

## **Interwar Segregation Policy in the Union of South Africa: Paving the Road to Apartheid<sup>1</sup>**

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While studying African history, scientists meet the term “history of blacks narrated by whites”. Despite this statement one could consider heartless there is no more accurate expression that could describe this issue. The matter of different perspective of the colour-dissimilar narrator is always widely discussed when speaking of African history. South African historical development of the twentieth century is considered to be a controversial issue because of the harsh racial policy which launched fully after the Second World War. This paper will focus on the interwar era of South Africa when during the first thirty years of the Union of South Africa’s existence, its government released series of laws, which content curtailed rights of natives within the state and set a course to the white race superiority, that lasted up to 1990s.

### **First Years of the Union**

The constitutive convention took place in Durban, Natal in October 1908 and four months later thirty delegates representing four British colonies on southern corner of the African continent that were involved presented a certain kind of a draft constitution of the emerging Union. It was based on four general principles: firstly, these British colonies, the Cape Colony, the Orange River Colony, the Colony of Natal and Transvaal, became to be classified as provinces and were supposed to be united on May the last 1910 when the Union of South Africa would come to existence. There was a two-

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level parliament system established; an upper house was the Senate, while an executive was responsible to a majority in the House of Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the convention had to deal with the issue of unequal franchise laws of each province. Former Boer-republics, Transvaal and the Orange Free State, guaranteed the suffrage exclusively to white men. The colonial government in Natal reduced the political rights of blacks, coloureds and Indians, so there were only a few individuals among them, who could use the franchise; there were set quiet low economic requirements for whites. Technically speaking, the Cape Colony guaranteed the franchise to any man without any racial obstacle. The only condition was the matter of man's possession.<sup>3</sup> All the delegations made an agreement that the voting system remained under supervision in each province, and in an effort to protect the rights of Africans in Cape: "[...] *any bill altering those laws would require the support of two-thirds of both houses of parliament.*"<sup>4</sup>

The third principle, regarded dividing of the country into electoral divisions for the lower house of parliament. At fourth the draft constitution made both English and Dutch, official languages of the forming Union. The convention also discussed the matter of incorporating British Southern Rhodesia, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland into the Union. There were delegates who would gladly accept this move because of an economical potential of these areas but the British government did not approve this proposal. Political scene of the new Dominion was very various at first. In every province except of the Natal Colony there existed several smaller or larger

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<sup>2</sup> There were twelve delegates of the Cape Colony, eight men represented Transvaal, the Orange River Colony and Natal each sent five delegates. All of the participants were white men only. The National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria (further only NASAP), Vol. 399, reference No. 4345, Speeches on the Constitution, Transvaal, 1909, f. 17. For further about establishing the Union, see L. THOMPSON, *The Unification of South Africa 1902–1910*, Oxford 1960.

<sup>3</sup> For further about the Cape Franchise, see below.

<sup>4</sup> L. THOMPSON, *A History of South Africa*, New Haven, London 1990, p. 151; S. DUBOW, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919–36*, Basingstoke 1989, p. 132.

political parties which usually merged shortly before the establishment of the Union. These parties were connected to each other according to similarities in their political platforms or due to recognizing identical objectives in their policies. Some of these parties did not survive for long but some made an indelible mark in the South African history.

The South African Party was established just a few days after the Union itself and shortly before the first Union-wide election took place. Orangia Unie of the Orange River Colony, Het Volk of Transvaal and the Cape Colony's Afrikaner Bond and the South African Party agreed to merge under the command of Louis Botha and created an alliance originally called the South African National Party.<sup>5</sup> This situation was inconceivable a few years back: the party members were enemies during the Second Boer War after all. Jan Smuts, Louis Botha, James Hertzog and others stood on the opposite part of the battlefield than Jan Hofmeyr or John Merriman but here we can see "*the proof of their genuine capacity for leadership*" when all of them suppressed mutual animosity.<sup>6</sup> The first election of the Union held on September 15, 1910 brought very successful results for the South African Party, when Botha and his followers gained sixty-seven of one hundred and twenty-one seats of the House of Assembly. Leander Starr Jameson's Unionist Party gained thirty-nine seats and the South African Labour Party of Frederic Creswell only gained four seats. Remaining seats left for the independent candidates.<sup>7</sup> Louis Botha became Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Afterwards in 1911 the designation changed to the South African Party. Afrikaners dominated the party but some party members were English-speaking politicians as well. W. BEINART, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, New York 2001, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> C. KIEWIET, *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic*, Oxford 1943, p. 148.

<sup>7</sup> NASAP, Vol. 3/666, reference No. 128, General Report to Governor-General on General Election 1910, 23. 9. 1910, f. 5.

<sup>8</sup> With four million Africans, five hundred thousand coloureds, then one hundred and fifty thousand Indians and about one and quarter million of whites in the newly formed state. THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 153.

Het Volk was established by Louis Botha in May 1904 with a massive support of his friend and a promising politician Jan Smuts.<sup>9</sup> This party wasn't a simple political party in a former meaning of the term, Het Volk was originally established as an organization of a certain part of South African population and some of its members proved to have political ambitions to provide Afrikaners their political voice.

Mutual coexistence of British and Boers which would bring prosperity to whole South Africa happened to be a common objective of Het Volk's members.<sup>10</sup> Formal inauguration took place on January 28, 1905, in Pretoria.<sup>11</sup> Party statutes developed by Jan Smuts who as a former member of Afrikaner Bond adopted some of their essential ideas and implemented them into Het Volk's statutes. Attitudes to political issues such as Chinese indentured labour or establishing an independent self-government of Transvaal emerged by time and were mostly identical with ideas of leading members. The most severe obstacle that had to be overcome within the party was the hatred between so called "hensoppers" Boers who gave up before the peace treaty of Vereeniging was signed up, and so called "bittereinders" those Boers who fought until the last day of the Second Boer War to the bitter end. "*To unite all Afrikaners and to erase these terms from Afrikaners' memories*" were words of Botha's inauguration speech.<sup>12</sup>

Het Volk's leaders Botha and Smuts both experienced generals of the Second Boer War "*with heroic war records*" and thus highly respected by Afrikaners believed that efficient agriculture, favourably disposed conditions to mining industry, and a certain kind of a federation of South African colonies would create a modern prospering state.<sup>13</sup> Louis Botha was more of the jolly

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<sup>9</sup> B. WILLIAMS, *Botha, Smuts and South Africa*, London 1946, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> H. M. FEINBERG, *The 1913 Natives Land Act in South Africa: Politics, Race, and Segregation in the Early 20th Century*, in: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1993, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> WILLIAMS, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> NASAP, Vol. 1035, reference No. PS 91/10/06, Vereeniging "Het Volk", 27. 2. 1905, f. 4.

<sup>13</sup> BEINART, p. 78.

and good-humoured one of the pair whereas Jan Smuts on the other hand, a Stellenbosch-graduate, always gave the impression of the methodical and businesslike professional. Botha was a natural-born leader, his personal charm, common sense and chivalry made him a fully respected person among Afrikaners and even among his enemies. His subordinates gave him almost a blind loyalty. Smuts on the other hand was never as popular as Botha with the public. He was always considered to be a clear-thinking and calculating lawyer and his personality never attracted as much attention and personal loyalty as Botha's persona did. Smuts' resolute acting contrasted Botha's placid nature. When Botha persuaded, Smuts overrode. Botha would conciliate those who opposed him Smuts literally wanted to give the opposition a hammering. But these two had a remarkable relationship; they were each other's "*friend without equal*".<sup>14</sup>

One of the first and crucial laws, regarding racial segregation that Botha's cabinet approved was the Mines and Works Act of 1911.<sup>15</sup> The Act gave a legal effect to colour bars which previously existed in mining industry and thus mine labour continued to be separated on racial basis.<sup>16</sup> But the law did not strictly aim on racial segregation. Its content was mainly about setting more convenient working conditions for white workers, and to protect certain categories of their employment, such as setting eight-hour working day.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless a certain colour bar was once legalized. Black Africans were previously displaced from fertile soil and sufficient water supply and this Parliamentary approval just prevented them from competing for skilled and better paid job opportunities.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> People say that Smuts even gave the name "Louis" to his daughter born in 1914 in tribute to Botha. The proper female version of the name is "Louise". D. W. KRÜGER, *The Making of a Nation: A History of the Union of South Africa 1910–1961*, London 1969, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> The Native Labour Regulation Act approved also in 1911 set different limits of financial compensation for injured workers based on race. Mines and Works Act 1911 (No. 12 of 1911). NASAP, Vol. 323, reference No. 7/321, Proclamation Bringing into Force on 1/12/1911 and Regulations Under Submitted for Approval, 9. 1. 1911, f. 2.

<sup>16</sup> THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 167.

<sup>17</sup> BEINART, p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> The law was amended a year later by "Mines and Works Regulation Act" which firstly

Het Volk was particularly supported by a rural population and a social structure of the electorate wasn't complicated at all. Afrikaners were mostly a homogenous group of the population, bounded to their soil, connected to each other by religion, language and iniquities they had to face during the Second Boer War.<sup>19</sup> Despite the fact that many young Afrikaners from villages and farms were leaving for industrial areas under the influence of Witwatersrand miners in 1907 the party's electorate remained on the countryside.

