

ELECTIONS

IN SOUTH AFRICA

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The slogan 'one man one vote' which is supposed to lie at the heart of the democratic process is inoperative in South Africa, where political power is vested in the 3,500,00 Whites out of the total population of approximately 20 million.

The House of Assembly which was elected in the last general election on April 22 consists of 166 Whites elected by and responsible to Whites only. Speaking at an election meeting in Durban on March 13, 1970, Prime Minister Vorster said: *'South African nationhood is for the Whites only. That is how I see it, that is how you see it, and that is how we will see it for the future.'*

His Minister of Information, Dr Connie Mulder, a strongman type seen by many as the next Prime Minister of South Africa (if it stays Nationalist for much longer), said at another meeting in Queenstown on March 7, 1970: 'Let me say to you unequivocally that in terms of National Party policy, we reserve Parliament for Whites—and Whites only'. The White man would always rule in White South Africa, said Dr Mulder.

And the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, Dr Koornhof, said at another election meeting on March 16, 1970: 'In White South Africa only the White man is "baas" and the Nationalist Party will maintain this position forever with force, if necessary'.

For the first time since Union in 1910, the House of Assembly now provides no representation of any kind for any section of the Non-White majority in the country's central legislature.

African representation in Parliament was abolished by the so-called Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, and Coloured representation by the Separate Representation of Voters Act of 1968. The Indians have never had any Parliamentary representation and are, of course, not to get any.

Nor is it only at the Parliamentary level that Non-Whites are denied legislative powers. They have equally no representation in the Provincial Councils and in three out of the four Provinces, as well as in South West Africa, they have no representation on municipal councils. Only in the Cape Province does the common-roll franchise in municipal elections exist—an anachronistic survival from the pre-Union non racial franchise of the old Cape Colony first introduced with representative government in 1853. This non-racial franchise is not, and never was, based on the principle of one man one vote, but on property and educational qualifications, altered from time to time to ensure that effective power always remained in White hands. Nevertheless, in some local Councils in the Western Cape and also in Port Elizabeth a handful of Non-Whites have sat side by side with Whites in local councils.

To the Nationalist Government this is a negation of their apartheid policy, and during the first 1970 session of Parliament the Prime Minister, Mr Vorster, announced that Non-Whites throughout the Cape Province are to lose their com-

mon roll franchise for municipal and other bodies. Within two years, he said, the White Parliamentary roll will be used as the basis of this franchise. Vorster said he regarded the step as the next logical move in the Government's policy for the Coloured people, and that discussions to this end had already taken place with the Cape Executive Council of the Provincial Council.

Vorster also claimed that discussions had taken place with the Coloured Representative Council, and read out a letter from the CRC chairman, Government-appointed Mr Tom Swartz, stating that the present non-racial system was an outmoded hybrid which was more of a hindrance than a help to the Coloured people. Swartz expressed support for the abolition of the non-racial franchise in the Cape and the substitution of purely Coloured bodies in Coloured local areas.

It only remains to be said that when Africans and Coloureds in the Cape province were registered on a separate voters' roll for elections, and also in those elections where a non-racial franchise was operative, not a single pro-apartheid candidate was ever returned by Non-White voters. Those members of the Nationalist Party who submitted their policies to the Non-White electorate were decisively rejected.

It is through the political segregation of the South African people, and the enforced exclusion of the Non-Whites from the corridors of power, that Vorster hopes to procure an expression of Non-White support for apartheid and the so-called policy of 'separate development'. He hopes that a twisted and thwarted non-White nationalism may be developed through 'separate development' and separate institutions in such a way as to justify the exercise of White Supremacy in what he calls White South Africa.

Has this policy any hope of success?

AFRICAN ELECTIONS

In place of representation in Parliament, the Africans were

offered the device of Bantustan, in terms of which each of the ten African ethnic groups would be given its own parliament in its own homeland. Theoretically, that is. In practice, not a single African ethnic group has yet been granted either its own homeland or its independence. The Nationalist Government points to the Transkei as its first Bantustan, but it is important to remember that the Transkei is not the homeland of the whole Xhosa people, of whom at least 400,000 live in the Ciskei, which has its own Territorial Authority separate from the Transkei, and it is Government policy that the two should not be integrated.

