

**THE BALANCE OF POWER AND THE
TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER HEREDITATUS CULTURAEQUE SCIENTIAE (HISTORY)

at the

Department of Historical and Heritage Studies
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
2005

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*Julle is die oorheersers
en julle die vertrappers
van ons wat sterk is,
maar magteloos verneder;
julle maal ons soos koring,
julle eet ons soos brood;
tog haat ons julle nie:
omdat julle mens is
en die dood ook deelagtig,
is julle ons broers;
maar julle is siek
aan die lasterlike hoogmoed.
Daarom moet julle
tot neederigheid genees word,
gebreek word deur ons
in ons magtige opstand
tot eenvoudige vreugdes,
tot die heilige lye,
tot 'n nuwe onmiddelikheid
van die heldere aarde;
maar as julle dood
en 'n vrot plek in ons volk is,
dan sal ons 'n mes vat
en vinnig, genadiglik
sny deur spiere
en vleis tot genesing.
- NP van Wyk Louw*

*Black and white make a contrast.
Black stands out clearly on white,
White is sharp and visible on black.
White on white is bland to invisibility,
Black on black merges into infinity.
Black needs white, white needs black,
To write a song, or right a wrong,
To make a pointer, or point to our maker.
And if they merge into subtle shades of grey?
Or find an identity in being differently the same?
Then they will have found their place and role
in this earth,
this life,
Which needs both night and day.
- DJ Gynes*

INTRODUCTION

The greatest danger – and the danger which, to a certain extent, Government did not escape in the past – is to think in ideological instead of realistic and pragmatic terms.

This does not mean that all principles and policy standpoints must be thrown overboard. To date many ideological –isms, such as socialism and fascism, have run aground because, like religion, it was regarded as an absolute truth, instead of a political policy which continuously has to keep pace with changing realities.¹

- Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Constitutional Development, 1990.

This is a study of the transition to democracy in South Africa. It is not intended to be an exhaustive account of the events that marked the abolition of apartheid and the introduction of democracy in South Africa, but it is rather an attempt – within a broad theoretical framework – to pose and address the seminal historical question of why apartheid ended as it did, and why democracy superseded apartheid in South Africa. Inherent in this decisive endeavour of asking *why*, however, is also the concomitant historical obligation of asking *how*. Hence this study seeks to both portray at length *and* interpret in depth the historical process of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Thus, while the prime focus of this study remains an analysis of the actual transition from apartheid to democracy, a comprehensive understanding of this transition, it was thought, requires a thorough understanding of the factors and processes that underpinned the establishing and perpetuation of the system of apartheid in the first place. A methodical and descriptive examination of the entire period of what is historically known as apartheid (thus 1948-c.1990) is therefore also incorporated into the elaboration of the theoretical analysis of the transition to democracy attempted in this study.

Since the 1970s there has been a vigorous historiographical debate on the character of the conflict during apartheid and of the subsequent democratic transition in South Africa.² Two schools of

¹ Progress with negotiations (Interview with Gerrit Viljoen), in RSA Policy Review, Volume 3, Number 5, 1990, p. 20.

² Details for the discussion on the historiography and methodology of the transition are largely taken from A Habib, The transition to democracy in South Africa: developing a dynamic model, in Transformation 27, 1995; DR Howarth, Paradigms gained? A critique of theories and explanations of democratic transition in South Africa, in DR Howarth and AJ Norval (eds.), South Africa in transition. New theoretical perspectives; E Webster and G Adler, Toward a class compromise in South Africa's 'Double Transition': bargained liberalization and the consolidation of democracy, in Politics and Society, Volume 27, Number 3, September 1999; H Marais, South Africa: limits to change. The political economy of South Africa's transition.

thought have predominated in this debate. On the one hand, scholars associated with the liberal modernisation school have maintained that the struggle in South Africa was one characterised by conflict between racial or national groups, and that the racial character of class inequality was a consequence of the White monopoly of political power. Scholars associated with the Marxist or neo-Marxist school, on the other hand, have insisted that the conflict in South Africa should be ascribed to differences in class, and that race is merely often the means by which class has expressed itself in South Africa. Conversely, liberal modernisation theorists have maintained that apartheid and capitalism were essentially incompatible since the strictures of apartheid had not taken cognisance of the structural requirements of the economy. Thus historians like Lipton [Capitalism and apartheid: South Africa, 1910-1984 (1986)] and Bromberger and Hughes [Capitalism and underdevelopment in South Africa, in J Butler, R Elphick and D Welsh (eds.), Democratic Liberalism in South Africa: its history and prospect (1987)] have argued that the cheap labour system and the inadequate education meted out to Blacks under apartheid contributed to a crippling skills shortage and an underdeveloped home market. Michael O'Dowd [South Africa in the light of the stages of economic growth, in L Schlemmer and E Webster (eds.), Change, reform and economic growth in South Africa (1978)] also suggested that South Africa's repressive labour system was typical of advanced capitalist democracies in an earlier stage of their development, and that the rationalising imperatives of capital accumulation would over time erode apartheid. Democracy, O'Dowd concluded, was perfectly compatible with capitalism in South Africa, and its realisation would be a product of evolutionary change.

Marxist and neo-Marxist theorists, however, have tended to delineate the relationship between capitalism and apartheid as a functional one. Capitalist industrialisation in South Africa, historians like Legassick [South Africa: forced labour, industrialisation and racial differentiation, in R Harris (ed.), The political economy of South Africa (1975)] and Johnston [Class, race and gold: a study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa (1976)] maintained, was dependent on the availability of cheap labour, and thus the state modified the existing reserve system to enable it to support workers' families as they travelled as migrant workers to service the expanding mining industry of South Africa. Democracy, Legassick [South Africa in crisis: what route to democracy?, in *African Affairs*, 84 (334)] and other Marxist historians insisted, was incompatible with a market economy in the light of the peculiar path of capitalist development in South Africa. With the advent of the transitional period in South Africa, however, some of the conclusions of both schools were progressively rendered obsolete. Liberal modernisation theorists who foresaw the evolutionary progression of capitalism to a less stratified order found great

difficulty in explaining the increased conflict engendered by capitalism after 1973, while Marxist scholars who had previously denied the possibilities of democracy emerging within the framework of a market-based economic and social system were hard put to explain the emergence of a post-apartheid, democratically elected government in South Africa. Nevertheless, some Marxist scholars countered by claiming that, while the realisation of democracy was possible, the actual de-racialisation of capitalism in South Africa was improbable.

The literature on South Africa's democratic transition has generally utilised a programmatic or descriptive form. Much of the earlier literature of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were deterministic accounts, as for example Lipset [Political Man (1960)], who concluded that the possibilities of a nation sustaining democracy was conditioned by the state of its economic development. Yet, in contrast to the structural explanations for transitions that implied a kind of inevitability thesis, Rustow [Transitions to democracy: toward a dynamic model, in *Comparative Politics*, 2 (3), (1970)] argued that, despite the correlation demonstrated by functional accounts between structural factors and democracy, such correlations did not necessarily imply causation. Thus, Rustow recommended the development of an alternative genetic model that placed less emphasis on structural factors and more on the behaviour, circumstances and decisions of elites, political and social movements, administrators, and the wider population. Linz and Stephan [The breakdown of democratic regimes: crisis, breakdown, and re-equilibration (1978)] continued Rustow's argument by focusing directly on elites and ascribing the breakdown of democracy to poor democratic leadership. In a similar methodological vein, O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead [Transitions from authoritarian rule (1986)] emphasised elite dispositions, machinations, and pacts to delineate the emergence of transitions and the subsequent development of the parameters of liberalisation and democratisation in South Africa.

Unsurprisingly thus, the dominant methodological approach in the literature emanating from South Africa concerned with the democratic transition from apartheid has become a genetic one. The essential tension in the literature concerns the amount of focus to be placed on the behaviour and decisions of elites as the sole independent variable, and whether to broaden the analytical spectrum to incorporate social movements and other social actors as independent variables who also influence the substantive content of and the prospects for the consolidation of the transition. The methodological divide has witnessed a bifurcation between mainstream (mainly liberal) and radical (mainly Marxist scholars). Mainstream works such as Adam and Moodley [The opening of the apartheid mind: options for the new South Africa (1993)], Friedman [The long journey.

South Africa's quest for a negotiated settlement (1993)], Rantete and Giliomee [Transition to democracy through transaction?: bilateral negotiations between the ANC and NP in South Africa, in *African Affairs*, 91 (1992)], Lee and Schlemmer [Transition to democracy: policy perspectives 1991 (1991)], Van Zyl Slabbert [The quest for democracy: South Africa in transition (1992)], Friedman and Atkinson (eds.) [South Africa Review 7. The small miracle: South Africa's negotiated settlement. (1994)], Rantete [The ANC and the negotiated settlement in South Africa (1998)], Sisk [Democratization in South Africa: the elusive social contract (1995)], Sparks [Tomorrow is another country. The inside story of South Africa's road to change (1995)], Spitz [The politics of transition. A hidden history of South Africa's negotiated settlement (2000)], Ottaway [South Africa: the struggle for a new order (1993)], and Waldmeir [Anatomy of a miracle. The end of apartheid and the birth of the New South Africa (1997)] have tended to focus their analyses on the major political parties and the foremost political events, and on the political pacts that were being forged in the negotiations of the transitional period. Radical scholars like Saul [Structural reform: a model for the revolutionary transformation of South Africa, in *Transformation* 20 (1992) and Thinking the unthinkable: globalism, socialism, and democracy in the South African transition, in R Miliband and L Panitch (eds.), The socialist register 1994 (1994)], Webster and Adler [Toward a class compromise in South Africa's 'Double transition': bargained liberalization and the consolidation of democracy, in *Politics and Society*, Volume 27, Number 3 (1999)], Taylor and Vale [South Africa's transition revisited: globalisation as vision and virtue, in *Global Society*, Volume 14, Number 3 (2000)], Murray [Revolution deferred. The painful birth of post-apartheid South Africa (1994)], and Marais [South Africa: limits to change. The political economy of transition (2001)], on the other hand, have argued that the undue focus on elites led scholars to misunderstand the role of popular movements (especially the labour movement) and 'struggle' in the origin, development, and outcome of the actual transition.

Within what can be considered as the mainstream of methodological academia on the subject, four prominent methods of analysing democratisation in South Africa have emerged. Firstly, by tying constitutional reform to the actual dynamics of democratic transition in South Africa, constitutionalism – as prominently presented in Donald Horowitz's book A democratic South Africa? Constitutional engineering in a divided society (1991) – argued for the primacy of constitutional and institutional forms likely to facilitate democracy in South Africa. Horowitz identified the roots of conflict in South Africa as emanating from both the pervasive presence of ascriptive racial and ethnic hierarchies and the propensity to hegemony by aspirant political groups. Secondly, the Institutional Rational Choice approach embodied in Timothy Sisk's

Democratisation in South Africa (1995) described the central cause of transition in South Africa as a shift in the perceptions of the major political actors from a zero-sum to a positive-sum game, thus the realisation that the costs of attaining an undisputed victory by one actor was outweighed by the apparent value of reaching a mutually favourable settlement. Following this realisation, a period of uncertainty inevitably ensues, but the momentum of the negotiating process is maintained by the concluding of various bilateral pacts that involves all the political actors in the transitional process. The negotiation process itself is marked by modification of the divergent interests of the parties as convergence transpires between the moderate centres in order to avoid violent conflict. In conclusion, Sisk investigated the kind of social contract that resulted from the transitional period, and the chances of its consolidation in South Africa.

Thirdly, a number of South African scholars have also drawn on comparative studies of democratisation in Latin America and Southern Europe to present a coherent model of democratic transition. Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert's The quest for democracy (1992), for instance, argued that international debates about democracy have witnessed both a growing ideological convergence around the predominance of market-driven economies and an increasing consensus of belief about the meaning of democracy. Slabbert emphasised the critical role of key political actors and their strategic decisions concerning democracy and democratisation, since these inform the process of overcoming obstacles and realising opportunities in the transitional process. In essence, according to Slabbert's analysis, the three processes that the transitional negotiations should address to ensure a favourable, democratic outcome are normalisation, democratisation, and consolidation. Fourthly, in The Negotiated Revolution (1993) Heribert Adam and Koogila Moodley adopted a hermeneutical approach to social action, maintaining that the issues of future economic control and political power underlay the transitional negotiations in South Africa. Thus, by its attempts to enshrine minority and property rights in the forthcoming constitution, the NP, Adam and Moodley argued, endeavoured to prevent a post-apartheid ANC-led government from intervening to reduce economic inequalities and disparities of wealth. Adam and Moodley refuted the perception that the NP was compelled to negotiate either via apparent military defeat in Angola or widespread political resistance inside South Africa, and instead underscored FW de Klerk's realisation of the 'opportunity' offered by the collapse of the Soviet Union to seek a favourable settlement in South Africa.

In contrast to these mainstream methodological approaches, the Marxist account of the transition emphasised a materialistic analysis of South African politics. Thus in the articles collected in his

book Recolonization and resistance in Southern Africa in the 1990s (1993), John Saul eschewed the implications of elite pacting in the South African transition, and rather emphasised an analysis of the likely possibilities of structural reform in South Africa. With the militant ANC campaigns of 1991 and 1992, the negotiating process of the early 1990s, Saul maintained, was shaped as much by mass action as by elite negotiators. In the same vein, Hein Marais expounded the Marxist methodological approach on the South African democratic transition by arguing in his book South Africa: limits to change that “The impasse (in South Africa) rested on the dire need to modernize and reinvigorate the processes of capital accumulation, on the apartheid state’s simultaneous inability to manage the expansive forms of restructuring that were required, and on the democratic opposition’s ability to challenge and veto the haphazard ‘modernization’ attempts of the state and of capital.”³

The methodologies and resultant historiography of the South African transition thus came to be characterised by a marked bifurcation between the opposing schools of the liberal modernisation (or so-called mainstream) theorists and Marxist (or radical) theorists. While both schools have contributed to an understanding of certain aspects of the transition, neither has been able to furnish a holistic and in-depth presentation of the entire transitional process. By emphasising the role of individual decision-makers and the formal negotiations process – and thus sketching a kind of psycho-social account of the transition – as the liberal modernisation school did, or alternatively, by focusing on social struggles and on structural dynamics as is the case with the Marxist school, both schools have succumbed to an inevitability thesis and have ignored significant developments that crucially influenced the substantive character of the South African transition. Significantly thus, this study seeks to avoid the obvious limitations of both the prominent methodological approaches by incorporating considerable elements of both schools within a broad theoretical and narrative approach to the South African transition. This approach was preferred so as to afford the author unbounded scope for interpretation, yet also the theoretical mechanisms to be able to produce a study that would hopefully add to the emerging theoretical discourse on the South African transition. Thus, in effect, the intention of this study was not to apply fact to theory in the first instance – i.e. enforcing a rigid theoretical and structural model on historical data irrespective of intersecting trends – but rather to apply theory to fact as a consequential process of historical data analysis. In other words, in this study the historical data and evidence was first viewed ‘in their own right,’ and subsequently via an intuitive analytical process, a broad theoretical framework was developed and applied with the

³ Quotation taken from H Marais, South Africa: limits to change, p. 3.

intention of adequately and comprehensively explaining and interpreting the South African transition from apartheid to democracy.

Therefore, while avoiding the entrapments inherent in enforcing the dictates of any single methodological interpretation and instead relying on the utilisation of a theoretically unhindered approach, this study seeks to produce a methodologically unconstrained yet historically and theoretically comprehensive and in-depth appreciation of *why* and *how* apartheid ended as it did and *why* and *how* democracy superseded apartheid in South Africa. The objective was thus not to amplify the historical process of the transition via the sustained utilisation of any particular methodological approach, but rather to add to the current discourse on the South African transition by simply elucidating the multifaceted reasons for and the complex nature of South Africa's transitional process via the application of various methodologies in the research, reflection, and analysis processes. Thus the author of this study thought it necessary to include an extensive narrative description of the political events that shaped and characterised apartheid and the South African transition, as well as of the activities and influences of political elites and elite pacting in the transitional negotiations process. In addition, the study also includes an in-depth account of underlying structural economic circumstances and processes, as well as a considerable appreciation of the role and impact of the general populace in the events that shaped the transitional process. In order therefore to attain what is hoped to be a comprehensive and effective understanding of the South African transition, interpretations of both class *and* race were incorporated in this study.

Thus, elements of Timothy Sisk's Institutional Rational Choice model were incorporated into the discussion in this study on substantive negotiations in South Africa after 1990, as the changed perceptions of individuals and factions in both the White and Black assemblages were thought to have significantly contributed to the facilitation of negotiations in South Africa. Moreover, this study also illustrates how an initial period of uncertainty ensued that nonetheless witnessed the signing of various pacts that maintained the momentum of the transitional process, and how a settlement eventually transpired as both the ANC and the NP progressively modified their negotiating stances. This study also endeavoured to portray the critical importance of the role and strategic decisions of key political actors in the transitional process, as Van Zyl Slabbert recommended, and the decisive importance of the push for a market-driven economy that had characterised numerous transitions is likewise incorporated as a central tenet of the theoretical argument explaining the South African democratic transition. Similarly, the NP's reluctance to

simply abrogate political and economic power and their resultant macroeconomic machinations and oblique negotiating strategies with the ANC (as Adam and Moodley posited) are likewise addressed in this study so as to present a holistic and comprehensive portrayal of the peculiar disposition of the South African transition. Yet apart from racial and political tenets of mainstream methodologies that are utilised in this study, the essentially Marxist methodological focus areas of economic structural fluctuations, the implications of class antecedents, and the role of the populace and mass action (as opposed to focusing simply on political developments and elite pacting) were also considered essential to produce the comprehensive and effective explanation of the South African transition that this study set out to accomplish.

The incorporation of various elements from a wide spectrum of the methodological divide was deemed indispensable to the comprehensive theoretical appreciation that the author endeavoured to utilise to adequately explain the historical process of the South African transition to democracy. In this regard, an extensive appreciation and comprehension of both the political and economic events and processes in South Africa's recent history were thought to be essential to attempt to attain a complete understanding of the transition from apartheid to democracy. Thus this study will attempt to delineate South Africa's transition as the ultimate consequence of the sustained and decisive clash between the enforced political constructs (or 'ideological terms' in the words of Gerrit Viljoen) of apartheid and the inexorably prevailing economic realities in South Africa. This study will seek to establish that, from the outset, the political superstructure of apartheid was implemented in order to impose certain strictly political interventionist measures from the realm of governance over and above the general structural economic concerns (or the 'realistic and pragmatic terms' as enunciated by Gerrit Viljoen) of the South African polity. As a largely ethnically confined political party, in response to the perceived contemporaneous cultural, economic, and social underdeveloped state of most Afrikaners, the National Party (NP) in 1948 utilised the attainment of political power to impose the elaborate system of apartheid as an interventionist and responsive political superstructure with the intention of forcibly improving and perpetuating the enhanced social standing of Afrikaners. The concomitant yet less politically prominent economic components (i.e. the utilisation of a substantial unskilled labour force, negligible fiscal expenditure, and the structural reliance on largely mineral exports and foreign investment) of this interventionist programme initially complemented the as yet underdeveloped and 'unmodernised' configuration of the South African economy, and hence a period of rapid economic growth and industrialisation ensued after 1948 that temporarily obscured the long-term

structural deficiencies of the South African economy and apparently justified the suppression of any form of resistance to apartheid.

The concept of a ‘balance of power’ may at first reflection appear to be a somewhat anachronistic framework to apply to South Africa’s transitional process. Indeed, the concept has been more readily associated with the model of international relations prevalent in nineteenth- and early twentieth century Europe. In essence, however, the concept refers to the enforced or organic counterbalance of competing ideas, ideologies, and influences that shape the political landscape of any given milieu at any given time. Hence such a pivotal balance (or more to the point, an imbalance) of forces also distinctively characterised the political dynamics of the South African polity in the second half of the twentieth century, and thus for this very reason the concept of a ‘balance of power’ was deemed optimal to fashion an adequate exposition of the elongated South African transition from apartheid to democracy. This study posits that the antecedents that shaped the contours of the South African transitional history were indeed consequent of a counterbalance of political vis-à-vis economic ideas, perceptions, and ideologies. The altered counterbalance between these ideological superstructures in 20th century South African history, moreover, is utilised to evince a thorough explanation of South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy.

The concept of a balance of power in South Africa is thus incorporated as the embodiment of a theoretical argument that delineates the South African transition as emanating from a decisive shift in the balance of power from an overtly political predilection to an inexorably economic predominance. In essence, the theoretical hypothesis of this study can be encapsulated in the following sentences:

*The introduction of apartheid was a decidedly political, Afrikaner endeavour. As a responsive, reactionary mechanism, apartheid was formulated as a political programme to uplift Afrikaners socially, economically, and culturally. The economic advancement of Afrikaners was no doubt an integral part of this endeavour, yet the entire superstructure of apartheid was a political flagship and not an elaborate economic programme that sought to advance the general economy of South Africa as its prime objective; instead, the **political** advancement and insulation of Afrikaners were the prime objectives of apartheid. The unremitting economic recession that occurred from the mid-1970s in South Africa, however, or in other words, the persistent stagnation of the South African economy under the auspices of apartheid*

*rule, enforced a gradual albeit sustained shift of emphasis within the South African polity. The flagging South African economy induced an appreciation of the imperative for political change so as to enable economic change as well. Thus the political focus of previous decades had been superseded by a marked **economic** balance of power that recognised the need to cede the political power of apartheid in order to address the economic regression that had beset South Africa. This shift in the balance of power facilitated the abolition of apartheid and the subsequent transition to democracy.*

The theoretical framework outlined above is illustrated here in a very simplified form, and will be unpacked at length in the chapters to follow this introduction. This theoretical framework was the product of a literature review that sought as its prime objective to provide a succinct yet effective historical explanation for the South African transition from apartheid to democracy. To this end a multiplicity of sources from the full spectrum of the theoretical divide have been perused by the author with the intention of providing a rounded and comprehensive explanation for the transition. This study, therefore, does not proceed with the usual application of a methodological construction to explain the historical events of the transition from the perspective of a particular theoretical school. Rather, this study sought to subject primary and secondary sources to a critical analysis that would result in a carefully constructed appreciation of the factors and processes that shaped the South African transition. The South African nation in the 21st century still lives very much in the shadow of the country's transition from its traumatic apartheid past, and hence the object with this study was to provide a historical study from a 21st century perspective on what is still a very contemporary topic. Thus by incorporating various theoretical and methodological elements from a wide spectrum, and yet by also developing a distinct theoretical framework to illuminate the underlying currents of the transition, this study is an attempt by the author to further our understanding of the transition via a unique multi-sourced and focused theoretical framework.

Thus although this study ambitiously covers an extensive historical period, the only aim of this study was in the first instance to provide a clearly-defined explanation of the prime factors and processes that facilitated the South African transition from apartheid to democracy. In this regard this study has utilised the somewhat contentious concepts of a political balance of power and an economic balance of power. The utilisation of the theoretical framework associated with these concepts has inevitably required the author to engage in some forms of reductionism and

generalisation. Yet inevitably, such vices as these are necessary accompaniments of any extensive historical study, and with their usage within the theoretical framework of this study it is hoped that the reader will find their application acceptable. The political balance of power that resulted after 1948 – as this study maintains – need not necessarily have been the only factor underpinning the introduction of apartheid. Similarly, the drive for economic resolution was certainly not the only consideration that impinged on the NP and the ANC in their negotiations regarding the transition from democracy. Indeed, criticism could even be levelled that certain factions within the ANC were inspired more by exclusively political factors rather than economic considerations in their dealings in the 1990s, and also that various political considerations proliferated within the ANC government after 1994. The argument presented in this study does not necessarily jettison these considerations. Instead, what this study intended to portray was not an exhaustive account of the South African transition, but rather an exposition of only the *prime and continuous factors and processes* that underlay South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. In this endeavour this study identifies several continuities and interrelated processes, and hence the adoption of the political/economic balances of power framework. Thus this study does not explore the ANC and NP as independent actors in the period of the transition, but rather seeks to incorporate these assemblages as actors within the theoretical framework (as utilised in this study) that underlay South Africa's process of transition. If the historical presentations exhibited in this study of for instance the ANC and the NP may thus appear incomplete, it should be noted that the prime objective of this study was to delineate the theoretical framework applied to South Africa's transition and not to portray an exhaustive picture of any political person or party concerned in the elongated transitional process.

A very particular perspective is thus employed throughout this study. While the prejudices of the author will no doubt have influenced the research and analytical process of this study, the perspective of this study is not intended to reflect the position of any assemblage or individual involved in the actual process, but rather to outline the trajectory and historical development of the events that informed the theory that forms the basis of the study. In accordance, where it was deemed appropriate to illustrate the progression of the theoretical framework of this study, certain historical events and implications have been emphasised while others have not. It is hoped that this procedure has not produced a lopsided historical account but rather an adequate and efficient explanation of the underlying currents and crucial developments of South Africa's elongated transition from apartheid to democracy.

As this study will seek to illustrate, the political superstructure and the concomitant economic framework imposed under the aegis of the political balance of power induced an ingrained and sustained structural economic corrosion in South Africa as economic growth and development became progressively stunted by the retrogressive politically orientated policies maintained by the government. From roughly the mid-1970s, South Africa's hitherto virtually exponential annual economic growth rate was transposed into a period of downright economic degeneration. This study will seek to render an in-depth explanation of the structural factors that contributed to this decisive economic malaise, and as an introductory rendition, the following facts can be recounted here. The fiscal costs required by apartheid had begun to proliferate, enticing expanded state expenditure and resultant inflation. Moreover, the period of rapid economic growth in South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s and the consequential development of the economy had induced an increasing need for skilled and semi-skilled labour – in stark contrast to the small quantity of White labourers and the vast majority of unskilled Black labourers who were by law and practice confined to unskilled labour. In addition, the structural over-dependence on gold exports and the deep-seated reliance on imports of capital and intermediary goods and oil had rendered South Africa crucially vulnerable to global trade fluctuations. Yet, the forced predominance of the political auspices inherent in the political balance of power preserved these counter-productive and ineffectual economic practices in South Africa. This period of the predominance of political constructs over underlying economic realities is theoretically defined in the study as the political balance of power, and is covered in-depth in part one of the narrative.

The palpable and detrimental economic crisis that had been initiated and was perpetuated by the political balance of power nonetheless became clearly visible. As a result, in an attempt to offset the damaging regression of the South African economy, a myriad of reform initiatives resulted from the realm of government that sought to blunt the manifest aspects of apartheid while not infringing on the core political safeguards of White hegemony inherent in the political balance of power. It was only with the advent of the 1990s that FW de Klerk resolved to utilise the contemporaneous altered global circumstances to endeavour to reach a nascent settlement with the hitherto banned and vilified African National Congress (ANC). Yet, De Klerk's unprecedented liberalising actions of the early 1990s, while significant in that they presaged the abolition of White political hegemony, retained residual elements of the political balance of power in the form of negotiation demands by the NP for the protection of minority rights in the forthcoming democracy. Four years of excruciating bilateral and multi-party negotiations, however, would – as this study will show – eventually yield a settlement that did not include any

such constitutional residue of the political balance of power. The growing global consensus of the late 1980s advocating the primacy of negotiations, coupled with the involvement of numerous international actors and the excruciating process of negotiations in South Africa of the early 1990s would likewise lead the ANC to progressively jettison its initial political interventionist policies such as nationalisation, forced redistribution of wealth, and an envisaged pivotal planning role for the central government in the running of the economy. What this study will thus proceed to illustrate is the advent after 1994 of a governmental structure intent on addressing the exigencies of the South African economy as its prime policy objective in the absence of any concerns related to a forced political preponderance. This epoch will theoretically be enunciated in the study as the economic balance of power, and its arduous implementation will be related in part two of the study.

In toto, the economic balance of power and the antecedent political balance of power are collectively articulated as the balance of power and utilised in this study to elucidate the extensive historical process of South Africa's elongated transition from apartheid to democracy. Within the structural economic deficiencies inherent in the enforced precepts of the political balance of power and the resultant debilitating economic malaise in South Africa lay the germination of an economic balance of power that encapsulated South Africa's transition to a non-racial democratic state. This study will illustrate how the economic regression under the aegis of the political balance of power in South Africa became the focal point and guiding incentive for the endeavour for a democratic resolution in South Africa, and how an economic balance of power with a pre-eminent focus on the unfettered administration of the economy emerged from the transition in fundamental contrast to the elongated period of counter-productive political meandering that had preceded the democratic transition. By utilising the theoretical implications of fluctuations in the balance of power, this study will thus attempt to adequately explain the causes and progress of the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa. By these means it is hoped that this study will make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing research on South Africa's remarkable transition from institutionalised racial domination to majority rule and a fledgling democratic order.

As for the methodical sequence of this study, the first chapter will trace the origin and introduction of the political balance of power in South Africa from the NP electoral victory of 1948, as well as the Black resistance that was evoked in this regard. This chapter will seek to provide a meaningful explanatory rendition of the background and antecedents of the political

interventionist programme launched by the NP after 1948, and will set out to impart a descriptive historical account of the political events as well as the economic and social machinations that accompanied the installation of the political balance of power. The opening chapter will also proceed to an analysis of the prevailing structural economic crisis that the political balance of power engineered in South Africa in the 1970s, and will illustrate the impact and initial response that this budding crisis evoked among South Africa's political and business fraternities. The second and third chapters will, accordingly, emphasise the evolving reform initiatives of the John Vorster and PW Botha administrations, as well as the burgeoning economic crises that these two leaders grappled with within the persistent paradigm of the increasingly beleaguered political balance of power. The second chapter will also delineate Vorster's fervent attempts to engineer a period of détente in South Africa's relations with African countries, as well as the significance of the advent of civil war in Angola and the resuscitation of internal unrest in South Africa in the 1970s in the form of the Black Consciousness Movement. Yet the integral economic component of the theoretical scrutiny of this study will be maintained throughout these chapters, as will the argumentative analysis ancillary to the theoretical essence of this study. Thus the third chapter will articulate the continuing economic crisis that engrossed the South African polity in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the increasingly recalcitrant behaviour of many White businessmen in their dealings with the government. In addition, the political progression of PW Botha's elaborate strategic and reformist initiatives, as well as the concomitant proliferation of internal unrest and military confrontation, will also be considered in this chapter. Lastly, the third chapter will proceed to describe the rise of FW de Klerk in the NP hierarchy, and will investigate at length the origins and development of his altered political outlook.

In a minor shift of focus, the fourth chapter will investigate the changes that occurred within the assemblage of the ANC from the early 1980s onwards. Thus this chapter will illustrate the ANC's gradual strategical acceptance of the inevitability of negotiations with the government, and the pivotal role played by the imprisoned Nelson Mandela in this regard. The fifth and final chapter will track the excruciating path of negotiations that preceded South Africa's transitional settlement of 1994, and will therewith illustrate how the political balance of power in South Africa was gradually yet unequivocally superseded by the economic balance of power. Accompanied by a detailed analysis of South Africa's decisive and recurring economic crisis, the final chapter will elucidate South Africa's inexorable progress towards the economic balance of power and a neo-liberal governmental structure in the absence of political interventionist policies. At the same time the final chapter will illustrate at length the political wrangling and violence that

characterised the elongated process of negotiations in South Africa, and will clearly describe the progressive economic *and* political collusion between the ANC and the NP. In addition, also to be investigated in depth will be other decisive events and processes that contributed to the ultimate termination of the political balance of power and the advent of the economic balance of power in South Africa – the seminal structural process that underlay South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.

PART 1

‘Winning all the battles and still losing the war:’ The passage of the political balance of power in South Africa

They accuse me of deviating from the direction of the past. I am not deviating from my direction, but – and this I learned from Dr Malan, and I stand by it still – if, in order to maintain my direction and to attain my objective, I have to take a different road, then I will do it. It is only a fool that, even if it is flooded, perseveres on the same road when there is a better road to attain his objective.⁴

- PW Botha, 1981.

⁴ JJJ Scholtz (compiler), Vegter en hervormer. Grepe uit die toesprake van P.W. Botha, p. 6. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

1

Built not to last:

The origins and implementation of the political balance of power in South Africa

At the outbreak of World War II, as a group, Afrikaners could have been regarded as underdeveloped. The grandparents and parents of the present generation of English-speakers, which is now so conspicuously occupied with poverty in South Africa, manifestly turned their backs on the poverty of this underdeveloped group. Worse still, they sometimes deliberately blocked its development.⁵

- J Sadie, Afrikaner economist, 1975.

A political strategy for a political assessment

The 1948 election victory by the National Party came as a shock to Nelson Mandela. If the United Party and General Smuts could triumph over the Nazis, then surely they would be able to make short work of DF Malan's NP in the national election, Mandela thought. On the day of the election, Mandela attended a political gathering with among others Oliver Tambo, and the possibility of a NP victory at the polls was regarded as being so remote that it was barely discussed at the meeting. The meeting went on all through the night, and when Mandela emerged from the meeting at dawn the next day, he learned from newspaper stalls that the NP had triumphed in the election after all. Mandela was "stunned and dismayed," but Oliver Tambo expressed satisfaction with the election result. Incredulous at Tambo's outlook, Mandela was at a loss to explain Tambo's sentiments. Tambo answered Mandela by saying, "Now we will know exactly who our enemies are and where we stand."⁶

The surprise victory of DF Malan's National Party in the 1948 general election induced consternation among virtually all of South Africa's sparring constituencies. JG Strijdom, at this time a close confidant of the designated Prime Minister Malan and himself a future Prime Minister of South Africa, was astounded and at first refused to believe that the NP had managed

⁵ J Sadie, 'Die ekonomiese faktor in die Afrikaner-gemeenskap,' in H van der Merwe (ed.), Identiteite en verandering (Cape Town, 1975), p. 88, as quoted in D O'Meara, Forty lost years. The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party 1948-1994, p. 74.

⁶ N Mandela, Long walk to freedom. The autobiography of Nelson Mandela, p. 128.

to pull through after all.⁷ Jan Smuts was shattered and felt betrayed, and his deputy, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, was utterly depressed, exclaiming “There is no hope for this country...unless they (the NP) fight among themselves...they always do, don’t they?”⁸ Nelson Mandela, reflecting afterwards on the election, stated astutely that “The Nationalists’ victory was the beginning of the end of the domination of the Afrikaner by the Englishman.”⁹ However, the reaction of Malan himself to obtaining political power in South Africa is most incisive. When the NP victory was confirmed, Malan declared glibly that “Today South Africa belongs to us once more. South Africa is ours for the first time since [the formation of the] Union [of South Africa in 1910], and may God grant that it will always remain our own.”¹⁰ An associate of the new Prime Minister reported that Malan also stated after the election victory that “At last we can feel at home again in our own country.”¹¹

Malan assumed the position of Prime Minister inspired by the firm vocation that political power had afforded him the mandate to enforce a restructuring that would uplift and advance the political, social and economic standing of the Afrikaners, the prime constituency of the NP. Malan propelled the NP as the vanguard of Afrikaner nationalism that would finally close the lid on and expunge the ramifications of the defeat of the Boer republics to the United Kingdom in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. He confidently initiated the new epoch in South Africa even though the NP had only secured 38 per cent of the vote as opposed to the 48 per cent of Smuts’ United Party. Nevertheless, with a slender majority of five seats, in alliance with the small Afrikaner Party and buttressed by the widespread cultural manifestations of the workings of the Afrikaner Broederbond, the NP laid claim to political power and proceeded to consolidate Afrikaner unity under its tutelage. Malan was driven to address the largely parlous social standing of Afrikaners in the preceding decades, and his state of mind is clearly reflected in his estimation of the Afrikaner as belonging “to a small nation...If he should vanish from the stage, who remains to perpetuate his way of life, his culture?...Can it thus be wondered at that, for the Afrikaner, the matter of survival has become an irresistible life force, a veritable obsession?”¹²

⁷ FW de Klerk, *The last trek. A new beginning. The autobiography*, p. 14.

⁸ Quotation taken from H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a people*, p. 482.

⁹ Quotation taken from N Mandela, *Long road to freedom*, p. 128.

¹⁰ Quotation taken from H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 487.

¹¹ Quotation taken from H Giliomee, ‘The leader and the citizenry,’ in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, *Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state*, p. 104.

¹² Quotation taken from H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 486. For content see H Giliomee, ‘The leader and the citizenry,’ in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, *Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state*, pp. 103-104.

By endeavouring to foment a united assemblage of all Afrikaners under the auspices of the NP, Malan sought to portray the new government to Afrikaners as ‘their’ government and the NP ministers as ‘their’ ministers. Malan eschewed Smuts’ UP as a party dominated by English-speakers who had augmented the marginalisation of Afrikaners in the social and economic spheres. Now the nucleus of Afrikaner social, economic and cultural revival was to be the NP, and as a political tool of this process the NP was to take recourse to a policy that became known as apartheid. This policy was to be implemented by the NP as a political instrument to socially and economically promote the Afrikaners to a position of at least parity with their English-speaking counterparts, and also to a position of insulation against the perceived social and economic threats posed to the Afrikaners by the Black populations of South Africa.¹³

It has been estimated that 25 per cent of Afrikaners in the early 1930s were so poor that they could not house or feed their families. Moreover, in the 1940s all sectors of the economy except agriculture were overwhelmingly controlled by English-speaking South African Whites. Afrikaners were well represented in unskilled and less skilled sectors, while there was a clear paucity of Afrikaners employed in more well-to-do sectors of the economy like the professional trades, in most sectors of commerce and in the more attractive engineering trades. Various estimates rate Afrikaners as earning only between 50 and 66 per cent of what their English counterparts were being paid in the period 1936-1946. Moreover, living costs increased sharply after the conclusion of World War Two, and while the real wages of White workers had decreased during the war, that of Blacks had increased significantly. 139 000 Afrikaners were unemployed by 1948, compared with a figure of 76 000 in 1945. In 1948 the Afrikaners, while constituting 57 per cent of the total White population, shared only 29 per cent of the total personal income compared to English-speakers’ 46 per cent. Afrikaners also perceived a direct threat in the rapid urbanisation of Blacks during the 1930s and 1940s. Black urbanisation denied Afrikaner farmers cheap Black labour, and threatened the already precarious economic position of urban Afrikaners with industrialists increasingly contemplating the usage of cheaper Black labourers.¹⁴

At van Wyk was an Afrikaner born in the Orange Free State in 1932. Later to become a journalist and historian, Van Wyk had well known the ravages of economic deprivation in his early years. “Poverty,” Van Wyk felt, “stalked the country. It seemed to be part of the very air we breathed.

¹³ JP Brits, *Op die vooraand van apartheid. Die rassevraagstuk en die blanke politiek in Suid-Afrika, 1939-1948*, pp. 123-126; H Giliomee, ‘The leader and the citizenry,’ in L Boulle, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, *Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁴ JP Brits, *Op die vooraand van apartheid*, pp. 14-18; D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 64-66, 74-75; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 479-480, 489.

My family was down and out. My father...had lost his farm and slipped down the economic ladder to be a *bywoner* (sharecropper) for Koot Bender, a well-to-do farmer, outside the town of Clocolan in the eastern Orange Free State. There, on a dust-blown ridge, he strove against all odds, like so many others all over the country, to eke out a living.” Van Wyk’s father told him many stories of his early days when – working as a butcher in Cape Town and Kimberley – he had had personal dealings with the likes of Cecil Rhodes and Leander Starr Jameson. Venomously, Van Wyk’s father spoke of the undermining “money power,” and, with unfeigned bitterness, told his son how he had been doomed to bankruptcy after the Wall Street crash. “In my mind,” Van Wyk thought, “our little windswept house with its walls of stone and unbaked bricks, small windows and corrugated iron roof, (was) the visible symbol of that calamity.”¹⁵

Under the aegis of the NP, Malan sought to harness the new Afrikaner nationalism of the 1930s and 1940s, which was underpinned by the perceived social and economic discrimination meted out by Smuts’ UP and their English-speaking affiliates. Malan promised to buttress Afrikaners’ economic standing against the encroachment of Blacks, and also to uplift the Afrikaner vis-à-vis the economic domination of English-speakers. HF Verwoerd, the future Prime Minister, claimed that taking hold of what he called ‘state power’ was the best means for the Afrikaners to attain their rightful place in the spheres of commerce and industry. Malan countered Afrikaner fears of being economically submerged by the burgeoning Black urban population by promising that South Africa will remain a ‘White man’s country.’ This was a significant harbinger of what was to become the NP’s conventional wisdom (and future election campaigning tool), that apartheid presented the only reasonable alternative to the Black surge threatening to engulf South Africa’s White population.¹⁶

To this end the NP adopted apartheid as its official racial policy in 1945. Apartheid meant in practice that race would become the prime criterion for privilege and opportunity. Under this methodology, Blacks’ social mobility would be demarcated so as not to interfere with the social, economic and political recovery and maintained insulation of Afrikaners. By these means, the NP intended to advance and sustain the interests of every sector of its varied support base (thus Afrikaner rural farmers, urban labourers, and emerging capital and business interests) by restructuring the economy in their favour. Apartheid would be the political force that was to bind the entire superstructure of Afrikaner economic and social interests to a perpetuation of prosperity. By implementing a political set of legislative and governmental directives, the NP

¹⁵ Quotations and content taken from A van Wyk, *The birth of a new Afrikaner*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁶ D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 65-66; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 476, 480-481.

sought to uplift Afrikaners from the spectres of poverty and Black submersion. First and foremost, apartheid was intended to be the political backbone of White supremacy.¹⁷

Thus, while most of the rest of Africa was gradually emerging from the paternalistic notions of White superiority inherent in colonialism, the NP was intent on propelling South Africa into a political mode as iconoclastic as it was anachronistic. Nelson Mandela thought that the NP was a party “animated by bitterness.” Bitterness, he felt, “towards the English, who had treated them as inferiors for decades, and bitterness towards the African, who the Nationalists believed was threatening the prosperity and purity of Afrikaner culture.” Of the system of apartheid, Mandela states that “it represented the codification in one oppressive system of all the laws and regulations that had kept Africans in an inferior position to whites for centuries...The premise of apartheid was that whites were superior to Africans, Coloureds and Indians, and the function of it was to entrench white supremacy for ever.”¹⁸

Even so, to many Afrikaners apartheid appeared to present a perfectly reasonable and workable solution to South Africa’s racial complexities. FW de Klerk states unequivocally that he supported apartheid as a young man. “There were,” states De Klerk, “a number of motivations for apartheid, some of them selfish, some idealistic; some acknowledged, some unspoken. Foremost among these was our conviction that without apartheid, our people would be swamped by the vast black majority – and that this would inevitably lead to the extinction of our own hard-won right to national self-determination.” Ultimately, however, De Klerk believed that peaceful co-existence was not practicable for Black and White in the same system in South Africa: “we saw separatism as the only means of avoiding the conflict that had been the cause of so much inter-ethnic violence in so many other plural societies throughout the world.”¹⁹

Indeed, from its inception, apartheid was endowed with a distinct idealistic ideological façade. When using the term for the first time in the South African parliament in 1944, DF Malan described apartheid as a policy that “will give the various races the opportunity of uplifting themselves on the basis of what is their own.” This goes some way to explain how the resilience and almost mythical prowess of the policy and very name of apartheid could be maintained for decades. Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, longstanding liberal ideologue, academic and politician, remembered the “excitement, even the thrill” with which young students during his tenure at the

¹⁷ H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁸ N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 127-128.

¹⁹ Quotations and content taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, p. 16.

University of Stellenbosch in the early 1960s greeted the idealistic strands of the nascent apartheid policies. With states on the African continent increasingly attaining independence from colonial subjugation, apartheid was introduced in South Africa seemingly as an “indigenous, post-colonial response.”²⁰

Undoubtedly, apartheid was in principle a set of political measures and ideologies geared primarily as a responsive mechanism. The apparent multi-racial benevolence of the ideology of apartheid cannot conceal the one-sided needs assessment that inspired the formulation of apartheid. As Piet Cillié, editor of *Die Burger* newspaper from 1954 to 1977 and a lucid apologist for apartheid, wrote in 1952: “The Afrikaners had not fought themselves free from British domination only to be overwhelmed by a majority of a different kind. Eventually we shall give the majority its freedom, but never power over us...They will not get more rights if that means rights over and in our lives.”²¹

In rectifying the relative economic deprivation of Afrikaners prevalent before 1948, Malan and the NP identified a crucial and integral prerequisite for any policy agenda that would accrue with political power. In response to the apparent victimisation, discrimination, pauperisation and general economic deficiency experienced by Afrikaners, the NP sought to fashion political power as an effective tool to remould the overall economic and social position of all Afrikaners. This was the prime and intended objective of the policy of apartheid, and political power was the means by which this policy could be enforced – so that the ‘Afrikanerisation of economic life’ (as the economic programme adopted by the NP in 1944 intended) could be implemented and perpetuated.²²

Afrikaner nationalism, thus, crystallised in an unmistakable economic interventionist thrust. By mobilising ethnic forces to foster Afrikaner accumulation, it was argued, Afrikaners had to take control of and exploit what they believed was rightfully theirs: political power. After the wartime national election of 1943 (which Smuts’ UP won comfortably), the NP systematically succeeded in presenting itself as the primary political vanguard of Afrikaner nationalism. Ultimately, only political power would suffice for the NP to significantly alter the economic and social standing of Afrikaners. The NP was able to contend effectively in the 1948 election because it succeeded in

²⁰ Quotations and content taken from H Giliomee, The making of the apartheid plan, 1929-1948, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 29, Number 2, June 2003, pp. 374-375.

²¹ Quotation taken from H Giliomee, The making of the apartheid plan, 1929-1948, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 29, Number 2, June 2003, p. 386.

²² D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 74-76.

canvassing as a comprehensive popular political movement that would advance the interests of all the various sectors of Afrikaners.²³

Thus in 1948 the policy of apartheid entered the fray in South Africa in official political and statutory terms. As has been shown, for the NP apartheid was a reactionary, interventionist programme implemented to address specific Afrikaner needs and fears. Eben Dönges, who as DF Malan's Minister of the Interior introduced most of the initial apartheid legislation, privately told a journalist in 1952 that for the NP leadership the policy of apartheid was implemented to safeguard the present and next two generations against the threats posed by the burgeoning Black and Coloured populations. In public, however, Dönges spoke of apartheid as a more permanent solution to South Africa's racial conundrum: "The efforts that are made to combat the immediate situation have to continue, but at the same time we must begin to think of a broader and more thoroughgoing approach. We must look a hundred years ahead and not only five years. The danger exists that we shall win all the battles and still lose the war."²⁴

The potential dangers identified by Dönges were indeed to prove authentic. Apartheid would indeed significantly address the Afrikaners' economic, social and cultural position vis-à-vis that of South Africa's White English-speaking population, and it would likewise indeed furnish the Afrikaners with an enforced temporary buffer against the encroachments of Blacks and Coloureds. The power of politics would see to that. Crucially, however, apartheid would never be able to win 'the war' for Afrikaners. In effect, apartheid was manifested as the confluence of at best a temporary political and economic programme with a supposedly permanent racial and emotional paradigm. As the decades of apartheid rule in South Africa progressed, the long-term survival and prosperity of Afrikaners were to become increasingly dependent on the reform and eventual abolition of apartheid. The emotional and ideological mainstays of apartheid – or, in other words, the political agenda prevalent under the dispensation of the political balance of power – would, however, prevent the abolition or prompt departure from apartheid after the achievement of the stated goals of the economic, social and cultural upliftment of Afrikaners. In fact, only when the continued maintenance and enforcement of apartheid began to seriously undo the original economic advancement of Afrikaners initially engineered by the introduction of the system of apartheid would the eradication of apartheid be considered.

²³ S Terblanche and N Nattrass, A periodization of the political economy from 1910, in N Nattrass and E Ardington (eds.), The political economy of South Africa, p. 12; H Adam and H Giliomee, The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power, p. 159.

²⁴ Quotation and content taken from H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, p. 485.

Nevertheless, at the time when the policy of apartheid was inducted in South Africa, the immediate predicament of the Afrikaners' economic and social circumstances seemed to require urgent redress, and hence the NP's policies were shaped within these political parameters. The economic, social and cultural empowerment of the Afrikaners (vis-à-vis South Africa's apparently domineering English-speakers) and of South Africa's White population in its entirety (vis-à-vis the apparently ominous presence of South Africa's non-White assemblages) formed the political assessment that determined the reactive, interventionist methods of the NP. Apartheid was the policy that was implemented to fulfil this political strategy. In short, the introduction of apartheid was very much a direct manifestation of the ascendancy of the political balance of power in South Africa.

