‘Angels and Demons’? The Dutch Reformed Church and Anticommunism in Twentieth Century South Africa

Ruhan Fourie

This thesis has been submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the faculty of the Humanities, for the International Studies Group at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Supervisor: Dr Lindie Koorts

Co-supervisors: Prof Jackie du Toit
Dr Chris Fevre

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DECLARATION

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Ruhan Fourie
Bloemfontein

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ABSTRACT

Afrikaner memories of apartheid are filled with images of an omnipotent communist threat, or the so-called *Rooi Gevaar* (Red Peril). This thesis explains why and how the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRC), the organisation with the widest reach and deepest influence in the everyday lives of Afrikaners, played a significant role in perpetuating an anticommunist imagination amongst twentieth century Afrikaners. It fills a lacuna in the historiography of South African anticommunism, which has up until now been confined to a state-centric approach. Drawing on international theoretical frameworks, this thesis expands the dynamics of South African anticommunism beyond a Cold War-paradigm and embraces the flexibility of the phenomenon. The DRC acts as a lens into the intricacies of South African and, more specifically, Afrikaner anticommunism. It offers an original account of South African anticommunism by integrating a wide range of archival sources from the DRC's extensive records, those of the *Afrikaner-Broederbond* (AB), and personal collections of key role-players, including Nico Diederichs, Koot Vorster, and Piet Meyer, into a single chronological narrative.

This thesis argues that the DRC formed the backbone of Afrikaner anticommunism throughout the twentieth century. It illustrates that the church was not always the main driver, nor was its influence consistent. However, as a vessel of moral anticommunist propaganda, the DRC fulfilled a critical role in legitimising overt opposition to and suppression of 'communism' in all its perceived manifestations, including black dissent, whilst also creating an Afrikaner imagination – even at times a moral panic – in which the *volk* remained convinced of the ever-present communist threat, and of its own role as a bulwark against communism. Anticommunism, argues this thesis, functioned as a vehicle for nationalist unity (and uniformity), a paradigm for Afrikaner identity, and a legitimiser of the *volk's* perceptions of its imagined moral high ground.

Keywords: Anticommunism, Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid; red peril; Nico Diederichs; Dan de Beer; Koot Vorster; Andries Treurnicht; Piet Meyer; Johan Heyns; Albert Hertzog; Dirk Kotzè; Philip Nel; Richard Wurmbrand; Carl McIntire; Antikom, National Council against Communism (NCC); *Sending onder Kommuniste* (SOK); Afrikaner-Broederbond; Institute for the Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS).

OPSOMMING

Afrikanerherinneringe aan apartheid is deurspek met beelde van ’n almagtige kommunistiese bedreiging, of die sogenaamde *Rooi Gevaar*. Hierdie tesis verduidelik waarom en hoe die NG Kerk van Suid-Afrika (NGK), die instelling wat in Afrikaners se alledaagse lewens die verste kon reik en diepste kon beïnvloed, ’n belangrike rol gespeel het in die bestendiging van ’n antikommunistiese verbeelding onder twintigste eeuse Afrikaners. Die tesis vul ’n leemte in die geskiedskrywing van Suid-Afrikaanse antikommunisme, wat tot dusver beperk was tot ’n staatsentriese benadering. Met behulp van internasionale teoretiese raamwerke, brei dit die dinamika van Suid-Afrikaanse antikommunisme verder as ’n Koue Oorlog-paradigma uit, en belig dit die buigsaamheid van hierdie verskynsel. Die NGK dien as ’n lens om die ingewikkeldheid van Suid-Afrikaanse, en meer spesifiek, Afrikaner-antikommunisme, te verstaan. Hierdie tesis bied dus ’n oorspronklike blik op Suid-Afrikaanse antikommunisme deur ’n wye reeks argiefbronne uit die NGK se omvangryke rekords, dié van die Afrikaner-Broederbond (AB), en die persoonlike versamelings van sleutelrolspelers, insluitend Nico Diederichs, Koot Vorster, en Piet Meyer, binne ’n enkele, kronologiese narratief te integreer.

Die tesis voer aan dat die NGK die ruggraat van Afrikaner-antikommunisme in die twintigste eeu was. Die kerk was nie altyd die hoofdrywer nie, en ook nie noodwendig konsekwent nie. As ’n drywer van morele antikommunistiese propaganda het die NGK egter ’n kritieke rol vervul om openlike opposisie teen, en die onderdrukking van 'kommunisme' in al sy vermeende manifestasies, inluitend swart weerstand, te legitimeer. Terselfdertyd het dit ook ’n Afrikanerverbeelding geskep – soms selfs ’n morele paniek – waardeur die volk oortuig gebly het van die immer teenwoordige kommunistiese bedreiging, en van sy eie rol as ’n bolwerk teen kommunisme. Antikommunisme, aldus hierdie tesis, was ’n voertuig vir nasionalistiese eenheid (en eenvormigheid), ’n raamwerk vir Afrikaner-identiteit en ’n legitimeerder van die volk se eie opvatting van sy verbeelde morele meerderwaardigheid.

Sleutelwoorde: Antikommunisme, Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), Afrikaner-nationalisme, apartheid, rooi gevaar; Nico Diederichs; Dan de Beer; Koot Vorster; Andries Treurnicht; Piet Meyer; Johan Heyns; Albert Hertzog; Dirk Kotzè; Philip Nel; Richard Wurmbrand; Carl McIntire; Antikom, Nasionale Raad teen Kommunisme (NRK); Sending onder Kommuniste (SOK); Afrikaner-Broederbond; Insitutut vir die Studie van Marxisme aan die University Stellenbosch (ISMUS).

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generation of DRC theologians that transcend the strict paradigms of the church's past which this thesis explores. Thanks to other DRC ministers, especially Rethie van Niekerk and Gideon van der Walt for insightful discussions and inputs. Far removed from the DRC's anticommunism, in the real world, a group of great friends supported me in ways that they would not necessarily realise. Here's to Scherlize and Schalk-Joseph, Julani, Lutje, Willem and Dalleen, Marco and Ruan, Wynand and Béla, Deon, Bouwer, Carin, Gert, Jan, Tiaan, Fernando and Charissa, Martin, Henco and Catherine, Esbe, Christoff, Lisa, Carla, James, Anrich, and Jokie. And special thanks to Carita Visser who offered special support right at the end of this journey – and who helped polish the bibliography.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Afrikaner Broederbond
ANC	African National Congress
Antikom	Antikommunistiese Aksie Kommissie
APK	Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk
CI	Christian Insitute of Southern Africa
CP	Conservative Party
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
DRC	Dutch Reforemd Church of South Africa
DRCA	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DRMC	Dutch Reformed Mission Church
FAK	Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge
GK	Gereformeerde Kerk
HNP	Herstigte Nasionale Party
ICCC	International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC
ISMUS	Institute for Marxist Studies of the University of Stellenbosch
ISSUS	Institute for Soviet Studies at the University of Stellenbosch
KS	Kerk en Samelewing: 'n Getuienis van die Ned Geref Kerk
MK	Umkonto weSizwe
NCC	National Council against Communism
NHK	Nederduits Hervormed Kerk
NP	National Party
NRT	Nasionale Raad van Trustees
OB	Ossewa-Brandwag
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
RCA	Reformed Church in Africa
RDB	Reddingsdaadbond
RVN	Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge die Lig van die Skrif'
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
Serkos	Sentrum vir Reformatoriese en Kontemporêre Studies
SOK	Sending onder Kommuniste

UDF	United Democroatic Front
UP	United Party
WCC	World Council of Churches

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INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Afrikaners, the ethnic white minority who held majority social, political, and economic power in a racially segregated South Africa until 1994, were contemplating the country's recent past under apartheid. Responding to revelations made during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, members of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRC), the church that served the majority of Afrikaners and was widely portrayed as the 'National Party at prayer' due to its moral support for the apartheid regime and its policies, expressed deep disillusionment about the injustices of the past.[1] The general position amongst its members, based on a study by Foot and Van den Berg, was that they had not been aware of the apartheid atrocities exposed by the TRC, and that the state and the media had kept them blind to it. They also felt misled by the DRC, which had theologically justified the policy of apartheid.[2] The DRC's relationship with racial discrimination in South Africa has been well-documented.[3] However, another aspect raised by its members was that they felt that the DRC, and the Afrikaner establishment, had played a key role in misleading them on the perceived threat of communism. One church member explained:

> [C]ommunism was portrayed to us [DRC members] as this threat, [and] in the process, the legitimate objections of black people, who were as a rule associated with communism, what they had against the system, were wiped off the table. It was not recognised. It was all shaded by "communism" as denominator. If, for example, guys [sic.] objected to the forced removal of people, we put this label on it: it is communist inspired, or it is communists who do it. And with that, it was dealt with, now you did not have to think about it anymore, the thinking was done for you. End of story.[4]

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[1] L. Foot & J. van den Berg, 'Lewe na apartheid: Lidmate se narratiewe vanuit 'n longitudinale pastorale betrokkenheid', *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, 55, 1 (2014), 50. The TRC was a court-like restorative justice body mandated by the state to deal with the atrocities committed during apartheid.

[2] *Ibid.*, 55.

[3] J Kingorn (ed.), *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, (Macmillan: Johannesburg, 1986); R.T.J. Lombard, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke en Rassepolitiek, met spesiale verwysing na die jare 1948-1961*, (Silverton: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1981); T. Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid in South Africa: An Examination of the Dutch Reformed Church-State Relations*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1999); H. Giliomee, '"The Weakness of Some": The Dutch Reformed Church and White Supremacy', *Scripture* 83, (2003); I. Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, (Toronto: Edward Mellen, 1981); A. du Toit, 'No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner nationalism and racial ideology', *The American Historical Review*, 88, 4 (1983).

[4] Foot & Van den Berg, 'Lewe na apartheid', 470. Translated from Afrikaans: '…kommunisme is vir ons geteken as hierdie bedreiging, in die proses is die legitieme besware van swartmense wat gewoonlik met kommunisme geassosieer was, wat hulle teen die stelsel gehad het, is van die tafel afgevee. Dit is nie raakgesien nie. Dit is alles ingekleur onder die noemer 'kommunisme'. As ouens beswaar maak teen die gedwonge verskuiwing van mense byvoorbeeld, dan het ons die etiket daaraan gesit: dit is kommunisties geïnspireerd, of dit is kommuniste wat dit

The above quote, and other responses by DRC members, makes it clear that the general membership believed that the perceived threat of communism had informed their understanding of black dissent as illegitimate, and the state's often violent actions as a reasonable response to this. What is less clear however, is who was responsible for the intellectual groundwork concerning communism, and how and why they were so effective in communicating this thinking to the grassroots populace. It is easy, and to an extent legitimate, to see Afrikaner fears of communist subversion as a by-product of the Cold War. This would, however, be an oversimplification of internal South African politics and restricts Afrikaner anticommunism to the Cold War-era.

This thesis will demonstrate how the fluid nature of anticommunism made it an enduring feature of Afrikaner nationalism, and how the DRC, albeit with fluctuating function and influence, remained its only consistent agent throughout the twentieth century. The importance of the DRC's moral anticommunism, the role of anticommunism as a nationalist unifier, and its influence in constructing Afrikaner identity are trends that will run throughout the thesis. The existing literature on Afrikaner anticommunism is overwhelmingly state-centric and portrays anticommunism in the DRC as the church's natural position, without sufficient explanation as to the reason why.[5] This study, in contrast, takes a systematic approach to the DRC's anticommunism, tracing its origins to the first decades of the twentieth century, and exploring how the church expanded and upheld this position throughout the century. The DRC's own agency in this matter is recognised, yet it is not viewed in isolation from the wider local and international context. The role of institutional and informal anticommunism within the church is investigated, as well as how individuals, be it from within the church or outside, used the DRC – and how the DRC used them – to advance an anticommunist agenda. It also explores the reasons for the seemingly unceremonious decline in the DRC's anticommunist position by the end of the twentieth century.

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doen. En daarmee is dit afgehandel, nou hoef jy nie verder te dink daaroor nie, daar is klaar vir jou gedink. Einde van die storie.'

[5] For example, A. van Deventer & P. Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism, 1922-1941', *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 17, 2 (1990).

Historiography and Background

Histories of the DRC in the twentieth century are deeply intertwined with the broader literature on Afrikaner nationalism. References to anticommunism, often taken as a natural nationalist stance, are scattered throughout this vast literature.[6] Nationalism in South Africa, as Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido point out, was rooted in responses to industrialisation, imperialism, and British 'race patriotism' in the late nineteenth century. New ethnic identities emerged after the consolidation of the erstwhile British colonies, the defeated Afrikaner republics, and the subjugated African kingdoms and territories into a single state in 1910.[7] Afrikaner nationalism, like any other nationalism, was based on what Benedict Anderson described as an imagined political community; imagined as both inherently limited – culturally, territorially, and ethnically – and sovereign.[8] Philosopher Johan Degenaar also pointed to the complexities of nationalism, which he argued was not merely a political ideology, but also a juridical, symbolic, and a social order.[9] Degenaar provided a brief philosophical analysis of Afrikaner nationalism, which he argued was a combination of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of *volonté générale* (general will) and Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of *Volksgeist* (spirit of the people). The former proposed that it is the general will of the people, with its collective personality, that dictates the will of the nation, while the latter considers the nation as an organic creation of God, with a divine right and calling in the world.[10]

Degenaar's work provides a basis to understand Western nationalism in its philosophical form, and its relevance to Afrikaner nationalism. As a historical process, Afrikaner nationalism has received a considerable amount of analysis from a range of scholars. By the 1960s, histories of the Afrikaners written by Afrikaner historians had a nationalistic character, infused with notions of unity, ethnicity, great leaders, and the triumph of

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[6] See T.D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion*, (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1975), 251; H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of A People*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 547-550; N.M. Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa, 1934-1948*, (University of California Press: Berkley, 1975), 177-179.
[7] S. Marks & S. Trapido, 'The politics of race, class and nationalism', in S. Marks & S. Trapido (eds.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, (London: Longman Group, 1987), 2.
[8] B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (London: Verso, 2006), 6-7.
[9] J. Degenaar, 'Philosophical Roots of Nationalism', in T. Sundermeier (ed.), *Church and Nationalism in South Africa*, (Braamfontein: Raven Press, 1975), 14.
[10] *Ibid.*, 23-4.

Afrikanerdom.[11] Within this paradigm, the assumption was made – or constructed – that Afrikaners were a homogenous group with an organic understanding of nationalism. However, scholars have since illustrated the complexities of Afrikaner nationalism.[12] The sociologist Thomas Dunbar Moodie's, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* (1975), was the first significant study in English of these complexities and remains one of the most influential explorations into how Afrikaner nationalists interpreted their world. Moodie, as an English 'outsider' to Afrikanerdom, traced the development of an Afrikaner 'civil religion' from the end of the South African War (1899-1902), until the Afrikaner nationalists' political victory in 1948. In the process, Moodie challenged the presumption of a homogenous Afrikanerdom, and demonstrated that Afrikaner beliefs were neither unchanging nor universally accepted. These beliefs were continually modified in response to the context and conditions in which Afrikaners found themselves.[13]

Moodie identified three intellectual strands of Afrikaner nationalism, each with their own emphasis and agents. The first was the Kuyperian strand, inspired by Dutch theologian and statesmen Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). Herein, the idea of 'sovereignty in each sphere' stood central, whereby all spheres of social life – including the state and church – functioned separately from each other, but were all equally subject to God alone. This subservience to God meant that all of these spheres, separate though they may be, shared a common value system.[14] Kuyper's 'sovereignty in each sphere' was interpreted in an Afrikaner nationalist paradigm to frame the Afrikaner *volk* as sovereign under God, and whose purpose and historical destiny was determined by God.[15] Some scholars, such as Giliomee, Hexham, and Du Toit, emphasised that this Kuyperian (neo-Calvinist) influence was confined to intellectual elites within the conservative sister church of the DRC, the *Gereformeerde Kerk* (GK – Reformed Church).[16] The historian Richard Elphick concurred, explaining that Kuyperianism 'seeped only slowly into the Dutch Reformed Church', which was much more influential in formulating the

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[11] A. Grundlingh, 'Sosiale Geskiedenis en die Dilemma in Afrikanergeskiedskrywing', *South African Historical Journal*, 19, 1 (1987), 42.
[12] Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa*; S. Dubow, 'Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid, and the Conceptualization of "Race"', *Journal of African History*, 33, 2 (1992), 209-237; Du Toit, 'No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner nationalism and racial ideology', 920-952; L. Koorts, *DF Malan and the Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2014).
[13] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 295.
[14] *Ibid.*, 55-6.
[15] *Ibid.*, 65.
[16] Giliomee, '"The Weakness of Some"; I. Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, (Toronto: Edward Mellen, 1981); Du Toit, 'No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner nationalism and racial ideology'.

foundation of apartheid theory.[17] The Kuyperian strand, especially when analysing the DRC, should therefore be treated as only a partial influence on Afrikaner nationalist thinking.

A second strand was imported by a younger generation of Afrikaner intellectuals returning from their studies in Europe during the 1930s. They were those whom Moodie referred to as the neo-Fichtean nationalists. They argued that the nation should be regarded as the central unit of social analysis, and the individual could only be fully human when it is part of a nation which is bound together by a single common culture. Central to this strand of Afrikaner nationalism was the notion that each nation has a distinct character and a separate divine calling in the world. This neo-Fichtean strand was, argued Moodie, predominantly confined to Afrikaner intellectual elites and was never the accepted ideological conviction of Afrikaner society as a whole. That said, its proponents quickly found themselves in the leadership of organisations within the Afrikaner nationalist movement, such as the *Afrikaner Broederbond* (AB – Afrikaner Brotherhood) and the *Afrikaner Studentebond* (ASB- Afrikaner Student Union).[18]

The final, and for this study, the most significant strand of Afrikaner nationalism Moodie identified, was the *volkskerk* (people's church) tradition of the DRC. Early twentieth century DRC clergy identified with the Afrikaner *volk* given the church's long association with Afrikanerdom, which stretched back to the seventeenth century proto-Afrikaner settler communities. With the changing conditions of Afrikaner society after the First World War – economic depression resulting in the phenomenon of 'poor whitism', and rapid urbanisation – DRC clergy, who were trained to care for the souls of their congregants, increasingly encountered the Afrikaners' harsh material realities when they began serving in congregations across the country.[19] This coincided with a growing Afrikaner national consciousness from the 1930s onwards, which amplified the church and its congregants' conviction that it was, in fact, the *volkskerk* of the Afrikaners. Within this framework, the DRC distinguished between party

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[17] R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 6.
[18] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 154-9.
[19] The church historian Robert Vosloo discusses both Afrikaner urbanisation and poor whiteism and the DRC's responses on it. See R. Vosloo, 'On Poverty: The Dutch Reformed Church and the "poor white problem"', and R. Vosloo, 'On urbanisation: The Dutch Reformed Church and the City', in R. Vosloo, *Reforming Memory: Essays on South African Church and Theological History*, (Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2017); The DRC's earlier identification with the *volk*, with specific reference to Afrikaner children, is thoroughly discussed in S.E. Duff, *Changing Childhoods: Dutch Reformed Church Evangelicalism and Colonial Childhood, 1860-1995*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

politics and what it called *kultuur*- or *volkspolitiek* (cultural or people's politics). The DRC believed in the separation of church and state, and therefore distanced itself from party politics, while self-identifying as a pillar of Afrikaner *volkspolitiek*. As a result, the church felt called to be involved in the upliftment of poor Afrikaners, the drive for Afrikaans-medium education, and Afrikaner unity.[20]

Hermann Giliomee, interrogating the roots of the DRC's white supremacy, expanded our understanding of the importance of the church's *volkskerk* tradition. Giliomee challenged Moodie's assumption that this tradition was a twentieth century phenomenon. Instead, he located it in the nineteenth century Afrikaner experience of the colonial frontier. The *volkskerk* tradition, Giliomee explained, grew from the DRC's Afrikaner egalitarianism on the frontier and was fused with its superior racial attitudes when slavery was abolished in 1838. This spiked fears of *gelykstelling* – social equality – among Afrikaners. The DRC, according to Giliomee, 'had to be mindful of the key concern of its members, namely preventing *gelykstelling*, or social levelling, which was the flip side of white egalitarianism'.[21] Giliomee argued that it was within this context that the 1857 DRC decision to support a segregated church should be evaluated. Other scholars, such as the church historian J. N. Gerstner, also argued that the DRC's colonial history is key to understanding its racial attitudes in the twentieth century. He illustrated how it contributed to the formation of a distinctive identity among the white settlers, and to their conviction of white superiority over indigenous peoples and slaves since the earliest years of the colony.[22]

The *volkskerk* tradition was deeply rooted in the DRC's identity by the twentieth century. This close historical identification with the Afrikaner *volk* made the DRC an integral institution, together with other cultural organisations that were influenced by Kuyperian and neo-Fichtean exponents, in the rising tide of Afrikaner nationalism. In exposing the 'factions and schisms, rifts about ideologies and personalities, manoeuvrings and conspiracies' of the different Afrikaner nationalist brands and organisations, Moodie also illustrated what bound Afrikaner nationalists together in their rise to political power.[23] One of these binding factors

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[20] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 71-2.
[21] Giliomee, '"The Weakness of Some"', 216.
[22] J.N. Gerstner, 'A Christian Monopoly: The Reformed Church and Colonial Society under Dutch Rule', in R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social & Cultural History*, (Cape Town: David Philips, 1997), 16.
[23] Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, xii.

was the perceived threat of communism to Afrikaner society. To the Kuyperians, such as the prominent DRC-leaders Koot Vorster and Andries Treurnicht, communism represented an idolatrous attempt to transcend the separate spheres of authority laid down in the ordinance of creation; to the neo-Fichteans, personified by the cultural leaders Nico Diederichs and Piet Meyer, it represented 'atomic individualism' that undermined a strong nation; and to the DRC, with its identity as an Afrikaner *volkskerk*, communism represented 'atheistic materialism'.[24] Moodie thus indicated that these somewhat competing intellectual strands within the Afrikaner nationalist movement were united by the 1940s through their shared anticommunist sentiments. These strands, and their proponents, thus provide a framework that can be expanded upon when examining the DRC's anticommunism, and the Afrikaner's rise to political power. This is illustrated in the extent to which, for example, the neo-Fichtean nationalists, none of whom were clergy or church officials, were deeply connected, and sometimes central, to the DRC's anticommunist activities. Individuals such as Nico Diederichs, a key figure in the economic mobilisation of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s, and later Minister of Finance (1967-1975) and State President (1975-1978) under a National Party (NP) government, and Piet Meyer, a staunch nationalist and chair of the AB and the state broadcaster in the 1960s, were committed neo-Fichteans, and both played central roles in the DRC's anticommunist efforts during the 1940s and 1950s.

Moodie's *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* was critical in illustrating the diverse nature – albeit within a nationalist paradigm – of Afrikaner thought in the first half of the twentieth century. However, just as critical, were the structural and material conditions in which nationalism functioned. Dan O'Meara, in keeping with the radical historiography of the 1970s and 1980s, offered a Marxist framework in which Afrikaner nationalism could be understood.[25] Afrikaner intelligentsia were not only divided on an intellectual basis, but as O'Meara's *Volkskapitalisme* of 1983 demonstrated, the Afrikaner community was divided by class as well.[26] The rise of Afrikaner capitalism was, according to O'Meara, accomplished through orchestrated attempts by, in particular, Afrikaner capitalists in the Cape; teachers, church clergy, tradesmen, and others whom he labelled the 'petty bourgeoisie'; industrial workers; and farmers.[27] There was

[24] Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 251.
[25] See Marks & Trapido, 'The politics of race, class and nationalism', 10-22.
[26] D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism 1934-1948*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press,1983).
[27] O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 96; 155.

thus, according to O'Meara, an interdependent development between Afrikaner capitalism and Afrikaner nationalism, with certain key role players, such as the Cape farmers and the Sanlam companies on the one hand, and the Northern-dominated AB, on the other. O'Meara's key contribution to this topic was his emphasis on how changing social conditions and different constituent forces in the Afrikaner nationalist alliance affected this coalition, and how it consequently shifted from advancing a rural backward-looking ideology to an urban ideology based on industrial capital. These forces, as this study will highlight, played into the DRC's developing anticommunist stance, especially in the earlier phases of its development as the church, as *volkskerk*, adapted to Afrikaners' new urban conditions in the 1930s and 1940s.

O'Meara continued his Marxist analysis of Afrikaner nationalism after the 1948 victory with his so-called 'son-of-*Volkskapitalisme*', published in 1996, and entitled *Forty Lost Years*.[28] With the state 'captured' by the NP for the advancement of Afrikaner interests, an array of Afrikaner organisations, including the Afrikaner Broederbond, the Dutch Reformed Church, and the *Reddingsdaadbond* (RDB), that had formed part of the nationalist alliance in the years before 1948, had a legitimate claim to influence in the new administration. The two main role players in this political structure, according to O'Meara, were the AB and the NP. O'Meara argued that, although the DRC played a critical role in shaping the moral framework of the Afrikaner nationalist agenda, it did not have the political control and power of the AB and NP when it came to influencing Afrikaner politics.[29] In 1961, after the Cottesloe Consultations (see Chapter 3), a period of state allegiance was initiated. The DRC operated not only as an Afrikaner *volkskerk* (national church), but also as, in O'Meara's words, a 'semi-state church'. In other words, the DRC not only served the Afrikaner people, but also the state. This had political implications as the church came to represent the state and concomitantly, its policy of apartheid.

In their approach to anticommunism however, the AB, NP, and the DRC found an equal alliance. The DRC offered the moral and religious justification for the anticommunist position in what this thesis will argue was the church's main role in the alliance, as the 'moral' anticommunist. Hereby, the DRC moralised any action, even violence, deemed to fend off communism, or perceptions thereof. The extent and nature of this alliance has not, however,

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[28] D. O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*, (Randburg: Ravan Press, 1996), 13.
[29] *Ibid.,* 43.

been systemically investigated and this is at the core of this thesis. By focussing on the major role-players of Afrikaner anticommunism, especially Nico Diederichs, Piet Meyer, Koot Vorster, Andries Treurnicht, and Dan de Beer, this thesis outlines the nature of their relationships with one another and the agendas influencing this broader anticommunist ecosystem. As this thesis will demonstrate, these individuals, with their differing brands of anticommunism, bound together different organisations, including the DRC's Anticommunist Action Commission (Antikom) and the AB's National Council against Communism (NCC), into an anticommunist network (see Chapters 2 and 3). Different individuals and organisations drove anticommunist endeavours throughout the twentieth century, but this thesis asserts that it was the DRC that remained the constant moral backbone of this ecosystem.

Anticommunism, as the thesis also argues, was greatly dependent on Afrikaner nationalism' most fundamental product: apartheid. Much has been written about its roots and implementation.[30] O'Meara, for instance, viewed apartheid as an attempt to protect the jobs of Afrikaner workers, to ensure a labour supply for Afrikaner farmers, and to secure a foothold for Afrikaner traders – that is, to secure the conditions for Afrikaner capital accumulation.[31] Others, such as Saul Dubow, asserted that O'Meara's argument reduced apartheid to a mere functional utility. Dubow argued that the influence of Christian-Nationalism – which Moodie framed as a civil religion – and covert scientific racism should also be taken into account when explaining the emergence of apartheid.[32] However, in his *magnum opus*, *The Afrikaners*, Herman Giliomee challenged some of these orthodoxies. He rejected O'Meara's assumption that apartheid was the work of northern populists, and argued that the policy was forged by Afrikaner politicians, academics and journalists in the south, who were preoccupied with the removal of the coloured vote and the reduction of Africans in the Western Cape.[33] The 1948 election victory should, according to Giliomee, not be seen as the result of the NP's apartheid policy, or even of the surge of nationalist sentiment after the 1938 Great Trek centenary, as was argued elsewhere.[34] Afrikaner voters, Giliomee argued, voted for DF Malan's NP out of

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[30] See, e.g., S. Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origin of Apartheid in South Africa, 1916-36*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989); D. Posel, 'The Apartheid Project, 1949-1970', in R. Ross, A.K. Mager & B. Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); D. Welsh, *Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011).
[31] O'Meara, Forty Lost Years, 43.
[32] S. Dubow, 'Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid, and the Conceptualization of "Race"', *Journal of African History*, 33, 2 (1992), 209.
[33] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, xvii.
[34] See Chapters 9 and 12 in Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*.

resentment towards the incumbent United Party (UP) of Jan Smuts because they were angered that the country had been dragged into the Second World War.[35]

Giliomee's work further emphasised the importance of framing religion and religious institutions, specifically the DRC with its own ideas and agency, as a socio-political force in Afrikaner history.[36] As discussed earlier, Giliomee emphasised the *volkskerk* identity of the DRC and its influence on the racial attitudes of Afrikaners.[37] He went further by explaining that the development of apartheid rested heavily on another aspect of the DRC's thinking during the first decades of the twentieth century. Along with Richard Elphick, Giliomee argued that it was, in fact, not Kuyperian, or neo-Calvinist thinking, that was responsible for apartheid theory. As Elphick bluntly put it, the South African Kuyperians contributed 'nothing to the foundation of apartheid theory,' rather, '[they] provided Afrikaner nationalist thinkers with a broad philosophical basis from which to oppose Western notions of racial equality'.[38] The real apartheid theorists, according to Giliomee and Elphick, were the evangelical missionaries in the DRC, 'who sought to foster 'development' among blacks without threatening white supremacy'.[39] An early formulation of separate development was formally endorsed by the DRC's federal mission commission in 1935, when the church adopted a proto-apartheid scheme as its mission policy. The DRC admitted that the policy was based on the 'traditional fear of the Afrikaner for 'equalisation' between black and white'. The policy concluded that 'every Nation has the right to be itself and to strive to develop and uplift itself' and the church encouraged and promoted 'social differentiation and spiritual or cultural segregation, to the benefit of both [black and white] sections.'[40] On this, Giliomee commented that 'Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid and missions policy was becoming a trinity that had separateness as its fundamental principle'.[41]

Other historians have further explored the DRC's relationship with apartheid. Lombard offered a descriptive study of the institutional development of the DRC's relationship with racial politics during the first decade of apartheid rule in South Africa, while Kuperus sought to synthesise this influence by examining church-state relations during the apartheid-era in its

[35] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 446.
[36] *Ibid.*, xvi.
[37] See also *Ibid.*, 454-464.
[38] Elphick, *Equality of Believers*, 6.
[39] *Ibid.*, 6.
[40] Quoted from Kinghorn, *NG Kerk en Apartheid*, 87-8.
[41] Giliomee, '"The Weakness of Some"', 229.

entirety (1948-1994).[42] It is, however, the seminal study *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid* (1986), edited by church historian Johann Kinghorn, that provides the most comprehensive account of the theological and institutional development of the DRC's history with racism.[43] It was compiled in the mid-1980s during a period of growing criticism from within the DRC, including academics and leaders, on the church's relationship with apartheid. In keeping with these voices, Kinghorn's work offers a critical evaluation on this relationship. To Kinghorn, apartheid theology was steeped in abstract notions of 'organic' human development, idealistic ideas of harmonious separated pluralism, and ethnic collectivism.[44] Like Elphick and Giliomee, *Die NG Kerk and Apartheid* traced the origins of apartheid theology to the segregationist mission policy of the church – the aforementioned 1857 synod decision and the 1935 mission policy stand out as seminal markers in this regard. Kinghorn further outlined how the *volks*theology of the early twentieth century had become the core theology of the DRC after the infamous Du Plessis-case in the 1930s (see Chapter 4). The notions of racial differentiation that were central to the missional policy and the nationalism linked with *volks*theology continued to strengthen the DRC's apartheid theology. Kinghorn argued that this position was continually tweaked and refined, but the adoption of 'Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge die Lig van die Skrif' (RVN – Race, *Volk* and *Volk*-relations in Light of the Scriptures) in 1974 confirmed that apartheid theology was the dominant theological position of the DRC (see Chapter 5).

What the accounts of Lombard, Kuperus, and to a lesser extent, Kinghorn, lack is a contextual analysis of the DRC's thinking on race during the apartheid years. Afrikaner nationalism continued to be the ideological context in which the DRC functioned in the latter half of the twentieth century. 'Without the nationalism,' wrote Giliomee, 'it is unlikely that the DRC would have remained as rigidly segregated as it was until the final decades of the century; without the DRC's endorsement of the apartheid policy, it would never have assumed its extreme form'.[45] The Afrikaner theologian, P.G.J. Meiring, reiterated this point in his 1975 essay on the DRC and Afrikaner nationalism. Meiring went on to make a moral judgement (a staple of theological analyses on the topic) on the DRC's historical relationship with Afrikaner nationalism. To Meiring, the 'positives' of this relationship – assisting the Afrikaner's search

[42] Lombard, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke en Rassepolitiek*; Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid*.
[43] Kinghorn, *NG Kerk en Apartheid*.
[44] *Ibid.*, 139-143.
[45] Giliomee, '"The Weakness of Some"', 221.

for identity and social upliftment – is outweighed by the negative aspects: the centrality of the *volk*, the proximity to the state, ecumenical isolation, and racial segregation.[46]

This study will argue that communism, the perceived 'red peril', functioned to sustain a deeply rooted fear of the *volk*'s imminent demise. This was done by created a subverted idea of communism which threatened every sphere of Afrikaner life. Giliomee argued that Afrikaner nationalists were preoccupied with ethnic survival. He noted that general concerns over 'white survival' appeared throughout Afrikaner history, but its emergence as a distinct nationalist anxiety was a twentieth century phenomenon.[47] Giliomee used this framework to explain apartheid thinking in the twentieth century. This study expands on his framework to explain how the fear of communism functioned during the same period.[48] This constant fear of Afrikaner demise made the moral bastion of the *volk*, the DRC, wary of any outside influences – what was termed *volksvreemd*, or foreign to the people. Kinghorn pointed to the DRC's conviction that there existed an omnipresent set of social crises that threatened the foundation of Afrikanerdom. Afrikaner poverty, a growing pluralisation of society, and the breakdown in so-called 'Afrikaner values' were identifiable facets of this threat through the course of the mid-twentieth century. Influenced by Kuyperian thought, prominent DRC leaders interpreted these social changes as signs of an impending collapse of the moral and social order, as a consequence of modernity's rejection of the religious hierarchy of authority. To maintain this hierarchy was a God-ordained duty for these DRC leaders, wrote Kinghorn. This meant that anything that tilted toward egalitarianism was not only opposed but decried as evil.[49]

As indicated above, references to Afrikaner opposition to communism are scattered throughout the existing literature, with little attention given to the phenomenon in its own right. For example, a 1990 study by André van Deventer and Philip Nel focussed on the earliest phase of state sponsored anticommunism, from 1922 until 1941. They illustrated how the Smuts-government used anticommunist rhetoric to delegitimise radicalising labour movements in the 1920s, especially in the wake of the 1922 Rand Revolt, when clashes between mine workers and the state became violent. Another function of anticommunism during this period, according

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[46] P.G.J. Meiring, 'Nationalism in the Dutch Reformed Churches', in Sundermeier (ed.), *Church and Nationalism in South Africa*.
[47] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, xvii.
[48] See 'Chapter 13: The Making of a Radical Survival Plan', in Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*.
[49] See J. Kinghorn, 'Modernization and Apartheid: The Afrikaner Churches', in Elphick & Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa*.

to Van Deventer and Nel, was to provide an effective means for consolidating and legitimising the political aspirations of the Afrikaner nationalist movement. To Van Deventer and Nel it was especially the Afrikaner politico-cultural entrepreneurs of the 1930s that utilised anticommunism. Their study, however, paid little attention to the moral foundation that the DRC laid for anticommunism to thrive. To Van Deventer and Nel, it was the right-wing Ossewa-Brandwag (OB), the AB, and their subsidiaries who drove anticommunist ideas and actions in this early phase, with the NP weaving this narrative into party policy by 1937. Yet, they viewed this as merely strengthening the state's later ability to mobilise and control the Afrikaner populace under the banner of anticommunism.[50] This perspective overlooks the motives and abilities of other cultural actors, especially the DRC which, as this thesis will illustrate, was the consistent anticommunist actor throughout the twentieth century.

Samuel Longford's 2016 MA thesis also focussed on the state's use of anticommunism as an alibi for repression in the first half of the twentieth century. Longford paid more attention to the DRC in this regard. However, he focussed primarily on DF Malan, the DRC minister-turned-politician, as a primary window into the DRC's theological approach to communism. This assumed that the DRC was, throughout the twentieth century, a homogenous and unchanging entity. Furthermore, Longford framed Malan as the most important person that linked the DRC and the NP after 1948.[51] While the relationship between the church and the party was certainly close, this study will show that it was maintained though a more nuanced and complex set of interchanging networks and interests, rather than being situated in a single personality. Thus, with regards to the church and anticommunism, Longford's study lacked a systemic and nuanced explanation of the DRC's view on communism.

Both Van Deventer and Nel, as well as Longford, produced state-centric accounts of anticommunism during the first half of the twentieth century. The second half of the century has, however, been largely overlooked within the existing scholarship. Kathrine Cartwright, for example, in her MA thesis, picked up the topic after the fall of the Berlin Wall.[52] This neglect of the apartheid years may stem from a perception that the correlation between the height of apartheid and the Cold War was sufficient contextual evidence to explain the

[50] Van Deventer & Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism', 71.
[51] S. Longford, 'The Suppression of Communism, The Dutch Reformed Church, and the Instrumentality of Fear during Apartheid', (MA-thesis, University of the Western Cape), November 2016.
[52] K. Cartwright, 'Perceptions of the "Red Peril": The National Party's Changing Portrayal of the "Communist Threat" c. 1985-February 1990', MA, University of Cape Town (2002).

phenomenon of Afrikaner anticommunism. This might be accurate on a state-centric level, but this study will illustrate the changing nature and utility of anticommunism within the broader Afrikaner society, which I argue was largely driven by the DRC. This dominance of the state-centric approach has left specific gaps within the existing historiography. Firstly, it overlooked earlier debates on communism by cultural or religious organisations that predated the emergence of state-sponsored anticommunism. Secondly, it detached the NP from the network of Afrikaner nationalist organisations, thus neglecting the interdependence of these organisations. Lastly, a state-centric analysis has tended to relegate all anticommunist sentiments to an elite minority and ignored how perceptions of communism actually played out in public and at a grassroots level. This state-centric approach disregards the long-term moral conditioning of Afrikaner society by the DRC, the most prominent moral guardian of Afrikanerdom during the twentieth century. This thesis will assert that the DRC created a fearful, yet loyal *volk* in the battle against communism, and was moved by its own anticommunist convictions rather than solely by its subjugation to the state.

One exception that did touch on the socio-cultural aspect of Afrikaner anticommunism was Wessel Visser's analysis of the production of anticommunist literature in the twentieth century.[53] Rather than evaluating its content, Visser investigated the motivation behind anticommunist literature production and the distribution thereof. The DRC received prominent attention in his study as a foremost producer of anticommunist literature. Visser explained the origins and uses of anticommunist propaganda by the church, with specific reference to official commissions, such as the Antikom established in 1946, which funded and distributed an array of anticommunist publications during the 1940s and 1950s. Visser's work is the only serious scholarly attempt to analyse Antikom, albeit that he only engaged with the organisation in a limited capacity since there is no unified archival collection on this commission. This organisation, constituted under the auspices of the Afrikaner churches and dominated numerically and financially by the DRC, is a focal point for much of this thesis. Antikom was undoubtedly an important part of the Afrikaner anticommunist information ecosystem, but as this thesis demonstrates, it mainly functioned as a site of Afrikaner nationalist unity (see Chapter 2) and later as a vehicle for right-wing opportunists (see Chapter 3). Visser also charted a range of anticommunist conferences organised by Antikom and the broader DRC during the

[53] Visser, 'The Production of Literature', 105-128. See also W. Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production in South African historiography', in H.E. Stolten (ed.), *History Making and the Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet: Uppsala, 2007).

1960s.[54] This thesis builds on Visser's focus on the subsequent publications from these conferences by exposing the motivations, the major role-players, and the responses to these gatherings (see Chapter 3).

Visser illustrated that anticommunist literature during the 1960s was borderline conspiratorial McCarthyism (see below). However, Visser identified a turn away from this rhetorical sullying of communism in the literature towards a more academic critique thereof in the 1980s.[55] In this instance, he pointed to the DRC's relationship with the Institute for the Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS), established in 1980 by history professor Dirk Kotzé. Visser demonstrated ISMUS's dependence on the DRC for financial support and hinted at some friction in this relationship but revealed little about the church's motives in supporting ISMUS, and the changing nature of its anticommunism in this period. This thesis expands on this relationship and argues that it coincided with a shift within the broader DRC which brought about the final phase of the church's anticommunism (Chapter 5). Publications are, however, only a single manifestation of anticommunist efforts. While Visser provided the clearest outline to date of the DRC's anticommunism, it covered a single aspect of a much wider systematic and institutionalised effort from the church to construct and maintain a fear of communism during most of the twentieth century in the minds of its congregants.

In contrast to the limitations of scholarship on South African anticommunism, there exists a wide-ranging and vibrant historiography on Western anticommunism. It not only provides a body of comparative literature, but, more importantly, offers a theoretical framework that has yet to be applied to the South African context, which is what this study will do. Existing surveys of anticommunist literature refer to the vast volume of work on the topic, although with varying degrees of quality. Two preconceived notions of Western anticommunism are evident in this literature: firstly, that the United States was the central anticommunist agent, and that it was a Cold War phenomenon.[56] For example, the American historian Christopher Lasch framed anticommunism as merely a natural subset of Cold War historiography, which had little influence in driving political actions during this period. Any

[54] Visser, 'The Production of Literature', 111-113
[55] *Ibid.*, 111 & 114.
[56] L. van Dongen, S. Roulin, & G. Scott-Smith (ed.), *Transnational Anticommunism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2.

earlier variants of anticommunism, he argued, could be ignored, because they had no real impact on US policy at the time.[57] Scholars have since moved beyond this view to look past the mere practical policy implications of anticommunism, viewing it as an underlying ideological stance which had political and cultural implications prior to the Cold War.[58] Heale, for example, pointed to republican history in the US as the root for later opposition to communism. He emphasised the fragility of republicanism, or what he called Americanism, which gave early American patriots from diverse European backgrounds 'a sense of commonality, and an instinctive awareness of this has perhaps made Americans nervously sensitive to any form of ideological subversion'.[59]

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw mainstream American political thought shun communism – by then a generic term for ideologies that denied private property, a core American ideal – as a foreign ideology. Heale thus argued that Americans were, by the end of the 19th century already, inherently politically and culturally incompatible with what was believed to be communist thought. In his work arguing for the legitimacy of American anticommunism, Haynes concurred with Heale's argument.[60] Markku Ruotsila, in similar fashion to Heale, extended the history of anticommunism to the latter half of the 19th century. In his book, *British and American Anticommunism before the Cold War* (2001), Ruotsila rooted overt anticommunism in conservative intellectuals' resistance to all manifestations of modernity at the turn of the century, which grew into a strong position of anti-collectivism.[61] Resistance to modernity was also a basis of anticommunist beliefs for conservative thinkers in the DRC, specifically Koot Vorster.[62] However, Afrikaner nationalist anticommunism deviates from the anti-collectivism which Ruotsila identified in American and British anticommunism. While the British and Americans revered individualism, the Afrikaner nationalists believed in the primacy the *volk* as a collective. As chapter 1 will illustrate, any other forms of collectivism,

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[57] C. Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), viii.
[58] See M.J. Heale, *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); J.E. Haynes, *Red Scare Or Red Menace?: American Communism and Anticommunism in the Cold War Era*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996); M. Ruotsila, *British and American Anticommunism Before the Cold War*, (London: Frank Cass, 2001); N. Fischer, 'The Founders of American Anti-communism', *American Communist History*, 5, 1 (2006); L. Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America: A Critical History*, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011).
[59] M.J. Heale, *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), xii.
[60] Haynes, *Red Scare Or Red Menace?*, 6-7.
[61] Ruotsila, *British and American Anticommunism*, xiii.
[62] See Kinghorn, Modernization and Apartheid'.

such as class, was heavily opposed by the Afrikaner nationalists because it threatened the superiority of the *volk*.

Ruotsila further argued that anticommunism was found across the American political spectrum. Its intellectual basis was determined by intertwined and complicated ideological evolutionary tracks of the three major American political philosophies of late nineteenth and early twentieth century: conservatism, liberalism, and socialism. These philosophies were all opposed to communist theory in varying degrees throughout their early evolutions, and Ruotsila emphasised that 'there never was any such thing as the one actor – anticommunism, a unified ideology – reaching for the one end point – end of communism, single defined – but rather a host of actors reaching for differently conceived end points'.[63] This, as this thesis will show, was true within the ideological sphere of Afrikaner nationalism which, as discussed above, consisted of different intellectual strands – the neo-Fichteans, Kuyperians, and *volkskerk*-clergy all shaped anticommunist discourse. By surveying the ebbs and flows of Afrikaner anticommunism throughout the twentieth century, it confirms Ruotsila's assertion that no single actor determined the anticommunist discourse. However, the main argument remains that the DRC, with varying degrees of influences and prominence, remained the moral backbone of Afrikaner anticommunism throughout this period. A variety of actors, such as right-wing opportunists (Chapter 3), transnational anticommunist missionaries (Chapter 4), and academics (Chapter 5), were enabled by the church's moral anticommunism and, as this thesis will show, also had a hand in shaping the DRC's anticommunist discourse.

In a more critical evaluation of American values, Fischer and Ceplair pointed to the 'convergence of two parallel and often complementary traditions' that formed the core of early anticommunism: nativism and anti-radicalism.[64] They wrote against the traditional view of Heale, Ruotsila and others, who viewed anticommunism as the American default, a 'normal' occurrence rooted in communism's alleged inherent incompatibility with US society. To Fischer and Ceplair, anticommunism was carefully constructed by political elites. Ceplair explained anticommunism as the institutional form of nativism and anti-radicalism, a process that occurred in the early twentieth century during a series of Red Scares.[65] Similarly, Afrikaner

[63] Ruotsila, *British and American Anticommunism*, xi.
[64] Fischer, 'The Founders of American Anti-communism', 72.
[65] L. Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America: A Critical* History, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 2.

nationalist anticommunism held anti-radicalism views throughout the twentieth century, especially in the latter half of the century when internal and external pressure on the apartheid state increased. Radical notions, or perceptions thereof, such as the desegregation of the church and promotion of liberation theology (Chapter 5) were framed in anticommunist terms to discredit movements which the DRC believed threatened the status quo of white dominance. Nativism however was far less prevalent – with the exception of an antisemitic episode (Chapter 3).

Hayns emphasised the institutional nature of anticommunism in America. Police strikes in Boston and a nationwide steel worker strike in 1919 led by individuals inspired by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, led to the first domestic Red Scare. The fear of a Red 'enemy within' was heightened with the founding of the Communist Party of the USA and American Labour Party in the same year, which formed the core of a so-called communist movement. After swift action by a variety of state institutions, specifically the FBI, the unrest was dealt with, and state institutions were purged of any suspected 'radicals'.[66] Twenty years later, in the wake of the Second World War, the second Red Scare occurred when fears of domestic communist espionage flared during the increasing Cold War tension between the US and Russia. This period became known for McCarthyism, named after the main driver of anticommunist paranoia within the state, Senator Joseph McCarthy. The South African state, and especially state security, held similar paranoid notions of internal anticommunist subversion, but remained the primary defenders of Afrikaners against 'outside' communist forces. However, McCarthyite opposition to the 'threat from within', where any dissidents were prohibited and views that strayed too far from conservative Afrikaner nationalism were silenced, was a prominent feature within the DRC from the 1960s (Chapter 3).

American domestic anticommunism knew no equal in the West, even during the Cold War. Italy and France, for instance, had the largest communist parties in the West, yet they handled any perceived communist subversions through political processes rather than adopting McCarthyist witch hunts.[67] Similarly, Britain heavily relied on the strength of their democratic institutions, rather than resorting to suppressive measures to keep communism at bay.[68] Some,

[66] Haynes, *Red Scare or Red Menace*, 8-9
[67] Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America*, 5.
[68] E. Bontecou, 'The English Policy as to Communists and Fascists in the Civil Service', *Columbia Law Review*, 51, 5 (May 1951), 565–566.

such as Ceplair have even argued that notions of British respectability, maturity, good sense, and morality were cultural reasons that explained why anticommunism did not reach the levels of irrationality and paranoia as in the United States.[69] The literature suggests that Britain was largely an anticommunist ally of America before and during the Cold War, but without the levels of domestic fear of communist subversion.[70] In this regard, the Afrikaner nationalists were much closer to the American brand of anticommunism, than that of western Europe or Britain. State measures against communism, such as outlawing it in 1950 had, however, a dual purpose: keep communist subversion at bay, but also suppress black dissent against the apartheid state (Chapter 2).

Transcending national borders were networks of non-state transnational anticommunist organisations and agents. Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin, and Giles Scott-Smith's 2014 edited volume attempted to shift the emphasis away from the notion that states, and in particular the USA, played the central role in anticommunist efforts during the Cold War. Global networks of anticommunists cooperated to varying degrees, but with little universal orchestration by a single global power. Cooperation was rather organised by informal arrangements between affiliations based on either class, ideology, or faith.[71] It is especially the last affiliation that is of interest to this study. Both Catholic and Protestant anticommunist networks either engaged in methods such as bible smuggling or established formal organisations that used propaganda and activism to fight against the perceived evils of communism.[72] In South Africa, the DRC, in an attempt to gain legitimacy within the international community given its proximity to the apartheid state, deliberately forged relationships and worked with some of these faith-based transnational networks (Chapter 3).

The existing literature demonstrates that anticommunism cannot merely be seen as opposition to the theory or practices of communism. Ruotsila distinguished between anti-communism and anticommunism (deliberately unhyphenated), the former referring to basic opposition to the repressive practices of state communism. In contrast, anticommunism is more

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[69] Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America*, 5.
[70] See Ruotsila, *British and American Anticommunism*; K. Olmsted, 'British and US Anticommunism Between the World Wars', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 53, 1 (2018), A. Defty, '"Close and continuous liaison": British anti-communist propaganda and cooperation with the United States, 1950–51', *Intelligence and National Security*, 17, 4 (2002).
[71] Van Dongen, Roulin, & Scott-Smith (eds.), *Transnational Anticommunism and the Cold War*, 10.
[72] See B. Boel, 'Bible Smuggling and Human Rights in the Cold War', and M. Ruotsila, 'Transnational Fundamentalist Anti-Communism: The International Council of Christian Churches', in Van Dongen, Roulin, & Scott-Smith (eds.), *Transnational Anticommunism and the Cold War*.

nuanced, and refers to a broad ideology that opposes all progressive movements of reform.[73] This broader definition also accounts for anticommunists' misuse of the term 'communism', and any ideological position that could be associated with it. Within the Western context, and as this study highlights in the case of South Africa, the proponents of anticommunism had no intention to objectively understand the theoretical framework of communism, Marxism, socialism, anarcho-syndicalism, or even liberalism, democracy, equality, or any other progressive ideology, which all at times featured as 'communism' and was therefore indiscriminately attacked. Throughout this study, the term anticommunism will therefore be used to refer to the broad range of efforts against what was perceived to be an amalgam of perils collectively referred to as 'communist'.

Although anticommunism seldom legitimately considered or engaged with communist doctrine and practices, it would be remiss in this study to overlook the history of communism in South Africa. The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), founded in 1921, grew from the traditions of syndicalist activists from the English-speaking world, communist migrants from eastern Europe, and local black activists of the early twentieth century.[74] By the end of the decade, the party had failed to convert loose affiliations into lasting disciplined membership, but saw more success in establishing early industrial unions for African workers. This occurred despite tension within the CPSA's international affiliate, Comintern (Communist International), which held workplace struggles in contempt and who directed the CPSA in 1928 to focus on establishing a 'Native Republic', which was more aligned with African nationalism than a working-class struggle. This became the first point of contention amongst early historians of the CPSA. Eddie Roux, an early party member, viewed Comintern's intervention as a threat to the growing African support for the party through the trade unions.[75] Jack and Ray Simons welcomed this shift, and went so far as to claim that the Native Republic thesis was a locally manufactured instruction.[76] Both of these works were largely based on the authors' own

[73] Ruotsila, *British and American Anticommunism Before the Cold War*, xii; J. Fayet, 'Reflections on writing the history of anti-communism', *Twentieth Century Communism*, 6, (Spring 2014), 8.
[74] For the prehistory of the party, see Chapter 1 in T. Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party, 1921-2021*, (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2021). See also, L. van der Walt, 'Anarchism and Syndicalism in South Africa, 1904-1921: Rethinking the history of labour and the left', (PhD thesis, University of Johannesburg, 2007); A. Drew, *Between Empire and Revolution: A Life of Sidney Bunting, 1873-1936*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); S. Johns, *Raising the Red Flag: The International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-1932*, (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1995).
[75] E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa*, (London: Victor Gollanz, 1948).
[76] J. Simons & R. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1950-1950*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969).

experiences of the party's early years. In his 1965 doctoral thesis, based on his investigation into Comintern documentation, Sheridan Johns determined that the CPSA was subordinate to external directives from 1928 until the early 1930s. He argued that these directives, shaped by the Soviets' strategic priorities, were often impractical in the South African context and almost led to the party's demise.[77] Russian historians Appolon Davidson and Irina Falitova, through further archival research of Comintern documents, came to the same conclusion.[78]

Tom Lodge emphasised that the history of the CPSA is heavily intertwined with the history of black politics in South Africa.[79] In the most recent history of the party, spanning the full century of its existence, Lodge argued that it was during the 1940s, when communist ideas and methods were incorporated into the 'bread and butter' issues of African people, that the party started to gain momentum. Rather than mobilising around wider political objectives, the party focussed on local and regional issues, and by doing so achieved incremental gains, establishing an enduring network that would later become the base for ANC (African National Congress) mobilisation.[80] In 1950, the NP government imposed a ban on all communist activity – a process in which the DRC played an important role as a moral legitimiser – forcing the party to operate underground. It was subsequently rebranded as the South African Communist Party (SACP) and continued to provide ideological inspiration to a new generation of anti-apartheid leaders, whilst party members became integrated into top ANC structures.

