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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

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Title: Class Conflict, Communal Struggle and Patriotic Unity: The Communist Party of South Africa During the Second World War.

by: Tom Lodge

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Class Conflict, Communal Struggle and Patriotic Unity: the Communist Party of South Africa during the Second World War.

Tom Lodge.

The years of the Second World War witnessed a revival in the fortunes of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). At the beginning of the war the Party's following numbered less than 300, its influence in the trade unions was negligible, it was isolated from other political organisations among blacks, while its efforts with whites had succeeded neither in checking the growth of fascism or Afrikaner nationalism nor in building class unity. Six years later the Party could count its adherents in thousands rather than hundreds, it was capable of winning white local government elections, and its members presided over the largest-ever African trade union movement as well as contributing significantly to the leadership of the African and Indian Congresses. From 1945 knowledge of the Party's development becomes vital for any understanding of the mainstream of black politics in South Africa. This paper will examine and attempt to explain the wartime expansion in the Communist Party's influence, first by referring to the social and economic conditions as well as the overall political environment of the time, and then by discussing the Party's policies and strategies. CPSA responses to three different sets of movements or organisations will be discussed: movements of the urban poor, of peasants, and of labour. The paper will conclude with an evaluation of the Party's role and development during the period.

Economic and social conditions which helped to promote a fresh mood of popular political assertion and which facilitated the rise in CPSA popularity have been well documented in the relevant literature and need only brief recapitulation here. For economic historians the 1939-1945 period represents the concluding part of an industrial boom which began with South Africa's devaluation in 1932. Between 1936 and 1951 the industrial workforce doubled at an annual growth rate of six per cent (1). This growth had a particular impact on Africans during the war because of the diversion of a quarter of a million whites (2) into military occupations. Africans in substantial numbers began to fill semi-skilled positions in factories and here the wartime increase in the number of black workers was three times that of whites (3). Movement into semi-skilled positions was one factor contributing to the narrowing of the wage gap between black and white manufacturing workers which occurred during the war (4). However the 100 000 extra African factory workers recruited during the war (a forty per cent increase in the

total of the African manufacturing labour force) only accounted for a small proportion of the growing urban African population (5). Between I936 and I946 official statistics revealed a virtual doubling of Johannesburg's African population to almost 400 000 whilst in some smaller centres the rise was even more rapid: in Cape Town during the war the number of African inhabitants grew from about I5 000 to an estimated total of 60 000. Additional numbers put an impossible strain on the already inadequate provision of housing and the war years were to see the mushrooming of shanty settlements on the fringes of every significant town. Many of the people who inhabited these were refugees from the overcrowded and drought stricken reserves where economic conditions at the beginning of the war were beginning to attract even government concern (6). The towns provided harsh havens for though there was work for some, all had to face spiralling food prices (7) (partly the result of heavy grain export commitments) as well as shortages, and most lived in conditions of fearsome poverty. In social and economic terms the war years represented an acceleration and deepening of changes which had already been in motion for nearly a decade. But government policies and the wider political environment of the I939-I945 period were in some respects importantly different from what preceded and followed the war.

During the early years of the war the Government displayed an uncharacteristic anxiety to secure the support and loyalty of Africans. This concern reached a climax in I942 when the Minister of Native Affairs, Denys Reitz criticised the pass laws and ordered a relaxation of their application in the main industrial centres of the Transvaal and Natal (8). The same year the Smit Committee recommended their abolition while the Minister of Labour, Walter Madeley, opening the Council of Non-European Trade Unions annual conference in November, promised that legal recognition of African trade unions was impending (9). Even at this point any hopeful expectations would have been qualified by War Measure I45 which prohibited all African strikes and Smuts's repudiation of the relevance to black South Africans of the Atlantic Charter (I0). Nevertheless talk of post-war black amelioration continued stimulated partly by the energetic efforts of parliamentary Native Representatives (who included after I943 a former communist, Hyman Basner) as well as a flurry of commission recommendations. The State's overtures to Africans were mainly attributable to its resolve to maintain high levels of industrial production and, of course, the government's feeling of vulnerability at a time of developing polarisation in white politics.

War brought a change in white public perceptions of the Communist Party. From I94I the Soviet Union was a glorious and respected ally (II) (with diplomatic representation in South Africa the following year) and a series of nation-wide meetings of such groups as the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) and Medical Aid for Russia were well attended and well publicised gatherings. The FSU, until I94I a coterie of CPSA enthusiasts, by the end of the war included among its patrons the Mayor of Johannesburg and the Minister of Justice (I2). The election of Bill Andrews as Party leader in I943 meant that the CPSA figurehead was a celebrated veteran of the white labour movement (I3). The Party in I942 became conspicuously patriotic: for several months it arranged 'Defend South Africa' rallies in town halls up and down the country, its newspaper columns gave prominence to war news while the editor donned an air-raid warden's uniform and conscientiously patrolled the

lanes of Orlando (I4). White comrades in the army helped to found a 'Springbok Legion'. Even the South African Broadcasting Corporation responded to the spirit of the times. A Yiddish choir drawn from the Jewish Workers' Club sung the 'International' on the radio and Bill Andrews was requested in I942 to broadcast a May Day message to workers in support of the war effort (I5).

It was a complicated time for the Communist Party. In conformity with Communist Parties in other parts of the world (though not in the British dominions) the CPSA was to declare the war to be a conflict between rival imperialisms and opposed it on that ground. Though 'in the interests of humanity' it was 'essential that Nazism be destroyed', for South Africans this could be done most effectively by confronting the domestic threat of Fascism (I6). In doing this it was 'childishly absurd' to hope 'that out of a white population of two million, which is divided by a deep cleavage from top to bottom, forces can arise that will save South Africa from fascist onslaught whether from within or without' (I7). Hence the Party's emphasis shifted from popular front activity among whites to efforts to mobilise large numbers of black people in anticipation of a wartime administration's increasingly authoritarian attacks on 'workers and democratic organisations'(I8). In March I940 in a report presented at the national conference, the Party's involvement in 'the national struggle of Non-Europeans' was argued to be essential to the development of a mass movement to resist fascism (I9). The Party's anti-war campaign was therefore most publicly evident in the activity of those of its members who were already active in the Non-European United Front (20). Opinion within the Party was not unanimous. Johannesburg Communists had held the view that the Party should support an effective prosecution of the war before being overruled by the leadership in Cape Town (2I). There was little determined dissent however: an already disillusioned Hyman Basner chose the Soviet Invasion of Finland as the occasion to make his break with the Party (22) while the unpredictable Jimmy La Guma decided, mysteriously, to join up (23). If others had private qualms about, for example, the Nazi-Soviet pact, they kept them to themselves (24). For while the Party apparently took its cue on the issue of the war from Comintern directives (25), nevertheless opposing the war was locally popular among certain groups. Following the precedent set by nationalists in India, radical South African Indians were to make opposition to the war their main plank in their effective opposition of the conservative leadership of the Indian Congresses. Here Indian Communists involved in the Non-European United Front were prominent. In Cape Town John Gomas writing in Freedom in June I940 reflected a common sentiment when he argued:

> I am satisfied with the statement of the famous English scientist Professor J B S Haldane, that he would rather be a Jew in Hitler's Berlin than a native in Johannesburg... How can we be interested in fighting Nazism thousands of miles away, while in reality we have a similar monster devouring us here daily? (26)

All this was to change in June I94I when the German army marched into Russia. Four days after the invasion the Central Committee produced a statement arguing that the total character of the war had changed: 'The Soviet Union is not an imperialist power and is not waging an imperialist war'. The Communist Party and the Non-European United Front abandoned opposition to the war to the Trotskyists whose position remained unaltered by the attack on Russia. 'Hitlerism', now according to Inkululeko, the new CPSA nespaper, was an immediate 'threat to the very hope of advancement and freedom for all workers and oppressed peoples'(27).