Before the Second World War Afrikaners had comprised 86 per cent of the White unskilled urban labour force, and less than 20 per cent of Afrikaners were employed as managers, professionals, directors or manufacturers. By 1952 Afrikaners were occupying 80 per cent of the workforce of the South African Railways and Harbour personnel, and 68 per cent of all White Post Office personnel were Afrikaners. Most of the higher earning professions in these services, however, were still occupied by White English-speakers. Nevertheless, these Afrikaner workers, along with rural farmers, were the prime constituencies of the NP, as Albert Hertzog, son of Anglo-Boer War general and former Prime Minister JBM Hertzog, proclaimed in parliament in 1953: "We on this side are partly a party of farmers but largely a party of workers." Consequently, after 1948 the NP set out to utilise its fledgling political leverage to intervene in the economy on behalf of these Afrikaner farmers and workers.²⁵

World War Two had witnessed a period of considerable Black urbanisation, a process with distinct disadvantages for both Afrikaner workers and farmers. In fact, in the period 1939-1952 the Black urban population almost doubled. The rise of Black urban wages encouraged an influx of Black workers to the urban areas, thus creating a direct threat to the sustained occupation of urban Afrikaner workers, while also depleting the supply of cheap Black labour available to rural Afrikaner farmers, especially in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. By instituting a policy of influx control with pass laws, and by establishing a system of labour bureaux, the NP implemented a regulatory process in the flow of Black labour between rural and urban areas. Before a Black labourer was allowed to depart from his rural dwelling, the local labour bureau

²⁵ Quotation and content taken from H Adam and H Giliomee, The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power, pp. 160-161.

was statutorily required to certify that the labour needs of farmers in that district had been met. Once a labourer had been legally classified as a farm or urban labourer, it was virtually impossible to alter this status, as indicated in his passbook. By forcibly channelling Black labour in this way the NP government implemented its policy of directly intervening in the economy to suit the needs of its Afrikaner constituencies.²⁶

White farmers were further abetted by increased agricultural subsidies and research funding, and also by the favourable prices set for their produce by the marketing boards. In addition, the government increased the price of maize by almost 33 per cent between 1949 and 1952, and while maize production virtually doubled in the first fifteen years after 1948, the maize farmers – comprising the single largest group of White farmers – partly accounted for the augmented support for the NP in the rural areas. The acute shortages of commodities that were prevalent in the pre-war years were rapidly eradicated by surpluses that were usually exported, and the increased profitability encouraged a surge of foreign investment. Between 1936-1939 and 1956-1959 the total output of agricultural crops increased by a staggering 93 per cent, and that of livestock by 61 per cent. While the consumer price index only doubled between 1939 and 1955, the price index of all agricultural produce fully quadrupled. Moreover, at the time of this period of rapid agricultural growth the wages of farm labourers remained deflated. In fact, the real cash wages of Black farm labourers continued to decrease until 1958/59.²⁷

NP labour policy was derived from the twin perceptions that White workers should not be replaced by Black workers in the same job, and that no Black labourer should ever hold a position superior to that of any White man. The unskilled and semi-skilled Afrikaner worker was mostly poorly educated and hence deplorably paid, and were in addition most exposed to competition from Black workers. In response to this state of affairs, the NP government introduced in 1957 various job reservation measures by which virtually all semi-skilled, skilled and supervisory jobs were restricted to White workers. Under the aegis of these protective measures, an expanding economy and the restrictive measures applied to Black workers, the income of Afrikaner workers steadily improved while those of Black workers decreased. In fact, real industrial Black earnings only matched the levels of 1947-1948 again in 1959-1960. White trade unions were engaged

²⁶ S Terblanche and N Nattrass, A periodization of the political economy from 1910, in N Nattrass and E Ardington (eds.), *The political economy of South Africa*, p. 13; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 76-77; H Adam and H Giliomee, *The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power*, pp. 161-162; JP Brits, *Op die vooraand van apartheid*, pp. 9-18.

²⁷ A Stadler, *The political economy of modern South Africa*, pp. 51-57; H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, p. 20; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, p. 77; H Adam and H Giliomee, *The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power*, pp. 162-163.

favourably by the state while the influence of Black trade unions was systematically extinguished. Moreover, the number of people – mostly Afrikaner males – employed by the state increased rapidly after 1948, with the period 1950 to 1955 witnessing the fastest ever growth rate in employment in the state apparatus (6 per cent per annum). In the period 1946 to 1966 the permanent establishment of the civil service grew almost three times as rapidly as the entire White population, and by 1968 there were twice as many Afrikaners employed in government jobs than before the election of 1948.²⁸

Another significant cog in the NP's 'Afrikanerisation of economic life' after gaining power in 1948 was the augmenting of Afrikaner business interests. While there was a paucity of Afrikaners in leading industrial and business leadership positions in 1948, the NP immediately proceeded to appoint Afrikaner businessmen to key positions on state economic boards and to senior management positions in state industries and major public corporations. Additionally, the NP sought to foster the burgeoning of state-owned corporations as a counter to the still overwhelmingly English-controlled mining and industry sectors. As a consequence, between 1946 and 1973 the share of state corporations in gross fixed investment in the South African economy increased from 6.2 per cent to 11.5 per cent, while that of the private sector declined from 63.5 per cent to 53 per cent. After a decade of NP rule the upper reaches of the extensive network of parastatal organisations had virtually been monopolised by Afrikaners.²⁹

Moreover, the NP government significantly expanded its share in the economy after 1948, and by 1973 the public sector share of the economy had almost doubled. Government bank accounts were transferred to an Afrikaner bank, and government contracts were awarded to Afrikaner firms. Thus the South African economy became increasingly a state-controlled and state-owned economy, as is evidenced by the fact that the annual expenditure of the public sector, as a percentage of gross domestic fixed investment, increased from 36.5 per cent in 1946 to 53 per cent in 1976. This period of unprecedented growth of the public sector provoked a significant degree of disquiet among the English-dominated private sector.³⁰

Yet the NP did not leave the private sector untouched. By means of state power the government promoted the growth of Afrikaner private industry, so that the Afrikaners were progressively

²⁸ H Adam and H Giliomee, *The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power*, pp. 161-165; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 76-78.

²⁹ D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 78-80.

³⁰ H Adam and H Giliomee, *The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power*, pp. 163-165.

making inroads into this sector as well. In 1948 there existed few Afrikaner private business ventures worth mentioning, but by 1970 the Cape finance company Sanlam had progressed to a position of economic strength second only to the Anglo-American Corporation as the biggest proprietor of non-governmental economic power in South Africa. Largely as a result of NP intervention, Afrikaner control of private industry leapt from 6 per cent in 1948 to a full 21 per cent in 1975. Moreover, if the escalating number of state corporations is included, industrial output under the auspices of Afrikaners was calculated to have risen to 45 per cent of the total national output by 1975. This increased Afrikaner share of the economy was accompanied by a general movement of Afrikaner workers away from less-skilled, poorly paid labour towards skilled, better paid and usually secure employment. The first twelve years of NP rule witnessed a rapid movement of Afrikaners into the higher-earning sectors of the economy, and likewise a rapid decline of the proportion of Afrikaner males in the lower-income categories of the economy. In short, various forms of government intervention after 1948 ensured the favourable entry and perpetual prosperity of Afrikaner capital in emerging corporate capitalism in South Africa.³¹

The NP government's conservative macro-economic policy of the 1950s – in broader terms classified as apartheid – laid the foundations for a period of sustained economic growth in South Africa. Budget surpluses were utilised to redeem debt. In fact, during the 1950s and 1960s the South African economy grew more rapidly than any other capitalist economy with the solitary exception of Japan. White workers were guaranteed access to lucrative jobs, and enjoyed the luxuries of rising wages and easy access to credit and loans. As a result, Whites became the consumptive backbone of South Africa's growing economy. Moreover, import controls and various other protective measures greatly augmented the local manufacturing industry in order to be able to supply the growing White consumer demand. White trade unions also won protective bargaining agreements for White workers and effectively prevented any wage decreases for White labourers. By altering monetary policy to achieve the prime objective of economic growth, the NP fostered a growing economy in a stable economic environment. The real GDP in South Africa between 1948 and 1957 increased by an annual average of 5 per cent, and Whites were the prime beneficiaries of this economic upturn as considerable resources were invested in health, education, and infrastructure for Whites.³²

³¹ H Giliomee, 'The leader and the citizenry,' in L Boulle, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 108-109; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 80-82, 136.

³² H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, p. 539; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 81-82; H Marais, South Africa: limits to change, p. 29.

As for Afrikaners specifically, in accordance with their avowed aim of the ‘Afrikanerisation of economic life,’ under the auspices of the NP, the place of Afrikaners in the South African economy was literally transformed during the first twelve years of NP rule. The successive administrations of Malan, who retired in 1954, and following him JG Strijdom, who died in office in 1958, and his successor HF Verwoerd effectively delivered on their promises of implementing the political policy of apartheid to engineer the social and economic revival of Afrikaners. As has been noted, the period up to 1960 witnessed the rapid movement of Afrikaner males into the higher income sections of the economy. While Afrikaner males were still not on an equal economic footing with their English-speaking counterparts, by 1960 this gap had been significantly closed in the more lucrative occupational sectors of the economy.³³

In effect, when the improved general welfare and social outlook of Afrikaners after 1948 are considered, it appears that the political dispensation of apartheid had indeed proved to be the Afrikaners’ economic and social salvation the NP had originally envisaged it to become. Yet once Afrikaners were propelled into dominant economic and social strata it soon became apparent that the anachronisms of racial favouritism – as enshrined by the political balance of power inherent in apartheid – could only be more of a temporary interventionist expedient than a permanent discriminatory state of affairs. As the politics of Afrikaner reaction and intervention were to become increasingly redundant, so the complexities of economic preponderance were to become paramount. By 1960, however, the progress from considering apartheid as a long-term interventionist answer to a profligate, irrelevant albatross had not yet been approached. For this realisation to take root, apartheid had first to be apparently vindicated – in the form of a South African economy lavishing for a spurt in favourable internal and external circumstances – and then conclusively devalued when the fragile prosperity of apartheid South Africa regressed decisively. Moreover, far from greeting the policies of apartheid with silent acquiescence, South Africa’s non-White populations were increasingly voicing and acting upon a resistant response to the forceful one-sided political interventions enacted on behalf of the Afrikaner minority.

In dire contrast to the revitalised fortunes of Afrikaners, the outlook for South Africa’s Black majority was incontrovertibly encumbered by the rigid state intervention inherent in apartheid. Blacks were transposed as foreigners in their own country, being prohibited from owning land anywhere but in the paltry 13 per cent of land allotted to them in the reserves. They were unable

³³ D O’Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 136-137.

to move anywhere without a valid pass, could not perform any skilled work, and were liable to arrest at any given time. Blacks could not aspire to any significant degree of social and economic mobility, and were subjected to an education system that, until the early 1970s, was designed specifically to equip Blacks merely with the bare rudiments to facilitate their entry into only the lower rungs of the labour market. Apartheid entailed only an incrementally more fortunate standing for South Africa's Coloured and Asian populations. These populations were not required to carry passes but were nonetheless forced to reside in strictly allotted areas and prohibited access to most public facilities.³⁴ In the context of these initial crude discriminatory measures implemented by the NP, Nelson Mandela justifiably derided the perpetrators of apartheid by stating that "I was sympathetic to the ultra-revolutionary stream of African nationalism. I was angry at the white man, not at racism. While I was not prepared to hurl the white man into the sea, I would have been perfectly happy if he had climbed aboard his steamships and left the continent of his own volition."³⁵

The imposition of apartheid naturally elicited a popular response from non-White detractors following the enforcement of the system in 1948. Consumer boycotts and sporadic strikes in rural areas cropped up in response to the initial discriminatory measures. From the introduction of apartheid, the perpetuation of resistance was spearheaded by the African National Congress (ANC). A young generation of African nationalists was at this time steadily shaping the vanguard of the ANC. Formed in 1944, and comprising such founder members as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, the ANC Youth League prodded the ANC main body into adopting various elements of the Youth League's more militant manifesto in its 1949 Programme of Action. Impatient with the ANC's hitherto ineffectual moderate protests, the Youth League's rise to prominence in the ANC committed the organisation to a programme of mass action under the aegis of African nationalism. In conjunction with the South African Indian Congress, the ANC proceeded to stage largely peaceful protests in 1952. Courting arrest by engaging in civil disobedience, the Defiance Campaign (as the organised protests were called) was aimed at forcing the government to repeal certain discriminatory legislation enacted or reinforced since 1948.³⁶

³⁴ H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, pp. 29-30; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 510-512.

³⁵ Quotation taken from N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, p. 129.

³⁶ S Mufson, Introduction: the roots of insurrection, in T Lodge, B Nasson *et al*, *All, here, and now: Black politics in South Africa in the 1980s*, p. 5; H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, pp. 22-24; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 512-513.

At the height of the Defiance Campaign ANC membership soared to 100 000 members, although by 1953 volunteers for civil disobedience actions had largely dried up. Moreover, the Defiance Campaign elicited a concerted repressive response from the state, eventually culminating in the arrest in 1956 of 156 activists – including leading ANC agitators – who were put on trial and charged with treason. Although the charges against most of the accused were subsequently withdrawn, by the end of the 1950s the state had succeeded in largely extinguishing the last vestiges of the ANC-led popular resistance campaign, and the ANC's membership had again dwindled to a pittance. In 1959, moreover, discord within the ANC produced the formation of a radical offshoot led by Robert Sobukwe. The resultant Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) – advocating more militant resistance under the auspices of a radical strand of African nationalism and denouncing any co-operation with Whites opposed to apartheid – lost little time in adhering to its portents of renewed mass resistance and proceeded to announce plans in early 1960 to defy the maligned pass laws.³⁷

In 1959 the future liberal politician and academic Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, while a first-year student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, attended a lunch-hour meeting arranged by the University's Fellowship Society as part of a series of lectures to examine the current political situation in South Africa. "For a well-meaning, overly devout rugby playing farm boy who had never given an analytical thought to politics," states Slabbert, "these meetings were traumatic in their impact." The first meeting Slabbert attended was addressed by none other than Robert Sobukwe, leader of the PAC and also lecturer at Wits University. Sobukwe turned up late for the meeting, and while apologising for his untimely arrival, he explained that on his way to the meeting he had been accosted by a young policeman who demanded to inspect his pass. Sobukwe related that, despite that the policeman had found his pass in order, he had nonetheless dropped the pass to the ground, put his foot on it, and told Sobukwe to pick it up. Sobukwe's portrayal of this incident sparked an angry "buzz" from the Black members of the audience, who occupied a large block comprising about half of an audience of 500-600 people. In his speech, Sobukwe made an impassioned demand for Black participation in the government, and when during question time after his speech one White student asked him, "quietly and almost timidly" whether he thought "blacks were ready to govern a complex industrial society, the black block of the audience jumped out of their seats as if electrically shocked and shouted in one voice, 'Right now!'"³⁸

³⁷ H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 512, 522.

³⁸ Quotations and content taken from F Van Zyl Slabbert, *The last White parliament*, p. 15.

Promising to liberate South Africa by the end of 1963, Sobukwe duly launched an anti-pass campaign on 21 March 1960 – forestalling a similar anti-pass campaign planned by the ANC for 31 March. The PAC's campaign did not provoke countrywide resistance, but in Langa township, outside Cape Town, a protest of 30 000 people led to rioting and the consequent killing of two people by the police. Likewise in Sharpeville, a Vaal Triangle township, 69 people were shot by members of the police when several thousands of protesters surrounded the local police station. In response to the massacre the ANC called for a stay-away from work on 28 March, and in response tens of thousands of Blacks stayed at home on this day. The many White businesses dependent on Black labour were brought to a standstill, the Stock Exchange plummeted and a major capital outflow followed. On 30 March the government declared a state of emergency, and after detaining 18 000 people in the following weeks, banned the ANC and PAC on 8 April.³⁹

Prime Minister Verwoerd refused to even consider a softening or blunting of government policies, and proceeded to initiate large-scale political repression. In fact, after surviving an assassination attempt on 9 April – in which he was shot in the head but afterwards recovered remarkably swiftly – Verwoerd seemed more imbued than ever with irrepressible belief in the credibility of apartheid. He persisted in foreseeing the feasibility of the homelands as the only political home for the vast majority of Blacks, and rejected calls for scrapping the pass laws. Yet in contrast to Verwoerd's steadfast optimism, the economic viability of the homelands would never acquire the configuration of anything but an idealistic mirage. The ANC and PAC responded to the government's extensive repression attempts by launching their respective armed wings, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the nation), and *Poqo* (Pure). The armed wings embarked on a low-key campaign of sabotage, but by the early to mid-1960s, with the organisations' leaders either captured, in exile or otherwise rendered impotent, the relative impact of both wings had been effectively waylaid by South Africa's security forces. In fact, once the underground networks of the ANC, the Communist Party and the PAC had been mostly eradicated by mid-1963, the remainder of the 1960s was marked by a dearth of large-scale political unrest among the Black population of South Africa.⁴⁰

Thus by the time of Verwoerd's assassination in 1966, any form of organised non-White resistance to the rigid politics of apartheid seemed to have wilted under the blows of state

³⁹ J Grobler, *A decisive clash? A short history of Black protest politics in South Africa 1875-1976*, pp. 122-126; N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 268, 279-282; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 522.

⁴⁰ H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 531-534; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, p. 173.

repression. While South Africa's economy seemed to flourish, and with any meaningful resistance to apartheid resigned to futility, the political assessment that underpinned apartheid was elevated to an apparently legitimised and revered political citadel. Apartheid had given Afrikaners economic sustainability and political dominance, and the severe repression of discordant voices and international condemnation seemed an insignificant price to pay to perpetuate the imperative of prosperity. As long as apartheid was indeed maintaining the welfare and growth of Afrikaners, the balance of power would remain firmly supportive of the political assessment that underlay this strategy. With the rapid economic growth prevalent in South Africa in the 1960s, the magnitude of apartheid politics seemed to accrue little incentive for questioning by its White beneficiaries.

In the mid-1960s, when the inimitable political standing of Verwoerd mirrored the solidly entrenched political establishment of the apartheid policies, South Africa maintained an annual economic growth rate of six per cent and an inflation rate to boot of only two per cent. The 1950s was likewise a period of steady economic growth while the apartheid policies were progressively implemented in South Africa. The immediate economic implication of the post-Sharpeville unrest of 1960, however, was a balance of payment crisis. The South African economy of the 1950s was directly reliant on foreign capital influx in order to provide investment funds and to strengthen the balance of payments – largely to pay for imported capital goods and machinery. When investors withdrew capital from South Africa in response to the Sharpeville and Langa killings, the balance of payments went into the red and the economy receded as consumer confidence and investment demand fell. Naturally, the state was not loathe in responding to this challenge, and forthwith imposed strict import controls and measures to reduce capital outflows. Consequently, the Stock Exchange recovered and investors regained the incentive to invest in South Africa. An increasingly open international economy – with a high demand for South African raw material imports – allowed the South African GDP to increase steadily, and hence the state was able to utilise foreign reserves gained in this way to import capital equipment and to augment local manufacturing and technology behind stiff tariff barriers. As a result, by the mid-1960s, South Africa's manufacturing sector was growing by almost twelve per cent annually.⁴¹

⁴¹ South Africa's balance of payments 1946-2000. Supplement to the South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin, June 2001, pp. 1-4, B-0--B-7; S Jones, Real growth in the South African economy since 1961, in South African Journal of Economic History, Volume 5, Number 2, 1990, pp. 40-48; TC Moll, 'Probably the best laager in the world:' the record and prospects of the South African economy, in JD Brewer (ed.), Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight, pp. 136-141.

The period 1964 to 1972, therefore, became an era of rapid capital accumulation in South Africa. By 1970, total foreign investment in South Africa was estimated to be R5 818 million, rising to a crescendo of R6 694 million in 1974. The average rate of return on capital investment in South Africa after 1964 was amongst the highest anywhere in the world. As late as 1974 the average American corporation received an 18 per cent return on its investment in South Africa, compared to a return of only eight per cent in Britain. With his indomitable resolve to maintain the strict racial policies of apartheid, and his forceful repression of Black dissent in the early 1960s, Verwoerd helped pave the way for the period of rapid economic growth from 1961.⁴² The bulk of unproductive Black labourers and the rising costs of maintaining the cumbersome apparatus of apartheid – the forthcoming result of Verwoerd’s intransigence and his intensification of apartheid – had not yet imposed costly strictures on the South African economy with its still relatively small and unsophisticated manufacturing sector. These and other potentially crippling economic quandaries would only become evident in the decade after Verwoerd’s death. The *Rand Daily Mail*, the liberal daily often most critical of the NP government, paid a generous tribute to Verwoerd in 1966 when it portrayed him as the man who had refined the rudimentary dogma of White supremacy “into a sophisticated and rationalised philosophy of separate development.”⁴³

Yet the paeans for White supremacy, or apartheid for that matter, were, if anything, premature. While apartheid was able to uplift Afrikaners from poverty, it would not be able to ensure them perpetual prosperity. In fact, as apartheid afforded Whites the opportunity to exchange their economic disparity for social and economic hegemony, it was this very system of apartheid and its crude machinations that would come to inhibit the attainment of long-term prosperity. To many Afrikaner businessmen, members of the Afrikaner middle class, and intellectuals and academics – almost all borne of apartheid and sustained by the period of economic growth in the 1960s – the steadily deteriorating merits of apartheid were slowly becoming painfully apparent.

In 1946 30.3 per cent of Afrikaners were engaged in agricultural occupations. By 1960 this percentage had declined to 16 per cent. This trend was accompanied by a momentous increase of Afrikaners in the so-called ‘white collar’ categories of the economy: from 29 per cent in 1948 to 43.5 per cent in 1960. In fact, the foremost beneficiaries of NP rule after 1948 were the emerging classes of urban Afrikaner financial, industrial and commercial capitalists. The guiding strategy of the NP in attempting to foster Afrikaner economic empowerment in the 1940s and 1950s rested not only on a considerable effort to mobilise both the savings of Afrikaner workers and

⁴² D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 173-174.

⁴³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 7 September 1966, as quoted in H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 540.

clerks, but also on utilising the latent capital to be gained from Afrikaner agriculture. The Afrikaner financial institutions established and maintained by the government to administer the consolidation of this capital duly gathered up all these hitherto dispersed monies and merged them into productive capital under their control. In conjunction with the virtually unmitigated state support given to Afrikaner economic undertakings after 1948, this strategy produced what had not existed previously: a burgeoning and competitive Afrikaner capitalist class. The forays of Afrikaners into both the public and private sectors have been noted, and the upshot of Afrikaners' state-sponsored seizure of a more competitive position in the urban economy was thus the establishment of influential Afrikaner financial, mining and industrial capitalists. Evidently, these groups were virtually hand-reared by the NP to emerge from a beleaguered infancy to a pungent maturity under the tutelage of an interventionist economic and social policy.⁴⁴

The most profound advance of Afrikaner economic interests after 1948 occurred in the sectors of finance, mining, liquor and catering, and manufacturing and construction. Within these sectors the greatest beneficiaries of the NP's economic favouritism after 1948 were the Cape-based conglomerates Sanlam, Rembrandt and Old Mutual. Sanlam, for one, had been established and was run by the selfsame men who had founded the Cape National Party and its official press. Afrikaner finance interests in the 1960s were evidently dominated by three groups: the insurance giant Sanlam and its numerous subsidiaries (i.e. Santam, Trust Bank, Bonuskor, Saambou and Federale Mynbou); the Cape-based Old Mutual insurance company; and a somewhat distant third: the Transvaal-based Broederbond-controlled Volkskas Bank. Sanlam, through its subsidiaries Federale Volksbeleggings, Bonuskor and Federale Mynbou, spearheaded the Afrikaner expansion into the mining and industrial sectors. Federale Mynbou gradually increased its mining holdings until 1975 when, in short-lived cooperation with Anton Rupert's Rembrandt group, it gained control of the Union Corporation mining house. In this way Federale Mynbou (now renamed to Gencor) emerged as South Africa's second biggest mining house. The Cape-based Rembrandt group itself advanced rapidly after 1948. It became one of the world's largest tobacco corporations, and profiting from the blossoming of the largely Afrikaner-controlled Cape wine industry, its liquor and catering holdings also increased substantially. The advances of Rembrandt largely accounts for the marked advances of Afrikaners in the liquor and catering sectors. The drop in share prices and flight of foreign capital after the Sharpeville crisis of 1960 were utilised by Sanlam and Old Mutual to increase their shareholdings in an extensive number of manufacturing companies. This development, in addition to the profusion of governmental

⁴⁴ D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 138-142.

manufacturing parastatals, serves to explain the positive Afrikaner developments in the manufacturing and construction sectors after 1948. Seen as a whole, the above-mentioned developments contributed to the Afrikaners' share of the non-agricultural economy virtually doubling in the first fifteen years of NP rule after 1948.⁴⁵

In conjunction with the virtually unmitigated state support given to Afrikaner economic undertakings after 1948, this strategy produced what had not existed previously: a burgeoning and competitive Afrikaner capitalist class. In September 1965 Verwoerd himself expressed his qualms about the rapid advancement of Afrikaner businessmen by saying that the growth of Afrikaner capitalism might subsequently be used against the Afrikaners themselves. As the institution of apartheid diminished the threat to Afrikaners of expropriation, enforced disparity, integration or perpetual poverty, so it detracted from Afrikaner capitalists' frame of reference the moral obligation of disavowing all capitalistic hegemony and materialist considerations in favour of esteeming the sovereignty and dominion of Afrikaners as their prime concern. Moreover, increasing prosperity made the White elite less disposed to sacrificing part of their economic welfare for the sake of enhancing the ill-fated political vision of the magnanimity of apartheid for South Africa's non-White races. Once apartheid had furnished Whites with the means for prosperity, the political outlook of apartheid was basically a *cul-de-sac*. White prosperity steadily undermined both the unity of Afrikaners and the sustained validity of apartheid. White prosperity, in fact, succeeded only in enhancing increased solidarity between Afrikaner capitalists and their business peers.⁴⁶

The expansion of Afrikaner concerns in the sectors of mining, industry and commerce brought with it an increasing commonality of interests and policy preferences between Afrikaner and English business associations. The state made increasing use of the economic clout, know-how and international connections of English-speakers. Moreover, mergers and joint ventures of Afrikaner and English capital increased significantly in the 1970s. Anglo American, traditionally disparaged by Afrikaners as the doyen of dominant English business institutions in South Africa, for its part is said to have encouraged the expansion of Afrikaner interests in mining with the express purpose of enhancing sympathy for business in government circles. In fact, in a shrewd move Harry Oppenheimer, head of the Anglo American Conglomerate that dominated the private sector, decided in 1964 that the time had come to open the doors of the business establishment to Afrikaner business undertakings that were still largely operating in an ethnic vacuum.

⁴⁵ H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 542-544; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 138-142.

⁴⁶ D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 141-142; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, p. 544.

Oppenheimer promptly sold General Mining – one of the main Johannesburg mining houses – to Federale Mynbou (an adjunct of Sanlam). The deal allowed De Beers, a company in which Oppenheimer had a majority interest, to retain its diamond monopoly in South Africa. The entire affair unleashed a furore in Afrikaner ranks, since through this deal Sanlam was accused of sounding the death knell for the long-cherished Afrikaner ideal of attaining for Afrikaners a position of sole ownership in South Africa's mining industry. Yet more than this, the Sanlam-Anglo American dealings laid bare a significant contradiction in the Afrikaner economic movement.⁴⁷

With the advent of the Afrikaner economic movement in the 1930s and 1940s, the nationalist discourse had been overtly and predominantly anti-capitalist. The ravages of capitalism were made to account for all the economic woes experienced by Afrikaners. The fault that the organisers of the Afrikaner nationalistic movement found with the capitalist powers in South Africa was that they were distinctly dominated by English-speakers, Jews, foreigners and unscrupulous monopolies, and that they were virtually devoid of Afrikaners. With the added impetus of political power Afrikaner leaders steeled themselves to obtain a significant share of the economic system, and they were in fact intent on nothing less than the 'Afrikanerisation of economic life in South Africa,' as has been noted. As a result, Afrikaner business interests had prospered rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s. As large Afrikaner business undertakings emerged to attain competitive positions, the foregoing anti-capitalist rhetoric among Afrikaner business and political leaders evaporated altogether. In fact, the new Afrikaner business conglomerates were increasingly veering on an independent track from mainline nationalist thinking, and even Verwoerd was induced to complain that Afrikaner business was becoming too independent and growing too close to Harry Oppenheimer. Indeed, prosperity had stimulated Afrikaner businessmen to grow increasingly distant from both the NP and its policy objectives. After apartheid had elevated Afrikaner business interests to an unassailable pedestal, apartheid and its rigid economic policies eventually became for Afrikaner businessmen a superfluous anomaly.⁴⁸

For most of the 1950s, business associations had cautiously circumvented taking public issue with the government on the increased tumult caused by the apartheid policies. When some occasionally attempted to interject, the government sternly recommended that members of the

⁴⁷ L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 214-215; H Adam and H Giliomee, The rise and crisis of Afrikaner power, pp. 178-182; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 543-544.

⁴⁸ D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 120-124, 141-142.

business community should not attempt to enter the field of politics. This did not, however, preclude organised business from remaining involved in politics, and low-key approaches to ministers were not infrequent occurrences. The Sharpeville crisis of early 1960, however, heralded a transition to a more assertive and public mode of articulating political interest by the business community. Harry Oppenheimer, for one, responded to the crises of 1960 by suggesting that “we must accept...a black political majority in the future.”⁴⁹

As an example of the business community’s more virulent role in political matters after 1960, on 12 May 1960, the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI), the Association of Chambers of Commerce (Assocom), the Federated Chambers of Industry (FCI), the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA) and the Transvaal and Orange Free State Chambers of Mines issued Prime Minister Verwoerd with a joint statement in which the signatories called for the abolition of curfew regulations, for amendments to liquor regulations and to the system of influx control. Shortly after the publication of the joint statement Assocom released its own statement of policy in which it launched an even more frontal attack on the policy essentials of apartheid, calling, for instance, for the abolition of job reservation and recommending that Blacks be allowed to acquire freehold title in urban Black townships. “It is essential,” the statement read, “to obtain greater co-operation among all people in South Africa, white and non-white. There should be imparted to non-whites a sense of inclusion in the shaping of (South Africa’s) future.”⁵⁰

Verwoerd responded somewhat fervently to the Assocom statement by stating that “However well intended, those who have made such proposals often do not have sufficient facts at their disposal by which they can test the effects of their proposals and it therefore remains the task of the Government, with full knowledge of the position after consideration of all the facts and consequences, and after consultation with its experts to make the necessary decisions.” While Assocom contended that the implementation of apartheid was jeopardising the economy, Verwoerd retorted to this with the belief that economic growth and apartheid could be sustained concurrently, and if this proved impossible, then economic development would be the inferior priority. “The implementation of apartheid policies,” Verwoerd had told representatives of Assocom and FCI in 1951, “had to take account of economic possibilities...(but) the desire for economic gain could not be allowed to take precedence over more urgent matters...(namely) the

⁴⁹ Quotation taken from P Frankel, Business and politics: towards a strategy, in Critical Choices for South African Society, Volume 7, June 1988, p. 3; L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boulle, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 215-217.

⁵⁰ Quotation and content taken from L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boulle, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 215-217.

interest of preserving white civilization.” Business leaders, both Afrikaners and English-speaking, could not disagree more with Verwoerd on this matter.⁵¹

An editorial of *Die Burger* newspaper of June 1960 succinctly revealed an important factor contributing to the government’s insistent rebuttal of the business community’s proposals: “Those so-called economic proposals are rejected because the political implications thereof are rejected, and it is time that businessmen who want to talk about these things should be asked to consider the political consequences of their economic proposals, like they ask others to consider the economic consequences of their political measures.” Evidently, it was the prerogatives of politics that shaped the government’s policy perspectives in this time, and the balance of power in South Africa was not yet significantly affected by the preponderance of the quandaries presented by the economy.⁵²

Yet the impending quandaries inherent in the South African economy were steadily becoming apparent while the period of rapid economic growth during the 1960s was still in progress. Close scrutiny of the nature of the South African economy and the measures employed within the system of apartheid bear out the severe fragility and precarious foundations of South Africa’s economic prosperity. South Africa’s role in international trade remained that of an exporter of gold and other raw materials to the developed market economies, and an importer from developed economies of capital, intermediate goods, oil, and arms. South Africa was unable to attain the trade profile of a ‘newly industrialising economy,’ and instead could not evade the tag of merely remaining an exceptionally well-developed exporter of primary products. Mineral exports alone had consistently generated between 70 and 85 per cent of South Africa’s export earnings, with manufacturing accounting for a diminutive 10 per cent, thus making this sector a net consumer rather than a net producer of foreign exchange. Since World War Two South Africa acquired the foreign exchange needed to pay for these essential economic imports from only two sources: earnings from the export of primary products, mostly minerals; and foreign capital inflows, i.e. investment or loans. This exposed the South African economy to a fundamental weakness: industrial development in South Africa would always be inextricably linked to the capacity of the

⁵¹ L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boulle, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 216-218.

⁵² Quotation taken from L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boulle, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, p. 218, originally from *Die Burger*, 23 June 1960.

economy to generate inflows of foreign exchange. This weakness became a growing concern in South Africa in the 1960s and led to a straightforward economic predicament in the 1970s.⁵³

After 1971 the international gold price did begin to increase, albeit erratically. With the consequent extra income the state was tempted to drastically enhance its spending, while luxury imports abounded and the exchange rate was strengthened. Little effort, however, was made to plough the additional resources into real investment – a strategical deficiency that effectively characterises a substandard economic policy. As a result, capital income rose and goods output increased incrementally, but the economy failed to benefit substantially. When the gold price fell, the economy was suddenly incapacitated, and the state was forced to finance large projects with costly foreign loans. In this manner the fatal weakness of the South African economy was further exposed.⁵⁴

The vitality of a growing economy's manufacturing sector is integral to the dynamism of a country's entire economic stature. The manufacturing sector tends to have much potential for raising employment at initial stages of development, and its productivity gains are easily transferable to other sectors when manufacturing provides them with cheaper and more efficient machinery. The South African manufacturing sector expanded considerably in the 1950s and 1960s, growing by over seven per cent per annum in real terms. This period of rapid development occurred for several reasons: an active state import substitution policy, state intervention in strategic economic sectors, cheap raw material and electricity inputs, and low Black wages. Yet the South African manufacturing sector produced neither the technologies nor the heavy machinery required both to manufacture service goods and to effectively serve the other sectors of the economy. The greater part of the intermediate and capital goods required by the economy was still obtained from cumbersome imports. Thus, the only way of enhancing industrial capacity was by increasing crucial imports, and this, in turn, could not be sustained unless sufficient foreign exchange could be raised to pay for these essential imports. The period of rapid growth in the 1960s, moreover, and the rapid increase of capital-intensive manufacturing had actually deepened South Africa's dependence on foreign imports, thus rendering the economy perilously

⁵³ C McCarthy, Stagnation in the South African economy: where did things go wrong? Occasional Papers no. 1, 2nd edition, 1991, pp. 1-8; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁴ TC Moll, 'Probably the best laager in the world:' the record and prospects of the South African economy, in JD Brewer (ed.), Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight, pp. 142-146.

vulnerable to the increasing temperamental stances of international investors and trading partners. As a result, by the 1970s manufacturing growth had begun to recede.⁵⁵

A significant indicator of the health of an economy is the extent to which it can provide employment and income to its labour force. In this regard, South Africa's performance was admirable until the onset of the early 1970s. During the 1960s, employment rates in most of the formal, high-productivity sectors of the economy increased steadily, and Black unemployment rates did not swell appreciably. The economic growth period of the 1960s, however, contributed to a considerable expansion of capital-intensive production and mechanisation, especially in the manufacturing sector. What this signified in practice was that, while large numbers of semi-skilled Black workers were drawn into production in the 1960s, even larger numbers of Black unskilled workers were rendered superfluous. Outside manufacturing, the prospects for employment were equally dire: agriculture, for instance, had also been mechanising and shedding labour since the 1960s, and the employment growth outlook for mining, trade, services and construction did not look auspicious either. This process marked a progression away from the reliance on cheap, unskilled Black labour that had long characterised the South African economy, towards the consolidation of a smaller semi-skilled and skilled workforce.⁵⁶

Thus the number of unemployed Blacks rose from 582 000 in 1962 to one million in 1970. Under the direction of apartheid's influx controls, these unemployed Blacks were to be removed from the urban areas and placed in the homelands. Moreover, well into the 1980s Blacks were subjected to an educational system explicitly engineered to confine Blacks to the lower echelons of the labour market, equipping them with only rudimentary skills while skilled, technical and professional work was reserved by law for Whites. With the rising capital and technical intensity prevalent in the manufacturing sector, the White labour supply was unable to fulfil the growing manufacturing demand for technical, professional and semi-professional labour, and shortages in this regard were estimated at 47 000 in 1969. The glaring deficiencies of the apartheid policies with regard to labour supply in South Africa generated futile demands from large businesses for a reconsideration of the restrictions imposed on the mobility and training of Black workers. The overall White prosperity of the 1960s tended to ameliorate the obviously damaging effects of

⁵⁵ A Hirsch, The origins and implications of South Africa's continuing financial crisis, in *Transformation* 9, 1989, pp. 31-37; TC Moll, 'Probably the best laager in the world:' the record and prospects of the South African economy, in JD Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight*, pp. 146-147; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 172, 176.

⁵⁶ H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, pp. 30-33; TC Moll, 'Probably the best laager in the world:' the record and prospects of the South African economy, in JD Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight*, pp. 147-151.

labour shortages, and while the economy prospered there seemed to exist little incentive in tampering with the inflexible racial divisions of labour inherent in apartheid. Yet the incentive for change was to become decisively more relevant with the advent of economic regression in the 1970s.⁵⁷

Until the late 1960s the apartheid system had arguably aided economic growth in South Africa. Its fiscal costs were negligible and it enhanced rapid capital accumulation by ensuring a cheap supply of Black labour for White businesses. By the late 1960s, however, this favourable scenario had begun to alter. Apart from the dearth of semi-skilled and skilled labour that was hampering productivity growth, the fiscal costs of apartheid had begun to proliferate. The expenses underpinning the efforts to maintain and expand apartheid were rising progressively in a period when the state was increasingly debilitated to afford them, thus compelling the government to raise taxes or loans. The critical nexus between the declining benefits and growing costs of apartheid was beginning to seriously undermine the hitherto apparently impregnable political credence of apartheid. Moreover, with signs that the Black resistance movement against apartheid were slowly finding a renewed fervour in the form of organisations like Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, the entrenched notions of the political and ideological superiority of apartheid was likewise coming under increasingly critical scrutiny.⁵⁸

Thus the aegis of apartheid politics that had hitherto inspired so much confidence to oversee a cumbersome economic programme and nothing short of a cultural transformation was steadily beginning to erode the very objectives it was originally intended to promote. Perpetual White prosperity and dominion were the deep-seated yet under-stated objectives of apartheid, couched in half-hearted attempts to lend legitimacy to apartheid by underscoring the system's apparently benevolent multi-racial rhetoric. The obviously prejudiced system of apartheid was still able to sustain a considerable degree of public support, however, when internal unrest was minimal and the economy was performing admirably. The recurrence of the former but especially the ebbing of the latter exposed the over-bearing political superstructure of apartheid to adverse public scrutiny from sources both internal and external to the constituency apartheid was supposedly serving. While Black resistance to apartheid was reviving from the early 1970s, the business community – with an increased Afrikaner element – was likewise increasingly beginning to

⁵⁷ D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 172, 174-176.

⁵⁸ TC Moll, 'Probably the best laager in the world:' the record and prospects of the South African economy, in JD Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight*, pp. 153-154; S Mufson, Introduction: the roots of insurrection, in T Lodge, B Nasson *et al*, *All, here, and now: Black politics in South Africa in the 1980s*, p 6-7.

advocate a departure from the crude essentials of apartheid when the system was beginning to function counter-productively to the economy.

In effect, a shift in the balance of power had been initiated. The tutelage of 'apartheid politics at all costs' prevalent in South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s was being superseded by 'economic viability at all costs.' The predominance of growth and prosperity was, in other words, the likelier option compared to the encumbering of sustained 'classic' apartheid. Even so, the 1970s and 1980s did not witness the eclipse of the political balance of power but only the gradual and sustained shift towards the economic balance of power. While recognising the imperative of departing from the hegemony of political apartheid, however, the NP leadership in this period still clung to the entrenched wiles of politics – i.e. by sternly maintaining White minority political dominance and rejecting a significant departure from apartheid – but also initiated the approach to the economic consensus that apartheid must be altered by introducing reforms and by endeavouring to blunt the rigid public face of apartheid slightly. A complete embrace of the economic balance of power was only to be attempted by their successors in the NP in the early 1990s.

**The trusted assessment becomes an assured anomaly:
The gradual departure from the political balance of power in South Africa**

*Economics have a more powerful effect on the course of events than any other factor. Almost everything else – politics, law, education, unemployment, poverty, unrest and so on – tends to be a consequence of economic processes. The real issues behind virtually every piece of legislation are economic: the motives are economic, the means are economic and the consequences are economic.*⁵⁹

- L Louw and F Kendall, 1986.

From political buoyancy to economic jeopardy

On a certain day in 1976 Mandela was at Robben Island prison head office conferring with the commanding officer. As Mandela was walking out of the room, he came across a young prisoner being scolded by a prison official for wearing his cap in the presence of senior officers, which was against the regulations. In another violation of the regulations, the young prisoner did not stand up when a police officer entered the room along with Mandela. After the major had twice requested the young prisoner to take off his cap, the young prisoner looked at the major and said ‘What for?’ ‘I could hardly believe what I had just heard,’ Mandela related. ‘It was a revolutionary question: What for?’ The major was taken aback, and told the young prisoner that it was against the regulations. When the young prisoner continued to digress by asking the major what the purpose of the regulation was, the major ‘stomped’ out of the room, telling Mandela to talk to the prisoner instead. ‘But,’ Mandela stated, ‘I would not intervene on [the major’s] behalf, and simply bowed in the direction of the prisoner to let him know that I was on his side.’⁶⁰

In September 1966 the future State President of South Africa FW de Klerk was on holiday with his family on the south coast of Kwazulu Natal. On the afternoon of 6 September, De Klerk and his wife Marike were enjoying a nap when Du Toit van der Merwe, a friend of the De Klerk family, suddenly burst into their room with the news that it had just been announced on the radio that Prime Minister Verwoerd had been stabbed with a knife. De Klerk rushed to the small radio he had brought with him on holiday, but the reception was poor and they could hardly make out anything at all. Van Der Merwe was so overcome with emotion that he suddenly grabbed De

⁵⁹ L Louw and F Kendall, *South Africa: the solution*, p. 48.

⁶⁰ Quotations and content taken from N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 577-578.

Klerk's radio and threw it against the wall, wrecking it completely. It was only when De Klerk was able to enlist the help of a neighbour – “who was still blissfully unaware of the news” – and his radio that he was able to confirm that Verwoerd was, indeed, dead. “I was overcome by disbelief and consternation, on the one hand,” De Klerk reflected afterwards, “and by anguish on the other.” Verwoerd's Minister of Justice, John Vorster, who had been integral to the severe state security response of the early 1960s, was chosen by the NP caucus to replace Verwoerd as Prime Minister.⁶¹

In 1972, when FW De Klerk entered Parliament for the first time as the NP representative for Vereeniging, he thought that “the National Party, under the leadership of Prime Minister John Vorster, was at the crest of its confidence and power. It appeared at that time that the government had effectively crushed the revolutionary threat. Sanctions and international isolation had not yet become major problems. The economy was booming and we were making progress with the development of the black homelands...All of us, including myself, were slipping into a false sense of security. It was, perhaps,” De Klerk concludes, “for these reasons that Prime Minister Vorster did not feel under any particular pressure to make any major policy changes.” De Klerk came to know Vorster well over the years, describing him as “a strong leader” and “a warm and considerate person,” and after becoming a member of parliament, De Klerk was even allowed the privilege of occasionally sharing a round of golf with the Prime Minister. De Klerk's most glowing appraisal of Vorster, however, concerned his political prowess – he described Vorster as “a pragmatic politician and a strategist *par excellence*.”⁶²

Yet the recalcitrant liberal newspaper editor and columnist Donald Woods was to posit a vastly different assessment of Vorster. In a newspaper column of 1975, Woods wrote that “There is a difference between the public image and the private personality of Prime Minister Vorster. His public image is that of the grim Volksleader, with downturned lips, devoid of all sense of levity. But those who know him maintain that he has been seen to smile. They say he has to be quite considerably amused or intrigued for this to happen. Which prompts the intriguing question – what intrigues Mr. Vorster?” Woods proceeded to conjecture that the game of chess – which Vorster had a special interest in – could be something that might amuse the Prime Minister. Woods concluded his article by stating ominously that “...today Mr. Vorster is engaged in his biggest-ever chess game. He has drawn the white pieces and therefore has the opening initiative,

⁶¹ Quotations and content taken from FW de Klerk, The last trek, p. 41.

⁶² Quotations and content taken from Ibid., pp. 47-48.

but as every chess buff knows it is black's response that shapes the end game. And in this particular chess game there are five times more black pieces than white ones."⁶³

Vorster's perceived political aptitude and strategical feats to the contrary, beneath the façade of the NP's apparent invincibility and the South African economy's seemingly unchecked advance lay the germination of a structural predicament unprecedented in its austerity. The economic upsurge prevalent in the 1960s was shortly to degenerate into a precipitate decline in the 1970s, and the strategies of apartheid were therewith increasingly proving to offer no strategical solution to the quandary of perpetual economic deterioration. Vorster was indeed presented with the spectre of his biggest-ever chess game, with more impediments than benefits, and De Klerk and the aficionados of the NP were shortly to realise how fragile their perceived sense of political security was becoming. What was transpiring, in fact, was a gradual and laborious shift in the balance of power.

Vorster, unlike Verwoerd, was no intellectual. While serving as Verwoerd's Minister of Justice, Vorster had developed a more pragmatic understanding of what was required to maintain the political hegemony of a shrinking White minority. Vorster was the first Prime Minister since 1948, however, to acknowledge that apartheid was not a goal in itself but rather a means to ensure stability and security. Thus Vorster emphasised matters relating to security, professing that the security of the state was his priority. Even so, Vorster was not intent on dominating government as Verwoerd did. Vorster understood that it was essential to consolidate rather than fragment White unity, and in public paid tribute to the contributions of English-speakers. Moreover, Vorster told all English newspaper editors (with the exception of Laurence Gandar of the *Rand Daily Mail*) that his door was open to them, and addressed gatherings of English-speaking business people. In fact, Vorster's conciliatory manoeuvres towards English-speakers precipitated a process in the coming years whereby the NP managed to gain the electoral support of between a quarter and a third of English-speakers. Vorster also committed himself to enabling South Africa to break out of its isolationist stronghold by launching his 'Outward Movement.' In this initiative Vorster endeavoured to establish diplomatic and economic ties with African states, thus intending to soften the uniform hostility towards South Africa prevalent in African countries to the north of South Africa. Vorster's much-lauded 'Outward Movement' appeared somewhat successful at first, with South Africa's isolation being lessened slightly by the Vorster government seeming to collude with both the Malawian and Zambian governments. With events escalating in southern

⁶³ D Woods, Behind the Vorster mask, in D Woods, South African dispatches. Letters to my countrymen, pp. 1-3.

