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ALBERT HERTZOG'S "CALVINIST SPEECH" AND THE VERLIG-VERKRAMPSTRYD: THE ORIGINS OF THE RIGHT-WING MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the role Dr Albert Hertzog, an ultra-conservative Afrikaner Nationalist, played in the formation of South Africa's right-wing movement. It focuses on his "Calvinist speech" of 1969 due to its historical significance for the unity of the National Party (NP) and as a broad summary of Hertzog's personal opinion on the politics of South Africa. The speech contrasted liberal English with Calvinistic Afrikaners and concluded that only an Afrikaner true to Calvinistic principles could succeed in leading the nation through the perilous times they were facing. This opinion was considered offensive to the English population as well as to "enlightened" Nationalists like the Prime Minister, John Vorster. The article will examine how the controversy surrounding the speech precipitated a split in the NP; those expelled formed a right-wing party that failed to gain considerable support. When apartheid was being dismantled in the early 1990s, the movement did not pose a serious threat to the ruling party despite vows that Afrikaners would never surrender their power but rather fight to the bitter end. The failure of these ultra-conservatives originated in the verlig-verkrampstryd of the 1960s, in which Hertzog played a significant role.

Keywords: Albert Hertzog, John Vorster, apartheid, Calvinism, verkrampstes, verligtes, right-wing movement

1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa's National Party (NP), an Afrikaans conservative party built on the fear of its nation's

and race's annihilation, was known for upholding white minority rule through the apartheid system between 1948 and 1994. The transition to a multi-racial democracy resulted from peaceful negotiations between the ruling party (NP) and political organisations representing blacks, Coloureds, and Indians.¹ External factors, mainly the fall of the Soviet Union and internal factors (political violence), have been well documented.² However, the circumstances within the Afrikaner nation that made this transition possible have not been scrutinised in as much detail. The fact that Frederik Willem de Klerk, leader of the NP and State President from 1989, was able to introduce such far-reaching reforms without strong resistance from Afrikaner Nationalists was partly due to the white right-wing³ having been successfully discredited in the previous decades. Since the late 1960s, more conservative factions of the NP were mocked by fellow party members and the press. This process of ridiculing ultra-conservatism began in 1967 during the so-called *verlig-verkrampstryd*. It was an internal party struggle (Afrikaans: *stryd*) between the enlightened ones (*verligtes*) and the "narrow-minded" ultra-conservatives (*verkramptes*).⁴ This conflict climaxed in 1969 with the expulsion of Dr Albert Hertzog from the NP, the eccentric son of the party's founder and South Africa's Prime Minister Barry Hertzog (1924-1939). Along with like-minded Nationalists, Hertzog founded the *Herstigte Nasionale Party* (Reconstituted National Party, HNP),⁵ which was defeated in the 1970 election (the party only

- 1 Some of the organisations that had participated in these negotiations were: African National Congress, South African Communist Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, South African Indian Congress and the Democratic Party.
- 2 V Shubin, *ANC: A view from Moscow* (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1999); L Thompson, *A history of South Africa* (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2001); H Giliomee and B Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007); G Kynoch, *Township violence and the end of apartheid: War on the reef* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2018).
- 3 Though the NP was a very conservative party there were often members who felt that the leadership was directing their organisation too far to the left on the political spectrum. Some of these right wings broke away to form separate political parties: Republican Party (1965), Reconstituted National Party (1969) and the Conservative Party (1982). These were minority groups with only the last one sitting in Parliament; however, they were all part of a rightist movement in Afrikaner politics that has not been studied in detail by historians.
- 4 In terms of domestic Nationalist policy, the *verligtes* advocated slow reforms that would improve race relations in South Africa while maintaining white rule. *Verkramptes*, on the other hand, propagated Afrikaner (rather than white) rule and strict adherence to traditional race relations as the only means of ensuring Afrikaner survival. The former were usually wealthier and better educated, while the latter were more dependent on state protection and thus wary of any changes to the *status quo*. In terms of foreign policy, the *verligtes* wanted to combat South Africa's growing isolation; the *verkramptes* did not believe appeasing the international community would be advantageous to the Afrikaners.
- 5 It was an Afrikaans Christian-National party, which claimed to be based on the infallible Word of God and to be the first in South African history to prioritise Afrikaner interests. It was devoted to a rigid implementation of apartheid and maintained that only Afrikaans should be the country's official language.

ever won one Parliamentary seat – Louis Stofberg became Sasolburg’s MP in 1985). The *verkrampes* were portrayed as outdated politicians who could not be taken seriously; it became unpopular for Afrikaners to be associated with them.⁶ By 1992, when De Klerk held a referendum on whether he had the support of the white population for a transition to a multi-racial democracy, the right-wing was discredited to such an extent that they could not pose a serious threat despite “about half of the Afrikaners and a million whites in total [voting] ‘no’ in the referendum”.⁷ Hertzog was a central figure of the *verkrampes* in the 1960s and 1970s; thus, the success of the *verligtes* to discredit him in the public’s eyes disarmed ultra-conservative Afrikaners and determined the path of reforms the NP would take from the times of Prime Minister John Vorster (1966-1978) until 1994 when apartheid ended.

This article aims to explain the origins of this historically significant failure of the Afrikaner right-wing movement by scrutinising Hertzog’s personality and his views. To achieve this, Hertzog’s “Calvinist speech” of 14 April 1969 – his most controversial speech in Parliament – will be analysed. To a greater extent, this paper is based on primary sources: diaries of Albert Hertzog, newspaper articles, published memoirs of South African politicians, and House of Assembly debates. The private collection of Hertzog held in the Archive for Contemporary Affairs at the University of the Free State provides valuable insight into the opinions and experiences of this devoted Nationalist. Although most quotes are taken from the years 1968 and 1969, they are analysed in the context of diary entries throughout Hertzog’s political career (1948-1970). The articles published in both the English-language and Afrikaans press played a significant role in creating Hertzog’s unflattering public image, which was partly responsible for his political demise. The memoirs used in this article belong to two opposition politicians (Japie Basson and Sir De Villiers Graaff) and one Nationalist, who had worked with Hertzog for decades (Ben Schoeman). All translations of diaries, memoirs, and Afrikaans newspaper articles have been made by the author. Hansards were also consulted for a transcript of the Calvinist speech and the heated debate that ensued.