The relationship between the ANC and the SACP is a much debated one within the historiography of the liberation struggle. Historians such as Stephen Ellis, as well as Davidson and Filitova, believed that the SACP used the ANC as a front for international communist influence, while others, such as Hugh Macmillan and Eddy Maloka, asserted that this assumption was overstated.[81] Lodge, however, highlighted the energy the SACP devoted to maintaining its own political survival as a party, and sustaining its relevance in the broader liberation movement during its years in exile. Therefore, according to Lodge, communist directives to the ANC could not have been uniform nor dominant. For example, the SACP's

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[77] Johns, *Raising the Red Flag*.
[78] See I. Filatova & A. Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era*, (Cape Town, Jonathan Ball, 2013).
[79] Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 2.
[80] *Ibid.*, 486.
[81] See S. Ellis, *External Mission: the ANC in exile, 1960–1990*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012). For a summary of this debate, see H, Macmillam, S. Ellis, A. Lissoni, & M. Kurbak, 'Debating the ANC's External Links during the Struggle against Apartheid', *Africa*, 85 (1), 2015, 154-162.

Marxist-Leninism, applied to the South African context, delivered a theory of 'colonialism of a special type', where both the coloniser and the colonised shared one territory. Out of this grew a two-phase programme, adopted in 1962, whereby the struggle for black liberation would be followed by a struggle for a socialist order.[82] Lodge demonstrated how ambiguous this programme was, and difficult to impose on the ANC, which had its own structures and influences. He did, however, indicate that party members played crucial roles in imprinting visions of a future 'people's democracy' on the ANC and strengthened its commitment to non-racialism in this period.[83]

The SACP, with its own assortment of Marxist traditions, was not the only element on the left to propose a vision of a post-apartheid South Africa. In a collection of essays edited by Edward Webster and Karin Pampallis, three further foundational leftist traditions in South Africa that attempted to address the so-called national question – that is, the drive to build a unified, democratic nation – were identified.[84] Robert van Niekerk argued that the Congress tradition, with the ANC at its centre, had developed an African nationalism that would propose a social democratic dispensation, while Luli Callinicos highlighted the importance of ethnicity and race in this tradition.[85] The Trotskyism of the Unity Movement, an alternative leftist project, introduced the notion of a permanent revolution, which advanced a vision of a state of permanent struggle against the capitalist order, which was at the root of all social struggles.[86] Siphamandla Zondi highlighted Africanist perspectives on the national question. Solidarity amongst Africans was central in the struggle for a new society, which would further denounce Western modernity and its imposed borders and identities on Africa.[87] One can add to these

[82] J. Cronin & AM Mashilo, 'Decentering the Question of Race: Critical reflections on Colonialism of a Special Type' in E. Webster & K. Pampallis, *The Unresolved National Question: Left thought under Apartheid*, (Johannesburg: Wits University press, 2017).
[83] Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 487.
[84] Webster & Pampallis (eds.), *The Unresolved National Question*.
[85] R. van Niekerk, 'The African National Congress: Social Democratic Thinking and the Good Society, 1940-1962'; L. Callinicos, 'Oliver Tambo and the National Question' in Webster & Pampallis, *The Unresolved National Question*.
[86] B. Brown, M.P. Giyose, H, Petersen, C. Thomas, & A. Zinn, 'The Unity Movement and the National Question', in Webster & Pampallis (eds.), *The Unresolved National Question*.
[87] S. Zondi, 'The Africanist Turn in South African National Question Discourses', in Webster & Pampallis (eds.), *The Unresolved National Question*.

traditions the influence of Western Marxism, especially within academic circles during the 1970s and 1980s, and feminist discourses on the left.[88]

After the Soweto Uprising of 1976, the apartheid state came under growing pressure both locally and internationally. The liberation movement was gaining broad support with the founding of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1982 as a popular local front. The ANC's military wing was intensifying its armed struggle, and exiled ANC leaders had effectively rallied international support for its cause. The NP state framed this as a Total Onslaught against South Africa, which required a 'Total Strategy' – a battle on all fronts. As André van Deventer and Philip Nel argued, the NP utilised Afrikaner society's by then deeply rooted anticommunism to implement and justify further repressive measures.[89] The liberation struggle, which utilised revolutionary and radical language at the time, was, as a whole, framed to be part of a communist plot against South Africa and any claims to end apartheid were thereby delegitimised. Lodge's nuanced account of the SACP's role in the liberation struggle during the 1980s, refutes the claims made by scholars such as Ellis and Anthea Jeffrey that communist strategy and methods dictated the movement's program.[90] On a practical level, the party assisted in providing the liberation movement with a network of activists ready to be mobilised, international resources, and strategic insights. Lodge, however, pointed to the more abstract nature of the SACP during the height of the struggle. Its radical ideas about insurrectionary revolution and vision of a national democracy were primarily important as armed struggle propaganda, a rhetorical tool, rather than fully implementable strategies. Lodge concluded that during this period 'the party's narratives helped bind together a massive movement inside the country, giving it a sense of purpose and a confidence about its ultimate ascendancy'.[91]

This brief historiographical overview of communism in South Africa highlighted aspects of leftist politics that will be considered through the course of this study. Communist strategies were deeply interwoven with black liberation politics throughout the twentieth century, and vice versa. The liberation of black South Africans was a strategic and moral goal for communists, who provided ideological inspiration and enduring networks to the broader

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[88] A. Nash, 'The Moment of Western Marxism in South Africa', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 19 (1), 1999; B. Bozzoli, 'Marxism, feminism and South African studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9 (2), 1983.
[89] Van Deventer & Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism'.
[90] See Ellis, *External Mission; A. Jeffrey, People's War: New light on the struggle for South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2019).
[91] Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 488.

liberation movement. Communist involvement in black resistance against apartheid gave the anticommunist state and its allies, including the DRC, an alibi to continually supress dissent and ignore criticism. The legitimacy of this alibi was reinforced by anticommunist exaggerations about the role of communism in the liberation movement, but as the literature discussed above suggests, the influence of the party's agents and doctrine was both fluctuating and sporadic. This converged with the anticommunist intimation, especially during the Cold War, of an imperial communist plot to establish a communist order in South Africa. The alleged role and influence of Soviet strategy must be understood in this context, as the Afrikaner anticommunist notion that the Soviets were the central and constant strategists of local communist tactics was deeply suspect. Lodge's nuanced approach, as discussed above, is helpful this regard. This study will seek to show how inflated visions of the communist threat were drawn into Afrikaner nationalist discourse, and in particular how the DRC utilised it to convince the *volk* of this threat.

As the literature above shows, leftist politics in South Africa was complex, with distinct traditions. It encompassed a range of visions of a post-apartheid future. These complexities were deliberately, out of ignorance or convenience, ignored by local anticommunists. Rather than merely opposing communist doctrine and strategy, anticommunism functioned as the antithesis of what it cast as 'communist'. These deliberately overlooked complexities to create a basic binary between the anticommunist and the 'other', which in the South African context was white society against the 'communists'. A situation was thus created whereby any intellectual current that opposed white hegemony could be labelled as 'communist' without engaging in a critique. By the same token, the DRC's vilification of communism as anti-Christian thus legitimised any action against dissidents. This was easily done in the case of outside actors such as black resistance and international opposition to apartheid. What this study will show, however, is that anticommunists expanded what they deemed to be a communist threat by including other '-isms', such as humanism and liberalism, which were portrayed as pathways to communism. Historians such as Wessel Visser alluded to public perception, from as early as the 1920s, that concepts such as 'communist', 'socialist', and 'Bolshevist' were mutually linked and even regarded as synonymous at times.[92] Afrikaner anticommunism strengthened this confusion throughout the twentieth century by expanding

[92] Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production in South African historiography', 306.

what was deemed to be 'communist' or communist-adjacent as everything that was not Afrikaner nationalism.

Afrikaner anticommunists functioned insularly and attacked what they viewed as *volksvreemd*, or foreign to the Afrikaner *volk*. Communism was the convenient 'enemy' or strawman. This essentially makes the history of Afrikaner anticommunism a history of white society. In his proposal for new historiographical perspectives on white South Africans under apartheid, Neil Roos emphasised that remarkably little is known about how ordinary white people reproduced, maintained, and negotiated racial regimes. He called for histories that 'entails more comprehensive knowledge of the ideologies that legitimized and reproduced apartheid, of how the state that privileged whites also disciplined and regulated them … as well as of the ethnography of whites.'[93] Part of creating these new historiographies is by investigating how ideology was 'made real' for ordinary whites.[94] Given the framework set out by Roos, this study gives weight to the DRC as a moral mediator between Afrikaner nationalist doctrine and Afrikaner society. The nature of the church as a *volkskerk* and its reach across the country made it a site where ideology penetrated the everyday lives of Afrikaners. The focus, then, of this study is how anticommunism, as an ideological subset of Afrikaner nationalism, functioned in white society and what role the DRC played in perpetuating this. This is a process that went deeper than a communist peril orchestrated from the outside. Constructed threats of communist subversion from within dictated the bounds of Afrikaner society. This encompassed the same ironies that Jean-Paul Sartre aptly identified in American anticommunism as early as 1950:

> [American] anti-communism is much more dangerous than ours [European] – for a strange reason: that you have no Communists. Frenchmen who hate Communists or fervently condemn Soviet policy meet Communists every day and everywhere. Thus, however violent their antipathy, they have to recognize that their opponents are men and not devils… And because [for Americans] the enemy is unseen and unknown, he is the devil and must be fought to the death. Moreover, he appears to be everywhere, just because he cannot be pinned down in a definite place; suspicion grows, infects everybody…And since communism is evil, all that is evil is Communist.[95]

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[93] N. Roos, 'South African History and Subaltern Historiography: Ideas for a Radical History of White Folk', *International Review of Social History*, 61 (1), 2016, 117-9.
[94] *Ibid.*, 138.
[95] Quoted in Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America*, 7.

Communist subversion of the *volk* became the bogeyman *par excellence* for the DRC during the height of its role as the moral anticommunist crusader, especially during the 1960s, when the DRC turned towards dissenting Afrikaner voices as its main target. By doing so, it ensured the conformity and unity of the *volk* through fear of moral persecution. On the surface, moral anticommunism might be seen as a product of mass hysteria whereby the entire *volk* lived in an irrational fear of whatever was perceived as communist. However, according to the historian of American anticommunism, Nick Fischer, this explanation potentially conceals the elitist and authoritarian character of anticommunism.[96] This means that the fear of communism was constructed to serve a particular purpose. Noam Chomsky suggested that anticommunism 'helps mobilize the populace against an enemy, and because the concept [of communism] is so fuzzy, it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten the class structure'.[97] In the Afrikaners' case, however, anticommunism went further than serving the class structure. On an emotional level, communism was cast as the ultimate evil threatening the survival of the *volk*. For the DRC, this meant that it also threatened the morality of the *volk*. Danielle Dunbar and Sandra Swart assist our understanding of this when writing on the moral panics of Afrikaners in the late apartheid era. A moral panic is a particular reaction to perceived attacks on the ideological foundation and social order of society. Dunbar and Swart utilised the sociological concept of the folk devil, which they appropriated in this context as the *volk* devil: an identified threat that is increasingly stigmatised during a period of moral panic.[98] For the DRC, communism was the ultimate *volk* devil.

Methodology

This thesis synthesises the existing literature on Afrikaner nationalism, anticommunism, and the DRC with a range of archival sources drawn from the church, the Broederbond, and central role-players, such as Koot Vorster, Piet Meyer, and Nico Diederichs, into a chronological narrative. The initial intention behind the archival research was to gauge the agency of the DRC with regards to anticommunism. Most of the research was thus conducted at the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa Archive (DRCA) in Stellenbosch, as well as the official archive of the DRC located at the Theology Faculty of Stellenbosch

[96] Fischer, 'The Founders of American Anticommunism', 70.
[97] N. Chomsky & E. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), 29.
[98] D. Dunbar & S. Swart, 'The Devil Rejoiced: *Volk*, Devils and Moral Panic in White South Africa, 1978-1982', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 28, 2 (June 2015), 237-238.

University. It houses the most comprehensive collection of DRC documents, which includes official documents from the national to local level, such as synodical documents, minutes from local church councils, various commission reports, and most DRC ecclesiastical bodies' collections. The first focus in this archive was to trace official church discourse on anticommunism through synodical reports and minutes.[99] Furthermore, no exploration of the DRC's past can be complete without a survey of its official journal, the *Kerkbode*, which is fully accessible at the DRCA.[100] Editorials, columns, debates, and letters from ministers and members published in this journal captured a wider discourse within the church concerning anticommunism. A thorough review of the *Kerkbode* also indicated where topics that relate to anticommunism fitted into broader discussions within the church throughout the twentieth century. Another journal published by the missionary wing of the DRC, *Die Sendingblad*, was also thoroughly surveyed as the missional dimension of anticommunism came to the fore (Chapter 4).

The synodical minutes provided the necessary information on the DRC's official positions, while a survey of the *Kerkbode* offered insight into the broader discourse within the church from clergy, theologians, and members alike. It is therefore common practise in church historical writing on the DRC to utilise these two sources, often neglecting the rich archival collections of various ecclesiastic bodies and individuals housed at the DRCA. This thesis relies heavily on these collections in an attempt to provide the most comprehensive sense of the DRC's anticommunist motives and discourse. As per the DRCA's procedures, the archivist conducted these digital searches on behalf of, but in full collaboration with, the researcher. This was specifically the case with documentation pertaining to Antikom. As mentioned earlier, the only study to give serious attention to Antikom was Visser's survey of anticommunist literature production by this ecclesiastic body.[101] This void is due to the absence of a full or unified collection of Antikom. Documents relating to Antikom are scattered across different collections, including the personal documents of Dan de Beer and W.A. Landman, as well as collections of the DRC's commission on public morality, which were traced by searching the DRCA's digital inventory. In the process, a semi-complete collection of *Antikom*

[99] A majority of national and regional synod meeting minutes were also accessed from the DRCA's website, https://www.kerkargief.co.za/acta/
[100] In 2003 the journal was rebranded into its current form as *Kerkbode*. However, from its inception in 1849 the journal was known as *De Gereformeerde Kerkbode*, and later *De Kerkbode* and *Die Kerkbode*. For the sake of consistency and clarity, this study will use *Kerkbode* throughout.
[101] Visser, 'The Production of Literature'.

Newsletters was collected, as well as fractional Antikom board meeting minutes and correspondence. This, then, is the first study to construct an overarching narrative of Antikom using a broad selection of primary material from various sources. In contrast to Antikom, archival sources regarding the DRC's anticommunist mission work is complete and methodically collected. These documents have, however, received little scholarly attention to date. Chapter 4 will demonstrate how this collection provides a clear insight into the grassroots success of decades of anticommunist activity by the DRC.

What became evident in the search for Antikom's documents was the key role of individuals and their networks with regards to anticommunist efforts. This situates the DRC as a focal point within a much larger and complex narrative of the anticommunism and the Afrikaner nationalist movement. Therefore, this thesis draws together archival sources from both the DRC and the broader Afrikaner nationalist movement, binding them into one narrative. It relies on a range of personal collections of Afrikaner nationalist anticommunists, primarily housed at the Archive for Contemporary Affairs (ARCA) at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. The collections of four central Afrikaner anticommunists were consulted. Nico Diederichs was a central figure on the Afrikaner nationalist movement's economic front. Piet Meyer, a nationalist contemporary of Diederichs, was influential on the cultural front, and later became the head of the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation). These men were anticommunist propagators in their respective spheres, but more importantly for this study, they were the first two chairpersons of the church's anticommunist body, Antikom. Their collections provide primary material that illuminates both Antikom's operations during the 1940s-1960s, but also how the DRC's anticommunist efforts fitted into the broader Afrikaner anticommunist ecosystem. Diederichs' collection, for instance, provided the most comprehensive collection of correspondence between individual anticommunists.

Prominent leaders in the DRC such as Koot Vorster stood out as core anticommunists, both within the church structures and as public figures from the 1960s to the 1980s. Vorster was at the centre of a web of anticommunist threads during the 1960s. While moderator of the DRC, Koot's brother, John (BJ) Vorster, served as Prime Minister of South Africa. This relationship embodied the close ties between the DRC and the NP state during the height of its anticommunism. This is not the first study to utilise Koot Vorster's collection, but it is the first

to focus primarily on the anticommunist nature of his documents.[102] As a central figure in efforts to rid the DRC of subversive forces in the wake of the Cottesloe Consultation in 1960 (Chapter 3), his collection assists in our understanding of the shifts within anticommunism, including its drive to draw a wide range of –isms, especially liberalism, into its discourse. In addition, Vorster was also central in two other seminal anticommunist projects: he was the chairperson of the Broederbond's National Council against Communism (NCC), while he also acted as a pivotal figure between local and international anticommunist actors during the 1960s (Chapter 3). His collection thus provides rich insight, through correspondence, minutes of meetings, and personal notes, on a variety of dimensions of Afrikaner anticommunism.

Apart from individual anticommunist actors, two other institutions that formed part of the broader anticommunist network in South Africa were the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB), and the Institute for Marxist Studies of the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS). Documents pertaining to its own anticommunist efforts, in the form of the National Council against Communism (NCC), were accessed at the AB's official archival collection, which is housed at The Heritage Foundation in Pretoria.[103] This collection has been employed in a recently published official history of the Broederbond by historian E.L.P. Stals.[104] This thesis, however, makes extensive use of these documents, in conjunction with the Vorster collection, to construct a full narrative of the NCC within the context of the broader anticommunist movement, rather than merely as part of the Broederbond operations (Chapter 3). The full ISMUS collection was accessed at the Stellenbosch University Library. Visser had previously made extensive use of this collection in his aforementioned study on Afrikaner anticommunist literature production.[105] This thesis expands on Visser's work in this regard but focusses specifically on the relationship between the key role-players of ISMUS, Dirk Kotzé and Phillip Nel, with the related DRC leader, Willie Jonker. Correspondence between these individuals and official meetings between their institutions illuminate the shifts within the church's anticommunist agenda in the final years of apartheid (Chapter 5).

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[102] See D.J. Langner, 'Teen Die Hele Wêreld Vry: J.D. Vorster as 'n Neo-Calvinis in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1935-1980', (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2004).
[103] The required permission to access and use these documents were obtained from the AB.
[104] E.L.P. Stals, *Die Broederbond: Die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner-Broederbond 1918-1994*, (Johannesburg: Die Afrikanerbond, 2021)
[105] Visser, 'The Production of Literature'.

These collections, together with the documents consulted in the DRCA and ARCA, confirmed the insulation of the Afrikaner anticommunist network. Except for contact with international right-wing anticommunists, local anticommunists functioned as an inward-looking network, and the absence of black voices is glaring – insight into black lives were almost exclusively informed by DRC missionary impressions, which were broadly framed around Afrikaner nationalist assumptions.

Outline

The thesis is broadly structured chronologically, but at times deviates from the confines of a strict timeline to emphasise certain themes within the complex narrative. Chapters were determined by both a contextual chronology and the themes that arise within it.

The first chapter traces the origins of the DRC's anticommunism to the 1910s and 1920s. By then the church had been firmly embedded as the *volkskerk* of the Afrikaners, and just like its rapidly urbanising members, had to adapt to a new city context. This first chapter shows how the church's process of acclimatisation in the city exposed it to the plight of Afrikaner workers. DRC responses to labour unrests, specifically the strikes of 1913 and 1922, reveals a church trying to tend to the demands of its proletarian members within an Afrikaner nationalist framework. This chapter argues that the roots of the DRC's anticommunism lay in its responses to labour unrest on the Rand during the 1910s and 1920s. In the process, the church denounced socialism – the preferred term used at the time – as too materialistic, and posited that Christianity brought about real change as a spiritual force. This chapter also demonstrates, however, that the church failed to translate its discourse into tangible action – calls from the DRC to establish a Christian-Nationalist trade union, for example, failed. The church was, nonetheless, drawn into an early network of anticommunist labour reformers in the Transvaal, backed by the Afrikaner Broederbond. This, as this chapter argues, was an important development, as the DRC now forged an anticommunist alliance with Afrikaner nationalists, which would remain intact for the majority of the twentieth century.

The second chapter follows the church as it navigated the growing Afrikaner nationalist movement of the 1930s and 1940s. The 1938 commemorative ox wagon trek energised the movement, leading to the formation of a variety of Afrikaner cultural and economic organisations, including the *Reddingsdaadbond* (RDB. These organisations, led by young nationalists such as Nico Diederichs and Piet Meyers, brought with them new and

different ideas on how the Afrikaner nationalist movement should be forged, but as this chapter will show, all were united by anticommunism. As the oldest Afrikaner institution, with the widest reach and deepest influence on the everyday lives of the *volk*, the DRC remained the most important moral organisation within Afrikanerdom. This chapter will demonstrate how individual nationalist ambitions, specifically that of Diederichs, coincided with the DRC's moral anticommunism, leading to the establishment of Antikom in 1946. The church, this chapter argues, thus became a site for Afrikaner anticommunist unity. This coincided with the NP's rise to power in 1948, and the implementation of the apartheid policy. Anticommunism became inseparable from apartheid in this period. Furthermore, this chapter explains how the DRC and its anticommunist alliance provided moral support for the new Afrikaner regime's banning of communism in 1950, arguing that this ushered in an era where the church acted a moral legitimiser of the state's suppression of black dissent. In the 1950s, the DRC also became somewhat idle in its anticommunist activities following the state's intervention to combat the 'threat' of overt communism.

The DRC broke its anticommunist dormancy in 1960. Chapter 3 describes how the Cottesloe Consultation, where South African clergy, including DRC delegates, denounced apartheid, igniting a conservative backlash in the church. It argues that anticommunism, rather than focussing on the threat from outside, turned inwards to create a uniform church leadership and *volk*. The rise of Koot Vorster and Andries Treurnicht as key anticommunist church leaders in this period is critically important. They expanded the parameters of what could be deemed 'communist' to such an extent that it included anything that was not Christian-Nationalist – therefore, any criticism of the state, apartheid, or the DRC's support thereof could be deemed 'communist', or communist adjacent. The 1960s, however, also saw growing fissures in the Afrikaner nationalist movement. This was dominated by the *verligte/verkrampte* (enlightened/conservative) discourse, but this chapter argues that right-wing opportunists attempted to navigate the Afrikaner fractures by driving an anticommunist agenda using the DRC's Antikom as a vehicle. They succeeded and gained mainstream prominence for right-wing discourse. This decade therefore saw the height of DRC anticommunism. A range of anticommunist conferences were held, drawing both Afrikaans and English, and local and international anticommunists together. In the process, Koot Vorster was also co-opted into the right-wing agenda and headed a newly established ultra-anticommunist body, the National Council against Communism (NCC), which was borne out of one of Antikom's conferences and financially backed by the AB. The chapter focusses on how Vorster became a key figure

in connecting local anticommunists with international counterparts, including the American, Carl McIntyre. The right-wing, however, pushed the church's anticommunism to its limits and failed to gain political power by the end of the decade. The chapter does, however, conclude that by latching on the moral anticommunism of the DRC, these right-wingers shaped public discourse to such an extent that it had long-lasting effects on the anticommunist imagination of everyday Afrikaners.

The 1960s and 1970s also saw great political shifts outside Afrikanerdom. Chapter 4 investigates local anticommunist responses decolonisation. This chapter argues that the anticommunist notions, driven by Antikom, to support transnational missionary work as a means to defend Africa against communism, infringed on the sphere of the DRC's strong, and long-established missional wing. This would turn out to be Antikom's first step toward its own demise. In 1972, the DRC endorsed its missionary wing's endeavour to establish *Sending onder Kommuniste* (Mission work to Communists – SOK), which raised funds to support bible distribution and missional activities in communist countries. The chapter argues that SOK's successful fundraising efforts was a sign of the effectiveness of decades of anticommunist rhetoric. It was especially women, children, and the elderly who committed themselves to the so-called battle against communism by supporting SOK. Another political development that shaped the DRC's anticommunism was the increased attention to the racial situation in South Africa in the wake of the 1976 Soweto Uprising. The DRC had formally committed itself to apartheid theology with the adoption of *Ras, Volk, en Nasie* (RVN) two years prior to the Uprising. Its dogmatic approach to apartheid was out of step with the new, yet gradual reformist approach of both the NP and AB at the time. The chapter argues that the DRC's sluggishness in its adoption of a reformist approach to apartheid made it liable to become submissive to the state, which had become the primary driver of Afrikaner nationalist thinking at the time. This was, as this chapter demonstrates, especially true with regards to anticommunism after the PW Botha regime adopted the Total Strategy doctrine. The DRC thus lost its influence over anticommunist discourse, which in turn meant a loss of influence and legitimacy for Antikom, which was still riddled with right-wing instincts. A gradual shift in Afrikaner anticommunism, away from rhetorical fearmongering towards an academic engagement with communism, also occurred in the early 1980s with the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS). The chapter concludes that this shift, along with the state's dominance over anticommunist efforts, led to the final demise of Antikom in 1985.

The fifth and final chapter explores the final stage of the DRC's anticommunism, from the mid-1980s until the end of white minority rule in 1994. Increased internal and external pressure in the early 1980s forced the DRC to rethink its commitment to apartheid, and in 1986 the church, now led by young pragmatic theologians such as Johan Heyns, officially abandoned apartheid theology. This chapter discusses how the church's shift away from apartheid initiated a process to rethink a future South Africa without apartheid or Afrikaner nationalism. It contends that in this process, the DRC recast anticommunism in such a way that it reinforced notions of a 'new' democratic South Africa. Fear of communists now made way for democratic notions of tolerance – while simultaneously opposing communist ideals to ensure the material safety of its members. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 accelerated this process. The chapter confirms the interdependence of anticommunism and apartheid; with the fall of apartheid came the unceremonious fall of anticommunism. The chapter does, however, indicate the discrepancies between the DRC leaders' notion of anticommunism, and how it was received amongst the laity of the church. It concludes that decades of anticommunist indoctrination still shaped the Afrikaner imagination, as South African entered a new democratic dispensation.

CHAPTER 1: ESTABLISHING ANTICOMMUNISM: THE DRC'S CASTING OF SOCIALISM AS THE OPPONENT OF THE VOLK, 1910-1939

South Africa entered the twentieth century in a state of war. The discovery of gold in the South African Republic (ZAR) triggered a struggle for control over the rich mineral fields in the Boer republic in the country's interior. This resulted in the outbreak of the South African War (1899-1902) between the Boer republics and the British Empire. This bitter war ended in defeat for the Boer republics and their incorporation into the newly formed (white) Union of South Africa. Afrikaner political, social, and cultural identities had to be revaluated, reimagined, and recontextualised. The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRC), the most powerful and longstanding Afrikaner institution was also forced to navigate these changing identities. It is in this period that the origins of the DRC's anticommunist stance, taking the form of anti-socialist trade unionism, can be identified. Communism received little attention in the DRC in the first three decades of the twentieth century. As this chapter will demonstrate however, the DRC's response to the poor white problem guided the church toward a new identity, away from a purely rural church to an urban centric *volkskerk*, or people's church. This meant that the DRC had to factor in the material concerns, exposed by socialists, of Afrikaners in the city in its pursuit of their collective devotion to the church and *volk*.

Amidst this shifting identify from a rural church to city church, the DRC had to find new ways of approaching a growing part of its newly urbanised members: the Afrikaner proletariat. Labour unrest, racial friction, and the church's fear of the moral degradation of Afrikaners through racial mixing, broken family structures, exposure to new cultural influences, led to the DRC's initial contemplation and practical responses to socialism. As this chapter will discuss, these early responses were predominantly focussed on socialism rather than on communism. It was, as historian Wessel Visser pointed out, a period in which these concepts were generally regarded as synonymous, or mutually linked.[1] The church's focus on socialism stemmed from a perception that it was targeting working class Afrikaners on the labour front. The 1913 mineworkers' strike on the Witwatersrand sensitised the DRC to the plight of workers and opened a conversation on socialism in which early commentators deemed it irreconcilable with Christianity. The 1922 Rand Revolt, on the other hand, forced the DRC

[1] W. Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production in South African historiography', in H.E. Stolten (ed.), *History Making and the Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet: Uppsala, 2007), 306.

into action, and triggered an urgent call to involve itself in trade unionism. By doing so, the church engaged in a battle for the soul of white workers that further vilified socialism as the direct opponent of Christianity and gave a moral tilt to the DRC's anti-socialist position. Until the 1930s, the DRC played a determining role in efforts to alleviate poor whiteism but failed to make progress on the labour front where it later opted to act as an auxiliary to other nationalist organisations. During this period, the DRC became committed to the emerging nationalist movement. The church's early commitment to an anti-socialist stance, coupled with its emergence as the moral bastion of the modern Afrikaner, and the relationships it forged with nationalist organisations in this period, are argued to have been critical to understanding the DRC's evolution as a driving force of anticommunism later in the twentieth century.

A church for and from the *volk*

On 31 May 1910, the process of white political consolidation was institutionalised with the creation of the Union of South Africa. The new Union government was characterised by its racially exclusive imitation of the Westminster model of British parliamentary democracy. This included a unitary government, restricted black franchise, British responsibility for the Union's foreign affairs, and disproportionate political power for rural constituencies.[2] Union eliminated interstate competition over, amongst other things, the railways and labour, thus tempering long-standing conflicts over resources.[3] To some extent, as Robert Ross has argued, this was a political recognition of economic and social ties that already existed.[4] Union, therefore, served to maintain, if not strengthen white supremacy in the former British colony. This was achieved through an intertwined process of elevating poor whites, whilst subjugating their black compatriots.[5]

The Union government was led by Louis Botha of the South African National Party (SANP). The SANP became the South African Party (SAP) the following year after the amalgamation of pre-union parties in 1911. It broadly represented the interests of white

[2] T. Kuperus, State, *Civil Society and Apartheid in South Africa: An Examination of Dutch Reformed Church-State Relations*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 26.
[3] P. Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture, 1910-1948', in R. Ross, A.K. Mager & B. Nasson, *Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 2, 1885-1994*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 254.
[4] R. Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 87.
[5] Ibid, 89 & 91.

farmers, white workers, and the white lower middle-class.[6] In the opposition benches sat the pro-British Unionist Party. It appealed to the English-speaking community, who were sympathetic towards mining and merchant interests. The English-speaking working class were represented by the Labour Party.[7] With black South Africans excluded from parliamentary politics, formal politics centred on white interests. This brought about the question of a (white) South African nationalism. There were two prominent currents to this nationalism: the doctrine of a broad white South Africanism with a somewhat English liberal character, and an interventionist Afrikaner nationalism.[8] Within the SANP, there was a challenge to Botha's Afrikaner/English reconciliation efforts by the Minister of Justice, J.B.M. Hertzog. He insisted on a poly-ethnic white state, with the maintenance of separate language and cultural traditions, and a shared loyalty towards a common fatherland. The minister was also committed to South African autonomy. After a cabinet crisis in 1912, Hertzog was asked by Botha to resign. Thirteen months later, Hertzog founded the National Party (NP) which centred around a growing ethno-nationalist sentiment that white nationhood in South Africa rested on the recognition of both Afrikaner and English cultures.[9] The NP would become the political home of a rising Afrikaner nationalist movement.

Amidst these developments in Afrikaner politics, and a fledgling Afrikaner nationalist movement, the DRC was revered by politicians as 'by far the most important institution in the Afrikaner community, [who] treated it with a mixture of respect and trepidation'.[10] Its roots stretch back to the colonial settlement of the Cape in 1652 where the DRC held the sole right to hold public worship under Dutch East India Company rule until the end of the eightieth century. After the Cape colony's subjugation under British rule in 1806, Scottish clergy were imported by the new colonial rulers to anglicise the Dutch-speaking DRC. This failed when the imported Scots assimilated to the Dutch culture and language of the congregants, whereafter the DRC remained the religious home of what became the Afrikaans community.[11] The church was the formative institution with regards to white Afrikaans identity and was also

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[6] See T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1966), 297-303.
[7] Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid*, 27.
[8] Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture', 254; Ross, *Concise History*, 91.
[9] Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid*, 27; H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of A People*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 356.
[10] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 384.
[11] R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 39-40.

influential in shaping the racial attitudes of its congregants. By the mid-1800s, racially segregated worship was already common practice, and in 1857 the DRC officially sanctioned this arrangement.[12] This tended to a long-standing fear amongst Dutch settlers that Christianisation of black and coloured 'heathens' would lead to 'social levelling'. The DRC not only sanctioned a racially segregated church, but also ensured it held paternalistic power over black and coloured converts. In 1881, this became formalised through the establishment of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), which served the coloured community.[13] It had separate places of worship and its own governing synod but remained under the control of the white DRC who called the Mission Church its 'daughter church'. The idea of segregation without independence became the key principle through which interracial relations in the DRC were organised.[14]

By the mid-1800s, the DRC had transitioned from a state-supported monopoly church to a large denomination with growing theological plurality. The church suffered two splits in response to this plurality; in 1853, a minister from the Netherlands, Dirk van der Hoff, responded to Afrikaners in the ZAR – the newly established Boer republic in the interior of South Africa – who had grown suspicious of the DRC in the Cape.[15] The Transvaalers – those living in the ZAR – who were comprised of Afrikaners who had left the colony in protest at British colonial rule, struggled to identify with a church that remained in British territory and partly under government control. A growing evangelism, paired with the doctrinal rigidity of the DRC, also repelled the Afrikaners of the interior. To provide a spiritual home for these Afrikaners, Van der Hoff established the exclusively white Dutch Re-formed Church of Africa (NHK) which became the state church of the Transvaal in 1860.[16] A second secession, incited by another Dutch clergyman, Dirk Postma, was triggered over the singing of so-called evangelical hymns.[17] For a culturally and theologically conservative group of Afrikaners called the Doppers, the hymns symbolised a range of issues similar to those that had prompted the NHK to secede from the DRC. To the Doppers however, the role of the state in the affairs of both the NHK (the ZAR's state church) and the DRC (under British colonial influence) was

[12] See C. Borchardt, 'Die "Swakheid van Sommige" en die Sending' in J. Kinghorn, *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1986) for a discussion on the lead up and implications of the decision of the DRC's 1857 synod on church segregation.
[13] Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NG Sendingkerk) in Afrikaans.
[14] Elphick, *Equality of Believers*, 44-45.
[15] Ibid, 46.
[16] Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHK) in Afrikaans.
[17] Elphick, *Equality of Believers*, 46.

particularly alarming. In 1859, Postma led the anti-hymn dissidents to form the Reformed Church (GK).[18] The Doppers' theological conviction was a form of hyper-Calvinism, and the church considered the DRC as having surrendered to evangelical pietism and thus departed from 'true' Calvinism.[19] The DRC, NHK, and GK later became known as the Afrikaans sister churches.

The DRC had experienced two splits by 1862, but it had also expanded across the settled territories. Apart from the Cape DRC, the Free State, Transvaal, and Natal now had their own DRC synods. The DRC thus had the largest reach of the three sister churches. This reach was not only wider, but also deeper. An evangelical revival swept through DRC congregations in the 1860s, which shifted the church from a declining social gatekeeper to the evangelical centre of its congregants' lives. As a result, DRC ministers were able to wield far greater influence over their congregants than before.[20] The majority of new ministers were now local men trained at the DRC's seminary in Stellenbosch, established in 1859, which was the bastion of orthodox evangelicalism. This new generation of locally produced clergy had a much deeper connection to the Afrikaner communities that they served. DRC clergy had become mindful of the key concern of its members, which was *gelykstelling*, or social levelling between races, which was the inverse of the Afrikaner egalitarianism they had been accustomed to.[21] By the end of the nineteenth century, the DRC had become rooted in the Afrikaner community to the extent that it identified as their *volkskerk*, or people's church. This was a long-standing tradition, but the 1885 synod explicitly stated that it was the church of the Afrikaner *volk*.[22] This officially committed the DRC to the spiritual and material wellbeing of Afrikaners.

The DRC thus entered the twentieth century as a significant institution in Afrikaner society. It was one of the only Afrikaner institutions in the north to have survived the South African War, and by the time of unification it had federated its four synods, which strengthened its cooperation and unity. In 1911, an estimated 90% of Afrikaners were members of the DRC,

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[18] *Ibid*, 47; Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) in Afrikaans.
[19] J. W. De Gruchy, 'Calvin(ism) and Apartheid in South Africa in the Twentieth Century: The Making and Unmaking of a Racial Ideology', in I. Backus & P. Benedict, *Calvin and His Influence, 1509-2009*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 309.
[20] S.E. Duff, *Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony: Dutch Reformed Church Evangelism and Colonial Childhood, 1860-1895*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 29; 42.
[21] H. Giliomee, '"The Weakness of Some": The Dutch Reformed Church and White Supremacy', *Scripture*, 83, (2003), 216.
[22] Duff, *Changing Childhoods*, 131.

which made it the largest unified body of Afrikaners.[23] Members of the DRC thus constituted a significant part of the electorate after the political unification of South Africa in 1910. Church leaders, however, had minimal interest in formal politics.[24] They drew a distinction between formal party politics and *volks*- or *kultuurpolitiek* (people's or cultural politics). As the *volkskerk*, the DRC considered it a moral obligation to participate in the politics of the people, while it distanced itself from party politics based on a strongly held conviction in the separation of church and state.[25] As a result, the DRC was well positioned to play a central role in the socio-political issues affecting Afrikaners at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Adopting the poor whites, adapting to the city

The most pressing socio-political issue of the early twentieth century was the so-called poor white problem. Economic pressure on subsistence farming, class antagonism between landowners and *bywoners* – the landless white tenant farmers – and harsh droughts forced scores of rural, semi or unskilled whites to move to urban centres in search of economic opportunity. The outbreak of rinderpest in the mid-1890s and the devastating effect of the South African War on Afrikaner livelihoods further accelerated the stream of poor rural whites to the cities.[26] Fewer than 10,000 Afrikaners lived in the cities before the South African War. By 1920 however, this number had grown rapidly to about 100,000, and 25 years later the number had quadrupled to at least 400,000 urban Afrikaners.[27] The Witwatersrand saw the biggest influx of poor whites, as it was the fastest growing industrial hub in South Africa. This rapid urbanisation was, in Hermann Giliomee's words, 'a chaotic, and almost always traumatic experience' for Afrikaners. They found themselves in a world where English – foreign to most rural Afrikaners – was the vernacular, and with few opportunities for semi-skilled and unskilled

[23] Census statistics show that in 1911 the Hervormde Kerk had 20 429 members (3,89% of the sister church members); Gereformeerde Kerk 24 600 members (4,68%); and the DRC 479 797 members (91,42%), see P.K. Albertijn, 'De Volkstelling van 1911', *Kerkbode*, 5 February 1914, 114.
[24] Duff, Changing Childhoods, 11.
[25] T.D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and Afrikaner Civil Religion,* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1975), 76.
[26] B. Freund, 'The poor whites: a social force and a social problem in South African history', in R. Morrell (ed.), *White but Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992), xvi.
[27] R. Vosloo, 'From a farm road to a public highway: The Dutch Reformed Church and its changing views regarding the city and urbanisation in the first half of the 20th century (1916-1947)', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 39, 2 (December 2013), 21.

work.[28] Housing conditions for poor migrants in rapidly growing urban centres such as Johannesburg were also dreadful, ranking amongst the worst in world.[29]

The poor white problem became a central political issue in Afrikaner circles during the first decades after unification, but it was the DRC who first discovered and tended to poor whites. By the late 1800s, on their routine house, DRC ministers encountered struggling congregants living in harsh rural conditions with little material means to sustain themselves or their families. During the 1870s, the Cape DRC had already indicated concerns over poor white children in rural areas and undertook initiatives, with the assistance of the colonial state, to provide education to these children which lasted until the end of the nineteenth century.[30] Increasing synodical attention was given to the church's *armsorg* – poor relief – from the 1880s.[31] As the *volkskerk* of the Afrikaners, who comprised the majority of poor whites, the DRC recognised the need to intervene on behalf of its impoverished congregants. At its first conference on poor whites, held in Stellenbosch in 1893, the DRC reiterated the need for better education and called for the establishment of *arbeidskolonies* – work colonies – to help rehabilitate poor white families.[32] Between 1894 and 1910, when the government became the primary driver of work colonies, the DRC accommodated 800 poor white families in its work colonies. In doing so, the church attempted to bring about the economic, spiritual, and moral rehabilitation of these poor whites in an attempt to condition them for urban life, which was becoming an emerging feature of Afrikaner society.[33]

The rapidly urbanising poor whites became a political problem; on a practical level this influx burdened city infrastructure, but poor whiteism also fundamentally challenged white middle and upper-class assumptions about white supremacy. Unemployed and unemployable poor whites were seen as a weak link in the veneer of the 'natural' order. The concept of 'poor whites' expanded beyond the definition of white people living in poverty but raised a set of

[28] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 323.
[29] S. Parnell, 'Slums, segregation and poor whites in Johannesburg, 1920-1934', in Morrell (ed.), *White but Poor*, 115.
[30] For a comprehensive study on the DRC's educational efforts in this period, see Duff, *Changing Childhoods*.
[31] R. Vosloo, 'The Dutch Reformed Church and the poor white problem in the wake of the first Carnegie Report (1932): some church-historical and theological observations', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 37, 2 (September 2011), 69.
[32] *Ibid.*, 69-70.
[33] N. Roos, 'Work colonies and South African historiography', *Social History*, 36, 1 (February 2011), 56-7.

fears around racial mixing and white superiority.[34] Friction in the labour market exposed these fears as poor whites competed with between 200 000 and 300 000 black migrant workers in the cities.[35] These workers earned wages far below what whites were prepared to work for. Black migrant labour was a fundamental feature of the economy, with leading industries such as the goldmines based on the model of ultra-cheap expendable labour.[36] This threatened unskilled and semi-skilled poor Afrikaners' chances of entering the urban work force. The symbolic, social, cultural, and political implication of a 'fallen' class of whites was not lost on the newly formed Union government. It acted swiftly by constituting the Native Labour Regulation Act (1911) which aimed at reducing the industrial power of Africans through undercutting bargaining power and outlawing strike action.[37] By doing so, the government protected both the interests of white workers and the mining industry. In the same year, the Mines and Works Act was passed that protected white workers in some sectors by imposing a colour bar whilst also demarcated other sectors as whites only.[38] The government's use of these mechanisms to protect poor and working-class whites was not only an attempt to retain the notion of white superiority. They were also becoming a politically significant electoral bloc whose loyalty was there for the taking.[39]

In the late 1920s, the DRC ceded responsibility over its worker colonies and education initiatives to the Union government as the church recognised the need for systematic and judicial solutions to these issues but continued its focus on poor whites as a matter of *volkspolitiek* – politics of the people. Clergy agreed that the poor white problem contributed to the moral and intellectual decline of the *volk*.[40] The DRC's historical ties with poor whites had been predominately rural, but this was increasingly being viewed as an urban problem. To stay true to its *volkskerk* tradition, the DRC had to revaluate its identity as a *Boerekerk* – Boer church – the church of rural Afrikaners. The church initially viewed the city as a hostile space

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[34] J. Tayler, '"Our poor": the politicisation of the Poor White Problem, 1932-1942', *Kleio*, 24, 1 (1992), 40; Duff, *Changing Childhoods*, 125.
[35] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 318.
[36] See T.D. Moodie & V. Ndatshe, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration*, (University of California: Berkley, 1994); T. Maloka, 'Mines and Labour migrants in Southern Africa: Review and Commentary', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 10, 2 (1997), 213-224; L. Schler, L. Bethlehem, and C. Sabar, 'Rethinking Labour in Africa, Past and Present', *African Identities*, 7, 3 (2009), 287-298; P. Delius, 'The History of Migrant Labour in South Africa, 1800-2014', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia for African History*, (2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.93.
[37] The Native Labour Regulations Act (No. 15 of 1911).
[38] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 259, 330.
[39] Freund, 'The poor whites, xvi.
[40] Roos, 'Work colonies and South African historiography', 62.

for Afrikaners. In December 1916, the Cape DRC organised a conference to discuss the poor white problem and urbanisation. 225 delegates, including government officials, professors of theology, and DRC representatives from the Transvaal, Free State, and Natal, gathered under the theme: The rural need and the trek to the cities (*Die landelike nood en trek na die stede*). Keynote speakers and conference discussions stressed the need to keep Afrikaners in rural areas and assist those in urban centres to return to the land, as the city was considered a graveyard for the Afrikaner soul. The DRC's role as a moral actor in the upliftment of the poor was reiterated.[41] Speakers such as DF Malan, now editor of the newly established nationalist mouthpiece in the Cape *De Burger*, addressed the racial dynamics faced by poor whites in the cities.[42] He advocated for segregated workplaces, whilst other speakers made some of the earliest calls for comprehensive racial separation in schools, churches, and trains to protect poor whites.[43]

Desperate rural Afrikaners however, continued to flood to urban centres. The DRC's attempt to dictate a reversal of Afrikaner urbanisation failed and it was forced to adapt to a changing *volk* dynamic or run the risk of losing relevance and influence. By 1923, the DRC revisited the poor white problem in a joint conference attended by the Afrikaans sister churches and several women's organisations. Delegates agreed that urbanisation could not be stopped, but attempts should be made to control it. There was also general acceptance that the DRC was now becoming a *stadskerk* – an urban church. By embracing this shift in identity, the DRC moved its focus to the social 'evils' facing Afrikaners in the city: materialism, secularisation, the disruption of the nuclear family, and class differences.[44] To the DRC, the largest and most tangible threats were the economic and social decline of poor whites in relation to black economic advancement, coupled with a sense of diminished numbers vis-a-vis urban black workers.[45] The 1923 conference consequently adopted the principle of industrial segregation based on territorial segregation.[46] It is within the context of the DRC's evolving identity as a

[41] Vosloo, 'From a farm road to a public highway', 22; Vosloo, 'The Dutch Reformed Church and the poor white problem', 70.
[42] In 1921, it was renamed *Die Burger.*
[43] L. Koorts, '"The Black Peril would not exist if it were not for a White Peril that is a hundred times greater": D.F. Malan's Fluidity on Poor Whiteism and Race in the Pre-Apartheid Era, 1912–1939', *South African Historical Journal*, 65, 4 (2013), 564.
[44] Vosloo, 'From a farm road to a public highway', 25.
[45] Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture', 264.
[46] Koorts, '"The Black Peril"', 564.

city church, rooted in its *volkskerk* tradition, that the church's earliest responses to labour unrests during the 1910s and 1920s emerged.

A *volk* with(out) class: a growing proletariat

The Union-government was a facilitator for the expansion of international capitalism in South Africa, specifically in the mining industry. Mine labour was a contentious space in the first half of the twentieth century. African mineworkers were trapped in a low-wage sector, working under harsh conditions, with no upward or outward mobility. This in turn caused labour unrest, but through police repression and wage increases in line with the Native Labour Regulations Act, the state largely supressed major strikes by African workers until the mid-1940s.[47] Strikes by white workers, however, were more difficult for the state to manage. Afrikaner workers had been drawn into labour unrest from the earliest orchestrated mineworker strike in 1907 on the Rand where they were recruited by the state and capital to weaken the strike through their labour.[48] Six years later however, Afrikaner workers became entangled in a violent clash between labour and the state. In reaction to new autocratic and anti-union management at the New Kleinfontein mine in Benoni, white workers embarked on a strike in May 1913. With some instigation by militant and socialist trade unionists, the strike spread to neighbouring mines, and by July 1913 a general strike was called with about 19,000 strikers on the Rand.[49] The strike had a considerable impact, with DF. Malan, who was still a DRC minister at the time, declaring that 'for the first time in our history we have come face to face with an industrial crisis on a large scale'.[50]

The strike ended after violence broke out between the protesters and approximately 3 000 imperial troops, leaving twenty-two civilians dead and 166 police injured. Due to the severity of the violence, the leaders of the strike and the state brokered a truce.[51] The response from the DRC was one of relief that the violence was over. The *Kerkbode,* official mouthpiece

[47] Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture', 255.
[48] D. Yudelman, 'Lord Rothschild, Afrikaner Scabs and the 1907 Strike: A State-Capital Daguerreotype', *African Affairs*, 81, 323 (April 1982), 257. E.N. Katz, however, disputes the overemphasis of the 1907 strike as a facilitator of Afrikaners' entry into mine labour, see E.N. Katz, 'The Underground Route to Mining: Afrikaners and the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry from 1902 to the 1907 Miners' Strike', *The Journal of African History*, 36, 3 (1995).
[49] Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture', 264.
[50] D.F. Malan, Socialism: Lecture delivered before the Graaff-Reinet Literary Society, (Graaff-Reinet: Graaff-Reinet Advertiser, 1913), 5.
[51] Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture', 264.

of the DRC, described the strike as the emotional incitement of violence on a level that is unheard of in South Africa. The only thing that would have made this episode worse, wrote the editor, was if the black workers on the Rand had joined in, which would likely have incited even more violence. The *Kerkbode* was sympathetic towards the government and especially Prime Minster Botha, whom it believed was guided by God to bring about peace.[52] While the *Kerkbode* described the government's reactions as dignified, the strikers were depicted as irrational and overly violent. There seemed to be little solidarity with the striking workers.

The violence of the 1913 strike prompted some DRC clergy to contemplate the role of the labour movement among its members. Shortly after the strike, the *Kerkbode* published the thoughts of H. Dekker on labour movements and strikes. Dekker was a Dutch-born missionary affiliated to the DRC congregation of Middelburg, a rural town in the eastern part of the Cape province. He served in the leadership of the DRMC, the racially segregated coloured daughter church of the DRC.[53] Although Dekker's expertise were in mission work, his thirty-one-part series in the *Kerkbode* on workers' strikes, which he explained to be the socialists' first weapon of choice in starting a revolution, helped to shape initial discourse within the DRC on socialism.[54] In the same year, the newly confirmed DRC minister in Graaff-Reinet, DF Malan, was invited by the local Literary Society to present a lecture on socialism in wake of the 1913 strikes.[55] Here he placed local socialist developments within a shifting international atmosphere where questions of individuals' responsibility toward the welfare of others was being asked.[56] Although this lecture was published for public consumption, it did not have the reach of Dekker's series. Despite that, Malan provided a much more thorough, nuanced, and logical criticism of socialism which provided further insight into the nature of the earliest manifestations of anticommunist discourse in the DRC.

Dekker and Malan's contemplations represent the first real indication of discourse within the DRC on socialism, which would later become intertwined with communism. This early discourse often referred to developments in European socialist and labour movements at the time as a framework. Large labour movements existed across Europe in the period

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[52] 'De Werkerstaking te Johannesburg', *Kerkbode,* 31 July 1913, 645-6.
[53] 'Dekker, Herman', *Gemeentegeskiedenisargief*, https://www.gemeentegeskiedenis.co.za/dekker-herman/ [Accessed 5 February 2021].
[54] The series was titled, 'Sociale Vraagstukken'(Social Questions) and appeared in the *Kerkbode*, 1913-1914.
[55] D.F. Malan, *Socialism*.
[56] *Ibid.*, 5.

preceding the First World War, but although socialism was a partial inspiration for their politics, it was not a necessary precondition.[57] European labour movements, and specifically their leaders, were influenced by what is sometimes referred to as 'vulgar Marxism', a simplified version of Marxist theory that was easier to understand as it was more practical than theoretical.[58] This was intended to make socialist ideals more accessible and acceptable to European workers. The deliberate simplification of Marxist theory consisted of three basic propositions: the present capitalist system is unfair, capitalism is not everlasting, and workers are a fundamentally homogenous class.[59] Socialist activists in European labour movements were vague about what the end of a class-based society would look like. In this sense, as David Sassoon concluded, early twentieth century European socialists did not appear to be much interested in socialism.[60] Rather, at the core of the pre-First World War socialist movement in Europe was a social democratic ambition, and not a revolutionary overthrow of the current social order. Dekker tended to make use of this simplified version of socialism propagated by European socialists in his analyses, whereas Malan offered a more complex approach. As a student of theology and philosophy, Malan admired the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, whose dialectical framework was a key influence on Karl Marx. This theoretical grounding gave Malan a particular perspective on the foundations of Marxist theory. He was, however, not swayed by the theory, nor by his direct encounters with socialism. During his doctoral studies in the Netherlands, Malan visited a socialist colony where all private property had been abolished and everyone worked for a general fund which attended to all the needs of the colony. This experience left him uninspired, but it had given him a greater insight into socialist practices.[61] Furthermore, the Dutch railroad strikes of 1903, triggered by a dispute over trade union membership, deepened Malan's contempt for workers movements. The ultimate success of the Dutch railroad strikers concerned Malan. At the time, he wrote that 'the workers gradually became the ruling class (*stand*) in all European countries' through such successes, indicating his disdain for workers power and mobilisation.[62]

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[57] D. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The Western European Left in the Twentieth Century*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2010), 5.
[58] *Ibid.*, 5-6.
[59] *Ibid.*, 6.
[60] *Ibid.*, 20.
[61] Koorts, *DF Malan*, 47.
[62] Ibid, 47. Translated from Afrikaans: 'So word die werkers langsamerhand die regerende stand in alle Europese lande.'