South Africa should strengthen its contribution to the destruction of Nazism by arming black soldiers and giving black people the vote: 'Give the people democratic rights, give them a country and a decent life, give them arms and there is nothing which they will not do to defend their freedom and their rights' urged Inkululeko (28). 'Bad as South Africa is', wrote Moses Kotane in early 1942 in a pamphlet entitled Japan, Friend or Foe?, 'she is as much our home as she is that of the Europeans ...South Africa is what we Non-Europeans allowed her to be ... in the future she will be what we ourselves make of her'(29). With support for the war effort the Communist Party was once again prepared to consider constituencies which three years earlier had appeared to be lost causes:

> Our experience has shown that our Party can gain support and good will of all sections. We must establish close contact with Afrikaners ... We must build the Party among skilled workers.(30)

The Party's attitude to the war would influence the most vital areas of its activity. For example, in calling for opposition to the government's War Measure 145, the Central Committee in December 1942 advocated that the 'trade union movement should get the Government to withdraw this measure' and 'demand' full recognition of African Trade Unions. Just how the trade unions should add force to these demands was not spelt out though the statement went on to suggest that 'in the interests of South Africa's well being, particularly in these serious times, every effort should be made to avoid strikes'(31). In 1942 the Party's posture also seemed to shape the attitude of the authorities to it. As mentioned above Bill Andrews was given time on the SABC to broadcast a May Day message calling for the solidarity of labour against Hitler and a subversion charge was dropped against Kotane after the Minister of Justice was shown a copy of his pamphlet Japan, Friend or Foe? (32).

There is little published information on Party activity during most of its anti-war phase. During 1939 and 1940 the Party did not publish a newspaper (33) and sympathetic historians tend to limit their discussion to Yusuf Dadoo's activities on behalf of the Non-Europeans United Front. The Front organised a series of anti-war rallies and Dadoo himself was imprisoned for four months after making an eloquent and powerful case against the war at his trial (34). The Front's opposition to the war, though, did not take it into the strikes and boycotts contemplated at its original inception (35). The African National Congress also provided a focus for activity by African communists: J B Marks first transferred most of his energies to ANC work after being expelled from the Party in the late 1930s (36) and Moses Kotane, general secretary and full-time functionary from 1939 onwards, led a revival of the ANC in Cape Town. The Johannesburg District Conference in its review of the previous year's work acknowledged in March 1941 the 'great importance attached to helping the ANC lead the African people in their struggle' (37) though in the same year the Party conference warned that commitments to other organisations were causing a neglect of the Party itself (38). In fact it is difficult to see a strong central impulse to the CPSA's development in this period: a modest and rather late beginning was made in the field of African Trade Union activity and some support was given to Alphaeus Maliba's pioneering attempts to organise peasant resistance in the Northern Transvaal; African members contested and won two and then three seats on the Orlando Advisory Board elections while in Johannesburg Communists continued their weekly public meetings on the City Hall steps. Here also it was hoped to gain through the Party's anti-war stance some Afrikaner support with the establishment of of an Afrikaans medium journal, Die

Ware Republikein, though the Party continued to stress the reactionary character of Afrikaner Nationalism (39). A modest growth in membership was recorded, from 280 to 400, a new District Committee was elected in Johannesburg in 1940 composed largely of men and women who had joined the Party quite recently and were thus unaffected by the divisions and tensions of its sectarian history in the 1930s, and a new constitution as drawn up in 1941. Reconstruction of the Party after the debilitations of the previous decade seems to have been the main priority; anti-war activity did not extend beyond public meetings. This notwithstanding, three communists were interned: the Joffe brothers of Johannesburg and the trade unionist Arnold Latti from Port Elizabeth. It is possible that the anti-war line did not inspire much enthusiasm within the Party; According to Edwin Mofutsanyana this period:

> (was) the time when the Africans began asking whether they (the Communists) were supporters of Hitler. They had phrases like 'wamphethu Mkize' - 'Hitler has got them all right'. (40)

Perhaps significantly in this context, one of the resolutions debated at the May 1941 conference, when the Party was still opposing the war, concerned the rights of African servicemen; they should be entitled to bear arms and to gain promotion to all army ranks (41). There was an essential ambivalence to the Party's anti-war position: even its most militant exponent, Yusuf Dadoo qualified his opposition with the proviso that if 'unfettered democratic rights' were extended to black people than the conflict could be transformed into a 'just war' which it would be possible to support (42).

Such considerations no longer applied after the Soviet entry into the war though there were some noisy objections to the Party's rationalisation of its new position (43). In April 1942 the Communists launched a 'Defend South Africa' campaign. This was to take the form of approximately thirty open air and city hall meetings, pageants and processions held in every major town and several smaller centres as well: Johannesburg, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Pietermaritzberg, Ladysmith, Dundee and Roodepoort were all visited by leading party spokesmen, black and white, calling upon the government to 'Avenge Tobruk, by mobilising our people and our wealth'. The public intentions of the campaign were spelt out in a lengthy pamphlet, Arm the People , thousands of copies of which were distributed during the eight months of its duration. Arm the People opened with a reference to the threat of invasion from Vichyite Madacascar: the 'Fascist peril' was 'approaching ever closer to our shores' and South Africa was 'faced with a desperate struggle for its existence'. After criticising the government for its neglect of adequate military training for blacks, its tolerance of the Ossewa Brandwag and similar components of a 'Fifth Column', and its continued diversion of national resources into gold production the pamphlet went on to outline 'A Policy for Victory'. Black soldiers should be armed and army conditions improved so as to encourage recruitment. Industry should be put on a war footing with the establishment of workers' production committees to increase output, protect workers' interests and prevent sabotage. African trade unions should be recognised and encouraged and African workers allowed to acquire skills. The pass laws and segregation laws should go and voting rights should be extended to blacks. Adequate air raid precautions were needed. Food supplies should be improved through aid to small farmers and the abolition of control boards which functioned to maintain high agricultural prices (44). If the underlying

motive of the campaign was to broaden the Party's appeal then it can be judged as a success. A recruiting drive for membership was mounted simultaneously and application forms were distributed at public meetings. Each district or branch was set recruiting quotas; Durban was apparently the most successful in bringing new people into the Party (45). By the end of the campaign membership had quadrupled with I 346 new adherents (46). £5 000 had been donated to party funds and the circulation of the by I943 communist-controlled Guardian newspaper had risen to 42 000 (47). In its public pronouncements the Party provided no indication as to among which sections of the population it was most successful in building a following at this time. While city hall meetings would have been primarily directed at whites many of the events were arranged in locations habitually used by black people and African speakers commonly provided keynote addresses. From later estimates it seems likely that a large proportion of the recruits were African and Indian(48). This may have been as much an effect of the Party's attention to local community issues and black trade unionism as of the specific content of the campaign itself.