Literature on the *verlig-verkrampstryd* is scarce. The main position is Jakobus Adriaan du Pisani’s *John Vorster en die verlig-verkrampstryd* published in 1988, which analyses many primary sources from the late 1960s. Beaumont Schoeman’s *Vorster se 1000 dae* is a non-academic summary of the conflict from the point of view of the ultra-conservative journalist. *Die verkrampste aanslag* by Jan Hendrik Philippus Serfontein

6 D O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948-1994* (Randburg: Ravan Press, 1996), pp. 299, 311.

7 H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people* (London: Hurst & Co., 2011), p. 645.

of the *Sunday Times* is a reflection of the dispute as seen by a *verligte*-sympathiser. There are, of course, English-language books on Afrikaner history, which provide an overview of this internal conflict and Hertzog's role in it. The two major scholarships that need to be considered when studying NP history are Hermann Giliomee's *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people* and Dan O'Meara's *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*. Both are excellent works, which explore various conservative factions; nevertheless, by their very nature, they are not exhaustive on the topic of Hertzog and the *verkrampstes*. Giliomee deals with the *verlig-verkrampstryd* in the 1960s and the failure of the right-wing to prevent De Klerk's reforms in the early 1990s but does not explain how the two are related. Moreover, he makes a chronological error in his review of Hertzog's career when he states that Hertzog was dismissed from Cabinet following the Calvinist speech rather than a few months earlier.⁸ O'Meara observes the (minimal) change in popularity of the HNP and other far-right groups between 1969 and 1992. He devotes a substantial amount of space to Hertzog's career, and his description of this strange political persona is quite detailed. Notwithstanding, he only uses the opinions of Hertzog's contemporaries to explain his ultra-conservative views. In order to better understand the *verkrampste* movement, it is crucial to also look at the manner it presented itself to the public in political speeches.

This article aims to fill this void by analysing one of the most important speeches from the movement's early stages. The contents of the Calvinist speech and the circumstances in which it was delivered will be discussed in detail to explain the origins of the right-wing movement in apartheid South Africa. Those, who are more interested in regional rather than Afrikaans history, should consider this article a case study in the use of religion by a political ideology in Southern Africa.

2. HERTZOG'S OPPOSITION TO THE VERLIGTES

From 1948, Hertzog was NP's Member of Parliament (MP) for Ermelo. When Hendrik Verwoerd became Prime Minister in 1958, Hertzog was given two portfolios: the Department of Posts and Telegraphs and the Department of Health. Verwoerd's successor, John Vorster (1966-1978), kept him in Cabinet for almost two years before dismissing him in 1968. Hertzog remained an MP for another year until he was expelled in 1969. Over 21 years, he became well known by fellow MPs from both sides of the House and the press.

8 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 558.

The two words that summarised Hertzog's personality were "polite" and "eccentric". Graaff remarked he was "one of the politest of men in private"⁹ while Basson expressed the opinion that he was one of the very few gentlemen in Parliament.¹⁰ Hertzog was "a gentle, soft-spoken, immaculately dressed man with a keen sense of humour".¹¹ One of the eccentric qualities he possessed was his devotion to leading a healthy life. He did not drink alcohol, tea or coffee; he did not smoke. "In addition, he was always exceptionally cautious with what he ate".¹² Commenting on his physical activities, both Basson and Graaff recalled that he was one of the few Nationalist MPs with whom they could play squash.¹³ Hertzog was recognised as an enigma by the press: "a Calvinist who drives a white Porsche sports car, an organiser of Afrikaans mineworkers who goes in for antique-collecting, a man, unfailingly courteous in manner, scornful of English values but married to an English-speaking woman".¹⁴ The speeches made by Hertzog throughout his career – both in Parliament and at cultural events – gave the impression that he was stuck in the past as he often spoke about Afrikaner history prior to 1948. In addition, Hertzog was almost 70 years old when he made the Calvinist speech, which strengthened the view that he was a politician from a bygone era. Moreover, his vehement opposition to television, which he voiced on numerous occasions as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (1958-1968), made the public consider him "a rather comic eccentric".¹⁵ It was this strange man that was the most senior *verkrampte* and would become the first leader of the HNP (1970-1977).

Hertzog's Calvinist speech cannot be fully understood without first discussing the origins of the "Hertzog group's" discontent with Vorster and the subsequent dismissal of Hertzog from Cabinet. By the time Vorster rose to the position of Prime Minister after Hendrik Verwoerd's assassination on 6 September 1966, South Africa's position in the international arena had become unfavourable. The General Assembly of the United Nations was very vocal in its criticism of apartheid since the early 1950s passing numerous resolutions condemning NP's policies. Even though those resolutions were non-binding (there was no way to hold its member states responsible for not complying with them), they were a clear indication that world opinion was

9 DV Graaff, *Div looks back: The memoirs of Sir De Villiers Graaff* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1994), p. 208.

10 J Basson, *Raam en rigting in die politiek en die storie van apartheid* (Cape Town: Politieka, 2004), p. 27.

11 *The Star*, 19 April 1969.

12 B Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1978), p. 341.

13 Basson, *Raam en rigting in die politiek*, p. 26; Graaff, *Div looks back*, p. 127.

14 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 24 May 1969.

15 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 5 May 1969.

increasingly hostile towards the Nationalist government. The Commonwealth of Nations was another forum where international anti-apartheid attitudes were made obvious, and in 1961 Verwoerd withdrew his country's application to be readmitted to the association as a Republic.

In February 1967, Vorster presented his Cabinet with two ideas that would improve the country's international relations and thus ensure the survival of a self-governing Afrikaner state: South Africa's growing isolation could be combated by altering its sports policy and establishing diplomatic relations with African states. Under Verwoerd, apartheid dominated all spheres of life; leisure was no exception. This had severe consequences for international sport because white South African teams were not allowed to compete with other races, whether abroad or at home. By extension, no racially mixed foreign team could tour South Africa, and the country was banned from the 1964 Olympic Games.¹⁶ What Vorster proposed was to maintain athletic segregation locally but dispose of the rules for international sport. This would allow South Africa to participate in world events and host foreign teams at home.

The second idea was part of Vorster's "campaign to contest and shape the definition of a legitimate African state",¹⁷ which emphasised that apartheid was simply a means of granting all population groups in South Africa self-determination. Vorster did not wish to continue his predecessor's *ad hoc* method of conducting relations with African states. While Verwoerd believed that permanent diplomatic ties were not needed because the countries' executive branches could resolve important issues, Vorster wanted to establish permanent diplomatic missions. This move would hopefully improve South Africa's position on the continent; if South Africa were accepted (with its apartheid policies) by its neighbours, it would be more difficult for the rest of the world to exert pressure for the system to be dismantled. Thus, South Africa's isolation would be corroded without the need to eliminate apartheid. The problem that arose was the position black foreigners (diplomats) would occupy in the South African society. The *verligtes* saw no issue in treating them the same as white diplomats; they would be allowed to, for example, live in areas reserved for whites and use medical services available to whites. Ultra-conservative NPs, however, "raised tricky questions about the schooling

16 JA du Pisani, "BJ Vorster se nuwe sportbeleid as faktor in die verdeeldheid binne die Nasionale Party wat gelei het tot die stigting van die Herstigte Nasionale Party", *Journal for Contemporary History* 9 (2), 1984, pp. 39-40.

17 J Miller, "Africanising apartheid: Identity, ideology, and state-building in post-independence Africa", *The Journal of African History* 56 (3), 2015, p. 453.

of children of Black diplomats and whether Black children from African States will be allowed in traditional all-White swimming baths".¹⁸

Both aspects of the outward policy, as it came to be called, found opposition in the *verkramp*te circles because they required social interaction between races. Both proposals were seen as "the thin end of the wedge which would lead to further concessions and finally to the entire dismantling of apartheid".¹⁹ The conflicting views were reported by the press; newspapers belonging to the Nasionale Pers (*Die Burger, Die Beeld*) shared the *verlig*tes' outlook while the ones under Afrikaanse Pers (*Die Vaderland, Hoofstad*) supported the *verkramp*tes. Most English-language papers with white readership published articles opposed to Hertzog and his followers except for SED Brown's monthly news sheet, *The South African Observer*.