The seventies of the nineteenth century set the origin of Afrikaner Bond. In August 1875, a group of reviving Afrikaners, led by reverend Stephanus du Toit, established the "Society for Real Afrikaners" (*Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners*). This party aimed to proclaim an independence of Afrikaner population.<sup>20</sup> Even though Stephnus assisted with establishing of the party, he was lately forced out of the position of the party leader by Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr. When the Society for Real Afrikaners merged with the "South African Boer Protection Association" (*Zuidafrikaanse Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging*), in April of 1881, Afrikaner Bond came into existence with Hofmeyr as its leader.<sup>21</sup> The statutes of the party were mostly created by a German journalist Carl Borckenhagen where he stated that Afrikaner Bond is supposed to "represent all the inhabitants who considered Africa as their homeland".<sup>22</sup> The party had mixed opinions whether to grant franchise to black population of the Cape Colony or not. While Cape branch of Bondsmen stood for the non-racial franchise, Orange Free State and Transvaal branches on the other

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mentioned terms such as "white person" in its parts. KIEWIET, p. 166.

<sup>19</sup> NASAP, Vol. 17, reference No. CONF 6/245/14/117, Draft Programme of "Het Volk", 17. 11. 1914, f. 16.

<sup>20</sup> One year later this group established a journal "Afrikaner Patriot" (*Di Afrikaanse Patriot*) the first printed material published in Afrikaans where Stephanus' brother Daniël known as "mister locomotive" became a chief editor. A year after reverend published "History of the Country in the Language of our People" as the title indicates written in Afrikaans which helped Afrikaners of Cape to separate their language from Dutch. T. R. H. DAVENPORT, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of South African Political Party, 1880–1911*, London 1966, p. 102.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in DAVENPORT, p. 109.

hand, supported the white franchise only.<sup>23</sup> Supporters of Afrikaner Bond were mostly white Dutch farmers but the party itself was never able to gain enough superiority in Cape Colony elections which means that the Bond always had to cooperate with a coalition partner. Before the Jameson's Raid in December 1895 the Party was willing to cooperate with Cecil Rhodes's Progressive Party of Cape Colony. Nevertheless after the unsuccessful uprising in Transvaal, Rhodes had to resign from the office of Cape's Prime Minister. The relations between Afrikaners and British inhabitants deteriorated and the mutual cooperation was no longer conceivable. Since that time Afrikaner Bond always tried to cooperate only with pro-Afrikaner political party to resist the imperial policy.

The South African Party of Cape Colony happened to be a very suitable political ally of Afrikaner Bond. As their coalition partner, the South African Party was created to resist British imperial policy on the South African soil. Even though these political parties cooperated with a predominant success, a significant difference between them lay in a question of the racial tolerance. While the South African Party supported racial diversity, Afrikaner Bond on the other hand pushed racial segregation proposals through. John Merriman, the leader of the South African Party since 1904, harshly criticized Hofmeyr's racialist manner of speech, which by time became quintessential just for Bondsmen.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, both parties were forced to collaborate, owing to the growing power of imperial authorities. The price for protecting Afrikaner interests was too high for the South African Party; the cooperation with Afrikaner Bond caused a massive loss of their electorate.<sup>25</sup>

The platform of South African Party of the Cape Colony consisted of investing to the local development, maintaining peaceful relations with neighbouring countries, bringing compulsory education to life, free trade within the colony or multiracial tolerance. The last election to the Cape

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 119.

<sup>24</sup> BEINART, p. 66.

<sup>25</sup> DAVENPORT, p. 126

Parliament took place in February 1908 and the South African Party created government majority together with Afrikaner Bond. This ended eight years of domination of the Progressive Party in the parliament.<sup>26</sup> John Merriman became Prime Minister for two years until the office was cancelled for good.

Abraham Fischer of the Orange River Colony also had in mind the destiny of Afrikaners. When in July 1905 the so called Orangia Unie came into existence, Fischer became the new party leader.<sup>27</sup> Just like Het Volk of Transvaal Orangia Unie adopted many ideas, originally coming from Afrikaner Bond's statutes, as their own. Granting rights to Afrikaners, such as equalizing Dutch to English at schools and securing their social rank within the South African society, were crucial efforts of their policy.<sup>28</sup> The first elections to the Orange Colony Parliament under the British rule were held in November 1907. Orangia Unie gained twenty-nine of thirty-eight seats and government-members representing Orangia Unie were for example James Hertzog, Cornelius Wessels or Christiaan de Wet. These Free Staters proved their political abilities even later, after establishing the Union.

James Hertzog especially, was a politically indispensable member of Botha's cabinet of 1910. But their relationship was based only on political matters.<sup>29</sup> Their mutual animosity, caused by certain differences between these two Generals, led to a cabinet crisis in December 1912. Nevertheless, this crisis was not caused by the matter of native policy. Regarding this question, the cabinet reached a general agreement. Majorly disputed topics were relations between Afrikaners and English-speaking South Africans respectively South Africa and Great Britain in wider scale. While Hertzog promoted "South Africa First" policy suggesting that in certain circumstances, the South

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<sup>26</sup> S. G. MILLIN, *Cecil Rhodes*, New York, London 1933, p. 244.

<sup>27</sup> T. R. H. DAVENPORT – C. C. SAUNDERS, *South Africa: A Modern History*, New York 2000, p. 246.

<sup>28</sup> FEINBERG, p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> And they tried to avoid seeing each other personally thus many times there figured Jan Smuts as mediator of their political discussions. W. K. HANCOCK, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years, 1870–1919*, Vol. 1, Cambridge 1962, p. 272.



Africans should not automatically support Great Britain, Botha followed the conciliation and cooperating policy among all the whites.

Hertzog as a minister in Botha's cabinet was supposed to show respect and subordination to Botha, the Prime Minister. In time Hertzog refused to do neither of these and gave inappropriate speeches which were not in conformity with the party's political platform and he became a political embarrassment of the Prime Minister. The situation escalated when Hertzog refused to either apologize publicly or resign from his post and thus the cabinet was forced to resign to prevent further disparaging of their status.<sup>30</sup> The government was then recreated by Louis Botha again but this time without defiant Hertzog. Such disunity among whites appeared to be the stumbling block of the Union. The breach became unbridgeable and relations declined in late 1913. In January 1914, Hertzog, Keyter, Fichardt and other Free Staters founded a new political party, the National Party.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Matter of Franchise, Hertzog on Rise**

As a quite rarity could be defined an electoral system of the Cape Colony, the Cape Qualified Franchise. The system was also known as a "£25 vote" because of the primary condition that any man was allowed to vote and to stand in parliament, if he had proven any kind of ownership of more than £25 or more than £50 salary or a salary of £25 including board and lodging at least.<sup>32</sup> The act came into force in 1853 with the new constitution of the Cape Colony and was based on non-racial relations. Not to mention, the right to vote could use natives as well as coloureds.<sup>33</sup> Compared to other South African regions, this was a groundbreaking attitude of those Cape politicians who got the law through such as Saul Solomon, William Porter or John Molteno.

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<sup>30</sup> FEINBERG, p. 78.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 109.

<sup>32</sup> THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 64.

<sup>33</sup> NASAP, Vol. 1566, reference No. 50/1296, Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives (further only JJCEN), 27. 6. 1928, f. 3.

The requested value of possession seemed by time to be very low. The law didn't exclude traditional African communal land tenure which meant that almost all African men had the right to vote.<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that not every man used this opportunity. In many cases, Africans lived in rural areas where information of that kind didn't find their way. Moreover registration of voters was complicated and voting stations were sometimes inaccessible for these countrymen. Besides, it was more of the symbolic significance and a proof of the direct continuity with the Victorian "civilizing mission" which admitted that (somewhere) in the future there would have existed black Africans who could be treated as equal political individuals.<sup>35</sup>

Although Africans did not use the power of the suffrage, certain white politicians felt to be threatened by the black population or simply refused to approve the issue of Africans' franchise in their minds. Especially British settlers and politicians of Cape's Eastern regions did not fully agree with the Cape Franchise, and so during next decades, series of restrictions went ahead. Although there existed an idea of a universal franchise during the first years of so called Responsible government, Cecil Rhodes and his colleagues contributed to a termination of the colour-blind franchise.

Firstly this conservative wing accomplished to get the Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887 through. This act denied the communal land tenure as a proof of an adequate possession to vote.<sup>36</sup> The Franchise and Ballot Act (1892) raised the limit to £75 which was much higher than many Africans could afford. The Glen Grey Act of 1894 delimited borders for African land owning and imposed a special tax for land holdings within Glen Grey district. The South Africa Bill of 1909 was the milestone where the Cape legislation met three other legislative systems and all of them were supposed to work together. John Merriman, Cape politician, made an attempt to defend the non-racial suffrage and tried to implement it to the legislative structure of the newly

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<sup>34</sup> BEINART, p. 81.

