's⁵ prediction that those who did not belong together would not remain together was vindicated for the coalition could not survive intact the first real crisis it had to face.⁶ Smuts persuaded the majority of the Party to support him by 80 votes to 67 on the war issue and became prime minister for a second time.⁷ Gen. Hertzog returned, briefly, to lead the National Party but the ideal of 'saamwerking' had again suffered a major reverse as the United Party experienced an exodus of parliamentarians and supporters.⁸ This was a foretaste of what was to become a fairly frequent occurrence after the Party had lost the 1948 election.

Notwithstanding vociferous opposition from a divided nationalist movement the U.P. fared well during the war years (1943 election)⁹ and its defeat at the polls in 1948 surprised both Smuts and Malan who described it as a 'miracle'.¹⁰

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5. Prime Minister of South Africa 1948-1954, and leader of the 'purified' nationalists who did not join the U.P. in 1934.
 6. D.F.Malan, Afrikaner Volkseenheid en my Ervarings op die Pad Daarheen (Kapaastad, 1959), pp. 157-159.
 7. Ibid., p. 176.
 8. W.H.Hancock, Smuts - The Fields of Force, p. 33.
 9. T.R.H.Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History (Johannesburg, 1977), Table 2.
 10. J.C.Smuts, Jan Christian Smuts (London, 1952), p. 510 and W.H.Hancock, Fields of Force, p. 505.

The long life that Smuts had intended for his 'best work for South Africa' did not eventuate. After his death in 1950 the impregnable foundation on which the ideal was to grow barely survived a generation and in 1977 the United Party voluntarily dissolved. Its leader at the time, Sir De Villiers Graaff, was heir to the Botha-Smuts tradition of conciliation and political moderation in the South African context. Yet a point was reached during the 1970's when Graaff, in the Smuts manner, was prepared to sacrifice both himself and his party in an endeavour to 'save South Africa' by bringing about a new political dispensation which he believed would successfully challenge the ruling party.¹¹ The U.P. disbanded in favour of the New Republic Party. What this, in practice, accomplished was to divide the parliamentary opposition still further and contribute materially to the landslide victory of the nationalists in the 1977 general election.¹²

The irony of the situation was that the U.P. had, for the first time since 1948, made significant electoral gains both in the general and in the provincial elections of 1970 and had continued for a while thereafter, to do well in by-elections.¹³ How then was it possible for a party which had survived so many frustrating years in opposition, and which had witnessed its electoral position weaken with virtually every successive poll since 1948¹⁴ suddenly dissolve at the point when its prospects had begun to improve?

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11. *Argus*, 18.8.76, Graaff's opening speech at the Cape U.P. Congress, East London, 17.8.76.
 12. H. du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1977: 'n Ontleiding van die Faktore wat die Verkiesing Beïnvloed het', unpublished thesis, University of Pretoria, 1979, pp. 117-120.
 13. B.M. Schoeman, *Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910-1976* (Pretoria, 1977), pp 486-90
 - i. Brakpan - N.P. majority of 1 392, 23.3.1972 compared with 3 725 in 1970.
 - ii. Klip River - N.P. majority cut from 1 093 in 1970 to 232, 29.11.72.
 14. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Oriëntasie in die Suid Afrikaanse Oposisie sedert 1958', D.Phil., University of the O.F.S., 1979, p. 104. Except for the 1959 Provincial election where the U.P. pushed up its majority in a number of seats and won Boksburg from the National Party, its first win since 1943.

Among the historical reasons is the one advanced that the U.P. was never truly united. It was a loose coalition¹⁵ of widely differing opinions, from 'liberal' English speaking suburbanites to 'bloedsap' platteland Afrikaners who had little in common other than their opposition to the National Party.¹⁶ The former, in the Unionist¹⁷ manner, could never vote for an Afrikaner government while the latter were the heirs to the traditional supporters of Botha and Hertzog.¹⁸

Further, there was little that the U.P. could offer to counter the sectional appeal of Afrikaner nationalism with its compelling call for a republic and for white survival.¹⁹ The U.P. was depicted as a dangerous movement which would plough the Afrikaner under and surrender white interests in South Africa. Its race federation plan and its federal derivatives were unable to satisfy an electorate which had witnessed the surge of black nationalism throughout South Africa, and the far from ordered advance to majority rule and independence.

The question of whether the U.P. had not served its purpose should also be considered. It could be argued that it had fulfilled a need but was no longer relevant. The future struggle as seen by the enfranchised voter lay between white survival and black rule. There was, conceivably, no longer any room for a white opposition party, particularly one which tried to steer a middle course between the radicals and the reactionaries and which by a policy of gradualism sought to build bridges among the different races.

15. E.Potter, The Press as Opposition (London, 1975), p. 33.

16. 'Liberal' in the context of white politics, that is left of centre. 'Bloedsap', conservative, right of centre within the U.P.

17. The party of Dr L.S.Jameson and Sir Thomas Smartt which disbanded to join the South African Party for the 1921 election. It had always been strongly pro-British.

18. Dr S.L.Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', p. 9.

19. Phil Weber, Na die Generaals - Republiek en Nasionale Eenheid, Genl. J.B.M.Hertzog gedenk lesing III (Stellenbosch, 1973), pp. 3-13.

Moderation and slow change were unacceptable to an increasingly more sophisticated black majority which rejected any racial discrimination by a minority. The policy of 'white leadership with justice', notwithstanding its merits, caused the U.P. endless problems and was rejected by both whites and blacks. In these circumstances the centrist position which the Party sought to occupy was fast disappearing as black-white polarization became ever more evident. Whites would rather support the National Party which offered the enfranchised group an apparently secure future and which, until 1977, rejected any suggestion of power sharing, a principle implicit in U.P. policy no matter how tentatively.²⁰

The 1977 election results, besides reflecting the confusion in opposition ranks also revealed the shrinking numbers who were prepared to support any form of genuine power sharing.²¹ In the light of this contention the demise of the U.P. can be regarded as being in the logic of South African political history and was merely the most recent manifestation of white solidarity opposing a very real threat to its continued survival on the continent.

If the long term view is taken then the electoral successes of 1970 can be discounted as nothing more than a brief renaissance during an inevitable decline. There was less and less room for an opposition party in a world strongly ranged against the 'white tribe' of Africa.

This is, however, by no means the complete picture for, between 1970 and 1977 the United Party also faced innumerable and seemingly insurmountable internal problems which hastened its destruction.

20. K.Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943- 1970(London, 1974), pp. 236-239.

21. H.du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing', P. 117. The N.P. won 134 seats, P.F.P. 17, N.R.P. 10 and S.A.P. 3.

Instead of 1970 heralding a new political dawn which would result in the replacement of a tired N.P. regime within the foreseeable future it started a period of unparalleled feuding which rent the Party from top to bottom.

The electoral successes of 1970 attracted new blood to the Party and gave it a fresh lease on life.²² People who had given up its cause as a lost one or who had merely marked time within its ranks again wanted to be associated with it. They anticipated further success and were impatient for it. Tried and tested policies and methods could be improved. The old should make way for the young who would furnish the Party with a bright new image - a reformist one.²³ The term 'Young Turk' was coined to embrace those who were regarded as progressive and reformist in their views. The 'Old Guard' or party reactionaries were branded as being opposed to change and attached to tradition. They were criticized as being obstacles to the future success of the U.P.²⁴

Consequently, a 'verligte-verkrampste' feud emerged which resulted in a sequence of crises.²⁵ From the moment Marais Steyn, the 'verkrampste', was ousted from the leadership of the Party in the Transvaal (1972) until his successor Harry Schwarz and his 'Young Turks' either left of their own accord or were expelled to form the Reform Party in 1975 virtually every action taken by the U.P. was open to criticism from one faction or another.²⁶

Nomination squabbles, notably prior to the 1974 elections, harmed the Party's performance as different groups, amid wide publicity, struggled to secure the candidature of their particular choice.

22. Interviews with Horak, 8.6.82, Wiley, 5.4.82 and Streicher, 5.5.82.

23. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

24. Ibid., Horak. He believed that the terms 'Young Turk' and 'Old Guard' were coined by Joel Mervis of the Sunday Times, which certainly made frequent use of them. Dr S.L. Barnard on p. 263 of his thesis attributed the use of the term 'Young Turk' to D.v.d. Merwe Brink, Transvaal M.E.C., on 14.6.72.

25. Dealt with in Chapter II.

26. Dealt with in Chapters III and IX.

Expulsions, court cases, disciplinary matters and the question of party loyalty became frequent topics for dispute. Serious differences of policy interpretation emerged with the Old Guard supposedly placing a 'verkrampste' view before the electorate and the Reformists a 'verligte' one. Hand-in-glove with these ideological differences, which tended to be ones of degree rather than of substance, were the personality clashes. Whether the former preceded the latter or vice versa was a moot point but both certainly existed and this aggravated the issue.²⁷

Yet, throughout the declining years of the U.P. a pervasive influence which contributed to its misadventures, if not at times being the cause of them, was the role played by the press, ironically mainly the English language opposition newspapers. It was the press which labelled the different groups within the party, which campaigned vigorously to expel democratically elected leaders, which demanded the resignation of Sir De Villiers Graaff and which insisted that the U.P. adopt a reformist platform. Small incidents were given great prominence. The Old Guard, whether young in years or not, were castigated, as was the Party's approach on important issues like the Schlebusch Commission where those who served on it were stigmatized as doing a disservice to South Africa.

The press attempted to formulate policy while tendentious journalistic methods influenced the voter against the Party by seldom giving the full story and mostly placing it in an unfavourable light. Some newspapers were more unsympathetic than others but towards the end of its life the U.P. enjoyed little or no press support at all.²⁸

27. Interviews.

28. See Chapter V.5.

The baleful role of the media in its affairs forced the Party onto the defensive as it justified or rejected reports often containing confidential information which ought never to have reached the newspapers in the first place but for 'leaks' by its own members. The credibility of the Party was so badly damaged that its performance at the polls deteriorated markedly.

The climax to these related events was reached after the defection of the Schwarz group to establish the Reform Party in 1975, an event which did not end the feuding within the U.P. Consequently it continued to lose supporters to both the left and to the right. Sir De Villiers, in what appeared to be a desperate bid to rescue the philosophy of the U.P., if not the Party itself, embarked upon a 'new initiative', the goal being the formation of an entirely new party which would be able to accommodate all those opposed to nationalist rule, and in the process offer an alternative to the government and 'save South Africa' from the unenviable situation to which it had been reduced.²⁹ With this in mind, negotiations with the Progressive Reform Party as well as with the small Democratic Party were launched with a view to finding common ground. Meetings were held and points of agreement reached but the initiative eventually foundered on differences of interpretation leaving only the Democratic Party and a section of the U.P. to disband and then come together as the New Republic Party. At that point³⁰ parliamentarians like Japie Basson and other reformists who remained within the U.P. refused to be part of the new dispensation and soon thereafter joined the P.R.P. which again changed its name, this time to the Progressive Federal Party.³¹

29. Graaff's East London address, 17.8.76

30. 29 June, 1977

31. Parliamentary Register Part II 1961 - 1980, published by the House of Assembly, pp. 174-6. The following M.P.'s refused to join the New Republic Party: J. Basson, I. de Villiers, B. McIntosh, H. Miller, N. Olivier and H. van Hoogstraten, all of whom joined the P.R.P. on 5.9.77 to form the Progressive Federal Party.

Conservatives including Messrs Myburgh Streicher and John Wiley had by then already established the South African Party rather than have had anything to do with the 'Progs'.³²

By the end of June the U.P. had ceased to exist. The electorate had not been given the opportunity to decide whether it still had a role to play. Instead, by an act of self-destruction a once powerful party had taken its own life. The party of Smuts, his impregnable foundation, for which he 'sacrificed everything' had in its turn destroyed itself.

32. IBID., Others were: T.Hickman, W.Deacon, S.A. van den Heever and T.Aronson. The S.A.P. was established on 28 May 1977.

CHAPTER IA RECOVERY OF A SHORT DURATION1. April 1970 - April 1972

The result of the April general election was a shot in the arm for the United Party. For the first time since 1948 it had made not insignificant progress by capturing eight nationalist seats. In a parliament of 166 members the position thereafter was:¹

	<u>N.P.</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>P.P.</u>
1966	126	39	1
1970	117	47	1

Benoni, Florida, Jeppe and Turffontien in the Transvaal, Maitland and Port Elizabeth Central in the Cape, and Umhlatuzana, Umlazi and Zululand in Natal fell to the U.P. although Umlazi had always been a Party stronghold which had become a government division when its M.P., Harry Lewis,² had crossed the floor during the previous parliamentary session.³

The swing against the government continued in the Provincial elections of November of the same year. On that occasion the U.P. won nine Nationalist seats

1. T.R.H.Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History, (Johannesburg, 1977), Table 2.
2. Parliamentary Register Part II 1961-1980, published by the House of Assembly. H.M.Lewis the member for Umlazi resigned from the U.P. on 11.2.1969 to join the N.P.
3. U.P. Division of Information and Research, 30.4.1970 (JHB, 1970), 1970 general election. Further information included the following:
 Unopposed: U.P. 6, N.P. 5
 Total votes cast : 1 508 284
 Total registered voters: 2 028 487
 Percentage poll: 74.35
 Votes cast according to Party (total number and percentages):
 N.P. 820 968 54.43
 U.P. 561 647 37.23
 H.N.P. 53 763 3.56
 P.P. 51 760 3.43
 Others. 8 365 0.725

See also K.Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970 (London, 1974), p. 209.

Commenting on these developments Dr Willem Kleynhans, then senior lecturer in political science at the University of South Africa, said that the U.P. was in 'sight of power' if it was able to attract the large 'floating vote' then emerging among disgruntled nationalists. To be able to do so it would, however, have to put its own house in order.⁴ In the light of later events it is interesting that the points raised were to become contentious issues within the Party. Kleynhans suggested, among other improvements, that the U.P. should eliminate policy inconsistencies and adopt an unequivocal 'verligte' approach; that it should modernize the party machine and match the nationalists enthusiasm for bilingualism and the degree of bilingualism of their public representatives. It had also to project a bolder, more dynamic and 'verligte' image and draw dynamic young people into the party machine to replace a generation that was no longer politically effective.⁵

It was the reformist element which subsequently tried to move the U.P. along the road sketched by Dr Kleynhans but in so doing they clashed head-on with the party conservatives to create insoluble political problems.

2. The Brakpan by-election.

While 1971 proved generally to be an uneventful year⁶ the following one was punctuated by a number of crucial by-elections which initially encouraged the Party but which later resulted in acrimonious exchanges that did nothing positive for its unity of purpose.

4. Argus, 30.10.70, 'U.P. in sight of power'.

5. IBID.

6. Although a debate regarding the United Party's approach to the 'homelands policy' was gaining momentum and involved politicians such as Japie Basson and Cathy Taylor who saw positive features in it while Marais Steyn rejected it. The Sunday Times and the Sunday Express began to identify with the different views and personalities involved and so fired the first shots in the verligte-verkrampste feud which was to follow and which is examined in later chapters.

The first, held in Brakpan in February, provided the government with a further shock but raised the United Party hopes as it clearly indicated that the swing towards it was continuing, at least in the urban areas. Julius Civin had reduced the N.P. majority from 3 725 votes (1970) to 1 392. This represented a swing of 12.6 percent away from the N.P. compared with the 1970 parliamentary result.⁷ Various reasons⁸ were advanced to account for this including that the government was old and tired, that the prime minister, Vorster, was a weak leader, costs were rising and that the voters were dissatisfied with the manner in which public funds were used in such 'scandals' as the Agliotti land deal.⁹ It was significant that no political commentator suggested that the electorate was being attracted to the U.P. because of its sound policies. It appeared to be benefiting from a protest vote and a swing that had actually begun as far back as the 1969 Newcastle by-election and which had gained momentum in 1970. Hans Strydom of the Sunday Times maintained that the result was 'a body blow from which Vorster would never recover'. He predicted, inaccurately as it turned out, that from that point the N.P. could only proceed downhill.¹⁰

Municipal elections on the Witwatersrand on the following Wednesday (2 March) produced further U.P. gains at the expense of the nationalists.

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7. B.M.Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910-1976 (Pretoria, 1977), pp. 486-90.
 8. Rapport, 5.3.72, 'Sterk debat oor teruggaan in stede'. The action of ministers and the rising living costs were blamed as contributing to the Brakpan and municipal council setbacks for the nationalists. See also Die Burger, 25.2.72, 'Groot teleurstelling oor Brakpan uitslag'. Suggested that a grievance 'stay-away' vote by the nationalists effected the result.
 9. Sunday Times, 27.2.72, Hans Strydom: 'Brakpan'. See also Rapport, 20.6.71, 'Algiotti geval'. This involved the selling of land near Jan Smuts airport by senior state officials of the Department of Planning for an inflated price of R7½ m. to a Mr Agliotti. The government appointed a Commission of Inquiry, the evidence from which was handed to the police for investigation but little seemed to have resulted from this. See also Hansard, 4.2.1972, Column 384.
 10. Sunday Times, 27.2.72, Strydom: 'Your time's run out'.

In Johannesburg itself, seven N.P. seats were captured which increased the U.P. total to 36 on the council leaving the nationalists with only 10 while the Progressive Party accounted for the other one. In Randburg the U.P. won 8 out of 10 wards, in Brakpan 4 out of 8 and in Springs 5 to the N.P.'s 7.¹¹ To a greater or lesser degree the same pattern was repeated in all the major centres on the Rand. These results, following so closely on the Brakpan success, caused considerable rejoicing among U.P. supporters but alarm and dismay within the National Party. Marais Steyn, Transvaal leader of the U.P., regarded the results as dramatic when he expressed the opinion that, 'werklike drama kan nou verwag word in Suid Afrika se politiek'.¹² There seemed to be a light at the end of the long, dark tunnel of opposition.

The nationalist press pinpointed, as far as possible, the reasons for these setbacks. They ranged from ministerial incompetence¹³ to the fact that the government was doing too much for the Blacks. Rapport noted that, 'dit gis en woel in N.P.' but asserted that the Party would remedy its mistakes.¹⁴ The Burger felt that there was no need for panic and that the decline in the Party's Brakpan majority was largely owing to abstention by its supporters.¹⁵ Faced with these electoral reverses the N.P. was shocked into self-examination and to the satisfaction of its supporters made every effort to recover lost ground and to correct its faults, an exercise which was to pay dividends, and from which the U.P. failed to learn when it too was in difficulties.¹⁶

11. Die Burger, 3 3.72, 'Uitslae: U.P. juig, N.P. vra ondersoek'.

12. IBID.

13. Interviews with Wiley, 5.4.82, Streicher, 5.4.82 and Horak 8.6.82, mention Agliotti, Land Bank loans and fishing scandals as a few examples.

14. Rapport, 5.3.72.

15. Die Burger, 25.2.72.

16. Refer to the Oudtshoorn by-election campaign in Chapter 1.3.

3. The by-election in Oudtshoorn.

The next major test for the two parties was in the Oudtshoorn parliamentary by-election of 19 April 1972, a poll which was destined to become a minor watershed in national politics for it was there that the U.P. suffered a very real setback to its recent steady performances.¹⁷ Although there were other by-elections during the months ahead in which the U.P., in some cases, continued to improve on its position as for example in Klip River¹⁸ it never fully recovered from the blow it received in Oudtshoorn when its own vote dropped by some 450 and the N.P. pushed up its majority by 1 401 votes to 4 848.

Thereafter the internal squabbling within the United Party became more marked. It became evident that it would have to clarify its policies and make them acceptable to the voters and not rely simply on government blunders to capture support.¹⁹ Later in the year, before the Caledon by-election,²⁰ the U.P. did, in fact, introduce its new federal policy in an effort to improve its tarnished public image by propagating what it believed was a more acceptable product which excluded the political albatross of a racially mixed parliament.²¹

17. B.M.Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910-1976 (Pretoria, 1977), pp. 486-90. The result was:

P.Badenhorst(N.P.)	6 666
P.Myburgh(U.P.)	1 818
F.van der Merwe(H.N.P.)	259
N.P. majority	<u>4 848</u>
Percentage poll	85.9
V.Volker(N.P.)	5 227
C.J.Uys(U.P.)	<u>4 995</u>
N.P. majority	<u>232</u>
Percentage poll	81.6

The date of the by-election was 8.11.1972.

19. Cape Times, 1.6.72, 'U.P. rethink on non-whites in Assembly'. See also 'A federal alternative'.

20. Voting took place on 8.11.72.

21. U.P. Division of Information Research(JHB, 1967), Sir De Villiers Graaff on Current Affairs, 24.10.67, Bloemfontein, 'Blue print for racial harmony', p. 2.

Unfortunately, party differences continued, for the latest plan was also open to various interpretations depending on whether the commentator was 'verlig' or 'verkramp' in outlook.

It was the Oudtshoorn result which crystallized the debate between the verligtes and the verkrampes. The N.P. fought the election on a platform of so-called 'boerehaat' which appealed to the Afrikaner's sense of ethnic unity and identity. The call was to stand together against those who hated the Afrikaner. It was implied that those who did the hating were to be found in the ranks of the United Party - the party which would plough the Afrikaner under if given the slightest chance.²² It would 'gang' up with the Blacks in order to do so by using its proposed non-white representatives in parliament if necessary. 'Blaar' Coetzee, himself a former United Party M.P., and thereafter a cabinet minister, suggested in Rapport that a United Party government would be disaster for South Africa resulting in black majority rule as it would not be able to restrict its non-white representation in parliament to sixteen.²³

The whole campaign was conducted in a highly charged atmosphere, a 'Cold Boer War', which received the full backing of the Burger and the N.P. leader in the Cape, P.W.Botha, who was regarded as having started the whole 'boerehaat' ruse.²⁴ Whatever the motives, this call to the blood had the desired effect and the N.P. gained an impressive victory, demonstrating that it had the vitality to turn the tide which, to that point, had been running strongly against it.

22. Hansard, 19.4.72, column 5 309, P.W.Botha. 'In daardie party sit daar elemente ... wat die Afrikaner haat'.

23. Rapport, 3.3.72, 'Sappe sit al klaar met 33 verkrampste L.V.'s'.

24. Sunday Tribune, 26.3.72, Hans Strydom: 'Panic stricken Nats. step up race hate war'.

For the U.P. it raised searching questions which were never satisfactorily answered and which had far reaching repercussions. To have dismissed the defeat as being unrepresentative of U.P. support in the country as a whole or of being a freak result of 'the deep platteland' as suggested by Senator Horak, the national secretary of the Party, was unconvincing. The U.P. had entered the contest, which in retrospect proved a costly political blunder, with every intention and hope of improving its position.²⁵ Had it succeeded it would not have been possible for the Party reformists to have mounted their campaign with as much success as they later did. For the Oudtshoorn by-election was conducted by the Party's designated 'verkrampes'. Philip Myburgh, its candidate who was later to resign because of its leftist drift, was a 'bloedsap'. He appeared set on outdoing the nationalists and adopted an extremely conservative line on important issues such as the Bantustans.²⁶ These were not then acceptable to the U.P.,²⁷ although certain of its M.P.'s such as Catherine Taylor and Japie Basson favoured a change of policy and their recognition. By opposing the homelands policy Myburgh upset verligtes in the Party because it implied that the government was doing too much for the Blacks by carving up the country into independent states. His Oudtshoorn campaign was also a slap in the face for the great majority of opposition newspapers which, since Brakpan, had decided that the electorate had opted to move in a reformist direction.²⁸

25. Interviews with Messrs Wiley, 5.4.82, Streicher, 5.5.82, Horak, 8.6.82, and Graaff, 16.6.82.

26. John Wiley, in an interview, 5.4.82, maintained that the Oudtshoorn campaign was not verkramp, but was fought according to Party policy.

27. U.P. Division of Information Research (JHB, 1967), Sir De Villiers Graaff on Current Affairs, 'Important differences', p. 1.

28. Interview with Streicher. The successes of 1970 and afterwards had been interpreted incorrectly, according to him, as a victory for a spirit of verligtheid which the English newspapers thereafter supported.

The Oudtshoorn result again confronted the U.P. with an old but very real dilemma. It could never hope to come to power without the Afrikaner vote. To achieve this it had to adopt a conservative approach particularly on the platteland, for the rural population was essentially conservative and any verligte overtures there would meet with little success as was demonstrated by the 1981 general election when the Herstigte Nasionale Party²⁹ pushed up its vote vis-a-vis the N.P. on the platteland which was seen as becoming 'too liberal' while the P.F.P. hardly bothered to put up any candidates, it rated its chances so poorly. Conversely, this approach would be unacceptable in the urban areas where a verligte image was necessary to capture the more moderate vote. The U.P. was never able to resolve this problem, if indeed there was a satisfactory solution. Consequently, it had two political faces - one related to that of Helen Suzman and the other to Dr Albert Hertzog.³⁰ 'Dawie' of the Burger asserted that the U.P. reformists were prepared to tolerate the reactionaries as a necessary evil in order to retain its Afrikaner vote in the rural areas and that their tactics, as a result, should not be too closely examined. When the U.P. came to power it would be a 'liberal' government even though its success was achieved with 'verkrampste' help. The 'Sap-Afrikaner' could then be relegated to a 'bywoner' position in the Party. This, claimed the newspaper, was the reason for Myburgh's Oudtshoorn nomination, for only a reactionary could hold the Afrikaner vote in the country regions.³¹

29. Die Herstigte Nasionale Party was formed as a result of a verligte-verkrampste split in the N.P. It was established on 25.10.1969 by Dr A.Hertzog and three other M.P.'s who were expelled from the N.P. because of their opposition to the government's sports policy among other things.

30. Helen Suzman was a founder member of the Progressive Party (1959) and a 'liberal' in white politics. Dr Albert Hertzog, son of General Barry Hertzog, was expelled from the N.P. in 1969 and formed the Herstigte Nasionale Party which was to be the standard bearer of extreme conservatism in South Africa.

31. Die Burger, 11.3.72, 'Dawie': 'Breek die Nasionalistes, hoe dan ook'.

Although 'Dawie's' analysis was an interesting supposition and had merit he overlooked the fact that all parties in all countries nominate 'horses for courses' to gain the maximum advantage for themselves.

Nevertheless, Myburgh's nomination was a blow to any enlightened image which the party might have been cultivating in certain quarters and because he was unsuccessful the way was open for a verligte backlash. Hennie Serfontein of the Sunday Times, although attempting to minimize the shock of the 'Nat. win' by suggesting that Oudtshoorn was traditionally a government constituency unaffected by current political trends, wrote that it also contained lessons for the U.P. He suggested that the voter would not fall for scare stories about potentially dangerous Bantustans, and that the U.P. should follow a verligte direction which would win votes in the cities, 'where it counts'. Verkrampde tactics of expediency, he felt, would lead nowhere.³² Once again the dilemma presented itself as to which approach the Party should adopt in order to retain as broad a spectrum of support as possible among both language groups and so remain a country-wide movement with some pretence of being able to defeat the government. Confusion would remain as long as conflicting views were held regarding this issue and to the very end of its life the U.P. was unable to resolve the matter in a satisfactory manner.

Another controversial aspect of U.P. policy which came under the microscope during the Oudtshoorn campaign was its race federation plan.³³

32. Sunday Times, 23.4.72, Hennie Serfontein: 'Shock Nat. win sets vote riddle'.

33. Aims and Principles and Constitution of the U.P., September, 1964, issued by the general secretary, Cape Town, p. 1.

'White leadership with justice', including limited non-white representation in a single parliament³⁴ received wide comment from political platforms and particularly in the Burger which left no stone unturned to point out its dangers.³⁵ The paper dismissed the 'boerehaat' stories as unconvincing and blamed the U.P.'s colour policy for its defeat. The electorate, it contended, would not swallow such a perilous plan as an alternative to separate development and had consequently voted against it. The earlier Brakpan election had been fought on economic issues but in Oudtshoorn the U.P. was called to account for its race federation policy and had been found wanting.³⁶ According to the Burger the proposed presence of 16 non-white representatives (8 Black, 6 Coloured and 2 Indian) in parliament would lead to racial chaos, and contained the seed of civil war. They could hold the balance of power and would always be an aggrieved group of M.P.'s, actively leftist and able to keep the N.P. in the minority in the Assembly. They would simply be used by the United Party for its own political ends. The various attacks on U.P. race policies were not without their effect for by the end of 1972 a new federal policy had been launched during the Caledon by-election which provided for a white parliament excluding all non-white representation.³⁷ On the other hand provision was made for a multi-racial federal assembly to represent all the race groups.³⁸ This simply moved the debate to the new council and the same arguments continued unchanged.

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34. Division of Information Research, 'Graaff on blue print for racial harmony', Bloemfontein, 24.10.67, p. 2.
 35. Die Burger, 29.4.72, 'Waarheid van Oudtshoorn te vreeslik vir V.P.'
 36. IBID., 'Waarom Oudtshoorn so gestem'.
 37. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82. The new policy had evolved over the years and was not a sudden departure from previous race policies.
 38. Sunday Tribune, 27.8.72, Martin Schneider: 'Courage, that's what this Plan has'. See also The Aims and Principles and Constitution of the U.P., Nov. 1975, p. 2.

In retrospect the Oudtshoorn by-election was a body blow which left the U.P. deeply scarred. Whether it was 'boerehaat', the Party's race policies, its reactionary campaign or whether the local N.P. organization was simply superior, the failure of the U.P. to maintain its position led to an intensification of the internal feuding that eventually had fatal consequences for it. Other by-elections were fought during the year with the same problems recurring.³⁹ What emerged was that, in general, the trend was no longer strongly in favour of the U.P. and as the internal problems escalated the Party's electoral support waned.

39. Rapport, 21.5.72, 'Brakpan moet V.P. en N.P. aan dink sit'. The N.P. candidate van Eeden pushed up his majority over Steynberg of the U.P. to 2 130 votes in the Brakpan provincial by-election of 17.5.72. Refer also to the Sunday Times, 12.11.72, 'No need for U.P. despondency'. In the Caledon parliamentary by-election of 8.11.72 the U.P. candidate D.Graaff polled 4 020 votes to L.Munnik's 6 054 which increased the previous N.P. majority by 174 votes to 2 034.

CHAPTER IIVERLIG-VERKRAMP, THE INSOLUBLE PROBLEM1. The issues involved.

The verligte-verkrampste conflict which ran like a silver thread through the maze of issues which the U.P. faced in its declining years remained unresolved at the end.¹ The concepts themselves defied clear definition but reformists in the Party were regarded as being verlig or enlightened whereas conservatives were unenlightened or verkramp. But as both groups purportedly adhered to the same political principles, differences tended to be confined to the manner in which policies were implemented or interpreted.² The media capitalized on labelling its favourites as verlig and its adversaries as verkramp. Consequently, men like Messrs Japie Basson and Harry Schwarz were described as being reformist in outlook, although they frequently denied the existence of 'Young Turk' and 'Old Guard' divisions in the Party. On the other hand, provincial leaders such as Marais Steyn, Myburgh Striecher, Radclyffe Cadman and Herman Oelrich, of the O.F.S. were branded as being verkramp and were heavily criticized. The divisions also tended to have a regional basis. The reformists were essentially a Transvaal phenomenon with pockets of support in the Cape but little in Natal and none in the O.F.S. Further, their strength lay in the cities and was negligible in the rural areas.

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1. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie in die Suid Afrikaanse Opposisie sedert 1958', D.Phil., U.O.V.S., 1979, pp. 3-25. This conflict was not new as liberals and conservatives of all gradations had been members of the Party since 1934 and in the South African Party before that date. They were responsible for the sporadic feuding which characterized its history. During the 1970's the inherent differences remained but the terms verkramp, for conservative, and verlig, for reformist, were used instead.
 2. Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82. He never believed there were serious policy differences within the Party.

The reformists were, however, fortunate to enjoy the support of virtually the entire English language press - the only major exception being the Sunday Express which threw its weight behind Sir De Villiers Graaff and the Old Guard until its editor M.A. Johnson stepped down in 1974 and it too defected to the reformist camp.³ The most vociferous voice raised in support of the reformist cause was that of the Sunday Times which had begun a series of articles as early as August 1971 demanding a fresh approach and change of direction by the United Party. The result of this sustained public debate, which continued for a number of years, was to undermine the credibility of the U.P. and create a picture of feuding and division which was a caricature of the actual situation.

Professor W.J. de Klerk⁴ of Potchefstroom University was credited as being the father of the words 'verlig' and 'verkramp' when he first used them at the S.A.B.R.A. youth congress in 1966.⁵ In a subsequent article in Rapport he detailed and updated his understanding of the terms.⁶

Verligtheid was depicted as a positive force which for South Africa could be a third possibility in the field of group relations, differing from verkramptheid or 'die chaos van die integrasiestiese standpunt'.

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3. Johnson always maintained that he was simply 'for the Party'. See his editorial of that name 15.7.73.
 4. Son of the former Minister of Education, Arts and Science, Senator Jan de Klerk.
 5. E. Potter, The Press as Opposition (London, 1975), p. 193. See also K. Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970 (London, 1975), p. 183.
 6. Rapport, 23.3.72, Prof. W.J. de Klerk: 'Nuwe lig op Verligtes'.

It was an attitude which strove for equality in differentiation and the following could be termed *verlig*: Firstly, the maintenance of the separation of nations in South Africa with the retention of group identities. De Klerk believed that the history of Africa indicated that nationalism was exclusive and that Africanization was preferable to ersatz Europeanization. Secondly, equality in separation demanded the removal of discrimination, or the domination of one group over another and of control which blocked forever independence and freedom. There would be equal treatment and opportunities in all spheres. Thirdly, the Whites had to accept that the present situation contained much inequality which they could help to alter in a correct manner which would lead to full independence. Once these points had been accepted it would be necessary to agree to the full development, on all levels, of the Bantustans including their consolidation and expansion to allow for this as well as full political independence when these states were ready to accept responsibility. It would also entail the development of co-operation between these independent states in a form of partnership while the immediate removal of discrimination was also necessary where white and non-white lived in one country. Coloureds and Indians, should in addition, retain their own identities, and their political rights had to be guaranteed in a framework of differentiation.⁷

Prof de Klerk believed that these were the main points in any *verligte* dispensation. South Africa should move in this direction. Opposition could be expected from the integrationists and *verkramptes* but there was, he felt, a swing away from *verkramptheid* while the integrationists had been totally rejected as they misread the fundamental racial differentiation which existed in South Africa.

7. IBID.

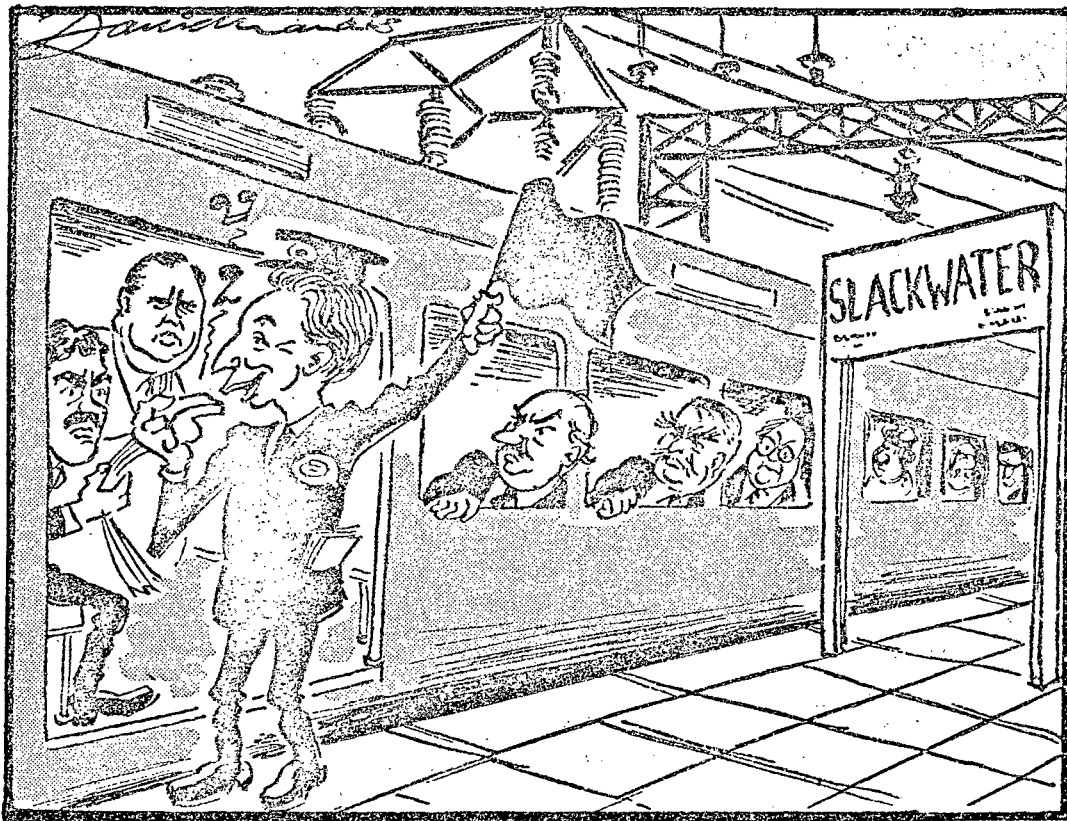
Japie Basson, frequently regarded as the father of the reform movement in the U.P.,⁸ delivered a controversial speech to the 1971 Party congress in the Transvaal which stressed the need for a new approach to race relations.⁹ He called for reform in the face of growing anti-white feeling. As the situation was changing rapidly and radically in South Africa 'anybody who continues to believe that Black and Brown people will be satisfied with a few paternalistic political crumbs from the whiteman's table is living in a fool's paradise'.¹⁰ Contact with non-white leaders, he said, would reveal that they were no longer prepared to tolerate being represented by whites who spoke for them in parliament. Such representation was worthless and whatever form future contact took it would have to be direct.¹¹ This view was in conflict with the existing Party policy which still advocated that non-whites receive limited representation by whites in parliament.

Basson was also of the opinion that the Bantustan concept was relevant and formed an important part of the broader political direction, one of a few from which South Africans would have to choose. Once again he differed from official policy which rejected the ultimate homeland plan. He also discarded the traditional 'white baasskap' idea as being unacceptable policy in the current political climate. Basson felt that 'Black power' would grow and would have to be accommodated but that any party attempting to do so in an integrated political system would meet with such white resistance that it would never rule in South Africa 'in our time'.¹²

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8. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82. See also the Sunday Times, 26.8.73, 'Prophet Japie is inspiration of reform'.
 9. U.P. Division of Information, (undated), J. Basson, address to the Transvaal U.P. Congress, 17.9.71.
 10. Argus, 27.9.71, 'Revision of U.P. Race policies'. It dealt with Japie Basson's congress address of 17.9.71.
 11. Sunday Times, 26.9.71, 'Facing reality of Black power'.
 12. IBID., Congress address.

The direction advocated by Basson - the third option - was to channel black and white aspirations into a decentralized system of power in which the races would feel sufficiently secure to make co-operation between them possible without one race dominating the other.

Basson pleaded for a fresh approach. He believed that the fundamentally important thing in politics was direction and not necessarily policy.¹³ His congress speech was hailed far and wide by those who believed it was a verligte one. The press gave it extensive coverage, the English newspapers praising it in the manner of the Cape Times editorial which described it as being 'a dynamic verligte challenge to the United Party'¹⁴ while the Afrikaans press predicted all sorts of dire consequences because of 'Japie Basson se opstand'.¹⁵



'All change for the Seventies'

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13. Sunday Times, 13.2.72, Japie Basson: 'Party friction not always disloyalty'.
 14. Cape Times, 20.9.71, editorial: 'Japie Basson and U.P.'.
 15. Die Burger, 20.9.71, 'Japie Basson se Opstand'.

If his directions were to be adopted then far reaching changes would have to be made to party policy. But since the Party leadership would be unlikely to accept them a great deal of conflict could be expected.

Basson's speech more than any other, came to be regarded as having started the verligte-verkrampste debate in earnest and won for him the title of spiritual leader of the reform movement though he was often to disappoint his admirers by remaining within the United Party when lesser politicians left for more verligte destinations.¹⁶

The way ahead suggested by Japie Basson agreed in many instances with the points raised by Prof de Klerk in his definition of verligtheid. Both envisaged three choices - integrationism, verkramptheid and verligtheid, with the latter receiving approval, the others being rejected. Nevertheless, the concept remained subjective, for what was verlig to one politician might be regarded as verkramp by another. The question of independent homelands was a case in point. Was it verlig to reject or accept them and by what yardstick should the judgement be made?

Notwithstanding such difficulties it became accepted that verligtes pursued a certain general direction, no matter how ill-defined, while those who were opposed to them or who remained non-committal were the verkrampstes, regardless of party affiliations. Therefore, U.P. representatives, for example, who came out strongly against the police for dispersing demonstrating students in front of St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town in June 1972, were praised for being verlig. The issue involved was, for them, the denial of certain liberties, in this instance the right to protest. Those who did not condemn the police were suspect and were branded as being verkramp.

16. Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff: 16.6.82. He spoke of Basson's loyalty to him over the years. See also Hansard, 24.2.75, column 1238. Basson denied that he had ever encouraged the reform movement in the Party.

Bannings without recourse to the courts was characteristic of verkramptheid whether the security of the state was involved or not. Serving on the Schlebusch commission, which investigated the activities of certain organizations, was frowned upon while to endorse its findings was definitely verkramp. Reformists always adopted a verligte approach on these matters. Consequently, members of the U.P. were forced to take sides; either they supported the reformist-wing of the Party or else the traditionally more conservative one.¹⁷ The resultant feuding took its toll on morale and many supporters abandoned it to join either the Nationalists on the right or the Progressives on the left - surely the more genuine conservatives and liberals in South African politics.

Headed by Stanley Uys, Hans Strydom and later Hennie Serfontein the Sunday Times mounted a sustained onslaught on the U.P. verkramptes and fully backed the views of Japie Basson. The newspaper became the mouthpiece of the reform movement and went to great lengths to undermine the democratically elected party leaders. It was ecstatic when Marais Steyn was replaced by Harry Schwarz as Transvaal leader of the Party in August 1972.¹⁹ It claimed credit for the shift in U.P. policy once it accepted the concept of independent homelands and professed throughout that it had the interests of the Party at heart and that its campaign was directed at revitalizing the opposition. It is, however, arguable whether the Times did not do more harm to the Party than any other section of the media or whether its motives were above reproach.

17. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Oriëntasie', pp. 12-13.

18. Interview with John Wiley, 5.4.82. See also the numerous Sunday Times articles on the subject which appear as footnotes throughout this thesis.

19. Sunday Times, 27.8.72, 'How Young Turks did it'.

When the English press in general, and elements supporting it, were unable to achieve their goal of reforming the Party from within they set about wrecking it with the intention of rejoining the acceptable parts with other interested groups in a 'verligte front' to oppose the government.²⁰ In this connection it is of interest to note that the editor of the Sunday Times, Joel Mervis, who was a delegate at the final congress of the Reform Party before its dissolution, eventually went on to become the P.F.P. M.P.C. for Hillbrow thus vindicating the views adopted by certain U.P. parliamentarians, such as John Wiley of Simonstown that the English press and the Times in particular did not really have the interests of the U.P. at heart. They merely regarded it as a vehicle to achieve their own political objectives or those of their owners.²¹

2. The verkrampte mafia.

In July 1972 following police action against students in Cape Town Stanley Uys attacked the U.P. leadership and accused Graaff of being in the hands of a 'verkrampte mafia' which prevented the party from changing.²² It was essential that the power of the verkramptes be broken in order to bring about a new political orientation. It was demanded of the U.P. that it strongly oppose any attack on civil liberties. This role, however, was being restricted by the verkramptes who were narrowing the Party's base by appealing to the conservative nationalist vote instead of broadening its appeal by courting verligtes.²³ Uys called on the party to stop fighting the Church, students and Progressives and to seek a new strategy.

20. Interviews with Messrs Wiley, Streicher and Horak.

21. IBID., Wiley. See also Chapter V.5.

22. Sunday Times, 2.7.72, Stanley Uys: 'Major shake up in United Party urged'.

23. IBID., 16.7.72, Uys: 'U.P. must attract all verligtes'.

Although this new plan was never more than superficially outlined the negative criticism of groups within the Party escalated.

In the following weeks' editorial, headlined 'Verligte Party' the Times called on the U.P. to take an unequivocal stand on issues that mattered.²⁴ These included Bantustan policy, where government changes should be accepted, petty apartheid, where a firmer stand was needed and civil liberties where the Party should be more consistent. The U.P. at that time, claimed the leading article, lacked initiative and dynamic leadership which hampered its chances of becoming the majority party. If it appealed to the verligtes right across the political spectrum it would come to power. 'A verligte front, could become a victory front'.²⁵ This editorial was supported in the following issue by another Stanley Uys article in which he pleaded for all verligtes to combine and for the U.P. to improve on its ideas, move into the 1970's and replace its verkrampste leaders if it wished to regain office.

Copy of this nature, though glib, focused unfavourable attention on the U.P. by making demands which the Party was unable to fulfil even if it so desired. It operated on a democratic basis, its leaders were chosen at provincial and national congresses and policy was formulated by its representatives and not by the press which was not answerable to any section of the electorate for its actions.

'Yes, there are verligtes in the U.P. but far more verkrampstes', according to Colin Eglin, of the Progressive Party, in the Sunday Times of the following week.

24. Sunday Times, 9.7.72, editorial: 'Verligte Party'. See also 'A radical personality change is called for'.

25. IBID., 16.7.72, 'U.P. must attract all verligtes'.

Uys agreed with him and went on to attempt a definition of a verligte, not an easy task. Those who had outgrown the N.P. for economic reasons were classed as verlig, as were opposition supporters who were prepared to back the positive steps of separate development.²⁶ A week later Uys defined verligtes as all forward looking men who favoured radical change in the party political alignment. Verkrampes were opposed to this. He accused the U.P. of being verlig in theory but verkramp in practice and that political expediency determined its actions. The solution to the problem, he felt, was for the Party to reject its verkrampete ideas and leaders and be governed by its liberal and civilized principles.²⁷

Stanley Uys and other political commentators found no shortage of material to draw attention to the inconsistencies of approach by the U.P. reflected, for example, in the differing reactions by De Villiers Graaff and Mike Mitchell of Durban North, to civil liberties following the student protest at St. George's Cathedral. By giving prominence to these and similar incidents the Party's credibility was damaged. Yet, as will be demonstrated, when the Times attempted to define verligtheid it was vague and merely played with words in as unconvincing a manner as it accused the U.P. of so often doing. When it spoke of the formation of a 'verligte front' it was skating on very thin ice for it never clearly explained on what basis this was to be achieved in practice and what chance of success such a grouping was likely to enjoy if it were not based on an acceptable programme of action. What future would such a front have if it simply was formed to oppose the government? South African political history since 1948 boasted the failure of many such fronts.²⁸

26. Sunday Times, 16.7.72.

27. Sunday Times, 23.7.72, 'Uys on verligtes'.

28. There was the United Democratic Front of 1953 and also the alliance in 1961 between Japie Basson's National Union and the United Party.

And if the U.P. was to rid itself of its verkrampes who was to draw up the complete list of qualifiers and on what basis was it to be done? The Sunday Times campaign was transparently superficial and was an example of prejudiced journalism which succeeded to an extent because the same type of article was repeated with monotonous regularity.

During June 1972 the Witwatersrand General Council of the U.P. was re-organized, giving reformists such as Messrs Harry Schwarz, Dave Dalling, Dick Enthoven and Horace van Rensburg a base from which to operate and to extend their influence. This development was lauded by the Times which expressed the hope that the revitalizing process would be copied in other U.P. divisions.²⁹ Determined efforts were, in fact, made throughout the country to bring this about but instead of creating a 'victory bandwagon' it led to one feud after another which sapped the Party's vitality.³⁰

3. The role of the Progressive Party.

From July 1972 when the Party was given so much gratuitous and mischievous advice a point which was also raised concerned the relationship existing between the United and Progressive parties. The P.P. had been all but annihilated in 1970 and had returned only one member to parliament yet there remained a great deal of sympathy for it, with Helen Suzman receiving far more attention than the support for her party warranted.³¹ The Progressive Party and the U.P. competed for the same vote in the urban areas and the P.P. could only do well if the U.P. fared badly.

29. Sunday Times, 6.8.72, 'Shake up needed if U.P. are to win power'.

30. Rapport, 23.7.72, 'Is hulle almal Sappe?'.

31. K.Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970 (London, 1974), pp. 218-219. Although only winning one seat the percentage of voters supporting the P.P. had increased.

This had not happened in the 1970 elections and consequently the P.P.'s share of the vote was very small.³² By 1974, when the U.P. was losing support, the P.P. staged something of a revival. In truth, the growth of the P.P. was closely linked to the decline of the U.P. But when the Progressives were in trouble sympathetic newspapers, the same ones as supported the reformists, did their best to boost the Party's plummeting fortunes. And not without success. Artificial life was breathed into the P.P. and it was kept alive long enough to benefit from the decline in the fortunes of the U.P. Victor Norton called for a 'sensible approach' to the U.P.-P.P. fight when his favourite party was struggling, and suggested that Suzman, Eglin and Ray Swart should be returned unopposed at the next election.³³ In return the P.P. would restrict its electoral effort against the U.P. in other seats. This could hardly have appeared an attractive offer to the United Party. Stanley Uys reiterated this approach by supporting an election pact between the two parties.³⁴ A similar appeal was made towards the end of the year subsequent to the Progressive's weak showing in the parliamentary by-elections in Vereeniging and Johannesburg West where they polled 559 votes and 192 votes respectively.³⁵ In an editorial the Sunday Times called for the two parties to pool their electoral resources.³⁶

Throughout the period of verligte-verkrampde quarrels in the U.P. there was strong media sympathy and later unequivocal support for the Progressives.

32. Division of Information and Research, (Johannesburg, 1970), United Party, 1970 general election. The Progressive Party share of the vote was 3.43 percent. See also K.Heard, IBID., p. 211. He puts the P.P. share of the vote at 3.5 percent and they had contested seven fewer seats than in 1966.

33. Sunday Times, 29.7.72, Victor Norton: 'U.P.-P.P. fight'.

34. Sunday Times, 5.8.72, Stanley Uys: 'Election pact with Progressive Party'.

35. B.M.Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910-76 (Pretoria, 1977), pp. 486-90. i. Johannesburg West 29.11.72, P.P. 559 votes
ii. Vereeniging 29.11.72 P.P. 192 votes.

36. Sunday Times, 11.12.72, editorial: 'A truce, why not?'

Currently, virtually the entire English language press supports the P.F.P. and none the N.R.P. the successor to the defunct United Party.³⁷ This tends to confirm the suspicion that at heart they had always been progressive and that leading newspapers had initially supported the reform movement as it appeared to stand a better chance of success than the ailing Progressive Party. As the U.P. infighting intensified it became increasingly clear that the so-called verkrampes in its leadership positions could not all be removed. Consequently, the U.P. gradually shed its press support to such an extent that most newspapers during the 1974 election were adopting an 'independent stance' and were asking the electorate to support the best candidates irrespective of party affiliation as long as they were verlig.³⁸ This strange advice will be examined at the appropriate time but what clearly emerged was that when the English press was unable to exert its will on the U.P. and when 'verkrampste leaders' in all the provinces, save for the Transvaal, retained their positions the newspapers deserted the Party and propagated their verligte front among the Progressives and those reformists who had abandoned the U.P.

In the light of subsequent events, and with hindsight, it is on balance correct to maintain that many who joined the U.P. after 1970 were but fair-weather friends and were in reality progressively inclined.³⁹

37. See Chapter V.5.

38. By their own admissions the Sunday Times, the Cape Times, Rand Daily Mail, Natal Mercury, Daily Dispatch and Eastern Province Herald, among others, were adopting this approach where they were not supporting Progressive candidates unconditionally.

39. Examples would include Robin Carisle (who joined in 1972) and many of the members of the G.R.O.W. movement in the Cape who virtually all left the U.P. with Harry Schwarz in 1975 to join the Reform Party. Prof Nic Olivier who became M.P. for Edenvale in 1974 is an important example in the Transvaal. See also Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Oriëntasie', pp. 259-260.

Their support was not sincere but was bestowed because the U.P. had done well in 1970. It was this group which favoured rapid change and new leaders, and which enjoyed media support but when their objectives remained unrealized they left the Party as readily as they had joined it and moved to the Progressive Party⁴⁰ which received increasing attention as the reformist bandwagon ground to a halt within the United Party.

40. The Young Turks who joined the Reform Party in 1975 became members of the Progressive Reform Party when the former merged with the Progressives later in the same year, that is on 26.7.1975

CHAPTER IIIMARAIS STEYN OUSTED: THE END OF AN ERA.1. Prelude to the Transvaal Congress of 1972.

The verligte-verkrampste battle reached its zenith in the Transvaal in August 1972 when Harry Schwarz, standard bearer of the Young Turks, toppled Marais Steyn in dramatic fashion at the Transvaal provincial congress of the U.P. Marais Steyn who was Graaff's 'right and left hand' was regarded as the leading member of the 'verkrampste Mafia' by the Sunday Times, and an opponent of reform in the U.P.¹ He had endured the brunt of a virulent press campaign to change the Party leadership in the Transvaal.²

Marais Steyn was not opposed to renewal but as an experienced and able politician he had a different approach to party politics and how to bring about a change of government. His methods had proved successful in 1970 when the U.P. in the Transvaal, under his leadership, did better than anywhere else in the country.³ Yet, it was in his own province that the greatest pressure for rapid reform was experienced. The group of Young Turk M.P.C.'s responsible for encouraging a new direction, also sincerely believed that they had the interests of the Party at heart when they nominated Harry Schwarz⁴ for the leadership position and in a vigorous, well organized campaign supported his candidature. The differences between the two men were more of style than of policy for both professed to support the principles of the U.P.⁵ But there was a difference of emphasis and possibly, because certain policies were open to divergent interpretations they were both, correctly, entitled to their viewpoints.

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1. Sunday Times, 2.7.72, Stanley Uys: 'Major shake up in United Party urged'.
 2. Interviews with Senator Horak, 8.6.82, and Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82.
 3. K.Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970 (London, 1974), p. 209.
 4. Harry Schwarz had been elected deputy leader of the U.P. in the Transvaal in September 1971. Marais Steyn had been re-elected leader of the Party at the same provincial congress.
 5. Interview, Graaff.

Harry Schwarz, himself, denied that Marais Steyn was a verkrampte and insisted, for many years, that everyone in the U.P. was 'verlig'. He opposed, to no avail, the labelling of party members by the press.

To confront Marais Steyn was a major decision and created immediate tension within the Party as Schwarz had been associated, in the eyes of the public, with the growing reform movement while Marais Steyn was regarded as a member of the Old Guard. To give but one example: Die Vaderland of July 26 reported that certain young fund raisers in the U.P. had been accused by 'leading verkramptes... of being a power group of liberalists and big money men', whose aim it was to oust Graaff and Marais Steyn from their posts.⁶ This story was embellished in Rapport⁷ and subsequently investigated by the Sunday Express⁸ where its correspondent, Kitt Katzin, revealed that a certain Daan Lemmer, a paid U.P. organizer, had been the source of the Die Vaderland's story. He had told the newspaper that Schwarz was the leader of a powerful liberal group in the U.P. which consisted of disguised progressives who wished to capture control of the Transvaal. Lemmer, who in a signed statement later admitted that his allegations were untrue, had spread the story as he was a Marais Steyn supporter.

This incident which was widely publicized was partly responsible for the leadership conflict between Marais Steyn and his deputy leader becoming more acute. Although revealed to be a mischievous story it contained the germ of truth, and in a concise manner drew attention to a situation which was widely believed to exist.

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6. Die Vaderland, 26.7.72, Koos Liebenberg: 'Magsbloeke wil die V.P. van binne oorneem'.
 7. Rapport, 30.7.72.
 8. Sunday Express, 13.8.72.

The predictions made by Liebenberg in his Vaderland article proved to be uncannily accurate. His unnamed source stated that Harry Schwarz would make a bid for the leadership of the Party in the Transvaal while the verligtes would also attempt to have Japie Basson elected his deputy. These reformists would then infiltrate the Party's divisional structure in order to get 'liberal' candidates nominated for the next election. This sequence of events duly occurred.

When Schwarz actually won the election, the U.P. was never again destined to be the same. He provided the reformists with a base from which to spread a new style of politics, a style which led to clash after clash and from which the U.P. was unable to recover. Marais Steyn, after a lifetime in opposition, resigned from the United Party and joined the government,⁹ previously regarded by him as the worst God had given to the country. In 1975 Harry Schwarz travelled a similar road to that of his predecessor and left the Party, his reform mission complete.¹⁰ Two years later the U.P. had ceased to exist.

It could not have been easy for Schwarz to oppose his own leader and this he admitted when he agreed to stand for nomination, '... (it was) one of the most difficult decisions of my political career but I took it in the belief that it would be in the best interests of the Party itself'.¹¹ It can only be presumed that these interests were of a reformist nature. In the light of later developments it is worth recording the pledges that Schwarz made in the event of his election. They included, among others, a promise to promote the unity of the U.P. and to strengthen the leadership of Sir De Villiers Graaff for the task ahead.

9. Parliamentary Register Part III 1961-1980, published by the House of Assembly, pp. 174-176. Steyn left the U.P. on 1.9.73 and joined the N.P. on the fourth.

10. IBID., Schwarz was expelled from the U.P. on 12.2.75.

11. Sunday Tribune, 20.8.72, Martin Schneider: 'Schwarz bids to oust Steyn'.

Action, not promises was what was required.¹² There was indeed to be plenty of activity but not of the kind that promoted party unity. Conceivably, Schwarz's envisaged path of action was later obstructed and he therefore felt that he had no alternative but to leave the U.P. Whatever the reasons, they contributed to the disunity within it. Schwarz's period in office coincided with the most bitter feuding in the U.P.

Marais Steyn, who approached the fateful congress with unwarranted complacency,¹³ declined to issue any manifesto for his candidature, '... others can say nice things about me if they wish.. My past record is all I wish to point to, and is for all to see'.¹⁴ Other provincial leaders condemned, to a man, the intensified press campaign which preceded the Transvaal congress and which they believed was intended to influence events.¹⁵

2. The election of Harry Schwarz.

In a well organized and smooth operation the Young Turks had Schwarz elected leader of the Party in the Transvaal.¹⁶ He reportedly defeated Marais Steyn by 29 votes out of about 500 cast.¹⁷ This was a reward for hard work and thorough planning which ensured that the largest number of reformist delegates that were entitled to be there and vote attended the congress.¹⁸

12. IBID.

13. Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82.

14. Sunday Express, 20.8.72, 'U.P. Transvaal leadership battle'. See also Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie in die Suid Afrikaanse Opposisie sedert 1958', D.Phil, University of the Orange Free State, 1979, pp. 292-94.

15. Sunday Express, 20.8.72, Hugh Robertson: 'U.P. Leaders Condemn Anti-Steyn Campaign'. See also Die Burger, 25.8.72, 'Leiding kies Steyn se kant'.

16. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', pp. 292-295.

17. Die Burger, 26.8.72, 'Marais se kop waai'.

18. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82. See also Barnard, p. 292.

This meant that in the months prior to the meeting reformists had gained control of the notoriously poorly organized U.P. branch structure, particularly on the Witwatersrand, and so placed themselves in a position to attend the Congress as official delegates.¹⁹ This was confirmed by the Young Turks, who had sponsored the Schwarz candidature, in the Sunday Times of August 27 which was euphoric in its praise of 'how they did it'.²⁰

After the election of Schwarz the reformists tried, but narrowly failed, to make a clean sweep of the leadership positions in the Transvaal when they nominated Japie Basson for the post of deputy leader. Dr Gideon Jacobs, however, a confidant of Sir De Villiers, and one of the Old Guard, defeated him by an estimated 70 votes.²¹

The Transvaal congress left Marais Steyn without a party post in the Province while its new leader would not even be a member of the parliamentary caucus as he was still a representative of the provincial council. His deputy, however, was an M.P. Hardly an ideal state of affairs. Schwarz's success was widely acclaimed by the entire English language press except for the Sunday Express which had reservations, and which had always backed Marais Steyn.²²

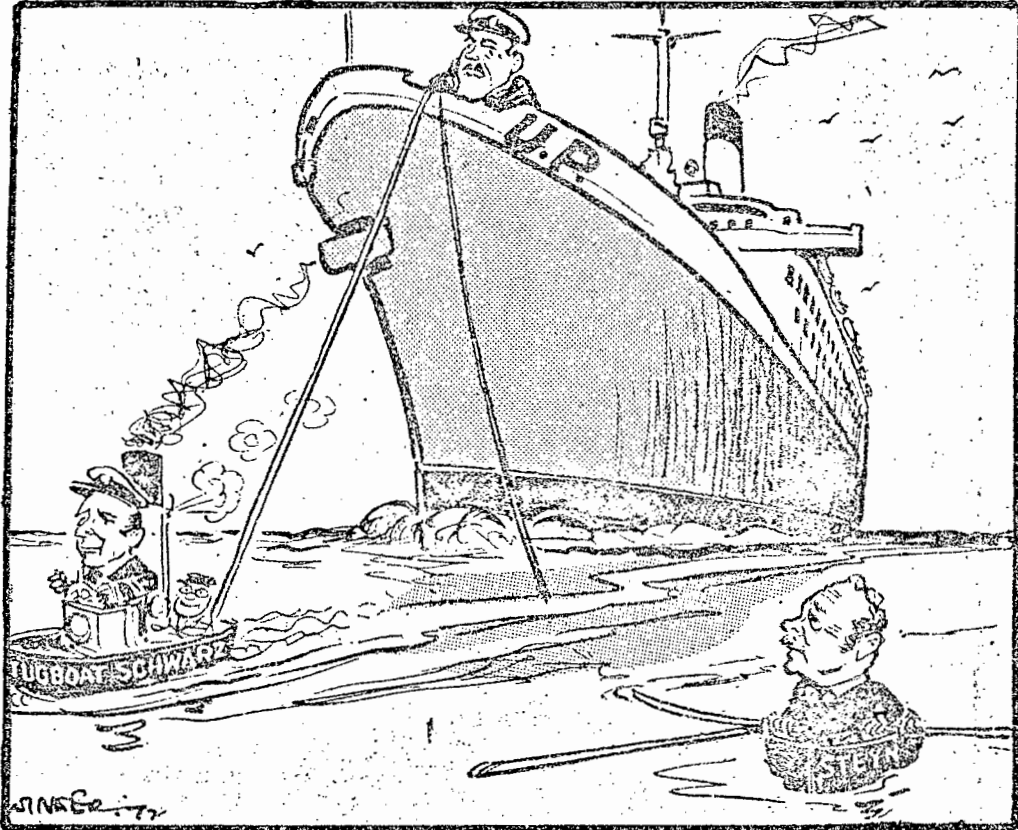
19. Sunday Times, 30.7.72, Uys: 'Young U.P. men obliged to move fast'.

20. IBID, 27.8.72, Serfontein: 'How Young Turks did it'.

21. IBID, J H P Serfontein, 'Jacobs is No. 2'. He added that his election was a 'pathetic backlash in favour of the establishment'. Senator Horak in an interview maintained that Graaff wanted Jacobs elected although he was not keen to stand, and consequently Graaff approached Schwarz to use his influence among his supporters to ensure this. See also Dr S L Barnard, p. 297, where he suggests that many of the reformist delegates had left by the time voting for deputy leader took place.

22. Graaff was also disappointed, see interview.

Sir De Villiers Graaff, whatever he may have felt about the loss of his most trusted lieutenant, announced that notwithstanding differences over elected positions the Party had closed its ranks 'and is now united and determined as ever'.²³



'Schwarz takes over the U.P. in the Transvaal'

Unfortunately, this optimistic observation was misplaced. Following the election of Harry Schwarz feuding within the Party intensified, and the electoral support won in the previous couple of years began to evaporate.

The Cape Times welcomed the defeat of the 'establishment' regarding it as a break-through for a new and bold political approach.

23. Sunday Express, 27.8.72, 'All stand together', and 'Party has closed ranks'.

Ripple effects could be expected and if the U.P. lost support on the right and on the platteland it would not be a disaster. The editorial suggested, incorrectly as it turned out, that the Party would then be equipped to capture the urban vote of 'modern South Africa'.²⁴ This type of article appeared in many parts of the country and hopes were raised to expect great things of the reformists.²⁵ Yet, in the by-elections of November the U.P. did reasonably well in seats where there was little or no Young Turk influence as for instance, in the Klip River constituency in Natal where the campaign was conducted by the established party organization. There the N.P. scraped home by 232 votes while in Vereeniging the N.P. majority was cut by 751 votes but in 'modern South Africa', in the Johannesburg West constituency, where the election was entirely in the hands of the reformists the nationalists increased their majority by 150 votes.²⁶ This was the only disappointing result in that series of by-elections. It was also a setback for the Young Turks who had promised great things for Johannesburg West and for the rest of the Witwatersrand.²⁷ Significantly, Schwarz did not avail himself of the opportunity to test his popularity as a candidate in the seat. Had he won, he would also have been returned to parliament with the added knowledge that the voters supported his style of reformist politics. His approach contrasted sharply with that of his predecessor who had invariably fought the nationalists, in fact, having defeated Dr Verwoed in the 1948 poll.²⁸

24. Cape Times, 28.8.72, editorial: 'Road to renewal'.

25. Rand Daily Mail, 26.8.72, editorial: 'Healthy Shock', Argus, 26.8.72, 'Young Cape U.P. Leaders Jubilant', and Sunday Times, 27.8.72, 'New U.P. born in the Transvaal'.

26. B.M.Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910-1976 (Pretoria, 1977), pp. 486-490.

i. Klip River	29.11.72	N.P. 5 227	U.P. 4 995
ii. Vereeniging	29.11.72	N.P. 5 271	U.P. 3 193
iii. Johannesburg West	29.11.72	N.P. 5 345	U.P. 3 903

27. Sunday Times, 23.7.72, 'Dynamic young men wipe out debts, aim to win 35 Rand seats'.

28. B.M.Schoeman, p. 513. The 1948 general election, Alberton constituency: Marais Steyn 4 867, Dr H.Verwoed(N.P.) 4 696, U.P. majority 171. Poll 80.9.

It became increasingly apparent that, notwithstanding the rhetoric, the reformists never produced the results they claimed were possible. During the 1974 general election reformist candidates did well only in a small number of the urban seats where they were not opposed by the Progressive Party. They were, apparently, unable to attract nationalist votes, nor were they able to make inroads among P.P. supporters who would only back them in the absence of a candidate of their own party.²⁹ The viability of the reform movement was limited unless it could capture control of the U.P. This attempt later failed but in the process created great tension within the Party and did it immense harm. With hindsight the question to be asked of the reformists was whether their victory over Marais Steyn was worthwhile in tangible political terms? As it contributed to the demise of the Party rather than its renaissance the answer must be an emphatic no. On the other hand had Marais Steyn remained at his post reform may not have been possible at all. As it turned out there was neither reform nor party left in the end.

29. See Chapter VIII.3.

CHAPTER IVBILINGUALISM

The issue of bilingualism also caused dissension within the United Party after the matter had been raised at its Cape Congress in Port Elizabeth in October 1972. It was decided that in future all parliamentary and provincial candidates in the Cape would have to be fluent in both official languages.¹ The decision was prompted by accusations made during the Oudtshoorn by-election that the Party harboured anti-Afrikaans elements within it. P.W.Botha's 'boerehaat' speeches, before the poll, started the 'language row' although the issue was also raised in parliament where certain opposition members were taken to task for never speaking Afrikaans.²

The entire matter was probably engineered by the Nationalists to embarrass the U.P. and to promote Afrikaner unity at a time when the Party had been losing votes. The success achieved in Oudtshoorn encouraged the further use of this sensitive issue for party political gain. The U.P. in the Cape reacted by passing its bilingual resolution.³ This had implications further afield and in Natal, in particular, caused problems where many of the Party's representatives were unilingual, including some of those on the Provincial Executive Committee.⁴

As Afrikaner votes were necessary to restore the U.P. to power it could not afford to be suspect in this matter.