There were two other bones of contention between the enlightened and the ultra-conservatives: immigration and national unity. South Africa had been experiencing increased immigration in the 1960s, reaching a record number of 48 048 in 1966.²⁰ This time the issue was that Vorster was not amending the old policy. The *verkramp*tes along with churches, cultural organisations and far-right groups, called for a more restrictive policy, one which would enlarge the white Afrikaans community.²¹ The proposed measures included limiting immigration to Dutch Calvinists and placing newcomers under a legal obligation to learn both languages. This would halt the influx of Southern Europeans and Roman Catholics, which were more inclined to become English-speakers; thus, distorting the proportions within South Africa's white population to the disadvantage of the Afrikaners.²² Therefore, Afrikaner political hegemony would be threatened.

Afrikaner Nationalists were also afraid of losing their cultural identity under pressure of the omnipresent English/Western culture. For this reason, Vorster's interpretation of what white national unity should be caused distress among many NP members. He supported a two-stream policy initiated by his predecessor that would encompass common patriotism to South Africa and separate cultural identities; this cooperation was expected across the NP, including on top political levels. What ultra-conservatives advocated was a one-stream policy — the complete assimilation of British descendants into the Afrikaans community.²³ The final outcome would be one white Afrikaner

18 *Sunday Express*, 4 February 1968.

19 JA Du Pisani, "BJ Vorster en Afrikanerverdeeldheid, 1966-1970: 'n Oorsig en evaluering van die Verlig-verkrampstryd", *Journal for Contemporary History* 11 (2), 1986, p. 6.

20 Du Pisani, "BJ Vorster en Afrikanerverdeeldheid", p. 12.

21 It is important to note that the Afrikaans-speaking Coloureds were not considered by the majority of Nationalists to be part of the same population group as them.

22 Du Pisani, "BJ Vorster en Afrikanerverdeeldheid", pp. 12-13.

23 Du Pisani, "BJ Vorster en Afrikanerverdeeldheid", p. 11.

nation speaking the same language and identifying with the same culture. These discrepancies strained Afrikaner unity in the years 1967-1969, and it was against this background that Hertzog made the Calvinist speech.

The timing of the infamous speech was consequential of Vorster's decision to remove Hertzog from his Cabinet in 1968. The dismissal happened in two stages: on 7 February, Hertzog lost the Posts and Telegraphs portfolio and on 12 August, the Department of Health. The first one was humiliating for two reasons. Dismissing only one minister in the beginning of a parliamentary session (while there was already talk of a Cabinet reshuffle in winter) purposefully forced all the media attention on the event and gave the impression that the minister was so inadequate that he had to be replaced immediately. Vorster maintained that he simply wanted Basie van Rensburg in the Cabinet and, therefore, needed a portfolio for him. When Hertzog heard this, he offered to give up his Health portfolio since there were no on-going projects that he was involved with at that department. On the other hand, Posts and Telegraphs was in the process of changes that Hertzog wanted to complete himself. There had been much criticism regarding the country's post office and telecommunications, and passing the department to someone else right before the effects of his hard labour became evident would result in the new minister getting all the credit for improved services.²⁴ Despite this humiliation, Hertzog did not resign from his remaining post as Minister of Health and remained in the Cabinet. He admitted considering the option of stepping down due to the atmosphere and direction in which the government was heading but did not want to run away.²⁵ He was, therefore, dismissed in the August reshuffle along with three other ministers: Alf Trollip, Pieter le Roux, and Willie Maree. Though this second stage of Hertzog's discharge was not humiliating like the first one, Vorster made it clear that there was no love lost between the two men. While the other departing ministers were wished a good retirement, "Dr Hertzog received a cheerless 'farewell'".²⁶ While Trollip and Le Roux were thanked for their services, "Dr Hertzog received only a laconic mention of his name. By contrast with the others, an expression of appreciation to him was noticeably absent".²⁷

24 Archive for Contemporary Affairs (ACA; Bloemfontein), JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/203: Hertzog, 6 February 1968 (diary).

25 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/204: Hertzog, 24 August 1968 (diary).

26 *Sunday Times*, 11 August 1968.

27 *Sunday Times*, 11 August 1968.

3. THE CALVINIST SPEECH

Hertzog was a known ultra-conservative; his anti-English outlook was publicised throughout his entire political career because he often attacked English-language press and mining magnates (who were of British descent) as enemies of South Africa. He was also against inviting two English South Africans, Alf Trollip and Frank Waring, into Verwoerd's Cabinet in 1961.²⁸ Hertzog's fear for the survival of Afrikaner culture (which was characteristic of the *verkramptes*) manifested itself in his fierce opposition to the introduction of television in South Africa. He disapproved of the medium for two reasons: it would lower the moral standards of the society, and it would be extremely difficult to broadcast Afrikaans programmes equal to English programmes in both quantity and quality.

In the first week of April 1969, Hertzog learned that the *verkramptes* expected him to make an "outstanding and impressive speech which would indicate in what direction they are going".²⁹ During the month of March, ultra-conservative MPs had been vocally attacked in the caucus. They refused to support a motion of confidence in Vorster because it included an unconditional condemnation of *verkrampste* papers *Veg* and *The South African Observer* without the inclusion of *verligte* papers *Dagbreek* and *Die Beeld*.³⁰ This crisis showed that few MPs identified themselves with the *verkrampste* faction. Having been on the defensive in the caucus, Hertzog's Parliamentary speech was considered an opportunity for an offensive. If their entire case was summarised in a cohesive manner (instead of being presented piece by piece in response to *verligte* accusations), perhaps other MPs would realise that they agreed with the ultra-conservatives. This would potentially change the balance between the two factions. Having been removed from Cabinet, Hertzog no longer felt obligated to suppress his opinions.³¹ It was apparent the group was not headed in the same direction as Vorster. If Hertzog's objective was to explain the ideas of the ultra-conservative faction, the speech was bound to go against the views of the *verligtes*. Whether Hertzog intended to escalate animosity between the two factions or not, he must have been aware that his speech could have that effect.

The Chief Whip of the NP was happy to let Hertzog speak in the House of Assembly because "he welcomed each of us six 'scapegoats' speaking to explain to the world that there was no split in the party and that

28 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/195: Hertzog, 24 October 1961 (diary).

29 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 13-20 April 1969 (diary).

30 Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek*, p. 353.

31 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 7 August 1968 (diary).

we still have confidence in it".³² On 14 April 1969, Hertzog got his chance. He first addressed the Leader of the Opposition, Sir De Villiers Graaff, and his demands to increase the rate of South Africa's economic, industrial, and technical development by involving a greater number of non-Whites in semi-skilled and skilled jobs. He accused the United Party of caring more about the blacks than the whites.³³ According to him, this increased economic power for the non-Whites would inevitably result in their political takeover of the country.³⁴ The scene was set for a speech about the threats facing the country and the *vekrampstes*' defence strategy that would ensure the survival of the white race at the tip of Africa.