But if, as the Simonses claim, it is possible to discern in the Defend South Africa Campaign a programme for 'complete liberation from national oppression' (49) this was not the main emphasis in the CPSA's appeals to voters in parliamentary and municipal elections the following year. The Party's intention to contest white elections, something it had not contemplated since the I920s (50) was signalled by Kotane at the concluding Defend South Africa rally when he announced a forthcoming new initiative 'to increase our influence, to press forward with our demands' (5I). Another pamphlet was produced. Entitled 'We South Africans' and aimed at potential white voters in the I943 general election it was studiously vague in discussing the CPSA's approach to African political aspirations. Referring to the Labour Party's 'total segregation' policy it suggested:

> Africans themselves may prefer such a system under socialism; it bears some resemblance to the 'autonomous national republics' that have been recognised in Soviet Russia and may be a progressive step under socialism. But it is a very long term policy; the practical question of today is how to remove the disabilities imposed on the non-white peoples. (52)

The pamphlet also argued that skilled white workers to protect their own long term interests should set about removing racial job reservation as well as contending that socialism would benefit 'members of the professions, artists and scientists, shopkeepers and small farmers' (53). The Party's nine parliamentary candidates garnered 7 000 votes between them, an average of II per cent of the vote. An East Londoner, Archie Muller, supported by African voters was narrowly defeated in the Cape Provincial elections. The same year the Party's electoral efforts were rewarded with two seats on the Cape Town City Council and one on East London's (54). It was an encouraging start. The other left-wing contender in the general election, the Independent Labour Party, despite its well-known leader Solly Sachs and a prudent 'bread and butter' manifesto collected only 2 per cent of the votes in the three working class constituencies it contested (55). Heartened by its modest success the Party continued to fight elections: in I944 Hilda Watts won a council seat in Hillbrow, a central Johannesburg suburb of high density apartment blocks and two further seats were gained in Cape Town.

Research is needed to tell us why the CPSA was able to win elections as well as to indicate the extent to which it tailored its propaganda to the prejudices and inclinations of white voters. Referring to the I945

municipal elections in Johannesburg an Inkululeko correspondent reported on the 'disappearance of old prejudices against communists' (56) and the shock he encountered amongst white suburban voters 'at the horror of non-European conditions ... (they) nearly always agree that improvements should be made'. 'The voters are waking up', he concluded, 'and we communists, by fighting the elections, are helping them to see the truth'. Though the CPSA's electoral appeal may have been defined in a way which could evoke social compassion it is also possible that it moderated the political and social implications of its policies. Support for the 'national democratic revolution' was frequently presented as merely the extension of civil rights to blacks. Emphasis on this detracted from the socialist content of the Party's message:

> Comrades, there are times when to be extreme ultra-revolutionary is to betray the cause for which we are working. Which is the more revolutionary today - to say you want to nationalise the land and nationalise the banks, or to say you want the vote and equality of rights for the non-Europeans. (57)

In January 1944 the CPSA removed from its constitution the clause which determined as one of the Party's principal aims 'the abolition of Imperialism and the establishment of an independent republic of the people'. It sought to reassure the white public in other ways too. Social equality between black and white would not necessitate the the abandonment of customary social segregation. A communist pamphlet published in 1945 dwelt on a familiar preoccupation in white electoral politics:

> One who thinks a black man is sorry and ashamed of his colour is stupid ...We love our colour and we would not like to decrease it by inter-marriage; we like our black girls dearly and wish them to marry and increase our black race. One who says we blacks might take European girls for marriage if we were freed talks rubbish. (58)

The Party's moderation in its public stance did not immunise it from attack. In Johannesburg the Labour Party having refused on two occasions the Communists' offer of an electoral pact published a leaflet in the 1945 election on what the Communist Party stood for. The leaflet detailed the CPSA's advocacy of universal suffrage and its espousal of the right of blacks to stand for election in addition to its desire for 'natives and coloureds (to be allowed to)ride in the same buses and live in the same residential areas as Europeans'. As Inkululeko plaintively pointed out the leaflet 'said nothing at all about the constructive municipal policy advanced by the communists' (59).

While trying to garner electoral support from whites the CPSA was also systematically attempting to build its following among blacks. In November 1943 following a vigorous return to pass law enforcement by the police on the Witwatersrand (60) an Anti-Pass conference was held in Johannesburg under the auspices of the CPSA. From a platform decorated with a huge portrait of Johannes Nkosi, the Durban communist martyr of the 1930 pass campaign, and festooned with 'Mayibuye I Afrika' banners, the assembly was opened by speeches from Yusuf Dadoo and Edwin Mofutsanyana. The time had come, said Dr Dadoo 'for the Non-European people to unite (60), to raise their voice and carry on a campaign against the pass laws, against this badge of slavery which humiliates the African people'. 'We are not alone', he continued:

> If we campaign properly and well, we will win the support of the Coloured and Indian people, and of the progressive Europeans.

The time had come, exhorted Mofutsanyana 'to fight the passes to the bitter end'. This should be done by employing 'every channel that we have':

> We must petition the government and tell them we can no longer tolerate their pass laws. We must tell our representatives in Parliament that in the coming session they must move a bill to abolish the pass laws. (62)

After the chairman had enjoined those 'who had nothing special to say not to speak' a pledge of support was taken by the 153 delegates (from 112 bodies representing 80 796 people) who then resolved to set up local anti-pass committees, send resolutions to the Prime Minister, Minister for Native Affairs, and the Native Representative Council and as well as requesting the parliamentary native representatives to introduce anti-pass legislation 'to undertake every possible form of activity which will bring pressure on the Government to abolish the pass laws'. A leading committee of 15 was then elected composed largely of African communists and non-communist members of the Transvaal African National Congress (63).

The formation of local anti-pass committees rapidly got under way. By May 1944 when an elaborate launching ceremony was held for the campaign in Johannesburg anti-pass activity had spread to affect most substantial African urban communities in the Transvaal: Brakpan, Roodepoort, Randfontein, Middelburg, Witbank, Springs, Vereeniging, Meyerton, Klerksdorp, Ermelo, and Pretoria. Anti-pass committees existed in Pietersburg and Sibasa in the Northern Transvaal. Work had begun in Cape Town where the Anti-Pass Committee held during January meetings in Langa, Retreat, Kensington, Bellevue, Philipi and Stellenbosch. Meetings were usually arranged in conjunction with local bodies: vigilance associations, tenants leagues as well as ANC branches and trade unions. By April 1944 local efforts were focused on the circulation of a petition and the selling of green, yellow and black anti-pass badges. A somewhat belated endorsement of the campaign came in March from Dr Xuma, President-General of the ANC (64).

The campaign was formally inaugurated in Johannesburg on the weekend of May 20th - 21st. 540 delegates attended a meeting at Gandhi Hall representing a diversity of organisations: trade unions, vigilance associations, food clubs, ANC and CPSA branches, churches, student groups, Advisory Boards, and Ratepayers' Associations. After addresses by Dr Xuma, the Rev. Michael Scott, Dr Ismail of the Indian Congress and the Native Representative Council members a National Anti-Pass Council was elected. The form of the campaign was confirmed: a million signature petition for presentation to the government in August, fundraising, and the distribution of publicity material. Trotskyite advocacy of more militant forms of resistance were rejected by the delegates and subsequently Inkululeko's columnist, Umlweli, reproved those who were arguing in favour of civil disobedience by the Anti-Pass leadership: this was foolish for the task of leaders was 'to assist and give guidance' (65). The climax of the launch was provided by a demonstration of 20 000 through the streets of Johannesburg. Few people, though, were there to witness it, for it was a Sunday.