The Transkei Constitution Act of 1963 purported to 'confer self-government on the Bantu resident in or deriving from the Transkei'. The Transkei Legislative Assembly consists of 109 members—the five Paramount Chiefs and 59 district chiefs holding office automatically, with only 45 members elected by the registered voters of the Transkei. In the first elections held under the new constitution—in 1963—880,425 Xhosa registered as voters, 466,107 of them being women. They were estimated to constitute 90 per cent or more of the total number eligible. Of these voters, about 610,000 were in the Transkei and 270,000 outside.

The elections was contested by two main groups, one led by Chief Kaiser Matanzima, supporting the Government's Bantustan policies; and the other led by Paramount Chief Victor Poto, standing for the retention of the Transkei as an integral portion of a single united South Africa. Because candidates stood as individuals and not on a political party basis, it is impossible to assess the percentage of votes cast for each group. After the election results were announced, Paramount Chief Poto claimed the support of 38 of the 45 elected members, and Chief Matanzima was reported to have conceded at least 35 seats. It was generally accepted that the overwhelming majority of voters had supported candidates whom they regarded as Poto supporters.

MATANZIMA AS CHIEF MINISTER.

Nevertheless, in closed session of the new Assembly Matanzima was elected Chief Minister by 54 votes to 49 (two members spoiled their papers, one chief had just died, one was away, one ill and one abstained). Accepting Poto's claim as accurate, the line-up was probably as follows.

	Matanzima	Poto
Chiefs	47	11
Elected members	7	38

In January 1964 Poto formed his group into the Democratic Party. Its membership was open to all races and it stood for 'democracy and multi-racialism for all in the Transkei and, eventually, all in the rest of South Africa'. In April 1964 Matanzima formed his Transkei National Independence Party, which stood for separate development and opposed 'multi-racialism'.

During all these years, the Transkei emergency regulations remained in force, and Matanzima did not hesitate to invoke them against hundreds of his opponents, who were detained without trial for long periods, banned and banished or driven out of their homes which were burnt down behind them. Some members of the Democratic Party crossed the floor to join him, some broke away to form the splinter Transkei People's Freedom Party.

By October 1968, just before the second election, the party affiliation of the 45 elected members was estimated to be: TNIP, 15; Democratic Party, 27; Freedom Party, 2; and one independent. 56 chiefs supported the TNIP and 8 the Democratic Party.

The second Transkei election was held on October 23, 1968. During 1967 the Transkei Constitution Act had been amended to enable elections to be held on a district rather than on a regional basis. In the 1963 election the 45 elected seats had been allocated between the 9 electoral divisions in accordance with the number of registered voters in each.

The 1967 Act necessitated the complete re-registration of all Transkeian voters both in the Transkei and in the Republic and the preparation of separate rolls for males and females for each of the 26 districts of the Transkei. The total number of voters registered was 907,778, of whom only 840,577 were able to cast a vote because in two districts—Butterworth and St Marks with 67,201 votes between them—candidates had been returned unopposed. No details are available of the number of male and female voters on the roll, or the number resident in the Transkei and the Republic. Of the 840,577 voters who were able to go to the polls, only 450,325, or 53.6 per cent, did so. (Report of the Department of the Interior, Transkei Government, for the years 1967 and 1968.)

According to the Johannesburg *Financial Mail* of November 8, 1968, the votes were cast as follows:

T.N.I.P.	43.8 per cent
Democratic Party	35.8 per cent
Freedom Party	2.4 per cent
Independents	18 per cent

The allocation of seats in the new Assembly after the election was:

	Chiefs	Elected	Total
T.N.I.P.	56	28	84
Democratic Party	8	14	22
Independent	-	3	3
	64	45	109

To sum up—Matanzima enjoys the support of only about 200,000 of the voters who went to the poll—or roughly one quarter of the total electorate, allowing for the two uncontested seats as well. Yet he controls 84 of the 109 seats in the Assembly—or four-fifths. This is democracy, Bantustan style.