Africa in the mid-1970s, however, Vorster's high hopes of a *rapprochement* were to prove illusory.⁶⁴

Soon after becoming Prime Minister, Vorster privately addressed a group of conservative parliamentarians and scolded them for clinging to the doctrines of apartheid as holy writ. Instead, Vorster maintained, the prime concern of the NP was "the retention, maintenance and the immortalisation of Afrikaner identity within a white sovereign state." Apartheid was merely intended as a tool to this end, and if there were more propitious methods of attaining this objective, Vorster insisted, he would be very willing to oblige. Vorster therefore seemed to exhibit a certain flexibility in his leadership, hence his more amenable approach to cooperating with African states and his attempts at fomenting greater unity between Afrikaners and English-speakers in South Africa. Yet even so, Vorster's apparent flexible slant did not significantly infringe on the political structures of apartheid. Vorster maintained the NP's integral faith in the credibility of the homelands as the only mainstays of political rights for Blacks, and he consistently opposed the granting of property rights to Blacks considered permanent residents in the urban areas. In addition, Vorster also clamped down on the vestiges of political rights for Coloureds and Indians.⁶⁵

Vorster's dubious political manoeuvres exacerbated the deepening rift among Afrikaners as to the continued relevance of the rigid policies of apartheid. The Afrikaner community was increasingly characterised by a bifurcation between *verligtes*, or the so-called enlightened or liberal ones, and *verkrampes*, or the so-called constricted or ultra-conservative ones. Both *verligtes* and *verkrampes* underscored the broad perception of White domination, but the *verligtes* renounced the narrow confines of Afrikaner racial traditions and advocated the introduction of gradual reforms to apartheid, while the *verkrampes* sought to uphold the strictly Afrikaner-orientated approach of the state and denounced any changes to the hallowed principles of apartheid and White domination. Significantly, this ideological bifurcation occurred largely along the corresponding partitions of class and wealth, with the *verligtes* being for the most part better educated, wealthier and wholly less dependent on state protection than the *verkrampes* assemblage. By the 1970s, Afrikaner business had come of age, and the leading businesses were able to function effectively without the patronage of the state. Hence many Afrikaner

⁶⁴ H Giliomee, 'The leader and the citizenry,' in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 120-122; FW de Klerk, The last trek, pp. 48-49; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 550-553.

⁶⁵ Quotation and content taken from H Giliomee, Broedertwis: intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the transition from apartheid, in African Affairs, 1992, 91, pp. 343-348.

businessmen now also progressively joined the fray of the *verligtes* in lobbying for significant reforms in economic and political policies.⁶⁶

Statements made by Vorster in 1974 seemed to indicate that the Prime Minister himself was veering in the direction of the *verligtes*. In October 1974 he had declared that southern Africa was entering a period of decision, and the only practicable outcome was a peaceful settlement. In November of that year, Vorster seemed to herald a period of substantial change when he proclaimed: “Give South Africa six months...and you will be surprised where South Africa stands then.” President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia described Vorster’s new initiative as “the voice of reason” for which Africa had been waiting. What followed in Vorster’s acclaimed ‘six months’ was a programme of diffused internal reforms intended to mitigate the forbidding public image of South Africa. Mostly as a result of the lobbying of the business fraternity, job colour bars in the labour market were diluted in this period in an effort to supply the growing need for skilled labour. The government now also decided on a slightly more benevolent approach to non-Whites, and the 1975-76 budget envisaged a rise in personal income of three per cent for Asians, 19 percent for Coloureds, and eleven per cent for Blacks (while that of Whites was reduced by seven per cent). In 1975 it was reported that the wages of a quarter of a million Black workers in the industrial sector had improved on average by 15 to 20 per cent in the previous year. Nevertheless, Vorster’s request for ‘six months’ might well have been a reference merely to South Africa’s changing international position. In the coming months Vorster visited the Ivory Coast, Liberia and Israel, and considering the extent of South Africa’s isolation, Vorster might well have interpreted these state visits as substantial breakthroughs.⁶⁷

In contrast to the quasi-colonial peremptory treatment of Blacks by Verwoerd, Vorster professed the conviction that he and the Afrikaners craved permanent acceptance as Africans from Blacks. When the Portuguese colonial empire unravelled in 1974-75 and the guerrilla movements came to power in Angola and Mozambique, the erstwhile buffer zone insulating South Africa from external insurgence was dismembered. As long as it was stable and did not provide forward bases for the ANC and the PAC, Vorster immediately promised not to disrupt the new government in

⁶⁶ M Mann, The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), *State, resistance and change in South Africa*, pp. 52-54; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 547-550.

⁶⁷ Quotations and content taken from D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, p. 192. For content see also H Giliomee, Afrikaner politics 1977-1987: from Afrikaner Nationalist rule to central state hegemony, in JD Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight*, pp. 112-115; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 566-568; L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, *Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state*, pp. 226-227; TRH Davenport and C Saunders, *South Africa. A modern history*, pp. 532-533.

Mozambique, but the increasing turmoil and impending civil war in Angola, however, presented the South African government with a potentially volatile regional predicament. When Cuban soldiers and Soviet advisors and materiel arrived in Angola to assist the *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA), a movement of Portuguese leftists and indigenous *mestizos* based in the Angolan capital Luanda, the Ford administration in Washington requested South Africa to provide training for the anti-Marxist movements in Angola, the *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola* (FNLA) and *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA), in order to enable the FNLA and UNITA to forestall the MPLA installing a national Marxist state in Angola.⁶⁸

When both Zambia and Zaire requested South Africa to assist in preventing Angola from completely falling under the sway of the MPLA, Vorster leapt at the opportunity to side with the African states and thus promote South Africa's entry into the mainstream of African politics. Vorster eventually authorised in August 1975 an invasion force of South African battle groups to infiltrate Angola. By December, however, in the wake of the Vietnamese war, the US government cut off aid to FNLA and UNITA, and South Africa was left somewhat stranded. Nevertheless, in January 1976, when delegates at an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Ethiopia voted whether to recognise the MPLA as the sole government of Angola, South African forces were still fighting in Angola. At the OAU meeting in Addis Ababa, South Africa was widely condemned for its alleged opportunistic ventures in Angola. In a desperately close vote, the OAU meeting eventually opted in favour of the MPLA. On 11 February 1976 the MPLA government in Luanda was officially inducted into the OAU, and by the end of March all South African forces had been withdrawn from Angola.⁶⁹

The Angolan intervention proved to be a great humiliation for South Africa, and effectively signified the termination of Vorster's elaborate efforts at détente. Internally, the policy fundamentals required by apartheid were likewise proving to be beyond the realm of the possible. As South Africa's economic growth tailed off in the course of the 1970s, the policy initiatives to develop the homelands as viable political and economic dwellings for Blacks were receding miserably. Between 1970 and 1980 the collective population of the homelands more than doubled, but agricultural production had largely come to a standstill. Moreover, as a testimony to the malfunction of the policies of influx control, the Black urban population increased by 1.5

⁶⁸ H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 567, 571-574.

⁶⁹ FJ du Toit Spies, *Angola. Operasie Savannah 1975-1976*, pp. 40-48, 73-79, 256-270; H Hamann, *Days of the generals. The untold story of South Africa's apartheid-era military generals*, pp. 14-19, 39-45.

million between 1970 and 1980. In short, it became painfully apparent by the mid-1970s that Black urbanisation was beyond the control of the NP. Externally, the South African government's initial fears were realised in that South West Africa/Namibia – which South Africa had occupied under a League of Nations mandate since 1919 – now had a Marxist-orientated government residing on its northern border, and the protective band of White-ruled neighbouring states that existed hitherto had now been replaced by post-colonial African states likely to be receptive to supporting South Africa's liberation movements. Moreover, Blacks inside South Africa likewise recognised the collapse of the Portuguese African empire as a harbinger for South Africa's eventual liberation, and hence Black resistance to apartheid in South Africa experienced a corresponding infusion of intensity.⁷⁰

In the early 1970s there existed few opportunities for Blacks to engage in acts of resistance to apartheid, by peaceful or other means. Nonetheless, by this time Black working class organisation was gradually emerging from more than two decades of indolence due to the stringent government restrictions that had been imposed upon it. Black labourers were rendered economically vulnerable by low wages and the threat of instant dismissal, although Black trade unions were largely impotent in this period. As a result, strike action had declined perceptively after 1948. The advent of the 1970s, however, witnessed the appearance of a labour militancy unprecedented in ferocity in South Africa. The decade was initiated by a massive strike of contract workers in South West Africa/Namibia, the territory occupied and administered by South Africa. This nascent labour discontent forthwith spread to South Africa, and in some ways heralded the transition from the period of rapid economic growth to the time of serious economic regression in South Africa. The advent of labour unrest in this period is also partly explained by burgeoning costs: between 1971 and 1973 the prices of essential commodities for Black workers rose by no less than 40 per cent. In 1973, more than 100 000 workers marched through the industrial area of Durban, and, in the same year, eleven striking mine workers were shot dead when the police was summoned to suppress a strike at a Carletonville Anglo American mine. From January 1973 to mid-1976, more than 200 000 Blacks engaged in strike action. Further imbued by the independence of Angola and Mozambique, this period witnessed the re-emergence of Black trade unions that virtually uniformly campaigned from a non-racial, class perspective.⁷¹

⁷⁰ KA Manzo, Domination, resistance, and social change in South Africa. The local effects of global power, pp. 205-207; H Giliomee, Afrikaner politics 1977-1987: from Afrikaner Nationalist rule to central state hegemony, in JD Brewer (ed.), Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight, pp. 112-117; H Hamann, Days of the generals, pp. 44-45.

⁷¹ SY Gool, The crisis of capital accumulation in South Africa, in G Naidoo (ed.), Reform and revolution. South Africa in the nineties, p. 83; A Stadler, The political economy of modern South Africa, pp. 172-177; D O'Meara,

Undoubtedly, by the early 1970s South Africa's Black population was ripe for an ideology of liberation from apartheid. The oppression inherent in apartheid was overt and blatant, and all opposition had been repressed. Apartheid was premised on discrimination and racism, and on a stereotyped view of Blacks as sexually promiscuous, prone to violence, chaos, corruption and uncleanness. From the hiatus engendered by these enforced ideological differentials the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) emerged in the late 1960s. The BCM was initiated by rising Black intellectuals on the segregated Black university campuses, and Steve Biko, a medical student in Durban, eventually emerged to spearhead the ideological progression of the BCM. The BCM sought to harness support among Blacks – as an inclusive group – who uniformly rejected White domination and privilege based on race. The BCM rejected the ANC's partial reliance on Whites to advance the liberation struggle, and instead emphasised the intellectual liberation of all Blacks, Coloureds and Indians from servitude to White supremacy. To this end the BCM advocated the development of Black pride and self-confidence, although the movement in principle eschewed violence and favoured a non-racial democracy. The ideological perceptions of the BCM were not loath to permeate the thinking of a generation of Black youth and intelligentsia. Although the BCM was at first regarded with a degree of tolerance by the government, by 1973 the security police started harassing Black Consciousness Organisations. A series of arrests and banning orders followed, as well as a number of deaths in detention. Steve Biko himself was issued with a banning order that restricted his movements to an Eastern Cape magisterial district.⁷²

The revolts that erupted in Soweto in June 1976 should be interpreted against the background of a number of entrenched and enduring grievances. Unquestionably precipitated by the pungent stimuli of Black Consciousness, the riots were also a result of the Black youth's loathing of the Bantu Education system, which Verwoerd had intended would designate Blacks to a menial allotment in society. At a time when the youth was faced with the spectre of rising unemployment and the increasing redundancy of unskilled labour per se, the inferior education Blacks were subjected to was inevitably to produce resentment. Furthermore, the acute – and largely government contrived – housing shortage had reached its zenith in Black townships in this period. In an effort to encourage migration to the homelands, the Vorster government decided to retard

Forty lost years, p. 179; M Mann, *The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform*, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), *State, resistance and change in South Africa*, p. 53.

⁷² H Adam and K Moodley, *The opening of the apartheid mind. Options for the new South Africa*, pp. 104-114; A Stadler, *The political economy of modern South Africa*, pp. 171-172.

the building of houses in Black areas in South Africa proper in favour of building them in the homelands. Lastly, the Administration Boards (which had replaced the urban local authorities in 1972-1973) elicited much discontent in the Black areas, for the imposition of these boards were absorbing much of the township's revenue and was staffed mainly by White officials. Yet it is most insightful to consider the circumstances surrounding the immediate cause of the 1976 revolts.⁷³

Andries Treurnicht, leading *verkrampste* and future right wing leader of the breakaway Conservative Party (CP), impressed Leon Wessels considerably when Wessels was attending university in 1968. Treurnicht, Wessels reflected, “seemed to be the perfect symbolic image of the great Afrikaner leader: principled, consistent, perspicacious, preacher and newspaper editor.” “Then,” regretfully, Wessels continued, “he entered parliament. As deputy minister he was still very eloquent. But one wonders though: what does Treurnicht really know about practical politics? He gives you no chance to really come close to him and to gain an understanding of how his heart beats...In the inner circles he must probably have been the worst leader I have encountered in such circumstances. You can't get a point of view out of him. But give Treurnicht a stage...”⁷⁴ As Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Treurnicht was responsible for the rigid enforcement of the policy of Afrikaans-language instruction in Soweto schools in January of 1976. The official policy of the Department of Bantu Education stipulated the utilisation of Afrikaans and English on a 50/50 basis as media of instruction in Black schools, yet due to the paucity of teachers proficient in both languages this policy had hitherto never been fully implemented. Treurnicht was convinced that the government had the right to determine the medium of instruction since White taxpayers subsidised Black schools, and thus in 1974 he propelled the comprehensive implementation of the 50/50 language policy in Black secondary schools. A 1972 survey had found, however, that 98 per cent of young Sowetans did not wish to be taught in Afrikaans, and 50 per cent considered Afrikaners ‘the most cruel and least sympathetic people in South Africa.’ Protests in this regard by teacher organisations, parents and students in the townships elicited no results from the government.⁷⁵

On 16 June 1976 a student march against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was duly initiated by pupils of Naledi and Thomas Mofolo high schools in Soweto. The marchers

⁷³ TRH Davenport and C Saunders, *South Africa. A modern history*, pp. 449-450.

⁷⁴ Quotations and content taken from L Wessels, *Die einde van 'n era. Bevryding van 'n Afrikaner*, pp. 21-23.

Quotations translated from the Afrikaans.

⁷⁵ J Grobler, *A decisive clash?*, pp. 169-174; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 578-579.

moved through Soweto, apparently with the intention of converging on Orlando Stadium for a mass gathering. About 10 000 marchers thus congregated at Orlando West High School, where they were confronted by members of the police. Tension was running high, and when the police fired tear-gas canisters into the crowd, some of the marchers retaliated by pelting the police with stones. In the melee that ensued the police opened fire on the advancing youths, killing at least one – thirteen-year-old Hector Petersen. After the first shootings wide-spread rioting broke out throughout Soweto. Rioters attacked and burned down Administration Board buildings, beer halls, schools, clinics, and libraries, and organised work stoppages. The uprising spread to townships throughout the southern Transvaal, to the campuses of Black universities, and to some urban areas in other provinces. Fierce rioting also occurred in Cape Town as Coloured youths were spurred to revolt by the events in Soweto. Unrest in the townships continued to simmer, until by October 1977 between six hundred and seven hundred people had been killed. The death in police detention of acknowledged BCM leader Steve Biko in September 1977 further served to exacerbate the tensions prevalent in the Black communities, and for the period 1976-77 the educational system for Black students was reduced to a state of disarray. The damage inflicted to property was immense: affected were over 100 government buildings belonging to the Administration Boards, as well as 250 bottle stores and beer halls, 170 shops, 25 clinics, eight banks, about a dozen libraries, a number of post offices as well as hotels, cinemas, churches, community halls, magistrates' courts, and petrol filling stations.⁷⁶

Despite the ample warnings that had abounded before June 1976 that unrest was afoot in the townships, it appears that the Vorster government was still blissfully unaware of the impending turmoil. Cabinet records from 1976 indicate that the strategy utilised by the police in Soweto – the use of live ammunition to quell the revolt – was never discussed by the Cabinet. When the storm did break the government was wholly unprepared to deal with the crisis, but it nevertheless resorted to what had become its somewhat characteristic recourse: repression.⁷⁷ In response to the escalating crisis, in October 1977 the government issued banning orders to all the associations associated with the BCM, as well the Christian Institute of the liberal Afrikaner cleric Beyers Naudé, and 42 people, mainly leading Black personalities, were detained. At the Transvaal NP Congress in May 1977, Vorster anticipated the international furore the Soweto crisis was certain to bring about when he proclaimed that South Africa would be “tested in the coming months and

⁷⁶ A survey of race relations in South Africa, 1976, pp. 57-58; A survey of race relations in South Africa, 1977, pp. 3, 74-75; TRH Davenport and C Saunders, South Africa. A modern history, p. 453.

⁷⁷ H Hamann, Days of the generals, pp. 47-48.

years as never before.” “Internally and externally,” Vorster braced his audience, “pressure will be applied against us.”⁷⁸

Indeed, already in March 1977 a number of African states had drafted a resolution calling on the United Nations Security Council to impose mandatory arms sanctions and a curb on investments on South Africa. In response to this initiative the United States had drawn up a ‘Declaration on Southern Africa’ in which it called on South Africa to terminate the policies of apartheid and to bring its occupation of South West Africa/Namibia to an end. Furthermore, in August of the same year France announced that it would no longer be selling arms to South Africa, and in November a United Nations Security Council resolution was passed unanimously that declared the further acquisition of arms by South Africa to be detrimental to international peace and security, and required all member states to refrain from supplying any arms or related materials to South Africa.⁷⁹ Already in 1964 Kuwait had banned oil exports to South Africa, and when the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) endorsed the ban in the wake of the Yom Kippur War of 1973 South Africa’s economy was facing a crisis. That South Africa was able to weather the immediate storm in this regard is attributable to the fact that oil imports from Iran were available until the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and while the government had begun hoarding supplies in underground facilities, it had also been developing pioneering techniques for the extraction of oil from coal, which South Africa possessed in abundance. Yet even so, after declaring that he had had cause to think in depth about the policies of the NP and how they would affect the future of South Africa, already in September 1976 Vorster stated resolutely and defiantly at an NP meeting that he would never compromise on his abject refusal to commend one-man-one-vote, and nor would he accede to a multi-racial national convention.⁸⁰

Yet if Vorster responded with denial to the dire social and political implications of Soweto, for South Africa the severe economic ramifications of the crisis were ineluctable. By 1976 the South African economy was, in short, enveloped in a full-scale recession. In the period 1974-1975 the volume of manufacturing output declined by almost six per cent, while all sectors of industry, with the exception of leather products and footwear, reported sharp decreases in production and a deflation of domestic demand. Moreover, total investment in the manufacturing sector decreased by 13 per cent between 1975 and 1977. While an estimated 6.7 per cent annual growth rate was

⁷⁸ Quotation and content taken from A survey of race relations in South Africa, 1977, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 1-3.

⁸⁰ TRH Davenport and C Saunders, South Africa. A modern history, pp. 545-547; A survey of race relations in South Africa, 1976, p. 3.

required merely to prevent the number of 2.3 million Black unemployed workers from increasing, the real growth rate of the South African economy was negative in the first half of 1976, nil in 1977 and negative again in 1978. In addition, the crippling paucity of skilled workers lingered unerringly, with 99 000 vacancies in the technical, professional and semi-professional grades reported in 1977. With the prevalence of instability and insurrection in the 1970s in South and southern Africa, the crucial vulnerability of the South Africa economy – its persistent dependence on foreign inflows of capital – was exposed when a net capital outflow of R121 million was reported in the financial year of 1976/77. The economic recession exacted an inflated burden on tax-payers, and also resulted in double-digit inflation. For many Whites this resulted in declining real incomes. The worst effects of the recession, however, were experienced in the agricultural sector. Hampered by a profusion of labour-intensive, inefficient undertakings, the agricultural sector remained substantially reliant on government subsidies and cheap Black labour. Many smaller agricultural undertakings were casualties of the recession, and hence the number of individual farms receded by a third in the period 1960 to 1980.⁸¹

In effect, what the pervasive recession of the 1970s had laid bare were the debilitating structural deficiencies of the economic policies inherent in apartheid, i.e. import substitution and cheap labour. The South African economy had, in fact, reached the limits of expansion under the political aegis of apartheid. The consensus among virtually all business groups was that future industrial expansion could only be spurred by the development of a virulent capital goods sector, and a calculated shift in the emphasis of exports towards industrial rather than primary products. This, in turn, required the altering of the nature and training of the labour force, since the copious supply of cheap, unskilled labour had now become an inhibiting factor. Most businessmen were agreed that higher wages for a Black urban workforce were required to stimulate economic growth via an expanded domestic market. This should, they argued, take the form of the introduction of semi-skilled, better-paid Black labour to offset the high wages and relative counter-productive maintenance of the core of White labourers. In short, the incoherence between the political maintenance of White domination and the economic growth and profitability of the South African economy was gradually making the maintenance of apartheid entirely untenable.⁸²

⁸¹ G Lewis, Prospects for negotiated reform in South Africa. A comparative study, pp. 2-3; M Mann, The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), State, resistance and change in South Africa, pp. 52-54; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 176-178.

⁸² SY Gool, The crisis of capital accumulation in South Africa, in G Naidoo (ed.), Reform and revolution. South Africa in the nineties, pp. 82-84; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, p. 178.

As a result, when the recession began to impact significantly on the economy in the 1970s, the business community was not reticent to voice its concern and to lobby for reform. Various business leaders requested the government to lessen the assortment of restrictions on the mobility of Black workers in order to facilitate their more productive utilisation. Apartheid measures such as influx control, pass laws, job reservation and the system of labour bureaux were especially slated by business leaders. The government was also berated for excluding Blacks from membership of trade unions since the existence of Black trade unions, businessmen argued, would facilitate some form of recognition and control of collective bargaining of Black workers and would thus ensure industrial tranquillity. Furthermore, the government was pressurised to endorse reforms which would alleviate South Africa's international isolation, rekindle the flow of foreign investment, and more importantly, re-establish domestic stability after the turmoil engendered by the Soweto riots. In August 1976, the Transvaal Chamber of Industry (TCI) presented Prime Minister Vorster with a set of policy proposals dealing with such issues as municipal government, education, influx control, and job reservation. In mid-October, after an increased number of worker stay-aways, reports surfaced that branches of Assocom (the Association of Chambers of Commerce) and FCI (the Federated Chambers of Industry) were planning to issue the government with strong calls for policy changes. Even so, unlike what Verwoerd had done in 1960, Vorster did not decline the opportunity to open the Assocom conference. Instead, Vorster used the opportunity to dictate to business associations the terms in which they could engage with the government. In his speech Vorster acknowledged the right of business associations to disagree with him on matters of public policy, but reaffirmed the exclusive right of the government in formulating public policy since this procedure was derived from the mandate provided by the electorate.⁸³

In a joint initiative of Harry Oppenheimer of the Anglo American Corporation and Anton Rupert of the Rembrandt group, most of South Africa's foremost companies contributed in 1977 to form the Urban Foundation (UF). The UF was formed with the stated objective of assisting in the development of a Black middle class with Western materialistic needs and ambitions. The formation of the UF reflected the collective thinking of the business community that apartheid was gratuitously inhibiting the capitalist outlook of urban Blacks, and hence that of White business as well. The UF fundamentals acknowledged the permanent presence of Blacks in urban areas, as opposed to the maintained policy of the state to eventually shift urbanised Blacks to the homelands. The UF approach in this regard was now also supported by large sections of the

⁸³ L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 224-226; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 182-184.

Afrikaans press, the foremost Afrikaner business conglomerates and by the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI). In order to generate greater labour productivity and contain industrial conflict, the UF also respectively promoted the raising of Black wages and the establishment of Black trade unions. Apart from the activities of the UF, White businessmen now increasingly promoted extending more opportunities to Black businessmen. In conjunction with the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce (Nafcoc), White businessmen also provided assistance to rising Black business undertakings. White businesses also favoured a softening of the Group Areas Act in order to enable Black businesses to establish themselves in the central business districts of urban areas. Another initiative of Oppenheimer and Rupert, the Small Business Development Corporation, was established to furnish loans to Black entrepreneurs. The formation of the UF and the changing perceptions of White businessmen clearly illustrated the increasing divergence of opinion on Black advancement between business leaders and the state.⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the social and economic upheaval engendered by the Soweto riots, and in the face of the calls for reform from the business community, Vorster's resultant oscillation permitted only the most cosmetic reforms. The Wiehahn Commission was appointed to investigate legislation in regard to industrial relations, and the Riekert Commission was tasked with investigating legislation in connection with the utilisation of manpower. Incremental alterations were made to the pass laws, and concessions for Coloured and Indian businessmen to buy land in selected urban areas were also introduced. Plans for giving permanence of occupation to urban Blacks were also announced. Yet political observers at the time denounced Vorster virtually *in toto* for lacking an overall reform strategy to contend with the ensuing crisis. In fact, as has been shown, Vorster opted to recoil from any notions of structural reform and instead acclaimed the objectives of apartheid as the only practicable policy options. By the end of 1977 it was evident that Vorster was wholly incapable of redressing the current political and economical crises. Utterly exhausted physically and mentally, Vorster resigned as Prime Minister in September 1978 and was elected to the largely ceremonial post of State President. In the NP caucus election to determine the next Prime Minister, PW Botha – hitherto the Minister of Defence since 1966 and leader of the NP in the Cape Province – narrowly defeated the Minister of Information, C Mulder. Mulder's prospects for becoming Prime Minister had been somewhat weakened when his involvement in the so-called Information Scandal was revealed, a secret government programme whereby state funds were surreptitiously utilised to manipulate and control the press. Later in 1979 Vorster was likewise compelled to resign as State President when a commission of enquiry

⁸⁴ L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 226-227; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 184-188.

established that he had known for a protracted period of the covert activities of the Department of Information.⁸⁵

The crisis of Soweto had been the ultimate catalyst that made Vorster baulk from the distant prospects of reform. Vorster had briefly hazarded a slight departure from the overbearing political superstructure of apartheid, but the ferocious repercussions of the onslaughts his political dispensation suffered during his tenure as Prime Minister made him draw back and retreat to the fortified enclave of the politics of apartheid. Where Vorster had come to realize the damaging economic and social impacts that resulted from the rigid maintenance of apartheid in South Africa, and had even temporarily considered a milder alternative to the imperious nature of White dominance, by the time of his retirement as Prime Minister in 1978 he had reaffirmed his belief in the inexorable triumph of Verwoerd's grand visions of apartheid and separate homelands. Vorster was the first Prime Minister after 1948, however, to even so much as hint at an incremental departure from apartheid. Although Vorster was to cringe from discarding any of the political pillars of White domination inherent in apartheid, he did, however, initiate the process by which South Africa's White population became gradually accustomed to the political and social presence of Blacks in the same statutory system. When Vorster was photographed sitting between two Black female guests at a state banquet during the state visit of President Hastings Banda of Malawi, he had inadvertently made a significant statement. Thus, unwittingly, Vorster had initiated a process of gradual integration that was to culminate in the first fully democratic election in South Africa in 1994.

Nevertheless, during the tenure of Vorster as Prime Minister, apartheid had begun to seriously undermine the White prosperity that it was originally intended to safeguard and perpetuate. White businessmen, operating at the vanguard of the economy and experiencing at first hand the debilitating effects of apartheid on the South African economy, became increasingly alienated from the state and advocated the implementation of progressive reforms to desegregate the economy. While Vorster might have recognised the imperative of altering apartheid, he was unable to forego the political structures that sought to forcibly maintain White dominance and racial segregation. The obvious imperative of the economy was insufficient to compel Vorster to distance himself from the costly prevarications of exclusively political policy considerations. Yet the time was fast approaching when no NP leader could choose to defy the reality of economic

⁸⁵ A survey of race relations in South Africa, 1977, pp. 5-7; Survey of race relations in South Africa, 1978, pp. 3-5; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 580-585.

stagnation in favour of the chimerical hope of a political resolution under the auspices of apartheid.

South Africa thus came to the crucial crossroads of political perceptions and economic realities: the political ideologies of apartheid had come to clash decisively with the economic realities prevailing in the country. The irrefutable critical economic standing of South Africa, however, connected with the increasingly obvious structural incompatibility of the dictates of apartheid with the country's economic exigencies, had initiated the embedding of an environment not immediately dismissive to the complete abolishing of White hegemony in favour of practical, non-racial economic procedures. This shift in the balance of power would eventually facilitate the passage to non-racial democracy in South Africa. Vorster had initiated the shift in the balance of power, and while PW Botha was to be incapable of taking the process to its logical conclusion, his successor was to have no such qualms in banishing the political balance of power to the realm of history and concluding the shift to the economic balance of power in South Africa.

Assuming the mantle of the obdurate Verwoerd in 1966, Vorster neglected to utilise the period of stability between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s to propel a political strategy offering alternatives to simply abjuring political power to Blacks in a democratic election. When the NP was eventually compelled to negotiate with Black leaders, it was not to be from an incontestable position of strength.⁸⁶ Vorster's failure to seize the incentive for reform also signalled the advent of a new militant phase in the liberation struggle against apartheid. "During the Rivonia trial," Mandela later wrote, "I remarked to a security policeman that if the government did not reform itself, the freedom fighters who would take our place would someday make the authorities yearn for us. That day had indeed come on Robben Island. In these young men we saw the angry revolutionary spirit of the times." Whilst being interned on Robben Island, Mandela was surprised in 1976 to see the isolation section of the prison filling with increasing numbers of young men. Through "whispered conversations" Mandela was able to ascertain what had taken place on June 16. "These young men," Mandela wrote of the new arrivals at Robben Island, "were a different breed of prisoner from those we had seen before. They were brave, hostile, and aggressive; they would not take orders, and shouted '*Amandla!*' at every opportunity. Their instinct was to confront rather than cooperate."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 584-585.

⁸⁷ Quotations and content taken from N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 575-576.

Assertively deferring the inexorable:

The last irrational cavort of the political balance of power in South Africa

“And so he (PW Botha) knows, better and more desperately than his predecessors, that when all is said and done, there is no way for apartheid to be protected militarily ad infinitum. Again, it is a matter of attrition: the wear and tear on the constructive resources...of the country – which, in fact, means the wear and tear on the economy of the country, will be just too big. The Prime Minister, then, with Machiavellian intuition, is going as hard as he can for the protection of apartheid politically. I do not see an intention to scrap apartheid as such, a will to put a line through that philosophy. What is happening, instead, is a political survivalist shifting of stance in respect of apartheid, under the impact of the military realities, and the attendant economic realities, of the situation.”⁸⁸

- A Small, Coloured author, 1983.

Enforcing change to enforce the status quo

In the early 1980s Leon Wessels, a member of the NP and later cabinet minister, was serving in the South Africa parliament as representative of the Krugersdorp district. On one occasion a friend of Wessels arranged for him to join in a visitation of various bars in Black townships in the Cape Town district, since the members of the delegation (including Wessels) were serving on the board of directors of a distilling company. “Late night discussions,” Wessels states, “inevitably (led) to the subject of politics. Thus I (once found) myself in the early morning hours in the company of a man who tells me: the problem in the country is apartheid and the biggest problem is ‘the government hates us.’ I contested this and asked: But how can you say a thing like that? He maintained his point of view, however: ‘the government hates us.’” Shortly after returning from his visit to the Black areas, Wessels immediately sought to discuss his findings with the State President PW Botha. During a break in a subsequent parliamentary session, the head of state allotted Wessels a brief few minutes to do so. When Wessels started telling Botha of his experiences in the Black townships, the State President was aghast and interjected: “What?! What are you doing there? Is it safe?” Wessels filled Botha in on the reasons for his visit, and implored the State President: “Sir, we all know of the violence, of the threatening violence, of the flames which are ignited because of people who have already died in the violence. But I can assure you of one thing: there is a source of goodwill among those people that overwhelmed me, and we have to exploit it.” Botha was visibly

⁸⁸ A Small, These angry days, in Leadership SA, volume two, number 2, 1983, p. 107.

impressed by Wessels' testimony, but had then to break off the conversation to return to the parliamentary debates. In reflecting on this brief encounter with the State President, Wessels felt that "Powerlessness overwhelmed me...Afterwards I thought of it a lot and really felt sorry for PW Botha, because how does a head of state ever experience what I experienced? He cannot possibly be exposed to it. He would never have been able to enter a township and experience the general goodwill of the people, but also the resentment towards apartheid and the pain and privation that it caused."⁸⁹

In the face of the escalating swell of vociferous and militant popular confrontation after 1976, PW Botha replaced the decrepit Vorster as Prime Minister in September 1978 to confront the quandary of political volatility. On assuming the position of Prime Minister, Botha immediately proceeded to inculcate in South Africa's governing echelons the pre-eminence of the need for political change. The challenges menacing South Africa, Botha argued, demanded conspicuous change and reform; in fact, Botha realised perspicaciously that only a new-fangled political dispensation would effectively underpin and perpetuate the welfare of Whites in South Africa in the midst of an increasingly antagonistic local and international environment. Botha extended to South Africa's political executive domain the blunt albeit pragmatic military modus operandi that if a strategy had become counter-productive to one's perceived interests, one replaced it with another strategy. Botha's long tenure as Minister of Defence had impressed on him the precedence of maintaining centralised and institutionalised control, and for Botha this was the procedural requirement that allowed the state to peremptorily hand down acceptable reform from a position of aloofness. Thus while Botha could be capable of unprecedented flexibility whilst he felt he could control – and when required limit – the direction and magnitude of the reform process, he could also be capable of utilising unparalleled force to maintain *his* perception of order and *his* accepted pattern of change. In the form of this nexus between institutionalised political continuity and unprecedented though selective reform, Botha was convinced he could maintain the status quo of White domination by enforcing the imposition of apparently significant political change.⁹⁰

In this light, PW Botha was able to proclaim in a benevolent fashion in 1979 that "under my Prime Ministership and my leadership of the National Party I will do for white South Africa what I can, because I belong to them, because I was born of them, and because I love them. But I will also do what I can for black and brown (a.k.a. Coloured) South Africa...In this land we can only

⁸⁹ Quotations and content taken from L Wessels, Die einde van 'n era. Bevryding van 'n Afrikaner, pp. 39-42. Quotations translated from the Afrikaans.

⁹⁰ Content partly attributable to insights from D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 254-259; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 586-589.

take good neighbourliness to its fullest consequences when we allow righteousness to prevail upon the communities of all populations.” Yet at an NP meeting in 1980 Botha professed belligerently that “The South African government has not yet utilised the full authority and power of the state to create order in this land. If we are compelled to apply the full power of the state, then many people are going to get hurt. I want to express this warning: there are people who are ridiculing us. There are people who think they can play with us. There are people who can think they can enlist external forces in order to disadvantage South Africa. Don’t make the mistake of your lives: you are going to get hurt and you are going to get very hurt.” Significantly, in an insightful comment in 1987 Botha pronounced in parliament that “Our policy is to reform, but we are not prepared to abdicate.” In effect, Botha was willing to take “a different road” – because the old one was “flooded” – but he was not willing to deviate from the general direction of the past.⁹¹

In 1936, when PW Botha was only 20 years of age, he had dropped out of the University of the Orange Free State to become a full-time NP organiser. In the following years Botha acquired the proficiency of organisational manoeuvring and consolidated his position in the NP of the Cape Province, and in 1948 he was elected to Parliament as representative of the town of George in the southern Cape Province. Botha was first appointed as Cabinet minister by Verwoerd in 1961, but it was after his elevation to the post of Minister of Defence in April 1966 that Botha first came to prominence. Whereas his predecessors in this portfolio had limited their mandate to addressing only the perceived direct threats South Africa faced, Botha extended South Africa’s security profile to feature prominently in the East-West global standoff. Botha argued that South Africa was directly threatened by Soviet expansionism in southern Africa, and sought to align South Africa closely with the Western assemblage of the global divide. The idea of exerting pivotal influence in the West’s tussle with communism increasingly appealed to the South African government, and hence PW Botha was able to legitimise South Africa’s military involvement in Angola with the conviction that South Africa had to “shoulder its responsibility as an ally of the free world.”⁹²

Seeking a cooperative military effort with the West in Angola – which might convince Western nations of South Africa’s strategic importance and hence serve as a catalyst for lucrative formal collaboration – the South African government adjudged its Angolan incursion in 1975 to be a worthwhile undertaking. Yet with the withdrawal of American support for the venture and

⁹¹ Quotations taken from JJJ Scholtz (compiler), *Vegter en hervormer. Grepe uit die toesprake van P.W. Botha*, pp. 16, 96, 21, 6 (in respective order). Quotations translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁹² Quotations and content taken from H Hamann, *Days of the generals*, pp. 50-52.

widespread condemnation of South Africa's invasion from the OAU and elsewhere, the government was shamefacedly forced to withdraw South African forces from Angola. PW Botha was terribly disappointed at the political outcome of the military campaign, and afterwards remarked bitterly how South Africa had intervened in Angola "with the approval and knowledge of the Americans. But they left us in the lurch. We are going to retell that story: the story must be told of how we, with their knowledge, went in there and operated in Angola with their knowledge, how they encouraged us to act and, when we had nearly reached the climax, we were ruthlessly left in the lurch by an undertaking that was broken..." In effect, with the US' volte-face in Angola, South Africa was rudely awakened to the fact that the West was not prepared to come to the defence of South Africa, even with the added incentive of a direct Soviet threat. Thus by the time Botha was elected Prime Minister in 1978, it was painfully apparent that South Africa would not receive any international assistance in confronting the security threats the country and government faced. Yet in attempting to offset both the internal and external adversaries drawn up against his government, Botha had already developed an all-encompassing strategical paradigm.⁹³

Since the advent of guerrilla warfare in southern Africa in the early 1960s, strategists within South Africa's defence establishment had been engaged in the debate to identify the optimal counter-insurgency strategy. A series of lectures at the South African Defence Force (SADF) headquarters by Professors Deon Fourie and Benjamin Cockram in 1968 first introduced the ideas of the French general André Beaufre to the strategical deliberation within the SADF. Among the SADF officers attending the lectures was Brigadier Magnus Malan, the later chief of the SADF and Minister of Defence. PW Botha, at this time the Minister of Defence, had become an ardent reader of military strategy, and the ideas of Beaufre (and to a lesser extent also those of JJ McCuen and Raymond Aron) made a particularly significant impact on the future Prime Minister. After Botha had met personally with Beaufre on a number of occasions, and Beaufre had come to lecture at the SADF War College in 1974, Botha was convinced of the relevance of Beaufre's military theories in the southern African context. Beaufre invented the term 'total strategy' in his military theories, and by 1974 PW Botha had become the foremost proponent of this strategy within the South African government and was advocating a strategic reorientation along Beaufreian lines.⁹⁴

⁹³ Quotation and content taken from C Alden, Apartheid's last stand. The rise and fall of the South African security state, pp. 38-40.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 44-46.

Beaufre's writings were in essence inspired by the author's reflections on France's counter-insurgency wars in colonial Algeria and Indo-China. In the post-World War Two or 'modern' world, Beaufre argued, purely military force is no longer exclusively decisive in settling disputes. Instead, the desired all-encompassing political outcome can only be attained by proper infusion of limited military force with the corresponding actions in the psychological, economic and diplomatic fields. In effect, an encompassing strategical approach in these critical fields is integrated with an inclusive military strategy to produce a 'total' strategy, which is then employed vis-à-vis the supposed 'total onslaught' of the revolutionary insurgency against the existing centres of power. Beaufre highlighted the imperative for the protagonist to also render his adversary psychologically impotent, to persuade them that it is in fact utterly useless to persist in resisting the conventional order. For this reason, regulating the flow of information was critical, and hence the control of mass media and public opinion were fundamental mainstays of total strategy. Military force should therefore be utilised only in a complementary fashion to implementing non-military measures in order to enforce a forthcoming political consensus. Beaufre also prescribed the political modus operandi the state was to follow. It was essential, Beaufre maintained, for the state to assert its legitimacy, its prestige, and its international solidarity. Complementary to this, the state should implement domestic reforms so as to effectively blunt the revolutionary appeal of the insurgents. In this way, Beaufre reasoned, the state would be able to negotiate with liberation organisations from a position of strength, as total strategy envisaged some form of compromise with the revolutionaries as an essential occurrence. Yet as a result of the state's apparent invincibility this compromise would result in a perpetuation of the political objectives of the conventional establishment.⁹⁵

By 1973 the Ministry of Defence had begun to incorporate the ideas of Beaufre in its official documents. In the introduction to the 1975 White Paper on Defence, PW Botha had written that "all countries must, more than ever, muster all their activities – political, economic, diplomatic and military – for their defence." The intensification of guerrilla activity in southern Africa in this period, and therewith the presence of Cuban troops and Soviet advisors in Angola, seemed to seriously exacerbate the security menace confronting South Africa. Coupled with the international campaign to isolate South Africa diplomatically and economically, the corresponding escalation of internal unrest in South Africa – which Botha dismissed as being exclusively derived from communist influence – delineated clearly for Botha the dire challenge South Africa was required to face up to. South Africa had, quite simply, become embroiled in a

⁹⁵ D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 259-263; C Alden, Apartheid's last stand, pp. 41-44.

battle for survival, and Botha was convinced that total strategy posited the only means of forcing a favourable resolution to the conflict. The proliferation of impromptu policy decisions and the lack of organisational coordination in the upper echelons of the state during South Africa's military incursion into Angola in 1975-1976, moreover, had convinced the likes of Magnus Malan and Botha that policy was of such great magnitude that it could not be left in the hands of NP politicians alone, especially when the state's response was incapacitated by the absence of a comprehensive tactical strategy, as Botha and Malan believed was the case. Thus the Ministry of Defence espoused Beaufre's total strategy, and presented it as the SADF's official strategical doctrine, enunciated as the 'Total National Strategy' in the 1977 White Paper on Defence.⁹⁶

Tabled in parliament on 31 March 1977, the White Paper called for a "total national strategy" for defence because South Africa was at war, "whether we wish to accept it or not."⁹⁷ "Total strategy," the White Paper stipulated, was a "comprehensive plan to utilise all the means available to a state according to an integrated pattern in order to achieve the national aims within the framework of the specific policies. A total national strategy is, therefore, not confined to a particular sphere, but is applicable at all levels and to all functions of the state structure." Therefore, the "co-ordination between government departments is of the utmost importance." In accordance with the prescriptions of Beaufre, the White Paper appreciated the need to stall the sources of internal discontent, insisting that "Full and worthy opportunities in the economic, social, and political spheres for all population groups in the RSA must be our aim; this can be achieved only by peaceful and evolutionary processes and without outside interference."⁹⁸ These decisive non-military components were rightly recognised as the variable factors by which the entire total strategy dogma was to rise or fall. General Constand Viljoen, Chief of the Army between 1977 and 1985 and subsequently also Chief of the SADF, later remembered how he admonished the Cabinet that "we could carry on militarily for a long period but eventually they would have to make some political moves to solve the problem. We (the Command Council of the SADF) told them they had to find a formula where all the people living in the country would feel involved and part of the country, which wasn't the case at the time...We warned the government that as every year passed their strategic options would become less and less."⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Quotation and content taken from C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 44-46. See also H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 587-588.

⁹⁷ Quotation taken from *A survey of race relations in South Africa*, 1977, pp. 2.

⁹⁸ Quotations and content taken from C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 46-49.

⁹⁹ Quotation and content taken from H Hamann, *Days of the generals*, pp. 55-56.

With his election as Prime Minister in 1978, Botha was able to instil the doctrine of total strategy into the governmental superstructure of South Africa, thus precipitating a composite and novel strategical initiative far removed from the abortive meandering of the Vorster government. Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert was later to describe PW Botha as “essentially a crisis manager. His political philosophy is remarkably uncomplicated: if things go wrong, there must be an enemy responsible, and if they go right it is because of ‘good Government’...If all else fails, Moscow must be responsible for what goes wrong, whether it be regional instability or domestic unrest, and those who do not accept this, are the witting or unwitting tools of it.” Perspicaciously, Slabbert summed Botha up as “a mixture of sentimentality and intolerance...The ferocity of his vindictiveness and irrationality, when angered, never failed to amaze me...He is disarmingly frank about his lack of analytical ability on complicated constitutional and economic affairs, but through years of practical experience in Government has developed the capacity to identify a crisis with unerring accuracy. And he is not afraid to deal with it.”¹⁰⁰ Defence Minister Malan was equally forthright in his assessment of Botha when he reflected that

“He (PW Botha) could be nasty, boy, there were times when he was nasty. But you had to take it. Fortunately in the military you get used to it. I think many of the politicians couldn’t take it but you had to stand up and fight for your rights. It wasn’t pleasant and whilst it was on, it was on, but afterwards you forgot about it, then you were friends again. What I like about PW Botha was if he gave you the green light you could depend on him – not like other politicians. He’s a man’s man, he’s a hell of a good friend to have, but he’s a nasty enemy.”¹⁰¹

Under Vorster’s leadership the state bureaucracy was beleaguered by rampant departmentalism, with ministers haphazardly imposing their will on policy execution. Government responses were predominantly responsive and were devoid of any coherent guiding objectives. At the time of the departure of Vorster the principal impression of the status of the state was that of an uncoordinated, inadequately administered family company. After assuming the highest office in 1978, however, PW Botha initiated a veritable organisational revolution in the realm of government. In 1969 a commission of enquiry had been conducted to investigate matters relating to the security of the state. The commission recommended the establishment of a State Security Council (SSC), a statutory Cabinet committee – whose function was to be to advise the government on the formulation and implementation of national security policies – that would be staffed by top-ranking officials from the governmental and security establishments.

¹⁰⁰ Quotations taken from F Van Zyl Slabbert, The last White parliament, pp. 147-148.

¹⁰¹ Quotation taken from H Hamann, Days of the generals, p. 54.

Consequently, legislation was passed in 1972 that officially established the SSC, but Vorster neglected to make the SSC an effective body. In 1979, however, Botha revitalised the SSC to become the pinnacle of what was called the National Security Management System (NSMS). Within the NSMS, the SSC was supplemented by twelve Joint Management Centres – spread over the country – whose functions were to gather intelligence and facilitate the implementation of executive policy decisions in the fields of security, and economic, social and political affairs. Presiding over the SSC, Botha utilised the NSMS to streamline the centralisation of power in the executive and to advance the militarisation of the state. The SSC was allotted the task envisaged in the doctrine of total strategy of bringing all the means available to the state to bear in achieving set objectives, and hence it shortly emerged as the primary executive body within the state, eclipsing even the Cabinet in magnitude. In this way Botha was able to revamp the executive nucleus of power both to encompass the tenets of total strategy and to facilitate a much greater degree of his personal control of the state bureaucracy.¹⁰²

Commenting on the leadership approach of PW Botha, FW de Klerk wrote that

“There was a great difference between the managerial styles of Prime Minister Vorster and Prime Minister Botha. In the Vorster government there was far less structure and system. Cabinet minutes were kept in an old A4 notebook by the most junior minister in his own handwriting and only decisions were minuted. There were no actual standing committees and the result was the appointment of countless ad hoc committees...When P.W. Botha became Prime Minister in September 1978, he introduced sweeping reforms to the management of the cabinet. The cabinet acquired a secretary, who kept proper minutes, which were circulated, together with detailed agendas, for approval at the following cabinet meeting...The cabinet was divided into standing committees for economic affairs, social affairs and constitutional affairs. Matters were referred to these standing committees according to the nature of the subject, which meant that far fewer ad hoc committees were appointed.”

“The net result of P.W. Botha’s managerial style and innovations,” De Klerk concluded, “was a significant improvement in the managerial effectiveness of the government and of departments. Botha was a good administrator.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² H Giliomee, *Afrikaner politics 1977-1987: from Afrikaner Nationalist rule to central state hegemony*, in JD Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa survive? Five minutes to midnight*, pp. 125-130; C Alden, *Apartheid’s last stand*, pp. 64-79; D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 259-263.

¹⁰³ Quotations taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 66-67, 69.