In June and July the campaign seemed to progressing well. In Brakpan (home of the APC's secretary, David Bopape) tables were set up in the streets and by the gates of the location with copies of the petition for people to sign. A thousand men and women gathered in Sibasa, their

numbers including several local chiefs and indunas. A request for 200 petition forms came from the recently established committee in Bloemfontein. In Heidelberg in June, after the arrest of a leading local communist and member of the Anti-Pass Committee, Dan Mokeana, for not having a lodger's permit, hundreds of women demonstrated outside the court-room while schools closed and no one went to work. After a parade through the centre of the town the mayor listened to a list of complaints against the location superintendent and promised the release of Mokeana. The superintendent himself was arrested the following week under suspicion of attempting to excite sympathy by placing a bomb in his own office.[66] Meanwhile further meetings were reported in Durban, Boksburg, Cape Town and Springs.

In August however the tempo of the campaign appeared to slacken. Though in Brakpan on August 10 there was a stay away by 7 000 African location residents in protest against the dismissal from his teaching post of David Bopape (67) there were no reports of activity connected with opposition to passes from anywhere else in the Transvaal. In September it was announced that the date for the presentation of the petition had been postponed (68).

The next public pronouncement of the National Anti-Pass Council did not come until February. This was a statement by Bopape on the closure of the petition drive (69). Angered by the silences in Bopape's statement two communist members of the Council , Mofutsanyana and Palmer made public criticisms of its work. In the Transvaal the campaign:

> ... became inactive after the (May) Conference. Badges were not sold, petitions were not signed, and even the local committees have gone to sleep ...something is radically wrong with the working committees. Most of the Council members at the centre failed to attend meetings: there has been an average attendance of from five to seven; the work being left to three members ...it must be pointed out that Chairman (Dadoo) and the Secretary (Bopape) have not been the live wires they should have been. They have rather expected local committees and others to take the initiative. (70)

The conclusion of the campaign was in June 1945. 5 000 people accompanied a deputation to present the petition to the Deputy Prime Minister. On arriving at Parliament its leaders were refused an interview with Hofmeyr and rejected the offer of meetings with the Ministers of Native Affairs and Justice. The government made no public response to the petition and its 100 000 signatures.

What had gone wrong? At the beginning there seemed to be no shortage of popular enthusiasm for the campaign. Large numbers of people apparently participated in demonstrations, on local iniatives passes were actually burnt on certain occasions (71), and in at least two centres, Brakpan and Heidelberg, the issue of the pass laws fused with other sources of local discontent to provoke impressive displays of communal solidarity (72). On the East Rand women were noticeably involved in the early stages of the campaign - in March 1944 at the instigation of Josie Palmer a special women's conference was held in Johannesburg - and the war years did witness an effort by some municipalities to regulate for the first time the movement of African women into town.

It is possible that the form the campaign took did little to retain people's interest and active support: contrasted with earlier types of protest against the pass laws petitioning was rather a lame tactic - hardly the conceivable limit 'of activity which will bring pressure on the Government'.

Of course it is possible as the critics quoted above suggested that leaders could have been more energetic (though it should be acknowledged that both Dadoo and Bopape were harassed by the authorities as a result of their part in the campaign) but that seems unsatisfactory by itself as an explanation. Contemporary commentators suggested that the CPSA deliberately confined the protest to legal sorts of activity as a consequence of its war policy (73). In addition it may have been that communists themselves may have been influenced by government proposals for reform to the extent of believing that if they campaigned 'properly and well' the authorities would have been suitably impressed.

Elections and national campaigns were only one dimension of the Party's wartime development. Before attempting any overall evaluation of its role its more localised responses and activities and its work in the trade union movement need consideration.

Before the war in the Transvaal there were two geographical focuses to CPSA activity among Africans. The first was in Orlando where from I934 Communists had dominated Advisory Board politics organising support for their candidates through the Vigilance Association. The Communists recognised from the beginning the limitations of the Boards (74)but argued that they should should be employed as platforms for a 'mighty struggle for self-government in the locations' to be conducted not only through the boards themselves but also outside them:

> If the municipality and the Government does not listen to the Advisory Board members when they put forward your just demands, the Advisory Board members must call meetings of residents, lead deputations and demonstrations and compel the rulers to fulfill these demands. The Advisory Board members must be real leaders and fighters for your demands (75).

After I937 though there was an additional dimension to the CPSA's view of Board politics for the Boards themselves were vital constituents in the process of indirect election of representatives to the Native Representative Council. The CPSA's own NRC candidate, Edwin Mofutsanyana, was a leading figure in Orlando Advisory Board activity. Ascetic and hardworking, 'loyal Edwin' (76) lacked the popular touch; Communist influence in Orlando depended more on organisational efficiency than on charismatic local personalities.

Communists were active also in Alexandra, the freehold township to the north of Johannesburg. In Bram Fischer the Party had a representative on the Health Committee, nominally the governing local authority in Alexandra and a substantial local branch had been built through the efforts of Max Joffe who during the late I930s was locally active in setting up a tenants' league.

Alexandra and Orlando provided the settings for two of the most dramatic assertions of popular discontent during the war and ostensibly the CPSA might have appeared well placed in both cases to have played a leading role. In Alexandra between I940 and I945 there were four seperate protests over rises in bus fares. They took the form of boycotts which climaxed in a seven week protest in November and December I944. Beginning with simple refusals to pay the extra fare the form of resistance became progressively more elaborate and militant: in I943 IO 000 people marched in a huge procession the eighteen miles to town and in the following year the movement looked at one moment as if it might develop into a township-wide general strike. Local leadership was provided by a Transport Action Committee (later called a Workers' Transport Action Committee) and from I943 local leadership

was supported and advised by an Emergency Transport Committee established and led by Senator Basner. By 1943 the CPSA, weakened locally the year before by the expulsion of the mercurial Gaur Radebe for petty bourgeois behaviour (money-lending), was just one of several political groups jostling acrimoniously with each other for influence over the boycotters. The genesis of these groups and the intricacies of their relationship with each other and with the boycotters are matters which have only partly been uncovered by recent scholarship but it does appear that in the 1944 boycott the CPSA functioned to limit and define the course of the movement; in other words that its influence was a restraining one. It opposed for example (on quite practical grounds) the extension of the boycott movement to the south-western townships and pressed for the acceptance of the offer of a City Council subsidised coupon scheme which guaranteed the perpetuation of the old low fare for three months (77), and it may have, through its influence on trade unions, delayed the implementation of the general strike call. In all this the CPSA may well have been correct in interpreting the popular mood in addition to the potential limits of what may have been gained. It is worth recording, though, that in doing so they were opposed by left wing groups calling for a socialised form of public transport (78). Local communists probably considered such proposals wildly quixotic: in the wake of the boycott the Alexandra branch immersed itself in the more everyday preoccupations of its constituents. In July they announced from their new office in the old Health Committee rooms their intention of taking steps "to organise people around the issue of drains and the risk of small pox". They also proposed to raise with the municipality the legal question of the status of the Health Committee; they wanted it to have trading rights so it could embark on a programme of bulk buying for consumer cooperatives (79).