A key point in Malan and Dekker's criticism of socialism was its overemphasis on class and class relations as a fundamental tool of analysis. This categorisation, according to Malan, led to friction in society and threatened societal unity.[63] Similarly, Dekker viewed socialist references to class division as a ploy to cause disunity.[64] This hostility toward class division sprouted from a nationalist conception of the unity of a cultural or racial entity. Therefore, they encouraged the use of 'standings' or 'distinctions' in society rather than class divisions as rich and poor, employers and employees, landless and landed – all of these, they believed, had interdependent roles in society.[65] This later developed into a central theme of the early anticommunist efforts on the labour front which promoted Afrikaner unity above class solidarity.

Malan and Dekker were both convinced that socialism was ultimately irreconcilable with a Christian belief system. Socialism, according to Malan, ignored the sinful nature of individuals as a reason for societal misery, and solely recognised structural reasons. They were also accused of propagating material matters of class and structural reform at the expense of the individual's spiritual needs. In contrast to this, Malan concluded that Christianity brought about social change by changing individuals, and therefore the world, from the inside, whilst socialists focussed on what could be changed externally.[66] The editor of the *Kerkbode*, J. Du Plessis also voiced his concern about the individual's loss of individual agency when, under socialism, they merged into the state.[67] Dekker, in turn, focussed on a Protestant conceptualisation of labour in opposition to socialism. He claimed that all work is a calling from God, which made any work a divine duty. Abstaining from work was thus considered a sin, and this sin – which Dekker reduced to laziness – became a burden on the community. The working class, according to Dekker's conceptualisation, must be content with their place in the broader societal structure.[68] Although Dekker is from the DRMC, he never recognised the interrelation between race and class. The absence of race in his writing reflected the fact that his discourse focussed solely on white labour. While socialism was not necessarily argued to

[63] Malan, *Socialism*, 8.
[64] Dekker, 'Sociale Vraagstukken IX', *Kerkbode*, 2 April 1914, 229.
[65] *Ibid.*; Malan, *Socialism*, 5.
[66] Malan, *Socialism*, 28.
[67] H.E. du P, 'Kolom van den Redacteur: De Socialistische Beweging', *Kerkbode*, 30 April 1914, 388.
[68] Dekker, 'Sociale Vraagstukken', *Kerkbode*, 18 September 1913, 796-7.

be an imminent threat, both Malan and Dekker saw it as theoretically diametrically opposed to their conception of Reformed Christianity.

Malan conceded that proponents of socialism pushed the church to introspection on their role in the lives of its working-class congregants. In his 1913 lecture he concluded:

> … Socialism has done an invaluable service to humanity, and not the least to Christianity itself by turning its searchlight on the evils of the existing system, by awakening the slumbering sense of social responsibility, by pointing out that there are social circumstances under which it is impossible for the individual to develop a healthy spiritual and moral life.[69]

While socialism had awaked the church to socio-economic inequities within society, Malan reiterated that it was flawed in its solution to these issues, and that only through Christianity could they be resolved.[70] The DRC thus had to find ways to serve an emerging Afrikaner proletariat in the cities, whilst also expanding its urban influence. Some church leaders believed that both of these concerns could be remedied by growing church attendance among working class Afrikaners. The *Kerkbode*'s editor speculated that church jargon in sermons, a feeling of class-segregation, and a belief that the church was a servant of the affluent classes, kept Afrikaner urban workers away from the church benches.[71] He concluded that workers saw the DRC in the city as uncaring, and in some instances hostile to the plight of the working class.[72] The editor called on the church to take inspiration from its campaign to relieve poor whiteism by tending to the social and spiritual needs of working-class Afrikaners. The *Kerkbode* added that the DRC had a moral obligation to serve this segment of Afrikaner society in a non-political manner.[73] In the context of the DRC's *volkskerk* tradition, non-political referred to party politics. It continued to commit itself to *volkspolitiek*, the politics of the people, which included being actively involved in the issues pertaining to the Afrikaners. This now included local labour issues, which were affected by broader political developments.

The period following the 1913 strike saw a realignment of socialism in Europe and in South Africa. The First World War caused a greater split between the reformed minded socialists in Western Europe and the revolutionary minded communists to the east. Most of the

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[69] Malan, *Socialisme*, 31.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] 'Kolom van den Redacteur', *Kerkbode*, 24 July 1913, 621.
[72] 'Kolom van den Redacteur', *Kerkbode*, 31 July 1913, 642.
[73] 'Kolom van den Redacteur', *Kerkbode*, 7 August 1913, 663; 'Kolom van den Redacteur', *Kerkbode*, 2 October 1913, 834.

European socialist parties patriotically supported their governments involvement in the war.[74] The Russian radicals, however, opposed their country's war effort. European socialists' relationship with their eastern comrades was further complicated by the violent nature of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Two years later, the Soviets decided to form a new international communist organisation – the Third International, or better known as Comintern – which forcedEuropean socialists into a radical position under its 'Twenty-one Conditions' for membership. At its core, it undertook to oust all reformists and centrists, demanded support for the Soviet Republic, and compelled members to be prepared for illegal political work.[75] This made it very difficult for European socialist parties to stand for a moderate socialist position in their countries, which weakened the European left. Comintern, for its part, failed both electorally and in its aspirations to bring about revolution. Despite this, socialist parties achieved considerable electoral gains all over Europe. The socialists' strategy conceded that a capitalist society could not be reformed from the outside, and through electoral victory, they could bring about their envisioned future. By contending for political power through the ballot box, socialist parties emerged as one of the foremost political forces in Europe and became the political home of the working class in the interwar years.[76]

Developments within the international socialist movement also influenced South African labour. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw attempts at forming an organised leftist movement. It was influenced by three main labour traditions. Firstly, a local white labourism influenced by the politics of the Australian Labour Party and Scottish socialists, which combined social democratic demands with the protection of white privilege through the colour bar and segregation.[77] Secondly, there was a more radical tradition emphasising interracial working class solidarity, influenced by the revolutionary syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which had originated in the USA, but was imported to South Africa by Scottish socialists. This tradition spread from radical white labour leaders to workers of colour during the 1910s.[78] Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, was

[74] Sassoon, One Hundred Years of Socialism, 30-1
[75] *Ibid.*, 32-3.
[76] *Ibid.*, 44.
[77] See, W. Kenefick, 'Confronting White Labourism: Socialism, Syndicalism, and the Role of the Scottish Radical Left in South Africa before 1914', *International Review of Social History*, 55, (2010), 29-62; J. Hyslop, 'Scottish Labour, Race, and Southern African Empire c.1880-1922: A Reply to Kenefick', *International Review of Social History*, 55, (2010), 63-81; J. Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist J.T. Bain: A Scottish Radical in Colonial South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2004); J.M. Mackenzie & N. Dalziel, *The Scots in South Africa: Ethnicity, identity, gender and race, 1772-1914*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), 228-233.
[78] Kenefick, 'Confronting White Labourism', 59.

the tradition that combined IWW syndicalism with Pan-Africanism, embodied by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) which would become the home of black and coloured labour. It was founded by Clements Kadalie in Cape Town in 1919, and rapidly grew from a few hundred members to around 100,000 in Southern Africa by 1927.[79] The union drew from a range of ideological elements such as moderate nationalism, liberalism, and African Christianity, though the primary influences remained IWW syndicalism and Garveyism.[80] With such a broad approach, the ICU struggled to contain its factionalism and became heavily fractured by the early 1930s. That said, the ICU's ascension to prominence was an important indicator of the political consciousness of non-white labour in the 1910s and 1920s. The ICU cut across traditional loyalties, which then united a large group of black South Africans as workers.

Whilst the ICU was the home of black and coloured labour, the broader leftist movement in South Africa still needed a political platform. After a dispute in the white Labour Party regarding the colour bar, a group of radical socialists broke away to form the International Socialist League of South Africa in 1915. In order to join the newly established Comintern, the League, together with other smaller Marxist organisations, founded the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921. The Party relied heavily on the older anarchist and syndicalist traditions in its early years. The all-white leadership of the CPSA denounced racism but saw the white working class as the main protagonist of the revolution.[81] The establishment of the CPSA marked the arrival of communism in South Africa.

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[79] L. van der Walt, 'The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism in Southern Africa: White Labourism, the IWW, and the ICU, 1904–1934', *African Studies*, 66, 2–3 (August–December 2007), 223-4.
See also H. Dee, 'Clements Kadalie, trade unionism, migration and race in Southern Africa, 1918-1930', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, April 2020.

[80] The ideology of Garveyism – named after its founder, the Jamaican political activist Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) – proposed the unification of people of African descent through repatriation of descendants of African slaves. For a comprehensive discussion on Marcus Garvey and Garveyism, see A. Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Black Politics*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2014); For a discussion on Garveyism in the South African context, see R.A. Hill & G.A. Prio, '"Africa for the Africans": the Garvey movement in South Africa, 1920-1940', in S. Marks & S. Trapido (eds.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, (Harlow, Longman, 1987). African Christianity here refers to notions of a Christian spirituality indigenous to Africa and independent from western Christian institutions. For a discussion on how diverging notions of African Christianity played a role in early African nationalist thought, see H. Dee, 'Nyasa Leaders, Christianity and African Internationalism in 1920s Johannesburg', *South African Historical Journal*, 70, 2 (2018), 383-406.

[81] Van der Walt, 'The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism', 236.

Between 'money-lustful capitalist and rebellious socialist': Exploring a third way for labour

After the 1913 strike, dissatisfaction with the status quo in labour relations intensified. Between 1916 and 1922, 205 strikes broke out, involving an estimated 175 664 black and white workers.[82] This dissatisfaction peaked in the wake of a drop in the world price of gold in December 1921. Mining companies tried to cut their operating costs by decreasing wages, and by weakening the colour bar to enable the promotion of cheaper black miners to skilled and supervisory positions. In response, a strike by white mine workers commenced on 28 December 1921.[83] By February of the following year, the strike remained in place, and the *Kerkbode* acknowledged that readers might be unsure about how to make sense of the events on the Rand – the majority of the *Kerkbode* readership at the time were mainly rural DRC members and clergy outside of the Transvaal.[84] A change of tone towards workers seeped through in the *Kerkbode's* first report of the unrest. 'Of course our sympathy in general is with the workers on earth and also in our country,' the editor commented, adding that a strike is however not an ideal situation and should be a last resort. The *Kerkbode* declared that a strike was a statement of war, and that the workers were being led into a violent conclusion.[85] Just before the strike evolved into an open rebellion, the *Kerkbode* was of the opinion that the *volk* was the better collective to be part of, and 'our workers' should first seek help from their own people before resorting to strikes or any forms of violence.[86] Both editorials were wary of condemning any action or labelling any party in the brewing conflict. Labour unrest was an unfamiliar phenomenon for the DRC to deal with, and the church had yet to solidify its place in the urban context in which this unrest played out. The cautious editorials reflected how the church held an ambivalent position on this unfamiliar matter before it regarded itself equipped to engage with it fully. Developments in the unrest on the Rand would, however, soon force the DRC to engage with labour issues.

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[82] Van der Walt, 'The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism', 229.
[83] J. Krikler, The Rand Revolt: The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa, (Johannesburg: Johnathan Ball, 2005), 115.
[84] P. B. van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1905-1975*, (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1988), 221.
[85] 'De Staking op de Rand', *Kerkbode*, 2 February 1922, 126. Translated from the original Dutch: 'Natuurlik is onze sympathie in het algemeen aan de kant van de werkers op aarde en ook in ons land.'
[86] 'De staking', *Kerkbode*, 9 March 1922, 296.

By March, the strike had turned into the 1922 Rand Revolt, an open rebellion against the state. As Jeremy Krikler, in his thorough study of the Rand Revolt pointed out, race did play a crucial role in the strike. That said, it later became an open rebellion against the state by all workers irrespective of race. The armed uprising had two main alliances: Afrikaner workers who opposed the current order in favour of the formation of an independent Republic, and the Communists, who hoped to promote a working-class revolution. Both groupings had a racialised understanding of what they were fighting for, with the slogan, 'Workers of the world, unite and fight for a white South Africa!'.[87] Republicanism was embedded in traditional Afrikaner nationalism, and sought to counter the reach of British imperialism in South Africa, whilst also securing political power through an Afrikaner nationalist party. They framed the Rand-conflict as a re-enactment of the frontier struggle between white and black, and revived old myths of Voortrekker heroes and dissidents such as Jopie Fourie as inspiration for the Afrikaner workers.[88] For these Republicans, it was a deeply anti-British and anti-imperial conflict.

The Communists, on the other hand, warned of black workers becoming equal to white workers, and radical non-Afrikaners believed a worker's victory in this conflict would prevent white 'race suicide'.[89] Jan Smuts, who succeeded Botha as Prime Minister, supported the mining industry during the Rand Revolt. He labelled the 1922 strikes as a 'Red Revolt' and blamed a small group of international communists for the violence in an attempt to delegitimise the strike.[90] Although both Republicans and communists were influential in the Rand Revolt, Krikler asserts that their influence should not be exaggerated. The most influential discourse on the Rand Revolt was race, as white workers – communist or republican – saw the threat of cheap black labour as an existential one.[91]

The end of the revolt saw war-like violence with martial law proclaimed, state troops deployed, and the strikers' physical base falling to the government after artillery bombardment. William Nicol, a prominent DRC leader on the Rand at the time, 'saw cannons firing from

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[87] Krikler, *The Rand Revolt*, 115.
[88] Ibid, 108. Jopie Fourie, a South African War veteran, led a band of rebels during the 1914 Afrikaner rebellion – pockets of rebels stood up against the governments' support of the war – and was consequently executed by the Louis Botha government, which made him an important Afrikaner martyr within Afrikaner nationalist circles.
[89] *Ibid.*, 333-4.
[90] A. van Deventer & P. Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism, 1922–1941', *Politikon: South African Journal for Political Studies*, 12, 2 (1990), 67.
[91] Krikler, *The Rand Revolt*, 128.

Brixton and saw the bombs explode on Aasvoëlkop' from his parsonage in Houghton.[92] The chaos of the revolt directly affected the DRC in the Rand, with some congregations cancelling services.[93] This level of violence resulted in a different reaction from the DRC than nine years earlier. The 1913 strike had opened a discussion about the church and labour, ranging from overtly condescending to somewhat sympathetic writings on the working class with no real action being taken. There seemed to be more sympathy towards the workers in the Rand Revolt, but there remained only a paternalistic concern for their wellbeing. The *Kerkbode* urged that it was now the opportunity 'to save our workers form the power and influence of strange and dangerous contemporary trends that is imported from abroad'.[94] Without naming it explicitly, socialism was cast as an idea foreign to Afrikaners.

The revolt created an urgency amongst clergy and other nationalist-minded Afrikaners in the city to engage with labour activities. In April 1922, a DRC minister from the Free State, N.J. van der Merwe, wrote in a letter to the *Kerkbode*:

> If ever there was a time to start a strong organised labour union, then it is in the turmoil of the current crisis. Will the brethren of our Church on the Rand not immediately organise a great congress to promote the cause? It is very sad that more is not made of the Christian principle that ought to regulate the relationship between capital and labour. Unity is strength, and if Christian workers are organised into a unit, the effect will surpass our best expectations.[95]

In anticipation of the Transvaal Synod meeting the following month, the *Kerkbode* suggested that Van der Merwe be part of this meeting, as, based on his contribution, he seemed to be an expert on the topic of Christian trade unionism.[96] Despite the wishes of the *Kerkbode*, Van der Merwe was ultimately not invited to the meeting. He would later become the founder of the

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[92] W. Nicol, *Met toga en troffel: die lewe van 'n stadspredikant*, (Cape Town: NG Kerk-uitgewers, 1958), 313.
[93] *Ibid.*, 313. Translated from the original Afrikaans: '… kanonne gesien vuur van Brixton en bomme obntplof op Aasvoëlkop.'
[94] 'De Stakers', *Kerkbode*, 13 April 1922, 454. Translated from the original Dutch: '… onze arbeider te verlossen uit de macht en van onder de invloed van vreemde en gevaarlike geestesstromingen, die van over de zee hier ingevoerd zijn.'
[95] N.J. van der Merwe, 'Christelike Arbeidersvereniging', *Kerkbode*, 13 April 1922, 477. Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'As daar ooit 'n tyd was om 'n sterk georganiseerde christelike arbeidersvereniging aan die gang te sit, dan is dit in die warboel van die huidige kriesis [sic.]. Sal die broeders van onse Kerk op die Rand nie dadelik 'n groot kongres organiseer nie, om die saak te bevorder? Dit is allertreurigs, dat daar nie meer gemaak word van die christelike beginsele, waardeur die verhouding tussen kapitaal en arbeid moet gereël word.' Eendrag maak mag, en as christen-arbeiders tot 'n eenheid georganiseer word, sal die uitwerking onse beste verwagting oortref.
[96] 'De Stakers', *Kerkbode*, 13 April 1922, 454.

Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigingе (FAK – Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations), a member of parliament for the National Party (NP) and served in the party's Federal Council.[97] Van der Merwe's public call to action did, however, start a conversation within the DRC on the prospect of officially engaging on the labour front. After a request from the presbytery of Johannesburg, the Transvaal Synod discussed its attitudes towards both capitalism and socialism in the aftermath of the Rand Revolt. The meeting was split between some sympathising with the strikers, and others blaming them for the violence. The delegates did, however, agree not to judge any party and the aim of the discussion was purely to explore the opinion of the Transvaal DRC on the topic.[98] The violence and any unlawful actions were condemned, but there was little desire to assign blame in any particular direction. This was because about half of the strikers were members of the DRC, and the meeting was very proud that the majority of them had not acted in ways considered undignified for people of their *volk* and church.[99]

The delegates debated the ideological currents at play on the Rand but seemed to only have a vague understanding of these theoretical concepts.[100] Both capitalism and socialism were labelled as 'worldly', a term the DRC frequently used to describe concepts, or the implications of concepts considered foreign or unfamiliar. Similar to Malan and Dekker before, the DRC opposed the binary ideologies of capitalism or socialism and tried to forge a 'third way'. For Malan, the 'third way' had been nationalism, and for Dekker ethical capitalism with 'Christian labour values'. In contrast, the DRC was yet to form a clear idea of a 'third way', although it was searching for it.[101] Overall, the synodical discussion took a pietistic and idealistic tone and concluded that the 'money-lustful capitalist' and 'rebellious socialist' had lost sight of the eternal world and everlasting treasures. The synod pleaded for a change of spirit, with a focus on the workers themselves:

> The Synod sincerely trusts that the workers, and especially the members of our Church ... have now clearly seen that they should not allow the handing over of control of their affairs to godless leaders. The workers will have to

[97] The FAK (1929) aimed to stimulate interest in Afrikaans literature and the arts, to help Afrikaners enter the business world, and to promote Christian national education. The FAK played a crucial role in determining the cultural lives and outlook of specifically the middle-class urban Afrikaners, and solidifying norms for the Afrikaans language. It functioned under the careful control of the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB).
[98] *Acts of the Transvaal Synod*, 1922, 144.
[99] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk*, 360; *Acts of the Transvaal Synod*, 1922, 144.
[100] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk*, 361.
[101] *Acts of the Transvaal Synod*, 1922, 144.

> see to it that a healthy Afrikaans, Christian spirit is manifested in the management of their affairs.[102]

This idea flowed into a more practical decision made by the synod. By now there was a consensus that the only way to advance the rights and freedoms of workers was to unionise them. The churchmen argued that under the current union leadership the workers had abused their rights. They believed that workers' rights were important, but the responsibilities attached to these rights were equally important, and it was argued that a certain type of leadership was required that advanced the rights of workers, whilst managing their freedoms as well.[103] The synod saw the need for a Christian Labourers' Society (*Christelike Arbeiders Vereniging*) – an echo of Van der Merwe's earlier suggestion. The *Broederkring*, or Circle of Brothers – consisting of all the Afrikaans ministers of the three sister churches on the Rand – was summoned to bring to life such a society. On 30 October 1922, the Christian South African Labour Society *(Christelike Suid-Afrikaanse Arbeidsvereniging*) was founded.[104] Noting concerns about the influence of communist propaganda on black workers, the *Kerkbode* urged 'our Afrikaans' workers to join the new movement – clearly positioning this as a white union.[105] It intended to serve white workers on all levels, and to collaborate with both employees and employers to create healthy labour relations. The *Kerkbode* believed that the role of unions, under socialist control, thus far was almost solely aimed at tending to the needs of workers by being hostile toward employers. This, the *Kerkbode* argued, was counterproductive to protecting the workers and went against what it believed to be Christian principles.[106] The church-led trade union never came to fruition. What became of the Christian South African Labour Society is not clear, though it seems to have failed to gain any traction. Even though this was a failed attempt, the stage was now set for the DRC to enter organised labour in a well-organised and focussed manner. While the 1913 strike put the plight of workers on the DRC's radar, and opened the discussion on socialism, the 1922 Revolt forced it to respond to working class problems and formally cast socialism as the opponent.

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[102] 'De Transvaalse Synode en De Onrust op de Rand', *Kerkbode*, 31 May 1922, 694. Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Die Sinode vertrou van harte dat die werkers, en veral die lede van ons Kerk … nou duidelik gesien het, dat hulle nie die beheer van hulle sake aal goddelose voormanne mag oorhandig nie. Die werkers sal moet toesien dat daar 'n gesonde Afrikaanse, kristelike gees in die bestier van hulle sake aan die dag gelê word.'
[103] 'Een Christelike Aarbeidersvereniging', *Kerkbode*, 1 November 1922, 1439.
[104] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 362.
[105] 'Een Christelike Aarbeidersvereniging', *Kerkbode*, 1 November 1922, 1440.
[106] *Ibid.*

Apart from this failed labour intervention, the DRC acted swiftly to help its members in need after the unrest. Congregations helped with feeding schemes, assisted in education initiatives for young children, and established networks to help orphaned Afrikaner children in this period.[107] During these efforts at social upliftment, the clergy on the Rand grew weary of the moral decay of working-class families. It was especially the well-being of the women and children of men who had been killed, injured, or imprisoned in the wake of the violent strikes of 1922 that worried them. In a letter to the *Kerkbode,* a DRC minister from Boksburg, an area particularly affected by the violent strikes, wrote that the cold was becoming harsh for the women and children left in dire economic situations after their fathers and husbands had been imprisoned following the Revolt. He pleaded for clothing for them and made a special request for baby clothes. The minister also reported that he had held services for the imprisoned Afrikaner men, and that they were blessed with the weekly *Kerkbode* to read.[108] The despair amongst Afrikaners in the wake of the violent strikes merely extended existing pressures on struggling families. Some women had to support their families financially due to the low wages earned by their husbands, whilst others had to carry the burden of unemployed parents and small children, or if they did not have other family members, sometimes their own fatherless children. The breakdown of traditional family structures greatly concerned the DRC who, believing that this structure could be further weakened by women forced to enter the workplace, viewed this a considerable threat to traditional conceptualisations of the Afrikaner way of life. These social and moral concerns later grew into anticommunist anxiety as more Afrikaner women entered the workplace, and subsequently joined trade unions.

‘Our poor’

The DRC’s active engagement with organised labour initiated a period where socialist elements, which had already been established as incompatible with Christianity, was becoming the church’s direct opponent. Prior to the 1922 revolt, socialism was merely viewed as the wrong solution to workers’ issues. By November 1922 however, the *Kerkbode* emphasised that ‘now the dangerous socialist movement must be countered with everything in our power, and the Christian society in particular is called to this’.[109] Socialism’s supposedly anti-Christian

[107] Nicol, *Met toga en troffel*, 97-99.
[108] G.J. Louw, ‘Die Nood op die Rand’, *Kerkbode*, 4 May 1922, 588.
[109] ‘Een Christelike Aarbeidersvereniging’, *Kerkbode*, 1 November 1922, 1440. Translated from the original Dutch: ‘Nu moet deze gevaarvolle Socialistiese beweging met alle macht tegengewerkt worden en daartoe wordt vooral de christelike samenleving ... geroep.’

character had now become a visible problem for some in the DRC, with the *Kerkbode* citing the Labour Party's apparent parliamentary attack on the Easter-holidays as an example. According to an article entitled, 'Anti-Christian Direction in the Labour Movement' (*Anti-Christelike Richting in de Arbeidersbeweging*), the whole socialist movement – trade unions and the Labour Party – threatened the stability and peace of the state.[110] Early involvement in the organised labour movement thus gradually hardened the church's opposition to socialism because it now had growing stakes on this front. As an urban church, the DRC had to increasingly tend to their working-class members' concerns in order to retain their allegiance, and socialist elements on the labour front became their direct competitors in this regard.

The *Kerkbode*'s framing of the Labour Party as the parliamentary extension of socialism in South Africa, came less than a year before Hertzog's NP and the South African Labour Party formed an alliance, the Pact, to contest the 1924 election. The NP had by now positioned itself as the political patron of poor whites. At the DRC's 1923 joint conference on the poor white question, Hertzog and Malan represented the NP, whereas the SAP were absent.[111] Both the Labour Party and the NP were sympathetic to the white working class, with the former representing the English working class and the latter the Afrikaners. The NP indicated that it had some sympathy for the low wages of black workers and in an attempt to gain African votes in the Cape, the NP made overtures to the leader of the ICU, Clements Kadalie. Hertzog even sent a donation to the union, while the Cape NP leader DF Malan, urged ICU members to stand alongside the Nationalists in a spirit of patriotism. The Pact clearly recognised the growing class consciousness of the period, enjoying the support of a wide constituency ranging from their traditional Afrikaner-base and English working class to black and coloured voters who voted against the SAP's lack of a racial policy.[112] This disgruntled, yet loose coalition, was strong enough to vote the Pact into power in 1924.

Following his loss, and after news that some communists had backed the Pact, the SAP's Smuts boldly declared that 'the Red Flag has come to South Africa'.[113] This set the tone for a slow process of pressure from the SAP-opposition benches to drive an anticommunist agenda through legislative proposals to counter Smuts' narrative. Through the enactment of the

[110] 'Anti-Christelike Richting in de Arbeidersbeweging', *Kerkbode*, 9 May 1923, 607-8.
[111] Koorts, '"The Black Peril"', 565.
[112] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 337.
[113] *Ibid.*

Wage Act (1925), the Mines and Works Amendment Act (1926), and its policy on so-called civilised labour – this refers to white labour, as opposed to 'uncivilised' black labour – the Pact government protected the white working class and thus strengthened the coalition between the state and white labour.[114] Kedalie and his ICU was a spent force in the eyes of the Pact government, and they did not feel it was the right time to give much attention to the calls for racial equality.[115] It was also the first time that the South African government took a stand against the mining industry. The SAP, who remained sympathetic to mining interests, used the debates on the Native Administration Act of 1927 to tactically force the state to exert greater control over communist agitation amongst the black working class. Three years later, the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1930 also attempted to confine, amongst others, communist activities. During a legislative debate, Nationalist Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow, conceded that communism might have the potential of becoming a danger to the state in the future, but it was 'at present merely a nuisance', while Smuts was deeply concerned about its current threat to race relations in South Africa. It was thus again Smuts who initiated a special focus on communists in this act, not the Nationalists. Anti-communist efforts by the state were thus the product of the political pressure from the opposition during the Pact government's administration. By the end of the decade however, the Nationalists had become increasingly sensitive to accusations that they had been too soft on communism.[116]

Institutional state-sponsored anticommunism was starting to take form, but it was the politics of poor whiteism, which persisted into the 1930s, that would create the conditions in which anticommunism expanded beyond mere legislation. The philanthropic Carnegie Corporation in New York became interested in this phenomenon in the latter half of the 1920s and funded the first systematic study of the problem. As the institution with the most intimate history with poor whites, the DRC took the lead in what became known as the Carnegie Commission on the Poor White Problem in South Africa. The Commission's 1932 report, which counted leading DRC clergy amongst its researchers, found that there were 300 000 poor whites in South Africa. Further analysis showed that 250 000 of them were Afrikaans speakers, which meant that in the early 1930s one in four Afrikaners were poor.[117] In 1934, the DRC held a *volkskongres* (people's congress) in Kimberley to discuss the implications of the Carnegie

[114] Van Deventer & Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism, 1922–1941', 66.
[115] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 338.
[116] Van Deventer & Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism, 1922–1941', 68-9.
[117] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 347.

Commission's report. White poverty was recognised as a result of social and economic circumstances, rather than an inherent character weakness of the poor. The DRC had finally recognised that the solution to Afrikaner urbanisation was not to reverse it, but to embrace it.[118] According to the Commission's report, the solution for poor whiteism was to be found in the education, training, and social upliftment of urban Afrikaners.[119] Politically, the poor white problem started as a national issue – of the black landed and urban poor suffering similar challenges for similar reasons remained overlooked – but it had now become a nationalist one. DF Malan, with his longstanding interest in the poor white problem, was now the leader of the opposition NP, and made sure that the party captured the poor white vote. In the 1938 election, the NP saw major growth in the Cape countryside where the majority of its votes came from deprived white areas.[120] The NP thus remained the political home of poor whites. Historian Bill Freund argues that the poor whites' inability to join forces in a class formation with others such as the black urban poor, offered the NP its opportunity to systematically court and win their allegiance.[121] The Nationalists, however, still had to persuade poor whites and the growing Afrikaner proletariat that their interests could only be served within Afrikaner Christian national structures. This meant that any form of class identity had to be replaced with cultural and ethnic allegiances, just as Malan argued in his 1913 lecture on socialism.[122] While poor whites had already been won for the Nationalist cause, efforts continued with the working class more broadly.

Afrikanerising Organised Labour

Alliances between local communist operatives and trade unionists became increasingly visible during the early 1930s. The CPSA saw an opportunity for political support with the scores of white workers on the Rand. In 1932, the party attempted to tap into this white electorate by contesting the by-election in Germiston. The CPSA ultimately failed, but during the campaign a former party member Solly Sachs regained communist credentials by openly canvassing support from white workers for the communist candidate.[123] Sachs was the General Secretary

[118] Vosloo, 'From a farm road to a public highway', 23.
[119] Vosloo, 'The Dutch Reformed Church and the poor white problem', 75; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 348.
[120] Koorts, '"The Black Peril"', 569, 572.
[121] Freund, 'The poor whites', xix.
[122] Tayler, '"Our poor": the politicisation of the Poor White Problem', 44-5.
[123] T. Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party, 1921-2021*, (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2021), 176-7.

of the Garment Workers' Union (GWU), a multiracial union of women factory workers in the garment industry. He believed that wining white workers for the socialist cause was a prerequisite for expanding left-politics to include the liberation of black people. For this he was suspended from the CPSA when the Comintern instructed the party in 1928 to support a campaign for a 'independent native republic'.[124] Sachs continued to guide the GWU by socialist principles and encouraged the participation of Afrikaner women in trade unionism who climbed the ranks to gain leadership positions in the GWU. By the late-1930s, Anna Scheepers was elected the president of the union, Johanna Cornelius became its national organiser, and her sister Hester, secretary of the Germiston branch. These Afrikaner women were not only leaders in a multiracial trade union, but also openly expressed their support for the Soviet Union and the expansion of international communism.[125] As mentioned earlier, the DRC feared that women would become susceptible to left politics but had clearly failed to prevent this. On the question of whether the church should offer any assistance to these women, an ex-garment worker answered: 'Which churches? … No one cared about us, except the union.'[126] At a gathering of garment workers, an Afrikaner trade unionist asked, 'Has there ever been an Afrikaner or even a minister of the DRC who has come forward to try and better the conditions of the garment workers as Solly Sachs has done?'[127] To these women, the church was failing in its attempts to tend to the needs of Afrikaner workers in the city, and organised labour on the Rand had become a site for communist expansion.

This context, and the growth of the NP as a patron of the poor and working class during the mid-1930s, readied Afrikaner labour for nationalist initiatives. Only 18% of white trade union leaders were Afrikaners, despite Afrikaners constituting approximately 80% of union membership. Afrikaner workers were sceptical of the capitalist system with its rampant greed and individualism, and nationalist leaders were similarly outspoken against its exploitive nature.[128] According to Dan O'Meara, the Afrikaner workers' relatively disadvantaged position within trade unions, and the state's close ties to the capitalist class made organised labour a site

[124] Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 169-170.
[125] E. Brink, '"Maar 'n klomp factory meide": Afrikaner Family and Community on Witwatersrand during the 1920s', in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict, South African Perspectives*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 178.
[126] *Ibid.*, 191.
[127] *Ibid.*
[128] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 423.

ripe for nationalist exploitation.[129] The initiative on this front would be taken by a group of influential individuals within the *Afrikaner-Broederbond* (AB), a highly influential 'secret' society, established in 1918, whose exclusively male and Afrikaner Calvinist members were dedicated to the advancement of Afrikaner interests.[130] These members were almost exclusively educated middle-class men, however the Broederbond chair at the time, LJ du Plessis saw working-class Afrikaners as a crucial element in creating economic prosperity for the *volk*. Their value, Du Plessis told a gathering of Broeders in 1936, lay in their buying power which would, if harnessed correctly, foster a system of *volkskapitalisme*, or people's capitalism, whereby Afrikaner wealth could be centralised and self-managed.[131]

Another AB member, Albert Hertzog, a young lawyer, and the son of Prime Minister JBM Hertzog shared Du Plessis's sentiment. He, however, saw the potential of organised Afrikaner labour as the best way to create large amounts of Afrikaner capital – controlling trade unions and their subscriptions would 'unleash a financial giant' Hertzog believed.[132] Thus, and within AB circles, working-class Afrikaners were viewed as a financial asset, and whose collective capital would help the nationalist cause. This went deeper than the DRC's earlier calls for Christian-Nationalist organised labour which simply proposed that Afrikaner workers needed to be saved from socialist influences within trade unions. The AB's approach also factored in the 'dangers' of socialism, although it was not the primary focus. Du Plessis, for instance, believed that a natural upshot of organised Afrikaner labour was protection against socialist influences.[133] Hertzog also held deeply rooted anti-socialist beliefs, but just like Du Plessis, he argued that the core goal of organised labour was to grow Afrikaner capital, spread nationalist ideas, and challenge the 'foreign' moneyed elite.[134]

There was an urgency within the AB then to launch a serious campaign to win the Afrikaner workers, specifically on the Rand, for the nationalist cause. The executive council of the AB supported Hertzog to take on this challenge. In 1936, Hertzog joined forces with two

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[129] D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner nationalism 1934-1948*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 83.
[130] See E.L.P. Stals, *Die Broederbond: Die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner-Broederbond 1918-1994*, (Johannesburg: Die Afrikanerbond, 2021); I. Wilkins & H. Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, *Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond*, (Jonathan Ball Publishers: Johannesburg, 2012); AN Pelzer, *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond: eerste 50 jaar*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979).
[131] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 128.
[132] O' Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 85.
[133] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 128.
[134] O' Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 85.

AB allies Piet Meyer and Nico Diederichs to establish the *Nasionale Raad van Trustees* (NRT – National Council of Trustees) whose main objective was to Afrikanerise organised labour, specifically in sectors where Afrikaner workers constituted majorities. The NRT and its operatives thus became known as the Reformers within organised Afrikaner labour. Its wider purpose, as historian Charles Bloomberg explained, was 'the welding together of Afrikaner workers and the Afrikaner nation into a mighty unity that would remain faithful to the Afrikaner's culture and religious tradition.'[135] Hertzog, Meyer, and Diederichs were part of a cohort young Afrikaner intellectuals returning to South African after doctoral studies in Europe who imported what the sociologist Dunbar Moodie described as neo-Fichtean notions of nationalism.[136] This defined the nation, each with a distinct character and a separate divine calling in the world, as the central unit of social analysis. Consequently, the individual could only be fully human when they were part of a nation which was bound together by a single common culture.[137] According to these neo-Fichteans, class solidarity proposed by communism undermined the supremacy of the nation. Meyer – who was the secretary of the FAK at the time – for instance, viewed 'communist-inspired' class conflict on the Rand as one of the greatest threats to Afrikaner solidarity and believed cultural unity to be the only bulwark against it.[138] Diederichs, a philosophy lecturer at the University of the Orange-Free State, held similar views, but went further in viewing 'foreign' socialist influences as a challenge to Afrikaner claims to political power in South Africa, which he believed were a divine right.[139]

The narrative of portraying socialist elements in the trade unions as 'foreign' was reinforced by exploiting a growing anti-Jewish agenda within Afrikaner politics at the time. Historian Milton Shain explained that the development of an anti-Jewish agenda in South Africa in the late 1930s was informed by European fascism and Nazism. It was driven by those on the radical right but only gained mainstream clout as a tool to mobilise voters in the run-up to the 1938 election.[140] Antisemitism was thus an available tool for political opportunists such as the NRT-trio, Hertzog, Meyer, and Diederichs. These men were also sympathetic, to different extents, to Nazism. Their broader focus on advancing the Afrikaner nationalist cause

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[135] C. Bloomberg, *Christian-Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond in South Africa, 1918-1948*, (London: Macmillan, 1990), 114.
[136] Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 154.
[137] Ibid, 154-9.
[138] Ibid, 169.
[139] Ibid, 156.
[140] M. Shain, *A Perfect Storm: Antisemitism in South Africa, 1930-1948*, (Johannesburg: Johnathan Ball, 2015), Introduction, Kindle edition.

on the Rand was, however, not reliant on an anti-Jewish agenda. It was rather utilised as a subset of anticommunism. In 1938, Diederichs addressed the Broederbond's national congress – the organisations top policy making body – on the Jewish influence on the labour front. He refrained from employing racist Jewish stereotypes and rather described the disproportional presence and influence of Jews in trade unions as a barrier in the advancement of an Afrikaner nationalist agenda. Diederichs added that their agenda was shrouded in secrecy – an ironic statement to make at a gathering of the Broederbond – and in constant conflict with Afrikaner interests whereafter he endorsed calls for stricter legislation to curb Jewish influence in South Africa.[141] There was no doubt that he made these statements out of conviction, but Diederichs' focus remained on communism. This was illustrated when he concluded, as others did at the time, that Jews were the main propagators of communism.[142] The battle, he implied, was against communism rather than against Jews, and therefore made the ambitious proposal of an organisation, separate from, but endorsed by the Broederbond and other sympathetic Afrikaner organisations, to fend off its influence in the trade unions, cultural organisations, and churches.[143] Diederichs thus exploited the anti-Jewish atmosphere within Afrikaner ranks for his anticommunist agenda. The Bondsraad, the national congress of the AB and the highest policy making body, again noted this proposal, but no action was taken. It was, however, the first signal of Diederichs' ambition to establish a specifically anticommunist organisation which would later come to fruition, as will be discussed in the next chapter, after the Second World War.

The NRT's focus on trade unionism on the Rand made the Transvaal the epicentre of early Afrikaner anticommunism in the latter half of the 1930s. Hertzog, Meyer, and Diederichs became the main drivers of the NRT's agenda to draw northern Afrikaner workers into the organic unity of the *volk*. They were convinced that a process of de-urbanisation, as proposed by the DRC in their earlier discussion on poor-whiteism, was unrealistic. Hertzog and his allies also believed, according to the official history of the NRT, that church leaders at the time were not up for the task to 'win the city' for Afrikaners.[144] Despite that, it was the Transvaal DRC that was the first responder to the plight of urbanising and proletarianizing Afrikaners. The

[141] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 130.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid.*, 131.
[144] L. Naudé (pseud.), *Dr. A. Hertzog, die Nasionale Party en die* Mynwerkers, (Pretoria: Nasionale Raad van Trustees, 1969), 13.

Reformers could not ignore this and were cognisant that they needed the cooperation of the church. They saw it as their task to further educate church councils in the Transvaal on the battle for Afrikaner workers.[145] Prominent leaders of the Transvaal church who had been involved in efforts to uplift Afrikaner's in the city were drawn into the NRT. The Transvaal DRC's poor-relief secretary JR Albertyn, as well as the respected doyen of the church JD Kestell, were elected to the NRT council, while the moderator of the Transvaal DRC and long serving member of the Broederbond's executive council William Nicol became a trusted ally of the Reformer's movement.[146] There was also a definite distinction between the Transvaal DRC's involvement in organised labour, and the wider DRC's support for it. Hertzog travelled to rural congregations outside of the Transvaal to spread the message of the plight of fellow Afrikaners on the Rand as a way to garner financial support for the NRT. The messaging to rural DRC members framed Afrikaner workers as victims of the capitalist class.[147] On the Rand however, the battle on the labour front would become more focussed on the perceived threat of communist influence. As Giliomee wrote, 'while detesting a capitalist interested only in private gain, the Broederbond [through the NRT] and the church had an even greater antipathy towards leftist trade unions.'[148] Therefore, the DRC's earliest foray into anticommunism was largely determined by the clergy and leaders in the Transvaal.

Initially, the NRT attempted to establish rival trade unions to win over Afrikaner workers in sectors such as mining. This failed, and the NRT shifted toward focussing on infiltrating the leadership of existing trade unions and by doing so, reforming them into Afrikaner trade unions, firstly targeting the Mine Workers Union (MWU) which had the largest concertation of Afrikaners workers at the time. The AB's financial support was not enough to sustain these efforts however.[149] In 1939, Albert Hertzog's uncle, Pieter Neethling, bequeathed the NRT with a sufficient reserve of funds which they relied on to continue with their reform efforts. All trade union activities were, however, frozen when the war broke out in Europe, which also stifled the Reformers who had to take wait six more years to continue their

[145] Naudé, *Dr. A. Hertzog*, 34.
[146] *Ibid.*, 27. The rest of the NRT's council members were Tibbie Steyn (wife of the late President of the Orange Free State MT Steyn), Bessie Marais (wife of Jannie Marais, a Afrikaner philanthropist from Stellenbosch), JD Kestell, JR Albertyn, JD du Toit (Afrikaans poet and GK theologian, Totius), Joon van Rooy (GK theologian), EC Pienaar (Linguist), W Louw (member of the AB's executive), IM Lombard (secretary of the FAK), and J. J. Bosman (founder of *Volkskas*).
[147] *Ibid.*, 98.
[148] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 423.
[149] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 130.

campaign.[150] The NRT had thus not achieved great success by the end of the 1930s. Nevertheless, the NRT's early years saw the development of an early anticommunist network. Meyer, Diederichs, and Hertzog would all later play critical roles as anticommunist agents. Even more important was that the DRC had been recognised as a key institution by these early anticommunists and had been drawn into this relationship.

The period from the 1910s through to the end of the 1930s saw the establishment of the foundations of the DRC's anticommunism during the twentieth century. The DRC's shifting identity towards an urban church had significantly shaped its early responses to leftist politics. Socialism, and later communism, was cast as incompatible with Christianity. With the DRC's attention being drawn into organised labour after the 1922 revolt, this incompatibility developed into outright hostility. Under the Reformist-influence, the DRC was drawn into a cultural battle where communism was not only the antithesis to Christianity, but also a threat to the unity of the *volk*. While the DRC leaders on the Rand were fully aware of the communist 'threat' to this unity, it was the Reformers who organised around this issue. That said, the most important development in this regard was that the DRC had been drawn into a growing anticommunist network of individuals and organisations that would maintain their link with the church in subsequent decades, but with fluctuating influence and agendas. Ultimately, this network quickly outgrew the organised labour front as the broader Afrikaner nationalist movement gained momentum. The DRC was already deeply embedded in the lives of Afrikaners, but it was now entrenched in the foundations of Afrikaner anticommunism which would only grow stronger.

[150] Moodie, Rise of Afrikanerdom, 173.

CHAPTER 2: THE DRC, ANTIKOM AND THE RISE OF AFRIKANER POWER, C. 1940-1959

The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the DRC following its flock to the city and establishing itself as an urban *volkskerk*. It was now as evenly embedded in the city as it was in rural South Africa. The city had, as the previous chapter illustrated, exposed the church to organised labour through its affiliation with Afrikaner organisations such as the *Afrikaner-Broederbond* (AB). So, as the DRC entered the 1940s it was strongly entrenched in the everyday lives of Afrikaners across the country and had an established position in the early network of Afrikaner nationalists. The 1940s saw the growth of a broad Afrikaner nationalist consciousness that would lead to the rise of Afrikaner power in 1948. It was a period where *volkspolitiek* grew into party politics. This chapter will illustrate how the DRC swiftly shifted its early opposition to socialist advances through organised labour toward a moral anticommunism whereby communism was framed as a bogey which threatened every section of South African life. The church, as the moral guardian of the *volk*, took it upon itself then to develop Afrikaner resilience against this perceived threat.

This shift toward a moral anticommunist position coincided with the ambitions of a leading Afrikaner nationalist intellectual, Nico Diederichs, who had been petitioning for the establishment of a grand anticommunist organisation. A heightened awareness of communism during the early stages of the Cold War would create the conditions for the DRC's and Diederichs' goals to converge, leading to the establishment of Antikom, the central anticommunist body within the Afrikaner nationalist movement that was dominated by the DRC, in 1946. This became a turning point in the DRC's anticommunist development. As this chapter will argue, the establishment of Antikom ensured that the DRC was further embedded within the Afrikaner nationalist anticommunist fold. Not only was the church now closer to *volkspolitiek*, but with the rise of the National Party (NP) to power in 1948, the DRC found itself in close proximity to formal political power. Its anticommunist platform also converged with NP policy which led to the DRC acting as the moral legitimiser of government policy on communism and black resistance. However, the enactment of the Suppression of Communism Act (1950) meant that the state had taken control of overt anticommunism, which meant that Antikom's activities became dormant in the 1950s.

The rise of Afrikaner nationalist consciousness

The 1932 Carnegie Report, which had investigated poor whites in South Africa and the *volkskongres* (people's congress) that followed, elevated poor whiteism to a national issue.[1] By the end of the decade however, it had been appropriated as a nationalist issue by a reconstituted National Party (NP), led by DF Malan, which had been formed in 1934 after J.B.M. Hertzog agreed to merge his party with Jan Smuts's South African Party (SAP) to form the United Party (UP). Malan, a long-time campaigner on the poor white issue, ensured that the NP prioritised indigent Afrikaners. The general election in June 1938, which the UP won convincingly, nevertheless indicated steady electoral support for the NP, especially in the countryside of the Cape Province. Many of these regions were singled out by the Carnegie commission as containing large numbers of poor whites, indicating the poor white support for the NP.[2] Later that year, a wider and deeper display of a growing nationalist consciousness exhibited the centrality of poor whiteism to the Afrikaner cause.

It was 100 years since the Battle of Blood River, a clash between a Voortrekker laager and a numerically superior Zulu army. It was decided to celebrate this centenary with a symbolic ox-wagon trek departing on 8 August 1938 from Cape Town, with one delegation arriving at Pretoria and another at Blood River on 16 December 1938.[3] Initially, two ox-wagons departed from the statue of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town, but when they were met with great enthusiasm by a crowd of 20 000 people at the first stop in Goodwood, the organisers decided to commission another seven ox-wagons to join the trek to the north. Two wagons travelled east, covering the old frontier, before heading north to Blood River, while the rest made their way north to Pretoria. Both delegations were set to reach their destinations on 16 December 1938. What ensued was an atmosphere bordering on mass hysteria. Organising committees

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[1] P. Du Toit, *Verslag van die volkskongres oor die armblankevraagstuk gehou te Kimberley, 2–5 Okt, 1934/ Report of the national conference on the poor white problem held at Kimberley, 2nd to 5th Oct., 1934*, (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1934). For a review of the DRC's response to the Carnegie Report, see R. Vosloo, 'The Dutch Reformed Church and the poor white problem in the wake of the first Carnegie Report (1932): some church-historical and theological observations', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 37, 2 (September 2011), 67-85.

[2] L. Koorts, '"The Black Peril would not exist if it were not for a White Peril that is a hundred times greater": D.F. Malan's Fluidity on Poor Whiteism and Race in the Pre-Apartheid Era, 1912–1939', *South African Historical Journal*, 65, 4 (2013), 572.

[3] The *Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereniging* (Afrikaans Language and Culture Association – ATKV), which represented the cultural interests of about 18 000 Afrikaner railway workers. It was the lifelong dream of the ATKV chairperson Henning Klopper (he was also a founding member of the AB) to organise such a symbolic oxwagon trek. See T.D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and Afrikaner Civil Religion*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1975), 177.

were set up by local DRC congregations in every hamlet, town, and city to welcome the wagons passing through. These gatherings became sites of Afrikaner euphoria: babies were baptised, and young couples married in the shade of the ox-wagons; men grew Voortrekker-esque beards and women donned the iconic bonnet of their pioneer ancestors. Afrikaans and Dutch folksongs were sung in the evenings around campfires. The spirited crowds were also addressed by local and visiting dignitaries, who eulogised the Voortrekkers.[4]

A staple in the speeches delivered next to the travelling ox-wagons was the call for *volkseenheid* (national unity). This ideal was cultivated by an Afrikaner middle-class intelligentsia, overwhelmed by the insecurities and frustration at their inability to make meaningful advances into the English-dominated economy, and constrained in the arena of formal politics.[5] There was, however, a realisation that 'Afrikaner unity' depended on a de-classed struggle. This was reflected in the speeches made along the trek that focussed heavily on reclaiming the poor whites for the *volk*. In his opening address to the Second Trek, the administrator of the Cape Province, J.H. Conradie, called on Afrikaners to focus on 'the great task of the rehabilitation of the poor and the liquidation of poverty'.[6] Conradie sent the wagons on their way with a dual purpose: to honour the Voortrekkers and their descendants, and to bring a message of hope to the poor and discouraged. At the 16 December gathering at Blood River, DF Malan invoked Voortrekker history to drive the message of salvaging poor whites. He told the crowd that Afrikaners had embarked on a 'second Great Trek' to the cities, and once again the *volk* faced the same foes: the 'non-white' and the Briton. Malan lamented the fate of the poor whites in the new urban battlefield: 'Our Blood River lies in the city and our Voortrekkers are our poor people who, under the most pressing circumstances, have to step into the breach in the face of the rolling dark tidal wave for our *volk*.'[7] The past and present were therefore firmly connected within this nationalist framework.

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[4] For descriptive accounts of the *Eeufees* (Centenary Trek), see D.J. Mostert (ed), *Gedenkboek van die ossewaens op die pad van Suid-Afrika, Eeufees: 1838-1938*, (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1940); A.P.J. van Rensburg, 'Die Simboliese Ossewatrek van 1938', *Historia*, 17, (1972), 12-46. More interpretative and analytical works include Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 175-207; A. Grundlingh & H. Sapire, 'From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual? The Changing Fortunes of Great Trek Mythology in an Industrializing South Africa, 1938–1988', *South African Historical Journal*, 21, 1 (1989), 19-38.

[5] Grundlingh & Sapire, 'From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual?', 22.

[6] Ibid, 23

[7] DF Malan, 'Die Groot Beslissing', in S.W. Pienaar & J.J.J. Scholtz (eds.), *Glo in u volk: Dr D.F. Malan as redenaar, 1908-1954*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1964), 116. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ons Bloedrivier lê in die stad en ons Voortrekkers is ons arm mense wat onder die mees knellende omstandighede teenoor die aanrollende donker vloedgolf in die bres moet staan vir ons volk.'

This growing nationalist consciousness was not merely constructed by the middle-class intelligentsia and exported to semi- and non-educated working-class Afrikaners via the celebrated ox-wagons travelling the country. Historians Albert Grundlingh and Hilary Sapire argue that it is a general foundation of nationalist constructions that an emerging middle-class intelligentsia has to draw the masses into a historical narrative. Grundlingh and Sapire, however, underline the importance of understanding why the masses would be open to such a process.[8] The enthusiasm and celebratory spirit of Afrikaners across the country during the ox-wagon centenary indicated that the imagery utilised by the various speakers had a ready appeal. This must be understood within the context of Afrikaner urbanisation and proletarianisation during the 1930s. The rural Afrikaner social order was rapidly disintegrating, while the newly urbanised Afrikaners had little cultural capital to hold onto in their new context. Grundlingh and Sapire concluded that for the Afrikaner masses, 'reanimating the past and fervently embracing that past was a meaningful act only because it had a reassuring significance in the present'.[9] The cultural camaraderie during the ox-wagon centenary enhanced the sense of Afrikaner unity amongst the *volk,* across class and geographic divides. As Dunbar Moodie, who argues that the ox-wagon centenary represented the height of Afrikaner civil religion, explains: 'Afrikaners had learned in their worship at the ox-wagon altars how very much they had in common as Afrikaners.'[10] The success of the Second Trek to enhance Afrikaner working class identification with the *volk*, according to Grundlingh and Sapire, underscored socialism's limited appeal to the Afrikaner proletariat. Socialist-inclined trade unionists had failed to develop a unique socialist culture, whilst their Afrikaner targets arrived in the cities with 'their cultural baggage replete with rural imagery, and nationalistic notions'.[11] This remained largely intact as Afrikaners entered trade unions. These unions' attempts to draw Afrikaners into a broad working-class struggle could not compete with the deep-seated cultural values and the mythologised history reawakened by the Second Trek.