De Klerk was, however, astounded by Botha's domineering nature. In cabinet meetings, De Klerk observed, "P.W. Botha sat at the head of the elongated oval cabinet table and presided over proceedings sometimes like a benevolent father and sometimes like a great bird of prey...His style did not encourage free and open debate." De Klerk related an incident that occurred at a cabinet meeting where a senior minister persisted in promoting his views, despite the obvious displeasure of Botha. "Predictably enough," De Klerk stated, "P.W. Botha turned all his fury on him." As the members of the cabinet filed out of the room after the meeting, one delegate jokingly remarked, 'Poor old chap, when all the signals were Dive! Dive! Dive! He surfaced, surfaced, surfaced!'" "In short," De Klerk deduced, "P.W. Botha dominated his cabinet...But for me the impression [of Botha] was not so much one of genuine personal power, as of a man who often tended to be a bully." Unimpressed by Botha's leadership disposition, De Klerk took note of "the negative aspects of P.W. Botha's managerial style – the tendency to be dictatorial, the inhibition of free and open debate and the inside track afforded to the security departments" – and vowed quietly to himself that "I would change all this if I ever became president."¹⁰⁴

Yet Botha's dictatorial and militaristic propensities were integral to his inclusive strategical assessment. When Botha became Prime Minister in 1978 he inherited a perilous state of affairs from his predecessor. South Africa was surrounded by hostile neighbours, and internationally South Africa encountered equally antagonistic reaction. Internally, moreover, South Africa was still reeling from the effects of the Soweto uprising of 1976, and the increased turmoil of insurgency in southern Africa was likewise a forbidding accompaniment. In addition, Vorster had bequeathed to Botha a ruling party ideologically largely bankrupt and politically indecisive. On assuming office Botha was resolutely cognizant of the detrimental obsolescence of Verwoerdian apartheid, and straightforwardly admitted that many NP policies had failed. Energetically and self-confidently, Botha set about modernising apartheid to better accede to changing circumstances. In his autocratic approach Botha sought to centralise executive power in his own hands in order to facilitate his envisaged 'reform from above' methodology. By these means Botha aspired to enforce an improved, more humane – and ultimately, Botha anticipated, more acceptable – form of apartheid, but apartheid nonetheless. Reform, Botha maintained, had become a prerequisite to White survival, and hence Botha attempted to forcibly propel both the Afrikaners as a nation and the NP away from their archaic conservative racial predilections to a reformist disposition. Yet Botha never foresaw the abandonment of apartheid and minority rule, and, under the aegis of total strategy, he was prepared to safeguard the fundamental vestiges of

¹⁰⁴ Quotations and content taken from FW de Klerk, The last trek, pp. 67-69.

apartheid by any means necessary. In essence, thus, Botha maintained the pre-eminence of the political balance of power that had sustained NP rule since 1948. Nevertheless, with the outlook of unprecedented reform Botha inaugurated his new dispensation in 1978.¹⁰⁵

PW Botha was by no means unmindful of the economic complexities that underlay the enforced maintenance of White hegemony in South Africa. He was therefore intent on portraying his dispensation as a significant departure from those of his unyielding predecessors. Yet Botha's overbearing security and defence superstructures belied any of his inclinations to forego the core essentials of White minority rule. What Botha offered as an answer to the economic conundrum facing South Africa were the implications of an inflated concept of reform. By abolishing apartheid in name and extending benevolent rhetoric to South Africa's non-White populations, Botha intended for his reform programme – that included a new constitutional order – to act as an all-encompassing resolution to Black discontent and hopefully therefore economic stagnation as well. To ensure that apartheid in practice was not infringed upon, however, Botha sought to maintain strict executive power with complimentary security and defence capabilities. In effect, in what was to be the last irrational cavort of the political balance of power in South Africa, Botha determined to prolong White hegemony by means of a grand strategical coup. Consequently, however, South Africa's economic woes and internal unrest would reach a disturbing apogee.

On 1 September 1979, the Afrikaner journalist and historian At van Wyk walked out of his front gate to fetch the newspaper from his post box. "Spring was in the air," Van Wyk noted, "...it was a joy to be alive." As Van Wyk unfolded his newspaper, however, he "stopped dead, with a shiver of excitement" running down his spine. Across the front page of the newspaper was displayed the picture of a smiling PW Botha, sitting in the back of his car and clutching the hand of a young Black man in Soweto. It was the first visit of a South African Prime Minister to the sprawling Black township of Soweto, and Van Wyk felt that "the enthusiasm with which he was received by the inhabitants of this threatening, mysterious black city which I have never visited for fear of what might happen to me, aroused all my pent-up expectations. Suddenly I saw our beloved land on the verge of achieving peace with herself." Moreover, Van Wyk thought, "Coming as it did in the wake of the promising reformist pronouncements by Botha, and as the climax of a series of visits he had made to black communities country-wide, the news made me believe something big was about to happen." It was, Van Wyk proclaimed triumphantly, "a

¹⁰⁵ Content partly attributable to insights from FA Mouton, PW Botha – Reformer or 'Groot Krokodil'?, in *Kleio*, XXVIII, 1996, pp. 190-201.

watershed in our history.” Van Wyk obtained a copy of the picture, had it framed, and proudly displayed in his study.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, when PW Botha became Prime Minister in 1978 he seemed to embody an innovative reformist approach. Botha not only visited Soweto, but also toured all the homelands and oversaw the meeting of NP parliamentarians with Inkatha leaders. From the commencement of the 1979 parliamentary session, PW Botha set the mood for an increased tempo of reform. Advocating the diminishing of “irritating and hurtful measures,” Botha proclaimed openly that the perpetuation of exclusively White privilege was no longer compatible with White survival. The government’s new initiative was enunciated as ‘good neighbourliness,’ and at successive NP congresses and meetings Botha imbued his audiences with the need to supplant racial hatred and prejudice with love and respect. In this way Botha altered government rhetoric so as to initiate the process of ordered albeit nonetheless token reform.¹⁰⁷

Where Afrikaner leadership might in the past have been projected as being concerned exclusively with Afrikaner self-preservation, Botha now attempted to portray Afrikaner rule as beneficial to all South Africa’s racial groups. Botha further elaborated on his pioneering racial perceptions when he told *Leadership SA* magazine in 1983 that

“As I see it today, the idea of Afrikaner unity at the expense of a united South Africa is out. The idea of an Afrikaner as a cultural entity and religious group with a special language will be retained in South Africa as long as civilisation stands. But politically, a new orientation is taking place. Being a good and proud Afrikaner is not incompatible with South Africanism. To create the idea that Afrikaners are narrow-minded, a petty group, wishing only to look after their own interests while keeping all others out of its company, is a wrong image. That is incompatible with South Africanism.”

The self-allotted challenge for Botha was, however, - as one Afrikaner businessman succinctly asserted at the time - to find the secret of sharing power without losing control. The political maintenance of this contradiction in terms was indeed the seemingly insoluble predicament that Botha’s new-fangled dispensation had to contend with.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Quotations and content taken from A van Wyk, *The birth of a new Afrikaner*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁰⁷ Quotation and content taken from *Survey of race relations in South Africa*, 1979, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁸ Quotation and content taken from Interview: PW Botha, in *Leadership SA*, Volume 2, Number 3, Spring 1983, p. 17. For content see also H Giliomee, The Botha quest. Sharing power without losing control, in *Leadership SA*, Volume 2, Number 2, Winter 1983, p. 27.

PW Botha's reformist approach was embodied in the so-called Twelve Point Plan, which the Prime Minister conveyed to the four NP provincial congresses in 1979. While promoting multi-racialism, inter-racial consultation and free enterprise, and acknowledging economic interdependence, the Plan also advocated the maintenance of social racial differentiation, and reiterated that state's drive for Black self-determination and self-government. In line with the precepts of total strategy, the Plan envisaged the removal of hurtful and unnecessary discriminatory measures while underlining the state's rights to defend itself and to maintain effective decision-making.¹⁰⁹ Observers derided the Plan as being ambiguously phrased, thus permitting divergent interpretations from conservative and liberal factions. Nevertheless, the Plan provided the framework by which PW Botha sought to address the pressing matter of the policy toward urban Blacks – a problematic issue that had rankled among the upper echelons of the NP throughout the 1970s. Hence the sphere of labour reform became the first priority for Botha's new administration to address.¹¹⁰

In response to the report of the 1979 Wiehahn Commission on Labour legislation, PW Botha oversaw the implementation of legislation with the intention of stimulating labour productivity by facilitating negotiated and controlled changes in production processes. Statutory job reservation in manufacturing industries was abolished and restrictions on the mobility and training of Black labourers were alleviated. In its attempts to regulate industrial friction the state also gradually reintroduced Black trade union rights. In addition to labour reforms, under the auspices of the 1979 Riekert Commission report on manpower utilisation, the state – while still maintaining its credence in the political and economic viability of the Black homelands – now recognised urban Blacks as permanent residents in White urban areas. To underscore the humanitarian counter-revolutionary dictates of total strategy, the state now also endeavoured to improve the social and economic circumstances of urban Blacks. In an effort thus to augment the quality of life of urban Blacks, the state introduced various housing, education and employment measures, and also lifted some of the limitations placed on Black businesses. Moreover, Black businessmen were now allowed to operate within the central business districts of White urban areas. In an effort to accommodate the political aspirations of urban Blacks, the state granted municipal status to selected community councils in urban Black townships. These Black Local Authorities (BLAs) were supposedly allotted powers equal to White municipalities, but would in fact never acquire any degree of legitimacy among urban Blacks. Nonetheless, with the reforms extended to Black business and local government, the state attempted to foment a Black middle class that would

¹⁰⁹ C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 79-83.

¹¹⁰ *Survey of race relations in South Africa*, 1981, pp. 4-5.

ascribe its livelihood to the South African government and could thus be co-opted to collaborate with PW Botha's limited reform policies. Botha's reformist administration also implemented extensive measures to consolidate and develop the Black homelands, and sought to persuade more homeland leaders to accede to 'independence' from South Africa proper.¹¹¹

Members of South Africa's business community encouraged and supported PW Botha's reform initiatives. Both Afrikaner and English-speaking businessmen were confronted with the same problems and hence came to the same practical solutions. In light of inhibiting apartheid strictures (on labour, for instance), the upper echelons of Afrikaner and English-speaking businessmen came to virtually uniformly contest those policies that obviously hampered economic growth and development. In short, while the South African government maintained a predominantly political basis for formulating state policy, business leaders argued from a pragmatic economic perspective. Whereas Vorster had kept business leaders at arm's length, PW Botha's accession as Prime Minister inaugurated a period of increased propinquity between the state and the private sector. From the advent of his involvement with the NP in the 1930s, Botha had operated in close proximity to the business interests which helped spawn the Cape NP, especially the financial interests around Sanlam. Whilst the private sector favoured as its uppermost objective the guaranteeing of the system of free enterprise, the introduction of total strategy and the concomitant elevation of PW Botha to the position of Prime Minister created by implication a more confidential relationship between the state and the private sector. Botha involved key executives of South Africa's foremost monopolies in the reshaping of the civil service, and delegates of these monopolies were likewise represented on existing advisory councils and commissions – i.e. the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (EAC) and the National Manpower Commission – whose roles and functions were expanded. After the imposition of the first mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in 1964, numerous South African businesses were co-opted onto the development of a locally based armaments industry, conducted under the aegis of the state-owned Armaments Development and Production Corporation (Armascor). Throughout the 1970s, in fact, business and military leaders encountered a growing convergence of interests in that both assemblages increasingly advocated the reform of apartheid. While military leaders favoured reform to make apartheid more militarily defensible, business leaders championed reform to re-invigorate the South African economy and encourage economic growth.

¹¹¹ J Gardner, Politicians and apartheid – trailing in the people's wake, pp. 65-67; W Cobbett, D Glaser, D Hindson and M Swilling, A critical analysis of the South African state's reform strategies in the 1980s, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), State, resistance and change in South Africa, pp. 21-30; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 272-277.

This military-industrial nexus provided PW Botha with the foundational collaboration by which he intended to institute his selective reform programme. In this manner, Botha hoped, a dispensation would ensue which would perpetuate the political provisos of White privilege and make apartheid more defensible, and also ensure stability and economic growth.¹¹²

The new epoch of greater collaboration by the private sector with Botha's reformist dispensation was formally initiated by meetings in November 1979 and November 1981 that drew together key personages from the political and business assemblages. Addressing some 350 leaders of the private sector at the 1979 Carlton Conference in Johannesburg, Botha pledged his commitment to a "policy of strengthening the free enterprise system and introducing orderly reform." The politicians and businessmen at the conference were in accord on the need for rapid economic growth. "The greatest good in South Africa," Botha asserted, "is not stability *per se*, or order for its own sake. A system in which material welfare is limited to a few within a sea of poverty is not only indefensible, it is objectionable." Thus Botha's intention (and his motive for attempting to co-opt the business sector in his reform programme) was to utilise the promotion of free enterprise in an attempt to enhance the material welfare of a large proportion of the non-White population – consequently diminishing their resistance to the existing political order. For this strategy to have any remote chance of succeeding, rapid economic growth was required. At the Good Hope Conference of 1981, Botha reiterated his call of collaboration to the business community by stating: "I assume, therefore, that the promotion of a regional order in which real freedom and material welfare can be maximised and the quality of life of all in Southern Africa can be improved, is still our common goal on which agreement does exist." While involving business leaders to an unprecedented extent in government, with a pronounced militaristic style Botha nonetheless attempted to gently browbeat the business community into collaborating with his reform programme on *his* terms. While granting business leaders the privilege of limited reforms to apartheid, the business community was required to contribute to engineering rapid economic growth so as to enable the state to co-opt more non-White South Africans onto the current political dispensation. Again, in accordance with the dictates of total strategy, economic growth was for Botha not an end in itself but rather a political means to perpetuate the existing political order and to make apartheid more defensible (militarily and otherwise).¹¹³

¹¹² The Anglo-Afrikaans alliance, interview with Frans Cronje, chairman of Nedbank, SA Breweries and the SA Permanent Building Society, in Leadership SA, Volume one, Number 2, Winter 1982, p. 42; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 224-228; 256-259, 294-295.

¹¹³ Quotations and content taken from M Mann, The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), State, resistance and change in South Africa, pp. 60-61. See also L Pretorius,

In an interview in 1985, Gavin Relly, the then chairman of the paramount Anglo American Corporation, enunciated his suggested role for South African businessmen as being “to make the world realise that you can’t have sensible reform without economic growth. “We are not capable in the long run,” Relly stated, “of creating an even moderately stable society, unless we can develop economically as a nation...” In contrast to Botha’s largely cosmetic reforms, Relly envisaged genuine and far-reaching reforms: “In South Africa our problem is essentially one of the cake not being big enough to go around. That is why the politics of reform are absolutely and directly related to the impact which industry can make on the gross national product...The politicians have the job of running the country...from business’ point of view it is entitled to say when it thinks those politics are jeopardising its ability to create wealth.”¹¹⁴ Yet by 1982 South Africa’s GDP recorded a negative real growth rate of -0.09 per cent. Moreover, South Africa’s foreign debt, which had stood at just more than eight per cent of the GDP in 1980, escalated to 27 per cent of the GDP in 1984 and in 1985 stood at \$24 billion. In addition, when using output values in constant 1990 prices, the South African manufacturing GDP recorded a negative real growth rate of -0.5 per cent in the period 1980-85.¹¹⁵ Oliver Tambo, leader of the ANC and at this time the foremost proponent of the international lobbying campaign against South Africa, denounced any prospects of meaningful political reform at this time in South Africa altogether. Whilst addressing the United Nations Meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid in New York in 1981, Tambo stated that “At best, Mr. Botha felt confirmed in his pursuit of the policies [of apartheid], not of reform, because that is not an issue, but of maintaining the status quo, in which a minority, a racial minority, rules over an unwilling majority without having, without asking even, a mandate from the majority. What is at issue are the structures which have been set up to maintain the status quo and no mandate has been given to tamper with those structures.”¹¹⁶

PW Botha was the first Prime Minister since 1948 to deliberate on pronounced economic as well as political parameters. In his extensive efforts to foment a more significant support base for the

The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 230-232.

¹¹⁴ Quotations taken from Gavin Relly in conversation with Hugh Murray, in Leadership SA, Volume 4, Number three, 1985, pp. 13, 18.

¹¹⁵ SY Gool, The crisis of capital accumulation in South Africa, in G Naidoo (ed.), Reform and revolution. South Africa in the nineties, pp. 84-85; C McCarthy, The 1980s – a lost decade for the South African manufacturing sector?, in S Jones & J Inggs (eds.), The South African economy in the 1980s. The South African Journal of Economic History, Volume 9, No. 2. Special Issue, 1994, p. 75.

¹¹⁶ Quotation and content taken from O Tambo, Act with a sense of urgency, in ES Reddy (ed.), Oliver Tambo. Apartheid and the international community. Addresses to United Nations Committees and Conferences, pp. 104-105.

existing political order by seeking to create a multi-racial assemblage adherent to his government via their economic advancement, Botha was eager to enlist the support of the collective business community. Yet by 1981 many business leaders had grown somewhat cynical of the rapprochement between the government and the business sector amidst Botha's sluggish pace of reform. The consensus among businessmen was that Botha's non-compliance was attributable to the virulent resistance to the reform process by the *verkramptes* within the ruling NP. Especially galling to leading businessmen in this regard was the conservatively obdurate Andries Treurnicht, the *de facto* leader of the *verkramptes* in the government who were most opposed to any reform initiatives. Once Treurnicht had been elected as leader of the Transvaal NP and had taken his seat in the cabinet, a significant confrontation with the imperious Botha was inevitable, and in 1982 the matter was to come to a head in the form of an acrimonious personal and ideological confrontation.¹¹⁷

The initiation of the first tendencies of reform during the time of John Vorster's tenure as Prime Minister had already created serious divisions within the NP. The anti-reformist *verkrampste* group, led in the early 1980s by Treurnicht, endeavoured to contest any reformist initiatives and lambasted PW Botha for persisting with his attempts to remould apartheid into a more amenable system. The overwhelming majority of the personages incorporated into Treurnicht's *verkrampste* assemblage were Transvaalers representing rural constituencies. Constituencies that were supportive of Treurnicht's conservative faction included White workers still insisting on a labour colour bar and job reservation, less prosperous farmers opposing the government's cuts on farm subsidies, and civil servants of the lower rungs, whose standard of living was steadily being eroded by rising inflation and taxes. While the high economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s was able to sustain the political façade of Afrikaner unity, the economic reverses of the 1970s had again steadily inverted the circumstances facing Afrikaner farmers and labourers. As a result of the period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, South Africa's key manufacturing sector had become increasingly dependent on Black workers. After the numbers of Black workers in this sector had soared by 140 per cent between 1960 and 1980, the lower echelons of White workers were again subjected to competition from workers who were not White. In the countryside the position of many White farmers regressed appreciably as the government cut back on subsidies and as consumer prices failed to correspond to increasing producer costs. Treurnicht galvanized the different elements of those factions disgruntled with current NP policies to foment a pressure

¹¹⁷ L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 232-233; M Mann, The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), State, resistance and change in South Africa, pp. 62-63.

group advocating the rigid maintenance of the sacred principles of Verwoerdian apartheid. In opposition to the *verkrampes* were *verligte* reformist-minded businessmen, professional people, journalists, intellectuals and academics who sought to project South Africa no longer as an exclusively White state but rather as a multi-racial collective.¹¹⁸

From early 1980 severe public confrontations – that exposed the deep and bitter cleavages within the superstructure of Afrikaner nationalism – occurred between Treurnicht and the Prime Minister. FW de Klerk, who by his own admission at this time often found himself in-between the *verkrampete-verligte* conflagration, remembered how, after a public fall-out had transpired between the *verkrampete* leader and the Prime Minister in March 1980, he (as part of a delegation from the Transvaal NP) had met with Treurnicht to try and dissolve the standoff. “Treurnicht,” De Klerk wrote, “did not like confrontation. When we went to see him to discuss the crisis he wept like a child. His tears were so intense that one could have wrung out his handkerchief like a wet towel. I reported back to the Prime Minister, who was in a difficult mood.”¹¹⁹

In the following two years recurring squabbles persisted between the right wing and main body of the NP, particularly in regard to PW Botha’s labour reforms. The decisive clash, however, occurred in February 1982. After Treurnicht queried the Botha administration’s proposed reform policy in regard to the Coloureds, PW Botha made it publicly clear that he expected Treurnicht to conform to the party line. At a parliamentary caucus meeting on 24 February the die was irrevocably cast when Treurnicht voted against a motion that expressed full confidence in the Prime Minister and confirmed his right to formulate and interpret policy. At a Transvaal NP Head Council meeting on 27 February – for which De Klerk and other reformist cronies had devised a strategy of carefully planned speeches and interjections, including an appearance by the Prime Minister himself, to outwit the Treurnicht faction – Treurnicht was emphatically ejected as leader of the Transvaal NP. Consequently, Treurnicht and fifteen (later seventeen) other members of parliament walked out of the NP to form the Conservative Party (CP).¹²⁰

The expulsion of the Treurnicht conservatives was interpreted as a significant triumph for PW Botha and his designs of reform. The intense internal dissension within the NP had begun to inhibit Botha’s reform initiatives, and Botha himself was known to have expressed his frustration

¹¹⁸ H Giliomee, Broedertwis: intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the transition from apartheid, in *African Affairs*, 1992, 91, pp. 348-353; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 606-608.

¹¹⁹ Quotation and content taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 80-85.

¹²⁰ D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 300-303.

with the slow pace of reform in the early 1980s. The Prime Minister's new-found but as yet provisional business allies had also begun to raise voices of concern, and the paucity of palpable reforms had induced some business leaders to call into question their fledgling relationship with the state. At the Good Hope conference of 1981, attended by the Cabinet, senior bureaucrats and 600 leading capitalists, the business delegates were slightly albeit notably less receptive to the Prime Minister's proposals. Business leaders encouraged Botha to jettison the overriding concern – that had so effectively dampened Vorster's willingness to propel meaningful reforms – of holding together the divergent constituents of the NP and instead to forge ahead with reform irrespective of the consequences.¹²¹ "Treurnicht's departure, De Klerk wrote afterwards, "freed us from his retrogressive influence. Now we could give our full attention within the government and Parliament to reform initiatives that could pull South Africa back from the edge of the chasm on which we were teetering. I was full of determination and worked as never before."¹²² With the Treurnicht faction now warming the opposition benches in parliament, PW Botha was emboldened to inaugurate the next and to him potentially the most decisive component of his reform programme – that of constitutional reform.

As early as the early 1970s Vorster and other members of the higher echelons of the NP had been concerned with the somewhat nondescript political status of Coloureds and Indians within the South African statutory structures. Envisaging the eventual prevailing of a new political dispensation for Coloureds and Indians by what he called 'orderly constitutional evolution,' Vorster oversaw the establishment of the Theron Commission in 1973 to investigate the status of the Coloured community and to submit proposals for improvement. Eventually submitting its report in 1976, the Theron Commission advocated the abandonment of various discriminatory apartheid legislation, and proposed the propelling of direct Coloured representation and inputs at all levels of government. Hence in response to the findings of the Theron Commission, in 1976 a Cabinet committee – chaired by none other than PW Botha – was appointed to investigate "possible and desirable adjustments to the existing constitutional order...in respect of the political system for the Coloured and Indian communities." The resultant constitutional proposals presented by Botha's Cabinet committee included the establishment of three separate parliaments for each population group, while matters of mutual concern would be addressed by a Council of Cabinets on which all three racial groups would be represented. Replacing the office of the Prime Minister would be that of an executive State President, with whom ultimate power would reside.

¹²¹ D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 300-301.

¹²² Quotation taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, p. 89.

The establishment of the Council of Cabinets would also render obsolete the existence of the Senate, and hence it would be abolished.¹²³

With his accession to the position of Prime Minister in 1978 PW Botha sought to incorporate the process of constitutional reform in his total strategy superstructure by co-opting Coloureds and Indians into the prevailing constitutional order without seriously infringing on the political hegemony of Whites. Thus Botha appointed a parliamentary select committee to investigate the 1977 constitutional proposals, which had been published as the Republic of South Africa Constitution Draft Bill in 1979. Converted into a commission under the chairmanship of Minister of the Interior Alwyn Schlebusch, the commission delivered its interim report in May 1980. On the recommendation of the Schlebusch Committee the proposed three separate parliaments were renamed as chambers of a single parliament, and the Senate was to be abolished and replaced by a multi-racial President's Council whose sixty members, elected for a five year period, could be White, Coloured and Indian, but not Black. Although the President's Council's duties were envisaged to be to advise the State President on matters of public interest, Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, at this time the leader of the opposition in parliament, felt that the President's Council, which sat for the first time in 1980, "was supposed to be stocked with experts of various fields, but as it turned out, with a few exceptions, the President's Council became the grazing ground for political has-beens rewarded for loyal service, or a hitching post for others waiting for vacancies to occur elsewhere."¹²⁴

Nevertheless, the constitutional committee of the President's Council was able to present proposals for the restructuring of the national government that incorporated the promulgation of a tri-cameral parliament with an executive State President. The President's Council's recommendations, tabled in parliament on 12 May 1982, encapsulated the essence of the proposed constitutional reforms. Parliament would be divided into three houses. The House of Assembly was to consist of 178 representatives of the White assemblage, the House of Representatives was to consist of 85 members of the Coloured assemblage, and the House of Delegates was to consist of 45 delegates of the Indian assemblage. The majority of the President's Council's recommendations were accepted by the NP in July 1982, and in May 1983 the Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill was presented to parliament. The implementation of the new

¹²³ C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 58-63; quotation and content taken from *A survey of race relations in South Africa*, 1977, pp. 7-9.

¹²⁴ Quotation and content taken from F Van Zyl Slabbert, *The last White parliament*, p. 104-107. See also TRH Davenport and C Saunders, *South Africa. A modern history*, pp. 496-498; *Survey of race relations in South Africa*, 1981, pp. 3-4.

constitutional order was greatly augmented by the Coloured Labour Party's decision in January 1983 to collaborate with the new constitution, and some groups in the South African Indian Council also decided to participate. The grudging collaboration of the Coloured and Indian assemblages was greatly attributable to the machinations of Chris Heunis, the overbearing albeit resourceful Minister for Constitutional Development. "He was the past master at talking consensus without making binding concessions," Slabbert thought. "This is exactly what he did with the Labour Party. He wooed, cajoled and pleaded with them. He hinted, suggested and implied, but not once was a definite public promise extracted or a definite shift in Nationalist Party policy offered."¹²⁵

In July 1983 a parliamentary select committee considered evidence on the bill, and up to the end of August the bill was debated in parliament. "In steering it (the bill) through parliament," Slabbert noted, "Heunis was at his arrogant, eloquent and contemptuous best. Speaking twice as long as anybody else, he regularly complained that the other side was wasting time. Eventually the Government moved the 'guillotine motion' which meant that after debates on Clause 34 of a 104 Clause Bill no more debate was allowed in Committee stage." Thus after the government curtailed time-consuming debates on the bill, on 22 September 1983 the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, No. 110 of 1983, was promulgated. On 24 August Prime Minister Botha announced that the proposed new constitution would be submitted to the White electorate by means of a referendum – in which voters could either accept or reject the new constitution – on 2 November 1983, and also promised that Coloured and Indian opinion would also subsequently be tested. In the resultant referendum campaign, the government launched an unprecedented propaganda offensive (in which effective use was made of electronic and print media) to saturate the White electorate with the perceived appeal of a 'yes' vote. While most business leaders advocated for a 'yes' vote, Slabbert's Progressive Federal Party – the official opposition – lambasted the proposed new constitution as being one party's unilateral solution that would only polarise White-Black relations and enhance conflict and disaffection by not including Blacks in the new dispensation. Blacks' political aspirations, the government stubbornly maintained, would be fulfilled in the homelands. Despite Slabbert's remonstrances, in a referendum with a 76 per cent White voter turnout the new constitution was sanctioned by a 66 per cent 'yes' vote.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 276-277; C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 137-142. Quotation taken from F Van Zyl Slabbert, *The last White parliament*, p. 109.

¹²⁶ D Prinsloo, *Stem uit die Wilderness. 'n Biografie oor oud-pres. PW Botha*, pp. 206-209. Quotation taken from F Van Zyl Slabbert, *The last White parliament*, pp. 110-111. See also *Survey of race relations in South Africa*, 1983, pp. 71, 88; TRH Davenport and C Saunders, *South Africa. A modern history*, pp. 499-502; N Worden, *The making of modern South Africa: conquest, segregation, and apartheid*, pp. 140-141.

The Coloured and Indian elections that were held in August 1984, however, turned out to be little short of unmitigated disasters. Fearful of an abject dismissal of the new dispensation should Coloured and Indian opinion on the proposed new constitution be tested by referenda, the government opted to proceed directly to two separate ethnic elections. During the elections sporadic violence erupted at a number of Coloured and Indian polling booths, and in the end only a paltry 30,9 per cent of registered Coloured voters and 20,29 per cent of Indian voters partook in the election. The propelling of the new constitution spawned the establishment in 1983 of the United Democratic Front (UDF), an umbrella body of various anti-apartheid organisations which acted as a front for the ANC, and this body was active in spurring unrest and voting intimidation during the Coloured and Indian elections. Shunning the palpable rebuff of the Coloured and Indian constituencies, however, the government resolved to implement the new constitution, and Prime Minister Botha, while acknowledging that the Coloured and Indian elections had been undermined by intimidation to impel voter abstention, claimed that the deplorable voter turnout was attributable to some people's 'in-built reluctance' to exercise their rights. Hence the new constitution came into operation on 3 September 1984, and after resigning from his position of Prime Minister, PW Botha was unanimously elected as South Africa's first executive State President on 5 September by an 88-member electoral college, consisting of 50 White, 25 Coloured and 13 Indian parliamentarians. On 14 September Botha was inaugurated and formally assumed office in a ceremony in the Groote Kerk in Cape Town. State President Botha formally opened the first session of the new parliament at a joint sitting of all three chambers on 18 September. As the Coloured and Indian parliamentarians solemnly marched into parliament to take their seats for the president's address, the discomfort and disgust on the faces of the Conservative Party members and a fair number of NP parliamentarians were painfully obvious.¹²⁷

The new constitutional dispensation inducted in 1984 in essence presented Coloureds and Indians with set constitutional proposals that were not open to negotiation. In fact, the new constitutional order was based squarely on the prevailing apartheid order, and signified an affirmation – by no means a negation – of the political dictates of White minority rule. Even so, PW Botha endeavoured to portray his constitutional reform initiatives in the guise of initiatives gained from negotiation. Yet any semblance of power-sharing was far removed from PW Botha's political strategy – the 1984 constitution was circumspectly structured in such a premeditated manner as to thwart or circumvent any attempts by the Coloured or Indian houses to attain any hold on the

¹²⁷ Race relations survey, 1984, pp. 122-130; F Van Zyl Slabbert, The last White parliament, pp. 106-107; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 612-613.

levers of power. In contrast to the homelands policy, which sought to co-opt non-White groups into subjugated structures away from the centre of power, the 1984 constitution co-opted non-White persons into the centre of political power, a procedure that Frederik van Zyl Slabbert called 'include-divide-and-rule.' Hence by allotting Coloureds and Indians a modicum of political power, the government attempted to transfigure the Coloured and Indian constituencies into willing affiliates of the quintessence of the political fundamentals of apartheid.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, the euphoria that accompanied the overwhelming approval from the White electorate for the new constitution gained from the referendum of November 1983 was followed by the signing of the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique on 16 March 1984. The South African and Mozambican signatories pledged to eschew providing sanctuary for insurgent forces and supporting violent actions against the opposing state. South Africa also signed similar agreements with Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. With the advent of the 1980s PW Botha had sought to induce the southern African states to partake in his Constellation of States design, but the southern African states had snubbed his offer and sought to diminish their economic dependence on South Africa. In response PW Botha had since 1981 embarked on what became known as a policy of destabilisation in the region in order to attain South Africa's security objectives. Apart from trying to convince the bordering African states diplomatically of the folly of Marxism, Botha also sanctioned more persuasive military interventions in order to hound ANC guerrillas that were given sanctuary in the neighbouring states. Thus South Africa bombed ANC facilities in for instance Maputo and Maseru, and supported dissident factions in Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. South Africa also maintained its occupation of South West Africa/Namibia, and, in this region, the South African Defence Force (SADF) was engaged in guerrilla war with the nationalist South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), and it also launched intermittent raids into Angola in support of UNITA. By 1984 the pressure that was exerted on the Mozambican government had become so burdensome that it was compelled to conclude a non-aggression agreement with South Africa. Occurring in such close proximity to the inauguration of the tri-cameral parliament in September 1984, the Nkomati Accord seemed to herald the crowning impulsion of the regional and domestic components of PW Botha's total strategy.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ H Giliomee, The Botha quest. Sharing power without losing control, in Leadership SA, Volume 2, Number 2, Winter 1983, pp. 31-32; F Van Zyl Slabbert, The last White parliament, pp. 121-123.

¹²⁹ N Worden, The making of modern South Africa: conquest, segregation, and apartheid, pp. 141-143; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 591-593.

Yet crucially, for virtually the entire Black population of South Africa, Botha's celebrated reform initiatives had changed almost nothing. The South African government had no intention of extending the vote to Blacks, nor to abandon the racial classification of every inhabitant at birth. In fact, Blacks were still subject to prosecution under the pass laws, and to forced removals and eviction to the disagreeable homelands. Despite being deprived of their South African citizenship, numerous Blacks still had to work as miners in South African mines or as household servants in White households. Moreover, the propelling of total strategy also led to the consolidation of the mechanisms for political repression, thus facilitating a markedly more violent response to any dissenting voice among the Black population. The advent of total strategy, however, implied for the government to jettison its overt racist ideologies. In seeking to pacify the overbearing Black majority, the government was obliged to eschew overt racism and the hitherto predetermined hegemony of explicit White supremacy. In effect, then, the Botha reform initiatives implied an admission by the government that there existed no moral or ethical justification for the perpetuation of White minority rule. By maintaining the rudiments of grand apartheid the government in effect clung to a political venture that its own ideologies had rendered illegitimate, and hence its token reform policies were exposed as political meandering that sought not to alleviate the conventional political order of discrimination but rather to perpetuate it. Consequently, in the wake of the celebrated Nkomati Accord and the introduction of the tri-cameral parliament, the government was set to be confronted with a Black urban uprising unprecedented in scale and ferocity.¹³⁰

As a sop to the disenfranchised Black majority in South Africa, PW Botha's total strategy measures included the introduction of Black local authorities in Black urban areas in an attempt to defuse discontent and pacify potential defiance to the state. Yet the new-fangled Black local authorities were not allotted any revenue base – since the revenue previously allotted by provincial and national government to the hitherto White local authorities had not been extended to the new Black local authorities – and in the wake of the widespread economic deprivation prevalent in the Black urban townships, the resultant increase in the rates of rent and electricity served only to foment insurrection. Moreover, while the Black local authorities elections staged in 1984 elicited a derisory voter turnout, Black discontent at being blatantly excluded from the new constitution was mustered further by resistance organisations, particularly the UDF.¹³¹

¹³⁰ D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 321-323.

¹³¹ C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 150-159; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 611-612.

Thus on the very day that the swearing-in of the new Coloured and Indian parliamentarians took place in September 1984, a mass protest erupted in the Vaal Triangle southeast of Johannesburg against high rent and electricity rates imposed by the Lekoa and Evaton town councils, which controlled Sharpeville, Evaton, Sebokeng, and Boipatong. Dissent had been looming in areas in the Transvaal since January 1984, when protests against the inadequacies of the educational system occurred in townships around Pretoria and Johannesburg. After the outbreak of September 1984, however, violence subsequently spread to other areas of the Transvaal, accompanied by attacks on the homes of councillors and policemen and on government buildings, shops and liquor outlets, churches, vehicles, service stations and beer halls. Numerous stay-aways and strikes by workers were organised, as well as rent and service charge boycotts, and consumer boycotts and marches. By the end of 1984, the death toll stood at 149, with four town councillors being killed by incensed mobs. By March 1985 the unrest had started to spread to the northern Free State, Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Natal, and in June a renewed wave of ferment broke out in the Witwatersrand. The advent of the urban uprising greatly abetted the *de facto* implosion of the entire Black local authorities system, as numerous councillors resigned from their positions. The exiled ANC was not directly responsible for the outbreak of violence in the Vaal Triangle in 1984, but after it had carried out 362 violent acts against the state and security establishments between 1979 and 1983, it seized upon the widespread unrest to foment its own image as the premier resistance organisation challenging the state. Unlike the riots of 1976, the 1984 uprising was much more broadly supported and strategically organised, with clergy, students, teachers, lecturers, business people, women's groups, and trade unions and workers all contributing, while international opinion was much more effectively manipulated.¹³²

The government's initial response to the unrests that erupted in the Vaal Triangle was to employ established methods normally used by the South African Police (SAP) in similar situations. Utilizing such coarse methods of crowd control as whips, rubber bullets and birdshot, the state also took recourse to legal tools such as arrests, banning orders and detentions. Moreover, the abduction, torture and even murder of activists were not uncommon. Yet by October 1984 Louis le Grange, the Minister of Law and Order, was obliged to depict the unrests as "war, plain and simple," and he subsequently announced that co-operation between the SAP and SADF would be increased to quell the tumult in the townships. In July 1985 the State President announced the imposition of a limited state of emergency, applying to 36 magisterial districts located primarily

¹³² Race relations survey, 1984, pp. 64-80; TRH Davenport and C Saunders, South Africa. A modern history, pp. 506-510; C Alden, Apartheid's last stand, pp. 159-164; H Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 612-613; KA Manzo, Domination, resistance, and social change in South Africa. The local effects of global power, pp. 227-229.

in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape. Under the partial state of emergency the government officially sanctioned such devices as the restriction of gatherings deemed to be a threat to state security, the banning of individuals or organisations, the establishment of curfews in selected areas, and the arrest and detention of activists. Hence meetings of 64 organisations were banned in 30 magisterial districts, and after the first six months of the partial state of emergency had elapsed 7996 people had been arrested, while 35 372 SADF soldiers had been deployed in 96 townships before the end of the year. Restrictions on the media were only imposed in November, and hence for a protracted period the international community was able to observe the rigorous implication of the heavy-handed government security response. Yet despite the Botha government's apparently fastidious application of the dictates of total strategy, the urban uprising that erupted in 1984 saw the government veer significantly in the same rudderless, haphazard direction as had characterised the Vorster government's response to the 1976 riots. Attempting to infuse extreme repression with reform so as to maintain a sense of state legitimacy, PW Botha failed to realise that his government had no legitimacy to defend and that his token reforms without unadulterated change were only aggravating his adverse position.¹³³

Yet Botha was not willing to compromise on the essential political mainstays of grand apartheid, and hence repression was the predominant means that Botha allotted the South African government to defuse the violent crises from 1984. The implementation of the extensive repressive measures to quell the revolt was recorded and televised globally, and Botha's reform initiatives were significantly discredited while the campaign for international sanctions against South Africa gained much impetus. No-one in the townships, it seemed, was exempt from the extensive counter-insurgency methods sanctioned by the government. During the partial state of emergency, Leon Wessels, the Member of Parliament for Krugersdorp, was approached by a television crew for an interview. Because the interview would be used in a television programme that sought to bolster South Africa's image overseas, it was decided that the interview with Wessels was to be conducted in a stretch of open land in-between the White and Black segregated living areas in Krugersdorp. A partial state of emergency had been declared in this area, but since Wessels was the elected Member of Parliament for this area, he did not expect to be interfered with. "Thus," stated Wessels, "we walked into the long grass, about 500 metres...Suddenly, while we were still setting up the cameras, a convoy of soldiers chanced upon us, and without further explanation summarily arrested us for contravening the emergency regulations. Apparently we were making a film in an area where it was unlawful to film." Wessels was

¹³³ C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 168-175; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 325-328.

flabbergasted: “I am the member of parliament of Krugersdorp and I am not allowed to move freely about as I wish. I am not allowed to participate in a programme that must enhance South Africa’s image overseas.” As much as Wessels tried to talk to the junior officer in command and dissuade him of his actions, the army officer refused to entertain any of Wessels’ requests and rather required of the Member of Parliament to remain quiet. Luckily for Wessels, a police patrol soon passed by the scene, and one of the police officers in the patrol was acquainted with Wessels’ identity and was able to sanction his immediate release and the continuation of the filming.¹³⁴

In an attempt to stifle the burgeoning instances of unrest in the townships, PW Botha propelled more significant token reforms in 1985 and, in the process, seemed content to resign himself to even concede reforms from a position of apparent weakness – very much in contradiction to the dictates of total strategy. In his opening address to parliament in January 1985, PW Botha announced that Black communities outside the ‘independent’ homelands would be given a political say “up to the highest level,” and also promised the abolition of discriminatory influx control measures, the revising of the policy of population removals, and the granting of full property rights for Blacks in urban areas. As further confirmation of the State President’s statement in March 1985 that he is “committed to a programme of reform designed to broaden democracy and to improve living conditions of all South Africans regardless of race, colour or creed,” the maligned passbooks were replaced in April by a universal identity book for all South Africans, and in June the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and Section 16 of the Immorality Act of 1957 were repealed. Following the President’s Council’s report on urbanisation, the state eventually abolished the influx control system and replaced it with a policy of so-called ‘orderly urbanisation’ in early 1986.¹³⁵

A more accurate indication of PW Botha’s intrinsically conservative mindset, however, was reflected in his so-called ‘Rubicon’ speech delivered at the Natal NP Congress on 15 August 1985. Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha had actively encouraged anticipation of significant reforms that would apparently be announced in the speech, and speculation abounded that PW Botha would announce the release of Nelson Mandela among other comprehensive reforms. In utter defiance of Pik Botha’s predictions, however, PW Botha utilised the occasion to deliver a

¹³⁴ Quotations and content taken from L Wessels, Die einde van ‘n era. Bevryding van ‘n Afrikaner, pp. 48-49. Quotations translated from the Afrikaans.

¹³⁵ Quotations and content taken from Race relations survey, 1985, pp. 26-29. See also C Alden, Apartheid’s last stand, pp. 191-200; D O’Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 326-328.

hectoring diatribe that affirmed his preference for old-style White supremacy. Sidestepping any mention of specific reform initiatives, Botha maintained emphatically that he was not prepared to lead White South Africans on a road to abdication and suicide. Businessmen and foreign governments were uniformly incensed at PW Botha's abject snub, yet hardly noticed amid all the dashed expectations was the fact that Botha had actually obliquely taken a fundamental step with the 'Rubicon' speech. Declaring that people in Black states and communities who did not desire to accept independence remained South African citizens and should be accommodated in a common political system, PW Botha had in fact discarded the entire homelands concept – traditionally the central tenet of the entire apartheid edifice. By jettisoning the homelands edifice PW Botha had inadvertently sounded the death knell for the political balance of power, since the impetus for independent Black homelands had encapsulated virtually the entire political justification for the implementation and maintenance of apartheid from the outset.¹³⁶

As a harbinger of PW Botha's 'Rubicon' denunciation of the homelands policy, in April 1985 FW de Klerk – at this time the Minister of Home Affairs and National Education – announced in parliament that the original apartheid objective of the NP that every Black person should become a citizen of an independent homeland was simply no longer attainable. Moreover, a booklet released by the NP in May further disparaged the homelands as the sole solution to the problems associated with Black political rights, and, in a frank assessment, the booklet declared that government attempts to dispel Blacks from urban areas had failed. PW Botha's 'Rubicon' speech finally banished any credence in the homelands as the panacea of South Africa's racial predicament, and thus, by ultimately invalidating by implication the core dogma of apartheid, the speech was undoubtedly a defining event in the passage of apartheid rule in South Africa. PW Botha had had to deliberate on whether to fundamentally maintain the core principles of apartheid or to fundamentally denounce the political structures of White minority rule. Characteristically, PW Botha had opted to insist on the maintenance of the political structures of White supremacy, yet in the process he had effected a vital self-inflicted albeit inexorable nail in the coffin of his own government and of apartheid in South Africa. In 1985 Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert perspicaciously appraised the character of PW Botha when he claimed that "it is to his (PW Botha's) credit that he is prepared to recognize the untenability of the present constitutional arrangements for Blacks and is prepared to discuss alternatives. Yet emotionally, as well as intellectually, he cannot seem to accept a common constitutional arrangement between black and white." Indeed, while PW Botha might have begun to vaguely sense the inevitable cessation of

¹³⁶ D Prinsloo, *Stem uit die Wilderness*, pp. 211-215; G Arnold, *South Africa: crossing the Rubicon*, pp. 69-70; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 614.

White minority rule he was naturally not prepared to go down without a fight. In short, PW remained politically inclined at all costs, but for others in the NP the passing of the political balance of power amid the overbearing exigencies of the economy was painfully obvious.¹³⁷

On 7 March 1986, in an attempt to stave off the damning negative publicity that had been engendered by the brutal security measures inherent in the partial state of emergency, the government announced that it was lifting the partial state of emergency – 229 days after its imposition. The lifting of the partial state of emergency did not, however, beget a respite in the regularity of the urban rebellion as violent incidents escalated with the death rate from the violence averaging over six persons per day. Fully cognisant of the escalating violence and the harmful implications that the partial state of emergency had generated, the government endeavoured to engineer the seemingly ingenious measure of replacing the overtly detrimental partial state of emergency with statutory legislation that would accomplish the same purpose of political repression, yet only with an added veneer of legality. Fearing to be branded as accomplices of the state's derided repressive measures, however, the Coloured and Indian delegates' opposition in the tri-cameral parliament thwarted this pernicious initiative. After the partial state of emergency had been lifted in March, PW Botha agreed to receive the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) in May, which was instructed by Commonwealth leaders to try and engineer a resolution to the political impasse in South Africa. PW Botha had been given ample warning by Pretoria's ambassador in Britain that receiving the EPG would effectively entail that a rejection of the group's eventual proposals would denote grave political consequences for South Africa. When the EPG subsequently proposed that the government engage in negotiations with the ANC after this movement would pledge to suspend its armed struggle, Botha defied the opinion of some of his senior government colleagues to accept the proposals and instead snubbed the EPG by sanctioning an SADF raid on ANC targets in three neighbouring Commonwealth states. In its final report the EPG concluded disconsolately that "...while the government claims to be ready to negotiate, it is in truth not yet ready to negotiate fundamental change...Its programme of reform does not end apartheid, but seeks to give it a less inhuman face. Its quest is powersharing, but without surrendering overall white control."¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Content partly attributable to insights from Race relations survey, 1985, p. 27. Quotation taken from F Van Zyl Slabbert, The last White parliament, p. 148.

¹³⁸ Quotation and content taken from D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 340-341. See also H Hamann, Days of the generals, p. 134; C Alden, Apartheid's last stand, pp. 176-178, 221-222.

Deeply frustrated by the Indian and Coloured chambers' perfidious insolence in blocking the proposed security legislation, PW Botha in mid-1986 consolidated the supremacy of the military assemblage in the upper echelons of the state when he simply by-passed parliament and proclaimed a nationwide state of emergency on 12 June 1986 – deliberately forestalling a three-day strike planned for the tenth anniversary of the 1976 Soweto rebellion on 16 June. With Defence Minister Malan promising to restore order to the townships, the SADF took over much responsibility for domestic security from the police and consequently a dramatic new crackdown ensued. Giving absolute priority to re-establishing law and order, close to 26 000 people were detained between June 1986 and June 1987, and extensive media censorship measures were enforced in 1986. After 3477 private Black homes and 1220 schools had been destroyed or badly damaged between September 1984 and May 1986, by the latter stages of 1986 the SADF succeeded in regaining some semblance of control in the townships. In December 1985 the government also cautioned six neighbouring African states to eliminate the ANC from their territories or face the consequences. Thus from early 1986 until the end of 1988 the government intensified its destabilisation of South Africa's neighbouring states, with Angola and Mozambique bearing the brunt of the onslaught.¹³⁹

In an attempt to undercut the fundamental economic grievances that provoked unrest in the townships, the government now also propelled a programme of socio-economic development as part of its counter-revolutionary agenda. 34 townships where the uprising had progressed extensively were singled out for special attention. R3,2 billion was allocated for the upgrading of these selected townships, with a further R16 billion allotted for the upgrading of 200 additional townships. With the implementation of various social development programmes – which were identified in consultation with the local community and from intelligence sources – the government also sought to placate the townships and therewith nip in the bud any fresh outbreaks of violence. Through the provision of social facilities, civic action programmes and organised education it was hoped that the township population could be 'won over.' Once the insurgents had been neutralised in the townships, the state envisaged for the Black local authorities to be reinstated – and now to be propped up by direct protection from the SADF – in order to fill the vacuum left by the removal of the insurgent bodies and to resuscitate effective Black civilian government over the townships.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ F van Zyl Slabbert, Reform and revolt: 1983 to 1988, in H Giliomee, L Schlemmer (eds.), *Negotiating South Africa's future*, pp. 75-82; H Hamann, *Days of the generals*, p. 128; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 342-346;

¹⁴⁰ C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 227-231; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 346-348.