LIMITATION POWERS

The Transkei Assembly is totally subordinate to the central South African Parliament and Government.

The Transkei Assembly has no control over matters pertaining to defence, internal security and foreign affairs, and has no control over White residents in the Transkei, who remain citizens of the Republic and are not eligible for the franchise in the Transkei. No White man can be arrested by a Black policeman or brought before a Black magistrate. The South African Government can veto any law passed by the Transkei Assembly, or legislate on any matter if the Transkei Assembly is reluctant to do so itself. More than half the Transkei's revenue is provided by the South African Government.

As the Minister of the Interior, Senator de Klerk, told a Nationalist Party meeting in Stilfontein on March 30 1966, the South African Government had not yet granted the Transkei a single essential right enjoyed by a sovereign independent state. It did not have the right under its constitution to possess its own army or railways. It had merely been given control over domestic matters, and every department of the Transkei Government had a White official to give it 'leadership and guardianship'.

The Transkei is the only Bantustan to have reached the stage of so-called "self-government". though others have accepted Territorial Authorities, the last being Zululand, which finally succumbed to Government pressure in March 1970. But none of the Bantustan Governments need cherish any illusions about the extent of the constitutional freedom they will ever be allowed to enjoy.

The promised independence for the Bantustans was an important issue during the South African election campaign in 1970, with both the verkrampte Herstigte Nasionale Party and the Opposition United Party furiously attacking the Government for imperilling the security of White South

Africa. Both argued that once the Bantustans became independent, they would become seedbeds of international Communism and bases for attack on White South Africa.

Cabinet Ministers in reply made it quite clear that whatever measure of independence was ultimately granted to the Bantustans—and that would only be done when the White man considered they were 'ready' for it—would be trimmed to the requirements of White South Africa. The Minister of Defence, Mr P.W.Botha, was reported to have given an undertaking that should any threat to South Africa materialise inside one of the future Bantustans, the South African Government would not hesitate to 'move in' to quell it. Mr Botha said South Africa was ready to 'move in' whether the homeland concerned was independent or not, if South Africa was threatened. This would be done in much the same way as South Africa had 'moved into' Rhodesia to fight 'terrorists'

The Prime Minister, Mr Vorster, went even further in a speech in the Johannesburg City Hall on April 16, 1970. 'If any country', he said, 'be it one of our Black territories which we are going to lead to self-determination or any other Black state in Southern Africa—uses its territory as a springboard for Communists to attack South Africa, we will do the necessary to protect South Africa's interests'.

Most aggressive was Dr P. van der Merwe, the chairman of the Nationalist Party's Foreign Affairs Committee, who said at a meeting in Camperdown on March 16 that South Africa might have to cross her borders 'to destroy her enemies'. Dr van der Merwe gave Israel as the example South Africa would follow in attacking enemies across her borders. He named Zambia and Tanzania specifically but said that 72 countries were actively participating in terrorism against South Africa.

COLOURED ELECTIONS

For the Coloured people of South Africa there is no 'homeland' or Colouredstan where they can develop 'on their own lines', as with the Africans. In place of representation in the central Parliament of South Africa, they are offered the Coloured Persons Representative Council, which will exercise certain functions of local government in the Coloured ghettos of South Africa, and will possibly also advise on the allocation of the funds for Coloured services, including education, voted by the House of Assembly.

The Coloured Persons Representative Council was set up by the Coloured Persons' Representative Council Amendment Act of 1968. It consists of 60 members—40 elected and 20 nominated by the Government. Every Coloured man and woman in South Africa over 21 is compelled to register as a voter on pain of a fine of R50 or 3 months imprisonment. Of the 40 elected seats, 28 are in the Cape Province, 6 in the Transvaal and 3 each in Natal and the Free State.

The first election under the Act was held on September 24, 1969. Six parties contested the election, of which only one—the Labour Party of South Africa led by Mr M.D.Arendse—stood on an anti-apartheid ticket. There were contests in only 37 of the 40 seats, as in three seats candidates of the government—supporting Federal Coloured People's Party, led by Mr Tom Swartz, who had been chairman of the Government-appointed Coloured Advisory Council, were returned unopposed.