The two threats which Hertzog identified in the country's future were increased pressure from the international community for majority rule and the spread of communism on the continent. South Africa must therefore prepare itself to withstand the inevitable propaganda attacks because "you can never win in any struggle without a tough, intrepid and spiritually well-equipped nation".³⁵ However, the population's "spiritual powers of resistance" were being destroyed from within. Hertzog went on to explain that the white population consisted of two distinct groups — the Afrikaners and the English-speakers — and that "we must understand their characteristics so that we can make the best use of that great potential".³⁶

Turning first to his own people, Hertzog declared: "We are permeated by that great complex of principles called Calvinism, that code of moral, ethical and religious principles. [...] We cannot be anything else".³⁷ That complex of principles included four crucial qualities; a Calvinist Afrikaner must:

1. "always act in an upright and just manner",³⁸
2. recognise the diversity of creation,³⁹
3. love "freedom of the individual and of his people",⁴⁰
4. subject "himself to authority",⁴¹

32 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 13-20 April 1969 (diary). The six "scapegoats" were Hertzog, Jaap Marais, Willie Marais, Daan van der Merwe, Cas Greyling and Louis Stoffberg.

33 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3878.

34 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3877.

35 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3879.

36 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3879.

37 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3879.

38 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3880.

39 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3880.

40 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3881.

41 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3881.

It is true that, as the early settlers were of Dutch and Huguenot origin, Afrikaners came from a Calvinist background and Dutch Reformed Churches played a vital role in the people's cultural and political life. Therefore, associating the Afrikaans population with Calvinism was not inaccurate. Whether the four qualities naturally stem from Calvinism, on the other hand, is debatable. Regarding the first point, the same can be said about members of other Christian denominations and followers of other religions. Moreover, the difference between what one should do and what one does is often that of 180 degrees – even a devout Calvinist will make mistakes. It is definitely a word that had not been usually ascribed to the English-speaking population yet would not be questioned when describing Afrikaners. Moreover, the term had already entered the *verkramp*te discourse at the beginning of 1969 when Dr Johannes Oberholzer, member of the Commission of the General Church Meeting of the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk*, published an article in *Die Transvaler* entitled "Principles in the Calvinistic Tradition".⁴² Dr Andries Treurnicht, the editor of the *Hoofstad*, expressed the correlation between apartheid and Calvinism in Potchefstroom just four days before Hertzog's speech in Parliament.⁴³ Calvinism had been a cornerstone of Afrikaner Christian-Nationalism;

Dutch Reformed concepts have long served to bolster Afrikaner Nationalist ideas: for example, the Calvinist notion of "election" has become synonymous with that of a racial elite; "vocation" with a superior mission; priesthood of believers with an aristocracy; power deriving from a sovereign God with an authoritative rule.⁴⁴

The second quality, recognising the diversity of creation, was the moral justification for apartheid: Nationalist Afrikaners argued that God had intended each nation for a certain purpose and that diluting the race and/or culture was contrary to his plan.⁴⁵ The other part of the justification for segregation and homelands was the belief that people should help themselves by their own efforts. At the core of Afrikaner Nationalism is the tradition of the *volk* as a societal unit bound by language, religion, and culture. It is not defined by the boundaries that make a country. A country does not necessarily constitute a *volk* as it may be home to more than one population group.

The last two points should be analysed together as they seem to contradict each other. On the one hand, an Afrikaner loves his freedom; on

42 JHP Serfontein, *Die verkramp*te aanslag (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1970), p. 188.

43 Serfontein, *Die verkramp*te aanslag, pp. 188-189.

44 C Bloomberg, *Christian-Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond in South Africa* (Hong Kong: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990), p. 4.

45 Bloomberg, *Christian-Nationalism*, p. 131; S Dubow, "Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid, and the conceptualisation of 'race'", *The Journal of African History* 33 (2), 1992, pp. 220-221.

the other, he subjects himself to authority. In Hertzog's mind, however, these two qualities were incompatible only if the government became tyrannical. If the authority is "just and upright", it must be protected by all means, including detaining without trial anyone who acts against it.⁴⁶ The 1963 General Laws Amendment Act allowed the police to detain a suspect for up to 90 days without recourse to law. Two years later, the Criminal Procedure Act made it necessary for a warrant to be acquired from the attorney-general but extended the period of legal detention to 180 days. In Hertzog's eyes, since the apartheid government was not unjust, there could be no tolerance for insubordination. Moreover, the *verkramptes* believed that any future in which the majority rules South Africa would be a time of discrimination against the whites. Verwoerd's legacy was strict adherence to racial segregation until the success of independent homelands renders all objections to apartheid moot; it had to be upheld if the "upright" authority (which safeguarded the whites' rights) was to remain in power. Calvinist Afrikaners had an obligation to subject themselves to authority and maintain their freedom (and respect the uniqueness of their nation, viz. point number 2)⁴⁷; all this could be accomplished by preserving the *status quo* — continuing on the path that Verwoerd had outlined.

The second group of South Africa's white population, British descendants, "have wonderful virtues by which they have rendered tremendous services to South Africa".⁴⁸ Hertzog did not specify what those virtues were, nor did he mirror the first part of his speech by naming several qualities; he identified only one characteristic — and whether it was a vice or not became a matter of fierce debate — "basically the English-speaking Afrikaner is liberal".⁴⁹ By extension, this meant that they "fall victim to the onslaughts of the communists and of the new leftist movements which always use their freedom to destroy freedom"⁵⁰ and that they cannot defend themselves against these attacks. As a consequence, the English "have been forced out of Africa" and were "being displaced in their own country".⁵¹ He

46 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3881.

47 Throughout this speech Hertzog used the male pronoun, which is not surprising as at that time men dominated not only Afrikaner politics but South African politics as a whole. This should not be understood as his attempt to differentiate between genders in the Calvinistic Afrikaner community as he would have expected women to remain faithful to these principles as well.

48 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3881.

49 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3882.

50 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3882. The leftist movements that Hertzog found threatening to the South African lifestyle and apartheid were cultural trends of the 1960s, which encouraged youth to abandon traditional values; this included international and domestic opposition to racial discrimination and segregation.

51 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3882.

claimed that these co-patriots cannot separate themselves from their heritage — the “liberalism of British politics” which was to blame for the absence of a self-defence strategy among them.⁵² This liberalism would have led to an end of white civilisation in South Africa following Harold Macmillan’s Wind of Change speech in 1960 since liberals would have supported the British Prime Minister’s address to relinquish power in favour of the black majority. Therefore, Hertzog deduced that the whites were still present in South Africa due to the decisive actions taken by the Calvinistic and Nationalist Afrikaner.