The growing Afrikaner economic movement of the late-1930s, a central part of the Afrikaner nationalist movement, also gained significant momentum after the ox-wagon

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[8] Grundlingh & Sapire, 'From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual?', 24. The authors draw this analysis from seminal works on nationalism by Tom Nairn and Benedict Anderson. See T. Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, (Illinois: Common Ground, 2015); B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006).
[9] Grundlingh & Sapire, 'From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual?', 25.
[10] Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 185.
[11] Grundlingh & Sapire, 'From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual?', 26.

centenary. A month prior to the ox-wagon centenary, the AB and its partner in the finance sector Sanlam, together with its cultural front, the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigingе* (FAK), decided that a *volkskongres* (people's congress) on the economic position of the Afrikaner and how to transform it would be held in October 1939.[12] It was, however, during the 1938 trek that Afrikaner economic consciousness was developed through calls for Afrikaners to take a lead in the financial upliftment of the *volk*. When the ox-wagons stopped in Bloemfontein in October 1938, the notable DRC clergyman, J.D. Kestell, made an emotional appeal for a great *reddingsdaad* (deed of salvation) by which the *volk* would rescue itself from poverty. His powerful declaration that *''n Volk red homself''* (a *volk* rescues itself) became the slogan of the economic movement. The Economic *volkskongres*, convened by the AB-affiliated FAK the following year, signalled a change in strategic focus toward the poor white problem. The focus on charity and protectionism of the 1934 poor white congress made way for ideas such as Afrikaner entrepreneurship and economic mobilisation as a way to root out white poverty. Out of this congress grew a network of organisations that were constituted to facilitate the economic mobilisation of Afrikaners on a multitude of levels. The broad economic strategies of Afrikaner capital were formulated by the *Ekonomiese Instituut* (Economical Institute – EI), while the *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut* (Afrikaans Institute of Commerce – AHI) played an important role in educating and shaping the interests of Afrikaner-businesspeople.[13] The most influential economic organisation, however, was the *Reddingsdaadbond* (RDB). Under the leadership of Nico Diederichs, the organisation focussed on cultural mobilisation, conveying the clear message to Afrikaners that economic prosperity could only be achieved if they were part of the Afrikaner *volk* and its Christian-Nationalist organisations.[14] This, of course, meant the economic uplift of a select group within South African society. By December 1945, the RDB had become a mass movement, with a total membership of 64 771, who were mobilised to invest in Afrikaner business, and participate in Afrikaner economic activity on the basis of their cultural affinity to the *volk*.[15]

The enthusiasm for the ox-wagon centenary reenergised Afrikaner organisations such as the Broederbond and the FAK. It also signalled the start of an important populist phase in

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[12] D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner nationalism 1934-1948*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 107.
[13] *Ibid.*, 148. For a discussion of the rise and role of these institutions and their network, see Ibid, 134-148.
[14] *Ibid.*, 142.
[15] *Ibid.*, 138.

the development of Afrikaner nationalism. Throughout the 1938 trek, the quintessential populist rhetoric of struggle, survival, and salvation were combined to drive a message of Afrikaner alienation from the centres of political and economic power.[16] Early the following year, the *Ossewabrandwag* (Ox-wagon Sentinel – OB) was established to utilise the enduring populist sentiment of the 1938 celebrations to build an Afrikaner nationalist cultural organisation. The OB's populist origins would soon turn into Nazi-sympathising during the Second World War. In 1941, under the leadership of the former administrator of the Orange Free State, Hans van Rensburg, the OB sharpened its focus on establishing a Nationalist-Socialist Afrikaner republic. The *Ossewabrandwag* soon became a mass movement, reaching a membership of 100 000 according to some estimates. Unlike the NP, the OB was opposed to parliamentary politics, and during the war it essentially morphed into a quasi-military organisation.[17]

The outbreak of the Second World War had a greater impact on Afrikaner anticommunists than previous global developments such as the 1917 Revolution. In 1941, the Soviets joined the Western allies against the Axis powers after a German invasion of its territory.[18] By supporting Nazi Germany, the OB bolstered its anticommunist credentials as the communist Soviets were now also their global enemy. DF Malan continued to promote alignment to Western democracy, but he was deeply concerned about Soviet participation in the war. He predicted that the German invasion of the Soviet Union would result in the fall of Germany at the hands of Bolshevik retaliation. This prompted Malan to warn that after the war 'Bolshevism will not only flood Germany, but the entire Europe'.[19] Malan feared that this would resurrect the Soviet Union's pre-war policy of communist expansionism. This was, in Malan's view, a great threat to the world order as communism was 'the destroyer of the foundations of civilisation and of everything the Christian nations deem to be holy'.[20] This was

[16] Grundlingh & Sapire, 'From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual?', 27.
[17] For the most comprehensive study on the OB, see C. Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel: Radical Afrikaner Nationalism and the History of the Ossewabrandwag*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2008).
[18] For analysis on why the Soviet Union entered the war, see E. Mawdsley, 'World War II, Soviet Power and International Communism,' in N. Naimark, S. Pons, S. Quinn-Judge, *The Cambridge History of Communism, Volume II: The Socialist Camp and World Power 1941-1960s*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); D. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).
[19] L. Koorts, *DF Malan and the Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2014), 363.
[20] Koorts, *DF Malan*, 363-4.

rooted in persistent fears about white civilisation's survival in South Africa, which Malan also warned would be in danger if Bolshevism grew stronger after the war.[21]

The groundswell of Afrikaner nationalist sentiment and the revitalisation of organised Afrikanerdom did, however, experience some initial difficulties. OB leader Hans van Rensburg was not convinced that the NP should be the unifying body of Afrikaner nationalism. In some respects, he was influenced by the surge of active support for the OB during the early stages of the war, which he believed would result in a German victory. Van Rensburg publicly claimed that the NP were latecomers to the drive for *volkseenheid*; something, he argued, Broederbond backed organisations such as the FAK had been involved in for some time.[22] The Ossewabrandwag had begun to venture beyond the boundaries of an apparent 'cultural organisation', into the NP's political territory. Malan attacked the OB's strategy of violence, whilst the NP stood behind their conviction that the parliamentary process was the most effective way to gain political power, and thereafter, a republic for Afrikaners. This led to a large-scale exodus of NP members from the OB. In an attempt to regain some leverage, the OB and its sympathisers in the AB convinced the NP to discuss a way forward for *volkseenheid*. This took the form of the *Afrikaner Eenheidskomitee* (AEK – Afrikaner Unity Committee), established in September 1941, which comprised leaders of the NP, Broederbond, and Ossewabrandwag. The OB-AB alliance tried to convince the NP delegates to concentrate all power in the AEK, with the leaders of each organisation sharing power as *volkskleiers* (leaders of the *volk*). Malan and his fellow NP delegates rejected this notion, recognising that the AB and other organisations were siding with the OB and that their proposal would give the OB the most powerful position in Afrikanerdom. They stood by its conviction that Afrikaner leadership should be unified through the party. The OB might have had the character of a mass movement, but the NP had tangible electoral support amongst Afrikaners. AB leaders who were not OB sympathisers thus realised that the NP was the most effective vehicle to ensure the unity of the whole *volk*. They sided with the party, and a purge of OB members from the Broederbond followed.[23] From here, the NP grew from strength to strength as the political home of Afrikaners.

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[21] Koorts, *DF Malan*, 364.
[22] Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel*, 416
[23] Ibid, 423-4

The Broederbond-Ossewabrandwag alliance had failed to sway power toward them, but it had revealed the political ambitions of two leading Afrikaner intellectuals who represented this alliance during the AEK negotiations. They were Nico Diederichs of the RDB and Piet Meyer of OB, both leaders in the Broederbond and individuals who became central to the DRC's anticommunist efforts. Both men were heavily influenced by their studies in Europe in the early 1930s. Diederichs studied in Munich, Cologne, Berlin, and Leiden where he developed into an exponent of neo-Fichtean nationalism before accepting a professoriate in political philosophy at the University of the Orange Free State in 1933.[24] According to the neo-Fichtean notion, human nature is defined in both spiritual and national terms, and the nation is the ultimate and ruling social structure of society.[25] As a result of this, Diederichs strongly opposed the concept of human rights and equality, whilst he also had ties with fascism and was sympathetic to Nazi ideology. As Giliomee explained, Diederichs's views 'pushed the nationalist ideology to its limits'.[26] His ideas were nevertheless popular enough amongst fellow Afrikaner nationalists that he quickly climbed the Afrikaner ranks and in 1938, at the age of thirty-five, he was elected as chairperson of the Broederbond.[27] The following year, he left his academic position in the Free State to head the RDB.[28]

Meyer, who started his undergraduate studies in theology, was at the end of his doctoral studies in philosophy in Amsterdam when Diederichs offered him the joint position as assistant secretary of both the AB and its public front, the FAK in 1936.[29] Meyer, like Diederichs, was a neo-Fichtean, although Moodie argued that by the end of the war, he had fused this intellectual stream with a totalitarian interpretation of Kuyperian notions, rapidly shifting toward Afrikaner National Socialism.[30] This took a more concrete form through his involvement with the OB. The historian Christoph Marx, in his seminal work on the OB, described Meyer as the organisation's most important ideologue. By 1943, Meyer had thrown all of his weight behind the Ossewabrandwag. He resigned as FAK secretary and started

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[24] Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom,*154. O'Meara puts Diederichs at the core of the young Afrikaner intellectuals who returned from Europe in the 1930s, grouping him with the Piet Meyer, Albert Hertzog, and HF Verwoerd as the 'four celebrated doctors.' See, O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 64.
[25] For a full discussion of Diederichs and the neo-Fichtean strand of Afrikaner nationalist thought see Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 154-9.
[26] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of A People*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012, 416.
[27] E.L.P. Stals, Die Broederbond: Die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner-Broederbond 1918-1994, (Johannesburg: Die Afrikanerbond, 2021), 702.
[28] O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 137.
[29] D. Prinsloo, 'Dr Piet Meyer in Johannesburg, 1936-1984,' *Historia*, 32, 1 (May 1987), 44.
[30] Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 230.

running the OB's propaganda efforts. Meyer also left Hertzog's NRT after the leader of the Ossewabrandwag, Hans van Rensburg, asked him to lead the organisation's *Arbeidsfront* – the labour and economic front. The *Arbeidsfront* did not directly organise Afrikaner workers, but attacked class divisions, propagating that 'ties of blood and *volk* come first' in an attempt to unify the workers into the broad nationalist fold.[31] This was short lived however, and by 1944 Meyer's involvement in the Ossewabrandwag withered as the organisation lost momentum at the end of the war and with the growing significance of the NP in Afrikaner politics.[32]

Diederichs and Meyer were thus imbedded in the intellectual and organisational spheres of Afrikaner nationalism by the mid-1940s. They were both deeply opposed to communism, and as mentioned in the first chapter, were early propagators of an anticommunist agenda within the Broederbond. In 1938, Diederichs published *Die Kommunisme: Sy Teorie en Taktiek* (Communism: Its Theory and Tactics) where he set out his view of the ideology's history and theoretical underpinnings.[33] He concluded in the book, which sported a red communist figure proudly smashing a church tower with the symbolic communist hammer on its cover, that communism was anti-Christian and anti-nationalist. For Diederichs, communism advocated the destruction of the existing world order, and was a 'furious satanic charge' against social constructs and institutions such as patriotism, privacy, the family, and religion.[34] Communism was cast as the ultimate evil: 'The spirit of the communist is the spirit of a Lucifer that wants to break and crush everything before it.'[35] His tone resembled that of a

Figure 1: Diederichs' 'Die Kommunisme' (1938) [Communism]

[31] Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel*, 468-9.
[32] P.J. Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie: 'n Persoonlike Rekenskap van Vyftig Jaar Georganiseerde Afrikanerskap*, (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1984), 46.
[33] N. Diederichs, *Die Kommunisme: sy teorie en taktiek*, (Bloemfontein: Nasionale Pers, 1938).
[34] Diederichs, *Die Kommunisme*, 150. Translated from Afrikaans: '… verwoede sataniese stormloop…'
[35] *Ibid.* Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die gees van die kommunis is die gees van 'n Lucifer wat alles voor hom wil verbreek en verpletter.'

moral panic – a particular reaction to perceived attacks to the ideological foundation and social order of society. Communism emerged as a folk devil, or as historians Danielle Dunbar and Sandra Swart described it in the Afrikaner context as a *volk* devil, which described an identified threat that was increasingly stigmatised during a period of moral panic.[36] Diederichs fabricated rather than identified communisms as a moral panic. Communism was not yet generally cast by his nationalist peers as the ultimate 'evil' force threatening the 'good' *volk*. That said, framing communism as an omnipresent evil attacking the existing order implied that the battle against it would require a broad coalition of Afrikaner organisations to fend of this threat on all fronts. The establishment of such an anticommunist organisation was Diederichs' ultimate objective and the thread that underpinned his career in *volkspolitiek*.

Meyer broadly shared Diederichs' views but did not oppose socialism as vehemently as other nationalist reformers in the trade union movement. In his 1944 book, *Die Stryd van die Afrikanerwerker* (The Struggle of the Afrikaner Worker), he argued that socialism and nationalism had for too long fought the twin evils of imperialism and capitalism separately. Meyer believed that nationalism and socialism had largely the same interests, and that the only solution to eradicate the oppression of capitalism, as well as the threat of communism, was the OB's nationalist socialism.[37] This embrace of socialism sharply differed from Afrikaner nationalist labour activists such as the prominent Albert Hertzog and Diederichs, and it certainly challenged the DRC's earlier steadfast disapproval of socialism. By the mid-1940s however, socialism had long been replaced by the all-encompassing notion of the communist threat as the main enemy of Afrikaner society. After his involvement in the *Arbeidsfront,* Meyer realised that the labour movement was not the core front where anticommunism ought to be mobilised. Communism had become a fluid entity within the minds of many Afrikaner intellectuals such Meyer and Diederichs, especially as it was framed as an all-encompassing ideology that attacked every aspect of the *volk* and nation. In 1984, Meyer wrote a memoir reflecting on his role and experiences in organised Afrikanerdom in which he vividly recalled his realisation that the communist peril applied to much more than labour:

> … the communist onslaught on our country extends far beyond the mere intrusion of trade union leadership… From the beginning of [their] organised action in our country, the communists also focused their activities on the non-

[36] D. Dunbar & S. Swart, 'The Devil Rejoiced: *Volk*, Devils and Moral Panic in White South Africa, 1978-1982', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 28, 2 (June 2015), 237-8.
[37] P.J. Meyer, *Die Stryd van die Afrikanerwerker*, (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclesia, 1944).

> white communities [*volksgemeenskappe*] to unite white and non-white workers into one common proletariat. It was a prerequisite for the establishment of a Soviet government of an integrated white-non-white working class in our country.[38]

The perceived communist threat was outgrowing organised labour and started to develop into an evil threatening all sectors of South African life, from Afrikaner unity to the racial order. Diederichs and Meyer were to become central actors in Afrikaner anticommunist thought and activities as this process developed, and the DRC became their platform.

Trading Unions for Unity

The growing influence of the economic movement, and in particular organisations such as RDB, forced the DRC to demonstrate its relevance within a nationalist movement that was gaining momentum. Previous attempts by the church to start a Christian trade union, or at least worker representation, had failed. With the growing influence of the nationalist movement, the DRC realised that it had to reposition itself; 'The *volk* had now come of age,' read a formative report on the church's urban situation, commissioned by the federal council of the DRC in 1944 and published three years later as *Kerk en Stad* (Church and City).[39] This statement reflected the range of new social, economic, and political boundaries being extended by a variety of Afrikaner organisations. The report added that the DRC, as the oldest *volksinstelling* (national institution), should retain some level of co-authority within all spheres of Afrikanerdom, 'without interfering [itself] intimately with everything'.[40] The DRC therefore realised it had to take a step back in some spaces, and trade unionism was one of those.

The DRC's retreat from the organised labour movement had implications for the church's position as an anticommunist institution. Its main position against communism had been its antagonism toward socialist influence among workers through the trade unions during the 1930s and early 1940s. A church synod report in 1946, which was proposed by the Cape

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[38] Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, 21-2. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ek het besef dat die kommunistiese aanslag op ons land baie wye strek as die blote indringing in die leiding van die vakbonde … Die kommuniste het van die begin van geoganiseerde optrede in ons land, hul bedrywighede toegespits ook op die nie-blanke volksgemeenskappe om blanke en nie-blanke werkers tot een gemeenskaplike proletriaat … saam te snoer. Dit was die voorvereiste om 'n Sowjet-regering van 'n geïntegreerde blanke-nie-blanke wekersklas in ons land tot stand te bring.'

[39] J.R. Albertyn, P. du Toit, and H.S. Theron, *Kerk en Stad*, (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclessia, 1947), 371. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die volk het nou egter mondig geword…'

[40] Albertyn, du Toit, and Theron, *Kerk en Stad*, 371. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Sonder om hom intiem in alles te meng …'

DRC and later adopted at a national level, revised the relationship between the DRC and the trade unions. The report reiterated that trade unionism was imported from abroad and therefore had an inherently 'strange taste' for the *volk*. This idea of foreignness was also described as an 'urban' phenomenon that alienated Afrikaner workers who were used to the traditional rural way of life. The trade union system, according to the report, posed a threat to national unity by alienating Afrikaner workers from what was considered unique, and that which was the nation's own – or *volkseie*.[41] This fear was echoed in a study conducted by the DRC's Commission for Current Affairs only a month after the 1946 synod report. This study investigated the class divisions within the Afrikaner community and argued that class, and the formation of classes, was a natural and universal occurrence.[42] A good relationship between the classes was thus seen by the DRC as essential to keeping Afrikaner society united.[43] Both of these documents, accepted at national level and published in the official journal of the DRC for public consumption, focussed on the perceived threat that trade unions, and their emphasis on class, posed to Afrikaner-unity. The Commission for Current Affairs report also joined a chorus of calls within the nationalist movement when it argued that 'substantial *volkseenheid* (national unity) should be the goal of our [the DRC's] pursuit'.[44]

The findings of these two reports illustrated the shift in the DRC's anticommunist discourse away from its downright opposition to socialist trade unionism towards a defensive position against what it perceived as communist. The use of the term 'socialism' was replaced by the exclusive deployment of 'communism', which both reports found to be the main instigator of class friction. This shift toward focussing on communism rather than socialism was likely a product of the Cold War atmosphere. It also coincided with a growing rift between socialist and workers parties in Western Europe and Soviet communism in the wake of the Second World War. In this period, Western socialists developed their own brand of anticommunism as the threat of Soviet imperialism grew.[45] According to the DRC, the Afrikaner community ran the risk of communists exploiting natural class differences in an attempt to generate friction. The rapid urbanisation of the previous two decades had created a challenge for the DRC, which had to reposition itself as a city church focussed on poor whites.

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[41] 'Ons Kerk en die Vakbonde', *Kerkbode*, 22 May 1946, 647.
[42] The report equates economic differences with social class and avoids using Marxist class-terminology.
[43] 'Klasseskeiding in ons Volkslewe,' *Kerkbode*, 19 June 1946, 796.
[44] Ibid, 796-7. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Wesenlike volkseenheid behoort die doelwit te wees van ons strewe.'
[45] M. Gervasoni, 'The misadventures of socialist anticommunism from the end of the war to the collapse of the Berlin Wall', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 22, 1 (2017), 27-42.

With the growth of Afrikaner capital in the 1940s, the DRC was forced to refashion itself as a mediator between the classes. The perceived threat posed by communist-inspired class agitation was not seen as an immediate one – a 1947 church report produced anecdotal evidence of communist influence amongst Afrikaners, but conceded that communist efforts have not yet succeeded on a broad scale.[46] Despite this, the report concluded that precautions had to be put in place to guard against future communist interference.[47] To curb the communist influence on Afrikaner workers, the DRC adopted an approach focussed on moral and social upliftment, abandoning any trade union involvement it had previously attempted. Membership of trade unions was encouraged, provided that doing so honoured the *volkseie* and was compatible with a Christian life and world view, but the DRC's practical involvement in the labour movement diminished. The DRC felt it had sufficient influence within urban areas by the mid-1940s to help rural Afrikaner-migrants to the cities receive employment at Afrikaner establishments, to invest in their careers, tend to their social needs, and to help bind families together. By focussing on these areas, the DRC shifted from a 'negative combating of the *volksvreemde* [foreign] outlook of Communism in the trade unions' to a 'healthier positive expansion of all good forces in the *volkslewe* [life of the *volk*] itself'.[48] The DRC was now central to efforts to morally strengthen the *volk* from within as a way of defending against all communist threats.

Kerk en Stad became a seminal document in setting out the DRC's vision of its future in the cities. The report emphasised and explained the step away from Afrikaner trade unionism even further. After consulting trade union leaders and experts on the issue, the study suggested that the DRC, on all levels, should support Christian-Nationalist trade unions or reform initiatives within unions, such as the *Blanke Werkers Beskermingsbond* (White Workers Protection League – BWB). The report emphasised that the extent of this support should be indirect, as trade unionism was not 'a terrain that is [our] own, and of which [the DRC] do not have adequate expert knowledge of'.[49] The report admitted that Afrikaner-expansion into new frontiers of society meant that the church was not capable of exerting full control over

[46] Albertyn, Du Toit, & Theron, *Kerk en Stad*, 335.
[47] 'Klasseskeiding in ons Volkslewe,' *Kerkbode*, 19 June 1946, 797; 'Ons Kerk en die Vakbonde,' *Kerkbode*, 22 May 1946, 468.
[48] 'Ons Kerk en die Vakbonde,' *Kerkbode*, 22 May 1946, 648. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Dit sal beteken minder negatiewe bekamping van die volksvreemde lewensbeskouing van Kommunisme in die vakbonde en meer die gesonde positiewe uitbouing van alle goeie kragte in die volkslewe self.'
[49] Albertyn, Du Toit, & Theron, *Kerk en Stad*, 313. Translated from Afrikaans : '… 'n terrein wat nie sy eie is nie, en waarvan hy nie genoegsame vakkenis dra nie.'

Afrikaner society.[50] The fact that organisations such as the RDB with its mass appeal had already succeeded in this area without overt help from the DRC prompted the report to conclude that 'the church can initiate and inspire, but should not control'.[51] The DRC's *volkskerk* tradition therefore shifted from tending to the spiritual *and* material needs of the Afrikaners due to the success of organisations such as the RDB through economic mobilisation and entrepreneurship on the terrain of *volkspolitiek* (*volk* politics). The church's influence on its congregants' spiritual lives translated into the moral resilience of Afrikaners in the cities, which became the primary focus of the DRC.

Institutionalising DRC Anticommunism

By the mid-1940s, shifts in the DRC's approach to communism converged with the agendas of ambitious Afrikaner nationalists, resulting in the establishment of an organised anticommunist front. Afrikaner nationalist anxieties in the Transvaal over apparent communist influences on the labour front had spread to DRC congregations across the country. By 1940, every DRC synod expressed their concern over the effects of 'materialistic and atheistic communism' on the Rand.[52] Another growing concern for the DRC was the perceived threat communism posed to race relations. In 1940, the Cape DRC, the largest and most influential of the synods, acknowledged the situation on labour front, but also warned that the coloured and black population was 'fertile ground for the seeds of communist propaganda'.[53] The DRC in the Transvaal and the Free State shared this sentiment, and in 1943 the church's federal council – the *Raad van Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerke* – decided to 'in all earnest point out to the Government the activities of the Communists, who, with newspaper articles, circulars, public assemblies and secret organizations, incite the natives against the white population'.[54] What specifically triggered this racial anxiety within church circles is difficult to trace. It was true that the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) had gradually begun to target black communities in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but as historian Tom Lodge explained, the party was still riddled with debates and was far from a full scaled or coordinated force in black

[50] *Ibid.*, 371.
[51] *Ibid.*, 313. Tranlated from Afrikaans : 'Die Kerk kan insinieer en inspireer maar moe nie beheer nie.'
[52] *Acts of the Cape Synod*, 1945, 184.
[53] *Acts of the Cape Synod*, 1940, 327; Translated from Afrikaans: '… 'n vrugbare akker is vir die saad van kommunistiese propaganda.'
[54] *Acts of the Raad van Kerke*, 1943, 90; Translated from Afrikaans: '…in alle erns die Regering te wys op die bedrywighede van die Kommuniste, wat met koerantartikels, sirkulêres, publieke vergaderings en geheime organisasies die naturelle opsweep teen die blanke bevolking …'

society at this stage.[55] It is possible that the DRC synods were informed by white missionaries who had picked up on the gradual increase in communist gatherings and literature distributed in black communities. Nevertheless, the DRC failed to convince the government of its anticommunist conviction. Delegations, one from the Cape DRC and another from the federal council, visited the minister of justice Colin Steyn in this regard. According to a church report, both delegations were warmly received by the minister, but their grievances were ultimately ignored, and nothing came from their visits.[56]

The initial failure to petition the government to act against communist agitation forced the DRC to reconsider its strategy. In 1945, the church's federal council accepted a resolution to collaborate with other Afrikaner organisations to educate the *volk* on the dangers of communism. In the first instance, it was envisioned that this would strengthen the *volk's* resilience, as well as create a groundswell of support for the anticommunist cause to convince the state to intervene.[57] The resolution was based on a report on two 'strange ideologies in our *volkslewe* [nation life]' which posed 'a serious threat for the Church and Christianity': communism and national socialism.[58] Both were strongly condemned, the former for its 'atheistic materialism', and the latter for deifying the nation. The fact that these two ideologies were paired was telling. The spike in Afrikaner Nazism during the WWII was simultaneously condemned as a threat to a core pillar of Afrikaner nationalism, its Calvinist Christianity, and was equated with the purportedly looming communist peril. The DRC's response to the 'strange ideologies' further revealed the anticommunist position of the church at the time. For the DRC, as Moodie explained, communist ideology represented 'atheistic materialism' which disregarded religion and placed little emphasis on an individual's non-material needs. The clear denouncement of defying the nation also distanced the DRC from neo-Fichtean notions that communism represented 'atomic individualism', which stood in contrast to the supremacy of the nation.[59] And yet, the report relied heavily on the work of Nico Diederichs, the most prominent neo-Fichtean intellectual at the time, to conceptualise and explain communism. His 1938 book *Die Kommunisme* stood out as the authoritative literature in Afrikaans on the topic,

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[55] T. Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party, 1921-2021*, (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2021), 225-235.
[56] *Acts of the Cape Synod*, 1945, 184-5.
[57] *Acts of the Raad van Kerke*, 1945, 40.
[58] *Ibid.*, 33; Translated from Afrikaans: 'Vreemde ideologieë in ons volkslewe'; '… 'n ernstige bedreiging vir Kerk en Christendom inhou.'
[59] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 251.

and Diederichs was acknowledged in church circles as a leading intellectual on communism because of his book.[60] That said, Diederichs did not only write on communism, but he actively advocated within Afrikaner nationalist circles for it to be taken as a serious threat. The DRC's new strategy of cooperation would soon converge with Diederichs' anticommunist ambitions and made him the central figure in the institutionalisation of the church's anticommunism.

Diederichs was one of the first to alert the AB's national congress, the organisations highest policy making body, in 1937 that communism had become a primary threat for *volkseenheid* on the labour front.[61] As discussed in the previous chapter, when the AB merely noted this without action Diederichs decided to utilise the anti-Jewish zeitgeist of 1938 to place anticommunism higher on the organisations agenda with little tangible success. He, however, remained determined to establish an Afrikaner organisation to curb communist influences in South Africa and the end of the Second World War provided an opportunity for Diederichs to resume this pursuit. Afrikaner nationalists argued that the Soviets were now in an advantageous position to spread communism across Europe from where it would flow into South Africa.[62] The Soviets had saw its military success during the war as a validation of the social, state, and economic systems that Soviet communism propagated, which convinced them to continue an expansionist policy, which had been put on hold during the war.[63] Afrikaner nationalists could not influence the situation in Europe, and needed a way to pre-emptively fortify South African society against communism. It was against this backdrop that Diederichs echoed his earlier proposal to establish a grand anticommunist organisation at the 1945 Bondsraad, the highest policy making body of the AB. He was originally asked to present a report reflecting on the findings of an internal commission on communism. This commission never convened however, and Diederichs proceeded to present his own report. He explained that rising communism, referring to the post-war situation in Europe, was a growing threat for the Christian character of the Afrikaner *volk* and for the survival of white civilisation in South Africa. The report concluded with resolutions which called for the both the state and the *volk* to actively involve itself in a battle against communism. On its part, the state was encouraged to ban the CPSA,

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[60] Diederichs, *Die Kommunisme*; *Acts of the Cape Synod*, 1940, 22; University of the Free State, Archive for Contemporary Affairs, Nico Diederichs Collection – PV 546 (hereafter NDC), 130, 1/K10/2, Correspondence with BJ Odendaal, JD Cilliers, and JF Mentz.
[61] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 130.
[62] W. Botes, 'Politieke persepsie: skaduwees, eggo's of werklikheid – 'n ontleding van Suid-Afrika se persepsies van die kommunistiese bedreiging,' *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 16, 1 (1989), 48.
[63] Mawdsley, 'World War II, Soviet Power and International Communism', 32-35.

and all activities associated with communism, while also establishing an economic system which advanced Afrikaner interests, especially that of the workers. It was further recommended that funding should be made available by the AB for continuous research into the threat of communism, which should then be distributed to the *volk* through the media and church.[64] These resolutions were accepted by the Bondsraad, and Diederichs was requested to take the lead on behalf of the Broederbond. His RDB was also lobbied to establish a committee to develop, in conjunction with ecclesiastical bodies, a way forward for coordinated anticommunist action.[65] Diederichs, who had long agitated for an Afrikaner anticommunist programme, had now organisational backing to pursue his ambitions.

In 1946, the DRC's determination to have communism outlawed converged with Diederichs' ambitions for a specifically anticommunist organisation. There had long been calls within the DRC to distribute a pamphlet to its members informing them about the dangers of communism and Diederichs was in search of a national channel to distribute anticommunism information.[66] This resulted in an official request from the Free State DRC, with some goading from the Broederbond, for Diederichs to write a 'a concise, sober, and scientific breakdown of communism and its irreconcilability with Christianity' to distribute amongst their congregants.[67] In February 1946, the Free State Synodical Commission for the Combat against Social Evils published, and fully endorsed, Diederichs' pamphlet *Wat die Kommunisme Werklik Is* (What Communism Really Is). Diederichs's analysis of communism, which was loosely based on his book published a decade earlier, citing the ideology's atheistic and materialistic disregard for the spiritual nature of humans in direct opposition to the Christian outlook of the *volk*.[68] Diederichs explained that communism framed itself as merely an economic theory, but that this was a façade. Communism was, in reality, a total ideology that affected 'all sides of reality and human existence'.[69] In other words, Diederichs argued that communism had a grand vision of society, where all of its constituent parts were controlled. This led Diederichs to publicly reiterate his call for communism to be fought on all fronts.[70]

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[64] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 231-2.
[65] Ibid, 232.
[66] *Acts of the Cape Synod*, 1940, 7, 22, 41; *Acts of the Raad van Kerke*, 1943, 90.
[67] N. Diederichs, *Wat die Kommunisme Werklik is*, (Sinodale Kommissie vir die Bestryding van Maatskaplike Euwels, Ned. Geref. Kerk in die O.V.S.), 2; Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 232. Translated from Afrikaans: '… 'n saaklike, nugtere en wetenskaplike uiteensetting van die Kommunisme en sy oversoenbaarheid met die Christendom …'
[68] Diederichs, *Wat die Kommunisme* Werklik *is*, 5-6.
[69] Ibid, 6. Translated from Afrikaans: '… op alle sye van die werklikehid en die menslike bestaan.'
[70] Diederichs, *Wat die Kommunisme Werklik is,* 8.

Historian Ernst Stals, in an official history of the Broederbond, highlighted that the AB's conviction that combatting communism was closely related with defending and promoting a Christian worldview was what drove the cooperation between Diederichs and the church.[71] While this was certainly the case, one cannot ignore the practical reasons behind this cooperation. Diederichs, as the central anticommunist figure of the time, had limited reach through Broederbond channels. DRC congregations spanned the entire country and encompassed the majority of the *volk*. His commissioned pamphlet was thus widely distributed, especially in the north, with 30,000 copies sent to congregations all over the Free State – some of which even reached Rhodesia – and 8,000 in the Transvaal.[72] The DRC congregation of Upington, a rural town in the northernmost part of the Cape Province, sent a request for 300 copies, highlighting the widespread interest in the communist threat, even in far-flung rural areas.[73] As the *volkskerk*, the DRC furthermore provided a moral legitimacy to anticommunism in the eyes of Afrikaners, whilst Diederichs provided the church with the expertise which bolstered its own anticommunist legitimacy.

Following the publication and distribution of the pamphlet, the Diederichs-DRC anticommunist coalition began to take shape. In October 1946, a one-day conference – the *Kerklike Kongres insake Kommunisme* (Church Congress on Communism) – was held in Pretoria. The roots of this congress were in the *Sinodale Kommissie vir Openbare Sedelikheid* (Synodal Commission for Public Morality) of the Transvaal DRC, but it was organised in conjunction with the other Afrikaans sister churches.[74] Judging by which church bodies were harnessed to inform congregations about the congress, it was clear that the issue of communism was perceived as a matter of the social and moral wellbeing of society: in Natal the *Euwelskommisie* (Social Evils Commission), in the Cape the *Kommissie vir Waaksaamheid en Bestryding van Sosiale Euwels* (Commission for Vigilance and Combat of Social Evils), and then the Transvaal's *Kommissie vir Openbare Sedelikheid* (Commission for Public Morality).[75]

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[71] Stals, *Die Broedebond*, 232.
[72] NDC, 130, 1/K10/2, SJ Naudé – N Diederichs, 7 May 1946.
[73] NDC, 130, 1/K10/3, DW van Rensburg – N Diederichs, 12 October 1946.
[74] A similar congress was planned by the Cape DRC for December 1946, however due to little interest, the *Waaksaamheidskomitee teen Sosiale Euwels* (Vigilance Committee against Social Evils) cancelled it. 'Offisieel: NG Kerk van die Kaap,' *Kerkbode*, 23 October 1946, 796; 'Offisieel: NG Kerk van die Kaap,' *Kerkbode*, 13 November 1946, 957.
[75] 'Offisieel: NG Kerk van Natal,' *Kerkbode*, 18 September 1946, 565; 'Offisieel: NG Kerk van die Kaap,' *Kerkbode*, 4 September 1946, 473.

An estimated 539 delegates from all over the country, and even some from neighbouring Rhodesia, representing congregations, women's organisations, and other Christian organisations of the three sister churches filled the synod hall in Pretoria on Wednesday, October 9th, 1946. The chair of proceedings, CB Brink, who was at the time vice chair of the Transvaal DRC, opened by stating: 'It appears that our Christian public has now became aware of what stands at its door if there is no safeguarding with great seriousness and a united front'.[76] The first speaker, a minister of the Dutch Re-formed Church (NHK) W. Huyzers, commented on the vehement hostility of communists towards religion as illustrated by Christian persecution in Russia after the 1917 revolution. Huyzer continued to cast communism as the utmost evil in the world, concluding that communism was a 'revelation of the satanic force of darkness' which the broad church had always fought against as the defender of Christianity across the world.[77] In the following speech, Nico Diederichs persisted in using the Soviet Union as an example of the threat communism posed to South Africa. According to Diederichs, the loss of private ownership, the dictatorial rule of a vanguard, the oppression of individual rights, and state censorship in the Soviet Union were all things that awaited South Africa if no immediate action was taken. Diederichs ended his speech with a call that 'all communist agitators [in South Africa] should be banned to Russia,' which was reportedly met with thunderous applause.[78]

In his address to the congress, Diederichs also mentioned the threat of the communists' call for a Native Republic in South Africa. He declared that the CPSA and the African National Congress (ANC), which, according to him were under communist influence, were taking the message of a Native Republic forward on a political front.[79] The congress, however, heard from two missionaries with purported knowledge of communism's influence within the black community who highlighted variations in the ideology's potency among the rural and urban African populations. CL Brink, responsible for the rural context, reported that it was Westernised black people who did not adopt Christianity that were the most susceptible to communist influence, not the traditional or Christian members of the black community. In

[76] A.M. Meiring, 'Landskongres van Christelike Kerke oor Kommunisme', *Kerkbode*, 30 October 1946, 849. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Dit lyk of ons christelike publiek hom nou bewus geword het van wat hom voor die deur staan as daar nie met groot erns en met vernigde front gewaak word nie.'
[77] *Ibid.*, 849. Translated from Afrikaans: '… openbaring van die sataniese mag van die duisternis …'
[78] *Ibid.*, 850. Translated from Afrikaans: '… alle kommunsitiese agitators na Rusland verban moet word.'
[79] N. Diederichs, *Die Kommunisme (Ekonomies-politieke aspek)*, (Johannesburg: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.) 12.

contrast, SF Skeen told the crowd that communism received broad informal support among urban Africans, with an estimated 90% of black urbanites subscribing to the ideology in some form, according to his anecdotal research. Skeen added that this sentiment had not yet been mobilised and lacked an organisational base, although he did warn that 'indescribable scenes of violence' would follow if it was not combatted.[80] Both missionaries proposed intensified evangelisation as an antidote to communist influence within black communities.[81] The last two speakers, although prominent in stature, were allotted the shortest sessions at the congress. Afrikaner nationalist HF Verwoerd, then editor of *Die Transvaler*, the nationalist daily newspaper in the north, reported on the extent of communist influence in the media. He promptly concluded that of all the pamphlets and newspapers that the communists spread in South Africa, such as *Freedom*, *The Workers Voice*, *Youth in Revolt*, *Socialist Action*, and *Soviet Life*, none have seen any success. Jan de Klerk, head of the BWB, followed with a brief overview of Afrikaners and trade unions. He emphasised that the communists in the trade unions were intentionally discrediting the church.[82]

The *Kerklike Kongres insake Kommunisme* (Church Congress on Communism) strongly condemned communism as 'a revolutionary, anti-religious, and dangerous ideology', which should be fought on all fronts by Christians.[83] Three strands of the communist 'threat' can be identified throughout the congress. In the first instance, communists allegedly desired global influence, and thus posed an international threat to Western civilisation. Within the South African context, the communist threat purportedly came from its targeting of the black community to join its revolution, which, it was feared, could end the dominance and even existence of the Afrikaner *volk*. Lastly, and on a theological level, the congress believed that communism set out to destroy Christianity. The majority of the speakers noted that the danger was imminent, but not yet a reality. The chair boldly described the situation as a 'crisis period in which the world operates,' where the threat of communism was 'knocking ever so hard on the door of South Africa'.[84] The DRC was now set to take up its place in the fight against communism, not just as the *volkskerk* protecting the Afrikaners, but also in global opposition

[80] A.M. Meiring, 'Landskongres van Christelike Kerke oor Kommunisme, II', *Kerkbode*, 13 November 1946, 946. Translated from Afrikaans: '… onberskryflike tonele van geweld …'
[81] *Ibid.*, 946-7.
[82] *Ibid.*, 947.
[83] *Ibid.*, 967. Translated from Afrikaans: '… 'n rewolusionêre, anti-godsdienste en gevaarlike lewensbeskouing…'
[84] A.M. Meiring, 'Landskongres van Christelike Kerke oor Kommunisme', *Kerkbode*, 30 October 1946, 849. Translated from Afrikaans: '… krisistyd waarin die wêreld verkeer, en van die steeds harder geklop aan die deur van Suid-Afrika.'

to this 'dangerous' ideology which was believed to threaten global stability and the existence of Christianity. To achieve this, the congress requested the establishment of a permanent commission to coordinate anti-communist efforts. As a result, the *Antikommunistiese Aksie-kommissie* (Anticommunist Action Commission), or Antikom, was created. This ushered in a new era of institutionalised and centralised anticommunism that would carry the DRC, and in some instances, Afrikaner efforts more broadly, in opposing communism. The 1946 congress thus represents a critical turning point in the DRC's role in shaping anticommunism in twentieth century South Africa.

Antikom itself was an assembly of anticommunists from an array of important Afrikaner nationalist organisations. Representatives of the three sister churches represented the majority of the executive, of which the DRC was numerically dominant – this also meant that the DRC had the greatest influence.[85] However, the initiative to establish an anticommunist organisation was set by Diederichs. His long-time advocacy for such a body, together with his anticommunist intellectual clout within Afrikaner circles, led to his election as chair of Antikom at its inception. This was a personal achievement for Diederichs, but Antikom was also the embodiment of Afrikaner nationalist unity and he was joined on the executive by old NRT comrade Piet Meyer of the Ossewabrandwag and one-time labour reformer Jan de Klerk of the BWB – all of these men were also leaders in the AB.[86] As founding members of Antikom, these men enjoyed lifelong membership of its executive, safeguarding this newly established anticommunist front from deviating from an Afrikaner nationalist anticommunist agenda in the future.

The presence of the Broederbond in the establishment of Antikom cannot be overlooked. Scholars such as O'Meara have tended to place a lot of emphasis on the Broederbond as a guiding force behind most of the Afrikaner organisations and strategies at the time. However, this somewhat overplays the power of the organisation during the 1930s and 1940s and ignored the personal agendas and ambitions of the individuals involved.[87] The

[85] NDC, 130, 1/K10/1, 'Aanhegsel by Notule van 17 Feb. 1949: Konstitusie van die Antikommunistiese Aksie-Kommissie (Antikom.)', 2.
[86] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 255-6.
[87] For instance, O'Meara argues that the Broederbond was the main driving force behind labour initiatives in the 1930s and 1940s because the individuals involved were leaders of the AB. The organisation's most recent official history, however, concedes that it was individuals such as Hertzog, Diederichs, and Meyer who drove these initiatives and that the AB's executive committee, of which all three men were members, endorsed their actions without involving the organisation in their strategy or objectives. See O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 78-96 and Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 128-131.

overlap between members of the Antikom executive and that of the leaders in the Broederbond should not be interpreted in a simplified manner. As argued above, Antikom was the product of the DRC's shifting focus on communism and the longstanding ambitions of Diederichs who utilised organisations and networks at his expense. Rather than a coordinated initiative of the Broederbond, it was a situation where anticommunism became a point of convergence for an array of Afrikaner nationalists Moodie's emphasises how the main Afrikaner intellectual strands were unified in anticommunism, and the Antikom council embodied this. For Diederichs and Meyer, the neo-Fichtean intellectuals on the council, communism represented 'atomic individualism', which stood in contrast to the supremacy of the nation as a collective. The presence of Jan de Klerk and *Gereformeerde Kerk* (GK) ministers on the council meant that it also had a strong Kuyperian component who regarded communism as an attempt to transcend the separate, God-ordained spheres of authority laid down in the order of creation. The largest contingent on the council was the *volkskerk* oriented DRC ministers to whom communist ideology represented 'atheistic materialism' which disregarded religion and placed little emphasis on an individual's non-material needs.[88] To all these nationalists, communism represented the force behind black resistance to segregationist policies, Afrikaner class divisions, and Soviet world domination.[89]

Organised anticommunism was, however, not merely a site for unifying different sections of Afrikaner nationalism but had a practical purpose as well. The centrality of Diederichs in the RDB placed Antikom in close proximity to the economic movement. This movement had become a dominant force in the rising tide of Afrikaner nationalism by the mid-1940s. Its leadership realised, however, that a cultural and ideological offensive was crucial in creating a favourable economic consciousness among the *volk* to mobilise and centralise Afrikaner capital. This meant that Afrikaners of all classes developed an economic consciousness through various types of organisations which would structure Afrikaner life and activities around new Christian-Nationalist values.[90] Antikom became central to the grand scheme of aligning the *volk* culturally in the values of the economic movement. Its function within this scheme was indirectly to secure the moral legitimacy of the economic movement,

[88] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 251.
[89] Van Deventer & Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism, 1922–1941', 66.
[90] O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 134.

and to directly create the moral conditions to invalidate 'strange' ideological perspectives within the volk – the latter would become the lasting legacy of Antikom.

Antikom's core objective was to promote 'the Christian doctrine and life as proclaimed by the three Afrikaans churches as the mightiest bulwark against the communist ideology'.[91] It set out to protect Afrikaners against the purported evils of communism by strengthening the *volk*'s social and moral resilience through distributing literature, holding seminars, and lobbying the state to offer protection against foreign communist influences. A secondary, and far less successful mission was to promote Christian-Nationalist views amongst black and coloured South Africans to convince them of the merits of apartheid – that it was the best way to secure racial harmony and development in South Africa.[92] Under Diederichs's leadership, Antikom got off to a slow start, initially focussing on three main activities. The first of these was to produce and disseminate anticommunist material among the black population, which was deemed an immediate priority. Diederichs had been contacted by some DRC missionaries – one from the Transkei and the other from the Free State – reporting that some communist 'infiltration' within the rural black population had disrupted the relationship between black workers and white farmers. Other DRC missionaries emphasised the need to create literature in isiZulu and isiXhosa to disseminate information in rural gin communities as a preventative measure against any future spread of communism beyond urban areas. These missionaries were eager to write this literature for Antikom, but according to Diederichs and Antikom's secretary, Dan de Beer, the standard of the proposed work was poor, which halted the publishing process.[93] Efforts to produce similar literature for the white populace were also met with little success. Writers who were invited to produce informative brochures on communism failed to keep up with given deadlines, or simply did not send anything to Antikom.[94] The publishing and distribution of anticommunist information might have been a priority for Antikom, but they were largely unsuccessful during the early years of the commission.

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[91] NDC, 130, 1/K10/1, 'Aanhegsel by Notule van 17 Feb. 1949: Konstitusie van die Antikommunistiese Aksie-Kommissie (Antikom.)', 2. Translated from Afrikaans: '… Christielike leer en lewe soos verkondig deur die drie Afrikaanse kerke, as die magtigste bolwerk teen die kommunistiese lewensbeskouing.'
[92] P.B. van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1905-1975*, (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1988), 263.
[93] NDC, 130, 1/K10/3, D.F.B. de Beer – N. Diederichs, 30 March 1949; N. Diederichs – D.F.B de Beer, 27 April 1949.
[94] NDC, 130, 1/K10/1, 'Notule van 17 Feb. 1949', 1-2.

A second area of Antikom's work in the 1940s focussed on establishing the organisation's financial viability. By the end of 1948, Antikom reported a profit of £609.2.9, or about R160 000 in today's value.[95] Literature sales constituted a miniscule part of the organisation's income, largely because of the slow pace of publication. The profit resulted from conservative spending and strong financial support from the sister churches, with the lion's share coming from the DRC which was responsible for two thirds of all Antikom income.[96] This strong financial position was the basis for Antikom's third core activity in its early years; the financial assistance of endeavours already undertaken by organisations affiliated to Diederichs. These endeavours were mainly based on the remnants of the reformist efforts of the 1930s and early 1940s. Antikom, through Diederichs' facilitation, helped sponsor two black men who were instructed by the RDB to disseminate anticommunist propaganda amongst black workers. One of these men, Eddie Domingo, was also part of the *Arbeidsfront* (the OB's labour front) anticommunist efforts to infiltrate trade unions.[97] Such efforts to spread anticommunist propaganda were, however, broadly ineffective.

Diederichs stepped down from his post as chairperson of Antikom early in 1949, following his election to parliament in 1948 as member of the newly instated NP government. He had been thus moved away from so-called *volkspolitiek* and entered the corridors of formal political power. Diederichs stayed on as part of the Antikom executive and was succeeded by CB Brink, vice chair of the Transvaal DRC and member of the Broederbond's executive committee.[98] The establishment of an organisation like Antikom had long been Diederichs' dream. That said, his focus on the economic movement, especially his leadership of the RDB, meant that he lacked the capacity to lead Antikom to become a great all-encompassing anticommunist organisation. The most significant aspect of Antikom's formation was that anticommunism had now been institutionalised within Afrikanerdom, but specifically within the DRC. The church had thus now become inseparable from Afrikaner anticommunism.

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[95] Thanks to Johan Fourie from the department of economics at Stellenbosch University for his assistance with this calculation.
[96] NDC, 130, 1/K10/1, 'Notule van 17 Feb. 1949', 2.
[97] Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, 24.
[98] NDC, 130, 1/K10/3, DFB de Beer – N. Diederichs, 30 March 1949; Brink facilitated financial support from Antikom to the failing BWB. At this stage Brink was BWB chairperson, with both Diederichs and Antikom secretary, Dan de Beer, serving on its executive. The BWB seemed to have run into financial troubles. On one of the BWB's last meetings, the RDB, the DRC's Armsorgraad, and Antikom offered to cover unpaid debt before the BWB 'quietly sank from view' not long after. NDC, 1/B14/1, 'Vergadering van die BWBB', 6 August 1949; O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 87.

Fusing racial anxieties and communist threats

Antikom's struggles to expand its national anticommunist efforts in its early years may have been because the central political actor within Afrikaner politics, the NP, had incorporated it into their platform.[99] The threat of communism became a key feature of political discourse in the run up to the election in 1948. This election was a pivotal moment in the history of race relations in South Africa. Different strands of nationalist thinking on race were incorporated into the NP's racial policy of apartheid. Influx control and autonomous reserves for black Africans, disenfranchisement and urban segregation of the coloured community, and the repatriation of Indians were key aspects to the policy. Race played a central role in the NP's leader DF Malan's election manifesto, but it was intertwined with the threat of communism. One of the fundamental questions Malan urged voters to consider was:

> Will the voracious and all devastating Communistic cancer be stopped, or will it be allowed to further undermine our freedom, our religion, our own South African nationhood, our white society's [*blankedom*] existence, our honourable tradition, and our racial and civil peace?[100]

Communism was presented as posing a threat to all spheres of Afrikaner life. Malan accused the UP government of allowing 'communist agitators' to influence the black populace against white domination. Malan continued to discredit Smuts's party as acting 'in conflict with the true interests of SA' by protecting 'our most dangerous enemy, Communism'.[101] The manifesto invoked the deepest red and black peril rhetoric by arguing that a UP victory would pave the way to a majority ruled communist South Africa: 'We [the NP] are willing to declare that if Stalin wants to build a unified non-white front against the whites in SA, he will find no better tool than that of the Smuts-Hofmeyr government'.[102]

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[99] Stals, for instance, argues that the Broederbond's interest in communism spiked in 1946, but failed to maintain momentum because the election of the NP in 1948 meant that the state would tend to the matter. See, Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 490.

[100] Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch University Library, Document Centre, D.F. Malan collection (hereafter DFM), 1/1/2390, D.F. Malan, 'Verkiesingsmanifes 1948, 20 April 1948', 2. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Sal die voortvretende en alles verwoestende Kommunstiese kanker gekeer word of nog verder toegelaat word om ons vryheid, ons godsdiens, ons eie Suid Afrikaanse nasieskap, ons blankedom se bestaan, ons rasse- en burgerlike vrede te ondermyn?'

[101] DFM, 1/1/2390, D.F. Malan, 'Verkiesingsmanifes 1948, 20 April 1948', 25.

[102] *Ibid.*, 5. Translated from Afrikaans: '… is ons bereid om te verklaar dat as Stalin 'n verenigde nie-blanke front teen die blankes in SA wil opbou, hy daarvoor geen beter werktuig sal kan vind as die Smuts-Hofmeyr regereing nie…'

The ruling UP government was thus presented by the NP as a threat to the future of white South Africa because of its perceived association with communists. The NP, in contrast, portrayed itself as the party of anticommunism. Malan made anticommunist action a fundamental element of the NP's election resolutions. He assured the electorate that the NP would rid the state and public services of communists and their influence, forbid immigrants entering from communist countries, deport 'strangers' who committed communist activities, disband the Communist Party, and take strict actions against communist agitators.[103] These election promises were consistent with DRC resolutions that were passed prior to the election. More specifically, they echoed the 1946 congress' rousing applause following Diederichs's call for communist agitators to be banished to Russia. The 1946 conference on communism had decided to petition the government 'to declare Communism and related organisations illegal', and added that the authorities should ensure that no communist-minded immigrant entered the country.[104] The *Kerk en Stad* report of 1947 had also advised that the DRC should campaign for laws against communism.[105] The striking similarities between the Party and church's call to action are a testament to the unifying force that anticommunism had become in the late 1940s. The DRC's strident call to outlaw communism was particularly effective in that it gave moral legitimacy to the political and public discourse on the topic. Any laws passed against communism would thus be a moral act, and not merely an oppressive one.