Of the just over 600,000 registered voters only 48.7 per cent went to the polls. Polls of up to 75 per cent were registered in some of the rural constituencies, where Coloured voters had reportedly been subjected to great pressure and intimidation by employers and police. In the Cape urban constituencies, where Coloured people had previously enjoyed the vote on the common roll and still enjoy direct representation in the City Council, the polls were low. Bottom of the

list was Liesbeek, with 13 per cent, and others showed a poll of only 16.4 per cent, 18.4 per cent, 19.2 per cent and 20.2 per cent.

ELECTION RESULT

The result of the election was as follows:

Parties	Votes Cast		Seats Won
	No.	%	
Labour Party of S.A.	135,204	45.3	26
Federal Coloured People's Party	90,605	30.3	11
Republican Coloured Party	30,238	10.1	1
National Coloured People's Party	23,260	7.8	1
Independent Federal Party	11,407	3.8	1
Conservative Party	3,216	1.1	-

The balance of the votes went to independents and there were a number of spoilt papers.

To sum up: the majority of Coloured voters did not vote at all. Of those who did vote although the majority supported pro-apartheid candidates, the anti-apartheid Labour Party emerged with the largest number of both votes and seats.

To secure control of the Council, the Labour Party had to win 31 seats, which it failed to do. But to make assurance doubly sure, the Government then proceeded to nominate Federal Coloured People's Party men to fill the remaining 20 seats on the Council, including 13 candidates who had been

defeated in the elections. This gave the F.C.P.P. the necessary 31 votes to control the Council

Perhaps the worst insult of all was the Government's appointment of Mr Tom Swartz himself as chairman of the Council executive (the remaining four members of which are elected by the Council itself). Mr Swartz, a former compositor's assistant in Umtata, was at the time of his appointment an estate agent in Cape Town, where he was contracted by the Department of Community Development to sell properties in Coloured areas that have been proclaimed white. During the elections Swartz stood at Kasselsvlei, but was heavily defeated by a Labour Party candidate, and got fewer votes even than the Republican Party candidate who came second. Yet this man is being presented to the world as the so-called 'Prime Minister of Coloured South Africa'.

The Coloured Representative Council is totally subordinate to the central South African Parliament, and its powers are even narrower than those of the Transkei Assembly. The CRC may draft laws on the limited range of matters entrusted to its supervision, but no proposed law may be introduced except with the approval of the Minister of Coloured Affairs. The entire budget of the CRC is voted by the South African Parliament, which can for its part legislate on any matter concerning the Coloured people as it thinks fit.

The president of the (Coloured) Labour Party, Mr M.D. Arendse, was not overstating the position when he told the annual congress of the party in Cape Town in April, 1970, that 'the Nationalist Government had, by devious means, deprived the Coloured people of all democratic voting rights on every level, thus stripping them of the last vestiges of democratic processes. As a result of the new political dispensation that has been engineered by the authorities, we find ourselves now virtually a voiceless people in the land of our birth'.

As far as the Indian community is concerned, the Govern-

ment has so far not been able to trust itself to hold any form of election. The South African Indian Council Act of 1968 converted the existing South African Indian Council into a statutory body of 25 members, all nominated and dismissible by the Minister of Indian Affairs. The Council, which is appointable for three years, has advisory and consultative powers on matters affecting the economic, social, cultural, educational and political interests of the Indian people. Though totally a stooge body, the Government has tried to force acceptance of it on the Indian community by compelling all applications for licences, passports etc. to be made through the Council.

WHITE ELECTIONS

The South African general election held on April 22 was called by the Prime Minister, Mr B.J. Vorster, a year before it was due with one main object in view—to crush the right-wing opposition inside the ruling Nationalist Party and restore the monolithic unity of Nationalist Afrikanerdom.

Announcing his decision at the Bloemfontein Congress of the Nationalist Party last September, Mr Vorster said:

‘We live in a dangerous world. Because we cannot afford to let the world get the idea that South Africa has an unstable Government, the Cabinet decided that there must be a demonstration of the power of the Nationalist Party as never before in South Africa. The way to do this is to go to the electorate’.