<sup>35</sup> Cape natives' colonial electorate also didn't exceed a line of 15 %. DUBOW, p. 132.

<sup>36</sup> NASAP, JJCEN, 27. 6. 1928, f. 12.

emerging Union, but without any further success. Cape Province was the only region of the Union where the non-white population had the opportunity to vote nevertheless not for long.

On May 19, 1930, the percentage of all black voters lowered from 3.1 % to 1.4 % when white women over twenty-one years of age, were given the right to vote. This increased the white-voters' percentage from 90.7 % to 95.5 %.<sup>37</sup> On April 7, 1936, the government approved the Representation of Natives Bill. Except of eleven members of the parliament, all participating politicians voted for passing the Act. This denied the suffrage to all Africans and those Cape Africans, who were up to this point allowed to vote, were given the right to choose three white representatives of natives, which were suppose to be natives' voice in the parliament. The Act also established a so called "Native Representative Council", consisting of six white officials, four nominated and twelve elected Africans. This artificial authority was supposed to defend natives' interests and to present their proposals to the government and discuss planned legislation. The idea was bright indeed but the system had no effect as Zachariach Keodirelang Matthews<sup>38</sup> described lately in his pamphlet "The Failure of the Natives' Representatives Council".<sup>39</sup>

The year of 1913 brought a significant mark to the Union's racial policy. When the Union of South Africa was established in May 1910, the political scene excluded demands of blacks and their efforts of political entrenchment. Botha's cabinet accepted, without any consultation with Africans, the Natives Land Act of 1913 and that was one step forward on the scale of ongoing segregation in the Union.<sup>40</sup> The act was a result of consolidating process of whites' wealth

<sup>37</sup> I. BERGER, *South Africa in World History*, New York 2009, p. 79.

<sup>38</sup> Z. K. Matthews was lately praised by Nelson Mandela as "*the very model of the African intellectual*". Quoted in BERGER, p. 105.

<sup>39</sup> Published in November 1946. B. BOTHA, *The Afrikaner's Emancipation: Freeing South Africans from their Apartheid Mindset*, New York 2008, p. 49.

<sup>40</sup> It happened on the June 19 of that year. It should be noted that from white man's point of view this bill was supposed to protect whites from dangerous squatting natives. B. WILLAN, *The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society and the South African Natives' Land Act of 1913*, in: *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1979, p. 84; THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 163.

and also demonstrated Afrikaner politicians' attempts to eliminate Afrikaner poverty. It implemented a system of the territorial separation between whites and blacks living in the same country. Almost every single Afrikaner member of the Parliament supported the act while, on the other hand, almost every English-speaking member rejected the proposal.<sup>41</sup>

The Union's population at this moment comprised of 67 % of natives<sup>42</sup> and yet the act established reserves for blacks within the Union, on the area of about twenty-two million acres, which equals about 7.3 % of the Union's area. Africans were not allowed to buy or to lease a land outside these reserves.<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that white men were also prohibited to acquire possession within newly established "Scheduled Native Areas".<sup>44</sup> Differences between individual legislative systems became evident, when Orange Free State province even prohibited sharecropping, while natives of Natal were rather disappointed with the Botha's policy because the act disadvantaged them compared to Indians.<sup>45</sup> Three years later the government was advised by the William Beaumont's Commission to add about eighteen million acres more to this restricted area, but unsuccessfully at that moment.<sup>46</sup> It should be noted, that the passage of the Natives Land Act did not contribute to healing the Botha-Hertzog split.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Some of them rejected the act because of its details and others simply didn't agree with the idea. BEINART, p. 89.

<sup>42</sup> NASAP, Vol. 184, reference No. 4/725/13, Natives Land Act, 19. 6. 1913, f. 5.

<sup>43</sup> These were roots of so called Bantustans that developed further during the apartheid era. P. MAYLAM, *A History of the African People of South Africa: From the Early Iron Age to the 1970s*, New York 1986, p. 143.

<sup>44</sup> WILLAN, p. 84.

<sup>45</sup> "It seems unjust to debar the native from purchasing land in areas where the Indian who is alien to the country, is free to do so." From William Beaumont's minority report about why the Land Act should not be applied to Natal and Zululand. J. H. HARRIS, *General Botha's Native Land Policy*, in: *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 16, No. 61, 1916, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 163.

<sup>47</sup> FEINBERG, p. 109.

Loudly and rigorously, was the Land Act criticized by Solomon Plaatje, a founding member of the South African Native National Congress.<sup>48</sup> Although Plaatje wasn't officially highly educated, he spent only a few years on missionary elementary grades in Orange Free State, he was well-erudite indeed.<sup>49</sup> His working experience included positions such as an assistant teacher or a postman but Plaatje was a journalist first of all. In 1901 he established the first newspaper of Africans, weekly published, half-English and half-SeTswana, "Newspaper of the Tswana" or "Bechuana Gazette" (*Koranta ea Bechoana*). Later he established "The Friend of the People" journal (*Tsala ea Batho*). His abundant journalistic contributions made him a trusted representative of his people who was opposed to tribalism and expressed the need of unity among African intelligentsia. In 1912 he became a Secretary-General of the newly established Native National Congress.<sup>50</sup> Plaatje's political colleague John Dube, a Zulu patriot, on the other hand did not fully refuse the territorial segregation; his reaction to the Land Act was rather neutral.<sup>51</sup>

Plaatje documented the impact of the Native Land Act on African population by travelling on a bicycle across the Union and briefly describing his experiences in his book "Native Life in South Africa".<sup>52</sup> During the next decade he made several journeys abroad, for example to the United Kingdom, to the United

<sup>48</sup> Further about the South African Native National Congress (the African National Congress), see below.

<sup>49</sup> He mastered German, English, Dutch and about four African ethnic dialects. During his stay in London he finished several books for example SeTswana-English proverb dictionary. P. LIMB, *Rethinking Sol Plaatje's Attitudes to Class, Empire, and Gender*, in: *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2002, p. 33. For further about Solomon Plaatje see S. M. MOLEMA, *Lover of His People: A Biography of Sol Plaatje*, Witwatersrand 2013.

<sup>50</sup> M. BENSON, *The African Patriots: The Story of the African National Congress of South Africa*, London 1963, p. 30.

<sup>51</sup> "We make no protest against the principle of separation so far as it can be fairly and practically carried out. But we do not see how it is possible for this law to effect any greater separation between the races than obtains now." Dube's statement to General Botha regarding the Land Act. NASAP, Vol. 264, reference No. MM 4136/14, *To the Natives Land Act*, Cape Argus, 14. 2. 1914, f. 1.

<sup>52</sup> BERGER, p. 91.

States of America or to Canada and presented the unpleasant position of black South Africans within the Union. Plaatje appealed to the foreign audience not to ignore this desperate situation and described the fact that Africans were persecuted by white government and were denied to buy any land in their own country.

In 1923 Jan Smuts' first government approved the so called Native Urban Areas Act which allowed municipal authorities to control movement of Africans, supervise their communities and set regulations for housing of blacks.<sup>53</sup> In fact the act divided the area of the Union into rural and urban territories where local authorities were responsible for natives located within their districts. This law's impact was that cities happened to be zones selected exclusively for whites. Those Africans who were allowed to stay within the urban areas, were domestic workers. Otherwise the act aimed to regulate the number of blacks in the areas, especially regulate the number of unemployed black citizens. To enter the urban white area an African needed to prove his identity with a special permit known as a "pass". Africans without this kind of a permit were sent back to the rural area or imprisoned.<sup>54</sup>

The land separation was deepened by the Natives Trust and Land Act of May 1936 when the government increased the area of reserves for black from previously-set 7.3 % to 13 %.<sup>55</sup> These reserves were transformed into reservoirs of cheap unskilled labour for white farmers and industrialists. The 1936 legislation was a result of long lasting administrative evolution with the complex history and underwent substantial modification by various parliamentary select committees.<sup>56</sup>

A triplet of pro-imperial parties, the Unionists of Cape Colony, also known as the British Progressives, the Constitutional Party coming from Orange River Colony and the Progressive Association of Transvaal, merged in

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<sup>53</sup> BEINART, p. 126.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 127.

<sup>55</sup> NASAP, Vol. 8822, reference No. 90/362, Native Trust and Land Act 18/1936, November 1936, f. 1.

<sup>56</sup> DUBOW, p. 134.

May 1910 and thus was the Unionist Party of South Africa established.<sup>57</sup> This party carried through interests of British population in the newly formed Union of South Africa. The Progressive British Party was established in January 1898 under the lead of Cecil Rhodes, who wanted to secure his earnings coming from the mining businesses. He was majority owner in the British South Africa Company, in the De Beers Consolidated Mines both established in 1889, and he also controlled the Goldfields of South Africa, which started its production in 1887.<sup>58</sup> Rhodes' materialistic attitude and lack of respect to Dutch inhabitants of Cape made him an immense numbers of enemies.<sup>59</sup>

Party's platform also struggled for privileged social rank of British inhabitants. The Progressive Party won both the election in 1900 and four years later as well, which means they could appoint their member to the office of Cape Colony's Prime Minister. For the first time was the position held by John G. Sprigg and in 1904 Leander Starr Jameson who made a bid for power in Transvaal almost nine years ago became the Prime Minister. Nevertheless the British Progressive Party was not able to succeed in elections that took place in February 1908 and thus John Merriman became Prime Minister.<sup>60</sup> The elections failure led to partial reforms within the party, for example the party's designation was transformed to the Unionist Party of Cape Colony.