While the government subsequently managed to enforce the Black local authorities system to resemble a degree of working order, the entire superstructure was thoroughly discredited and rejected by the Black population when the government was able to claim only a paltry 25 per cent Black voter turnout for the 1988 municipal elections. The UDF, who had actively boycotted the elections, claimed that a 5 per cent Black voter turnout was a more accurate figure. When PW Botha opened parliament at the end of January 1986, he stated that “We have outgrown the outdated colonial system of paternalism as well as the outdated concept of apartheid.” Yet, notwithstanding his public condemnation of apartheid, PW Botha even now remained resolutely committed to maintaining White political hegemony. Despite the government’s initiation of power-sharing initiatives, PW Botha was perennially unable to jettison his government’s firm reluctance to infringe upon the sacred core precepts of White minority rule. The government’s denunciation of the homelands policy and the acceptance of a single South African citizenship and nationality only served to further exacerbate the dearth of any justification for withholding full political rights from the Black majority, and increasingly the embattled state of PW Botha was castigated and its legitimacy utterly renounced.¹⁴¹

The South African business community also found itself increasingly alienated in the mid-1980s from PW Botha’s government - its erstwhile political champion of reform. The state’s heavy-handed repressive reaction amid the escalating urban turmoil encouraged calls for disinvestment and economic sanctions against South Africa, and as a corollary of this the business community found itself increasingly pressurised to denounce PW Botha’s White minority state. PW Botha’s former cautious allies had seemingly come to realise that total strategy was not going to be the decisive strategical riposte that would ensure the acquiescence or at least tacit co-optation of the vast majority of Blacks, and hence the unprecedented levels of unrest were not likely to recede significantly in the foreseeable future. In an article in the *Citizen* newspaper on 28 September 1985, Raymond Ackerman, chairman of the retail giant Pick ‘n Pay, wrote that “Business has been speaking out very loudly over the past few months regarding the political situation and the feeling among most leading businessmen is that urgent action is required by government...Apartheid must go in its entirety...”¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Quotation and content taken from Race relations survey, 1986, Part 1, pp. 160-161. See also C Alden, Apartheid’s last stand, pp. 231-233; D O’Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 347-349.

¹⁴² Quotation and content taken from Policy perspectives 1989: South Africa at the end of the Eighties, pp. 116-121. See also L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Gilomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 232-233.

Yet while the government sought to uphold the core tenets of the dogma of White supremacy inherent in apartheid – and in fact used brutal force against those who sought to inhibit the state in maintaining the status quo – there was little mutual interest that could resuscitate the constructive relationship between the state and business leaders. Hence increasing business disillusionment in South Africa was also reflected in the actions of foreign investors and Western governments. A net disinvestment of roughly R604 million was precipitated in 1983 when three large foreign companies withdrew from South Africa. Between September 1984 and September 1985, all of 18 American companies either partially or completely reduced their holdings in South Africa, in the process repatriating assets and profits totalling \$493 million. When combined with substantial current account deficits, this produced a net decline in foreign reserves of over R4,7 billion between 1981 and 1984, and total foreign debt rocketed from \$16,9 billion at the end of 1980 to \$24,3 billion at the end of 1984. Although South Africa profited greatly from the rapid rise of the price of gold in the late 1970s (eventually peaking at \$850 in 1980), by mid-1984 – when global oil prices receded again and inflation in the countries of the West had declined – the dollar rose again and concurrently the gold price drifted downwards, accompanied by a decline in the value of the South African Rand. Hence in 1984 the Rand decreased in value by 30 per cent, and this in turn contributed to increased inflation rates of over 20 per cent.¹⁴³

In an effort to reduce the crippling rise in inflation the government in August 1984 raised interest rates to unprecedented levels, but the inadvertent effect of this was only to heighten South Africa's economic recession as it severely discouraged consumer expenditure and put considerable pressure on businesses by inhibiting company borrowing. Thus in the first half of 1985 company liquidations increased by 27 per cent when compared to the last six months of 1984. The unfolding recession also augmented Black unemployment, as between October and December 1984 alone 43 000 jobs were lost in the sectors of manufacturing, construction, electricity and transport. Moreover, between December 1984 and December 1985, the number of Blacks registered as jobless increased by a staggering 63,6 per cent. South Africa's indubitable dependence on overseas trade, investment, and finance was again exploited by a global disinvestment campaign and business leaders became gravely concerned at how the state's intransigence was compounding South Africa's economic recession. Yet these were the fatal costs of propelling reform apartheid, or in other words, of affirming the rudiments of White

¹⁴³ SY Gool, The crisis of capital accumulation in South Africa, in G Naidoo (ed.), Reform and revolution. South Africa in the nineties, pp. 84-86; A Hirsch, The origins and implications of South Africa's continuing financial crisis, in Transformation 9, 1989, pp. 35-37; D O'Meara, Forty lost years, pp. 328-329; D Rees, Rates of (ex)change, in Leadership SA, volume 5, number one, 1986, pp. 31-33.

supremacy inherent in the political balance of power with an aggressive buttressing – and hence a significant retort from South Africa’s influential business leaders was not loath to appear.¹⁴⁴

In January 1985 the AHI, Assocom, the Chamber of Mines, SEIFSA and the National Chambers of Commerce (NAFCOC) presented visiting US Senator Edward Kennedy with a memorandum that outlined their support for the meaningful political participation of Blacks in South Africa, with the intended audience of the increasingly hostile anti-apartheid pro-disinvestment lobby in the US. In early 1986 FCI released a business charter and action programme that called, among other things, for the abolition of all statutory discrimination. Although the AHI’s support for the charter was not substantial, the FCI initiatives were subsequently endorsed by Assocom and NAFCOC. In response to the imposition of the first partial state of emergency in 1985, both Assocom and FCI called for the introduction of substantial political reforms, and in July 1986 the two organisations and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) issued a similar plea. Yet PW Botha was not overly concerned with the remonstrances from the business sector. In response to the FCI’s recurrent griping, PW Botha wrote to its president that “instead of criticising the government in the most irresponsible fashion, you should be helping it.” In an attempt to restore the state’s ailing relationship with its erstwhile business allies, as a follow-up to the Carlton and Good Hope conferences, PW Botha convened the Bryntirion conference in 1986. Any potential for a rapprochement at the conference was scuppered, however, by the abounding scepticism among business leaders of the sincerity of the government’s intentions to propel significant reforms, especially in light of the state’s brutal repressive tendencies and PW Botha’s obvious intransigence, in particular his ‘Rubicon’ speech rebuff. In fact, the detrimental political and economic consequences generated by the ‘Rubicon’ speech had effectively wrecked South Africa’s economic prospects under the Botha government, and therewith PW Botha had also jettisoned the support of South Africa’s business community indefinitely.¹⁴⁵

PW Botha’s announcement in July 1985 of the imposition of the partial state of emergency was almost immediately followed by France’s application of economic sanctions against South Africa. Subsequently Chase Manhattan Bank opted to freeze its credit to South Africa and to call in its loans as they matured. Other American banks initially refused to follow suit, but after the decisive setback effected by the ‘Rubicon’ speech the trickle of banks withdrawing from South Africa

¹⁴⁴ M Mann, The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), *State, resistance and change in South Africa*, pp. 74-76.

¹⁴⁵ Quotation and content taken from L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, *Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state*, pp. 233-236.

became a flood. In response, South Africa was forced to postpone debt repayments and reinstitute exchange controls. By 1987 250 foreign companies had withdrawn from South Africa. The ‘Rubicon’ speech also contributed to the US Congress imposing sanctions banning new investments and loans to the South African government, and the Commonwealth also enforced measures that included a ban on all agricultural and manufacturing imports from South Africa. Occurring when the South African economy was in a sustained recession, the economic fallout generated by the ‘Rubicon’ speech came at a time South Africa could ill-afford.¹⁴⁶

PW Botha’s various strategies had always consumed vast amounts of financial resources. During his years in office government spending increased by an annual average of 18,5 per cent. Official estimates held that the South African economy was required to grow at an annual rate of 3 to 5 per cent simply to keep pace with population growth, yet real annual growth receded from an average of 5.8 per cent in the 1960s to 3,3 per cent in the 1970s and a mere 1,8 per cent between 1980 and 1987. South Africa’s vulnerable traditional trade configuration – that of being essentially an exporter of raw materials and an importer of oil, arms, technology, and intermediate and capital goods – became increasingly compromised as the opening up of new gold streams in Canada, Australia and the US saw South Africa’s share of world gold production plummet from 51, 9 per cent in 1980 to 32,5 per cent in 1986. Moreover, as the South African economy reeled from dwindling capital inflows, real metal prices were estimated at being approximately 45 per cent lower in 1989 than they were in 1962. Although the South African government was able to negotiate agreements with its international creditors in 1986 and 1987 that froze \$14 billion of its foreign debt until 1990, South Africa still had to come up with almost \$8 billion to be repaid between 1987 and 1990. While the South African economy was able to record a GDP growth rate superior to the population growth rate in 1988, the short-lived economic upsurge in this year encouraged domestic spending on imports. Consequently, the total foreign reserves of R4,93 billion at the end of 1988 were less than 30 per cent of the 1980 levels, and by October 1988 South Africa’s gold reserves were sufficient only to support six more weeks’ worth of imports. In addition, the resources available to the South African Treasury were denuded by the SADF’s protracted military involvement in South West Africa/Namibia and Angola. After maintaining a military presence in the area for 14 years, however, South Africa finally signed a peace accord with Cuba and Angola in New York in December 1988. Besides facilitating the withdrawal of both South African and Cuban forces from Angola, the accord also

¹⁴⁶ D Prinsloo, *Stem uit die Wilderness. ’n Biografie oor oud-pres. PW Botha*, pp. 240-242; M Mann, The giant stirs: South African business in the age of reform, in P Frankel, N Pines and M Swilling (eds.), *State, resistance and change in South Africa*, pp. 76-78; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 614.

envisaged free elections in and the complete independence of South West Africa/Namibia in March 1990.¹⁴⁷

Thus by 1989 the government's underhanded approach of manipulating the South African economy to underscore the bastions of White interests had only served to exacerbate the enduring structural crisis of the economy and to inhibit economic growth and accumulation. The government's preoccupation with security and defence matters effectively emasculated its reform initiatives that were originally deemed essential precepts of total strategy. Such were the costs of maintaining the political balance of power, and, by his intransigence and strategical meandering, PW Botha only hastened the end of White minority rule in South Africa. The government's abject failure to attain sustained economic growth drastically undermined its capacity to finance the political strategy, and the concurrent lack of economic growth and burgeoning unemployment spurred Black unrest and alienated erstwhile White support. In effect, PW Botha and his strategists had been overly fixated with ostentatious politics of minority rule and had largely disregarded the core, underlying economic realities that determined the outcome of any political venture. Even so, by 1989 PW Botha's unwavering headstrong demeanour still personified the government's stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge that it had reached a political impasse, and even more importantly an economic impasse. As had occurred at the latter part of Vorster's leadership, in the media PW Botha's government now became increasingly saddled by damning labels such as 'rudderless' and 'reactive.' Yet while PW Botha might have remained unflappable (despite his ailing health), his leadership position and the entire strategical superstructure that his rule entailed were shortly to pass into the realm of history.¹⁴⁸

As 1988 progressed FW de Klerk became precipitously contemptuous of the leadership of PW Botha, and, after another unsavoury outburst by the State President, De Klerk felt compelled to propound explicit defiance to PW Botha's belligerent ramblings. "I felt that I could no longer serve under P.W. Botha and that the time had come to make a stand," De Klerk wrote afterwards. "His surliness, aggression and poor human relations were doing serious harm to the National Party and the country...in my mind there were no further doubts: the time to confront P.W. Botha had come." Before De Klerk would have the opportunity to act on his resolve, however, PW Botha's resignation would be presaged by events beyond his (De Klerk's) control. On 18 January

¹⁴⁷ W Steenkamp, *South Africa's Border War 1966-1989*, pp. 166-177; S Jones and J Inggs, An overview of the South African economy in the 1980s, in S Jones & J Inggs (eds.), *The South African economy in the 1980s. The South African Journal of Economic History*, Volume 9, No. 2. Special Issue, 1994, p. 1-18; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 354-356; A Kamsteeg and E van Dijk, *FW de Klerk: man of the moment*, p. 46.

¹⁴⁸ D Prinsloo, *Stem uit die Wilderness*, pp. 234-238; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 359-360, 365-366.

1989 – hours before he was scheduled to open the new parliamentary session – the State President suffered a mild stroke and was rushed to 2 Military Hospital in Wynberg, Cape Town. Amid intense speculation regarding PW Botha's designated successor, Chris Heunis was sworn in as acting State President on 19 January. Nonetheless, from his sickbed PW Botha made it clear that he had no intention of resigning, and with the office of the State President creating the impression that the President was not seriously ill, PW Botha was released from hospital on 24 January and promptly announced that he would be convalescing for a period of six weeks before returning to his duties. At an NP parliamentary caucus meeting of 2 February, however, the NP bigwigs were presented with a letter from PW Botha announcing his resignation as leader of the NP but not as State President. By abrogating his leadership of the NP, PW Botha apparently wanted to elevate his post of State President above the commonplace parliamentary politics so that he would be able to convene a national forum of selected ethnic leaders that would devise ways in which Blacks would be allotted more representative albeit segregated responsibilities in the central government. Fearing that his absence would initiate a furious fracas for power within the NP, and mindful of the intense political wrangling that had preceded his own election as Prime Minister, PW Botha instructed the NP caucus to immediately appoint a new party leader.¹⁴⁹

Thus in a close-run election that went to three ballot rounds in the NP caucus meeting of 2 February, FW de Klerk narrowly defeated Finance Minister Barend du Plessis by eight votes in the final round of voting. Foreign Minister Pik Botha had been eliminated in the first round, and Chris Heunis in the second, and apart from being PW Botha's preferred candidate, Du Plessis' formidable performance in the final round was testament to the NP caucus' esteem for his reputation as a leading *verligte*. Yet despite De Klerk's reputation as a conservative – or at best a centrist – in a subsequent speech to parliament De Klerk committed himself to establishing a South Africa devoid of racism and domination, and stated that “it has been alleged that the National Party is clinging to White domination...I want to state unequivocally that the National Party is against domination of any group by another. White domination, in so far as it still exists, must be stopped.” PW Botha's devolution of the NP leadership to De Klerk created obvious dissension in the government as to who now actually wielded ultimate power: the State President, now sundered from his political power base, or the leader of the ruling party in parliament, bereft of the executive means to implement policy? While speculation, intrigue and political

¹⁴⁹ Quotation and content taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 125-131. See also A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country. The inside story of South Africa's road to change*, p. 88; A Kamsteeg and E van Dijk, *FW de Klerk: man of the moment*, pp. 46-47; C Alden, *Apartheid's last stand*, pp. 270-271; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 388-389.

manoeuvring abounded, the irrepressible PW Botha remained aloof and standoffish to the new NP leader, and De Klerk, for his part, was determined to address the ambiguity that Botha's delegation of power had fomented. Thus on 10 March De Klerk convened a meeting of the Federal Council of the NP to discuss the executive impasse. The Federal Council overwhelmingly supported a proposal presented by De Klerk that suggested that in the best interests of the country and of the NP the leader of the NP as the majority party should also hold the office of State President. Consequently, while addressing parliament in April for the first time since he had suffered his stroke, PW Botha grudgingly announced that his resignation would ensue after the concluding of the 1989 general election, the date for which he also announced as 6 September. De Klerk was much relieved and eager to focus his full attention on the impending election, yet PW Botha's final ill-tempered flurry would precipitate his departure sooner than De Klerk anticipated.¹⁵⁰

PW Botha never fully reconciled himself to relinquishing political power, and hence the last months of his presidency witnessed various vindictive and petty outbursts by the obsolete State President against those whom he felt had betrayed him or usurped his authority. Thus PW Botha was cynically irked at the audacity of De Klerk to visit various European and African leaders in mid-1989, and by the favourable publicity that De Klerk's visits had provoked. When De Klerk heeded a call by Foreign Minister Pik Botha to meet with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda in late August 1989 – Pik Botha anticipated the United Nations to shortly adopt resolutions unfavourable to South Africa, and wanted the NP leader to lobby with Kenneth Kaunda to oppose the resolutions – PW Botha made it known that he was bitterly upset at allegedly not being told of De Klerk's impending visit after hearing about it in the media. PW Botha severely castigated Foreign Minister Pik Botha, and assumed a hostile and malicious posture towards the leading members of the NP. For De Klerk this vitriolic slight by PW Botha was the final straw. Mustering a number of senior ministers, and determined to bring the matter to a head, De Klerk led a delegation to the State President's official residence in Cape Town. In the resultant meeting, after the ministers present uniformly declared their support for De Klerk's proposal that the State President take sick leave until a new president was appointed, PW Botha harangued his distinguished audience on his grievances and their audacity to insinuate that he was incapable of maintaining his post, and rejected De Klerk's proposal. Ultimately, however, the State President

¹⁵⁰ Quotation taken from Guidelines for a new South Africa (Excerpts from the speech by Mr. F.W. de Klerk...on February 8, 1989, during the joint debate on the opening address of the State President), *RSA Policy Review*, volume 2, number 2, 1989, pp. 82-83. See also *Race relations survey*, 1988/89, pp. 688-689; FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 136-140; DA Mungazi, *The last defenders of the laager*. Ian D. Smith and F.W. de Klerk, pp. 99-103.

offered to resign, provided that he appeared on state television to elucidate the reasons for his departure. De Klerk and his accomplices gleefully accepted the State President's offer.¹⁵¹

In his belligerent, irascible swansong, PW Botha appeared on national television the same evening and delivered a muddled justification for his actions. Nevertheless, he duly announced his retirement. The following day FW de Klerk was unanimously elected as acting State President at a Cabinet meeting, and, after the general election, De Klerk was formally elected as State President. Finally, in May 1990 PW Botha also resigned from the NP altogether, in protest, he maintained, against De Klerk's reform programme. For PW Botha the final straw was when Joe Slovo, the general secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), was included in the ANC delegation that engaged in negotiations with the government. State President De Klerk countered Botha's condemnation by insisting that the NP leadership was merely fulfilling the process initiated under PW Botha's erstwhile leadership. At van Wyk, the Afrikaner journalist and historian who had drawn such mirth and inspiration from PW Botha's visit to Soweto in 1979, and who had even framed a copy of a picture depicting PW Botha clutching the hand of a young man in Soweto, must have noted PW Botha's passing without much regret. "Over the years," Van Wyk wrote, "I have often looked at the picture that excited me so much and has been published around the world. Thinking about what might have been I have had the urge on occasion to take a felt-tip pen and scrawl across it: 'So much – so little.'"¹⁵²

De Klerk's presidential inauguration ceremony took place in the Dutch Reformed student church at the University of Pretoria on 20 August 1989. The sermon – which was delivered by De Klerk's own pastor, Dr PW Bingle of the *Gereformeerde* Church in Cape Town – and the administration of the oath seemed to evoke in De Klerk an extraordinary vocation for his impending eminence as State President. "It was," De Klerk wrote afterwards, "a stirring message which called on me to answer for the decisions that I would take as president in the Council Chamber of God. The administration of the oath was an emotional moment. For me, it was far more than just a formality. I experienced it as though I was indeed standing before God and quietly promised that I would try to carry out the responsibility that He had entrusted to me with the biblical principles of justice, peace and charity as my guidelines."¹⁵³ De Klerk's brother, Willem, later claimed that FW was

¹⁵¹ A Kamsteeg and E van Dijk, *FW de Klerk: man of the moment*, pp. 50-55; FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 140-147.

¹⁵² Quotation taken from A van Wyk, *The birth of a new Afrikaner*, p. 33. See also *Race relations survey*, 1989/90, pp. 727-728; A Kamsteeg and E van Dijk, *FW de Klerk: man of the moment*, pp. 52-56.

¹⁵³ Quotation and content taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, p. 149.

“literally in tears after the service. In tears he told us we should pray for him – that God was calling him to save all the people of South Africa, that he knew he was going to be rejected by his own people but that he had to walk this road and that we must all help him...I remember, too, that he said, ‘I am not a fundamentalist, I don’t think I am important in God’s eyes, but I believe in God and I believe I am being called upon to perform a specific task at this time in this new situation.’”¹⁵⁴

Yet De Klerk subsequently denied that the ensuing epoch-making transformation he initiated was borne of a personal Damascus Road conversion. Instead, De Klerk insisted, the realities of practical politics and therewith the gradual acceptance in the NP of the impracticalities of apartheid had thoroughly convinced him of the dire need for unadulterated change. Even so, before being elected State President, De Klerk had sustained a distinct conservative disposition. As leader of the Transvaal NP he had constantly endeavoured to woo the significant conservative component in the province. In 1984 De Klerk attempted to persuade Alan Hendrickse, the leader of the Coloured House of Representatives in the tri-cameral parliament, to assist in prolonging the existence of the controversial racial sex laws so as to afford the NP more time to prepare Whites for the laws’ eventual abolition. In 1987, also, as Minister of Education, De Klerk was an outspoken advocate of segregated universities. Yet De Klerk – constantly kept at arm’s length by PW Botha – was never intimately absorbed in PW Botha’s much-vaunted state security council, and had not held his predecessor’s total strategy antics in high regard. Whereas PW Botha never attained a university degree and instead worked his way upwards in the NP hierarchy accompanied by his vicious temper and bullying tactics, De Klerk – a full twenty years younger than PW Botha – obtained a *cum laude* law degree, and was renowned for his mild-mannered demeanour, attaining the label of peacemaker after his conciliatory activities in the *verligte-verkrampste* ructions in the NP in the 1980s. One political observer differentiated between PW Botha and De Klerk as follows: “Where President Botha is rough, he (De Klerk) is smooth; where President Botha smashes, he bends; where President Botha confronts and rages, he yields and mollifies. His career is a tale of compromises, making the best of bad situations, of smoothing over difficulties.” In short, while PW Botha was the reformer who was incapable of significantly breaking with the past, De Klerk became the conservative who would propel South Africa on the road to meaningful transformation.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Quotation and content taken from A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 99-100.

¹⁵⁵ Quotation taken from D Geldenhuys and H Kotzé, FW de Klerk: a study in political leadership, in *Politikon*, volume 19, number 1, pp. 32-33. See also H Giliomee, Democratization in South Africa, in *Political Science Quarterly*, volume 110, number 1, 1995, pp. 86-89; DA Mungazi, *The last defenders of the laager*, p. 142; D O’Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 396-397.

As early as 1987, however, De Klerk had stated publicly that the NP's long-standing policy on Black political rights had led to a *cul-de-sac*. As a testament to the changing political assessment prevalent in the Afrikaner cultural elite, moreover, an Afrikaner Broederbond document circulated in 1989 entitled 'Political values for the survival of the Afrikaner' argued that the exclusion of Blacks at the highest levels of political processes had become a threat to the survival of Whites. In 1989 De Klerk openly admitted that the government's policies had landed the NP in an ineluctable predicament, and told *Leadership SA* magazine that "all the people of South Africa, whether they be black, white, Indian or coloured, must have a vote, must elect their leaders, and must, through their leaders, become part of all decisions affecting their lives. They must therefore become involved at all levels of government in such a way that no one group will be able to dominate the other. In as much as it can be said that the white group in South Africa dominates the others, that must be moved away from." The NP's acceptance in 1986 of the concept of a single South African state for all South Africans had impacted deeply on De Klerk. By his own admission, this event had triggered a decisive mental leap for the future State President, and henceforth De Klerk promoted power-sharing with Blacks as the right course of action for a future political dispensation. Moreover, when De Klerk conducted political campaigns against the CP in the Transvaal in the 1980s, he came to realize that the conventional disposition of Treurnicht's conservative faction was based not on any degree of identity but rather on straightforward racism. Henceforward thus De Klerk was increasingly estranged from the overtly conservative constituents within the NP. In addition, after becoming Transvaal leader of the NP, De Klerk had become involved in Chris Heunis' process of constitutional policy formulation, and for the first time De Klerk was brought face to face with the acute problems of accommodating the Black majority within the existing political structures. In this way De Klerk was exposed to reformist thinking within the NP whilst grappling with the exigencies of a failed ideology, and after he was elected as leader of the NP in 1989 De Klerk concluded that Heunis' models were not feasible. Continued coercion, De Klerk was convinced, was not the answer. Instead, only a truly new-fangled political strategy would ensure stability and safeguard Afrikaner survival.¹⁵⁶

De Klerk was convinced that the perpetuation of White domination was increasingly rendered untenable by Blacks' capacity to resist or undermine the apartheid apparatus in proportion to the

¹⁵⁶ Quotation taken from Last of the line (interview with FW de Klerk), in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number six, 1989, p. 25. See also H Giliomee, Democratization in South Africa, in *Political Science Quarterly*, volume 110, number 1, 1995, pp. 87-88; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 402-403; A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 94-99.

proliferation of their numbers, skills base and political power. He understood that White South Africa was set to endure only increasing hardship and isolation in the absence of a political settlement, and that the consequences of striking a bargain with the Black majority would be infinitely more beneficial now than in ten years time. Moreover, De Klerk hoped, to sanction a political rapprochement now would afford the NP to negotiate from some position of strength – as opposed to with its back firmly against the wall at some time in the future – and would thus allow it to attain guarantees for the adequate protection of the rights of the White minority in a multi-racial democracy. To maintain the support of the White electorate, De Klerk would portray the entire process as one of controlled and calculated transformation. This assessment was clearly elucidated by De Klerk in 1990 when he stated that “We have not waited until the position of power dominance turned against us before we decided to negotiate a peaceful settlement. The initiative is in our hands. We have the means to ensure that the process develops peacefully and in an orderly way.”¹⁵⁷

The outgoing governor of the South African Reserve Bank, Gerhard de Kock, acknowledged in 1989 that South Africa’s economic situation would never be adequately resolved without fundamental political change. The interplay between economic sanctions, trade restrictions, and disinvestment exacerbated South Africa’s worst economic crisis in its history, and De Klerk knew that without meaningful political change this deplorable economic situation could only deteriorate. De Klerk’s positive perception on the viability of negotiations was also significantly enhanced by the transformation of the hitherto strident international climate. The decline and ultimate collapse of communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe – combined with the conclusion of South Africa’s involvement in the conflict in Angola and therewith the departure of the opposing Cuban troops – largely removed the decisive justification for militant action against the internal and regional detractors of apartheid, and De Klerk was very conscious of the window of opportunity that this facilitated. The Soviet Union clearly indicated that it favoured a peaceful settlement in South Africa, and De Klerk was convinced that the bargaining position of the NP would be much improved when negotiating with an ANC delegation bereft of the support of the USSR.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Quotation and content taken from H Giliomee, *Broedertwis: intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the transition from apartheid*, in *African Affairs* (1992), 91, pp. 356-358. See also H Giliomee, *Democratization in South Africa*, in *Political Science Quarterly*, volume 110, number 1, 1995, pp. 87-88, 94-95.

¹⁵⁸ C Nel, *Countdown*, in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number six, 1989, p. 18; S Friedman and M Narsoo, *A new mood in Moscow: Soviet attitudes to South Africa*, pp. 3-4; A Habib, D Pillay and A Desai, *South Africa and the global order: the structural conditioning of a transition to democracy*, in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 16, 1, 1998, pp. 102-104.

After his election as State President, thus, De Klerk acted on his volition to engineer a democratic settlement in South Africa. In this regard De Klerk endeavoured to normalise the role played by the security forces, and therefore PW Botha's celebrated national security management system was abolished in November 1989. Mandatory White military service was also halved, and the military budget subsequently reduced. Furthermore, De Klerk restored the Cabinet to its position as the central forum for decision-making in the executive. Shortly after becoming State President De Klerk also made state visits to the Ivory Coast and Mozambique, and both Presidents Felix Houphouet-Boigny and Joachim Chissano received him warmly and encouraged him to lead South Africa out of its regional and international isolation by abolishing the last vestiges of apartheid. The new president's constructive inclinations were underscored when he gave permission for a protest march into the city of Cape Town in September 1989. In sanctioning the march – led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Reverend Allan Boesak – De Klerk attempted to indicate his proclivity to launch the democratic transformation process that he was determined to see through. As a harbinger of his future intentions, De Klerk announced the release of ANC stalwart Walter Sisulu and the last remaining political prisoners – bar Nelson Mandela – on 15 October. Yet few anticipated the full extent of the bombshell De Klerk would unleash with his opening of parliament speech on 2 February 1990.¹⁵⁹

De Klerk spent much of his December holiday in 1989 contemplating the speech. "The key decision," De Klerk wrote afterwards, "I had to take for myself was to make a paradigm shift...I realized that we would have little chance of success in the coming negotiations if we did not grasp the initiative right at the beginning and convince the important players that we were not negotiating under pressure, but from the strength of our convictions." After consulting a number of ministers, De Klerk eventually tabled the key concepts of the speech to the Cabinet on 31 January. Eventually, late on the evening of 1 February De Klerk finalised the speech. "I awoke on the morning of 2 February with a sense of destiny," De Klerk wrote. "I knew that my speech would usher in a new era." Thus with the attention of the world focused on South Africa amid intense media speculation, De Klerk ascended the podium in parliament and announced the release of Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the SACP, and the suspension of the state of emergency, which had been in force since 1986.¹⁶⁰ The journalist Allister Sparks was one of roughly 200 reporters that had assembled in a briefing room adjoining

¹⁵⁹ D Geldenhuys and H Kotzé, FW de Klerk: a study in political leadership, in *Politikon*, volume 19, number 1, pp. 24-25; D O'Meara, *Forty lost years*, pp. 402-403; A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 100-102; FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 152-160.

¹⁶⁰ Quotation and content taken from FW de Klerk, *The last trek*, pp. 162-166.

parliament 30 minutes before De Klerk was scheduled to deliver his speech. Finally, after the doors were locked and the reporters were told that they were not permitted to leave until De Klerk had finished speaking, the reporters were handed copies of the text of De Klerk's speech. "A hush settled over the room," Sparks wrote, "then a rising buzz as we read the text before watching De Klerk on closed-circuit television. I recall my own astonishment as I flipped through the pages. 'My God, he's done it all,' I murmured to my *Washington Post* colleague, David Ottaway. My first thought was – and still is – that De Klerk didn't appreciate the full implications of what he was doing."¹⁶¹

Indeed, De Klerk might not have fully comprehended the significance of his actions. His speech effectively marked the end of more than four decades in which an overbearing political balance of power had been harnessed to the political dogma of apartheid. For more than four decades the policies enforced by the government in South Africa had been borne largely of the political considerations that underlay White minority rule. The exigencies of underlying economic antecedents had been judged as subordinate to the requirements of political considerations, and hence the undue concentration afforded to increasingly obsolete and detrimental political mandates had produced an economic state of affairs in South Africa that desperately required the abrogation of apartheid and White minority rule. The structural deficiencies and expansive requirements inherent in apartheid had in fact produced a disfunctional economy, and thus the period of intensive negotiations that would follow De Klerk's speech would witness the gradual introduction of an economic balance of power in South Africa, in which political considerations would be considered inferior to economic concerns. While the stated objectives of apartheid to enhance the economic, social and cultural standing of Afrikaners had largely been achieved as early as the 1960s, it had required a considerably longer time for the Afrikaner elite to free itself from the ideological, emotional and dogmatic entrapments of apartheid. A purposeful shift from a political to an economic balance of power – with the ruling elite recognising the folly of maintaining a preference for political rather than economic priorities – had achieved this. For De Klerk it was simply a matter of 'practical politics,' yet for decades before his election as State President, NP politicians had operated under the dictates of idealistic and ideological politics, largely shunning the practical economic implications of their policies. De Klerk realised the practical deficiency and fatal implications of maintaining this political balance of power, and thus by abrogating the political strongholds of White supremacy he initiated an economic balance of

¹⁶¹ Quotation and content taken from A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, p. 107.

power in which the requirements of economic growth and development would progressively surpass all purely political deliberation.

Corresponding shifts of power:

Fomenting linkage between the ANC and the South African government

“As a revolutionary movement, it is however our task and responsibility that we should, at all times, keep the initiative in our hands, particularly with regard to strategic questions. The issue facing us is how to keep the initiative in our hands on this strategic matter of negotiations. What positions should we elaborate to ensure that it is our opponent who is forced to respond to us and not the other way round? Clearly, as a revolutionary movement, we cannot afford to tail behind the regime and allow ourselves to fall into a defensive posture, with the regime maintaining the offensive.”¹⁶²

- ANC discussion paper on the issue of negotiations, 16 June 1989.

In search of an exploratory engagement

Early on the evening of 12 September 1989, two South African National Intelligence Service (NIS) agents, Mike Louw and Maritz Spaarwater, checked into the Palace Hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland. After an extensive period of considerable clandestine arrangements, a direct meeting had been arranged between representatives of the South African government and the exiled ANC. After two and a half years of talks with the jailed Nelson Mandela and indirect encounters with representatives of the ANC, the government had decided to make direct contact with the exiled ANC so as to sound them out on their willingness to negotiate. Shortly after 8 PM the ANC delegation, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, arrived at the Palace Hotel and proceeded to the hotel room of the government agents. When the ANC delegation came down the passage, talking, the government agents showed themselves, and Thabo Mbeki forthwith walked into their hotel room and exclaimed emphatically, “Well here we are, bloody terrorists and for all you know fucking communists as well.” Mbeki’s light-hearted comment broke the ice, and immediately set the government agents at ease. Thus the ensuing talks commenced auspiciously, and continued until 3 AM the following morning. Crucially, when Louw and Spaarwater flew home the next morning they had a decisive message to convey to the South African government: the ANC was willing to talk. Hence Louw and Spaarwater reported back to new State President De Klerk, and after being at first suspicious, De Klerk before long became relaxed and told the agents to tell him all about their historic meeting with the ANC. “From that moment on,” Louw thought, “he took the ball and ran with it.”¹⁶³

¹⁶² Discussion paper on the issue of negotiations, June 16th, 1989.

¹⁶³ Quotations and content taken from A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 109-114.

When the ANC was banned in South Africa in 1960, HW van der Merwe, later to be appointed director of the Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town, was a student at the University of California in Los Angeles. On his return by sea to South Africa in 1963, his ship docked in Southampton and consequently Van der Merwe spent ten days in London. “In response to a compelling urge” Van der Merwe decided to visit both the South African embassy and the offices of the ANC, where he was received “with great suspicion by two black men frowning behind their desks” at him. “They must have been wondering,” Van der Merwe wrote, “about my motive but I cannot recall any motive, vision, expectation or ambition in making this visit except the wish to do something about the conflict (in South Africa).” Undeterred, Van der Merwe proceeded to become involved in various anti-apartheid actions in the coming decades, and in the process built up “warm personal relations” with several ANC leaders. He also met regularly with senior officials of the South African embassy in London, and constantly tried to seek out someone who might want to utilize his favourable contacts with the ANC. On one occasion he managed to confer with Rusty Evans, the “second in command” at the embassy, but when Van der Merwe told Evans that he was planning to meet with representatives of the ANC on the selfsame day, Evans was perturbed and gave Van der Merwe a stack of government propaganda. In response Van der Merwe exclaimed, “Well, if this is your view it is so much more important for me to visit them because you will never do it.” At this Evans looked slightly embarrassed, and suddenly requested of Van der Merwe to return to him after his meeting with the ANC. The next day, thus, Van der Merwe was back at the South African embassy, and as he entered ‘the second in command’s’ office Evans “came forward with a big smile and an outstretched hand and said, ‘Please tell me about our friends.’” To Van der Merwe this was progress.¹⁶⁴

While overt developments were fashioning a decisive shift in the balance of White political power that would eventually enforce gradual conformity to the dictates and implications of negotiations, a subtle albeit likewise decisive shift in the balance of power was transpiring within the dispersed assemblage of the ANC. Whereas the leaders of the organisation consistently claimed that the ANC had never ceased to espouse the virtues of negotiations with the government, by the 1960s and 1970s the eminence of negotiations as a viable option to achieve the abolition of apartheid had largely withered within the modus operandi considerations of the organisation. With sustained impetus from the jailed Mandela, however, and with the ANC by no means being impervious to the altered internal and external circumstances confronting the South

¹⁶⁴ Quotations and content taken from HW van der Merwe, Peacemaking in South Africa. A life in conflict resolution, pp. 139-140.

African polity, the inevitability of engaging in negotiations likewise dawned on the ANC and therewith its numerous affiliates. While the strategical shift in power within the ANC was no doubt largely a subsidiary to the overbearing shift in power from the forceful upholding of political considerations to the embracing of the pre-eminence of economic concerns, the tactical reappraisal within the ANC – as an adjunct of the pre-eminent power shift – remains an integral component of a comprehensive understanding of the transition to democracy in South Africa. Underlying the shift in power within the ANC, however, is a multifarious sequence of covert and overt events that collectively stimulated and facilitated the elevated status and eventual predominance of negotiations. Consequentially, of course, majority rule would ensue within the confines of the perpetuation of the economic balance of power. Thus in a descriptive fashion this chapter will chronicle the succession of events that were antecedent to and consequential of the crucial strategical shift in the balance of power within the ANC.

Since the advent of the 1980s, a heightened conflict had emerged in South Africa that was characterised by armed attacks by *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) and increased internal resistance mobilisation orchestrated by the UDF, concomitant to a more comprehensive and more brutal security response by the South African government. PW Botha's grand strategical outlook and its repressive corollaries, subsequently accompanied by the promulgation of the tri-cameral parliament in 1984 and the propulsion of the ill-fated Black local authorities, only exacerbated an increasingly volatile state of violence and political and economic turmoil. Hence the government found itself progressively seeking alternatives to the impasse. Ostensibly to terminate the powerful influence Nelson Mandela exerted on the stream of young Black activists passing through Robben Island, the government in 1982 transferred Mandela and three other interned ANC leaders – Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba and Andrew Mlangeni – to the Pollsmoor maximum security prison located in the suburb of Tokai, a few miles southeast of Cape Town. The government was in fact seeking to coax Mandela into compromising on his political position and transferred him to Pollsmoor in order to make him more accessible to their discreet approaches. Although initially angered by their sudden relocation, at Pollsmoor Mandela and his three fellow new arrivals (shortly to be joined also by Ahmed Kathrada and Patrick Maqubela) were placed in a spacious and admirably furnished communal cell on the third floor of the prison building, and as political prisoners were not subject to the normal strict prison regulations and were allotted improved food rations compared to what they had received for the preceding seventeen years on Robben Island. The political prisoners were now also afforded unprecedented access to various local and international newspapers and magazines, and hence Mandela was

afterwards to write that “at Pollsmoor, we were more connected to outside events. We were aware that the struggle was intensifying, and that the efforts of the enemy were similarly increasing.”¹⁶⁵

As the struggle intensified, moreover, the government made numerous conditional offers to release Mandela in an attempt to marginalize him. In what he thought would be a master stroke, PW Botha ignored the advice of his Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons Kobie Coetzee and his Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange, and proceeded in January 1985 to offer to release Mandela if he would unconditionally reject violence as a political instrument. Unsurprisingly, in a statement read out by his daughter Zindzi at a political rally in Soweto, Mandela rejected Botha’s offer and instead called on the State President to reject violence on his own behalf. “Let Botha show,” the statement read, “that he is different to Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd. Let him renounce violence. Let him say that he will dismantle apartheid...Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts...I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated.”¹⁶⁶

With the unprecedented levels of violence engendered by the September 1984 urban uprising providing an ominous incitement, Mandela at the time addressed a letter to Kobie Coetzee with the intention of setting up a meeting to discuss negotiations between the ANC and the government, but received no reply. When in 1985 Mandela was taken up in Volks Hospital in Cape Town to receive surgery for an enlarged prostate gland, however, Coetzee abruptly turned up at the hospital. “Some intuition,” Coetzee later explained, “told me I shouldn’t see Mr. Mandela behind bars...Now I have known him only as a free man, not as a prisoner, and I wanted that to remain in his mind as well.” Although politics was not discussed, the impromptu meeting proceeded amicably, and Coetzee was much impressed by Mandela’s professional and cordial demeanour. To Mandela, however, it was clear that Coetzee had come to sound him out on his willingness to negotiate and that, by implication, the government was belatedly appreciating the reality that some sort of agreement with the ANC was inevitable.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Quotation taken from N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, p. 617. For content see also JM Rantete, The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa, pp. 128-129; J Gregory (with B Graham), Goodbye Bafana. Nelson Mandela, my prisoner, my friend, pp. 197-213.

¹⁶⁶ Quotation taken from N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, pp. 622-623. For content see A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 49-51.

¹⁶⁷ Quotations and content taken from A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 23-25. For content see also N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, pp. 624-625; J Gregory (with B Graham), Goodbye Bafana, pp. 259-260.

Upon his return to Pollsmoor, Mandela was inexplicably isolated from his fellow ANC prisoners and placed in a cell on the ground floor of the prison. Mandela was discontented to be removed from his colleagues on the third floor, and was now subjected to incessant abuse from the regular prisoners who saw him walking in the courtyard, but over the next few weeks he came to a self-acclaimed realisation about his new circumstances. “The change,” he decided,

“was not a liability but an opportunity...my solitude gave me a certain liberty, and I resolved to use it to do something I had been pondering for a long time: begin discussions with the government. I had concluded that the time had come when the struggle could best be pushed forward through negotiations. If we did not start a dialogue soon, both sides would soon be plunged into a dark night of oppression, violence and war. My solitude would give me an opportunity to take the first steps in that direction, without the kind of scrutiny that might destroy such effort.”

In a revelation that would be mirrored by that experienced by FW de Klerk roughly four years later, Mandela realised that “the enemy was strong and resolute. Yet even with all their bombers and tanks, they must have sensed they were on the wrong side of history. We had right on our side, but not yet might. It was clear to me that a military victory was a distant if not impossible dream...It was time to talk.” Resigning himself to at first keep his resolve completely to himself, Mandela sat down to write a letter to Coetzee.¹⁶⁸

Coetzee, however, did not reply to Mandela’s letter, and a second letter could likewise elicit no response from the Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons. Notwithstanding his taciturn behaviour, Coetzee himself had experienced a fair degree of cajoling to fully utilise the unique opportunity implicit in Mandela’s advances. Piet de Waal, an old student friend of Coetzee from their time together at the University of the Orange Free State, had become a lawyer and moved to the small Free State farming town of Brandfort. It was to this very town in 1977 that Jimmy Kruger, the then Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons, banished Winnie Mandela, the wife of Nelson Mandela, after her nonconformity was considered too boisterous by the government in the wake of the Soweto riots of 1976. De Waal’s family became familiar with Winnie Mandela, and since De Waal was the only lawyer in town, he was obliged to undertake her legal concerns. Surmounting his initial qualms about being Winnie Mandela’s legal representative, De Waal became well acquainted with his client, and later stated that “It began at a professional level, but I also got to know her as a person. I learned quite a few things from knowing her, and I came to understand her point of view.” After Coetzee was appointed Minister in 1980, De Waal launched

¹⁶⁸ Quotations and content taken from N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, pp. 625-628. For content see also J Gregory (with B Graham), Goodbye Bafana, pp. 263-267.

a cautious petition with his old friend to lift the ban on Winnie Mandela, and also to engage in negotiation with Nelson Mandela and to release him from prison. Coetzee was later to state that “You could say that’s where the whole process started. I trusted Piet. What struck me particularly is that Piet de Waal and his family could break down the barriers of prejudice and bias in a little place like Brandfort. That told me something indeed.”¹⁶⁹

Another person who became well acquainted with Winnie Mandela while she was confined to Brandfort was HW van der Merwe. “We knew,” Van der Merwe explained, “that she must be a very lonely person, forced as she was to live with people with whom she had so little in common.” Van der Merwe and his wife eventually managed to visit Winnie Mandela in 1982, and immediately a congenial bond was established between them. Regular visits followed, and in 1983 Winnie Mandela told Van der Merwe that she had told her husband about him, and consequently Nelson Mandela wanted Van der Merwe to visit him in prison. Eventually, in July 1984 Van der Merwe was able to gain permission for a forty-minute visit on 8 October. Not long before meeting with Nelson Mandela, Van der Merwe was introduced to Gertrude Shope, a member of the ANC’s National Executive Committee. Shope invited Van der Merwe to visit the ANC’s headquarters in Lusaka, and he took up the offer in August of that year when he went to attend a meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Zambia. In Lusaka Van der Merwe conferred “with great openness and warmth” with Alfred Nzo, the Secretary-General of the ANC, and with Thabo Mbeki, the head of the ANC’s Department of Information and Publicity. Van der Merwe assured his hosts that many senior leaders in South Africa had a genuine desire to come to terms with the ANC, and in reply Nzo and Mbeki were able to confirm what Van der Merwe thought he knew already: the ANC wanted a settlement through negotiations in South Africa. When Van der Merwe proceeded to meet with Nelson Mandela at Pollsmoor in October 1984, he was able to pass greetings to Mandela from Nzo and Mbeki, much to the delight of Mandela. Shortly after his visit to Mandela, Van der Merwe was summoned by Minister Coetzee, and the Minister requested Van der Merwe to act as an intermediary between himself and Nelson Mandela. Van der Merwe was more than willing to oblige, and handed Coetzee the confidential report of his visit to Mandela, whereupon the Minister assured Van der Merwe that “You will hear from me sooner than you think.” Yet Van der Merwe never heard from Coetzee again, and assumed that the Minister must have been reprimanded by PW Botha. Van der Merwe, however, was undeterred and remained steadfast in his determination to foment dialogue and understanding between the government and the ANC. During the following two years, moreover, more than two

¹⁶⁹ Quotations and content taken from A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 15-20.

dozen delegations (of which some were facilitated by Van der Merwe) of White and Black South African businessmen, academics, theologians, and journalists made the journey to Lusaka to confer with the ANC.¹⁷⁰

One such delegation to the ANC in Lusaka (in which Van der Merwe was not involved) transpired in September 1985, and consisted mainly of White businessmen of the Anglo American Corporation. With the businessmen's trek to Lusaka a dynamic relationship was born between South Africa's predominantly White business community and the ANC. As the end of the political balance of power inexorably approached in South Africa, the maturing relationship between business leaders and the ANC would become crucial as the ANC would increasingly shun the implementation of radical outcomes in South Africa. While the ascendancy of political paradigms prevalent in the 1980s was still very much in force in 1985, after 1990 the business community would be instrumental in the compulsion that facilitated the ANC's eventual embrace of the economic balance of power in South Africa. Tony Bloom, chairman of the Premier Group in South Africa, formed part of the 1985 delegation, and wrote in his meeting notes that "I have no doubt whatsoever that the people we met have an overwhelming desire to come back to South Africa...They love to talk about South Africa in detail, about parts in South Africa, to remember people in South Africa, places and events." In fact, Bloom continues, "I was surprised (almost overwhelmed) by the cordiality of the meeting...There was a total lack of aggression, animosity or hostility towards us." Bloom, moreover, was surprised by the moderate outlook of his hosts: "I was struck by the absence of traditional Marxist-Leninist jargon and dogma. Even in the discussion on nationalization of industry, the concepts could easily have fitted into a socialist rather than Marxist framework...It was difficult to view the group as hardline Marxists or bloodthirsty terrorists who were interested in reducing South Africa to anarchy and seizing power, with a hatred of Whites." Significantly, Bloom concluded auspiciously that

"I believe that they are people with whom serious negotiation can be undertaken and with whom a certain amount of common ground could be found. Clearly there are fixed positions on either side that are diametrically opposed to each other, but this is the situation in many negotiations. I believe there could well be room for compromise and I would unhesitatingly support any initiative to get the South African Government and ANC into contact with each other."¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Quotations taken from HW van der Merwe, *Peacemaking in South Africa*, pp. 111, 141, 121 (in order). For content see *Ibid.*, pp. 111-121, 140-143, 149-150.

¹⁷¹ Quotations and content taken from The Editor, A moment in history, in *Leadership SA*, Volume 4, Number three, 1985, pp. 25-30. Brackets inserted by Tony Bloom.