But if communists accurately gauged the limits to popular militancy in the Alexandra bus boycott this cannot be said in their judgements concerning the Orlando squatters movement. At the beginning of the war each of Orlando's 5 000 houses accomodated seven people. This average was to nearly double between 1940 and 1944 as a consequence of a huge influx of migrants from the farms and the reserves seeking access to jobs and food. Rather than building accommodation for these people the Council lifted restrictions on subletting and allowed the most acute conditions of overcrowding. After fruitless agitation against the housing shortage a group of Orlando residents led by James Sofasonke Mpanza, an Advisory Board member, organised an exodus of sub-tenants out of the location to construct hessian shelters on the empty veldt in March 1944. Before the sub-tenants moved however, Mpanza approached the Communists and asked them to join his committee. Mofutsanyane and his comrades held back, though, arguing that at the beginning of the winter Mpanza's plan was irresponsible and would merely lead to greater privations than already existed. Orlando communists distrusted Mpanza in any case, with his background of convicted murderer, born-again evangelist and small-time huckster, and they had been energetically opposing his role in Advisory Board politics for nearly a decade. But municipal hostility and cold weather notwithstanding, Mpanza's movement grew and grudgingly the Communists had to concede support while questioning Mpanza's personal motives and criticising his administration. Their initial abstention cost them dear. Thereafter Mpanza ensured their exclusion from any active participation in the leadership of his new kingdom and they were confined to organising soup kitchens and lobbying the Council in concert with liberal pressure groups for a more generous policy towards the squatters. In three successive Board elections, in 1944, 1945 and 1946, the Communists failed to win any of the seats(80).

At one level the failure can be attributed to the personalities involved.

The autocratic Mpanza was indisposed to sharing decisions with any but the most sycophantic counsel and in manner and style was light years apart from trained party functionaries like Mofutsanyana. But the problem was deeper than this for the Communists had underestimated the housing crisis (81) and the intensity of popular feeling arising from it and had allowed the iniative to pass from their hands. As the Johannesburg District Committee put it in a refreshingly self-critical report:

> We failed to recognise the deep desire and need of the people for vigorous and correct political leadership, we did not act as the vanguard of their struggles. (82)

Their characterisation of Mpanza as'irresponsible' was symptomatic of their unwillingness at that time to contemplate initiating direct action. In Orlando this may have been partly a consequence of participation in local elections. Though at the beginning the Communists professed to be conscious of the limited utility of the Boards by the I940s it is possible that 'control' of the Boards had become an end in itself. Certainly in Orlando in I944 the Communists demonstrated considerable insensitivity to the needs and aspirations of sub-tenants who were not, it should be remembered, entitled to vote in Board elections. It is also conceivable tnat Johannesburg Communists may have been influenced in their response to the squatters by their understanding of local white politics . As the report quoted above went on to suggest:

> There is a large and growing body of European opinion conscious of the oppression of the non-European people and sympathetic to their demands and aspirations. It is the special duty of every European Communist devotedly and energetically to spread and deepen this consciousness and sympathy (83).

Fortunately the kind of local challenge provided by Mpanza was exceptional Elsewhere . Communist participation in local bodies such as residents associations and Advisory Boards provided useful vehicles for agitation over administrative injustices, food shortages and material hardship, and helped to significantly extend their influence. By I945 there were Communist branches or groups established within African communities in most of the industrial towns (84). Both locally and nationally African Communists took pains to collaborate with the African National Congress often functioning as key office holders. Here their tactical emphasis on reformist demands and their apparent concern to avoid confrontation with authority helped to foster the developing alliance with the still very conservative ANC leadership. At the same time small-scale organisation around subsistence issues could also provide the first vital steps in communal mobilisation. In this context the food buying cooperatives developed by Communists in Johannesburg, Durban and Pretoria in the course of I943 and I944 were imaginative responses to the deprivation and helplessness of the urban poor (85). In general then, despite their setback in Orlando, the early I940s were years in which the Communists successfully established themselves as a popular force in local urban African politics (86).

Their record was less impressive in the countryside. For in the Reserves the close of the I930s and the beginning of the I940s witnessed the inception of an extended and increasingly violent struggle as peasants attempted to resist the government's efforts to reorganise land usage and political structures. Through the heroic efforts of Alphaeus Maliba, the Communists had first hand knowledge of the most serious of these conflicts, that of the Northern Transvaal, and for a time the Party helped Maliba's Zoutpansberg

Cultural Association, providing legal assistance, an office, and in I939 publishing a pamphlet by him (87). But despite resolutions and the adoption of an agrarian element in their programme (88), Maliba's cause did not figure prominently in the Party's wartime concerns. Indeed when the CPSA in I944 held its first 'rural conference', marking, according to Kotane, a 'new stage' in the Party's development, it held it in the Western Cape for the benefit of farm labourers, not peasants (89). Of course reaching reserve communities was often very difficult because of government restrictions but it was also the case that leading Transvaal Communists felt that the Party's prime tasks should be different. As the Pretoria advocate George Findley commented after defending Maliba in Louis Trichardt in I94I:

> The Platteland Africans are a secondary area - mere propaganda is needed there, not peasant revolts. (90)

The final dimension of CPSA activity was trade union organisation. While fighting a rearguard action within the white trade union movement (91), the most important activity was in developing workers' organisations among Africans and, in the Cape and Natal, among Coloured people and Indians. CPSA trade union initiatives will be described at length in a seperate paper and only a tentative outline of an analysis can be presented here.

The Second World War provided a favourable climate for the growth of black trade unionism. The development of manufacturing and the increasing employment of Africans in semi-skilled industrial positions provided one vital impetus for trade union organisation. The inclusion of Africans in Wage Board determinations to a greater extent than ever before gave to unions legal space for manoeuvre enabling them to deliver substantial benefits to their new members without bringing them into immediate confrontation with the state. A high level of spontaneous industrial militancy throughout the war years helped to encourage an official perception of African trade unions as a means through which conflict between employers and workforce could be regulated.

Communists were not first in the field in wartime African unionism (though they did do pioneering work with Indian and Coloured workers in Durban and the Cape Boland). After the depredations of the purges and the Popular Frontism of the I930s they had retained few members with any experience of African trade unionism. The two clusters of African trade unions which had developed by I94I, the Joint Committee of of African Trade Unions, and the Coordinating Committee, with respectively 20 000 and 3 000 affiliated members were led by men who were wary of involvement with the Communist Party. The first had been set up as a result of the work of Max Gordon, a radical socialist employed by the Institute of Race Relations and the second was under the aegis of Gana Makabeni, expelled from the Party in I93I (92). Communists, though, were active as members and office bearers in unions affiliated to these bodies and their merger into a Council of Non-European Trade unions at the end of I94I took place at a meeting over which Moses Kotane presided. At least four of the seven men who composed the first CNETU executive were communists. Nevertheless CNETU is best understood as an uneasy coalition rather than a body over which the Communist Party exercised direct control.