The Unionist Party of the South Africa persisted on the Union's political scene between May 1910, when it was established, up to November 1920 when the huge election fiasco and growing power of the National Party forced these Unionists to conclude an alliance with the Smuts' South African Party. Only two men became leaders of the Unionist Party during

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<sup>57</sup> MILLIN, p. 292.

<sup>58</sup> M. S. GEEN, *The Making of the Union of South Africa: A Brief History 1487–1939*, London 1947, p. 138.

<sup>59</sup> President Krüger himself stated in his memories about Rhodes that "*this man is a curse of South Africa*". H. C. BREDELL – P. GROBLER, *Paměti presidenta Pavla Krügra*, Praha 1903, p. 134.

<sup>60</sup> MILLIN, p. 127.

the ten years lasting era of their existence. Since 1912 Thomas Smartt was the leader and before him, these duties lay on shoulders of Leander Starr Jameson.<sup>61</sup>

Parties, of which consolidation created the South African Unionists, struggled for economical stability and prosperity within the colony where existed or they were attracted to each other on the basis of the support to the British Empire but after May of 1910, their preferences broaden out. The Constitutional Party, the Unionists and the Progressive Association merged together with politically involved individuals coming from the Colony of Natal. The newly merged Unionists of South Africa loudly protected the South African mining industry because most of its members were shareholders of gold and diamond mines in the area. They also inveighed against foreign labour when cheap Indian workers filled vacancies after repatriated Chinese; therefore unemployed black labour was causing severe inconveniences.<sup>62</sup> A good many of the Unionists were veterans of the Second Anglo-Boer War where they defended imperial interests. The party benefited from the non-Boer community of the Union and tried to keep the pro-British cultural orientation among the population.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the South Africa was full of mutual antipathies among population. There were Dutch inhabitants, who considered this country as their homeland and on the other hand, there were also British colonists, who claimed the same. Both of these white groups had to face an issue of “native policy”. There were two major issues that needed to be solved sooner or later. On one side there stood the question of a mutual coexistence of Afrikaners and Britons whilst on the other hand the native-colonists matter led to several disputes in society.<sup>63</sup> All of them together could not exist side by side; one of these classes was predestined to suffer in the future. A white workman could only have satisfactory salary and fairly good

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<sup>61</sup> HANCOCK, p. 331.

<sup>62</sup> MAYLAM, p. 122.

<sup>63</sup> KIEWIET, p. 141.



vacancies if a black workman suffered in unbearable working conditions with subsistence wage and vice versa. Equality between white and African labour did not simply exist. White workers were more expensive than natives and there appeared widespread beliefs like the Frederic Creswell's one that whites should not work on place of black labour.<sup>64</sup>

Colonel Creswell became the leader of the newly formed South African Labour Party in 1910. This party was based on the idea of protecting skilled white workers from being disadvantaged against the numerous black labourers. Creswell himself stood against Chinese indentured labour before the Labour Party was even established. The growing mining industry in the second decade of the twentieth century increased the electorate of the Labourists. The party was very often mixed up erroneously with the Communist Party of South Africa, which led many times to smaller quarrels between the party and journalists.<sup>65</sup> A huge wave of new electorate joined the party after the Rand Rebellion in 1922 when many whites began to be highly disappointed with the way Jan Smuts solved the Rebellion and with the South African Party's policy at all.<sup>66</sup>

The Rand Rebellion was a consequence of long-lasting poor conditions for white mineworkers in South Africa. The Second Boer War brought first signs of disorder to the mining industry. Closed mines, redundant miners, loss of revenues and a growing feeling of racial oppression happened to be highly discussed political matters, including the issue of Chinese indentured labour.<sup>67</sup> After the First World War the prices of gold took a dive and mining companies

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<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, p. 146.

<sup>65</sup> This was mostly caused because of the fact that those Labour Party members who had more radical ideas which differed from the Labour Party's political platform simply left the party for the Communists. NASAP, Vol. 970, reference No. 19/781, Governor-General: Reports to the Secretary of State. South African Labour Party Congress, Pretoria. Endorsement of Labour Nationalist Pact: Rejection of Application by Communist Party for Affiliation with the South African Labour Party, 1923, f. 22.

<sup>66</sup> Smuts was then hated like no man before him in South Africa. NASAP, Vol. 972, reference No. 19/834, "*Smuts must not go on!*" Cape Times, 3. 6. 1924, f. 9.

<sup>67</sup> BERGER, p. 101.

had to dismiss thousands of black as well as white miners from employment and lower wages for those who stayed. During the War, white workers applied to the Chamber of Mines to keep their working positions, once occupied by whites, for whites only and they succeeded. But a white miner was still more expensive than a black one and that caused a breaking of the Chamber's promise. Thus almost two thousands of white workers were replaced by blacks in 1921. First local strikes came soon but serious inconveniences appeared later, in January 1922.

Powerful trade unions of area around Fordsburg, close to Johannesburg where the mining industry was strong became to be very active and William "Comrade Bill" Andrews, the leader of the Communist Party, exhorted dissatisfied miners to a general strike. This was proclaimed on March 6 and two days later the situation became more complicated when members of the revolt made first attempts to take over the city of Johannesburg. The situation was getting out of control and former Prime Minister Jan Smuts arrived to the Rand on March 11 and tried to calm the situation down. An end was put to the revolt at midnight on March 18. A lot of cruelty happened on both sides, hundreds of rebels were killed as harshly as military force members or citizens defending their homes and at least one thousand people were injured. The leaders of the Rebellion were sentenced to death. Jan Smuts was blamed for letting the situation going that far which caused a loss in elections in June 1924 to the Nationalist and the Labour Party. The Nationalists gained sixty-three seats while Smuts' South African Party only won fifty-three.<sup>68</sup>

Together with eighteen seats of the Labour party created the Nationalists a so called "Pact government" whose rule lasted for nine years. Their primary objective was to secure "civilized labour policy" where "civilized" certainly meant "white".<sup>69</sup> Hertzog and Creswell were brought together by Nationalists' member Tielmann Roos and they made arrangements of a collective action via

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<sup>68</sup> NASAP, Vol. 972, reference No. 19/840, Governor-General: Reports to the Secretary of State. Results of the Elections, June 1924: Review and Comments on, 25. 6. 1924, f. 1.

<sup>69</sup> BEINART, p. 85.

mutual correspondence before the elections.<sup>70</sup> Even though this partnership was based on a primitive fact, on hatred of a common enemy, it was a crucial moment in South African history. Jan Smuts called this cooperation between Afrikaner conservatives and British radicals an “*unholy alliance*”.<sup>71</sup> Apparently, according to their political platforms he wasn’t far from truth. But this unnatural alliance found its way to a successful operation.<sup>72</sup> In June 1924, after Hertzog-Creswell’s victory, it was obvious that the language and cultural barrier between Afrikaners and Britons was easier to tolerate at certain points when they recognized a common objective.<sup>73</sup>

The Pact Government acted during its first days like “hound dogs” and their target was the former Union’s Premier Jan Smuts. Afrikaner Nationalists disrespected Smuts for his too pro-British policy. The South African labour disrespected Smuts for his pro-capitalist policy. And finally both sides disrespected Smuts for his inability to protect civilized labour. Smuts was portrayed in cartoons, symbolizing capitalist avariciousness, slyness and untrustworthiness.<sup>74</sup> In 1924 elections he lost his seat to an unknown candidate of the Nationalists. The Government consisted of inexperienced ministers with almost none administrative knowledge. Hertzog was the only government-experienced cabinet member.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> KRÜGER, p. 134.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, p. 137.

<sup>72</sup> Yet there appeared a few Nationalists who did not agree with the Pact and left the party to protest against the agreement. NASAP, Vol. 972, reference No. 19/837, *Nationalist Split*, Rand Daily Mail, 11. 6. 1924, f. 14.

<sup>73</sup> NASAP, Vol. 972, reference No. 19/834, Fifth Report on progress of the electioneering campaign, 28. 5. 1924, ff. 3–4.

<sup>74</sup> BEINART, p. 82.

<sup>75</sup> Three Nationalist members, Tielmann Roos who became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice. Daniel François Malan who was appointed to the office of Minister of Interior, Public Health and Education. Nicholaas Christiaan Havenga became new Minister of Finance. They were completed by two Labourists, Frederic Creswell who was entrusted with power of Minister of Defense and Tommy Boydell who got Ministry of Public Works, Posts and Telegraphs under a command. KRÜGER, p. 137.