Preludes to such negotiations were in fact at this time taking place between the government and the ANC, yet the process was in danger of stalling with Coetzee's noncommittal withdrawal following Mandela's overtures. After his first impromptu meeting with Coetzee at the Volks hospital, Mandela had asked to see his legal advisor, and hence George Bizos also made a visit to the hospital. Mandela was concerned that news of his potential dealings with Coetzee might reach the ANC in exile and could be construed as irresponsible and independent conduct on his part, and hence he requested Bizos to undertake a journey to Lusaka to assure the ANC leaders that nothing would transpire without their concurrence. Bizos agreed, but subsequently decided to inform Coetzee of the purpose of his journey to Lusaka in order, firstly, to placate the authorities' suspicions regarding his dubious excursion, and secondly, to address his own suspicions of the government's intentions in negotiating with Mandela. Following certain covert arrangements, Bizos and Coetzee eventually met aboard an aircraft flying between Cape Town and Johannesburg, and Bizos was at pains to impress on Coetzee Mandela's integrity and unwavering loyalty to the ANC. Coetzee, Bizos claimed afterwards, "showed a very keen interest, and the whole discussion seemed to be an awakening for him." A few days later Bizos conferred with Oliver Tambo in a room in the Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka, and in an animated discussion Bizos assured Tambo – who had indeed been concerned that Mandela might be tricked by the state into striking a compromise – of Mandela's enduring loyalty and control of the situation. After a second journey to meet with Tambo in Lusaka in February 1986 – by which time Tambo had been able to discuss the matter with a small inner circle of ANC leaders – Bizos was assured of the ANC's full confidence in Mandela and was able to deliver an encouraging message to his client at Pollsmoor. In addition, upon his return Bizos also sought out Minister Coetzee, and accompanied by his long-standing professional colleague Judge Johann Kriegler, Bizos "reported to him what had gone on between Tambo and myself and between Mandela and myself," and assured him that "there was a serious desire to start talking to the government. I also told him – and I don't know how pleased he was to hear this – that there were no differences between Mandela and the outsiders, and that, whatever agreements were reached, the ANC in exile would support Mandela."¹⁷²

If proceedings had hitherto advanced sluggishly, the development of the embryonic talks between Mandela and the government was ironically to be precipitated by the fallout generated by PW Botha's contemptuous snubbing of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), a delegation tasked by the

¹⁷² Quotations and content taken from A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 26-31. For content see also DT McKinley, The ANC and the liberation struggle. A critical political biography, pp. 86-87.

British Commonwealth meeting in October 1985 in Nassau to visit South Africa to investigate whether sanctions were the optimal means to engineer an end to apartheid. After arriving in South Africa in early 1986, the EPG visited Mandela at Pollsmoor, and Mandela utilized the meeting – which was attended briefly by Minister Coetzee and Commissioner of Prisons Lieutenant General WH Willemse – to raise issues of potential negotiation between the government and the ANC before Coetzee and Willemse took their leave. In May, after the EPG had visited the ANC in Lusaka and had also held talks with government representatives in Pretoria, the EPG was scheduled to meet with Mandela once more. On the day before this meeting was scheduled to occur, however, the South African government authorized the South African Defence Force (SADF) to launch air and commando raids against ANC targets in a number of neighbouring African states. Incensed by this callous misdemeanour, the EPG abruptly left South Africa, leaving Mandela despondent and frustrated, yet steadfast. “In every outward way,” Mandela later wrote, “the time seemed inauspicious for negotiations. But often, the most discouraging moments are precisely the time to launch an initiative.”¹⁷³

In accordance with his resolve, Mandela wrote a short letter to General Willemse, and within days Willemse flew down from Pretoria to Pollsmoor. In response to Mandela’s request to meet with the Minister of Justice, Willemse mentioned that by chance the Minister was in Cape Town, and that a meeting could perhaps be arranged. Willemse forthwith phoned Minister Coetzee, and after a short telephonic discussion Willemse turned to Mandela and said, “The minister said, ‘Bring him round.’” Within minutes Mandela was whisked off to Savername, the Minister’s official residence in Cape Town, and upon arrival he was greeted “warmly” by Coetzee, whereupon Mandela and the Minister spent three hours in conversation. Mandela was struck by Coetzee’s “sophistication and willingness to listen,” and after answering the Minister’s several “knowledgeable and relevant” questions, Mandela informed Coetzee that the way forward was for him (Mandela) to meet with the State President and the Foreign Minister. After Coetzee had taken note of Mandela’s requests, the two shook hands and Mandela was returned to his cell. For Mandela the excursion to Coetzee’s residence was a substantial breakthrough: “I was greatly encouraged. I sensed the government was anxious to overcome the impasse in the country, that they were now convinced they had to depart from their old positions. In ghostly outline, I saw the beginnings of a compromise.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Quotation and content taken from N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, pp. 628-631.

¹⁷⁴ Quotations and content taken from Ibid., pp. 631-632.

Although another lull ensued after Mandela's auspicious excursion to Coetzee's residence, Mandela could not help but notice the significance of the increased exposure he was allowed to experience. In late 1986 Coetzee instructed Mandela's warders to take their prisoner on a number of discreet visits around the countryside – wherever Mandela wanted to go. Thus in the following months Mandela was taken by several warders to various attractive locations in and around Cape Town and even as far afield as Langebaan, Laingsburg and Ceres, while one warder even took him to meet his family. On one occasion Mandela was taken for a drive along Chapman's Peak Drive – the road which follows the coastline south from Cape Town to Cape Point – by James Gregory, a warder that guarded Mandela for no fewer than twenty-four years in three different prisons and with whom Mandela had developed an amicable relationship. For not the first time on this particular day Mandela at a certain interval needed a toilet, and Gregory therefore drove higher up the coastal road to find a deserted picnic pull-in. "As he came out of the bushes," Gregory later wrote, "zipping up his trousers, I smiled. 'You know, Nelson,' Gregory jokingly told Mandela, "this is becoming a habit. You're urinating all over South Africa. Where next?"¹⁷⁵

Shortly after Mandela's sequence of amiable excursions, the conduit of negotiation with Kobie Coetzee was accordingly reopened. Following several additional private meetings with the Justice Minister at his residence, Mandela was told that the government intended to establish a committee of senior officials as a working group to engage in negotiations with him, and that the committee would consist of Minister Coetzee (who would act as chairperson), General Willemse, Fanie van der Merwe (Director General of the Prisons Department), and Niël Barnard (the head of the National Intelligence Service). In spite of his disinclination to accede to the presence in the discussions of a person intimately involved with the security establishment as was Barnard, Mandela assented to his involvement in the committee so as not to alienate State President Botha, who had full knowledge of the impending proceedings. The first formal meeting of the working group took place in May 1988, and over the coming months the government was to schedule intermittent sessions, while Mandela was also occasionally to request meetings. Discovering his embryonic negotiation counterparts to be largely ignorant of the ANC, Mandela found reason to initiate the discussions with a thorough briefing on the history and *raison d'être* of the organisation he was representing. The ANC's impulsion to maintain the armed struggle and its alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) soon dominated the negotiations, however, and for months Mandela was at pains to impress on his sceptical Afrikaner counterparts that the armed struggle was a legitimate means of self-defence in response to the state, who as the

¹⁷⁵ Quotation and content taken from J Gregory (with B Graham), *Goodbye Bafana*, pp. 277-282.

oppressor actually dictated the form of the struggle while the oppressed can only respond in kind. Mandela was hard pressed to significantly infringe on his negotiating partners' intransigent perceptions of the unmitigated malevolence of the SACP, and likewise spent a considerable period of time attempting to mollify their acute concerns regarding the ANC's outlook on nationalisation and majority rule and the rights of minorities. Nonetheless, eventually the meetings seemed to have borne fruit when Mandela was informed in the winter of 1988 that State President Botha intended to meet with him before the end of August.¹⁷⁶

The introduction of this more structured negotiating configuration by PW Botha's normally insular government was indeed a significant indication of the decisive impetus of the inexorably changing balance of power. That the government was at all willing to consider meeting officially – albeit covertly – with Mandela was tantamount to a significant retreat from the obdurate stance of previous years. It was, in fact, the first authoritative recognition by the government that the overbearing balance of power was shifting, and implicit in this was the underlying acknowledgement that the forced pre-eminence of the government's hoary political perceptions could not possibly be perpetuated in a vastly changing environment. The government's nascent conciliatory moves were the upshot of an overbearing recognition that the political balance of power – at least in its current form – simply had to be abolished. While the government would remain reluctant to jettison all its political predilections (and would remain recalcitrant in this regard until well into the period of negotiations that ensued after 1990), the option of negotiating with the ANC seemed to give the government the opportunity of yielding to the obvious obsolescence of the political balance of power by abolishing the loathsome aspects of apartheid. Yet since the government felt certain to occupy a position of strength in the ensuing negotiations, it felt emboldened to claim the perpetuation of certain residual guarantees of the political balance of power in the post-apartheid dispensation. These retrograde political demands, however, as well as the political interventions envisaged by the ANC, would be enveloped by the ultimate predominance of the economic balance of power once the political balance of power was unequivocally abolished. Thus while PW Botha was progressively influenced to an unprecedented extent by the changing impulsion of proceedings, his nominal chief adversary Oliver Tambo was overtaken by events, albeit temporarily.

Notwithstanding George Bizos' earlier assurances, shortly before Mandela started meeting with the working group, Oliver Tambo smuggled a note to his imprisoned colleague expressing his

¹⁷⁶ AH Marais, Negotiations for a democratic South Africa, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 1-3; N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 636-644.

concerns as to what exactly Mandela was discussing with the government. Apprehensive at the dubious confidentiality of the correspondence, Mandela responded by asserting simply that the discussions focused only on facilitating a meeting between the government and the National Executive Committee of the ANC, and while indicating that he believed the time had come for such talks, Mandela assured his geographically distant colleague that the position of the ANC would not be compromised in any way. As recently as 1985 Tambo had rejected the proposition of negotiations out of hand, maintaining that anything but the immediate abolition of apartheid was utterly non-negotiable. In 1986 Tambo had told the World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa – held at UNESCO House in Paris on 16 June – that the “masses, and their organisation, the ANC, would have dearly loved to liberate our country from a racist tyranny by peaceful means, including negotiations. Indeed, over many years, we tried again and again to achieve this result, but to no avail.”¹⁷⁷

A 1987 document published by the ANC entitled *Statement of the National Executive of the African National Congress on the question of negotiations* likewise disparaged the prospects for negotiations, and stated categorically that

“the Botha regime has neither the desire nor the intention to engage in any meaningful negotiations. On the contrary, everything the regime does is directed at the destruction of the national liberation movement, the suppression of the democratic movement and the entrenchment and perpetuation of the apartheid system of White minority domination...The racists are out to terrorise our people into submission, crush their democratic organisations and force us to surrender.”

Nevertheless, the document proceeded to reiterate that

“the ANC has never been opposed to a negotiated settlement of the South African question. On various occasions in the past we have, in vain, called on the apartheid regime to talk to the genuine leaders of the people. Once more, we would like to reaffirm that the ANC and the masses of our people as a whole are ready and willing (sic) to enter into genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy.”

Significantly, the document corroborated the negotiating standpoints that were shortly to be advanced by Mandela in his nascent negotiations with the government. Echoing Mandela’s

¹⁷⁷ N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 638-639; I Phillips, Negotiation and armed struggle in contemporary South Africa, in *Transformation* 6, 1988, pp. 46-47. Quotation taken from O Tambo, Victory is within our grasp, in ES Reddy (ed.), *Oliver Tambo. Apartheid and the international community. Addresses to United Nations Committees and Conferences*, p. 133.

outlook on the maintained relevance of the armed struggle, the document stated that “We reject unequivocally the cynical demand of the Pretoria regime that we should unilaterally abandon or suspend the armed struggle. The source of violence in our country is the apartheid system. It is that violence which must end.” Moreover, in regard to the ANC’s sustained alliance with the SACP, the document maintained that “we reject all efforts to dictate to us who our allies should or should not be, and how our membership should be composed. Specifically, we will not bow down to pressures intended to drive a wedge between the ANC and the South African Communist Party, a tried and tested ally in the struggle for a democratic South Africa.”¹⁷⁸

The 1987 ANC document on negotiations appeared against the background of the materialisation of a perceptible recognition on the part of the ANC that the vaunted armed struggle would not encompass the toppling of the South African government. By the beginning of 1987 no fewer than 507 trained MK combatants had been neutralized in South Africa, with 379 of these having been arrested and 128 killed. In addition, the South African police had by this time discovered and confiscated more than 3000 hand grenades, 150 limpet mines, 31 RPG-7 rocket launchers and 378 AK-74 rifles. In a document circulated to national command centres in October 1986 the ANC acknowledged these and other failures, stating that “At the beginning of the year...we set out the task that we had to achieve in the area of armed struggle. Nine months on, it is clear that, despite all our efforts, we have not come anywhere near the achievement of the objectives we set ourselves.” Bemoaning the frailty of the underground revolutionary structures inside South Africa and also the serious reversals suffered by the ANC in Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Botswana, the document reflected that “This cannot be but a matter of serious concern because it means that the enemy has gained ground at our expense. We have been forced to withdraw many people, dismantle machinery and rethink our plans and programmes.” By 1987, therefore, with the palpable limitations imposed on the armed struggle becoming painfully apparent, the proposition of negotiations with the South African state was gradually gaining serious scrutiny within the ANC as a meaningful conduit to attaining a transfer of power in South Africa.¹⁷⁹

Concurrent with the internal dynamics prevalent within the ANC regarding the increased relevance of negotiations, the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, and southern African

¹⁷⁸ Statement of the National Executive of the African National Congress on the question on negotiations, 9 October 1987. See also M Swilling and F van Zyl Slabbert, *Waiting for a negotiated settlement: South Africans in a changing world*, in *Africa Insight*, volume 19, number 3, 1989, pp. 140-141; M Phillips and C Coleman, *Another kind of war: Strategies for transition in the era of negotiation*, in *Transformation* 9, 1989, pp. 21-24.

¹⁷⁹ Quotations and content taken from JM Rantete, The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa, pp. 125-128.

states sympathetic to the ANC were all exerting pressure on the ANC to extend serious consideration to the prospects of negotiating with the South African government. In line with Gorbachev's dedication to permeate Soviet foreign policy with a commitment to dialogue, the Soviet Union sought to reduce international tensions and the danger of nuclear proliferation through the promotion of negotiations, and hence this outlook was also applied to South Africa. Thus while the Soviet Union did not abrogate its military assistance to the ANC it nonetheless exerted considerable pressure on the ANC to negotiate with the South African government. The United States and Britain applied similar pressures on the ANC, and the war-weary southern African states were likewise advocating a negotiated settlement in South Africa. Angola and Mozambique, both smarting from the effects of combating internal insurgent forces sustained by South Africa, actively encouraged the ANC to engage in negotiations.¹⁸⁰

It was obvious thus that the ANC could not spurn the prospects of negotiations and therewith eschew the support of both the global East and West assemblages. More schematic development was therefore devoted within the organisation to augment the advancement of the initiative for negotiations. After the ANC had elucidated its commitment to negotiations with its 1987 landmark document that illustrated the organisation's willingness to confer with the government, the ANC's constitutional committee reiterated the ANC's stance on negotiations with the release in 1988 of the organisation's *Constitutional Guidelines*. Designed to transmute the Freedom Charter from a vision for the future into a constitutional reality, the Guidelines envisaged the establishing of a 'unitary state' with distinct executive, judicial, and legislative branches. In a democratic and non-racial South Africa individual human rights would be guaranteed through a bill of rights, and the state would ensure that the entire economy serve the interest and well being of the population as a whole. Significantly, the Guidelines also confirmed the ANC's acceptance of negotiations as the optimal path to attaining national liberation.¹⁸¹

An ANC *Discussion paper on the issue of negotiations* released in June 1989 further elaborated on the ANC's paradigm on negotiations. Acknowledging the increasing international consensus towards détente and negotiation, the paper maintained that the issue of negotiations in South Africa had arisen because of the "crisis of the apartheid system," which, in turn, was attributed to

¹⁸⁰ M Swilling and F van Zyl Slabbert, *Waiting for a negotiated settlement: South Africans in a changing world*, in *Africa Insight*, volume 19, number 3, 1989, pp. 141-146; JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, pp. 132-135; J Rantete and H Giliomee, *Transition to democracy through transaction?: Bilateral negotiations between the ANC and NP in South Africa*, in *African Affairs*, 91, 1992, pp. 526-527.

¹⁸¹ DT McKinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle*, pp. 90-91.

the advances that had been made by the ANC on various fronts. Thus, the paper concluded, “We must continuously intensify our offensive on all these fronts with the sole aim of transforming South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. At the same time, we must be ready to deal with all consequences of our victories. One of these consequences may be, as has been the case in all the countries of Southern Africa where the liberation movements took up arms, that at a certain point the enemy might decide that it is ready to talk seriously.”¹⁸² In a statement to the Ordinary Congress of the Socialist International in Stockholm on 20 June 1989, moreover, Tambo stated that

“Negotiations are not an end in themselves; they can be a means to the realisation of our objectives, but they must involve the genuine representatives of the South African people and can succeed only when it is possible for all parties to enter into discussions on the basis of equality and with agreement on the objectives to be achieved. The ANC has over decades expressed its preference for a resolution of our country’s problems through these means, but our repeated calls have always been shunned. There can be no viable settlement that falls outside these parameters...”¹⁸³

Thus the subtle strategical transition within the ANC came to fruition, facilitating the organisation’s future constructive engagement with the government after the shift in the principal balance of power had likewise exposed the White assemblage of South Africa to the inexorable predominance of coming to terms with the ANC and therewith adhering to overbearing economic concerns. While the government was progressively counting the economic cost and recognising the irrelevance inherent in the forcible maintenance of apartheid, the ANC’s evident willingness to negotiate was systematically becoming the obvious solution to the impasse. That that linkage between the government and the ANC could be and would be fomented was attributable to the compelling implications of corresponding and undeniable changing balances of power affecting both assemblages. Yet the dictates of political assessments are not always acquiescent to the force of logic, and hence the more pragmatic intuition of FW de Klerk was required to supersede the ultimately blinkered vision of PW Botha. The ANC’s resultant negotiating strategy, on the other hand, was significantly gaining impetus amid widespread international support.

With a delegation led by Alfred Nzo, the ANC proceeded to submit its negotiating position to the OAU conference that took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 21 August 1989. In a comprehensive

¹⁸² Quotations taken from *(ANC) Discussion paper on the issue of negotiations*, 16 June 1989.

¹⁸³ Quotation taken from ANC statements: President Tambo on negotiations, in *Sechaba*, Volume 23, Number 8, August 1989, p. 4.

endorsement of the ANC's standpoint on negotiations, the OAU *Ad hoc* Committee on Southern Africa sanctioned the ANC's framework for negotiation by adopting a draft declaration, subsequently known as the Harare Declaration. Incorporating the fundamental principles of the 1987 ANC document on negotiations and the 1988 ANC Constitutional Guidelines, the Harare Declaration authenticated the ANC's desire for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. After expressing a preference for the attainment of a solution arrived at by peaceful means in South Africa, the Declaration stated that "We believe that a conjecture of circumstances exist which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations." The Declaration thus went on to "encourage the people of SA, as part of their overall struggle, to get together to negotiate an end to the apartheid system and agree on all the measures that are necessary to transform their country into a non-racial democracy." In accordance with the position of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, the Declaration called on the South African government to create a suitable climate for the commencement of negotiations by releasing all political prisoners, lifting all bans and restrictions, removing all troops from the townships, terminating the state of emergency and repealing all racist legislation, and ceasing all political trials and executions. Upon the fulfilment of these conditions the Declaration envisaged for discussions to take place "between the liberation movement and the South African regime to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing to a mutually binding ceasefire." In conclusion the Declaration reiterated the ANC's vision for the establishment of an interim government that would formulate a new constitution and oversee democratic elections.¹⁸⁴

Reflecting the concerted international compulsion for a negotiated settlement in South Africa, and emanating from the recognition within the ANC of the critically dented potential of the armed struggle, the Harare Declaration was the fulfilment of a pragmatic ascendancy in the ANC that advocated the optimal utilisation of negotiations as the most favourable conduit to achieving the time-honoured objectives of the liberation struggle. In an attempt to justify this pragmatic albeit less overtly virulent strategical initiative, negotiations were now presented as a new milieu for struggle in which the power and character of the 'masses' would be no less apparent. Negotiations were now thought of as not superseding armed and mass struggle but rather as complementing them. Thus at an ANC conference held in Lusaka on 18 January 1990, the

¹⁸⁴ Quotations and content taken from Draft Declaration of the OAU *Ad hoc* Committee on Southern Africa on the question of South Africa (Harare Declaration), 21 August 1989, in M Hough and A du Plessis, Selected documents and commentaries on negotiations and constitutional development in the RSA: 1989-1994, pp. 36-43. For content see also JM Rantete, The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa, pp. 148-150; DT McKinley, The ANC and the liberation struggle, pp. 99-100.

organisation proceeded to officially designate the armed struggle as a failure. In a sober assessment, ANC Secretary-General Nzo stated at the conference that “looking at our situation realistically, we must admit we do not have the capacity within our country, in fact, to intensify the armed struggle in any meaningful way.” The Harare Declaration, however, was endorsed by the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) in September 1989, as well as by the United Nations General Assembly in the form of a *Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa*, which was passed on 14 December 1989. In addition, the Harare Declaration was also ratified by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) in South Africa, and the Declaration subsequently gained widespread acceptance as a blueprint for future negotiations with the South African government.¹⁸⁵

In line with the increased prevalence within the ANC of perceptions underscoring the enhanced relevance of negotiations, as early as 1986 the organisation was actively seeking to engage in discussions with multiple contingents of White South Africans. In 1986 two *verligte* Afrikaner academics, Willie Esterhuyse and Sampie Terreblanche, were invited to visit the ANC in Lusaka. When PW Botha was informed of their invitations, however, he cajoled Esterhuyse and Terreblanche into jettisoning their plans to undertake the excursion since he did not want them talking to ‘murderers.’ Nevertheless, within a year both Esterhuyse and Terreblanche would indeed be talking with representatives of the ANC, ironically with PW Botha’s indirect knowledge and approval. When Michael Young – the head of communications and corporate affairs at Consolidated Goldfields, a key British mining house with a significant subsidiary in Johannesburg – met Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki at a meeting between the ANC leaders and leading British businessmen in London, he felt inspired to offer the assistance of British business in fomenting discourse on finding a solution to the South African question. Tambo apparently accepted Young’s offer, and requested Young to endeavour to initiate discussions between the ANC and leading Afrikaners. Thus Young flew to South Africa to seek out potential collaborators, and eventually he was directed to Esterhuyse and Terreblanche. For his part Esterhuyse received Young’s advances enthusiastically, but to his surprise Esterhuyse was soon visited by Niël Barnard, the head of the National Intelligence Service, who had been informed of the initiative. Ironically, Barnard asked Esterhuyse whether he would be willing to report to him on his discussions with the ANC, since according to Barnard the government desired an informal

¹⁸⁵ H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation: constitution-making in South Africa*, pp. 30-35; Historical overview, in M Hough and A du Plessis, *Selected documents and commentaries on negotiations and constitutional development in the RSA: 1989-1994*, p. 3; DT McKinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle*, pp. 100-101. Quotation taken from JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, p. 128.

contact with the ANC. Esterhuyse agreed provided that he was allowed to inform the ANC of this procedure, and hence the organisation knew right from the outset that Barnard (and thus by implication PW Botha as well) would be kept informed of the content of the discussions. With Esterhuyse thus acting as intermediary, a round of indirect talks was initiated between the exiled ANC and the South African government.¹⁸⁶

In twelve meetings between November 1987 and May 1990 – which all, bar the first, were held at Mells Park House in the village of Mells, near Bath in Somersetshire, England – Esterhuyse involved at various times more than twenty prominent Afrikaner leaders in constructive discussions with representatives of the ANC. Among the Afrikaners invited by Esterhuyse was Willem de Klerk, the brother of the future State President. Willem de Klerk duly reported to his brother FW after the three meetings he attended at Mells Park House. Although FW remained largely unreceptive to his brother's reports on the meetings, Willem de Klerk was convinced that FW was nonetheless affected by the positive perceptions that were conveyed to him concerning his brother's experiences at the Mells Park meetings. Apart from reporting in writing to his brother, Willem de Klerk also reported verbally to the Broederbond, and in a blunt assessment of the ANC, he assured his Afrikaner counterparts that "We can do business with the ANC. They are not that radical. They are willing to negotiate. They are willing to compromise. They see the Afrikaners as an indigenous part of the South African population. They are not that dangerous. There's a flexibility even in their economic outlook." According to Esterhuyse, the critical discourse the Afrikaners were exposed to at Mells Park House instigated a fundamental shift in their assessment of the political situation in South Africa. While they at first proffered tentative justifications for the gradual reform of apartheid policies in South Africa, under the barrage of unanswerable questions posited by Thabo Mbeki and his ANC colleagues "we moved," in the words of Esterhuyse, "from trying to explain to posing the questions: 'Where do we go from here? What needs to be done?'"¹⁸⁷

Apart from the Mells Park House meetings, at this time the ANC was also able to confer with groups of Afrikaner academics. In July 1987 61 mainly Afrikaans-speaking academics gathered in Dakar, Senegal, to engage in discussions with a 17-member ANC delegation. The meeting was organized by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA), and the group of academics was led by Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, the former leader of the opposition in the South African parliament. In the form of the resultant Dakar Declaration, the delegates at the

¹⁸⁶ A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 75-79.

¹⁸⁷ Quotations and content taken from A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 79-86.

conference “accepted the historical reality of the armed struggle,” but also recognized that “the use of force is fundamental to the existence and practice of racial domination.” Significantly, the conference delegates “unanimously expressed preference for a negotiated resolution of the South African question,” and “recognized that the attitude of those in power is the principal obstacle to progress in this regard.”¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, from 8 until 12 July 1989 45 mostly Afrikaans-speaking writers met an ANC delegation at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe to discuss issues of contemporaneous Afrikaans writing and associated matters related to the national liberation struggle. In an introductory address at the conference, Steve Tshwete of the ANC told the assembled delegates that “The struggle is continuing today, and the main thrust of that struggle is, in the first instance, to liberate the black people, and to transform South Africa from a racist country to a democratic one...That is what we want to achieve: the total eradication of apartheid and the ushering in of a united non-racial, democratic society for all our people in South Africa.” In this endeavour, Tshwete insisted, “the ANC is not opposed to a negotiated resolution of the problem. We have never been opposed at any given moment...We will take negotiations in our stride, in the process of struggling for the eradication of apartheid, when we have to negotiate, we will negotiate. Negotiate nothing else than the abolition and elimination of apartheid. That will be the thrust of the negotiation process; and we accept that it’s going to come.”¹⁸⁹

From 2 until 16 July 1989, a group of 27 White South African academics and businessmen (also as guests of IDASA) likewise undertook a journey to Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, with the excursion culminating in a two-day gathering with senior members of the ANC in Lusaka.¹⁹⁰ After meeting with the representatives of the ANC in Lusaka, Adrian Botha, at the time the Executive Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa, stated that he “was impressed with the knowledge and pragmatism displayed by the majority of the ANC representatives we met. There appears to be an earnest desire to return home (South Africa is referred to as ‘home’ and not by name) and negotiate.”¹⁹¹ In a similar assessment after the meeting with the ANC, Anton Steenkamp, at the time a journalist with the *Vrye Weekblad*, was convinced that “the willingness of the members of the ANC to engage in negotiations is clear as ever after our visit to Lusaka...As an elderly ANC leader put it: Lusaka is more and more becoming the centre of talks on the future of our beloved land. And therewith the wish that such

¹⁸⁸ Quotations and content taken from The Dakar Declaration, 12 June 1987.

¹⁸⁹ Quotations and content taken from A Coetzee and J Polley (eds.), Crossing borders. Writers meet the ANC, pp. 9, 11-14, 23-24, 204-205.

¹⁹⁰ C Louw, ‘n Woord vooraf, in C Louw (compiler), Journey to the ANC. Reports on a visit to Windhoek, Harare and Lusaka, pp. 7-8.

¹⁹¹ Quotation taken from A Botha, Background to the tour, in C Louw (compiler), Journey to the ANC, p. 31.

discussions would take place *inside* South Africa, not there in the middle of Africa.”¹⁹² Charles du Toit, at the time the Industrial Relations Manager at Volkswagen South Africa in Port Elizabeth, thought after the meeting that “the ANC was unflinching in its resolve to reach a settlement. Their objective was for a negotiated settlement without the destruction of our society or its economy. However, if the only way to rid our country of apartheid was by bringing South Africa to its knees, then the ANC was resolved to take it there.”¹⁹³

Notwithstanding the burgeoning number of constructive gatherings that at this time transpired between White South Africans and representatives of the ANC, the critical enterprise remained in the hands of the imprisoned Nelson Mandela and his ostensibly overbearing negotiating counterparts. From the advent of the negotiations Mandela had repeatedly called for a meeting with State President Botha, yet Niël Barnard experienced considerable difficulty in persuading Botha to accede to Mandela’s request. The progression of the negotiations was temporarily offset, moreover, when Mandela was diagnosed with a mild bout of tuberculosis, probably partly caused by the chronic dampness of his Pollsmoor cell. While convalescing at Constantiaberg clinic near Pollsmoor prison in December 1988, Mandela resumed his meetings with the negotiating committee. As portent of an impending change, Coetzee let it be known that he intended for Mandela to shortly be allotted more freedom of movement. Thus in December 1988, after Mandela had returned to Pollsmoor he was transferred to Victor Verster prison, located outside the town of Paarl, roughly fifty kilometres from Cape Town. In order to make him more accessible to visitors, Mandela was accommodated in a proper house (that had hitherto accommodated the deputy prison governor) on the prison grounds, and was allotted his own household staff. Fully utilising his nascent liberties, Mandela laboured intensively to prepare himself for the ongoing negotiations with Coetzee’s committee and for his sought-after meeting with State President Botha, and also received various activists from outside and political prisoners still incarcerated in Pollsmoor and on Robben Island. In addition, while at Victor Verster Mandela was permitted to send an occasional fax and make a solitary phone call to the ANC head offices in Lusaka. By means of this elementary consultation process, and also via Bizos’ direct links with Lusaka, Mandela endeavoured to remain in agreement with the overarching currents of the liberation movement, yet in fact a clandestine operation would be

¹⁹² A Steenkamp, In die frontlinie vir ‘n gedeelde toekoms, in C Louw (compiler), *Journey to the ANC*, pp. 45-46, 52. Quotation translated from the original Afrikaans. Italics used by Steenkamp.

¹⁹³ C du Toit, Some hope for the future, in C Louw (compiler), *Journey to the ANC*, p. 68.

required to ensure that Mandela's activities remained in accordance with those of the ANC in Lusaka.¹⁹⁴

Already in 1985 – after the ANC had held its national consultative conference held in Kabwe, Zambia in June – the organisation resolved to infiltrate a leadership cadre into South Africa to extend organised leadership to the mass insurgency. Mac Maharaj, who had spent twelve years on Robben Island (where he had been close to Mandela) and who had gone into exile after his release in 1976, was chosen to spearhead what became known as Operation Vula, and eventually infiltrated South Africa in 1988 to initiate the operation. While proceeding to establish an underground network from his base in Durban, Maharaj set up a line of communication with the ANC in Lusaka via sophisticated technological conduits, thus fomenting the ANC's first direct correspondence with an underground agent inside South Africa. In due course Maharaj also corresponded surreptitiously with Mandela while he was more readily accessible at Victor Verster, and thus a circuitous albeit swift line of correspondence was set up between Tambo in Lusaka and Mandela. After Tambo had received via Maharaj a thorough report from Mandela, he was able to endorse Mandela's initiatives and encouraged him to persist with his endeavour. Tambo was adamant only that Mandela did not compromise the ANC's stand on sanctions, impressing on him that sanctions were "the key problem. We are very concerned that we should not get stripped of our weapons of struggle, and the most of these is sanctions. That is the trump card with which we can mobilize international opinion and pull government over to our side." Thus by means of a covert operation originally intended to supplement the armed struggle, the fledgling negotiating process was ironically augmented instead. Maharaj was also able to contribute to the internal anti-apartheid formations – especially the UDF – being infused with the knowledge of Mandela's conciliatory initiatives, and although Operation Vula was later to trigger a crisis of its own, the operation now further emboldened Mandela to seek a meeting with PW Botha.¹⁹⁵

While at Victor Verster Mandela endeavoured to construct a comprehensive memorandum which he intended to submit to PW Botha. In this regard Mandela was assisted by his four prominent colleagues still incarcerated at Pollsmoor (Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba, Andrew Mlangeni, and Ahmed Kathrada), who were allowed to visit him in January 1989 to discuss the proposed

¹⁹⁴ AH Marais, Negotiations for a democratic South Africa, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 3-4; J Gregory (with B Graham), *Goodbye Bafana*, pp. 283-315; A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 38-41, 45-46, 51-52; N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 645-650.

¹⁹⁵ Quotation and content taken from A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 61-67.

memorandum. In the memorandum that was eventually dispatched to Botha in March – after the State President had recovered from the stroke he had suffered in January – Mandela assured Botha that it was “in the national interest for the African National Congress and the government to meet urgently to negotiate an effective political settlement.” While outlining the ANC’s *raison d’être* for legitimate protest vis-à-vis the government’s flagrant and sustained racist political order, Mandela wrote that the ANC considered the “armed struggle a legitimate form of self-defence against a morally repugnant system of government which will not allow even peaceful forms of protest,” and hence the ANC would not jettison the armed struggle “until the government shows its willingness to surrender the monopoly of political power, and to negotiate directly and in good faith with the acknowledged black leaders. The renunciation of violence either by the government or the ANC should not be a pre-condition to but the result of negotiation.” Mandela proceeded to repudiate the government’s conventional perceptions that the ANC is dominated by the SACP or subject to the whims of the Soviet Union, and insisted that “majority rule and internal peace are like the two sides of a single coin, and white South Africa simply has to accept that there will never be peace and stability in this country until the principle is fully applied.” Thus “the key to the whole situation,” Mandela maintained, “is a negotiated settlement...An accord with the ANC, and the introduction of a non-racial society is the only way in which our rich and beautiful country will be saved from the stigma which repels the world.” Mandela proposed that substantial negotiations be undertaken in two stages. The first stage would entail discussions to create the appropriate climate for negotiations, and would also involve attempts to reconcile the ANC’s demand for majority rule in a unitary state with Whites’ concomitant concerns and insistence on structural guarantees in this regard; while the second stage would constitute the actual negotiations themselves. In conclusion, Mandela urged Botha to utilise the opportunities inherent in his advances and therewith “to overcome the current deadlock, and to normalise the country’s political situation.” Mandela hoped, he wrote, that Botha “will seize it without delay.”¹⁹⁶

Eventually in July Coetzee and Barnard were able to convince Botha to accede to meeting Mandela, and this only after Coetzee convinced the State President that he stood only to gain from such a meeting. Thus on 4 July Mandela was informed that he was to meet with Botha the following day, and in a clandestine operation organised by Barnard – Botha was fearful that

¹⁹⁶ Quotations taken from N Mandela, Document prepared before meeting with P W Botha on 5 July 1989, in N Mandela, *The struggle is my life. His speeches and writings brought together with historical documents and accounts of Mandela in prison by fellow-prisoners*, pp. 200-207. For content see J Gregory (with B Graham), *Goodbye Bafana*, pp. 335-338.

public knowledge of the meeting would cause serious repercussions – Mandela was ushered in great secrecy to Botha’s Tuynhuis residence alongside the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town on 5 July. Although Mandela was apprehensive at coming face to face with the vaunted *Groot Krokodil* and his infamous temper, from the first moment of the meeting the State President “completely disarmed me,” in the words of Mandela. “He was unfailingly courteous, deferential and friendly.” With Coetzee, Willemse, and Barnard, Mandela and Botha sat down for what Mandela described as not so much “tense political arguments but a lively and interesting tutorial. We did not discuss substantive issues so much as history and South African culture.” After a congenial discussion Mandela raised the solitary serious issue of the meeting by asking Botha to release unconditionally all political prisoners, a request Botha kindly refused. In conclusion, Mandela and Botha drafted a mundane statement elucidating their historic gathering as merely a meeting for tea to promote peace in South Africa, whereupon Mandela and Botha shook hands and Mandela was returned to Victor Verster. Although the meeting with Botha proved to be no more than a courtesy encounter with little political substance, Mandela was convinced that some kind of breakthrough had been achieved. “Mr. Botha,” Mandela wrote afterwards, “had long talked about the need to cross the Rubicon, but he never did it himself until that morning at Tuynhuis. Now, I felt, there was no turning back.” The following month, however, Botha announced on national television his resignation as State President, and FW de Klerk – whom Mandela had hitherto regarded as no more than a “cipher” – was sworn in as the new State President. Nevertheless, ever since De Klerk was elected as the leader of the NP in February 1989 Mandela had begun “to follow him closely. I read all of his speeches, listened to what he had said and began to see that he represented a genuine departure from his predecessor. He was not an ideologue but a pragmatist, a man who saw change as necessary and inevitable.” Thus on the very day De Klerk was sworn in as acting State President, Mandela wrote him the customary letter requesting a meeting.¹⁹⁷

The removal of the infinitely politically-minded PW Botha was indeed a significant event in the progression to negotiations. In conjunction with the marginalisation of Oliver Tambo in the ranks of the ANC leadership, moreover, and the concurrent ascendancy of Mandela and his conciliatory initiatives, the removal of Botha and his replacement with De Klerk signalled a significant progression to the dispensation of negotiations. While the thinking of both Mandela and De Klerk was as yet not utterly devoid of exclusively political predilections, the ascendancy of these two leaders in their opposing assemblages would facilitate the gradual abolishing of the political

¹⁹⁷ Quotations and content taken from N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 657-660. For content see also J Gregory (with B Graham), *Goodbye Bafana*, pp. 338-340; A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 53-56.

balance of power, and therewith the advent of the dispensation of negotiations that would ultimately lead to the unadulterated inauguration of the economic balance of power in South Africa.

FW de Klerk's accession to the State Presidency initiated a perceptible new political atmosphere in South Africa. After the poor showing of the CP in the 1989 general election and the concomitant admirable performance of the liberal Democratic Party (DP), De Klerk – who had effectively asked the White electorate to deliver a mandate for open-ended negotiations – was elated to perceive that nearly 70 per cent of White voters had cast a vote in favour of embarking on the road to negotiations. In this atmosphere a unique type of politics emerged in which the national debate was not about how to govern or even how to reform but rather how to negotiate. In the aftermath of the election Gerrit Viljoen, the Minister of Constitutional Development, emphatically told *Leadership SA* magazine that “the September 6 (1989) election was the last in which blacks will not participate as voters at central government level. This is our basic assumption. If we expect a long process of five years or more to change the situation, then we are not being realistic. We must have a sense of urgency based on our goal that this was the last election in which blacks have not participated.” As evident confirmation of his commitment to comprehensive change, after becoming State President De Klerk took the unprecedented step of allowing a series of peaceful protest marches to take place, and also initiated the desegregation of all South Africa's beaches while also overseeing the repealing of the Separate Amenities Act. Moreover, on 10 October 1989 De Klerk announced that Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Andrew Mlangeni, Elias Motsoaledi, Jeff Masemola, Wilton Mkwayi, and Oscar Mpetha were to be released from prison. In addition, in January 1990 De Klerk promised to suspend the state of emergency and also to release Mandela.¹⁹⁸

As De Klerk assumed the State Presidency Mandela's meetings with Coetzee's negotiating committee continued, and Gerrit Viljoen now also joined the proceedings. When Mandela's hitherto imprisoned colleagues were released in October 1989, he felt compelled to convey his appreciation to De Klerk. For his part, Mandela was informed by Coetzee that a meeting with State President De Klerk had been scheduled for 12 December. Prior to his first meeting with De

¹⁹⁸ Quotation taken from Interview: Gerrit Viljoen, in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number eight, 1989, p. 73. For content see P Bell, the Grand Parade, in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number eight, 1989, pp. 62-63; W de Klerk, Changing season, in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number eight, 1989, pp. 68-70; R Bethlehem, Hair trigger, in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number seven, pp. 10-15; P Bell, Watershed, in *Leadership SA*, volume 8, number seven, pp. 18-22; J Gregory (with B Graham), *Goodbye Bafana*, pp. 344-346; JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, pp. 153-156.

Klerk, Mandela was able to consult with various colleagues from several constituencies in the liberation movement. Thus at the house at Victor Verster Mandela received numerous delegates from the UDF and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and also ANC leaders like Oscar Mpheta, Christmas Tinto, Trevor Manuel, Johnny Issal, and Cheryl Carolus. Cyril Ramaphosa, at this time the general secretary of the National Mine Workers' Union, also visited as part of a delegation that included Terror Lekota and Tokyo Sexwale, both former fellow inmates with Mandela on Robben Island. Immediately after the conclusion of a meeting with the now re-united Walter and Albertina Sisulu, however, Mandela proceeded to draft a new letter to State President De Klerk.¹⁹⁹

Dwelling on the subject of negotiations between the ANC and the government, Mandela's letter to De Klerk was not dissimilar to the memorandum Mandela had previously despatched to PW Botha. "In my view," Mandela wrote, "it has now become urgent to take other measures to end the present deadlock, and this will certainly be achieved if the government first creates a proper climate for negotiation, followed by a meeting with the ANC. The conflict which is presently draining South Africa's life blood, either in the form of peaceful demonstrations, acts of violence or external pressure, will never be settled until there is an agreement with the ANC." Mandela reiterated his abject refusal to condone the suspension of the armed struggle as a precondition for the ANC to engage in negotiations with the government, and instead put it to De Klerk that "the very first step on the way to reconciliation is obviously the dismantling of apartheid, and all measures used to enforce it. To talk of reconciliation before this major step is taken is totally unrealistic." As regards negotiations, Mandela repeated his proposal that talks be conducted in two stages.²⁰⁰

On the morning of the day after Mandela's letter was delivered to De Klerk, Mandela was taken to meet the State President – who was accompanied by Coetzee, Willemse, Barnard and Mike Louw, an NIS colleague of Barnard – in the same room in Tuynhuis where Mandela had taken tea with PW Botha. "From the first," Mandela noted, "I noticed that Mr de Klerk listened to what I had to say...Mr de Klerk seemed to be making a real attempt to listen and understand." In addition, Mandela noticed that De Klerk did "not react quickly to things. It was a mark of the man that he listened to what I had to say and did not argue with me." De Klerk assured Mandela that his aims were in fact no different than Mandela's, and in order to allay White fears of

¹⁹⁹ J Gregory (with B Graham), *Goodbye Bafana*, pp. 346-347; N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 661-662.

²⁰⁰ Quotations and content taken from N Mandela, 'A document to create a climate of understanding,' in N Mandela, *The struggle is my life*, pp. 208-213.

majority rule De Klerk mooted the concept of ‘group rights’ to protect the rights of minorities in the future political order. As a harbinger of the confrontational negotiations that were to follow, Mandela was not impressed with the concept of ‘group rights,’ and remarked that, while possibly allaying White fears, it also abetted Black apprehension. Nevertheless, Mandela urged De Klerk to suspend the state of emergency and to free all political prisoners – requests to which De Klerk was not impervious. Although the meeting was a purely explorative occasion, after his first encounter with De Klerk Mandela felt inspired to “write to our people in Lusaka that Mr de Klerk seemed to represent a true departure from the National Party politicians of the past. Mr de Klerk, I said...was a man we could do business with.”²⁰¹

Around the time De Klerk was elected State President he was informed of a clandestine NIS operation that was to add further impetus to his resolve for engaging in negotiations with the ANC. Despite the objections of Mandela – who distrusted the motives of the government and wanted exploratory negotiations not to be duplicated via another channel – by means of Esterhuyse Barnard was able to set up a direct meeting between the NIS and the ANC. Following profuse covert arrangements, eventually on the evening of 12 September 1989, two NIS agents, Mike Louw and Maritz Spaarwater, conferred with Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma in a hotel room in Lucerne, Switzerland. After a protracted session Louw and Spaarwater were able to return to Pretoria and report that the ANC was indeed willing to negotiate. While De Klerk was at first nonplussed and apprehensive at the agents’ avowal, he eventually acknowledged their findings and responded accordingly to the consequential implications. Further clandestine meetings followed in Lucerne, and in the wake of De Klerk’s momentous speech of 2 February 1990 the discussions proceeded to focus on the security implications of Mandela’s impending release from prison; the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC, and the SACP; and the return to South Africa of exiles still wanted within the country for previous trespassing of the security laws. Eventually, in subsequent clandestine meetings between ANC and government representatives held in Berne and Geneva in the course of the following month, the arrangements for the first formal meeting between the government and the ANC in South Africa were put in order, clearing the way for formal negotiations to commence in South Africa after the release from prison of Mandela.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Quotations and content taken from N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, pp. 662-665. For content see also J Gregory (with B Graham), Goodbye Bafana, pp. 348-349.

²⁰² AH Marais, Negotiations for a democratic South Africa, in Journal for Contemporary History, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 3-4; A Sparks, Tomorrow is another country, pp. 109-119.

When Mandela and De Klerk met again after their auspicious first encounter in December 1989, it was on 9 February 1990 in the delirious aftermath of De Klerk's speech on 2 February in which he announced the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC, and the SACP, and the impending release of Mandela. At the meeting Mandela was informed by a cheerful De Klerk that he was to be released the following day in Johannesburg. Ironically, Mandela informed De Klerk that he strongly objected to both being released so unexpectedly and in Johannesburg at that. De Klerk was aghast at Mandela's remonstrances, and told Mandela that the state could not renege on its commitment to the foreign press that he was to be released the following day in Johannesburg. Yet Mandela persisted. In the end De Klerk and Mandela were able to reach an auspicious compromise: Mandela was indeed to be released the following day, but from Victor Verster, not Johannesburg. Eventually on the afternoon of 11 February – after Mandela had refused to leave Victor Verster until his wife Winnie arrived from Johannesburg – Mandela walked out of prison after he had spent 27 years in jail, and gradually made his way to the Grand Parade in Cape Town. Addressing a buoyant crowd from the balcony of the city hall, Mandela paid tribute to various members of the ANC, the SACP, the UDF, COSATU and various other individuals and organisations involved in the struggle against apartheid, before stating that “Today the majority of South Africans, black and white, recognize that apartheid has no future,” yet “the factors which necessitated the armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue. We express the hope that a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement would be created soon so that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle.” In reiterating his call for the initiation of negotiations, Mandela stated that

“Mr. de Klerk has gone further than any other Nationalist president in taking real steps to normalize the situation. However, there are further steps as outlined in the Harare Declaration that have to be met before negotiations on the basic demands of our people can begin...Negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid will have to address the overwhelming demand of our people for a democratic nonracial and unitary South Africa. There must be an end to white monopoly on political power.”²⁰³

After his release Mandela's first responsibility was to report to the ANC leadership, and hence on 27 February Mandela flew to Lusaka to attend a meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee. After dispelling the last vestiges of distrust that lingered in the higher echelons of the

²⁰³ Quotations taken from N Mandela, Speech on release from prison, in S Johns and R Hunt Davis, Jr. (eds.), Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress. The struggle against apartheid, 1948-1990. A documentary survey, pp. 225-228. For content see J Gregory (with B Graham), Goodbye Bafana, pp. 356-368; N Mandela, Long walk to freedom, pp. 666-677.

ANC regarding his role in negotiating with the government while in prison, Mandela was elected Deputy President of the ANC, while Tambo – despite having suffered a debilitating stroke in August 1989 – was re-elected as President. The advent of Mandela's compelling presence within the formal ANC structures, however, facilitated a final mainstream acceptance within the organisation of his views on the pre-eminence of dialogue and negotiations with the government. Eventually in March official agreement was reached within the ANC to engage in formal discussions with the government, and a meeting with De Klerk and representatives of the government was duly scheduled for 11 April. In order to make arrangements for the meeting, a joint steering committee comprising members of both the ANC and government assemblages was set up. For this purpose Penuell Maduna, Jacob Zuma, and Gibson Mkanda had to be smuggled into the country (while the ANC had been legalised individuals had not yet been indemnified against prosecution for their violations of the security laws), whereupon they were joined by three internal members of the liberation movement: Mathews Phosa, Curnick Ndlovu, and Ahmed Kathrada. On 1 April, however, after members of the police had killed unarmed protestors in Sebokeng (roughly 50 kilometres south of Johannesburg), Mandela abruptly announced that the ANC was suspending any further talks with the government. Nevertheless, in a procedure that would come to characterise the negotiation process in the coming years, after the announcement Mandela and De Klerk met privately in Cape Town and agreed – after De Klerk pledged to investigate the Sebokeng incident – to reschedule the bilateral meeting to early May. Hence on 27 April 1990 the most senior ANC leaders arrived in South Africa to prepare for the meeting with the government that was scheduled to take place at the Groote Schuur mansion at the foot of Table Mountain.²⁰⁴

Thus the historic advent of negotiations between the government and the ANC was precipitated by the confluence of two corresponding shifts in two parallel balances of power. While the government was unable to disdain the pragmatism of jettisoning its political antecedents in favour of embracing the prevailing economic realities, the ANC was likewise incapable of eschewing the unprecedented opportunities inherent in the government's conciliatory advances as effected by the overbearing implications of the changing balance of power. The augmented obligation of discarding debilitating and obsolete political ideals in favour of addressing the economic predicament in a climate of peace and stability had necessitated the absolute relevance of engaging in negotiations. As a corollary of the decisive shift in the predominant balance of power

²⁰⁴ H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 38-45; JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, pp. 158-161; N Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, pp. 684-687, 691-692; A Sparks, *Tomorrow is another country*, pp. 120-124.

this irrefutable outcome also induced a corresponding strategical shift within the ANC that facilitated the organisation's embracing of the inevitability of engaging in negotiations. Thus a decisive confluence between these inter-related shifting balances of power produced a milieu conducive to negotiations and the de facto closure of the dispensation of the political balance of power. Although both the ANC and the NP entered the ensuing period of excruciating negotiations with residual political (as opposed to exclusively economic) predilections, when a settlement was finally reached and the negotiations concluded both assemblages will have jettisoned their exclusively political concerns and wholeheartedly embraced the prevailing overbearing economic realities of South Africa. Thus although the ensuing period of negotiations would produce complications of its own, the negotiations could and would result in only one dispensational outcome: the economic balance of power.