The allegation that white English South Africans were liberal was a generalisation, which was bound to stir up emotions. Judging by the lack of support for either the Liberal Party or the Union Federal Party, and minimal votes cast for the Progressive Party, Hertzog’s accusation was unjustified. Every election following its triumph in 1948 showed that the NP was gaining the confidence of more white English speakers.⁵³ Though this fact suggests that they were rather conservative, Hertzog would not have believed that election results disproved his theory. He probably would have argued that increased support for the government actually verified that only the Nationalist Afrikaner could be trusted (even by the English population) to lead South Africa through such difficult times. Hertzog did not name any qualities of this population group he considered to be good; he identified one characteristic, which was a threat to the survival of white civilisation in South Africa. The message was clear: the English had helped build South Africa, but it was *despite* them that it had survived.

After presenting these opinions, it is unsurprising that Hertzog reached the following conclusion: “In the struggle that lies ahead for us, perhaps the fiercest and greatest that lies ahead for us, it will once more be the man who is the bearer of these wonderful Calvinistic principles who will fight at the forefront of the struggle for our civilisation”.⁵⁴ The speech and its conclusion was a definite blow to the English-speaking South Africans, but Hertzog did not omit to deal a blow to his opponents in the NP’s ranks. The *verligtes* were warned: “we shall be able to rely on him only as long as he is the bearer of those Calvinist principles”.⁵⁵ Vorster’s attempts to liberalise apartheid was a betrayal of those principles: they did not adhere to God’s commandment to keep the population segregated. They opened the way to majority rule that would discriminate against the whites, thus taking their freedom away. Vorster and the *verligtes* were a threat to the white nation’s survival.

52 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3882.

53 BM Schoeman, *Parlamentêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika 1910-1976* (Pretoria: Aktuele Publikasies, 1977), pp. 405, 439.

54 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3883.

55 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3883.

Serfontein, who followed the internal disputes of the NP closely, wrote that "there were loud hear-hears from all the Nationalist MPs and not just from the *verkrampes*".⁵⁶ The first member to speak following the Calvinist Speech was Basson, a former nationalist expelled from the party in 1959 after publicly objecting to the removal of MPs representing blacks from Parliament. In his speech, Basson expressed concern that the view on English-speakers being liberal was simplistic. The next point dealt with UP's priorities — it was not the black people that the party was advocating for: "We are concerned about the position of the white man, even more so than the honourable members on that side are, for the simple reason that we know that, unless the white man in South Africa is fair towards the other race groups, he has no future in this country".⁵⁷ Basson's third remark was that the international community (excluding the communists) did not wish to see the end of white civilisation on the tip of Africa.⁵⁸ Before moving on to other issues brought up during the budget debate, the MP posed a question to Hertzog: "The honourable member for Ermelo had a great deal to say about the justice Calvinism requires, but can he honestly and truly say that justice is being done to the Coloureds?"⁵⁹ When Basson's time expired a few minutes later, the debate was adjourned.

5. REACTION TO THE SPEECH

In the immediate aftermath, there was no *verligte* counterattack; the atmosphere in Parliament after the speech did not suggest that Hertzog had widened the rift between the *verkrampes* and the *verligtes* beyond repair.

On Tuesday morning, the press reviews were mixed. *The Star* summarised the speech without any analysis. It ended the article with the following sentence: "The political pundits will be speculating on what lay between the lines of Dr Hertzog's first speech this session".⁶⁰ On the other hand, George Oliver of the *Rand Daily Mail* provided his readers with an interpretation of the message between the lines. The title of the article set the mood: "Hertzog Gives [Prime Minister] Warning on Leadership". The introductory sentence was a short analysis of the Calvinist speech: "The deposed Cabinet Minister, Dr Hertzog, gave a thinly veiled warning to the Prime Minister, Mr Vorster, not to deviate from traditional Afrikaner nationalism or strictly defined Calvinism".⁶¹ As discussed above, this was an interpretation

56 Serfontein, *Die verkrampste aanslag*, p. 188.

57 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3884.

58 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3884-3885.

59 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 14 April 1969, column 3886.

60 *The Star*, 15 April 1969.

61 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 15 April 1969.

that could have been foreseen. The *Argus* called for the repudiation of Hertzog because “sincere and kindly though he is, his philosophy however misguided, is also dangerous”.⁶²

Die Transvaler reported that Hertzog’s explanation of the “Calvinistic tendencies” of Afrikaner Nationalists had been faultless though membership to the NP should not be conditional on one’s religious background.⁶³ Piet Cillié of *Die Burger*, the Cape NP’s mouthpiece, saw this as an opportunity to attack the ultra-conservative politician yet again.⁶⁴ He deemed the speech anti-English and called for it to be “rejected with contempt, instead of being seriously discussed”.⁶⁵ According to Cillié, Hertzog’s words were weapons to be used against the NP. He believed the speech to be so dangerous to the ruling party that it questioned the leadership’s sincerity in advocating white unity. Strengthening the sense of solidarity between the Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking white South Africans was important to the *verligtes* because it ensured the survival of the white race. The homelands policy introduced by Verwoerd was based on the 1951 demographic projections of Jan Sadie, who had estimated that the black population would grow by ten million between 1946 and 2000. In reality, that number would be reached in the 1970s.⁶⁶ The “enlightened” Nationalist editors, Cillié and Schalk Pienaar, believed that the only way to avoid black majority rule over whites was to accelerate the development of the homelands and in the meantime eliminate discriminatory laws, which were based solely on race (like separate public spaces and services).⁶⁷ Therefore, to Cillié, *verkramptes* were a threat to the survival of the white race, and the Calvinist speech could harm the entire NP if Vorster did not disassociate himself from Hertzog.

The English-language newspapers’ and Cillié’s condemnation of Hertzog in the press in those two days did not reflect the mood among the Nationalist MPs in the immediate aftermath of the speech and thus can be considered an independent variable in the war against the *verkramptes*. *Die Burger* played a leading role in this “*verligte aksie*” (enlightened action) since the late 1950s.⁶⁸ The newspapers used Hertzog’s speech to widen the gap between NP’s two factions to such an extent that no one could sit on the fence any longer.

62 *The Cape Argus*, 15 April 1969.

63 *Die Transvaler*, 16 April 1969.

64 JC Steyn, *Penvegter: Piet Cillié van Die Burger* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2002), p. 236.

65 *Die Burger*, 16 April 1969.

66 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 595-596.

67 FA Mouton, “Survival in justice’: Apartheid and the Schalk Pienaar-Dr AP Treurnicht broedertwis, 1968-1978”, *South African Historical Journal* 69 (3), 2017, p. 454.

68 JN Klee, *Die “Verligte aksie” in die Nasionale Party 1959-1970, met verwysing na adv. BJ Vorster en die Afrikaanse Pers* (MA, Rand Afrikaans University, 1993), pp. 107-109.