Barry Hertzog was a genuine Afrikaner through and through. His father, a struggling farmer who taught him about history of Afrikaners, provided to young Hertzog the best possible education he could afford. Hertzog studied law at a Victoria College on Stellenbosch University just like Smuts. Although he was affected with the British culture, as almost every white educated Free Stater in these times, he never failed to remember the loyalty to his people and he vigorously defended Afrikaners' nationalism. He identified himself with the struggle of Afrikaans cultural development and the political equality. Hertzog finished his legal studies in Amsterdam which revealed him spirituality and roots of his Afrikaner people.

He did not consider the tension between Afrikaners and English South Africans a fundamental problem of South Africa but he saw the keystone of inconsistency of South African society in those British South Africans who still felt like expatriates of the Empire in the country.<sup>76</sup> Compared to Smuts, Barry wasn't as bright, wit or mentally agile as Jan, but he was arduously painstaking and painfully logical in any case. That made Hertzog a brilliant theoretician opposite Smuts who was faultless in practice. On the other hand, Hertzog, like Botha, was followed by numerous adherents due to a certain personal charm of his.

During the first five years of service, Hertzog's cabinet achieved a great success on almost all frontlines, which assured the government their next election victory in 1929. Hertzog himself aimed his attention especially to two great issues: namely make South Africa a safe place for whites and gain sovereignty for the Union.<sup>77</sup> As the first major statement

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<sup>76</sup> He believed in so called "two stream" policy in the Union according to which white South Africans should follow a policy of separate development for Afrikaners and English-speakers running along different paths, living by separate institutions. Compare FEINBERG, p. 78; KRÜGER, p. 137.

<sup>77</sup> To the matter of Afrikaner nationalism in 1925 was the Afrikaans equalized as official language instead of Dutch at the civil service. The Bible was also translated to Afrikaans. Since 1934, was the national anthem called "The Voice" (*Die Stem*) played alongside the "God Save the King". "The South African Flag Controversy" lasted between 1925 and 1928. Nationalists could not understand the British need for Union Jack to be part of the

of segregationist intent is commonly accepted Hertzog's 1925 Smithfield speech.<sup>78</sup> One year later in Malmesbury Hertzog expressed more strident emphasis on the need to preserve white supremacy. "*The native stands in relation to the European as a child in religion and moral conviction, lacking any art or science...*"<sup>79</sup> The Immorality Act of 1927 forbade the extramarital sexual intercourse between a European, which meant white, citizen and a native.<sup>80</sup> Men could be sanctioned by five years of a prison sentence and four years of imprisonment awaited for any woman, breaking the law. So called "procuring" of women, for the same purpose, was prohibited as well. The same year's Native Administration Act established a divided legal system for Africans. Natives' affairs were given under a command of a different authority. That action created a barrier between the Africans' and the administrative apparatus.

There was a difference between "Hertzogite" and "Smutsian" style of segregation. The Hertzogite supporters stridently aimed on an abolition of the Cape franchise, the white "civilized" labour policy, the industrial colour bar and the distribution of farm labour. Their speeches became more racist and they emphasized the economic and political exclusion of Africans from a common society. The Smutsian segregationists, on the other hand, preferred the incorporation and protection to become a part of their racial policy. The

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flag and on the other hand English South Africans weren't willing to accept the proposal of two ex-republican flags to be representing their people. The flag-problem was solved in late 1927 with "the Union Flags and the Nationality Act" and new flags were shown together on May 31, 1928 for the first time. There were orange, white and blue banner while the white one consisted of the Union Jack and two former republic's flags. On special occasions, the national flag was supposed to be accompanied with the Union Jack. Compare KRÜGER, p. 137; BEINART, pp. 114–115.

<sup>78</sup> DUBOW, p. 46.

<sup>79</sup> "...he will have to be told in the most unequivocal language that the European is fully determined that South Africa shall be governed by the white man, and that the white man will not tolerate any attempt to deprive him of that task." Ibidem, p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> The act mentioned "illicit carnal intercourse". This bill together with the Native Affairs Act of 1920 was part of a process of transferring power over the regulation of African life from Parliament to the executive. According to the Native Affairs Act, there were established tribally based, but government appointed, district councils. MAYLAM, p. 132.

crucial divergence was the matter of the industrial colour bar; when the Smutsian liberal branch turned to be exasperated with the Hertzogite protective prejudicing policy.<sup>81</sup>

Hertzog had been loudly calling for granting the independence to the Union and his intransigence proved itself on the Imperial Conference in 1926. The Conference was held from October 19 to November 23 in London.<sup>82</sup> The matter of constitutions was widely discussed with the participation of the representatives of Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, India, the Irish Free State, New Zealand, Newfoundland, the Union of South Africa, Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and Dominions Affairs.<sup>83</sup> The Union was represented in London by the Prime Minister James Hertzog and Nicolaas Havenga. Before his departure to the Conference, Hertzog proclaimed the necessity of an equal status of the Union and Great Britain and demanded an official written document confirming the status. On the Conference he gave a speech to the committee regarding the issue and after series of negotiations amongst members, they obliged him. The position of self-governing communities was defined formally and later ratified by the full Conference.<sup>84</sup> The final improvement of constituency came in 1931 with the Westminster Statute which turned these results in practice.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> DUBOW, pp. 43–44.

<sup>82</sup> M. KOVÁŘ – J. VALKOUN, *The “Balfour Formula” and the Imperial Conference of 1926*, in: Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2011, p. 595.

<sup>83</sup> Australia was represented by the Prime Minister Stanley Bruce and Sir Neville House and John Latham. Canadian participants on the conference were the Prime Minister William Mackenzie King with Ernest Lapointe. India sent to London the Secretary for India the Earl of Birkenhead, Maharaja of Burdwan, and D. T. Chadwick. The Vice-President of the Executive Council Kevin O’Higgins with James McNeill and Desmond Fitzgerald negotiated for the Irish Free State. New Zealand was represented by the Prime Minister J. G. Coates and Sir Francis Bell. Newfoundland sent A. B. Morine to participate in the Conference. Great Britain’s interests were defended by the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, Leopold Amery and Lord Balfour as a chairman. *Ibidem*, p. 594.

<sup>84</sup> Compare THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 160; KRÜGER, p. 147.

<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that Jan Smuts had also commented the matter of constitution in the Commonwealth as well. In his memorandum published in 1921 Smuts mentioned a necessity to discuss the dominion status because of the rising wave of nationalism in some

## “African Renaissance”<sup>86</sup> and Indian Political Force

Black Africans’ political resistance was in the first years of the Union of South Africa represented especially by two political movements; it was the South African Native National Congress and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union. The founding meeting of the National Congress was held in Bloemfontein on January 8, 1912.<sup>87</sup> All abroad-educated lawyers Pixley Seme, Alfred Mangerna, George Montsoia and Richard Msimang arranged the gathering to launch the Congress’ inauguration. Reverend John Dube was elected as a first president of this native movement. Draft statutes were created shortly after and the content regarded a principle of an umbrella federation of all African movements ever established. Main goals of the newly established protest organization Pixley Seme described in his speech: *“The white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa – a union in which we have no voice in the making of laws and no part in their administration. We have called you [...] so that we can together devise ways and means of forming our national unity and defending our rights and privileges.”*<sup>88</sup> The organization changed its name to the

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of the Dominions. He highlighted four basic topics: the status of Dominions, the relation of the King as a symbol of unity in particular areas of the Empire, kinds of negotiations and consultations among these parts in all institutional matters and other ways of dominion subordination. His contribution lately helped to solve the constitutional issue within the Empire. J. VALKOUN, *The Contribution to the Study of Attitudes of the Dominions to the Institutional and Constitutional Questions within the British Empire in the 1920s*, in: Dvacáté století – The Twentieth Century, No. 2, 2011, p. 120.

<sup>86</sup> Further about African renaissance debate compare: B. DAVIDSON, *The African Awakening*, London 1955; L. BARNES, *African Renaissance*, London 1969; J. A. LANGLEY (Ed.), *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa 1865–1970*, London 1979.

<sup>87</sup> This meeting was preceded by the Native Convention of March 1909 held in school room of the Waaihoek Location in Bloemfontein where thirty-eight native delegates of all four South African colonies had a session to discuss the new South Africa Bill and the draft constitution of the emerging Union and its impact to black South Africans. DAVENPORT – SAUNDERS, p. 262.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 319.



African National Congress during the annual meeting in May 1923 but formerly was the designation changed in 1925.<sup>89</sup>

Pixley ka Isaka Seme was a Natal-born lawyer with the diploma from the Oxford University. His excellent studies at American Congregationalist missionary brought him to the Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts in the United States of America and later he completed the degree in Law in Great Britain. In 1906 Seme gave a speech called “The Regeneration of Africa” at Columbia University where he gained the Bachelor degree before moving the Oxford. This presentation claimed him the George William Curtis oratorical medal, and shown his rhetorical abilities. The financial sector was the critical factor of the Congress’ functioning but Seme’s great contribution to this organization was his ability of “fund-raising”. During the first decade of the South African Native National Congress’ existence the deficiency in financing caused a woeful situation within the movement itself. Nevertheless Seme saw the possible solution in financial support of tribal native chiefs who he persuaded ceaselessly.