1. Herald, 23.10.72, 'Candidates to be bilingual'.
2. Hansard, 12.4.72, Columns 4671-4. Mr P.W.Botha made reference to his 'boerehaat' speeches in Villiersdorp and Ceres and then, in parliament, repeated the names of U.P. members who showed contempt for Afrikaans and were therefore 'Afrikaner haters'. They included, among others, Messrs Hourquebie, Wood and Emdin. The U.P., he said, was becoming 'a home for everything that hates Afrikaners'. See also C.Taylor's If Courage Goes, My Twenty Years in South African Politics (Johannesburg, 1976), pp. 222-23.
3. Interview with John Wiley, 15.4.82.
4. Cape Times, 21.11.72, editorial: 'Language and politics'.

Yet it was forced on the defensive over an issue on which it had a proud record. Conciliation and co-operation between the language groups had long been the cornerstone of its policy. It was far less a sectional party than were the nationalists.⁵ Consequently when the language row was given prominence, between October and December 1972, it embarrassed the Party and to a certain degree damaged its image in the eyes of Afrikaners who were led to believe that their language would not receive equal treatment within the U.P., notably in Natal.⁶

An aggravating factor was that the leading figures involved were those associated with the verligte-verkrampste developments in the U.P. In this instance, however, the 'verkrampstes' supported bilingual candidates while the 'verligtes' adopted an equivocal approach. Eric Winchester, an outspoken M.P. representing Port Natal, threatened to resign from the Party if a resolution similar to the one in the Cape were to be adopted in Natal. Winchester, who regarded bilingualism as desirable but not essential felt that the quality of the representative was a more important factor.⁷ These remarks were made at a Coast council meeting of the Party in Natal when John Phipson, M.P.C., tabled a motion calling for bilingual candidates in future. The motion, which reportedly would not have been passed, was later withdrawn.⁸

This incident was given wide publicity and the nationalist press made a great issue of it in order to discredit the U.P.⁹ The Burger, which accused the Party of having two strategies, used Winchester's approach to substantiate its claim.

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5. Letter by Myburgh Streicher to Die Burger, 22.3.72, explaining the Party's bilingual tradition.
 6. Interview with John Wiley. He felt that it definitely cost the Party votes in the Klip River by-election.
 7. He believed that language was an accident of geography.
 8. Daily News, 20.10.72, 'Stormy U.P. meeting'. See also IBID., 19.10.72, 'Natal will not insist'.
 9. Die Burger, 22.11.72. 'Vat Winchester vas'.

There was one strategy for the North, where the Progressive presence had created a bitter anti-Afrikaans atmosphere, and made it all important to seek unity among the English vote, particularly as the Johannesburg West by-election was approaching. Any reprimand, argued the Burger, of an English speaking M.P. like Winchester would have serious repercussions and would drive his supporters into the Progressive camp. On the other hand, in the Cape, where the Afrikaner vote was more important, the strategy regarding bilingualism was also different for there it was necessary to actively canvass this section of the electorate.¹⁰

While the Burger's editorial was outspoken it does partially explain why no disciplinary action was taken against Eric Winchester. Natal, where United Party support was strongest, was predominantly English-speaking and there was less reason, as far as local objectives were concerned, to take a firm stand regarding bilingual candidates.¹¹ This attitude, however, could only have an adverse influence in other provinces and notably in the rural areas. The nationalists exploited this situation to their advantage ignoring the fact that among their own parliamentarians were unilingual members who never spoke in English.¹²

Philip Myburgh who had sponsored the original Cape motion was most dissatisfied over his colleague's attitude which he regarded as an insult to all Afrikaners.

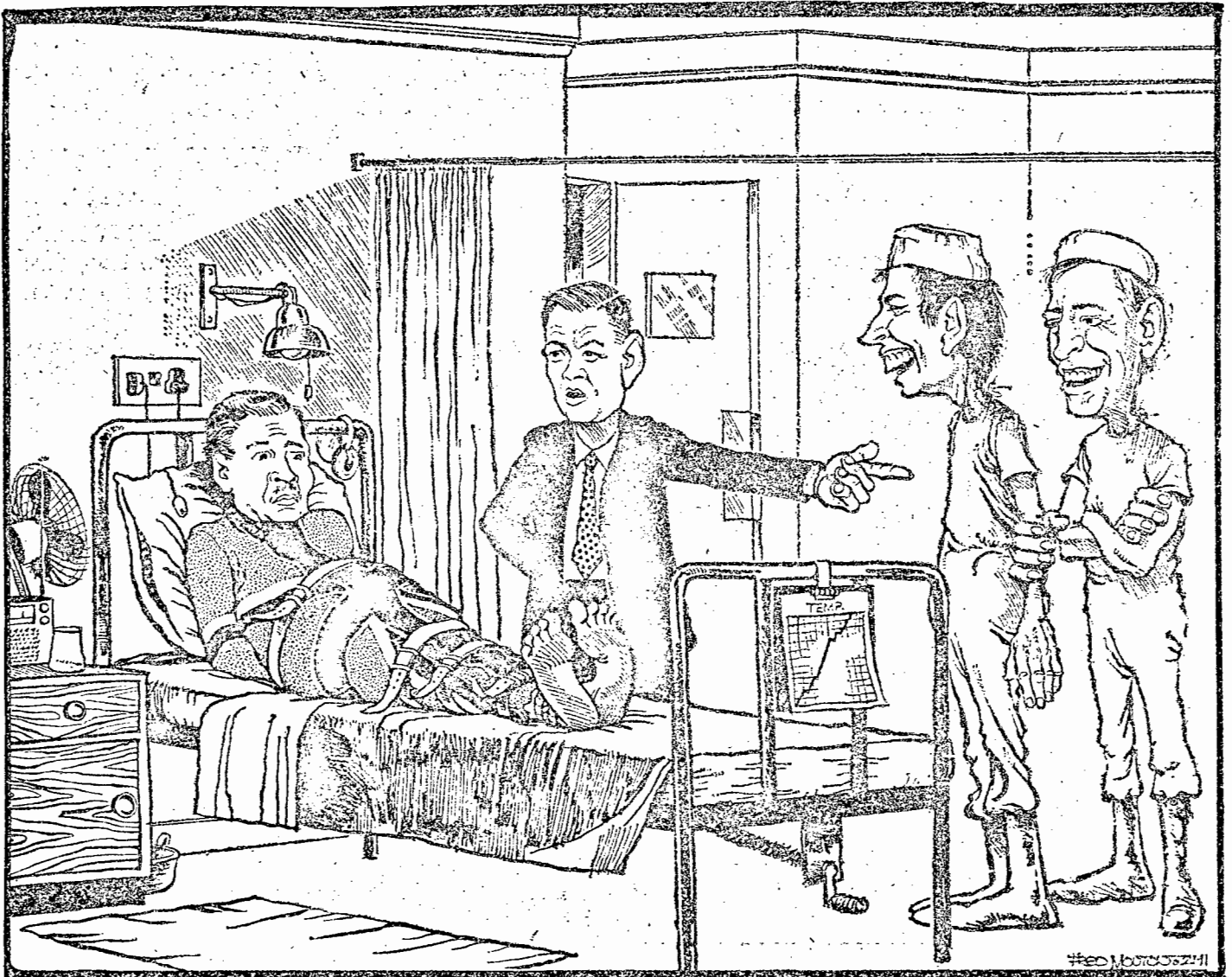
10. Die Burger, 17.11.72, 'Twee Strategieë'.

11. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

12. Hansard, 19.4.72, Column 309, Marais Steyn pointed out that 'Hansard shows that the majority of members opposite have never spoken English in this House'.

He would like to see him leave the Party and parliament.¹³ 'Winchester kan maar loop', were the headlines in the Burger of November which also published a letter by Myburgh publicly calling for the Party to censure him.¹⁴

Winchester did not react to this letter but it is worth noting that both these men eventually parted company with the U.P., Myburgh because it was becoming too 'liberal' and Winchester because it was not sufficiently reformist in outlook.



'Eric, ek is Phillip Myburgh en hier is die Barnard-broers, Afrikaners deur en deur. Hulle het aangebied om vir jou 'n ware Suid-Afrikaanse hart oor te plant'

13. Die Burger, 20.11.72, Editorial: 'Myburgh in Opstand'.
 14. Die Burger, 20.11.72, 'Winchester moet betig word'.

John Vorster added his voice to the debate when in Durban he criticized the attitude and spirit prevailing in the U.P. with regard to bilingualism. He claimed that he could not understand how the Party could talk of national unity when it shared such 'contempt for Afrikaans'.¹⁵ Speaking at a by-election meeting in the Klip River constituency Marais Steyn, fully aware of the sensitive nature of this issue, made it clear that he 'would like all U.P. representatives to be bilingual but sometimes it happens that they aren't'. Neel Uys, the U.P. candidate, also admitted that the Selection Committee preferred bilingual candidates but that they were reluctant to reject a constituency choice.¹⁶ As will be demonstrated, prior to the 1974 general election certain locally favoured candidates were, in fact, overlooked for other reasons by the provincial selection committees. This caused the U.P. a great deal of discomfiture at the time and also lost it votes.

The result of the Klip River poll on November 29 was very encouraging to the U.P. for it substantially reduced the nationalist majority.¹⁷ What influence, if any, the language row had on the voting will always remain unclear. Certain commentators¹⁸ maintained that it had cost the United Party the seat while others such as Radclyffe Cadman, newly elected Party leader in Natal, believed that the voters had accepted the Party's integrity regarding the issue.

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15. Argus, 27.10.72, 'Vorster tackles U.P. in Natal'. See also Cape Times, 27.10.72, 'U.P. show contempt for Afrikaans'.
 16. Die Burger, 27.11.72, 'Taal Politiek'.
 17. B.M.Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings, V.Volker of the N.P. polled 5 227 votes to the 4 995 of the U.P. candidate, C.Uys. N.P. majority 232. Percentage poll 81.6. pp. 486-90.
 18. John Wiley was such an example. He had also written a letter to Eric Winchester on 18.11.72 expressing his concern at the approach the latter had adopted towards the issue of bilingualism.

Thereafter the language argument was allowed to subside and it was relegated to its traditionally dormant place in South African politics with both Vorster and Graaff agreeing on the need for bilingualism and respect for language rights.¹⁹

The debate had had about it a superficiality²⁰ which nevertheless created adverse publicity for the U.P. at a time when the verligte-verkrampste clash was gaining momentum. Rapport contended that Winchester was worth his weight in gold to the National Party,²¹ an opinion with which Hans Strydom of the Sunday Times agreed.²² The issue reinforced the widely held view that the U.P. was divided and, depending on its audience, spoke with more than one voice. It contributed to the widening rift in the Party and reflected the historically divergent streams of thought within it.

19. Hansard, 18.4.72, Column 5188

20. Cape Times, 3.11.72, 'Bilingualism a red herring'.

21. Rapport, 10.12.72, 'Winchester werd sy gewig in goud vir N.P.'.

22. Sunday Times, 10.11.72, Hans Strydom: 'Winchester Boob - will be exploited by N.P.'.

CHAPTER V.THE SCHLEBUSCH COMMISSION

The upheaval caused by the Schlebusch Commission shook the United Party to its very core. It brought to public attention the twin issues of internal security and national unity, matters on which the U.P. officially adopted a bi-partisan approach and supported the government. As a consequence it had to endure a sustained press campaign of unparalleled ferocity. By serving on the commission the Party was accused of abandoning its attachment to civil liberties which were purportedly threatened by the various recommendations of the commission. It was argued that support for internal security measures would irrevocably damage individual freedoms. This issue aggravated the verligte-verkrampste split then developing in the Party. The reformists were, for the most part, opposed to serving on the Schlebusch investigation while the conservatives were in favour of participation.¹

Officially the U.P. agreed to serve on the commission but the degree of opposition to this decision indicated that there was both a lack of discipline among party representatives and open division on matters of national concern. According to Senator Horak the U.P. wanted to be seen to be doing what was right for South Africa, in this instance by serving on a body investigating organizations the nature of whose activities could possibly be directed towards the overthrow of the existing political order and its replacement by a radical-leftist one.² It was in the national interest that any such plots should be revealed and their protagonists prosecuted. The United Party's association with the Schlebusch Commission badly damaged its unity of purpose.³

1. Sunday Express, 15.4.73, 'Enough of Schlebusch'.

2. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

3. Dr S.L.Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', p. 329.

Its commissioners were vilified and one, Etienne Malan, was destined to lose his parliamentary seat, Orange Grove, as a direct consequence of his membership of this body.⁴ The Party had fared badly in the 1974 election, which had reversed the successes of 1970, and had lost support to both the National and Progressive parties. Disenchanted with the growing rift within the U.P. an increasing number of voters had switched their allegiance to other political homes.

1. The appointment of a Select Committee.

In February 1972 the prime minister announced the appointment of a parliamentary Select Committee of Investigation into Certain Organizations under the chairmanship of Jimmy Kruger M.P. It would investigate the National Union of South African Students (N.U.S.A.S.), the University Christian Movement (U.C.M.) and the South African Institute of Race Relations (S.A.I.R.R.). The prime minister intimated that he was in possession of information which persuaded him to see what the inside of these organizations looked like.⁵ It was, in short, a matter of security.⁶ Sir De Villiers Graaff expressed reservations concerning the merits of such a select committee as its members would all be politicians who were not necessarily the best people to judge, impartially, questions related to state security. It also appeared to him that the committee was to inquire into the guilt or otherwise of these organizations with regard to un-South African activities. Consequently, he called for a judicial commission to investigate the matter, if any inquiry was thought desirable.⁷

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4. IBID., p. 422. In the 1974 election he lost to Rupert Lorimer of the Progressive Party who had specially been requested to vacate Bryanston for Orange Grove by Joel Mervis of the Sunday Times.
5. Hansard, 10.2.72, Column 725-727.
6. C. Taylor, If Courage Goes, My Twenty Years in South African Politics, (Johannesburg, 1976), p. 240.
7. Hansard, 10.2.72, Column 729.

Graaff's appeal fell on deaf ears and the U.P. had to decide whether or not to serve on the committee.⁸ The caucus agreed that it was better to participate in the investigation rather than allow the government to have everything its own way.⁹ The Select Committee was, in due course, converted into a commission popularly known as the Schlebusch and later as the Le Grange commission. It sat between 1972 and 1975 and produced a number of reports containing certain recommendations on which the government could act if it so wished. Steps, subsequently taken, such as the banning of N.U.S.A.S. leaders led to a great furore and as the United Party was closely associated with the Commission it was tarred with the same brush as the government notwithstanding its objection to the actions taken by the Nationalists.¹⁰ If the Party had not served on the Commission it believed the students would still have been restricted and possibly other measures taken against N.U.S.A.S. as well.

When the names of the commissioners were announced in March 1972 they included four from the United Party, Messrs R.M.Cadman (later replaced by Bill Sutton), L.Murray, E.Malan and Marais Steyn. Catherine Taylor, chairman of the Party's education group, was a notable omission, a decision which was surprising as it amounted to a vote of no confidence in her.

Taylor, who had close links with student organizations, resented this snub and later became a strong opponent of the Commission.¹¹

8. C.Taylor, If Courage Goes, pp. 240-242.

9. Hansard, 10.2.72, Column 800-802. Marais Steyn explained the U.P. attitude to security on the Select Committee but expressed fear that the Inquiry may 'bring the evils of McCarthyism to South Africa'.

10. Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82.

11. C.Taylor, If Courage Goes, pp. 241-242.

She came to support the reformist-wing of the Party and ended her political career in a running battle with the Cape leadership over nomination procedures and other issues.¹²

Matters were aggravated in early June 1972 when a student demonstration was dispersed by the police on the steps of St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town.¹³ The students led by Dirk Kemp, a British citizen, were protesting against university apartheid and state intervention in college affairs, particularly in Black universities.¹⁴ When Colonel Crous, in charge of the police, was allegedly 'manhandled' his men executed a baton charge which also cleared the pavement of demonstrators.¹⁵ This rather trivial incident received wide publicity and 'Black Friday' was regarded by those strongly attached to civil liberties as a blow to free assembly and legal protest. The prime minister, on the other hand, was satisfied with the action taken by the police¹⁶ but the U.P. again adopted an equivocal stand. Sir De Villiers condemned the police tactics while Mike Mitchell, the Party's legal spokesman, stated that the churches should not have allowed their premises to be used for a demonstration.¹⁷

At the N.U.S.A.S. congress in December its president, Paul Pretorius, in his opening address suggested that in certain circumstances the organization would disobey the law: '... if the right to lawful meetings ... was removed

12. See Chapter VIII.2.

13. T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History (Johannesburg, 1977), p. 308.

14. C. Taylor, pp. 242-250.

15. Hansard, 5.6.72, Columns 8706-15. The minister of Police, L. Muller, gave an official report on the demonstration.

16. IBID., 5.6.72, Column 8737-8. Vorster supported the police action and 'would have been disappointed' had they not acted as they had done.

17. IBID., 5.6.72, Columns 8718-22. Graaff called for a judicial inquiry into the actions of the police. See also the Sunday Times, 9.7.72, 'A Verligte Party'.

... (N.U.S.A.S.) would ignore such removal and take the consequences of (its) stand'. And '... the time was approaching when one's conscience would have to take precedence over corrupt edicts of those that rule ... edicts cleverly concealed beneath the guise of law.¹⁸ A supporting resolution was accepted by 47 votes to 6 with 10 abstentions. Even the Cape Times, long sympathetic to student causes, regarded this speech as a major blunder which would encourage the nationalists to take firm measures against them at a time when they should have been grateful to the courts for recently having upheld their rights to lawful protest following the June demonstrations.¹⁹

2. The tabling of the first interim reports.

These fears were realized when early in 1973 the Prime Minister tabled the first two reports of the Schibusch Commission.²⁰ Both were unanimous and therefore included the support of the United Party commissioners. The first, which recommended that the commission become a permanent institution to deal with security was accepted by the government. The second, also an interim report, concerned the activities of N.U.S.A.S.²¹ It recommended that steps should be taken against individuals and not against the organization per se as it was a small group of activists who determined the policy direction of N.U.S.A.S. A leadership clique kept control of the movement year after year and it was influenced by people within South Africa, but who were not members, and also by interested parties from beyond the borders of the country. The Report maintained that as fewer than five percent of English speaking students were active in the organization it was necessary for its leadership to create provocative situations to arouse the interest of the wider student body.

18. C.Taylor, p. 253 and p. 266.

19. Cape Times, 30.1.73, 'N.U.S.A.S. Major Blunder'. See also Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History (JHB, 1977), p. 308.

20. Hansard, 27.2.73, Columns 1485.

21. C.Taylor, p. 265.

N.U.S.A.S. also sought financial aid, which was not forthcoming in South Africa, from foreign sources and consequently had to behave in a manner acceptable to these donors. It had to compete for funds with other militant groups intent on the overthrow of the existing order.²² This state of affairs the commission found to be undesirable.

The report concluded that the N.U.S.A.S. leaders had been acting in a manner which could be described as creating a climate for revolution and that the danger of agitation which might result in student violence had 'become actual and must receive urgent attention'. Vorster, who had tabled the findings, then referred to the December speech of Paul Pretorius as an example of how the way was being prepared for illegal action.²³ He also quoted from the Natal University publication Dome which contained a number of provocative statements.

Since the final report was not ready for submission the Commission recommended that immediate steps be taken and it named those who had manoeuvred N.U.S.A.S. into a position which endangered internal security.²⁴ Their participation in student affairs was regarded as undesirable and as their cases fell within the purview of the Suppression of Communism Act the Minister of Justice, P.C.Pelser, banned them forthwith in the 'interests of South Africa, the universities, of students and parents whose children attend them'.²⁵

22. IBID., pp. 265-266. See also Hansard, 27.2.73, Columns 1485-1489.

23. IBID., 27.2.73, Columns 1488-1490. See also the leading article in Dome, 21.2.72, which threatened demonstrations which would make the June ones (1972) 'appear as a Sunday school picnic', if students were restricted.

24. IBID., 27.2.73, Column 1489, namely Messrs P.Pretorius, P.Ensor, P.le Roux, N.Curtis, C.Wood, C.Keegan S.Lapinsky and R.Turner.

25. IBID.

Eight leaders of the South African Student Organization (S.A.S.O.) also received banning orders bringing the total to sixteen.²⁶ The restriction of the student leaders caused widespread dissatisfaction because it had been accomplished through arbitrary executive action and without recourse to the courts.²⁷ They had not been found guilty, in open court, of any crime. The English language press, with one exception, the Sunday Express, mounted a massive campaign against the bannings and castigated the official opposition for being an accessory to the erosion of civil liberties.²⁸ This sustained criticism, which was not entirely warranted, did much to lower party morale at a time when it also had to endure an on-going campaign to change the Party leadership. Both the Financial Mail and the Sunday Times had called on Graaff to resign.²⁹

In addition, the U.P. was being criticized for the timid manner in which it had introduced its new federal policy.³⁰ The Party was facing a crisis which was aggravated by growing verligte-verkrampte tensions.

As the recommendations of the commission on which the government acted were unanimous the U.P. was regarded, by its critics, as having been equally responsible for the arbitrary action that had been taken although it was totally opposed to the bannings and would have preferred it had the students been brought to court.³¹

26. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History, (JHB, 1977), p. 308.

27. Cape Times, 28.2.73, 'By-passing courts'.

28. IBID., 1.3.73, editorial: 'Not proven'. See also interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82.

29. In February 1973.

30. Hansard, 8.2.73, Columns 287-298.

31. IBID., 27.2.73, Columns 1508-1513.

In her autobiography, Catherine Taylor maintained that the U.P. commissioners were aware of the steps that the nationalists were likely to take notwithstanding Graaff's denial at a public meeting in Rondebosch that, 'at no time did it (the government) consult the commission on what it should do and at no time did it consult the opposition. It took the decisions on its own'.³² Marais Steyn in an information pamphlet on the bannings made it clear that the four Party commissioners were permitted publicly to state their opposition to it and that they had also previously made this clear to the Commission.³³ This statement appeared to indicate that the commissioners had at least discussed the possibility of banning even if the U.P. was not consulted by the government on its subsequent actions.

The United Party, it was felt by Catherine Taylor and its other detractors, had presented the nationalists with a blank cheque of which they had made use.³⁴ There was no virtue in being angry after the event. What made it worse, was that the U.P. representatives had not even submitted a minority report recommending a more democratic form of action.³⁵

3. The United Party takes the blame as the civil war intensifies.

The U.P. found itself in an unenviable position. The real issues involved were those of state security and civil liberties, two causes which were seldom likely to co-exist harmoniously in any state. Which ever one the U.P. decided to support it was certain to be heavily criticized by those who set greater store by the other issue. The Burger, and the Afrikaans press without exception, were generally satisfied with the U.P. for adopting a bi-partisan approach to questions of internal security.

32. C. Taylor, If Courage Goes, p. 270.

33. IBID., pp. 266-270.

34. IBID.

35. A minority report was submitted with the fourth Interim Report of the Commission in 1974.

The English newspapers, on the other hand, excluding the Sunday Express, were vociferous in their condemnation of the role played by the Party in the Schlebusch Commission.³⁶ They demanded the resignation of its four representatives from the committee and held them responsible for the destruction of civilized values.³⁷ Within the Party formations pro and anti-Schlebusch factions emerged as for instance in the North Rand constituency where the M.P., Brigadier Bronkhorst, supported the official party decisions while his M.P.C., Dave Dalling was totally opposed to the commission.³⁸ Bronkhorst was consequently relegated to the conservative camp and Dalling, who had previously been involved in the defeat of Marais Steyn as Party leader in the Transvaal, enhanced his reputation as a reformist. Brigadier Bronkhorst informed the parliamentary caucus of his divisions disapproval of the Party's Schlebusch connections but the matter was never discussed and no further action was taken.³⁹

The United Party served on the Commission because it was a parliamentary duty and it was regarded as the correct course of action for a responsible opposition to follow.⁴⁰ At the very least, it could fulfil a watchdog role and attempt to influence nationalist decisions. Etienne Malan, under difficult circumstances, explained to Witwatersrand University students that the U.P. commissioners had in fact achieved this objective.⁴¹ They were opposed to arbitrary administrative action but had they not signed the interim report, making it unanimous, the nationalists would have submitted their own recommendations requesting much stronger steps under the Suppression of Communism Act.

36. Cape Times, 2.3.73, 'A bewildering performance'.

37. IBID., Shaw: 'Object lesson in bungling'.

38. Dr S.L.Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', p. 337.

39. Sunday Times, 15.3.73, 'North Rand hits at U.P. role'.

40. Interviews, Wiley, Streicher, Graaff and Horak.

41. S.L.Barnard, p. 343.

He continued ' ... had we not been on the Commission may not N.U.S.A.S. have been banned or restricted, might not unfair things have happened on that Commission?' ... 'I am proud of what we did'.⁴² Although never officially acknowledged, it became widely believed and reported that the government had intended to ban thirty student activists and the whole of N.U.S.A.S. This would confirm Etienne Malan's contention concerning the moderating influence exerted by the U.P. on the commission.

Marais Steyn also expressed his opposition, in parliament on the day the reports were tabled, to the government having acted in terms of the Communism Act⁴³ as the Commission had not found that N.U.S.A.S. activities furthered the aims of communism.⁴⁴ On the following day he suggested that the evidence against the students be forwarded to the Attorney General.⁴⁵ Lionel Murray supported this request and added his disapproval of the bannings by executive action.

No matter how strongly, or how often, the U.P. expressed itself against restriction without trial it remained the villain of the piece as far as its critics were concerned, and many of them were found to be within the Party itself.⁴⁶ It was found guilty by association. The Progressives made the most political capital out of the U.P.'s difficulties with Helen Suzman also speaking of a 'blank cheque' which the U.P. had given the government.

42. C.Taylor, *If Courage Goes*, pp. 266-78.

43. Hansard, 27.2.73, Columns 1508-15. Marais Steyn clarified his Party's approach to the Commission, standing by the factual reports but being 'unhappy' that the prime minister had acted under the Suppression of Communism Act against the students.

44. There was no other act which could be used where internal security was involved.

45. Hansard, 28.2.73, Columns 1565-1566. Marais Steyn said the U.P. had always 'resisted executive action which deprives people of their liberty'. He then asked that the evidence be given to the Attorney General.

46. Sunday Times, 22.4.73, 'Schlebusch bannings not justified - Basson'. See also Barnard, p. 349.

The unequivocal stand taken by the Progressive Party on civil liberties paid dividends in the general election of 1974 when it attracted a considerable number of disgruntled former U.P. supporters to raise its parliamentary representation to six.

The U.P. was unable to counter, effectively, all the unfavourable criticism it received. To reduce the number of statements made by Party representatives the caucus decided that Sir De Villiers and the four commissioners alone would be permitted to speak to the press concerning the reports.⁴⁷ Graaff felt that the commission had certain achievements to its credit and that its U.P. members had acquitted themselves well. N.U.S.A.S. had been saved and not outlawed while a small clique, exploiting the organization, had been identified, as had a potential danger to internal security. In addition, the good standing of students at English medium universities had been endorsed.⁴⁸ These 'positive' achievements, which Graaff intimated were a result of the U.P.'s presence on the commission, were, however, completely ignored by its detractors who held the Party responsible for the bannings.

Harry Schwarz who was overseas at the time of the bannings, stated on his return in March, that he was totally opposed to any such action without trial. He also had reservations about the apparent willingness of the U.P. to serve on a permanent security body as envisaged by the Commission. He arranged a meeting with Sir De Villiers Graaff to clarify the situation.⁴⁹ Two other reformists, Dave Dalling and Horace van Rensburg had already held discussions with Graaff to express their misgivings concerning tactics on the Schibusch commission.⁵⁰

47. Daily News, 27.4.73, 'U.P. bans comment on Report'. See also interview with Senator Horak.

48. C.Taylor, p. 276.

49. Rapport, 18.3.73, 'Harry kwaad vir Div.'.

50. Dr S.L.Barnard, p. 336.

Both objected to the presence of the Party's representatives on the commission. Van Rensburg, who was the M.P.C. for Randburg, had even signed a petition supporting N.U.S.A.S. and criticizing the action which had been taken against its leaders.⁵¹ Dave Dalling was a member of the rebellious North Rand divisional committee which had drawn up a memorandum condemning the part played by the U.P. on the commission and which it wanted circulated among the parliamentary caucus.

It had become abundantly clear that the reformists were vociferously opposed to official Party policy. Their attitude was praised by the English newspapers notwithstanding that it could be construed as an act of disloyalty harmful to the unity of the Party. The reformists were never able to effectively reconcile their differences with the Party leadership and eventually they all found new political homes but in the process their abrasive presence contributed further to the decline of the United Party.⁵²

While the meeting with Schwarz's two lieutenants produced nothing of substance the discussion between the Transvaal leader and Sir De Villiers Graaff, midway through March, created wide interest as a clash had been predicted. This did not materialize and a statement issued after the meeting indicated that the two were in 'complete accord'. On leaving Cape Town Schwarz announced that there was no crisis in the United Party and that its stability was not in any way endangered.⁵³

51. Die Burger, 9.4.73. 'Ou Garde lus vir van Rensburg'.

52. Interviews with Horak and Streicher.

53. Senator Horak in an interview regarded it as unlikely that Sir De Villiers would have come to a unilateral agreement with Schwarz.

This the Rand Daily Mail was unwilling to accept and, in view of earlier statements by various reformists, wished to know exactly on what terms 'complete accord' had been reached.⁵⁴ It was not sufficient to state, as Graaff had done, that 'the results of the discussions will become apparent within a reasonable time'.⁵⁵

The results of these discussions were never clarified and remained open to a number of interpretations which resulted in further Party differences. The apparent accord, however, involved certain aspects of the commissioners work. As far as can be ascertained, Graaff and Schwarz had agreed that the U.P. had not as yet committed itself to serve on a permanent security commission, nor was it bound to agree to legislation to create such a body.⁵⁶ Schwarz also explained to a youth meeting on the Rand that the U.P. commissioners could not bind the Party to accept the commission's recommendations and had not done so in the case of the proposed permanent security body. He added, that he felt that it would never do so. Schwarz feared the creation of a body akin to the French revolutionary Committee of Public Safety. The Witwatersrand Regional Council endorsed their leader's view as did Senator Horak⁵⁷ who pointed out, however, that membership of any security commission could only be decided upon once the draft law setting it up was investigated. It was thus premature to take any final decisions.

Schwarz appeared to be overreacting for none of the Party's commissioners were entitled to formulate policy which was the task of its national congress, and when not in session, of Sir De Villiers Graaff.

54. Rand Daily Mail, 20.3.73, 'You promised Harry'.

55. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

56. Argus, 19.3.73, 'Graaff and Schwarz in accord'.

57. General Secretary of the United Party.

Consequently, the divisions which were being provoked by the Schlebusch connection could have been less serious had Party representatives been more patient, and accepted that the U.P. was merely fulfilling a parliamentary duty similar to others it had undertaken in the past.⁵⁸

Even Suzman had not objected when it had sat originally as a select committee in 1972. As the Schlebusch commission, it had certain defined functions. It was a fact finding body acting within its terms of reference and neither the government nor the United Party were in any way committed to supporting its recommendations.⁵⁹ This point of view, however, received scant support and the U.P. was placed in the dock for being seen to be associated with the actions of an authoritarian government intent on crushing civil liberties.

The Sunday Times⁶⁰ headlined Schwarz's explanations and praised the stand he was taking to protect democracy while additional attacks were made on the Party's commissioners and on Graaff's leadership. The 'complete accord' reached between the two party leaders was not reflected in media reports where the battle raged unabated. The Sunday Express pleaded for co-operation in the interests of South Africa and claimed that the U.P. had not broken a single principle by serving on the Commission and by supporting its findings.⁶¹ Gerald Shaw had on the previous day, in the Cape Times, written that although Schwarz and Graaff had reached accord at leadership level a left and right-wing split in the U.P. remained a real possibility and one which Vorster would relish. The prime minister issued a statement at the end of March reflecting his concern for a situation in which certain of the commissioners were being subjected to unfair criticism.⁶²

58. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

59. Sunday Express, 6.5.73, 'U.P. Commissioners Hit Back'.

60. Sunday Times, 25.3.73.

61. Sunday Express, 25.3.73.

62. S.L.Barnard, p. 345.

This could only apply to U.P. representatives as none of the nationalist members received any adverse publicity. The fact that Vorster threatened to initiate proceedings against certain critics was indicative of the vicious campaign mounted against the U.P. commissioners and, by implication, against the Party.

The Burger expressed similar views to those of the Cape Times when it predicted an 'inevitable' clash between the Young Turks and the Old Guard notwithstanding any recent accord. It also warned that Schwarz would have to tread carefully to retain the support of those who had organized his election. Already some were drifting to the Progressive Party on the Witwatersrand⁶³ while other Young Turks in the Cape Peninsula were in 'revolt' and had formed themselves into an 'Intermediatory Group' which was dissatisfied with the Party hierarchy.⁶⁴

Whether it had been manoeuvred by the government to serve on the Schlebusch commission out of concern for public safety as suggested by Professor Davenport or whether the decision had been entirely its own there was no doubting that the U.P. found itself in a most uncomfortable position, one from which it could not extricate itself without estranging at least some of its supporters.⁶⁵ If it dissociated itself from the commission to please the reformists there was no guarantee that the conservatives, who wished to support the nationalists on issues of national security, would not rebel.

63. One example was John Brittain a U.P. organizer on the Witwatersrand.

64. Die Burger, 26.3.73, 'Kloof al weer in die V.P.'.

65. T.R.H.Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History (JHB, 1977), p. 308.

Opposition to the Party's involvement in the commission was centred mainly, though not exclusively, on the Witwatersrand, where the same Young Turks who had spearheaded the defeat of Marais Steyn mounted an attack on the membership of the commission. In early April the Witwatersrand Regional Council⁶⁶ of the Party held a stormy meeting where strong opposition to the role played by the U.P. was expressed.⁶⁷ Reformists at the meeting made their presence felt by monopolizing speaking time to create the impression that they spoke for the majority. One of them, Peter Scott⁶⁸ proposed a resolution demanding the resignation of the four U.P. commissioners. This was withdrawn at the request of Schwarz who wished to avoid embarrassing the Party.

Matthis, a Randburg city councillor, proposed a second resolution condemning the commissioners for not submitting a minority report. To the surprise of the Young Turks this was defeated. Dalling and other delegates from the North Rand constituency also spoke against their participation on the commission.

It was only the intervention of Graaff and Schwarz which prevented the meeting from degenerating into an unseemly squabble.⁶⁹ They adopted a conciliatory approach and since reaching their own accord over the matter wished to restore Party unity. Their attitude rescued the meeting but the more determined of the reformists had no intention of being thwarted or disciplined on issues over which they felt strongly.

66. This Regional Council consisted of delegates from 40 Witwatersrand electoral divisions and was the body on which the reformists were most strongly represented.

67. Sunday Express, 15.4.73, 'Stormy Witwatersrand meeting'.

68. Scott was chairman of the Johannesburg West constituency.

69. The Sunday Times, 15.4.73, H. Serfontein: 'Rand U.P. rebuffs Graaff'. He interpreted the meeting as a defeat for the Party's leader and a victory for the Young Turks.

They reopened their attacks at the Transvaal provincial congress later in the year.

Whereas strong opposition to Schlebusch was expressed in the Johannesburg area the General Council of the U.P. in the Transvaal as well as its Platteland Council fully supported the caucus decisions concerning the commission as did the major Party formations in the Cape, Natal and the Orange Free State.⁷⁰ This widespread support for Party policy again emphasized the divisive role being played by the reformists whose main strength lay in certain Johannesburg constituencies but which was well organized and highly motivated. After the U.P. had disbanded it was significant that its successor the N.R.P. was unable to win a single Transvaal parliamentary seat. In fact, it fared worst wherever the reformists had been most active and best where the U.P. had been most stable, notably in Natal.⁷¹

In Cape Town, Cathy Taylor, who was becoming increasingly disillusioned with the U.P., prepared a press statement criticizing its commissioners for not having submitted a minority report which would have dissociated it from the totalitarian methods of the government on matters of internal security. As Graaff had recently decreed that only he or the U.P. commissioners could issue public statements concerning the report Taylor faced the risk of being disciplined if she proceeded to have her views published. Graaff, who was shown her statement, requested that it should not be made public as it reflected on the integrity of the U.P. commissioners.⁷²

70. Sunday Express, 15.4.73, 'Steyn and Commissioners have full support of Pretoria General Council'.

71. The 1977 election results reveal that the N.R.P. won 10 seats, nine of which were in Natal.

72. C. Taylor, If Courage Goes, p. 278.

Much against her will Taylor asked Gerald Shaw of the Cape Times to withhold her statement from publication but to announce instead her resignation from the United Party's shadow cabinet where her position as Chairman of the Education group had become untenable. She found it unacceptable to be 'gagged' by her colleagues when she wished to comment on student affairs.⁷³

The majority of the newspapers made her resignation their main story and coming as it did at the height of the Schlebusch controversy did nothing to restore confidence in the United Party. Both the Daily News⁷⁴ of Durban and the Burger⁷⁵ predicted that a split in the Party was imminent.

In an explanation to the caucus Taylor maintained that a minority report would have added weight to the Party's stand against arbitrary arrest and would have prevented the subsequent confusion. She received no open support among caucus members while her resignation was accepted with regret.⁷⁶ Messages of congratulations, however, poured in from outside which reflected the wide interest the whole Schlebusch affair had generated among the opposition public.⁷⁷

Sir De Villiers, on the same day as her resignation, addressed a public meeting in Rondebosch and with her permission quoted selected sections of the statement which he had earlier squashed. Those parts which were used implied a critical standpoint towards certain students but when he was challenged by student leaders in the audience, such as Steve Jooste,⁷⁸

73. IBID.

74. Daily News, (undated), 'Taylor move may trigger Split'.

75. Die Burger, (undated), 'Breek punt in die V.P. lyk onvermydelik'.

76. Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 340-341.

77. C. Taylor, pp. 283-285.

78. President of the S.R.C. at UCT.

to read the whole statement, Graaff refused to do so as he said he did not have Taylor's permission.⁷⁹ Tony Heard, editor of the Cape Times, then took it upon himself to publish Taylor's statement in full although Gerald Shaw had previously agreed to honour her request not to do so. The editor claimed that he was doing it in the interests of 'clarity' but as likely a reason was that he was making use of another opportunity to embarrass the United Party for which he had little regard. Its publication added to the criticism of the Party which was aggravated when Taylor denied that she had prevented Sir De Villiers from making use of her entire statement. She also denied that she had given permission for the Cape Times to print it.⁸⁰ Cathy Taylor was suspected, in certain circles, of having reflected on the integrity and credibility of Sir De Villiers Graaff.⁸¹ This rather delicate issue was eventually explained away as a misunderstanding⁸² and when the caucus heard Taylor's account of how her statement came to be published it was accepted without dissent. Any other course of action would, at that point, have damaged the Party's image still further. As it was, the entire Grahamstown Youth Branch resigned as a demonstration of support for Taylor who was enjoying wide public acclaim for her stand.⁸³

The Party's press relations were at a low ebb. Other than the Sunday Express all the English newspapers supported Cathy Taylor who by then was clearly representative of the reformist-wing of the Party, the very faction they were encouraging.

79. C. Taylor, pp. 285-289.

80. IBID.

81. Die Transvaler, 14.3.73, 'Cathy gooi 'n skadu oor Sir De Villiers'. See also the Rand Daily Mail, 15.3.73, 'A Credibility gap for Div.', and the Sunday Times, 18.3.73, Uys: 'Graaff's credibility gap'.

82. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

83. Taylor, p. 285-289.

Matters were not improved when Myburgh Streicher, the Party's Cape leader, made a scathing attack on the Cape Times for having published Taylor's statement against her wishes. Speaking in Kimberley he stated that the Cape Times had not published the article to help break the 'political logjam' but to damage the U.P. at a sensitive time. It was, he said, an example of immature political journalism that was helping to make the English group politically impotent.⁸⁴ The increasingly strident reporting about the U.P. and its problems tended to bear out Streicher's contention that the English press was driving a wedge between the English speaking voters and was keeping them out of the mainstream of white political thinking. An analysis of the 1977 election results reveal that the Opposition and therefore the English vote which traditionally had supported it, was hopelessly divided into three small parties which together could total a mere thirty seats in parliament. The government, on the other hand, had attained its greatest electoral success (135 seats) with as many English speaking voters supporting the National Party as the official Opposition.⁸⁵ This was the legacy of the United Party's demise. Not a stronger, more effective opposition but a weaker and more impotent one whose chances of ever becoming the government were even more remote than had been the U.P.'s in its declining years. Yet, notwithstanding the divisions and tensions which beset the United Party it was unlikely to have disbanded had its credibility not been constantly undermined by a hostile press, both English and Afrikaans. The influence of the former was more decisive as it was read by the opposition supporting public.⁸⁶

84. Die Burger, 19.3.73.

85. H. du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1977: 'n Ontleiding van die Faktore wat die Verkiesing Beïnvloed het', University of Pretoria, 1979, p. 167, where he quoted H. Lever as estimating English support for the N.P. in 1977 at 30,9 percent in his book, South African Society. W.A. Kleynhans is quoted as placing it as high as 35.1 percent.

86. See Chapter V.5.

The Schlebusch Commission, and reaction to it continued throughout the year. After the 1973 Easter recess⁸⁷ prime minister Vorster tabled a third interim report dealing with the activities at so-called Christain and ecumenical fellowship centres such as Wilgespruit in the Transvaal which were hired for use by both the University Christain Movement and by N.U.S.A.S.⁸⁸ Here sensitivity training was conducted by people regarded by the government as being unqualified. The report also revealed incidents of a most unsavoury nature including sexual promiscuity, the use of strong drink and dagga and blasphemous behaviour by the students participating in the fellowship programs.⁸⁹

Vorster referred to Wilgespruit as a 'nest of iniquity' which had to be cleaned up by the South African Council of Churches within three weeks or else the government would act.⁹⁰ The Director of Wilgespruit, the Rev Dale White, was also disgusted by the activities of the U.C.M. at the centre. So was the Cape Times but this in no way altered its opposition to the U.P.'s role on the commission. It was stated that although the affairs at Wilgespruit were unacceptable they had nothing to do with the security of the state, which was the real issue.⁹¹ The U.P., on the other hand, felt that the revelations in the third interim report justified the role it played in the investigations and merited its continued participation.

In terms of an earlier caucus ruling only certain parliamentarians were permitted to comment on the latest Schlebusch report, a directive ignored by

87. On 24 April 1973.

88. Cape Times, 26.4.73, 'Schlebusch-3'.

89. Schlebusch Commission, Third Interim Report, 25.4.73, pp. 2-6.
Few who participated in the U.C.M. programmes were bone fide students and many weren't Christians.

90. Hansard, 25.4.73.

91. Cape Times, 28.4.73, 'Time to get out'.

Catherine Taylor who felt that public representatives should be allowed to interpret the wishes of the electorate on issues of importance. Streicher rejected her attitude when he declared that 'no party can function effectively when everyone takes it upon himself to offer public comment'.⁹²

There were clearly deep differences of opinion between Taylor and the Party hierarchy and it became ever more apparent, that she was not prepared to be disciplined by caucus decisions concerning the Schlebusch reports.⁹³ Cathy Taylor made her final speech in the Assembly in May 1973 but remained on in parliament until April of the following year during which period she became an outspoken critic of the Party leadership, particularly in the Cape, where she became immersed in various nomination disputes before the 1974 general election. She became identified, on her own admission, with the reformist-wing of the United Party whose political style she admired.⁹⁴ Taylor was replaced as chairman of the Party's education group by Etienne Malan, ironically one of its Schlebusch representatives and an 'Old Guard' supporter of Graaff. It is conceivable that had these differences between Taylor and her caucus colleagues not become matters of public debate but had remained confidential that the fortunes of the United Party might have been different. Cathy Taylor was highly regarded in opposition circles as an excellent politician, but her growing disenchantment with the U.P. encouraged reformists elsewhere to continue their campaign.

Some of the manoeuvring which took place behind the Schlebusch reports were unofficially 'explained' to Mrs Taylor by Hugh Robertson⁹⁵ of the Sunday Express.

92. Interview with Streicher, 5.5.82.

93. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

94. Sunday Times, 27.7.73, 'U.P. is lucky to have Young Turks - Cathy'.

95. Senior political correspondent of the Sunday Express.

If his revelations were correct it would account for the stand taken by the U.P. and the views expressed by Etienne Malan to the Witwatersrand students. It would also indicate that Robertson enjoyed the confidence of certain U.P. commissioners and was therefore better informed than the majority of caucus members. He maintained that, initially, the report on N.U.S.A.S. had recommended the banning or deportation of thirty university lecturers and students, that a commissioner would be placed on each campus, N.U.S.A.S. would be banned and would be replaced by a general student body controlled by statute. The influence of the U.P. members on the commission had resulted in the compromise recommendations which were presented to parliament but the price was that the report had to be unanimous. The responsibility thereafter would rest with the nationalists for whatever action might be taken. This left the United Party free to deplore the bannings and claim, as Sir De Villiers did, that N.U.S.A.S. had been saved and that the Party's commissioners had been responsible for considerable achievements.⁹⁶

Robertson's revelations, taken together with other information already mentioned, had about them the ring of truth. Although he would not reveal his source it was in all probability Marais Steyn whom he had stoutly defended in various articles in his newspaper and whom he thought had been unjustly criticized by Taylor and others who were ignorant of all the facts.⁹⁷

The Sunday Express in due course received a letter of thanks from the parliamentary caucus of the Party, a gesture which caused further critical comment from the reformists who regarded the Express as a stumbling block to their progress.

96. C. Taylor, p. 303.

97. Interview with Graaff and Horak. Neither believed that any deal was struck with the N.P. commissioners.

Taylor announced at the end of July 1973 that she would not seek re-election as she was 'not prepared to remain a prisoner of the system anymore'.⁹⁸ This decision caused dismay among her supporters and she was frequently requested to reconsider it or else to stand as an independent candidate. As it happened, Cathy Taylor did not seek nomination again but it was significant that the Wynberg constituency became embroiled in one of the most bitter nomination battles in the Cape with Taylor supporting the reformists against the conservative Candidates Committee. Jac de Villiers, who was their choice, won the nomination contest in controversial circumstances⁹⁹ and subsequently the Wynberg seat as well, but with a substantially reduced majority. The Party infighting had undoubtedly taken its toll in this constituency.¹⁰⁰

Catherine Taylor eventually resigned¹⁰¹ of her own accord from the Party, she was never expelled for being 'too outspoken'.¹⁰² To have done so before the 1974 election would have been a political blunder. Ironically, it was during the short pre-election parliamentary session that her approach to the Schlebusch investigation was partly vindicated. Lionel Murray declared that the Party would submit a minority report on certain findings of the Commission not yet tabled and that it would recommend that any executive action be subjected to certain judicial controls.¹⁰³ This announcement had, however, come too late to influence the course of the election for the Party. The electorate, mainly the English speaking voters, had by then decided to support whole-heartedly the role of the Party on the commission or had abandoned it and no amount of backtracking would retrieve the situation.

98. Taylor, p. 306.

99. Interviews with Messrs Streicher, Horak and Wiley.

100. See Chapter VIII.2.

101. Rapport, 26.5.74, 'Cathy Taylor self uit V.P.'. She resigned her membership of the U.P. on 24.5.74.

102. C.Taylor, p. 308.

103. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82, where he spoke of the public pressure placed on the U.P. commissioners.

There were additional factors which contributed to the weaker performance of the U.P. in the 1974 elections but the controversial public record of its Schlebusch commissioners, particularly when compared with the Progressive Party candidates who stood unswervingly for civil liberties, was the main cause for discontent among sections of the electorate.

The 1973 parliamentary session had been a difficult¹⁰⁴ one for the United Party as it had to fight both inside the House and outside.¹⁰⁵ Its sound performance, as an opposition, in parliament representing more than thirty percent of the voters was seldom revealed to the general public.¹⁰⁶ Instead, the media emphasized extra-parliamentary activities which had a divisive effect on the Party at a time when there was still a small swing towards it as was reflected in the results of the Aliwal North and Umhlatuzana provincial by-elections.¹⁰⁷ The attempts to split the Party over the commission, and the press campaign to replace Graaff cast a shadow of despondency over its well-being which was, to a degree, temporarily dispelled by these results. They at least demonstrated that, initially, the attempt to exploit problems within the Party had not resulted in any electoral slump. Voting in these constituencies had taken place at the very height of the Schlebusch controversy when the party was being mercilessly criticized.

104. Sunday Times, 15.4.73, 'Disastrous period in Parliament for the U.P.'.

105. Sunday Express, 10.6.73, 'Tough Session'.

106. Du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing', p. 125. The U.P. received 31.6 percent of the vote and the N.P. 54.7 in the 1974 election.

107. The results were:

i. Umhlatuzana, 5.4.73			
Bill Wood	U.P.	3	861
Mrs Jo Naude	N.P.	2	906
U.P. majority			<u>955</u>
The 1970 U.P. majority			803
ii. Aliwal North, 9.5.73			
J. Greeff	N.P.	4	969
H. Smith	U.P.	3	810
N.P. majority			<u>1 159</u>
The 1970 N.P. majority			1 325

Cadman expressed his pleasure that the 'venomous press attack' had not had an adverse effect on its performance.

The Natal constituency was, however, a 'working class' area not unduly concerned about the deprivation of civil liberties of certain privileged students. Far more important to them were the effects of inflation and the rising costs of living.¹⁰⁸ They voted accordingly. In addition, the reformist movement was never strong in Natal where the U.P. tended to be a more united and stable force while there was also no Progressive Party candidate to draw the votes of those who were disenchanted with the U.P.'s role on the commission.

The Sunday Express was also satisfied with the Aliwal result and reported it as being a setback for the reformists as the campaign had been conducted by the Party's establishment.¹⁰⁹ Prof Kleynhans, however, in the same edition predicted that the U.P. would not do as well in urban seats where loyalties were not so ingrained. Gerald Shaw in his Political Survey claimed that country by-elections were 'becoming increasingly irrelevant', and that the balance of power lay in the urban and peri-urban seats.¹¹⁰

These two results encouraged the view that the sustained outrage over the Party's Schibusch performance was not nearly as widespread as its critics would have the public believe. It was essentially an issue kept alive and exaggerated in order to attain certain desired goals, in this case a movement by the U.P. in a reformist direction.¹¹¹

108. Die Burger, 6.4.73, 'Hoekom N.P. Verloor'. It placed the blame on inflation. See also Hansard, 5.4.73, Columns 4183-86. Cadman explained why the U.P. had done well in a climate 'of hostility and venom' towards it.

109. Sunday Express, 13.5.73, 'Aliwal Setback for Young Turks'.

110. Cape Times, 12.5.73, Shaw's Political Survey.

111. Sunday Express, 13.5.73, 'Enough of Schibusch'.

4. Graaff's leadership attacked

The campaign to undermine the leadership of Sir De Villiers Graaff came to be regarded in the same manner. The Sunday Times led the way but was by no means the only newspaper which felt Graaff should stand down. After what certain jouranalists described as a weak performance in the no-confidence debate¹¹² by the U.P. in February 1973 the attack became more forthright.¹¹³ Following a meeting with the editor, Joel Mervis, of the Sunday Times where Party-press relations were discussed Graaff issued a statement expressing his strong disapproval of the methods adopted by certain correspondents whose object it was not to report news but to create it.¹¹⁴ He attacked these political commentators '... of having no experience of politics save perhaps as unsuccessful candidates ...', of trying to, 'break down the existing order and with it the official opposition ...' and then hoping that '... something will arise to save South Africa'.¹¹⁵ Graaff, whose reaction to press comment was usually expressed in moderate tones, was probably reacting to the continous criticism of certain members of the U.P. by Hans Strydom and Hennie Serfontein both former candidates of Japie Basson's defunct National Union Party in the 1961 general election.

The attack also appeared to be a bid to pre-empt the demand by the Sunday Times that Sir De Villiers 'should go'¹¹⁶ which was prominently displayed in a variety of articles by its quartet of political writers on February 25. The editorial claimed that Sir De Villiers had not fulfilled the hopes expected of him as leader and that after 'prolonged consideration we are now satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt that he has become a serious liability to the United Party' and that he was 'morally bound to resign'.¹¹⁷

112. Cape Times, 12.2.73, editorial: 'Not good enough'.

113. Sunday Times, 18.2.73, 'U.P. should heed press criticism'.

114. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82. Mervis who had been disappointed with the Party's performance in the no-confidence debate had asked Graaff whether he would consider resigning.

115. Cape Times, 24.2.73, 'Graaff attacks 'New Left''.

116. Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 321-327.

117. Sunday Times, 25.2.73, Editorial: 'Sir De Villiers Graaff'.

The newspaper then listed thirteen reasons why he should step down as leader but prefaced the demand by professing that it was made out of deep and profound interest in the future of the United Party.¹¹⁸

The newspaper did not actually reveal the name of Graaff's successor but mentioned Japie Basson and Radclyffe Cadman as both being able to do a better job.¹¹⁹ As the Sunday Times pre-eminently supported the reformist faction and Basson was regarded as its spiritual leader while Cadman was a dyed-in-the-wool conservative who was, in future, to receive his share of criticism, there was little doubt as to whom Mervis would like to see as the national leader of the U.P.¹²⁰

The most objective, and thus valid, reason mentioned for Graaff to resign was the inescapable fact that he had lost four successive elections. These defeats at the polls could, in the final analysis, have been a contributory factor to the decision to disband the Party. But could any other leader have done any better? Most unlikely, if one considers that since Graaff did retire, in 1977, the official opposition has already had three leaders, lost two elections, and after the 1981 poll was reduced to a combined total of 34 elected seats.¹²¹ It would appear that the length of tenure in office is totally unrelated to the chances of political success.

118. IBID, 25.2.73, 'Thirteen Reasons Why Graaff should go'. It was probably written by Joel Mervis and Stanley Uys though merely penned as the Sunday Times feels. See also 'U.P. leader has a moral duty to voters to resign', and 'Stanley Uys slams Sir De Villiers'.

119. IBID, editorial.

120. Interview with Graaff. He believed Mervis would like to see Basson as the U.P. leader but Japie would never command sufficient congress support to be elected.

121. Parliamentary Register Part II 1961-1980, published by House of Assembly:

Leaders:	Dates
R M Cadman	1.7.77 to 29.11.77
C W Eglin	30.11.77 to 2.9.79
Dr F van Zyl Slabbert	3.9.79 to -----

1981	P.F.P.	26
	N.R.P.	8
		<u>34</u>

The Times' vendetta, which lasted a few weeks, stirred up a hornet's nest with the rest of the 'fourth estate' making its contribution.¹²² The Afrikaans press predicted, once again, a split in the Party¹²³ while the Sunday Express which had warned Sir De Villiers of the planned attack,¹²⁴ listed thirteen reasons why he should remain on as leader.¹²⁵ None of this undermining of Graaff's position contributed towards party unity and the claim by the Sunday Times that it in no way wished to harm the Party was open to the most serious doubt. It was actively attempting to dictate to the U.P. how it should conduct its affairs. Graaff summed up the position in the Argus, when he asked, 'who is to control the U.P. - the leader with his caucus and his congresses, or Mr Mervis and his three political writers?'¹²⁶ His loyalty was to the former and to the voters and not to the Sunday Times.¹²⁷

This type of journalism was an obstacle the U.P. had to contend with throughout its declining years and although the political comment, more often than not, lacked substance the sustained nature of the attack had a debilitating effect on party morale. It led to retaliatory speeches¹²⁸ by incensed M.P.'s such as Captain Jack Basson of Sea Point who referred, in the Assembly, to Mervis as the 'godfather' of a press mafia, and to the journalists of the Sunday Times, Serfontein and Strydom as 'political hirelings who have become character assassins of good Afrikaners ... for dirty silver!'.¹²⁹

122. Cape Times, 24.2.73, 'Graaff in firing-line'.

123. Burger, 23.2.73, 'V.P. en Pers oorlog kom'.

124. Sunday Express, 25.2.73, Robertson: 'Plot to oust Div!', editorial: 'Div. Beware'.

125. IBID., 4.3.73, '13 Reasons Why Div. should stay', by Senator Oelrich leader of the U.P. in the Orange Free State. See also the Editorial: 'Div. must stay'.

126. Argus, 26.2.73, 'Graaff to Mervis: Who is to control the U.P.'.

127. Die Burger, 26.2.73, 'Graaff se vyande help hom'.

128. Cape Times, 27.2.73, 'U.P. men lash out at Sunday Times'.

129. Hansard, 16.5.73, columns 6713-6714.

Relations between the English newspapers and the United Party were never cordial for any length of time after the campaign to replace Marais Steyn had succeeded in 1972. One by one they withdrew their support and seldom conveyed to their readers anything but a negative image of the Party. ¹³⁰

The campaign to oust Graaff did not enjoy much genuine support if a poll commissioned by the 'neutral' Rapport can be accepted as being accurate. Its survey on April 8 revealed that of the 3 000 voters canvassed the overwhelming majority who admitted to being U.P. 'people' supported the leadership of Graaff. Sixty-four percent regarded him as the best leader, 8.8 percent supported Schwarz, 8.4 percent Basson and six percent Marais Steyn. Of those Afrikaners who professed to be U.P. supporters over sixty-five percent were pro-Graaff while among the English speaking canvassed the figure was forty-seven. From this poll Rapport concluded that Schwarz did not enjoy the backing of the ordinary voter. It also revealed, if it needed revealing, that Graaff commanded, by far, the majority support among U.P. adherents. He had, after all regularly been chosen national leader by the Party congresses and was to be elected unopposed in the future. ¹³¹ What these facts do reveal was that the attempt to remove Graaff and the concomitant campaigns to boost Schwarz and other reformists was not based on any popular public demand but was the creation of certain newspapers to capture the Party for the reformists. When it later became apparent that this could not be achieved the strategy changed to one of breaking the U.P. and replacing it with a 'verligte front'. In this instance the campaign was much more successful. ¹³²

130. Taylor, pp. 255-258.

131. Sunday Express, 15.4.73, 'Overwhelming support for Graaff'.

132. Cape Times, 12.7.72, 'A verligte front'. See also the Sunday Times, 20.5.73, 'Verligte front, an inspired idea'.

The role played by the press in the decline of the U.P. should never be underestimated whether it was reporting on real or fabricated concern for the Party's leadership or whether raising a storm over its Schlebusch connection. These were merely among the issues which received the most unfavourable treatment by all the English newspapers except for the Sunday Express during 1973.

The parliamentary session which had ended in June, had not been a very successful one for the U.P. and as its sole supporting newspaper noted, a divided party eventually could only fail. It advised that during the recess the rifts would have to be healed and that more party discipline would have to be applied to isolate the dissidents and prevent national issues being raised at provincial level by the Transvaal Young Turks in defiance of parliamentary caucus decisions.¹³³

5. The role of the English newspapers.

As the newspapers played such an influential role in the fortunes of the U.P. it is necessary briefly to examine more closely the forces which motivated their activities. The Afrikaans press supported the government and did so unequivocally during the period under review. As such they were opposed to the United Party and were only too eager to exploit each and every difficulty which beset it. They made use, for instance, of the Oudtshoorn by-election to prove that the U.P. was a party which harboured anti-Afrikaans elements. Through its race federation policy these supporters were prepared to make common ground with the non-whites in order to disposses the white-man and particularly the Afrikaner, of his heritage.¹³⁴

133. Sunday Express, 10.6.73, Editorial: 'Tough Session'.

134. See Chapter 1.3.

This 'boerehaat' campaign embarrassed the United Party and encouraged it to scrap, more quickly than it otherwise would have, its policy of limited non-white representation in parliament. It also resulted in the bilingual argument between factions in the Party which cast doubt on the claim that it was a truly broadly-based South African organization.¹³⁵

When the verligte-verkrampste debate gained momentum the Afrikaans press did its best to drive a wedge between the feuding factions. Invariably it backed the conservatives when it did choose sides. It was critical of the rôle played by Harry Schwarz and his followers who were accused of not being real 'Sappe'. It praised the role of the U.P. Schlebusch commissioners and commended their patriotism in the national interest while castigating the un-South African bias of the reformists in the U.P. over the internal security issue.¹³⁶

The Afrikaans newspapers painted a picture of turmoil in the United Party and may have encouraged some of its more conservative Afrikaans elements to follow the road of Marais Steyn into the N.P. but their influence on the majority of the U.P. supporters must have been limited as they were English speaking and presumably did not read these newspapers to any great extent. They relied for their political information almost entirely on a monopolistic English language newspaper cartel. This thesis draws on numerous examples to illustrate the stand adopted by these publications to various important issues and to make the point that they did not have the interests of the U.P. at heart, but in fact, the very opposite. Suffice to say that in 1970 the entire English press with the exception of the Rand Daily Mail¹³⁷ still supported the United Party.

135. See Chapter IV.

136. See Chapter V 2 and 3.

137. Supported the P.P. since its inception in 1959.

By 1977 not a single member of the Argus-S.A.A.N. group did. They all supported the P.F.P. The N.R.P., successor to the United Party was left without media support.

A trend developed, over the years under consideration, where English newspaper editors attempted to push the U.P. leadership in a 'verligte' direction as perceived by themselves. They came to support reformist factions within the Party to achieve this objective. It was in this manner that Young Turks, whether in Johannesburg, Swellendam or Port Elizabeth came to enjoy wide press acclaim while those who opposed them, within the Party, were labelled as verkramp and were to be removed.¹³⁸ But when the campaign to replace its conservative leaders by verligte ones had largely failed, except in the Transvaal where Harry Schwarz had ousted Marais Steyn, the tactics changed. As the United Party could not be captured from within it had to be broken up and its reformist elements were to join the Progressives in a new 'verligte front'. This appeared to be the goal of the English newspapers. It has also been suggested and, judging from subsequent events, appears to be correct that the underlying basis for the course of action adopted by the newspapers was their desire to keep alive the Progressive Party which in 1970 and after twelve years of existence could still only win one seat in parliament, that of Helen Suzman's whose personal appeal was stronger than that of her party. During the 1974 election the newspapers either supported P.P. candidates, U.P. reformists or even what the Sunday Times regarded as 'verligte nationalists'.¹³⁹ Labelled U.P. verkrampes received scant attention and in many instances were actively opposed.¹⁴⁰

138. See Chapter II.

139. Sunday Times, 14.4.74, 'The Best-man team'.

140. Etienne Malan in Orange Grove was one such example.

To better understand the approach of the English language newspapers it is necessary to examine who actually controlled the industry and then pose the question of whether it was really a free press?

By 1968 Argus and S.A.A.N. already owned between them nine out of the thirteen dailies and all the English Sunday newspapers.¹⁴¹ By 1974 they owned more than ninety percent of the English daily newspapers as well as the three Sunday ones.¹⁴² Through their influence over the Central News Agency (C.N.A.) and the South African Press Association (S.A.P.A.) they could, respectively, monopolize distribution and control who got the news and when. Elaine Potter, in her examination of the press, contends that its freedom was hampered by the monopolistic control exerted by mining interests who through their editors influenced policy. The fact that the owners generally did not actively interfere was because the editors who were appointed by them shared their views.¹⁴³

In October 1974 John Wiley gave a more up to date and detailed analysis of the ownership of the English newspapers.¹⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the blocks of shares held by nominee companies¹⁴⁵ which disguised the names of the beneficial holders, it revealed that the Argus group effectively controlled S.A.A.N. and that the Argus in its turn, was controlled by the Anglo American Corporation of which Harry Oppenheimer was the chairman and chief financial backer of the Progressive Party at that point.¹⁴⁶

141. E. Potter, The Press as Opposition (London, 1975), pp. 50-51.

142. Sunday Express, Times and Tribune.

143. IBID., pp. 51-63.

144. Hansard, 25.10.74, columns 6507-6558.

145. IBID., Standard Bank nominees and Amosite Nominees Ltd. were the main nominee companies in the Argus group.

146. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', p. 164. Oppenheimer had come out in favour of the P.P. as far back as the 1961 election.

Wiley's investigation disclosed that more than fifty percent of the Argus share-holding was in the hands of the Anglo American Corporation and that three A.A.C. employees sat on the Board of the Argus Company.

As far as the South African Associated Newspapers was concerned the Argus Co. had effective control as it was the largest single shareholder in S.A.A.N. Thus Anglo's holding in S.A.A.N. is through the Argus and if the shares of the Abe Bailey Trust and Bailey nominees, both controlled by Syfrets Trust (which merged with Union Acceptances, an Oppenheimer company), are taken into consideration then, according to John Wiley, Anglo American has a controlling interest of 53.1 percent of the shares in S.A.A.N.¹⁴⁷

Both Potter and Wiley believed that the English press was monopolistic and that this impeded its freedom of expression. Wiley's analysis of the situation was not seriously challenged in parliament nor was it convincingly refuted outside the House. This meant that English readers had no choice¹⁴⁸ of newspapers other than those of the Argus-S.A.A.N. group which were controlled by Anglo American and Harry Oppenheimer. Consequently, a uniformity of political viewpoint, which stifled free discussion became the norm. The nature of the control exerted over the English press can explain the political bias which developed during the 1970's. A progressive-reformist viewpoint was pushed to the exclusion of all others. The Sunday Express, published by S.A.A.N., was the last English newspaper to support the U.P. but when its editor M.A. Johnson resigned in 1974 it too fell in line and propagated 'progressive' politics.

147. IBID., Hansard.

148. This was before The Citizen appeared on the scene.

Johnson had been appointed editor (1961) before S.A.A.N. had been 'captured' by the Argus group and had been strong enough to uphold his political convictions in the face of unbridled criticism from the Sunday Times in particular. However, he paid the price, and was 'overlooked' when Joel Mervis resigned as editor of the Times.¹⁴⁹ He was replaced by Tertius Myburgh who could be relied upon to support the reformists initially, and the progressives after the demise of the former.

While the English newspapers may not have been responsible for all the ills which befell the U.P. they, nevertheless, played a major role in aggravating and exploiting them in a manner carefully calculated to sow division within its ranks. An understanding of the controlling interests in the virtually monopolistic combine which the English press undoubtedly was helped to explain the politics of uniformity adopted by them.

6. Speculation concerning consensus.

By June a compromise of sorts had been reached between the Transvaal provincial caucus and its senior body. It had little option but to agree, albeit reluctantly, with the parliamentary caucus ruling to remain on the Commission. As a concession it could, if it so felt, debate relevant issues arising from the reports but was forbidden to challenge the caucus stand. This attempt to reconcile the different factions was in keeping with the accord reached between Sir De Villiers Graaff and Schwarz. It was essentially a delicate balancing act, the object of which was to avoid civil strife by satisfying both groups. The 'silence rule' was necessary to avoid unsubstantiated criticism before the final reports of the commission revealed all the evidence.

149. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

Presumably the U.P. commissioners were of the opinion that these findings would justify their support of the Schlebusch commission. The internal squabbling, however, remained essentially unresolved and in February 1975 the Transvaal reformists left the United Party virtually en bloc.¹⁵⁰

Speaking to the Argus, Marais Steyn put the case for closer co-operation with the government on certain issues. There already existed a bi-partisan approach to matters of strategic security, defence and foreign policy. He was convinced it should also include internal security, then being investigated by the Schlebusch commission. This, he felt, would not end political argument but would lead to sharper and more productive dialogue on other aspects of democracy, including the 'rule of law'.¹⁵¹

Marais Steyn was making a plea to remove certain areas from the political debate which caused discord and division among the voters. He, and others, were of the opinion that an understanding with the government on internal security matters would be in the interests of South Africa.¹⁵² This type of consensus talk appealed to the U.P. conservatives but found no favour with the reformists or the press which supported them. Not long after having expressed his convictions Marais Steyn carried consensus to its logical conclusion when he resigned from the U.P. and joined the nationalists in a move which had far-reaching consequences for the United Party.¹⁵³

Reaction to his views were not slow in appearing. Gerald Shaw of the Cape Times in his political column wrote that those in the U.P. who felt strongly about civil liberties would never find common ground with the government.

150. See Chapter IX.2.

151. Argus, 9.6.73, 'Marais Steyn leading U.P. contender for consensus'.

152. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

153. He joined the N.P. on 4.9.1973.

He would prefer it if 'verligtes' of all parties sought consensus in order to create a verligte drive to save the Republic. He added that the most outspoken verligtes were to be found in the Progressive Party.¹⁵⁴ The Sunday Times also expressed doubts concerning consensus as it felt that the nationalists would demand so many concessions it would be a wasted effort. It believed that the U.P. right-wing would, in any event, be more likely to join the government, and suggested that it would be far better if the U.P. reached consensus among its own members.¹⁵⁵ Considering the amount of in-fighting prevalent this was sound advice which was never heeded.