On 16 April, Hertzog was summoned to the Prime Minister's office where Vorster and Ben Schoeman (leader of NP's Transvaal branch to which Hertzog belonged) "tried to rip him apart".⁶⁹ They pointed out that labelling all English as liberals and all Afrikaners as Calvinist was incorrect. There were numerous English Nationalists and Presbyterians (the reformed Church of Scotland based on Calvinistic principles). At the same time, some Afrikaners were liberal (for example, Jan Styler who was leading the Progressive Party). Also, the white Rhodesians fighting against majority-rule were English. Despite having these inconsistencies pointed out to him, "Hertzog was past redemption".⁷⁰ With regard to giving Vorster a public warning, Hertzog attempted to clarify what he meant: the "man" was used as a singular noun to symbolise the *volk*, just as "the white man" symbolised the white race. Since Hertzog refused to publicly acknowledge that his words were offensive, the Prime Minister informed the MP that he would repudiate the speech the following Monday; Hertzog raised no objections.⁷¹

The discussion then lingered on the word "Calvinist" – a word that had been taken out of its religious context and falsely contrasted with the political term of liberalism. The adjective "Christian" had been used throughout Afrikaner Nationalism's history, for some time even hyphenated as "Christian-National".⁷² However, Calvinist is much more specific and exclusive; many English-speaking South Africans were Christian but not Calvinist. The claim that this denomination was the reason liberalism did not triumph over conservatism in South Africa threatened to insult not only those English who still had to be persuaded to support the NP but also those who had already been voting for the ruling party. Schoeman asked why Hertzog used that word if he had never used it before. He also pointed out that their party was the Nationalist Party, not the Calvinist Party, and they had to be open to their English countrymen.⁷³ The former Minister defended himself: "Nationalism stands for certain principles, and what are those principles? Nothing less than Calvinist principles".⁷⁴ The three men did not come to an understanding. With time, Schoeman would become convinced that the Calvinist Speech had not been written by Hertzog alone but rather with the help of his clerical supporters. "He never gave the impression of being very religious and we had never heard of Calvinism and Calvinistic principles from him before".⁷⁵ This was a fair observation; Hertzog had not reverted to religious terminology

69 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 20 April 1969 (diary).

70 Schoeman, *Parlamentêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p. 356.

71 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 20 April 1969 (diary).

72 Bloomberg, *Christian-Nationalism*, pp. 208-212.

73 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 20 April 1969 (diary).

74 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 20 April 1969 (diary).

75 Schoeman, *Parlamentêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p. 356.

in his speeches except for sporadic referrals to God guiding the Afrikaner nation. The Calvinist Speech conveyed a message which Hertzog had been repeating for decades but the addition of the adjective “Calvinist” must have been inspired by other *verkrampes*.

The party leaders claimed they had the rest of NP MPs on their side. This seemed strange to Hertzog because it did not correspond with the opinions he had heard after the speech, but since Vorster and Schoeman’s view on it was negative, others changed their minds to fall in line with the leadership. Hertzog did not share this thought with his superiors, and the meeting ended. Hertzog was certain that party leaders failed to fully understand English South Africans; Vorster and Schoeman believed it was an insult to call someone liberal, a word that Hertzog claimed the English used with pride. Vorster and Schoeman were willing to do anything to get support from that part of the population — an attitude which Hertzog condemned.

I could not help but lament the ill condition in which our NP leadership found itself in — political sickness: the moment a leader stops caring about his principles and does not make them clear like Verwoerd, but when he wants to dance around and crawl and water down things to possibly increase his following out of enemy ranks.⁷⁶

Hertzog’s assessment of the situation (which proved quite wrong) was as follows: “If their plan is to cause a split [in the party] or to throw me out over my use of Calvinism and my speech about it, then they have chosen shaky grounds because Afrikaans churches and the conscious Afrikaners will see it as a very bad principle. It will hit them worse than they perhaps expect”.⁷⁷ Thus, it is possible that in resorting to such terminology, Hertzog’s intention was to checkmate party leadership who would either not dare to oppose him or would be greatly harmed if it chose to do so. Serfontein suggests that party leadership was, in fact, afraid of not having the backing of church officials, but it proved to be unfounded.⁷⁸ The *verkrampes* had the support of reverend Jan Jooste (a prominent theologian) and *Die Kerkbode* (the official mouthpiece of the Dutch Reformed Church, DRC), but they did not receive this widespread show of solidarity from reformed churches that Hertzog had predicted.

On Friday, 18 April, about 600 nationalists met in Pretoria and made their loyalties known. As Serfontein recalls, “This was the first gathering of nationalists that I have attended since 1948 where the great majority furiously booed anyone who dared defend the Prime Minister”.⁷⁹ Though Hertzog was not present, the meeting was a great display of his supporters. Barry Botha,

76 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 20 April 1969 (diary).

77 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 20 April 1969 (diary).

78 Serfontein, *Die verkrampste aanslag*, p. 194.

79 Serfontein, *Die verkrampste aanslag*, p. 191.

known for distributing a 1968 pamphlet that sarcastically praised Vorster's government for its progressiveness, was one of the main speakers at the event. He announced that the time was right for the *verkrampstes* to form a party. Botha was later reprimanded by Jaap Marais for trying to force the MPs to break away from the NP.⁸⁰

The *Sunday Times* called the Calvinist speech "a confession of faith, a testimony of belief, a philosophy of life [...], it is the *Verkrampstes*' Charter".⁸¹ Stanley Uys, the political editor, interpreted the Charter as irreconcilable with the Prime Minister's policy of white unity and thus, "This is more than defiance: it's a declaration of war by the *verkrampstes*".⁸² He saw the objective of this controversial speech as inflaming the "embers of the Boer-British struggle". Uys himself continued to add fuel to the fire by stressing that "Dr Hertzog is not just another MP: he is the leader of the group within the Nationalist Party which is challenging the leadership and making a take-over bid for control".⁸³ The *Sunday Times* applied pressure on Vorster by claiming that "If the Nationalist Party, in its assembled might, cannot muster the courage to repudiate Dr Hertzog, officially and publicly and unequivocally, then it might as well declare the struggle with the *verkrampstes* lost now".⁸⁴

On 22 April, Graaff demanded that the Prime Minister repudiate Hertzog. According to the UP, Vorster was not clear enough; he simply called the speech unfortunate and unjustly generalised. Understandably, the Opposition welcomed any disagreements inside the ruling party. The constantly increasing support for the NP since 1948 was happening at the expense of the UP, which lost seats even in traditionally safe areas like Natal. Graaff must have hoped to persuade English-speakers to vote for the UP again by pointing out that the Nationalists did not respect them. Hertzog's speech seemed undeniable proof of that.

Hertzog joined the debate and tried to clarify that his speech had been wrongly interpreted and was not, in fact, controversial; "liberal" could be substituted with "broadminded".⁸⁵ This was not satisfactory to the Opposition. Therefore, Graaff pushed NP leadership to distance themselves from Hertzog's viewpoints unambiguously. "Mr Schoeman reacted like a bull in a china shop".⁸⁶ He gave the assurance that "the Prime Minister and I — as leader of the Nationalist Party in the Transvaal, of which the honourable member for Ermelo is a member — reject, without reservation,

80 Serfontein, *Die verkrampste aanslag*, pp. 191-192.

81 *Sunday Times*, 20 April 1969.

82 *Sunday Times*, 20 April 1969.

83 *Sunday Times*, 20 April 1969.

84 *Sunday Times*, 20 April 1969.

85 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 22 April 1969, column 4630- 4633.

86 *Sunday Express*, 27 April 1969.

the accusations he made against the English-speaking South Africans".⁸⁷ No other steps were taken by the party to discipline him.