After Mandela's release from prison he and Winnie did not forget HW van der Merwe, the man who had endeavoured to foment reconciliation in South Africa and who had been close to Winnie Mandela throughout the 1980s. Van der Merwe had, of course, managed to visit Mandela in prison in 1984, and in 1989 Van der Merwe and his wife Marietjie had again been invited to take lunch with Mandela at his house at Victor Verster. On 4 March 1992, however, Marietjie had passed away. A few days after her death, while Van der Merwe was sitting at his desk, "the phone rang and a man greeted me without introducing himself. There followed a long silence. I said, hesitatingly, 'Nelson?' Another long silence was broken by the word 'Madiba', said in a firm, slow voice." For Van der Merwe this was a significant moment. "This signalled," Van der Merwe wrote afterwards, "a profound change in our relationship: the familiar 'Nelson' was replaced with the respectful clan name reflecting the authority that this great man had resumed." After spending decades attempting to establish reconciliation in South Africa, Van der Merwe could only have been pleased at the authority Mandela was progressively exhibiting. At long last, Van der Merwe must have thought, what he had laboured to achieve for so long was becoming a reality.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Quotations and content taken from HW van der Merwe, Peacemaking in South Africa, pp. 123-125.

PART 2

‘The economy of this country always has and will continue to remain central to our struggle for national liberation:’ The induction and perpetuation of the economic balance of power in South Africa

The ANC is just as committed to economic growth and productivity as the present employers claim to be. Yet we are also committed to ensure that a democratic government has the resources to address the inequalities caused by apartheid... Our history has shown that apartheid has stifled growth, created mass unemployment and led to spiralling inflation that has undermined the standards of living of the majority of our people, both black and white. Only a participatory democracy involving our people in the structures of decision making at all levels of society can ensure that this is corrected. We will certainly introduce policies that address the economic problems that we face.²⁰⁶

- Nelson Mandela, 1990.

²⁰⁶ N Mandela, Address to rally in Soweto, 13 February 1990, in N Mandela, The struggle is my life, pp. 220-221.

5

**Resolving political dissonance amid nascent economic collusion:
the arduous inauguration of the economic balance of power in South Africa**

*Black and white South Africans are symbiotically linked. The major antagonists have recognised that symbiosis, and they have also recognised that they have to co-operate peacefully or tear society to pieces in deepening conflict.*²⁰⁷

- D Welsh, newspaper columnist, 1990.

Endeavouring for a political settlement in the context of an economic preponderance

In 1984 Daniel Voll, an American writer, spent seven months in South Africa and subsequently wrote a number of articles on his stay in South Africa that appeared in *Harpers*, *Vanity Fair*, and *New Republic* magazines. After arriving at the airport in Johannesburg, Voll hailed a taxi, and requested the Black taxi driver, Elijah, to drive him around Johannesburg for two hours. Elijah agreed, and eventually took Voll to his home in Soweto. As Elijah pointed out to Voll the homes of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, he told the American tourist of his dreams. “Sometimes I dream,” Elijah said. “Maybe to own a house. It is not impossible...I have many dreams. Last night I dreamt I was driving my taxi, this yellow taxi. Do you know who I was driving?...I was driving Nelson Mandela. Driving him home from prison.”²⁰⁸ On 11 February 1990, Susan Collin Marks was one who witnessed Elijah’s dream of a freed Mandela becoming a reality. Squatting in the thin shade of a palm tree on Cape Town’s Parade, Marks was part of the crowd that anxiously waited for Mandela to be released. When Mandela finally strode onto the balcony of the city hall, “he heard,” Marks wrote afterwards, “us roar our approval and acclaim. We cried, laughed, danced, waved, and shouted our welcome. He laughed and waved back. Parents picked up their small children and held them high above their heads so that they too,

²⁰⁷ D Welsh, Facing a new day, *Sunday Times*, 4 February 1990, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), The miracle of a freed nation, p. 14.

²⁰⁸ Quotations and content taken from D Voll, American witness, in Leadership SA, first quarter 1985, pp. 122, 125.

could one day say, ‘I was there the day Mandela was released.’” No doubt Elijah must likewise have been overjoyed on this day.²⁰⁹

When the all-White Parliament opened on 2 February 1990 the customary crowds of demonstrators gathered outside Parliament to disparage the legitimacy of the current political dispensation. After FW de Klerk had delivered his momentous opening address, however, the cantankerous mood was forthwith superseded by a nascent optimistic ambience. With the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the SACP, and the subsequent release of Nelson Mandela from prison, moreover, Desmond Tutu for one was conspicuously ecstatic and proclaimed that now is the “time to say ‘Yeah!’ It is a time to celebrate.” Helen Suzman, former MP, Zach de Beer, parliamentary leader of Democratic Party (DP), Harry Oppenheimer, and Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi all expressed their delight with the ensuing transformation, and praised De Klerk for his bold actions. A mere eight days after De Klerk’s groundbreaking speech, the PAC’s Barney Desai arrived at the airport in Johannesburg to become the first of many exiles to return to South Africa. Desai had listened to De Klerk’s speech on short-wave radio in Harare, and immediately booked a flight to Johannesburg. After being banned for thirty years, the ANC in February proceeded to open its first official office in South Africa in Stanger (Natal), and Justice Mpanza – a former detainee on Robben Island – was appointed to head the office. Furthermore, in March the ANC established its internal political headquarters in Johannesburg.²¹⁰

Commenting on the implications of his speech on 2 February in an interview conducted on national television on 4 February 1990, De Klerk stated that he now felt “even more sure that it was the right decision than when the Government first made the decision...Internally,” De Klerk stated, “I think it will have the effect that the realisation will dawn on people that the Government is serious to get negotiations going, that we are not playing games, and that we want to start talking constructively in a meaningful way as soon as possible with all leaders in order to work out a new dispensation that will make South Africa safe for all its people.”²¹¹ Elaborating on his celebrated concept of ‘group rights’ that he had mooted to Mandela in their opening meetings, De Klerk subsequently set out his future vision for South Africa when he told *Leadership SA*

²⁰⁹ Quotations and content taken from SC Marks, Watching the wind. Conflict resolution during South Africa’s transition to democracy, p. 3.

²¹⁰ Quotation and content taken from Tutu: A time to say ‘Yeah’ and a time to celebrate, *Sunday Times*, 11 February 1990, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), The miracle of a freed nation, p. 25. For content see also F Meer (ed.), The Codesa file, pp. 23-25; DT McKinley, The ANC and the liberation struggle, pp. 103-104; P Green, Return of the exiles, in Leadership SA, volume 9, number nine, pp. 31-32; Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990, p. 676.

²¹¹ Quotation taken from Reform opens doors (Interview of Mr De Klerk on the television programme *Netwerk*, 4 February 1990), RSA Policy Review, volume 3, number 3, 1990, pp. 3-4.

magazine that “in the constitutional sphere I think it is quite attainable to have a power-sharing model which will offer, on a fair and just basis, full participation for all but simultaneously offer security for minorities.”²¹² In a more blunt portrayal of the NP’s prevailing negotiating strategy, Gerrit Viljoen, the Minister of Constitutional Development and of National Education, had stated in Parliament in February 1990 that the insistence of some political parties on the establishment of a unitary state with a Black majority in South Africa was unacceptable to the NP. Instead, Viljoen stated, “the practical realities of our country require an effective form of protection for minorities as a component of any new power dispensation.”²¹³

In direct contrast to the NP’s opening gambit in the negotiating process, however, at a meeting of the Association of West European Parliamentarians in March 1990 the ANC’s Yusuf Saloojee rejected outright the concept of negotiations based on power-sharing in South Africa. The ANC had, Saloojee maintained, engaged in negotiations with the government not because it trusted it but because the ANC wanted to enforce an alternative way to a settlement. Moreover, in the same month Walter Sisulu likewise stated that the ANC rejected the notion of group rights. Sisulu denounced the NP’s proposal for group rights as merely a ploy to perpetuate “some of their economic and social privileges...even after liberation has come.” In an ominous projection of the rigorous negotiation that was shortly to ensue, Thabo Mbeki stated in April 1990 that in the forthcoming talks those who favoured a non-racial democracy would occupy one side of the negotiating table and those favouring group-based thinking the other side of the table.²¹⁴ In an interview in early 1990 Mbeki likewise condemned De Klerk’s proposition of group rights, stating that “What is not yet clear is whether De Klerk and the leadership of the NP have moved sufficiently to recognise that you cannot construct a new political arrangement in South Africa on the basis of the group concept. If the NP continues to proceed from the position that the group concept is fundamental, we cannot have successful negotiations...Black and white South Africans should join hands now to end apartheid – then the constitutional requirement of a white veto wouldn’t arise.”²¹⁵

De Klerk’s intentions with advocating group rights and constitutional protection for minorities in fact constituted the last vestiges of the political balance of power that persisted within the

²¹² Quotation taken from Holding the pace (Interview with FW de Klerk), in Leadership SA, volume 9, number six, 1990, p. 36.

²¹³ Quotation taken from Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990, p. 217.

²¹⁴ Quotation and content taken from Ibid., pp. 678-680.

²¹⁵ Quotation and content taken from Disarming talk (Interview with Thabo Mbeki), in Leadership SA, volume 9, number two, 1990, p. 25.

dispensation ushered in by the advent of the period of negotiations. These stubborn vestiges were to cause considerable procrastination and hindrance in the forthcoming negotiating process as the ANC would vigorously maintain its drive for a conventional democratic order and an utterly non-racial unitary state. An excruciating period of negotiations would eventually extract a compromise, but the exact composition of the prevailing economic balance of power – and therewith the entire superstructure of the post-apartheid state – was still very much under construction as both the ANC and NP assemblages grappled with obstinate political issues and individually responded to the imperative of formulating an economic policy that adhered to the overbearing structural requirements of the South African economy. While De Klerk afforded himself the luxury of not fully jettisoning the last vestiges of the political balance of power, the preponderance of the economy was obvious to both the NP and the ANC as a sustained recession persisted amid escalating violence.

In a frank assessment, Barend du Plessis, the Minister of Finance, in an interview in 1990 identified the most pressing current economic problem as “the inadequate economic growth rate which, on the one hand, could be ascribed to the fact that South Africa does not have full access to foreign loans, and on the other, to the shortage of properly trained entrepreneurs, managers and technicians.”²¹⁶ South Africa’s ‘inadequate’ economic growth rate was reflected in a plummeting GDP growth rate that fell from a 1.8 per cent average in the 1980s to a negative value in the early 1990s. The rates of crucial gross fixed investment likewise languished in negative growth territory in the early 1990s, and the economy remained crucially hobbled by very high rates of unemployment and a critical shortage of skilled labour amid the plethora of a largely redundant unskilled labour force; by unceasing balance of payments difficulties; and by plunging levels of personal savings. The vital manufacturing sector remained enfeebled due to a lethargic local demand, while the mining sector shed 30 per cent of its workforce between 1987 and 1995 and the agricultural sector for its part likewise registered a dramatic drop in employment as this sector’s contribution to the GDP dropped progressively from the 1960s. In toto these economic impediments produced a sustained and comprehensive economic recession from early 1989 until late 1993, when an upswing in agricultural production brought some belated relief.²¹⁷

This deplorable economic state of affairs in South Africa came to weigh heavily on the emerging policy initiatives of the ANC, as it had progressively done on those of the South African

²¹⁶ An economic shift of emphasis (Interview with Mr Barend du Plessis, Minister of Finance), in RSA Policy Review, volume 3, number 5, 1990, pp. 21-22.

²¹⁷ H Marais, South Africa: limits to change, pp. 100-105.

government since the 1970s. The grave outlook for the economy compelled the ANC to seek to engineer policies that would positively reverse the unfavourable economic trends of the late 1980s and early 1990s and that would produce all-important economic growth in a stable, democratic society. This constituted the decisive impulsion of the emerging predominance of the economic balance of power. The ANC's status as the predominant negotiating counterpart with the government in the ensuing negotiations, and the organisation's obvious and pervasive support among large echelons of the Black assemblage in South Africa would thus facilitate the perpetuation of the economic balance of power in a post-apartheid South Africa after a settlement had been reached regarding the problematic political residue inherent in De Klerk's group rights stratagem. Indeed, in the latter half of the 1980s – despite the obvious difficulties of the ANC still being a banned organisation – various polls and surveys conducted among South Africa's Black populations consistently indicated a measure of widespread support for the ANC and Nelson Mandela in particular. Further polls and surveys conducted in the early 1990s, moreover, estimated that between 62 per cent and 71 per cent of Blacks in South Africa supported the ANC. A March 1991 survey of 905 township residents across South Africa, for instance, found that – apart from that the ANC was clearly the dominant party in the townships – the vast majority of the respondents supported negotiations and talks between their leaders and the government, while only slightly more than one out of ten respondents supported the armed struggle and militant confrontation. In sum, the ANC's systematic and gradual embrace of the economic balance of power within their prevailing economic strategies could only be thoroughly decisive in a post-apartheid democratic South Africa.²¹⁸

For the duration of its decades-long exile the ANC had devoted scant resources to developing an economic policy amid the overbearing political struggle against apartheid before 1990. While the celebrated 1955 Freedom Charter remained the seminal ANC policy document, as a formula of economic policy the Charter was decidedly vague. While the 1988 ANC Constitutional Guidelines document had only committed the ANC to a 'mixed' economy, with the unbanning of the organisation in February 1990 the ANC had as yet formulated no formative economic policy. Amid South Africa's economic crisis, however, the evident significance of formulating an economic policy as the decisive policy initiative of the post-apartheid state was apparent within the ANC. Hence Tito Mboweni and Vella Pillay, members of the ANC's Department of

²¹⁸ Content partly attributable to insights from pp. H Kotzé, The support base of the ANC: myth or reality?, in W Esterhuysen and P Nel (eds.), *The ANC and its leaders*, pp. 70-84; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa. The elusive social contract*, p. 153; L Schlemmer, *Black township residents amidst protest negotiation and violence: an empirical study. Research Report No. 18*, 1991, pp. 21-25.

Economics and Development, stated in May 1990 that the ANC had begun formulating a policy aimed at “economic growth through redistribution” as a means to address South Africa’s current economic crisis. After his release from prison, moreover, Mandela made numerous statements in favour of nationalisation, yet he added in April 1990 that the ANC would only consider nationalisation if this practice strengthened the economy. There was, however, as yet no semblance of accord within the ANC on issues such as nationalisation and privatisation, but there was universal agreement in the organisation that any ANC economic policy would have to significantly address the economic downturn of the South African economy as the prime directive of the ANC-ruled post-apartheid state. Thus with the intention of producing a coherent set of policies which effectively promoted economic growth and job creation while at the same time boosting business and investor confidence, as a consequence of two workshops held in Harare by the ANC’s Department of Economic Policy in conjunction with Cosatu, the ANC in June 1990 produced its Discussion Document on Economic Policy (DDEP). Advocating selective nationalisation and the ‘restructuring’ of the economy to engineer a ‘mixed’ economy, the DDEP stressed that the fundamental objective of economic policy should be to “achieve economic growth through a process of increasing equality in the distribution of incomes, wealth and economic power.” Thus in this fashion the ANC entered the period of negotiations with an emerging appreciation of the predominance of economic concerns in any post-apartheid state, and while the emphasis on redistribution and nationalisation inherent in the DDEP would in the coming years leading up to 1994 gradually recede within the ANC, the understanding of the imperative of ensuring economic growth and stability in the absence of radical political transformations would only be amplified.²¹⁹

The gradual rise to ascendancy of the economic balance of power was also facilitated by concurrent developments within the White assemblage in South Africa. FW de Klerk’s rise to prominence within the NP facilitated the structured devaluation of PW Botha’s vaunted ‘total onslaught’ antics, and the nascent ideology of a New South Africa devoid of racial discrimination was instead emphasised. Recorded perceptions and attitudes among Whites in South Africa, furthermore, indicated that the majority of Whites were likewise willing – occasionally with lingering reservations – to jettison White minority rule and effectively the political balance of power. Several surveys that were conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council’s (HSRC)

²¹⁹ Quotations and content taken from Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990, pp. 682-683. For content see also H Marais, South Africa: limits to change, pp. 122-126; N Nattrass, Politics and economics in ANC economic policy, in African Affairs (1994), 93, pp. 344-352; TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 149-153; ANC Discussion Document on Economic Policy, in HS Chhabra, South Africa. One year after Nelson Mandela’s release, pp. 124-141.

Centre for Conflict Analysis (CCA) since 1985 indicated that the majority of Whites in South Africa broadly supported the reform initiatives undertaken by the government. After De Klerk succeeded PW Botha as State President, moreover, surveys indicated that Whites' willingness to support reform increased perceptively. Data routinely gathered by the CCA since 1985 also indicated, furthermore, that a growing proportion of Whites were beginning to concede that the accommodation of Blacks in South Africa's central governmental structures was a historical inevitability that need not be feared. In a survey conducted after the September 1989 general election – when the ANC was still officially a banned organisation – for instance, 61.3 per cent of the White respondents indicated their support for negotiations between the government and the ANC if the latter committed themselves to a peaceful resolution in South Africa.²²⁰

In another survey also conducted at the time of the September 1989 general election among White voters, 53 per cent of the 1312 respondents believed that the government had no viable alternative to negotiating with the ANC and other Black groups about Black participation in Parliament, while only 9 per cent believed that the government could still negotiate exclusively with moderate Black groups aside from the ANC. Moreover, 62 per cent of the respondents supported a process of negotiation towards an inclusive government containing members of all of South Africa's racial groups, although two-thirds of the respondents added that individual protection against discrimination; protection of property rights against confiscation; equal decision-making rights for Whites; and the parental right to participate in schools' admission policy to be non-negotiable safeguards for any post-apartheid settlement.²²¹ A questionnaire that was disseminated among various members of the Afrikaner elite (i.e. prominent academics, church leaders, businessmen, members of the media, and politicians) late in 1989 produced similar findings. The South African elite, it was concluded, had confidence in the option of negotiations as a way of reaching a peaceful solution in South Africa. 88.6 per cent of 948 respondents viewed negotiations as a viable solution to the conflict in South Africa, while 81.5 per cent of the respondents agreed that a universally acceptable settlement was possible in South Africa. Furthermore, most of the respondents indicated a clear preference for either a federal post-apartheid order or a groups-based system. Hence in advancing the advent of negotiations and therewith the eventual predominance of the economic balance of power, and in upholding his

²²⁰ NJ Rhoodie, Survey-based indicators of black and white perceptions of sociopolitical change in South Africa, in DJ van Vuuren, NE Wiehahn, NJ Rhoodie and M Wiechers (eds.), *South Africa in the nineties*, pp. 506-508, 524-542.

²²¹ L Schlemmer, L Stack and C Berkow, Transition and the white grass-roots, in R Lee and L Schlemmer (eds.), *Transition to democracy. Policy perspectives 1991*, pp. 162-169.

insistence on the concept of group rights in a post-apartheid South Africa, De Klerk acted in accordance with the attitudes and perceptions of the majority of White South Africans.²²²

De Klerk's forthright endorsement of negotiations and a peaceful settlement also legitimised greater involvement of the business sector in the process of founding the economic balance of power in South Africa. 1989 had witnessed a marked increase in the volume of public policy comment by members of the business community in South Africa, in fact, the total of 1335 media items regarding the business community for 1989 constituted a 200 per cent increase on 1988. For business it was no longer a question of whether to intervene but rather how to intervene, and both the positive progress of change in South West Africa/Namibia and De Klerk's conciliatory initiatives in the latter half of the year prompted the business community to speak more decisively in advocating the need to move to a transformed post-apartheid society. Business leaders urged the government especially to deracialise the economy and to make it more accessible to all South Africans, thus fomenting a constituency for liberal economic policies and for reform. On 10 November 1989 De Klerk had received a delegation from the Association of Chambers of Commerce (Assocom) who urged him to speed up the process of constitutional reform. Yet both the government and the business sector were agreed on the fundamental need to engineer economic growth and wealth and to share the benefits of this welfare in a more equitable manner. In addition, in voicing these objectives members of South Africa's business establishment showed a marked degree of collusion with the emerging economic objectives articulated by members of the Black assemblage. Walter Sisulu, for instance, told the University of the Witwatersrand's Business School that the economic objectives of the ANC consisted of the reduction of inequality; a decent living wage for every worker; the extension of social security, medical facilities, and a safety net for the unemployed; and increases in the consumption fund and the social wage. White business leaders and politicians, however, condemned the ANC's evolving stance on nationalisation and redistribution of income in the strongest terms, with Org Marais, the Deputy Minister of Finance, stating in February 1990 that drastic redistribution of income would have as negative an impact on capitalism as did the apartheid laws. In addition, in the same month Barend du Plessis, the Minister of Finance, referred to nationalisation as a policy of 'theft.' On the need to establish a post-apartheid order that augmented economic growth and

²²² EG Lombard, *Elite-houdings oor onderhandelings in Suid-Afrika*. Tesis ingelewer ter gedeeltelike voltooiing aan die vereistes vir die graad van Magister in Politieke Wetenskap aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, pp. 6-8, 182-184, 194-199, 207-214, 220-231, 242-245.

stability in the absence of political upheaval – thus the perpetuation of the economic balance of power – however, the ANC and NP was fundamentally agreed.²²³

In formulating its negotiating strategy in early 1990, the NP sought to incorporate its concept of group rights into a proactive nation-building approach. By September 1990 the NP opened its membership to non-Whites, and thus via multi-racial alliance-building it sought to project itself as a credible power-sharing partner in a post-apartheid state. Nevertheless, De Klerk still instilled in the NP an expectation that the new political dispensation would incorporate built-in guarantees to preclude the domination of one party or group by another. In this manner De Klerk hoped to forestall the NP's expected marginalisation as a minority party in an ANC-led government. De Klerk also expected to gain approval among Western countries for a settlement in South Africa incorporating group rights guarantees, and in a protracted period of negotiations, it was hoped, the ANC would be forced into certain compromises. Thus the NP refined its group-rights initiatives in order to soften their overtly racial overtones, yet the residual group-rights formula nonetheless remained the NP's last ideological vestige of the political balance of power, and was to cause much procrastination in the coming negotiations with the ANC. Although its economic policy outlook was still in a state of flux, the ANC for its part upheld its negotiating strategy that envisaged a fully democratic, unitary state. Thus the period of excruciating negotiations that followed was to serve both to ultimately terminate the residue of the political balance of power – in the form of the NP's group rights advances – and to birth the economic balance of power as increased economic collusion transpired between the government and the ANC while the latter progressively softened its economic policy perspectives to preclude any radical state interventions.²²⁴

The first step in the process of negotiations was the so-called 'talks about talks,' or the endeavour to remove the obstacles in the path of multi-party negotiations. The first formal round of preliminary talks between representatives of the ANC and the government at Groote Schuur on 2 May 1990, however, was silhouetted against the sinister background of burgeoning instances of violence and unrest in South Africa. In the aftermath of De Klerk's momentous speech of

²²³ R Lee, M Sutherland, M Phillips, and A McLennan, Speaking or listening? Observers or agents for change? Business and public policy: 1989/90, in R Lee and L Schlemmer (eds.), Transition to democracy. Policy perspectives 1991, pp. 95-104, 108-110, 118-124; H Ebrahim, The soul of a nation, p. 25; Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990, p. 735; L Pretorius, The head of government and organised business, in L Boule, D Geldenhuys, H Giliomee *et al*, Malan to De Klerk. Leadership in the apartheid state, pp. 240-241.

²²⁴ D O'Meara, The new National Party and the politics of negotiation, in D Innes, M Kentridge, and H Perold (eds.), Power and profit. Politics, labour, and business in South Africa, pp. 20-25; TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 134-139.

February 1990, in fact, a wave of violence erupted in several townships between factions supportive of the ANC and members of the Zulu-based Inkatha. The violence was at first confined to the Natal province, but as the year progressed bloodshed also occurred increasingly in the Pretoria-Johannesburg-Witwatersrand (PWV) region. Ominously, the months following De Klerk's speech and Mandela's emergence from prison were the bloodiest months in the history of the conflict in South Africa. Indeed, despite Mandela's impassioned appeals for peace, between January and March 1990 roughly seven hundred people died as a result of factional violence in Natal.²²⁵ Nonetheless, despite the burgeoning violence John Kane-Berman, the director of the South African Institute of Race Relations, expressed auspicious predictions for the opening of negotiations when he concluded in 1990 that "the structural conditions for negotiations between all major players to bring Africans into parliament have been in place for some time." In this regard, Kane-Berman wrote, the inevitability of negotiations was attributable to the implications of "urbanisation and steady economic integration (which meant) that black permanence in the white-designated area was a fait accompli." In fact, Kane-Berman concluded, "Apartheid is crumbling all about us, and the new society is taking shape...Despite the trauma of the years 1984 to 1989, underlying social and economic forces have been transforming our society willy-nilly in what amounts to a silent revolution."²²⁶

In a surprisingly cordial albeit business-like atmosphere, the first bilateral meeting between the ANC and the government thus transpired at Groote Schuur in May 1990. The participants at the meeting mingled openly and Mandela and De Klerk both seemed to exude an aura of confidence that a lasting agreement could be reached via negotiations. At the end of the three-day meeting more than 400 journalists and diplomatic personnel witnessed a buoyant Mandela and De Klerk expressing their unreserved satisfaction with the proceedings, and with the promulgation of the agreement reached at the meeting – the so-called Groote Schuur Minute – De Klerk and Mandela's optimism was reflected in the general euphoria that pervaded South African society in the aftermath of the meeting. In terms of the agreement both the government and the ANC agreed on a common commitment to address the current climate of violence and pledged to endeavour for stability and a peaceful process of negotiations. For its part the ANC pledged to review its policy of armed struggle and agreed by implication to effectively curtail its ability to take recourse to armed action while the negotiating process was taking place. The government

²²⁵ J Olivier, Political violence, in JD Brewer (ed.), Restructuring South Africa, pp. 15-20; TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 89-90.

²²⁶ Quotations and content taken from J Kane-Berman, South Africa's silent revolution, pp. 7-8, 49-68. For content see also J Kane-Berman, The crumbling of apartheid, in Leadership SA, volume 4, number four, pp. 56-58, 59.

reiterated its intention to review existing security legislation, to lift the lingering state of emergency, and to enable exiles to return to South Africa, and both the ANC and the government agreed to establish a joint working group on political offences that would determine an operational definition of political offences and would establish mechanisms for the release and indemnification of prisoners or those in exile convicted or accused of political crimes. In a sanguine appraisal of the historic meeting, a *Sunday Times* editorial of 6 May 1990 asked

“Who but incurable bigots or escapist clingers to apartheid myths could fail to be moved by the television images? The youngish, imperturbably calm and surefooted State President, and the tall, dignified and articulate black leader sitting side by side, making history together...Two South Africans, from different generations and from separate poles of the political spectrum, had begun to discover each other as humans. More, there was dawning recognition that our future lies in the same diversity which, by making victory impossible for any party, makes compromise inescapable for all parties.”²²⁷

As a result of the Groote Schuur Minute, as soon as 7 May the tri-cameral parliament had passed an Indemnity Bill for political offenders, and on 19 May the government indemnified 38 ANC leaders for a period of six months. Moreover, in June De Klerk lifted the state of emergency in all parts of South Africa except in the strife-torn province of Natal. In between the Groote Schuur meeting and the next bilateral meeting scheduled for 6 August in Pretoria, both Mandela and De Klerk separately visited a number of countries to mobilise support for their respective political positions. De Klerk’s international standing was significantly augmented by the obvious policy shift that he had initiated within the NP, and in presenting the case of the government to European nations De Klerk was assisted by statements from Minister Viljoen, who promised that ‘petty apartheid’ and other residual discriminatory laws would be scrapped and that the homelands structures would be abolished. In appreciation of the prevailing relevance of the economic balance of power, moreover, Viljoen added that these reforms would be cost-efficient and that they made financial sense. In the same vein, while attending the United States Mandela placated business leaders by pledging to respect free enterprise, and in addition began to progressively contradict his earlier statements on nationalisation by indicating that the ANC is not perpetually wedded to the policy of nationalisation. In a meeting with US trade union officials at the African-

²²⁷ Quotation taken from The hopeful Spirit of Groote Schuur, *Sunday Times*, 6 May 1990, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), The miracle of a freed nation, pp. 32-33. For content see M Motlhabi, Toward a New South Africa. Issues and Objects in the ANC/Government Negotiation for a Non-racial Democratic Society, pp. 11-22; HS Chhabra, New South Africa. Problems of democratic transition, pp. 24-30; H Ebrahim, The soul of a nation, pp. 44-47; TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 90-93.

American Labor Center, for instance, Mandela told his hosts that “state participation will not be an option if there are better options.” Inadvertently, thus, the statements of the leaders of both the White and Black assemblages began to foreshadow the prevailing of the economic balance of power, yet a great deal of political wrangling still lay ahead before this eventuality would ultimately transpire.²²⁸

When Mandela and De Klerk returned to South Africa, however, they found a country still embroiled in political violence. A major wave of violence beyond the confines of Natal erupted on 22 July when in the township of Sebokeng outside Johannesburg about forty-three hundred Inkatha supporters raided a rival ANC-supportive hostel in the wake of an Inkatha Freedom Party rally (in July Mangosuthu Buthelezi had announced that the Inkatha movement would be reconstituted as a national political party, the IFP) at a local stadium. In a series of attacks and counter-attacks a vicious cycle of bloodshed ensued. The journalist Sebastian Balic was one who witnessed at first hand the brutal nature of political violence that raged at the time. In August 1990 Balic watched aghast in Soweto as a group of Inkatha supporters hacked to death Sandile Gugudu, a Xhosa. The Inkatha supporters claimed Gugudu had fired on them, and consequently rushed the hostel in which he was hiding. Gugudu was dragged out of his hiding place and was set upon by a mob wielding traditional weapons. “Spears and sticks,” Balic wrote, “were flung into his body as he writhed in soundless agony, twisting into a helpless foetal position. And then came the killing blow from the axe that opened his skull. But bloodlust was still running high. Mindless men continued to stab and hack at him before kicking his body on to its back and searching the pockets for the pistol Gugudu was supposed to be carrying. When nothing was found, the killers struck again at the helpless corpse as if in frustration at its innocence.” After having witnessed this ghastly encounter, Balic “walked the longest few hundred metres of my life out of Nancefield, slowly realising that I had just watched a man die a brutal death...in total silence.”²²⁹

On the eve of the scheduled 6 August meeting between the ANC and the government another political storm broke when the existence of Operation Vula was exposed and Mac Maharaj and other operatives of the operation were arrested. Speculation immediately abounded that Operation

²²⁸ Quotation and content taken from DT McKinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle*, pp. 107-109. For content see also H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 47-52; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 92-93.

²²⁹ Quotations taken from S Balic, Let’s live and let live, *Sunday Times*, 19 August 1990, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), *The miracle of a freed nation*, p. 37. For content see TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 93-98; Human Rights Commission, *Checkmate for apartheid? A special report on two years of destabilisation July 1990 to June 1992*, pp. 3-6.

Vula was nothing less than an ANC plot to overthrow the government by force, yet the ANC denied this and demanded the release of Maharaj. Nevertheless, both the ANC and the government agreed not to let anything jeopardise the scheduled meeting, and hence on 6 August the planned gathering took place in Pretoria. After a marathon thirteen hour session that consisted of difficult negotiations albeit with concessions extracted from both sides, a joint statement – the so-called Pretoria Minute – was released. Under the terms of the agreement the ANC agreed to officially suspend its armed struggle (though MK would not be disbanded), and, in reciprocation the government pledged to the phased release of around 1300 political prisoners and the return of roughly 22 000 exiles after October 1. In addition, De Klerk also agreed to amend the Internal Security Act in order to eliminate threats to open activity by the ANC and the SACP, and agreed to give serious consideration to lifting the state of emergency in Natal. The Pretoria Minute also committed both sides to “peaceful consultation and cooperation with each other” so as to establish “peace and prosperity for our country.” The international community and South African business and religious leaders unanimously applauded the Pretoria Minute, yet while the CP and the PAC unequivocally rejected the agreement Mangosuthu Buthelezi – showing increasing signs of indignation at feeling marginalized by the ANC – of the IFP warned that the recurring violence would not cease until an agreement was reached between himself and Mandela. Indeed, in the wake of the Pretoria Minute the entire negotiating process was threatened by the recurring violence, and Mandela reproached the government for apparent complicity with the IFP in fomenting violent clashes and for not utilising its capacity to curtail the bloodshed. Furthermore, when the government subsequently announced plans of reforming or repealing the Land Act, the potential for White right wing insurgency was mooted when the CP announced that it had plans for a resistance campaign.²³⁰

Political violence claimed some 1000 victims from August to September 1990, and the chronic violence and alleged security forces complicity somewhat soured the hitherto hopeful climate for negotiations. In private meetings between De Klerk and Mandela in November and December the two leaders struggled to maintain the impetus for the negotiating process. Moreover, the Pretoria Minute caused considerable consternation among many ANC supporters, since it was not at all certain that the government had met the conditions set out in the Harare Declaration for the suspension of armed activities, and the chronic violence that abounded made the suspension of

²³⁰ Quotations taken from The Pretoria Minute, 6 August 1990, in M Hough and A du Plessis, Selected documents and commentaries on negotiations and constitutional development in the RSA: 1989-1994, pp. 54-55. For content see HS Chhabra, New South Africa, pp. 30-32; H Ebrahim, The soul of a nation, pp. 56-64; Human Rights Commission, Checkmate for apartheid?, pp. 15-28.

the armed struggle all the more confusing to many ANC supporters. The ANC Consultative Conference that took place from 14 to 16 December 1990 reflected and augmented Mandela's discontent with the dubious role of the government. While the conference mandated the ANC leadership to continue its exploratory negotiations with the government, the main resolutions adopted at the conference nonetheless prepared the ANC for mass action, and the final resolution adopted at the conference constituted an ultimatum to the government which stated that unless all obstacles to multi-party negotiations are removed before 30 April 1991 the ANC would consider the suspension of the entire negotiating process. After the conference Mandela again met privately with De Klerk, however, and it seemed that the personal rapport between the two leaders might prevail to avert a crisis. The more positive outlook improved further in early 1991 when Mandela also met with Buthelezi, and after an affable discussion the two leaders signed the Royal Hotel Minute on 29 January that committed the signatories to ending the violence between their respective organisations. Despite this high-level agreement, however, political violence continued to escalate. Nevertheless, on 8 January 1991 the ANC injected new life into the negotiating process when it called for the convening of an all-party conference that would – the ANC maintained – address the ANC's demands for a constituent assembly and interim government. This constituted a significant concession on the previous ANC position for elections to be held first, and then talks on a new political order. At the opening of parliament on 1 February 1991 De Klerk reciprocated this gesture by announcing the repealing of the remaining apartheid laws and by unequivocally committing himself and his party to negotiations. Thus following a secret meeting between the ANC and the government at DF Malan airport in Cape Town, the so-called DF Malan Accord was signed. In terms of the Accord the ANC reiterated its commitment to suspend its armed struggle, and agreed that both the ANC and MK would be subject to the law of the land. Mandela and De Klerk also agreed to appoint a Liaison Committee to oversee a phased process for the surrender and licensing of ANC weapons. While the DF Malan Accord effectively removed most obstacles in the way of a multi-party conference, largely as a result of the ongoing violence further procrastination ensued before constitutional negotiations would commence.²³¹

As the ANC's April 30 deadline approached and an adequate response from the government was not forthcoming, the ANC addressed an open letter to the State President, requesting him to

²³¹ DT McKinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle*, pp. 109-117; F Meer (ed.), *The Codesa file*, pp. 30-34; JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, pp. 162-165; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 99-103; H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 67-72; AH Marais, *Negotiations for a democratic South Africa*, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 4-7.

dismiss the Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, and of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok; to impose security measures to radically curtail the spread of violence; to censure the activities of the armed forces and to investigate incidents of police brutality. If these demands were not met, the letter warned, the ANC would suspend all constitutional negotiations by 9 May. Through the ultimatum the ANC implicitly denounced the government as having a hidden agenda of negotiating with one hand and destabilising the ANC with the other, and also condemned the government for not bringing the violence under control while it apparently had the ability to do so. De Klerk appeared sluggish in confronting the concerns raised by the ANC, and wanted to address the ANC's ultimatum in such a way that would not appear to be a sign of weakness. De Klerk was thus loath to directly adhere to the ANC's demands, and instead informed Buthelezi and Mandela of a planned summit on violence to be held in Pretoria on 24-25 May. The proposed summit was denounced by the ANC as a unilateral initiative on the part of the government who was itself implicated in the violence, and on 18 May the ANC announced it was discontinuing constitutional discussions with the NP, before calling for a two-day general strike, mass protests, a consumer boycott, and a day of fasting in solidarity with political prisoners. However, as negotiations between the government and the ANC appeared to be flagging a delegation of religious and business leaders under the guise of the Consultative Business Movement (CBM) endeavoured to foment re-engagement in early May. With violent clashes persisting in Natal and on the Witwatersrand, the delegation met both with Mandela and De Klerk, and as a result on 9 May De Klerk and Mandela reached an interim agreement. De Klerk pledged to implement measures to curb the violence in the townships, while it was agreed that the ANC would boycott De Klerk's proposed summit on violence, although it was understood that the ANC would attend a subsequent conference held by neutral convenors. Thus on 22 June a group of church and business leaders met again in order to discuss ways of convening a national peace conference which all parties could attend. This low-profile mechanism was the germination of a process that would ultimately result in the signing of the National Peace Accord.²³²

The ANC national conference held in Durban on 5 and 6 July 1991 witnessed the election of Mandela to the post of President (Oliver Tambo had been largely incapacitated since suffering a stroke in 1989), and Cyril Ramaphosa (the former general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers) to that of secretary-general. In effect, the conference speeded up the momentum of the negotiating process. While still endorsing the use of mass action to enhance the ANC's position at the negotiating table, the conference nonetheless proceeded to soften the movement's

²³² H Ebrahim, The soul of a nation, pp. 89-90; TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 106-109.

stance on the lifting of economic and trade sanctions, and effectively delivered a fresh mandate to the ANC leadership to continue in earnest with the negotiating process. Barely two weeks after the conclusion of the ANC conference, on the other hand, De Klerk and the NP's position was significantly impaired when details of the government's covert financial support of Inkatha appeared in the media. The extensive repercussions caused by 'Inkathagate' came to threaten to topple De Klerk's government, and in response, the State President announced a Cabinet reshuffle. Partially bowing to the ANC's April demands, Ministers Vlok and Malan were demoted from their posts (yet not dismissed from the Cabinet). Behind-the-scenes arrangements and bilateral meetings in preparation for a peace conferences continued, however, and amid unprecedented levels of violence the first multi-party agreement – the National Peace Accord – was eventually signed on 14 September 1991. Under the terms of the National Peace Accord the signatories committed themselves and their political parties to a peaceful process of negotiations to democracy in South Africa. The Accord also specified codes of conduct for political parties and organisations, the police and the SADF, and also created several institutions and mechanisms to facilitate the containment of violence and dispute resolution and compliance. Subsequently, between 25 and 27 October more than 400 delegates representing anti-apartheid organisations gathered in Durban for the inaugural conference of the Patriotic Front – a political collective spearheaded by the ANC and the PAC intended as a front for Black political unity. The delegates committed themselves unanimously to convene an all-party negotiating convention at the soonest opportunity. Thus in the wake of the establishing of the Patriotic Front, the ANC conferred with various political organisations – including the NP – and from these consultations the multilateral constitutional negotiations were scheduled for 29 and 30 November 1991. The negotiations would take place at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, and would be called the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). On 20 November it was announced that the commencement of the talks had been rescheduled to 20 December, and thus on this date the parties gathered in Kempton Park for the historic opening of the multi-party constitutional negotiations.²³³

While political dissonance persisted between the ANC and the government amid excruciating negotiations and escalating violence, the less overt dynamics fashioning the progressive

²³³ National Peace Accord, 14 September 1991, in M Hough and A du Plessis, Selected documents and commentaries on negotiations and constitutional development in the RSA: 1989-1994, pp. 58-66, 81-95; M Robertson and E Bulbring, Peace gets its chance, *Sunday Times*, 2 September 1991, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), The miracle of a freed nation, p. 50; F Meer (ed.), The Codesa file, pp. 34-45; H Ebrahim, The soul of a nation, pp. 88-98; TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 106-109; HS Chhabra, New South Africa, pp. 43-44; JM Rantete, The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa, pp. 172-174.

dominance of the economic balance of power were engineering increased economic collusion between the business community, the government, and the ANC. While addressing a joint session of parliament on 17 June FW de Klerk was delighted to announce that “The year 1991 will become known in history as the year in which South Africa finally removed statutory discrimination – apartheid – from its system. Now it belongs to history.” Tacitly acknowledging the perceptible shift in the balance of power, De Klerk proclaimed that now “everybody is liberated from the moral dilemma caused by this legislation which was born and nurtured under different circumstances in a departed era.”²³⁴ By taking the coherent step of abolishing the fundamentals (i.e. the apartheid legislation) of apartheid, De Klerk and the NP facilitated the gradual albeit inexorably dominant impulsion of the economic balance of power in South Africa. Various publicly under-emphasised and behind-the-scenes events of the early 1990s, however – and the impact of these multi-faceted events on the ANC as the impending political rulers of South Africa – would confirm and augment the prevailing predominance of the economic balance of power on the eve of post-apartheid South Africa. In this regard numerous machinations engineered and perpetuated by the NP, South African business leaders, as well as various international authorities contributed to the ANC’s eventual considerable embrace of the economic balance of power. Essentially, however, historical antecedents, as well as the concomitant economic realities and exigencies of post-apartheid South Africa would determine the overbearing relevance of the economic balance of power (and therewith the utter insignificance of exclusively political concerns) in post-apartheid South Africa.

The perception that De Klerk had wilfully ‘sold out’ South Africa’s White population in dismantling apartheid was occasionally expressed among Whites in South Africa after 1990. Yet, as has been shown, for De Klerk the decision to discontinue apartheid formed part of a calculated albeit enforced causative resolution. By choosing to forego the fundamental constructs of the political balance of power in favour of embracing the economic balance of power, De Klerk had in fact hoped to exchange moribund White political hegemony for the perpetuation of White economic eminence in the prevailing dispensation in South Africa. Thus the NP’s drastic reformation of the South African polity can also be attributed to De Klerk’s perception that an economic balance of power in South Africa devoid of political dictates could be fashioned to the perpetual material and social advantage of most Whites in South Africa. Within the confines of the protracted negotiation process De Klerk and his reformist advisers thus endeavoured to play for time, calculating that by involving numerous political participants a convoluted situation

²³⁴ Quotations taken from FW de Klerk, End of an era (Speech of FW de Klerk to joint session of Parliament), RSA Policy Review, Volume 4, Number 9, p. 85.

would be produced that could allow the NP to extract concessions from the ANC so as to preclude a radical outcome. By championing the primacy of the free market with minimal state intervention the NP sought to draw the ANC into a pervasive consensus underlining the eminence of the so-called neo-liberal virtues of market liberty and deregulation as the optimal conduits to engineering economic growth. By means of a negotiated settlement, therefore, the NP sought to put an end to the political stalemate and therewith produce an environment conducive to stability for optimal economic growth after the expected infusion of overseas investment. Moreover, a negotiated settlement with an elaborate system of checks and balances would prohibit the ruling ANC from engaging in unilateral actions. In this regard the NP progressively echoed the refrain of South Africa's large business conglomerates who maintained that South Africa's remaining racial inequalities could be addressed through a redistribution of social surplus – which could be enhanced only through a market-orientated growth strategy – rather than through radical state intervention or forced redistribution of wealth.²³⁵

To this end the NP sought – via an elongated period of negotiations and a neo-liberal settlement – to engross significant elements of the liberation movement and the Black population in its drive to harness the prevailing economic balance of power to safeguard most of the established economic order. Thus under the leadership of De Klerk the NP sought to establish alliances with Black business and community leaders and with moderate Black political organisations, apart from appointing non-White Cabinet ministers and opening its membership to people of all races. Relations between the state and South Africa's business community also became effusive with the government's neo-liberal initiatives, as was manifested when De Klerk appointed Derek Keys – an executive from General Corporation (Gencor), a South African mining conglomerate – to his Cabinet in 1991. In fact, after 1990 the De Klerk government, private local capital interests, and international financial institutions came to virtually uniformly attack and disparage any 'business unfriendly' ANC economic ideas as naïve and obsolete. Indeed, the major South African business conglomerates launched an unremitting public and private crusade between 1990 and 1994 to convince the ANC of the inexorable superiority of neo-liberal economic policies. In claiming that neo-liberal economic policies were essential if foreign investment was to be secured, the campaign launched by the big conglomerates was well supported by most sections of the South African media as well as by international financial agencies and Western diplomatic representatives. In manoeuvres designed to pre-empt radical restructuring of big corporations

²³⁵ MJ Murray, *Revolution deferred. The painful birth of post-apartheid South Africa*, pp. 11-18; A Habib and V Padayachee, Economic policy and power relations in South Africa's transition to democracy, in *World Development*, Volume 28, Number 2, 2000, pp. 246-248.

once the ANC inevitably came to power, after 1990 several conglomerates propelled Black people into executive and management positions and transferred some assets to Black-owned or -managed consortia. In addition, the big conglomerates also commissioned a multitude of business advisory groups and private consultancy firms to fashion futuristic market-driven growth strategies that distinctively derided the prospects of state intervention methods as useful mechanisms for successfully carrying out the redistribution of material resources and creating economic equality.²³⁶

Thus after De Klerk's momentous reforms of 1990 the leading political figures of the ANC were inundated by neo-liberal ideas vigorously propagated by numerous influential South African and international factions. Moreover, because the ANC had placed so little emphasis on economic policy formulation before 1990 the movement was positively on the defensive in terms of the South African economic debate. The ANC simply could not forthwith evince a set of defined progressive economic strategies to effectively counter those advanced by the state, local business interests, and international financial and diplomatic institutions. Any radical interventionist thrusts in ANC policy formulation were hobbled, moreover, by the movement's historical appeal as a champion of non-racial policies. The ANC was thus obliged to appeal to Whites, as well a growing Black middle class of professionals and businesspeople. In addition, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communist Eastern Europe the radical wing in the ANC favouring state interventionist socio-economic policies was dealt a critical blow. The collapse of the ANC's erstwhile Communist benefactors also meant that the United States and its allies Britain, Germany, and Japan, were to be the most important international actors during South Africa's transitional period. The price these international actors demanded for the pressures they applied to the South African government during apartheid – and also the prerequisite they stipulated for future investment in and aid to South Africa – was a commitment from the ANC to embrace neo-liberal free-market principles and to shun radical state interventions. Accordingly, the ANC was now also afforded full access to international financial institutions, banks, and corporations, and systematically a welter of contacts (i.e. conferences, workshops, and graduate programmes) began to develop between leading members of the ANC and these international institutions – who uniformly impressed on the ANC the imperative of neo-liberal policies. Additionally, the ANC

²³⁶ I Taylor and P Vale, South Africa's transition revisited: globalisation as vision and virtue, in *Global Society*, Volume 14, Number 3, 2000, pp. 403-405; MJ Murray, *Revolution deferred*, pp. 13-16, 20-22; M Robertson, Keys brought in to end dithering about economy, *Sunday Times*, 8 December 1991, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), *The miracle of a freed nation*, p. 52; V Padayachee, The evolution of South Africa's international financial relations and policy: 1985-1995, in J Michie and V Padayachee (eds.), *The political economy of South Africa's transition. Policy perspectives in the late 1990s*, pp. 41-49.

also came under increasing pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), and the Consultative Business Movement (CBM) to abandon its proposed inward industrialisation programme and to rather adopt an investment-led, export-orientated growth strategy.²³⁷

The impact of these sustained and multifarious influences on the ANC – and therewith the increased collusion between the ANC and the government that progressively facilitated the unhindered emergence of the economic balance of power – became more perceptible as the transitional period progressed in South Africa. In May 1990 Alan Hirsch (an economic historian that also acted as an advisor to the ANC) noted that “On the side of the ANC, a lot of people who a few years ago would have accepted a more radical socialist position now accept a social democratic position...The position of the majority of the ANC economists is very clear: most of what’s in private hands should remain in private hands.” In May 1990 Christo Nel of the CBM was also quoted as saying that “You now find black and white leaders talking on the phone, having lunch. In the transition and post-transition period, relations will exist...We have divergences, but we have enough in common to run the country.” Indeed, the essential consequence that the NP and its business allies envisaged to result from dialogue and collusion with the ANC was a working compromise that preserved the economic system of South Africa while deconstructing the more odious political aspects of racialism and minority rule. Thus, already in the late 1980s the NP had begun to implement neo-liberal economic policies with the intention of linking large sections of the South African economy to the international business world. For a post-apartheid ANC-ruled South Africa, the NP strategists and business leaders intended, the costs of de-linking the South African economy in this regard by launching a radical interventionist economic programme would simply be impracticable. In this way the hands of the ANC were gradually tied as the policies and reforms initiated by the NP had created an irreversible momentum that could not be inverted for fear of alienating the now all-important market. Crucially, thus, in this way the antecedents of the pre-eminence of the economic balance of power was established in South Africa. With these multitudinous machinations and subtle albeit forceful processes the inevitability of the economic balance of power largely unhindered by

²³⁷ J Michie and V Padayachee, The South African policy debate resumes, in J Michie and V Padayachee (eds.), The political economy of South Africa’s transition, pp. 227-229; E Webster and G Adler, Toward a class compromise in South Africa’s ‘Double Transition’: bargained liberalization and the consolidation of democracy, in Politics and Society, Volume 27, Number 3, September 1999, pp. 369-371; MJ Murray, Revolution deferred, pp. 20-22.

any overriding political interventions from the left or the right in a post-apartheid South Africa was assured.²³⁸

In an effort to address the hiatus in ANC economic planning that existed in 1990, in November 1991 the organisation set up its Macroeconomic Research Group (MERG) to develop a new macroeconomic model for South Africa. Speaking at the opening of MERG on 23 November 1991, Mandela gave expression to his perspicacious understanding of the current machinations that the ANC were encountering. Assuring his guests that “The economy of this country always has and will continue to remain central to our struggle for national liberation,” Mandela stated that

“On the one hand the black majority is desperately fighting to redress historical injustices and present inequalities and on the other the white minority government is using every means at its disposal to maintain economic power in the hands of the whites and big business in particular. The intention is of course, to ensure that whites continue to enjoy a privileged life style. While engaging us in the arena of political negotiations the government is implementing economic strategies that go well into the future and might even tie the hands of a democratically elected government. The aim is of course to make it as difficult as possible for a new government to implement policies of redistribution and socio-economic justice. The systematic exclusion of the democratic movement from the arena of policy formulation significantly weakened its ability to formulate policies.”