The verkrampte element in the Nationalist Party was expelled and duly formed a new party in October, calling itself the Reconstituted Nationalist Party (Herstigte Nasionale Party) under the leadership of four former Nationalist MPs—Dr Albert Hertzog, Mr Jaap Marais, Mr Willie Marais and Mr Louis Stofberg.

Its platform was Calvinist fundamentalism and naked racialism. It stood for the supremacy of the Afrikaans language

over English, the domination of White over Black. It opposed the Government's immigration policy because the majority of immigrants became absorbed in the non-Afrikaans section of the White population and too many of them were Catholics. It opposed Vorster's so-called 'outward policy' towards Black Africa and in particular Vorster's minimal concession towards mixed sport—the acceptance of players with Maori blood in the next New Zealand rugby team to tour South Africa.

The very choice of a party name with the initials H.N.P. was intended to remind the volk of the brave days of 1934 when Dr Malan refused to join General Hertzog in fusion with General Smuts, went out into the electoral wilderness, and began the long struggle to win the allegiance of Afrikanerdom which finally came to fruition with the victory of the Herenigde (reunited) Nasionale Party in 1948.

Since 1948 the Nationalist Party has gone from strength to strength. In 1948 Dr Malan won a bare majority in Parliament though polling 140,000 votes fewer than his opponents. In the last general elections in 1966, in which only the White voters of South Africa and South West Africa were involved, the Nationalist Party won 126 seats, the United Party 39 and the Progressive Party one. The Nationalist Party won 58.6 per cent of the total votes—the highest figure it had ever attained.

Yet at the very apex of its power, the Nationalist Party was being undermined by the conflict between the verligtes (enlightened or liberal elements) and the verkramptes (twisted up or conservative elements). Basically this conflict is based on class divisions which have manifested themselves in the ranks of the Afrikaner people in the last generation (as analysed in "When Thieves Fall Out" in issue No.40 of *The African Communist*).

The election has given Vorster his victory over the HNP—and also shown how the Afrikaner people are in a different

position today from 1936. Not a single HNP candidate was returned, and of the 78 HNP candidates who were in the field, 75 forfeited their deposits, including Dr Hertzog himself.

Vorster has clearly demonstrated that the Nationalist Party still enjoy the allegiance of the majority of the Afrikaner people. Only 53,763 votes were cast for HNP candidates, as compared with 820,968 votes for Nationalist Party candidates.

But while crushing the menace from his right wing, Vorster appeared to lose ground to his left. The United Party won back eight marginal seats from the Nationalist Party and increased its majorities in 22 of the seats it held before the election.

Further to the left, the Progressive Party gained votes from the United Party. The lone Progressive Party M.P. Mrs Helen Suzman increased her majority in Houghton, and Progressive Party candidates were narrowly beaten in Sea Point (by 231 votes) and Parktown (by 1,116 votes). In six of the straight U.P.-P.P. clashes the U.P. majorities were cut. With 19 candidates in the field, the Progressive Party gained 51,760 votes in this election, compared with the 41,065 votes gained by their 27 candidates in the 1966 election.

These gains were hailed by many anti-Nationalists as a 'shift to the left' and a 'big jolt' to Vorster and apartheid. *Rand Daily Mail* foreign editor Allister Sparks in an ecstatic appraisal said: 'Here is the evidence of South Africa's awakening to the new challenges before it'.

Before joining in the rejoicing, the results need to be analysed a little more closely. Adding to the Nationalist Parties' votes together—after all theirs is merely a family quarrel—the result is 57.99 of the total poll—only a few points below the 58.62 the Nationalist Party alone gained in 1966.

The United Party's share of the total vote has gone up only fractionally—from 37.05 in 1966 to 37.23 this time.

And the Progressive Party's percentage has risen only from 3.10 in 1966 to 3.43 today.

The share of all the remaining candidates, mostly right-wing break-away Nationalists and the English-led National Alliance Party which also backs apartheid, was only 0.725 of the total poll, compared with 1.23 in 1966.