The next wave of articles on Hertzog and his supporters reported his return from Cape Town on Friday, 25 April. About 250-300 men welcomed him at Jan Smuts International Airport in Johannesburg with a banner that read, "We like a man who can stand up for himself".⁸⁸ Hertzog refused to make a speech saying that "There are times when it is better not to say anything".⁸⁹ Photographs commemorate the supporters carrying Hertzog on their shoulders.⁹⁰ *The Star* shone an unfavourable light on the event reporting that "Foreign travellers were amazed and amused at the antics of his supporters as they rushed from one entrance gate to another to greet their leader, and also at the confusion as they cheered passengers arriving on other flights".⁹¹

6. THE CONTINUATION OF THE CONFLICT

In May, the controversy moved from Cape Town to the Ermelo constituency. Hertzog stood in front of the electorate in Badplaas, Carolina, and Ermelo to explain the conflict between him and party leadership. The press followed the *verkrampte* leader inland and reported that "It is obvious that the NP leadership is out to thoroughly discredit Dr Hertzog - short of expelling him from the party and taking the blame for splitting the party".⁹² After reading the original speech, Hertzog asked the audience to decide if he had insulted the English-speakers or was correct in his analysis. Dr Pieter Koornhof, Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, accused his opponent of making the voters choose between the Prime Minister and himself. In response, Hertzog blamed *verligte* Sunday papers for blowing the whole matter out of proportion.⁹³ On 2 May, 120 people who gathered in Badplaas passed a motion of confidence in the NP and its leadership; the next day in Carolina, 400 Nationalists passed an amended motion of confidence in the NP, its leadership, and Hertzog.⁹⁴ If the voters had lost confidence in their MP, he would have to resign his position and thus lose his political influence. Removing him from the NP would not be problematic or maybe even necessary.

The next gathering took place in Ermelo on 9 May with about 600 people present. "The tussle in Ermelo is important because it is not only the prelude to

87 House of Assembly Debates, *Hansard*, 22 April 1969, column 4635- 4639.

88 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 26 April 1969.

89 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 26 April 1969.

90 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 26 April 1969.

91 *The Star*, 26 April 1969.

92 *The Star*, 5 May 1969.

93 *Die Burger*, 13 May 1969.

94 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 3 May 1969; *Sunday Times*, 4 May 1969.

the provincial election next year but may give an indication to the *verkramptes* of their hope of success in a challenge to the present Nationalist hierarchy in the general election in 1971 - particularly their chances on the Transvaal platteland".⁹⁵ On this occasion, Koornhof was replaced by Dr Nicolaas Diederichs, Minister of Finance, who defended Vorster's outward policy. Both speakers propagated national and party unity. The motion to censure Hertzog for his speech was defeated 10-1 and the motion of confidence in the NP, the Prime Minister and Hertzog was passed.⁹⁶ Hertzog's success lay not in the motion of confidence (as they signified support for him *and* Vorster), but rather in the failure of the censure motion. This meant that the audience believed Hertzog when he described the differences between him and party leadership as frivolities. He warned against "mental dictatorship" — his opinions should not have to be the same as Vorster's, but they should be respected nonetheless.

Though Hertzog was not ousted in his constituency, the week's events were not a complete success for the *verkramptes*. Both in Carolina and Ermelo, the former Minister was asked about his association with Barry Botha, SED Brown, the crowd at Jan Smuts airport, and *Veg* — all openly ultra-conservative. Hertzog did not admit to being in league with those people and publications, which many *verkramptes* saw as a betrayal of the bravest (most outspoken) members of the movement; one article reported that the emotions were so high that "a split is imminent among *verkramptes*".⁹⁷

Since Hertzog had put the blame for stirring up emotions over his speech on *verligte* newspapers, he was criticised by Pieter Botha (leader of the Cape NP and Minister of Defence). Botha saw any denunciation of *Die Burger* as an attack on the Cape NP. Hertzog was, therefore, accused of trying to arouse provincial animosity between the Transvalers and Southern Nationalists.⁹⁸

On 13 May, Hertzog attended the party caucus. Vorster accused him of secretly forming factions to fight leftist tendencies claiming that even under Verwoerd, he had been approached by Hertzog to create a rightist group against the Prime Minister's liberal ideas. Hertzog objected to this accusation, but other *verligtes* present also testified to having been offered the same proposition. After reflecting on it, Hertzog noted in his diary: "Some of us are just more sensitive to the liberal undermining of our entire *volk*; naturally we constantly speak about it with people and say that we need to stand as a group or as one or something like that against liberalism and liberal

95 *The Star*, 9 May 1969.

96 *Sunday Times*, 11 May 1969.

97 *Sunday Express*, 11 May 1969.

98 *Die Transvaler*, 12 May 1969.

influences. And that is what is now interpreted as forming groups”.⁹⁹ He saw this accusation as an excuse to expel him without losing voters; “undermining the Party” was a serious offence that was credible enough to be accepted by the public.¹⁰⁰

The Prime Minister proclaimed that those who do not adhere to party principles and policies must leave; Schoeman voiced his annoyance with the dissidents. He refused to defend them any longer and told them that he would prefer if they would simply leave the NP.¹⁰¹ However, the decision was taken that the *verkrampste* problem would only be resolved at the Transvaal Congress in September.

The next caucus occurred on 20 May, and Cillié believed it would result in an official break in the NP. That morning he wrote: “[Hertzog] continued with actions which he knew would mean an irreconcilable clash unless the opponents were weaklings without a backbone”.¹⁰² Nevertheless, efforts were still made to make peace. Hertzog composed a letter to the Prime Minister stating that he stands by the decisions of the Transvaal branch, he *abides* by Vorster’s interpretation of his speech (not that he accepts it), and that he rejects any notion that he had been involved in forming or was the leader of any faction harmful to the NP.¹⁰³ At the meeting itself, Hertzog was allowed to speak. He explained that upon reflecting on the accusations directed at him the previous week, he realised that it was all just a big misunderstanding. When he spoke about forming a group to oppose liberalism, he simply meant that they must stand as one in the face of evil.¹⁰⁴ Afterwards, Hertzog was told that his short speech could not have been more tactful.¹⁰⁵ This, along with the letter in Vorster’s possession, was accepted by the caucus as a sincere wish to fall in line. The split Cillié heralded was averted; the *verkrampstes* remained in the NP.

Vorster’s official statement included more promises than Hertzog had made, namely that he would clear up the confusion at the upcoming gatherings in his constituency.¹⁰⁶ What the Prime Minister probably had in mind was a straightforward statement from Hertzog that he abided by the leadership’s interpretation of the Calvinist speech and repudiation thereof.

Hertzog went to the East Transvaal to meet with his electorate in Amsterdam (6 June), Breyten (7 June), and Waterval Boven (13 June). He

99 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/205: Hertzog, 12-18 May 1969 (diary).

100 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/206: Hertzog, 20 May 1969 (diary).

101 Serfontein, *Die verkrampste aanslag*, p. 201.

102 *Die Burger*, 20 May 1969.

103 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/206: Hertzog, 20 May 1969 (diary).