Neither Graaff nor Vorster seriously considered making concessions which would pave the way to a broad consensus between the two parties. Vorster was prepared to accept, as members, U.P. individuals who had escaped what he termed the stifling Smuts-Unionist tradition still evident in the Party but consensus certainly held few, if any, benefits for him. Graaff also rejected the idea unless U.P. policy was retained virtually intact in any merger.¹⁵⁶ The whole consensus debate appeared to be a kite-flying exercise following a parliamentary session when vital issues concerning national security had been raised. Nevertheless, for the U.P., they posed serious questions of conscience and helped delineate more clearly where the different factions stood. Right-wingers would find no difficulty in co-operating with the government over certain security matters whereas the reformist-wing would never contemplate such a move. The divisions within the Party remained deep, and were destined to become even more pronounced notwithstanding the various attempts made to heal the widening rift.

154. Cape Times, 9.6.73, Shaw: 'The Elusive Consensus'.

155. Sunday Times, 17.6.73, Editorial: 'Consensus'.

156. Rapport, 10.6.73, 'Graaff praat: Konsensus al hoe sterker'.

7. Senator Horak's letter.

While the issue of consensus was being debated the Sunday Express received a letter of appreciation from the Party's national secretary which thanked the newspaper for its 'consistent and responsible support' over the years and for the role it had played in the Party's progress.¹⁵⁷ The letter followed a combined meeting of the Central Head Committee and parliamentary caucus on June 9 and expressed the 'unanimous appreciation' of those present. This was later disputed by certain reformists but what caused even more animosity within Party ranks was a letter drawn up by the Transvaal caucus, also unanimously, and delivered to the same newspaper three days after the Horak letter had been published. It took exception to certain Express articles which, among other things, had attacked Schwarz and had made, it claimed, unfounded allegations from anonymous sources concerning plots to influence future nominations. Whether it was Horak's letter of appreciation or speculation about the intentions of the reformists, which the Express had reported on June 17, that had prompted the course of action taken by the Transvaal caucus remains uncertain. The Express had alleged that the Young Turks would attempt to replace seven M.P.'s on the Witwatersrand in a bid to grab power in a manner reminiscent of Schwarz's 1972 coup.¹⁵⁸ This would remove from the scene those opposed to the reform movement. The Transvaal letter stated that these revelations sowed division within the U.P. It was signed on behalf on the caucus by O.T.van der Merwe, its chairman.

A situation had arisen where a particular province had adopted a stand in opposition to its senior body. Two letters, to the same newspaper, expressing contradictory sentiments had been written.

157. Senators Horak's letter to the Editor M.A.Johnson, was dated 16.6.73, a copy of which appeared in the Sunday Express, 8.7.73.
 158. Sunday Express, 17.6.73, 'Young Turks try to oust seven M.P.'s'.

It was indicative of the lack of discipline and division which existed in the Party.¹⁵⁹ It also meant that certain Transvaal M.P.'s who had attended both meetings had associated themselves with both letters! This, as will be explained, was as a result of a genuine misunderstanding related to the unanimity of the Horak letter. The whole issue was raised by the press and a rather trivial matter assumed national proportions. The Sunday Express vigorously defended its reports and took the opportunity of mounting a fierce attack on the reformists whom it held responsible for the Party's misfortunes.¹⁶⁰ It wrote that it found it strange that not a single newspaper had received any official letter condemning the campaign to replace Sir De Villiers Graaff which recently had been waged. The Express was pointing a finger at the Transvaal caucus which had not taken any unanimous decision to condemn the Sunday Times for demanding the resignation of the national leader.

In a number of editorials the Express laid the blame squarely on the Young Turks, as it called the reformists, for any disruption in the U.P. It rejected the claim by Dick Enthoven that it was 'causing embarrassment to the leader and untold damage to the Party'. 'If there were no Young Turks there would be no disruption and no Old Guard-Young Turk fued', the leader article proclaimed. It asked whether any of the reformists had sprang to Graaff's defence when their major backer, the Sunday Times, had campaigned to replace him, in the same way they were currently rallying to the defence of Schwarz?¹⁶¹

The opposing viewpoints with which the public were confronted could not be clearer than expressed in these two Sunday newspapers.

159. Interview with Senator Horak

160. Sunday Express, 8.7.73, 'That letter!'

161. IBID., 15.7.73, 'Where the Blame Lies'.

Both claimed that they were in favour of the Party but the Express was critical of the reformists while the Times was totally opposed to the conservatives. The departure of their respective enemies would lead, they both believed, to a genuinely united party.

The Sunday Express strongly justified the stand it had taken over the years. It alone of the English newspapers had constantly supported Graaff, even during the 'darkest days', while its support for the Schlebusch commissioners was well known, as was its backing for the Party's chief lieutenants. It was, it claimed, simply 'for the Party', it was not its policy maker nor was it out to place some faction in power. But for the Party to succeed the in-fighting had to stop - young, ambitious politicians had to be more restrained. The priorities for success, according to the Express, were loyalty, unity and the discarding of irrelevant issues for real ones.¹⁶²

It is difficult to disagree with these sentiments when examining the problems which threatened the United Party. Whichever faction was right, if any could lay claim to that distinction, a little more discipline and loyalty would have gone a long way to counter the attacks by its real political opponents. One rather irrelevant issue was Senator Horak's letter. Had its unanimity not been challenged over what was in reality a procedural matter there would have been no national outcry. The reformists, according to the Express, had seized on it in their on-going feud with the Party. By challenging the caucus decision they hoped to force the Central Head Committee to rescind it and so score a major victory for themselves.¹⁶³

162. IBID., 'For the Party'.

163. IBID., 8.7.73, 'That letter'.

The Rand Daily Mail of July 13 predicted that there would be resignations if the letter was not withdrawn, and mentioned Jacpie Basson as being among those who was most disturbed. However, in a letter to the Express of July 22 he denied that he would ever leave the Party because of Senator Horak's letter but he steadfastly maintained that he had not committed himself to it. Consequently, the whole issue dragged on. The Burger again accused the Party of speaking with two voices¹⁶⁴ while the Sunday Times could not understand how praise could be lavished on a newspaper which was an enemy of the Transvaal U.P.¹⁶⁵ Both Sir De Villiers and Jack Connan, Chairman of the Central Head Committee, supported the correctness of the Senator's letter, a move which pleased the Party conservatives but which placed the Young Turks in conflict with major party formations and figures.¹⁶⁶ There was obviously a misunderstanding regarding the unanimity of letter in question. Graaff cleared the air somewhat by explaining in a statement that there had been an honest difference of opinion which would be resolved at the next Head Committee meeting on August 30. That turned out to be an extremely stormy gathering where other, more important, issues came to a head but where a compromise was reached regarding the Horak letter. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved¹⁶⁷ as being correct although there were four objections including that of Basson's.¹⁶⁸ The August meeting did, however, also condemn the Express for its various attacks on the Transvaal U.P.¹⁶⁹

164. Die Burger, 26.6.73, 'Harry Schwarz se Klap vir V.P. leiding'.

165. Sunday Times, 8.7.73, Editorial: 'U.P. Complexities'.

166. Sunday Express, 8.7.73, Robertson: 'Horak acted correctly says Graaff'.
See also 'Connan: Decision was taken unanimously'.

167. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

168. Sunday Express, 2.9.73, 'U.P. minutes approved'.

169. Sunday Times, 2.9.73, 'Graaff rebukes Express'.

In this manner the matter, as had been the case with others, was resolved by way of a compromise decision and there were no resignations from the Party.¹⁷⁰

The explanation for the misunderstanding was that votes were very seldom taken at these committee meetings, particularly with regard to less important decisions where consensus was sought with any objections being recorded. Consequently, when Japie Basson claimed that, 'I did not vote, nor was I asked to vote, nor would I have', he was in a sense correct but he also failed to make an official objection which would have been recorded in the minutes.¹⁷¹ Thus an honest difference of opinion could have arisen over the word unanimous.¹⁷² Had the incident been ignored the Party would have spared itself another round of critical appraisal and would, possibly, have promoted its fragile unity. As with so many of the other disputes the different factions were unable, or unwilling, to reach accord in the interests of a united party.

170. Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 351-54.

171. Sunday Times, 8.7.73, 'Basson, Enthoven Speak Out'.

172. Interview with Senator Horak.

CHAPTER VITHE TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL CONGRESS AND THE DEFECTION OF MARAIS STEYN

The post-parliamentary period was not without incident. Short interludes of peace were followed by controversial upheavals as the different party groupings continued their tactical manoeuvring. While the reformists strengthened their positions on the Cape Peninsula Council and in the Young South African movement attention, however, remained focused on the Transvaal.

Following the Party's Central Executive meeting of July 26 Graaff issued a clear directive that the feuding and indiscipline in the Party would no longer be tolerated. It detracted, he said, from its first duty which was to attack the government.¹ The national leader was clearly concerned about the seriousness of the situation and the need for unity. His words must have had some impact for the Transvaal Provincial Congress on August 17 and 18, in contrast to the previous years' traumatic events, passed in a spirit of apparent goodwill.² Harry Schwarz was re-elected unopposed,³ as was his deputy Dr Gideon Jacobs. Graaff addressed the delegates and again stressed the need for unity while he promised firm action against dissidents.⁴

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1. Argus, 27.7.73, Editorial: 'Graaff's clear directive'
 2. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse Opposissie sedert 1958', D.Phil., U.O.V.S., 1979, p. 358
 3. Die Burger, 18.8.73, 'Eenparig herkies as V.P. leier in die Transvaal'
 4. Argus, 18.8.73, 'Graaff puts foot down on U.P. dissidents'. See also Sunday Express, 19.8.73, Editorial: 'Graaff calls on U.P. to close ranks', and Die Burger, 18.8.73, 'Graaff sê hy gaan twis nou stop'.

The Congress was interpreted as a triumph for the reformists.⁵ It had come out strongly in favour of the power sharing component of the U.P.'s federal policy and had demonstrated its faith in consultation with other racial groups by sharing the platform with Prof Hudson Ntsantwisi, Tom Swartz and J.N. Reddy of the Indian community, all of whom addressed the meeting.⁶ Schwarz indicated that he would press for the Transvaal's Act of Dedication to be included in the Party's constitution when the National Congress met later in the year.⁷ He would also canvass for a permanent federal secretariat to act as a consultative body for the different race groups. The Congress had already taken a 'verligte' course and received widespread praise as a result. The Sunday Times believed that its decisions would encourage 'verligtes' in other provinces to make their voices heard and in an editorial predicted that the in-fighting in the Party was over.⁸ The campaign for Graaff to resign was set aside as he was encouraged to take note of the spirit evident at the Transvaal congress.⁹

The peace which prevailed at this congress and the optimistic predictions for the future suffered a severe reverse a week later when a new bombshell struck the U.P. and exposed the deep rift which existed beneath the surface of professed unity. Following the combined Head Committee and parliamentary

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5. Die Burger, 20.8.73, 'Kongres triomf vir Schwarz, sê Sir De Villiers'. See also Sunday Times, 19.8.73, 'Schwarz triumphs in Transvaal', and Die Vaderland, 18.8.73, 'Groot sege vir Harry Schwarz'!
 6. Tom Swartz was leader of the Coloured Representative Council, J. Reddy was a member of the Indian Council and Prof Ntsantwisi was the Chief Minister of Gazankulu.
 7. Act of Dedication to our People, published by the Transvaal Provincial Council, 2.5.73.
 8. Sunday Times, 19.8.73, 'Verligtes backed to the hilt in the Transvaal'. See also Cape Times, 20.8.73, 'Congress a new dimension in South African politics'.
 9. Sunday Times, 26.8.73, Editorial: 'Graaff's Green Light'.

caucus meeting of August 29, which was to resolve the Horak letter issue, Marais Steyn announced his resignation from the United Party.¹⁰ Not only did he leave, but he applied for membership of the National Party, the party he had fought tooth and nail for over 30 years.¹¹ Although the reformist newspapers¹² were ecstatic with his decision it did the U.P. immeasurable harm to lose a parliamentarian of his stature, a man once described by Ben Schoeman as 'the best debater on either side of the House'.¹³ Both foe and friend recognized his ability and even Helen Suzman of the Progressive Party called him a 'brilliant debater'. The Sunday Times editorial of August 2 pointed out that his departure was to be welcomed as he had stood for verkramptheid and he was out of touch with the forces of reform in the U.P.¹⁴ The Sunday Tribune of the same day reviewed developments as being a great success for the reformists while the Burger regarded his departure as a paralysing blow for the Party.¹⁵

The divisions were now more sharply defined.¹⁶ Steyn had left the United Party because of the 'unbridgeable personality problems' with Harry Schwarz and also over his and the other reformists' interpretation of its federal policy.¹⁷ The sharing of power which they envisaged at the expense of the

10. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

11. Rapport, 2.9.73, 'Steyn word Nat'. See also Sunday Express, 2.9.73, 'Marais Steyn Quits U.P. Will Join Nats'.

12. Cape Times, 3.9.73, editorial: 'Good - now who's next'.

13. Die Transvaaler, 18.5.73, 'Wat ek van premiers, LV's dink'.

14. Sunday Times, 2.9.73, editorial: 'Marais Steyn - a political tragedy'.

15. Die Burger, 3.9.73, 'Tragedie vir V.P.'. See also 'Steyn dompel V.P. in Krisis'.

16. Argus, 31.8.73, editorial: 'U.P. rift is in the open'.

17. Horak interview, 8.6.82.

sovereignty of the white parliament would endanger its future and would be a threat to the 'concept of white leadership with justice'.¹⁸

A little over a year had passed since Marais Steyn had lost the Transvaal leadership of the Party. He had been the victim of a press vendetta¹⁹ artificially created to serve the interests of certain groups and had, during the previous twelve months, seen the values he had stood for eroded by one crisis after another. It was hardly surprising that he took the final step of leaving the Party which he had helped to guide through the difficult years of opposition to its 1970 electoral successes.²⁰ He had been Graaff's adviser and staunchest supporter. He must have been disappointed when his leader stood by helplessly and watched his defeat at the hands of the reformists.²¹ There can be little doubt that personality differences played a decisive role in his actions. His ex-wife, Mrs Clem Dreyer, in an interview with the Sunday Tribune, confirmed that he hated Schwarz and that his defeat as Transvaal leader had led him to consider leaving the Party.²² She also mentioned that he was friends with Daan Lemmer and Jack Dormehl²³ both of whom had been deeply involved in earlier moves to discredit Harry Schwarz and his supporters.²⁴ He had lost faith in the U.P. in the same manner that many others were to become disillusioned

18. Argus, 31.8.73, 'Steyn: Why I quit'.

19. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

20. Sunday Express, 2.9.73, 'Steyn bombshell'.

21. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

22. Sunday Tribune, 9.9.73, 'The Four Ambitions of Marais Steyn M.P.'

23. Dormehl, a member of the Head Committee in the Transvaal was expelled from the Party following attacks on Schwarz which were construed as being anti-semitic in character (Feb. 73). See also Barnard, p. 351.

24. Vaderland, 26.7.72, 'Magsblok wil die V.P. van binne oorneem'. It revealed Lemmer's support for Steyn.

as it drifted without apparent direction. Through disloyalty and strife the U.P. had become powerless, he explained to the Sunday Times. He spoke of the immeasurable harm done by the newspapers to the Party and of the groups within it which had co-operated to sow dissension. He compared the effective manner in which the prime minister had dealt with the Herstigter revisionists with the weak leadership of the United Party to control dissident factions.²⁵ Marais Steyn had, in his analysis of the U.P., pinpointed with great accuracy those areas of weakness which contributed to its decline. His departure hastened its downfall and served as an example to other conservatives to reconsider their options in the political arena. Vorster, in the words of the Sunday Express, regarded the defection as a 'bonus for the National Party'.²⁶ It would also divert attention from his own, not inconsiderable, problems. The prime minister welcomed Marais Steyn with open arms and extended an invitation to others like him to cross over to the National Party.²⁷

Marais Steyn had bridged his political Rubicon, he could no longer solely through loyalty to his leader 'sustain my membership of an organization that had become ineffective and meaningless ...'.²⁸ For him to have left the U.P. and joined the nationalists, whom he had once referred to as the worst government South Africa had ever had, must have been a difficult decision in the extreme. The evidence would suggest that personality differences rather than matters of policy were the deciding factors. Once

25. Sunday Times, 2.9.73, 'Steyn: Why I must Quit'.

26. Sunday Express, 9.9.73, Editorial: 'Bonus for NATS'.

27. Rapport, 2.9.73, 'Steyn word NAT - wic gaan hom volg?'

28. Argus, 8.9.73, A special supplement by J. D'Oliveira on Marais Steyn.

Schwarz had replaced him an intolerable situation had arisen in which the pupil had become the master.

Sir De Villiers had little option but to condemn Steyn in the strongest terms. In the September issue of the Party newspaper Onwards he denounced his defection as a 'gross prostitution of his political faith', an 'act of vengeance aimed at destroying the United Party'.²⁹ Graaff correctly pointed out that his action would lower the confidence of the electorate which had supported the U.P.

Although Steyn left of his own accord, he had in many ways been driven out of the Party. He would not have gone but for the hounding he had endured from the reformists.³⁰ His departure contributed to the polarization of white politics, with the United Party conservatives or 'vaderlanders', as P.W. Botha called them, gravitating towards the National Party and the reformists inexorably joining the Progressives. The political centre was left increasingly depopulated. Steyn's move appeared to be most harmful to the Party in the Transvaal where its representation decreased in the 1974 general election and disappeared entirely in 1977 when its successor the N.R.P. made no headway whatsoever. Marais Steyn's resignation must have been the last straw for many U.P. supporters for whom 1973 had been a very trying period. The uninspiring no-confidence debate had been followed by the Schibusch controversy and the press campaign to oust

29. Onwards/Voorwaarts, Sept. 1973, 'Prostituted his political faith'. See also Argus, 7.9.73, 'Graaff on Steyn'.

30. Interviews with Messrs Wiley, Horak and Streicher.

Graaff. If a man referred to as 'Mnr Sap'³¹ could no longer find a home in the Party then there must indeed have been something amiss. He had epitomized the struggle against the N.P. since 1948. He was the Party's chief strategist during the 1970 election successes, yet he became the first victim of the civil war which had begun in earnest in 1972 and which continued after his resignation until the demise of the Party itself. The Cape Times, which had rejoiced in his departure and had suggested that other 'verkrampes' should follow his example, predicted that the U.P. would, as a result, become more relevant, 'if smaller'. The newspaper was once again proved wrong and the Party did not become more relevant although it did indeed become smaller, until in the end nothing could rescue it and few wanted it saved. Marais Steyn's observation that the U.P. was heading for disaster whether Graaff was its leader or not, proved more accurate.

Following a Central Executive meeting to consider the consequences of Steyn's resignation the Party issued a statement indicating that it was not embarking on a 'left-liberal' direction following the Transvaal provincial congress but did pledge that its policy provided for white leadership in the interests of all 'our people'. Such leadership had to be seen as the instrument to bring about the sharing of powers and responsibilities among 'all our population groups'.³² This announcement, which contained nothing new, would it hoped be acceptable to both camps in the Party. It provided for white leadership but it would not be per-

31. A term used by the Afrikaans press, particularly Die Burger.

32. Argus, 6.9.73, 'New Pledge on White leadership'.

manent, it would be the instrument of change.³³ It still, however, left unresolved the ultimate destiny of the white parliament and which powers it would relinquish to the multi-racial federal Assembly.

The meeting appointed Dr G Jacobs to fill Marais Steyn's information post in the Party and decided, for the umpteenth time, to close its ranks. But it was visibly being weakened by the actions of politicians who, presumably, wished to keep alive the democratic tradition in South Africa. As it lost support the government become stronger and the opposition weaker. A strong U.P. would have been better able to keep the nationalists on their toes and might have been able to help create the political milieu for the reform desired by some of its members. The decline of the U.P. as a result of policy and personality differences which were exploited by an unsympathetic press was, in the wider view, symptomatic of the growing irrelevancy of white opposition in South Africa .

33. Interviews with Graaff and Horak

CHAPTER VIITHE ROAD TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS, NOVEMBER 1973.

Following Marais Steyn's defection the need for party unity became even more imperative.¹ It was essential to present a unified front to the electorate, especially as an early election was expected. With this as a prospect unusually high interest was focused on the National Congress of the U.P. in November.² Before then, however, a few incidents occurred which demonstrated that the factional strife was still present, and contrary to the warnings that it would no longer be tolerated the unsatisfactory situation remained largely unchanged.

1. Problems in Caledon and in the Young South African movement.

In preparation for the National congress the Caledon division drew up a memorandum that took a strongly reformist approach on topical issues.³

It was signed by five members of the division including Kobus van Eeden its chairman, who was an admirer of Harry Schwarz. A copy of this confidential document was sent to Myburgh Streicher, the Cape leader.

Simultaneously it was secretly released to the press which gave it wide coverage without once condemning it as an act of gross disloyalty.⁴

The source of the 'leak' was never discovered.⁵ What aggravated the situation was that its release coincided with a visit by Sir De Villiers to Bredasdorp where he spoke on September 16. There he warned of the dangers of hanging labels around Party representatives and saddling it with a 'leftist' image.⁶

1. Sunday Times, 4.11.73, 'Unity or Goodbye'.

2. Sunday Express, 4.11.73, Editorial: 'Vital congress'.

3. Argus, 17.9.73, 'Caledon memorandum: U.P. calls for dynamic approach'. It favoured withdrawal from the Schibusch Commission, restoration of the Coloureds to the common voters roll and multi-racial sport.

4. Cape Times editorial, 18.9.73, 'What's the fuss about?' It expressed pleasure that verligte thoughts emanated from the platteland. See also the Herald, 22.9.73, 'Why fuss about Caledon memorandum, Mr Streicher?'

5. Argus, 17.9.73, 'Alarm in U.P. over leak to press'.

6. Die Burger, 17.9.73, 'Graaff waarsku oor 'n linkse beeld vir Party'.

A strong suspicion remained that the Caledon memorandum was released by unnamed reformists to embarrass Sir De Villiers.⁷ They were, in the words of Marias Steyn, who was speaking in Stellenbosch two days later, 'people who were not United Party in their hearts but had climbed onto the bandwagon' after its success in the 1972 Brakpan by-election. Marais Steyn was explaining to his audience the reasons for his departure from the U.P.⁸ To judge by the Caledon disclosures disloyalty was still rife and it was being abetted by the majority of English newspapers which strongly supported the nature of the proposals.

A week later another issue, again involving Party differences, made the headlines. At the annual Cape conference of the Young South Africans, held in Port Elizabeth, towards the end of September a determined and successful bid was mounted to extend the influence of the reformists. The meeting was attended, uninvited, according to Bert Meintjies the local youth organizer by Horace van Rensburg M.P.C. and Jonathan Schwarz, son of Harry Schwarz. Their presence, he said, created a tense situation and was responsible for causing discord among those present. Whether they were entitled to be there or not was largely immaterial but what rankled was that the meeting approved and accepted the Transvaal's Act of Dedication against the express wishes of the Cape leader, Myburgh Streicher, and his deputy, John Wiley both of whom cautioned that the document should be studied first.⁹ The congress also elected as its new chairman, Maans Kemp, a school teacher dedicated to the Transvaal reformist movement. The U.P. Youth had been effectively captured by the reformists in the Cape.¹⁰

7. IBID., 'Verraaiers en saboteurs in V.P.' sê Streicher!

8. Argus, 18.9.73, 'Still in U.P. if not for Schwarz - Steyn'.

9. Interview with Streicher, 5.5.82, and Wiley, 5.4.82.

10. Cape Times, 24.9.73, 'U.P. Youth deries Cape leadership'. See also IBID., 19.10.73, 'Platteland has verligtes too'. Interview with Kemp by a Times correspondent.

It was alleged that it had been hijacked by the Transvaal and Dan Rossouw, M.P.C., a labelled conservative, attacked the lobbying done by the 'invaders' who had 'led Mr Kemp by the nose'.¹¹

The Transvaal youth movement was already controlled by the reformist-wing of the Party with James Ramsay as its chairman. It appeared, was suggested and later proved correct that the ultimate objective was the removal of Andre Fourie, M.P., from his post as National leader of the Young South Africans.¹² He was to be replaced by a reformist and the national youth movement was to fall under his authority.¹³ This was the reason for capturing control of the Cape which would then be entitled to send reformist delegates to the vital federal council meeting of the movement in October.¹⁴ Should a reformist become leader¹⁵ it would also mean representation on the important leadership Executive Committee of the Party which consisted of twelve members.

These predictions duly came to pass and Andre Fourie was voted out of office at the federal meeting in Bloemfontein.¹⁶ His successor was none other than Maans Kemp, who reportedly, defeated him by a single vote.¹⁷ The reformists had won another battle.¹⁸ Sir De Villiers had had the mortification of being witness, firstly, to the defeat of Marais Steyn and now had to accept the loss of Fourie, another of his trusted supporters. He had not used his influence to rescue either of them.¹⁹

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11. Argus, 25.9.73, 'Invaders' alleged at Cape Youth Congress'.
 12. Interview, John Wiley, 5.4.82 and Myburgh Streicher 5.5.82.
 13. Die Burger, 27.9.73, 'Jong Turke wil Fourie bykom'.
 14. Sunday Express, 30.9.73, 'Reformists' seek control of Youth Movement'.
 15. Sunday Times, 7.10.73, 'Verligte challenge awaits Fourie'.
 16. 13 October 1973.
 17. Sunday Express, 14.10.73, 'Fourie ousted as Youth leader'.
 18. Interviews with Wiley and Senator Horak.
 19. Die Burger, 15.10.1973, Editorial: 'Die passiewe leier'.

Andre Fourie was the second youngest member in the House and if age were a criterion could hardly be a member of the 'Old Guard'. He was a hard-working M.P. who had won the Turffontein seat back from the nationalists in 1970. He was a conservative as far as loyalty to his leader and party were concerned but also, by his own standards, a verligte as opposed to being a reformist which were not necessarily synonymous.²⁰ It was his misfortune to have been branded as a verkrampste by the reformist supporting press, all of which wrote of the challenge he was to face at the federal congress. He would meet opposition because of his past verkrampste record, asserted the Sunday Times of September 30.²¹ His major error was to have been an admirer of Marias Steyn's political style. Tony Hickman, M.P. and chairman of the Cape Peninsula Council, who had to fight his own battles against the Party reformists rallied to Fourie's defence. He clearly believed that the latter had been defeated not as a result of his ability to do his work but solely because he had been described as being verkramp. As he had not been prepared to be associated with the 'leftist-liberal' direction of the so-called 'verligtes' in the Party he had been sacrificed in a well planned campaign. Verkramp 'had become a swear word in politics' and any man who was labelled as such was finished, asserted Hickman.²² What he should have said was that any person in the United Party who received such a tag was assured of being villified by a hostile press.

One of those strange ironies which surface from time to time in politics to expose the essential shallowness of certain press arguments concerned Andre Fourie in 1974.

20. Reformist in this instance being identified with the Young Turks or Schwarz group in the Transvaal whose political direction was not regarded as being enlightened by certain sections of the U.P.

21. Sunday Times, 30.9.73, 'Andre Fourie faces challenge'.

22. Cape Times, 16.10.73, 'Hickman condemns attack on Fourie'.

His parliamentary seat was contested by his mentor, Marais Steyn, in the general election of that year. In one of the toughest fights in the country the two 'verkrampes' exchanged blows. Fourie was defeated by fewer than 400 votes and Marais Steyn, far from being finished in politics as Stanley Uys had predicted after his defection,²³ went on to become a minister of state. The press had faced one of these unpleasant dilemmas which was a consequence of having labelled United Party representatives as being either verkramp or verlig. As both candidates had been condemned as reactionaries opposed to reform the question arose as to which one was more deserving of their support. In the end the majority came out in favour of Fourie, admittedly reluctantly, but at least he had not defected to the N.P. Yet, in 1981 Andre Fourie was again returned to parliament, this time as the nationalist member for Turffontein, following Steyn's elevation to ambassadorial rank and his own switch of parties!

2. The Congress.

As the date of the National Congress approached there seemed little prospect of internal peace. The reformists were rejoicing in Fourie's defeat while Stanley Uys made yet another of his wildly inaccurate predictions when he claimed that within two years the verkrampes would all have disappeared and the U.P. would be shaping itself into a truly verligte opposition.²⁴

Instead, it was in 1975 that Harry Schwarz and his reformists left the United Party. In the meantime conservatives such as John Wiley and Tony Hickman simultaneously attacked the 'leftist-liberal' direction of the reformists who, in their opinion, wished to take the Party down the road of the Progressives.²⁵

23. Sunday Times, 9.9.73, Uys: 'End of the Road for Marais Steyn'.

24. IBID., 21.10.73, 'U.P. Verligte Victory causes a Wail!'

25. Cape Times, 20.10.73, 'U.P. in Peninsula locked in struggle'. See also IBID., Editorial: 'Mr John Wiley, M.P.'.

Wiley even named fourteen conservatives whom the Sunday Times wished to remove from the political scene.

An interesting development was also the sudden transformation of Joel Mervis of the Sunday Times as the reformist-wing of the Party appeared to be making headway. He became increasingly more sympathetic towards Sir De Villiers whose head he had, earlier that year, demanded on a platter. Having rid himself of the 'mill-steyn' around his neck Graaff appeared to have a better understanding of the issues at stake and was walking with a 'lighter step', claimed the editor.²⁶ The inconsistent approach of this newspaper towards Graaff's leadership demonstrated to Party stalwarts the folly of expecting reliability on other matters where it attempted to influence policy.²⁷

What did become increasingly clear was that Graaff would have to restore peace among the warring factions at the congress or the Party would face certain ruin. He would have to take a strong line, for as 'Dawie' of the Burger pointed out, nothing could be worse than the situation which already existed.²⁸

On the eve of the congress Rapport published the results of an independent survey commissioned by it²⁹ which indicated that between April, when the previous poll had been taken, and October the U.P. had lost the support of Afrikaans speaking voters but had increased its popularity among the English section. The N.P. had improved its overall position but the P.P. had not made any headway.³⁰

26. Sunday Times, Editorial: 30.9.73, 'Graaff on Target'.

27. On the 10.9.72 the editor of the Sunday Times claimed, 'Graaff must stay', and then in the following year again called for his resignation! See also interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

28. Die Burger, 29.9.73, Dawie: 'Uit my Politieke pen'.

29. Mark en Menings opnames(Edms.) It used a sample of 3 000 voters.

30. Rapport, 4.11.73, 'V.P. nou verder agter N.P.'

The results were:

	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>N.P.</u>	<u>P.P.</u>
Afrikaans support in percentages	6.7(9.8)	84.4(81.6)	0.6(0.8)
English support in percentages	47(41.1)	11.3(13.2)	17.8(16.8)

Total support for the parties in percentages:

N.P.	55.9(53.4)
U.P.	22.8(21.2)
P.P.	7.2(7.5)

The figures in brackets represent the April results.

If political polls have a message it would seem that in this instance the in-fighting in the U.P. had not as yet, to any marked extent, affected its electoral support except among Afrikaans speaking voters. It could be argued that they had followed the conservative Marias Steyn into the National Party and that the increased support for the U.P. among English speakers could also be attributed to his move as they felt that the Party had strengthened its 'verligte' image. The P.P. had made no progress because 'enlightened' English voters remained within the U.P. in the belief that the reformist-wing was making headway, and in electoral terms represented a better prospect than the Progressive Party even though their political inclinations were progressive in everything but name. In addition, the survey indicated that Graaff's popularity as leader of the Party had increased notwithstanding the difficulties he had encountered.

Whatever conclusions could be drawn from the poll nothing could alter the fact that the forthcoming congress was finely balanced and any explosion there would effectively, and possibly finally, tip the scales against the United Party among the electorate.³¹

31. Sunday Times, 4.11.73, 'U.P. at crossroads'. See also the Cape Times, 6.11.73, 'U.P.'s crucial congress'.

The Burger was convinced that it would be a peaceful congress but only because the reformists would be in the minority and would be unable to achieve their ultimate objective which was to take over the U.P. in the same way they had done in the Transvaal. Confrontation, would, therefore, be avoided at Bloemfontein, but would be continued behind a superficial facade of unity to attain their final goals. The problem with the reformists, asserted the Burger, was that they did not belong to the 'correct' Sap-tradition. Their ways were unacceptable to a party of compromise, and of moderation. The end result would either be their rejection or the death of the party itself or both.³² The newspaper displayed a good deal of insight for the 'Young Turks' never did achieve their main objective, and towards the end they had been rejected by the establishment but in the process the U.P. had been killed.

The Bloemfontein congress turned out to be a surprisingly successful gathering with an absence of friction which must have encouraged its supporters.³³ An atmosphere of goodwill and conciliation prevailed among delegates.³⁴ Sir De Villiers Graaff's opening address on November 8 explained the key points in the U.P.'s new federal policy which had become one of the areas of friction between the Party factions and had contributed to Marais Steyn's departure.³⁵ 'White leadership' and 'power sharing' had been stumbling blocks since the plan had first been introduced.³⁶ Sir De Villiers repeated that white leadership would be the instrument used to achieve power sharing.

32. Die Burger, 6.11.73, Editorial: 'Nie Regte Sappe nie'.

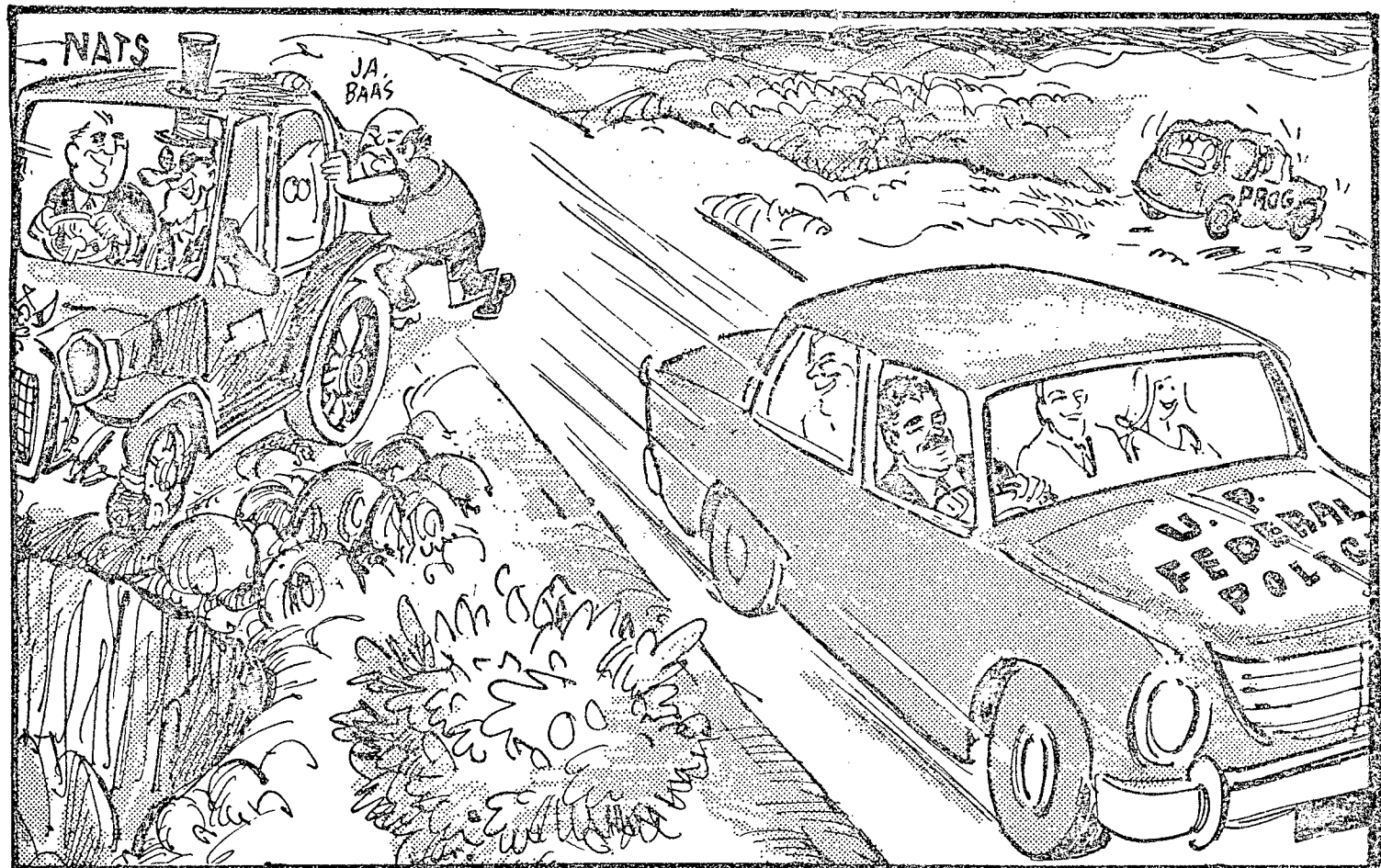
33. Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 377-382.

34. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

35. Graaff opened his address on 8.11.73 with a statement of policy.

36. Introduced officially by Mike Mitchell (Durban North) during the no-confidence debate in February 1973 although it had been revealed to the voters of Caledon in the November by-election of the previous year.

The federal plan would create a 'community of communities' which would achieve a common loyalty and a common security. The transfer of power to the federal parliament would be by the white assembly and the keys of power would only be handed over to this central multi-racial body after the approval of the enfranchised voter had been obtained.³⁷



'The introduction of the United Party's federal policy'.

In this important speech Graaff explained that white leadership was in the interests of all and it had to serve as a catalyst and guarantee of orderly progress.

37. Cape Times, 10.11.73, 'Graaff firm on power sharing'.

'Baasskap' had to be rejected but the leading role played by whites in the economic, social and political fields had also to be recognized. Whites had to take the lead in a new political dispensation which would lead to the final objective of the sharing of power in South Africa.³⁸

It was a fine exposition but left unresolved the future of the white parliament. Although consensus was reached at the Congress the federal alternative was destined to be attacked by both the right and left-wings of the U.P., on the one hand for 'selling out' to the Blacks and on the other for retaining effective power in White hands.³⁹

Graaff also warned that those who in future broke ranks would receive no quarter. It was yet another attempt to restore party discipline. 'My lieutenants and I are determined that we should fight as a truly united party'. Intellectual ferment was natural in the U.P., he said, and therefore he had been patient but the time to close ranks had arrived. The N.P. was the only enemy.⁴⁰ Sir De Villiers effectively answered his critics who had earlier in the year demanded his resignation when he was again unanimously re-elected national leader. His popularity and standing in the United Party was overwhelming and confirmed the results of the Rapport poll which had indicated that he had no serious rivals.⁴¹ Considering his strong position in the Party it is surprising that he was so patient with those in subordinate leadership roles when they spoke out of turn or ignored disciplinary codes to follow their own inclinations.

38. Interviews with Graaff, Streicher, Wiley and Horak. Graaff had no doubt that the multi-racial assembly would eventually replace the white parliament in importance.

39. Horak interview, 8.6.72.

40. Argus, 9.11.73, 'No quarter: Graaff warned'.

41. Mark en Meningsopnames(Edms.) survey. The results appeared in Rapport, 4.11.73. They indicated that approximately sixty percent of U.P. supporters wanted Graaff to lead the Party, sixteen were for Basson and nine favoured Schwarz.

He appeared, indeed, to be too tolerant when dealing with those who deserved severe discipline. It looked as if he allowed problems to develop before acting and then often only after the damage had been done. It is easy to be wise with hindsight but had he nipped in the bud problems when they first appeared they might not have developed into the crises they frequently became with their consequent debilitating effects on Party morale. Graaff did not seem to exercise the strong leadership his popular standing in the Party entitled him to.⁴² His political style was to seek consensus rather to play the role of a dictator even when such an approach was justified. This, possibly, contributed to the decline of the Party as Graaff, himself, admitted in an interview with S.A.T.V.⁴³

Harry Schwarz when he addressed the congress adopted a conciliatory tone, and even proposed that Senator Herman Oelrich, a conservative, be re-elected chairman of the conference. He also had a proposed Transvaal resolution requesting the acceptance of its Act of Dedication withdrawn. Had this reformist document been debated it would most certainly have sparked off a confrontation between the two factions. A quarrel was avoided and Schwarz could feel satisfied that the revised programme of principles adopted by the congress in any event incorporated the main points of the Act of Dedication.⁴⁴ Schwarz admitted to the delegates that there were differences among them but added that they were not over matters of principle or of policy but rather concerned details of approach and the tempo of change.

42. Interviews with Senator Horak, 8.6.82 and Graaff, 16.6.82.

43. S.A.T.V. interview, 13.12.77. Among other observations Graaff admitted that, 'I was inclined to be chairman of the committee more than a leader in respect of certain issues...' and '... if I had given a stronger lead I'd have had more unanimity in the Party ...'.

44. Argus, 9.11.73, 'U.P. programme of principles'. It consisted of a preamble and six principles.

The congress was a major triumph for the United Party coming as it did at the end of a year of discord.⁴⁵ It was referred to as the 'peace' or 'unity' congress. Any clashes which took place must have occurred behind closed doors.⁴⁶ Officially the feuding groups had agreed to differ. But in the light of future events it became clear that the congress had merely patched over the cracks. The essential differences remained. According to John Wiley the congress had been a success because it was the desire of Sir De Villiers that unity be restored. The prospect of an election played a role as well. The reformists were 'accommodated at every turn', although 'I and others, who thought like me had the strongest reservations about accommodating the Young Turks'.⁴⁷ Wiley believed, as did most of the press, both English and Afrikaans, that the congress was in fact a triumph for the reformists. Not a single newspaper, though noting the success of the congress, believed that genuine unity had been restored. Schalk Pienaar of Rapport, for instance, congratulated the U.P. on once again having rescued itself from a serious crisis but predicted that there would soon be another. He believed that differences had been temporarily shelved because of negative reasons such as the approaching general election.⁴⁸ Rapport like the Burger⁴⁹ and other nationalist newspapers reported the congress as a victory for the reformists which would have dire consequences for the U.P. That the concept of power sharing had been adopted meant that the congress was in fact a victory congress for the reformists.

45. Sunday Times, 11.11.73, 'A great victory congress'.

46. Bill Horak in a personal interview explained that there were in fact open clashes between Schwarz and the 'establishment' before the congress opened and that Schwarz had threatened to leave Bloemfontein and return to the Transvaal with his delegates. Dr G. Jacobs had interceded on behalf of Graaff to persuade him to remain.

47. Interview with John Wiley, 5.4.82.

48. Rapport, 11.11.73, Schalk Pienaar: 'Transvaal red V.P. uit verleentheid'.

49. Die Burger, 10.11.73, 'Schwarz het tot duisver inisiatief in Bloemfontein'.

'Dawie' of the Burger referred to it as 'Harry Schwarz se kongress' and a triumph for the 'leftist-liberal' Young Turks but warned that this would lead to disaster for the United Party at the polls very similar to that suffered by it at the 'Hofmeyr election' of 1948. The reason would be the liberal interpretation of the federal policy by the Young Turks.⁵⁰

Hans Strydom of the Sunday Times managed to interpret the congress as the successful culmination of its campaign to reform the U.P. which had begun, he wrote, with its editorial of 15 August 1971, 'The Party that is losing its way'.⁵¹ The protracted operation had paid dividends and he congratulated the reformists for having given the Party 'a new lease of life'.⁵² The Times also maintained that it had always been the Party's strongest supporter. Even when it had called for Graaff's resignation the resultant shock had been beneficial, for at Bloemfontein the U.P. had rejected 'verkramptheid' and Graaff had aligned with the 'verligte spirit' sweeping the Party. The voters would thereafter return to it for it was 'the Party which had found its way'.⁵³ With a stroke of the pen the Sunday Times had cancelled its two year vendetta against the Party's democratically elected leaders and against policies formulated by its various formations. Yet, its support for the Young Turks, whose importance was exaggerated out of all proportion to their electoral impact, was one of the major contributory factors to the divisions within the Party. Its claim that it was the Party's strongest supporter was to be of short duration for when the civil war recommenced it continued its support, not for the Party, but for a certain faction within it.

50. Die Burger, 10.11.73, Dawie: 'Uit my politieke pen'.

51. Sunday Times, 15.8.71, editorial: 'The Party that is losing its way'. It is generally regarded as having started, or drawn attention to, dissension within the Party.

52. Sunday Times, 11.11.73, 'U.P. Congress vindicates the Sunday Times'.

53. IBID.

It had ceased to support the Party, or any section of it, by the time of its demise. There can be no escaping the massive role played by this newspaper in the affairs of the United Party and in the final analysis it was a negative one.⁵⁴

The Sunday Express and to a lesser extent the Argus emphasized Graaff's role in making the congress a success. The Express was of the opinion that it was the ordinary non-labelled majority of the U.P. which had achieved victory in Bloemfontein and that it was a triumph for Sir De Villiers rather than for the reformists.⁵⁵ It, too, was optimistic for the future but for different reasons from those of its rival, the Sunday Times.

Provincial leaders such as Myburgh Streicher and Radclyffe Cadman repudiated reports that any group had been victorious⁵⁶ at the congress. Schwarz wrote to the Sunday Times requesting that the terms 'Young Turk' and 'Old Guard' be dropped as 'we are all United Party members'. The newspaper retorted that if the factions disappeared then the terms would as well.

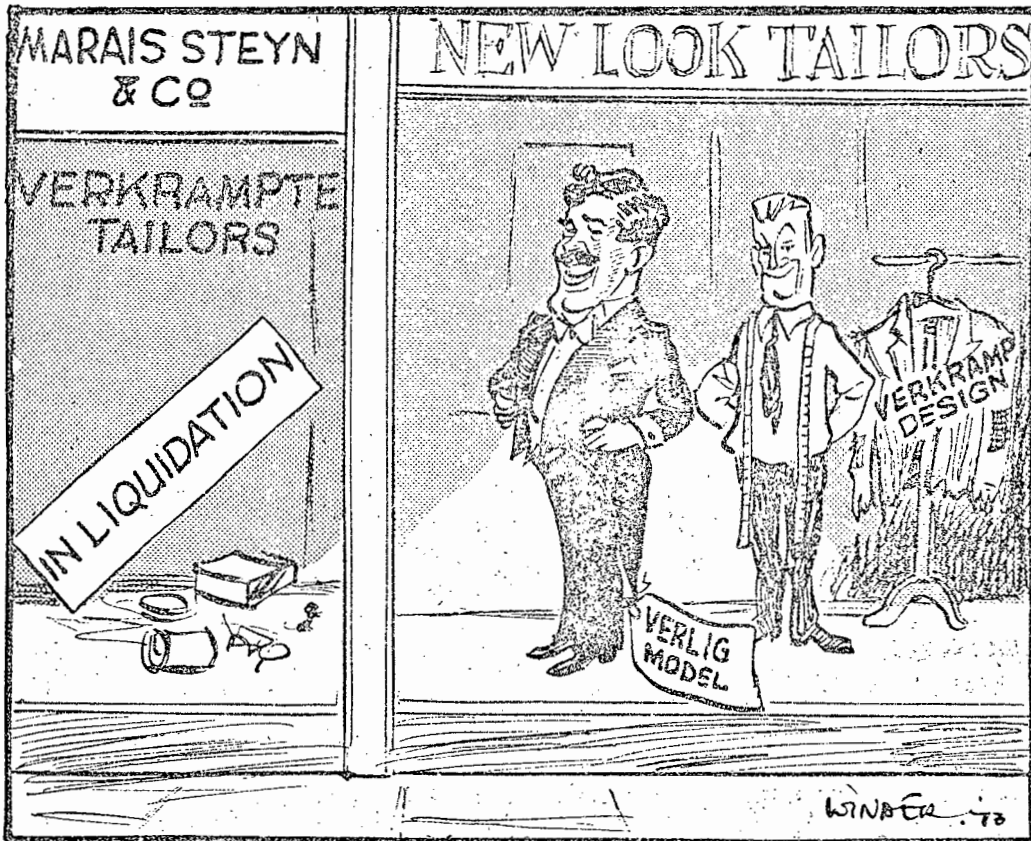
For the United Party the year ended on an upswing with the expected and often predicted split not materializing. The Party was officially united and preparing for an early election, possibly in April.

54. Interviews with Wiley, Streicher and Horak.

55. Sunday Express, 11.11.73, 'Graaff Triumph'.

56. Die Burger, 16.11.73, 'Geen groepe in V.P.'.

Unfortunately its highest expectations were dashed, the new year brought little goodwill and even less prosperity as it became enmeshed in a spiral of disasters culminating in the general election setbacks from which it was never to recover. There were destined to be no more victory congresses for the United Party.



'The 1973 National Congress ends the year on a high note'

CHAPTER VIII1974: A DECISIVE ELECTION YEAR

Notwithstanding the accord reached at the national congress the new year again brought all the simmering discontent to the surface. It was a sad reflection on the lack of party loyalty and discipline that it had to enter an election campaign in a dangerously divided state. One of the main reasons for this were the disputes concerning nominations, notably in certain seats on the Witwatersrand and in the Cape where the different factions manoeuvred to have their candidates accepted. The reformists were particularly keen to have 'verligtes' nominated in 'safe' seats in order to establish a power base in the parliamentary caucus where they had enjoyed little support. If that objective were achieved they would be better placed to continue the struggle to capture the United Party from within. The 'establishment' were as determined to maintain their strength in parliament. Consequently, an acrimonious battle resulted. As the Young Turks were in control on the Witwatersrand they had more success there than in any other region.

The nationalists, never slow to exploit a promising situation, played the two factions off against one another and frequently pretended doubt as to who really led the United Party - was it Sir De Villiers Graaff or Harry Schwarz? The Progressive Party which had languished in the political wilderness also exploited the United Party's difficulties to its advantage by appealing for support from the genuinely 'verligte' or liberal voter. Thus the United Party, which had to fight on two fronts while simultaneously coping with its internal squabbles, lost support both to the government and to the Progressives. The pendulum had finally begun to swing against it in terms of electoral support and was thereafter to gain momentum. Up to the 1974 election the Party had not lost any significant support.

By-election results, if not spectacular, had on the whole indicated that the Party was holding its position and in some cases showing an improvement, notwithstanding its many problems.¹ The 1974 results, however, suggested that the situation had altered and that opposition voters were not prepared to tolerate indefinitely a party divided against itself. Thereafter a swing away from the United Party accelerated to such a degree that Sir De Villiers finally disbanded it in favour of a new dispensation which he hoped would 'save South Africa' for by that time (1977) the United Party assuredly was not capable of the task.

1. The Mahlabatini Declaration.

While the nomination wrangles were developing Harry Schwarz refocused attention, with startling clarity, on the brittle nature of the consensus reached in November. His actions forced Graaff to take the almost unprecedented step of having publicly to reprimand his provincial leader for a breach of protocol. Early in January Schwarz took it upon himself to meet with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in Zululand. The result of their conference was the so-called 'Mahlabatini Declaration' where five points of agreement concerning common aims were reached. It was an attempt by Schwarz to promote dialogue with prominent black leaders and to create a blue-print for future inter-racial talks. It was also a follow-up operation to the Transvaal congress which had been addressed by three important black leaders. The general contents of the pact were sufficiently vague not to embarrass the Party and when Graaff's attention was drawn to the matter he concurred that they were in broad accord with U.P. policy.

1. For instance in Klip River and Vereeniging.

Schwarz's sojourn to Mahlabatini received wide publicity and the newspapers which supported him lauded his initiative. The attention which this issue received reopened the divisions which had been temporarily shelved at the Bloemfontein congress. Both Helen Suzman and the nationalists viewed the exercise as a transparently superficial gimmick to gain attention, which it certainly did do. The Burger, in addition predicted, correctly, that a clash between Harry Schwarz and the Party hierarchy was unavoidable.²

The reason for this was not so much the nature of the agreement but rather the manner in which Schwarz had conducted the operation as it raised the question of protocol and that of the party leadership.³ Although Schwarz initially indicated that he had given Sir De Villiers warning of his intentions, he later agreed that he had not acted correctly.⁴ In any event, it remained the prerogative of the Party leader rather than a provincial one to initiate agreements of this kind. The question which emerged was whether Schwarz was attempting to usurp the duties of his leader. In addition, as the meeting was held in Natal, it would also have been expected that the United Party in the province be informed of it. This procedure was not followed and Cadman was not notified of his colleague's intended visit.⁵

There can be little doubt that Schwarz had acted in good faith and in the best interests of the Party, as he understood them to be, but the matter did not end there. As the leading reformist he received both praise and criticism for his actions. 'Dawie', of the Burger, wrote that the incident was an endeavour to place Schwarz in a good light and to reflect unfavourably on those who had not acted earlier as he had done.

2. Die Burger, 16.1.74, 'Botsing met Schwarz in V.P. onkeerbaar'.

3. IBID., 25.1.74, 'A leier laat hom lei'.

4. Interview with Graaff 16.6.82.

5. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.32.

In any event, dialogue with homeland leaders was nothing new and, according to 'Dawie', Schwarz's theatrical gesture was nothing more than 'breaking in through an open door', which would have no positive results.⁶

The Sunday Express regarded his 'Declaration' as an act of political indiscretion which was inopportune on the eve of an election. Its leading article castigated Schwarz for usurping his leader's position, of offending the Natal leader, and for creating ill-will by meeting Chief Buthelezi a few days before other U.P. leaders were scheduled to consult with him.⁷ It concluded that Schwarz had not been authorized to negotiate any pact and that rather than having done the Party a service it was likely to lose its votes.⁸ It so happened that Cadman was destined to lose the Eshowe (Zululand) seat to the nationalists following a campaign in which his opponents used the old stock-in-trade 'swart gevaar' tactics to exploit the 'Declaration' which his colleague had cemented with the Zulu leader.⁹

A week after having met his Transvaal leader, Sir De Villiers bleatedly, but publicly rebuked him for the manner in which he had acted.¹⁰ Considering the reformists' past record of provocative acts there was little else he could do. He had stayed his hand to maintain the fragile Party unity but eventually had been forced to respond. In a statement, he made it clear that, 'Mr Schwarz understands that I won't tolerate any infringement of my leadership no matter how unintentional'.¹¹

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6. Die Burger, 19.1.74, 'Dawie, uit my politieke pen'.
 7. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.
 8. Sunday Express, 20.1.74, Editorial: 'Schwarz's U.D.I.'.
 9. Eshowe had also been unfavourably delimited for the U.P.
 10. Sunday Times, 20.1.74, Uys: 'Farcical reaction to Schwarz coup'.
 11. Rapport, 27.1.74, 'Die bitterste pil vir Harry'.

While this was a fairly mild reprimand the Transvaal reformists were not prepared to let the matter rest there, and two days later, on January 24, held a meeting of the Witwatersrand General Council where a motion of confidence was passed in Harry Schwarz by 490 votes to 10.¹² Japie Basson also declared himself totally in accord with the 'Mahlabatin! Declaration' which he said, made it possible to talk to the outside world. He believed that Schwarz had acted correctly. This defiant stand by the Transvaal seemed to indicate that it cared little for the Party as a whole or the harm it could do it. The Sunday Times considered the show of solidarity for Schwarz as a vindication of the Declaration and praised him to the hilt for having made it possible.¹³ When Schwarz addressed the gathering he explained that it had not been his intention to bypass Graaff or infringe on his authority but that he had done it in the interests of the Party. The meeting was clearly dissatisfied with Graaff's reaction and it was only with reluctance that it supported a motion of confidence in him as well when it was proposed by Francois Oberholzer, a party loyalist.¹⁴

On January 31 the matter was officially aired, for the last time, at a Party caucus meeting attended by Harry Schwarz. According to Catherine Taylor, the Transvaal leader was bitterly attacked by Radclyffe Cadman in what she referred to as the 'closest thing at an attempt at political murder' she had ever witnessed.¹⁵ Schwarz apparently had to endure a sustained assault by the caucus which consisted mainly of conservatives and which fully endorsed Sir De Villiers Graaff's earlier reprimand even after Schwarz had expressed his regret to the caucus and had apologized for his breach of protocol.¹⁶

12. Sunday Times, 27.1.74, Serfontein: 'Schwarz triumph 490-10'.

13. IBID., Editorial: 'What the fight is all about'.

14. IBID., 'Schwarz Triumph'.

15. C. Taylor, If Courage Goes, p. 119. See also Sunday Express, 3.2.74, Robertson: 'Cadman emerges as U.P. strongman'.

16. Rapport, 3.2.74, 'Harry veg vir sy politieke lewe'. See also Die Burger editorial: 'Koukus sit Schwarz op sy plek'.

For the sake of unity the Party had again closed its ranks,¹⁷ but had there not been an election approaching Schwarz and his colleagues would probably have resigned at that point. As it was, the election offered the opportunity of returning to parliament a number of reformists, including Schwarz himself, and there would thus be no profit in leaving. To have resigned or to have been driven out over the 'Mahlabatini Declaration' would have achieved nothing positive for them.¹⁸ Consequently, Schwarz, who did not wish to split the Party, had to swallow his pride and apologize, and thus deferred the likely break for the time being. The Sunday Times was critical of the methods adopted by the Old Guard which it claimed had used the 'Mahlabatini Declaration' as a pretext to force Schwarz out of the Party. That he had accepted his treatment from the caucus had enhanced his stature and meant that he placed the interests of the Party first.¹⁹ The newspaper wrote no word of support for the caucus nor did it mention the other issues involved.

2. Nomination disputes.

In February²⁰ John Vorster officially announced that the election would take place on Wednesday April 24. What had been expected had been confirmed and a long election campaign of two and a half months lay ahead. It proved to be an arduous period for the United Party and considering the nomination and other traumas it had to survive it was surprising that it performed no worse than it did.

17. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', pp. 382-396.

18. Cape Times, 1.2.74, Shaw: 'The Plot that failed'.

19. Sunday Times, 3.2.74, 'Political Piranhas'.

20. Hansard, 4.2.74, column 65.

Although the acrimonious nomination contests were confined to the Witwatersrand and parts of the Cape they captured the limelight, for in many ways they epitomized the struggle for the very soul of the United Party. The promotion of reformist candidates in certain seats represented an endeavour to infuse the U.P. with new and young ideas. Every political party, particularly one which has been in opposition for many decades, could do with rejuvenation. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on the observers point of view, the traditional 'Sappe' regarded the Basson-Schwarz direction as an attack rather than a positive contribution by people who had abrasive personalities and who had adopted brash methods in the past to achieve questionable objectives.²¹ In addition, the changes advocated appeared to be of a liberal-radical nature which were unsuitable for a Party which had rejected Jan Hofmeyr in 1948 and the Progressives in 1959. Basson, with his chequered political background,²² and Schwarz, who had almost left with the Progressives in 1959, were not considered to be part of the ethos of the United Party. To the traditionalists they represented a group who were progressive in everything but in name.

21. It was generally accepted that Harry Schwarz had a quick temper which, as an example, was in evidence at the time of Marais Steyn's defection. Rapport, 9.9.73, illustrated this by way of a cartoon and a short verse:

By resigning an M.P. called Steyn
caused the U.P. a great deal of peyn
but Sir De Villiers Graaff
found it hard not to laaff
when Schwarz lost his temper again.

I would like to add that my personal research confirmed that Mr Schwarz was often difficult to work with and did get annoyed easily. He, of all the people I spoke to, was the only one who broke an appointment for an interview and later refused to answer my written questions unless some of them were altered. See also Barnard, pp. 351, 370, 433.

22. Japie Basson was a full-time U.P. organizer in the 1940's, joined the N.P. in 1950 and became an M.P. for S.W.A. before being expelled from the Party in 1959. In 1960 he established the National Union Party which formed an electoral agreement with the U.P. for the election of that year. Thereafter he returned to the U.P.

Consequently, the United Party hierarchy, particularly in the Cape, was generally not receptive to reform candidates and a bitter struggle developed at constituency level for ultimate control of the Party caucus.

In the Cape, constituency nominations had to be approved by the Provincial Candidates Committee whose decisions were, in the event of an appeal, subject only to the Central Candidates Committee of which Sir De Villiers Graaff was the chairman. In addition, it consisted of the five provincial leaders (including South West Africa), the Party's chief whip, Gray Hughes and its national general secretary, Senator Horak. Not only in the Cape, but elsewhere, nominations at constituency level which were supported by the local divisional committees consisting of branch delegates were in the normal course of events approved by the provincial body and such nominations became the official Party candidates for the election. Matters usually proceeded smoothly unless the Provincial candidates committee took exception to a nomination from a constituency. If an acceptable compromise could not be reached then the Central Committee made the final decision. But should an unpopular candidate be foisted on a constituency as occasionally happened, it created a great many problems which often had repercussions in other electoral divisions.

In the Cape, the Candidates Committee consisted of its leader, Myburgh Streicher, the deputy leader, John Wiley and Senator Redi Louw. This triumvirate was regarded by the reformists as being almost reactionary and was part of what the Sunday Times had chosen to call a 'verkrampste mafia'. Of the three, Wiley had been the most outspoken in his criticism of the reform movement and of the press which supported it.²³

23. Interview with Wiley.

It was almost inevitable that he and the rest of the committee, would become involved in nomination tussles where reformists were put forward as candidates.

The Young Turks had made some headway in the Peninsula following public meetings addressed by Harry Schwarz and visits by other of his lieutenants, while the Young South Africans had been infiltrated and finally captured by the reformists.²⁴ This small but vociferous nucleus, which drew inspiration from the Witwatersrand, began a campaign to undermine the standing of leading United Party figures in the province which it saw fit to regard as verkramptes.²⁵ Their efforts were solidly backed by the local English language press with the Cape Times and Argus in Cape Town, the Herald and Evening Post in Port Elizabeth and the Daily Dispatch in East London all doing their best to keep the local reform movement alive. This meant that they wrote critically of the Party hierarchy with whom they had little in common.

Although Party leaders were not normally opposed in their own seats, Wiley discovered, through the newspapers, that he was to be an exception and that a certain Dr Peter Penny²⁶ was to seek nomination in Simonstown. Wiley thus became involved in the first nomination squabble in the Province.²⁷

24. In 1973 Maans Kemp had been elected leader of the Party's youth movement in the Cape and thereafter had replaced Andre Fourie as its national leader.

25. Interviews with Wiley, Streicher and Graaff.

26. A Cape Town lawyer and economist.

27. Cape Times, 25.12.73- 'Penny seeks U.P. nomination'.

Dr Penny was a reformist²⁸ and although he had no hope of winning the nomination had challenged Wiley in order to show '... that John Wiley was not representative of the United Party'. He also believed that more Party leaders should have signed the agreement with Chief Buthelezi.²⁹ Dr Penny, who had made known his plans shortly before Christmas, received a tremendous amount of publicity for the next couple of weeks while the matter was being settled. The whole episode appeared to be a publicity exercise to denigrate Wiley and boost the reformist cause. As it turned out, the challenger, who was a stranger to Simons-town, received not a single vote³⁰ from the local divisional committee but made up for this by receiving extensive media coverage, which was unusual for a defeated candidate in a nomination contest - few others were accorded even so much as a mention. What had made all the difference was that Dr Penny had championed the reformist cause against a leading conservative. Dr Penny, also contrary to his written undertaking, released to the press the text of his speech to the divisional committee.³¹ This conformed to the modus operandi of the reformists who at times revealed the confidential affairs of the Party to the media and then denied that they had done so or else, as in the case of Dr Penny, maintained that it was necessary to do so in the interests of the Party's image. The 'Penny affair' was an unworthy little episode, its sole objective being the embarrassment of an elected and therefore, presumably, representative party leader while simultaneously gaining publicity for the reformist-wing of the Party.

Once the dust had settled in his own constituency attention was focused on a number of other vexing nomination disputes.

28. Minutes of the 'GROW' organization, 27.4.74, revealed him to be closely associated with this reformist group within the U.P.

29. Sunday Times, 20.1.74, 'Penny explains challenge'.

30. Cape Times, 22.1.74, 'Wiley backed unanimously'. The vote was 30 to nil. See Die Burger, 22.1.74, 'Verligte Sap kry aapstert'.

31. Argus, 22.1.74, 'U.P. leaders rebuke disclosure by Penny'.

In the Peninsula the Wynberg constituency became the most controversial while Sea Point and Gardens also presented problems. In Port Elizabeth, both Walmer and Central became embroiled in the Party's factional differences while East London City became marginally involved. The unedifying wrangles were accompanied by unfavourable press comment which harmed the United Party's election campaign. Although the nomination of candidates was an internal and private matter it did not stop interested parties from revealing the course of events to the press.

By the end of January the newspapers, both English and Afrikaans, were writing of a major crisis in the Party as the 'nomination in-fighting rages'.³² The Burger told of a 'struggle to the death' in the United Party³³ while the Cape Times maintained that the activities of the Old Guard were wrecking the unity of the Bloemfontein congress. This all coincided with the problems Schwarz's meeting with Chief Buthelezi had created.

Before dealing with the disputes in more detail it is of interest to note some of the side issues which emerged because Party representatives had been labelled verlig or verkrampt, Young Turk or Old Guard. Dr Jan Moolman, M.P. for East London City was at the time 72 years old but was still regarded as a Young Turk because he had been critical of the Cape leadership! David Graaff and Theo Aronson were both 32 but were unfavourably received because they had been identified with the Old Guard and were opposing sitting members who were reformist in their thinking although much older than the challengers.

32. Cape Times, 26.1.74, 'Party heads for major crisis'.

33. Die Burger, 26.1.74, 'Stryd tot die Dood bars los in die V.P.'. See also IBID., 28.1.74, 'Sappe se lang messe uit'.

The Sunday Times had, early in February, expressed the hope that the United Party would nominate younger men and that the 'dead wood should be axed'.³⁴ Apparently this did not always apply, as the yardstick to be used was whether a candidate was a reformist or not. This was an example of the type of inconsistency with which the Party had to cope.

'Kobus' van Eeden who was regarded as a verligte and was the favourite to win the Wynberg nomination had had a chequered political background (ref. later). As recently as 1968 he had held what could be construed as anything but enlightened views when he appealed to the voters of Caledon to support him, in a by-election, because he was 'vir die witman'. No doubt he had since reviewed his political philosophy but what really counted in his favour was that he had become a supporter of the reformist movement and whether he held verligte or other views was of secondary importance.

During the 1970 general election the Candidates Committee had intervened three times in nomination issues and had not received any criticism.³⁵ Had all the United Party candidates in 1974 simply been regarded as being for the Party, as had been the case in the previous election, then the undignified in-fighting between different factions could largely have been avoided and, also, possibly, the decline of the Party. What, too, would have been avoided was the placing of Sir De Villiers in the unenviable position of having to appear to choose sides when he was called upon to decide between the final nomination of one candidate or another. Whatever judgement he made it was certain to be criticized by the supporters of the losing candidate.

34. Sunday Times, 3.2.74.

35. Interviews with Streicher and Wiley.

This was an intolerable situation but to his credit Graaff endeavoured to be the impartial mediator.³⁶ A lesser figure would not have been able to hold the warring factions together and it was largely as a result of his efforts that the Party went into the election as a single, if somewhat battered, entity.

The Wynberg nomination epitomized the civil war in the Party. Whereas nomination procedures generally passed uneventfully in Natal, the Orange Free State and South West Africa where a spirit of unity still prevailed a tactical battle was waged on the Reef and in parts of the Cape as competing candidates jockeyed for advantage.³⁷ Catherine Taylor's decision not to seek re-election in Wynberg following the Schlebusch episode and her growing disillusionment with party politics meant that a vacancy existed. Brian Bamford, the local M.P.C., was regarded as her logical successor before he was approached by the Candidates Committee to make himself available in the Rondebosch seat. Sir De Villiers Graaff was going to move to the new division of Groote Schuur and the United Party needed a 'verligte' candidate to oppose Prof van Zyl Slabbert who was to receive the Progressive Party nomination in the constituency. Bamford agreed to move and Wynberg, consequently, needed another candidate.³⁸ The divisional committee nominated Kobus 'Yster' van Eeden, a prominent politician from the Swellendam district and chairman of the Southern Cape Region of the United Party. He was a reformist and a follower of Harry Schwarz but he did not enjoy the confidence of the Cape hierarchy, who favoured the nomination of Jac De Villiers, M.P.C. for Constantia, and leader of the U.P. in the Provincial Council.

36. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82. He said that Graaff went out of his way to accommodate the reformists.

37. IBID.

38. Bamford agreed on condition that there would be an open nomination contest in Wynberg, an undertaking which he believed he had received from Wiley before he agreed to move. There was later doubt concerning this and resulted in the Cape Times, Editorial, 4.2.74, 'Assurances and amnesia'.

De Villiers was linked to the right-wing of the Party and had recently blotted his copy-book by having been the only delegate at the Bloemfontein Congress briefly to have crossed swords publicly with Schwarz.³⁹

Notwithstanding various other gatherings and contradictory press reports the only official Party nomination meeting in Wynberg was held on January 10 where the divisional committee put forward van Eeden as their choice for the election. The Provincial candidates committee, was however, not prepared to accept this decision, ostensibly because certain objections had been received regarding the validity of the composition of the divisional committee. The Wynberg division appealed to the Central Candidates Committee to uphold their choice but this was rejected. Thereafter the Cape hierarchy unanimously nominated De Villiers as the official Wynberg candidate.⁴⁰ Sir De Villiers Graaff also turned down a personal appeal by van Eeden.

The apparently dictatorial methods employed by the Candidates committee to overrule the democratic rights of the constituency resulted in a sustained and blistering press attack which totally overlooked the fact that the Committee had acted constitutionally.⁴¹ Whether its decision was a wise one was debatable for it went against the wishes of the local supporters, a number of whom refused to campaign for Jac De Villiers while others joined Theo Gerdener's Democratic Party which decided to fish in troubled waters by contesting the seat.⁴²

39. Cape Times, 10.11.73, 'Angry Attack on Schwarz'.

40. Cape Times, 4.2.74, 'De Villiers gets Wynberg'.

41. IBID., 12.2.74, Editorial: 'Alienating support'.

42. Argus, 4.3.74, 'Gerdener for city talks'. There were rumours that Taylor would stand for the D.P. See also Cape Times, 23.4.74, 'Taylor may join D.P., fight seat'.

There can be no doubt that the Wynberg nomination contest, and the adverse publicity it received, affected the Party, for its majority was substantially cut as De Villiers' share of the vote dropped at the election.⁴³ It is equally certain that the Candidates committee had opted for De Villiers as he was a Party loyalist, and had rejected Kobus van Eeden because of his political track-record, particularly his more recent flirtation with the reformists. Previously he had left the United Party in the early 1950's with the Bailey Bekker group to form the short-lived Conservative Party which had regarded Adv Strauss, then leader of the U.P., as being too 'liberal'. Van Eeden returned to the U.P. via Japie Basson's National Union Party which formed an electoral pact with the U.P. for the 1961 general election. With such a discouraging past it could be more readily understood why the Candidates committee had played safe and nominated Jac De Villiers whose party credentials were impeccable.

In the Gardens seat the sitting member, Harold van Hoogstraten, enjoyed constituency support but there was a strong move to have the son of the leader of the opposition, David Graaff, replace the sixty-two year old incumbent. Graaff was half his age and although an attempt was made to label him as being a verkrampte there was no concrete evidence to support such a claim. Van Hoogstraten was, however, the press favourite as he was a committed reformist. He also had the support of his divisional committee.⁴⁴

43. H. du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1977', p. 130. In a 63 percent poll the United Party majority dropped to 1 586 when the U.P. polled 4 354 votes, the N.P. 2 768 and the Democratic Party 1 946.

44. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', pp. 408-430. In 1970 the divisional committee did not want him but the Party leadership did!

The Central Candidates committee was asked to consider the Gardens nomination but before a decision was made the issue resolved itself when Dr Marius Barnard declared that he would no longer consider standing as a U.P. candidate. Sea Point had been earmarked for the 'verligte' doctor but with his withdrawal David Graaff was asked, by the local division, to stand in his place.⁴⁵ Consequently, van Hoogstraten's nomination was confirmed in the Gardens but not before a great deal of public animosity had been aroused.

This resolved the situation in the Cape peninsula but it was unfortunate that private and domestic differences within the Party had become the subjects of public debate and frequently as a result of inaccurate press speculation.⁴⁶ In order to clarify the position, and to defend themselves, the Candidates committee was forced to reveal the reasons for some of their controversial decisions. This only complicated the issue and opened the door for further criticism as their explanations were not acceptable to the reformist newspapers.

In February Dr Marius Barnard listed his reasons for withdrawing from the contest. They included the Party's role in the Schiebusch Commission, its handling of the Schwarz-Buthelezi declaration and the nomination disputes.⁴⁷

45. A memorandum signed by Streicher (undated) to the Central Disciplinary Committee in 1974 regarding Carlisle, mentioned that he and the Sea Point division initially were opposed to the candidature of David Graaff in December 1973. Only after Dr Barnard's unavailability did they support him.

46. As for example in Wynberg.

47. Sunday Times, 16.2.74, 'Barnard: Why I withdrew as U.P. candidate'.

It is surprising that he was prepared to stand in the first place as he was fully aware of the Party's attitude to at least the Schlebusch issue. Nevertheless, he had put his finger on some of the causes for dissension within the Party and when a man of his public standing was not prepared to make himself available for election because of them, his decision damaged its image.⁴⁸ It may even have cost the United Party the Sea Point seat which was won by the Progressives.⁴⁹ But it remains debatable whether his election to parliament for the United Party would in any way have helped heal the rifts within it, for on his own admission, he was a verligte and would have sided with the Basson-Schwarz wing of the Party. When the U.P. was disbanded he never became a supporter of its successor the N.R.P. and is currently (1982) the P.F.P. member of parliament for Parktown. In 1974 personalities such as Dr Barnard were being favoured by the reformist newspapers and they were difficult to oppose because of their status although, according to Wiley, he was 'no more a United Party supporter than was the man in the moon'.⁵⁰

In Port Elizabeth two sitting members faced problems: Walter Kingwill of Walmer and van Zyl Cillie of Central. Neither could be labelled verkramp. Cillie was destined to travel the same road as Kobus van Eeden. Having received constituency support he was rejected by the 'axemen' as the Sunday Times called the Provincial Candidates committee.⁵¹ Kingwill lost the Walmer nomination to his sitting M.P.C., Theo Aronson, at divisional level and although, in this instance, the reformist press were upset about it they could do little as democracy had run its course. They had predicted a win for Kingwill and were upset at the outcome of the voting.

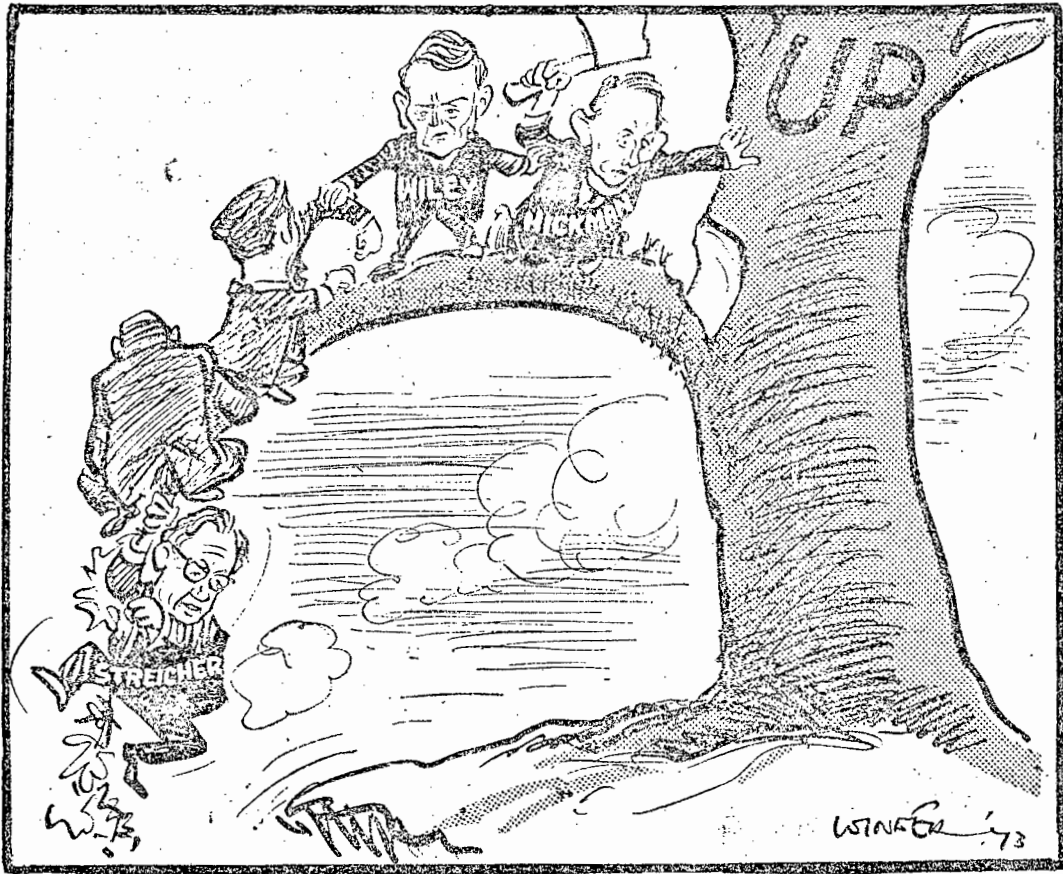
48. Cape Times, 8.2.74, Editorial: 'Setback for United Party'.

49. Interview with Wiley. He was of the opinion that it did.

50. IBID., answer to question 40.

51. Sunday Times, 17.2.74, 'U.P. hatchmen slip up'.

When the Central Candidates committee upheld the decision rejecting Cillie's nomination Kingwill replaced him as the candidate for Central.



'The activities of the Cape leadership harm the Party'

The treatment meted out to van Zyl Cillie, who had won the seat back from the nationalists in 1970, was widely criticized. It was regarded as having been motivated rather by personal animosity than by political differences although he was a reformist and therefore in the opposite camp from the leadership group. He had, however, incurred the displeasure of the Party leadership over various incidents. In November of the previous year he had struck Bert Meintjies, a U.P. organizer, who had laid a charge and claimed damages of R4 300.⁵²

52. In a statement, 10.12.1973, van Zyl Cillie recounted the events leading to this incident. It emerged that Cillie believed that Meintjies had the support of the Party hierarchy who were using him to undermine his (van Zyl's) position.

Meintjies apparently enjoyed the confidence of the Cape leaders and Cillie was convinced that Wiley was making use of the organizer to undermine his position in the Port Elizabeth region. When confronted with these suspicions Meintjies denied them, called van Zyl Cillie a liar and was then struck by him.⁵³ Distorted reports of this unedifying incident, and its consequences, appeared in the press which left an unsatisfactory picture of the state of affairs in the Party in this region.

Another matter, which did not reach the newspapers, but of which the Party leaders were aware, was that of the friction which existed between Cillie and Mannie Goldberg, chairman of the Port Elizabeth Regional Council and confidant of the Cape hierarchy. Following an argument between the two men in which Goldberg cast doubt on Cillie's competence to handle the Party finances he stated in a letter to the Provincial secretary, Neil de Goede, that in future he would refuse to sit at the same finance table as van Zyl Cillie. He also indicated that if van Zyl Cillie were not opposed at the next election, he would, himself, do so in the interests of the Party.⁵⁴

The Cape leaders were also in possession of a statement from Frank Smith, then chairman of the divisional committee of Central, in which he expressed strong opposition to van Zyl Cillie who he maintained had publicly insulted him and his wife at a committee meeting where they were accused of being of no value to the Party. They had consequently withdrawn their support from him. Smith also brought attention to the manner in which the local branches were constituted to ensure that Cillie would win any nomination contest.⁵⁵

53. IBID.

54. Private letter, 6.11.1973, from Mannie Goldberg to Neil de Goede.

55. Statement, 28.11.73, signed by Frank Smith.

Wiley, in an interview, later confirmed that the branches were controlled by friends or relations of van Zyl Cillie.⁵⁶

There were obviously strong feelings between the Party leadership and Cillie but there were also reasonably strong grounds to disqualify him from receiving the 1974 nomination. He had undoubtedly not acted in a manner calculated to win friends and influence the electorate.

Cillie, in his turn, was understandably annoyed at being 'axed' by the Candidates committee who thereafter accepted Kingwill who had lost the constituency vote in Walmer. The manoeuvring within the Party in the Eastern Cape, which daily received adverse press comment, left it ill-prepared for the approaching election according to the Herald and with a 'defeatist attitude' to boot. The public which had to base its opinion on inaccurate media reports were left largely ignorant of the factors which were considered before nominations were finalized. Nevertheless, the procedures followed were those laid down in the Party's constitution and were executed by democratically elected leaders who were invested with certain powers. Van Zyl Cillie, amidst all types of speculation that he would stand as an independent or even oppose Myburgh Streicher in Newton Park eventually refuted these rumours. He would continue to support the Party although he was dissatisfied with its decisions and would work to change its leadership at the next congress where there would be a chance 'to elect enlightened men to lead the U.P.'⁵⁷

56. Interview with John Wiley, 5.4.82.

57. Herald, 2.3.74, 'Axed M.P. is not standing'.

The rejection of Cillie's nomination had a sequel when the former M.P. for Port Elizabeth West (later Newton Park), George Hayward, in an interview published by the Herald demanded that, 'Streicher and his friends' be expelled from the Party.⁵⁸ He also expressed disappointment with Sir De Villiers Graaff's leadership but praised Harry Schwarz. This outburst had followed an open letter in which he took the almost unheard of step, for a member of the Party, to call publicly on the voters of Newton Park not to support Streicher whom he hoped would lose the seat.⁵⁹ These remarks inflamed the reformist-Old Guard dispute. They were exploited to the full by the nationalists and reformist supporting press to the detriment of the Party as a whole. Hayward was evidently very bitter about the treatment meted out to van Zyl Cillie who happened to be his son-in-law. Hayward's outburst could not be ignored and he was expelled from the U.P.⁶⁰

These and other political squabbles bedevilled the Party as the election approached. While all political organizations experience differences of opinion those in the United Party went beyond the bounds of acceptability and were too intense to lead to a satisfactory conclusion. Even had nomination procedures been more 'democratic' and the system modified as was suggested by both Schwarz and Basson it was unlikely to have resolved the problem.⁶¹ If constituencies had the final right to approve the selection of candidates the factional battle would merely have been shifted to that level of authority and would in all probability have been more widespread than it had been.

58. Herald, 1.4.74, 'Get rid of Cape leader, says U.P. veteran.'

59. Evening Post, 20.2.74, 'Hayward hits hard at Streicher'.

60. Cape Times, 2.4.74, 'Ex-M.P. expelled for attack on Cape leader'.

61. Die Burger, 21.2.74, 'Basson gooi klip in V.P. bos'. See also IBID., 24.2.74, 'Grootmond op Kleinmond'.

No matter what nomination procedures were in operation there would still have been problems because the trouble lay not with the procedures but with the United Party itself.

There were other nomination incidents in the Cape which received their share of adverse comment. Dr Jan Moolman of East London City withdrew from the contest when it was intimated by the Candidates committee that they preferred Harland Bell. Dr Moolman was 72 years of age but was regarded as a Young Turk supporter. He accused Streicher and Wiley of leading a verkrampte movement aimed at eliminating the verligtes.⁶² The official reasons for his unacceptability, however, were given as being his age and the fact that he had allowed the Party organization to deteriorate in his constituency. The other unpleasant dispute was in Green Point where the sitting M.P.C. Sam Gross, a verligte, was ousted by Andrew Hudson a Party organizer.⁶³ In this instance the vote was a 'democratic' one and Hudson was chosen by 29 votes to 25 by a specially constituted electoral college.⁶⁴ Gross rejected the decision as being invalid because he regarded the composition of the college as irregular.⁶⁵ An appeal to the Central Candidates committee upheld the decision of the electoral college. Gross expressed his reservations in the local press which in this case sympathized with him notwithstanding their repeated demands for the acceptance of democratic decisions as should have been the case in Wynberg and Central. In this instance they would have been satisfied had the Central committee rejected Hudson, the party organizer, for Gross, the verligte. The latter felt that many supporters would cross to the Progressive Party or abstain from voting.

62. Cape Times, 26.1.74, 'Cape leaders accused'.

63. Argus, 7.3.74, 'Hudson beats Gross at electoral college'.

64. Convened by the Cape Peninsula Council, it consisted of delegates from six Green Point branches, from twelve other seats and representatives of the Cape Peninsula Council itself.

65. Argus, 8.3.74, 'Gross fights Party choice'.

He remained 'aggrieved at Graaff's decision' while his wife resigned as chairperson of the Green Point women's branch.⁶⁶

These were the main points of friction in the Cape although there were a few other less well publicized ones. Yet, notwithstanding the invective directed against the Candidates committee it had interfered directly in only three constituencies.⁶⁷ As Streicher pointed out, the powers exercised by the Committee had not been created by them but had been inherited and had been used in the past without undue comment.⁶⁸ If the Party had been free of factions it would have been unlikely to have faced any acrimonious nomination contests. Instead, the whole unseemly exercise contributed to a loss of confidence in the Party as an effective political organization.

In the Transvaal the boot was on the other foot as there Harry Schwarz was chairman of the Candidates committee which had even greater powers than its counterpart in the Cape.⁶⁹ A different approach was adopted and reformists were favoured wherever nomination contests arose involving candidates with opposing views.⁷⁰ Rightly or wrongly the situation developed where Sir De Villiers Graaff and his Central committee were seen to be approving mainly 'verligte' nominations in the Transvaal while axing them in the Cape. Towards the end of January when Sir De Villiers was busy rejecting the appeals of Cape verligtes⁷¹ he was simultaneously approving the nominations of leading Transvaal reformists such as Dalling, Enthoven and van Rensburg.⁷²

66. Cape Times, 14.3.74, 'Nomination decision disastrous says Gross'.

67. IBID., 25.1.74, 'Old Guard seek to oust verligte U.P. candidates', and IBID., 20.2.74, 'Cathy hits at Party machine', whom she (Taylor) referred to as a 'coterie of ruthless men'.

68. Interview with Streicher, 5.5.82.

69. IBID.

70. Sunday Express, 27.1.74, 'Choosing candidates - method resented'.

71. Cape Times, 27.1.74, 'Decisions stay - U.P. leaders'.

72. Argus, 9.2.74, 'Tough bargaining over nominations'.

Both the Burger and the Sunday Express were of the opinion that a tactical battle was being fought in certain Transvaal constituencies and that Schwarz was delaying the approval of some Old Guard nominations such as that of Dr Fisher (Rosettenville) and Hendrik van Eck (Benoni) until he had secured the candidatures of certain verligtes in other constituencies.⁷³ A case in point was the nomination of Prof N Olivier in Edenvale.⁷⁴ A Stellenbosch academic, and recent United Party recruit, the professor received the nomination ahead of George Oliver, a conservative, whose Kensington seat had disappeared at the most recent delimitation.⁷⁵ Although Prof Olivier won the nomination legitimately it was speculated by the Sunday Express that had he not received Edenvale then the nomination of Old Guard candidates would have been blocked on the Witwatersrand. The professor's nomination did create a good deal of comment for he had been selected ahead of local men such as Oliver who were long standing members of the United Party. What made Nic Oliver acceptable on the Witwatersrand was his verligte image. This was the decisive factor.⁷⁶ No criticism was raised because he lived in Stellenbosch and sought a Transvaal nomination. Yet, the Cape leader Streicher who lived in Durbanville but represented a Port Elizabeth constituency was criticized for this by the same sources which favoured Olivier's nomination! In the intriguing political power game no stone was left unturned to gain an advantage over an opponent no matter what inconsistencies were revealed in the process. In Wynberg both aspirant candidates were strangers to the constituency and consequently the question of residence had never been raised.⁷⁷

73. Interviews with Wiley and Streicher.

74. Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 410-411. Dave Dalling admitted to the author that they wanted verligte candidates nominated ahead of Old Guard ones.

75. Burger, 11.2.74, 'Tuis nou oor Olivier'.

76. Dr S.L. Barnard, p. 416.

77. Van Eeden came from the Swellendam area, Jac De Villiers from Paarl.

Reformists regarded Olivier's nomination as compensation for the loss of Wynberg. Thereafter the approval of certain Old Guard nominations could go ahead. Etienne Malan was a point in case. As a member of the Schlebusch Commission he had faced intense opposition on the Reef. His was the very last nomination to be approved and then only because Sir De Villiers Graaff had insisted on his colleague receiving it.⁷⁸ The delay and uncertainty in Orange Grove contributed to Etienne Malan's defeat by Rupert Lorimer of the Progressive Party.⁷⁹ Graaff had overruled the divisional committee of Orange Grove and rescued Malan who had been doing an unpopular parliamentary duty for the United Party. The Star referred to this as the 'unseemly nomination of Etienne Malan by Graaff' while Hogarth de Hoogh of the Sunday Times, which had recently claimed that it had the best interests of the Party at heart,⁸⁰ wrote that Graaff had become the captive of his Old Guard, and would reap the whirlwind.⁸¹ As it turned out, Malan faced the most slanderous campaign of denigration of any candidate in the election which included allusions to his supposedly anti-semitic past. The unsavoury nature of this criticism must have frightened all verligtes and a good many verkramptes from voting for him. Yet, Malan was regarded by his colleagues as one of the hardest and most conscientious workers in parliament.⁸² Conceivably, had a reformist candidate been nominated in Orange Grove, as the

78. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82, and with Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82.

79. Dr S.L. Barnard, p. 422. Mervis of the Sunday Times would boycott Progressive candidates until the Party moved Lorimer from Bryanston where he was opposing the Young Turk reformist Horace van Rensburg. Once they had done so no leading reformist was opposed by the P.P. in the Transvaal.

80. Following the November 1973 National Congress in Bloemfontein.

81. Sunday Times, 3.3.74, 'Div. lets himself down over nominations'.

82. Graaff regarded him as an outstanding member of the Party's parliamentary team. He had a brilliant academic record as a Rhodes scholar.

constituency committees had wished, the seat would have been saved as the Progressive Party tended not to contest divisions where 'known' United Party verligtes such as Dalling and Schwarz were standing.⁸³ Had the desired nomination taken place it would not in any event have benefited the United Party because the majority of reformists who had won seats at the election had deserted the Party by 1975.

3. The election.

Once the nomination courts had sat on March 18 and the issue of candidates had been disposed of the United Party endeavoured, yet again, to close its ranks and present a united front to the electorate. The acrimony engendered by its nomination battles, however, lingered and the press continued to exploit internal differences. The nationalists described in detail any contradictory statements and depicted the United Party as speaking with at least two voices, one for the 'verligte' urban areas, the other for the more conservative constituencies. With few exceptions the English language newspapers made no effort to foster Party unity and came out in support of candidates they considered to be reformist in outlook. A Cape Times editorial had already stated that it would not support United Party candidates opposed to the reformist movement. It would rather favour a verligte nationalist than a verkrampte 'Sap'.⁸⁴ The newspaper never did explain what a verligte nationalist was and when challenged by Gray Hughes, the Party's chief whip, to reveal the basis on which it distinguished between verligte and verkrampte United Party candidates it was unable to do so but admitted that it was a matter of judgement rather than of fact.⁸⁵

83. Dr S.L. Barnard, p. 423.

84. Cape Times, 20.12.73, editorial.

85. Letter to the Cape Times, 8.3.74, by Gray Hughes.

Notwithstanding this revelation the role played by these newspapers had a negative effect on the Party's performance which in certain constituencies like Orange Grove was decisive. With the exception of the Sunday Express⁸⁶ they adopted an ambiguous position prior to the election.

While they professed to support the opposition cause it was done in such a manner and with so many reservations that it created confusion. In their preoccupation with the shortcomings of the United Party the nationalists were almost ignored. The Star⁸⁷ and the Cape Times⁸⁸ would only support verligte United Party candidates while the Sunday Times actually selected its 'best man' team for parliament.⁸⁹ This coincided with a new drive to persuade the electorate to support the man rather than the Party. This meant that policies and principles became a secondary consideration. It was no longer good enough to vote for the United Party and its policies, more important was the person who was to interpret them.⁹⁰ The nationalists, on the other hand, had traditionally tended to support their Party as its policies were more important than the candidates representing them.⁹¹ If an elected member later disappointed the voters as a person they would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they had voted for the Party and not the man.

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86. Sunday Express, 17.3.74, 'Vote for the Party', and its editorial of 31.3.74, 'Dont't be misled', warned against the folly of voting for the man rather than for the party.
87. Sunday Times, 17.3.74, 'Star starts to twinkle'.
88. Cape Times, 2.4.74, 'We support reform'.
89. Sunday Times, 14.4.74.
90. Sunday Express, 21.4.74, 'Fight the enemy'. It ridiculed the concept of voting for a 'bestman' team.
91. Burger, 16.4.74, Dawie: 'Om vir die man te stem'.

The other flaw in the 'vote for the man' slogan was that a very small percentage of voters in any constituency ever became acquainted with the candidate. They had to rely to a large extent on the notoriously subjective judgements of the newspapers for an opinion as to his worthiness or otherwise. It was far more logical to support the Party and its policies. Rapport, commenting on this issue suggested that United Party supporters might as well be called upon to vote for Sir De Villiers Graaff's smile.⁹²

In its 'best man' team the Sunday Times listed twenty-two desirable, enlightened candidates. It included eight from the United Party, eight progressives, four nationalists and two democrats. Included among the U.P. favourites were Radclyffe Cadman and Andre Fourie both of whom in the past had been branded as conservatives. Fourie was later to join the National Party and currently represents them in parliament (1982). Punt Janson was selected as a nationalist verligte but a week after having this honour bestowed on him he made it clear that he was a firm supporter of the 180 day detention law. It can only be surmised as to the criterion employed by the Sunday Times to select this multi-party side for it represented virtually the whole spectrum of political thought in South Africa. Yet, in some inexplicable manner they would 'do justice to their supporters and their country'.

This was the type of journalistic advice that was being fed to the opposition electorate. Only the Sunday Express appealed to the United Party voters to support it on the basis of its policies without any other consideration being brought to bear.

92. Rapport, 24.2.74, Pienaar: 'Hulle stem maar vir Div's se glimlag'.

The undermining of the Party helped the Progressives who campaigned for the reformist vote in those constituencies where Young Turks had not been nominated. They also exploited the 'vote for the man' syndrome in their propaganda which offered the voters a chance to elect a 'better and more effective opposition'. Their efforts were not without success for the same voters who returned Progressive Party members to parliament in three instances voted in United Party M.P.C.'s.⁹³ This rather unusual development meant that the same voters supported both United and Progressive Party policies simultaneously. Otherwise, they had fallen prey to the subjective judgements of political commentators in deciding who the best candidates were on the basis of personality.

The Progressive Party which had in 1970 performed dismally in terms of seats won and had been in the political wilderness since its establishment in 1959 received a new lease on life as the problems in the United Party gradually accelerated its decline. The English press, which even in its darkest moments had treated it favourably, came out more strongly on its side as the election approached. This, coupled with the twin assets of ready money and good organization helped the Progressives to do well in 1974. It contested only twenty-one selected seats and concentrated its efforts on them.⁹⁴ Of this number two were against the nationalists, three candidates were involved in three-cornered contests and in the sixteen other constituencies the United Party was the enemy. To all intents and purposes the Progressive Party was fighting the official opposition while ignoring the government.

93. In Rondebosch, Parktown and Orange Grove the P.P. won the parliamentary contest while the U.P. held the provincial seat in each instance.

94. J. Strongways-Booth, A Cricket in the Thorn Tree, Helen Suzman and the Progressive Party (Johannesburg, 1976), p. 259. Had the P.P. not made headway in 1974 it may have disbanded. The Party made a last and special effort to win more seats in that election.

It was left to the United Party, even in its disorganized state, to confront the nationalists. The Progressives also did not oppose Young Turk candidates in the Transvaal but directed their efforts towards dislodging labelled Old Guard supporters such as Etienne Malan.⁹⁵ Many of the Progressive Party claims could not stand up well to close scrutiny. They could not create a better opposition in the sense of strengthening it numerically. But by distracting the United Party from its fight against the nationalists they could contribute to weakening the anti-government forces in parliament and in that would produce a less effective opposition, for in the political arena, in the final analysis, only numbers count. The quality of the opposition is almost immaterial for if it was really so significant then it could be argued that the highly regarded Helen Suzman provided all that was required in that direction. Quantity is more important than quality in party politics though both are desirable, for given enough members the opposition would become the government which, presumably, is the prime objective of any serious opposition party.

The Progressive Party, however, did play an effective role in weakening the United Party. It forced it to fight on two fronts and to spread its rather meagre resources more thinly over a wider area.⁹⁶ It split the opposition vote, in certain constituencies, to the advantage of the nationalists and was partly responsible for the United Party adopting its 'two-voice' approach on certain issues. Where it fought against progressive candidates it projected a more liberal image than it did elsewhere, notably in the rural areas.

95. Dr S.L. Barnard, p. 421. The P.P. concentrated on a selected number of seats only.

96. Horak interview, 8.6.82. The Party was always short of funds.

The Progressives capitalized on the United Party's misfortunes to become the main winners in the election, emerging with six seats. Suzman retained Houghton while the other five were all won from the United Party.⁹⁷ Its successes were to continue after the election. It was also fortified by defections from the United Party as it later rushed toward extinction. The Progressive successes of 1974 played an important role in the United Party's decline, a process which strengthened both it and the nationalists but numerically weakened the opposition as a whole.

The 1974 election was the sixteenth since Union and, according to the prime minister, had been called early because of the uncertain times which the country was likely to face within the next five years. The government wanted to be free to deal with any issue which might arise. Vorster must have been well informed for on the day following the election Spínola overthrew the Portuguese government which, among other things, heralded the end of its colonial period in Africa with all its consequent problems for the Republic.

It was the first time that both parliamentary and provincial elections were held on the same day. The Delimitation Commission⁹⁸ had determined that there would be 171 parliamentary seats, five more than in the previous Assembly.⁹⁹ The National Party fielded 135 candidates, the U.P. 110, the H.N.P. 50, the Progressives 21 and the Democratic Party 7. There were eleven independents and others.¹⁰⁰ The death of Ossie Newton-Thompson in an aircraft crash in South West Africa reduced the United Party's number of candidates by one and created a vacancy in Pinelands which had to be filled at a later by-election.¹⁰¹

97. Parktown, Johannesburg North, Orange Grove, Rondebosch and Sea Point.

98. It consisted of judges P M Cillie, R P Erasmus and G P van Rhyn.

99. Report of the Thirteenth Delimitation Commission, 8.2.74, Government Gazette. Transvaal 76, Cape 55, Natal 20, O.F.S. 14, S.W.A. 6.

100. B.M.Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910-1976, p. 510.

101. Parliamentary Register Part II 1961-1980. Published by House of Assembly. The crash occurred on 3.4.74, after nominations had closed. Consequently by-elections had to be held in Pinelands and also in Karas, S.W.A., as the U.P. candidate G.J.van den Berg for this area was killed in the same crash.

There was never any doubt as to the outcome of the election but the strong showing of the Progressive Party was not entirely expected. The final state of the parties was: National Party 122, United Party 41, Progressive Party 6. There were two vacancies, Pinelands and Wonderboom. The former was won by the Progressive Party and the latter by the nationalists at subsequent by-elections.¹⁰² The United Party had lost ten seats, five to the Progressives and four to the nationalists. Progressive Party gains were made in Johannesburg North, Orange Grove, Parktown, Sea Point and Rondebosch. The U.P. lost Florida, Turffontein, Eshove and Port Natal to the nationalists but won Randburg from them. The National Party captured 55,4 percent of the vote, the U.P. 32,8, the P.P. 6,3 and the H.N.P. 4,0.¹⁰³ The provincial results revealed that the United Party had lost nine seats, six to the nationalists and three to the Progressives.

The results were a severe blow to the United Party but taking into account the divided state in which it had entered the campaign they should not have been entirely unexpected. The Party never recovered from these setbacks and the trend away from it was confirmed in later by-elections. The National Party had improved its performance by capturing a number of marginal seats although direct comparisons with the 1970 results were not possible as a result of delimitation changes. The much discredited Marais Steyn won narrowly against his former protege, Andre Fourie in Turffontein. Marais Steyn had been one of the most sought after speakers at nationalist meetings where he vigorously attacked his former party and blamed the reformists for 'white-anting' it from within.¹⁰⁴

102. J.Swanepoel, Die Verkiesing van 24 April 1974, Instituut vir Eietydse Geskiedenis, U.O.V.S. (June, 1974), p. 8.

103. IBID., p. 9.

104. Pro-NAT, April 1974, 'V.P. tot die dood toe siek'.

The Progressive successes were confined to the wealthier English speaking urban constituencies which had been exposed to the sustained press attacks on the United Party. Their gains were exclusively at the expense of the United Party in what had formerly been regarded as 'safe' seats and they were against both 'verligte' and 'verkrampste' United Party candidates. Etienne Malan was voted out of Orange Grove,¹⁰⁵ not because he was an ineffective M.P. but because of his Old Guard connections.¹⁰⁶ His opponent was Rupert Lorimer. On the other hand, Dr van Zyl Slabbert won against the reformist, Brian Bramford while Colin Eglin defeated David Graaff, an attractive young candidate who was not at all verkramp although an effort was made to label him as such.¹⁰⁷ The conclusion reached was that if the electorate, in certain seats, was confronted by two candidates both of whom were verlig they would then vote for the Progressive candidate. The election results also indicated that a fair number of opposition supporters had finally decided to switch their allegiance to the Progressive Party either out of conviction or else out of exasperation at the chaotic situation prevailing in the United Party. On the Witwatersrand leading reformists had won well but none of them had been opposed by Progressive candidates, and presumably their votes included many cast by Progressive supporters.

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105. Sunday Times, 31.3.74, Editorial: 'Freedom of Choice'. The newspaper came out strongly against Malan and the Schiebusch commission, and supported Lorimer of the Progressive Party.
106. Interview with Senator Horak, 7.5.82. His provincial running-mate, Alf Widman, a reformist, won for the U.P. indicating that the campaign against Malan had been effective.
107. Cape Times, 17.4.74, Editorial: 'Whom to support?' It asked the electorate to vote for Prof van Zyl Slabbert and Colin Eglin as they would be 'better for the reformist movement'.

But of the 35 seats they had promised the United Party on the Reef there was little evidence.¹⁰⁸ Schwarz who had made certain predictions to the Sunday Times which were published three days before the election proved to be one hundred percent incorrect.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the United Party fared worst in the Transvaal where the reformists were in control of the campaign. Instead of winning thirty-five seats they won eleven and in the process lost three seats to the Progressives and two to the nationalists. Instead of revitalizing the Party the reformists appeared to have weakened it. Unfavourable comparisons were drawn with the advances made under the leadership of Marais Steyn in 1970.

The newspaper headlines following the election indicated conclusively, if any further evidence was still required, where their sympathies really lay. They were euphoric about the Progressive Party advances and almost ignored the nationalists' victory by an increased majority. On April 25 the Cape Times proclaimed in bold-print: 'Progs. make inroads into U.P.', the Argus: 'Big election blow to U.P.', the Star: 'Progs. maul U.P.', and the Rand Daily Mail: 'Triumph for Progs.'.

The United Party's troubles were far from over. Besides losing to the left and to the right its own caucus would in future be more divided as a result of an influx of new, reformist M.P.'s including Harry Schwarz the member for Yeoville. The Young Turks had established another power base from which they could continue their efforts to reform the Party from within, failing which they were in a better position to split it in their endeavour to bring about a realignment in opposition politics.

108. Sunday Times, 23.7.72, Dynamic young men ... aim to win 35 Rand seats'. The U.P. in fact won 11 seats in the Transvaal.

109. Sunday Times, 21.4.74. Among his predictions were that Boksburg, Springs, Germiston district, Maraisburg, Rissik and Witwatersburg were within the grasp of the U.P. Not one was won. Randburg, which was captured, he did not mention.

Unlike the strong stand taken against dissident elements by Dr Malan ¹¹⁰ in 1943 and Vorster, to a lesser extent, in 1970 Sir De Villiers Graaff had failed to take action to counter similar groups in his own party before the 1974 election. He had attempted to keep the factions together, for the Party had traditionally been one of compromise and consensus. But the clash of interests and personalities which had emerged had gone beyond the limits of reasonableness.¹¹¹ Decisive action had been necessary if Party harmony was to be restored. This was not forthcoming and if the Party had made one mistake, according to Vause Raw leader of the New Republic Party, it was that it had waited too long in trying to reconcile the irreconcilables.¹¹² Consequently, the post-election situation in the United Party was a recipe for disaster. Dr Malan had declared war on the fringe groups of the 'Herenigde' Nasionale Party and had brushed them all aside - the Ossewabrandwag, Oswald Pirow's New Order, Loius Weichardt's Greyshirts and Havenga's Afrikaner Party. The approach to the 1943 election had also been characterized by an opposition in disarray but Dr Malan had used the opportunity to deal with the troublemakers and although a small opposition had been returned to parliament it was united behind its leader and the policy of his party. Only thereafter had Dr Malan offered the olive branch to his opponents and by 1948 the National Party was in power.¹¹³ John Vorster had acted swiftly to destroy the threat posed by Dr Hertzog's Herstigte Nasionale Party and had called the 1970 election partly to flush them out. Sir De Villiers, on the other hand, had led a divided party into the 1974 election and had emerged with a smaller but still divided one after it.¹¹⁴

110. T.R.H.Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History (JHB, 1977), pp. 237-38.

111. Interview with Horak, 8.6.82, answer to question 61.

112. Hansard, 14.4.82. Vause Raw speaking during the Prime Minister's Vote referred to the development of factions within the National Party and compared them to those which had emerged in the old U.P.

113. T.R.H.Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History (JHB, 1977), pp. 235-238.

114. Sunday Times, 28.4.74, Uys and Strydom: 'Weakness, disunity behind U.P. defeat'.

The election had resolved none of the United Party's problems.

4. The Pinelands by-election.

The exodus of opposition voters from the Party continued and it suffered a severe reverse at the Pinelands by-election which had been necessitated by the death of Oswald Newton-Thompson. The United Party had won the provincial seat fairly comfortably in April, although with a reduced majority, against the Progressives. Its failure to retain the parliamentary seat was indicative of the growing swing against it. During the post-election period the Old Guard-reformist battles continues unabated. There were differences of opinion regarding the nomination of candidates to fill the Party's quota of Senate seats while in the Cape there was a concerted effort by the reformists to depose the leadership clique at an early congress.



'Graaff contemplates his position as Party leader'

The Party's new federal policy remained a point of friction as varying interpretations were placed on its meaning while Sir De Villiers Graaff's leadership again came under the searchlight following his fifth consecutive defeat at the polls.¹¹⁵

Their successes in the general election encouraged the Progressive Party to make an all out effort to capture the Pinelands constituency. To strengthen their chances they discarded their original general election candidate, Eric Oettle, in order to enlist the services of the more glamorous Dr Alex Boraine. He was a former leader of the Methodist Church in South Africa and consequently would be a strong protagonist of civil liberties, an area in which the United Party had been judged and had ostensibly been found wanting. The Progressives were apparently also going to rely on their 'vote for the man' slogan used so successfully during the recent April election.¹¹⁶

The United Party candidate was to be Miss Annette Reinecke the newly elected M.P.C. for Rondebosch. Her nomination had not been without drama as her opponent was none other than the 'verligte' Kobus van Eeden who, as was mentioned earlier, had been 'axed' by the Candidates Committee in Wynberg.¹¹⁷ In order to enhance his chances of receiving the nomination three other reformists withdrew from the contest, namely Messrs Bamford, Carlisle and P. Myburgh. In a democratic vote, however, the Pinelands divisional committee supported Miss Reinecke and her nomination was approved by the Cape Candidates Committee.¹¹⁸

115. IBID., 5.5.74, Editorial: 'Leadership issue'. Graaff is again encouraged to resign.

116. Burger, 14.5.74, 'Man en Party'.

117. Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 435-438.

118. Cape Times, 30.4.74, 'U.P. pick Reinecke'.

Had van Eeden been chosen, there was little doubt, in the light of recent nomination squabbles, that his nomination would have been approved. Pinelands required a verligte candidate and he would have fulfilled those requirements. Reinecke had managed to remain aloof from the Young Turk-Old Guard fight and consequently had not been labelled in any way. Nevertheless, the reformists had been upset that their favourite, van Eeden, had not been nominated. The third candidate in Pinelands was Dr Brian Peers, National Party, English speaking and Catholic. His entry into the contest proved decisive. It split the more conservative vote to the detriment of the United Party and, as was to be the case in Durban North in 1976, demonstrated that in any three-cornered contest in a traditionally English speaking constituency the Progressive Party was likely to win.¹¹⁹ In Pinelands all three candidates conducted an enlightened campaign each placing the most liberal interpretation possible on their policies.

The Burger predicted, with a certain degree of accuracy, that the Pinelands by-election would decide to which opposition party the future belonged. It depicted the United Party as directionless and battle scarred with the electorate unaware as to which faction it was voting for, while the Progressives, according to it, were simply perpetuating the old Unionist traditions with their uniligual candidate. The Party was incapable of capturing a significant number of Afrikaner votes and was, it claimed, merely leading the English speaking electorate towards greater political isolation.¹²⁰

In a following article the Burger claimed that the United Party was losing its only real right to exist, namely its ability to draw supporters from widely differing backgrounds.

119. Streicher interview, 5.5.82.

120. Die Burger, 6.6.74. Dawie: 'Uit my politieke pen'.

It was heir to the traditions of Botha and Smuts but the emergence of the reformists was destroying that character and making it a pale image of the Progressive Party with declining influence. This faction had done so much damage to its traditional image that it would never be able to rehabilitate itself as it entered a last ditch jingoistic struggle against an expanding South African nationalism.¹²¹ This newspaper, though overstating its case, was laying the blame firmly on the reformists for the problems in the United Party. It was correct in predicting that the Party would never recover and that the Progressives would come to represent a small number of English speaking constituencies outside the mainstream of white political thought. Judging by the 1977 election results it could be argued that the National Party had won so much support that it had come to represent the broad spectrum of South African political thinking which included the direction fostered by Generals Botha, Smuts, Hertzog and Sir De Villiers Graaff.¹²²

In an attempt to demonstrate its unity of purpose the United Party assembled on the same platform Miss Reinecke, Japie Basson and, the Cape leader, Myburgh Streicher who was hardly given a hearing at the Rondebosch meeting.¹²³ Basson, on the other hand, was cheered by the largely student audience. The merits of their respective speeches counted for nothing, their degree of purported verligtheid for everything. Streicher, however, was not to be intimidated and later returned to the state of the Party in a controversial speech made at Nuy near Worcester on June 5. It was a speech which could well have been made at a less sensitive time than the Pinelands by-election for it was used by his opponents against the Party.

121. Die Burger, 10.6.74, 'n Party is sy naam'.

122. Sunday Times, 5.5.74, Uys: 'Centre occupied by National Party today'.

123. The meeting took place on 22.5.1974.

Streicher, himself, felt that no matter what he had said it would have been employed by a hostile press to discredit him. But he believed, what he said had needed saying.¹²⁴ He took the English press to task for the role they had played in the affairs of the Party since 1970. They were attempting to push it in a so-called *verligte* direction, failing which they would like to split it in order to direct the *verligtes* towards the Progressive Party as the latter needed the kiss of life. Obstacles to these goals, which had to be removed, included Graaff and others who thought like him. Streicher then went on to name the journalists of the Sunday Times as the chief culprits in the newspaper campaign against the United Party. He also criticized those who intimated they were prepared to take over the leadership of the Party. This was an attack on Japie Basson who had suggested that if he was required he would be willing to lead the United Party. In a later interview Myburgh Streicher admitted that he had nothing against Basson but what he objected to was his offer while Graaff was still leader of the Party and had never indicated that he was preparing to step down.¹²⁵ The Cape leader threatened to resign if all the things done in the name of *verligtheid* were laid at the door of the United Party.¹²⁶ It was far better, he felt, to seek points of agreement with the government on certain issues.

Streicher's speech, which had evoked the now familiar responses, had to be considered against the background of post-election comment which had again called for Graaff's resignation¹²⁷ and his replacement by a *verligte* such as Basson.¹²⁸

124. Interview with Streicher, 5.5.82.

125. IBID.

126. Die Burger, 6.6.74, 'Streicher dreig om uit die V.P. te bedank'.

127. Sunday Times, 12.5.74, 'Electorate blames Div. for poll losses', and IBID., 2.6.74, 'Call to make Japie U.P. deputy leader'.

128. Die Burger, 28.4.74, 'Jong Turke kies Japie'.

Graaff who had always given journalists a good hearing and was not hostile to them spoke bluntly of their slanted reporting and unfair criticism.¹²⁹

Speaking on the United Party's electoral setbacks¹³⁰ he mentioned as an example the hours spent on attempting to explain to reporters the Party's attitude towards the Schlebusch Commission but to no avail. It seemed that the editors had decided that whatever Harry Schwarz said was verlig but no matter what a John Wiley said it would be verkramp. That, he said, was the approach adopted by the English newspapers towards the Party.¹³¹

The Sunday Times had actually listed the names of six United Party members it held chiefly responsible for the Party's defeat.¹³² Among them were Myburgh Streicher, John Wiley and Radclyffe Cadman who before the election had been included in the newspaper's list of the best available men to represent the country! As has already been explained, Sir De Villiers had won the confidence of English newspapers following the Bloemfontein 'unity' congress which had been interpreted as a victory for the verligtes. But, following the election reverses and the Party's unimpressive showing in the Transvaal, where the reformists were in charge, the same press turned its back on Graaff and the majority of his followers. Consequently, Streicher's speech was grist to their mill and received wide publicity both in the daily and in the Sunday newspapers.¹³³ None of it was favourable. His intended meaning was twisted and taken out of context while it was suggested that he was forcing a show-down in the Party which would damage Miss Reinecke's by-election chances.

129. Sunday Express, 12.5.74, 'Graaff speaks bluntly on Press'.

130. His remarks concerning the press followed a Central Head Committee meeting on May 1 which had met to analyse the electoral setbacks of April.

131. Die Burger, 9.5.74, 'Graaff sê hy glo dis pers se skuld'.

132. Sunday Times, 30.4.74, 'Six Share Blame!'

133. Burger, 6.6.74, 'Nou is dit oorlog'.

Streicher rejected the inaccurate reporting of his speech in a letter to the Cape Times but the damage had been done.¹³⁴ Streicher always denied that his speech had harmed the Party's chances in Pinelands.¹³⁵ But the media used it to create the impression that the United Party was opposed to enlightened policies and the 'verligte' mood of the electorate. This was disadvantageous to Reinecke who, at all times, had fought a verligte campaign in Pinelands.

In addition to the 'gathering storm' around Streicher's speech, Annette Reinecke had to contend with a number of other blows which damaged her chances.¹³⁶ The verligte-verkrampde feud had resulted in the resignation of George Oliver¹³⁷ from all his posts in the Party as a protest against Schwarz's leadership in the Transvaal.¹³⁸

In the Senate elections, labelled verligtes such as Brian Bamford and Eric Winchester had received seats ahead of Old Guard candidates.¹³⁹ Dr Gideon Jacobs had also resigned as deputy leader of the Party in the Transvaal. And in another act of defiance the Cape Peninsula Council of the United Party had been summoned to a special meeting by its reformist members to discuss Streicher's speech and John Wiley's support for it. This was in defiance of the expressed wishes of both Sir De Villiers and the chairman of the C.P.C., Tony Hickman.¹⁴⁰ This undisciplined act had a sequel after the Pinelands poll but in the meantime, coupled with all the other problems, it created a bad press for Miss Reinecke who, in any event, had a tough fight on her hands.

134. Cape Times, 6.6.74, Editorial, 'Streicher's speech'.

135. Streicher interview, 5.5.82, see also Argus, 7.6.74, 'Streicher defends Worcester speech'.

136. Sunday Times, 9.6.74, 'The Gathering Storm'.

137. Former M.P. for Kensington.

138. Sunday Express, 9.6.74, 'Oliver taking legal advice'.

139. Sunday Times, 9.6.74, 'Senate Blow to Conservatives'.

140. IBID., Uys and Strydom: 'Group in Cape defies Div. to criticize Streicher'.

Closing the by-election campaign Graaff¹⁴¹ appealed to the electorate to support the 'Bloemfontein initiative' where the Party had adopted a verligte direction. The local English newspapers after their protracted criticism of the Party's affairs, made a belated and thinly disguised attempt to project a more neutral stance when they praised the 'outstanding qualities of Dr Boraine' and thereafter appealed to the voters to make their own decision as to which candidate sought to 'promote effective verligte forces'.¹⁴² The nationalist Burger attacked both the United and Progressive Parties with equal vigour. This meant that the U.P. was caught in the middle without media support. The by-election took place in pouring rain, but the sound organization of all parties¹⁴³ ensured a percentage poll in excess of eighty. By a margin of thirty-four votes the Pinelands electorate returned Dr Boraine to parliament, increasing the Progressive Party's representation to seven in the Assembly.¹⁴⁴ For the United Party it was another major setback that could only aggravate its internal differences. If it was unable to hold Pinelands then assuredly very few urban seats could be regarded as 'safe', particularly in any three-cornered contest which split the more conservative vote.¹⁴⁵ The swing against the United Party was accelerating and short of ending the civil war there appeared

141. Dr S.L. Barnard, p. 437. It was the first time he had addressed a by-election meeting.

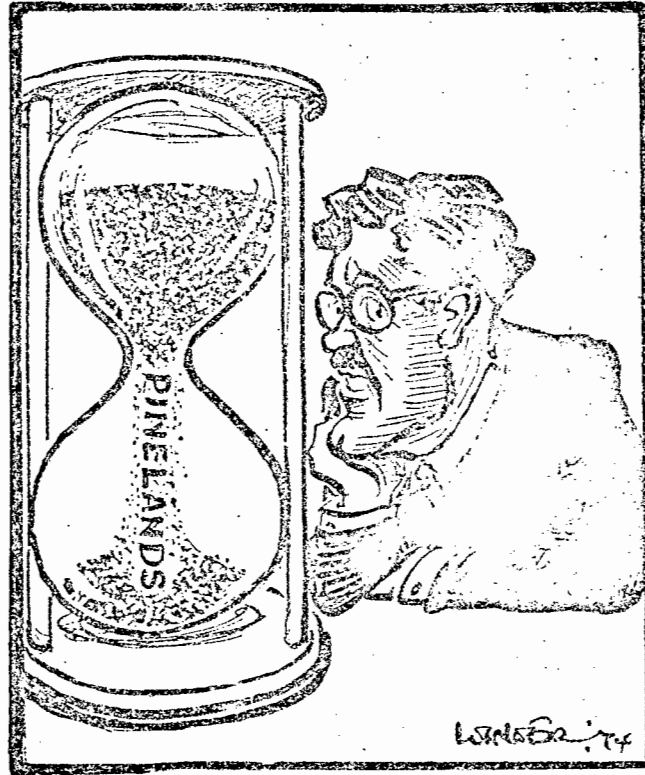
142. Cape Times, 10.6.74, 'Over to Pinelands'.

143. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.5.82. He believed the U.P. had lost because its supporters, by that time, had lost interest and because the heavy rain had kept some of them at home.

144. B.M. Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings, pp. 486 - 90. Dr Boraine (P.P.) 4921 votes, A. Reinecke (U.P.) 4887, and Dr Peers 1649. P.P. majority of 34. Percentage poll 81.5. Date of by-election 12.6.1974.

145. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

to be no way of stopping, let alone reversing, it.



'The Pinelands by-election poses a threat to the Party's future'

In a post election comment Miss Reinecke referred to the 'sick soul' of the Party which she believed had influenced the result.¹⁴⁶

Besides this condition an issue worth considering was: what role, if any, had personal and policy attributes played in the Pinelands poll? Dr Boraine was portrayed as a glamorous candidate, but he lacked Reinecke's political experience who herself had been described as an attractive personality a short while previously.¹⁴⁷ With regard to policies, both candidates fought a 'verligte' campaign and as far as civil liberties were concerned both professed support for

146. Cape Times, 14.6.74, 'On the Pinelands Result'.

147. That is, during the provincial election in Rondebosch in April.

the rule of law. Both the United and Progressive Party's racial policies could be heavily criticized as no yardstick existed by which the one could be judged superior to the other. The shift away from the U.P. could thus not be explained by the sudden attractiveness of its opponents' policies for they had been in existence since 1959. The decline in the Party's popularity had to be sought elsewhere.

It was rather a rebellion by English speaking voters against the apparent futility of supporting a Party with a loser's image and which was riddled with ever-deepening conflicts.¹⁴⁸ That the flight of these voters to the Progressive Party represented the exchange of one politically declining power block for another impotent one appeared to matter little. The United Party was losing English speaking support to its left and Afrikaans speaking voters to the right. The very reason for its existence was being threatened as polarization took place among the white electorate. The broad South Africanism for which Botha and Smuts had striven was being whittled away. Since 1948 the United Party had steadily lost its Afrikaner support and in 1974 it had not even contested platteland seats like Caledon and Swellendam where it had always received strong backing. The general election of 1974 had indicated that it was also losing English support. The Pinelands by-election had confirmed that trend.

148. Cape Times, 13.6.74, Editorial: 'Significance of Pinelands'.

According to 'Dawie' of the Burger three streams were discernible among opposition English speaking voters. Firstly, there were those who supported the Progressive Party. Secondly, there were the Young Turk reformists who were closer to the Progressives than to their own United Party traditions. Lastly, there remained the trusted but dying group which sought co-operation with Afrikaans members of the community.¹⁴⁹ It was a sound analysis and when the United Party finally disbanded in 1977 it became evident that the first two streams had merged while the majority of the third group voted for the National Party in the election of that year, leaving a small core which made up the New Republic Party. The Pinelands by-election had pointed to this dispensation.

5. 'G.R.O.W.' contributes to party disunity

The Pinelands reverse again focused attention on the prevailing power struggle in the Cape with particular regard to the leadership positions occupied by Messrs Streicher, Wiley and Hickman. The result was interpreted, in certain quarters, as a major setback for them. The Cape Times called for an early congress in order that the reformists could take over and steer the Party away from Old Guard policies and so restore its flagging fortunes.¹⁵⁰

The campaign to replace the Cape leadership had begun indirectly

149. Die Burger, 15.6.74, 'Dawie', Uit my Politieke Pen.

150. Cape Times, Editorial, 18.6.74, 'U.P. in Turmoil'.

as a movement to foster the reformist cause in the Cape. It had developed secretly into a carefully planned scheme, known as 'GROW', to oust John Wiley. Get Rid of Wiley (GROW) was, however, just the code name, and its main objective was the replacement of all conservatives in leadership positions from constituency level upwards.¹⁵¹ It was significant that by the end of 1974 Wiley had resigned as deputy leader, Hickman had not stood for re-election as chairman of the Cape Peninsula Council and a number of reformists had been expelled from the Party for disloyalty. A bid to replace Streicher failed narrowly at the Cape Congress in November, but by then the Party had been virtually split into two irreconcilable factions in the Province.

Reformist influence in the Cape on an organised basis can be traced to the activities of Robin Carlisle, who had unsuccessfully contested the Vasco constituency for the Party in the 1974 general election. He had formerly been a Progressive who had joined the United Party on the Witwatersrand in March 1972. He was a strong supporter of Harry Schwarz and was one of those who had made the United Party their home following its 1970 electoral successes. Carlisle transferred to Cape Town and in the latter half of 1973 built up his Intermediate Group which, initially, was a political discussion forum. Its members, who were invited to join, later became prominent in reformist politics and were involved in many of the clashes with elected Party leaders.¹⁵²

151. Minutes of 'GROW' meetings, 27.4.74 and 4.5.74.

152. Interview with Horak 8.6.82. He told of Carlisle's apparent enthusiasm to work for the U.P.

Carlisle became an important figure in the Peninsula and in the affairs of the Party in the region. It was suspected and later claimed that he was involved in meetings with the press, with whom he had a close rapport, and that he provided them with confidential Party information. He became deeply involved in the leadership controversies in the Cape and worked actively for a change at the top.¹⁵³ His Intermediate Group gradually evolved into the organization 'GROW', a reformist clique, which wanted to alter the Party radically from within. There was hardly an unpleasant incident in the United Party in the Peninsula which did not involve Carlisle's group during the period of its existence. Each incident received wide publicity. One such example was the press coverage of an unofficial meeting arranged by the Intermediate Group with the Western Province Council of Churches to discuss, among other things, the role of the United Party in the Schlebusch Commission.¹⁵⁴ Although no reporters had been present, the meeting nevertheless received wide coverage and the articles intimated that the U.P. delegates present had agreed with the attack made by the churchmen on the Schlebusch Commission.¹⁵⁵ This was later confirmed by the ministers present, but denied by the United Party representatives.¹⁵⁶

The Carlisle group was most active in the Sea Point and Gardens constituencies where prominent reformists gained control of the

153. A memorandum submitted by Myburgh Streicher in 1974 to the Central Disciplinary Committee included evidence of this.

154. Cape Times, 3.10.73, 'U.P. and Churchmen for meeting'.

155. IBID., 5.10.73, 'Churchmen against U.P. on Schiebusch'.

156. IBID., 6.10.73, 'U.P. men deny attack on Schiebusch'. See also Die Burger, 6.10.73, 'Schiebusch - berig laat V.P. skarrel'.

branch structure. New members were enrolled and these committees became numerically strong. New branches were initiated in other constituencies while attempts were made to transfer members to existing, but weak, committees.¹⁵⁷ This was, however, contrary to the Party's constitution which stipulated that members had to belong to branches in the electoral divisions where they resided, except in 'exceptional circumstances'. Consequently, the request of some thirty Young Turks to be transferred to other branches was blocked on this technicality.¹⁵⁸ Although this was strictly a domestic issue details were 'leaked' to the newspapers which commented unfavourably on the attempts by the Old Guard to curtail the activities of the reformists.¹⁵⁹ In the light of later developments there was little doubt that Carlisle's reformists were intent on capturing the Party's branch structure and from that base extending their influence through strong delegate representation to the Cape Peninsula Council, the chairman of which was Tony Hickman.¹⁶⁰ Such a development was not viewed with enthusiasm by the Party establishment and consequently the request for transfers by reformists was rejected. At the Annual General Meeting of the C.P.C. in August 1973 their influence was thus still limited and Hickman was re-elected chairman although Carlisle and other verligtes also gained seats on the executive. As will be demonstrated the position had altered by the following A.G.M. where the Carlisle group captured control of the Cape Penin-

157. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.5.82. Carlisle, after arriving from Johannesburg, approached him and requested to become active in the Party. He was advised to form a branch in Sea Point, which he did.

158. Sunday Times, 9.6.73, 'Transfer rule angers U.P. men'.

159. Cape Times, 11.6.73, 'Confrontation looms in U.P.'

160. Interview with Horak, 8.5.82 and Wiley, 5.4.82.

sula Council.¹⁶¹

While the activities of the Young Turks were not conducive to Party harmony, as disturbing to its future well-being was the lack of loyalty demonstrated by those individuals who provided information of a domestic nature to the media and whose subsequent reports in the words of Hickman were 'pot-pouris of little fact and much fancy'. Speaking to the Boland Regional Committee in Malmesbury on June 11 Myburgh Streicher accused the press of 'exploiting anything just to embarrass the U.P.' He emphasized that party loyalty was a qualification for party membership. It was a vain appeal, for the undermining continued as did the 'fabrications of some newspaper writers'.

Following the Pinelands by-election the Sunday Express came into the possession of copies of documents which exposed the secret campaign of the Cape reformists to replace the Party leadership there.¹⁶²

As has been mentioned the campaign was known as 'GROW' and was, in truth, the final product of Carlisle's original Intermediate Group. The documents, which were minutes of meetings, revealed that the chairman of 'GROW' was Philip Myburgh¹⁶³ (unrelated to the Philip Myburgh of Oudtshoorn by-election fame who was to resign from the Party because of the activities of the reformists). His Director of Operations was none other than Carlisle and if any doubt still existed regarding the role of the press in the fortunes of the reformists it was dispelled by the revelation that the group's press

161. Die Burger, 18.8.74, 'Jong Turke vat Kaapland oor'

162. Sunday Express, 11.8.74, Robertson: 'Secret GROW'. See also Die Burger, 12.8.74, 'Groepe werk teen V.P.'

163. Philip Myburgh is currently (1982) the P.F.P. member of parliament for Wynberg.

officer was Hans Strydom of the Sunday Times, the outspoken critic of the Old Guard leaders in the United Party. Other prominent members of the group included Kobus van Eeden and Tiaan van der Merwe.

Minutes of 'GROW' meetings were undoubtedly kept, although Myburgh preferred to refer to them as informal notes. Those made at the time of the general election indicated that it was the intention of the group to oust both Streicher and Wiley in order that van Eeden could be elected leader of the Party in the Cape. They also intended to work for an early congress to achieve this goal.¹⁶⁴ Judging by similar demands which appeared in the press, following the election setbacks, it would seem that the group's rapport with the newspapers was particularly good at the time. The minutes also revealed that van Eeden would be promoted as a candidate in the Pinelands by-election.¹⁶⁵ As it happened the Party leadership refused to hold an early congress while van Eeden lost the Pinelands nomination to Miss Reinecke.

These reverses irked 'GROW's' Director of Operations and at a meeting on May 4 at Joostenberg (Myburgh's farm) Carlisle suggested confrontation with the establishment at every opportunity. These minutes also indicate that 'GROW' had contact with the Democratic and Progressive parties both of whom, however, regarded the reform movement in the U.P. as being dead.¹⁶⁶ Carlisle, whom even his opponents regarded as an excellent organizer¹⁶⁷, thereafter directed the group's plan of action towards having verligtes elected at the Cape Congress.

164. Minutes of meeting held in the Newlands Transito hotel, 27.4.74.

165. Die Burger, 19.8.74, "GROW' se planne onthul'.

166. Minutes, 4.5.1974.

167. Interviews with Streicher, 5.5.82 and Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

To enlist support, office bearers of the Party would be approached, new reformist branch committees would be established while the Party's youth wing and women's divisions were to be captured. It was planned to get rid of Tony Hickman as chairman of the C.P.C. and to attack Sir De Villiers Graaff's leadership.¹⁶⁸ In short, the reformists' cause was to be encouraged at every possible opportunity. With the support of the local English newspapers an atmosphere favourable to the reformists was created and many of the aims listed in the minutes were achieved. As an example, the Boland and Peninsula Women's Council¹⁶⁹ was captured by the reformists.¹⁷⁰ 'GROW' also had plans for the Port Elizabeth region where the aftermath of the divisive nomination disputes made it fertile ground for reformist activities. Theo Aronson, M.P., who was elected unopposed in Walmer, kept a meticulous record of the activities of the local reformists and the role played by the Port Elizabeth English newspapers in supporting them and undermining the elected Party leaders. His record of press cuttings and other documents revealed a picture of undermining and disloyalty similar in nature to that which existed in the Cape Peninsula, on the Witwatersrand and elsewhere, but on a smaller scale.¹⁷¹ The reformists in Port Elizabeth and in 'GROW' wanted Wally Kingwill to replace John Wiley as deputy leader of the

168. Minutes, 4.5.74.

169. There had been an unpleasant inter-party fight between Mrs Gross, a Young Turk, and Miss Reinecke of the establishment for the chairmanship of the Council in July and August.

170. Cape Times, 3.8.74, 'Women re-elect verligte chairman'. Mrs Gross was favoured ahead of Miss Reinecke.

171. Aronson Papers. These include 26 annexures and private letters detailing the activities of reformists in the Eastern Cape and the role played by the Evening Post and Herald in the Party's affairs. These are in my possession.

Party at the next congress. In this instance they achieved their objective although Wiley had by that time made himself unavailable for re-election.

'GROW' was well organized and its plans were carefully considered. Reformists were appointed in each Peninsula constituency to look after their interests and to campaign for the van Eeden-Kingwill ticket at the Congress. The movement was to be kept secret at all costs and when its existence was exposed Myburgh, speaking at Swellendam on August 25, maintained that it was a justifiable campaign which wanted the best leaders elected in a climate which would be favourable to the re-orientation of opposition political parties.¹⁷² Myburgh Streicher, in an interview, rejected 'GROW' as an undemocratic development which operated in secret and which created a party within a party.¹⁷³

'GROW' enjoyed a certain degree of success. van Eeden was re-elected, albeitly narrowly, as chairman of the South Cape region of the Party while the reformists also captured control of the Cape Peninsula Council in August when Ryk Morkel replaced Hickman as its chairman who, however, had not made himself available for another term of office.¹⁷⁴ John Wiley did not have to face the possibility of defeat at the Cape congress as he had resigned as deputy-leader before the time. This had made it easier for Kingwill to replace him. During the course of these events Old Guard

172. Die Burger, 26.8.74, 'Myburgh oor 'GROW' toegejuig'.

173. Streicher interview, 5.5.82.

174. Argus, 16.8.74, 'Reformists take over U.P. in Peninsula'.

strategists reacted and various Young Turks were suspended and later expelled from the Party for their activities.¹⁷⁵ There seemed to be no end to the feuding between the two factions.

Carlisle and van Eeden were the first to be suspended in June for disloyalty to the Party.¹⁷⁶ Both appealed to the courts to have their suspensions set aside.¹⁷⁷ Streicher, who had originally acted against them, did not oppose their applications as he felt that it would not be in the interests of the Party to debate domestic issues in public. Tiaan van der Merwe, another member of 'GROW', represented Carlisle at the hearing. The court ruled in favour of the Young Turks, maintaining that they had, for procedural reasons been incorrectly punished.¹⁷⁸ Streicher retaliated by reimposing the suspension pending further investigations.¹⁷⁹ The Central Disciplinary Committee had been established in June following recommendations made at the National Congress in Bloemfontein¹⁸⁰. It would hear the appeals of Carlisle and van Eeden and would also decide on what action should be taken against those who had been responsible for convening the meeting of the C.P.C. prior to the Pinelands by-election in defiance of the wishes of both Hickman and Sir De Villiers Graaff. The Disciplinary Committee eventually decided to drop the complaints against Bamford for having illegally

175. Die Burger, 15.6.74, 'Kaapse Sappe vat twee hoë Turke vas!'

176. Minutes of the Action Committee (leadership group of the Cape U.P.), 14.6.74.

177. Die Burger, 18.6.74, 'Geskorste Sappe wil hof toe'. See also Cape Times, 'Another suspended reformist decides to take court action'.

178. Die Burger, 20.6.74, 'Eerste skorsings nietig verklaar deur hof!'

179. Cape Times, 20.6.74, 'U.P. men again suspended'.

180. Letter from Graaff to the general secretary, Sen. Horak, dated 19.6.74 confirmed the establishment of such a disciplinary committee. He appointed Gray Hughes to be its chairman. Graaff also reaffirmed the power of suspension vested in provincial leaders pending investigation by the Central Disciplinary Committee.

called the Peninsula Council meeting while the suspension of Carlisle and van Eeden were also set aside. It was a compromise decision as charges against various reformists and conservatives facing disciplinary action in the Transvaal were also dropped. Myburgh Streicher, thereafter, explained that he was withdrawing the suspensions of the two reformists in the interests of Party unity.¹⁸¹ He wanted a new start on a clean slate.

6. Resignations and expulsions

Unfortunately these decisions did not have the desired results and were followed by the resignations of leading conservatives from the Party.¹⁸² On August 10 John Wiley resigned as deputy leader in the Cape.¹⁸³ It was a protest against the lack of discipline and loyalty in the Party. His position, he maintained, had become untenable in the face of constant attacks while he was dissatisfied that disciplinary action against the reformists had been set aside.¹⁸⁴ Wiley pointed out that the Cape Times had, during the course of the first six months of the year, published over fifty leading articles relating to the 'Streicher-Wiley faction' and had never yet been able to clarify the differences in principle held by the reformists and conservatives in the Party nor had it been able to explain how they had run a 'fierce campaign' to hold back verligte advance. Wiley's

181. Sunday Times, 1.7.74, 'Streicher capitulates?' See also the Argus, 20.7.74, 'U.P. men: complaints dropped!'

182. Rapport, 2.7.74, 'Sappe word na skeuring!'

183. Cape Times, 12.8.74, 'Wiley resigns as deputy leader'.

184. Letter from Wiley to the Cape Head Committee, 17.9.74. In it he explained his reasons for resigning, a decision he had taken on 30.7.74, but had only made public after the Umhlazana by-election.

resignation was regarded as a victory for the reformists but, in truth, it was another defeat for the United Party.