Thus, Mandela concluded, there is “a need to increase the capacity of the ANC and the entire democratic movement in the field of economics.” When the MERG report (which was perceptibly less neo-liberal in structure by calling for the restructuring of the economy through initiatives in business and the labour market, and by envisaging a strong private sector interacting with a strong public sector) was eventually tabled in 1993, however, it was ineffectual to offset the increasing economic collusion between the ANC and its new business allies. The ANC policy documents that preceded the MERG report, moreover, increasingly reflected the ANC’s emerging neo-liberal stance. While the ANC’s 1991 draft resolution (issued in preparation for the 48th National ANC conference), for instance, still echoed previous calls for a mixed economy, the 1992 draft policy guidelines (issued in preparation for the ANC Policy Conference of May 1992) was highly supportive of market forces and underlined the protection of all South Africans’ property rights.

²³⁸ Quotations and content taken from C Charney, Convergence, in *Leadership SA*, Volume 10, Number four, 1991, pp. 25-30. For content see also I Taylor and P Vale, South Africa’s transition revisited: globalisation as vision and virtue, in *Global Society*, Volume 14, Number 3, 2000, pp. 405-407.

While the policy guidelines eventually adopted at the May 1992 conference was slightly less compliant to neo-liberal economic policies than the earlier draft, the general direction of the prevailing economic perceptions within the higher echelons of the ANC was clear. In the end, as the bedrock of the first post-apartheid government the ANC would come to embrace financial and monetary stringency with a restricted role for the state in terms of redistribution. Trade and industrial policies would be restructured in accordance with an export-orientated strategy, and the market would be instrumental in attempting to foment economic revival through the achievement of sustainable growth and the encouragement of foreign and domestic investment. In short, in the absence of radical political interventions the post-apartheid government led by the ANC would operate without any overbearing political concerns – thus within the strict confines of the economic balance of power.²³⁹

While the ANC and the NP might have experienced increasing collusion with regard to economic affairs, much dissonance was still to transpire within the political negotiation process before a settlement would be reached. On 20 December 1991 238 delegates from nineteen political parties along with nearly 1000 international observers thus gathered at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park for the first plenary meeting of the so-called Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). CODESA 1 – as this opening gathering became known – was largely a ceremonial event concerned primarily with developing guidelines for future multiparty negotiations. From the outset, however, CODESA 1 was an abrasive forum with suspicion and wrangling abounding between the ANC and the NP. Significantly, De Klerk and his negotiating team still expected to attain structural guarantees and veto privileges for minorities from what they envisaged would be protracted constitutional negotiations, while the ANC negotiating team dismissed the NP's archaic demands for guarantees and visualised rapid and decisive constitutional negotiations that would pave the way for conventional majority rule. The opening day of proceedings at CODESA 1 was seared, moreover, by a symptomatic personal clash between De Klerk and Mandela. When De Klerk derided the ANC for refusing to officially and unequivocally terminate its armed struggle, a visibly incensed Mandela delivered a vehement retort, denouncing De Klerk's integrity and scorning the legitimacy of his leadership and his government. After De Klerk and Mandela had met privately after their virulent encounter, however, a rapprochement was effected the following day when the two leaders shook hands

²³⁹ Quotations taken from Opening address by cde Nelson Mandela on the occasion of the signing of a statement of intent to set up a national capacity for economic research and policy formulation, 23 November 1991. For content see H Marais, South Africa: limits to change, pp. 136-139; N Natrass, Politics and economics in ANC economic policy, in African Affairs (1994), 93, pp. 352-355; N Bruce, No easy road, in Leadership SA, Volume 11, Number three, 1992, pp. 4-6.

publicly during the proceedings. In the end CODESA 1 culminated in the signing of a Declaration of Intent of purposes and principles in which the gathered parties committed themselves to a non-sexist, non-racial multi-party democratic state with regular elections on a common voters' roll. In addition, with the formation of five working groups CODESA was transformed into a standing body. The five working groups – which negotiated issues regarding the principles and structures of a new constitution; the creation of a climate conducive to peaceful political participation; the structure of the transitional government and the future path of the transition; the constitutional future of the Black homelands; and time-frames for the implementation of decisions – met for the first time on 20 January 1992, and were required to report back when the second plenary of CODESA was expected to convene in March or April 1992.²⁴⁰

In his speech at the opening of Parliament on 24 January 1992, De Klerk endorsed the preliminary agreement reached at CODESA 1, but stressed that any major changes would require approval via a referendum in which all South Africans would participate. While negotiating with the ANC De Klerk was put under consistent pressure by the White right wing, fronted by the CP as the official opposition in parliament. In engaging in negotiations with the ANC, the CP argued, De Klerk had left the White rank-and-file in the lurch. The issue of a White backlash to De Klerk's actions came to a head when a by-election was held in the town of Potchefstroom in the Transvaal, and the measure of importance De Klerk attached to gaining the town for the NP was clearly portrayed when he himself proceeded to campaign in the town. Accordingly, when the NP candidate lost by some two thousand votes De Klerk took the drastic reactive step in February of announcing that a White referendum – not a general referendum for all South Africans – would be held in March to test White attitudes on the transition. While White political leaders thus proceeded to jockey anachronistically to influence White voters only, the ANC condemned the 'racist' ballot yet encouraged Whites to cast a 'yes' vote in favour of the transition. As the world watched nervously the pre-election campaigns proceeded amid violence as 270 Blacks were killed in townships in the three-week period preceding the election. In the event, however, the White right wing and the CP were devastated when 68.6 of White voters cast their ballots in a 'yes' vote in favour of the transition. In effect, the overwhelming 'yes' vote constituted a tacit denunciation of the political balance of power by the White minority.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ R Spitz (with M Chaskalson), *The politics of transition. A hidden history of South Africa's negotiated settlement*, pp. 18-26; AH Marais, *Negotiations for a democratic South Africa*, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 11-20; MJ Murray, *Revolution deferred*, pp. 180-182; HS Chhabra, *New South Africa*, pp. 97-101; H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 98-105; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 201-206.

²⁴¹ TRH Davenport, *The transfer of power in South Africa*, pp. 10-12; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 201-206; F Meer (ed.), *The Codesa file*, pp. 86-87; HS Chhabra, *New South Africa*, pp. 101-104.

Complementary to the positive outcome of the White referendum, the CODESA working groups, meanwhile, were apparently making encouraging progress. The media reported excitedly on the significant compromises that were transpiring, and various political leaders made hopeful public statements on the auspicious developments that were now emerging in the negotiations leading up to CODESA 2. In January 1992, for instance, Mandela was quoted as saying that he would be prepared to reserve seats for Whites in the new Parliament. During February Mandela also insisted that the ANC was rethinking its economic policy and was moving away from nationalisation, while Walter Sisulu maintained that the ANC could call for the termination of sanctions before the end of May. The resounding endorsement of the NP's strategy of negotiation inherent in the referendum results of March 1992, however, apparently gave the NP leadership the incentive to harden their stance in the ongoing negotiations with the ANC. Thus while working groups 1, 3, 4, and 5 were making admirable progress in preparation for CODESA 2, working group 2 – which focused on the principles and structures of a new constitution – became ominously deadlocked on matters relating to the future regulations of a constituent assembly that would draft the new constitution. Indeed, two days of excruciating negotiations at the CODESA 2 plenary on 15 and 16 May 1992, moreover, could also not resolve the deadlock. The relatively minor yet decisive points of disagreement that persisted at CODESA 2 were indicative of the delegates' belief that they still had options other than compromise. A team of analysts at the Centre for Policy Studies subsequently concluded that the deadlock at CODESA 2 was attributable to the NP's unchanging desire for a slow transition to nothing less than power-sharing, which contrasted sharply with the ANC's aspirations of attaining quick majority rule through a streamlined CODESA negotiating process. With these incompatible approaches CODESA and the working groups were thus disbanded as the negotiations deadlocked. Further constitutional negotiations were expected to resume at the end of June, yet renewed violence and acrimony would again intervene in the negotiating process.²⁴²

While the ANC Policy Conference of May 1992 may have augmented the ANC leadership's endorsement of the prevailing economic balance of power, in the wake of the stalled CODESA talks the conference also decided on a course of mass action to put pressure on the government. The envisaged 'rolling mass action' plan – spearheaded by the trade union federation COSATU –

²⁴² F Meer (ed.), *The Codesa file*, pp. 83-86; TRH Davenport, *The transfer of power in South Africa*, pp. 12-14; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 209-212; HS Chhabra, *New South Africa*, pp. 107-108; I Sarakinsky, The politics behind South Africa's negotiated settlement, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Volume 20, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 71-74.

entailed coordinated strikes and street demonstrations as a show of strength in an attempt to force the government to agree to an interim government before the end of June. In explaining the ANC's recourse to mass action, Walter Sisulu subsequently told *Leadership SA* that "Through these actions we have moved the negotiation process forward. Our actions were not negative. Great frustration was building up in our constituency after the deadlock in negotiations. It was endangering the whole process. The mass action campaign has helped to defuse this frustration." By mid-June, however, many townships were seething with strife between rival IFP and ANC factions, and on the evening of 17 June – the day after the ANC launched its mass action campaign with rallies and stayaways – between 20 and 50 ANC supporters were killed by IFP marauders in the ANC stronghold of Boipatong, a township just south of Johannesburg. In the wake of the massacre Mandela again accused the De Klerk government of direct complicity in the escalating violence, and immediately announced the suspension of all talks with the government. After the ANC leadership had met on 23 June, the government was presented with fourteen ANC demands for the resumption of talks while Mandela called for a UN Security Council meeting on political violence and the deployment of an international observer force in South Africa. As a result a UN Security Council meeting – which representatives of virtually all of the 19 CODESA parties attended – was convened on 15 July, and following the meeting former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was delegated by the UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali to visit South Africa as a special UN envoy later in July. As a result of the Vance mission, the UN would dispatch ten officials to South Africa to monitor the ANC's mass action campaign, and eventually on 17 August the UN was to adopt a resolution authorising the deployment of a fifty-member UN observer mission to South Africa.²⁴³

The ANC's mass action campaign, however, continued. The general strike that started on 3 August was a significant display of power by the ANC as some four million workers (according to the ANC) stayed at home, and on the third day of the strike Mandela led a peaceful demonstration of perhaps as much as 100 000 people through the streets of Pretoria. In September the ANC leadership aimed to take the mass action campaign into the homelands where they believed recalcitrant dictators were hampering free political activity. Thus on 7 September – despite strong protests from the South African government – an ANC cross-border march was launched to Bisho, the capital of Ciskei. An opportunistic change of direction by a group of ANC marchers into the town itself (as opposed to the stadium outside the town), however, provoked a

²⁴³ Quotation taken from *Changing the guard* (Interview with Walter Sisulu), in *Partnership*, an edition of *Leadership SA*, September 1992, p. 22. For content see H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 133-134; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 212-217.

violent response from Ciskeian soldiers, and as a result 28 marchers and one Ciskeian soldier were killed in the ensuing skirmish. The initial reactions to the Bisho shootings seemed certain to consign South Africa's transition to the abyss, yet in fact Bisho was to have the inadvertent effect of pushing the parties back to the negotiating table. Secret talks had already been taking place since 21 August between the ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa and the NP's Minister of Constitutional Affairs Roelf Meyer, and from these talks it appeared that an auspicious understanding had been emerging. After accepting an invitation from De Klerk, Mandela and his ANC delegation eventually convened with the government on 26 September, and after an eight-hour session an agreement was reached, the so-called Record of Understanding. In terms of the agreement the NP agreed to the phased release of some five hundred prisoners convicted of murder in the period before 1990; the fencing of hostels; and a ban on the public display of cultural weapons, except during certain cultural events. In return the ANC agreed to reconsider its programme of mass action. In effect, with the Record of Understanding both the ANC and the NP agreed to reconvene multi-party negotiations, yet the outlook for these now looked more auspicious since a bilateral agreement had been reached between the ANC and the NP that also envisaged the introduction of 'deadlock-breaking mechanisms.'²⁴⁴

The Bisho shootings also contributed to a marked decrease in militant ardour within the ANC. In the wake of the Record of Understanding, moreover, resolution of the internal differences within the organisation regarding the negotiation process were abetted when the ANC leadership considered a document on negotiations authored by SACP chairperson Joe Slovo. Holding out the olive branch inherent in his so-called 'sunset clauses,' Slovo proposed an extended period of power-sharing to guide South Africa until the end of the century and to the complete implementation of a new constitution. Realising the inevitability of compromise with the government, Slovo envisaged the power-sharing deal to create significant convergence between the ANC and the NP so as to eventually guarantee a smooth passage to majority rule. The policy of compulsory power-sharing eventually gained approval within the higher echelons of the ANC, and was subsequently taken up in the document *Negotiations: A strategic perspective*, which was released in November 1992. The IFP and Buthelezi, however, had been irked by the Record of Understanding and the apparent sidelining of the IFP implicit in the agreement, and as a result Buthelezi, the Ciskei leader Oupa Gqozo, Bophuthatswana's Lucas Mangope, the CP and its offshoot Afrikaner Volksunie (AVU), and the Afrikaner Freedom Foundation conferred as an

²⁴⁴ TRH Davenport, *The transfer of power in South Africa*, pp. 14-16; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 217-220; JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, pp. 184-185, 197-198.

opposing bloc and consequently formed the Concerned South Africans Group (COSAG). Buthelezi's apparent alienation also exposed divisions within the NP between those who supported a coalition with the IFP and the more reformist faction advocating a comprehensive settlement with the ANC. The Record of Understanding and the implicit demotion within the NP of Buthelezi as the party's prime ally, however, signalled the prevailing of the reformist-minded faction within the NP, and – abetted by the conciliatory attitudes prevailing within the ANC in the form of the 'sunset clause' – the NP now increasingly assumed the unprecedented predilection of an unconditional willingness to eschew the last vestiges of the political balance of power and reach a lasting agreement with the ANC.²⁴⁵

Thus in an attempt to precipitate a settlement, delegations from the NP and the ANC convened at a secluded game lodge from 2 to 5 December 1992 for a meeting that produced further agreements. An additional meeting followed on 20 January 1993, and a subsequent round of talks eventually culminated in a meeting in Cape Town from 10 to 12 February. In these bilateral meetings concessions were made by both sides, as agreement was precipitated by the increasing political (as opposed to only economic) collusion between the ANC and the NP after Slovo's 'sunset clause.' The journalist Allister Sparks later delineated the conspicuous progress in negotiations by stating that it had taken "the imminent prospect of a national disaster to shock the two major parties into realizing that they had better sink their differences and work together or there would be nothing left for them to fight over." Even though the IFP, the CP, and the PAC were loath to sanction the agreements reached bilaterally between the major negotiating partners, the outlook for the multi-party talks (now reconstituted as the Multi-party Negotiating Process or MPNP) that resumed on 1 April 1993 at the World Trade Centre was much improved due to the underlying collusion between the NP and the ANC. The advent of March, however, had also seen a wave of violence in Natal that continued into early April. Furthermore, a new and perilous crisis was initiated when Chris Hani – the leader of the SACP – was assassinated by White right wing extremists in April. With a tremendously violent backlash to the assassination of the popular leader expected in the townships, Mandela proceeded to call for peace and restraint, and while clashes did occur throughout the country in response to Hani's death, the assassination – like the Bisho killings – in the end hastened convergence when then MPNP resumed its proceedings on 26 April. As the talks proceeded and increased collusion transpired between the ANC and the NP,

²⁴⁵ H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 140-144; R Spitz (with M Chaskalson), *The politics of transition*, pp. 30-32; TRH Davenport, *The transfer of power in South Africa*, pp. 15-16; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 219-222; JM Rantete, *The African National Congress and the negotiated settlement in South Africa*, pp. 197-205.

the smaller parties continued to spar as they recognised their belittled role in the new dispensation that was inevitably to proceed from the current negotiations. Thus the PAC continued its violent attacks on Whites, and the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) – a new Afrikaner assemblage comprising virtually every significant right wing group – demanded Afrikaner self-determination. Yet despite this persistent dissension and the political violence that continued to engulf South Africa, the negotiations now continued.²⁴⁶

By early June the MPNP had set a tentative election date of 27 April 1994, despite opposition from the COSAG members. The White right wing was also gradually facing up to the prospect of majority rule. On 25 June the militant White right wing Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) commandeered a peaceful demonstration (organised by the AVF to oppose a 24 June MPNP decision to reject the proposition of an Afrikaner homeland or *volkstaat*) and proceeded to invade the World Trade Centre with armed commandos, committing acts of vandalism and insulting negotiators. The AWB incursion was thoroughly condemned by most of the negotiating parties, and in the end discredited the right wing's case for self-determination. Unperturbed, the MPNP negotiators ratified the 27 April 1994 election date on 2 July 1993, despite that the IFP and the CP permanently abandoned the MPNP as a result (although the CP and IFP would still take part in bilateral negotiations). The ratification of the election date, however, also set off a fresh wave of violence, and consequently the month of July would become the most violent month in South Africa since August 1990 as 605 people lost their lives in political violence. In another callous incident on the 25th of July, for instance, PAC commandos massacred twelve churchgoers at St. James Anglican Church in Cape Town. Nevertheless, as the rampant violence continued into August and September, by 8 September the MPNP finalised the details of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), the creation of the independent electoral commission, and the media and broadcasting legislation. The TEC – which would operate with the Cabinet in preparing the way for elections – would be composed of one representative from each of the parties in the MPNP that acceded to its existence. On 24 September the TEC bill was finally adopted by Parliament, and thus, while addressing the Special Committee on Apartheid at the UN on the

²⁴⁶ Quotation and content taken from TD Sisk, Democratization in South Africa, pp. 222-230. For content see also I Sarakinsky, The politics behind South Africa's negotiated settlement, in Journal for Contemporary History, Volume 20, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 76-80; JA du Pisani, Negotiating a democratic South Africa: bilateral and multiparty negotiations, June 1992 to December 1993, in Journal for Contemporary History, Volume 19, Issue 2, December 1994, pp. 41-48.

same day, Mandela allowed himself to call for the termination of sanctions against South Africa.²⁴⁷

Despite concerns to get the Freedom Alliance aboard the transitional process (on 7 October 1993 the discordant groups involved with COSAG had reconstituted themselves as a coalition under the name of the Freedom Alliance), during the first two weeks of November the final areas of disagreement between the ANC, the NP, and other parties at the MPNP were resolved. The final settlement was sealed, in fact, in a summit between Mandela and De Klerk (assisted by Ramaphosa and Meyer) on 16 November. During this meeting it was agreed that the power-sharing Government of National Unity (GNU) would continue for five years, and that a single ballot would be used in the April 1994 elections. Significantly, in this meeting De Klerk also withdrew the residual element of what had been his celebrated group rights proposal for the transition: a veto power in Cabinet. This was indeed a historic concession. In jettisoning the residue of his group rights brainchild De Klerk had ultimately jettisoned the last vestiges of the political balance of power in South Africa. More than forty years of political meandering and almost four years of painstaking negotiations had finally resulted in the belated complete abolition of the predominance of political concerns over the conventional economic matters of governance. Just after midnight on 18 November thus, the MPNP proceeded to adopt the agreement that incorporated South Africa's transitional settlement. Claire Robertson of the *Sunday Times*, who was covering the closing negotiations, afterwards wrote that "It began terribly late and took place in an echoing hypermarket of a room. No hymns or anthems marked its passing. But at fourteen minutes past midnight on Thursday, November 18, the plenary session of the negotiations finally killed off centuries of white rule in South Africa...Those gripped by this irritating country from birth or out of a horrible fascination kept watch as South Africa's future was sealed in the dead of night." As the evening finally wound up Cyril Ramaphosa stood in the "shadows above the hall," commenting on how tired he was. Yet in one final "soundbite for the night," Ramaphosa exclaimed "But it's a good package. We got a good deal."²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 229-237; I Sarakinsky, The politics behind South Africa's negotiated settlement, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Volume 20, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 82-88; JA du Pisani, Negotiating a democratic South Africa: bilateral and multiparty negotiations, June 1992 to December 1993, in *Journal for Contemporary History*, Volume 19, Issue 2, December 1994, pp. 50-68; H Ebrahim, *The soul of a nation*, pp. 160-168.

²⁴⁸ Quotations and content taken from C Robertson, Sekunjalo! – It has happened!, *Sunday Times*, 21 November 1993, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), *The miracle of a freed nation*, pp. 117-118. For content see also TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 239-243.

After the settlement had been concluded on 18 November, the Interim Constitution bill was only finalised by the negotiators on 2 December, and was subsequently enacted in a special session of Parliament. Eventually on 28 January 1994 State President De Klerk gave his assent to Act 200 of 1993 – South Africa's first non-racial, democratic constitution. Amid repeated efforts to persuade the Freedom Alliance members to join the election mechanisms, the TEC took office in December. On 10 January 1994 the Ciskei government opted to join the TEC, and consequently the homeland was reincorporated into South Africa during March. In the same month Mangope's government in Bophuthatswana was toppled amid civil unrest, and consequently this homeland was also incorporated into South Africa. In the hope of securing the participation in the elections of the IFP and the AFV, the deadline for parties to register for the elections was extended first from 10 February to 4 March, and subsequently to 9 March. In mid-February the government and the ANC introduced a package of concessions in an attempt to lure the IFP and the AFV to participate in the elections. The concessions included the introduction of greater provincial powers and a constitutional principle envisaging Afrikaner self-determination if sufficient support for an Afrikaner *volkstaat* could be proven. The latter concession proved sufficient for a faction of the AFV under former SADF general Constand Viljoen to register for the elections under the banner of the Freedom Front, yet it was only after a protracted period of international mediation and further concessions that Buthelezi was coaxed on 19 April to sanction the IFP's participation in the election. With the prolonged indecision regarding the IFP's participation in the elections and the uncertainty of the transitional process violence continued to plague South Africa until the advent of the election itself. Yet as the political balance of power was officially consigned to history with the 1994 elections, so the concomitant political violence gradually receded as the insecurity of the transition diminished.²⁴⁹

Gradually, thus, the political convergence between the NP and the ANC came to emulate the economic collusion between the two parties that produced the introduction of the economic balance of power in South Africa. The NP approach to the economy was codified in a document entitled *The restructuring of the South African economy: A Normative Model Approach*. The so-called Normative Economic Model (NEM), which was released in March 1993, set as its goals the restructuring of the market economy to achieve a 4.5 per cent GDP growth rate and a 3 per cent increase in employment by 1997. Significantly, the NEM also envisaged the removal of political and socio-economic barriers to the market, and in terms of the plan the need for redistribution would be addressed through privatisation and deregulation, the benefits of which

²⁴⁹ R Spitz (with M Chaskalson), *The politics of transition*, pp. 43-44; TD Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*, pp. 242-245.

would systematically trickle down to the broader population. At the time of its release the ANC and COSATU utterly condemned the NEM, as did mainstream business journals, and consequently the NEM was apparently consigned to the sidelines of the economic debate. Three years later, however, the macroeconomic strategies enshrined by the ANC and the GNU would incorporate several of the NEM's elements. Mandela's speech at the launching of the ANC's election campaign in the Western Cape in 1993, moreover, was "infused," according to one journalist, "with the spirit of the market...He told businessmen their property would be secure under his rule. He spoke in broad terms of the elimination of tariff barriers, of scrapping exchange control, and of constructing a prosperous society..."²⁵⁰

In fact, after a number of macroeconomic concessions the ANC leadership had by late 1993 come to adopt positions increasingly consistent with neo-liberal policies. By late 1992 nationalisation had effectively disappeared as a serious option in the economic agenda of the ANC, and the economic policy adopted at the ANC Policy Conference of May 1992 envisaged very little regulation of foreign investment and was very receptive to foreign investors, guaranteeing them national treatment and economic stability. In addition, by late 1993 the ANC accepted a clause in the constitution that guaranteed the independence of the Reserve Bank. The ANC also agreed to retain the conservative Chris Stals as governor of the Reserve Bank, and the NP's Derek Keys was also retained in the Cabinet of the power-sharing GNU after 1994. In November 1993 the ANC also concluded a secret \$850 million loan agreement with the IMF, and in return for obtaining the loan the ANC pledged not to ease monetary policy, to prioritise inflation reduction, to limit government expenditure, and to refrain from raising taxes. These concessions and agreements were not in line with the thinking of both the MERG report and of the groups drafting the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – which was to be the ANC's election manifesto for the 1994 election – and hence on its release MERG was largely shelved while the RDP was amended to make it more consistent with the ANC's evolving macroeconomic policies. In essence, in line with most of the proposals of MERG the RDP envisaged a role for the state in leading and regulating the market to meet the twin goals of reconstruction and development. Yet in other aspects the RDP was subsequently amended by the ANC leadership to accord with its neo-liberal outlook. In particular, the RDP was altered to allow a much greater outward-orientated growth strategy that underlined the seminal value of export growth. Tariffs were also

²⁵⁰ Quotations taken from P Wilhelm, In the marketplace of hope, in *Leadership SA*, Volume 12, Number 4, 1993, p. 10. For content see A Habib and V Padayachee, Economic policy and power relations in South Africa's transition to democracy, in *World Development*, Volume 28, Number 2, 2000, p. 248; H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, pp. 129-130; T Moll, Keeping the window open, in *Leadership SA*, Volume 12, Number 2, 1993, pp. 31-32.

to be reduced, and a high premium would be placed on foreign investment. In fact, in the period 1990-1995 the ANC's international financial strategies were systematically stripped of all commitments to the regulation of South Africa's relations with international financial institutions and foreign investors. In sum, as the ANC increasingly embraced conservative neo-liberal economic policies in the absence of any radical political interventions, the economic balance of power was taking palpable shape within the South African polity.²⁵¹

Thus in what the Commonwealth Observer Group to the South African Elections called "a free and clear expression of the will of the South African people," with its RDP election manifesto the ANC proceeded to win a handsome 62.7 per cent of the vote in the 1994 elections.²⁵² After he had received the provisional result of the elections, in a speech on television on 2 May 1994 Mandela acclaimed what he regarded as "indeed a joyous night for the human spirit." While acknowledging the celebratory atmosphere and the advent of a new epoch in the history of South Africa, Mandela assured the public that

"Tomorrow, the entire ANC leadership and I will be back at our desks. We are rolling up our sleeves to begin tackling the problems we face. We ask you all to join us. Go back to your jobs in the morning. Let South Africa work. For we must, together and without delay, begin to build a better life for all South Africans...Almost all the organisations that are going to take part in the government of national unity have undertaken in the course of the campaign to contribute to the better life of our people. That is going to be the cornerstone, the foundation on which the government of national unity is going to be based..."²⁵³

In an interview published in the *Sunday Times* on 1 May 1994, Mandela shed more light on the outlook of the ANC as the government in waiting. Promising to eschew radical policies, Mandela stated that the ANC's plan for reconstruction and development contained "not a single reference to nationalisation" and "not a single slogan that will connect us with any Marxist ideology."

²⁵¹ E Webster and G Adler, Toward a class compromise in South Africa's 'Double Transition': bargained liberalization and the consolidation of democracy, in *Politics and Society*, Volume 27, Number 3, September 1999, pp. 364-365; A Habib and V Padayachee, Economic policy and power relations in South Africa's transition to democracy, in *World Development*, Volume 28, Number 2, 2000, pp. 249-251; V Padayachee, The evolution of South Africa's international financial relations and policy: 1985-1995, in J Michie and V Padayachee (eds.), *The political economy of South Africa's transition. Policy perspectives in the late 1990s*, pp. 41-45.

²⁵² Quotation taken from *The end of apartheid. The report of the Commonwealth Observer Group to the South African elections, 26-29 April 1994*, p. 71. For content see S Friedman and L Stack, The magic moment. The 1994 election, in S Friedman and D Atkinson (eds.), *South Africa Review 7. The small miracle: South Africa's negotiated settlement*, pp. 319-325; L Schlemmer, South Africa's first open election and the future of its new democracy, in H Giliomee, L Schlemmer (with S Hauptfleisch) (eds.), *The bold experiment. South Africa's new democracy*, pp. 158-166.

²⁵³ Quotations taken from *This is indeed a joyous night for the human spirit*. Transcription of a speech by Nelson Mandela, 2 May 1994, SATV channel 1, pp. 2-3.

Mandela also dwelt on the need to assuage local and international businessmen and investors, and in his frequent meetings with heads of state and government, officials from the World Bank and the IMF, and commercial bankers and business leaders, Mandela mentioned that he had told them that “We are building a new country, and we want your assistance with resources. We can never get the support of business if we are going to have radical policies.”²⁵⁴

The ANC had vehemently opposed all privatisation initiatives under the De Klerk government, yet shortly after the GNU was constituted the ANC’s scruples in this regard promptly evaporated. Thus in December 1995, Thabo Mbeki, the then Deputy President, announced plans for the privatisation of components of parastatals like Telkom and South African Airways. The option of privatisation had been considered, Mbeki argued, because the GNU had identified the need to reduce government debt and to adjust the state’s role in the economy. The economic strategy of the GNU was subsequently formally codified in June 1996 with the publication of a government report entitled *Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy* (GEAR). Targeting a 6.1 per cent annual growth rate and the creation of 409 000 jobs annually, GEAR envisaged an accelerated programme of privatisation, deregulation and fiscal restraint. Showing remarkable similarities with the De Klerk government’s discarded NEM, GEAR was dependent on a significant increase in private sector investment. The advent of GEAR ultimately amalgamated the post-apartheid economic visions into the desire to foment an environment conducive to market-orientated economic growth. In short, the neo-liberal economic policies adopted by the ANC in the absence of radical political interventions after 1994 were founded on financial and monetary stringency with a restricted role for the state in redistribution, and the restructuring of trade and industrial policies in accordance with an export-orientated strategy. In addition, economic recovery would be market-led and aimed at achieving sustainable growth by attracting foreign and encouraging domestic investment.²⁵⁵

This then was the raw outline of the economic balance of power that had been wrought in and had ultimately prevailed from the turbulent vicissitudes of the political balance of power. The introduction of the ANC’s neo-liberal market-orientated economic policies after 1994 – and the decisive receding of radical interventionist policies within the strategical development of the ANC – signalled nothing less than the ultimate inauguration and perpetuation of the economic

²⁵⁴ Quotations and content taken from K Owen, Power to the people. Face to face with a president in waiting, *Sunday Times*, 1 May 1994, in J Cameron-Dow (researcher), *The miracle of a freed nation*, pp. 158-160.

²⁵⁵ A Habib and V Padayachee, Economic policy and power relations in South Africa’s transition to democracy, in *World Development*, Volume 28, Number 2, 2000, p. 252; H Marais, *South Africa: limits to change*, pp. 138-138, 160-165.

balance of power in South Africa. In tacit recognition of the ultimate prevailing and perpetuation of the economic balance of power, Mandela, frustrated by his government's failure to deliver on election promises, instructed his cabinet in July 1995 to abandon its obsession with grand plans and make economic growth its top priority. Indeed, the days of forced political predominance in the face of an economic preponderance had indeed passed in South Africa – the economic balance of power had belatedly yet inexorably and unequivocally prevailed.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ R Hartley and E Bulbring, Mandela's new 'Asian tigers' plan for growth, *Sunday Times*, 30 July 1995.

CONCLUSION

*The ANC has certain disadvantages and certain advantages... We are unfortunate in the sense that we are the last African nation to win its political freedom. The struggle here has lasted so much longer, and more harm has been done to people and the country. But we are fortunate that we are able to learn from past mistakes in Africa and in the world. I therefore don't expect demands to be made which will create more difficulties for ourselves, even if they appear to be shortcuts. We cannot afford any short cuts. We have to be more scientific in our approach to building an economy.*²⁵⁷

- Walter Sisulu, 1992.

That Walter Sisulu and the ANC came to eschew any radical 'shortcuts' and instead embraced a 'scientific' approach to the economy was the outcome of a painstaking historical process that outlined the trajectory of nothing less than a palpable shift in the balance of power in South Africa. The progressive and crucial divergence between the political ideologies of apartheid and prevailing economic realities had made the political preponderance that underlay apartheid and the elongated political balance of power an obsolescent and decisively detrimental state of affairs. This injurious condition was only augmented by the force and coercion that were implemented to forcibly offset the historical implications that propagated a purely 'scientific' governmental approach, devoid of any convoluted political agendas. The evident economic impracticalities and incorrigibly dismal outcomes of apartheid on the South African economy induced various responses from the upholders of the political balance of power, most notably increased repression and convoluted yet wholly deficient reform initiatives. Yet it was only with the advent of the government of FW de Klerk that the dire need was embraced for unadulterated political change to reflect the prevailing shift in the balance of power that underscored the primacy of a 'scientific' approach to the economy in the absence of radical state interventions, prohibitions, or prescriptions. The ANC were likewise disabused of their initial radical interventionist policy options as the irrepressible need to manufacture economic growth in a milieu of social cohesion

²⁵⁷ Changing the guard (Interview with Walter Sisulu), *Partnership*, an edition of Leadership SA, September 1992, p. 24.

and stability was extracted from the rigorous transitional negotiations to become the bonfire and foremost ideal for a post-apartheid South Africa. In short, while the shifting balance of power had obliterated apartheid and the political balance of power and its inherent paradigm of political preponderance, it had also wrought a new governmental environment predicated on economic precedence. The shift in the balance of power and the advent of the economic balance of power had, in fact, initiated nothing short of a New South Africa, if not in immediately perceptible form then most definitely in fundamental structure.

What ultimately doomed the political balance of power in South Africa therefore was the irrepressible economic decline that the political predominance of apartheid had wrought. The cumbersome political superstructure of apartheid was decisively discredited and rendered obsolete by the progressive economic decline that accompanied it. The political paradigms that inspired White political hegemony were terminally flawed in that they were positively one-sided: to contain various racial and ideological constructs they forcibly omitted an appreciation of the concurrent and intersecting economic realities that inexorably prevailed in South Africa. From this critical contradiction a perpetual structural crisis was the inevitable upshot, and hence desultory reform measures – interspersed with capricious acts of repression – were elicited from the governmental upholders of the political balance of power. As the structural economic crisis evolved the consensus for enhanced reform measures likewise improved (while the consensus for repressive and militaristic responses gradually receded, especially with the passing of PW Botha), and hence by the early 1990s FW de Klerk was prepared to utilise the government's entrenched political position to negotiate with the ANC in an effort to retain residual political elements of the political balance of power in the ensuing state of affairs in a post-apartheid South Africa. With the ongoing economic crisis providing an ominous albeit stimulating backdrop, however, the elongated process of negotiations was to eclipse the residual and now ultimately anachronistic political preconditions of both the NP and the ANC. In the form of the ensuing economic balance of power a governmental environment predisposed only to engineering stability and economic growth and devoid of exclusively political policy sentiments thus ultimately prevailed in South Africa. This was in essence the foremost historical process that underlay the South African transition from apartheid to democracy.

It would thus appear that the South African transition was no miracle (as it has often described without adequate analysis), but rather a fascinating and remarkable historical process that emanated from clearly apparent antecedents and implications. Despite the persistent emphasis on

the political façade of apartheid during the political balance of power in South Africa, the performance of the economy as the foremost barometer of the functioning and well-being of the entire South African polity remained the fundamental dynamic that could ultimately undermine or bolster the political constructs that were imposed via the governmental level. The apparent progressive economic development of the 1950s and 1960s could therefore lend significant accreditation to the political programme of apartheid, and could also seemingly justify the political repression that was applied to the detractors of apartheid. The structural economic deficiencies and virtually perpetual recession that characterised the 1970s and the 1980s, however, decisively corroded any justification for the ideological strictures that were imposed to govern the South African polity, and made the increasingly violent and costly repressive measures appear all the more irrational and counter-productive. An escape from the political balance of power (and its domineering ideologies) and a favourable political settlement therefore became increasingly desirable options, and the pragmatic initiatives of De Klerk and the concomitant receptive approaches of Nelson Mandela facilitated the attempt at an authoritative settlement that would underscore the economic realities prevalent and prevailing in South Africa.

This is not to imply that the dynamic of the South African economy was the sole driving force behind the South African transition. Political pressure both from inside South Africa (i.e. violence, strikes, militant actions, etc.) and from outside South Africa (i.e. sanctions, boycotts, embargoes) were all important factors in forcing the government's hand in opting to dismantle apartheid and the political balance of power in South Africa. Moreover, the cumulative effect of all these and other influential factors no doubt likewise impacted significantly on the South African transition. Yet while this study in no way attempted to belittle the import of all these factors individually or collectively, what emerged in this study is the theoretical analysis that all these factors were not necessarily decisive in their own right, but rather in their individual and cumulative impact on the South African economy. Thus the impact of the widespread internal unrest of the 1970s and 1980s as well as the pervasive international condemnation of apartheid were crystallised in their effects on the development and performance of the South African economy – at least as far as the impetus for the abolition of the political balance of power is concerned. It follows then that no political programme – irrespective of its content – was likely to succeed perpetually in an environment of economic degeneration, and the various forms of internal and external resistance to apartheid thus hastened the obliteration of the political balance of power by intentionally or inadvertently contributing to the economic malaise in South Africa.

Nevertheless, this study was not written with the intention of providing a deterministic and ultimate explanation of South Africa's transition to democracy. Inevitably, as is the case with all human activity, the process of history always involves an indeterminate amount of happenstance and irony. In the South African transition influential individuals could certainly have made different decisions that could have contributed to a different outcome in South Africa. Yet even so, the historian is able to distinguish undeniable and forceful contours in the progression of history, and an explanation of such very contours in the South African transition to democracy was the object of the theoretical analysis of this study. The historian's explanation in this regard is always dependent thus on a certain amount of speculation, yet the objective with this study was to evince a credible theoretical explanation from careful analysis of historical fact, and not to apply historical facts to conform to predetermined theoretical analyses.

Thus in this manner this study was the product of research that sought to provide the most plausible explanation for why apartheid ended as it did in South Africa, why the transitional process transpired as it did, and why the post-apartheid order occurred in its present fashion. It is the historian's unenviable task of interpreting the convoluted and manifold events that shape our past, and indeed, as our present circumstances and predilections change, so does our reflections on the past. Thus it is not unreasonable to argue that history changes as people change, and hence no work produced by any historian can be set in stone as the ultimate and indefinite answer to any exposition of the quandaries of the past. Hence this particular study is likewise an attempt to provide an interpretation of South Africa's transitional historical process from the current post-apartheid South African perspective. Numerous reflections and interpretations with likely more credible explanations will no doubt follow after this study, yet it is also likely that some of them might be partly informed by the paradigmatic explanation developed in this study. Nevertheless, the essential objective of this study was thus to add to the current research and discourse on the South African transition from apartheid to democracy, and not an attempt to banish further investigation by endeavouring to provide a final explanatory analysis.

As a last word to this study it can be noted here that South Africa still lives very much in the shadow of both its apartheid past and the recent history of its democratic transition. Even a decade after the historic election of April 1994, South Africa still grapples with issues of reconciliation and integration, and increased instances of criminal activity have become an unsavoury characteristic of the post-apartheid order. Moreover, in large measure due to the environment fashioned by apartheid in South Africa, a rampant and debilitating HIV/AIDS

epidemic has propelled South Africa to the epicentre of this global pandemic. Yet the South African economy has largely shrugged off its sluggish economic patterns so characteristic of the previous dispensation, and although not prodigious, the growth rates of the economy have indeed improved perceptively. The argument is often made by many rank-and-file South Africans, however, that nothing substantial has changed in South Africa in the decade following the historic election of 1994. Christina ‘Poppy’ Buthelezi, for instance, wheelchair-bound since she was shot in the back by members of the police during an anti-apartheid rally in Soweto in 1977, now tells her children not to “trust the white man. He is not your friend. He is your enemy...I won’t forgive and I won’t forget.” Antoinette Sithole also told the *Pretoria News* in 2004 that “We voted and tried to uplift ourselves. But look, now most of us are jobless...If there is progress, we don’t see it.”²⁵⁸ Yet although many South Africans’ lives may not have been enhanced considerably since 1994, something infinitely significant has indeed changed. The political preponderance that had caused so much devastation and derision in South Africa has been jettisoned, and the ideological dictates of White political hegemony have been pulled down from their enforced pedestals. Indeed, without these political inhibitions the democratic government of South Africa presently concerns itself with the prime concern that all governments should occupy themselves with: managing the economy to its optimal capacity and to the benefit of all the country’s inhabitants.

²⁵⁸ Quotations taken from *Reconciliation a distant dream, say victims*, *Pretoria News*, 26 March 2004.

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SUMMARY

This is a study of the transition to democracy in South Africa. Within a broad theoretical framework it poses and addresses the seminal historical question of why apartheid ended as it did, and why democracy superseded apartheid in South Africa. This study delineates South Africa's transition as the ultimate consequence of the clash between the enforced political constructs of apartheid and the inexorably prevailing economic realities in South Africa.

The political superstructure of apartheid was implemented from 1948 in order to impose certain strictly political interventionist measures over and above the general structural economic concerns of the South African polity. The concomitant yet less politically prominent economic components of this interventionist programme initially complemented the as yet underdeveloped configuration of the South African economy, and hence a period of rapid economic growth and industrialisation ensued after 1948 that temporarily obscured the long-term structural deficiencies of the South African economy. Eventually, however, the economic framework imposed under the aegis of the political balance of power induced a sustained structural economic crisis in South Africa. From roughly the mid-1970s, South Africa's hitherto virtually exponential annual economic growth rate was transposed into a period of economic degeneration.

In an attempt to offset the damaging regression of the South African economy, a myriad of reform initiatives resulted from the realm of government that sought to blunt the manifest aspects of apartheid while not infringing on the core political safeguards of White hegemony inherent in the political balance of power. It was only with the advent of the 1990s, however, that FW de Klerk endeavoured to reach a settlement with the hitherto banned ANC. Yet De Klerk's unprecedented liberalising actions of the early 1990s initially retained residual elements of the political balance of power in the form of demands by the NP for the protection of minority rights in the forthcoming democracy. Nevertheless, the growing global consensus of the late 1980s advocating the primacy of negotiations, coupled with the involvement of numerous international actors and the excruciating process of negotiations in South Africa of the early 1990s would lead the ANC to progressively jettison its initial interventionist policies, while the NP would likewise come to abandon its insistence on minority rights.

Thus in 1994 a governmental environment prevailed in South Africa intent on addressing the exigencies of the South African economy as its prime policy objective in the absence of concerns related to a forced political preponderance. This epoch is enunciated in the study as the economic balance of power. In toto, the economic balance of power and the antecedent political balance of power are collectively articulated as the balance of power, and this theoretical construct is utilised in this study to explain South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie is 'n studie van die oorgang van apartheid na demokrasie in Suid-Afrika. Dit beantwoord binne 'n breë teoretiese raamwerk die bepalende historiese vraag waarom apartheid geëindig het soos dit geëindig het en hoe dit gebeur het dat demokrasie dit vervang het. Die studie toon aan hoe die oorgang uiteindelik die gevolg was van die stryd tussen die politieke strukture van apartheid aan die een kant en die immerteenwoordige ekonomiese realiteite in Suid-Afrika aan die ander kant.

Die politieke bo-struktuur van apartheid is sedert 1948 op so 'n wyse geïmplimenter dat sekere politieke maatreëls afgedwing is sonder om op strukturele ekonomiese eise ag te slaan. Die ekonomiese komponente van hierdie ingrypende program het aanvanklik die Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie in die breë gestimuleer en tot 'n tydperk van vinnige groei en industrialisasie gelei. Hierdie groeifase het tydelik die langtermyn strukturele defekte in die Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie verberg. Op die lang duur egter het die politieke magsbalans wat op die ekonomiese raamwerk afgedwing is tot 'n ekonomiese krisis gelei en van ongeveer die middel sewentigerjare af het Suid-Afrika se buitengewone groeikoers skielik vir 'n periode van ekonomiese agteruitgang plek gemaak.

In 'n poging om die skadelike agteruitgang van die Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie te stuit het die regering 'n hele reeks hervormingsmaatreëls ingestel, wat egter nie die basis van wit oorheersing sou aantast nie. Dit was eers met die aanvang van die 1990s dat F.W. de Klerk ernstig gepoog het om 'n vergelyk met die toe nog verbanne ANC te bereik. De Klerk het egter steeds elemente van die politieke magsbalans probeer behou deur op spesiale regte vir die blanke minderheid in 'n toekomstige demokrasie aan te dring. In die lig van die heersende wêreldtendenses en internasionale druk het die NP egter mettertyd sy eise laat vaar en het die ANC terselfdertyd afgesien van sy vroeëre voornemens om streng regeringsbeheer oor 'n toekomstige ekonomiese bedeling in te stel.

Teen 1994 was dit duidelik dat die eise van die Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie eerder as politieke ideologieë voortaan van groter belang vir enige regering in Suid-Afrika sou wees. Dit het die skaal na die ekonomiese magsbalans geswaai. Dit is hierdie teoretiese konstruksie wat gebruik word om Suid-Afrika se oorgang van apartheid na demokrasie te verklaar.