It is true it is difficult to make an exact comparison. In 1966 there were 19 unopposed candidates, this time 11 (six UP and 5 Nationalists). In addition, one seat, Langlaagte, generally regarded as a safe Nationalist seat, was not contested, because the Nationalist candidate died after nomination day. So a poll was held only in 154 constituencies.

The result was: Nationalist Party 117 (probably to become 118 after the Langlaagte by-election), United Party 47, Progressive Party 1.

But perhaps the greatest difference between 1966 and 1970 was in the percentage of the total electorate that went to the polls. In 1966 the total percentage poll was approximately 83; in 1970 it was only 74.35. One of the seats gained by the United Party from the Nationalists was won with only 58.1 per cent of the voters going to the polls.

There has never been any satisfactory evidence that large numbers of English-speaking voters supported the Nationalist Party, and the claim that the Nationalist Party lost its English-speaking supporters in this election must remain suspect in the absence of proof.

A far more likely explanation for such shift as has been registered is that large numbers of Afrikaners, gravely troubled by the split between N.P. and H.N.P. and unable to resolve the doubts in their own minds, simply abstained from voting. In 1966 the swing to the Nationalists was a whopping 17 per cent. This time (again if one takes the NP and HNP vote together), Nationalist Afrikanerdom marked time. Had there still been only one Nationalist Party in the field, there is little doubt that it would have forged still further ahead.

Bearing these silent voters in mind, Dr Hertzog and his colleagues have announced their intention to continue their campaign, and express confidence in the future. There are provincial elections still to come, either later this year or early next year. Perhaps one will have to wait until then to see if the verkrampste threat has been eliminated.

So long as pressure from the verkrampstes continues (and it must be remembered that there are as many remaining inside the Nationalist Party as outside its ranks), the effect can only be to pull the whole Nationalist movement to the right. Not surprisingly, in his first post-election broadcast, Prime Minister Vorster restated his total adherence to apartheid and separate development, and warned against the futility of making any gestures towards meeting the demands of the outside world. He did not even mention the necessity of concessions towards the oppressed millions of the South African people themselves.

But is the United Party any better? It speaks of 'White leadership' instead of White Supremacy, as though there were any essential difference. Mr Michael Mitchell, who did not even have to woo an electorate as he was returned unopposed as M.P. for Durban North, even used the language of Dr Koornhof when on April 20, 1970, he said 'a United Party Government would maintain White leadership in South Africa by force if necessary'.

Similarly the Progressive Party leader, Dr Steytler, who claims his party is the only true alternative to apartheid in South Africa, made it clear in a major policy statement on March 10, 1970: 'Certain politicians had tried to create an impression that the Progressive Party stood for one man one vote. This was most definitely not the case'.

In fact, of all the 407 candidates who contested the South African general election, not one stood on a platform of universal suffrage for all, irrespective of race, creed or colour.

Perhaps one should end this survey of the South African electoral scene with the words of a statement issued by the external mission of the African National Congress in London on April 24, noting with surprise reports claiming that the South African elections showed a 'swing to the Left'.

The statement said: 'The elections were fought only on the question of how best the non-white peoples could be exploited....The vile policy of apartheid which is the Nationalist Party's main platform is also that of the United Party....The pill in so far as the non-white peoples are concerned will be as bitter to swallow as apartheid. The economic interests which finance and back the United Party have the same interest as that which supports the Nationalist Party.

'Both these capitalist groups are inter-linked in various ways and are unanimous in their desire to maintain the free flow of cheap black labour.

'Since the election was fought only on the question of how best to exploit the non-white people we in the African National Congress place no importance on its outcome, except to warn the British people not to be hoodwinked into thinking that white South Africa is really swinging Left and that the lot of the black population will improve.

'Our struggle for the free and non-racial democratic South Africa will therefore go on relentlessly'.

In other words, there can be no solution to the problems of South Africa through the ballot box. Not until the bastions of White supremacy are destroyed by the South African revolution will it be possible for the South African masses to exercise the democratic rights which are their due.