The DRC, in turn, fused the NP's apartheid policy – which it fully supported – with its own brand of anticommunism. A fundamental part of the DRC's concern with communism was its impact on black and coloured communities. The two missionaries, Brink and Skeen, who spoke at the 1946 conference on communism implied that there was cause for concern, albeit precautionary, that communists were targeting both rural and urban black and coloured populations. One Free State missionary, BJ Odendaal, bluntly claimed that after the war, black people could say, '*Baas* (Master) Stalin won and they will put the white man in his place now'.[106] For DRC clergymen, communism posed a threat to the 'healthy' paternalistic relationship that white society had developed in relation to the black and coloured populace which would consequently lead to the downfall of Christianity. It did not occur to DRC

[103] DFM, 1/1/2390, D.F. Malan, 'Verkiesingsmanifes 1948, 20 April 1948', 25.
[104] A. M. Meiring, 'Landskongres van Christelike Kerke oor Kommunisme, II', Kerkbode, 13 November 1946, 947.
[105] Albertyn, Du Toit, & Theron, *Kerk en Stad*, 391.
[106] NDC, 130, 1/K10/4, B.J. Odendaal – N. Diederichs, 29 June 1945.

clergymen that black and coloured dissent came from a valid dissatisfaction with the status quo. Odendaal underscored that communism was to blame for the 'dissatisfied ingredient in our society which believes they [black and coloured people] will get something they never will. They become anti-white and become a threat to society which will lead to great clashes, which will only lead to the downfall of the non-whites'.[107] In essence, the DRC clergy argued that communism, and any clashes that emanated from it, were not in the interest of black and coloured communities. Within the anticommunist atmosphere which white South Africa had created, associating black and coloured grievances with communism became a way of discrediting genuine dissent, and justified any 'necessary' response.

The DRC identified two main instruments that were crucial to fighting perceived communist influence among black and coloured communities, one of which was evangelism. As Odendaal claimed, 'communism cannot exist in an evangelised and satisfied *volk*'.[108] According to the church however, the most important instrument was the implementation of apartheid. The DRC's position on apartheid, and more specifically, separate development, was explained to the public in what appears to have been an official statement published in *Die Burger* on 7 April 1950.[109] The DRC feared that the supposed communist principle of *gelykstelling*, or social levelling between races, would only have one result: 'non-white' dominance over the white minority. This would allegedly cause the 'expulsion of white civilization from South Africa, which will not only be to the detriment of the white peoples, but also to the detriment of the indigenous races of our country'.[110]

While tying apartheid and anticommunism together, the DRC implied that not only white survival, but white dominance had to be secured for the well-being of all races in South Africa. Communism, with its doctrine of equality, was believed to undermine this proposed

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[107] NDC, 130, 1/K10/2, B.J. Odendaal, 'Kommunisme onder die Gekleurde Bevolking in Suid-Afrika', August 1945.
[108] *Ibid.* Translated from Afrikaans: 'By 'n geëvangeliseerde en tevrede volk kan Kommunisme nie bestaan nie.'
[109] Shortly after a seminal DRC conference on the 'native question' in 1950, this article appeared in *Die Burger* with no author. It seemed to be a reworked version of the speech on communism delivered by Nico Diederichs at the conference. However, the title of the article, 'Apartheid is the only guarantee: church's warning against communism', gave the impression that its content was an official church statement. The conferences resolutions, which included Diedeichs notions of communism, were however accepted as part of the DRC's missionary policy and one could therefore view this article as a version of the church's official sentiment towards anticommunism and apartheid.
[110] 'Apartheidsbeleid is Enigste Waarborg,' *Die Burger* 7 April 1950, 2. Translated from Afrikaans: '… verdrywing van die blanke beskawing uit Suid-Afrika wat nie net tot nadeel van die blanke volke sal wees nie, maar ook tot nadeel van die inboorlingrasse van ons land …'

paternalistic equilibrium. White dominance was posed as the only option to protect black people against communism, which, according to the article, would cause a new colonialism under Soviet rule. The eradication of white dominance would be 'the great moment for him [the communist] in the objective to bring South Africa under the salvation of Russia'.[111] Black people were framed as weak and vulnerable to the communist onslaught. Separate development, where different races could 'rise to highest steps of development' in their own territory, would strengthen, especially black people, against communism because it involved 'de-tribalisation and Westernisation, the detachment from their own soil that makes them most easily susceptible to Communist propaganda'.[112] In short, black people supposedly needed white dominance as protection against communist dominance and apartheid maintained white dominance, whilst bolstering black communities against communist advances. The DRC's support for apartheid sprouted from its belief in the divine calling of white society to act as the saviours of black and coloured society. The article in *Die Burger* represented the church's endorsement of separate development as a moral anticommunist measure which bolstered overall support for the policy within the *volk*.

Antikom: The State's moral legitimiser

The 1948 election had seen the state captured by Afrikaner nationalists following the NP victory. It was an unanticipated victory, and although the NP did not get a majority of the popular vote, in alliance with the Afrikaner Party, it won a majority of five seats to defeat the governing UP, who were widely thought to have had fought a poor campaign.[113] The NP had succeeded in consolidating an alliance between working-class Afrikaners, new Afrikaner capital, the predominantly Afrikaner agricultural sector, and the Afrikaner intelligentsia, who all now had stakes in the nationalist government. The new South African prime minister, DF Malan, claimed that this election victory gave the NP a mandate to roll out its policy of apartheid.[114] Apartheid was, however, still a contested idea within the broader nationalist alliance. There was consensus around the view that white supremacy had to be preserved, but there was disagreement over how best to maintain it. Deborah Posel suggests that at its core,

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[111] 'Apartheidsbeleid is Enigste Waarborg,' *Die Burger* 7 April 1950, 2. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Dit sal vir hom die groot oomblik wees in die strewe om Suid-Africa onder die heil van Rusland te bring.'
[112] *Ibid.* Translated from Afrikaans: '…die ontstamming en die verwestering, die losruk uit eie bodem wat hulle die maklikste vatbaar vir Kommunistiese propaganda maak.'
[113] S. Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948-1994*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2014), 1.
[114] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 482-4.

this conflict was over the relationship between political segregation and the economic integration of Africans in 'white' areas. There were the exponents of 'total segregation' that viewed economic integration as a fundamental and irreversible threat to white society, and more pragmatic proponents of apartheid who insisted that there were political and economic advantages to the integration of Africans into the economy.[115] The NP did not adopt a ready-made blueprint for apartheid in 1948 – the Sauer Report which was the closest to being such a blueprint was riddled with contradictions and was ultimately insufficient – and the roll out of state-policy in this area was composed of *ad hoc* reactions to immediate problems and priorities.[116] In contrast, the NP had a clear plan regarding communism. Its election manifesto had categorically stated what they intended to do on this issue when in power, and action was swiftly taken after gaining state control. This was because, as mentioned earlier, anticommunism was a point of convergence for different sections within the nationalist movement. The NP could easily muster support along these lines.

The consensus on how to handle communism was bolstered by the DRC and Antikom shortly after the election. The NP's newly appointed minister of justice, CR Swart, was invited to deliver a keynote at the DRC's *Congress on Social Evils* in the winter of 1949. The event was intended to shine a light on the 'different evils that are busy destroying our national and church life', such as gambling, alcoholism, Sunday sports, sexual promiscuity, and prostitution.[117] In his keynote, Swart presented the government's plan to fight these social evils, as well as communism. Addressing the Congress, Swart declared that his department 'declared war against communism and will not tolerate any nonsense'.[118] As minister of justice, Swart framed the fight against communism as a matter of preventing disorder and unlawfulness. His final assurance that, 'I will not allow [communist] meetings be to be held and I will not give these [communist] leaders a chance to rouse non-whites against whites', was met with a spirited applause from the 515 delegates.[119] This signalled to the DRC that its previous calls for communism to be outlawed would likely become a reality following the NP-victory. It was also significant that Swart chose to use this specific opportunity – a church congress on social

[115] D. Posel, 'The meaning of apartheid before 1948: conflicting interests and forces within the Afrikaner nationalist alliance', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14, 1 (October 1987), 125-6; 133.
[116] Posel, 'The meaning of apartheid', 139; Also see Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948-1994*.
[117] D. de Beer, Om Hulle Ontwil, Kerklike Kongres van die Ned. Geref. Kerke insake Maatskaplike Euwels 1949, (Pretoria: Federale Raad vir Bestryding van Maatskaplike Euwels, 1949).
[118] C.R. Swart, 'Die Regering en Maatskaplike Euwels', in *Om Hulle Ontwil*, 12.
[119] *Ibid.*, 12. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ek sal nie toelaat dat sulke vergaderings gehou word nie en ek sal nie hierdie leiers 'n kans gee om nie-blankes op te rui teen blankes nie.'

and moral issues – to announce the government's intentions towards communism. This signified how the state intended to utilise the DRC as the moral bastion of the *volk* to justify the implementation of suppressive legislation.

The congress personified the links between the DRC and Antikom and its proximity to new political power. The gathering was partially connected to Antikom through its secretary, Dan de Beer, who was the convener of the 1949 Congress. He organised the last speech of the congress on communism, with the arch anticommunist, fellow Antikom member, and recently elected member of parliament, Nico Diederichs, presenting. Communism, Diederichs said in his usual impassioned way, 'is a mighty colossus whose dark shadow hangs over the entire world'.[120] For Diederichs, communism attacked everything that makes a person human: morality, justice, freedom, responsibility, and individual personality. Diederichs continued to convey to the crowd of DRC ministers that above all, communism attacked the most precious possession of humankind, its spiritual and religious life.[121] Rather than looking to the perceived threat communism posed to South African race relations, Diederichs returned to an inward focus on the *volk*:

> The strongest weapon against communism is the spiritual weapon… as long as we stay unified, as long as we keep our moral standards, as long as our *volk* stays national, healthy, and true to itself, as long as we stay true to the *Boerkerk* [Afrikaner church] as the conscience, as the guardian of morals of our volk, and as long as this Church [the DRC] stays planted in the *volkslewe* [national life], with a sober sense of reality, keeping the flame of religion and idealism burning brightly … will we as a *volk* not perish.[122]

Diederichs placed the DRC at the forefront of the Afrikaners struggle for survival that was purportedly threatened by the long shadow of communism. Coming from Diederichs, who had been at the centre of early initiatives to fight perceived communist influence, this emphasis highlighted the growing prominence of the DRC as an anticommunist organisation. The labour initiatives, and especially that of Diederichs's RDB, had deterred many Afrikaner workers from identifying with class-based ideologies and successfully incorporated them into the nationalist

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[120] N. Diederichs, 'Die Kommunisme', in *Om Hulle Ontwil*, 172. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Hy is 'n magtige kolos wie se donker skaduwee oor heel die wêreld hang.'
[121] *Ibid.*, 173-9.
[122] *Ibid.*, 180. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die sterkste wapen in hierdie stryd is die geestelike wapen… so lank soos on sons eenheid bewaar em, so lank soos ons volk nasionaal, gesond en homslef bly; so lank ons soos ons getrou bly aan die Boerekerk as die gewete, as die bewaker van die sedes van die volk en so lank soos hierdie Kerk, binne in die volkslewe geplant, met nugtere werklikheidsin die vlam van die godsdiens laat brand … sal ons as volk nie ondergaan nie.'

fold.[123] Furthermore, Afrikaner workers' fears were subdued by the NP's victory, believing that the new government would meet their material needs.[124] The RDB gradually faded away after 1950, until it officially disbanded in 1957. The custodian of the Afrikaner worker was now the state.[125] Diederichs's speech at the *Congress on Social Evils* illustrated how anticommunism had become a broad struggle on all fronts, with the DRC as the central moral combatant. The church had not only provided moral support for state intervention on communist activities, but it also had the reach to prepare the *volk* on social and spiritual grounds against anything that could be identified as 'communist'.

The moral anticommunist cause may have increasingly revolved around the DRC by the late 1940s, but the newly elected nationalist government was the impetus for legislative anticommunism. At the DRC's *Congress on Social Evils*, Swart assured the church that it could count him as an ally. The delegates used this opportunity to lobby the state, through a congress resolution, to act swiftly against communism. Accordingly, the congress requested the government to ban the CPSA on the grounds that they were unpatriotic, atheistic agitators of race friction, and propagators of violence and revolution. All communist propaganda from abroad should also be banned, and local communist literature should be heavily restricted, whilst any supporters of communism should be barred from the civil service and education sectors. The congress finally requested that current laws against rousing non-whites against whites should be sharpened and implemented even more strictly than before.[126] Though the resolution was officially passed by the entire congress, it was in essence the product of Nico Diederichs. The organiser and fellow Antikom member, Dan de Beer, had asked Diederichs to send him recommendations for the congress on what actions should be taken on communism.[127] This explains why the core content of the final congress decision on communism was identical to the recommendations Diederichs had made at the 1946 Congress on Communism.[128] His persistent agitation as a central figure of the DRC's institutional anticommunism had paid off. As a member of parliament, Diederichs was positioned at the intersection of formal politics

[123] O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 220.
[124] Ibid, 241.
[125] Ibid, 141.
[126] *Om Hulle Ontwil*, 215-6.
[127] NDC, 130, 1/K10/3, D.F.B de Beer – N. Diederichs, 2 December 1948.
[128] N. Diederichs, *Die Kommunisme (Ekonomies-politieke aspek)*, (Johannesburg: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.) 16-7; *Om Hulle Ontwil*, 215.

and *volkspolitiek* to advance the anticommunist agenda. His position also strengthened Antikom's influence as its proximity to formal power became solidified.

The congress' recommendations also matched the findings of a parliamentary report requested by Swart, which was released earlier in 1949, that investigated the state of communism in South Africa. The church's resolution legitimised the proposals Swart later presented to the South African parliament to ban communism. Swart, in a speech to parliament, argued that legislation banning communism was not merely desired, but necessary. He drew from the DRC's position that communism was targeting Christianity, adding that it was a 'devilish gospel'.[129] By July 1950, after some parliamentary debate on the jurisdiction of the minister of justice, Swart's proposed Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 was passed. Swart had thus effectively leveraged the DRC's anticommunism to serve the NP-government's agenda. The basis of the Act was:

> To declare the Communist Party of South Africa to be an unlawful organisation; to make provision for declaring other organisations promoting communistic activities to be unlawful and for prohibiting certain periodical or other publications; to prohibit certain communistic activities; and to make provision for other incidental matters.[130]

It was a wide ranging and deliberately vague law that gave the minister of justice autocratic powers to interpret what was 'communist' and to decide how any person or organisation that he deemed to be communist, ought to be punished.[131] Unsurprisingly, this had a damaging effect on overt communist activities. Shortly after the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act into law, the Central Committee of the CPSA, not without dissenting voices, decided to dissolve the organisation.[132] The state's swift and heavy-handed legislative action against communism played to the wishes of the NP's electorate, and it further kept a crucial anticommunist lobby group – the DRC – happy. The church's insistence on the prohibition of communism had given the state the moral legitimacy to suppress its opponents, but also the favourable public opinion to implement this legislation with relative ease and authority. This enabled the state to act as the protector of the *volk* against any physical threats

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[129] G.J. Kruger, 'C.R. Swart: Sy Rol as Minister, 1948-1959,' (MA thesis, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1985), 61.
[130] Suppression of Communism Act No. 44 of 1950.
[131] For an analysis of the deliberate ambiguity and authoritarian nature of this legislation, see R. Pincus, 'Apartheid Legislation: The Suppression of Communism Act', *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, 5, 2 (1966), 281-297.
[132] S. Clingman, *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary*, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2013), 172.

that communism may present. With this protection secured, the DRC could assume its position as the dominant voice of moral anticommunism in South Africa. It was commonly accepted within Afrikanerdom that communism had to be fought on all fronts, and the DRC could now focus on the social, moral, and spiritual fortification of the *volk*. This could be pursued with greater vigour, particularly as it was aligned with the state's ideology and the dynamics of the bipolar world order that had emerged following the end of the Second World War, and which had by 1948 solidified into the Cold War.[133]

The DRC's Moral Anticommunism

For the church, apartheid was viewed as a crucial safeguard against communist influence within its borders.[134] A key spectre that the church utilised in this regard was Soviet imperialism. This became an important tool for the DRC as the Cold War progressed. The article in *Die Burger* discussed above made it clear that the Afrikaner community, with the church as the moral foundation, had a wider responsibility to the Western world to prevent the spread of communism on the African continent:

> It is not impossible that a world conflict could arise again in the foreseeable future – a battle between the East and West in which the East would then be the defenders of the Communist thought. South Africa is of the greatest strategic significance for the West in such a fight. If Communism achieves victory in our country, a darkness will descend not only over South Africa, but also over the whole of Africa. The flame of the Western civilisation will be extinguished on this continent. Our battle against Communism is thus a battle in the interest of all freedom loving Western nations.[135]

In projecting its anticommunist position as a global 'calling' to protect Western civilisation, the DRC saw itself, and South Africa, as disproportionally essential to the Cold War. This fuelled a greater sense of self-importance and the legitimacy of the anticommunist

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[133] For an overview of the origins of the Cold War, see D.C. Engerman, 'Ideology and the origins of the Cold War, 1917–1962,' in M.P. Leffler & O.A. Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume 1: Origins*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39.
[134] 'Apartheidsbeleid is Enigste Waarborg,' *Die Burger* 7 April 1950, 2.
[135] *Ibid.* Translated from Afrikaans: 'Dit is nie onmoonylik nie dat binne afsienbare tyd weer 'n wereldstryd kan ontbrand – 'n stryd tussen die Ooste en die Weste waarin die Ooste dan die verdedigers van die Kommunistiese gedagte sal wees. In so 'n stryd is Suid-Afrika vir die Weste van die strategiese betekenis. As die Kommunisme in ons land die oorwinning behaal, sal 'n donkerte nie net oor die Suid-Afrika nie, maar ook die hele Afrika toesak. Die vlam van die Westerse beskawing sal in hierdie vasteland uitgeblus word. Ons stryd teen die Kommunisme is dus 'n stryd van alle vryheidsliewende Westerse volke.'

stance of both the DRC as an institution and its members. Despite this context, Antikom struggled to find its footing in the 1950s. The determination of its central figure, Nico Diederichs, to get communism outlawed, succeeded after years of agitation within the Afrikaner nationalist movement. This position had also taken up more of his attention, which consequently meant that his direct involvement in Antikom waned. CB Brink's term as chair of Antikom was short-lived, and, by the early 1950s he was replaced by the ubiquitous Piet Meyer.[136]

The NP may have outlawed communism and banned the CPSA, but according to Meyer, this had not extinguished the communist threat. He believed that Antikom had to assume the leadership of the 'spiritual' front against communism, and he accepted the chairpersonship with pride.[137] Under Meyer's leadership, Antikom continued to publish and distribute information about communism amongst white congregants of the DRC, and in black and coloured communities through the Church's missionary network. In the mid-1950s, Antikom published a series of pamphlets titled the *Anti-Kommunistiese Inligtingsreeks* (Anti-communist Information series). The cover of each issue was an illustrated scene of a crumbling city with a giant presentation of a communist figure hacking a church in the centre of the city with a sickle, and ready with a hammer in the other hand to destroy the building. The first three issues of *Anti-Kommunistiese Inligtingsreeks* were edited versions of speeches delivered at the 1946 Conference on Communism. This included a critique of communism by Diederichs, the relationship between communism and the worker by SP van der Walt and Jan de Klerk, and two missionaries' reports on the communist influence within black and coloured communities.[138] The fourth instalment of the pamphlet was again an edited speech of Diederichs from the 1949 Congress on the communist threat.[139] The first original edition in the series came in 1954 from the pen of Antikom's chairperson, Piet Meyer, under the title, *Die Hand van*

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[136] The exact year is difficult to determine. Piet Meyer claimed to have been Nico Diederichs' direct successor (Meyer, *Nog nie ver gengoeg nie*, 24). Correspondence between Antikom secretary DFB de Beer and Diederichs indicates, however, that CB Brink was the successor (NDC, 130, 1/K10/3, DFB de Beer – N. Diederichs, 30 March 1949). There are archival voids in Antikom meeting minutes, and the earliest accessible minutes after Diederichs term is 1954 where Meyer is already chair (ARCA, Piet Meyer Collection – PV 720 (Hereafter PMC), 'Antikom Jaarverslag: 1954-1955).

[137] Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, 24.

[138] N. Diederichs, *Die Kommunisme (Ekonomies-politieke aspek)*, (Johannesburg: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.); S.P. van der Walt & J. De Klerk, *Die Kommunisme en die Arbeider*, (Johannesburg: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.); S.F. Skeen & C.L. Brink, *Die Kommunisme en die nie-Blanke*, (Johannesburg: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.).

[139] N. Diederichs, *Die Kommunistiese Bedreiging*, (Johannesburg: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.)

Moskou in Suid-Afrika ('The Hand of Moscow in South Africa'). According to Meyer, Afrikaners were well informed about communism's anti-religious, anti-nationalist, and materialistic doctrines, as well as the communists active in Europe, but information on the recently banned CPSA was scarce.[140] In his pamphlet, Meyer chronicled the history of the CPSA by summarising two formative texts by local communists. These were the only texts on the history of the CPSA at the time, written by members of the party and based on their own experiences.[141] Meyer offered a melodramatic interpretation of this history wherein he concluded that 'the goal of the Communists Party of South Africa at the moment in our country is not to spread the communist ideology amongst the natives, but to poison African nationalism in southern Africa with anti-white content'.[142] Meyer thus disputed African nationalism as an ideology of dissent, and instead, as others such DRC missionaries had done before, characterised it as a communist controlled ploy by the Soviet Union to gain traction in Africa.[143] Throughout the next decade, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, this theme would become a central pillar of the DRC's anticommunist rhetoric as the decolonisation of Africa ensued.

Figure 2: Meyer's 'Die Hand van Moskou in Suid-Afrika'. [The Hand of Moscow in South Africa]The communist attacking the church at the centre of society was on the cover of every Antikom pamphlet.

Similar to other Afrikaner anticommunists such as Diederichs, Meyer's conclusion illustrated his ignorance of the developments and complexities of the liberation movement and communism. Before it disbanded in 1950, some individuals within the CPSA served within the structures of the African National Congress (ANC). However, as Tom Lodge explained, the

[140] P.J. Meyer, *Die Hand van Moskou in Suid-Afrika*, (Pretoria: Die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie, n.d.), 3.
[141] R.K. Cope, *Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of W.H. Andrews, Workers' Leader,* (Cape Town: Steward Printing Co., 1944); E. Roux, S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography, (Cape Town: African Bookman, 1944).
[142] Meyer, *Hand van Moskou*, 30.
[143] Meyer, *Hand van Moskou*, 30.

relationship between the two parties were equivocal.[144] For example, in some ANC circles, such as its Youth League, a brand of Africanism that was sceptical of communism had begun to gain traction. The Youth League founder, Anton Lembede, rejected communistic class analysis and, in similar terms to Afrikaner nationalists, proposed that Africans should unite around their ethnicity and status as an oppressed nation. He wrote in 1946 that 'Africans are a conquered race – they do not suffer class oppression – they are oppressed as a group, as a nation'.[145] The ANC was also undergoing a transformation from being a historically reformist organisation towards a more militant stance inspired by leaders of the Youth League. In 1952, the ANC was the main driver of the Defiance Campaign, which was intended to be a largescale non-violent protest against oppressive apartheid legislation. The campaign did, however, also become violent and this prompted the state to respond to black dissent with further violence.[146]

The campaign ultimately failed to pressure the NP government to listen to black, coloured, and Indian grievances with apartheid, but the scale of support for the protest indicated that the anti-apartheid struggle had taken on the character of a mass movement. This was embodied by the establishment of the Congress Alliance – a network of organisations including the ANC, South African Indian Congress (SAIC), South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the South African Congress of Democrats (COD) – set up to actively oppose the apartheid regime. The COD acted as the white wing of the Congress Alliance and became the political home of some former members of the CPSA.[147] In 1953, the CPSA was illegally reconstituted under a new name, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and its leadership encouraged members to take up positions within the as yet unbanned affiliates of the Congress Alliance. ANC hostility towards white communists had largely been defused through the strong interpersonal relationships formed between its leaders and their SACP counterparts, whilst they also recognised that a broader racial solidarity was required for the continuation of the liberation struggle.[148] This was not, as Meyer and later anticommunists suggested, the

[144] Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom*, 282.
[145] T. Lodge, *Black Politics since 1945*, (Braamfontein: Raven Press, 1983), 21-22.
[146] See A. Mager and G. Minkley, 'Reaping the whirlwind: the East London riots of 1952', in Phil Bonner, Peter Delius and Deborah Posel (eds), *Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962*, (Braamfontein: Raven Press, 1993); G. Baines, 'Community Resistance and Collective Violence: The Port Elizabeth Defiance Campaign and the 1952 New Brighton Riots', *South African Historical Journal*, 24, (May 1996), 39-76; M. Breier, 'The Death that Dare(d) Not Speak its Name: The Killing of Sister Aidan Quinlan in the East London Riots of 1952', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 6 (2015), 1151-1165.
[147] For an analysis of the racial and ideological complexities of the liberation struggle, see D. Evaratt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism: White opposition to apartheid in the 1950s*, (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009).
[148] Clingman, *Bram Fischer*, 174-6.

communisation of the liberation struggle, nor of the ANC, but rather, a broadening of solidarity across organisations. To the apartheid regime however, the proximity of local communists to the leadership of the ANC provided the state with further reason to quash any sign of dissent using the harshest means at its disposal.

Apart from publishing the aforementioned series of pamphlets, it is unclear, due to a gap in the archive, whether Antikom played an active role in the anticommunist drives of the 1950s. This apparent dormancy could be explained by the fact that the state's actions against communism in 1950 had done enough to curb public concern over its perceived threat, and thereby tapered anticommunist vigour for Antikom to feed off. With this intervention, curtailing overt expressions of communism had effectively been outsourced to the state. The DRC had played a crucial role in the moral legitimation of state sponsored anticommunism but had to stand in its shadows as the state assumed a central role in local and global anticommunist efforts. The state acted heavy-handedly and swiftly in another seminal moment in the mid-1950s. In June 1955, the Congress of the People, a multi-racial gathering of anti-apartheid organisations including the ANC, was held in Kliptown where the seminal Freedom Charter was formulated. On the second day of the congress, police ended the gathering on the suspicion of treason. The Freedom Charter was deemed a 'communist blueprint for Southern Africa' by the state and consequently outlawed. Even within the ANC some Africanists denounced the document as a product of communist manipulation. Nevertheless, the Charter was ratified by an ANC conference the following year.[149] In reality, as historian Stephen Clingman writes, the main impulse behind the document was a vision of a democratic and multi-racial South Africa with nothing beyond gestures to socialism. He also disputed internal claims of communist manipulation, maintaining that the communists within the Congress organisations did not have effective control nor intent for such influence.[150]

What constituted as communist under the Suppression of Communism Act was deliberately vague and was used by the state as legislative tool to crush any dissent. The

[149] W. Botes, 'Politieke persepsie: skaduwees, eggo's of werklikheid – 'n ontleding van Suid-Afrika se persepsies van die kommunistiese bedreiging,' *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 16, 1 (1989), 49; On the Freedom Charter, see G. Marcus, *The Freedom Charter: A Blueprint for a Democratic South Africa*, (Johannesburg: PUB, 1985); AJGM Sanders, 'The South African Freedom Charter', in J. Hund (ed), *Law and Justice in South Africa*, (Cape Town: PUB, 1988); R. Suttner, 'The Freedom Charter: The People's Charter in the 1980s', *Crime and Social Justice*, 24 (1985), 72-95; I. Vadi, *The Congress of the People and Freedom Charter: A People's History*, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2015).
[150] Clingham, *Bram Fischer*, 214.

following year, 156 people were arrested in the wake of the congress, suspected of being part of a communist influenced conspiracy to violently overthrow the government as was believed to have been set out in Freedom Charter. This resulted in the seminal Treason Trial which only ended in March 1961 and found that there was not sufficient evidence to prove that the ANC wanted to violently overthrow the government, leading critics to accuse the government of overreach.[151] This judgement came after the state had failed to prove that the Congress leaders were motivated by a communist conspiracy. This case required that the ambiguous legislative understanding of 'communism' set out in the Suppression of Communism Act had to be clearly defined and the court accepted violence as a prerequisite for a communist conspiracy to overthrow the government. It was important for the state to adopt violence as a requirement for communist activities as it set out to prove to the public that South Africa was threatened by violent revolutionaries.[152] However, the state struggled to prove that the accused were instigating violence, therefore it could not be proven that they were part of a wider communist plot. The trial illustrated how weak conceptualisations of communism could limit the implementation of anticommunist legislation. It further hinted at how Afrikaner's perceived black dissent as inherently communist, confirming their ignorance of black politics or the nature of communist activity in South Africa.

Anticommunism and the International Legitimisation of Apartheid

On the diplomatic front, the South African government allied with the West by positioning the country as an important bulwark against the spread of communism on the continent. DF Malan had made it clear even before the 1948 election that if open conflict occurred, South Africa would not remain neutral. The NP's election manifesto declared that 'our sympathies will definitely be on the side of the anti-communist countries, and as far as it is required and feasible our active support as well'.[153] Historian Jean-François Fayet pointed out that dictatorships or illegitimate regimes frequently aligned with Western anti-communist powers during the Cold War to legitimise their domestic actions; South Africa was a prime example of this.[154] The NP

[151] T. Karis, *The Treason Trial in South Africa*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, 1965); H. Joseph, *If This Be Treason*, (Cape Town: Kwela, 2018); Clingham, *Bram Fischer*, 217-241.
[152] Clingham, *Bram Fischer*, 222.
[153] DFM, 1/1/2390, D.F. Malan, 'Verkiesingsmanifes 1948, 20 April 1948', 14. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ons simpatieë sal beslis aan die kant van die anti-kommunistiese lande en ook, sover vereis en uitvoerbaar, ons aktiewe steun.'
[154] J. Fayet, 'Reflections on writing the history of anti-communism', *Twentieth Century Communism*, 6, (Spring 2014), 11.

did hold deep anticommunist beliefs and were convinced of communism's threat to South Africa, but by siding with the West at the start of the Cold War, they were able to deflect some difficult questions about the country's policy of apartheid. Taking South Africa's projection of itself as vehemently anticommunist into account, together with its own economic and strategic priorities, the Truman administration in the U.S. saw South Africa as a useful ally in the early years of the Cold War. Following the 1948 election, the U.S. State Department summarised the country's fundamental policy objectives towards South Africa, which were:

> (1) to maintain and develop the friendly relations which exist between the United States and the Union of South Africa; (2) to encourage the maintenance of South African bonds of sympathy with the western powers and continued participation in the United Nations; and (3) the economic development of South Africa and the growth of its foreign trade.[155]

This 'diplomacy based on friendly cooperation' was the basis for U.S. relations with South Africa in the first years of the Cold War, although it became more complicated for the U.S. and the West as the NP expanded its apartheid policy. Initially, this was expressed in anticommunist terms; for example, the Truman administration indicated its concern in the early 1950s that the Malan government might be too preoccupied with its apartheid policy to focus sufficiently on the larger issue of stopping communist expansion in Africa.[156] Truman's concerns illustrated some limits of nationalist anticommunism. While the U.S. was anxious that apartheid might distract South Africa from the global fight against communism, the NP and the DRC saw apartheid as a critical weapon in its anticommunist arsenal. The critical difference was that the U.S had the global battle against communism in mind, whereas the nationalist state and its moral legitimiser, the DRC, were in reality focussed on anticommunism as a way to drive a nationalist agenda within South Africa.

In the early years of the Cold War, the South African state did also make a tangible contribution to the global fight against communism, namely, through material support for the

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[155] A. Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 18. For an analysis of US-SA state relations during the Cold War, see T. Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): T.J. Noer, 'Truman, Eisenhower and South Africa: The "Middle Road" and Apartheid', in M.L. Kren, *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy during the Cold War*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993); J. Daniels, 'Racism, the Cold War and South Africa's regional security strategies 1848-1990', and A. van Wyk, 'The USA and apartheid South Africa's nuclear aspirations, 1948-1980', in S. Onlsow, *Cold War in Southern Africa: White power, black liberation*, (Oxford, Routledge: 2009).

[156] R. Nixon, *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda* War, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2015), 15.

U.S. during the Korean War (1950-1953). The South African government did not agree to provide military aid at first, but after long consideration, the Malan administration agreed to send squadrons of the South African Air Force to Korea, together with ground personnel and some volunteers.[157] Malan was convinced that in the Cold War context South Africa's security would be assured by close cooperation with other anticommunist countries. He saw the Korean conflict as an opportunity to gain leverage within the United Nations' Security Council. The UN had already indicated some dissatisfaction with the racial situation in South Africa, and Malan wanted to neutralise further criticism.[158] Returning fighters were praised by the minister of defence FC Erasmus for what they achieved in the Far East and in the battle against communism.[159]

The emergence of the Cold War and the bipolar world order had a considerable influence on South African discourse on communism in the years after the Second World War. Throughout the 1950s, the NP-government positioned South Africa as an anticommunist state within the international community. More importantly, it used this global anticommunist discourse to justify its domestic racial policies. The state's anticommunism stance was not necessarily determined by the DRC, but the church played a crucial role in the moral legitimisation of its stance. In some instances, the DRC was used by the state to this effect, and in other instances the church lobbied the state to act in accordance with its own anticommunist ideals. This stance was primarily based on the DRC's casting of communism as the antithesis of Christianity. Though the state had a practical role to play in protecting the country against communist influence, the Church was viewed as the main bulwark against the anti-Christian position of communism. This placed the DRC at the centre of anticommunism in South Africa following the implementation of the Suppression of Communism Act, as overt anticommunism was now in the hands of the state, but the moral and spiritual fight against communism was, in theory, conducted by the Church. In reality however, the practical efforts of the DRC through Antikom to spread anticommunism on a national scale were limited in their impact, with the latter failing to establish itself as an anticommunist hub in this period. Nevertheless, the emergence of Antikom was an important development as it laid the groundwork for the DRC

[157] D. Burger, 'Kommunisme, Suid-Afrika en die Koreaanse Oorlog 1950-1953', (MA thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2014), 115.
[158] Koorts, *DF Malan*, 404-5.
[159] Burger, 'Kommunisme, Suid-Afrika en die Koreaanse Oorlog', 121.

to become a more prominent anticommunist organisation in the coming decades as the Cold War intensified, attacks on white dominance increased, and *volkseenheid* began to crack.

CHAPTER 3: TESTING THE ANTICOMMUNIST CONSENSUS: ANTIKOM AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE FAR-RIGHT, 1960S

The 1960s in South Africa are often described as the heyday of apartheid, the period when the policy was rolled out under the leadership of Prime Minster HF Verwoerd who was described by his successor BJ Vorster to have 'thought for every one of us [Afrikaners]'.[1] David Welsh explained that while the first phase of Nationals Party (NP) rule (1948-1959) emphasised the entrenchment of NP power and the extension of racial discrimination, the second phase (1959-1966) ushered in an era of 'positive' versions of apartheid under the banner of 'separate development', and a greater political consolidation between Afrikaners and the English-speaking community.[2] This second phase brought with it friction within the Afrikaner nationalist establishment, as it moved away from the tradition of exclusionary Afrikaner politics toward a broader politics of white interests. Fissures in Afrikaner nationalist politics, especially between archconservative and more reformed minded factions became a feature of Afrikaner society in the latter half of the decade. This would erode Afrikaner unity in what Welsh identified as the third phase of apartheid rule – the slow fall from 1966 onwards.[3]

The DRC itself underwent a similar factional split after the watershed Cottesloe Consultation in 1960, where South African church leaders condemned apartheid in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. As this chapter will show, the conservative backlash within the DRC, assisted by other Afrikaner organisations such as the *Afrikaner-Broederbond* (AB) and even the state, to a large extent determined the parameters of the church's anticommunism. This backlash within the church successfully tilted the DRC towards the conservative benches which also heralded an era of loyalty toward the state. The church had thus remained the mainstream spiritual home for Afrikaners, with even closer links to formal power. This chapter will argue that it was this position that made the DRC susceptible to far-right opportunists on the fringe of Afrikaner politics who drove an archconservative anticommunist agenda in an attempt to gain mainstream acceptability. As the chapter will discuss, this fringe group used

[1] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 2009), 530, 535; A. Grundlingh, '"Are we Afrikaners Getting too Rich?" Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s,' *Journal of Historical Sociology*, June/September 2008, 21(2/3), 143.
[2] The second phase also coincided with the Afrikaner's revaluation of South Africa's place in Africa amidst the process of decolonisation on the continent. The decolonisation of Africa and its effect on the DRC's anticomminism will be discussed in Chapter four.
[3] D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, (Jonathan Ball: Cape Town, 2009), 42.

the DRC dominated Antikom, an inter-church anticommunist organisation, as a catalyst for their archconservative agenda. Moreover, this group worked closely with leaders in the DRC, such as Koot Vorster and AP Treurnicht, to amplify their radical rhetoric under the guise of anticommunism. Anticommunist congresses, local meetings, and information distribution by Antikom became platforms for far-right opportunists. The 1960s also ushered in an era of cooperation between local anticommunists and international Christian crusaders against communism.

By the end of the decade, the energetic rise of right-wing anticommunist opportunists had come to a halt. They had increasingly tested the limits of the DRC's anticommunism, and the political ambitions of the group and their leader, Albert Hertzog, became an increasing hindrance for the NP's gradual reform agenda and drive for greater unity between the English and Afrikaner community. In 1969, the far-right fringe was defeated in the political field, which also ended their position within the DRC's anticommunist efforts. They might have failed to gain real political power, but this chapter will assert that their radical anticommunist rhetoric became imbedded within the Afrikaner psyche, making the 1960s a critical decade in the evolution of anticommunist thought and function within the *volk*.

New Afrikaner economic realities

To understand the DRC's discourse around communism in the 1960s, it is important to examine how the economic context shifted its focus. The objective of anticommunism during the 1930s and 1940s, in the form of Christian-Nationalist trade unionism, had been to win over Afrikaner workers to the nationalist cause in the face of socialist competition. This had helped to unify Afrikaner nationalist factions in the run-up to the 1948 election. For cultural and church leaders, anticommunism focussed on the working class during a time when most Afrikaners had a low socio-economic status. After the Nationalists gained political power in 1948, the church outsourced overt anticommunism to the state, which acted swiftly to outlaw communism. This left church leaders to discuss the threat of communism in theoretical and moral terms for the remainder of the 1950s. This period also saw class and status divisions remain latent for the sake of Afrikaner unity – the upper classes accepted that Afrikaner power relied on working class support, while working class Afrikaners remained largely content with the prospects of their socio-economic progression through the rise of Afrikaner political

power.[4] By the 1960s, there was a clear move away from a class-focussed anticommunism. A range of interventions to tackle urban white unemployment during the 1930s under the United Party regime, followed by the war economy drawing any remaining poor whites into the labour force, saw the eradication of the poor white problem by the mid-1940s. During the first decade of the NP rule, Afrikaner workers largely advanced to better vocations and were no longer competing with black workers who took up lower ranking jobs.[5] This meant that working class Afrikaners no longer had to be 'saved' by the Afrikaner bourgeois. That said, high economic growth during the 1960s further created a broadly prosperous Afrikaner community which brought other economic divisions and cultural shifts within *volk*. Stark class differentiations amongst Afrikaners emerged from its earlier latency and the divisive role of social status became a growing concern for some DRC clergy. Kosie Gericke, moderator of the Cape DRC for the latter part of the 1960s, voiced this concern when he blamed the rapid urbanisation of 1920s and 1930s for creating a divide between 'prosperous Afrikaners and their less well-off countrymen.' He lamented this division, emphasising that there existed 'a considerable degree of snobbishness' within Afrikaner society.[6]

The changing economic position of Afrikaners, and the rise of the middle-class, required the DRC to move away from its paternalistic role toward working class Afrikaners. It was now focused on the new cultural shifts of the 1950s, which triggered a greater emphasis on the moral dimension of DRC anticommunism. Concerns over morality, secularisation, and the influence of international popular culture on the *volk* raised the DRC's defences against so-called outside influences, of which communism was deemed to be the most prominent. In an inversion of earlier warnings over the materialistic nature of socialism in the 1930s and 1940s, the church believed that Afrikaner society was now under the spell of capitalist materialism, which had allegedly begun to induce 'corrosive change in what was up till [the 1960s] considered seemingly impenetrable Afrikaner culture'.[7] These changes fuelled the DRC's sense of self-importance as the gatekeeper of Afrikaner morality. In contrast to its response to the rapid urbanisation of the first few decades of the twentieth century, there were 'very few clergy renegotiating Afrikaner identity in this different material context' of the 1960s.[8] Instead, the

[4] Grundlingh, '"Are we Afrikaners Getting too Rich?"', 148.
[5] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 354.
[6] Grundlingh, '"Are we Afrikaners Getting too Rich?"', 149.
[7] *Ibid.*, 144.
[8] *Ibid.*, 152.

DRC took on an authoritative and deeply conservative guardianship over the *volk* and its morality.

An era of state loyalty: Sharpeville and its aftermath

Amidst the flourishing nationalist politics and expansion of white social and economic privileges, the 1960s was also a period of continued existential fears for Afrikaners. These fears were inspired by reality, but were exacerbated by myth, for the most part. The reality was that the hardening of apartheid measures had fuelled legitimate opposition among the oppressed sections of the population. This opposition was seldom viewed by the state and church as founded on genuine dissatisfaction, but rather as an attack on white society as a whole, and Afrikaners in particular. Early in 1960, opposition to apartheid gained momentum and intensified when the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) announced a campaign to defy the government's pass laws. On 21 March 1960, approximately 7,000 protesters gathered at the police station in the township of Sharpeville. This protest soon turned into tragedy when police opened fire on the crowd, killing sixty-nine Africans. This ignited a wave of protest action across the country, causing the apartheid state to respond sharply and brutally. On 30 March 1960, a State of Emergency was declared and within the next few weeks more than 18,000 people were incarcerated. On 8 April 1960, the government banned liberation organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and PAC.[9]

The state response engendered a sense of physical safety and control among the white populace. Leaders within the DRC responded to Sharpeville with a veiled critique of state violence, however they ultimately blamed black dissent for this sort of response. Nine leading figures of the DRC's Cape, Transvaal and Free State synods conferred immediately after Sharpeville to discuss a response to the rising tensions within the country.[10] Although they did so in their personal capacity, considering the position of these individuals within their respective synods, it is safe to conclude, as the church historian Van der Watt has, that this meant that they were broadly representative of the mainstream DRC perspective at the time.[11]

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[9] For a comprehensive history of the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, see T. Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[10] A.J. van der Merwe, A.G.E. van Velden, J.D. Vorster, and W.A. Landman of the Cape Synod; P.Z.C. Coetzee and Z.B. Loots of the Free State Synod; A.M. Meiring, C.B. Brink, and F.E.O'B. Geldenhuys of the Transvaal Synod.
[11] P.B. van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1905-1975*, (N.G. Kerkboekehandel: Pretoria, 1987), 103.

On 31 March 1960, they released the so-called *Kaapse Verklaring* (Cape Statement). Herein, the clergy expressed generic condolences to all who had been affected by the violence, including the protesters, police, and bystanders, before turning defensive. They criticised the local media's coverage of the previous ten days as distorted and biased against the state. The statement reaffirmed the DRC's position that separate development was a reasonable policy if applied honourably and fairly – that is, non-violent and without violating human dignity. Ending on a paternalistic note, the statement cautioned non-white members affiliated with the DRC family against the false promises of agitators who, according to the church, did not truly represent their interests.[12] The moderator of the DRC's mission church, CJJ van Rensburg, reinforced this point later when he laid the responsibility for the violence at Sharpeville at the feet of ANC and PAC agitators, whom he labelled communist organisations.[13] The DRC thus relieved the state, and its apartheid policy, from any blame for the outbreak of violence.

Rather than identifying the validity of black dissent, the DRC placed the responsibility for the uprising and the violence that ensued on communist elements. There were certainly communists in the ANC, which to paranoid anticommunists was reason enough to deem the whole organisation communist. This was, however, a deliberate oversimplification and demonstrated an ignorance of the internal politics of the liberation movement.[14] The PAC, for its part, was formed in 1959 by the Africanist faction of the ANC in response to the organisation's adoption of a non-racialist position and the perceived dominance of the South African Communist Party (SACP). The PAC was, effectively, founded on anticommunist grounds, and the organisation grew even more vehemently opposed to communism throughout the 1960s.[15] The DRC's ignorance of black politics highlighted the racialised logic underpinning anticommunism. To the church, any form of black resistance to apartheid or the state could not be based on valid discontent because it was caused by communist agitation. This was an echo of the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 which very clearly described communist activity to include dissent against the state, while it defined communist doctrine in a deliberately vague manner. Black dissent was therefore illegitimate from the DRC's anticommunist perspective.

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[12] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 103.
[13] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 17.
[14] See, S. Clingman, *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary*, (Jacana: Johannesburg, 2013), 174-6.
[15] K. Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa)*, 1959-1994, (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2010), 53-57.

The state's response to peaceful protest at Sharpeville put South Africa under considerable scrutiny from the international community, which widely condemned racial oppression in the country. In 1961, South Africa declared itself a republic after a referendum which returned a marginal yes-vote – a long held goal for the nationalists. Consequently, Verwoerd was forced to apply for readmission to the Commonwealth in this period of heightened scrutiny. Verwoerd pre-empted an embarrassing expulsion form the Commonwealth and decided to withdraw South Africa's application for readmission.[16] The more significant diplomatic consequence of Sharpeville was the United Nations (UN) Security Council's condemnation of the massacre. Through Resolution 134, the UN called upon the South African government to abandon apartheid and all forms of racial discrimination. Britain and the US, initially cautious in speaking out against the South African government, supported a motion by the UN General Assembly declaring apartheid policies a blatant violation of its Charter.[17] The Sharpeville massacre also led to an increased global consciousness about the racial situation in South Africa, prompting the establishment of pressure groups such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain, which became part of a wider transnational network of organisations which lobbied for the isolation of the apartheid regime over the next three decades.[18]

Cottesloe: a test of the DRC's dogmatism

The DRC leadership, through its Cape statement, attempted to undermine global responses to Sharpeville by blaming the international media for its continued 'slander' of South Africa.[19] In doing so, the DRC signalled to the Afrikaner public that the international community was becoming increasingly hostile towards the *volk,* whilst the statement also defended and endorsed the state's racial policy. It did not take long for international criticism to target the

[16] S. Dubow, 'The Commonwealth and South Africa: From Smuts to Mandela', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45, 2 (2017), 297-9. See also JRT Wood, 'The roles of Diefenbaker, Macmillan and Verwoerd in the withdrawal of South Africa from the commonwealth', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 6, 1-2 (1987), 152-179; R. Hyam, 'The Parting of the Ways: Britain and South Africa's Departure From the Commonwealth, 1951–61', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26, 2 (1998), 281-297. For a discussion of the success and especially failures of exiled anti-apartheid activists in the run-up to Verwoerd's withdrawal, see M. Graham, 'Campaigning Against Apartheid: The Rise, Fall and Legacies of the South Africa United Front 1960–1962', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 46, 6 (2018), 1148-1170.
[17] S. Dubow, 'Were there political alternatives in the wake of the Sharpeville-Langa violence in South Africa, 1960?', *The Journal of African History*, 56, 1 (2015), 125-6.
[18] See, C. Gurney, '"A Great Cause": The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, June 1959-March 1960', J*ournal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1 (2000), 123-144; R. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid: A History of the Movement in Britain; A Study in Pressure Group Politics*, (London: Merlin Press, 2005).
[19] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 103.

DRC directly. In an influential *New York Times* article in April 1960, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, Joost de Blank, heavily criticised the DRC for its loyal support of apartheid. He appealed to the World Council of Churches (WCC) – the largest and most influential ecumenical organisation in the world – to expel the DRC if they did not openly oppose apartheid, adding that the WCC should send a team to South Africa to investigate the racial situation in the country.[20]

Historically, the DRC and WCC had not enjoyed the warmest of relationships. From its inception in 1948, the WCC made it clear that it strongly opposed any form of racial discrimination in the global church community.[21] The Transvaal and Cape DRC, who became members in 1948 and 1953 respectively, for their part, saw the WCC as a forum to promote their brand of segregationist theology to the world. For instance, when the WCC general assembly gathered in 1954, it declared that any form of segregation based on race was contrary to the Gospel and incompatible with the nature of the church of Christ. CB Brink, who was a member of the WCC central committee and a former Antikom chair, however, viewed the meeting as a positive experience for the DRC when he reported to the Transvaal synod that the DRC delegates 'stepped into an atmosphere filled with suspicion and condemnation. I left the World Council with the assurance that some were at least convinced of our honesty and sincerity and that they were interceding for us.'[22] To the Transvaal and Cape synods then, the WCC was merely a diplomatic forum through which the DRC could elicit sympathy among the international church community for South Africa's racial policy.

The Transvaal and Cape synods' counterparts in the Free State and Natal disapproved of the WCC from the start and did not join it. They voiced a deep discomfort with the WCC's theological basis which it deemed to be too broad and open to subversion, and they feared that it may become an all-powerful super-church. Both the Free State and Natal synods were also concerned about the WCC's supposed sympathy for communism.[23] This was largely unfounded, although some WCC members initially criticised the ecumenical body's apparent

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[20] 'Capetown Anglican Archbishop Assails Dutch Church on Bias', *New York Times*, 8 April 1960, 8.
[21] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 124.
[22] Quoted in P.G.J. Meiring, 'Die NG Kerk en die Wêreldraad van Kerke – ses dekades van verwagting, verwydering en toenadering', *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskryf*, 55, 3-4 (2008), 195. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ons het ingestap in 'n atmosfeer vol agterdog en veroordeling. Ek het die Wêreldraad verlaat met die versekering dat sommige ten minste oortuig geraak is van ons eerlikheid en opregtheid en dat hulle vir ons intree.'
[23] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 125.

leniency towards human rights violations by communist regimes in Eastern Europe. This would only become a serious reproach of the WCC's actions by the end of the 1960s.[24] A more substantial, albeit academic, anticommunist wariness of the WCC came from the dean of theology at the University of Pretoria, EP Groenewald.[25] In 1952, he cautioned the Transvaal synod that the World Council's emphasis on global social interventionism might pave the way for communism in instances where 'Christ's rule is not commonly recognised' and a biblical message of justice could become construed to serve communist interests. Despite these concerns, Groenewald firmly supported DRC membership of the WCC and remained an advocate of the ecumenical movement.[26]

Synodical differences on the ecumenical movement should not be interpreted simply as a split or a sign of factionalism in the DRC. The church's decentralised structure made it possible for these diverging views to be adopted by various synods, while still functioning as an amalgamated *volkskerk*. There did, however, emerge as a form of factionalism amongst DRC leaders across all synods on the theological grounds for apartheid during the 1950s. There was a split between those whom the historian Tracy Kuperus termed the ideological purists within the DRC, and their moderate pragmatist colleagues. Both groups supported the implementation of apartheid, but the pragmatists viewed it as a practical, yet replaceable, policy and supported the notion of a developmental apartheid in which racial difference would level out over time. The purists, on the other hand, believed that racial differentiation was by divine design, and therefore advocated for total apartheid as the will of God.[27] The power relations between these factions were tested when ecumenical pressure on the DRC increased in 1960.