104 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/206: Hertzog, 20 May 1969 (diary).

105 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/206: Hertzog, 20 May 1969 (diary).

106 ACA, JAM Hertzog Private Collection PV451 file 4/1/206: Hertzog, 20 May 1969 (diary).

made it clear that the conflict had not disappeared by continuing to blame the liberal Cape press (*Die Burger*, *Die Beeld* and the *Sunday Times*) for sowing suspicion and causing disputes within the Party. Hertzog claimed that without Piet Cillié's malicious reaction, the UP and NP leadership would not have given the Calvinist speech much thought.

The attack on Vorster was indirect but obvious: "Nobody is infallible. Nobody is perfect. [...] We should endeavour ourselves to rectify these mistakes within the party. We must also be prepared to listen to reasonable criticism".¹⁰⁷ Neither Hertzog nor anyone in his company had any intention of founding a separate party. The *Sunday Times* described the first two meetings as "another brilliant political performance" and "a clever egg dance".¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the gatherings were not without difficult questions; Dawie de Beer (Party secretary in Breyten) asked Hertzog to submit to the Prime Minister's statement that he would clear up the confusion that arose in the aftermath of Calvinist speech. According to Serfontein, Hertzog replied angrily that he had in fact complied with his superior's instructions and the matter had been explained. He added that the letter addressed to Vorster clearly acknowledged the difference of opinion between them. The *verligtes* did not accept this rationalisation, and *Dagbreek* printed a political cartoon entitled "Peace pipe after two weeks".¹⁰⁹ It depicted Vorster as a Native American chief looking at Hertzog smoking a peace pipe. The smoke originating from the pipe formed into a hand holding an axe directed at Vorster.

Hertzog's unambiguous submission to party leadership with regards to his speech did not occur at the last constituency meeting, in Waterval Boven, because the chairman began with the statement that "party leadership had agreed unanimously that Dr Hertzog, in his constituency, had cleared up any confusion to their satisfaction".¹¹⁰ Two days later, he admitted that it had only been his personal opinion based on a report in *Die Transvaler*¹¹¹, but the opportunity to force Hertzog to capitulate was gone.

The reasoning behind Schoeman and Vorster's lack of disciplinary action against the unrepentant rebel could be summarised by the Prime Minister's private comment, "Don't worry, he will hang himself".¹¹² They preferred the events to unfold in such a way that Hertzog would leave the party himself or at least make his expulsion acceptable in the eyes of the public. Since the May truce failed in a matter of days, "another feeble patching-up gesture would be

107 *Sunday Times*, 8 June 1969.

108 *Sunday Times*, 8 June 1969.

109 *Dagbreek en Landstem*, 8 June 1969.

110 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 14 June 1969.

111 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 16 June 1969.

112 ACA, L Stofberg Private Collection PV886 file 2: Stofberg, 11 June 1969 (diary).

fraught with serious risks to prestige — especially Mr Vorster's".¹¹³ Therefore, the decision was to let the affair over the Calvinist speech die a natural death and for the man who penned it to dig his own political grave. "It was now just a matter of finding the means to get rid of Hertzog and his cohorts in a way which contained the collateral damage".¹¹⁴ The opportunity arrived at the Transvaal congress since all *verkrampes*, but one (Louis Stofberg) belonged to that province's NP.

The Transvaal NP congress was held between 9 and 11 September; it was decided that the attendees would vote on whether they support each of the four aspects of Vorster's policy. If those who opposed it refused to subject themselves to the decision of the congress, they would be punished by their respective branches. The matters of diplomatic relations with African countries, cooperation between the two white population groups, and immigration were agreed to unanimously. However, during the vote on the sports policy, 18 members refused to support Vorster – 11 voted against the policy and seven abstained.¹¹⁵ Since Hertzog and Jaap Marais refused to accept the majority's decision, their local party branches revoked their membership at the beginning of October. Louis Stofberg was also expelled, and Willie Marais resigned.

7. CONCLUSION

On 25 October in Pretoria, these four MPs established the HNP. The events of May and June showed that Hertzog had more support than party leadership wished he had. In order to prevent the ultra-conservatives from propagating their views during the Parliamentary session and gaining support, the Prime Minister announced that the general election of 1971 would be held in April 1970 instead.¹¹⁶ The new political party did not win a single seat in the House of Assembly despite contesting in 78 constituencies.¹¹⁷ Thus the *verligtes* triumphed over the *verkrampes*.

Nevertheless, victory was not complete. Due to the traumatic experience of the party splitting on his watch, Vorster did not implement any significant reforms in fear of dividing the Afrikaner nation even further.¹¹⁸ He did not vigorously pursue his conciliatory outward policy, which meant that the

113 *The Rand Daily Mail*, 9 June 1969.

114 O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, p. 163.

115 JA du Pisani, *John Vorster en die verlig-verkrampstryd* (Bloemfontein: University of the Free State Press, 1988), pp. 134-135.

116 Schoeman, *Parlamentêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, p. 365.

117 Schoeman, *Parlamentêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika*, pp. 452-473.

118 O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, pp. 195, 205.

white population's lifestyle did not change significantly during his leadership. The fact that Vorster did not take the country on a drastically different path also meant that the HNP could not offer the electorate anything more than the NP was already doing to ensure white domination. Therefore, even though the *verkrampstes* certainly lost the dispute, the *verligtes* did not achieve their goals. There was no easing or elimination of racially discriminatory laws, nor any attempts to appease the local population (either by providing urban blacks with political rights or by precipitating the development of the homelands into viable independent states). As divisive and decisive as the *verlig-verkrampstryd* was to the NP and the Afrikaners, the effect on South Africa was that reforms were not introduced for yet another decade because Vorster did not wish to risk losing the support of his electorate.

In conclusion, the political significance of the Calvinist speech made by Hertzog on 14 April 1969 was that it forced party leadership to act decisively against the opposing faction. "Vorster could no longer put off a fight to the finish".¹¹⁹ Ultra-conservatives were against the outward policy, which demanded that strict racial segregation be relaxed to improve the world's opinion of South Africa. They saw Vorster's attempts to accommodate the international community as a weakness, which greatly contrasted with the ideologically rigid Verwoerd. Hertzog's speech emphasised loyalty to traditional values, which he summarised with the term "Calvinism". Vorster, who did not deal well with criticism, saw the speech not only as detrimental to his policy of white unity but also to his image as a more reasonable Prime Minister than his predecessors had been. He forced the *verkrampstes* to either submit to his outward policy or face expulsion, thus splitting the party into the progressive majority and conservative minority. It should be remembered that progressive Nationalists were still very conservative and did not wish to replace apartheid with racial integration: "The two camps themselves tended to exaggerate the differences between them on racial policy".¹²⁰ Vorster's decision not to risk further internal conflicts by minimising racial reforms resulted in the HNP being unable to provide a real alternative to NP policies and not having the momentum needed to remain relevant in Afrikaner politics. This weakened the right-wing movement to such an extent that they failed to gain support even when De Klerk ended minority rule in South Africa 20 years later.

119 O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, p. 163.

120 Glliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 549.