The growing power of native intelligentsia could be recognized in an increasing number of newly established printed sources published in various African languages such as “Native Opinion” (*Imvo Zabantsundu*) established by John Tengo Jabavu in 1884, “Voice of the People” (*Izwi Labantu*) founded in 1897 by Allan Kirkland Soga or above mentioned Plaatje’s “Bechuana Gazette”, established in 1901. Seme majorly participated in a foundation of an official mouthpiece of the South African Native National Congress, the Abantu-Banthon newspaper. The list published articles in English, SeSotho, Zulu, Xhosa and SeTswana languages to attract as wide readership as possible and the paper soon gained a roaring success and became one of the most widely read newspaper amongst black South Africans. The financial situation

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<sup>89</sup> The same gathering brought also other resolutions such as party’s attitude to the recently announced Labour-Nationalist election pact or the last year’s Rand Rebellion. The “God Bless Africa” (Nkosi Sikel’ i-Africa) was proclaimed as an official anthem of the Congress and there was chosen the green, black and gold flag. BEINART, p. 103.



affected the frequency of publishing; sometimes the new issue appeared weekly, sometimes monthly. Abantu-Bantho, during its existence, commented every political step that would have an impact on natives. The newspaper's popularity fell sharply in the 1920s; the lack of monetary resources paralyzed the editorial board and in July of 1931 was the Abantu-Bantho incorporated to African Leader, the new mouthpiece of the renamed African National Congress.<sup>90</sup>

Even though the first Congress' president between 1912 and 1917 John Langalibalele Dube was born to minor Zulu chief-family and so would have had position to reign the AmaQadi tribe after his father, he could not become the chief, because of the Christianization, that his father had undergone earlier. The missionary schooling influenced Dube, like almost all of their students, at that time. Dube then often expressed his cleft position of mission-educated native inhabitant, trying to find a balance between his ethnic roots and Christian studies. By a stroke of luck, he was taken to the Oberlin College in the United States, where he attended several courses of preparatory school. Though Dube never became a proper graduate of the Oberlin and though he only worked there as a cleaner, he made valuable connections and gained a lot of experience, which he utilized in future. In 1904 Dube founded the first Natal newspaper of black Africans "Sun of Natal" (*Ilanga lase Natal*) and he also became the president of the Natal Native Congress which provided him a good credit for the presidential election at the 1912 convention.<sup>91</sup>

On January 7, 1919, Clemens Kadalie established a small trade union among coloured dockworkers in Cape Town. By the time the "Industrial and Commercial Workers Union" came to existence nationwide. Kadalie himself attracted most of the attention with his portentous speeches. During the

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<sup>90</sup> BENSON, p. 31.

<sup>91</sup> The first considered presidential candidate was Reverend Walter Rubusana. He was widely respected native, not only among the blacks, but even the whites paid him respect. Besides, as a Xhosa-born he had kind of privilege to become a leader of such an organization. Nevertheless the Xhosa delegates decided to take a back seat during this election "*in order to unite people from other provinces who besides suffer under greater restrictions*". Ibidem, pp. 28–29.

**Alena Bulvasová**

Interwar Segregation Policy in the Union of South Africa: Paving the Road to Apartheid

1920s this organization actually outshined the South African Native National Congress, later the African National Congress. For short period of time the Workers Union was more influential, and more controversial as well, than the Congress. The Workers Union saw members of the Congress as “good boys” under strong influence of white politicians. There was a crucial difference between the levels of education that these organizations’ leaders had reached. Seme himself, and his colleagues, were mostly highly educated individuals, lawyers, clergy or journalists, who wanted to hold a discourse about African grievance and to elicit support of whites by using legal means. On the other hand, Kadalie’s followers were frustrated Africans<sup>92</sup> who spent a short time on missionary schools and were not willing to suppress their ethnic roots.<sup>93</sup>

The Workers Union drew ideas from Marxism, from independent churches and also from Marcus Garvey’s “back-to-Africa” movement.<sup>94</sup> Kadalie called for workers’ rights and wages, stressed black unity and nationalism, accented black commercial opportunity and also he pointed on African Christianity.<sup>95</sup> Supporters’ bases could be found mostly in black urban communities but during the 1920s the Workers Union spread also to rural areas. The movement found supporters in areas of today’s Namibia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia as well.

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<sup>92</sup> In fact Kadalie did attract attention of white workers who gladly welcomed his appeals but the interracial unity of workers was impossible due to different amounts of money these two classes earned. Besides, this situation always slightly deteriorated when employers threatened white workers’ with replacing them with cheaper black labour when they needed to lower costs. BERGER, p. 99.

<sup>93</sup> THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 176.

<sup>94</sup> Marcus Garvey was a Jamaica-born journalist who after his stay in London where he wrote for several newspapers such as the *Orient Review* or the *African Times* developed the idea of black African unity. Returning to Jamaica, Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association based on his previous idea. The first organization’s branch outside Jamaica was established in May 1917 in New York. Garvey held lectures about his movement and then expressed his idea of repatriating black inhabitants back to Africa, to Liberia. Garvey is connected to the Rastafarian movement. BENSON, p. 57.

<sup>95</sup> BEINART, p. 104.

One of the most discussed black struggles during the interwar period in the Union became undoubtedly the Bulhoek Incident of 1921. In 1912 a native lay preacher Enoch Mgijima joined the Church of God and Saints of Christ, formerly established in the United States of America, and started baptizing his followers (natives) in the Kei River in Eastern Cape. Shortly after that, Mgijima called them “Israelites” as he identified them with the Hebrews in the Old Testament.<sup>96</sup> He predicted that the world would end after thirty days of rain and only his followers would be the chosen ones to await the Lord’s coming.<sup>97</sup> That statement convinced his followers to cease working on all activities of everyday life. They stopped taking care of their fields and means of their subsistence which led to many struggles with neighbouring (white) farmers.

Mgijima was later excommunicated from the Church of God and thus he and his followers were forced to find another place to concentrate. The Israelites moved to Bulhoek where Mgijima owned a small land. At the edge of 1919 and 1920 numbers of his followers expanded and at that time the movement comprised of about three thousand members.<sup>98</sup> The crucial problem was that the newly coming black supporters of Mgijima, did not register themselves at local authorities, they did not pay any taxes and their squatting way of life perturbed other villagers and because they, from time to time, stole what they needed; a cattle, a tool or crops.<sup>99</sup> Local authorities asked Mgijima several times to make his followers leave the area but he promised they would leave after the forthcoming Passover, which was their main religious festival, in April 1920. He did not want to lose his credibility and did not want to give up the fairly luxurious way of life he had enjoyed.

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<sup>96</sup> D. H. MAKUBE, *The Bulhoek Massacre: Origins, Casualties, Reactions and Historical Distortions*, in: *Militaria*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1996, p. 23.

<sup>97</sup> BEINART, p. 101.

<sup>98</sup> MAKUBE, p. 26.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 27.

The Passover festivities prolonged to May of 1920, the squatters did not leave the Bulhoek, more likely they settled themselves in the area and authorities were alarmed about the situation, so they became to solve the problem. Their plan was to register all the squatters so they could remove them from the property.<sup>100</sup> All the negotiations between the authorities and the Israelites failed. The situation only worsened; there were growing numbers of armed conflicts between the police officers and the Israelites. Local authorities had no other way to settle a dispute. Jan Smuts' government was embroiled to the struggle and the newly appointed Native Affairs Commission was sent to the area to negotiate with Mgijima.<sup>101</sup> Even South African native authorities, such as the South African Native National Congress or the Council of the Transkeian Territories, tried to persuade the Israelites to leave Bulhoek and return to their homes to avoid carnage, which was in the air. The Israelites counted on their potential numerical superiority. Besides, they blindly believed in Mgijima's words and so they refused to leave once again.

The South African Police and the Union Defense Force joined forces and almost one thousand of policemen and soldiers were armed with machine guns, a canon and artillery. The Israelites stood up to five hundred men, armed with swords and clubs. The assault began in the morning of May 24 and ended in the evening of the same day.<sup>102</sup> More than two hundred men were killed and almost one hundred and fifty Israelites arrested, including Enoch Mgijima, his brother Charles and Gilbert Matshoba, who participated in the movement.<sup>103</sup> These three were sentenced to six years' hard labour in DeBeers Convict Station at Kimberley and other defendants were sentenced to between twelve to eighteen months of hard labour in a trial that took place in November 1921 in Queenstown.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> MAKUBE, p. 28.

<sup>101</sup> DUBOW, p. 88.

<sup>102</sup> MAKUBE, p. 33.

<sup>103</sup> BENSON, p. 51.

<sup>104</sup> MAKUBE, p. 40.