The main thrust of Communist Party trade union work lay in the expansion of organisation mainly in the service sector and light industry though there were efforts to organise power workers, metal workers and mine labourers as well. Much of the organisation was of a fairly superficial

quality with African officials serving as secretaries for several different organisations and offices centralised on party premises in Johannesburg. For the purpose of representing workers at wage board enquiries such arrangements were adequate but they would have been severely put to test in more militant forms of action. The Party however made it quite clear on several occasions that it opposed the use of the strike weapon. As Ray Alexander reported to the I944 CPSA conference:

> Our party's policy is directed towards a peaceful settlement of disputes and avoiding any strikes or any actions that will hinder the war effort. (93)

There were probably other considerations as well. As a contemporary liberal commentary pointed out in I94I : 'Unions have endeavoured to avoid strike action as far as possible. It is illegal for Natives to strike and there is therefore a need for a high degree of organisation'(94) Not that workers were unwilling; on several occasions unions had to curb the militancy of their members. For example in the Non-European Federation of Iron and Steel Workers it was neccessary in I943 to pass two resolutions against 'hasty,ill considered action' and 'unneccessary stoppages' after the granting of a modest wage award and reports of disatisfaction among rank and file workers with the leadership persisted to the end of the war (95). The Communist-led Gas and Power Workers' Union intervened in I942 to prevent a strike 'because we felt that it was our duty to prevent trouble when the country was in the midst of a serious war crisis' (96). In at least three strikes in which trade unions were involved, the milling workers', timber workers' and coal deliverers' disputes, all in I944, the Communists were sharply critical, accusing their leaders of being 'a handful of wreckers','fifth columnists' and 'scoundrels' (97). More specifically in each case they argued that the strikes were based on inadequate preparation. These unions were led by Trotskyites who delighted in irritating the Communists as on the occasion in I943 when the African Commercial and Distributive Workers attempted to persuade the Trades and Labour Council to resolve against the opening of a second front contending that it would 'be used only for the imperialists' dream of crushing the people's movement'. Such a position, charged the Communists, was clearly 'Fascist inspired', raising the 'suspicion in the workers' minds that the Soviet Union's allies are really her enemies' (98). In the case of strikes which were not Trotskyite inspired the CPSA took a more sympathetic position, Party members despite policy appearing on picket lines (99), and the Party itself defending the strikers in its propaganda for African trade union recognition (100).

African trade unionism by I945 represented a substantial achievement, the II9 bodies with their alleged I50 000 membership (101) representing an impressive total, particularly if the very small number of trade union organisers is recalled. What is arguable is that more could have been achieved, especially if the Party had been willing to employ strikes in its campaign for trade union recognition. In I945 its policy of industrial discipline appeared as if it might place in jeopardy its ascendency within the African trade union movement. Accusing the 'Stalinists' of 'Trade Union Fetishism' (102) a Trotskyite 'Progressive Trade Union Group' produced a catalogue of the various wrongdoings and shortcomings of the CNETU executive. These included it alleged communist inspired 'pacification' of workers and the establishment of rivals to unions which did not conform with communist policies and the failure to support strikes (103) In August I945 Communists needed the help of unaccustomed allies to retain their position at the CNETU conference: a well organised effort by the Progressive Trade Unionists to pack the conference was

defeated with the help of the CPSA's normal antagonist, Senator Basner, who had been invited to open the meeting. Thereafter the Trotskyites were expelled (104). Taking with them some of the most militant and experienced trade unionists their departure did not portend well for the new phase of working class action which was to succeed the ending of the common front against Fascism.

Conclusion

The Party's view of its history during this period is one which depicts it in terms of unmixed achievement, stressing the succesful broadening of public support, the more militant of its activities, and the development of mutual perception and understanding between it and the African National Congress. In the one scholarly study of the CPSA wartime history the author reflects the CPSA's own interpretation in his own analysis of the CPSA's apparently smooth and logical progression from a purist advocacy of 'class struggle' to a more pragmatic espousal of 'national liberation' (105).

As the evidence in this paper indicates things were more complicated than this. This period of the Party's history was characterised by its lack of militancy, its identification with African national aspirations was based on a most limited interpretation of what they should be, and an optimism that went well beyond most liberal prognostications of the capacity of white society to seriously entertain proposals for social reform (106).

Critics of the CPSA both at the time and more recently have suggested that by allegedly subordinating local interests to the dictates of international politics (and in particular the Soviet Union's role within them) important opportunities were squandered. Important forces within ruling circles favoured reforms; with more militant actions these would have been secured (107).

Of course it is also possible that popular militancy may have increased government intransigency particularly as the Communists and other opposition groups were still very weak organisations. Even the new African labour movement was highly vulnerable: mostly unskilled, predom--inantly in non-strategic industries, internally divided, and operating in a context of high urban unemployment was it really capable of deleivering really decisive blows against employers and the state? The CPSA's left-wing opponents in the trade union movement were contemptuous of the 'milk and water' methods employed by the CPSA in its campaign for African trade union recognition but their own strike actions were entirely confined to wage-related issues (108).

It may be more tenable, though, to argue that the CPSA's role during the war was as much a reflection of the experience and predisposition of its members as a consequence of externally imposed diktats. There were those, like the lawyer Franz Boshoff, suspended from the Party for accepting a state brief to act against Mpanza, who were still captives of their professional and social background (109). Then there were others, such as the veterans of the Jewish Workers' Club, who were representatives of a stream of Eastern European radicalism. For them identification with the needs of the Soviet workers' state required no external prompting (110). Some black men joined the Party because it stood for, in the words of Naboth Mokgatle, Pretoria

trade unionist, a society 'in which all children would have free education and equal opportunities ...(and)...all would have the right to vote'(111). Some of the Party's wartime adherents would have joined from a humanitarian impulse towards justice and equity rather than a knowledgable commitment to Marxism (112). The CPSA of the I940s represented a rich composite of South African political traditions. The one thing it was not was a Leninist vanguard of professional revolutionaries. It is not surprising, therefore, that it did not behave like one.

Notes and References:

I. Jill Nattrass, The South African Economy, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, I98I, p. I65.

2. D. Hobart Houghton, The South African Economy, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, I973, p.

3. Ibid, p. I22.

4. H J and R E Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa, I850 - I950, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 555.

5. A W Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield: Squatter Movements in Johannesburg, I944-I947', Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 6, No. I, I979.

6. This first found expression in Proclamation 3I of I939 which outlined a programme of livestock limitations and land conservation measures.

7. Cheryl Walker, Women and Resistance in South Africa, Onyx Press, London, I982, p. 70.

8. Leonard Thompson and Monica Wilson, Oxford History of South Africa, Volume 2, Oxford University Press, Ox ford, I97I, p. I99

9. Simons, op cit, p. 556.

I0. Thompson and Wilson, op cit,

II. For examples of expressions of pro-Russian sentiment by Government spokesmen see: Brian Bunting, Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary, Inkululeko Publications, London, I975, p. II3-II4.

I2. Simons, op cit, p. 540 and Inkululeko, (Johannesburg), 3 December I945.

I3. R K Cope, Comrade Bill, Stewart Printing Company, Cape Town, n.d. (I943). As well as sponsoring this biography through a 'W H Andrews Biography Fund' the CPSA also commissioned a bust of their chairman. Quite apart from electoral considerations there may also have been a desire to atone for the expulsion of Andrews in I93I. See Wilfred H Harrison, Memoirs of a socialist in South Africa, Stewart Printing Company, Cape Town, n.d. (I947).

I4. See profile of Edwin Mofutsanyana, Inkululeko, I7 June I942.

I5. Taffy Adler, 'Lithuania's Diaspora: The Johannesburg Jewish Workers' Club , I928-I948', Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 6, No. I, I980, p. 77. R K Cope, op cit., p. 33I.

I6. South African Communist Party, South African Communists Speak: Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party, I9I5-I980, Inkululeko Publications, London, I98I, p. I36.

I7. 'The Communist Party's Policy on the War Now!', statement by the Politburo of the Communist Party, August I940, reprinted in South African Communists Speak, p. I60.

I8. J. Morkel, 'The War and South Africa', Report delivered at a conference of the CPSA, March 23 - 24, I940, reprinted in South African Communists Speak, p. I49.

I9. Ibid.

20. The NEUF was formed in March I938 at a conference sponsored by the National Liberation League, a mainly Coloured organisation founded by James La Guma in Cape Town in I935. At the inception of the NEUF both Communists and Trotskyite influenced Coloured radicals were elected on to the Front's National Council.