Philip Myburgh, a former M.P.C. for Wiley's constituency of Simonstown, whom the Sunday Times referred to as 'Volstruis Myburgh'¹⁸⁵ either because they considered him to be a verkrampte with his head in the sand or else because he had contested the unfortunate Oudtshoorn by-election, not only left the Party but retired from politics altogether.¹⁸⁶ In an open letter to Sir De Villiers Graaff, which the Burger published, he set out his reasons for resigning.¹⁸⁷ They were very much a summary of the ills which had beset the Party. 'Reformists', he contended, spoke with an accent 'foreign' to South Africa on matters of patriotism. The questioning of the Party's role on the Schlebusch commission had cast a shadow over this patriotism. He also attacked the lack of respect shown by certain M.P.'s towards the Afrikaner, which undermined an established principle of the United Party to promote co-operation between the two white races.¹⁸⁸ General Louis Botha had, 60 years previously, made contact with the same problem when he had said: 'Ek werk vir samewerking, maar Mnr Merriman moet my nie te ver druk nie'. Myburgh believed that if the present Merriman's of the Party could be tackled it would not fall apart. He was referring to the stand taken by public representatives such as Eric Winchester, who had objected to the request that

185. Sunday Times, 20.6.74, 'U.P.'s 'Volstruis' Myburgh breaks truce'. See also Die Burger, 28.6.74, 'V.P. g'n satelliet van P.P. nie, sê Myburgh'.

186. Cape Times, 1.8.74, 'Philip Myburgh quits U.P.'

187. Myburgh resigned on 31.7.74 and his letter appeared in Die Burger, 5.8.74, 'Myburgh sê waarom hy bedank'.

188. Myburgh was referring to the 'boerehaat' campaign of the Oudtshoorn by-election and the subsequent row over the need for bilingual candidates from which certain M.P.'s like Eric Winchester emerged without honour.

Party candidates had to be bilingual. Myburgh also professed to have doubts concerning the place of White leadership in the new federal policy. It had been a principle which had been propagated with success over the years yet suddenly anybody who stood by it was 'verkrampt'.

The manner in which Sir De Villiers Graaff had handled the disloyalty evident in the Party had displeased him as well. Action had been promised against dissidents but nothing had been done to discipline those who had 'leaked' information to the press or who had expressed publicly their lack of confidence in the elected leaders of the Cape. Graaff had let these people down when he should have supported them. Some, such as Andre Fourie and Etienne Malan, paid the price and had been defeated at the polls. The Party underminers were not disciplined and the Young Turks were accommodated at the expense of leaders, like Streicher, who were forced to capitulate to restore peace.¹⁸⁹ Peace, he claimed, always reigned when those who stood by Party principles were 'destroyed'. The United Party was becoming ineffective because Graaff was trying to keep together those who did not belong together.

Myburgh's strong attack on Sir De Villiers Graaff and the Party's shortcomings reflected concisely the feelings of the conservative or moderate-wing of the United Party. His resignation on the day prior to the opening of the new parliament could not have inspired the U.P. with much confidence, coming as it did immediately after the Umhlatuzana by-election result. It was a further shock, this time from Natal, where

189. IBID. See also Horak interview, 8.6.82.

its support had remained strong. Cadman, the Provincial leader, had scraped home by thirty votes in a 'safe' seat found for him after his recent defeat in Eshowe. This time his opponent was Theo Gerdener of the Democratic Party.¹⁹⁰ The result clearly indicated that the U.P. had not resolved any of its problems and that the swing against it continued unabated. The low percentage poll of 51.1 also reflected voter apathy or poor organization, or both.

The Burger regarded the recent events as an on-going process with trusted leaders being discredited. As the U.P. dissolved a 'new opposition' emerged which would be anti-Afrikaans and would lack even the United Party's ideal of national unity.¹⁹¹ The Cape Times rejected its opponents 'negative' attitude and expressed confidence in the composition of the new parliament. Gerald Shaw believed that it stemmed from a fear of Afrikaner verligtes moving across to the opposition. This wish never materialized to any extent but the United Party did continue to disintegrate.

Resignations continued to flow in and in September, Advocate Percy Niehaus, leader of the Party in South West Africa, joined the list. As a conservative, he was unable to accept, any longer, the state of affairs in the Party. He had already lost his Senate seat to the 'verligte' Eric Winchester, who had to be accommodated after his own defeat in Port Natal by the Nationalists. Niehaus' leadership position was also being challenged

190. B.M. Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910 - 1976. (Pretoria 1977), pp. 486-90. The result was:

R.M. Cadman (U.P.)	3288
T Gerdener (D.P.)	<u>3258</u>
U.P. majority	<u>30</u>
% poll 51.1	

191. Die Burger, 2.8.76, editorial, 'Politieke ontbinding'.

in S.W.A. by another Young Turk, Brian O'Linn.¹⁹²

The biggest blow to the Party establishment, however, was the resignation of M.A. Johnson as editor of the Sunday Express. His departure, in September left a gap which would never be adequately filled. He had unswervingly supported the Old Guard cause and that of the United Party throughout all its tribulations. He had been their only mouth-piece. Johnson, who had been the newspaper's editor since 1961 would not reveal publicly his reasons for resigning. It became known, however, that he had left because an undertaking which would have made him editor of the Sunday Times had been broken.¹⁹³ He was the senior newspaperman among Sunday journalists and was in line for the post on the Times. When this became known the political journalists on that newspaper, Messrs Uys, Serfontein and Strydom, circulated a petition opposing his appointment and threatening resignation should Johnson become its editor.¹⁹⁴ Had Johnson been given the post there is little doubt that the resignations would have been accepted! The campaign was a success, the directors of S.A.A.N. withheld his appointment in favour of Tertius Myburgh¹⁹⁵ who continued the newspaper's political support for the reformists in the same manner that Joel Mervis had done.

Johnson's resignation had a significant political impact for whoever South African Associated Newspapers appointed in his place he was unlikely to be a supporter of the Conservative-wing of the Party. His departure was a major victory for the reformists in their ideological battle with the Old Guard. Thereafter the reformists and the Progressive

192. Die Burger, 11.9.74, 'Niehaus se bedanking verras nie'.

193. See Chapter V .5

194. Interview with Wiley, 5.4.82, Senator Horak, 8.6.82 and Sir De Villiers Graaff, 16.6.82.

195. Then Editor of the Pretoria News.

Party enjoyed the support of the entire English language press. A national front between the opposition, excluding the Old Guard, and the press which had last existed in the days of General Smuts had been created.¹⁹⁶ The loss of their only reliable mouthpiece was a bitter pill for Sir De Villiers Graaff and his supporters to swallow.

By the end of September the conservative-wing of the Party had been considerably weakened by resignations, each one of which resulted in the reformists strengthening their positions.¹⁹⁷ The resignations were all related to the activities of the reformists and were a protest against the undermining and disloyalty evident in the Party's affairs. While identifiable Old Guard supporters were leaving voluntarily, the expulsion of reformists did not cease and at the beginning of October the Cape Head Committee announced the departure of a further five for their part in the 'GROW' movement. Those expelled included Robin Carlisle, yet again, P.A.M. Myburgh and T. van der Merwe.¹⁹⁸ The Committee had taken a strong stand and had rejected a milder motion requesting an apology from those involved. All five indicated that they would appeal against their expulsion from the Party which had resulted in a violent, if not unexpected, reaction from reformists quarters. The smouldering bitterness within the Party was again brought to the surface.

196. Hansard, 25.10.74, Columns 6507 - 6158. Analysis by Wiley of the ownership of the English newspapers.

197. By the end of September the following had either resigned from the Party or from positions of power within it: G. Oliver, G. Jacobs, A. Hickman, P. Niehaus, P. Myburgh, M. Johnson, J. Wiley. They were all associated with its conservative-wing.

198. The Head Committee which had met on Saturday, September 28, had expelled Messrs Carlisle, Myburgh, T. van Der Merwe, J. McNaughton-Davis and J. Wilson. The vote was 64 in favour and 48 against.

James Ramsay, leader of the Transvaal Youth Movement, wanted them reinstated while Elias Olivier, a new recruit from Theo Gerdener's Democratic Party and the U.P. organizing secretary on the Witwatersrand questioned the Party's right to exist in its present form.¹⁹⁹

Harry Schwarz criticized the 'small group within the U.P.' which opposed liberal changes in a speech at Eerste River in the Cape on October 4.²⁰⁰ The Reformer, which was the official publication of the Witwatersrand Young Turks led the attack on the Cape leadership²⁰¹

while the two political commentators of the Sunday Times, Strydom and Serfontein, who were strongly committed to the reformist cause, predicted a 'show-down' with the verkramptes followed by an inevitable split in the Party.²⁰² Its leading article of the same edition blamed

the Old Guard for wrecking the United Party while the Pretoria News of October 7 called on the Young Turks to leave the Party for a new political home. The Eastern Cape newspapers also contributed their criticism of the Party and its 'misuse of power'.²⁰³

What contributed to the dissatisfaction and the suspicion of political opportunism was that the Cape Head Committee had taken its decision to 'axe' the five only after Sir De Villiers Graaff had left the meeting for Johannesburg. He was, therefore, apparently unaware of what was to follow his departure.²⁰⁴ The Sunday Times suggested that the expulsions were a manoeuvre to weaken the reformist presence at the Cape Congress

199. Argus, 1.10.74, 'Ramsay shocked at expulsions'.

200. Die Burger, 5.10.74, 'Jong Turke val Kaapse Ou Garde woes aan'.

201. The Reformer, September 1974, 'Axing shocks Y.S.A. boss'. See also 'Crisis of conscience says Ramsay'.

202. Sunday Times, 6.10.74, 'Reformists are set for action'. See also its editorial, 'Party in Travail'.

203. E.P. Herald, 2.10.74, 'U.P. conservative leadership under the Whip'.

204. Graaff interview, 16.6.82. He confirmed that this was correct.

in November where the Party leadership would be called to account for itself.

The official explanation for the expulsion of the five was that their activities in 'GROW' were 'in conflict with the best interests of the Party'. They were accused of furthering the candidatures of selected persons in the Cape; of co-operating with journalists hostile to the United Party; of collecting funds to further their objectives and of forming parties within the Party. These activities had undermined the Party's discipline and the unity for which Streicher had repeatedly called.²⁰⁵ The expulsions did nothing to help achieve that objective either. But they did detract from the good performance its parliamentary team was delivering at the time. It was most unfortunate that the Party's extra-parliamentary affairs tarnished this sound effort and dominated the political headlines.

As the chairman of 'GROW', Myburgh regarded its activities as legitimate politics to achieve desirable goals and he refused to apologise for what had taken place. What must have mystified and probably disturbed him was how the minutes, or informal notes as he called them, had found their way into the unfriendly hands of the Sunday Express which exposed the secret movement and so prevented the achievement of its objectives by stealth. Investigations have been unable to reveal the real source of the 'leak', but it would appear that one of the members of the movement had had second thoughts and had mailed the minutes to the Express.²⁰⁶ Whatever the truth of the matter, it was a sad com-

205. Cape Times, 30.10.74, 'Move explained by hierarchy'.

206. John Wiley in an interview, 5.4.82, claimed that a member of the U.P., unfriendly to 'GROW', had been invited to join the group and that this person had sent a copy of the minutes to the Sunday Express. He had also been sent a copy.

mentary on the state of intrigue which existed even among party members committed to clandestine activities.

A special caucus meeting on October 3 agreed that it had no constitutional right to interfere with decisions made by the Cape Head Committee and suggested that any appeal by the five should be directed to the Central Head Committee of the Party. This, in fact, occurred but as a result of certain other developments the appeals were withdrawn before any judgments were handed down.

The United Party was suffering from many afflictions simultaneously, but its failure, with rare exceptions, to make any meaningful headway against the National Party was the chronic debilitating illness which resulted in episodes of self-mutilation. An inability to define or to agree on the real causes of the rift within its ranks made it virtually impossible to find a cure and the palliative measures to which it resorted satisfied neither the reformists or the conservatives.

7. The Cape Congress

The Cape Congress,²⁰⁷ held between November 5 and 7, was the occasion for the next round of fisticuffs between Party antagonists. A clash had been predicted since before the general election when the nomination disputes had captured the attention of political commentators. The congress would ostensibly be where the reformists settled their outstanding accounts with the Cape leadership and restored to the Party the enlightened image which it had destroyed. It was the best attended

207. It was held in the Weizman Hall, Sea Point, Cape Town, November 1974.

congress in years, a sure indication of the intense lobbying which must have taken place by both factions in order to secure the presence of the maximum number of their respective delegates.

Unfortunately for the Party, democratically reached decisions were not accepted with good grace at the congress by certain delegates. Thus, one of the prerequisites for Party unity, and democracy in general, was to a noticeable degree absent. One of the biggest shocks for the reformists was the re-election of Myburgh Streicher to lead the Party by an estimated 56 votes out of some 726 cast.²⁰⁸ Van Eeden and his supporters had suffered another defeat but the election of the 'verligte' Wally Kingwill as deputy leader, was some consolation.²⁰⁹ The Party had again managed to reach a compromise solution at the leadership level although the ten delegates elected to represent the Cape on the Central Head Committee were virtually all of the centre or right-wing of the Party.²¹⁰

It was significant that many delegates, the majority of them reformists, left the congress following the announcement of the election returns. The goodwill necessary to end the feuding was lacking and the results of the voting would only perpetuate the differences. Following van Eeden's defeat there were rumours of mass resignations and only an appeal by Harry Schwarz, who was present, to accept democratic decisions restored

208. Volkstem, November 1974, 'Kaapland kies leier en Streicher wen weer'.

209. Burger, 3.11.74, 'Koos Yster gaan Streicher pak', and Ibid, 6.11.74, 'Streicher'.

210. Delegates to the Head Committee were: Messrs P. Swanepoel, W. Kingwill, J. Wainwright, W. Deacon, J. Wiley, L. Murray, Boet van den Heever, H. Bell, T. Aronson and M. Streicher.

a superficial calm. In addition to the rancour created by the elections there were many bitter exchanges and contentious motions which fanned the flames of discontent. Norman Osburne, a delegate from the Gardens constituency, wanted placards pertaining to white leadership removed from the hall as they raised doubts concerning the Party's commitment to power sharing.²¹¹ Simon Jocum of Green Point, who was on record as



'Gesien John Vorster wil ses maande hê, Streichertjie? Lyk my óns gaan minstens ses jáár nodig hê'

211. Interview with Streicher, 5.5.82. He maintained that 'white leadership' as such was never officially abandoned by the U.P.

having criticized his M.P., Lionel Murray, for his role on the Schlebusch Commission, admitted that he had worked against Streicher and would continue to do so until things changed. 'Boet' van den Heever, M.P. for Kingwilliamstown, spoke out strongly in favour of Party discipline and demanded that those who had rejected it or its elected leaders should be told to 'gee pad uit hierdie saal'. It was Graaff's responsibility to act against such people, he said.

A motion of confidence in Streicher was met with silence from a section of the delegates although the majority accepted it. Sir De Villiers Graaff who, in his opening and closing speeches steered a middle course, sought to promote the elusive spirit of party unity. He stated that he was not interested in factions and warned against attempts by pressure groups of the left or of the right to hijack the Party. He reprimanded the press for the paucity of balanced reporting and for its extreme partisanship. He believed that each outburst of provocative journalism had a cumulative effect and evoked a corresponding reaction until people who agreed on a political philosophy, but differed only on detail of method or of pace thought they had a duty to destroy each other. This was a perceptive observation on the state of affairs in the Party for invariably both factions claimed to adhere to its policies. When Schwarz left to establish his Reform Party in 1975, he had little success in formulating an alternative policy to that of the U.P. In closing the conference, Sir De Villiers appealed for unity among those who shared the same fundamental philosophy and warned that the Party could do without those who were unable to accept democratic decisions which did not favour them. Nevertheless, he was of the opinion that the congress had smoothed over divi-

sions in the interest of placing national concerns first.

The press regarded the congress in a less optimistic light, depicting it as part of the on-going power struggle in which the reformists had come off second best. The local newspaper headlines between November 6 and 8 told the story:

Argus: 'Cape Reformists suffer setback'

'Tensions still high'

'Graaff warning to U.P. extremists'

Die Burger: 'Sap stryd vlam op'

'Reformiste delf weer onderspit'

'Streicher herkies - Skop vir Reformiste'

'Reformiste lek wonde na Baklei Kongress'

The Cape Times, though Graaff had not mentioned it by name, rejected his criticism of the press and claimed that it reflected events but did not create them. In the same article, however, it admitted that it did influence public opinion and then proceeded to attack the forces of reaction within the United Party.²¹² Yet, this same newspaper which agreed that it had the power to influence political thought was unable or unwilling to clarify the differences which it believed divided the verligtes from the conservatives, when challenged to do so.²¹³ While the press may not have created the original divisions within the United Party it played a major role in embellishing and exaggerating them.

212. Cape Times, 8.11.74, editorial.

213. Letters were sent by Gray Hughes on 8.3.74 and by Wiley on 24.6.74 to the Cape Times challenging it to clarify its position with regard to the verligte-verkrampste debate.

The issue of the five expelled reformists was also discussed at the congress where a compromise was again reached. It was decided that if they apologised to Streicher and his lieutenants and agreed to relinquish any office they had formerly held they would be readmitted to the Party. The creation of this loophole for their return did not impress the five while a conservative delegate, Fritz Myburgh, from the Southern Cape handed in his resignation in protest against the lack of discipline evident in the Party.

The Cape Congress had resolved none of the Party's problems. The reformists had failed in their bid to replace the Party leadership although Kingwill was thereafter the second-in-command.²¹⁴ The 'closing of ranks' did not materialize for the irreconcilable elements were still present to foster disunity. The great pity was that the 'silent majority', that broad middle group of Party supporters, was unable to exert a greater influence on events. Had the centre held, the United Party might have survived the activities of its extremists to the left and to the right. In the mid-1920's the poet W.B. Yeats expressed his thoughts on a similar situation in Germany where the weak but well-meaning Social Democratic government of the Weimar Republic was being undermined by the extremes of national socialism and communism:

Things fall apart;
 The centre cannot hold ...
 The best lack all conviction,
 While the worst are full
 Of passionate intensity.²¹⁵

214 . Argus, 6.11.74, 'Cape reformists suffer setback'.

215 . W.B. Yeats, The Second Coming.

This was the plight of the United Party.

8. The new senate

The electoral setbacks of 1974 had a further sequel when the new Senate was constituted on May 20. The reduced number of public representatives returned by the United Party meant fewer senators when the various electoral colleges met to fill their provincial quotas. The verligte-verkrampste debate was moved to the Senate as the two factions jockeyed for representation.²¹⁶

In Natal, where the Party had remained virtually untouched by internal problems, Eric Winchester received a senate seat. He had lost the Port Natal constituency to the National Party by 20 votes. A contributory factor may well have been his questionable stand on the issue of bilingualism which was given wide publicity and was a sensitive matter in an electoral division with a fairly high percentage of Afrikaans speaking voters.²¹⁷ Winchester was the only prominent labelled 'verligte' in the Province and he received his senate nomination ahead of Percy Niehaus,²¹⁸ the conservative South West African leader who had previously occupied a Natal senate seat.²¹⁹ The Party in Natal was, however, in difficulties. In the past, two of its six senate seats had been reserved for Niehaus and Herman Oelrich, the O.F.S. leader of the Party, as neither of them were able to win a parliamentary seat in their own regions. To complicate matters Cadman had lost Eshowe in the face of a racialistic campaign which

216. Cape Times, 20.4.74, 'Another threat to U.P. unity'.

217. The constituency was also unfavourably delimited for the United Party. See also Chapter IV.

218. Burger, 28.5.74, 'Niehaus kry trekpas'.

219. Sunday Times, 2.6.74, 'Triumph for verligtes in Natal U.P.'

had exploited the Schwarz-Buthelezi agreement. A seat had to be found for the Natal leader²²⁰ and J.S. van der Westhuizen created a vacancy by resigning from Umhlatuzana which he had won at the general election. Cadman, as has been mentioned, later scraped a win by thirty votes against Theo Gerdener. Van der Westhuizen was compensated for his generous gesture by being given one of the senate seats. The final choice for the remaining seat lay between Winchester and Niehaus. The former received the Party nomination and Percy Niehaus' public career came to an end. Soon thereafter he resigned his post as leader of the Party in S.W.A. Eric Winchester did not remain in the United Party much longer for in the following year he, and senator Brian Bamford of the Cape, both joined Harry Schwarz's new Reform Party which later merged with the Progressives. From the United Party's point of view it would have been better had these defeated 'verligte' parliamentary candidates not been given senate seats.

The changes in Natal had been, to a degree, unavoidable and had not strictly been the result of factional struggles. Winchester was, after all, a Natalian whereas Niehaus came from S.W.A. In the Transvaal, however, those elected to the Senate were reformist sympathizers and their success was regarded as a slap in the face for the Old Guard. Experienced senators such as Abe Getz and 'Suitcase' Gert du Preez²²¹ were not renominated while parliamentarians defeated at the recent election and who had conservative connections were also overlooked.²²²

220 . Cadman had succeeded Douglas Mitchell as leader of the Party in Natal at its Provincial Congress in December 1972.

221 . 'Suitcase' (du Preez) because of his readiness to pack and leave at a moment's notice to contest seats anywhere for the United Party.

222 . These included Messrs Emdin (Parktown), E. Malan (Orange Grove), D. Marais (Johannesburg North), A. Fourie (Turffontein) and G. Oliver (Kensington).

Instead, three verligtes were nominated, Anna Scheepers, Laurie Poorter and Henry du Toit. Had the Progressives not supported the United Party at the electoral college then the combined opposition would have been entitled to only two seats. The Progressives on their own did not command sufficient support to have representation in the Senate. The nomination of a third senator depended on the goodwill of the Progressives which explains the reason for Mrs Scheeper's success. She was regarded as enlightened and was consequently acceptable to the Progressives. Had the U.P. nominated a conservative as its third candidate it is doubtful whether Progressive support would have been forthcoming.

While the Senate elections in the Transvaal were hailed as a reformist victory which strengthened their power base in the Party caucus, they did not please its conservative-wing which had witnessed the eclipse of loyal and experienced politicians in a move interpreted as favouring the reformists rather than the Party. George Oliver was particularly disillusioned and resigned as the Party's Director of Information and as the editor of its publication Volkstem. This was a protest against Schwarz's leadership in the Transvaal.²²³ He publicly claimed that Schwarz had reneged on an agreement, initiated by De Villiers Graaff, that he would receive a senate seat.²²⁴ Sir De Villiers wanted him in parliament because of the important posts he held in the Party. Oliver maintained that the special appeal which Schwarz had undertaken to make on his behalf to the electoral college never eventuated.²²⁵

223. Horak interview, 8.6.82.

224. Burger, 4.6.74, 'Oliver daag Schwarz in skerp V.P. twis'.

225. Argus, 3.6.74, 'Oliver: major row brewing in U.P. circles'.

Although neither Schwarz or Graaff had the authority to bind the Transvaal caucus to elect Oliver, had such an appeal been officially made it would have been heeded in the best interests of the Party²²⁶ and there would, in all probability, have been no difficulty in securing his nomination, at least for one of the two seats which did not rely on Progressive support.²²⁷

Both Sir De Villiers and Harry Schwarz remained silent on Oliver's allegations but the whole matter of the Transvaal senate elections left an unfavourable impression which created widespread comment.²²⁸

In many ways the situation in the Cape and the Transvaal made an interesting comparison. Whereas the Cape leadership was kept busy suspending reformists, in the North the action was directed against the conservatives. George Oliver's resignation was badly timed as it coincided with the closing stages of the Pinelands by-election campaign. This was further ammunition for the Progressives when painting a dismal picture of division within the United Party.

The election reverses of 1974 had again led to speculation concerning Sir De Villiers Graaff's future as Party leader. This was hardly unexpected in the wake of his fifth election setback but the media used the opportunity to sponsor the claims of Japie Basson, the spiritual leader of the reform movement. A Durban newspaper predicted that

226. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82. He was disappointed that Oliver had not been elected.

227. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82. He felt that one method Graaff could have used to have certain candidates elected was to make the issue a matter of confidence in himself.

228. Sunday Times, 19.5.74. Serfontein: 'Electoral snub for Div. and Oliver!'

he would lead a 'new look United Party' following the resignation of Sir De Villiers Graaff which was shortly expected.²²⁹ This type of mischievous reporting was pure speculation calculated to promote the ever present discontent within the Party. Graaff had recently been unanimously re-elected at the national congress and had given no hint of retiring from politics. Japie Basson tentatively kept alive the speculation during the Pinelands campaign when he said that he was available to lead the Party if he was ever proposed and the post was vacant.²³⁰

Although he was replying to a hypothetical question put to him by the Sunday Times, which in no way challenged Graaff's position, his qualified answer was given banner headlines and it was implied that it was a desirable event. The Cape Times felt that he was well suited for the post because he had prepared the way for the reform movement in the Transvaal under Schwarz. Not only was he a desirable leader for the United Party, asserted the Times, but also a potential South African prime minister.²³¹

Basson's 'availability' to lead resulted in reactions like that of Myburgh Streicher's at Worcester which helped to create the spectacle of a party in travail before an important by-election. Those voters not strongly committed to the U.P. and who relied heavily on the news media for political information could have been only negatively influenced. Basson's 'offer' was construed as a challenge to Graaff's leadership

229. Daily News, 28.4.74, 'He's the man when Graaff resigns'.

230. Sunday Times, 26.5.74. 'Japie ready to lead'. See also Sunday Tribune of the same day, 'Basson launches bid for U.P. leadership'.

231. Cape Times, 28.5.74, editorial, 'A potential Prime Minister'.

during a difficult period in the U.P.'s history.²³² Although the left-wing was pleased the Old Guard were angered that his position should be undermined. The Burger wrote of the civil war having come out in the open but predicted that even if Basson took over he would only split the Party and end up leading the pseudo-progressive section.²³³

These issues, which pre-dated the Pinelands poll, must have influenced the result and were an indictment of the unprofessional behaviour of party members which provided its opponents with material damaging to it.²³⁴

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232. Cape Times, 1.6.74, Shaw: 'Japie Basson - will a crisis bring his chance!'.
 233. Die Burger, 27.5.74, 'Burgeroorlog in die V.P.' See also IBID., 13.4.74, 'As Graaff loop'.
 234. Sunday Times, 7.6.74, 'Basson: I will criticize'.

CHAPTER IX1975: THE REFORMIST SPLIT

The year 1974 had not ended on a high note for the Party. Both the Transvaal and Natal had held their provincial congresses where Schwarz and Cadman had respectively been re-elected to lead the Party. But whereas the situation in Natal remained calm the position in the Transvaal was volatile. The reformists themselves were becoming divided and a measure of impatience with the provincial leadership had become evident. One group resigned from the Party and formed a new 'Realignment Movement' the objective of which was the establishment of a 'new verligte dispensation' which would attract those of all parties who were tired of the political logjam in the Republic.¹ The leading figure in this organisation was Martin Stephens, a former M.P. for Florida, who resigned from the U.P. in November 1976.²

This development indicated that certain sections within the reform movement were losing faith in Schwarz's ability to assert their point of view and simultaneously bring about reconciliation within the United Party. The conservative element had also managed to regain lost ground on various provincial bodies and at Head Committee level clashes took place with the leadership group. Andre Fourie, the former M.P. for Turffontein, was the most prominent member of the Old Guard to feature in the disputes. He expressed his lack of confidence in the Party's Transvaal leadership in letters to Sir De Villiers Graaff and he also had reservations concerning the emphasis placed on aspects of the Party's new federal policy by

1. Dr S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie', pp. 450 - 51.

2. Other leading figures were Elias Olivier, former U.P. organizer on the Witwatersrand and Mike Smuts, Chairman of the U.P. in Krugersdorp.

the reformists.³ In an interview with the Vaderland he was, in addition, critical of Stephens' 'verligte alliansie' which would discover, he maintained, just as the reformists had done, that the majority of U.P. supporters were conservative in outlook. He was generally displeased about the way things were going in the Transvaal. He did not believe that Schwarz was able to bridge the ever-widening gap in the Party or that the men in charge were capable of placing it on a sound footing again.⁴

Consequently, the old year ended with the reformist-verkrampste issue as unresolved as it was destined to remain for most of 1975, particularly in the Transvaal where breaking-point was reached. The same personalities who had initially been involved in the struggle for power within the Party were prominent in the final rounds of the fight. These 'verligtes' finally broke with the Party; the same United Party that they were going to save and reform was abandoned as a lost cause.⁵ Their departure was a body blow from which it was never able to recover. The civil war in the Party, which was largely of their making, left wounds too deep to be healed. The Young Turks had played a decisive role in the decline of the United Party. It was significant that on their own they were unable to remain a viable movement as there was simply not sufficient political room between the United and Progressive parties for yet another opposition group. As had frequently been predicted, they were destined to merge with the Progressives with whom they had much in common. Their sojourn in the U.P. had been marked by noble objectives but they had achieved little that was constructive. Instead they had become a powerful force for

3. Letter from Fourie to Graaff, 10.9.74. Reply by Graaff, 25.9.74.

4. Die Vaderland, 6.12.74, 'Andre Fourie praat sy hart uit'.

5. Die Burger, 17.2.75, 'Dis die Harry wat V.P. so red'.

destruction which, arguably, contributed not only to the demise of the United Party, but also to the subsequent weak and fragmented state of the opposition in South Africa.

1. The departure of Dick Enthoven

Matters came to a head early in February with the expulsion from the parliamentary caucus of Dick Enthoven, M.P. for Randburg and one of the leading Transvaal reformists. His dismissal was as a result of disloyalty. Harry Schwarz, his provincial leader, was soon thereafter to suffer the same fate following his decision to leave the House of Assembly rather than to vote against an amendment introduced by the prime minister, John Vorster, during the no-confidence debate. These events heralded the final phase of the disintegration of the United Party.

Enthoven, the Director of Finances in the Transvaal, who had never raised the amounts of money predicted on his behalf by the reformist press,⁶ became the centre of a controversy when he initiated a public poll which unfavourably compared the support enjoyed by Graaff and the Party vis-a-vis the reformists.⁷ The Pegasus Poll, as the survey was called, was conducted by a group, Market Research, whose impartiality was doubted when the results became known and also the name of its sponsor.⁸ The United Party was shown up in a very poor light while widespread support was revealed for the reformists.⁹

6. Horak interview, 8.6.82. See also Sunday Times, 6.8.72, 'U.P. pledge to raise R2m by November'. But IBID, 24.6.73, 'Have raised R250,000, want R1m over five years', tells its own story.

7. Sunday Times, 2.2.75, 'U.P. torn by new row'.

8. Interview with Horak, 8.6.82. See also the Argus, 16.1.75, which claims its newspapers commissioned the poll.

9. Die Burger, 1.2.75, 'Ou Garde eis Jong L.V.'s se kop'.

Harry Schwarz found the results of the poll 'very interesting', a view shared by few in the caucus.¹⁰

The upshot of the issue was that Enthoven, who had commissioned the poll, and who refused to apologize for having done so, was expelled from the Party caucus on February 4, the first such expulsion since the early 1950's when the Bailey Bekker group of conservatives received similar treatment.¹¹ His conduct was regarded as a deliberate act of disloyalty which was 'incompatible with continued membership of the United Party'. Although expelled by the caucus it did not have the authority to rescind his membership of the Party and Enthoven intimated that he had no intention of resigning.¹²

Sir De Villiers Graaff regarded the expulsion as a disciplinary matter unrelated to the aims and principles of the Party. Harry Schwarz, for the time being, refrained from commenting but he had been placed in an invidious position for Enthoven's activities would inevitably be considered at various levels of authority in the Transvaal. The question of whether the province would also discipline him was fraught with problems. While his leader remained silent other reformists and the press gave the incident enormous attention which had serious repercussions for Party unity.¹³ The five Young Turks who had previously been expelled in the Cape informed Sir De Villiers that they would no longer seek readmission to the Party. Maans Kemp, who had replaced Andre Fourie as leader of the Young South Africans in 1973, announced

10. Argus, 2.1.75, 'Results deserve study - Schwarz'.

11. Sunday Tribune, 2.2.75, 'Old Guard gunning for Enthoven over poll'.
See also Die Burger, 4.2.75, 'Enthoven dalk uit vandag'.

12. Cape Times, 5.2.75, 'Enthoven Axed' and also IBID, editorial:
'Expulsion of M.P.'

13. Argus, 16.1.75, 'U.P. faces biggest crisis, vote survey shows'.

that the Party was 'stagnant, ineffective and irrelevant to the South African political scene'. He resigned from the United Party, a move which represented a fairly typical reformist reaction to the Enthoven incident. Kemp had allowed a strong youth organization under Fourie's direction to deteriorate dramatically. The only A.G.M. he had attended during his term of office was the one which had engineered his original election.¹⁴ As had been the case with the Young Turks on the Witwatersrand whose electoral predictions had failed miserably,¹⁵ similarly under Kemp's verligte guidance the Young South Africans had produced nothing but dramatic press headlines. From a viable party organization it had been reduced to impotence.

Other resignations followed swiftly and it appeared as if all the better known reformists had decided that the time had arrived to leave.¹⁶

Virtually the whole membership of 'GROW' cut its ties with the Party, including Charles Plumbridge, Peninsula youth leader, and six of his branch chairmen.¹⁷ In future they would work for a 'verligte dispensation' in South Africa involving verligtes of all parties. By their statements it became apparent that they were of the opinion there was no future for verligtheid, as they understood it, in the United Party.

Harry Schwarz faced an unenviable task for it would be left to the Party in the Transvaal to discipline Enthoven and to consider his future in politics. Speaking in parliament, Schwarz had made it clear

14. Interviews with Streicher, 5.5.82, and Horak, 8.6.82.

15. They had predicted that they would win thirty-five Witwatersrand seats at the 1974 election, but only won eleven.

16. Die Burger, 7.2.75, 'Jong Sappe bedank op streep'.

17. The youth chairmen of the following constituencies resigned: Sea Point, Gardens, Vasco, Bellville, Constantia and Green Point.

that he would not be the 'executioner' of his friend and said that he would rather go into the political wilderness than drive him out of the Party.¹⁸ Although Enthoven had been found disloyal to his leader, colleagues and Party, it was evident that Schwarz did not consider him to be so. On the following day Gray Hughes, chairman of the caucus, spelt out clearly as an answer to Schwarz the Party's objections to the Pegasus survey. Firstly, it contained 'loaded' questions to establish 'reformist' strength in the event of a break-away. Secondly, it created the illusion that the leader, and the Party's effectiveness under him, were being challenged by rival candidates and thirdly, when the desired responses were obtained the Argus Group was approached to give wide publicity to the results.¹⁹

Enthoven had not even approached his own provincial leader with regard to the poll²⁰ or to the dissemination of the results. He had also expressed no regret at the harm he may have caused. As far as the United Party's parliamentary caucus was concerned, it was an instance of gross disloyalty.

Sir De Villiers who, at the time, was wrestling with the unrewarding task of leading his floundering Party in the no-confidence debate against the united ranks of the government, issued a stern warning to the mavericks.

18. Hansard, 6.2.75, Columns 335 - 336.

19. The poll claimed that the Young Turks would receive support from 41 percent of the Witwatersrand opposition voters should they break-away from the U.P., which would thereafter receive only 28 percent. It also indicated that Graaff was preferred by 26 percent of those polled but was closely followed by Eglin (24) and Schwarz (23) for leadership of the U.P. See also Dr S.L. Barnard, pp. 452 - 454.

20. The constituencies involved in the survey were Bryanston, Jeppe, Yeoville and Rosettenville.

He would not allow the Party to be 'hijacked by any clique, group or unconstitutional formation'.²¹ Their narrow approach would harm the broad appeal of the Party and place a ceiling on its support. The accord, he said, which had been reached at the Bloemfontein Congress (1973) was being eroded by personal differences which resulted in disloyalty to colleagues and to the Party. He maintained that no group had attacked the aims and principles of the Party but attempts had been made to manufacture policy differences.²²

Resignations and adverse publicity seemed to indicate that the final break was close at hand and that the chances of restoring even a semblance of peace were things of the past.²³ The Sunday Times critically considered the issue of loyalty. It questioned whether any was due to Graaff who had led his Party to disaster and who would have done it a service had he stepped down years before. This was at least the third time that the Times had changed its opinion of Graaff, but what it did not alter was its strong support for the reformist cause which it backed to the hilt against the Old Guard over the Enthoven poll.²⁴ It predicted that the urban vote would go to the reformists and that Enthoven's expulsion would result in a regrouping of reformist forces outside the United Party. Japie Basson was regarded as a potential leader of an alliance between the Young Turks, Progressives and Democrats. The 'verligte alliance', which the reformist press had propagated with varying intensity since Basson's 1971 congress speech, seemed a distinct possibility. While the reformists had been unable to capture the Party from within, enough dissension had been generated to ensure a split,

21. Argus, 7.2.75, 'Graaff threatens to act on disloyalty'.

22. IBID.

23. Argus, 7.2.75, 'Final split in U.P. forecast'.

24. Sunday Times, 9.2.75, 'Who is the U.P.' and 'Reformist D-Day near'.

with the strong possibility of the disaffected elements seeking solace outside the parent body in a new party formation. During this process the United Party had been irreparably damaged.

2. The establishment of the Reform Party

The climax to these divisive issues was reached in the early hours of February 10 when the Reform Party was officially established. The very choice of the name indicated that, notwithstanding earlier protests by Schwarz and other leaders that there were no factions within the Party, there was definitely a section, a reformist-wing, which could no longer remain a part of it. In many ways the break was similar to that of the progressives in 1959 except that the reformists did not have a clearly defined political issue on which to leave the United Party. It was a culmination of personal differences rather than of policy matters. The aims and principles of the United Party had been accepted by all the groups within it although differences regarding their manner and pace of implementation had existed.

The birth of the new party followed secret talks between Harry Schwarz and certain Transvaal M.P.C.'s led by Alf Widman. The Provincial leader had flown to Johannesburg after having discussed his position in the Party with Sir De Villiers Graaff on Monday.²⁵ What emerged from those talks was that Graaff no longer wanted him in the Party. His failure to support Graaff's opposition to the prime minister's amendment in the no-confidence debate had been the last straw, although Schwarz maintained that his action was a result of a misunderstanding and did not warrant expulsion from the Party.²⁶ Having ascertained

25. Argus, 12.5.75, 'Schwarz had earlier talks with Graaff'.

26. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82. Sir De Villiers agreed that there could have been a misunderstanding.

what the position was he undertook not to oppose his expulsion but instead hurried to the Witwatersrand to meet the reformist members of the provincial and city councils to thrash out the details of the new party, in what was probably a premeditated move but which had to be implemented more rapidly than was planned.²⁷

Following the meeting Alf Widman, and nine other United Party M.P.C.'s, announced their resignation from the U.P. in order to establish the Reform Party.²⁸ Widman was to act as its caretaker until such time as Schwarz was able to assume the mantle of leadership. This dramatic move had with a single stroke of the pen made the new party the official opposition in the Transvaal Provincial Council.²⁹ The United Party had been left with three members. At parliamentary and provincial level the United Party had almost ceased to exist in the Transvaal.³⁰ These events clearly indicated the strong power base which the reformist-wing of the United Party had established in the province.

The coup in the Transvaal had been conducted with a degree of secrecy and intrigue eminently in keeping with the long history of the Old Guard-Young Turk dispute.³¹ Neither Sir De Villiers nor Francois Oberholzer, leader of the U.P. in the Provincial council, had been informed of the reformists' plans.³² As had been the case with so many other manoeuvres the media were the first to be informed. Oberholzer had the dubious pleasure of hearing the news over his car radio

27. Cape Times, 8.2.75, 'Harry flouts Old Guard'.

28. Argus, 11.2.75. Editorial: 'A shattering blow'.

29. IBID, '10 U.P. men form new opposition'.

30. Messrs Oberholzer, Epstein and Opperman were all who remained.

31. Horak interview, 8.6.82.

32. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

en route to a council meeting. The bitterness engendered by the manner of the break was reflected in a speech by Oberholzer to the council that morning (February 11) when he referred to the matter: 'As u mooi kyk, Mnr Voorsitter, sal u sien hoe die bloed van my rug afdrup'.³³

The United Party in the Transvaal had indeed been stabbed in the back.

Schwarz and Widman issued similar statements explaining their decision and which also reflected the degree of collusion between them.³⁴

Schwarz revealed what had long been widely suspected as the source of conflict between the reformists and the rest of the United Party. He questioned the worth of the U.P. propagating a verligte public image while acting differently behind closed doors. He accused members of paying lip-service to the ideals of the enlightened 1973 Congress, but interpreting them in a way which caused endless disputes particularly with regard to the federal concept and the question of discrimination.³⁵

Schwarz also asserted, for the first time, that differences were not only as a result of personality clashes but were related to direction, philosophy and policy as well. He felt that the drive to oust the reformist elements in the United Party would continue indefinitely and for that reason 'I hope to find a political home with people that share my view ...'³⁶

He concluded that as he had been blamed for causing the feuding within the Party, his departure should create the opportunity for it becoming

33. Die Burger, 12.2.75, 'V.P. Steier na dramatiese skeuring!'

34. IBID, 'Widman sê waarom hulle verlaat het'.

35. Die Burger, 13.2.75, 'V.P. verkramp sê Schwarz'.

36. Cape Times, 13.2.75, 'Reformists hit at U.P. double standards'.

a united force, although he doubted it and predicted a continuation of the double-talk as new reasons would be found for quarrelling. In this he proved correct, but according to Streicher and others, the reason was that not all the reformists had left, some had remained within the United Party.³⁷

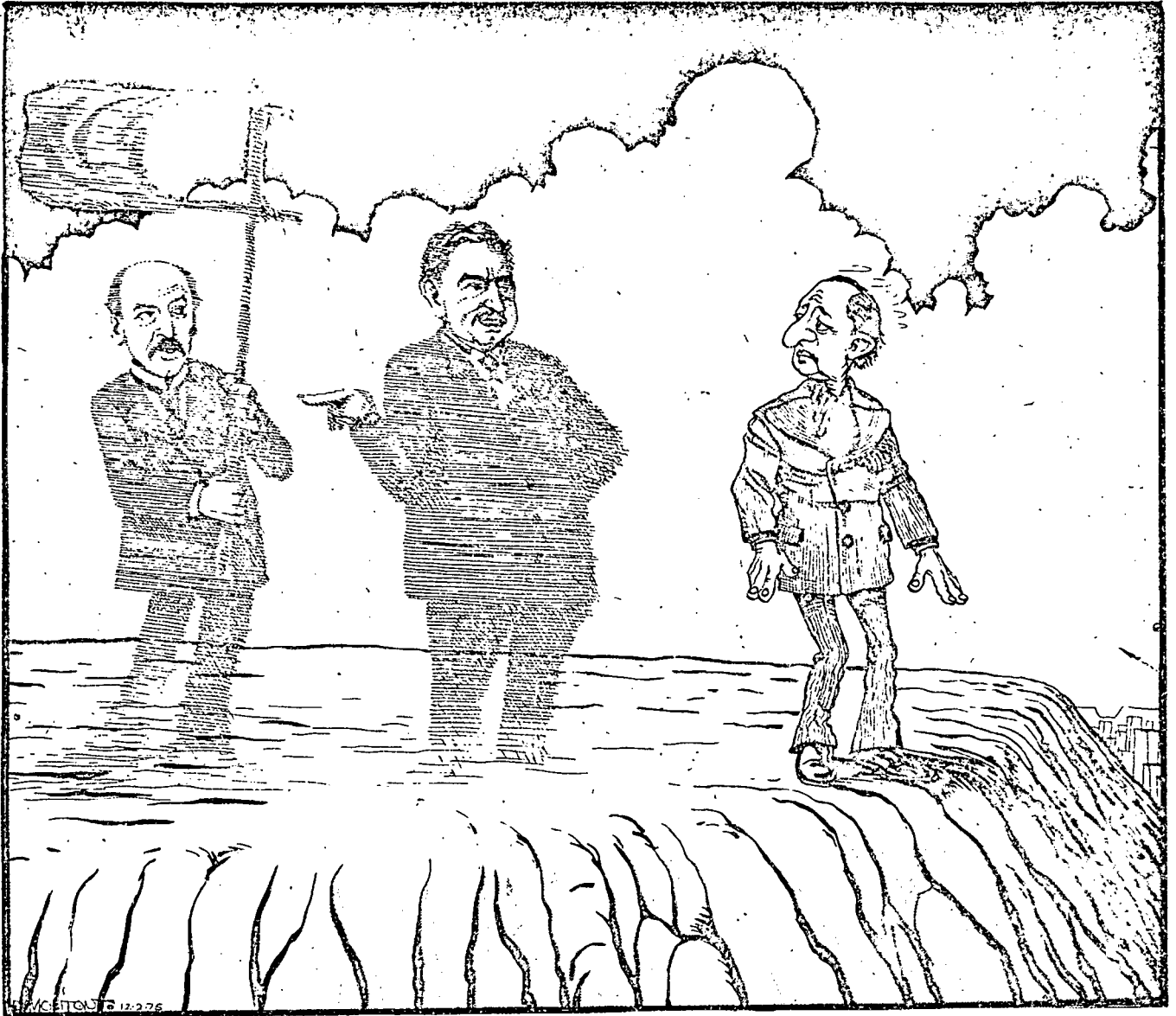
Alf Widman explained that 'differences in the Party over ideology and policy had reached breaking-point'. Yet over the years this had been repeatedly denied by all groups as a source of friction. Its policies were what had kept the divergent segments together. In sketching the road ahead, Widman could do little better than declare that the reformists would support the broad policies and principles which the United Party had adopted in 1973. Its federal 'dispensation' would henceforth be propagated with honesty and there would be no double-talk.

The stand taken by Widman was not a new development in South African politics. Dr Albert Hertzog in 1969 and Dr Treurnicht in 1982 had both left the National Party because, in their opinion, it had forsaken the true path of Afrikaner nationalism. The reformists, according to Widman, had broken with the United Party in order to propagate its policies in the spirit of their formulation.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the disputes between the United Party and the reformists rested on personality differences

37 Interviews with Streicher, Horak and Wiley

which may originally have arisen as a result of varying policy interpretations which in their turn could be traced to different



'Geluk met julle Herstigte Reform Committee hier op die Rand. My vriend Jameson het vir jou 'n vlag gebring'

philosophical outlooks, namely conservative or liberal. Once the break had been made it became important to emphasize that there were policy differences, although they were never clearly defined, in order to establish an identity for the Reform Party as an entirely separate

and recognizable political force.³⁸ The reformists never did convincingly manage to draw up a distinct programme of principles which could distinguish them from the United Party and relied for their proposals on Schwarz's Act of Dedication. The direction of their thinking was, however, more compatible with that of the Progressive Party, a characteristic which facilitated the merger of the two within the following five months.

Sir De Villiers issued a statement on February 28 reviewing the role played by the reformists in the United Party. Knowing what he did, it is surprising that he had tolerated their presence for so long and had allowed them to damage the Party as they had done.³⁹ He referred to them as a well organized minority which had since the 1970 election attempted to hijack the Party while pretending devotion to it. As they had failed in this they had turned to wrecking it. Graaff confirmed that the break was over personalities and discipline, not principles to which the Schwarz group had protested their loyalty. He also rejected the reformist claim that they were responsible for verligte thought in the United Party which had always held modern and enlightened views. Changes⁴⁰ which had occurred after 1972 had not been due to them although the media claimed otherwise.⁴¹ Graaff predicted, correctly, that in order to establish an identity ideological differences, which had not existed, would have to be manufactured.

38. Sunday Times, 16.2.75, 'Graaff Slams Reformists'.

39. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.5.82. He said that Sir De Villiers went out of his way to placate the reformists.

40. As an example, the new federal policy was being investigated before 1972.

41. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

Disaster awaited the new party as the reformists were political mavericks who lacked deep-seated convictions and were incapable of functioning cohesively.⁴²

From the United Party's point of view it was unfortunate that Sir De Villiers had not acted firmly to eradicate the reformists before they had done any real harm.⁴³ Once the split had been made no words or actions could heal the wound. Many of the dissidents were ensconced in formerly safe United Party seats where they were able to entrench their positions. None resigned to test their popularity in by-elections among the electorate which had originally returned them to parliament as United Party representatives. Verligte action apparently did not go to those lengths, although using the 1977 election results as a guide they would in all probability have retained their seats as the N.R.P., successor to U.P., was unable to win a single parliamentary division in the Transvaal.

What also emerged from this United Party debacle was the damaging and inconsistent role played by the press. This was not a new development but illustrated the difficulties with which the Party had to contend. Schwarz had received wide acclaim for his constructive move in not opposing Vorster's amendment in the no-confidence debate.⁴⁴ Gerald Shaw wrote

42. See also Hansard, 24.2.75, column 1278.

43. Interviews with Graaff and Horak revealed that there was a point prior to the 1974 election when a concerted attempt was made by members of the Central Head Committee to block all Young Turk nominations in the Transvaal, but Graaff overruled this move.

44. Die Burger, 13.2.75, 'Schwarz sê hoekom hy nie gestem het nie'.

of his 'moral courage' and of his being a 'light in the U.P. gloom'.⁴⁵ When the United Party, however, had supported certain government measures, which it frequently did, it received nothing but condemnation. Over the years the Sunday Times had regarded support for the Bantustans as constructive and so had the Young Turks, but at the time it had not been U.P. policy. Federalism was well and good if it involved the phasing out of the white parliament for a multi-racial federal one as desired by the reformists though not by the conservatives. Support by the United Party for the Schlebusch investigation in what it believed was the national interest was not regarded as constructive and was criticized by every English newspaper save for the Sunday Express. To win the support of the opposition press had become increasingly more dependent not on what a person did, but rather on who the person was who did it. The reformists had this support and their departure from the United Party was praised as another constructive move.

The United Party was falling apart but the pace of disintegration was accelerating. Both the Progressive and Reform parties had once been part of it. As was the case with the progressives, the reformists' growth potential lay not in the appeal of its political message, which was in any event never clearly formulated, but rather in the fortunes of the United Party. Should the latter stage a revival, then the reformists had no hope of success, but should the U.P. collapse, as did happen, then limited progress was possible but only in the form of a merger with the progressives. The reason was simple enough - all three groups appealed to the same section of the electorate for

45. Cape Times, 8.2.75, Shaw's political survey.

support.

By February 12 Messrs Dalling, Bamford and Schwarz himself had all been expelled from the United Party while Horace van Rensburg had resigned.⁴⁶ All were from the Transvaal and were the original Young Turks who had started the reform movement. Various city councillors had joined the new party, including fifteen from Johannesburg and four from Randburg.⁴⁷ It was estimated by one source that fifty percent of those actively involved with the United Party on the Rand were sympathetic to the Reform movement.⁴⁸ In the Cape, Senator Brian Bamford became the leader of the Party and was supported by other reformists such as Norman Osburne (Gardens)⁴⁹ and Simon Jocum (Green Point), all of whom had clashed with the Party leadership.⁵⁰ Those members of 'GROW' who had been expelled or had resigned from the U.P. also joined the new party. Included among the resignations from the Eastern Cape were Maans Kemp and van Zyl Cillie, the disgruntled ex-M.P. for Central, who in a letter to the Sunday Times detailed his reasons for leaving. He criticized Graaff's weak leadership and blamed him for being the main obstacle to a verligte consensus in South Africa.⁵¹ The membership list included the great majority of those who had been publicly associated with the reform-wing of the United Party. The swiftness with which Schwarz was able to establish the new party indicated that it was a well

46. Argus, 12.2.75, 'Graaff expels Schwarz from U.P.'

47. Burger, 13.2.75, 'V.P. skeur verder in dag van skokke'.

48. Sunday Times, 16.2.75, 'The week that shook the Party'.

49. Divisional chairman of the U.P. in the Gardens electoral district.

50. Argus, 14.2.75, 'Drive for members'.

51. Sunday Times, 16.2.75.

organised movement - a party within a party - which could be mobilized at short notice if the occasion arose. The reformist break-away also reflected the degree to which its members had been able to build a power base within the United Party over the years.

Two prominent 'verligtes' who did not leave the U.P. at that point were Japie Basson and Prof Nic Olivier. Neither were able to see any ideological reason for doing so nor did they believe that the splintering of the opposition would achieve anything positive. Commenting in the Sunday Express on the establishment of the Reform Party, Basson contradicted many of Harry Schwarz's claims when he said: 'I'm against sheer opportunism in politics. A party must be built around clear principles. The United Party objectives provide the rallying point for any realignment'.⁵² Basson and Olivier kept alive the verligte thinking within the United Party and their presence contributed to the continuation of the civil war.

The reformist split left the opposition in disarray with no Tielman Roos available to act as a catalyst to bring the scattered fragments together in a new party.⁵³ The harm done by the reformists to the United Party was clearly evident. Their brief stay had left a trail of destruction. Schwarz, who had deposed Marais Steyn in order to

52. Sunday Express, 16.2.75. 'Another lone stand by the great survivalist'. See also Hansard, 24.2.75, column 1238. Basson said there was no need for another party to be formed.

53. Roos was a former N.P. leader in the Transvaal and Minister in Hertzog's 'Pact' government before being made a High Court judge. He returned to politics during the Depression years, demanding the formation of a coalition government. His activities contributed to Smuts and Hertzog coming together to form a coalition government in the interests of South Africa in 1933.

revitalize the Party and bring it to power by 1985 had achieved the opposite result. Its back had been broken and it was infinitely worse off than when the reformists had made their bid for power. The United Party had not been made a better opposition, but rather a weaker one.

While the departure of the reformists could conceivably have provided the opportunity for the United Party to become more unified, this did not materialize. Others still remained within its ranks to continue the feud⁵⁴ while those in the caucus previously considered to be centrists tended thereafter to fill the vacuum left by the reformists.⁵⁵ Contrary to the conviction expressed by Graaff that the war was over the Party was unable to make a new start.

The confusion over the departure of the reformists had hardly begun to subside when John Wiley ignored the wishes of his caucus to comment publicly on the issue at a divisional meeting in Simonstown. Following a strong attack on the reformists he appealed to the traditional supporters of the Party to return, 'now that the alien elements have been or are being driven out'.⁵⁶ He praised Streicher for exposing the disloyal elements and attacked the English press for driving 'good men' out of the Party in an endeavour to replace them with reformists and Progressives. Wiley also maintained that the United Party was one of 'moderate conservatives' and that the reformists had left because of policy

54. Interviews with Wiley, 5.4.82, Streicher, 5.5.82 and Horak, 8.6.82.

55. Parliamentarians such as Hymie Miller, Graham McIntosh and Derick De Villiers would be included in this group.

56. Cape Times, 19.2.75, 'Wiley Attack'.

differences.⁵⁷

His address disturbed those 'verligtes' still in the Party and Senator Winchester threatened to resign if Wiley were not expelled in the same manner Dick Enthoven had been, following his political survey.⁵⁸ His misgivings were expressed in a letter to the caucus from which he had voluntarily withdrawn as a protest against the lack of discipline exercised in the case of Wiley over a long period.⁵⁹ There had been a standing grudge between the two dating back to Wiley's criticism of his colleagues' stand regarding the matter of bilingual candidates in 1972.

The parliamentary caucus had again been placed in an awkward position for it did not wish to be accused of being sympathetic to conservatives while the reformists had been punished. Wiley had also been in error when he spoke of the U.P. being attached to moderate-conservative views whereas both Sir De Villiers and Basson had said that it was committed to verligte policies. In addition, he had contradicted the Party leadership by stating that the reformist split was over policy differences. Graaff believed that personality differences had been the main reason. The Cape Times touched on these problems in an editorial and demanded to know why 'right-wingers' always appeared to survive.⁶⁰ Wiley escaped possible disciplinary measures planned by his opponents by

58. Die Burger, 19.2.75, 'Nuwe twis dreig oor Winchester'.

59. Cape Times, 19.2.75, 'Senator leaves U.P. caucus'.

60. Cape Times, 27.2.75, editorial, 'The Incredible United Party'.

apologizing to the caucus for certain misunderstandings' his speech may have caused.⁶¹

Peace in the Party was unlikely to last and Senator Winchester as an example, was never reconciled to the prevailing state of affairs. He resigned to join the Progressive Reform Party in August.⁶² Tensions remained because the verligte section of the Party, increasingly referred to as the Basson group, were committed to a political direction which the conservative-wing would never accept. The situation assured the continuation of the civil war for although there had been a divorce in the family the United Party still represented an unhappy marriage.

Speaking in the House of Assembly towards the end of February Sir De Villiers Graaff predicted that the Reform Party had no future. The question, he said, 'is simply who is to swallow them?' His answer, 'they will be swallowed by the Progressive Party.' Dr Jacobs: 'very indigestible'. Further interjection: 'It is a like swallowing a porcupine (Bill Sutton).'⁶³ Sir De Villiers' analysis of its prospects proved accurate. The Reform Party did not survive as a separate entity for longer than six months. Its appeal was restricted to a very limited section of the electorate and although it did not lack leadership material who were constantly making news, it remained a prime

61. Die Burger, 28.2.75, 'Poging om John Wiley uit koukus te dryf misluk'.

62. Argus, 9.8.75, 'Winchester also joins PRP'.

63. Hansard, 24.2.75, Column 1278.

example of a movement where there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians.⁶⁴ It never contested an election so its popularity was never accurately determined but the very fact that Schwarz agreed to merge with the Progressive Party⁶⁵ suggested that he realised that there was no viable future for another splinter group to the left of the United Party.

The merger which took place on July 26 followed protracted negotiations which had begun in May. The reformists, as predicted by Graaff, were swallowed by the Progressives and had to accept the bulk of their policies, including the qualified franchise which, until recently, had been rejected by Schwarz.⁶⁶ The party, which he had referred to as 'a political circus' had become acceptable to him, just as the National Party had become attractive to another former leader of the United Party in the Transvaal, Marais Steyn. Ray Swart, chairman of the Progressive Party, and himself a former United Party M.P., was satisfied that the agreement reached in no way diluted the principles of his party, 'otherwise I wouldn't have been party to it'.

Harry Schwarz was also pleased with the proposed merger, 'a home for all true verligtes', which he forecast would make a great impact on the political scene. He had made similar predictions for the United Party following his triumph in 1972 when he had ousted Marais Steyn.

64. Horak interview, 8.5.82.

65. Cape Times, 19.5.75, 'Progs. and Reform Party agreed to merge'.

66. Cape Times, 14.5.75, 'Reform Party accepts Prog. policy'.

His hopes were not realized and his new political home which was later to become the Progressive Federal Party made a very modest impact at the 1977 election although by then the United Party had disbanded, a development which should have boosted the new party's chances. Schwarz also predicted, this time more accurately, that the merger meant the end of the U.P.⁶⁷ although it was the Party itself rather than the P.R.P. which was responsible for its demise. In addition, he stressed that the merger would have a new name and a new policy. 'It will not simply be a new P.P.' The word 'Reform' was added to Progressive and that was the most visible contribution of the Schwarz group to the new party besides adding to it the services of a number of accomplished politicians.

The merger, which followed congresses by both parties, brought together two former splinter groups of the United Party.⁶⁸ The main participants had all once been U.P. supporters. Colin Eglin was elected leader and Harry Schwarz would be the P.R.P.'s national chairman. The English press wrote with enthusiasm of the event and the Cape Times referred to the 'dynamic verligte leadership' of the new party.⁶⁹ In his final address to the Reform congress, Schwarz called for loyalty to the leader of the proposed party. Possibly, he found this appeal necessary in the light of his own disloyalty to Graaff and that of the reformists in general towards the elected leaders of the United Party during their sojourn in it. It was interesting to note that Joel Mervis, the former

67. The Star, 19.5.75, 'Merger will be death knell of the U.P.'

68. Argus, 12.7.75, 'Prog. merger inevitable says Schwarz'.

69. Cape Times, 28.7.75, 'Merger and After'.

editor of the Sunday Times, was a delegate at the Reform congress and was elected to the executive of the Progressive Reform Party. Following the merger this newspaper proclaimed that it was the intention of the P.R.P. to replace the United Party.⁷⁰ It referred to the merger as the 'wedding of the year'. Uys and Serfontein in their articles had finally admitted what many conservatives, and later also Sir De Villiers Graaff, had believed to be their intention from the start, that was if they were unable to capture the Party from within, to wreck it and build a new one from the various 'verligte' splinters. In this way the political logjam would be broken and a new alignment in South African politics initiated.

By the end of 1975 two opposition parties were thus represented in parliament. The P.R.P., which was a coalition of former United Party 'verligtes' and which had as its main political objective the replacement of the U.P. rather than of the government; and the United Party itself, which still professed to be an alternative government but which was in reality declining rapidly as it wrestled unsuccessfully with internal problems. Its task would thereafter become that more difficult as the challenge from the left had been strengthened while the National Party remained as monolithic as ever.

3. The final Le Grange Reports

The tabling of the final reports of the Le Grange Commission (formerly Schlebusch) on the Christian Institute (C.I.) and the University

70. Sunday Times, 27.7.75, Uys and Serfontein: 'New Party's target is U.P.'

Christian Movement (U.C.M.) in June 1975, continued to trouble the United Party. The Reports had been presented to parliament at a time when the reformist group was strengthening its position and they made use of the opportunity to take an unequivocal stand against them, something which the U.P. was unable to do. Mike Mitchell⁷¹ explained his Party's attitude towards the rule of law.⁷² It was no different from that which he had used in previous debates on the Schlebusch Commission when he had said 'one cannot speak of the rule of law or of recourse to the courts if one does not have as a fact in one's country a state of law and order'.⁷³ The difficulty for the Party, he said, was to strike a balance between human rights and the public interest. Individual liberty could only exist in a framework of law and order which was more difficult to maintain during times of instability. Legislation which abrogated the rule of law was only acceptable when the security of the state was endangered. This was the attitude adopted by the U.P. towards security and laws pertaining to the safety of the state.

This point of departure explained the attitude adopted by the Party to the Le Grange reports on certain organizations. It was a matter of state security and ultimately of patriotism. As the C.I. and U.C.M. were found to be undesirable organizations, legislation to curtail, within reason, their activities should be supported.⁷⁴ On this issue

71. Mitchell was the M.P. for Durban North and the Party's spokesman on legal matters.

72. Cape Times, 21.6.75, Mitchell: 'Rule of law: What it means'.

73. Hansard, 8.3.73, Column 2266.

74. Cape Times, 5.6.75, 'Role of U.P. in C.I. Report defended'.

the Party's right-wing stood closer to the government than to its verligte members such as Japie Basson and Prof Olivier who, among others, were presumably more attached to the rule of law. Consequently, the Commission tended to polarize opinion in the Party.

The English newspapers maintained that the great divide in South African politics at that time concerned civil liberties while their Afrikaans counterparts regarded patriotism as the cardinal priority.⁷⁵ Those U.P. commissioners still serving on the Commission, Messrs Murray and Sutton, were being castigated, virtually as traitors to the opposition cause, by the English language press for co-operating with the government on issues of national security. These two had signed the final Le Grange reports without submitting any minority recommendations. Certain members of the Party's parliamentary caucus had expressed misgivings about the wisdom of having acted as they had done and had thus perpetuated the long standing dispute which had originated with the appointment of the original Schlebusch Commission in July 1972.⁷⁶

There is no doubt that the United Party suffered as a result of its association with the Le Grange Commission, but it was unfortunate that so few of the electorate ever read the various reports or were ever in a position to judge for themselves the merits of the case against the organizations under investigation. The English press had,

75. Cape Times, 6.6.75, editorial: 'The Great Divide'.

76. Argus, 5.6.75, 'Olivier, Basson regret C.I. findings'.

from the start, with the exception of the Sunday Express, adopted a negative approach as it had decided that civil liberties were under attack and never once admitted that the security of the state was sufficiently threatened to warrant executive action against citizens without recourse to the courts.⁷⁷ Having adopted this approach the English newspapers were prepared to suppress the unsavoury evidence revealed by the Le Grange investigation or else to interpret it in the most favourable light. One example was the manner in which a speech by Cadman was handled when he discussed the U.C.M. and the role played by Dr Alex Boraine in its activities. On the basis of the evidence Cadman contended that the U.C.M. could be faulted on moral grounds for its actions were at times both disgusting and blasphemous. Its activities at Wilgespruit, he said, were anything but Christian while, politically, it advocated revolution and Black power. It received funds from abroad to finance its radical activities which included the rejection of all white political parties and the capitalist free enterprise economy in favour of a Marxist-Socialist state. Dr Boraine, the Methodist representative to the U.C.M. conference in 1968, had not objected to the activities of the Organization but had even congratulated the editor of its magazine which included the controversial leading article, 'One for the Road'.⁷⁸

Dr Boraine responded by denying that he had necessarily supported every article of the U.C.M.'s publication and that he had resigned in 1969

77. Cape Times, 4.6.75, 'The amazing C.I. report'.

78. Hansard, 16.6.75.

when he was unable to change its direction.⁷⁹ He regarded the Commission as having wasted its time investigating an organization that had since become defunct.⁸⁰

The Cape Times, among others of the S.A.A.N. and Argus group, did not initially report Cadman's speech. His words were suppressed and later only partly reported when Cadman had pointed this out in other newspapers. The English speaking voter was consequently not readily afforded the opportunity to read the more damning evidence which appeared in the Le Grange reports. They were fed only a certain diet of comment which suited the editorial viewpoint. They were not given the chance to decide on the evidence available whether the United Party was perhaps correct to have served on the Commission. With regard to Dr Borraine, it was possibly considered politically expedient to minimize his association with the discredited U.C.M. He had, in addition, been their first choice in the Pinelands by-election of the previous year and he was a member of the party which they supported.

It was in the face of this type of media exposure, or lack of it, that the U.P. had to make itself heard. It never did succeed in placing its viewpoint clearly before the electorate.

The Afrikaans newspapers, on the other hand, strongly supported the work of the Commission as being in the national interest. They felt

79. Cape Times, 11.6.75, 'Borraine denies he was pleased'.

80. IBID., 27.6.75, 'Charges answered'.

that the U.P. commissioners had done their duty by endorsing the findings. It had been a patriotic act but it was a pity that the 'verligtes' in the U.P. and the 'English press' had adopted a stand contrary to the best interests of the country.⁸¹ Although the Afrikaans newspapers reported extensively on the findings of the Commission and put an entirely different interpretation on them from that of its English language competitors, this did not help the United Party for its support was concentrated largely among English speaking voters who seldom read the Afrikaans publications. Consequently, it can be concluded that the damage done to the United Party by serving on the Commission was partly due to its inability to inform the electorate of its role in the investigations or to make public much of the evidence which had motivated the nature of its response. Bill Sutton⁸² was of the opinion that a thread of radicalism ran through all the organizations investigated with the exception of the Institute of Race Relations. The Christian Institute, however, he regarded as a danger to the state. It meddled in politics and was financed largely from abroad. He supported the statutory action recommended by the Commission against it.

The result of the Le Grange recommendations was that the Christian Institute was declared an affected organization in terms of the appropriate act⁸³ and its overseas funds were terminated. No action was taken against the U.C.M. as it had previously been disbanded. Although it was the government which had acted against the C.I. the U.P. was

81. *Die Burger*, 5.6.75, 'Toets vir patriotisme'.