The Russian Revolutions of 1917 started a chain reaction of establishing communist parties all around the world. The South Africa Communist Party's founding assembly began on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1921 and ended two days later. The result was that mostly radical white workers and socialist, who previously experienced people's struggles in Europe,<sup>105</sup> established a small but very effective and disciplined group that would overthrow the capitalist state and establish a socialist government in South Africa. William H. Andrews became a secretary of the newly established movement. Party's first attitude to the racial diversity was negative and the party was strictly oriented to white workers. As their slogan claimed, "*Workers of the world unite and fight for a white South Africa*"<sup>106</sup> and thus the South African Communists tried to follow this statement. Nevertheless, after the year 1924, after the Pact Government election victory, the party focused on moderating its racial attitude and made several attempts to lure black workers to become members of the Communist party.

Since that time, there appeared an idea of two-stage revolution by which socialists would work together with black African nationalist groups to reach the point of racial equality and then there would be a space for socialism. And thus the Communist Party became the only organization, recruiting multiracial members that had no obstacle between themselves. This party became refuge for depressed members of other South African organizations such as the African National Congress or the Industrial and Commercial Workers union.

On the opposite side of the political scale than William Andrews worked pro-Nazi oriented Oswald Pirow. This able-bodied lawyer could be considered as one of the "apartheid pioneers" in the Union. He became to be a member of the National Party due to his influential friend Tielman

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<sup>105</sup> Such as Polish, Latvians or Lithuanians or Russians themselves and who used to be members of the South African Labour Party but changed their party-membership just because of their radical ideas. BERGER, p. 99.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted from BERGER, p. 99.

Roos.<sup>107</sup> Pirow was a member of the second Hertzog's government formed after victorious election in 1929 as a Minister of Justice. Later he supported the unification of the Nationalists and the South African Party and this move ensured him a seat in Hertzog's cabinet formed in 1934. Pirow had very negative relationship to the South African Communist Party, because of their racial tolerance. His thoughts about natives were complicated.

*“There is the policy of assimilation which, ultimately at any rate, concedes to the Negro full political economic and social equality with the European. Then there is the policy of differentiation which concedes to the black man the unqualified right under our guardianship to develop along his own lines to the fullest extent of which he is capable and which, in fact, places on the white man the obligation to assist the Native in such development, but which definitely once and for all time denies the Negro social and political equality with the European. The latter doctrine is the accepted policy of the Union. It is in my opinion the policy which ultimately with or without modification will be accepted by all our northern neighbours.”*<sup>108</sup> Pirow was a pure “Germanophile” and his obsession deepened after his visit to Europe during the 1930's where he met several far right leaders such as Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini or Francisco Franco.<sup>109</sup> Naturally, one of his close friends was a British fascist Oswald Mosley. Pirow believed that a war in Europe is inevitable and was deeply convinced about Nazi victory. He supported a certain way of dividing the African continent and expressed that the Union is interested in the area south of Equator, including Kenya and Uganda but excluding French Equatorial Africa because he believed that these states will, sooner or later, carry a large number of the white

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<sup>107</sup> He practiced law in Pretoria for a certain time and during his studies he excelled in many sport disciplines such as boxing, fencing, swimming or horsemanship. R. L. McCORMACK, *Man with a Mission: Oswald Pirow and South African Airways, 1933–1939*, in: *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1979, p. 543.

<sup>108</sup> O. PIROW, *How Far Is the Union Interested in the Continent of Africa?*, in: *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 36, No. 144, 1937, p. 318.

<sup>109</sup> His family spoke only German at home. McCORMACK, p. 543.

population and to avoid white man's extinction in Africa, it is necessary for the white community to remain cohesive.<sup>110</sup>

Pirow supported Hertzog's efforts to stay neutral in the forthcoming world conflict and thus he joined the newly formed Herenidge Nasionale Party. Just a few months later, in September 1940 Pirow and almost twenty of his followers established a Nazi-admiring political movement called the "South African New Order". They stroke out on their own two years later when the Herenidge Nasionale Party leaders Daniel Francois Malan and Johannes Gerhardus Strijdom publicly rejected the ideology of National Socialism. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Oswald Pirow had a great passion for air transportation and also a good sense of business opportunities. He coordinated an establishment of the South African Airways on February 1, 1934.<sup>111</sup> By time, the South African Airways acquired small South West African Airways and that was one of the ways the Union used to strengthen its position on the African continent, just like Pirow wished.

Political affairs of the interwar period in the Union were very strongly influenced by a strictly male Calvinist and partially secret organization Afrikaner Broederbond. This movement could be described as "*an arrogant, self-chosen elite, operating by stealth and intrigue, its early cultural aspirations swamped by its neo-Fascist ideas on race and colour*".<sup>112</sup> In a beginning of 1918 there was established a movement called Young South Africa (*Jong Zuid Afrika*)<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Pirow claimed that "*in Europe white states may be able to afford fighting each other; in Africa the whites will disappear with calamitous rapidity unless they stand together*". PIROW, p. 320.

<sup>111</sup> Based on a government acquisition of the Union Airways where Allistair Miller was the major owner. Pirow persuaded Miller not to sell the Union Airways to the Imperial Airways when Miller faced financial problems. Later Pirow of course preferred German Junkers JU-52 and JU-86, to be part of the South African fleet. McCORMACK, p. 549.

<sup>112</sup> D. O'MEARA, *The Afrikaner Broederbond 1927–1948: Class Vanguard of Afrikaner Nationalism*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1977, p. 156.

<sup>113</sup> After a few months its designation hanged to Afrikaner Bond. A huge disclosure of the organization took place in 1978 after the book *The Super-Afrikaners. Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond* by Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom. Compare O'MEARA, p. 157; BEINART, p. 120.



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which members were connected to each other by same political, cultural and religious ideas and traditions, dated back to early history of Cape Dutch. The times when the Broederbond was established were times of political crisis and a common depression; the 1913 split in the South African Party, caused confusion and bitterness among Afrikaners. That led certain people to incline to zealotry.

The highest authority within the organization was the Bondsraad, a congress of divisional delegates convened at the beginning of each July. Membership was restricted to financially sound, white Afrikaans speaking men; over age twenty-five, of an unimpeachable character who actively accepted South Africa as their sole homeland. One could only become a member after being officially invited by other members of the Broederbond and his name had to be known among at least of a half of current members of the local division nearest to his home.

According to their almost identical aims it could be considered that members of the National Party were naturally members of the Afrikaner Broederbond but it would be an erroneous surmise. The elitism caused severe divergences between these two groups thus not every Nationalist-member was a “pro-Broederbonder” but the Broederbond installed some of its members to the Nationalists’ lines so they could fully influence political actions.<sup>114</sup>

Indian Diaspora in South Africa had concentrated in the colony of Natal, namely around the city of Durban. Most of the Indians left India on the ground of an indentured servitude when the British Empire organized massive transports of Indians to South Africa to fill in workplaces after black Africans who weren’t willing to work for colonial farmers and other colonial employers. Between 1860 and 1910 about one hundred and fifty thousand indentured Indians arrived to South Africa in order to work on sugarcane

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<sup>114</sup> NASAP, Vol. 716, reference No. F 4/116, Departement of Interior. Reporting of Subversive, Disloyal or Suspicious Activities. “Die Ossewa Brandwag”. State Employees Not to Be Members of “Broederbond”, 4. 4. 1940, f. 3.



plantations in Natal.<sup>115</sup> Those Indians, whose indentured contracts expired and who refused to return to India, promptly settled themselves and became general labour force in Natal. There also appeared Indians who came to South Africa as “fortune-seekers”, to find better a life that they had in India.

The name of Mahatma Gandhi is closely connected to South Africa. When Gandhi arrived to Natal, Indians outnumbered whites in the colony.<sup>116</sup> Gandhi spent twenty-one years in South Africa and during this time his personality underwent a great change. Since the first time he entered South African soil, he had to face discrimination based on colour, he hadn't experienced before.<sup>117</sup> Gandhi wished to fight the social inequality and Indian discrimination and thus in 1894, on August 22, there was established the Natal Indian Congress which would defend social ranks and rights of Indians in South Africa, respectively in Natal.

In 1908 Gandhi firstly used the term “satyagraha”<sup>118</sup> which expressed the non-violent or passive resistance. That designation was actually invented after Gandhi initiated a competition to find a name to describe the recent passive resistance campaign against the government in the Indian Opinion journal on December 28, 1907. Patriotic reasons led Gandhi to choose a word from either a Sanskrit or a Gujarati vocabulary for this activity. And then the next year, before or on January 10, was the money prize in the amount of £10 given to one of the contestants who proposed a word “sadagraha”, which Gandhi then

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<sup>115</sup> BERGER, p. 86.

<sup>116</sup> A. L. HERMANN, *Satyagraha: A New Indian Word for Some Old Ways of Western Thinking*, in: *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1969, p. 125.

<sup>117</sup> One of the most known accidents of Gandhi's first moments in South Africa is undoubtedly how he was expelled of a train to Pietermaritzburg or when the magistrate of Durban ordered Gandhi to take off his turban; both of this incidents happened in the year of his arrival in 1893. A. BOSE, *A Gandhian Perspective on Peace*, in: *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1981, p. 159.