In response to growing calls to act against the DRC in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, the WCC officially intervened. After consultation with the South African member churches, which included the Transvaal DRC and the Cape DRC, the WCC sent its Secretary, Robert S. Bilheimer, on a series of visits to South Africa that resulted in the coordination of

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[24] M.E. Brinkman, *Progress in Unity?: Fifty Year of Theology within the World Council of Churches: 1945-1995, A study guide*, (Peeters Press: Leuven, 1995), 153.
[25] Groenewald was also an influential theologian with regards to the biblical justification of apartheid. See R. Vosloo, 'The Bible and the justification of apartheid in Reformed circles in the 1940's in South Africa: Some historical, hermeneutical and theological remarks', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, 1, 2 (2015), 201-4.
[26] Meiring, 'Die NG Kerk en die Wêreldraad van Kerke', 194. Translated from Afrikaans: '…Christus se heerskappy nie algemeen aanvaar word…'
[27] T. Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid in South Africa: An Examination of Dutch Reformed Church-State Relations*, (MacMillan Press, London: 1999), 83-5; Kinghorn, Die NG Kerk en Apartheid, 105. For further discussion on the theologies of these factions, see Vosloo, 'The Bible and the justification of apartheid'.

the Cottesloe Consultation.[28] This gathering and its aftermath drew a definitive line through the relationship between the DRC and WCC and, for the DRC, ushered in an era of self-isolation and full allegiance to the apartheid state. It also played a determining role in the way that anticommunism came to function within DRC discourse. The eight South African member churches and WCC delegates gathered from 7-14 December 1960 in Johannesburg to discuss the situation in South Africa and its ramifications.[29] A Christian understanding of contemporary social issues with specific reference to race, and the role of the church with regards to justice and mission work, was central to the Cottesloe agenda.[30] Meetings, working groups, and the accommodation were all interracial, although most delegates were white. At the end of weeklong deliberations, the Consultation released a statement that elicited a frenzied response within Afrikaner ranks. The statement affirmed that people from all racial groups were equal citizens of the country. It rejected segregation in the church, condemned the state's prohibition of racially mixed marriages, criticised the migrant labour system and the policy of job reservation, and affirmed the right of all people to own land.[31]

Not only was this statement signed and supported by all DRC delegates, but the majority of the statement's contents was based on a report that the Cape DRC had submitted to the meeting.[32] Both the Transvaal and Cape synod's submissions to the WCC were drawn up by the best minds in the DRC, but they explicitly stated that the reports were the views of its contributors and reaffirmed that the synods had the final say on the church's position on racial policies.[33] These contributors and the delegates to the Cottesloe consultations were, with a few exceptions, from the moderate pragmatist camp in the DRC.[34] Therefore, the formulation of the official Cottesloe statement and the DRC delegates' support for it did not represent the

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[28] Robert S. Bilheimer was an American Presbyterian minister who joined the WCC in 1948 and became a central figure in ecumenical activities in the latter half of the twentieth century. For biographical information, see Bilheimer's account of the ecumenical movement in R.S. Bilheimer, *A Spirituality for the Long Haul: Biblical Risk and Moral Stand*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); *Breakthrough: The Emergence of the Ecumenical Tradition*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Geneva WCC Publisher, 1989).
[29] The South African member churches: Cape DRC, Transvaal DRC, Dutch Re-formed Church of Africa (NHK), Anglican Church, Congressional Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church of South Africa, and the Bantu Presbyterian Church.
[30] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 32.
[31] J.W. de Gruchy, 'Grappling with a Colonial Heritage: The English-speaking Churches under Imperialism and Apartheid', in R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social & Cultural History*, (David Philip: Cape Town, 1997), 162.
[32] Kinghorn, *NG Kerk en Apartheid*, 120.
[33] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 59.
[34] Prominent ideological purists that formed part of the DRC delegations were E.P. Groenewald, from the Transvaal and J.D. Vorster from the Cape

position of all leaders within the church. The DRC delegation was aware that the statement would be controversial, not only amongst fellow church leaders, but also in the broader Afrikaner ranks. The Dutch Re-formed Church of Africa (NHK), also a member of the WCC, had the only delegation at the Consultation that did not fully support the official statement. They formulated their own statement in which the NHK delegation distanced itself from the consultation's remarks and reiterated that it fully supported the policy of separate development and rejected any form of racial integration. It also praised the government's handling of the country's racial tensions.[35] This made the DRC delegates nervous, and they quickly realised that they should recalibrate their support for the Cottesloe statement to avoid the impression that the DRC and the government were at odds over racial policy. In the thirty-minute tea break on the Consultation's last day, the delegations of the two DRC synods drafted their own statement that accompanied the official Cottesloe statement, in which they reaffirmed their view that a policy of racial differentiation was the best solution for South Africa. They were of the opinion, however, that the outcome of the Consultation was reconcilable with this current racial policy. They argued that it merely prescribed that there cannot be a biblical justification for segregation, but it did not command racial integration on a practical level.[36]

The backlash to the Cottesloe statement was immediate. English newspapers supported it and asked whether this was the end of the DRC's close relationship with the state.[37] Most of the Afrikaans newspapers, however, condemned the decision as 'liberalistic' and saw it as an attack on Verwoerd's government under the guise of religion.[38] One exception to this was *Die Burger*, the nationalist Afrikaans newspaper in the south, whose editorials and columns were more sympathetic to the DRC delegations. Its editor, Piet Cillié – according to Giliomee the most influential Afrikaner thinker of his time, along with Verwoerd – was a committed yet critical nationalist who was not dogmatically devoted to apartheid.[39] He offered his political ideas and insights in the newspaper's influential weekly political column under the pseudonym Dawie. Here, he commented that the DRC had a deeper understanding of race relations in a practical sense than the NP, due to its extensive missionary work, and that these church leaders

[35] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 93.
[36] *Ibid.*, 94.
[37] Editorial, *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 December 1960.
[38] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 105. See the editorials of *Die Transvaler*, 29 December 1960; *Die Vaderland*, 28 December 1960.
[39] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 497-8.

could not simply be dismissed as liberals.[40] The NP's Federal Council however, when discussing the Cottesloe Consultation at its annual meeting, determined that no other institution but the state was capable of deciding on the well-being of the 'non-white' population.[41]

The height of the backlash to Cottesloe came from Verwoerd in his New Year's Eve message to the country. The Prime Minister warned that opponents of separate development were creating the impression that 'our churches', which one can assume was a reference to the DRC, had given their official judgement against the policy. This, he assured, was simply not true. The support for the Cottesloe statement had emanated from individuals who acted in their personal capacity and 'the churches have indeed not spoken at all'. According to Verwoerd, the church's opinion will only be official after all the voices had been heard, after their respective synods had taken place.[42] Verwoerd's assurance was apparently informed by a leading DRC minister in the Cape and vice chancellor of Stellenbosch University, JS Gericke, who visited the Prime Minister after the Cottesloe Consultation to inform him that the DRC had not yet discussed the issue, and that the synods would have the final say.[43] This was a clear display of the close proximity between likeminded apartheid ideologues in the top echelons of the DRC and the government. Gericke was a prominent figure in the ideological purist camp of the church, which strongly aligned with the state's racial policy. A public declaration of this kind by the prime minister strengthened the ideological purist's position, while Verwoerd would gain more support for his policy rollouts from the DRC if the purists increased their influence in the church.

A 'Purified' DRC: Purging the pragmatists

After Verwoerd's speech, a process to purge the DRC of any dissenting voices and so-called unpatriotic influences was set in motion. The DRC's stance on apartheid and support for the state was publicly discussed and debated in columns, editorials, and letters in newspapers, but it was behind closed doors where the battle played out. By the late 1950s, the AB was struggling

[40] L. Louw (ed.), *Dawie 1946-1964: 'n Bloemlesing vir die geskrifte van Die Burger se politieke kommentaar*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1965), 202-205. Piet Cillié did not make this observation out of loyalty to the DRC. He was not particularly devoted to the DRC, or any church for that matter – he was the only member of the AB that was explicitly not part of any Afrikaans protestant church. Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 273.
[41] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 107.
[42] A.N. Pelzer, *Verwoerd aan die Woord*, (Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel: Johannesburg, 1963), 404. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die kerke het inderdaad nog glad nie gepraat nie.'
[43] N. Smith, *Die Afrikaner Broederbond: Belewinge van die b*innekant, (Lapa: Pretoria, 2009), 124.

to recover following the divisions of the Second World War, and its political side-lining by Malan's successor as Prime Minister, JG Strijdom.[44] In 1956, the leadership of the Broederbond was accused by its Potchefstroom divisions, which was one of the AB's strongholds, of lacking a vision or purpose. Verwoerd, however, saw the AB as instrumental to achieving his goal of Afrikaner unity and this reinvigorated the organisation.[45] In the wake of Cottesloe, the AB, of which most DRC ministers were members, sent out an extraordinary circular to its 400 divisions that reaffirmed Verwoerd's New Year's message. During a meeting in February 1961, the AB's Executive Council voiced their disappointment in Broederbonders – the majority of the DRC delegates to Cottesloe were in fact AB members – who went against the principles of the Bond at Cottesloe. These members were to be reasoned with in an attempt to persuade them of the 'real facts'.[46] This attempt at 'reasoning' subsequently turned into a reckoning of the DRC's pragmatists in the synod meetings that followed that year.

A series of synod meetings were held throughout the course of 1961. In March, the Federal Council of Churches – a joint meeting of the five DRC synods – gathered to discuss the Cottesloe statement. In what became a guiding resolution to the synod meetings that followed, the Federal Council unequivocally rejected the Cottesloe statement and urged the Cape and Transvaal synods to revoke their membership of the WCC. The Transvaal synod convened its 730 delegates shortly after the federal council's meeting, in what was reportedly a tense and heated gathering. AM Meiring, a Cottesloe attendee, narrowly won his re-election as moderator with nine votes, while the veteran vice-chair of the synod, Frans Geldenhuys, and a rising star in the Transvaal synod, Beyers Naudé, were both ousted from their leadership position by 450 votes to 280. A clear factional line had now been drawn.

The ideological purists such as AP Treurnicht, Koot Vorster, and AB du Preez, however, seemed to have relied on somewhat superficial reasoning rather than deep theological contemplation in their response to Cottesloe. While defending the Cottesloe statement, Naudé declared: 'I will accept any amendments to the [statement] if we can account for it on Scriptural grounds.'[47] As purists who believed that apartheid was the will of God and biblically justified, one would expect that Naudé's plea would easily be answered in these terms by his challengers.

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[44] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 175.
[45] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 525.
[46] *Ibid.*, 528.
[47] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 140. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ek sal enige wysigings in die besluite aanvaar as ins vir onsself op Skriftuurlike gronde rekenskap daarvoor kan gee.'

Throughout the synod's discussion on Cottesloe however, their rebuttal rested on the notion that the DRC's actions should not embarrass the government, and that the church should stand by its traditional racial policy.[48] This was the dominant position of the synod which gave greater weight to practical considerations that maintained the racial hierarchy, rather than disrupt the status quo by engaging critically with the state and its policies. The synod chose a dogmatic rather than an ethical position which illustrated that the factional power balance was on the side of ideological purists.[49] A populist attitude had emerged amongst the Transvaal's purists whereby political arguments, especially on race, were wrapped up in theological justification and delivered in emotionally charged language. The Cottesloe delegates were subjected to a flood of accusations, including that they had put the future of Afrikaners on the line, which made them, in the eyes of the purist delegates, traitors to the *volk*.[50] The hostility of the Transvaal synod meeting seemed to have evaded the Cape synod's assembly in November 1961. There were no Cottesloe casualties when the synod elected new leaders, however the leadership remained split between pragmatists such as AJ van der Merwe and WA Landman, and purists in AP Treurnicht and Koot Vorster.[51]

Both synods rejected the Cottesloe statement and decided to withdraw their membership from the WCC – in the Transvaal only about 150 out of the 730 delegates voted against the motion, while the Cape synod was split 362 for and 202 against.[52] A strong populist undertone in the discussions surrounding the WCC amplified the anticommunist nature of the decision. WA Landman confidentially reported to WCC secretary Rob Bilheimer that the Cape synods' discussion on the WCC was 'disappointing if not shocking… References are made to periodicals and books received from the USA to show how liberal, pro-Roman Catholic and pro-Communist the WCC is.'[53] According to Brink, a Cottesloe delegate and victim of the Transvaal synod's pragmatist purge, this was the product of the sustained propaganda of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) that was slowly gaining ground within the DRC.[54]

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[48] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 140.
[49] P.G.J. Meiring, 'Remembering Cottesloe: Delegates to the Cottesloe consultation tell their stories', *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, 54, 1 & 2 (2013), 7-8.
[50] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 140.
[51] *Ibid.*, 145.
[52] *Ibid.*, 145; 147.
[53] *Ibid.*, 150
[54] *Ibid.*, 143.

The ICCC was the single largest international organisation of self-designated fundamentalist Christian churches – these were Protestant churches who viewed the bible as the only true source of knowledge.[55] Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it was the primary information-sharing, coordinating, and collaborative agency of fundamentalist Protestant churches worldwide. From its inception in 1948, the ICCC was also the leading voice of fundamentalist Christian anticommunism, with its founder Carl McIntire acknowledged as the primary influence on this movement in the Unites States.[56] McIntire was a fervent opponent of the WCC and 'liberal' Christians in the West who embraced a socially oriented understanding of their faith. They, McIntire and the ICCC believed, were the principal carriers of communist ideas into the Western churches and public discourse. Just like the earlier DRC anticommunists, McIntire argued that communism was 'diametrically opposed, in all its parts, to the Christian concept of God and man'. Once the Cold War began, he incorporated this argument into a wider fear of Soviet imperialism.[57] The DRC had no official ties with the ICCC, but the purist factions' discourse on the WCC seemed to have been influenced by McIntire's propaganda machine. The effectiveness of this propaganda was evident in a report compiled by an ad-hoc commission that investigated the Transvaal synod's membership of the WCC. By their own admission, the report had not done an in-depth study on the World Council. It was, however, confident enough to conclude that the WCC had 'substantially strong liberalist, humanist, modernist, cosmopolitan, socialist and collectivist tendencies'.[58] The DRC's purists were seemingly bolstered by the anticommunist populism of the ICCC's narrative which, as Brink had observed, was seeping into their rhetoric. This laid the foundations for later cooperation between the DRC purists and international fundamentalist anticommunists.

Cottesloe represented the height of the pragmatic moderates' influence within the DRC. It triggered a factional backlash in which the ideological purists in the DRC such as Treurnicht and Vorster, assisted by the AB and supported by Verwoerd, prevailed. Broederbond-insider-turned-dissident, Nico Smith, later called it the greatest triumph of the AB in church affairs.[59]

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[55] M. Ruotsila, 'Transnational Fundamentalist Anti-Communism: The International Council of Christian Churches' in L. Van Dongen, S, Roulin, G. Scott-Smith (eds), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War*, (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2014), 235.
[56] See M. Ruotsila, 'Carl McIntire and the Fundamentalist Origins of the Christian Right', *Church History*, June 2012, 81 (2), 328-607.
[57] Ruotsila, 'Transnational Fundamentalist Anti-Communism', 237.
[58] *Acts of the Transvaal* Synod, 1961, 388. Translated from Afrikaans: '… wesenlik sterk liberalistiese, humanistiese, modernistiese, kosmopolitiese, sosialistiese en kollektivistiese tendense het …'
[59] Smith, Die Afrikaner Broederbond, 187.

One might argue that the AB imposed its position on the DRC through its mobilisation against those clergy, such as Beyers Naudé, Frans O'Brein Geldenhuys, and WA Landman who had supported Cottesloe. This is true to an extent, however the fact that opposition to this process was so weak, with only a few lone dissenting voices, is a strong indication that the AB and DRC's positions fundamentally aligned after Cottesloe. Church historian, Johann Kinghorn, convincingly argued that the DRC, with its rejection of Cottesloe, chose the path of dogmatising apartheid theology, as opposed to the ethical judgement thereof. He added that this had long been the position of the DRC, but that Cottesloe was a test of its strength. The outcome made it clear where the DRC stood, and what its chosen path was.[60] The minority pragmatic faction, whose views were represented in the Cottesloe declaration, had been effectively silenced. The purist faction subsequently drove the DRC's unequivocal support for apartheid and the state. For the next twenty-six years, the DRC refrained from any criticism of the state's implementation of apartheid. This meant that the DRC abandoned its position as a formative force in Afrikaner racial discourse, in contrast to its role in the 1930s and 1940s. Instead, the church was now a devotee to the state, providing moral legitimacy to its racial oppression and keeping the *volk* compliant. It became even easier for the state to liaise with the DRC when the church restructured from a fragmented federal structure into a unified national church in 1962. Provincial synods, with regional sub-synods, were brought under the centralised leadership of a General Synod, with some continued regional variations.[61] Phillip van der Watt argued that this newly unified DRC was paralysed by the backlash after Cottesloe and had almost no independent position on the socio-political front throughout the 1960s.[62] This was true with regards to the racial situation in South Africa, but the purists' dominance in the DRC also triggered a populist impulse in which the church played a critical role in determining the temperature of Afrikaner discourse on communism.

The DRC weathered the storm after Cottesloe, but it had a lasting impact on the church.[63] Cottesloe also forced some DRC pragmatists to re-evaluate their position in the institution. The majority, such as the long-serving DRC bureaucrat Frans O'Brian Geldenhuys

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[60] Kinghorn, *NG Kerk en Apartheid*, 121.
[61] E.P.J. Kleynhans, Die Kerkregtelike Ontwikkeling van die Nederduitse Geroformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, 1795-1962, (Published PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 1973), 322-337.
[62] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 114.
[63] For an analysis of the ecumenical, ecclesial, and theological impact of Cottesloe on the DRC, see R. Vosloo, 'The Dutch Reformed Church, Beyers Naudé and the ghost of Cottesloe', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 37, 1 (2011), 1-17.

and prominent young theologian Willie Jonker, felt the need to stay within the church structures to gradually shift racial and theological convictions in the DRC.[64] For Beyers Naudé however, the DRC's unwillingness to engage with apartheid on a Biblical basis after Cottesloe convinced him to pursue a path of racial justice outside of the church, which he had served for just over twenty years. His departure from the DRC also meant that he had parted ways with the *volk*. He resigned from the Broederbond, of which his father had been a founding member, with Naudé himself the youngest member ever inducted into the secret organisation. Shortly after his resignation, Naudé broke the AB's tradition of secrecy by leaking confidential Broederbond documents to the press.[65] It was no surprise that he became a target for the Afrikaner establishment. This was worsened by his proximity to the ecumenical movement and organised anti-apartheid initiatives. With the support of the WCC, Naudé founded the Christian Institute of Southern Africa (CI), an ecumenical organisation that embarked on a united theological struggle against apartheid, driven by a Christian commitment to justice.[66] Naudé's criticism of the DRC, his perceived betrayal of the AB, and his anti-apartheid activism meant that he would become a pariah of the Afrikaner *volk*. He would, however, become one of only a handful of Afrikaner anti-apartheid icons who earned Afrikaners some acceptability within the broader movement of black resistance against apartheid.[67]

Rise of the DRC's anticommunist populists

The Cottesloe backlash brought prominent fundamentalist figures within the DRC to the fore, such as the church leader in the Cape and close ally to Verwoerd, JS Gericke; the newly appointed editor of the church's mouthpiece *Kerkbode*, AP Treurnicht; and the vice-chair of the Cape DRC and brother of the future Prime Minster BJ Vorster, Koot Vorster. Gericke and Vorster were responsible for efforts at a synodical level to reject the Cottesloe statement and to reprimand its supporters in the DRC – Vorster later viewed this as the highlight of his four-

[64] In his memoir of his time in the DRC, Geldenhuys mentions that he had always wondered if it was better to reform from the church from the inside, or from the outside like his brother-in-law Beyers Naudé. See his reflection on this in F.E.O'B. Geldenhuys, *In Die Stroomversnellings: Vyftig jaar van die NG Kerk*, (Tafelberg: Kaapstad, 1982), 56.
[65] C. Ryan, *Beyers Naudé: Pilgrimage of Faith*, (Claremont: David Philip, 1990), 86-95.
[66] For a detailed chronicle of the CI's origin and activities, see JHP van Rooyen, 'Die NG Kerk, Apartheid en die Christelike Instituut van Suider Afrika', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1990).
[67] L. Koorts, 'Palatable and Unpalatable Leaders: Apartheid and Post-apartheid Afrikaner biography' in H. Renders, B. de Haan and J. Harmsma (eds), *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2017), 148.

decade-long career.[68] Vorster felt that the statement ignored the 'good' in the policy of apartheid.[69] He believed Cottesloe was an attack on the church, which in turn was an attack on the *volk*, describing it as the 'sharpest onslaught from the liberalist element to destroy Afrikaner politics'.[70] During the Cottesloe consultation, Vorster called Treurnicht and asked him: 'How can we help in defending against this onslaught against the church?'[71] Treurnicht had the influential *Kerkbode* at his disposal, which he saw as 'a sword in the battle against liberalism'.[72] To Treurnicht and Vorster, as will be discussed in this chapter, liberalism was the gateway to communism. It was Vorster, however, who would emerge as the central figure in the DRC's anticommunist efforts in the decade following the Cottesloe consultations.

Koot Vorster was a staunch Afrikaner nationalist in the neo-Kuyperian mould, with strong *Ossewa-Brandwag* (OB)-credentials. He was also a consistent defender of apartheid, as he believed it to be the only way in which different races could live together peacefully. Christianity, Afrikaner-identity, and apartheid were inseparable in Vorster's eyes.[73] Alongside this conviction sprouted a strict binary view of the world in which Vorster identified only two ideological stances: on the one hand, the Christian outlook, which had a nationalist focus, and on the other, secularisation, with its globalist orientation. Accordingly, he believed that these two diametrical stances manifested in the twentieth century through the antithesis between Calvinism on the one side, and liberalism and communism on the other. His conclusion that communism stood in direct opposition to Christianity was consistent with the convictions of Vorster's anticommunist predecessors in the DRC such as Herman Dekker and Nico Diederichs (as head of Antikom) discussed in the previous chapters. Like Dekker and Diederichs, Vorster described communism in terms of good vs evil: Calvinism was inherently good, while communism was described as 'a diabolic enemy with a devilish ideology which maintains its power through discord, violence and death'. While communism was an evil threat from the outside, Vorster believed liberalism to be the threat from within. He considered this 'pestilence that walks in darkness' as a 'bulldozer' which cleared the road for communism. To

[68] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 130, 148-9; D.J. Langner, 'Teen Die Hele Wêreld Vry: J.D. Vorster as 'n Neo-Calvinis in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1935-1980,' (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2004), 121.
[69] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, 108.
[70] Langner, 'Teen Die Hele Wêreld Vry', 114.
[71] *Ibid.*, 117. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Hoe kan ons help om die aanslag teen die kerk af te weer?'
[72] *Ibid.*, Translated from Afrikaans: ''n swaard in die stryd teen liberalisme.'
[73] *Ibid.*, 114.

the old OB general, it was clear that liberals were unknowingly being taken advantage of: 'The liberal will always serve the communist, but never the other way around.'[74]

The supposed threat of liberalism, as a proxy for communist influence, was at the core of Vorster's anticommunist rhetoric, which became increasingly influential within the church during the 1960s. He tapped into wider fears about moral decay within a changing Afrikaner society, and an uncertain global political context. Vorster's belief in the great threat of communism might have been consistent with the anticommunist voices of past decades, but by this time, communism was illegal and had no real support in white South African society. Despite that, the bogey of communism remained and the notion that it could subvert the *volk* was a powerful tool that dictated the parameters of debates within Afrikanerdom. Earlier anticommunist initiatives had been effective in convincing the broader white populace that communism was not an attractive option for South Africa's future. This conviction was solidified by the changing global context. The Cold War peaked during the 1960s, with heightened tension between the global superpowers over the Cuban Missile Crisis, an intensified space and arms race, the outbreak of the Vietnam War, and decolonisation in Africa and Asia. The South African government continued to support Western opposition to the communists in the East. It also claimed that the country's mineral resources and its political significance as the self-proclaimed defender of Western civilisation in Africa made it a prized target for international communism. The state thus saw it as essential to secure the country against this threat through the political repression of what it alleged to be communist aligned individuals and organisations. Afrikaans newspapers generally supported such anticommunist actions. The English newspapers, which were often critical of the nationalist state, also frequently voiced their opposition to communism. 'Like all real democrats,' read a 1964 editorial in *The Star*, 'we dislike Communism intensely… it would be disastrous were it ever to be implemented in South Africa'.[75] This illustrated that opposition to communism was one of the very few points of consensus in a white society full of divisions.

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[74] 'Kommunisme soos 'Pestilensie in die Donker'', *Die Burger*, 2 April 1964. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die liberalis sal altyd die Kommunis dien, maar nooit omgekeerd nie.'
[75] 'A dangerous congress,' *The Star*, 3 April 1964; Also see: 'Red Smear Congress,' *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 April 1964.

Antikom and the *Verkrampte* Onslaught

A deep disapproval of communism was a widely accepted position within the DRC, and the broader South African white community by the early 1960s. Yet, despite the solidity of the white anticommunist consensus, some leaders within the Afrikaner ranks still felt the need to affirm Afrikaner uniformity under the banner of anticommunism. Fissures in Afrikaner society started to show during the 1960s with growing foreign cultural influences and gradual exposure to the racial situation in South Africa after the Sharpeville massacre. The parameters of Afrikaner discourse were broadening and this, according to some self-appointed guardians of the *volk*, threatened the Christian-Nationalist outlook and racial order which ensured the *volk*'s survival. Restrictions on this discourse were thus deemed to be needed. This was especially required in the DRC with its deep social responsibility toward the *volk* and far-reaching influence on the daily lives of Afrikaners. The post-Cottesloe victory over the pragmatic moderates within the DRC was not considered sufficient to secure the required level of uniformity. The movement to discredit anyone within the DRC who voiced criticism of apartheid had to be expanded to white society more broadly. The executive of Antikom, and some leading AB members, framed the communist threat as something that had entered the *laager* in the guise of liberalism. This anticommunist circle within the DRC and AB were set on creating uniformity within the *laager* by attacking so-called liberal influences – in reality, this meant those within white society who did not support the nationalist cause – while overt actions against communism, or what was to be perceived as communist, were left to the state.

The state's response, to a large degree, reached its zenith with the banning of allegedly communist organisations such as the ANC and PAC in 1960, making it almost impossible for these groups to continue their activities inside South Africa. This led to the intensification of the underground struggle against apartheid following the establishment of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK – Spear of the Nation) in 1961 as the military wing of the ANC, which embarked upon an armed struggle against apartheid.[76] The state launched a dual offensive by tightening suppressive laws and granting more freedom to the security forces to act as they saw fit against

[76] For histories on MK, see T. Simpson, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle*, (Penguin Books: Cape Town, 2016); J. Cherry, *Spear on the Nation (Umkonto weSizwe): South Africa's Liberation Army, 1960s-1990s*, (Athens: Ohio Unviersity Press, 2012); For the SACP and ANC's role in the creation of MK, see S. Ellis, 'Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto weSizwe', *Cold War History*, 16, 1 (2016), 1-18; S.M. Stevens, 'The Turn to Sabotage by the Congress Movement in South Africa', *Past & Present*, 245, 1 (2019), 221-255.

any suspected revolutionaries. In 1962, the Sabotage Act, which included a deliberately broad definition of what constituted sabotage, legislated for twelve days' detention without trial, which was later extended to ninety days, and ultimately six months. Detainees faced physical abuse, which included electric and water torture. In some cases, this led to death.[77] The government also shut down any remaining left-wing publications, such as *Spark* and the *Guardian.* whilst it also implemented new censorship laws to curb so-called leftist influences in cultural activities.[78] Moreover, the watershed Rivonia Trail of 1964, in which underground leaders, including Nelson Mandela as leader of MK, were sentenced to life in prison, demonstrated the state's intent on suppressing all black dissent. Bram Fischer, who led the defence in this trial and who was a leader of the SACP, was arrested the following year after going underground.[79] The state utilised its extensive power to supress left leaning and left-wing dissenters and their organisations to such an extent that by the mid-1960s, communist activities were nearly impossible. The DRC, insulated from black dissent and supportive of the state interventions against any form of it, did not explicitly respond to the Rivonia trial. It did, however, become a marker for the DRC to reference when trying to convince its members that there was a 'real' revolutionary threat to the country.

The white South African anticommunist consensus also manifested itself within the DRC. During the 1960s Antikom cemented the DRC's anticommunist position, which was broadly propagated by the purist faction of the church. Antikom continued to distribute its *Anti-Kommunistiese Inligtingsreeks* (Anticommunist Information-series), adding four more publications to its catalogue with the last edition appearing in 1962. This was the same year that Antikom launched its official mouthpiece under the editorship of Dan de Beer, DRC minister and Antikom secreatary. The quarterly *Antikom Nuusbrief* – the English version was *Anticom Newsletter* – had a clear goal: to inform South Africans about the threat communism posed to the country.[80] By its second year of publication, it had a circulation of about 15,000 copies, with most distributed to Afrikaans congregations across the country.[81] This was not where anticommunist discourse within the DRC stopped. The *Kerkbode*, with a much higher

[77] See R. Suttner, *Inside Apartheid's Prison: Notes and Letter of Struggle*, (Jacana: Auckland Park, 2017).
[78] Clingman, *Bram Fischer*, 254-5.
[79] For a thorough account of the Rivonia Trail and Fischer's subsequent arrest, see 'Chapter 11: Into the Dark' in Clingman, *Bram Fischer*, 273-301.
[80] 'Redaksioneel,' *Antikom*, August 1962.
[81] Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa Archive (Hereafter DRCA), KS 2059, 'Verslag van die Anti-Kommunistiese Aksiekommissie, 1963-1967,' 1.

circulation than the *Antikom Nuusbrief*, at 1,100,000, published a series of articles in 1964 by BB Keet, a prominent DRC theologian and influential figure in the pragmatic faction of the church, in which he dismissed communism on theological grounds.[82]

The apartheid state had demonstrated its efficiency in supressing 'outside' dissent, amidst some cracks that started to show within Afrikaner ranks by the mid-1960s. Once the ideal of a republic had been achieved in 1960, the NP had to expand its political priorities from being the political vanguard of Afrikaner religion, culture, and language, to erecting the state that governed over all South Africans. An intra-Afrikaner struggle stemmed from this changing context, that was, at its core, about the purpose of the state and the goals of Afrikaner nationalism.[83] In 1966, WJ de Klerk, son of the Minister of Education, Jan de Klerk, and older brother of future President FW de Klerk, identified the factions within Afrikaner politics as the *verligtes* (enlightened) and the *verkramptes* (archconservative) which became a common framework in which Afrikaner politics was framed. The *verligte* position was that the state had a broader mandate than only serving the Afrikaner *volk*, and these Afrikaners generally supported reforms to apartheid policies. Those in the *verkrampte*-camp however, believed that the state's primary purpose was to protect Afrikaner interests and that apartheid was the only policy platform that could serve this purpose.[84] For the next twenty years, the *verkrampte/verligte* divide dominated nationalist politics with both camps advancing their agenda in a variety of Afrikaner spheres and vying for power in the party.

There were, of course, varying degrees to which NP-members ascribed to the *verligte* and *verkrampte* camps. Verwoerd, as leader of the party, had to balance the needs of the factions. He, for instance, assuaged *verligte* nationalists through talk of expanding the independence of black homelands. Verwoerd also allowed the right-wing fringe of the *verkrampte* faction, led by MP Jaap Marais and cabinet member Albert Hertzog, to establish a political narrative of impending communist threat.[85] As discussed in Chapter 1, Hertzog had long been a central figure in anticommunist politics, specifically during the 1940s when he, together with Piet Meyer, launched reformist labour initiatives to win Afrikaner workers for the nationalist cause. In this period, Hertzog established a small network of like-minded

[82] Agenda van die Algemene Sinode 1962, 124; BB Keet, 'Die Stryd in Rusland', *Kerkbode*, 14 October 1964, 493; 'Kinderkruistog in Teenoorgestelde Rigting', *Kerkbode*, 25 November 1964, 694.
[83] Giliomee, ''Broedertwis': 346.
[84] J.H.P. Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, (Human & Rousseau: Cape Town, 1970), 15-6.
[85] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 547-8.

nationalists whom he could rely on to drive an ultra-*verkrampte* agenda within a variety of Afrikaner organisations – amongst them the Broederbond, its cultural front the FAK (*Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigingе*) NP, and other cultural organisations in Pretoria. This 'Hertzog-group', as journalist Hennie Serfontein labelled them, attempted to subvert these organisations by collaborating with like-minded members or ensuring that Hertzog-men were elected to influential positions.[86] Front organisations to the Hertzog-group were also established, such as the *Christelike Kultuuraksie* (CKA – Christian Culture Action) and the *Genootskap vir die Handhawing van Afrikaans* (GHA – Association for the Sustaining of Afrikaans) to publicly pressure mainstream Afrikaner organisations toward a more fundamentalist position.[87] Their focus remained on their involvement in *kultuurpolitiek* (cultural politics) in order to create a political atmosphere that could direct Afrikaner *partypolitiek* (party politics) in a more fundamentalist direction. The Hertzog-group's influence was noticeable yet minimal, and within the mainstream Afrikaner nationalist fold of the 1950s and 1960s, the group found itself on the right-wing fringes of Afrikaner politics.

The Hertzog-group did, however, gain traction in organised anticommunism. An outright rejection of communism was one of the most broadly held convictions in white politics and as a right-wing fringe group the Hertzog-men saw an opportunity to capitalise on the anticommunist consensus. Antikom chair, Piet Meyer, although not directly affiliated with the Hertzog-group, was argued by journalists Ivor Wilken and Hans Strydom to have been the so-called spiritual father of these archconservative nationalists. He, as well as the Hertzog-group, shared deep reservations about the direction that Verwoerd was heading with his drive to unify white society – Meyer had a predisposition for maintaining Afrikaner power rather than white power – and the independence of the homelands. That said, Meyer was not prepared to risk openly criticising Verwoerd. The Prime Minister was aware of Meyer's scepticism of his policies, but in 1959 when Hertzog, as Minister of Post Services and Telecommunications, proposed that Meyer take charge of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Verwoerd agreed and appointed him.[88] After accepting this powerful position, Meyer decided to step down as Antikom chair. The following year Meyer was elected chair of the Broederbond, where he furthered his anticommunist agenda. In one of his early addresses as

[86] For an in-depth survey of the Hertzog-group and its activities, see Serfontein, *Die Verkrapte Aanslag*.
[87] For instance, the GHA (established in 1966) sought to pressure the FAK into a more fundamentalist direction by being its populist cultural alternative. See Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, 28.
[88] Meyer claims Hertzog was instrumental in his appointment, see Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, 80-1.

chairperson, Meyer declared that 'as a [*volk*], we want to be an instrument in the hands of God to take on the struggle against communism'.[89] The Antikom board decided to replace Meyer with Schalk Botha.[90] To the public, he was presented in vague terms as 'a businessman from Pretoria', but in reality, he was Hertzog's closest confidant.[91] By this time, Botha had been Hertzog's loyal lieutenant for twenty years. He was at his side during his labour initiatives and in charge of the Hertzog's business empire. Prior to his appointment to Antikom, he had been the quiet driving force behind the Hertzog-group's work.[92]Schalk Botha's appointment as Antikom chair was the Hertzog-group's first move to enhance its relevance through anticommunism. Antikom, as the central body of the Afrikaans churches, became a vehicle through which the group sought to gain mainstream legitimacy. With Botha appointed as chair of Antikom, his position transformed from a behind-the-scenes operative of a fringe group within Afrikanerdom, to a public anticommunist leader with the legitimacy that came with affiliation to the DRC and its sister churches.

For the Hertzog-group to succeed, it was imperative that Antikom's moral legitimacy among the *volk* remained intact. Here they relied on the personality of Dan de Beer. From 1962, De Beer served as the secretary of the DRC's National Commission for Public Morality, which gave him immense clout within South Africa. De Beer's conservative views on what constituted a moral society led the English press to refer to him as 'The Sin Hunter', while he was generally known as 'Mr. Morals'.[93] He was also a constant and central figure in Antikom from its inception. As discussed in the previous chapter, De Beer initiated the 1946 congress

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[89] I. Wilkins & H. Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, *Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond*, (Jonathan Ball Publishers: Johannesburg, 2012), 317.

[90] Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, 24. The exact process to elect a new chair remains unclear, but it was a decision made by the Antikom board. An archival gap in the Antikom minutes makes it difficult to identify who exactly served on the board at the time. According to the Antikom constitution, the founding members remained lifelong members, so one can conclude that Nico Diederichs, Piet Meyer, Dan de Beer (of the DRC), Jan de Klerk (who was now minister of work and public work) were possibly still involved in Antikom. Numerically, Antikom remained dominated by DRC clergy from the Transvaal and Cape synods.

[91] *Christendom teen Kommunisme: Referate Gelewer by die Volkskongres oor Kommunisme*, (Volkskongres oor Kommunisme: Pretoria, 1964), 5.

[92] Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, 23. On Botha's fundamentalist activism in the Broederbond, see Wilkins & Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, 179; On Botha's role in Hertzog's labour initiatives in the 1940s, see W. Visser, 'Dr. Albert Hertzog se bemoeienis met die Mynwerkersunie', *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 2, 1 (July 2006), 145-164.

[93] K. Anderson, 'Mr. Morals: the Rev. Daniel F.B. de Beer,' *The Cape Argus*, 27 July 1963; C. Birkby, 'The Twenty Most Powerful People in South Africa Today,' *Sunday Times*, 14 July 1963; De Beer campaigned against horse- and dog racing, miniskirts, bikinis, evolutionary theory, shops that are open on Sundays and planes that fly on Sundays, liquor sales to black people and at the Voortrekker monument, and avant-garde books in Afrikaans. See DA Scholtz, 'De Beer, Daniël Ferdinand Bosman (Dan)', *elektroniese Christelike Kernensiklopedie (eCKE)*, https://ecke.co.za/de-beer-daniel-ferdinand-bosman-dan/ [accessed on 11 April 2021], 4 December 2019.

where Antikom was born and acted as the organisation's secretary until his death in 1972. In his memoir, Piet Meyer pointed to De Beer as the person who was really in charge of operating the organisation's machinery.[94] His prominent position in the DRC, Antikom, and as a public commentator, prompted the *Sunday Times* newspaper in 1963 to consider De Beer as one of the top twenty most powerful people in South Africa.[95]

De Beer embodied the church's anticommunist position, which framed communist subversion as a threat to the morality of the Afrikaner community. Writing in *Die Transvaler* in January 1964, De Beer argued that 'communism is busy gnawing on the moral roots of the South African way of life' and in an interview elsewhere he stated that 'immorality … is a powerful weapon in the hands of Communism'.[96] The crusade against immorality as a form of anticommunism also served to reinforce Afrikaner support for the state, as De Beer explained in clear Christian-Nationalist terms: 'Every Christian-Afrikaner must be wary and pray and exert his effort to combat immorality [which is the tool of the communist] … to strengthen the Christian foundation of the State.'[97] This re-emphasised how the DRC employed anticommunism to foster its role as the moral legitimiser of the apartheid state. While it was argued in chapter 2 that Antikom had struggled to gain momentum in the 1950s, it was revitalised in the mid-1960s as the notion of anticommunism as a unifying symbol grew, and as a result of the opportunism of the right-wing Hertzog-group. It was ready to take centre stage again in the battle against communism. As Schalk Botha explained, after the government and police effectively supressed communism's frontal attack on South Africa, the focus should now move to 'the new indirect flank attacks' which were targeting every aspect of society.[98] As the key moral anticommunist body, an energised Antikom was set to take a central place in coordinating a defence against these unidentified 'flank attacks'.

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[94] Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, 24.
[95] C. Birkby, 'The Twenty Most Powerful People in South Africa Today,' *Sunday Times*, 14 July 1963.
[96] D.F.B. de Beer, 'My Ideale Suid-Afrika,' *Die Transvaler*, 3 January 1964. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die kommunisme is besig om aan die seedlike en geestelike wortels van die Suid-Afrikaanse lewenswyse te knaag.'; K. Anderson, 'Mr. Morals: the Rev. Daniel F.B. de Beer,' *The Cape Argus*, 27 July 1963.
[97] D.F.B. de Beer, 'My Ideale Suid-Afrika,' *Die Transvaler*, 3 January 1964. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Daarom moet elke Christen-Afrikaner waak en bid en y kragte inspan om onsedelikheid … te bestry en die Christeliek grondlsap van die Staat te verstewig.'
[98] 'NHK Gee Steun aan Volkskongres oor die Kommunisme,' *Die Burger*, 6 December 1963.

‘The most important moment in our volk’s history’: The *Volkskongres* on communism (1964)[99]

The driving force behind Antikom remained the Hertzog-group, who now had a disproportionate level of influence within organised anticommunism. This position was used to advance their strategy of pushing public opinion toward a more conservative tilt, while establishing a legitimate platform to pressurise the state. The clearest display of this came when Antikom organised a *volkskongres* (national congress) on communism. Gatherings like this had been a recurring feature in Afrikaner politics previously – in 1934, for example, on poor whites, 1939 and 1950 on the Afrikaner’s economic position, and in 1944 on race policy.[100] The political scientist Newell Stultz astutely observed that, ‘in every case, the convening of a *Volkskongres* marked the emergence of a new issue in Afrikaner politics and the beginning of a general effort at mobilising the Afrikaner public’.[101] The issue at hand was the longstanding matter of communism, but mobilising against so-called ‘flank attacks’ was now the priority.

The Hertzog-group’s influence in the *volkskongres* was clear from the start. The first proposal at the *volkskongres* on communism was made by a long serving Hertzog-man, AD Pont, a theologian of the NHK, at a meeting of the AB’s public front organisation, *Rapportryers* on 27 November 1963.[102] Merely two days later, Beaumont Schoeman, a member of the Hertzog-group, reported in *Die Vaderland*, the NP’s mouthpiece in the Transvaal, that the idea of such a *volkskongres* ‘is busy spreading like a wildfire and is finding resonance in all possible areas’.[103] This comment came after two prominent Hertzog-aligned NP politicians, Jaap Marais and Connie Mulder, had publicly endorsed the idea.[104] A few days later, the Antikom executive announced that it was officially organising a *volkskongres* on communism. On 6 December

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[99] This was the bold claim made by the mayor of Pretoria, PJ van der Walt, at the opening of the *Volkskongres* on communism. See *Christendom teen Kommunisme*, 8.
[100] For publications produced by these gatherings, see *Volkskongres oor die Armblanke-vraagstuk, Kimberley, 2de tot 5de Oktober 1934,* (Kimberley: Diamond Fields Advertiser, 1934); *Ekonomiese Volkskongres: referate, besluite en presensielys, 3-5 Okotber 1939, Bloemfontein*, (Johannesburg: FAK, 1939); Verslag van die Tweede Ekonomiese Volkskongres (1950), 4-6 Oktober 1950, Bloemfontein, (Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers, 1950); ‘Die Rassebeleid van die Afrikaner: Besluite van die Volkskongres, Bloemfontein, September 1944’, Op die Horison, March 1945, 1, 16-23.
[101] N.M. Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa, 1934-1948*, (University of California Press: Berkley, 1975), 178.
[102] *Christendom teen Kommunisme*, 5.
[103] Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, 52. Translated from Afrikaans: ‘… besig is om soos ‘n veldbrand te versprei en weerklank op alle moontlike terreine te vind.’
[104] *Ibid.*

1963, the NHK (a member church of Antikom) publicly endorsed the announcement, becoming the first church to do so.[105] It should be noted that the NHK had emerged as a powerful conservative voice during the Cottesloe consultations when it gained public clout for its sharp rejection of the meeting's statement which preceded the DRC's later dismissal. Some DRC leaders even feared a post-Cottesloe exodus of its members to the NHK.[106] This gave the NHK a disproportionate amount of confidence and credence within Afrikaner circles – its membership accounted for approximately 6% of Afrikaners, while the DRC represented 43%.[107] Some of the NHK leaders, such as Pont and AJG Oosthuizen, were strongly aligned with the Hertzog-group, and Serfontein argues, perhaps hyperbolically, that the NHK could have been regarded as a front organisation of the Hertzog-group.[108] The DRC, on the other hand, had always been a broad church of Afrikaners. It was the home of purists and pragmatists, and congregants in every part of the country from all classes. The church did not initially endorse or mobilise for the *volkskongress* with the same enthusiasm as the NHK. Despite that, its influence within Afrikaner society made it possible for the DRC to garner greater support for any anticommunist endeavour, with less effort than any other Afrikaner organisation. The DRC eventually supported Antikom's congress, and it was announced in all official church publications, and participation was encouraged on a synodical level.[109]

By the end of 1963, after open consultation with a range of representatives from cultural, educational, and economic organisations, who all gave their support for such a congress, Antikom established an organising committee to begin the planning of the *volkskongres* on communism.[110] It was unclear how members were chosen for this committee, but they were all directly or indirectly part of the Hertzog-group. It was chaired by Antikom chair Schalk Botha, who was assisted by co-vice-chairman JF Allen, a minister of the Church of England in South Africa, and PW Jordaan of the DRC and member of Antikom's board. The editor of the DRC Transvaal Synod's official mouthpiece, *Die Voorligter,* and ideological purist hardliner within the DRC, AJV Burger and SED Brown, editor of *The South African Observer*, a conversative political tract distributed in the English-speaking community, was

[105] 'NHK Gee Steun aan Volkskongres oor die Kommunisme', *Die Burger*, 6 December 1963.
[106] Lückhoff, *Cottesloe*, 105; 126.
[107] *Ibid.*, 128; For the statistical breakdown, see Appendix 3 in R.T.J. Lombard, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke en Rassepolitiek met spesiale verwysing na die jare 1948-1961*, (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel Transvaal, 1981), 282.
[108] Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte* Aanslag, 38.
[109] 'Die Volkskongres', *Kerkbode*, 4 March 1964, 305.
[110] *Christendom teen Kommunisme*, 5.

joined by the right-winger Ivor Benson of the SABC to represent conservative media interests on the committee.[111] The FAK and Broederbond were both represented by Piet Koornhof, the cultural director of the former and secretary of the latter organisation. Two theologians, AD Pont of the NHK and WJ Snyman of the *Gereformeerde Kerk* (GK), also served on the committee, together with two clerics of the NHK and the GK. GJ Potgieter, principal of the Pretoria Education College, and Jaap Marais, conservative NP MP, were also on the committee. GH Beetge, general secretary of the *Blanke Bouwerkersbond* (White Builders Union – BBWB), was the committee's secretary.[112] He was also one of Hertzog's closest deputies and was the Hertzog-group's most important link to the labour front.[113] The composition of this committee was a display of the Hertzog-group's ambition to push its agenda on a national level through Antikom, at the time the most prominent moral anticommunist body in the country.

The theme of the congress was *Christianity against Communism*, which was bound to draw the attention and imagination of a society as Christian and as avowedly anticommunist as white South Africa.[114] The committee emphasised that the *volkskongres* would draw on both Afrikaners and the English-speaking community to unify white society against communism. This was aligned with the broader political tone of white unity set out by Verwoerd after the formation of the Republic in 1961.[115] By this time, the AB had also adopted a program to win English-speakers' favour for the Afrikaner-cause.[116] Nationalist politics had by now entered into an era which, as Moodie described it, was 'shifting away from Afrikaner exclusivity, toward an inclusive white unity'.[117] This white unity called for a substitute doctrine to the ethnic and cultural nationalism that had preceded it. The question was on what principles such a doctrine ought to be built. Anticommunism was part of the answer to this problem. Stultz explained that the fear of communism became a unifying white phobia which replaced the earlier Afrikaner Anglophobia, whilst also merging with the ever-present fear of black

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[111] According to historian Donal Lowry, Benson was convinced of 'a communist world conspiracy, combining the BBC, the World Council of Churches, Wall Street, the Kremlin and other advocates of a denationalising and 'one world philosophy'.' D. Lowry, 'The Impact of Anti-communism on White Rhodesian Political Culture ca. 1920s-1980', *Cold War History*, 7, 2 (May 2007), 179-180.
[112] *Christendom teen Kommunisme*, 5.
[113] Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, 24.
[114] Between 73-76% of South Africans indicated that they were Christian in the 1960 and 1970 census. (J. Hendriks, 'Census 2001: Religion in South Africa with denominational trends 1911-2001', in J. Symington (ed.), *South African Christian Handbook 2005-2006*, (Tydskriftemaatskappy van die NG Kerk, Wellington: 2005), 77.
[115] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 525.
[116] A.N. Pelzer, *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond: Eerste 50 Jaar*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1979), 92-3.
[117] Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 287.

dominance over whites.[118] Hertzog and his network were, however, critical of Verwoerd's inclusive policy and firmly believed in Afrikaner-dominance of state and society. Despite that, they also understood that a broader white anticommunist platform would draw them closer to the mainstream of Afrikaner nationalist politics. To have excluded the English-speaking community in their anticommunist efforts would once again have consigned the Hertzog-group to the margins.

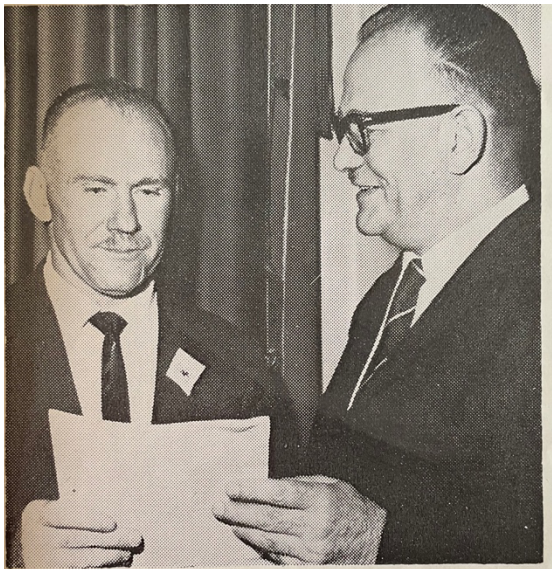

Figure 3: Volkskongres organisers GH Beetge (left) and Schalk Botha (right) at the opening of the congress of 1964 (Christendom teen Kommunisme, 1)

The message was clear: the *volkskongres* on communism would be a display of white unity. In the press coverage leading up to the congress, Botha and Beetge declared that the gathering would be the most representative event of its kind. Beetge gave the assurance that the congress's 150-person coordinating group would be represented evenly by English and Afrikaans speakers, and Botha claimed that despite some unsympathetic press, positive responses were streaming in from both the English and Afrikaans community.[119] There were even claims that American and Australian observers would be attending.[120] In reality however, the public attempts to cast the *volkskongres* as a gathering of the English and Afrikaans sectors of society on an equal footing was a façade. English speakers did not even represent a quarter of the executive committee or of the long list of sponsors. Only an estimated 15-20% of the 2,428 congress attendees were English speakers.[121] The weak showing from the English community may have revealed the inability of the Afrikaner organisers to mobilise anyone outside of the *volk*. Furthermore, the English press' depiction of the congress as a gathering of fringe conservatives is also likely to have made it difficult to gain broad English support for the gathering.

[118] Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics*, 177.
[119] 'Christendom teen Kommunisme kongres se tema', *Die Vaderland*, 31 January 1964; 'Sowat 3 000 sal Kongres oor Rooies Bywoon', *Die Vaderland*, 15 January 1964.
[120] 'Christendom teen Kommunisme kongres se tema', *Die Vaderland*, 31 January 1964.
[121] ''Mumbo-Jumbo' at Congress on Communism', *The Natal Mercury*, 4 April 1964.

On 31 March 1964, Pretoria Town Hall welcomed delegates and the public to the *volkskongres* on communism. The attendees consisted of prominent businessmen, university rectors, members of the security forces, and academics. By far the largest group of attendees, however, came from the DRC and its sister churches. Some reports indicated that almost half of all attendees, both as delegates and in an unofficial capacity, were clergy from the Afrikaans churches.[122] Over the next three days, the audience heard speeches from clergy and academics on the historical background of communism, its tactics to attack the church, and how it had infiltrated Western culture. The alleged 'communist program for Africa' was also discussed, as well as the suggestion that communist revolutions were initiated to bring about world domination.[123] The congress covered a wide range of topics, but the content of the speeches broadly followed a similar logic with varying emphases. All speakers made it clear that 'liberalism' – this was any organisation or idea that was not conservative – was the greatest vehicle for communist infiltration.[124] 'Communist' and 'liberalist' were frequently used in the same breath, or interchangeably, in a deliberate effort to blur the boundaries between the two ideas. In doing so, the congress invoked an expired form of McCarthyism. This practice of undermining political opponents by making unsubstantiated claims of their communist affiliation, whilst also questioning their patriotism, was a prominent feature in the US during the opening phases of the Cold War.[125] It led to a political climate of suspicion and fear in the US which was similar to what the congress attempted to create with religious undertones in South Africa. This was clearly displayed in the way speakers and discussants specifically targeted the WCC, the UN, and the 'liberal' press. Without providing any evidence, the WCC and UN were accused of falling under the influence of communists, the CI was described as a front for the WCC, and the 'liberal' press were accused of paving the way for communist subversion.[126]

Some Afrikaans newspapers provided positive press coverage of the congress during the three-day long consultation. The northern-based nationalist newspaper, *Die Vaderland,*

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[122] ''Mumbo-Jumbo' at Congress on Communism', *The Natal Mercury*, 4 April 1964.
[123] All the speeches and discussions were compiled and published in *Christendom teen Kommunisme: Referate Gelewer by die Volkskongres oor Kommunisme*, (Volkskongres oor Kommunisme: Pretoria, 1964).
[124] B. Thompson, 'Die Illusie van Goedhartigheid', in *Christendom teen Kommunisme: Referate Gelewer by die Volkskongres oor Kommunisme*, (Volkskongres oor Kommunisme: Pretoria, 1964), 103.
[125] L.R.Y. Storrs, 'McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, 2 July 2015, 2.
[126] See for instance B.J. Engelbracht, 'Die Kommunistiese Aanslag op die Kerk'; J.D. Vorster, 'Kommunisme in Aksie' in *Christendom teen Kommunisme*.