82. Schiebusch commissioner and United Party M.P. for Mooi River.

83. Affected Organizations Act.

again held jointly responsible by its opponents. In this they were supported by the attitude of Japie Basson and Prof Olivier both of whom disassociated themselves from the findings of the Report and also rejected the executive action taken against the Christian Institute. Although never intended as such, their reaction was construed as a rebuff for the U.P. commissioners which could start another upheaval in the Party.⁸⁴ Gray Hughes, its chief whip, issued a statement on June 7 which denied that there was a split in the caucus over the Le Grange reports and which explained that the Party was opposed to declaring the C.I. an 'affected organization' but agreed that its foreign funds should be terminated. Differences of opinion, he said, had been expressed over certain conclusions reached on the evidence examined but this was permissible within the Party as such opinions were based on fact and were distinct from party policy. The Party was, thus, not divided on fundamental principles as had been alleged for mischievous reasons.⁸⁵

As the United Party had been seen to be co-operating with the government on the Schibusch and Le Grange commissions over a period of three years a new round of speculation concerning a possible coalition had followed the final reports.⁸⁶ The prime minister had rejected the suggestion as nonsense. This was hardly surprising as there could be no possible attraction for the government in a merger with a declining party. Nevertheless, the issue, which was never a serious proposition,

84. Die Burger, 6.6.75, 'Onmin in V.P. oor C.I.'

85. Cape Times, 7.6.75, 'Caucus split denied'.

86. Sunday Times, 8.6.75, 'Coalition rumours'. See also IBID, 15.6.75, Uys: 'New line up for S.A.?'

received the consideration of political commentators, who used the opportunity to draw attention to the failing health of the United Party. Gerald Shaw criticized Bill Sutton for having co-operated with the government to undermine the rule of law and suggested that the M.P. for Mooi River belonged in the National Party. He maintained that the U.P. could no longer survive in its present form and that conservative members, who were adverse to the political advancement of Blacks, should join the government while those who favoured 'power sharing', the 'verligtes', should join the Progressives in a 'new powerful opposition party'.⁸⁷

Shaw had again propagated the mythical 'verligte front' at the expense of the United Party. A front, consisting of splinter groups with no defined policies and which had all originated from the same parent body where they had failed to find consensus in the first place! How they were expected suddenly to co-operate in a 'verligte' realignment was never spelt out by those political observers who favoured the move.

'Dawie' of the Burger regarded co-operation between the main parties on the Commission as a growth point for a broader nationhood and therein, he suggested, lay the reason for the 'hysterical' attack by the opposition press, for on no account were the English seen to be working with the nationalists. Stanley Uys rejected the idea

87. Cape Times, 7.6.75, Shaw: 'Talk of Coalition', and IBID, 14.6.75, 'The Real Division'.

of coalition but called for those who belonged together to go to their 'real homes'. He saw no end to the United Party's troubles which, he predicted, would continue to lose support to both the left and to the right. Its fall from grace he attributed wholly or partially to its participation in the Schlebusch commission.⁸⁸

4. Erosion of support continues

The stark realisation remained that while the Party had acted from sound motives its sojourn on the Commission, in the words of Prof Olivier, had placed 'an albatross around its neck'.⁸⁹ It had encouraged the growth of a 'new opposition' mainly of English speaking citizens who wished to dissociate themselves from the National Party. Conversely, others had simultaneously joined the latter for patriotic reasons. This polarization was at the expense of the U.P. which increasingly occupied a shrinking middle-ground in the political milieu. This trend was reflected in the results of an opinion poll published in Rapport on July 13. Support among the main parties in percentages was:

National Party	58.7
Progressive Reform Party	12.8
United Party	11.7
Democratic Party	3.1
Herstigte Nasionale Party	2.0

These figures indicated a loss of support for the United Party. The survey also revealed that 21.8 percent of English speaking voters

88. Sunday Times, 15.6.75, Uys: 'No time for Draadsitters' and also 'Schwarz was the catalyst'.

89. Cape Times, 18.6.75.

supported the N.P., 24.8 the U.P., and 32.2 the P.R.P. The 1977 general election was to confirm this trend and clearly demonstrated how small the political centre in white politics had become to which the United Party and its successor, the New Republic Party, directed its appeal.

By-elections during 1975 had also demonstrated the declining influence of the U.P. in the rural areas where its traditionally loyal Afrikaans speaking following was deserting it, not it would seem for the National Party, but to the H.N.P., which had been increasing its share of the vote in a number of low polls. The Middelburg parliamentary by-election in the Transvaal towards the end of May resulted in the U.P. ending last, in a three-way contest, behind the H.N.P. which had begun to replace it as the main opposition on the platteland.⁹⁰ This trend is discernible when studying the results for the last three elections in the constituency:

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
N.P.	6,047	5,238	4,774
U.P.	2,974	2,066	1,662
H.N.P.	873	1,674	2,353

90. B.M. Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings 1910 - 1976. (Pretoria 1977), pp. 486 - 90.

Middelburg (25.5.75)	N. Ligthelm (N.P.)	4774
	L. Stofberg (H.N.P.)	2353
	G. Erichsen (U.P.)	<u>1662</u>
	N.P. majority	<u>2421</u>
Percentage poll		64.8

In August the U.P. vote also declined in the Caledon parliamentary by-election.⁹¹ This was a seat in which it had always performed solidly in the past. The swing against the Party in the Transvaal and the O.F.S. rural areas, in particular, continued until it had become a totally ineffective organization even prior to its official demise. Its offspring, the N.R.P., has since made no progress in those areas whatsoever, nor has the Progressive Reform Party or its successor, the P.F.P. Instead of a 'verligte' opposition emerging in the rural areas and in the industrial constituencies of the cities a more right-wing extremist group has stepped in to fill the vacuum left by the U.P. There the 'new opposition' is conspicuous by its absence. The attempts to 'liberalize' the United Party had led to a backlash on the platteland and in certain urban seats.⁹² For the more sophisticated city electorate the policy changes proposed by the U.P. over the years had been insufficient to retain their support but for the rural voter they had been too radical.

At the end of the year Sir De Villiers admitted that it had been a difficult period for his party but that it had weathered the storms and that the setbacks at the polls were of a temporary nature. He said that he had no intention of resigning or of forming a national government with Vorster.⁹³

91. <u>IBID</u> , Caledon	J.P. de Villiers (N.P.)	6730
6.8.75	S.J. Delport (U.P.)	<u>3467</u>

N.P. majority	<u>3263</u>
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The N.P. majority was 2034 in the 1972 parliamentary by-election. David Graaff (U.P.) had then polled 4020 votes.

92. Sunday Times, 6.7.75, Uys: 'White backlash'.

93. Cape Times, 3.12.75, Copeland: 'Graaff speaks his mind'.

Superficially the Party was still united but the undercurrents remained and 1976 was to bring no message of hope concerning its future prosperity. Japie Basson had become the new provincial leader in the Transvaal,⁹⁴ its third in as many years. Together with his colleagues Messrs Streicher and Cadman he undertook to promote the unity of the Party and to enforce discipline within it.

94. Elected on 11.9.75, to succeed Harry Schwarz .

CHAPTER X1976: THE DECLINE GATHERS MOMENTUM

In many ways 1976 was a watershed year for the country. South African troops invaded, then withdrew from Angola while Cubans and other Russian proxies propped up its marxist regime. Southern Africa became increasingly part of the East-West struggle. The South West Africa question became more intractable, there were signs of an economic recession while four months of internal unrest followed the Soweto riots. The Theron Commission submitted its report on the position of the Coloured people and Transkei received its independence. Against this background the United Party struggled on as the official opposition, but its fortunes continued to decline until a point was reached when Sir De Villiers Graaff initiated a campaign to 'save South Africa' which, he believed, would also preserve something of the character of the Party in a proposed new dispensation.¹ What must have spurred Graaff's search for a new beginning were two disastrous by-election results which clearly indicated that a crisis had been reached in the Party.

1. Alberton and Durban North

In 1948 the discredited Marais Steyn had won the Alberton seat against Dr Verwoerd. In 1970 the U.P. had polled 2,616 votes, in the 1974 general election 1,719 and in the by-election of 31 March 1976 a mere 952. This put it into third place behind the H.N.P.² The Progressive

1. Interview with Wiley, Streicher and Horak.

2. B.M. Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings, pp 486 - 490.

C. Ligthelm (N.P.)	6801
D. de L. van Staden (H.N.P.)	1004
A.S. Fourie (U.P.)	<u>952</u>

N.P. Majority	<u>5797</u>
Percentage Poll	58.6

Reform Party had not considered it worthwhile contesting the election. The Middelburg trend of the previous year had been repeated. On the Transvaal platteland the United Party had ceased to be a meaningful political force.³ The result was also a major setback for Japie Basson who had recently taken charge of the Party in the Transvaal, and of whom much was expected. Following this result Dr Alex Boraine of the P.R.P. appealed to Basson and other 'verligtes' still in the United Party to join them,⁴ an offer which was rejected because Basson still believed that his party remained the best framework for the strongest verligte front in South Africa.⁵

This optimism must have been dashed soon thereafter when the United Party suffered yet another traumatic defeat, this time in the urban Natal constituency of Durban North. Here the loss of support was to the left. In a seventy-six percent poll Harry Pitman of the P.R.P. polled 4243 votes to the U.P.'s 3919 and the Nationalist's 3139. This gave him a majority of 324 votes in the by-election created by Mike Mitchell's unexpected retirement from active politics.⁶ Had he too perhaps had enough of the civil war within the Party?⁷ The result had confirmed Myburgh Streicher's contention that in a three-

3. Die Burger, 3.4.76, 'Alberton'.

4. Cape Times, 6.4.76, 'Boraine asks Japie Basson and De Villiers to join P.R.P.'.

5. Argus, 6.4.76, 'P.R.P. call to U.P. rejected by Basson'.

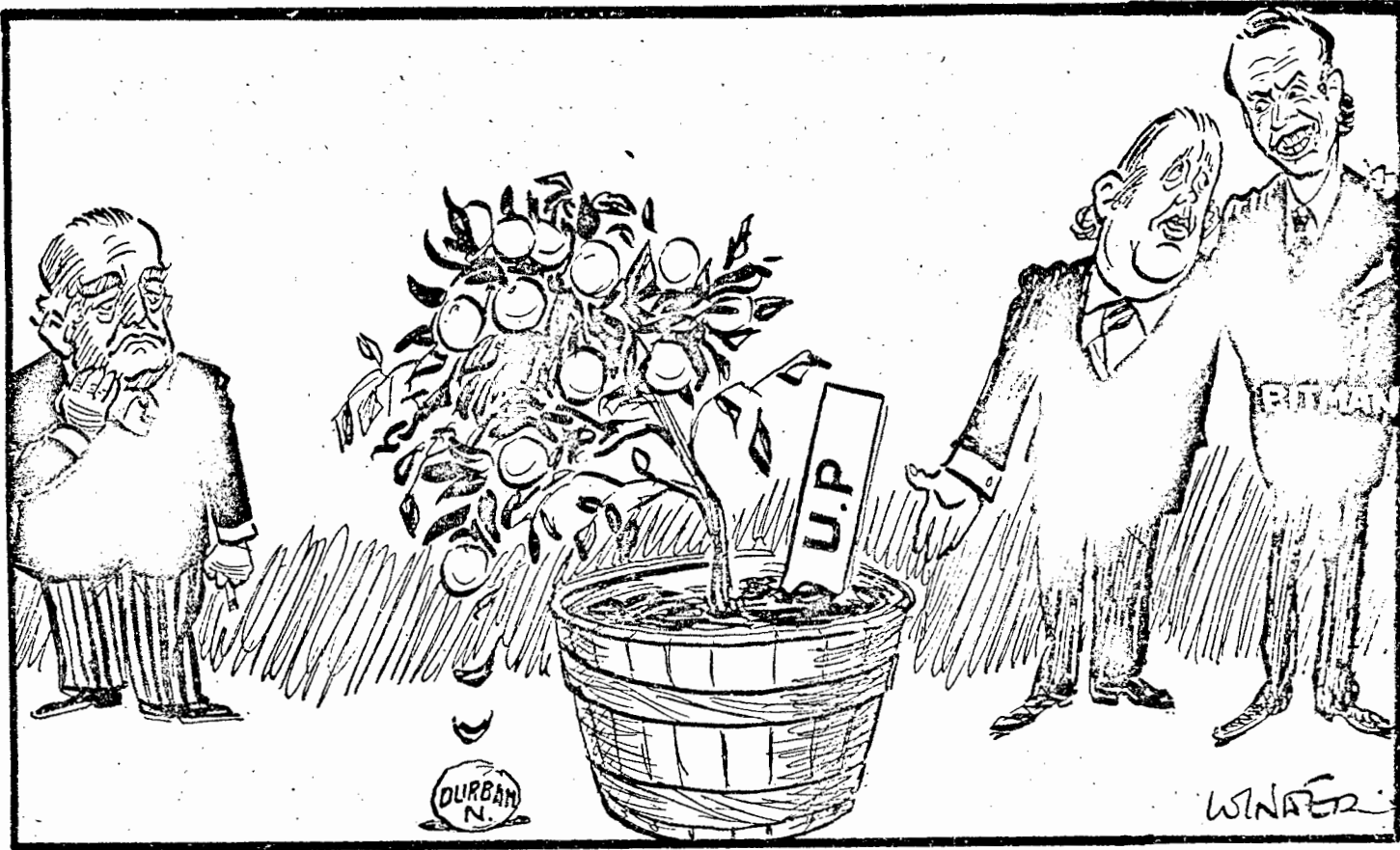
6. B.M. Schoeman, Parlementêre Verkiesings, pp 486 - 490.

S Pitman (P.R.P.)	4243
W Reynolds (U.P.)	3919
D Worrall (N.P.)	<u>3139</u>

P.R.P. majority	<u>324</u>
Percentage Poll 76	

7. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

way contest involving the N.P. the United Party would lose to the Progressives.⁸



'Durban North was another by-election setback for the U.P.'

The Burger wrote of the outcome as a 'political earthquake' which underlined the United Party's image as a loser with no prospect of a rescuer in sight. The wealthy English speaking voter had abandoned it for a party with limited growth and sectional appeal.⁹ In another editorial the Party was described as being punch-drunk, with the only escape from its misery being the knock-out blow. Whether it turned to the left or the right it had lost all credibility, claimed the newspaper.¹⁰

8. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

9. Die Burger, 7.5.76 'Politieke Aardskuding'. See also 'V.P. swartgallig oor toekoms'.

10. Die Burger, 10.5.76, Editorial: 'Polarisasie'.

The English press which had worked so hard, particularly in Durban, to achieve a P.R.P. victory and which had all but ignored the U.P. candidate was ecstatic over the result. The Daily News interpreted it as a rejection of white 'baasskap' even in the verligte form propagated by Dennis Worrall of the National Party. It claimed that the P.R.P. would be a strong opposition and that it was 'pegging' the limits of government action and was preparing for power!¹¹ The lessons of white opposition politics since 1948 appeared to be entirely lost on the political correspondents of the Daily News and others who commented in the same vein. Setting aside the unrealistic remarks of these opinion-makers what remained incontestable was that the United Party had suffered another paralysing reverse. Sir De Villiers regarded the result as a matter of 'grave concern' and promised a special meeting of the caucus to examine the reasons for the setback. He believed that it confirmed the trend towards polarization and the politics of confrontation which would lead to a stronger National Party and a smaller less effective opposition.¹² His fear proved demonstrably accurate if the 1977 election results are studied.

The prime minister asserted that the Durban result indicated that the U.P. had lost the right to exist,¹³ and predicted that its disintegration would thereafter take place more rapidly. As so often happens in the case of a loser the United Party lacked the good fortune which frequently separates success from failure. It had lost Durban North and Pinelands

11. Daily News, 7.5.76, 'Message is Explicit'.

12. Argus, 7.5.76, 'Graaff not to resign'.

13. IBID, 'U.P. has lost right to exist'.

14. Die Vaderland, 6.5.76, 'Oomblik van waarheid'.

by the narrowest of margins, and in both instances on a split vote. Had the National Party not contested the seats there could have been little doubt that the United Party would have retained them at that time. In 1977 Ron Miller of the New Republic Party actually rewon the Durban North constituency from the P.F.P., but then there was no third candidate to divide the more conservative vote.¹⁵ The U.P. was also unfortunate that these by-elections were held in generally wealthy English speaking areas where the media strongly supported the policies and personalities of the Progressive and later Progressive Reform parties. This contributed to the weaker performance by the U.P. Circumstances, however, alter cases as was demonstrated by the result of the provincial by-election held in East Griqualand on the same day as the Durban North contest. In this far-flung rural constituency the power of the press was substantially less through the sheer magnitude of the distances involved and the result of the voting was notably different; for the United Party candidate gained a convincing victory over his Progressive Reform challenger.¹⁶ This result was announced well after that of Durban North and was virtually ignored, intentionally or otherwise by the newspapers which were engrossed by the 'verligte' triumph in Durban. Consequently, a much

15. H. du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesings van 1977', p. 140. The result was:

N.R.P.	4692
P.F.P.	<u>4525</u>

N.R.P. majority 167
 Percentage poll 66.1

16. Rural areas are also traditionally more conservative which could have influenced the vote as well. The result recorded in the Government Gazette, 21.5.76, was:

D.J.N. Malcomess (U.P.)	3490
E. Spring (P.R.P.)	<u>971</u>
U.P. majority	<u>2419</u>
Percentage poll	53.1

The election was held on 5.5.76.

needed morale boosting win by the Party in East Griqualand was overlooked. What remained impressed on the minds of the electorate was the U.P. defeat in Durban North, a formerly 'safe' seat.

Prof Kleynhans of U.N.I.S.A., who had in the past been optimistic about the future of the U.P. reassessed its position in the light of recent events and concluded that voters 'pounced' on parties which were doing badly and that such a situation created openings for the National and Progressive parties.¹⁷ Tertius Myburgh, the editor of the Sunday Times, wrote of the electorate forging new loyalties as the U.P. faced imminent collapse under its uninspired leadership.

He derided its attempts to 'bestride the mythical centre' and described it as a 'tired defeated party' which was being banished to a 'wasteland of its own making'.¹⁸ Japie Basson accepted that the Durban North setback was the fault of the Party and not that of an unsympathetic press. He was, however, apprehensive that a lack of statesmanship could ruin the opposition and the two party system with it.¹⁹

These and other comments all touched on points pertaining to the decline of the Party.²⁰ It had always attempted to occupy the middle ground in white politics with all the inherent pitfalls of having to compromise on sensitive issues in order to reach consensus.²¹ It had

17. Sunday Tribune, 9.5.76, 'U.P. seats in danger!'

18. Sunday Times, 9.5.76, 'Goodbye to old Politics!'

19. Sunday Tribune, 9.5.76, 'We're to blame - Japie Basson!'

20. Cape Times, 8.5.76, Shaw: 'Voters opt for verligte change!'

21. Interview with Horak, 8.6.82. The Party, he claimed, died when its members were no longer prepared to compromise which meant that antagonists had to give up some of their views and accept those of their opponents in order to reach consensus.

left itself open to attack on both flanks and with its decline, polarization became more pronounced, a development mentioned repeatedly as a probability by 'Dawie' of the Burger. Whereas its political moderation was criticized by its adversaries it became increasingly evident that once the centre was weakened more extreme groups moved in to occupy the vacant ground. While the decline of the United Party was never primarily a result of its centrist politics, they did lend themselves to exploitation during times of crises.

Before Sir De Villiers addressed the Central Head Committee on the recent setbacks, the Party suffered two further blows when Kent Durr and Annette Reinecke abandoned it, the former for the National Party and the latter for the cross-benches of the Provincial Council as an independent. Miss Reinecke was no longer prepared to endure the constant friction within the Party while Durr had left as a result of its weak response to the long awaited security legislation based on the recommendations of the Le Grange Commission. The Party had decided not to support the bill to establish a permanent security commission but rather to compromise by requesting that it be referred to a select committee for improvement. This was a setback for the right-wing which wanted to support the principle of the bill but a victory for the left which had been vociferous in its condemnation of the final recommendations of the Le Grange Commission.²² Eventually the United Party, which had absorbed more than its share of debilitating criticism because of its Schibusch connections, voted

22. Die Burger, 12.5.76, 'Regses in V.F. kry pak oor Wet'.

with the P.R.P. against the principle of the proposed new security bill. This received the approval of the English newspapers but was criticized by the Afrikaans ones which regarded it as a defeat for the right. It had also driven Durr into the arms of the National Party.²³

Durr's decision indicated that as the Party lost momentum it would lose support, not only to the P.R.P., but also to the National Party and this included English speaking voters. The 1977 election results illustrated clearly the degree to which polarization had taken place among them.

It was against this background that Sir De Villiers addressed the Central Head Committee, which next to its National congress, was the Party's highest policy-making body.²⁴ He spoke seriously of the problems facing it, their causes and the Party's future. 'We have come together', he said, 'to discuss nothing less than the fate of the United Party itself'. He detailed the reasons for its loss of support as originating not from a lack of sound policies but from massive and hostile press campaigns, the clever marketing of candidates, intensive canvassing and house meetings, the twisting of policy issues and the denigration of the United Party, its leaders and candidates. These factors had converted people who were oblivious

23. Die Burger, 22.5.76, 'Hoe die Prog-Refs help om Kent Durr Nat. te maak'

24. Division of Information and Research, Graëff's address to the Party's Head Committee, 20.5.76 (Johannesburg, 1976).

of the real issues involved. Sir De Villiers used as an example the Durban North by-election where both daily newspapers as well as the Sunday Tribune and the Sunday Times had either ignored or denigrated the Party's candidate and had supported Harry Pitman. Reynolds' (U.P.) speeches were frequently not reported while sometimes his presence on a public platform was not even mentioned. The Daily News had been the most partisan and 'had done the whole cause of press freedom a disservice'. While the P.R.P. victory had received banner headlines the United Party's resounding win in Griqualand East had elicited scant attention, the Rand Daily Mail tacking it on to the end of a political article by Bernadi Wessels which only the most 'assiduous readers of political news' would have noticed!

Sir De Villiers believed that the voters who had switched to the P.R.P. had been kept ignorant of its policies for a common-roll franchise and Black majority rule would not attract votes. The activists of the 'new left' and the partisan journalists who supported them, 'argue not in terms of policies but of images'. He believed that they sought to destroy the credibility of the Party in order to enlist support for a new and more effective opposition. Graaff vowed that he would have nothing to do with such a disastrous alignment.²⁵

The feuding and public recriminations among party members resulted from a lack of confidence which itself had led to a loss of support.

25. IBID .

The key to future success therefore, lay in the Party's ability to regain this confidence on the basis of a moderate political approach. Success for the P.R.P., Graaff said, would leave the English voter isolated, and frustrated, in a smaller opposition which would be forced to seek common cause with the Blacks. The result of such polarization in white politics was inevitable confrontation. Conciliation was only possible through the United Party which was sufficiently broadly based to achieve this desirable objective. Graaff therefore asked 'moderate South Africans' to support the U.P. in order to preserve the democratic system in the Republic and to prevent the development of a virtual one-party state'. Support for the Party would take the country back from the perilous road to totalitarianism which would be the inevitable result of confrontation between left and right-wing extremes'. Graaff ended his twelve page address optimistically when he admitted that the Party had 'lost a few skirmishes but would yet win the war'.²⁶

Sir De villiers had made an important analysis of the state of the Party but it was not destined to regain the confidence he mentioned as necessary for its revival. The writing was on the wall, it was not going to win any war but was, instead, on the verge of drawing up its own surrender documents.²⁷

26. IBID.

27. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. Vause Raw, Chairman of the Division of Organisation, reported to the Central Executive Committee on 14.9.76 that 'in the present situation' the Party would not be able to fight even a minimum of 50 priority seats at a general election. Financial and manpower potential was lacking while too few public representatives were 'involved on a broad scale with their constituents'. This was important for the candidate had become a major factor where once the party used to be the dominant one. Raw reported that in the majority of U.P. held seats organization existed only on paper and that the 'stalwarts' who were still involved were becoming discouraged and old and they could not provide the 'spark' needed for new growth.

2. The Graaff initiative

Three months later Sir De Villiers Graaff set in motion a sequence of events which were to end with the demise of the Party and his retirement from active politics. At the Cape congress of the United Party in East London Sir De Villiers came out strongly in favour of power-sharing with the protection of minority rights while laying before the delegates a federal alternative to the government's policy of separate development.²⁸ He believed that the government's policies had broken down on all fronts. The Soweto riots and the subsequent unrest had left it unmoved. He revealed that he had, a week previously, spoken with Vorster²⁹ but that the government was not prepared to alter its position even if it meant that it would receive United Party support for any courageous moves which it introduced.³⁰ In the face of such an intransigent attitude, during a difficult period of the Republic's history, it was essential to have a strong opposition to save the country. Following this preamble Graaff declared himself willing to mobilize a united opposition which would offer a federal alternative to the policies of the National Party. His proposed realignment would not be a merger - 'not a united verligte front' - of the U.P. and P.R.P. that would exclude conservatives.³¹

In the light of subsequent misunderstandings it should be made absolutely clear that what Graaff wanted was a new, more broadly based, opposition which could accommodate disillusioned nationalists who were prepared to share power with Blacks while group identities were maintained.³² The

28. Argus, 13.8.76, 'Graaff spells it out'.

29. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

30. Daily Dispatch, 17.8.76, 'Graaff: Vorster won't alter policy'.

31. Daily Dispatch, 19.8.76, 'U.P. - Progref merger not enough - Graaff'.

32. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

domination of one race over another had to be avoided. South Africa needed a strong alternative government, not merely an 'effective' opposition. Nor could it afford a divided opposition which was unable to attract disenchanted nationalists. A merger between the U.P. and the P.R.P., if possible, would achieve nothing and would simply return the opposition to square one. Sir De Villiers was prepared to sacrifice the United Party, if necessary, to form a new party which could challenge the government. He appealed to opinion-makers, businessmen and the existing opposition forces as well as to disillusioned nationalists to join his campaign to 'save South Africa'.³³

Graaff's initiative, launched in East London, was a brave attempt to break the political logjam and to extricate a divided opposition from the cul-de-sac into which it was inexorably moving ever deeper. Had he succeeded, many of the cherished ideals of the U.P. would have been preserved in the new alignment. Unfortunately, the campaign made no noticeable impression on the nationalists while the deep-seated animosity among opposition politicians doomed the exercise to eventual failure. In the process the U.P. shed further support to both the left and to the right and when it went into voluntary liquidation the rump of what remained of the once powerful political party of Botha, Smuts and Hertzog was the small New Republic Party, whose electoral performance at parliamentary level suggested that it was unlikely to 'save South Africa' and would have to battle for its own political survival.

33. Daily Dispatch, 17.8.76, 'Graaff plan to save Republic'

Graaff's speech attracted praise from opposition quarters³⁴ though, predictably, none from the nationalists. But even among the well-wishers there were those who did not view the initiative in the manner Graaff had intended. Myburgh Streicher, the villain of many 'verligte-verkrampte' battles, supported the campaign and was convinced that the philosophy of the United Party would be retained in any new alignment. However, he expressed reservations about the P.R.P. for he believed that Colin Eglin was interested only in an effective opposition and not in an alternative government.³⁵ Japie Basson regarded Graaff's offer to stand down, if it was required, akin to the statesmanship of General Smuts when he stood back for Hertzog in 1934.³⁶ Basson also rejected a merger with the P.R.P. although he was destined to join them in the following year.³⁷ Eglin, who welcomed the plan which would bring 'genuine verligtes together' was, however, of the opinion that the inclusion of conservatives would serve no purpose.³⁸ Harry Schwarz expressed similar sentiments. Notwithstanding these reservations, Sir De Villiers stood firm on the issue of conservatives.³⁹ Yet, from the very start it was apparent that positions were being taken up that boded ill for the success of the initiative. Conditions were being set regarding the eligibility for membership of the proposed new party.

Both the Argus and the Cape Times questioned the wisdom of a new

34. Argus, 23.8.76, 'Wide backing for campaign'.

35. Daily Dispatch, 19.8.76, 'Streicher backs Divs. new plan'.

36. Hertzog became prime minister of the fusion government in 1934 with Smuts as his deputy.

37. Argus, 18.8.76, 'Basson - praise for Graaff speech'.

38. Cape Times, 28.8.76, 'Eglin: We'll talk to U.P.' See also Argus, 19.8.76, 'Eglin welcomes Graaff plan'.

39. Argus, 20.8.76, 'Graaff firm on conservatives'.

alignment which included conservatives, particularly those from the United Party who were branded as 'ultra-rightists' and 'reactionaries'.⁴⁰ Success depended on the exclusion of this group.⁴¹ Ironically, this group was even less enthusiastic to be associated with any realignment involving the Progressive Reform Party.⁴²

Sir De Villiers kept the initiative alive by contacting leading business figures including Messrs Harry Oppenheimer, Len Abrahamse and Frans Cronje, all of whom expressed an interest in it. At the Transvaal congress⁴³ he again referred to the plan and called on members of the P.R.P. to join it on an individual basis.⁴⁴ He rejected Eglin's proposal for the creation of a verligte front. Eglin had, from the outset, adopted an obstructionist approach, for as a potential leader of the opposition he did not approve of Graaff stealing the limelight at a time when the United Party was disintegrating and stood a good chance of being replaced by the Progressive Reform Party. By emphasizing the desirability of a verligte front he hoped to attract reformists still in the United Party. This ploy would ensure the exclusion of conservatives and hasten the decline of the United Party. In this manner the P.R.P. would make gains without sacrificing anything. Graaff, on the other hand, wanted a new party which would be above old divisions.

40. Cape Times, 19.8.76, editorial: 'Graaff's offer'. See also IBID, 21.8.76, Shaw: 'Graaff's Plan - can it save South Africa'.

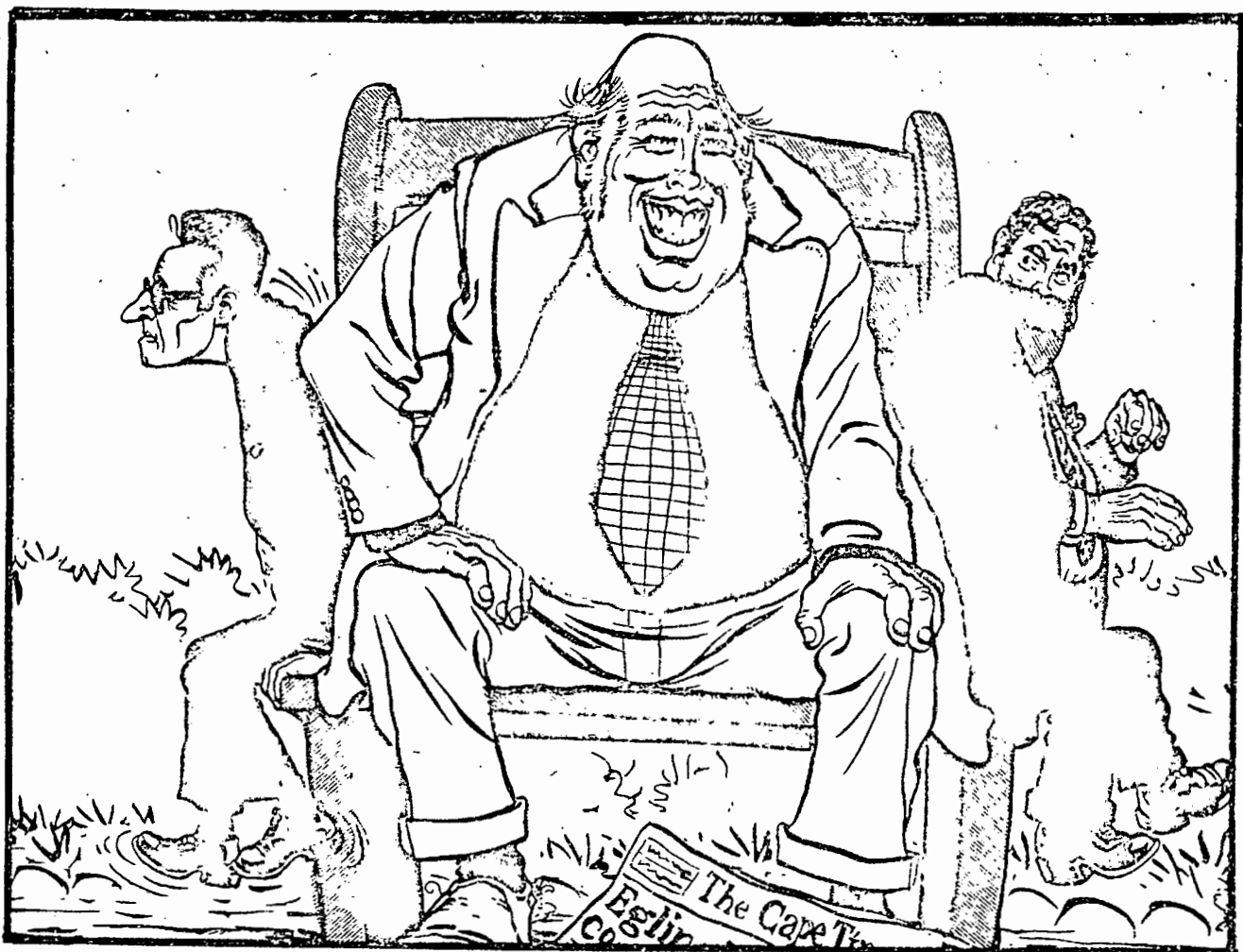
41. That is, the Streicher-Wiley group.

42. Die Burger, 9.10.76, 'Wiley verwerp P.R.P. front'.

43. Held on the 17 and 18 September, 1976

44. Sunday Times, 19.9.76, 'Div. urges P.R.P. to join him as individuals'.

In October 1976 both the P.R.P. and Theo Gerdener's Democratic Party agreed to co-operate with the United Party to set up a committee to investigate the establishment of a unified opposition.⁴⁵ Colin Eglin still insisted that it should be a union of compatibles and that the principle of power-sharing should be accepted.⁴⁶ Graaff was critical of Eglin's comments for even if they were valid they were anticipating the work of the steering committee.



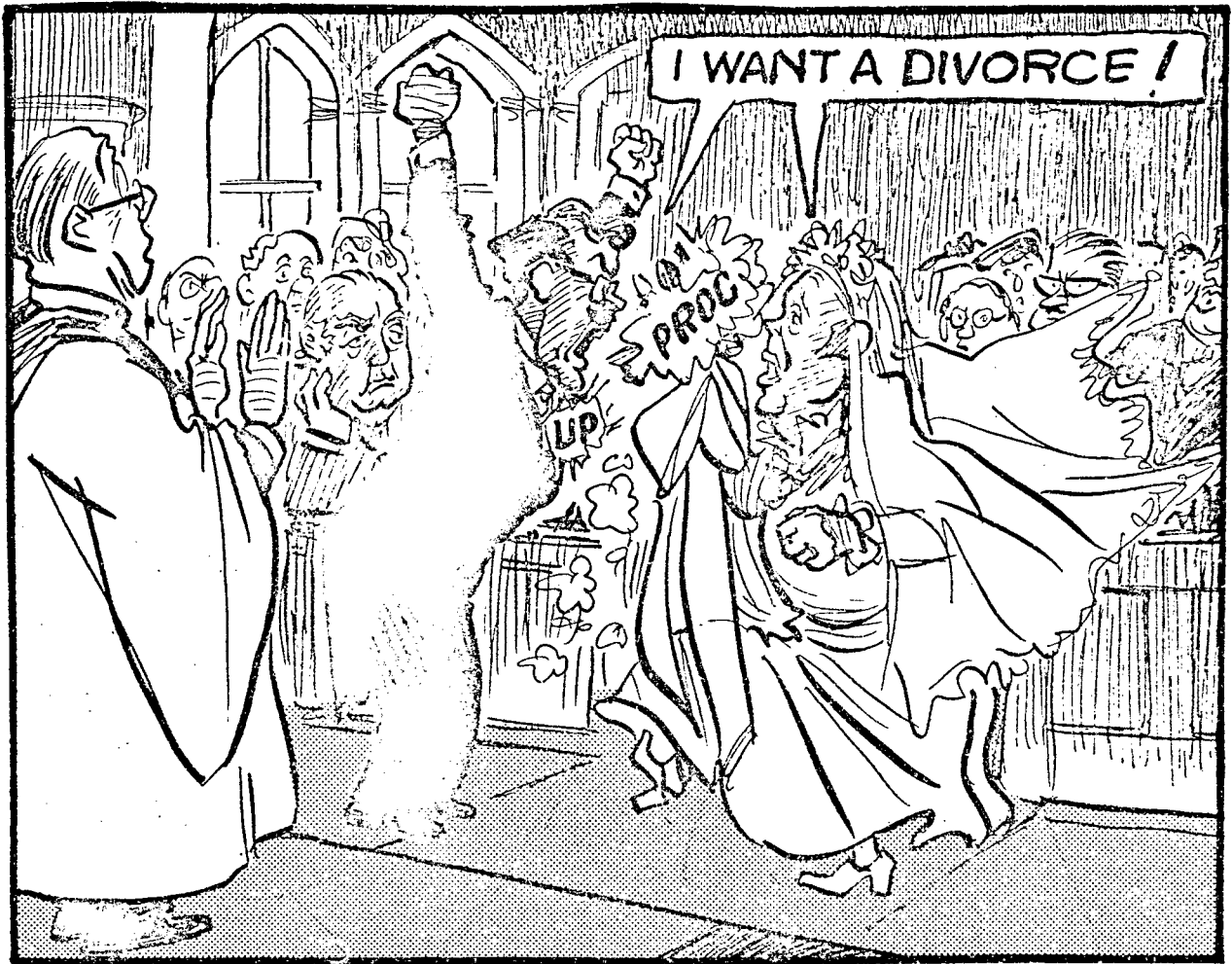
'Eglin will co-operate in the 'save South Africa' campaign'

The nationalists viewed progress differently. They predicted trouble should the U.P. merge with the P.R.P., although this was misrepresenting

45. Argus, 30.8.76, 'Gerdener supports initiative'.

46. Cape Times, 18.6.76, 'I'll co-operate with U.P. and D.P.'

Graaff's intention. The Burger thereafter quoted members of the United Party's right-wing as being totally opposed to any such co-operation.⁴⁷



'Doubts regarding co-operation between Eglin and Graaff'

Vorster used the opportunity to appeal to the conservatives, who saw no future in the U.P., to join with him.⁴⁸ The Burger also predicted the failure of Graaff's plan as it was started from a position of weakness by a leader who was close to the end of his political career.

47. Die Burger, 9.10.76, 'Opstand broei in V.P. oor smeltery'. It quoted the views of parliamentarians Wily, Streicher and Van Den Heever

48. IBID, 14.10.76, 'Kom Loop Saam'.

The final product would be a further shrinking of the opposition.

Other than the government, only the P.R.P, which wanted Graaff removed in any case, would benefit by strengthening its position in certain urban seats which would be 'stolen' from the mother party.⁴⁹

Ten weeks after Graaff had made his 'save South Africa' speech a steering committee to investigate the feasibility of creating a new party was appointed.⁵⁰ This followed recommendations made by Graaff's committee of business and academic leaders who intimated that they would sponsor such a conference if the three parties involved could find common ground. South Africa, they believed, could not afford the luxury of opposition parties fighting each other. The appointment of a steering committee was the first step in this direction.⁵¹ A former judge, broederbonder and nationalist, Kowie Marais was to chair the committee of eight which would:

' seek and define the area of common purpose which will command the support of all who recognize the need for fundamental change in South Africa'.⁵²

The Committee would convene on November 17 in order to hear proposals from the political parties involved as well as evidence from outsiders including black and brown leaders. On the basis of the evidence gathered the Steering Committee would make its recommendations which would then

49. IBID, 6.10.76, 'Div. se mislukte inisiatief'.

50. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. Report of the Steering Committee thanked Messrs C. Saunders, A. Louw, L. Abrahamse and H. Middelman for requesting that it should be appointed to undertake such an investigation.

51. The Steering Committee consisted of: Messrs J.F. Marais, M. Borkum, F. Bradlow, F. Cronje, D. Kriek, P. Nel, F. Robb and J. Steyn.

52. Argus, 27.10.76 'Kowie Marais' Blueprint for a new S.A.'

be accepted or rejected by the parties involved.

An air of uncertainty preceded its first meeting as reformists and conservatives contested the right of the other to be part of any new party.⁵³ Graaff, however, insisted that the door should be left wide open and that no group should be excluded. A week before the Marais group met the Head Committee of the U.P. in the Cape gave the Graaff initiative its unanimous support but only after the leader had allayed certain fears and had assured members that he was in favour of a new party and not a merger with the P.R.P.⁵⁴ Natal also backed the plan but wanted the retention of group identities as a pre-requisite for any political realignment.⁵⁵ Ray Swart of the P.R.P. insisted on the Steering Committee accepting certain non-negotiables while the English press continued to misrepresent Graaff's intention by writing of a merger between the opposition parties as opposed to the creation of a new one.⁵⁶

Graaff had explained to the Cape Head Committee that the negotiations he had undertaken had been done by him in his individual capacity and not as a party representative. The Steering Committee's terms of reference were to examine the feasibility of creating a new party and not of unifying the existing opposition. He had thus reprimanded

53. Cape Times, 9.10.76, 'U.P. split on unity move'.

54. IBID, 10.11.76, 'Cape Head Committee backs Graaff'.

55. IBID, 13.11.76, 'Natal U.P. give full backing to Graaff'.

56. Argus, 27.10.76, 'Talks to merge three opposition parties'. See also the Sunday Times, 31.10.76, 'This marriage must work'.

Kowie Marais for speaking of agreements between the U.P. and P.R.P. because they were not part of the terms of reference. Graaff said that he would examine the recommendations of the Steering Committee and thereafter decide whether to submit them to the United Party, which was not obliged to endorse them.

Sir De Villiers had assumed the role of the 'honest broker'. The establishment of the Steering Committee was mainly his work and he was prepared to give it a chance before any other decision regarding the U.P. was taken. The Party, he felt, had nothing to lose by supporting his initiative, as its options remained open. Should the Steering Committee make unacceptable proposals there was no compulsion to accept them.

The Committee held its first meeting on schedule and heard evidence from interested parties. On the following day Sir De Villiers gave a wide ranging interview to Tim Patten of the Argus, in which he reviewed a number of relevant issues pertaining to the United Party since he had become its leader in 1957.⁵⁷ He admitted that he knew from the start that it would be a major task to keep the Party together and after the 1970 successes its fortunes had declined as a result of internal difficulties which had been aggravated by certain journalists. Yet even during the most trying times he had not considered stepping down. He was a 'servant of his congresses', and if they wanted him he was prepared to serve. He believed that the Party's biggest success was to revive the

57. Argus, 18.11.76, 'Graaff: The Years behind, the years to come'.

federal concept in South Africa within which framework future constitutional changes would be made once the Westminster system had been abandoned.⁵⁸

The U.P. had also been responsible for constructive opposition and did not protest simply for its own sake. The government had accepted many of its proposals, for instance in matters regarding Black diplomats and sport. The role of some crusading journalists had, however, disappointed him in their efforts to oust him in order to split the Party. He ended the interview by saying that he was prepared to serve under another leader if a new party was brought into existence as a result of his initiative.⁵⁹

Graaff's comments concerning sections of the press were similar to those which had appeared in a Burger editorial a few days previously. It laid the blame for the splintered opposition squarely in the lap of the English newspapers. Now that the opposition had been sapped of its energy or growth potential the same newspapers were attempting to rebuild what they had destroyed. These newspapers, admonished the editorial, should have learnt to build and not just break down.⁶⁰

The rebuilding process took a hesitant step forward when the P.R.P.'s national congress⁶¹ endorsed an opposition realignment although many

58. The President's Council made similar proposals to the government in 1982.

59. IBID.

60. Die Burger, 12.11.76, editorial: 'Magteloos om te bou'.

61. Met in November, 1976.

delegates believed that it would be an exercise in futility. Pre-conditions were set for the Party's co-operation and these included the abolition of political discrimination, consultation with Blacks and a sharing of power.⁶² The December issue of Progress, the Party's propaganda journal, also warned that it would not compromise on principles or their interpretation.⁶³ Three days later the Central Head Committee of the United Party also backed the plan and wished the Marais committee well in its work. Graaff remained optimistic that the principles and policies of his Party would be provided for in the steering committee's recommendations. Conservatives, such as Streicher, were overruled when they urged that negotiations with the P.R.P. on the Marais committee should stop.⁶⁴

After having heard evidence from a wide variety of sources the Steering Committee released its report on December 20. Prior to this, however, the United Party received a severe shock when yet another leading figure expressed his dissatisfaction by withdrawing from the activities of the Party. Myburgh Streicher, while remaining a member of the U.P., resigned as its leader in the Cape. He was not prepared to accept responsibility for his Party in the Province with regard to its association with the Marais committee. In a press statement he expressed grave doubts as to whether the Marais committee was able to produce a blueprint for an alternative party.⁶⁵ The approach of the P.R.P.

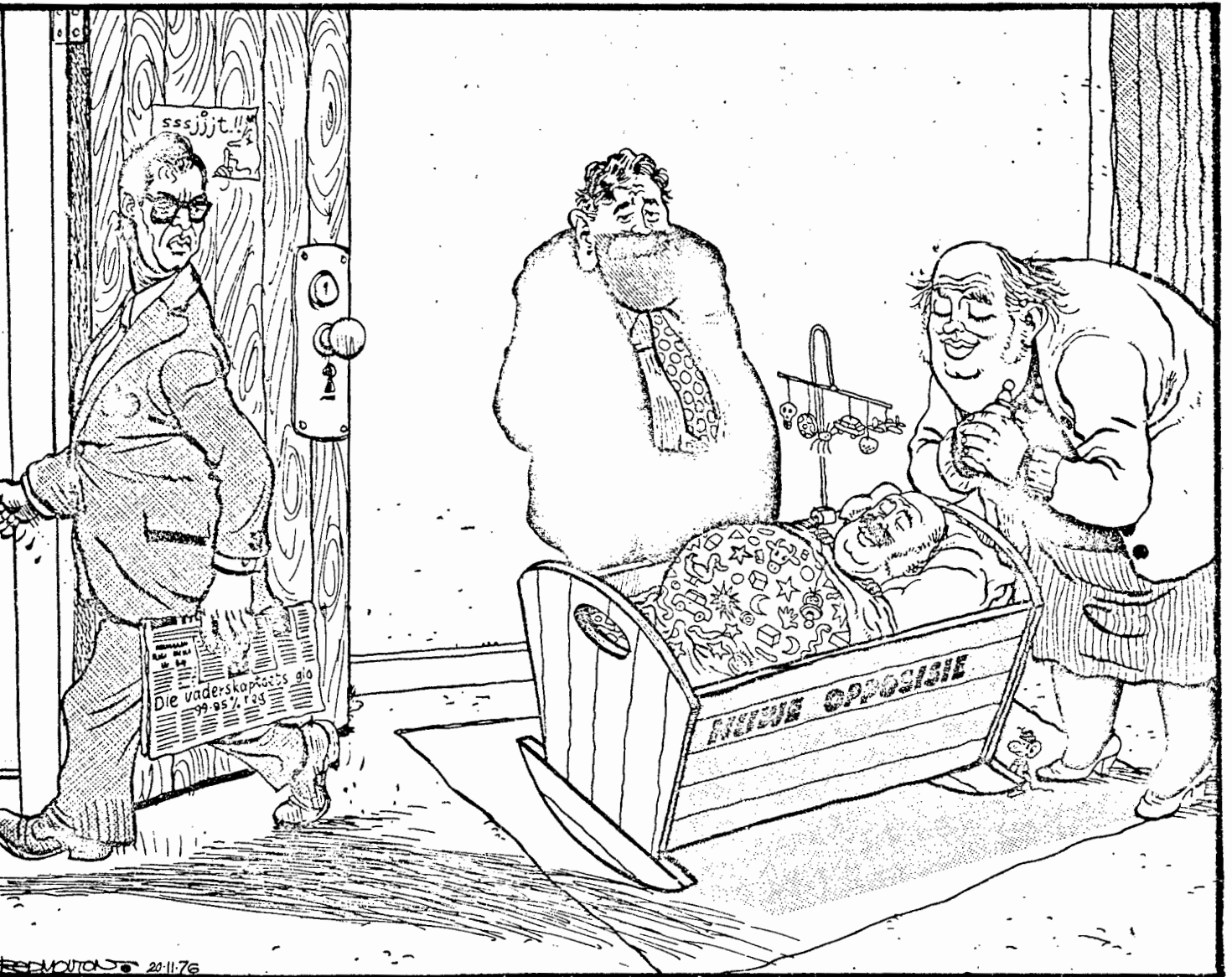
62. Sunday Times, 21.11.76, F. de Villiers: 'Wary P.R.P. backs the new party'.

63. Progress, December 1976, 'Realignment Warning'.

64. Citizen, 9.12.76, 'U.P. heads for showdown'.

65. Cape Times, 11.12.76, Copeland: 'Streicher quits as Cape U.P. leader'. See also Die Burger, 11.12.76, 'Streicher tree uit as V.P. se Kaapse leier'.

at its recent national congress had made it clear to him that irreconcilables could not be reconciled. He expressed the fear of the United Party conservatives everywhere when he said that for the



'Streicher dissociates himself from further negotiations with the Progressives as the likely outcome would be unsatisfactory'

two parties to communicate the U.P. would have to dilute its policies 'so that the leftist element could be accommodated'. The P.R.P. were integrationists whose platform would lead to Black majority rule.

There was no future for the U.P. in such a direction.⁶⁶

Possibly Streicher's action had been premature and he should have waited for the Marais Report before acting as he had done.⁶⁷ As it turned out the two parties did, in the end, interpret the recommendations differently and were unable to reach agreement on the formation of a new party. The Streicher revolt had, however, been brewing for a long time and had followed years of 'verligte - verkrampte' in-fighting.⁶⁸ The prospect of having to co-operate with those responsible for so much of the damage to the U.P. was anathema to the conservatives and, consequently, they made a final attempt to preserve the Party. Streicher made it clear that he still supported its philosophy and had the highest regard for Sir De Villiers Graaff. When it later became evident that consensus with the P.R.P. on the basis of the Marais Report was not possible, as had been predicted by Streicher, it was too late for the conservatives to do anything about it for they had already left the Party and had reconstituted themselves as the Independent United Party (I.U.P.).⁶⁹ This group proposed to continue to uphold the true principles of the Party and in this they could be compared to Dr Malan's 'purified' nationalists who refused to follow Hertzog into the Fusion Government of 1934. They were, however, not destined to enjoy the same success. Prior to this, Copeland of the Cape Times, asserted that the United Party's right-wing would, in fact, sit as a 'purified' group and

66. Argus, 11.12.76, 'Streicher statement: Resigned as Cape U.P. leader'.

67. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

68. Rapport, 12.12.76, 'Chaos sak op V.P.'

69. Parliamentary Register Part II, 1960 - 1980, published by the House of Assembly. The I.U.P. was established on 26.3.77 and the S.A.P. on 28.5.77.

that some of them would eventually join the nationalists.⁷⁰ He believed, however, that Streicher's resignation would not necessarily endanger the Marais committee's attempts to form a new enlightened party but that it would make a split in the U.P. more probable. Copeland's prognosis of the situation was destined to be proved largely correct.

The Transvaler put forward a different interpretation claiming that Streicher had been driven to resign by the Party's left-wing which was still determined to eradicate the conservatives in order to clear the way for a verligte front with the P.R.P.⁷¹ Verligtes,⁷² it claimed, had known all about Graaff's 'save South Africa' campaign while conservatives such as Wiley and Hickman had been kept in the dark until the East London congress and had consequently been unprepared to meet the challenge. The 'Bassonites', said the newspaper, had achieved what the Young Turk reformists had failed to do, namely to defeat the Old Guard in the United Party.

The Argus wrote that Streicher's resignation would damage Graaff's initiative particularly as he still remained a member of the Party. The Burger, on the other hand, regarded Streicher's move as a last warning to Graaff 'to come home' and to stop capitulating to the P.R.P. whose future growth prospects were so limited.⁷³ Streicher, it asserted

70. Cape Times, 13.12.76, Copeland: 'Streicher: split possible in U.P.'

71. Die Vaderland, 14.12.76, 'V.P. Linkses het Moorde Beplan'.

72. Such as Japie Basson and Derick De Villiers. See also Horak interview, 8.6.82.

73. It placed them at approximately 30 in the urban areas. At present the P.F.P. has 26 elected members (1982).

had written the first sentence in the last chapter of the history of the United Party. The following step would be dissolution leaving the National Party as the only nationwide political party, just as the United Party had once been. It then, again, blamed the English press for the destructive role it had played in the affairs of the United Party when it found it was unable to make any headway against the Nationalists.⁷⁴

In an earlier editorial, The Citizen wanted to know why Graaff had ever started his initiative for if there was to be a merger the United Party as such was finished and if there was not, it would split. The conservatives would not accept the Marais hybrid and if Graaff did not stop the initiative they would leave the Party, but if he did, the 'Bassonites' would go. There was no doubt, it asserted, that the Party was disillusioned, despairing and dying.⁷⁵ Rapport concurred that if Graaff went ahead with his plans the result would be nothing less than the disbanding of the Party.⁷⁶ The Sunday Times predicted a right-wing split and regarded Streicher's resignation as a declaration of war on Sir De Villiers. His move, however, would facilitate the establishment of a more viable, modern opposition as it would exclude conservatives.⁷⁷

Both Graaff and Kowie Marais blamed Streicher for acting prematurely as they expected the Report to be acceptable to most P.R.P. and U.P.

74. Die Burger, 11.12.76, 'Streicher uit'.

75. The Citizen, undated, comment: 'A Dying Party'.

76. Rapport, 12.12.76, 'Chaos Sak op V.P.'

77. Sunday Times, 12.12.76, F. De Villiers: 'U.P. breakaway looms on right'.

members. Whatever the outcome, the Marais committee's deliberations had led to a great deal of controversy and comment which did not bode well for the establishment of a new opposition.⁷⁸

Streicher's resignation and those who were to follow his example had far-reaching consequences and heralded the final chapter, at parliamentary level, of the disintegration which was already well advanced among rank and file supporters of the Party. Sir De Villiers was gradually losing more and more of his most trusted followers, men who had carried the United Party message to the furthest corners of the Republic. Without conservative support, however, it was not possible for any opposition party to progress. The U.P. had found it difficult enough to attract the Afrikaner vote, which was traditionally a conservative one, notwithstanding its faithful core of 'bloedsap'⁷⁹ rural members. The chances of a new alignment grouped around the P.R.P. to make any headway with its urban 'liberal' image were even more remote. The final outcome would be a larger National Party, strengthened by U.P. conservatives, and a smaller opposition with limited growth potential. In this process of realignment the United Party would be squeezed out of existence.

3. The Marais proposals

On December 20 the Marais Committee presented its proposals to the public.

78. IBID, 'Shake out in U.P.'

79. S.L. Barnard, 'Politieke Orientasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse Oposisie sedert 1958', unpublished thesis, D.Phil, University of the O.F.S., 1979, p. 9. 'Bloedsappe' refers to those supporters of the U.P. dating back to the days of Botha and Hertzog. They were the conservative Afrikaner elements. Sappe, on the other hand, were supporters of the South African Party (1910 - 1934).

They were widely framed, consisted of fourteen points, and were ostensibly to form the basis for a new united opposition.⁸⁰ Judge Marais had found that very little difference existed between the interested parties on matters of principle although difficulties regarding policy, form and approach were present.⁸¹ Personality clashes and past feuds had also played a role in keeping the parties apart.

The next step was for the Party leaders to ascertain the reaction of their organisations⁸² to the proposals although three days after the Committee had revealed its Report the respective national leaderships had all tentatively approved the recommendations.⁸³ It soon became apparent, however, that this approval was based on differing interpretations which were more in accord with the objectives of the various parties concerned. The issue of a common as opposed to a plural society in which group identities were recognized became an obstacle to the formation of a new party.⁸⁴ The concept of power-sharing created similar problems. The U.P. and P.R.P. were both of the opinion that the Marais proposals encompassed their particular approach to these matters. This was not entirely unexpected as the in-exactness of the Report, almost a prerequisite for agreement among political adversaries, lent itself to this.⁸⁵ Should consensus be reached on the main objective the details could always be finalized later. But agreement would remain an elusive dream if the necessary goodwill among the participants was lacking. This was destined to be the fate of the Marais Report.⁸⁶

80. See appendix E, p. 354

81. Cape Times, 21.12.76, 'A good start'.

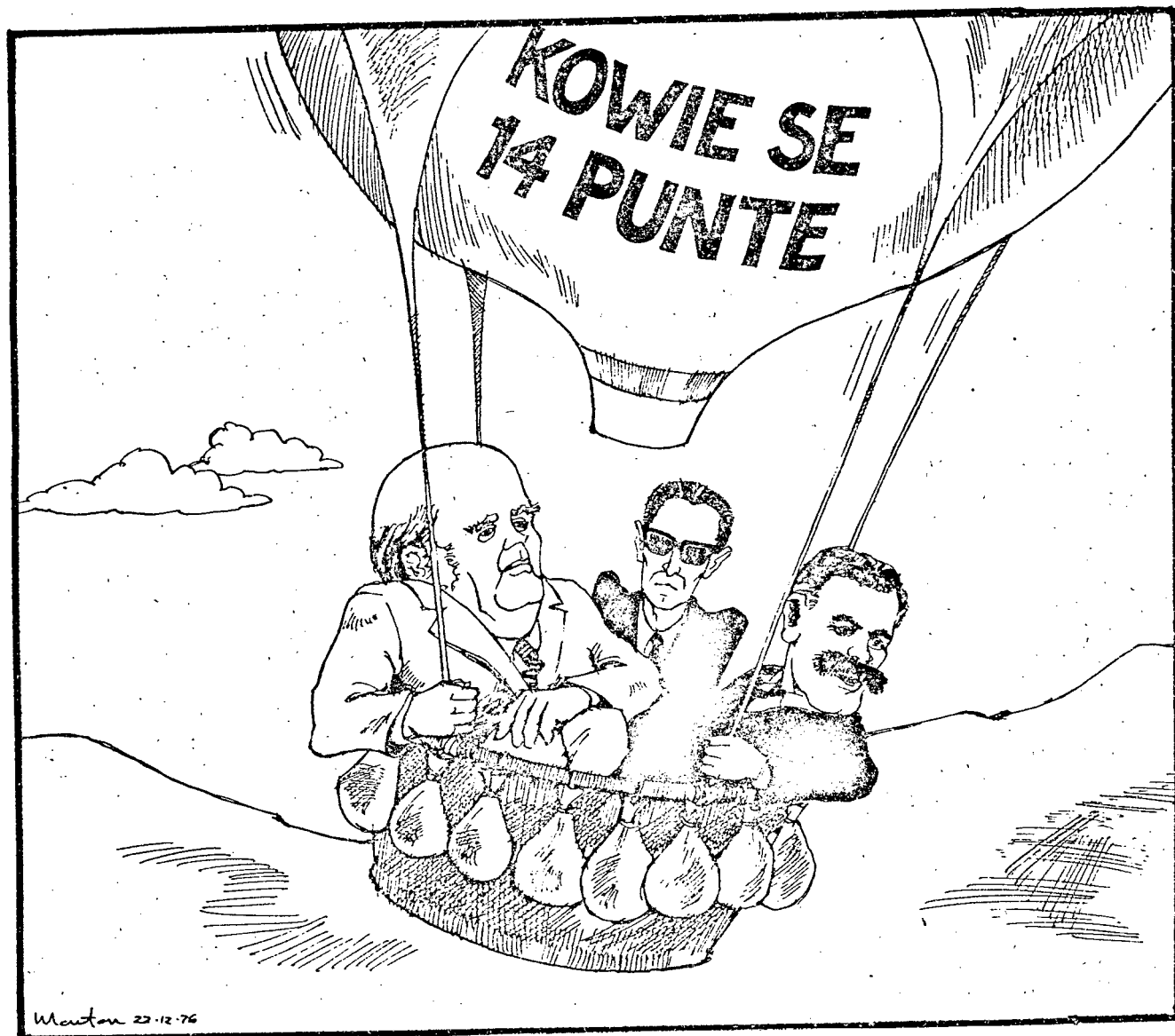
82. Cape Times, 22.12.76, 'Opposition meetings'.

83. IBID, 'Party leaders accept Marais findings'.

84. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

85. The seven point plan on which Hertzog and Smuts had agreed in 1933 to bring about a coalition government had been as innocuous.

86. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82. He mentioned that the proposals were ambiguous.



'n Mens wonder hoe dit sal gaan wanneer ons eers afsak grond toe!

Streicher, and those who thought as he did, immediately expressed their dissatisfaction with the proposals as they excluded the principle of white leadership.⁸⁷ Basson responded by attacking these conservative views as being more in accord with the thinking of the Herstigte Na-

87. Argus, 20.12.76, 'Streicher expresses misgivings about proposals'. See also the Cape Times, 22.12.76, Copeland: 'Wiley attacks Marais Report as leftist-liberal'.

sionale Party which, he suggested, their proposers should join.⁸⁸

This resulted in a letter from John Wiley to Gray Hughes, the Party's chief whip, to raise Basson's attack on himself, Van Den Heever and Streicher at the first caucus meeting of 1977. He regarded it as a breach of caucus discipline and of the code of conduct to which Party members subscribed.⁸⁹

It was already evident that even before the various parties had examined the 'fourteen points' that differences existed, not only among the participants but within the United Party itself. When the U.P. Central Executive met on December 22 to consider the Marais Report it was attended by Dr J Steyn, a member of the Steering Committee, to ensure that the proposals were correctly interpreted. The meeting decided that the interpretation by it of the fourteen points agreed with that put on them by the Marais Committee and consequently recommended that when the Party's Head Committee met in January it should authorize Graaff to continue with his initiative to form a new party as had been suggested by the Steering Committee.⁹⁰

88. Argus, 24.12.76, 'Basson hits at critics of U.P. move'. See also Rapport, 26.12.76, 'Min vrede rondom Kowie plan'.

89. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. At the Executive Head Committee meeting, 22.12.76, Basson raised the question of Myburgh Streicher and Wiley's public statements and wanted steps to be taken. It was, however, decided that no action would be taken before the new year.

90. IBID, committee meeting, 22.12.76. Dr Steyn pointed out that the concept of group identity (the major obstacle to agreement between the U.P. and P.R.P.) was inherent in the Kowie Marais proposals although the word was not mentioned by name.

CHAPTER XI1977: THE DEATH OF THE UNITED PARTY1. The Consequences of the Marais Report

Prior to the meeting of the Central Head Committee¹ Dr Gideon Jacobs made a comparative study of the Marais proposals and the policy of the United Party. He concluded that the fourteen principles did not clash with those of the Party and were almost a restatement of existing policy.² In recommending their acceptance he insisted, however, that there were certain principles from which the U.P. would not deviate. These were that there would be no compulsory integration, that group identities would be retained and domination rejected and that South Africa was a plural society and not a common one.³ Jacobs was of the opinion that the Marais proposals incorporated these principles.

This document was made available to the leaders of the United Party a few days before the Central Head Committee meeting. Sir De Villiers Graaff recommended that his committee accept his motion to form a new party. He noted that the Marais Report did not propose a common roll franchise or an open-ended commitment to create a common-roll geographical federation. While he accepted an equitable sharing of power it had to be on a responsible basis and this excluded the concept of one man one vote.⁴

1. The Head Committee meeting was scheduled for 18.1.77.

2. Paper by G.F.Jacobs, 12.1.1977, 'Recommendations of the Marais Committee and the position of the United Party'.

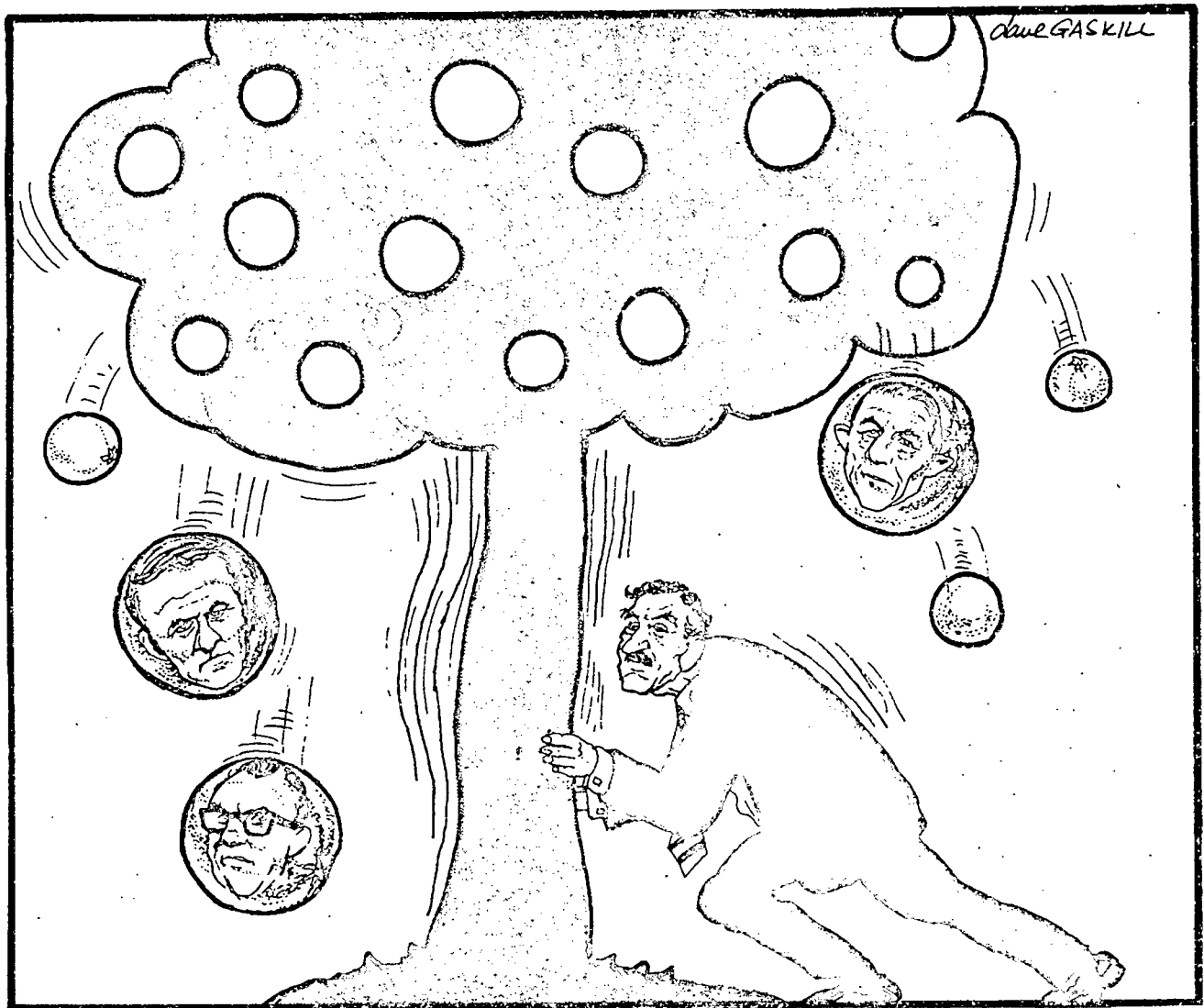
3. Cf. to point 5 of Marais proposals.

4. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

The meeting which lasted the entire day of January 18 eventually endorsed Graaff's motion⁵ but there were six dissenting votes. Sir De Villiers believed that they should have abided by the majority decision and should have refrained from publicly criticizing it. The conservatives had felt otherwise and their move had meant that they had formally declared themselves opposed to the initiative to form a new party. The United Party was on the brink of another split and this even before the proposed new party had been launched.

Following the Central Head Committee decision the parliamentary caucus of the Party met to discuss the events of the previous day. The dissidents argued their case but it became apparent that they would not change their minds nor would they remain silent on the matter. As a result of this attitude they were expelled from the Party caucus.⁶ The initiative to form a new party was looking decidedly frail while the United Party had suffered another blow to its morale, and that on the eve of the no-confidence debate in the Assembly. Graaff, nevertheless, remained optimistic, claiming that '... one cannot win a war without losing men'. Unfortunately for the U.P. it was destined to lose too many men to be able to win any battle.⁷

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5. The Central Head Committee issued a statement, 18.1.77, endorsing the Marais recommendations provided that the points raised by Dr Jacobs were observed.
 6. Parliamentary Register Part II 1961 - 80, Published by House of Assembly. They were Messrs Wiley, Streicher, Hickman, Deacon, Van Den Heever and Aronson.
 7. Citizen, 19.1.77, 'U.P. splits on new Party'.