<sup>118</sup> The word is created by two Sanskrit words “Satya” which means truth, and “Agraha” which could be translated as insistence. A follower of satyagraha is called a “satyagrahi”. BOSE, p. 161.

modified.<sup>119</sup> Later he described that satyagraha combines courage with love and fearlessness and that is “*really an attitude of mind [...] passive resistance means resistance of evil with inner force instead of physical force*”.<sup>120</sup>

In early 1914 Gandhi met Jan Smuts, Minister of Justice at that time, because of growing numbers of satyagrahis campaigns. The two lawyers agreed that Gandhi’s followers would stop their resistance campaigns in exchange of abolishing the £3 Poll Tax, recognizing marriages contracted of traditional Hindu and Muslim rites and allowing free transits of Indian into Transvaal. This was later called the Indian Relief Act which passed through the Parliament on June 26, 1914. Gandhi’s South African mission in life ended and he moved back to India that year.

On July 23, 1925, Daniel François Malan introduces Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill which defined Indians as aliens and proposed limitation of their population through repatriation. Two years later, after a so called Round Table Conference between India and the Union, Malan presented the Immigration and Indian Relief Act which, besides other things, contained a scheme of voluntary repatriation of South African Indians back to India when the repatriates would receive of £20 per adult and £10 per child.<sup>121</sup>

Gandhi’s resistance efforts led him to participate in establishing another organization, which would defend Indian rights in the area, with its headquarters in Transvaal, the Transvaal British Indian Association, lately renamed to the Transvaal Indian Congress. Since 1923 both of these movements, together with the Cape British Indian Council, worked under an umbrella organization, the South African Indian Congress, which was established under prominent member Yusuf Dadoo.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> HERMANN, p. 127.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in HERMANN, p. 129.

<sup>121</sup> The money bonus doubled in 1931. NASAP, Vol. 914, reference No. 15/1289, Asiatics: Miscellaneous: Position of Indians in the Union. Desires summary of speech of Dr. Malan at meeting of Nationalists Party on the Asiatic Questions to be telegraphed and that full text may be sent by posts as soon as possible, 1925, f. 3.

<sup>122</sup> BEINART, p. 131.

Dadoo, a South African political activist and a descendant of Indian immigrants, who achieved a doctor's degree in medical education during his studies in London, became an indispensable character of South African liberation movement in the twentieth century. His further political involvement began in 1930s, when Dadoo returned to the Union after his studies, and when the political situation disconcerted him strongly. Numbers of segregationist bills were rushed through, the Communist Party of South Africa suffered under sectarianism within its own lines and the Indian Congresses were publicly castigated. Yusuf Dadoo saw the only possible way, how to create a strong reliable political counterbalance to European supremacy, in cooperation of all non-white South Africans; coloured, blacks, Indians etcetera. Thus the Non European United Front was established in 1938, respectively between July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup> 1939, when the South African Indian Congress convened.<sup>123</sup> The next year Dadoo became a member of the Communist Party where during the World War Two, became a member of the central committee and was prosecuted several times for anti-war campaigns.<sup>124</sup> Dadoo significantly contributed to mutual cooperation between the South African Indian Congress and the African National Congress.

The 1930's brought a wind of change to the political climate in the Union. The cabinet of James Hertzog entered the third decade of the twentieth century while their political allies were concentrated in the Labour Party. After the 1929 repeated election victory of the Labour-Nationalist there appeared fragmentation in their pact, which caused the reduction of their parliamentary majority.<sup>125</sup> The political position of the Nationalists was as weakened as the position of the South African Party due to the Great Depression which affected minds of their supporters and voters and many of them turned their hopes to more radical parties. These two political movements were in first coalition

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<sup>123</sup> It is necessary to distinguish the Non European United Front and a Trotskyite organization the Non-European Unity Movement established in 1943. BENSON, p. 150.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>125</sup> DUBOW, p. 146.

talks with each other since 1933 and in the May elections of that year they won one hundred and thirty-six of a total one hundred and fifty seats.<sup>126</sup> In June 1934 they merged by the Fusion Act and became the United South African Nationalist Party, the United Party in short. James Hertzog retained the Prime Ministers' post and Jan Smuts became his deputy and Minister of Justice.<sup>127</sup>

The Fusion was not based on a conspiracy to pass the Native Bills; nevertheless, it offered an unprecedented opportunity to do so. For the South African Party the merger meant that the Cape Franchise was dispensable in electoral terms. The National Party saw the merger as the launch pad to the feasible two-thirds parliamentary majority which would achieve an abolishment of the Cape Franchise.<sup>128</sup> Despite a world of difference between Hertzog's and Smuts' political attitudes they found a way to a mutual cooperation. Smuts agreed to secure rural population and to support a white labour policy and to respect Hertzog's constitutional achievements. Hertzog had previously denied a desire for further constitutional demands. Although they did not share each other's opinion on segregation, Smuts was prepared to compromise in order to remain in power.<sup>129</sup>

The British ethnic group, former members of the South African Party who did not agree with the Fusion, established the Dominion Party in Natal. This party did not have an impact on the Union-wide political actions. On the other hand those intransigent Afrikaners, who were not satisfied with the merger led by Daniel Francois Malan, established the Purified National Party (*Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party*) which political decisions were strongly influenced by the Afrikaner Broederbond.<sup>130</sup> The Purified Party achieved a great

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<sup>126</sup> NASAP, Vol. 234, reference No. 3/5247, National Government. Political Situation, the Fusion, coalition, principles of the United South African National Party in the Union of South Africa, 1. 7. 1934, f. 9.

<sup>127</sup> THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 161; BEINART, p. 117.

<sup>128</sup> DUBOW, p. 148.

<sup>129</sup> BEINART, p. 117.

<sup>130</sup> Malan's followers appreciated his appeals to an Afrikaner population which experienced a rapid rate of urbanization and benefited from state provisions of compulsory white education.

coup in 1938 during the centenary celebration of the Great Trek, the crucial moment in Afrikaners' history. The celebration culminated on December 16 with the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.<sup>131</sup> Malan and others sought purification and cleansing from old enemies such as the mining capital, the Empire and Smuts. Even greater extent than Hertzog they called for racial protection against rising black African stream.

The United party won the 1938 election again. This time with one hundred and eleven seats in the House of Assembly while the Purified Nationalists gained only twenty-seven seats. At this moment the political situation of the Union was calm. When the European state of affairs escalated during the year 1938, respectively in 1939, the Union was on the crossroads. On September 3, 1939, the United Party split.<sup>132</sup> Jan Smuts' and his followers were for joining Great Britain in war while the fellowship around James Hertzog wished to stay neutral in this conflict. The voting about declaring the war to Germany ended with eighty to sixty-seven votes for joining the world conflict. Hertzog made an attempt to dissolve the Parliament at governor-general, but unsuccessfully and thus he resigned as the Prime Minister and Smuts replaced him at the post as well as within the United Party which Hertzog and his followers left immediately. They joined Malan's Purified Nationalists and the Reunited National Party (*Herenigde Nasionale Party*) was established.<sup>133</sup>

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He also found support amongst young intellectuals some nurtured in the University of Stellenbosch and some drained from Germany who believed in Afrikaner superiority. Compare THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 162; BEINART, p. 120.

<sup>131</sup> The monument was design by the architect Gerard Moerdijk. NASAP, Vol. 1/1/248, reference No. 146/73, Voortrekker Monument: Drawings, 1936–1938, f. 26.

<sup>132</sup> DUBOW, p. 151.

<sup>133</sup> THOMPSON, *A History*, p. 163.

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## **Conclusion**

The interwar era of the Union of South Africa foreshadowed the direction of the racial policy that burst out after the Second World War. Nevertheless native affairs were not the most discussed matters of the Union's policy. Racial legislation had its objectors at white population, but they only represented a minority. The nineteenth century-opinion of inferiority of black race still predominated among the whites. Union's Politicians had mostly positive attitude to the racial segregation the only matter that differed was the scale of the separation. There collided the Smutsian mild way of segregation with the Hertzogite one of rather radical manners. Same terms could be then used even for other problematic matters. Jan Smuts and James Hertzog, both were educated lawyers and experienced Generals, but of almost diametrical political attitudes. As a friction area of their policies were undoubtedly relations between Afrikaners and Britons, respectively Afrikaans and English-speaking South Africans. Smuts wished to walk on a path of mutual cooperation of these two cultures which was unacceptable for man like Hertzog, a true Afrikaner and raised Free Stater, as he strongly preferred Afrikaner superiority and independence. In a nation-wide scale the attention focused on the question of the Union's relationship to the Empire.

## **Abstract**

This paper reflects a political scene of the Union of South Africa during the interwar era. During this time the Union had to solve two capital problems. Firstly it was the issue of coexistence of Afrikaner and English-speaking population. Secondly the government had to deal with the matter of native affairs. Time showed which one of these questions was more important for the government to be answered in the first place. There were two politicians who stood out from others with their rhetoric and political opinions: James Hertzog and Jan Smuts. Their decisions were crucial for the Union's interwar policy.

**Keywords**

The Union of South Africa, Race Policy, Segregation, Pre-Apartheid, Interwar Period