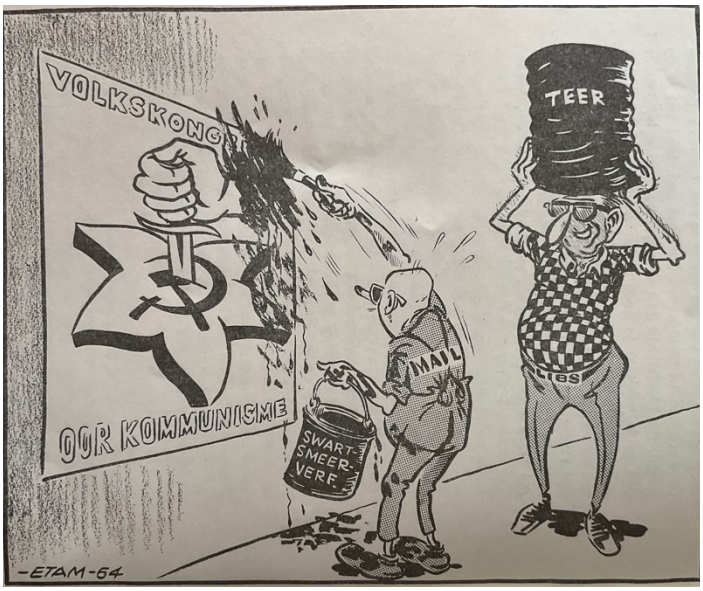

Figure 4: A cartoon from Die Transvaler during the Volkskongres. The liberal press is depicted tarring and feathering the Volkskongres (Christendom teen Kommunisme)

promoted a fear-inducing front-page with the heading 'Rooies Voorspel Bloedstryd teen SA' (Reds predict bloody struggle against South Africa) and reported on a global communist plot that was targeting the Republic with 'devilish devotion'.[127] There were more critical voices within the broader white community, whom the congress had aimed to unite. The congress had evidently stretched the broader anticommunist consensus within white society beyond its limits. This was reflected in both the southern Afrikaans and English newspapers, who wrote of the smug outlook of those attending the congress, which was 'highlighted by cheers and jeers, clapping and back-slapping – and a few incidents which proved that this was not in fact a conference, but a series of lectures aimed at consolidating the extreme Right-wing stand against liberalism'.[128] Antikom and its allies were criticised for overplaying a valid critique of communism as 'they felt it would be a good thing to try and change them [whites] from non-Communists into anti-Communists'. The ever-critical nationalist editor of *Die Burger*, Piet Cillier, commented in his *Dawie*-column that the affiliates and the tone of the congress made him 'fear the possibility of greater damage to anti-Communism, which is currently strong, determined, and purposeful in South Africa, than to Communism.'[129] In a similar tone, *The Star* claimed the congress 'has confused the public, focussed attention on the wrong things, increased the danger of an era of McCarthyism, presented Communism with a whole lot of respectable associates, and gone some way to making Communism itself sound respectable'.[130]

[127] 'Rooies Voorspel Bloedstryd teen SA', *Die Vaderland*, 1 April 1964, 1.
[128] L. Bennet, 'Smug Outlook at Anti-Red Congress', *Sunday Times*, 5 April 1964, 12.
[129] 'Dawie', *Die Burger*, 14 December 1963. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ek vrees die moontlikheid van groter skade aan die anti-Kommunisme, wat op die oomblik in Suid-Afrika sterk, vasberade en doelgerig is, as aan die Kommunimse.'
[130] 'A dangerous congress', *The Star*, 3 April 1964.

This, *The Star* concluded, played into the hands of the enemy: 'If they are killing fatted calves in Moscow and Peking [Beijing] today, nobody need be surprised.'[131]

The *volkskongres* retaliated; on the last day of the congress, DRC leader, JS Gericke, condemned the 'attacks' from the press and called for a ban on the so-called 'liberalist' media. The applause that followed this statement was reportedly so rousing that Gericke struggled to be heard as he advocated for a ban on the liberalist press.[132] Gericke's demand was added to in the final resolutions of the congress:

> The *Volkskongres* seriously urges the Government to actively and decisively act against the liberal press which, under the guise of "Freedom of the press", is softening our *volk* to Communism and undermines the authority of the State.[133]

The most tangible decision taken by the congress was to form another grand anticommunist organisation. Antikom had set out to advance a Christian-Nationalist agenda against communism, but its activities were limited to distributing anticommunist information, whilst also remaining a church-centric body. The *volkskongres* was a catalyst to reenergise anticommunist sentiments amongst a broader base and to establish a more ambitious organisation, reminiscent of the mass economic movement of the 1940s, that would have anticommunist tentacles in every sector of Afrikaner society. A mandate was given to a select group at the congress to create an organisation which would fend off communist attacks and fight for the advancement of the Christian-Nationalist antidote to communism. This group was,

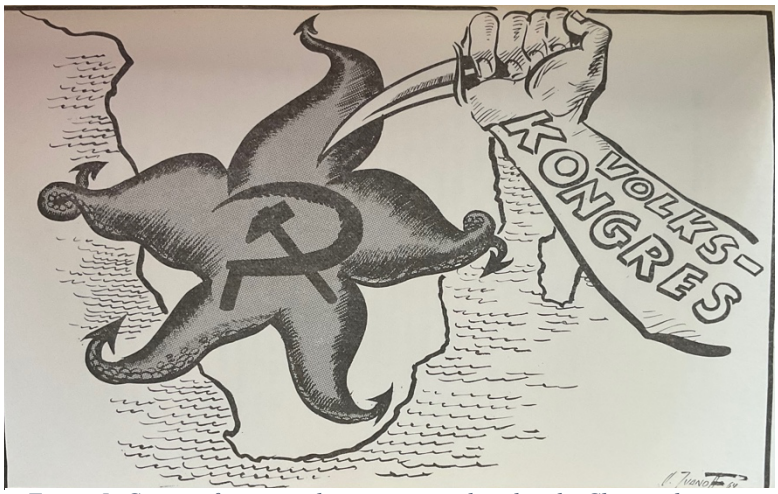

Figure 5: Cartoon from an unknown source placed in the Christendom teen Kommunisme book [Christendom against Communism}. The Volkskongres is depicted as the force that will kill off the communist tentacles spreading across southern Africa (Christendom teen Kommunisme)

[131] 'A dangerous congress', *The Star*, 3 April 1964.
[132] '"Liberalistic Press" is Condemned', *Pretoria News*, 2 April 1964.
[133] *Christendom teen Kommunisme*, 272-3. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die Volkskongres drin baie ernstig by die Regering daarop aan om daadwerklik en beslissend op te tree *teen* die liberalistiese pers wat onder die dekmental van die "Vryheid van die Pers" ons volk sagmaak vir Kommunisme en die gesag van die Staat ondermyn.'

unsurprisingly, dominated by Hertzog-men. Botha and Beetge became central figures in the development of the new comprehensive anticommunist organisation, which was called the National Council against Communism (NCC). It was established in the spirit of greater collaboration across the cultural-political (*kultuurpolitiek*) spectrum, expanding what Antikom was to the Afrikaans churches to organised Afrikanerdom more broadly.

The NCC fell under the jurisdiction of the Broederbond, which also acted as its main financier. Piet Meyer, who remained involved with Antikom, had been elected as chair of the Broederbond in 1960. Under his leadership, the AB re-emphasised the threat communism posed to Afrikaners. The Broederbond had been actively distributing anticommunist information to all its members which helped to create a conducive atmosphere amongst Afrikaners for the establishment of a grand anticommunist organisation such as the NCC.[134] The nature of the Broederbond's relationship with the NCC, however, remained informal. The Hertzog-men, who pushed for the formation of this council, believed that it needed a leader with solid anticommunist credentials and legitimacy within Afrikanerdom. This person was to be found in the vice-chair of the DRC Cape synod, Koot Vorster, whose speech at the *volkskongres* was to some extent the catalyst for this new organisation.[135] Vorster told the congress that once communists target a specific country then an array of front organisations systematically operated to attack every sphere of that society. He described a hostile world where so-called communist aligned international organisations, strategically placed experts and intellectuals, clandestine groups, and agents who infiltrated unsuspecting organisations including schools and churches, all formed part of communist efforts to overthrow South Africa. The only way to counter this, according to Vorster, was to fight fire with fire by systematically organising against such advances.[136] The Broederbond, Hertzog-group, and Vorster's perception of the existence of a communist campaign on all fronts in South Africa were thus mirrored by the NCC. Vorster had, by this time, become the de facto spokesperson for the purist faction in the DRC, and his ideas were aligned with the Hertzog-group. He was not a member of the Broederbond but was invited to join the AB and to accept the position as head of the NCC, which he did in 1964.[137]

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[134] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 490-1.
[135] See, J.D. Vorster, 'Kommunisme in Aksie', in *Christendom teen Kommunisme*.
[136] Vorster, 'Kommunisme in Aksie', 77.
[137] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 272.

Vorster unites with the Right

Koot Vorster's new position put him at the intersection between Afrikaner anticommunism, right-wing politics, and the DRC's moral standing in society. These domains were united in their opposition to communism, but their differences in anticommunist emphasis made it difficult for the new figurehead to strike a balance. The state utilised anticommunism, with the initial moral support of the DRC, to supress black dissent. In real terms, Vorster had to balance the DRC's call to morally and spiritually strengthen the *volk* against communist perversion on the one hand, and right-wing opportunists attempts to gain political influence through anticommunism on the other. Vorster's position became clear shortly after being elected NCC chair. Two anonymous articles appeared in the *Antikom Newsletter* of August 1964 based on the antisemitic trope that Jews were propagators of communism.[138] The first article claimed, without evidence and no clear objective other than to propagate antisemitic rhetoric, that Vladamir Lenin had been born to Jewish parents.[139] The other article set out to prove, again with little evidence, that Jews were responsible for communist atrocities in Soviet Russia.[140] The Jewish press in South Africa swiftly and sharply condemned the anti-Semitic views expressed in these articles.[141] In an interview with the *SA Jewish Times* Vorster doubled down on the claims made in the Antikom articles. He further claimed that a disproportionate number of Jews were involved in communist activities. Vorster subsequently criticised the Jewish community as the only group in South African society who had not joined in the broader struggle against communism.[142] The Antikom executive also supported Vorster's claims and invited the Jewish Board of Deputies to provide their account of the origins of communism in Soviet Russia, which would be published in the *Antikom Newsletter*.[143] The Jewish Board refused to indulge Antikom's attempt at debate. The *South African Jewish Times* strongly dismissed Vorster's challenge with a veiled criticism of the conformism that was sprouting out of the anticommunist movement. Its editorial on 2 November 1964 read: 'South African Jewry will uphold, without fear or favour, the democratic right of each and every Jewish citizen to

[138] For earlier accounts of antisemitism within Afrikaner politics, see M. Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1994); M. Shain, *A Perfect Storm: Antisemitism in South Africa 1930-1948*, (Jonathan Ball: Johannesburg, 2015).
[139] 'Aangename Kennis, Mnr. Haim Golfmann', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, August 1964, 5.
[140] 'Wie het die Kommunisme in Rusland gevestig?', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, August 1964, 7-8.
[141] 'Anticom: A Tissue of Lies', *Jewish Herald*, 13 October 1964, 1; 'The "Antikom" Pamphlet', *Zionist Record and SA Jewish Chronicle*, 16 October 1964.
[142] 'Dr. Vorster "Warns" the Jewish Community', *South African Jewish Times*, 6 November 1964, 1.
[143] DRCA, PPV 998, DFB de Beer – Secretary of the Jewish Board of Deputies, 20 November 1964.

decide public issues for himself, without an internal communal dictation that would be as unlawful as it would be unthinkable… We will repulse any attempt to stampede us into a kraal.'[144]

Vorster and Antikom did not only cross a line in the eyes of the Jewish community of South Africa. They were also chastised for their anti-Semitic views by Afrikaner newspapers, and more importantly, by the DRC. Antisemitism had long been present on the fringes of Afrikaner politics, reaching its height during the Second World War with the growing prominence of the OB (see Chapter 1). By the 1960s however, this sentiment had been relegated to the outermost margins of Afrikaner politics due to greater Afrikaner economic prosperity and a political atmosphere of white unity.[145] The majority of the Hertzog-men were old OB-members, including Vorster. It was not surprising, then, that their brand of anticommunism tapped into an underlying current of antisemitism. To *Die Burger,* the *Antikom Newsletter* articles were unmistakably anti-Semitic, which was based on a 'kind of pseudo-contemplation'. Antisemitism, it argued, was as 'equally strange and sly [an] ideology' in South Africa as communism. Vorster and Antikom's antisemitism confirmed *Die Burger's* earlier concern about the *volkskongres* on communism: 'public anticommunist action, just like Communism itself, is appealing to a certain lesser balanced type of person that finds in it an emotional outlet, but in the process causes great damage to the cause by gifting points to the enemy.'[146] The brand of anticommunism advocated by Vorster and Antikom was even recognised as right-wing fringe within Afrikaner circles, albeit by those in the more *verligte* camp.

Die Burger's description made it clear that the anticommunism of Antikom and the NCC found itself on the periphery of the Afrikaner consensus against communism. This became even more apparent when the DRC officially distanced itself from *Antikom Newsletter's* articles and Vorster's defence thereof. 'If I know my Church,' responded AJ van der Merwe, the moderator of the DRC, 'you won't find a Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church

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[144] 'Dr. Vorster's Threat', *South African Jewish Times*, 6 November 1964, 12.
[145] M. Shain, 'Antisemitism and the Far Right in South Africa, 1930-1994' in M. Baumgarten, P. Kenez, B. Thompson, *Varieties of Antisemitism: History, Ideology, Discourse*, (University of Delaware Press: Newark, 2009), 284.
[146] 'Onnodige Twisgesprek', *Die Burger*, 6 November 1964. Translated from Afrikaans: 'dat openbare anti-Kommunistiese aksie, net soos die Kommunisme self, aantreklik is vir seker minder gebalanseerde mensetipes wat daarin emosionele ontrlading vind, maar in die proses die saak groot skade aandoen deur punte aan die vyand present te gee.'

in any of the provinces that would support or lend itself to any movement which aims at persecuting the Jews. They disapprove of it strongly.'[147] Frans O'Brien Geldenhuys, a leader in the Transvaal synod, publicly denounced the articles, stating that it does not 'reflect the attitude of the DRC'.[148] The Cape Synod, of which Vorster was vice-chair, was more cautious in its criticism, and requested Antikom to launch an internal investigation on the matter to prevent such a lapse in judgement in the future which in effect was merely a slap on the wrist.[149] It was clear from the DRC's reaction that the right-wing anticommunist coalition of Antikom and Vorster, as leader of the NCC, had overplayed their hand. This anticommunist axis found itself on the periphery within the broader DRC, yet Vorster had learned that radical rhetoric generated much-needed public attention to garner support for the anticommunist cause. As chair of the NCC he would later employ this tactic on the international stage.

The DRC, with its long history as a *volkskerk*, was, quite literally a broad church, which had to accommodate an ever-wider spectrum of Afrikaner creeds and classes filling its benches as the nature of the *volk* evolved over time. Cottesloe had cemented the DRC's loyalty to the NP. Like Verwoerd, the DRC had allowed anticommunists free rein through its financial and moral support of Antikom, as it served the church's broader agenda of strengthening the *volk's* spiritual and moral resilience against communism. Nevertheless, the right-wing anticommunists which had come to dominate Antikom, and their DRC ally, Vorster, had now demonstrated their opposition to the widely held consensus of white unity that the NP and, by association the DRC, stood for. The DRC had seldom espoused anti-Semitic sentiments in the post-WWII period.[150] The new direction of the right-wing anticommunists was thus at odds with the broader anticommunist conviction of Afrikanerdom.

Forging bonds across the Atlantic: The NCC and the American Anticommunist Crusade

The DRC's reprimand of Vorster and Antikom's antisemitism disguised as anticommunism had little effect on the right-wingers. The Hertzog-group now had a new and much larger anticommunist platform in the NCC to mobilise from, without the risk of another DRC-

[147] 'Dr. Vorster's Threat', *South African Jewish Times*, 6 November 1964, 12.
[148] 'Antikom-berigte nie N.G. Kerk se Houding', *Dagbreek*, 8 November 1964, 6.
[149] DRCA, PPV 998, Scriba-synodi (Wes-Kaap) – DFB de Beer, 17 November 1964.
[150] M. Shain, 'Ambivalence, Antipathy, and Accommodation: Christianity and the Jews' in Elphick & Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa*, 283.

backlash. Antikom was still under the control of the Hertzog-group, but the focus was now on expanding the NCC. Vorster was an important figure in this regard. He set out to connect with likeminded anticommunists abroad, and amidst the heightened Cold War-climate, discovered influential Christian anticommunist movements in the United States, who had drawn his attention during the Cottesloe consultations when the ICCC's propaganda had permeated in purist circles of the DRC.

During the 1950s, the powerful Protestant fundamentalist wing of American Christianity, such as the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), was dominated by a rising radical far-right faction. Central to their beliefs were what the historian WL Vinz identified as the five-point Fundamentalist creed: 'verbal and infallible inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, his substitutionary atonement on the cross, his physical and bodily resurrection, and his imminent, premillennial second coming.'[151] As opposed to its more liberal counterparts – some scholars have described this group as the 'New Evangelicals' who were open to cooperating with ecumenical bodies and secular organisations – the radical conservative segment were politically minded and aligned with the right-wing of American politics.[152] Core to this group's beliefs was a deep commitment to anticommunism, and out of this grew a new generation of religious-political pundits who spread their views through personal speaking engagements and mass media.[153] This was known as the Christian anticommunist crusade.[154]

The leading anticommunist crusader was Carl McIntire, who was a prominent preacher, activist, and right-wing broadcaster during the Cold War. Like Vorster, he was aligned with neo-Kuyperian thought and staunchly opposed to all forms of modernity. The historian Heather Hendershot aptly captured McIntire's essence: 'Never willing to give up, always looking for conspiracies when things did not go his way, and a model of fundamentalist hostility toward

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[151] W. L. Vinz, 'The Politics of Protestant Fundamentalism in the 1950's and 1960's' *Journal of Church and State*, 1972, 14 (2), 235-6.
[152] Vinz, 'Politics of Protestant Fundamentalism', 236; see also, M. Ruotsila, 'Carl McIntire and the Fundamentalist Origins of the Christian Right,' *Church History*, June 2018, 81(2), 328-607; A.R. Schäfer, *Countercultural Conservatives: American Evangelicalism from the Postwar Revival to the New Christian Right*, (The University of Wisconsin Press: Wisconsin, 2011).
[153] Vinz, 'Politics of Protestant Fundamentalism', 235.
[154] See, C. Wilcox, 'Popular Backing for the Old Christian Right: Explaining Support for the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade', *Journal of Social History*, 21, 1 (1987), 117-132.

modernity, McIntire might well be described as God's angriest man.'[155] Central to McIntire's gospel was his anticommunist conviction. According to historian Markku Ruotsila, in the early years of the Cold War, when McCarthyism was still flourishing and 'all manner of Americans competed for credentials as the staunchest of all anticommunists, [McIntire] was set apart by the intensity, organisation, and scope of his effort'.[156] His magazine, *Christian Beacon*, with up to 150,000 subscribers, and his radio program, *The Twentieth Century Reformation Hour*, which was carried by more than 600 radio stations, became staples for anticommunist activists during the 1950s.[157]

The similarities between the NCC's approach to anticommunist propaganda in the 1960s and that of McIntyre in the 1950s suggested that Vorster had drawn some inspiration from the American crusaders. The manner in which McIntire gained religious and secular anticommunist influence through these propaganda syndicates and speaking engagements, seemingly stimulated Vorster to follow suit. Rather than setting up new structures, the NCC used the *Antikom Newspaper* and state broadcaster as syndicates. Both organisations had strong ties to NCC – Meyer for example supported the NCC as leader of the Broederbond, but was also a member of the Antikom board, and chair of the state broadcaster. Members of the Hertzog-group such as Schalk Botha were also still leading figures in Antikom and were supportive of the NCC's ambition to become a leading cultural organisation. The NCC approached Antikom's board in the summer of 1967 to propose the takeover and expansion of its newsletter. The plan was to develop the *Antikom Newsletter* into a 'sturdy conservative publication' by creating a new company under NCC control, with the Afrikaans churches as stakeholders.[158]

The idea of establishing a company to develop the *Antikom Newsletter* into a fully-fledged monthly newsletter, had broad support in the Antikom board, but there was some discomfort with the NCC's control of such an endeavour. The DRC representatives believed that *Antikom Newsletter* had established a good reputation amongst Afrikaans churches and by

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[155] H. Hendershot, 'God's Angriest Man: Carl McIntire, Cold War Fundamentalism, and Right-Wing Broadcasting', *American Quarterly*, June 2007, 59(2), 375.
[156] M. Ruotsila, 'Carl McIntire and the Fundamentalist Origins of the Christian Right', *Church History*, June 2018, 81(2), 391.
[157] D. Dochuk, From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservativism, (W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2010), 152.
[158] The Heritage Foundation Archive, Afrikaner Broederbond Collections, (Hereafter the ABC), AB 1/1/130/2, 'Nasionale Raad teen Kommunisme: Sekretariële Verslag 27 April 1967', 1. Translated from Afrikaans: ''n stewige konserwatiewe publikasie'

transferring the publication to an NCC-controlled company they ran the risk of losing that trust if it was not directly linked with the Afrikaans churches. There thus existed some tension on the Antikom board between the Hertzog-men, who were supportive of the NCC's proposal, and the DRC representatives who always constituted the majority on the board. This might reveal another reason behind the drive to establish the NCC: to give the right-wing anticommunists more autonomy, free from DRC clergy who might have interfered in their objectives. To avoid this tension developing in open conflict, the Antikom board decided to further explore the possibility of creating a new company – this never materialised – and to assure the NCC of Antikom's cooperation by acting as an informal mouthpiece of the Council.[159] In an official history of the first fifty years of the Broederbond, AN Pelzer claimed that the NCC was fully responsible for the *Antikom Newsletter*.[160] While there did exist informal cooperation and coordination between Antikom and the NCC with regards to the newsletter, this publication remained the responsibility of the Antikom executive throughout its existence.

Taking its cue from McIntire's *Twentieth Century Reformation*, the NCC, albeit on a much smaller scale, utilised the airwaves to spread anticommunist propaganda through radio broadcasts. The SABC was headed by former Antikom chair and leader of the Broederbond, Piet Meyer, who often engaged in public speaking events for the NCC on the subject of communist subversion through mass media communication.[161] In a retrospective appreciation of Meyer's career, Vorster wrote that, 'when our newspapers let us down, you expanded the SABC into the only mass communication medium that kept us on the right track'.[162] Meyer's work on the topic was also published and distributed through NCC platforms.[163] It was relatively easy then for the NCC to get sought after spots on the public airwaves for their anticommunist partners.[164]

The devoted anticommunist and DRC minister, AP Treurnicht, was afforded the opportunity to speak to the *volk* every Sunday evening throughout 1968 and 1969. In this series,

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[159] DRCA, KS 2059, Antikom Notules en Verslae, 'Notule van die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommisie, 22 Februarie 1967', 2-3.
[160] A.N. Pelzer, *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond: Eerste 50 Jaar*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1979), 173.
[161] See ARCA, PV 720, 'Die Rol van die Radio in die Hedendaagse Koue Oorlog.'
[162] ARCA, PV 702, Letter from J.D. Vorster to P.J. Meyer, 6 December 1979. Translated from Afrikaans: '… toe ons koerante ons in die steek gelaat het, het jy die S.A.U.K tot die enigste massa-kommunikasie medium, wat ons op die regte pad gehou het, uitgebou.'
[163] See P.J. Meyer, 'Kommunisme en kommunikasiemiddels', in *Bewaar jou Erfenis: Referate gelewer by die Simposium oor Kommunisme, 7-9 Oktober 1968*, (Potchefstroom Herald: Potchefstroom, 1969), 105-126.
[164] ABC, AB 1/1/130/2, 'Nasionale Raad teen Kommunisme: Sekretariële verslag tot 31 Julie 1964,' 3.

called *Onder die Soeklig* (Under the Searchlight), Treurnicht, who was the NCC's Secretary of the Religion and Culture Committee, promoted the NCC's agenda by engaging with the perceived perils of communism and liberalism. Through this series, Treurnicht praised the government's firm handling of overt communism and protecting the Republic from communist infiltration. He also painted a grim picture of subversive communist attacks on all spheres of Afrikaner life. Liberalism was a regular target: Treurnicht told his listeners that liberalism's skewed optimism about human nature and its appetite for social change caused it to 'remove people's anchors, which keeps them standing against the revolution[ary]-tide of communism'.[165] It should be noted that another DRC-leader, Prof. TN Hanekom, of the theology faculty at Stellenbosch University, also took to the airwaves to discuss liberalism with the *volk*. In contrast to Treurnicht, Hanekom adopted a more nuanced approach with a historical survey of liberalism in South Africa. Although he disapproved of liberalism's supposed overemphasis on individual freedom, Hanekom did not draw on anticommunist rhetoric, which painted liberalism as the gateway-ideology for communism. In fact, communism was never mentioned in his six-part series.[166] This further indicated that right-wing anticommunist sentiments, which likened liberalism with communism, were not accepted throughout the DRC.

It was through the SABC's generosity toward anticommunists that the NCC's path crossed with that of another prominent American anticommunist, Major Edgar Bundy. If McIntire was the preacher and teacher of the American anticommunist crusade, Major Edgar Bundy was its general. The two were good friends and Bundy was McIntire's closest confidant. Bundy, a retired air force officer and former intelligence agent, rose to anticommunist prominence as the 'political clairvoyant' who early on predicted that China would succumb to communism and that North Korea would subjugate its southern neighbours.[167] This reputation, combined with his title as an ordained Southern Baptist minister, gave Bundy great clout as an anticommunist crusader. By the mid-1950s, he headed the Church League of America, a 'Christian anticommunist institute which emerged as the premier information-gathering site for the anticommunist Right'.[168] Bundy's work was apparently known within DRC circles even

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[165] ARCA, PV 873, 3/2/82, 'Onder die Soeklig, Sondag 26 Januarie 1969, Kenmerke van die Liberalisme', 3. Translated from Afrikaans: '… mense se ankers verwyder, wat hulle teen die revolusie-gety van die Kommunisme staande moet hou.'
[166] T.N. Hanekom, *Die Liberalisme in ons Land: 'n Reeks Radiopraatjies deur Prof. T.N. Hanekom*, (Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie).
[167] Dochuk, From Bible Belt to Sunbelt, 152.
[168] *Ibid.*

before official contact was made between him and South African anticommunists. In 1966, he claimed that his 1958 book dealing with apparent leftist political activism in the ecumenical movement was 'greatly instrumental in causing the [DRC] to withdraw from the World Council of Churches'.[169] It was a hyperbolic claim and impossible to prove, but it certainly bolstered his image within both his own anticommunist circles and in South Africa.

Bundy was among fourteen American journalists invited to South Africa by the ministry of information in 1966 to convince the visitors and their audience about the ideas of separate development. The SABC invited Bundy to speak on both their English and Afrikaans radio stations about his work and the dangers of communism. The *Sunday Times* reported that Bundy's presence on the national radio waves caused shock amongst a handful of unnamed Afrikaner clergy. According to the newspaper, Bundy was a right-wing extremist on the fringe of American Protestantism.[170] The NCC offered Bundy the opportunity to defend himself and arranged for *Antikom Newsletter* to run his reply. The reply was scathing. After bluntly refuting every statement made of him by the *Sunday Times*, Bundy attacked the reporter, claiming he was using classic liberal tactics to delegitimise the 'truth' and likened his tactics to that of Hitler. He voiced his hope that the government would close down such liberal publications and warned the reporter that 'I will deal with [him and his newspaper] from the public platform all over your country'.[171]

The tone and content of Bundy's reply was so scathing that the Antikom board felt that there might be negative implications for the reputation of the Afrikaans churches, whose representatives were now growing more impatient with right-wing anticommunism, and legal repercussions for Antikom itself. They decided to publish Bundy's reply in a private edition of *Antikom Newsletter*, which was only distributed amongst Antikom's board and their allies.[172] This affair brought Bundy and the NCC together as transnational anticommunist allies, as they were both targeted by what they perceived to be a hostile media environment. The NCC had also demonstrated their loyalty to their American partners by defending them against local

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[169] 'Anti-Communist U.S. Churchman Stirs Up Controversy in South Africa', New York Times, 13 November 1966, 6; E.C. Bundy, *Collectivism in the Churches: A Documented Account of the Political Activities of the Federal, National, and World Councils of Churches*, (Church League of America: Illinois, 1958).
[170] J.H.P. Serfontein, 'Stir over Major Bundy's radio talk,' *Sunday Times*, 20 February 1966.
[171] E. Bundy, 'Major Bundy Replies To His Critics,' *Antikom*, May 1966, 4-7.
[172] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/2/2, DFB de Beer – JD Vorster; *Anticom*, May 1966. The reply was also sent to the *Sunday Times* who never published it. It is possible that the reply was sent to the *Sunday Times* as personal correspondence which was never intended for publication.

criticism and affording them the platform needed to expand their anticommunist rhetoric, whilst Antikom, by handling the Bundy affair internally, revealed its awareness that such rhetoric would have negative implications for its organisation and the church.

Onward Christian Soldiers: *Oorlog om die Volksiel*-symposium (1966)

Within the first year of the NCC's operations, Vorster convinced Antikom's executive that a South African congress that brought together Western conservative organisations would help energise local anticommunist efforts. An international gathering like this would associate the NCC with international anticommunist circles, bolstering its local legitimacy and also affording Vorster recognition in the global anticommunist crusade. He proceeded to do his utmost to convince other unnamed 'high-ranking people' of his ambitious vision, even giving full assurance that McIntire and FBI director Edgar Hoover would attend the proposed congress, without any evidence that this was ever a possibility.[173] This promise of a grand congress where all the Western anticommunists would confer in South Africa was an attempt to convince the aforementioned highly ranked people to help fund the congress. Piet Meyer was the only person known to have sponsored travel and accommodation for two of the speakers at the eventual congress.[174]

The NCC therefore had to rely on Antikom to initiate a grassroots fundraising campaign. In this case, the DRC representatives fell in line, probably because similar gatherings in the past, like those in 1946 and 1964, had always led to an impetus of energy which resulted in the organisational strengthening of the anticommunist movement. Antikom lobbied the three Afrikaans churches' governing bodies to approve a fundraising campaign at congregational level, which was approved by all the sister churches. A circular was sent out to all church councils across the country informing the brethren of the congress's international focus, whilst maintaining that it would be spearheaded by Afrikaners. The councils were asked to tap into the nationalist spirit of 1960s republicanism by arranging a special collection of funds on 29 May 1966, the Sunday closest to Republic Day (31 May).[175] Using DRC congregations as fundraising platforms proved to be very effective. Just before the gathering was held in September 1966, it was reported to the NCC that donations from the Afrikaans

[173] ABC, AB 1/1/130/2, 'Notule van Dagbestuurvergadering, 24/8/1965', 2.
[174] ABC, AB 1/1/130/2, 'Sekretariële Verslag, 24/8/1965', 2,
[175] ABC, AB 1/1/130/2, 'Internasionale Simposium Oor Kommunisme, Dringende Omsendbrief aan Kerkrade',

churches amounted to almost two thirds of all fundraising efforts. However, this would not be enough for the ambitious plans Vorster had envisioned.[176] The grassroots level fundraising indicated the existence of a broad anxiety about a communist threat amongst congregants. Despite that, the fact that the NCC could not convince high level funders, confirmed that the grassroots sentiment, shaped by Antikom's manufactured fear of the communist peril, was easy to mobilise, while hinting at a growing suspicion at a high-level about the right-wing motives behind the fearmongering.

During the lead-up to the symposium, Afrikaner society mourned the passing of their leader Hendrik Verwoerd. On 6 September 1966, three weeks before the symposium, the Prime Minster was assassinated on the floor of the House of Assembly by a parliamentary messenger with no immediately obvious motive. Verwoerd, who had an unwavering belief in the apartheid policy and who left no room for critics, was replaced by the Minister of Justice and younger brother of Koot Vorster, BJ Vorster. With his history of implementing draconian security measures to curb black dissent while Minister of Justice, Vorster became the chosen candidate of right-wing anticommunists within the NP.[177] He was 'applauded [for] his attacks on communists and liberals as subversive elements undermining the social order' by *verkrampte* politicians.[178] Koot Vorster was convinced that his brother had a divine calling to free South Africa from all forms of communism. According to Koot, three pillars united the brothers: their love for God, their love for their *volk*, and their deep hatred of communism.[179] BJ Vorster was, however, much more of a pragmatist than his predecessor and approached apartheid as merely a method of achieving the goal of Afrikaner preservation. While Verwoerd gave free rein to the *verkramptes* of his party, Vorster provided the *verligtes* the freedom to agitate for gradual reforms.[180] This quickly made him a target of the NP's right-wing. Intensifying tensions between the pragmatic Vorster and the Hertzog-group formed the backdrop to shifts in the anticommunist landscape in the latter part of the 1960s.

Koot Vorster's grand vision of a fully-fledged gathering of all the greatest conservative minds and anticommunist activists of the Western world faded away due to a lack of funds,

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[176] ARCA, PV 632 – Koot Vorster, 1/2/29/5/5, 'Internasionale Simposium oor Kommunisme, Sekretariële Verslag, 19 Augustus 1966', 2.
[177] H. Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers: 'n Opperste toets van mag*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 93.
[178] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 550.
[179] Langner, 'Teen Die Hele Wêreld Vry', 182.
[180] Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 93.

rejected invitations, and general apathy from his fellow NCC members. That said, the NCC's ally, Major Bundy accepted the invitation to speak at the symposium, which gave Vorster something to build on. Bundy accepted a six-week tour of South Africa, with speaking arrangements all over the country, and some meetings with the country's intelligence community. He joined a line-up of other anticommunists from the Netherlands, Hungary, France, the US, and some local crusaders in the NCC's International Symposium on Communism with the theme, *Oorlog om die Volksiel* (War for the Soul of the *Volk*). The symposium, held at the University of Pretoria and at a local DRC congregation, spanned over four days in September 1966, with attendance fluctuating between 400 and 800 people. Despite Vorster's claims that it was the 'general testimony that the International Symposium [seemed] to be of greater value, meaning, and influence as the *Volkskongres* of 1964,' it did not have the scale nor the authority of the Antikom-organised *volkskongres*.[181] It was also a far cry from the 'glorious gathering' of Western conservatives that Vorster had envisioned. At the end of the gathering, a so-called program of action was drafted, which in reality was simply a manifesto in support of the state's anticommunist efforts. The international focus of the symposium was side-lined to reaffirm the NCC's loyalty to the state, the importance of defending the morality of white society, and the expansion of Christian-Nationalism.[182]

Widening the anticommunist net: liberalism as the gateway to communism

The International Symposium caused some controversy and debate, specifically in relation to Major Bundy's presence. It was not his speech on the communist infiltration of the WCC that sparked public discussion, but what he represented.[183] A few days before the symposium, the *Sunday Times* ran a full-page article on how Bundy was perceived in America. It reported in an official statement by the American Episcopal (Anglican) churches that Bundy topped the list of individuals who 'promote hysteria and fear' by voicing disproved charges of massive communist infiltration of clergy and government and that he had 'been associated with various other groups across the nation which are marked by their fringe nature'.[184] The article added

[181] *Oorlog om die Volksiel: Referate gelewer by die Internasionale Simposium oor Kommunisme*, (Nasionale Raad teen Kommunisme: Pretoria, 1967), 7.
[182] *Oorlog om die Volksiel*, 222-3.
[183] See E.C. Bundy, 'Die Wêreldraad van Kerke – Platform vir kommunistiese propaganda' in *Oorlog om die Volksiel*, 144-169.
[184] R. Heard, 'Bundy Top of 'Hysteria and Fear' List,' *Sunday Times*, 25 September 1966, 17.

that the National Council of Churches – the largest ecumenical structure in America – also included him in their comprehensive list of 'radical rightists'.[185] Bundy's anticommunist bravado and favourable treatment by Antikom and the NCC was also noted in his home country. The *New York Times* reported that 'Bundy may be a minor crank in the States, but he sure gets the red-carpet treatment' in South Africa.[186]

This point was reiterated by JHP van Rooyen, a prominent figure in the pragmatic moderate faction of the DRC and a member of the Christian Institute. He was shocked at the level of support that Bundy and McIntire had enjoyed in his church, while he encountered the exact opposite in the US while on a research trip exploring the threat of communism for the church. In a letter in *Kerkbode*, Van Rooyen explained how these men and their organisations are extremists in their own country who ride the wave of outdated McCarthyism. As an opponent of communism himself, he warned that these extremists were counterproductive to the anticommunist cause:

> [The real danger] that threatens church and *volk* is this: the threat of extremism, which, in the fight against communism means nothing less than the actual advancement of communism… [Extremism is] a hysterical effort by persons and organisations who, in the name of combatting communism, cultivates polarisation in the *volk* and church life through sowing confusion and arousing distrust.
>
> Ignorance, confusion, and hate-campaigns, which is so typical of extremist groups' technique, will create a fertile breeding ground for communism in our country in particular.[187]

In his reply to Van Rooyen in the *Kerkbode,* Antikom's secretary, Dan de Beer, came to the defence of the 'conservative churchmen and right-leaning combatants against communism'. He raised the issue of what anticommunists called anti-anti-communism, which he described as 'people who are not themselves communist, nor do they wish to be, but still counter everyone

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[185] *Ibid.*
[186] 'Anti-Communist U.S. Churchman Stirs Up Controversy in South Africa', *New York Times*, 13 November 1966, 6.
[187] Appendix 2: 'Brief van Dr. J.H.P. van Rooyen uit die VSA in 'Die Kerkbode' van 22 Junie 1966' in JHP van Rooyen, *Kommunisme in die Kerk?*, (Johannesburg, c.1966), 23, 25. Translated from Afrikaans: '… 'n gevaar wat ons kerk en volk bedereig, nl. Die gevaar van ekstremisme wat in die bestyign van die kommunisme eintlik niks anders beteken as juis 'n bevordering van die kommunisme nie… [Ekstremisme kan beskryf word as] 'n histeriese poging om van persone en organisasies wat in die naam van bestriding van die kommunisme 'n polarisasie in die volks- en kerklike lewe bewerk deur die saai van verwarring en die wek van watrou… Onkunde, verwarring en haatveldtogte wat so tipies is vna die ekstremistiese groepe se tegnie, sal in besonder in ons land 'n vrygbare teelaarde vir die kommunisme skep.'

who are efficiently denouncing Communism'.[188] At the International Symposium Vorster told the crowd that anti-anti-communists were 'enemy no. 1' and 'a weapon in the arsenal of Communism…[and were] busy breaking down the vigilance and preparedness of our *volk*'.[189] Van Rooyen pointed out in his reply to De Beer that the anti-anti-communist labelling was merely a way to discredit anyone who criticised the right-wing anticommunists.[190]

The so-called anti-anti-communism was designed to disingenuously deflect any enquiry into the tactics used by right-wing anticommunists. In the case of Van Rooyen, the NCC used the fact that he was a member of the Christian Institute to further discredit him. They consistently condemned this organisation and its leader, Beyers Naudé, as a communist front organisation. Naudé was an easy target for the right-wing anticommunists because he was the ultimate 'traitor' to the *volk*, having turned his back on the Afrikaners by actively opposing the state for its apartheid policy and the DRC for supporting it.[191] To label him a liberalist puppet of communism stigmatised Naudé even further, and sent out a clear signal to the *volk* that Afrikaner dissent was equal to assisting communist expansion. While the state utilised anticommunism to control black dissent, the conservative anticommunists attempted to utilise it to control Afrikaners.

It is important to point out that Naudé and the Christian Institute in fact opposed communism. *Pro Veritate*, the Institute's official organ, often warned against communism as a disruptive force to the non-racial and ecumenic project. It called for good relations between faith communities as a defence against communist agitators.[192] Naudé himself constantly and vehemently denounced communism in public engagements throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. In an address at the University of Cape Town in 1967, he condemned communism as evil and unjust in its aims, its methods rejectable, and its successes a fantasy.[193] Theologian

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[188] Appendix 3: 'Brief van Ds. D.F.B. de Beer, in 'Die Kerkbode' van 3 Augustus 1966' in JHP van Rooyen, *Kommunisme in die Kerk?*, 25-6.
[189] Oorlog om die Volksiel, 5.
[190] Appendix 4: 'Antwoord van Dr. J.H.P. van Rooyen gestuur aan 'Die Kerkbode' op 4 Augustus 1966' in JHP van Rooyen, *Kommunisme in die Kerk?*, 27.
[191] Naudé remembered that when he established the CI, he went to some effort to convince his own mother that it was not a communist front. People in his own social circle also faded out of his life as rumours spread amongst them that Naudé was being prepped to be the successor to Bram Fischer as the underground leader of the SACP. CFB Naudé, *My Land van Hoop: Die Lewe van Beyers Naudé*, (Human & Rousseau, Cape Town: 1995), 75.
[192] 'So Word Kommunisme Bevorder,' *Pro Veritate*, 15 March 1964, 3.
[193] See, CFB Naudé, *Freedom in our Society*. Address given on the occasion of the University of Cape Town Day of Affirmation of Academic and Human Freedom lecture. 1 June 1967, found in CGJ van Wyngaard, 'Beyers Naudé (1966–1977): Between Western ideals and black leadership', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, 6, 2 (2020), 420.

Cobus van Wyngaard argued that Naudé employed 'a rhetorical ploy of turning the National Party anti-communist argument against the National Party and apartheid government itself, naming the National Party as embodying the worst traits of communist governments [with reference to its totalitarian nature], and as itself being the most significant contributor to the growth of communism in Southern Africa.'[194] Van Wyngaard does caution that Naudé did not merely employ this as a rhetorical political ploy, as he was equally committed to the struggle against both communism and apartheid.[195]

To label Naudé and the Christian Institute as 'communist' would have openly exposed Vorster's reactionary anticommunism. This was why Vorster exploited the notion of anti-anti-communism to discredit dissenters such as Naudé and the Christian Institute as unwitting enablers of communism. Vorster's shift in tone was strategic; in 1967, his anticommunist ally in the NHK and prominent Herzog-man, AD Pont, was sued by Naudé and Albert Geyser, a former NHK theologian and now chairman of the Christian Institute board, for defamation. They cited both subtle and blatant references Pont made at the 1964 *volkskongres* to the CI as a communist front organisation. Adding to this, the plaintiffs cited a more worrying series of articles published in the *Hervormer*, the organ of the NHK, in which Pont boldly claimed that communism was being spread in South Africa through the Christian Institute, that its organisational structure was that of a classic Communist party, and that Naudé and Geyser had sold out by siding with communism. Naudé and Geyser told the court that Pont had falsely claimed that they were 'communists and supporters of sabotage, war and revolution against South Africa' which were all highly illegal with dire consequences for them as individuals and for their organisation. They also argued that they were wrongly depicted 'as people with despicable moral standards who had betrayed their country, their people, their church, their faith, and who only pretended to be Christians'.[196] On 9 June 1967, the court ruled in favour of Naudé and Geyser and ordered Pont to pay damages of R 10,000 to each of them. A deal was made that Pont would pay them in monthly payments of R63 after he claimed he had no moveable assets, and that his only possessions were his Bible and his *sannageweer* (muzzleloader used during the Great Trek).[197] Naudé did, however, offer to clear Pont's debt if he publicly apologised for his red smear campaign. Pont declined and continued diligently to

[194] Van Wyngaard, 'Beyers Naudé (1966–1977): Between Western ideals and black leadership', 421.
[195] *Ibid.*
[196] C. Ryan, *Beyers Naudé: Pilgrimage of Faith*, (David Philip, Cape Town: 1990), 118.
[197] Naudé, *My Land van* Hoop, 78.

pay his R63 per month for almost 20 years.[198] The outcome of the case proved that there were judicial limits to what anticommunists could say and do. It also justified Vorster's attempt to drive an anticommunist agenda against the Christian Institute and Naudé by labelling them as anti-anti-communists and liberals.

The label of anti-anti-communists also served to discredit any criticism of the anticommunist movement. The statements made by Van Rooyen and the *Sunday Times* were indeed true of Bundy and the reality of the American Christian anticommunist crusaders by the mid-1960s. The election of President John F. Kennedy, the rise of the civil rights movement, and the cultural revolution of the 1960s, meant that right-wing Protestant fundamentalists struggled to generate attention in a rapidly shifting society. A realistic consensus on the threat of communist subversion in American society was reached within the political and social mainstream, and the Christian anticommunist crusaders were thus confined to the fringes of religion, politics, and society as a whole.[199] By the mid-1960s, the leaders of this movement, such as McIntire and Bundy, had lost clout because of their 'very public siding with the most extreme segregationists and Southern white supremacists'.[200] By the time that Vorster looked to these crusaders for inspiration and collaboration, they were already outliers within their own country.

There were definite parallels between the American crusaders and the NCC, such as its belief in communist evils and its mechanisms for information distribution. There was, however, one key difference. The American crusaders were vying for political power and influence, while they also believed that the state was not taking the communist threat seriously enough. In South Africa, however, the anticommunists were grateful for the manner in which the state had outlawed communism and protected the nation from perceived overt communist attacks on the Republic and its people. This was true of the Verwoerd government, and it continued under BJ Vorster. Even before his brother's election, Koot Vorster had spoken of the 'cordial brotherly relationship' between the DRC and NP government which had developed in a very practical sense.[201] The International Symposium officially proclaimed, 'its gratitude and joy about the fact that someone so excellently equipped for the fight against communism is today

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[198] Ryan, *Beyers Naudé*, 119.
[199] W. L. Vinz, 'The Politics of Protestant Fundamentalism in the 1950's and 1960's', *Journal of Church and State*, 14, 2 (1972), 259.
[200] M. Ruotsila, 'Carl McIntire and the Fundamentalist Origins of the Christian Right', 404.
[201] Langner, 'Teen die Hele Wêreld Vry', 182. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Hartelike boreder verhouding'

the Prime Minister of South Africa'.[202] To the public, and especially to their international allies, the political differences between the NP and NCC's right-wing agents were never revealed. It served the local anticommunist crusaders well that there was a strong outside perception of their proximity to state power.

The NCC was also not deterred by its critics. In fact, framing them as liberal 'attacks' served as self-vindication to the anticommunist cause and inspired the NCC to translate the energy generated by the symposium to the wider public. Some of the international speakers were invited to tour the country in an attempt to inspire and educate at a grassroots level. Two of the symposium speakers – the president of *The Truth about Cuba Committee (TACC),* Luis Manrara, and the French scholar, Suzanne Labin, took a two-week trip through the Transvaal and Free State to engage with local cultural groups, churches, and in the case of Bloemfontein, military trainees.[203] These engagements were mostly organised by local organising committees. In the case of Major Bundy, the NCC and Vorster took charge of his six-week long itinerary. Bundy engaged in thirteen speaking engagements, both public and private, across the country, reaching about 5,000 people.[204] This included intimate engagements with church leaders and small gatherings with groups of clergy from the Afrikaans churches. During Bundy's stay in Cape Town and Stellenbosch, he developed a close friendship with Vorster. It was beneficial for Vorster to have a strong connection with such a prominent figure of the American anticommunist crusade as it bolstered his local image, while Bundy sought to utilise this close relationship as a channel to the prime minster of the Republic for some personal gain. Bundy worked through Vorster to facilitate a private audience with the prime minister for a prominent Texas businessperson, and to procure state connections for gold trading. [205]

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[202] *Oorlog om die Volksiel*, 223.
[203] University of Miami Libraries Digital Collections, Cuban Heritage Collection Digital Collection, The Truth About Cuba, Int. Records, 1961-1975, 'Report on South Africa', 6. The TACC was a Miami-based anticommunist organisation constituted in the wake of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion with the main goal to distribute information on the threat of Cuban communism posed to the US. Luis Manrara struggled to gain traction in South Africa, however his work in America seemed to have some impact. See, RM. Mwakasege-Minaya, 'Exiled Counterpoint: Cuban Exile Reception, Media Activism, Conservatism, and the National Educational Television Network', *Chiricú Journal: Latina/o Literatures, Arts, and Cultures*, 4, 2 (2020), 37–6.1 Suzanna Labin was also active in transnational anticommunist networks. See, O. Dard, 'Suzanne Labin: Fifty Years of Anti-Communist Agitation', in Van Dongen, Roulin, Scott-Smith (eds), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War*.
[204] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/1/15, E. Bundy – JD Vorster, 27 July 1972.
[205] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/1/15, E. Bundy – JD Vorster, 27 July 1972; ARCA, PV 632. 1/2/1/18, E. Bundy – JD Vorster, 16 September 1974.

Bundy also saw in Koot Vorster a fellow international anticommunist, and in 1967 invited him to speak at the Church League of America's International Symposium on Communism in Chicago. He was invited in his capacity as chair of the NCC, but Vorster was introduced in the marketing material and the newspaper coverage as 'actuary of [the] largest church denomination in South Africa – Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk [DRC] – and brother of the Prime Minister of South Africa' which hints at the fact that his real legitimacy in anticommunist circles came from his status as a church leader, and his proximity to political power.[206] Vorster's drive to position the NCC as part of the global anticommunist crusade through the International Symposium had seemingly failed to bear any fruit. On the last day of the symposium, Vorster rose to the stage to share with the 700 delegates how South Africa had become a key target of communism. In what the *Sunday Times* described as a fire-and-brimstone speech, Vorster made the bold claim that 'your [the US's] President Kennedy and our Dr. Verwoerd were both killed by communists'. He went on to attack the West's apparent indifference to the communist 'menace'.[207] The rejection of the application from Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, who would have been the symposium's keynote speaker, to enter the United States, inspired Vorster to use the podium to attack both the US and UN policy toward South Africa's northern neighbour. He judged US foreign policy to be extremely inconsistent, while the UN was described as the 'chief agent of communism'. These claims led to a lengthy standing ovation in Chicago.[208] Vorster went even further; in a television interview on a popular Chicagoan television programme, the *Kups Show*, Vorster told the three million viewers that the US seems to be too weak to finish the 'small war in Vietnam'.[209]

Gauging anticommunist success

Koot Vorster and the NCC fitted well within the right-wing mould of the American anticommunist crusaders, who in turn recognised the DRC leader's anti-red rhetoric. The question is to what extent was the NCC and their Antikom counterparts as marginal and extremist within its own context as the American crusaders were in theirs? By the end of the

[206] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/5/8, International Symposium on Communism-pamphlet; also see ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/5/8, International Symposium on Communism Program; 'Church League to Sponsor Communist Symposium', *The Daily Journal*, 6 March 1968, 2; 'S. African Speaks Here,' *Chicago Daily News*, 9 March 1967, 11.
[207] R. Heard, 'Premier's Brother Drops Bombshell', *Sunday Times*, 19 March 1967, 1.
[208] Langner, 'Teen die Hele Wêreld Vry', 176.
[209] R. Heard, 'Dr. Vorster in TV clash with U.S. theologian', *Sunday Times*, n.d.

1960s, the overwhelming majority of white South Africans considered the greatest dangers to the political system as stemming from communist influence in the Republic. Almost three quarters of the elected decision-making elite of white society believed that international communism represented the 'greatest threat to the security of South Africa and the successful realisation of the policy of separate development'.[210] Communism was not merely regarded as an illegitimate ideology by white society, but it was framed as a disruptive force to the racially hierarchical status quo. Taking this into consideration, it seemed as if the South African anticommunist crusaders' rhetoric had broad appeal. That said, the extent to which they influenced this belief is difficult to quantify. The political atmosphere of the Cold War context had a definitive role in shaping how white South Africans saw the threat of communism, while cultural shifts inspired by the American pop- and countercultures led to some collective social angst about moral decay. These external factors cannot be ignored when attempting to determine the extent to which the fear of communism gripped Afrikaners, and white society as a whole.

The closest one can get to a clear indication of the effectiveness of the South African anticommunist crusade was the reaction from the mainstream Afrikaner establishment. The DRC itself was dominated by discussions on 'race', and its biblical and moral justification of the country's racial policy during a period of state subservience.[211] Unlike early phases of the DRC's anticommunism, 'race' did not intersect so intensely with anticommunist rhetoric and thinking during the 1960s because for the time being the state had effectively crushed the liberation movement and repressed black dissent. The focus was on the threat of a communist infiltration of white society, not its potential influence on black dissent. The 1966 General Synod illustrated how discourses on race at a national level were separated from anticommunism. The Cape Synod's commission for racial issues submitted an eight-part report on the current racial situation in South Africa. Topics ranged from racially mixed marriages, migrant labour, and the biblical foundation for racial segregation. The last section was an exploration of the role communism played in the current South African situation.[212]

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[210] Giliomee: *The Afrikaners*, 548.
[211] For an overview, see J. Kinghorn, 'Die Groei van 'n Teologie – Van Sendingbeleid tot Verskeidenheidstoelogie', in J. Kinghorn (ed.). *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, 128-30; Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1905-1975*, 116-8.
[212] Langner, 'Teen die hele wêreld vry', 131.

The General Synod accepted the report, except for the last section on communism.[213] The reasons are unclear, but the fact that the national meeting of the DRC regarded the analysis of communist influence on the racial situation in the Republic as misplaced, was significant. It confirmed that the DRC had fully entrusted the state to act on 'outside' communist attacks, while the church focussed on internal white resilience against any forms of so-called communist subversion. In fact, General Synod meetings in the 1960s did not even mention Antikom. It endorsed the inter-church organisation, but Antikom's support came from local synods which was manifested through financial aid and *Antikom Newsletter* distribution drives. Antikom's financial reports during the 1960s showed that the General Synod made no financial contribution to the organisation, but that the majority of its funds came from the provincial synods. Antikom thus effectively appealed to grassroots DRC clergy and members, while the upper echelons of the church did not regard it as important on a national level. The church establishment remained committed to the battle against communism but focussed on establishing the moral resilience of the *volk* rather than playing on their emotions. The Cape, Free State, and Transvaal synods were by far the top contributors to Antikom until the end of the 1960s.[214] The Antikom executive's composition also continued along provincial synodical lines, rather than incorporating representation from the General Synod – the Antikom chair did however represent the organisation on the General Synod.