'All shook UP'

A further jarring note to the 'save South Africa' campaign was Eglin's statement that while the P.R.P.'s Federal Executive approved of the Kowie Marais proposals it would only consider a merger of the parties involved but would not itself disband to form a new party.⁸ This was

8. Argus, 15.1.77, 'P.R.P. approval of Kowie proposals expected today'.
See also IBID, 10.1.77, 'Eglin: P.R.P. will merge, not disband'.

contrary to the whole spirit of Graaff's original initiative. Meanwhile, Francois Oberholzer, leader of the United Party's remaining three members in the Transvaal Provincial Council, vowed to have nothing to do with the P.R.P.⁹ Senator Horak appealed for moderate centrist policies to be supported in the country in order to ward off the growth of extremist groups. He believed that moderates, who comprised the 'silent majority', suffered because of their apathy and tolerance. Graaff's campaign was an attempt to prevent polarization and to mobilize moderate opinion, initially among whites, but later also among non-whites. The Marais proposals should be supported for these reasons, he believed.¹⁰

Prof Kleynhans of U.N.I.S.A. remained unimpressed by the efforts to establish a new opposition. He was of the opinion that it was not the proven policies of the United Party which had let it down but rather its uninspired leadership. He also criticized the Party for failing to contest the municipal elections in Randburg, an electoral division which the Party had won in the 1970 provincial poll and in the 1974 general election. It was a vivid example of the declining influence of the United Party.¹¹

The United Party did, however, contest the Johannesburg municipal

9. IBID, 13.1.77, 'No co-operation says U.P. M.P.C.'

10. IBID, 15.1.77, Horak: 'Moderates have a vital duty to S.A.'

11. IBID, 13.1.77, 'Kleynhans slams U.P.'

council elections where the campaign was conducted by Francois Oberholzer or 'Mr Johannesburg' as he was called.¹² He was no friend of the reform movement and adopted a right-wing approach which upset both the P.R.P. and Japie Basson who accused him of presenting emotive issues in a 'racist and verkrampte' fashion.¹³ His so-called 'Black Manifesto' did nothing to promote co-operation among parties which were at that time searching for common-ground on the basis of the Marais proposals. Oberholzer's manifesto appealed for support on a platform which opposed racial integration at local level.

Notwithstanding these and other problems it appeared certain that the conservatives in the United Party would form their own party.¹⁴ Such an event would reduce the United Party's representation in the Assembly to 30, seventeen less than it had been in 1970. It would also represent the fourth split since 1948, and the largest since the Progressives had broken away in 1959.

The Cape Times expressed pleasure at the expulsion of 'the six who, over the years, were regarded by it as a stumbling block to necessary reform.'¹⁵ Their departure¹⁶ would open the way for 'enlightened men' of all parties to get together.¹⁷ This prediction never did materialize to any extent but the decline of the U.P. continued, as did the frag-

12. Oberholzer is currently (1982) chairman of the Johannesburg management committee, the most influential position on the Council.

13. The Citizen, 17.6.77, 'Speak Up'.

14. Sunday Times, 16.1.77, 'U.P. won't die - Streicher'.

15. Cape Times, 20.1.77, Copeland: 'Six U.P. M.P.'s expelled from Caucus'.

16. Parliamentary Register. They were expelled from the U.P. on 19.1.77 and the I.U.P. was established on 28.5.77 under Myburgh Streicher's leadership.

17. Cape Times, 20.1.77, editorial: 'Inevitable'.

mentation of the opposition. The six right-wingers were officially expelled from the Party on January 19 prompting Streicher to comment, during the non-confidence debate, that it was 'strange that those who wished to hold on to the original principles of the United Party should be expelled and those who wished to deviate from them and disband the Party should be retained in it'.¹⁸ He could see no reason to depart from the principles on which he had been elected while he had frequently warned that negotiations with the P.R.P. would result in the eclipse of the United Party.¹⁹ The dissidents thereafter sat in the Assembly as the Independent United Party.²⁰

Graaff had been left in a quandary for he had gone beyond the point of no return. He had to proceed with the initiative but appeared to be at the mercy of the P.R.P. He was committed to disbanding the United Party yet Colin Eglin was only interested in a merger which was unlikely to appeal to many in the U.P. It was also doubtful whether any nationalists would be attracted, which was surely the main objective of bringing about an opposition realignment.²¹

Eglin was placing his Party's interests ahead of the creation of a broadly based opposition, and he was in a sound position to make appreciable gains. As Graaff intended to dissolve the U.P., Eglin

18. Hansard, 25.1.77, columns 123 - 125.

19. Cape Times, 26.1.77, Streicher: 'I.U.P. won't sacrifice principles'.

20. Argus, 20.1.77, 'New Party for expelled M.P.'s. Streicher to lead'.

21. Die Burger, 22.1.77, 'Dawie' - Uit my politieke pen.

needed only to wait, with a little patience, to gather up at least some of the pieces. His party fully supported him while the U.P. was in disarray. If Sir De Villiers made overtures to heal the break with the conservatives he would lose the support of those reformists still in the United Party. He appeared to be in a 'no-win' situation while Eglin remained in a strong position no matter what developments materialized.

Dr D Worrall,²² commenting on events, felt that the P.R.P. had never been serious about a new party as they were moving away from the white electorate towards an alliance across ethnic lines. He illustrated this contention by quoting Ray Swart who had two weeks previously stated that his party had retained a credibility among blacks which was a priceless asset and 'which mustn't be jeopardized by doing deals in the exclusive arena of white opposition politics which became more and more irrelevant ... as each day passes'. This thinking, he believed, was unacceptable to the United Party as were the various P.R.P. congress resolutions such as the one favouring compulsory mixed schooling.²³ The differences between the parties were so unbridgeable that the possibility of their finding common-ground was highly improbable. The P.R.P. had, he believed, entered the negotiations for ulterior and cynical motives, realizing that the longer the debate lasted the greater would become the disunity within the U.P. with its eventual collapse favouring both Eglin and the National Party.²⁴

22 . Defeated N.P. candidate in the Durban North by-election and later M.P. for Gardens (1977).

23 . Taken at the P.R.P. Transvaal Congress, September 1976 .

24 . Rapport, 23.1.77, 'Dennis Worrall on the U.P.'

Eglin steadfastly refused to disband the P.R.P. for the proposed new party²⁵ and what, therefore, remained to bring about its formation would consist of those still in the U.P., when it was dissolved, and those in Theo Gerdener's small Democratic Party.²⁶ Eglin could hardly be blamed for being somewhat disdainful of the Graaff initiative which had been made from a position of weakness at a time when the P.R.P. was enjoying a certain measure of electoral success. The 'save South Africa' campaign could, to a 'progref', appear more like an attempt to save something of the declining U.P. Its misfortunes, as mentioned earlier, resulted in progressive successes²⁷ which, if continued, would culminate in a new official opposition. This appeared to be Eglin's immediate objective rather than the creating of a new party which could possibly challenge the nationalists as an alternative government as Sir De Villiers desired.

With the expulsion of the six United Party conservatives the opposition had been fragmented into three groups.²⁸ A vote of no-confidence in the opposition would have been a more appropriate motion in the Assembly at that time especially as it appeared that the disorder would increase before any stability was restored.²⁹

In response to the mounting criticism Sir De Villiers suggested that it might be necessary to adopt a different approach in order to bring

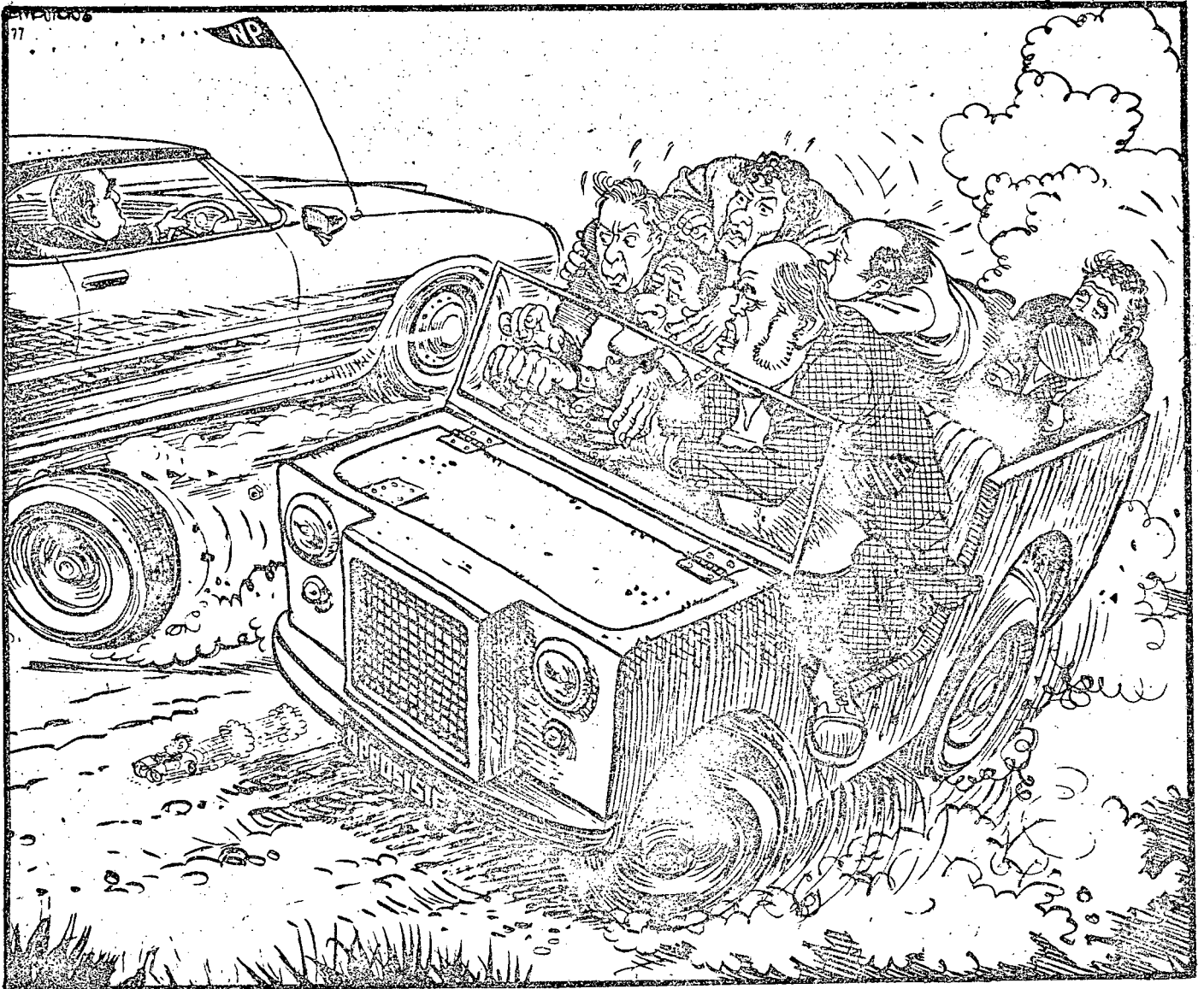
25. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

26. Gerdener had previously promised to join the proposed new party. See Die Burger, 29.12.76, 'D.P. sal vir nuwe party ontbind'.

27. See the results of the 1974 general election, Chap. VIII, 3.

28. Sunday Times, 23.1.77, 'Shambles in Opposition'.

29. IBID, 'Opposition in Chaos'.



'An opposition shambles'

about the creation of a new party. He therefore tentatively recommended the formation of a board of trustees which would appoint a secretariat to carry out a defined programme of action based on the Marais recommendations.³⁰ The proposed secretariat would draw up a new constitution

30. Die Burger, 21.2.77, 'Einde in sig vir Nuwe Party'. See also The Citizen, 3.2.77, 'Back my new bid - Graaff'.

which would be discussed at a national conference attended by the interested parties who would then return with it to their respective congresses for consideration.³¹

It appeared as if Graaff was moving away from the earlier joint decision by Party leaders to bring about a new opposition dispensation. The P.R.P. expressed surprise at not having been informed of Graaff's latest plans and made a final offer that the two parties consult on the Marais proposals. Consequently, further inter-party talks were agreed on in order to sort out problems arising from the interpretation of the 'fourteen points'. The meeting between the three Party leaders, each assisted by two advisers, and once again under the chairmanship of Judge Marais, took place in Cape Town on February 12 and lasted a day and a half. At the end of the meeting it was evident that no agreement had been possible between the United and Progressive Reform Parties, although Theo Gerdener still supported Graaff.³² Sir De Villiers thereupon intimated that he would seek an alternative government without Eglin's assistance. He would pursue the initiative through the proposed board of trustees and secretariats.³³

Sir De Villiers and Eglin failed to agree on the recognition of ethnic groups in South Africa.³⁴ The latter refused to accept that

31. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. The Central Executive Committee considered a draft proposal for the formation of a new party, 25.2.1977.

32. Cape Times, 14.2.77, 'Talks collapse'.

33. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. Statement by Graaff to the Central Head Committee on his initiative, 19.2.77.

34. Interview with Graaff, 16.6.82.

they should be recognized within a common society. He maintained that the key issue at the talks was Cadman's insistence on the separation of power on the basis of race at all levels of government. Cadman rejected this interpretation of his approach by referring Eglin to the Party's federation plan.³⁵ He, in turn, accused Eglin of being prepared to accept Black majority rule at all levels of government with the only safeguard a bill of rights, which he believed was no safeguard at all. Graaff was also critical of Eglin's allegedly unrealistic approach to prevent Black majority domination. Together with Judge Marais, Eglin, however, remained convinced that many would support the 'enlightened' interpretation of the Marais principles.³⁶

The talks broke down because existing party philosophies coloured the interpretation of the Marais Report while the negotiators lacked flexibility and the necessary goodwill to reach agreement. Graaff eventually broke off the negotiations when it became evident that they were leading nowhere. This did not mean, however, that his initiative was dead.

An interesting and somewhat surprising development followed the latest impasse, when Judge Kowie Marais was apparently 'captured' by the Progressive Reform Party. He and Eglin issued a joint statement, the object of which was to mobilize enlightened political forces in a new dispensation. The erstwhile neutral chairman of the Steering Committee

35. Argus, 14.2.77, 'Majority rule issue ruined talks - Cadman'.

36. Sunday Times, 13.2.77, 'New Party plan founders on Marais' 14 principles'.

had chosen sides with the P.R.P. to pursue another 'save South Africa' initiative. Judge Marais was subsequently elected to parliament³⁷ as a Progressive Federal Party representative, an event which could only raise doubts as to where his sympathies lay when he was chairman of the Steering Committee seeking the basis for a new party. The prime minister, John Vorster, likened these strange developments to a 'divorce before marriage' and predicted that it was only a matter of time before the Bassonites would also join the P.R.P.³⁸



'Judge Marais lends his support to Eglin'

After the collapse of the talks the United Party caucus issued a

37. He won the North Rand constituency in the 1977 general election.
 38. Die Burger, 14.2.77, 'Nuwe opposie stort in duie'.

'unanimous' statement thanking Sir De Villiers for his efforts while urging him to proceed 'on the broadest possible basis to bring about a new dispensation in South Africa by drawing together a real alternative government'.³⁹ Japie Basson, who had been disappointed at the breakdown of the inter-party talks, had also supported the caucus statement. Judging by the length of the meeting (3½ hours) some very direct talking must have taken place.⁴⁰

The Citizen wrote that the collapse of the talks was expected, for how, it asked 'could irreconcilables be reconciled?'. It regarded the 'save South Africa' campaign as an exercise in futility. The editorial scathingly attacked the fourteen principles as the '... Bible of the opposition, according to the new Moses, Kowie Marais' which was so inspiring that all three parties were able to interpret them to suit their own objectives. According to the newspaper the opposition exercise had foundered on the Marais report and with it Graaff had killed his political career and should retire. The United Party would never be the same as its stalwarts had abandoned it while 'fly-by-nights' had been courted. Mr Basson and his supporters, prophesied the Citizen, would still join the P.R.P., a party which 'deserved them and which they deserved'.⁴¹

Although written in strong language the editor, M.A. Johnson - formerly of the Sunday Express - had shown rare insight, for his predictions were

39. Argus, 15.2.77, 'Graaff to go ahead for new Party'

40. Cape Times, 14.2.77, 'Divided U.P. caucus'.

41. The Citizen, 15.2.77, Editorial: 'Ending a farce'.

to be realized within the next few months. A further farce was the spectacle of both Sir De Villiers and Colin Eglin proceeding separately to form a new party which they were unable to start together. The objective of another party had, in any event, become somewhat academic once the talks had failed because the United Party, by another name, would hardly be any different with a few Democrats added nor would the P.R.P. be with the infusion of the Bassonites. The chances of attracting disillusioned nationalists, verlig or otherwise, to a shattered opposition which was unable to save itself, let alone South Africa, seemed highly improbable.

2. Municipal elections in Johannesburg

Added to his other problems Sir De Villiers had the further mortification of seeing the chairman whom he had appointed to the Steering Committee, Judge Kowie Marais, throw his weight behind the P.R.P. in the Johannesburg council elections which were scheduled for March 2.⁴² The Judge by then regarded the United Party as irrelevant and although not officially a member of the P.R.P., shared various platforms with its candidates. As both parties were seeking support from the rate-payers on the basis of the fourteen points Judge Marais' activities could only enhance the chances of the 'progrefs' at the expense of the U.P. which, it would be inferred, had misinterpreted the proposals and consequently had been responsible for the collapse of the inter-party discussions.⁴³

42. Municipal elections on the Witwatersrand, particularly in the Johannesburg area, were traditionally fought on a party political basis.

43. The Citizen, 27.2.77, 'Kowie's 15th principle, vote P.R.P.'

The results of the municipal elections on the Witwatersrand and of the provincial by-election in Durbanville, which were held on the same day, clearly demonstrated that the opposition as a whole had lost ground to the National Party. In Durbanville both the U.P. and the P.R.P. forfeited their deposits but the latter did better than the United Party which ended third in a sixty-seven percent poll.⁴⁴ In Johannesburg the United Party lost control of the council for the first time in thirty-one years. It won only eleven of the forty-seven seats. The P.R.P. won an additional two, increasing its representation to 19.⁴⁵ This meant that it was the largest single party, but was still short of an absolute majority in the council. The National Party doubled its number of seats to fifteen while an independent nationalist also took a ward.⁴⁶ In Randburg the National Party won eight of the ten seats and the P.R.P. the remainder. The message from those results was abundantly clear - the United Party was still losing support on a massive scale both to its left and to its right. The P.R.P. was improving its position vis-a-vis the United Party but it remained a gradual process. Overall the opposition was in a parlous state.⁴⁷ The U.P. was left with little vitality and its

44. Durbanville result: N.P. 7848, P.R.P. 543,
U.P. 1280. N.P. majority of 6305.

This represented a 6.8 percent swing to the N.P. In the previous election the U.P. had polled 3314 votes.

45. Cape Times, 3.3.77, 'P.R.P. top party in JHB'.

46. Johannesburg municipal results (March 2, 1977):

N.P.	15	P.R.P.	19
U.P.	11	Ind. N.P.	1
Vacancy	1	(later won by P.R.P.)	
Total	47		

See also The Argus, 3.3.77, 'Nat. gains'.

47. Sunday Times, 7.3.77, 'The cluttered opposition'.

demise could only be a matter of time while the P.R.P., which was replacing it, appeared to be anything but the dynamic force presented to the public by the English newspapers. Its rather lack-lustre performance in strong opposition areas reflected its general unattractiveness and while it would, in all probability, become the official opposition it would not be able to take the place of the U.P. as a once broadly based opposition enjoying support from all sections of the electorate.⁴⁸ It had become apparent that while Graaff and Gerdener continued their search for a viable opposition the political tide had turned against them and the P.R.P. was destined to form the nucleus of any future opposition grouping.⁴⁹

Shortly following the announcement of the Johannesburg results which left no single party with a majority, the United Party, which held the balance of power, struck a deal with the nationalists to retain control of the powerful management committee under its leader, Francois Oberholzer.⁵⁰ This effectively excluded the P.R.P. from exercising any power in the Council. The city would continue to have a United

48. The 1977 and 1981 general election results confirm this contention as does the Johannesburg municipal council poll of 1982 where the P.R.P. was still unable to capture control although it remained the strongest party.

49. Sunday Times, 6.3.77, 'Back to the drawing boards'.

50. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. The Central Executive of the Party regarded the decision as an administrative arrangement which would enable the U.P. to ensure responsible management of the day-to-day affairs of Johannesburg. The 'deal' was made only after the P.R.P. and subsequently the N.P. had rejected a U.P. proposal of proportional representation of the three parties by two members each on the management committee of the council and the election of the Chairman by a free vote. Basson did not agree with the decision and voted against it at the meeting on 21.3.1977.

Party mayor (Powell) but his deputy would be a nationalist (Otto). The United Party caucus on the city council had been allowed to decide for itself the course of action it would adopt regarding an understanding with the other parties.⁵¹ Its decision to co-operate with the nationalists enraged the P.R.P. and upset the Bassonites still in the United Party. At least two factors motivated the Johannesburg United Party to act as it had done. One was the retention of effective power in its hands, and the other was to take revenge on the P.R.P. for the harm it had caused it. The events leading to the reformist breakaway were still fresh in the memory of the U.P. councillors. Apparently anything was better than co-operating with their former colleagues, including coming to an arrangement with the nationalists - traditionally their political enemy. Had they co-operated with the P.R.P. it was most unlikely that they would have been able to strike such a favourable agreement as they had done.⁵²

The Johannesburg situation led to sharp differences among United Party parliamentarians and when the Central Executive Committee endorsed the decision of the members on the city council the position of Japie Basson became more uncertain.⁵³ He was strongly opposed to what he regarded as an unprincipled manoeuvre by the Party's councillors in Johannesburg, but the party leadership was not prepared to support his stand.⁵⁴ Consequently, as a protest, he resigned his post as leader of the United

51. IBID.

52. IBID. The P.R.P. wanted exclusive control of the Management Committee.

53. Argus, 23.3.77, 'Japie Basson's position in balance'.

54. Die Burger, 23.3.77, 'Basson, hiërargie van V.P. bots'.

Party in the Transvaal. He handed in his resignation at the Provincial executive meeting at the end of March.⁵⁵ Prof Nic Olivier also left the executive while Messrs D De Villiers, L Poorter and Senator Du Toit agreed to work with Basson for the establishment of a new opposition based on the Marais proposals. This decision raised speculation that the inter-party talks would be reopened, a move which was favoured by Basson. Ironically, Japie Basson was replaced as leader in the Transvaal by Oberholzer, the man primarily responsible for his resignation. He was the fourth provincial leader in the Province since Marais Steyn's defeat in 1972, a situation indicative of the turmoil which had contributed to the Party's decline.

The situation in the Transvaal, as far as the Party was concerned, was critical. It was in complete disarray. Prior to Basson's resignation two leading conservatives had also left before their probable expulsion. Andre Fourie, the former M.P. for Turffontein and Koos Darvel, chairman of the Platteland Regional Council, had criticized the party leadership and had resigned because of the confusion and irresolution prevailing in its affairs as well as the incompatibility among its members.⁵⁶ They associated themselves with the Streicher group.

55. Argus, 1.4.77, 'Basson quits post, new talks possible'. See also The Cape Times, 1.4.77, 'Basson quits as U.P. Transvaal leader'.

56. Die Burger, 11.3.77, 'Nog twee bedank'.



'Japie was maar altyd 'n Jona. Dit kan net beter gaan sonder hom'

Graaff had, in the meantime, proceeded with his initiative and had appointed a board of sixteen trustees shortly after the Johannesburg

Council elections.⁵⁷ Theo Gerdener had agreed to act as its executive trustee. The trustees would be responsible for establishing a main secretariat in Cape Town with smaller ones throughout the country to pursue as their objective the establishment of a new party. A special sub-committee would formulate policy and report to the trustees. The fourteen principles of the Marais Report would again provide the starting point of the exercise. Sir De Villiers Graaff tentatively named June 25 as the day on which a new opposition would be established following a national congress in Johannesburg.⁵⁸

3. The final months

In May a further attempt was made to reopen negotiations between the U.P. and the P.R.P.⁵⁹ These talks, which continued on a sporadic basis into June, again explored the possibility of finding some form of opposition unity. They were not destined to succeed. For this exercise the United Party appointed a three-man committee under Dr G. Jacobs 'to explore the possibility of widening the Graaff initiative'.⁶⁰ The P.R.P.'s team was led by Dr van Zyl Slabbert while Theo Gerdener was the senior Democratic Party delegate.⁶¹ The talks began on an optimistic note and there was speculation that the P.R.P. would be prepared to disband and merge with elements of the United Party to form a new one.⁶² The divisive issue still revolved around whether the country should be seen as a plural or common society.

57. Argus, 5.3.77, 'New Party: Business leaders join board'.

58. Cape Times, 2.4.77, 'Div. names Day'.

59. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

60. Argus, 12.5.77, 'U.P. and P.R.P. to Reopen Talks'.

61. IBID., The U.P. team consisted of Messrs Jacobs, De Villiers and Raw; the P.R.P. delegates were Van Zyl Slabbert, Borkum and Bamford while Gerdener was supported by McMinin and Prof de Crespigny.

62. Argus, 24.5.77, 'P.R.P. now likely to disband for merger'.

Meanwhile, towards the end of May while these negotiations continued some two hundred former and current members of the U.P. had met in Pretoria to establish a new party.⁶³ Consequently, on the 28th, the South African Party was born. It consisted of members of the Independent United Party and was, essentially, a right-wing movement which had rejected the Marais initiative.⁶⁴ It had six M.P.'s and five M.P.C.'s all from the Cape Province.

Streicher was its leader and John Wiley was his deputy. The break with the United Party was complete, yet the South African Party claimed that it was, in fact, continuing with the original policies of the U.P. Unlike it, and the P.R.P., the S.A.P. rejected the fourteen points of the Marais Report as a basis for any new opposition realignment. Its policy was based on the six principles of the United Party which had been accepted at the 1973 national congress.⁶⁵ It was strongly in favour of patriotism and emphasized the importance of the leadership role played by whites in the political arena.⁶⁶ It supported the government on matters of internal security and, in general, did not differ to any great degree with the nationalists over policy directions.⁶⁷ While it was the right-wing of the U.P. which had established the Party, its members regarded themselves as moderates or moderate conservatives.⁶⁸

63. Argus, 28.5.77, 'More U.P. men may join new party'.

64. H. Du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1977, an unpublished masters thesis, Univ. of Pretoria (May 1979), pp. 27 - 28.

65. IBID.

66. See also Streicher's article in The Citizen, 18.4.77, 'A lifetime in politics - now the challenge'.

67. Streicher in Die Vaderland, 4.4.77, 'So verskil ons met die N.P. - so stem on saam'.

68. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

The S.A.P. appealed to both English and Afrikaans speaking South Africans for support on the basis of its moderate approach.⁶⁹ Its growth potential was, however, not large and as with the Reform Party, it discovered that there was simply not enough political space for another party, this time to the right of the U.P. Nevertheless, for a short period it did provide a political home for those who disagreed with the road being followed by the United Party yet were, for emotional or traditional reasons, unable to support the nationalists.

The negotiations with the P.R.P. were finally abandoned as a failure by the United Party caucus in June. Gray Hughes announced that the talks to form a joint opposition had once again collapsed.⁷⁰ Further discussions would be fruitless because the parties involved were still unable to agree on certain fundamental issues. Consequently, the United Party had decided to proceed with the Graaff initiative. Four M.P.'s were, however, not prepared to abandon as futile the talks with the P.R.P.⁷¹ Messrs Japie Basson, D De Villiers, N Olivier and H Miller were opposed to the continuation of the Graaff plan without the support of the P.R.P. They felt that no proposed new party could afford to exclude them.

The opposition was in a state of paralysis. It was hopelessly divided and helpless to influence the government. The United Party was on the

69. Cape Times, 31.5.77, 'New Sap party confident of support'.

70. Argus, 10.6.77, 'U.P. talks with P.R.P. fail'.

71. IBID., '4 U.P. men reject new party'.

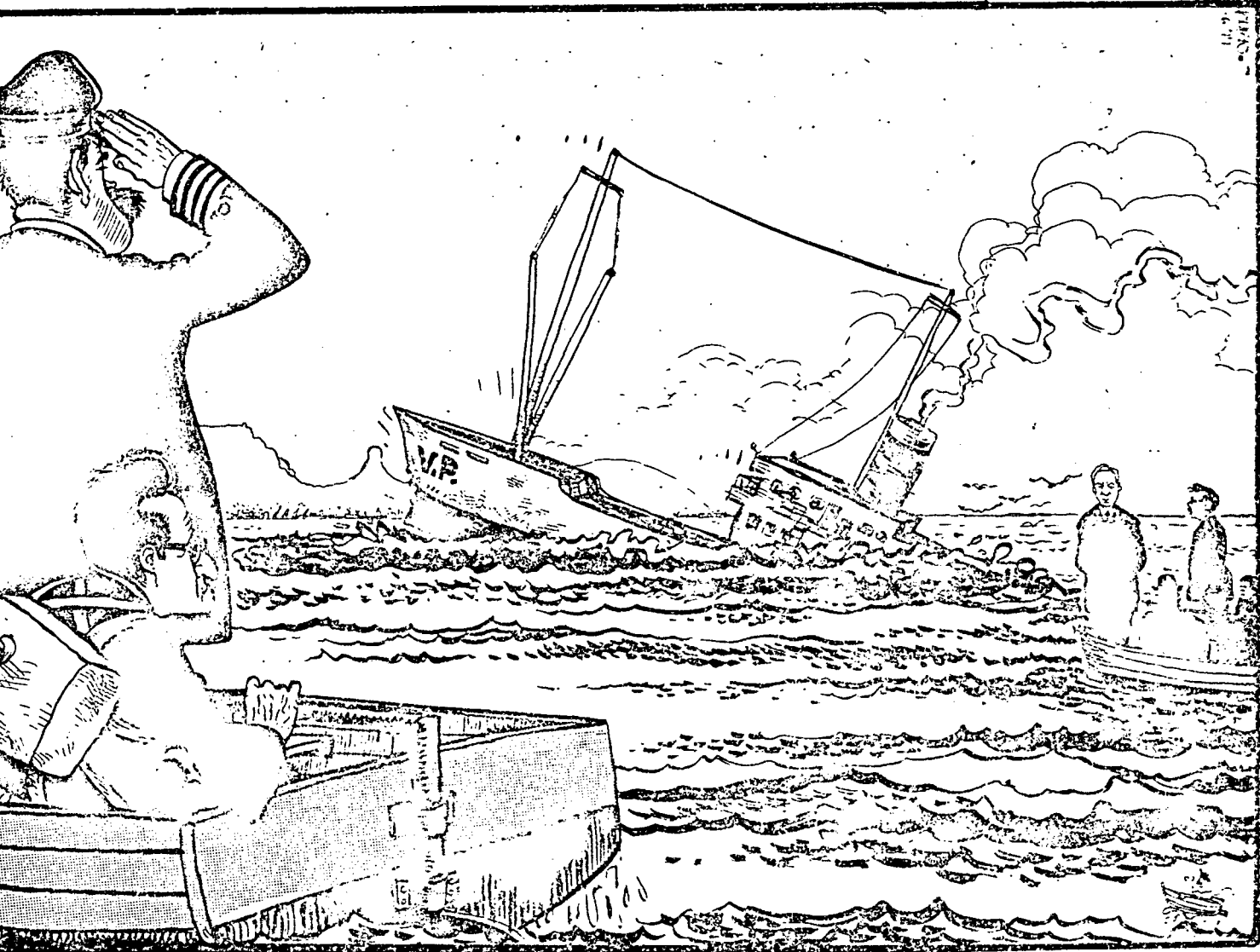
verge of yet another split, for the Bassonites were unlikely to join a new alignment which ignored the 'progrefs'. Graaff, who had begun his initiative to promote, among other things, a stronger opposition which could become an alternative government, discovered that his endeavours had instead become a catalyst for additional disintegration among the opposition. All that he was left with was the support of Theo Gerdener with whom there had also at times been differences. A Graaff-Gerdener party without the 'Bassonites' and 'progrefs' fell far short of Sir De Villiers' original plan. Such a party would also be much smaller than the U.P. which was to be dissolved to make its formation possible.⁷²

In the week prior to the United Party's demise a last ditch stand was made to save it. A 'Committee against Dissolution' was established by a certain Justus van Zyl who felt that any new party would be a disaster and certainly no better than the United Party which was being disbanded for insufficient reasons. Graaff should rather abandon his 'exercise in self-deception' and hand over the leadership of the Party to someone else.⁷³ This effort to save the U.P. came to nothing and on June 28 both the United and Democratic parties held their final congresses prior to the establishment of a new party. At the U.P. congress Dr Jacobs laid the blame for the failure of the inter-party talks squarely on the shoulders of the P.R.P. Graaff also announced to the delegates that he had come to the end of the road as leader of

72. Die Burger, 22.6.77, Dawie: 'Hierdie politiek is af van die spoor van gesonde verstand'.

73. Sunday Times, 'Transvaal Group in Bid to get reprieve for U.P.'

the Opposition, an office he had held for twenty-one years.⁷⁴ The congress decided to disband the United Party after forty-four years service to South Africa.⁷⁵ The Party of Hertzog and Smuts had ceased to exist.⁷⁶

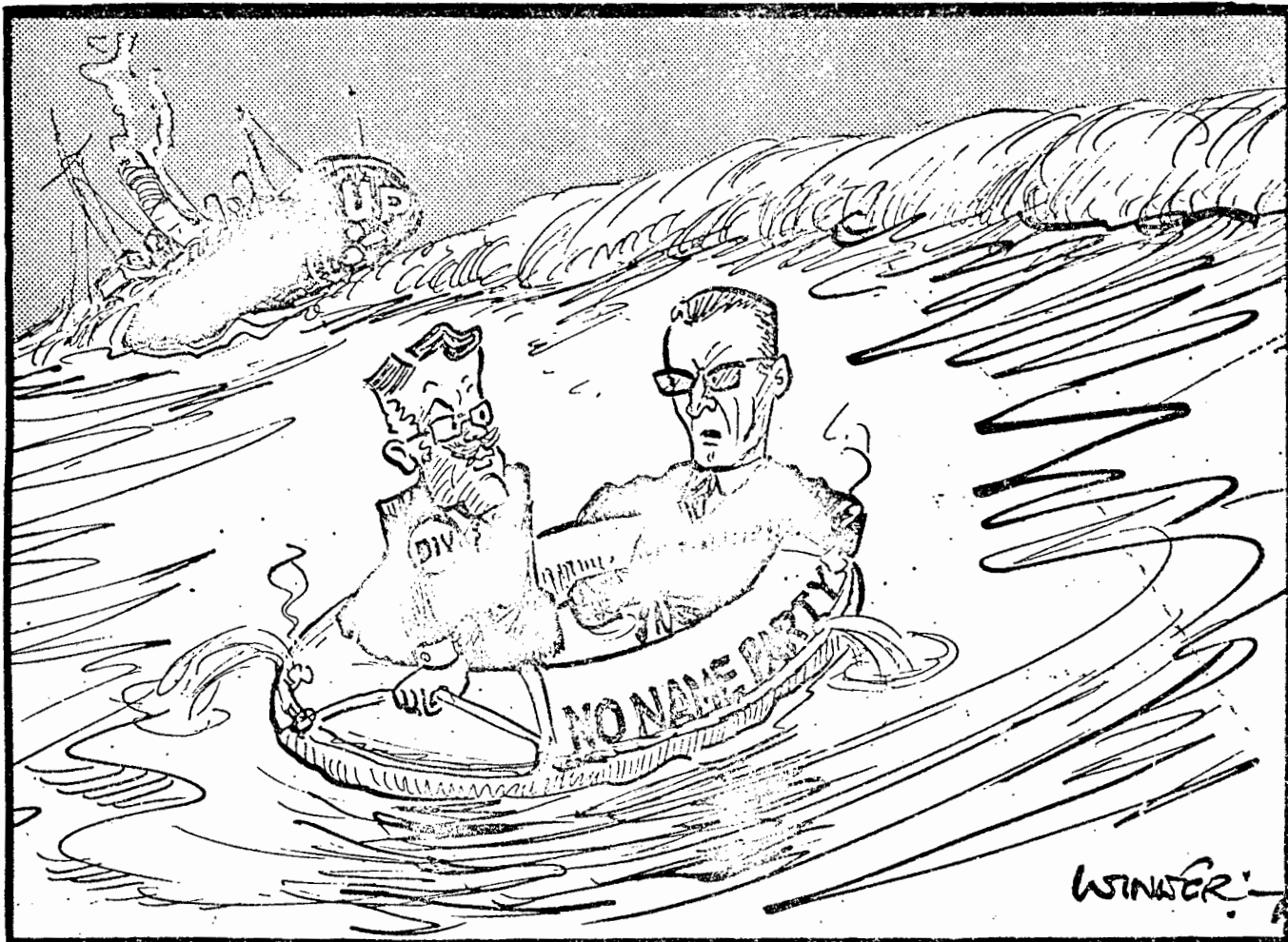


'The United Party is abandoned by Graaff'

74. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A. At a Central Executive Committee meeting, 23.6.77, Graaff indicated that he was only available as interim leader of the new party and recommended that Cadman be elected its parliamentary leader.

75. IBID., Congress Resolution to dissolve the U.P. taken 28.6.77.

76. L. Gordon et al, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, (Pietermaritzburg 1978), p.75.



'An uncertain future awaits the new party'

On the following day 700 delegates met to establish another party and thus fulfil the original objective of Graaff's 'save South Africa' campaign. The New Republic Party was formed on June 29. Both Sir De Villiers Graaff and Theo Gerdener were elected as its honorary life presidents. Sir De Villiers would be the interim leader of the Party until a permanent choice was made. Radclyffe Cadman became its parlia-

mentary leader.⁷⁷ At that point the N.R.P., with 23 M.P.'s, was still the largest opposition group in the Assembly. It also had nine senators and controlled the Natal provincial council.⁷⁸

The Basson group⁷⁹ did not, however, support the establishment of the new party and following talks with the P.R.P. merged⁸⁰ with them to form a 'verligte' opposition group based on the Marais proposals.⁸¹ On September 5 another new party, the Progressive Federal Party, came into existence. Its leader was Colin Eglin. Judge Kowie Marais officially joined this Party. The P.F.P. with 18 M.P.'s had become the second largest opposition group in parliament.⁸²

4. The 1977 election

If any further proof was required that the death of the United Party had strengthened the National and to a lesser extent the Progressive Federal Party, a cursory examination of the snap general election of 1977 would provide it. Vorster took advantage of the disarray among opposition groups to hold an early election. Ostensibly it was also

77. Cape Times, 25.6.77, Scott Haig, 'Requiem for a great party'. He likened the U.P.'s composition to a choir of different singers and also posed the question of whether it was born too soon or whether it lived too long?

78. H. Du Toit, 'Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1977', pp. 19 - 27.

79. United Party Papers, U.N.I.S.A., The Central Executive Committee, 29.6.77, suspended Sen. L Poorter and Messrs Basson, Miller, Olivier, van Hoogstraten and McIntosh.

80. Argus, 15.7.77, 'Basson and P.R.P. meet to clinch deal'.

81. L. Gordon, S. Blignaut, S. Moroney, C. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1977, South African Institute of Race Relations (Johannesburg, 1978), p. 19.

82. H. Du Toit, Die Parlementêre Verkiesing, p. 17.

Ou Opposisie:



Nuwe Opposisie:



'Is the new opposition any different from the old?'

called to allow the voters to express an opinion on foreign interference⁸³ by both the West and Soviet Russia in the internal affairs of South Africa and to decide on the government's new constitutional plans for the country.⁸⁴

83. The Citizen, 9.11.77, 'The patriotic election'.

84. Cape Times, 10.11.77, 'What the election is about'.

It was to be a short campaign. The election was announced on September 21, nomination day was October 20 and voting would take place on November 30.⁸⁵ All three opposition parties faced similar problems. They had to make the public aware of their new identities and at the same time had to place their respective party organizations on an election footing. The N.R.P. and S.A.P. had a particularly difficult task as they lacked media support and had inherited the moribund U.P. branch structures where they still existed.

In all, 321 candidates were nominated:⁸⁶

N.P.	148
P.F.P.	60
N.R.P.	45
S.A.P.	7
H.N.P.	56
Independents	5

There were forty-four uncontested seats, forty-two of which went to the N.P. and two to the P.R.P. The governing party's number of unopposed divisions was to be substantially larger than the total number of seats won by the combined opposition! The N.R.P. fought on a very narrow front failing to put up candidates in rural areas where the U.P. had once enjoyed a strong following and also in certain urban constituencies which it had won in the 1974 general election.⁸⁷ What made the opposi-

85. H. Du Toit, p. 100.

86. *IBID*, p.75.

87. *IBID*, p.77. These included Bryanston, Newton Park, Randburg, Sandton, Simonstwon, Walmer and Yeoville .

tion's task more difficult was that in three or four-cornered contests as for example was the case in Albany, its vote would be split to the advantage of the N.P.

The result of the election was an overwhelming triumph for the National Party and a humiliating defeat for the fragmented opposition. In terms of seats won the position was as follows (the numbers in brackets indicate the state of parties before the election):⁸⁸

National Party	134	(116)
Progressive Federal Party	17	(18)
New Republic Party	10	(23)
South African Party	<u>3</u>	(6)
	<u>164</u>	

One vacancy, Springs, was caused by the murder of the N.P. candidate, Dr Robert Smit, during the campaign. In the subsequent by-election the National Party also won this seat which pushed its total to 135, the largest number ever won by any party in South Africa's political history. Its majority over the combined opposition was 105, another record. The Progressive Federal Party with 17 seats became the smallest ever official opposition.⁸⁹

The combined opposition totalled thirty seats, stark testimony to the

88. IBID, p. 117

89. The P.F.P. had appealed to the electorate to vote for 'an effective opposition' and placed advertisements to this effect in all the major English newspapers as for example in the Sunday Times, 27.11.77.

disintegration within its ranks. In 1970 the United Party had won 47 constituencies, in 1974 it took 41 and in 1977 it had not participated



'Hoekom lyk dit vir my dié kroon word al hoe groter?'

in the election. Its successor, the N.R.P., which was to 'save South Africa', had won but 10.

CONCLUSION

Except for a brief renaissance in 1970 the United Party had declined steadily since 1948, and although it is correct to state that even when at its weakest, following the 1966 and 1974 elections, the United Party had still been stronger than the P.R.P. after its best performance in 1981,¹ it had nevertheless reached a point from which it no longer had the vitality to recover.² The in-fighting, disloyalty, indiscipline and lack of responsibility which had characterized its declining years were probably inherent in the nature of its original composition.³ The wide spectrum of opinion represented by the Party required strong leadership in order to maintain the type of consensus politics associated with its moderate image. Its heterogeneous character meant that if differences within it became too marked it would face the very real threat of a breakaway by one group or another.⁴ The Party had always been a coalition of diverse interests and when the need for reform became an insistent demand during the 1970's it was unable to achieve unanimity as to the direction and pace of change required. Personality clashes developed between the factions and deep-seated philosophical differences were revealed. The loss of English media support was something the Party had not experienced before 1970 and the role of the press in undermining the

1. Following the 1966 election the U.P. had 39 seats, after 1974 41, while after the 1981 poll the P.R.P. had 26 elected M.P.'s plus a nominated one.

2. Interview with Senator Horak, 8.6.82.

3. Die Burger, 29.6.77, 'V.P. victim of acute frustration'.

4. Interview with Bill Horak, 8.6.82

United Party should not be underestimated.⁵

Although it can be argued that Graaff disbanded the Party prematurely there can be little doubt that following the electoral reverses of 1974 and after, that its days of active political life were numbered.⁶ It had lost its rural support to the National and Herstigte parties while it stood only the remotest chance of defeating the Progressives in the majority of English speaking urban constituencies, particularly in three-cornered contests.⁷ The process of polarization in white politics had advanced to a point where moderate centrist parties had become almost irrelevant.

Dr E. G. Malherbe, a former principal of Natal University, commenting on the demise of the United Party pinpointed some of its shortcomings.⁸

After the Second World War he had already written to Smuts that the U.P. 'was finished'.⁹ Its war record had been its strongest point but the Party had not been equipped to handle the post-war dislocation. Young people, he said, were not inspired by the United Party nor were they attracted to it. A party which lost its youth would not survive. The Party's leaders, excluding Smuts, no longer had any strong appeal to the majority of South Africans and the Party had lost its capacity

5. See Chapter V.5.

6. Interview with Horak. It had to be faced, he said, that by 1977 the United Party was finished.

7. Interview with Myburgh Streicher, 5.5.82.

8. Article by E.G. Malherbe in The Sunday Tribune, 27.6.77, 'A Long Time Dying'.

9. Contained in a letter to Smuts, 8.9.1948, and quoted in Hancock, Fields of Force, pp. 512 - 514.

for rejuvenation. Malherbe also felt that Jan Hofmeyr was an embarrassment in any effort to unite the majority of the United Party with the moderate elements Havenga¹⁰ would be able to bring with him from the nationalists ranks should a Smuts-Havenga agreement eventuate. Following the defeat of Smuts in 1948 there had been speculation of such a possibility as it was reported that Havenga was unhappy in Malan's government. According to Malherbe, Havenga was popular with the English and had Smuts co-operated with him the nationalists would not have made the same rapid progress, for the United Party would have been able to attract Afrikaner moderates.¹¹

The heirs to Hofmeyr's liberal politics in the United Party had been the Progressives, Reformists and Bassonites who had all made it difficult for Afrikaner moderates to join the Party while they were partly responsible for driving out those who were already supporters of it. As has been demonstrated, they were a nucleus around which crises developed with monotonous regularity.

Malherbe also believed that all inspiration and imagination had gone out of the United Party's leaders. Following the death of Smuts in 1950 there was nobody able to cope with the strains placed on it by its liberal and conservative elements. Smuts had been able to do so

10. Minister of finance at the time of fusion and later leader of the Afrikaner party which had concluded an electoral pact with Malan's nationalists for the 1948 election.

11. Hancock, Fields of Force. pp. 512 - 514.

but his successors, Strauss and Graaff were not.¹² The strong moderate English and Afrikaans leaders needed by the United Party were conspicuous by their absence and this was a factor symptomatic of the malady which killed the United Party.¹³ As has been mentioned, the Transvaal alone had four different provincial leaders between 1972 and 1977.

Professor Kleynhans has also convincingly explained the demise of the U.P.¹⁴ It was due, he wrote, not to a lack of a dynamic platform; on the contrary the Party's policies were realistic, moderately verlig and politically relevant. But the major defects, in his opinion, were an absence of inspired leadership on most levels, and a lack of an efficient broadly based party organization which was necessary to mobilize support. The nationalists were always well organized with an active branch structure while the United Party was frequently searching for candidates and offices at election time. There had also been an inability to exploit the successes of 1970 - 1972, which instead of revitalizing the Party had led to internal dissention and to a lack of discipline and loyalty which had demoralized its popular support. This resulted in a loss of seats. Then there was the poor registration of voters because of the lack of card carrying members to do the work. Before the 1974 election the nationalists registered 50,000 voters on the Witwatersrand, the U.P. 6,000. Graaff had also been misguided in

12. Adv. J.G.N. Strauss led the U.P. from 1950 to 1956 when he was replaced by Sir De Villiers Graaff in a 'palace revolution' at the national congress of that year. He remained head of the Party until its demise in 1977.

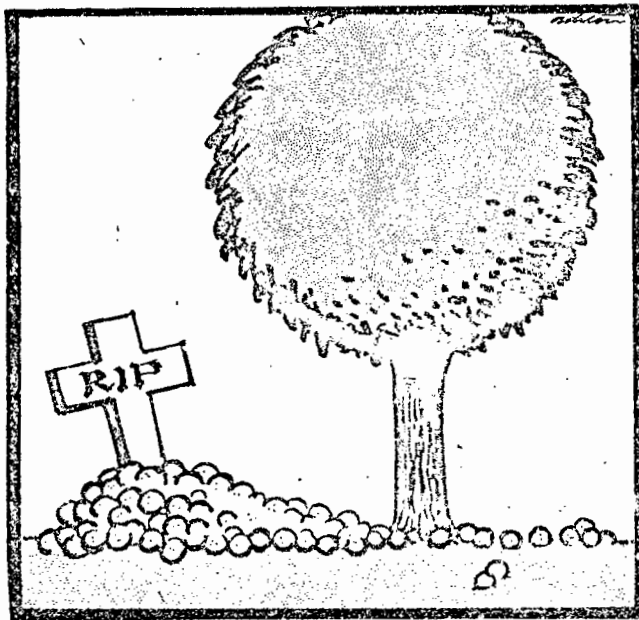
13. Sunday Tribune, 27.6.77

14. Article by Prof Kleynhans in the Argus, 25.6.77, 'U.P. disregarded basic rules and so it died'.

sacrificing the United Party for what he thought was a broader based opposition when the U.P. had always had the broadest base. Further, a lack of public information to inform the voters of its verligte message and an endless number of crises involving among other matters, nomination and leadership disputes had all contributed to its demise.

To these past and more recent problems must be added the negative role played by the press during the final years of its political life, particularly that of the English newspapers which were more widely read by its supporters. By and large they denied the Party a public platform and what attention it did receive was usually of a most unflattering nature. The power of the press was intentionally used to denigrate and destroy the United Party, as has been demonstrated in Chapter V.

The party also tried too hard to be all things to all men simultaneously. Consequently, it fell short even pleasing most of the voters some of the time. This combination of factors led to its gradual decline and abrupt demise in 1977. Smuts' 'best work' had itself become the victim of the evolutionary political process in South Africa and had gone the same way as other parties before it.



APPENDIX

(A) INTERVIEW ON 16 JUNE 1982 WITH SIR DE VILLIERS GRAAFF

LEADER OF THE UNITED PARTY FOR TWENTY-ONE YEARS.

Question 1. To what do you attribute the electoral successes of the United Party in 1970?

Answer. Government blunders played a role but I think more important was the fact that we were able to attack as a united party consisting of people who had worked together for a considerable time, who knew each other and complemented one another.

Question 2. As the Party had really only won back what it had lost in 1966 was it accurate to speak of a breakthrough?

Answer. In terms of seats it only regained what it had lost in 1966 but if you look at the voting figures for the various constituencies you will see that we gained a great many votes and I know from my personal knowledge that the Nats. were very worried indeed after the 1970 election. So there was an advance.

Question 3. What attracted the so-called reformists to the Party after 1970 or were they already present? If already there what spurred them on to greater activity?

Answer. Most of them, I think, were already in the Party but I believe they thought they could exploit the successes of 1970 by applying what they regarded were new methods, new systems and new forms of publicity but without much experience. They did, however, have the support of the Sunday Times and in the early part of their campaign they made quite an impression.

Question 4. As all public representatives presumably adhere to the same policies where then were the main areas of difference between the Old Guard and the reformists, or were they more of a personal nature?

Answer. I do n't believe there were any real policy differences except over the Schlebusch commission at the time and the ideas of power sharing on one side and white baasskap on the other. You see Mr Schwarz challenged Marais Steyn very early on for the leadership of the Transvaal and was successful and there were bitter feelings because it was a very narrow victory and one which owed a great deal to a high degree of organization. As a result, attempts were made to find ideological differences between the two but I do n't think that they succeeded in finding them for before his defection Marais Steyn and Harry Schwarz had agreed to the question of white leadership and what it meant in practice. So as far as policy differences were concerned they were minimal.

Question 5. Do you know where the terms Young Turk and Old Guard originated?

Answer. I think they were press terms, probably the Sunday Times had a lot to do with it.

Question 6. Who was the leading figure/s behind the reform movement?

Answer. I think, at the outset, Dick Enthoven, Horace van Rensburg, Dalling, Schwarz and to an extent Basson. Mr Basson was a philosopher and on occasions made provocative statements but in the fifteen years I worked with him he always remained loyal to me.

Question 7. What essentially were the objectives of the reformists?

Answer. Well, differences were not policy differences. I think they felt they could run the Party better than anyone else and they tried to hijack it from within. Schwarz had taken over in the Transvaal and had his people in there. But their supporters were always trying for "take-overs" in other provinces, for instance they tried to unseat Myburgh Streicher. Then there was the suggestion that a new party should be formed although there were no policy differences.

Question 8. Was there any single event which could be cited as a point at which they became a more cohesive force within the U.P.?

Answer. I think it was more a drift which was given momentum by various events such as the attacks on our Schlebusch commissioners, the behaviour of Wits. students and the meeting of the Witwatersrand General Council where I had to step in to keep the peace among people many of whom were n't members of the Council.

Question 9. Did the Sunday Times play an important role in the defeat of Marais Steyn and in the fortunes of the reformists generally?

Answer. Yes, it did. It did a demolition job on Marais Steyn.

Question 10. Do you think the Young Turks and the Sunday Times were in collusion or did they simply propagate similar views?

Answer. Well, I believe they had pretty regular meetings and had close contact.

Question 11. Was there an identifiable conspiracy among the English newspapers to destroy or weaken the U.P.; especially the Old Guard?

Answer. No, not a conspiracy as such.

Question 12. Why did the U.P. do badly in the Oudtshoorn by-election of 1972 after having done well up to then?

Answer. I think we completely misjudged the constituency and Streicher was the only one who was right when he said we should not have contested it. From my own experience I knew that it was hard to establish branches there and that they always tended to fade away. The type of voter was also easily excited and susceptible to emotional appeals which were made to him by the nationalists.

Question 13. Was the "boerehaat" campaign in Oudtshoorn by the nationalists an election ploy or was there substance to the allegations?

Answer. It was more a useful ploy at that point.

Question 14. Do you think the Party spoke with two or more voices depending on the speaker or the audience?

Answer. No, I do n't think so. This argument is exaggerated.

Question 15. Why did the Cape find it necessary to introduce a resolution on the need for bilingual candidates at its provincial congress in 1972?

Answer. This was an issue which came up year after year in congress. I think everyone appreciated the desirability of it yet if you had an outstanding candidate you could n't knock him out if he was not so good in the other language.

Question 16. Natal did not follow the Cape example and Eric Winchester objected to the idea of a similar bilingual resolution being adopted there. Do you think it harmed the Party, for instance, in the approaching Klip River by-election?

Answer. I do n't know whether it harmed the Party but Mr Winchester could not, of course, really speak Afrikaans.

Question 17. So was the bilingual argument really just a storm in a teacup?

Answer. Yes, although propaganda could be made out of it. My advice was for people not to enter politics until they were bilingual.

Question 18. Why did the Party serve on the Schlebusch commission?

Answer. It is the duty of the opposition to participate. We served on the select committee and when it was converted into a commission we continued to serve. Our commissioners kept us informed. If we had not participated we would have to have relied on others for information which may have not been entirely adequate.

Question 19. Looking back do you think it was a good decision to serve on the Commission?

Answer. I think so for it had important political implications.

Question 20. Could the Schlebusch commission and the adverse press publicity surrounding the Party's association with it be regarded as one of the main causes for its decline?

Answer. What was important were the recommendations by the Commission which were unacceptable to many of our people, nor did we support the action of the government but the press did its best to give the impression that we were part and parcel of the whole deal.

Question 21. Did the press misrepresent the Party's role or intentions on the Commission?

Answer. I can n't really say although it did appear to be so at times.

Question 22. In 1973 at a meeting in Rondebosch you made use of part of a statement by Cathy Taylor which had previously been withdrawn at your request from being made public through the newspapers. When you were challenged by a student to read her entire statement you refused as you said you did not have her permission. She later denied this. Was it a genuine misunderstanding between the two of you or did you not wish to read something which placed the students in a favourable light?

Answer. Well, he had a copy of her statement which he tried to read out. He did not have her permission to do so nor did the Cape Times which later published it. I could have used the entire text but was not prepared to publicize that section which was unfavourable to us.

Question 23. Did the U.P. commissioners know before hand that N.U.S.A.S. leaders would be restricted but were prepared to support a unanimous report

in return for an undertaking that action against them would be less harsh than otherwise planned?

Answer. No, I do n't think there was any kind of a deal.

Question 24. Was Senator Horak's letter of appreciation to the Sunday Express a unanimous decision by the Party?

Answer. Yes, in the sense that no vote was taken and no objections were noted at the meeting.

Question 25. Did you and Mr Schwarz ever reach an accord over the Schlebusch commission and matters pertaining to it?

Answer. Yes, of course there was. In the debate in the House we both spoke and it was a most successful debate in which we destroyed the criticism there had been.

Question 26. Do you think there was a planned campaign to oust André Fourie from the leadership of the Young South Africans?

Answer. Well, there was no doubt that there had been lobbying behind the scenes.

Question 27. Did Marais Steyn leave the Party at a point calculated to harm it, that is when there were attempts being made to reconcile differing points of view?

Answer. No. I think it had to do with the feeling between him and Harry Schwarz. They were starting to look for points of policy difference and Mr Steyn might have realized that he would not again get the Transvaal nomination.

Question 28. How did you feel about his defeat at the hands of Harry Schwarz and his later defection to the N.P.?

Answer. I was very sorry for him as I thought he deserved better but he had let the Party organization go slack and although I had warned him I do n't think he realized what was coming his way. When I heard of

his resignation I was on holiday but made every effort to persuade him to change his mind and to retract the statement he had issued to the Sunday Express. He was upset but I could n't move him to change his decision.

Question 29. Was the 1973 National congress really a unity or peace congress as claimed or were the cracks simply being patched over?

Answer. No, it was a successful congress. There were certain statements that had to be approved and Harry Schwarz was always a difficult man to get to approve anything that had to be drafted. The ordinary Party supporter had heard that Schwarz was going to oust me and they came to make sure that that did n't happen and, in fact, in the end I had to protect Schwarz as so many were gunning for him.

Question 30. Did the reformists actually emerge victorious from that congress as was made out by certain press reports?

Answer. No.

Question 31. Were there ever attempts at various levels or times to expel or force Schwarz from the Party, for instance, after the Buthelezi meeting in 1974?

Answer. There was a very strong feeling against him indeed and his Buthelezi visit was discussed at depth in caucus where he had to defend himself. But there was no movement to expel him and the caucus did not have the power to do so.

Question 32. Was the introduction of the new federal policy in the 1973 no-confidence debate poorly handled by Mike Mitchell?

Answer. He was part of the constitutional committee which had made certain recommendations but he was a chap who could get flustered and Mr Vorster caught him out and made him look a bit silly over the proposals.

Question 33. With regard to the federal policy and power sharing. Was it in all sincerity possible to place different interpretations on its meaning, with the conservatives placing more emphasis on the future of the white parliament and the reformists on the proposed multi-racial federal assembly?

Answer. There was definitely no doubt in my mind that the federal assembly would become the senior body. Once the federal assembly was established it would take over. The white parliament would be the regulator of change.

Question 34. Was "white leadership" part of an official statement of policy or was it more of a slogan and was it ever abandoned?

Answer. It developed over the years as party policy. When I first went to parliament people like Smuts talked of "white leadership with justice" and "white guardianship" but with the passage of time it became more and more realized that there would have to be a sharing of power and that in that sharing the Whites could play a very big role. And that is why when determining the constitution it was decided that it would not depend on numbers but probably on the contribution of a particular section of the population to the gross national income.

Question 35. With regard to the nomination of candidates in 1974. Was there a power struggle in progress, particularly in the Cape and the Transvaal to consolidate the position of the different factions in parliament?

Answer. There was no doubt that there was a struggle going on. The reformist group had control in the Transvaal and they pushed their candidates to the detriment of some very good and experienced ones while in the Cape there is no doubt that Wiley and Streicher were pushing for certain other people.

Question 36. Were Old Guard nominations like that of Etienne Malan withheld in the Transvaal until certain verligte ones had been confirmed?

Answer. In the case of Etienne Malan the excuse was that his divisional committee did not want him. Eventually I insisted on his nomination. I thought he was an invaluable member who had been discriminated against because of his membership of the Schlebusch commission. He was a most useful M.P. and I needed him as a part of the parliamentary team. He was a most brilliant scholar and we needed his abilities.

Question 37. Did the Central Candidates Committee have to approve all nominations or only those involved in disputes?

Answer. Technically all nominations came to us but they received automatic approval unless there was something funny about them.

Question 38. To what did you attribute the Party's setbacks in the 1974 elections?

Answer. The reverses were almost entirely a result of the feuding in the Party over such issues as nominations.

Question 39. Were the same reasons applicable to the defeat in the Pinelands by-election?

Answer. Possibly. But Miss Reinecke did n't get the support Ossie Newton-Thompson would have got. She was also involved in a nomination contest but by then the tide was flowing against us following the fighting earlier on in the year during the election. The press was also dead against us.

Question 40. Did the reformists in the Cape attempt to capture the branch structure of the Party there as a stepping stone to greater things?

Answer. Yes, I've no doubt they tried.

Question 41. Was there any connection between the Witwatersrand Young Turks and those reformists, such as Carlisle, who operated in the Cape?

Answer. Oh yes, very close connections.

Question 42. Had you already left the Cape Head Committee meeting when five of the Cape reformists were expelled from the Party for their activities in 'GROW'?

Answer. The meeting took place in the Verwoerd building and I knew nothing about the planned expulsions. It was a peaceful meeting but once I had left they got stuck in.

Question 43. Do you think Mr Schwarz engineered his departure from the U.P. following the Enthoven poll and his refusal to vote against the prime minister's amendment in the 1975 no-confidence debate?

Answer. No, I do n't think so. I think he heard Vorster's amendment but wished to see his son off to the army. The division bells rang and I do n't think he realized that by not voting he would be accepting the nationalist non-white policy. I asked him to sit down but he got up and walked out. That was the reason as far as I was concerned.

Question 44. Do you think that the establishment of the Reform Party was well planned?

Answer. No, I do n't think so.

Question 45. Were you informed that it was going to be established before the event was made public?

Answer. No. It was a last desperate attempt by Harry Schwarz to salvage something for himself.

Question 46. Why did the U.P. remain divided after the reformists had left?

Answer. There was very little friction in the Party after they had left. There was more unanimity after the departure of Schwarz but in 1976 there were the Soweto riots and other disturbances and there were increasing calls for the establishment of a new party to bring in moderate Nats. and Progs. It was obvious that we couldn't win an election and so I started seeing various business and other people to form a committee to look into such an initiative. We got Gerdener and Marais on our side and other outstanding chaps whom we thought had a chance of attracting Nat. votes. But the problem was the Progs., we couldn't get anywhere with them. And then when Marais brought out his report it was ambiguous and people like Wiley and Streicher would on no account have anything to do with the Progs., while others were prepared to accommodate them. The former broke away and when we had our congress in June only a handful led by Japie Basson were not prepared to accept the new policy and went over to Colin Eglin. It was rather sad, for the principles we finally adopted would have been acceptable to Wiley and Streicher.

Question 47. Did Japie Basson possibly remain in the Party when the reformists left because he expected, in due course, to become its leader?

Answer. There is not the slightest doubt that many saw Japie as a possible successor. He was a most able speaker but never had the support of the grassroots.

Question 48. Did the defeat in the Durban North by-election in 1976 spell the end for the U.P. and did it possibly encourage you to embark on the "Save South Africa" campaign?

Answer. No. Worreil's standing split the vote against us. But the "Save

South Africa" campaign began at the Cape congress after I had seen Vorster in Pretoria to discuss the situation in the country and where I had made certain proposals to him which, however, he was not prepared to consider.

Question 49. Was the "Save South Africa" initiative not more of an endeavour to preserve something of the U.P.'s policies and traditions if not the Party itself?

Answer. No. What had bearing on my thinking was the serious situation in the country and that if there wasn't a change of direction there could be dire consequences.

Question 50. Why were the conservatives in the U.P. not prepared to co-operate with the P.R.P.?

Answer. It was a question of personalities although they also thought that the policies of the P.R.P. were too far to the left and liberal.

Question 51. Did Colin Eglin ever indicate that he would disband the P.R.P. for a new party?

Answer. No.

Question 52. Why did the whole initiative really fail in the end?

Answer. We couldn't agree on policy. The issues of group identities, local option and whether S.A. was a plural of common society were stumbling blocks. The representatives of the P.R.P. on the one hand and the U.P. and D.P. on the other couldn't find agreement. We broke off the discussions in the end and went on on our own. We could not establish a rapport with them.

Question 53. How did you see your own role in the conservative-reformist quarrels over the years? Looking back do you feel you should have acted differently? Do you think you were too lenient with the dissidents of both factions?

Answer. My role was that of referee, it was not a question of appeasement. Each group enjoyed support; Schwarz in the Transvaal had everything his way since the defeat of Marais Steyn while Streicher was operating in the Cape where he was aware that others were trying to replace him without there being any real difference in policy. If anybody had put a foot out of line policy-wise I could have chucked them out as I laid down policy. Knowing what I know now and with hindsight I may have acted differently. There were unfortunately irreconcilables in the Party but then Smuts had held together a motley team and I too had some very strange characters.

Question 54. Nevertheless, were reformists more likely to be disciplined than conservatives?

Answer. No, I don't think so.

Question 55. Were you aware that the 1975 Enthoven poll was to take place and do you know who really paid for it?

Answer. I think he commissioned it himself, and no, I was not informed that it was to be conducted.

Question 56. Did you know that Mr Schwarz was going to meet chief Buthelezi in Mahlabatini at the beginning of 1974?

Answer. I was aware that he wanted to speak to him but before he did so he was to tell me which he didn't do.

Question 57. Before the 1974 election was there a move within the Party to prevent the Young Turks from the Transvaal contesting seats and thus going to parliament?

Answer. Yes there was but I overruled these demands.

Question 58. What happened in the case of George Oliver and the Senate seat he expected to receive in the Transvaal in 1974? He did not receive the nomination although he was under the impression that you were going to intercede on his behalf with Harry Schwarz to secure his election?

Answer. In the past a nomination which I wanted would be approved by the committee which dealt with it. Oliver was nominated but was voted out. I had expected him to receive the nomination and was disappointed when he did not do so.

Question 59. Did the weak finances and inadequate branch structure of the U.P. contribute to its decline?

Answer. Unless you have an active, hard working member or chairman of a division the branches always go to pieces and the collection of money stops. This was an endemic problem for as long as I knew the U.P.

Question 60. Did the Young Turks ever restore the finances of the Party on the Rand as they claimed they would do?

Answer. No.

Question 61. Were the reformists responsible for any of the verligte changes in the U.P.?

Answer. No. In so far as there were any changes it was a question of consensus and then only if I approved of them.

Question 62. Why did Mr Johnson resign from the Sunday Express in 1974?

Answer. He did not get the editorship of the Sunday Times which, as the senior editor in the country, he had expected. He had given years of service to S.A.A.N. and he felt it was owed to him.

Question 63. Did the Reform Party ever draw up a policy distinct from that of the U.P.?

Answer. No, I don't think they did.

Question 64. Do you know why Mike Mitchell resigned and by so doing created the by-election in Durban North?

Answer. I think he found he was spending more and more time on his practice and that he could do better at the bar than in politics. To an extent I think he had also lost his enthusiasm.

Question 65. Did you at any stage suspect that Judge Kowie Marais was siding with the progressive elements in your initiative before he actually joined them?

Answer. At one point in Cape Town he told me that he had been to Eglin to promote some meetings in furtherance of the cause to 'save South Africa'. But he didn't tell me he was going to join them.

Question 66. Do you think the press wished to break the U.P. and then push the reformists in it to join with other verligte groups to form a so-called verligte front?

Answer. It is hard to know what the press wanted because they never acted unitedly. I had devoted support from certain newspapers from beginning to end and was very grateful for it. But there were some which for publicity or their own ideas kept breaking line, so to speak.

Question 67. Did you possibly prematurely disband the U.P.? Surely the voters should have given the final verdict or had it reached a point where it wouldn't have survived anyway?

Answer. It was not a question of surviving. The fact of the matter was that while the U.P. existed no Nat. would vote for it. We wanted to put forward something new before the electorate that would attract both the left and the right. We had also been advised that because of the state of the voters rolls there would be no hope of an election in 1977. This advice proved to be wrong and there was an election. We didn't have a chance to establish the new party and what happened was that the press saw this as an opportunity to ignore us entirely and push the claims of the P.P.