2I. J. Morkel, op cit., p. I50. Bunting, op cit., pp. 97-98. Alan Brooks, From Class Struggle to National Liberation: The Communist Party of South Africa, I940 - I950, M A Dissertation, University of Sussex, I967, pp. 23-25.

22. Basner's decision to break with the Party are discussed in a transcript of a tape-recorded autobiography which is kept in the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, University of London. See Basner papers, B 28.

23. Simons, op cit, p. 532.

24. According to his biographer, Bram Fischer was 'deeply worried' by the pact. The source of this information is not attributed. See Naomi Mitchison, A Life for Africa: The Story of Bram Fischer, Merlin Press, London, I973, p. 50.

25. Simons argues that the Party needed 'no prompting from outside to define its attitude' but Morkel in his report states that at the time of the German-Soviet pact the Party 'was asked to be cautious in its attitude to the war that was ahead, and not rush in with support'. See Simons, op cit, p. 528, and South African Communists Speak, p. I49.

26. J Gomas, 'The War and Segregation', Freedom, June I940. Reprinted in South African Communists Speak, p. I5I.

27. 'How to beat Hitler', Inkululeko, 7 August I94I.

28. Ibid.

29. Extracts reprinted in South African Communists Speak, P. I72.

30. Report of the Central Committee to the Communist Party conference, I4-I6 January, I944. Reprinted in South African Communists Speak, p. I84.

3I. 'The Strike of African Workers and Compulsory Arbitration', Statement by the Central Committee of the CPSA, 3I December I942. Reprinted in South African Communists Speak, p. I77.

32. Bunting, op cit, p. II3.

33. This deficiency was partly compensated for by the existence of The Guardian, a left wing weekly published in Cape Town, which took a sympathetic position towards the CPSA. By I943 its editor was a Party member. I have yet to consult files of The Guardian.

34 Statement by Dr Y M Dadoo, 6 September I940, NEUF, Johannesburg.

35. Proposals for a militant strategy were adopted at the April I939 conference which formed the Front.

36. According to Basner's biographer Marks was expelled from the Party in I937-I938 for neglecting his duties as a party member. Marks had been preoccupied with financial problems as well as with campaigning on behalf of Basner in the I937 Native Senator elections. These were years of considerable disenchantment with the Party's policies among its black members. Marks rejoined the CPSA during the war . In the late I930s and early I940s he worked as book keeper for Richard Baloyi, Alexandra businessman, bus owner, and ANC Treasurer-General.

37. Inkululeko, 3 March I94I.

38. Brooks, op cit, p. 39.

39. See 'The Communist Party's Policy on the War Now!', statement by the Political Bureau, August I940, p. I54.

40. Interview with Edwin Mofutsanyana with Bob Edgar, Lesotho, I982. P. 38 of transcript.

4I. Inkululeko, 5 May I94I.

42. Statement by Dr Y M Dadoo.

43. For descriptions of Trotskyite agitation against the Party's new pro-war policy see: A Manson, C Sideris, and D Cachalia, An Oral History of the Life of William Barney Ngakane, SAIRR, Johannesburg, I982, pp. 42-45; Bunting, Moses Kotane, pp. I07-I08.

44. Johannesburg District Committee, Arm the People, Johannesburg, CPSA, I942. Reprinted in A B Lerumo, Fifty Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party, I92I-I97I, Inkululeko Publications, London, Revised Edition, I980, pp.II9-I25.

45. Inkululeko, 20 September I942.

46. Ibid, 23 January I943.

47. Ibid, 23 January I943 and Simons, op cit, p. 538.

48. Thomas Karis and Gwendoline Carter, From Protest to Challenge, Volume 2, Hoover Institution, Stanford, I973, p. I07 and p. 408.

49. Simons, op cit, p. 536.

50. During the I930s it only attempted to participate in a parliamentary election once, in I932 in Germiston, when it tried to register J B Marks as a candidate, as a protest against the exclusion of blacks from the franchise.

5I. Bunting, op cit, p. II3.

52. Communist Party of South Africa, We South Africans, Cape Town, I943, p. 34.

53. Ibid, p. 37.

54. As was reported at the Conference: 'Our participation in the elections of I942-I943 is only a beginning of a new period in the history of the South African people. Our experience has shown that our party can gain the good will and support of large sections. Our members who have been elected to the City Councils of Cape Town and East London are the first of a future body of Communists on parliamentary and other representative organs'. Communists in in Conference: The I943-I944 National Conference of the CPSA, CPSA, Cape Town, I944, p. 9.

55. See Leslie Witz, 'A Case of Schizophrenia: The Rise and Fall of the Independent Labour Party', University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, I984, paper, p. 29.

56. Inkululeko, 29 October I945.

57. H J Simons at the Party Conference, Cape Town, December I944, quoted by Bunting, op cit, p. I22.

58. J E N Tchamase, An African Speaks, CPSA, Cape Town, October I945, quoted by Bunting, op cit, p. I26.

59. Inkululeko, I2 November I945.

60. Rodney Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History, Macmillan, London, I977, p. 24I.

61. It may be possible to see in this phrase an oblique reference to the efforts to establish a Non-European Unity Movement by opponenets of the Communist Party and the ANC some of whom had been previously associated with Dadoo in the NEUF. Hirson suggests that the Anti-Pass campaign's timing may have sprung partly from a concern to pre-empt the launching of the NEUM. See I B Tabata, The Awakening of a People, Spokesmen Books, Nottingham, I974, pp. 95-I02; B Hirson, 'Prices, Homes and Transport', unpublished paper, footnote 99.

62. Circular letter from Mofutsanyana and Dadoo, Joint Convenors, Anti-Pass Committee, 23 November I943, AD 843, B 5I. 2. 2., South African Institute of Race Relations Papers, University of the Witwatersrand.

63. The members of the Committee were the following: E T Mofutsanyana, J B Marks, G D Moema, C S Ramahanoe, Y M Dadoo, D W Bopape, J Palmer, A E P Fish, J Xaba, E G Mokeana, O L Monongoaha, V Pillay, E P Mafethe, A S Mabuse. At least ten of these people had been or were at the time members of the CPSA.

64. Tabata alleges that initially Xuma opposed the campaign viewing it as an improper attempt to usurp the leadership role of the ANC. Tabta, op cit, p. 96.

65. Inkululeko, I0 June I944.

66. Ibid, 24 June I944.

67. For a full account of the local tensions which led to this incident see: Hilary Sapire, 'The Stay-Away of the Brakpan Location', University of the Witwatersratersrand History Workshop, I984, paper.

68. Inkululeko, 9 September, I944.

69. Ibid, 24 February I945.

70. Ibid, I0 March I945 and 24 March I945.

7I. Tabata, op cit, p. 96. Tabata's chronology may be confused. Here it is possible that he may be describing events in a post-war attempt to revive the campaign.

72. See Sapire, op cit, and Inkululeko, I0 June I944. In both centres the issue and restriction of lodger's permits was being used by the municipal authorities as a means of controlling the influx of African migrants into town.

73. Tabata, op cit, p. 98 and Edward Roux, Time Longer than Rope, University of Winsconsin, Madison, I964, p. 322. Both books were first published in I948.

74. The Boards, as their title implied, had no executive powers, and the four elected members were balenced by official nominees. The vote was confined to tenants and participation in Board elections was usually very low.

75. South African Worker, 26 September I936. Quoted in Kevin John French, James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party in the Development of Local Politics in Soweto, M A Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, I983, p. 54.

76. As referred to by Roux.

77. The most detailed examination of the role of different political organisations in the Alexandra boycott is by Hirson, op cit. See also, Alfred Stadler, 'A long way to walk', African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand seminar paper, I979.

78. Edward Roux, 'The Alexandra Bus Strike', Trek, 2I September, I945.

79. Inkululeko, 28 July I945.

80. French, op cit, pp. II8 - I28.

8I. Mofutsanyana interview, transcript, p. 47.

82. Johannesburg District Committee, Democracy in Action: Proceedings of the Johannesburg District Annual Conference of the Communist Party, March I7th, I8th and 25th, I945, CPSA, Johannesburg, I945, p. 6.

83. Ibid, p. 7.

84. In the Transvaal, for instance, groups or branches existed in: Central Johannesburg, Sophiatown, Western Native Township, Coronation, Orlando, Pimville, University of the Witwatersrand, Ferreirastown, Bertrams, Yeoville, Alexandra, Payneville (springs), Kliptown, Germiston, Benoni, Brakpan, Nigel, Lady Selborne, Marabastad, Eersteruste, Atteridgeville, Pretoria Central, Krugersdorp and Roodepoort.

85. Reports in Inkululeko, I943-I946 and Communists in Conference, p. 5.

86. For elaboration of this argument with reference to Port Elizabeth and the East Rand where a high level of cross-affiliation in the leadership of Trade Unions, the ANC and the CPSA was achieved see: Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since I945, Longman, London, I983, p. 5I and pp. I3I - I33.

87. Recently the Party's own historiography has placed more emphasis than previously on Maliba's work. Maliba and the ZCA are not mentioned at all in the first systematic survey of the Party's History, A Lerumo's 'After 40 Years', African Communist, no. 7, September I96I, and only in passing in Lerumo's later study. By the publication of South African Communists Speak, a revised view of Maliba's importance seems to have developed for his I939 pamphlet, published by the Johannesburg District Committee, The Conditions of the Venda People, is reprinted in full. The fullest study of Maliba's work is by Baruch Hirson ('Rural Revolt in South Africa, I937-I95I8, Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century, Volume 8, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, I978, pp. I20-I22). Hirson reports that the Party's involvement in peasant struggles was the subject of some debate in I940 with those who felt that the Party should not divert attention away from its urban activities emerging paramount. Hirson suggests also that the CPSA's advocacy of freehold land tenure in Maliba's pamphlet reflected a failure to examine and analyse the peasants' interests from marxist premises. Basner, who worked with Maliba during the early I944, implies that Maliba's activities were conducted in increasing isolation from the Party (Interview transcript, p. 50). It may have been the case that CPSA support for peasant struggles slackened after I94I as a consequence of its tactical abandonment of an anti-imperialist stance. From I928 the 'national problem' in Party theory was understood to include an important 'agrarian' dimension.

88. Inkululeko, 4 April I94I and Communists in Conference, I944.

89. Inkululeko, I5 April I944.

90. George Findlay Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Diary. Quoted in Richard Haines, 'Resistance and Acquiescence in the Zoutpansberg, I936 - I945', University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, I98I, paper, p. 6.

9I. R K Cope (op cit, pp. 332-333) views the ascendency of 'reactionaries' within the SA Trades and Labour Council as being completed by I940 with the defeat of an anti-war motion, the introduction of a block vote and the voting out of office of Bill Andrews.

92. For surveys of African Trade Union organisation during the first years of the war see: W H Andrews, Class Struggles in South Africa, Stewart Printing Company, Cape Town, I94I, p. 54; Friends of Africa Annual Report, October I940-June I94I, A L Saffrey Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, D I.

93. Communists in Conference, p. 5.

94. 'African Trade Unions and the Institute', Race Relations, Volume 8, Number 2, I94I.

95. Inkululeko, 27 March I943.

96. Inkululeko, I4 August I944 and Friends of Africa, Report for January - June I943, Saffrey Papers, D I. In January I94 the Union was unable to prevent power station employees from striking at the Victoria Falls works. Simons's account does not mention the Union's role in persuading the men to return to work (op cit, pp. 570-57I) stating simply that the strike was broken by the Native Military Corps.

97. Inkululeko, 23 September I944, I0 June I944, 28 January I946. See also Socialist Action Progressive Trade Union Bulletin, Vol. I, no. I, February I945 and Labour History Group, Workers at War: CNETU and the I946 African Mineworkers' Strike, Salt River, April I983.

98. Inkululeko, II April I944. A similar motion was adopted in I942 by the Port Elizabeth branch of the NEUF (Bunting, op cit, p. I08).

99. For CPSA participation in picketing during strike in January I943 of Durban rubber workers, see Inkululeko, 24 January I943.

I00. See for example the favourable Inkululeko report on the strike led by the Sweet Workers Union, 22 November I942. Here, though, the editorial attitude may have been influenced by the non-strategic nature of the industry. A Central Committee-endorsed publication, Ran Alexander's Trade Unions and You (CPSA, Cape Town, published after I94I but before the end of the war) devoted four pages (pp. I3 - I6) to a discussion of 'When to use the strike weapon'. Here no mention is made of any inhibiting war effort considerations. Is it possible that there was some disagreement within the Party leadership over the wartime strike policy?

I0I. These figures should not be accepted too literally. For discussion of their validity see Tom Lodge, 'Political Mobilisation during the I950s: An East London Case Study', paper shortly to be published in volume edited by Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido on class and nationalism in South Africa.

I02. The Revolutionary Communist, August I945, p. 3.

I03. Socialist Action Progressive Trade Union Bulletin, Volume I, Number I, February I945.

I04. Inkululeko, II August I945. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 334.

I05. Brooks, op cit. Lerumo's Fifty Fighting Years associates the Party's growing influence to a 'leftward trend of the people' (p. 72).

I06. In at least Pretoria the American 'Browderite' thesis which argued that the Communist Party should support 'New Deal' elements within the Roosevelt administration and cease to undertake independent organisation of the working class was sufficiently influential to be attacked in a pamphlet by George Findlay. For examples of liberal social pessimism see Paul Rich's discussion of Alfred

Hoernle in his White Power and the Liberal Conscience, University of Manchester Press, Manchester, I984, pp. 66-76.

I07. For a recent re-statement of this view see Richard Monroe, 'Lessons of the I950s', Inqaba ya Basebenzi, no. I3, March - May I984, p. 9.

I08. Socialist Action Progressive Trade Union Bulletin, Volume I, Number I, February I945, p. 4.

I09. The full circumstances of the Boshoff affair were described in a police report tabled in the House of Assembly. Union of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates, June 9th - 25th I952, p. 7953. See also Inkululeko, II March I946.

II0. The obituary of Private Mendel Flior in Inkululeko, 8 July I944 is suggestive. Flior was killed in Italy at the age of 23. Born in Dvinsk in Latvia he joined the Jewish Workers Club shortly after his arrival in South Africa in the mid I930s. As a cabinet maker he became an active trade unionist. He joined the CPSA in I940. An elder brother died in Spain as a member of the International Brigade.

III. Naboth Mokgatle, Autobiography of an Unknown African, University of California, Berkerley, I97I, p. 234.

II2. Hilda Bernstein, for example, joined the CPSA just before the war because it was 'the only political party that had no colour bar'. Hilda Bernstein, The World that was ours, Heinemann, London, I967.