Question 68. The press and your leadership. Did Joel Mervis of the Sunday Times make certain demands of you before he requested your resignation as leader of the Party in 1973?

Answer. I cannot remember exactly when, but he at one point suggested that we accept apartheid. I hounded him on that and said nothing of the sort would happen. He then climbed down. Thereafter he came to listen to the 1973 no-confidence debate which disappointed him. He then saw me and suggested that I might like to resign. But I had the congresses behind me although if there was somebody who could take over from me with congress support I was not looking for staying on in the job. He then went off and had this thing of 13 reasons why I should go published and took the line that I had agreed to stand down. I know he had Japie Basson in mind as my successor but he wouldn't have received congress support. Later again the Times changed and wrote that Graaff must stay!

Question 69. What do you think was the main reason/s for the rapid decline of the U.P. after 1972 or had it simply come to the end of its useful political life?

Answer. The main reason was the internal squabbling. People were frustrated from being in opposition for many, many years. They realized that there was a crisis in the country and they were looking for an opportunity to make headway against the government.

(B) INTERVIEW ON 8 JUNE 1982 WITH SENATOR BILL HORAK
FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE UNITED PARTY

Question 1. Can the election successes of the United Party in 1970 be attributed to its policy, to its better organization or to problems which faced the government? What, in fact, accounted for the increased number of seats won by the U.P.?

Answer. The mistakes of the government obviously played a part, such as the Agliotti land deal, loans to Minister Haak and similar things. But it was more a bread and butter election than an ideological contest. It was also the first time the new prime minister had to face the electorate, while among his own people the Herstigte split had created problems. Nevertheless, it was pleasing that the U.P. improved its position.

Question 2. Was the euphoria misplaced, for after all, the U.P. had more or less only won back what it had lost in 1966? Was it accurate, therefore, to speak of a break-through?

Answer. The euphoria which had originated on the Witwatersrand with Harry Schwarz and his so-called Young Turks and later with Mervis of the Sunday Times who believed the electorate were voting ideologically for a more liberal direction was, I believe, misplaced. But certainly the results were encouraging and we felt they provided a platform on which to build and to hit the government on bread and butter politics where they were more vulnerable than on their nationalistic ideologies which had a very powerful appeal.

Question 3. What attracted the Reformists to the United Party or were they already there after the 1970 successes?

Answer. Some were already there. Harry Schwarz was their leader. They were

impinging on parliamentary territory and aimed to hijack the Party. They believed it was on the way up and, mistakenly, that there had been an ideological break-through. They wished to get rid of the older members and take over the party.

Question 4. If already there, what spurred them to greater activity, for up to about 1970 they had been fairly dormant?

Answer. Not all that dormant. They were represented in the Transvaal Provincial Council but I think what spurred them on was their misinterpretation of the reasons for the Party's gains. They thought that the millennium had arrived and that everyone was now liberal.

Question 5. As all representatives, presumably, adhere to the same principles and policies where then were the main areas of difference between the Reformists and the rest of the Party or were they more of a personal nature?

Answer. Sets of principles can be interpreted differently. Treurnicht, for instance, remained in the N.P. after 1977 when the power sharing concept was mooted. Broad statements of principle are capable of many interpretations. Personal ambition also played an important role in party differences.

Question 6. Was there a leading figure(s) in the reform movement?

Answer. Yes. I would say Japie Basson and Harry Schwarz, although Basson may have been hijacked into it. The Sunday Times helped by writing of a Schwarz-Basson axis and of the verkrampde mafia which surrounded Graaff. Basson tended to be the ideological leader and Schwarz the organizational driving force.

Question 7. Was there any single event which can be regarded as the point

at which the Reformists emerged as a recognizable force within the United Party?

Answer. I am not sure about a single event. It was rather a process brought to public light through the Sunday Times when it started speaking of the Young Turks as a vital force in the U.P.

Question 8. Who was actually interpreting party policy and traditions correctly, the establishment or the Reformists?

Answer. The establishment, most definitely. It was Graaff, Marais Steyn, myself, Vause Raw and others.

Question 9. Do you agree that there were definite divisions within the Party?

Answer. Oh yes. There was a left-wing, a solid centre, and some on the right-wing.

Question 10. Where did these terms 'Old Guard', 'Young Turk' originate?

Answer. They came from the fertile brain of Joel Mervis as far as I know, and Stanley Uys, his political correspondent.

Question 11. Would you say the Sunday Times played an important role in the defeat of Marais Steyn and in the fortunes of the Reformists generally?

Answer. Indeed, yes. Very much so.

Question 12. Was there an identifiable conspiracy among the English newspapers to weaken or destroy the U.P., particularly the Old Guard within it?

Answer. I don't think they were trying to weaken it, but were rather mounting a hijack operation to give it a more liberal image and to motivate it. The Sunday Express, of course, adopted a different approach from that of the Sunday Times.

Question 13. Were the Young Turks and Sunday Times in collusion or did they simply propagate the same views?

Answer. Eventually they certainly were.

Question 14. Why did the U.P. do so badly in the Oudtshoorn by-election after having done so well up to then?

Answer. I said we couldn't expect advances in the rural areas which I referred to as the 'deep platteland', not in a derogatory manner, but to indicate that people there were more conservative. Oudtshoorn reflected the obvious disunity in the Party. The conservative U.P. did not like what they saw of the Young Turks and voted nat. Further, P.W. Botha and the Burger managed to construct a good 'Boerehaat' campaign in which we were depicted as a party which hated the Afrikaner.

Question 15. Was 'boerehaat' just an election ploy or was there substance to the campaign?

Answer. As a neutral observer I would have thought there was some substance to it, that there was this anti-Afrikaner attitude in certain circles.

Question 16. Did the Party speak with two or more voices depending on the speaker or the audience, rural or urban?

Answer. Yes, every politician likes to please his audience but only within the framework of the principles of the Party.

Question 17. Did the U.P. start changing to its new federal policy after the Oudtshoorn setbacks, particularly as its old policy of a mixed parliament had been strongly attacked?

Answer. Not really. The federal approach had originated in the 1960's when Graaff directed Marais Steyn to produce a race federation. Thereafter

it simply developed and was refined. Then a constitutional committee was appointed under Mike Mitchell to elaborate. So its origins lay in the past and the 1973 policy was a culmination of the process. Oudtshoorn was not the catalyst, as it was happening anyway.

Question 18. Why was it necessary to introduce a motion at the Cape congress in 1972, which insisted that election candidates should be bilingual?

Answer. To counter the 'boerehaat' image and to show that the Party was truly a South African party and that it was bilingual.

Question 19. Do you feel that Natal was wrong not to have followed suit, when a similar motion there was withdrawn?

Answer. It was difficult for Natal, for the urban areas were English speaking and that was the core of the United Party support. They did not have much chance to be bilingual. The Natal attitude was based on practical considerations but there certainly were some jingoes in the province.

Question 20. Did the actions of Eric Winchester M.P., who threatened to leave the Party if a bilingual resolution was passed in Natal, harm it?

Answer. I should rather not comment on Mr Winchester. I believe he was a jingo - a type of left-wing labourite if he lived in England. There is no way of really telling whether his differences with Wiley and others over bilingualism affected the Klip River result.

Question 21. Was the bilingual issue just a storm in a teacup or did it adversely affect the Party's image?

Answer. It was really a manifestation of attitudes which had existed in the Party since the Unionists had joined it. It was not so important an

issue as such, but the attitude towards it which allegedly reflected un-South Africanism by some U.P. supporters, and perhaps a lack of respect towards Afrikaner traditions was more serious. This attitude still existed in certain quarters.

Question 22. Why did the Party decide to participate in the Schlebusch Commission?

Answer. Because it felt very strongly about subversion and the maintenance of law, order and stability. It was prepared to play a part in these investigations into subversive organisations in spite of opposition from the so-called Young Turks. It was a genuine manifestation of the Party's South Africanism.

Question 23. Looking back, do you feel it was a wise decision considering all the trauma it created for the Party?

Answer. Yes, I do.

Question 24. Would you say that the damage done by serving on the Commission was the single most important reason which contributed to the decline of the Party?

Answer. I don't think it was the most important cause. The trouble was that a faction of the Party wanted to take it over and push it in its own direction with the support of an important section of the press. The Schlebusch reports and the student bannings were exploited by the reformists to attack the 'establishment'. If there was no Commission the process would have still continued. It was used as an instrument to hijack the Party.

Question 25. Did the English press, excluding the Sunday Express, misrepresent the Party's role or intentions on the Commission?

Answer. Yes. And they are still doing it.

Question 26. Was it wise to 'gag' parliamentarians, such as Catherine Taylor, from commenting on the Schlebusch reports?

Answer. I am not too clear on Mrs Taylor, but I don't believe she was such a force in the Party although she had a good way of putting things across. It was standard practice that on delicate issues the leader or the chief representatives on a commission should comment and not every backbencher. In the causus they can freely have their say.

Question 27. Cathy Taylor tended to ignore this ruling and wasn't disciplined. Do you think her actions harmed the Party?

Answer. I think she overestimated her importance in the scheme of things although her actions had an effect in the Wynberg constituency.

Question 28. Harry Schwarz returned from overseas and had a meeting with Sir De Villiers over the Schlebusch issue, with which he was not satisfied. The meeting produced an accord between the two - was this in fact so?

Answer. It was unlikely that Graaff would make a unilateral agreement with one man. He did not operate like that and I have no record of such an agreement. To state that Schwarz had reached such an understanding which excluded the other senior provincial leaders is, I think, to aggrandize Schwarz's position.

Question 29. Did the U.P. Schlebusch commissioners make a deal with the nationalist members that if they agreed to an unanimous report there would be less harsh action taken against the students?

Answer. I doubt it. Mr Schlebusch didn't work that way.

Question 30. The U.P. was criticized for not originally submitting a minority report yet before the 1974 election when another interim report of the Commission was tabled they did in fact do so. Was this a result of public pressure?

Answer. I'm not an expert on this, but the commissioners probably felt they had been pressurized and should explain themselves.

Question 31. Was your letter to the Sunday Express of June 1973 thanking it for its support a result of a unanimous Head Committee decision?

Answer. Nobody in the meeting objected to it. I think Schwarz and the others were caught napping. No votes were taken and nobody got up and said no. At a later meeting it was agreed that there had been no objections.

Question 32. Why were there objections to the letter?

Answer. Because the Young Turks disliked the Express as Johnson, its editor, supported the establishment. This thing was really a civil war with the reformists on one side and the establishment on the other with the Sunday Times supporting the former and the Express the latter. Those involved were personally objectionable to each other.

Question 33. Following your letter, the Transvaal Young Turks sent their own one to the Express attacking its political reports. Was this not indicative of a lack of discipline in the Party?

Answer. Absolutely, yes. There was no discipline then, none at all at that level.

Question 34. Was Andre Fourie also ousted as leader of the Young South Africans in a planned coup?

Answer. Oh yes.

Question 35. Did Maans Kemp, his successor, contribute much that was positive to the youth movement?

Answer. I don't think he did much, but in all fairness to him it was diffi-

cult to do anything in a situation of indiscipline and faction fighting.

But I think he was rather ineffectual.

Question 36. Was the 1973 National Congress a 'peace' or 'unity' congress as reported, or were the cracks simply being patched over as there was an election on the horizon?

Answer. I can say something about that. At the Head Committee meeting before the congress there were grave difficulties over the nature of the agenda and Schwarz threatened to go back to the Transvaal with his delegation. Graaff as leader, and for reasons of his own, got Dr Jacobs to intercede and he persuaded Schwarz to remain. This surprised me but I think Harry's vanity had been assuaged or else he was afraid of the consequences of his move which would leave him open to the accusation of having destroyed the unity of the Party. So, superficially there was unity, but it was a patched over congress. Schwarz used the platform at every opportunity to push his own image and although Sir De Villiers made it clear that the congress was a victory for the Party and not any section of it, the Sunday Times disagreed and hailed it as a triumph for the Reformists. Why, I don't understand, as there were no policy changes at all.

Question 37. Why did Harry Schwarz decide in 1972 to oppose Marais Steyn for the leadership of the Transvaal? Do you feel it was his own decision or was he a front-man for a movement or group within the Party?

Answer. It was his own decision; Harry always makes his own decisions. But he was part of a group, in fact, its leader. They ran a well organised campaign, so well controlled that Graaff was able to get Schwarz to have Dr Jacobs elected as deputy leader in the Transvaal once Steyn had lost his post. Schwarz was able to use his influence among the

delegates to have Jacobs elected ahead of Japie Basson.

Question 38. Do you think Graaff should have intervened to save Marais Steyn from defeat?

Answer. It is easy to speak now, but I feel he should have done so. He could have made the election of Marais Steyn a matter of confidence in his leadership. This would have been one course of action.

Question 39. Did Marais Steyn leave the Party in 1973 at a point calculated to harm it, that is, at a time when efforts were being made at reconciliation?

Answer. I don't think he wanted to harm the Party. He asked me to go along with him. He was just sick and tired of being persecuted. After his defeat at the Transvaal Congress, at what was really a rigged election within the law, Schwarz didn't leave him alone. The vendetta continued. As he wasn't being given sufficient protection, he left and I sympathized with him. The two of them were antagonists.

Question 40. Were there attempts at certain times to force Schwarz out of the Party, for instance after his meetings with Chief Buthelezi?

Answer. No, not to force him out, but he was rebuked time after time for acting on his own initiative and defying the establishment. He was rebuked in caucus for seeing Buthelezi, for going there over Cadman's head, the Natal Provincial leader. Members of the U.P. were scheduled to see Chief Buthelezi a few days later in any event, but I don't know whether Schwarz knew of that.

Question 41. Was the federal policy and the question of power sharing in all sincerity open to different interpretations, with the conservatives placing their faith in the white parliament and the reformists in the

proposed multinational federal one?

Answer. No, actually the federal plan produced by the Mike Mitchell constitutional committee agreed to power sharing unanimously through certain constitutional mechanisms. There were later differences over the question of the phasing out of the white parliament, how and at what point. It is interesting that Harry Schwarz has never signed the report of that constitutional committee although he was a member of it and agreed to it.

Question 42. Was the policy of white leadership ever officially abandoned?

Answer. No, not officially but 'white leadership with justice' was really a slogan used when the need arose. But the Party's principles remained the same.

Question 43. With regard to the 1974 election. Was there a power struggle in progress at constituency level in the Cape and elsewhere? Did the Cape Candidates Committee object to certain nominations like van Zyl Cillie because they were Reformists? Was this a method to consolidate the strength of the different factions in parliament?

Answer. I was not directly involved but I have no doubt that that was what was happening. There was, of course, a Central Candidates Committee which also met to consider nominations and at one of these meetings a formal motion was proposed by one of the conservatives to veto the nomination of Schwarz, who was at the meeting, of Horace van Rensburg and a whole string of other reformists. No formal vote was taken but the majority were clearly in favour of the motion. Then at the personal intercession of Sir De Villiers their candidatures were approved but no vote was taken.

Question 44. A similar sort of thing seemed to exist in the Transvaal where Schwarz withheld certain Old Guard nominations like that of Etienne Malan until verligtes such as Prof Olivier had their nominations confirmed. Did that sort of situation exist?

Answer. Yes, that sort of thing did exist, no doubt about it although I was not involved at that level. Malan had a difficult time. He lost the seat to a Progressive, yet Widman won the provincial election for the U.P. His chances were hampered by the late confirmation of his candidature.

Question 45. After the 1974 election was there a move to oust the Cape leadership of the Party?

Answer. Yes, there was. The reformists wanted Streicher out and van Eeden and Bamford in. This move failed.

Question 46. To what do you attribute the loss of the 'safe' Pinelands seat at the by-election following the general election of April 1974?

Answer. Well, there was the rainstorm that kept our people away but secondly I don't think that Miss Reinecke was the best candidate in the circumstances although I'm not sure who would have been. The other reason was that the U.P. people had lost their enthusiasm at that point. Ossie Newton-Thompson would have made it as he had a good public image in Pinelands.

Question 47. Do you know much about this organisation 'Grow' and the activities of Robin Carlisle in the Cape?

Answer. I don't know much about 'Grow' which was simply one facet of the Young Turk's operation. But what Carlisle did was to approach me on his arrival from the Transvaal and offer his help to the Party. As

he lived in Sea Point I said he should form a branch there and then help to establish branches elsewhere. For very good reasons nobody without special permission may belong to a branch outside the area where he was registered. Well, Carlisle formed a branch of Young Turks in Sea Point who came from all over in contravention of the constitution and thereafter they began setting up branches in other constituencies. It was a calculated strategy to gain control of the Party by dominating the divisional committees. They also succeeded in gaining control of the Cape Peninsula Council, but their methods were unconstitutional.

Question 48. Did you get the impression that Carlisle was sent from the Transvaal to the Cape?

Answer. Oh yes, I got a very strong impression that he was transferred here. He later, of course, returned to the Transvaal where he became a Progressive M.P.C. for Von Brandis, I think.

Question 49. Could the Transvaal reformists have been behind the Young Turk movement in the Cape?

Answer. Oh certainly. This was a concert. They popped up all over.

Question 50. What role did Graaff play in this whole conservative-reformist battle, or civil war as you call it? Did he give strong leadership? Did he favour one faction above the other; could he afford to do so in his position?

Answer. He favoured no faction. He was a tremendously fair-minded man, a man of peace and not of war. Although his heart was clearly with the establishment, he tried to treat the reformists with absolute impartiality. His role until very late in this business was that of the

peace-maker. He went to absurd lengths to placate Schwarz on various things, but you cannot do deals with these people - they always reneged on them. But these were honest attempts by Graaff to make peace and because of them he was seen to be pandering to the reformists which led to criticism of his leadership by the conservatives in the Party. Personally, I would not have tolerated these people. I feel Sir De Villiers could have exercised stronger discipline over the reformists. I doubt whether Cadman would have tolerated them, for instance.

Question 51. Do you think Schwarz engineered his departure from the Party following the Enthoven poll and his refusal to vote against the prime minister's amendment in the 1975 no-confidence debate?

Answer. Graaff, by then, had made up his mind that he could no longer live with these chaps and he acted decisively and they were forced out of the Party. It was traumatic. We spent hours on this on-going conflict. Enthoven had also commissioned his poll through a firm with which he had connections and the whole thing suggested it was a rigged survey.

Question 52. Was the establishment of the Reform Party well planned? Although it was formed over a weekend the whole thing appeared to be well organised - virtually all those involved in the Transvaal reform movement were present, while neither Graaff nor Oberholzer, leader of the Party in the Transvaal provincial council, apparently knew anything about it. Was that normal political practice?

Answer. It depends on what sort of personality you are. A cloak and dagger individual would tell nobody. It would be more usual to inform your

leader of the fact that you could no longer agree politically and that you were making the break. Schwarz told nobody. I think its establishment was a contingency operation. Having failed to take over the Party from within they resorted to this strategy.

Question 53. Do you believe that the reformists, wanted to hijack the Party, failing which they wished to wreck it and unite the reformist elements with progressives and others in a new 'verligte' party?

Answer. Yes, this is a fact of political life. Absolutely.

Question 54. Why did the U.P. remain divided after the reformists had left it?

Answer. Certain reformists were still there - a residue remained either as agents or because they did not want to break with the Party at that point.

Question 55. Did the by-election defeat in Durban North in 1976 possibly spell the end for the Party and did it encourage Graaff to embark on his 'save South Africa' campaign?

Answer. That, and the Soweto riots. At the time of the riots the constitutional committee decided that I and Derick de Villiers should, on behalf of the committee, suggest to Graaff that he go and see Vorster and offer him the Party's co-operation on a certain basis. This was the only future the Party had, we believed. Graaff did go and see the prime minister, but he was not interested. If we wanted to co-operate we had to join the National Party, for we had no bargaining power to strengthen our case. So that failed. But it was obvious that the U.P. had to broaden its base. Eventually we had negotiations with the Progressives and with Theo Gerdener while dissatisfied nationalists were also approached.

Question 56. Were any provincial leaders consulted regarding the 'save South Africa' campaign or did Graaff do it off his own bat?

Answer. Yes, there was consultation although it was possible that people such as Myburgh Streicher were not informed of the actual initiative until the East London congress because they were not members of the constitutional committee which had advised Graaff just prior to the Cape congress to make attempts to broaden the base of the opposition. Graaff used to consult people, like his provincial leaders and Derick de Villiers while there was a sort of inner drafting circle which drew up press statements and so on.

Question 57. Was this initiative not also an endeavour to save something of the United Party's policies and traditions, if not the Party itself?

Answer. Yes, definitely.

Question 58. Why were conservatives in the Party not prepared to co-operate with the P.R.P. in this 'save South Africa' campaign?

Answer. Because they probably read the P.R.P. correctly, that they were really un-South African in outlook and that there was no way one could co-operate with them. And it turned out like that in the end. Cadman, and others, spent lots of time negotiating on an informal basis with Progressive leaders, but could come to no philosophical agreement. Talks broke down on the preservation of group identities. The conservatives simply anticipated this result, but Graaff insisted that the attempt to find common ground should be made.

Question 59. Was Graaff possibly premature in disbanding the Party? Should not the electorate have been given the chance at a general election, to make the final decision regarding its future?

Answer. Lets face it, we were broke at that stage. The initiative was an attempt

to find a way out, to broaden the Party. The old U.P. would have been given the coup de grâce at an election.

Question 60. Were the Progressives not aware of this and consequently reluctant to negotiate as the chances of becoming the official opposition must have been fairly good?

Answer. Maybe, but I didn't know what they were thinking.

Question 61. What do you feel were the major reasons for the rapid decline of the United Party after 1972, or had it simply come to the end of its useful political life?

Answer. No, I don't think it had come to the end of its useful life. Had it not been for the terrible internal strife engendered by the Young Turks and by ambitious men like Harry Schwarz it would, after 1970, have continued to fulfil a useful role as the official opposition. What killed it was the disunity caused by the Young Turks. It was torn apart and could no longer survive.

Question 62. It has been suggested that by its nature the U.P. was never united. It contained so many shades of political opinion that the potential for conflict was always there and this resulted in the many splits. Comment please.

Answer. This is endemic in the structure of all political parties, one only has to refer to the history of the N.P. and also to the Progressives today. The art of leadership is to find consensus among the wings and differing opinions. This did not just apply to the United Party. But when an element is determined to have its own way, and not consensus, then the party must split. We had it with Harry Schwarz, and Eglin before him. When the proponents of a particular line refuse to seek

consensus and demand their own way, then you have friction. The U.P., in fact, stayed together quite well, and for a long time. It lost little groups when they were not prepared to find consensus, and that means being prepared to sacrifice a bit of your own view and accept a little of the other man's opinion.

Question 63. Were personality clashes more marked than policy differences between the conservatives and reformists?

Answer. Yes, personality clashes. But at the beginning I didn't think that basically there were any policy differences. Personality clashes, and clashes of ambition, those were the problems.

Question 64. Did the Young Turks put the Party on a sound financial footing, particularly in the Transvaal as often claimed in the Sunday Times?

Answer. That was all nonsense. It was part of their technique, these huge promises. They never raised that sort of money and when they left the Party they left it with a big deficit and an overdraft. Admittedly finances didn't get any worse under them, but they never got any better either. The way the Sunday Times wrote of their exploits was counter-productive as it discouraged the ordinary voter from making contributions to a party which apparently had so much money. The financial statements by the reformists were also never properly presented and this annoyed people like Wiley and Streicher, among others.

Question 65. Was finance a problem in the U.P.?

Answer. Oh yes, always a problem. It is easier for governments to get money than for opposition parties.

Question 66. Did many of the U.P.'s problems stem from poor organization at branch level?

Answer. Of course. But you can't see this in isolation. It is tied up with the lack of finance, with motivation and enthusiasm. The lack of confidence to win played a part.

Question 67. Why did the reformists do badly in the Transvaal in the 1974 general election, in a region where they were in control and for which they had promised much?

Answer. There was a reaction to them there as well. They did not have the sort of support to win 35 seats. It was a manufactured support. Too many chiefs, not enough Indians.

Question 68. Why did the Sunday Express support the Party establishment?

Answer. Largely because the editor, Mr Johnson, had a high regard for Sir De Villiers. He was totally sincere in his support of the U.P.

Question 69. Why did he resign as editor of the Express in 1974?

Answer. Because he was not made editor of the Sunday Times. He was very disappointed in the Board of S.A.A.N., for he was the senior Sunday editor in the country and expected to get the appointment. He resigned on principle in objection to Tertius Myburgh being given the job ahead of him.

Question 70. Did the reformists really want Graaff as the leader of the United Party?

Answer. I think they wished to hijack the Party including the leader, but with a pistol to his head. They wanted Graaff as a figure-head as he had public appeal.

Question 71. Why did George Oliver leave the Party over the senate nominations in the Transvaal?

Answer. Because Schwarz never did anything to secure his nomination although there was an understanding emanating from Graaff that he would do so. Also, I think it was a protest against Graaff's inability to get elected to the Senate those people whom he wanted there.

Question 72. Why was the name Reform Party selected?

Answer. I think simply because the name had been associated with this movement in the United Party.

Question 73. Did the Reform Party ever really draw up a separate set of principles and policies to that of the U.P.?

Answer. No, not really.

Question 74. Were reformists more likely to be disciplined than conservatives in the Party?

Answer. Yes, I think so. Maybe because the conservatives usually played within the rules.

(c) INTERVIEW ON 5 MAY 1982 WITH MYBURGH STREICHER THE FORMER
LEADER OF THE UNITED PARTY IN THE CAPE, AND THEREAFTER OF
THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY.

Question 1. To what did you attribute the electoral successes of the United Party in 1970? To its policy and organization or to government mismanagement and the Herstigte split?

Answer. It was a mixture of both. There was better organization, and policy was put across more clearly, that is white leadership with reasonableness and justice. Government mismanagement played a role and the Herstigte split definitely helped the U.P. This should be emphasized.

Question 2. Was there really a breakthrough as the U.P. had merely won back what had been lost in 1966? Was the public euphoria misplaced?

Answer. No, not really misplaced but it would have been wrong to put too much emphasis on an optimistic future. There were signs that the U.P. was getting its views across and there was also evidence, in certain seats, that nationalists of 1966 had now voted for us. So there was a glimmering of hope for the U.P.

Question 3. What attracted the so-called reformists to the U.P. or were they already present after the 1970 elections? If already there, what suddenly spurred them to great activity within the Party?

Answer. Enthoven, van Rensburg, Schwarz and others were already there. They had been members of the youth movement for many years. The 1970 successes, perhaps, influenced them to make their presence felt. To them the successes meant that the U.P. was in a position to become an alternative government and they wanted to be in influential positions when that happened. That is why they tried to control the Transvaal. They also believed that a sudden air of verligtheid had appeared in South African politics and that

they should be associated with it. But it was, I think, just people thinking along solid, moderate lines. There was no real spirit of liberalism or verligtheid about. They misjudged the mood of the public.

Question 4. Presumably all public representatives adhere to the same party principles and policies. Where then lay the major areas of difference within the U.P. or were they more of a personal nature?

Answer. I do n't think differences in the Party were really because of personal problems and though members learnt to be tolerant it was not always possible to appreciate each others shortcomings. There were those in the U.P., however, who should have broken away with the Progressives in 1959. Thereafter they lay dormant but they did n't honestly accept the Party's views of white leadership with justice - they regarded it as baasskap. They were thinking along the lines of the Progressives. This is where the problem lay.

Question 5. Were there definite Old Guard-Young Turk divisions in the Party or was it all fantasy?

Answer. It was not a fantasy. The Sunday Times and the press generally tried to label us. The Old Guard, to them, were more than conservative and were portrayed as reactionary which was really nonsense. We were moderates as opposed to those who took a more radical view to solve the country's race relations issues. But the divisions were there.

Question 6. Was there a leading figure/s or influence behind the reformists?

Answer. In the end Harry Schwarz was chosen to lead. He became the obvious figure. He was to replace Marais Steyn and so get into a position of authority. I believe Japie Basson played an important role behind the scenes though he was never an out-and-out liberal, more a pluralist as subsequent events have shown.

Question 7. Was there any single event which could be cited as the point at which the reformists emerged as a recognizable force in the U.P.?

Answer. Yes, in 1972 with the demise of Marais Steyn as a political leader in the Transvaal. They had organized well to beat him. New candidates and branches had been formed and dormant ones revived.

Question 8. Who was actually interpreting policy and party traditions correctly, the conservatives or reformists?

Answer. I prefer to call them moderates (the conservatives) and they were clearly in touch with the voting public at large in South Africa. The reformists were in touch with those voters in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg and parts of Cape Town.

Question 9. Did the Sunday Times play an important role in the defeat of Marais Steyn in 1972 and in the fortunes of the reformists in general? Do you think there was an identifiable conspiracy between the English press to destroy or weaken the U.P.; particularly its Old Guard?

Answer. Yes, definitely. They gave the reformists terrific publicity. Serfontein, Uys and Strydom all sided with the reformists. It is interesting to note that Serfontein and Strydom had both been supporters of Japie Basson's National Union Party before they became Sunday Times journalists. There was close contact between them and they played an important role in harming Marais Steyn in the articles they wrote. According to them he was not doing his job and as a protagonist of white leadership he was seen by them as a supporter of "baasskap."

Question 10. Were the Young Turks and the Sunday Times in collusion or did they simply propagate similar views?

Answer. Yes, I know they were. They caused trouble - as for instance in the campaign to get rid of Graaff. Thirteen reasons for him to resign were

listed but were all virtually variations of the first one. I believe, and it was later proved, that the long term view of the Sunday Times was that they wanted a reshuffling in the opposition. They wanted a faction to leave and join the Progressives whom they did not want to see die. The Progressives only had one seat at the time (Suzman's) and the Party was kept alive by the English press. They supported the Young Turk philosophy because this would lead to a break in the U.P. and those who left would move in the direction of the progressives.

Question 11. Why did the U.P. do badly in the Oudtshoorn by-election after having done well in earlier ones like Brakpan?

Answer. The first mistake was that we ever decided to fight it. The indications were there that we should not have done so. The nationalists had registered many new voters and would make a special effort to counter the recent setbacks suffered in the Transvaal. Those of us in the know advised the party leadership against contesting the seat but this was overruled as others thought it would repeat the trend set in Brakpan. I also think that because the Young Turks had already stuck their heads out there was talk of division in the press and this harmed the campaign.

Question 12. Was "boerehaat" just an Oudtshoorn election ploy or was there substance to the allegations?

Answer. The nationalists had to make a special effort to prove that they were the real Nats. for they were facing a threat from the right. But there were some people, not many, who created the impression that they did not think much of bilingualism and that the Afrikaners were leading South Africa down the drain. We pointed out, in parliament, that those people were mainly in the Progressive camp and did not include prominent members of the U.P. What signs of "boerehaat" could be detected in the Party emanated from some old-time jingoes in Natal, not in the Cape.

Question 13. Did the U.P. begin to change to its new federal policy as a result of the Oudtshoorn setback?

Answer. At the time a constitutional committee under Mike Mitchell was already investigating a new policy. This was another reason why the Party should not have contested the seat. Policy was in a state of flux. The U.P. had to take cognisance of the fact that the N.P. was not going to change and certain things like its homeland policy was becoming a fact. This made it necessary for the U.P. to review its policy. The new federal policy was being investigated and the Oudtshoorn result showed that the Party could no longer continue with a policy which offered limited non-white representation in parliament.

Question 14. Do you feel the Party spoke with two or more voices depending on the speaker or the audience?

Answer. Not necessarily deliberately. Some candidates in hopeless seats at times lacked political acumen and put the incorrect interpretation on policy which embarrassed us. For instance, they would say too much was being spent on Black education, but important leaders in the Party never said anything like that. These errors usually occurred in rural seats but not exclusively so.

Question 15. Why was it felt necessary to introduce a resolution on the need for bilingual candidates at the Cape congress of the Party in 1972?

Answer. It originated because there were not enough bilingual candidates. It would have helped to present an image of South Africanism which would have assisted the U.P. The Party needed more speakers who could appear before both rural and urban audiences.

Question 16. Do you feel Natal was wrong in not following your example in the Cape?

Answer. Yes, definitely. It created an anti-South African feeling against the Party which was a pity.

Question 17. Do you feel that the negative approach towards bilingualism by Eric Winchester harmed the Party, for instance at the Klip River by-election?

Answer. No doubt about it. But the Party was not insisting on fully bilingual candidates - it would judge the merits of each case. The opposition to the bilingual motion in Natal harmed the broad, moderate image of the United Party.

Question 18. Was the bilingual issue a storm in a teacup or did it adversely affect the Party's image?

Answer. Yes, it did do harm, for a party building a spirit of broad South Africanism had to promote bilingualism.

Question 19. Why did the Party decide to participate in the Schlebusch Commission?

Answer. Because as far as security legislation was concerned the U.P. felt that it could n't be soft on the issue. It was also a parliamentary duty. The Party had participated in many commissions so why the participation in this one created such opposition, I still do n't understand although it did emanate from leftist elements in South Africa such as N.U.S.A.S. which felt that the rule of law would be threatened and free expression curtailed.

Question 20. Looking back do you think it was a good decision?

Answer. Oh yes, despite what Harry Schwarz and others said or the attacks by the English press. It remains the duty of the parliamentary opposition to participate in commissions.

Question 21. Would you agree that the damage done by the Schlebusch Commission was the single most important cause in the decline of the United Party's fortunes?

Answer. No, I do n't think it was the main reason. The issue was used by the press to cause a split in the U.P. and so keep the Progressive Party alive.

Question 22. Did the press misrepresent the Party's role or intentions on the Commission?

Answer. Certainly. It was never put across that we were performing a duty.

Question 23. Was it wise to "gag" M.P.'s such as Catherine Taylor from commenting publicly on the Schlebusch reports?

Answer. It was wrong to publicly discuss the matter while our commissioners were still participating. Certain undisciplined members did not help by criticizing when they knew their colleagues had been given a job to do. They gave the impression that party discipline was lacking.

Question 24. Cathy Taylor ignored the "silence rule" and was not disciplined. Was it because of her public standing or because there was an election approaching?

Answer. I do n't clearly recollect but she was definitely spoken to and the matter was dealt with by the leader. I think by then Mrs Taylor had decided to go her own way and she was not concerned about the consequences of her actions. It was the prelude to her exit from politics.

Question 25. Did Mrs Taylor's activities harm the Party, particularly in the Cape?

Answer. Yes, I think so. She was rather undisciplined within the Party. She had her own views and expressed them publicly. She gave the impression of not being altogether happy with party policy.

Question 26. Did Sir De Villiers Graaff and Harry Schwarz ever really reach accord over the Schlebusch Commission; over matters such as binding the Party to its recommendations and the establishment of a permanent security commission?

Answer. I do n't think so. Schwarz was not in favour of a permanent commission or of even serving on the Schlebusch commission.

Question 27. Did the U.P. commissioners know beforehand that the N.U.S.A.S students would be restricted? Was there a deal with the nationalists - a unanimous report in return for less harsh action against the students?

Answer. It is difficult to say. The U.P. was worried about N.U.S.A.S. activities but I did not get the impression that there was a deal. If they had to be dealt with then it had to be done.

Question 28. Why did the Party eventually submit a minority report but not after the first interim reports? Was it as a result of public pressure before the 1974 general election?

Answer. By then the fellows on the Commission were getting cold feet because of public reaction. They started watering down the U.P.'s general attitude on how to deal with violence and subversive activities. That was the reason.

Question 29. Was Senator Horak's letter to the Sunday Express of June 1973 a unanimous Head Committee decision? Japie Basson denies he supported it.

Answer. Yes. I was there and was surprised when the motion was moved that there was no reaction from some quarters. No objections were raised. No vote was taken or called for. When the chairman asked if anyone was against it there was no response. So it was unanimous.

Question 30. Why were there, later, objections to the letter?

Answer. Because the Express was supporting the moderates in the Party and this was a reflection on the Young Turks, so they objected.

Question 31. The fact that the Transvaal caucus of the Party also sent a letter expressing its displeasure with the Sunday Express seemed to indicate a breakdown of discipline. Where was this point of breakdown?

Answer. It was not really a matter of discipline but more of the Young Turks wanting to get back at the newspaper as individuals because it had attacked certain members of the Transvaal caucus. This prompted them to act as they did.

Question 32. Why did you object to the Transvaal's "Act of Dedication" being accepted by the Cape Youth congress in Port Elizabeth in 1973?

Answer. Because at the time the U.P. was investigating whether it should reframe its principles for the 1973 national congress. Transvaal Young Turks arrived in Port Elizabeth and handed out their Act and got somebody to move that it be incorporated into the principles of the U.P. I objected to that, not to the Act itself, as there was a sub-committee investigating the Party's principles at the time. It was up to them and not for the Cape Youth congress to tell them what to do. If they had suggested that the Act be placed before the investigating committee with a view to the national congress accepting it there would have been no objection.

Question 33. Were Horace van Rensburg and Jonathan Schwarz entitled to attend the Port Elizabeth Youth congress?

Answer. Usually they would be invited. Normally a provincial leader would attend and make a short speech. These two arrived, however, with a certain objective in mind.

Question 34. Was there a planned campaign to replace Andre Fourie as national leader of the youth movement?

Answer. Yes, most definitely.

Question 35. Did Maans Kemp contribute anything constructive to the youth movement during his term of office?

Answer. As a teacher he did not have the time to devote to it. And the way he was elected, pushing out a man who was doing very well, created a terrific division in the youth movement which he was not in a position to heal.

Question 36. Was the 1973 National Congress really a unity or peace congress as claimed or were the cracks simply being patched over?

Answer. No it was not. Yet the amazing thing was that the six principles adopted there were a unifying factor. But because the Young Turks had already decided upon their strategy, namely to eventually break up the U.P. and to link up with the Progressives, it was only a matter of time before they would again be differing with the Party. In that regard it was not a unifying congress.

Question 37. Did the reformists actually emerge victorious from the Congress?

Answer. Yes, that is, their press made it out to be so. They had a wonderful rapport with the newspapers which put their story across. I think they were then still going for a take-over of the Party from within. This was all part of their strategy.

Question 38. Did Marias Steyn leave the Party at a point (1973) calculated to harm the attempts at reconciliation then taking place within it?

Answer. I think he left because he had had enough of what was going on in it. He had been a very important figure in the Young Turk-Old Guard fight and I believe he was terribly disappointed because he was not really supported by the leader in the true sense of the word, and he had been a faithful lieutenant. He did not leave at the point for the reasons suggested in the question.

Question 39. Why were you and others opposed to the Transvaal's "Act of Dedication"?

Answer. Refer back to answer 32. We did n't want the National Congress to be bound to a certain direction while the principles of the Party were being investigated.

Question 40. Were there attempts at various levels and times to expel or force Harry Schwarz from the United Party, for instance after the Buthelezi meeting?

Answer. Never by evoking certain disciplinary clauses in the constitution. But at various levels he was spoken to in a most straight-forward manner. By 1974 we had had so much of the Young Turks that the whole executive of the U.P. and the Central Candidates Committee had recommended that they should not come to parliament. As leader, Graaff overruled this and felt that by having them there he would be able to control them. This proved incorrect, they could never be controlled as they were philosophically at variance with the United Party. Schwarz was strongly attacked at the Central Executive meeting over the Buthelezi declaration by the Natal leader Cadman and others. I said to him that it was only political etiquette that the provincial leader be informed of his intentions and receive clearance. Why did he not go and see his own Black leaders in the Transvaal and sign a declaration with them? It was done for publicity. Buthelezi was the central figure in Black politics. I would be very surprised if Graaff ever knew about the meeting in advance.

Question 41. Was the introduction of the U.P.'s federal policy in the 1973 no-confidence debate poorly handled by Mike Mitchell?

Answer. The first error was that the policy was leaked out before-hand. Secondly, it was badly handled although I do not hold Mike Mitchell completely to blame. Nevertheless, it was important that the presentation of a new policy should be immaculate.

Question 42. The question of the federal policy and power sharing - was it in all sincerity open to different interpretations, for instance the conservatives laid emphasis on the white parliament, the reformists on the proposed multi-racial federal assembly?

Answer. Yes, but there were two parts to it. In the initial stages parliament, as the only sovereign constitutional body, had to keep a firm hand on developments leading to the establishment of the federal assembly. No step which could harm the security of the state would be taken without first holding a referendum or an election. The idea was that the white parliament would be the regulator and controller of this constitutional development. So the policy could not be explained unless both aspects were emphasized - those which controlled developments and the final federal dispensation. I believe that the intention was that the white parliament would remain the regulator for a very long time to protect the rights of minorities and so on. The regulator would watch the situation carefully and remain in power if the policy was not working. But it was a difficult issue and a different emphasis was placed on the policy by different groups like the reformists.

Question 43. Was the policy of white leadership ever officially abandoned?

Answer. No, never officially abandoned. It became part of the revised 1973 principles again.

Question 44. Was the opposition to the nomination of certain candidates in 1974, constituency choices like van Eeden and van Zyl Cillie which was led by you and John Wiley, because they were reformists? In other words, was it part of a power struggle to consolidate the different factions in parliament?

Answer. Senator Redi Louw was also a member of the Candidates Committee. It must be remembered that power was vested in us by the provincial congress and we also had the confidence of the national leadership. I believe nominations were judged on merit. For example, van Eeden who we knew was a reformist was a very good candidate but we had the power to overrule him and decided that Jac de Villiers, who was leader of the Party in the Provincial Council, was a better choice. In the past similar decisions had been made and had not caused the same outcry. But yes, our actions created a lot of trouble.

Question 45. In the Transvaal, did Schwarz withhold Old Guard nominations, possibly in retaliation for your actions in the Cape, until certain verligtes such as Prof Olivier had been confirmed as candidates?

Answer. It could well have been part of Harry Schwarz's tactics. His Candidates Committee had more power than ours did in the Cape.

Question 46. What was the attitude of the Port Elizabeth vigilance committee towards you and the nomination procedures?

Answer. It was a reformist-type body, and although not happy with the procedures, had no real say in the nominations.

Question 47. Following the 1974 election was there a move to hold an early Cape congress with a view to unseating you and other "verkrampte" leaders?

Answer. There was definitely an attempt to unseat us but the Congress was held at the normal time notwithstanding demands in the press to hold an early one.

Question 48. Was your speech near Worcester on the eve of the Pinelands by-election attacking Basson's leadership aspirations, among other things, correctly reported and do you think it influenced the voting there - possibly costing the United Party the seat?

Answer. The speech did not only deal with Japie Basson who had publicly made himself available to lead the Party. I was not opposed to his candidature but I criticized that he publicly offered himself, something which should be left to the Congress. The leader had also not indicated that he was retiring or that he was not available for re-election. Basson created the impression that the Party was not happy with Graaff's leadership - my speech indicated that we were. It was a necessary speech. Another point raised was the general direction in which the Party had to move. I said unless we were prepared to assist the government in solving the colour issue while allowing also for the protection of white interests I would not be prepared to serve as a leader of the Party. When fighting the Progs. as in Pinelands, I felt that we could not afford to throw overboard our moderate approach. That's why I made my speech. It was not badly timed. Die Burger gave it good coverage but even had I said nothing the English press would have taken it out of context as that was their intention.

Question 49. To what do you attribute the Pinelands defeat, a formerly "safe" seat?

Answer. There was already a swing to the Progressives in the 1974 election. Even had Newton-Thompson stood, his vote would have been reduced though he may not have lost. The same thing happened in Durban North in 1976. In three-cornered contests the Progressives were likely to win. The defeat had nothing to do with my speech - there was a trend against the Party because it was hopelessly divided between so-called Old Guard and Young Turk factions. Another mistake was made by Graaff himself when he indicated that the U.P. would be happy to have Coloureds back in parliament, this was contrary to the 1973 policy and created confusion in the minds of many.

Question 50. Who was the instigator of "GROW"?

Answer. The Get Rid of Wiley move was inspired, I believe, in the Transvaal but received support in the Cape peninsula. The reformists wished to get rid of him because of his attacks on them and his outspoken criticism of the English press.

Question 51. Were its (GROW) members at fault or were they legitimately canvassing Party support to change the Cape leadership?

Answer. There would have been no objection had they operated in a democratic manner but they were forming a party within a party. They did not canvass democratically; secret meetings were held and stories were spread reflecting on the leadership of the Party.

Question 52. How did the minutes of "GROW" fall into the hands of the Sunday Express?

Answer. I do n't really know but possibly from one of their own members who had second thoughts about the matter.

Question 53. Did its members campaign to capture the branch structure of the U.P., particularly in the Peninsula and then from that base expand further to gain control, for instance, of the Cape Peninsula Council?

Answer. Yes, definitely.

Question 54. Do you think "GROW" had connections with the Young Turks on the Reef?

Answer. Yes.

Question 55. Could the Transvaal reformists have been behind their emergence in the Cape, for instance, was Carlisle planted here?

Answer. There were many rumours and it was certainly possible. Robin Carlisle was also a good organizer.

Answer. Yes, it did have a lot to do with it.

Question 61. Were the provincial leaders consulted concerning Graaff's initiative or did others advise him?

Answer. Certainly not me and I would have advised him to follow another direction, that of approaching Mr Vorster to seek consensus on certain issues, and so avoid a sterile debate over them between two strong parties. Such consensus would also have prevented three-cornered contests and the United Party would not have lost them.

Question 62. Was the 'save South Africa' campaign not an endeavour simply to save something of the United Party's policy and traditions, if not the Party itself?

Answer. Possibly, but the fault lay in the manner the plan was developed through the Marais steering committee. It could only result in a game of musical chairs among the opposition groups.

Question 63. Why were you and other conservatives or moderates not prepared to co-operate with the Progressive Reform Party?

Answer. Because of philosophical differences. They wanted the sharing of power at all levels, even school integration. No former United Party supporter, or nationalist would be attracted to such a policy.

Question 64. Were you and other Independent United Party members justifiably expelled from the caucus, or did you leave of your own accord?

Answer. We did not leave of our own accord. We did not want to disband the Party and its six principles for the 14 Marais principles which everyone had to accept before proceeding with the proposed merger. We could simply have sat apart from the U.P. What was the point in throwing us out when the Party was preparing to disband in the near future?

Question 56. What role did Graaff play in this whole reformist-conservative quarrel? Did he give strong leadership? Did he favour any faction? Was the Party discipline too weak?

Answer. It was a combination of all these things. There was a lack of discipline which he did not stamp out. He should have taken a strong line against the reformists. The Party would then have been more unified. But, instead, the philosophical differences always reappeared. He was more a chairman than a leader.

Question 57. Did you think Schwarz engineered his departure from the United Party following the Enthoven poll and his own refusal to vote against the prime minister's amendment in the 1975 no-confidence debate?

Answer. There could have been some planning but I think Schwarz had come to the end of the road in the United Party. At heart he was a Progressive. These actions had put the Party in a bad light but he would have found some pretext over which to break with it.

Question 58. Was the establishment of the Reform Party well planned, that is, in advance?

Answer. It could have been because Schwarz has strong support in the Transvaal. This made it possible for him to act so quickly when it became necessary for him to do so.

Question 59. Why did the U.P. remain divided after the departure of the reformists?

Answer. That was simple - they had not all left.

Question 60. Was the defeat in Durban North in 1976 the event which finally spelt the end for the U.P., and which may have encouraged Graaff's 'save South Africa' campaign?

Question 65. Did you believe there was any real future for the South African Party?

Answer. We wanted it to be a Party with a positive attitude in parliament which would help the government solve the racial problems and those of internal security. The 1977 election came too soon for us to really get organized and I think the electorate indicated that they wanted the National Party and us to get together.

Question 66. Do you think Graaff acted prematurely to disband the United Party? Surely the voters should have had the final say in its future, for instance, at an election?

Answer. I disagreed with the tactics. He should rather have handed over to another leader but he was within his rights to act as he did, by working through the Party machinery. He did not have to ask the electorate to decide the future of the Party.

Question 67. Do you think the press wished to break the U.P. and push the reformists to join up with other "verligte" groups to form a so-called "verligte front"?

Answer. Yes.

Question 68. What do you think the major reason was for the rapid decline of the U.P. after 1972 or had it simply reached the end of its useful political life?

Answer. The white-anting factions which were pushing it in the direction of the Progressives. You could n't have a party within a party. A point was reached beyond which there was no reason to keep the Party together.

(D) INTERVIEW ON 5 APRIL 1982 WITH JOHN WILEY, THE FORMER DEPUTY

LEADER OF THE UNITED PARTY IN THE CAPE

Question 1. Were the United Party's electoral successes of 1970 attributed to its policies or to government mismanagement and the Herstigte split?

Answer. Careful planning after the 1966 disastrous results played a part. Graaff instructed provincial leaders to improve the Party machine which consequently became far more effective at all levels of the organization. The U.P. also concentrated on the confusion in government policy which led to the Herstigte split and which had an adverse effect on nationalist morale. Maladministration and corruption by the government were highlighted, including extraordinary fishing concessions being made to 'business buddies' on the West coast which were depleting the industry. The Agliotti land deal revealed unacceptable practices by senior officials in the Department of Planning which were never satisfactorily cleared up. The Bell-Makatini Flats and Babalatakis-Faros shipping affairs were also highlighted.

Question 2. Was there a definite breakthrough in 1970 or was the euphoria misplaced; after all, the U.P. really only won back what it had lost in 1966?

Answer. Yes, the Party did win back what had been lost but there were additional gains and the scene was set for further progress which was reflected in later by-election results. The 1970 gains indicated a firm basis for optimism - not of winning power, but of becoming sufficiently strong to be a real factor on the political scene, possibly leading to a coalition.

Question 3. What attracted the so-called reformists to the U.P., or were they already present after the 1970 elections?

Answer. They were already present in the Transvaal provincial council representing Witwatersrand seats. Some were Progressives in disguise and others sympathetic to them. They were in a position to exert control in the province. They took over from within. Thus some were already in the Party while others joined the bandwagon after the 1970 successes.

- Question 4. If already present, what suddenly spurred them to greater activity within the Party?
- Answer. The 1970 election results. The U.P. appeared to have a chance to improve its position, and many of the reformists "scented power".
- Question 5. Presumably all public representatives of the U.P. adhered to the same principles and policies. Where, then, were the major areas of difference or were they mainly of a personal nature?
- Answer. Differences arose over interpretation of policy. But there were substantial differences of approach and philosophy which surfaced when interpreting policy. Personality clashes appeared once the other differences became marked. Differences were deliberately used by certain groups to discredit the existing establishment. When the undermining started, personalities became prominent.
- Question 6. Was there a leading figure or influence behind the reformists?
- Answer. Yes. Harry Schwarz was chosen to lead the assault. Enthoven was the chief schemer assisted by van Rensburg and Dalling. Japie Basson was their political adviser, he gave the movement its philosophical base, its spiritual head, who wished to replace Graaff as national leader. Harry Schwarz was the interim leader who had to replace Marais Steyn in the Transvaal.
- Question 7. Was it easy to recognize or categorize a reformist? Schwarz, for instance, denied the existence of Old Guard - Young Turk divisions in the Party.
- Answer. Yes, there were divisions. All over the Witwatersrand the reformist groups met secretly to undermine the Party. They differed on policy interpretation on such matters as white leadership, which eventually, for them, would make way for "black" rule. Schwarz only played to the gallery when saying there were no Old Guard - Young Turk divisions. The newspapers supporting him clearly gave prominence to them.
- Question 8. Was there any event which could be regarded as the point at which the reformists emerged as a recognizable force in the Party?

- Answer. Defintely - 2 July 1972 was the day the press (at first the Sunday Times) began a correlated, well planned and orchestrated campaign to break up the United Party and turn it into something completely different. Before that Japie Basson had, with various speeches, in 1971 set the political climate for this campaign. He distanced himself from the traditionalists in the Party. His speeches and his Sunday Times articles were always slightly different from those of his leader yet not seriously so. He could in this regard be compared with Dr Treurnicht and the role he played vis-a-vis the prime minister P.W.Botha.
- Question 9. Who was actually interpreting party policy correctly? The reformists or the conservatives within it?
- Answer. The traditional leadership around Graaff. They were responsible for the interpretation of policy. The reformists came in and gave it an entirely different slant from what was intended.
- Question 10. Were nomination procedures at fault in 1970 which allowed "rebellious" elements to gain election?
- Answer. Yes, but only in retrospect. The U.P. leadership did n't then know that groups would form to undermine democratically elected Party leaders.
- Question 11. Would you agree that the Sunday Times played an important role in the ousting of Marais Steyn as Transvaal leader and in the fortunes of the U.P. in general?
- Answer. Yes, it set the climate for the whole campaign and, week after week, brought out "news" of what was happening in the U.P., always discrediting the Old Guard and building up the Young Turks (its phraseology).
- Question 12. Were the "Young Turks" and the Sunday Times in collusion or did the newspaper simply share the same views as them?
- Answer. Yes, in complete collusion. Secret meetings were held. Joel Mervis, Stanley Uys, Hans Strydom and Hennie Serfontein - the quartet, were hand-in-glove with the reformists.

Question 13. Was there an indentifiable conspiracy among the major English newspapers to destroy or weaken the U.P., particularly the Old Guard, or was the whole thing just a fantasy?

Answer. Yes, there defintely was. The Sunday Times was the ring-leader.

Question 14. Why did the Party do badly in Oudtshoorn after having done well in other recently contested by-elections?

Answer. The N.P. threw everything into that election. It was excellently organized and had the full support of Die Burger. P.W.Botha put his finger on the U.P. weakness - its claim to be a broadly based South African party, yet it fell down badly on bilingualism, so much so that many of its M.P.s could not be invited to address meetings there. This was not "boerehaat" but reflected the factual situation, which the English press and unilingual politicians called "boerehaat".

Question 15. Was "boerehaat" merely an election ploy or was there substance to the campaign?

Answer. Yes, there was substance to it. There was still a jingo element in the U.P.; the old jingo-liberal group which only paid lip-service to party policies like that of bilingualism.

Question 16. Did the Party change to its new federal policy as a result of the Oudtshoorn reverse?

Answer. Yes, possibly. Although the Oudtshoorn campaign was not fought on a verkrampte platform but strictly according to Party policy. Its failure there was grist to the "verligtes" or Young Turks in actual fact.

Question 17. Do you feel the U.P. spoke with two voices depending on the speaker or the audience?

Answer. This argument is overdone but depending on whether it is a rural or urban audience a speech would deal with matters of interest to them. The matter of policy interpretation again emerges if the speaker is conservative or reformist in outlook, for instance, a Harry Schwarz or a Myburgh Steicher, a Japie Basson or a John Wiley or a Tony Hickman.

- Question 18. Why was it necessary to introduce a resolution on bilingualism at the Cape congress in Port Elizabeth in 1972?
- Answer. Because people like myself, Philip Myburgh and Myburgh Streicher believed that the Party should practice what it preached. It was no good having excellent policies without the troops to sell them to the electorate in a language they could understand.
- Question 19. Do you feel Natal was wrong not to follow the Cape's example?
- Answer. Yes, it was. They should have been forced to do so.
- Question 20. Do you think that the negative approach to bilingualism of Eric Winchester M.P. harmed the U.P. - for instance in the Klip River by-election?
- Answer. Unquestionably. The N.P. made the most of his stand on bilingualism and exploited it during the by-election campaign.
- Question 21. Was bilingualism, as an issue, a storm in a tea-cup or did it adversely affect the Party's image?
- Answer. It adversely affected the image of the Party from top to bottom because it showed up the hollowness of the claim to being a truly South African party of national unity.
- Question 22. Why did the U.P. decide to participate in the Schlebusch investigation?
- Answer. It was first a select committee. It is the duty of an opposition to participate in and not to boycott parliamentary institutions. Then it became a commission after the session ended.
- Question 23. With hindsight do you think it was a good thing to have taken part?
- Answer. Yes, although as with bilingualism, the question of whether to participate or not, showed up the deep divisions in philosophy and outlook on political strategy in the United Party.

- Question 24. Would you agree that the damage done by the Schlebusch commission was the single most important cause in the decline of the Party's fortunes?
- Answer. It brought to a head the smouldering differences in the Party, but it was only one of the many internal problems.
- Question 25. Did the press misrepresent the Party's role or intentions on the Commission?
- Answer. Yes, the press seized on the issue to drive a deeper wedge into the Party and to discredit the Old Guard.
- Question 26. Was it necessary to "gag" M.P.'s such as Catherine Taylor from commenting on the Schlebusch reports?
- Answer. There was a certain amount of confusion which did not help the Party and people like Mrs Taylor were out of step and wanted to change the direction of the Party.
- Question 27. Cathy Taylor ignored the silence rule and escaped being disciplined. Was this because of a possible election or because of her popular standing with the public who would not have taken kindly to her being disciplined?
- Answer. Possibly. Also the leadership was being weakened and undermined by the pressure from the reformists and the press, and could take no strong stand without offending one or other section.
- Question 28. Did her (Mrs Taylor) activities harm the Party?
- Answer. Yes. She played an undermining rôle through her own desire for publicity.
- Question 29. Schwarz was another who had misgivings about the U.P.'s role on the Commission. Did he and Sir De Villiers ever really reach accord over the matter?
- Answer. No, because Schwarz always wanted more once he had achieved something. He was never satisfied. If he achieved one objective he set himself another.

Question 30. Why did the U.P.'s commissioners later submit a minority report but not after the first interim reports of Schlebusch commission - was it because of public pressure?

Answer. Yes, partly. Press and thus public pressure played a role and the Young Turks had got at the Party leadership and had made it indecisive.

Question 31. If the English press was controlled by the Argus group how was it that the Sunday Express for so long adopted a "verkrampte" point of view, at variance with all the other English newspapers?

Answer. The Express was not verkrampt, it put across the viewpoint of the Party leadership. In the 1970's there was n't the same control by Argus over SAAN as there is now. There was greater editorial independence. The Express supported the U.P. The rest all came to follow the Sunday Times which set the example - its surrogates followed suit. The Express resisted the bandwagon effect. Its editor, Johnson, for years had been a U.P. supporter and believed it reasonable and just to support democratically elected leaders. He opposed the undermining methods of the Young Turks to whom he took a personal dislike.

Question 32. Was there any sinister reason for Mr Johnson's retirement in 1974?

Answer. Yes. He was, as the senior Sunday newspaper editor in the country, in line for a post on the Sunday Times. But Uys, Serfontein and Strydom, three of the quartet of conspirators who backed the Young Turks, were determined that he would not get the editorship. They circulated petitions against him and went out of their way to ensure that he would not get the post. The campaign succeeded and he did not.

Question 33. Was Senator Horak's letter of appreciation to the Sunday Express a unanimous decision of the Party caucus? Mr Basson denies that he supported it.

Answer. Yes, it clearly expressed the feeling of the caucus. I was there and so was Basson. He only spoke up after the Express had published the letter.

Question 34. The fact that the Transvaal caucus thereafter sent a letter expressing displeasure with the newspaper's political reporting indicated a lack of discipline. Where was the point of breakdown?

Answer. It was evidence of the fact that factions had already formed. The Young Turks were in charge in the Transvaal and they were displeased that Johnson was exposing their tactics.

Question 35. The national congress of 1973 was referred to as a unity or peace congress. Do you agree or was it merely a patching over of the cracks?

Answer. Very definitely, yes. The prospect of an election played a role but it was Graaff's desire that unity be restored that was decisive. I, and others who thought like me, still had the strongest reservations about accommodating the Young Turks.

Question 36. Did the reformists actually emerge victorious from that congress?

Answer. Yes, they were accommodated at every turn and the rank and file who did not appreciate what was going on wanted unity and an end to factions.

Question 37. Was Marais Steyn's resignation an attempt to wreck the spirit of conciliation which was being rebuilt at that time (1973)?

Answer. No. He was a realist and saw that there was in fact no unity and felt that he had been very badly let down by Graaff and other U.P. leaders.

Question 38. Why were you and others opposed to the Transvaal's Act of Dedication?

Answer. We were opposed to the Young Turks and their position in the U.P. It was one of their publicity stunts to indicate that they were the only ones doing something, the only ones moving forward in the U.P. Their attempt to get the Act incorporated in the party's program of principles or federal plan was evidence of their attempt at imposing their will on the Party.

Question 39. The question of the federal policy and power sharing created problems. Was it in all honesty open to varying interpretations, all of which could have been correct? The conservatives appeared to put their faith in the white parliament whereas the reformists favoured the future of the Federal Assembly.

Answer. It did allow one group to say one thing and another group another. White leadership with justice had been Smuts' policy in 1948; later white leadership was regarded as the regulator and controller of the pace of change in South Africa. The term was never ditched, and Schwarz should have been expelled from the Party when he said the words would never cross his lips. The federal policy was interpreted differently depending on the outlook of the person concerned.

Question 40. There was opposition to the nomination of certain candidates in 1974, such as van Eeden and van Zyl Cillie in the Cape although they were constituency choices. Was this because they were reformists? In other words, was there a power struggle to consolidate the different factions in parliament?

Answer. Yes, there was undoubtedly a power struggle. In both cases mentioned the nominations were supporters of the Transvaal Young Turks but were not necessarily 'verlig'. Van Zyl Cillie, in addition, controlled the branch structure in P.E. Central through members of his family or their friends. It was hardly democratic. There were also few branches in the Wynberg constituency. In other constituencies like Sea Point men such as Dr M Barnard were being favoured. He was no more a U.P. supporter than was the man in the moon but he was difficult to oppose because he was such a well-known public figure. The Young Turks thus used his candidature to their own advantage and at the last minute Dr M Barnard withdrew and gave Sea Point to Eglin on a plate.

Question 41. In the Transvaal did Harry Schwarz withhold Old Guard nominations until certain verligtes such as Prof N Olivier had been confirmed as official candidates?

- Answer. Yes, absolutely. He lost us three of four seats on the Witwatersrand including that of Etienne Malan who was the last nomination to be confirmed. He was a hard working M.P. who served on the Schlebusch Commission and so incurred the displeasure of the Young Turks. Prof. Olivier was given Edenvale on a plate.
- Question 42. To what do you attribute the defeat of the U.P. in the Pinelands by-election - formerly a 'safe seat'?
- Answer. The disruption caused by the Young Turks and the setbacks in the recent general election. Pinelands was a blow to the Party, in fact one of the straws that broke the camel's back. Durban North was the final one.
- Question 43. Who was the instigator of "GROW"?
- Answer. Carlisle, Myburgh, Tiaan van der Merwe and certain journalists were the instigators.
- Question 44. Do you know how the minutes of "GROW" meetings fell into the hands of the Sunday Express? Were they genuine minutes?
- Answer. Yes they were a genuine record of proceedings. I was given a copy too. A party member who was approached to join "GROW" - and disliked their undermining activities - handed it to the press.
- Question 45. Was the aim of "GROW" to capture the U.P. branch structure in the Peninsula?
- Answer. Yes, it wished to get rid of me and others in leadership positions. It aimed to gain control of all levels of the Party organization. It captured the Cape Peninsula Council leadership, Branches and Divisional committees were all infiltrated.
- Question 46. Do you think "GROW" had connections with the Young Turks in Johannesburg?
- Answer. Yes. They were hand-in-glove. Nothing was sacred. Carlisle was probably planted in the Cape to promote their cause.

Question 47. What role did Graaff play in all these conservative-reformist issues? Did he give a strong lead? Did he favour any faction? Was discipline too weakly enforced?

Answer. There was no obvious replacement for Graaff and he was popular so the Young Turks did not dare oppose him too openly. He tried to reconcile the irreconcilable.

Question 48. Was the establishment of the Reform Party well planned? It was preceded by Enthoven's public opinion poll and Schwarz' refusal to oppose the prime minister's amendment in the Assembly (1975).

Answer. I do n't think so - they did not think they would be kicked out. The Old Guard led the fight-back and the gross disloyalty of the Young Turks turned the middle of the roaders against them.

Question 49. Why did the U.P. remain divided after the departure of the reformists?

Answer. Some of the reformists remained behind, such as Japie Basson and his supporters, van Hoogstraten, Derick de Villiers, Olivier and company.

Question 50. Was the Party's defeat in the Durban North by-election the final straw which spelt the end for the U.P. and which may have encouraged Graaff to start his "save South Africa" campaign?

Answer. It was a major setback. But Graaff never consulted his provincial leaders before embarking on his new initiative to "save South Africa".

Question 51. Was the campaign not really an endeavour to save something of the U.P.'s policies and traditions, if not the Party itself?

Answer. I am not sure whether Graaff had not by then lost touch with events - he clutched at any straw and was badly advised especially by Derick de Villiers.

Question 52. Why were you and other conservatives not prepared to cooperate with the P.R.P. to "save South Africa"?

Answer. Because so far from saving South Africa, it would bring demise of the U.P.

Question 53. Did you break caucus directives by attacking the press at different times and so contribute to Party disunity?

Answer. No caucus directives were broken. Someone had to hit back at the press. The English press was trying to break the U.P. Yes, it did contribute to tensions, because some U.P.'s were using the press against their colleagues.

Question 54. Was it true that only "verligtes" were punished while conservatives escaped party discipline?

Answer. No, the Old Guard held leadership positions and were in a position to discipline the Young Turks and even to expel six of their ringleaders in the Cape.

Question 55. Did the English press really wish to break the U.P. and rejoin parts of it with other "verligte" elements in a Verligte Front?

Answer. Yes, that was the whole purpose of the plan.

Question 56. What do you feel was the major reason for the U.P.'s rapid decline after 1972 or had it simply come to the end of its useful political life?

Answer. Faction-ridden, leaderless and losing support to the right (N.P.) and to the left (P.P.). It could not have survived, in retrospect.

Question 57. Was Graaff premature in disbanding the U.P. without allowing the voters to decide on the matter at an election?

Answer. Yes, he did a terrible thing to disband the only broad based moderate party in South Africa. He effectively set it on the course of self-destruction when he tried to negotiate a new opposition party with the Progs. and the Democrats through an action committee under the chairmanship of Judge Marais - now a P.F.P. member of parliament.

(E) THE FOURTEEN PRINCIPLES OF THE MARAIS COMMITTEE

1. God is acknowledged as the ultimate authority in the destiny of all nations.
2. All South Africans have an equal right to full citizenship and citizenship rights, either in a federation or confederation, which can only be realized in a country where there is no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, religion or sex.
3. Full citizenship is the basis for loyalty towards the State. Only with this loyalty can the State effectively discharge its duty to maintain an orderly society and the security of the country at all times and in all circumstances.
4. Political rights must be shared by all South African citizens on an equitable and responsible basis, and all systems which could lead to racial domination are rejected.
5. In a plural society like that of the Republic, a constitution and an entrenched Bill of Rights guaranteeing the rights of individuals and minorities are essential. These must be guarded over by a Judiciary, appointed by an independent authority.
6. All citizens have the right to an equal opportunity to share in the system of free economic enterprise, which the party is committed to

maintain/....

maintain and develop.

7. The party stands for a democratic system of government and rejects all totalitarian or authoritarian systems, such as communism or facism.
8. Except in the case of a duly declared state of emergency or war, every individual has the right to the protection of his life, liberty and property. In the protection of these rights, access to the judiciary must not be denied.
9. The party guarantees the right of all our people to maintain their religious, language and cultural heritages, as well as the right to develop these heritages, provided that this does not encroach on the rights of others.
10. All educational systems must provide equal educational opportunities for citizens of all races.
11. All inequitable forms of statutory or administrative discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, religion or sex, are unacceptable in the ideal society for which the Party will strive, and shall be subject to the testing rights of the judiciary.
12. The party accepts that certain geographic areas are being developed as economic and political growth points for certain sections of the population. Where the inhabitants of suchlike areas freely elect to proceed

with/....

with such developments towards increasing self-determination, the Party will respect their wishes in terms of its broad policy. No compulsory removal of populations will, however, be permitted and the general welfare will be thoroughly taken into account. In particular, there will be no possibility of any person being compelled to become a citizen of an area other than the one in which he is permanently resident.

13. The Party will endeavour to have all the above principles, as well as other guarantees, incorporated in a constitution for the Republic which will be drawn up after joint consultation and decision-making by the representatives of all citizens of the country.
14. As an inseparable part of the continent of Africa, the Republic accepts that peaceful relations with the states of Southern Africa, in the first instance, must be brought about and that technological, economic and political co-operation must be encouraged where possible by way of institutional arrangements.

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