Controversies around Vorster's NCC had aroused a lot of attention, while Antikom quietly continued its work as the information peddler within a wider anticommunist ecosystem. It had expanded the *Antikom Newsletter's* circulation from 5,000 copies in 1962 to 65,000 copies in 1968 by distributing it to more congregations and even police stations.[215] Antikom also translated a pamphlet on the dangers of communism into three African languages and distributed it through the DRC's mission churches to 90,000 people.[216] The 1960s had also become the decade of the anticommunist gatherings and Antikom was invited in 1968 by local congregations to hold a symposium on communism in Port Elizabeth. A local organising committee was set up and Antikom organised the speakers, which were all NCC or Antikom members – GH Beetge, Schalk Botha, Piet Meyer, and Koot Vorster were all invited. To Botha

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[213] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1966, 514.
[214] *Acts of the North Transvaal Synod*, 550; DRCA, KS 3059, 'Verslag van die Anti-kommunistiese Aksiekommissie', 6.
[215] *Bewaar jou Erfenis*, 16.
[216] No evidence or documentation on the content or effectiveness of the pamphlet is available. It was merely mentioned at a Antikom symposium in 1968. See, *Bewaar jou Erfenis*, 15.

and Antikom, this symposium was a continuation of the 1964 and 1966 congresses. In its scale, impact, and prominence however, the 1968 symposium fell below that of its predecessors – only about 200 people attended.[217] The usual anticommunist targets were attacked, such as the WCC, the UN, and liberals, whilst a call for a conservative defence against communism was repeated. In his opening address, Botha represented the *verkrampte* position of the symposium, arguing that a conservative *volksmuur* (wall around the *volk*) 'that surrounds us as believers and a nation and within which we can maintain, nurture and strengthen our identity' was the only defence against communism.[218]

Under the symposium theme, *Bewaar jou Erfenis* (Preserve your Heritage), Vorster took on another perceived enemy in the cultural realm. The *Sestigers*, or Generation of the Sixties, emerged as an Afrikaans literary movement that embraced secularisation, modernity, racial tolerance, and sexual freedom.[219] Grundlingh demonstrated how the economic boom of the 1960s had made Afrikaners susceptible to these modern 'vices' and the *Sestigers* were seen as representative of a much feared moral decay within the *volk*.[220] Vorster, belatedly, launched an attempted anticommunist attack on these writers by framing them as liberals who were preparing the way for the communists. The work of prominent *Sestigers* such as André Brink, Jan Rabie, Breyten Breytenbach, and MM Walters, were deemed a danger to the *volk* that 'only the communists will cheer about it'.[221] He called for the Afrikaans literary fraternity to do everything in its power to stifle these writers as a way to defend against communist subversion.[222]

Aside from this new attack on the *Sestigers,* the remainder of the symposium was largelya rehash of old anticommunist rhetoric, but with lower energy and comparatively little controversy. It failed to rouse the attention of the media, both negative or positive, and the symposium resolution resulted in merely thanking previous anticommunist efforts such as the National Council of Trustees (NRT), the NCC, and Antikom-assisted congresses. The state, specifically Prime Minister Vorster, was also thanked for its strong defence against

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[217] DRCA, KS 3059, 'Verslag van die Ooskaapse reëlingskomitee aan Antikom, 7 Oktober 1968', 1.
[218] *Bewaar jou* Erfenis, 17.
[219] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 554. See also J. Polley, *Simposium oor die Sestigers*, (Human and Rousseau: Cape Town, 1973); F Galloway, *Breyten Breytenbach as openbare figuur*, (HAUM: Pretoria, 1990).
[220] Grundling, '"Are we Afrikaner Getting too Rich?"'144.
[221] Vorster, 'Die noodsaaklikheid van kerklik-kulturele optrede', 21. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Hieroor sal net die kommuniste juig.'
[222] *Ibid.*

communism.[223] The 1968 symposium lacked the mobilisation drive which previous gatherings had, but this was partly because of the local rather than national nature of the meeting. The symposium also coincided with a period in which right-wing anticommunists had begun a fight for survival.

Clipping the Right-wing: The end of *verkrampte* opportunism

The right-wing anticommunists who used the DRC to legitimise their movement and gain mainstream acceptance stoked an atmosphere of fear and conformity that served the broader anticommunist agenda. This was utilised to supress and delegitimise black dissent, while the DRC used it as a mechanism to generate Christian-Nationalist conformity within the *volk*. However, the Herzog-group's political ambitions were increasingly becoming an issue for the more reformist-minded BJ Vorster. He had always been wary of the right-wing nationalists undermining his authority and obstructing his efforts at minor reform. Hertzog and the *verkramptes* were in fact heavily opposed to Vorster's increasing support for English-Afrikaner cooperation, for more autonomy for the homelands, his policy of forging relationships with other African leaders, and the concessions he made to break sports isolation.[224] Their opposition became a hindrance to Vorster who had realised that Afrikaner survival depended on white unity, and the *verkrampte* drive for Afrikaner superiority threatened this crucial unity.

Vorster found substantial support in AB, and he used it to fend of the right-wing fringe. In 1968, he formally requested that the *Afrikaner-Orde* (AO – Afrikaner Order) – the Hertzog-group's secret society within the AB – be disbanded. It was immediately supported and implemented by Broederbond leader Piet Meyer.[225] Meyer had, by this time, realised that the right-wing Hertzog-group was engaging in a futile struggle for political survival. As Vorster's support and power surged, Meyer decided that he would move to support the prime minister to solidify his own position. Hertzog subsequently lost almost all of the influence he had in the AB. Vorster dealt the final blow to Hertzog and his group by releasing him from his cabinet position in 1969.[226]

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[223] *Bewaar jou Erfenis*, 159-160.
[224] Wilkins & Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, 182.
[225] Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, 149.
[226] Wilkins & Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, 187.

With the Broederbond's shifting attitude toward the right-wing and Hertzog's dismissal, the tide had officially turned against the Hertzog-group. This had a direct effect on the NCC, which was the Hertzog-group's most ambitious project. The AB executive, now aligned with the Vorster-faction of the NP, indicated a growing discomfort with the bad press the NCC and its leader had received. There was also a growing sense that the NCC's work could be done by the church's Antikom, with the necessary support. In June 1969, an AB delegation approached NCC secretary and leading Hertzog-man, GH Beetge, to inform him that they were considering the closure of the council.[227] The process would be discreet, and the administrative staff would be transferred to other organisations.[228] When this news reached Vorster, he immediately demanded answers. The AB executive explained to him that the NCC was becoming an expensive project, and that it did not see a future where the council could become financially independent. They reiterated that the more viable option was to support Antikom who had a proven record of raising money at a grassroots level. Vorster's argument that Antikom was too limited in its reach, that it was an impossible task to become financially independent, and that it was now more important than ever to fight the evils of communism, were not enough to convince the AB leaders to keep the NCC alive.[229] All of this was 'both a deep disappointment and shock' for Vorster. His disillusionment was clear in a letter to the AB on 22nd November 1969:

> And what afflicts me even more is the fact that you announced the dissolution of the Council without even consulting with the Council itself. And doing so … without a word of thanks for the work that was done! I did not deserve this, and nor did my Council![230]

Vorster reluctantly accepted the end of the NCC. The main Afrikaner anticommunist organisation was now Antikom again, which had the informal backing of the realigned AB. Had the AB viewed the NCC's modus operandi as the way forward for the anticommunist cause, it would likely have invested more money into its operations. The closure of the organisation's anticommunist body, which was the embodiment of South Africa's

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[227] ABC, AB 1/1/130/1, 'Verslag van 'n Samespreking oor die Voortbestaan van die Nasionale Raad teen Kommunisme 9 Junie 1969.'
[228] ABC, AB 1/1/130/1, G.H. Beetge – Unknown, 18 Julie 1969.
[229] ABC, AB 1/1/130/1, 'Verslag oor onderhoud met U.R. komitee op 17 September 1969 in Johannesburg.'
[230] ABC, AB 1/1/130/1, J.D. Vorster – G.H. Beetge, 22 November 1969. Translated from Afrikaans: 'En wat des te meer krenk is die feit dat u sonder raadpleging met my of the Raad die ontbinding die Raad aankondig. En dit in 'n streng formele brief sonder 'n word van dank vir die werk wat gedeon is! Ek het dit nie verdien nie, en my Raad ook nie!'

anticommunist crusaders, hinted at the growing irrelevance of the brand of anticommunism advocated by the right-wing, and the affirmation of the legitimacy of the Afrikaans churches, with the DRC the most prominent, as vehicles for a brand of anticommunism that served the nationalist cause and not personal political agendas.

The NCC's closure was also a direct blow to the Hertzog-group. They were not only at the fringe of Afrikaner politics, but now they were shunned from the formal Afrikaner political *laager*, both in terms of cultural and party politics. Hertzog had to find another vehicle for his political agenda and decided to break away from the NP, and to establish the *Herstigte National Party* (Reconstituted National Party – HNP) in October 1969 to contest the 1970 election. The founders were all from the Hertzog-group, with GH Beetge and Schalk Botha from the anticommunist front joining the upper echelons of the party. Journalist Hennie Serfontein wrote that the HNP was so right-wing that its policies were not a 'return to Verwoerd or even Strijdom – it is a return to pre-1920'.[231] Its brand of staunch conservatism seemed irrelevant to the contemporary Afrikaner society of the late-1960s. The HNP failed to win even one seat in the 1970 election, and never attracted more than 15% of Afrikaner voters in subsequent elections. Giliomee aptly commented that the HNP 'represented an ethnic splinter, not a split'.[232] This confirmed that the Hertzog-group's ideals and agenda were on the fringe of Afrikaner politics both formally and culturally. Its opportunism had come to an end. The AB went on to purge HNP leaders, including Beetge, Botha, and Hertzog, from its organisation, and reaffirmed its support for the reformist direction of the NP government.[233] The right-wing might have failed to gain political power in the 1960s, but it played a critical role in dictating the anticommunist agenda and their radical rhetoric would have a lasting effect on the perceptions of communism within white South African society.

[231] Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, 218.
[232] Giliomee, '"Broedertwis": Intra-Afrikaner Conflicts', 348.
[233] Wilkins & Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, 189.

CHAPTER 4: MISSION RED: DECOLONISATION, MISSIONS, AND THE DEMISE OF ANTIKOM, 1960S-1980S

Antikom's right-wing opportunists had little room to manoeuvre themselves into the mainstream Afrikaner nationalist fold by the end of the 1960s. Albert Hertzog's political failure at the ballot box in 1969 showed that his men in Antikom had no significant public or political support to mobilise in their right-wing efforts. However, changes in global politics, specifically decolonisation in Africa, gave these anticommunists a narrow opening. White South Africa feared that decolonisation opened the door for communist advances in Africa, and that revolutionary forces would consequently swamp the southern tip of the continent, ending white rule.[1] The apartheid state, especially under BJ Vorster's rule (1966-1978), attempted to gain support amongst other African countries against any communist advances as a way to buffer South Africa against such an insurgency. As this chapter will argue, the right-wing opportunists of Antikom used the spectre of communism in Africa to regain some lost traction amongst grassroots Afrikaners. Central to their strategy was to establish links with transnational anticommunist missionary bodies such as the Wurmbrand Mission and Open Doors, and to intensify their activities locally, including bible distribution and anticommunist missionary work. Here, as this chapter will demonstrate, the anticommunists came up against the strong missionary wing of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) which co-opted their idea as a way to maintain the sovereignty of the church's missionary endeavours, leading to the establishment of *Sending onder Kommuniste* (SOK – Mission to Communists) in 1974. Antikom was thus forced to the periphery of anticommunist missionary work, however this chapter will further illustrate how SOK fed off Antikom's previously successful fearmongering and effective rhetoric that had convinced Afrikaners, especially women, to join the missional battle against communism.

The anticommunist missionary work was being established in the shadow of the DRC's reckoning with the country's racial situation. In 1974, the church committed itself to a dogmatic version of apartheid with the adoption of its *Ras, Volk, en Nasie* (RVN) policy, while the National Party (NP) and the Afrikaner-Broederbond (AB) had started to re-evaluate such commitments, especially after the Soweto Uprising of 1976. This chapter explores how the

[1] The South African approach to the Republic of the Congo, for example, was a way to safeguard white minority power in the early stages of decolonisation. See 'Motives' in L. Passemiers, *Decolonisation and Regional Geopolitics: South African and the 'Congo Crisis', 1960-1965*, (Routledge: Abingdon, 2019).

church's delay in adopting a reformist position on apartheid deepened its subjugation to the state. Under PW Botha's rule (1978-1989), this developed into the total centralisation of anticommunism to the state. As a consequence of this shift in anticommunist power, the church gradually adopted new approaches to anticommunism which moved away from right-wing fearmongering, toward opposing communism on the merits of the ideology. This ultimately led to the demise of Antikom as the DRC formulated new anticommunist partnerships, including with the newly formed Institute for the Study of Marxism (latterly the Institute for Soviet Studies), on its way to adopting a more academic engagement with communism by the mid-1980s.

Anticommunist responses to Decolonisation

For Afrikaner anticommunists, the decolonisation of Africa and the rise of African nationalism tapped into wider fears about white demise. From the first edition of the *Antikom Newsletter*, published in March 1962, there was a strong focus on communist imperialism, with specific reference to Soviet opportunism in a decolonising Africa. The opening paragraph of the newsletter's 'preface', for example, sounded the warning: 'Communism seeks to dominate the world and it is involved in a race against time. On the continent of Africa, the strategy is to stress the urgent need for a third force between democracy … and capitalism – this third force being International Communism.'[2] Disregarding African solutions for Africa, anticommunist logic presumed that the continent was now in the hands of two outside forces – communism and capitalism – that had significant implications for its future.

It is likely that the *Antikom Newsletter's* anonymous preface was written by its editor, Dan de Beer. Although not officially a member of the right-wing Hertzog group, De Beer was an infamously conservative crusader on every moral aspect of Afrikaner life. As discussed in chapter 3, he viewed communism as the ultimate moral enemy to Afrikaners, convinced that any possibility of what he subjectively regarded as communist subversion within the *volk* should be eradicated. As editor of Antikom's official mouthpiece, De Beer extended his concerns about communism as a subversive threat from within South Africa, to the threat of an external communist enemy. In the Antikom preface, he proclaimed his conviction of the 'virtue' of the Afrikaners' steadfast defence of Western ideals. Afrikaners, De Beer argued, did

[2] 'Foreword', *Anticom Newsletter*, March 1962, 1.

not merely act as opponents to communist advances in Africa, but also as proponents of the maintenance of Western values throughout the continent: 'The destiny of Africa does not lie in the acceptance of Communist ideology but in the historical of creative and truly European development base on Christian civilization.'[3] Afrikaners, as imagined by De Beer, were central to the survival of European political, cultural and religious traditions in their broadest sense.

Communist expansion in Africa was not the only imagined threat to the self-proclaimed mission of Afrikaners to defend Western civilisation. According to DRC minister, JS Gericke, 'the Free World lost its sense of spiritual values to such an extent that it allows its own religion and religious institutions to be used as allies of false propaganda against a Christian and pro-Western country as South Africa.'[4] The 'religious institution' Gericke referred to was the World Council of Churches (WCC), which had turned its focus to anti-apartheid activities from 1960 after the Cottesloe consultations (see chapter 3). Gericke built on the DRC's pre-existing anticommunist narrative of the WCC to illustrate that Afrikaners were not only fighting to preserve Western civilisation in Africa against communists, but also against institutions in the West that were believed to be under communist influence. This cast white South Africa, and the Afrikaner community in particular, as both the victim of allegedly subverted Western institutions and as the only true defender of Western civilisation against a communist onslaught in Africa. This exaggerated sense of self-

Figure 6: A cartoon from Die Transvaler (1964) depicting Afrikaners equipped with weapons against overt communism, and the bible, to fight the spiritual battle, braving the communist storm approaching South Africa, as Africa falls under its influence. (Christendom teen Kommunisme)

[3] 'Foreword', *Anticom Newsletter*, March 1962, 1.
[4] 'Gericke Waarsku oor Uiterstes in Anti-Rooi-Stryd', *Die Burger*, 12 September 1964. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die Vrye Wêreld [het] sy sin vir geestelike waardes in so 'n mate kwytgeraak, dat hy sy eie godsdiens en godsdienstige instellings as bodgenote van leuenpropaganda laat gebruik teen 'n Christelik en pro-Westerse land soos Suid-Afrika.'

importance provided a greater purpose for Afrikaners in taking up the battle against communism. It served to manufacture an anticommunist atmosphere, built on a combination of victimhood, fear, and a sense of calling to defend Western civilisation in Africa, all in an attempt to enhance white unity and uniformity. The focus of Afrikaner anticommunism thus continued to be primarily on white South Africa.

The fear of a communist onslaught targeting Afrikaners appears to have been essentially rhetorical. The *Antikom Newsletter* pledged to provide its readers with a 'true and correct version regarding Communism in Africa,' dedicating large parts of its first instalments to the subject.[5] This quickly faded, and outsourced articles from American anticommunist propaganda outlets sporadically began to appear in the newsletter.[6] Speakers at the major anticommunist congresses, such as the *volkskongres* of 1964, the international symposium on communism in 1966, and the Antikom symposium of 1968 (see chapter 3), often referred to the threat of communism to Africa in passing, but this topic never made it into the various resolutions or calls to action at the end of these gatherings.[7] Communist advances in Africa, real or imagined, served only to abet local anticommunists in their fearmongering within white South African society. It was thus part of local anticommunist rhetoric, but practical efforts to confront these advances never materialised. This rhetoric gave Afrikaners a greater sense of self-importance as the sole defender of Western and Christian civilisation. The image of an ever-approaching communist threat in Africa was set to induce fear, and simultaneously inspire Afrikaner unity – or rather uniformity – in its 'duty' to defend Western civilisation. Some anticommunists did attempt to go beyond rhetoric and sounded calls to action. For example, the chairperson of the National Council Against Communism (NCC), Koot Vorster, called his fellow clergy, businesspeople, and academics to action in his speech at the anticommunist conference in 1968:

> We do not dare act against Communism by only exposing the satanic power, the economic fraud, the political thuggery. This is needed and important, but it is and remains only negative. Communism must be acted against

[5] 'Voorwoord', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, March 1962, 1.
[6] See, for example, the anonymous articles 'Communist Front Organisations in developing areas in Africa', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, September 1962, 5, 8; 'African journalist in Communist East Germany', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, January 1964, 2; 'Communist Chinese Subversion in Africa', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, February 1965, 6-7 – the latter was taken from *The Christian Beacon* (3 September 1964) the magazine of Carl McIntire's anticommunist organisation.
[7] P.F.D. Weiss, 'Die Kommunistiese program in Afrika met spesiale verwysing na Suid-Afrika', in *Christendom teen Kommunisme: Volkskongres oor Kommunisme*, (Volkskongres oor Kommunisme: Pretoria, 1964)

> positively, with the mighty Word, the message of salvation… Why must we still be on the defensive? We must act offensively.[8]

Previous anticommunist efforts, such as Antikom, focussed on the distribution of information on communist doctrine and strategy to cultivate resilience amongst Afrikaners. What Vorster proposed was a more proactive strategy, where the *volk* ought to be mobilised against communists, rather than merely being informed of their beliefs and activities.

Anticommunism on an African mission

Proactive action against communist expansion in Africa did not come from anticommunists however, but rather from the DRC's missionary quarters. Anticommunists in the church had always framed the battle against communism in missionary language. In the 1940s, it was the souls of the workers that had to be won, whereas the 1950s and 1960s saw the DRC take up the calling to defend the *volk* and the Republic against perceived communist priests and prophets spreading a false gospel of racial equality. Despite this, a concrete 'missionary action' against communism had never been formulated before. Early in the twentieth century, DRC missiologists believed the threat of communism had to be factored into missionary work in Africa. For instance, in 1929, JG Strydom, missions secretary of the DRC in the Free State, saw his work as a crucial deterrent to communism amongst the local black populace.[9] Later, in the wake of the Second World War, some DRC missionaries expressed concern, albeit misplaced, that black South Africans returning from the war were 'exposed to the atheistic communism', which held a threat to what they believed to be healthy race relations.[10] In 1945, a missionary conference of the Transvaal DRC also acknowledged the potential danger that communism posed to the church's missionary project.[11] The shifting political landscape in Africa during the 1960s triggered greater urgency to discussions within the DRC about mission work and its potential role in countering communism. GBA Gerdener, one of the DRC's

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[8] 'Highlights of the Symposium', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, February 1969; for full text of the speech see JD Vorster, 'Die Noodsaaklikheid van Kerkelike Kulturele Optrede teen die Kommunisme', in *Bewaar jou Erfenis*, (Potchefstroom Herald: Potchefstroom, 1968), 18-34.

[9] R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa*, (University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville, 2012), 6.

[10] J. Pienaar, 'The life and work of G.B.A. Gerdener with special reference to his contributions to Afrikaner identity formation and the racial discourse in South Africa from 1925 to 1950', (MTh dissertation, Stellenbosch University, December 2020), 103; There seemed to have been little basis for this concern, however some returning black South Africans became disillusioned and disappointed with a promised better future after the war. See L. Grundlingh, 'Prejudices, Promises and Poverty: The Experiences of Discharged and Demobilized Black South African Soldiers after the Second World War', *South African Historical Journal*, 26, 1 (1992), 116-135.

[11] S.F. Skeen, 'Kommunisme', in *Gevaarpunte vir die Sending*, (Voortrekkerpers: Johannesburg, 1945), 12-16.

leading missiologists at the time, indicated that Afrikaners and their church were rooted in the 'new Africa' – the decolonising Africa.[12] In his 1964 book on the Afrikaner's missionary task in this new Africa, he wrote that it was 'our Africa … the Africa of which we form a part and from which we cannot be detached.'[13] To Gerdener, this rootedness in Africa meant that the church's calling, amongst other things, was to counter any form of communist propaganda and advances on the continent. This sentiment gained momentum with the intensifying local anticommunist rhetoric of the 1960s. It also coincided with the DRC renegotiating its missionary structures beyond South African borders.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the DRC had a missionary presence across Southern Africa (see chapter 1). In each country and 'homeland', a so-called 'daughter church' had been planted by DRC missionaries to serve the local populace. The DRC, as the 'mother church', managed this system with deep paternalism and control through its synods and mission policies. In the shadow of African decolonisation however, the DRC underwent a process of cutting its paternalistic ties with the continent during the 1960s. Churches in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), Malawi (then Nyasaland), Namibia (then Southwest Africa), Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia), Botswana, Mozambique, and in the South African homelands gained independence, keeping only limited representative ties with the DRC.[14] The relationship between the DRC and these newly independent churches, which the DRC now referred to as 'young churches', was debated heavily within missionary circles. Some DRC missional strategists such as Gerdener framed this independence as a positive force in the Christian fight against communism on the continent. They argued that when a country fell under communist rule, the local church's ties with the outside world would be cut off. A 1965 undergraduate thesis from the faculty of theology at the University of Pretoria surveying the DRC's mission work and communism in Africa, found that because of this threat, the 'young churches' ought to prepare for communist rule – as a matter of worst-case scenario planning – by functioning completely independently from the DRC: 'The young churches will have to support themselves, expand by themselves, and govern themselves, because no one will be

[12] Gerdener was a long serving chair of the Federal Mission Council of the DRC and editor of the DRC's missionary journal, *Op die Horison* (On the Horizon). He also lectured at the DRC's Wellington Mission Institute, and later became professor of missiology at the theology faculty in Stellenbosch until 1955. He was also an important intermediary between the DRC, the academic community, and the NP government with regards to racial policy under nationalist rule. See Pienaar, 'The life and work of G.B.A. Gerdener'.
[13] G.B.A. Gerdener, *Ons taak in die Nuwe Afrika*, (N.G. Kerk-uitgewers: Cape Town, 1964), 12, 50.
[14] P.B. van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1905-1975*, (N.G. Kerkboekehandel: Pretoria, 1987), 237, 243-251.

there to do it for them in the case of Communist conquest (authors emphasis).'[15] There was, however, a sense that independence left these churches vulnerable to communist attacks, whilst there were also concerns about the ability of the young churches to find a balance between 'biblical obedience' to the state, and dissent to communist rule in their countries.[16] It was believed that the *inheemswording* – indigenisation – of these churches will be their strongest defence against the 'foreignness' of communism. The study concluded that the young churches should be one with their local people, but also guide them on Christian ways.[17]

This position, that new churches should fend for themselves, was incongruous with Antikom's anticommunist rhetoric regarding the threat of communism on the continent. One might have expected the DRC to use all its resources, such as its mission churches, to fight the so-called Red enemy. One DRC minister in the mid-1960s described the efforts that did exist as 'very small, virtually unorganised,' consisting of small groups of people listening to recordings of anticommunist speeches.[18] Rather, Antikom's rhetoric on communism in Africa was designed to generate fear, and ultimately control, over white congregants – the focus of anticommunists in the 1960s. Thus, explaining why no substantial anticommunist efforts were initiated by the leadership of the DRC in neighbouring countries.

Assisting the Global Anticommunist mission

The DRC's traditional missionary wing and its anticommunists had operated separate from one another, and in 1968 it was the latter who led initiatives to use missionary work as a way to fend off communism. By the end of the 1960s, a form of Cold War-inspired mission work had gained global prominence. It consisted of a group of private transnational enterprises, such as the *Wurmbrand Mission*, *European Christian Mission* (ECM), and *Open Doors*, each run by evangelical missionaries, focussed on evangelising efforts in communist countries in Eastern Europe where religious freedom was perceived to be threatened or non-existent.[19] The two foci

[15] S.P. Botha, 'Die Sending en die Kommunisme,' (B.Div Thesis, University of Pretoria, October 1965), 76-7.
[16] This Biblical notion of 'obedience' to the state was based on the passage found in Romans 13, which states 'Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.' (Romans 13:1-2, New King James translation).
[17] Botha, 'Die Sending en die Kommunisme,' 70, 81-2.
[18] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/1/3, S. Boshoff – JD Vorster, 4 May 1965. Translated from Afrikaans: '…heel klein, feitlik ongeorgniseerd…'
[19] See L. Van Dongen, S, Roulin, G. Scott-Smith (eds), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War*, (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2014), 235-275.; J. Gouverneur, 'Underground Evangelism: Missions During the Cold War', *Transformation*, 24, 2 (2007), 80-86; For the links between these organisations and global Cold War

of their missional activities were bible distribution, usually by illegal means, and support for underground churches in these communist countries, including East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union. These enterprises launched large fundraising campaigns in countries and communities where anticommunism was in the ascendant, especially in the United States.[20] In South Africa, they found significant allies in Koot Vorster and Antikom. Vorster was an open supporter of this movement and he regarded spreading the Christian gospel in communist countries as the most pro-active way the church could fight back against international communism.[21] At Antikom's last major conference in 1968, Vorster voiced this view publicly and convinced the delegates to officially petition the Antikom executive to 'find ways to morally and financially support the underground Christian Churches behind the iron curtain [sic.]'.[22] The DRC had traditionally focussed its missionary endeavours on black Africans, but with the independence of its missionary churches early in the 1960s, the DRC retreated into a supervisory role on mission work in Africa.[23] This shift opened up new possibilities for mission work in other spheres and which the anticommunists seized. Antikom responded to Vorster's request by setting up a fund for the benefit of underground missionary efforts. It urged members of the Afrikaans churches to donate toward the fund to support the 'underground church that is being tortured for their faith by the communists'.[24] The funds were to go directly to prominent missional enterprises in communist countries, such as the Wurmbrand Mission which was the largest organisation of its kind at the time.

The Wurmbrand Mission was set up by Richard Wurmbrand, a Romanian pastor and anticommunist dissident, imprisoned and tortured for fourteen years by the communist regime in Romania. After his release from prison in 1964, Wurmbrand made it his mission to inform the West about Christian persecution in communist countries. In 1967, he established *Jesus for*

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politics, see J. Heanes, 'Transnational Religious Actors and International Politics', *Third World Quarterly*, 22, 2 (April 2001), 143-158.

[20] The most important enterprises included the American based Underground Evangelism (today known as Mission without Borders), Jesus Christ to the Communist World, and Open Doors. European-based enterprises included the Slavic Gospel Association, Miskan Bak Jernteppet, Suomen Evankelisluterilainen Kansanlähetys, Glaube in der 2. Welt, and European Christian Mission. See Goeverneur, 'Underground Evanglism'; Boel, 'Bible Smuggling and Human Rights'.

[21] D.J. Langner, 'Teen Die Hele Wêreld Vry: J.D. Vorster as 'n Neo-Calvinis in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1935-1980,' (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2004), 177.

[22] 'Help die Ondergrondse Christelike Kerk After die Ystergordyn!', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, February 1969, 3. Translated from Afrikaans: '…om weë te prober vind om die ondergrondse Christelike Kerk agter die ystergordyn morel en finansieel (sic.) te steun.'

[23] The exceptions here were missionary ties in Sri Lanka and Japan. See Van der Watt, *Die NG Kerk*, 251-2.

[24] 'Help die Ondergrondse Christelike Kerk After die Ystergordyn!', *Antikom Nuusbrief*, February 1969, 3. Translated from Afrikaans: '…ondergrondse kerk wat so vir hul geloof gemartel word deur die kommuniste…'

the Communist World – colloquially called the *Wurmbrand Mission* in South Africa – which later expanded to become *Voice of the Martyrs*, which spread information of Christian persecution in communist countries, and raised funds for bible smuggling. This organisation was characterised by its aggressive public relations efforts, its fierce fundraising capabilities, and ability to build networks.[25]

In collaboration with the European Christian Mission (ECM), a transnational missionary enterprise, Antikom organised a South African book tour for Pastor Wurmbrand in 1969. On 5 September, Dan de Beer of Antikom was joined by RB Murray, chair of the DRC's Northern Transvaal evangelisation committee, and a local representative of the ECM, in welcoming Wurmbrand to South Africa.[26] During his two-month tour, Wurmbrand visited town halls and churches all over the country, speaking at almost forty gatherings of concerned Christians of all races – events for white, black, and coloured people were held separately. The ECM was responsible for his schedule, but Antikom ensured that many of his engagements were with DRC churches.[27] *Antikom Newsletter* reported with great enthusiasm that it is not often that 'a visiting preacher attracts such crowds in South Africa as the Christian martyr … Richard Wurmbrand'.[28] The largest event saw 12,000 people gather at Loftus-Versfeld Rugby Stadium in Pretoria. Wurmbrand, whose speech was recorded on vinyl records to be distributed by the DRC, was joined by church and Antikom officials on stage. At this grand occasion, Antikom chair, Schalk Botha, handed over a cheque worth R4,000 (equivalent to R320,000 in 2021) Wurmbrand – this was all of the money collected for the Underground Church-fund Antikom had launched a year earlier.[29] Botha referred to the Vorster-instigated decision at the 1968 symposium to provide financial aid to the missionary efforts: 'we are now privileged this afternoon to hand over our moral and financial support to Pastor Wurmbrand'.[30] Antikom's contribution was said to be its first, but not its last.[31] On the one hand, the DRC's anticommunists saw an opportunity in their newfound ally to expand their local fearmongering efforts. In the broader political sense however, Wurmbrand, with his international reputation

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[25] Boel, 'Bible Smuggling and Human Rights', 266.
[26] 'Pastor Wurmbrand in South Africa,' *Antikom Nuusbrief*, September 1969, 1.
[27] 'Besoek van Pastoor Wurmbrand aan Suid-Afrika,' *Antikom Nuusbrief*, September 1969, 3.
[28] 'Wurmbrand se Boodskap aan Suid-Afrika,' *Antikom Nuusbrief*, November 1969, 7. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Selde het 'n besoekende prediker sulke skares in Suid-Afrika getrek as die Christenmartelaat… Richard Wurmabrand.'
[29] This calculated with inflation.
[30] 'Wurmbrand se Boodskap aan Suid-Afrika,' *Antikom Nuusbrief*, November 1969, 7. Translated from Afrikaans: 'Nou is ons bevoorreg om vanmiddag ons morele en geldelike steun aan Pastoor Wurmbrand te kan oorhandig…'
[31] *Ibid.*

as a moral anticommunist missionary, was a useful political ally with regards to the DRC's endorsement of apartheid. Wurmbrand stated that 'apartheid is correct in my eyes' and reportedly defended South African racial segregation abroad.[32]

Cooperation between Antikom and anticommunist missions abroad could be interpreted as a strategic move by South African anticommunists to enhance their relevance to the West within the Cold War context. The reality was somewhat different, as Western underground missions in communist countries never gained legitimacy among the mainstream Protestant world, or in the political sphere. Underground missions were widely criticised within these circles with the former shunning their theological basis, whilst the latter considered them counterproductive to American efforts to ease hostility with the Soviet Union during the 1970s.[33] Similar to Antikom and the NCC's ill-timed alignment with the inept American Christian crusaders discussed in chapter three, the strategy of using anticommunist missions as a proxy to gain broader moral legitimacy in the West, was misplaced. That said, the greater motivation for this collaboration was to exploit international missionary activism to feed into the local anticommunist narrative of an imminent communist threat to white society in South Africa. Antikom provided Wurmbrand with donations for his mission, while his testimony strengthened the image of the violent nature of communists amongst the Afrikaner grassroots. Wurmbrand combined his first-hand account of Christian persecution in communist-ruled Romania – he was known to display his scars sustained from torture by communist authorities – with the violent implementation of the Soviet Union's anti-religious policies as evidence that communism itself was a violent force that targeted Christians.

The image created by Wurmbrand of the hostile and violent communist brought a new dimension to the local anticommunist narrative. It widened the earlier image of communism as an ideology that attacked all things dear (yet nevertheless intangible) to Afrikaner and white society, such as the ideals of Western civilisation, Christianity, and the *volk*. Followers of communism were now also portrayed by DRC anticommunists as physically violent and barbaric. In marketing the Antikom fund to assist the Wurmbrand mission, this expanded narrative was concisely articulated to the public in the *Antikom Newsletter*:

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[32] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/1/18, 'Memorandum: insake die erkenning van die Wurmbrandsending – vir voorlegging aan die ASSK, 24 Maart 1971,' 3-4.
[33] Boel, 'Bible Smuggling,' 265.

> [We] will unite with all men of good will in keeping the Communist scourge and its liberalist henchmen out of South Africa.
>
> Let us pray for the suffering Christians in Communist countries. Let us pray for those in our own country who are keeping watch day and night to protect us from Communist spies and saboteurs. Above all, let us rededicate ourselves to Christ and his Church and uphold Christian standards and norms in our public life. It is the accepted strategy of Communism to break down the moral resistance of a people by fostering infidelity, immorality and vice, and then to destroy the nation.[34]

Morality remained central to Antikom's anticommunists, but the idea that fellow Christians were on the receiving end of communist violence created an element of urgency in Antikom's grassroots efforts to create awareness of the 'evils' of communism. Dan de Beer, the DRC's secretary of public morality and Antikom secretary, explained that their support for religious martyrs in communist countries 'is the most Christian and the best way to awaken our people and keep them awake to the world danger that threatens S.A'.[35] Grassroots support for Wurmbrand's mission – congregations, women's groups, and regional missionary bodies were inspired by the extensive Wurmbrand tours of South Africa, and further informed and persuaded by the *Antikom Newsletter* and the *Kerkbode* – generated the favourable atmosphere for Antikom to drive its agenda of fortifying the *volk* through anticommunism. In 1970, Antikom reported to the DRC's General Synod that 'the support for [Wurmbrand] and similar efforts… does not only fit into our Christian calling, but also strengthens our *volk* spiritually for the struggle against communism in our country'.[36]

***Sending onder die Kommuniste*: the final mission, 1975**

Wurmbrand's tour of South Africa ignited a debate within the DRC about its model of involvement with mission work in communist countries. This was initiated at the DRC's Cape synod in 1969, which requested the national missions commission to investigate the possibility of institutionalising support for the Wurmbrand mission 'in order to spread the gospel to communists in Africa, and to organise the underground church in countries under communist

[34] 'Pastor Wurmbrand in South Africa,' *Antikom Nuusbrief*, September 1969, 1.
[35] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/2/2, DF de Beer – JD Vorster, 28 Junie 1971. Translated from Afrikaans: '…Die mees Christelike en die bester manier is om ons volk wakker te maak en wakker te hou vir die wêreldgevaar wat S.A. bedreig.'
[36] DRCA, KS 2059, 'Verslag van die Antikommunistiese Aksiekommissie vir die Jaar 1970, 3.

rule in Africa'.[37] Funding from Antikom and the NCC was intended to support the Wurmbrand Mission's efforts in Eastern European countries. The church was thus discussing broadening the possible mission field to Africa. The General Synod responded to this request by recognising the renewed commitment to the idea of spreading the Christian gospel as the only way to fight communism, and it affirmed the DRC's alignment to the anticommunist missional cause. A task team was assigned by the General Synod to investigate the Cape Synod's proposal, who referred it to the DRC's national missions council for a final decision.[38]

The original synodical motion for such as committee was proposed in part by long serving Antikom board member PW Jordaan, but its final composition was made up of two DRC missiologists CWH Boshoff and A Murray, joined by the church's missional secretary PES Smith and Koot Vorster.[39] It consulted Antikom, who provided positive information on Wurmbrand and his mission. To Antikom, it was obvious that the DRC should officially endorse and morally support the Wurmbrand mission. This was based on the on Antikom's belief that the DRC was 'called' to combat communism and has stood central in anticommunist efforts for the last quarter of a century. This confirmed that the DRC remained critical to the anticommunism ecosystem. Antikom further argued the Wurmbrand mission has received great support from the DRC's members during and after his tour and that solidarity toward fellow Christians in communist countries provided the *volk* with moral strength. DFB de Beer, on behalf of Antikom, maintained that the DRC's General Synod and national mission commission should not take on any financial responsibility toward the Wurmbrand mission and should only provide moral support. It was rather church councils and members who ought to be urged to donate to the cause.[40] This would effectively provide Antikom the opportunity to continue its grassroots activism through its speaking engagements, public meetings, and the distribution of its newsletter, while also remaining the sole administrator of funds for the Wurmbrand mission crowdsourced from DRC members and congregations. The link with Wurmbrand would also provide legitimacy to Antikom.

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[37] This body, officially called the Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie (ASSK – General Synodical Mission Commission), was the DRC's national governing body on missions and mission policy and reported to the General Synod; ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/1/18, 'Memorandum: insake die erkenning van die Wurmbrandsending – vir voorlegging aan die ASSK, 24 Maart 1971,' 8. Translated from Afrikaans: '… ten einde die evangelie na kommuniste in Afrika uit te dra en die ondergrondse kerk in lande onder kommunistiese bewind in Afrika…'
[38] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1970, 693-4, 721, 835.
[39] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1974, 25.
[40] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/1/18, 'Memorandum: insake die erkenning van die Wurmbrandsending – vir voorlegging aan die ASSK, 24 Maart 1971,' 8-9.

After consulting with the *Bible Society of South Africa* – a trusted and long-time partner of the DRC who were already providing bibles to Eastern European countries – as well as other local mission experts, the DRC's national missions commission decided to move in a different direction than that suggested by Antikom. The missionary wing of the church, not the anticommunists, thus held sway on this issue. To the anticommunists, mission work was merely a conduit to garner clout, funds, and support for a slowly receding Antikom. The missionaries saw it primarily as a way to assist Christians under communist rule and convert those who had fallen to the 'evil' ideology – they were however not oblivious to the upshot of sustaining anticommunist imagery amongst Afrikaners. Their investigation concluded that mission work in communist countries, especially in Africa, was such a specialised field that the church could not merely outsource it to transnational enterprises. 'Under the current circumstance,' the investigation's final recommendation read, 'it is urgently essential for the DRC to establish its own mission action for mission to the Communist World'.[41]

On 5 October 1972, the DRC executive declared that it took 'the historical decision to approve these recommendations and therefore decided that the [DRC] would start with mission work amongst Communists' – it was not specified which countries, but the implication was that it would be mission work targeting Eastern Europe.[42] This led to the creation of the DRC's *Sending onder Kommuniste* (SOK – Mission under Communists). According to Wurmbrand, who endorsed this development, the DRC was the first church in the world to establish such an endeavour.[43] Initially, this undertaking was directly run by the DRC's national missions council, who established networks within the DRC to distribute information and raise funds. In February 1975, a dedicated secretary, PW de Wet, was appointed after the General Synod of 1974 officially allocated funds for SOK.[44] As a linguaphile, he could read and write Russian, but De Wet was not an expert on communism. He was rather knowledgeable on missionary work in Africa where he had not drove an anticommunist agenda, but rather focussed on

[41] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1974, 309-310. '…onder huidige omstandighede vir die Ned. Geref. Kerk dringend noodsaaklik is om 'n eie sendingaksie vir sending aan die Kommunistiese Wêreld te begin.'
[42] *Acts of the General Synod,*1974, 310. Translated from Afrikaans: '…die geskiedkundige besluit geneem om hierdie aanbevelings goed te keur end us te besluit dat die Ned. Geref. Kerk met sendingwerk onder Kommuniste sal begin.'
[43] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1974, 310.
[44] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde* Kerk, 252.

Figure 7: The charismatic and eccentric PW de Wet, or Piet Kommunis, drew financial support from across the country for his Sending onder Kommuniste (SOK). (Die Sendingblad, September 1991, 15)

evangelising. He worked as a missionary in Nigeria in the latter half of the 1950s, whereafter he served as a DRC minister in Swaziland and Southern Rhodesia in the 1960s.[45] De Wet also headed the DRC's Synod of Central Africa before taking up the position as secretary of SOK.[46] His charismatic personality and sharp sense of humour made him a likeable and relatable figure in the DRC. De Wet quickly became infamous in church circles as 'Piet Kommunis' (Piet Communist), notorious for his fervour and energy in spreading the message of anticommunist missionary work.[47]

SOK's objectives were similar to that of the transnational missionary-led private enterprises. These included disseminating information on the threat of communism, spreading the gospel to communists through bible distribution, and assisting fellow Christians under communist rule.[48] The SOK's objectives were met with some concern from the two main anticommunist mission organisations operating in South Africa. The Wurmbrand Mission soon realised that SOK would not become a source of funding for its own organisation but will act as an entity on its own. They were concerned about competing with the DRC, because they felt they had a healthy relationship with the church. The DRC's new direction would also mean that the Wurmbrand Missions would lose an important source of income, as DRC members contributed 60% of its financial support in South Africa.[49] The DRC, however, did not see the Wurmbrand Mission as a competitor, but as an ally in the global mission to communist countries in Eastern Europe. This effort would be enhanced by the DRC's distinct focus on Southern Africa, and that the church's 'special contact with the young churches… also offers

[45] Today Eswatini and Zimbabwe.
[46] G. Van der Merwe, 'Sterfgevalle: 'Piet Kommunis'', *Kerkbode*, 26 January 2021, Accessed 3 May 2021 (https://kerkbode.christians.co.za/2021/01/26/sterfgevalle-piet-kommunis-en-kerkbode-medewerker/).
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1974, 310.
[49] ARCA, PV 632, 1/2/29/1/18, 'Memorandum: insake die erkenning van die Wurmbrandsending – vir voorlegging aan die ASSK, 24 Maart 1971,' 5.

distinct advantages and opportunities to the Church to undertake this work by itself'.[50] This was eventually accepted by the Wurmbrand Mission, who even offered to provide financial support for this venture. The DRC's missionary wing had thus effectively negotiated its authority over Southern African anticommunist mission work, whilst maintaining international links.

Open Doors, another major transnational interdenominational anticommunist mission affiliated with the charismatic Cold War-era bible smuggler, Brother Andrew, was uncomfortable with the DRC treading on what it felt was its territory.[51] Open Doors, with its focus on bible distribution in Africa, claimed to have already been working with some DRC synods and the young churches.[52] SOK's affiliation with the Bible Society, who had the same aim as Open Doors, made the DRC's new endeavour a direct competitor to Open Doors. As a result, Open Doors would not concede to the DRC's prerogative over the 'young churches'.[53] Discussions between the DRC, representatives of the Wurmbrand Mission and Open Doors give some indication as to why the church decided to establish its own mission to communist countries. With the loss of the DRC's 'young churches', the missiologists involved would have considered it a further loss if the young churches had fallen under the influence of outside mission organisations in relation to anticommunism. The DRC was concerned about the ever-approaching communist wave that purportedly threatened to sweep across Southern Africa, and it felt that it was important for the church to maintain some form of anticommunist authority in neighbouring countries and territories, while not appearing as a remnant of colonial rule. The DRC wanted autonomy in this regard, and it was made clear to the representatives of the Wurmbrand Mission and Open Doors that the DRC worked best when working alone in its own sphere of influence.[54] To the DRC delegates, it was 'the most advantageous and safest' scenario if the DRC itself collaborated with its former daughter churches, whom they made sure to frame as the fruits of the DRC's 'expanded mission work'.[55]

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[50] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1974, 310.
[51] Brother Andrew, born Andy van der Bijl (1928-) is a Dutch born bible smuggler and missionary who focussed on the persecuted church, previously behind the Iron Curtain, and later in the Middle East. E.J. van der Watt, 'Broer Andrew,' *Elektroniese Christelike Kernensiklopedie*, 4 December 2019, https://ecke.co.za/broer-andrew-andy-van-der-bijl/ [Accessed 14 October 2020].
[52] DRCA, AS 1482, 'Vertroulik: Notule van Samesprekings van Verteenwoordigers van die ASSK met Verteenwoordigers van die CSKW en van Geopende Deure, 22 November 1972,' 1-4.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Ibid.*,3.
[55] *Ibid.*, 2.

Central to SOK's messaging was the image of the violent communist targeting South Africa. Antikom and the Wurmbrand Mission had established the sentiment that communists were prone to violence, butbut SOK created immediacy by focusing the attention of DRC members on the violent resistance – framed as communist 'terrorism' – in neighbouring countries such as Mozambique, Rhodesia, and Namibia.[56] However, despite this messaging and its original position that the DRC's own missionary work amongst communists would focus on Africa, SOK effectively busied itself with missionary endeavours, primarily bible and anticommunist literature distribution, targeting communist countries in Eastern Europe. SOK's assertions that African countries were threatened by violent communist advances was merely rhetorical, functioning as a fearmongering tool to create a sense of urgency and immediacy to the threat. The Afrikaner's real sympathy, SOK asserted, was rather with white Christians being supressed in communist countries, and white communists who were allegedly brainwashed by their rulers. The DRC's official missionary newsletter, *Die Sendingblad*, alluded to the novelty of undertaking missionary work that did not target black people, affirming that although the majority of communists were white, SOK's work 'remains missionary work, because they are heathens (white heathens)'.[57] So, even when the church entered the missionary field beyond South Africa, it remained primarily concerned with communism's impact on white people. SOK's departure from its original intended focus on Africa furthermore indicated that the DRC's missionary wing essentially adopted Antikom's missionary agenda of supporting transnational missionary work, but effectively kept them from venturing into its sphere of influence. This was an early sign of things to come for Antikom's relationship with the DRC.

Afrikaner Women vs Communism

The combination of tapping into Afrikaner fears of communist inspired black violence, and sympathy toward white European 'heathens' in need of Christian intervention was effective in mobilising the *volk*. DRC members from across the country responded with great enthusiasm to the creation of the church's own anticommunist missionary organisation in 1972. Before a full-time secretary was appointed, SOK did not engage in any public speaking engagements or speaking tours. The new organisation merely published a few articles in the *Kerkbode* and *Die*

[56] 'Sending onder Kommuniste: Wat doen N.G. Kerk?', *Die Sendingblad*, Julie 1973, 220.
[57] *Ibid.* Translated from Afrikaans: 'Al is 'n groot persentasie van hierdie mense Blankes, bly dit sendingwerk, want hulle is heidene (wit heidene), wat van God en sy gebod nie weet nie en dikwels ook nie wil weet nie.'

Sendingblad informing DRC members about its intention to assist global bible distribution efforts to communist countries in eastern Europe.[58]

SOK's early messaging resonated particularly strongly with women in the DRC, who had long been important consumers of written church media and had a well-established history of missionary activity.[59] A stream of small donations and letters from all over South Africa followed, most notably from individual women and women's organisations, the elderly, and children. According to Elna Mouton, women and women's organisations had generally found themselves on the periphery of the male dominated DRC. They were mostly entrusted with the practical work of compassion, such as poor relief and catechism. However, church councils, synod meetings, and other ecclesiastic bodies often pointed to women's ability to raise funds for the mainstream church activities dictated by men.[60] Letters sent to SOK along with the donations reveal the creativity, commitment, sincerity, and fervour of those at the grassroots who wanted to assist anticommunist missionary work. Women gathered to bake and sell *pannekoek* – a traditional Afrikaans pancake – while others knitted jerseys to be distributed by missionaries amongst communists.[61] Pupils from a small farm school near Uitenhage held regular drives to collect loose change from fellow students to raise funds for SOK – and even staged a school play on the virtues of bible distribution amongst communists.[62] A Sunday school teacher from Windhoek sent in moneys collected by the nine-year olds in her class, with one girl enthusiastically selling doilies to raise funds.[63] Elderly women would write to SOK that their modest contributions were the first payments they made after settling their boarding fees. Some of the elderly sent in their contributions from their sickbeds, while some of the younger DRC members were excited to contribute from their first salaries. The contributions were modest, with the majority of donations ranging from R3 up to R250 (equivalent to R150

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[58] 'Die Kommunistiese Wêreld', *Die Sendingblad*, September 1972, 306; 'Sending onder Kommuniste: Wat doen N.G. Kerk?', *Die Sendingblad*, Julie 1973, 220; 'Senidng Kommuniste en Kommunisitese Wêreld', *Kerkbode*, 8 November 1972, 587; 'Sending aan Kommuniste', *Kerkbode*, 20 Desember 1972, 794; 'Die Kerke Agter die Ystergordyn', *Kerkbode*, 25 April 1973, n.p.

[59] I. Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1924', in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, (Longman: London, 1987), 113-114; J.M. Cronje, *Vroue met Nardusparfuum: die aandeel van die vrou in die sendingwerk van die Nederduits Gerofmeerde Kerk*, (NG Kerkboekhandel, Pretoria: 1984).

[60] E. Mouton, '"Remember forward and hoping backward"? Some thoughts on women and the Dutch Reformed Church', *Scriptura*, 76, 2001, 79.

[61] 'Pannekoek Help Sending onder Kommuniste', *Die Sendingblad*, October 1974, 333.

[62] 'Selfs Kindertjies Help Sending onder Kommunisme', *Die Sendingblad*, February 1975, 42; C. Potgieter, 'Sente vir Bybels', *Die Sendingblad*, November 1976, 394. Uitenhage is now known as Kariega.

[63] 'Negejariges stuur spaargeld vir Sending onder Kommuniste', *Die Sendingblad*, March 1975, 85.

and R12 250 in 2021).[64] There were some outliers, for instance, a person who donated a remarkable R44 000 inherited from their brother, citing their 'gratitude that our country is still spared from tribulation' for their generosity.[65] By the time De Wet took charge of SOK in 1975, the organisation had already received R43 660 (equivalent to R2,5-million in 2021) in spontaneous donations.[66]

The fervour with which these donations were collected confirmed that grassroots anticommunist sentiment within the DRC was well established by the mid-1970s. As this thesis has demonstrated, the DRC had officially and zealously opposed communism for over half a century, while the previous chapter specifically argued that right-wing anticommunist rhetoric had drifted into mainstream discourse, amplifying fears amongst Afrikaners of an imminent communist threat. Anticommunism was further embedded amongst Afrikaners from DRC pulpits across the country. In his analysis of apartheid preaching, theologian Johan Cilliers highlights how DRC ministers employed anticommunism in the 1960s, but especially the 1970s. Preachers casted communism as an outside force targeting righteous and guiltfree Afrikaners, or as Cilliers succinctly described this dichotomy, 'passive sufferers and active enemies'. He further argued that apartheid preaching depended on an external enemy such as communism to function – communism was perceived not only to threaten Afrikaner Christian-Nationalism.[67]

Figure 8: The DRC in Nelspruit collecting jerseys and scarfs knitted by local women to distribute amongst communists in Eastern Europe (Die Sendingblad, February 1984, 1)

[64] These amounts are valued at the 2021 purchasing power of donations made in 1975.
[65] 'Grepe uit Briewe', *Die Sendingblad*, February 1977, 53; Translated from Afrikaans: 'Ek doen dit uit dankbaarheid dat ons land nog gespraar is van verdrukking.'
[66] 'Bydraes Sending onder Kommuniste', *Die Sendingblad*, March 1975, 79.
[67] J. Cilliers, *God for Us? An analysis and assessment of Dutch Reformed preaching during the Apartheid Years*, (SUN Media, Stellenbosch: 2006), 64-66.

Grassroot DRC members were thus deeply committed anticommunists by the time De Wet sought to mobilise support for the SOK, which he capitalised on. Most of his time was spent travelling around South Africa, visiting as many congregations as possible where he especially engaged with local women's unions and youth groups to inspire members to donate funds for its missionary work amongst communists. DRC members were presented with slide shows informing them about the main activities that the SOK coordinated. It consisted of passive assistance, mainly providing financial help to existing missionary societies, such as funding bible distribution to communist countries through the *Bible Society of South Africa*, as well as donating to missionary societies targeting Eastern Europe and South Sudan.[68]

Figure 9: Children from a local DRC congregation on a day trip at the Port Elizabeth harbour visiting the bible distribution to communists kiosk. (Die Sendingblad, January 1982)

The acknowledgement of DRC women as merely good fundraisers undermined their substantial contribution from the margins, as was the case with anticommunist mission work. Women often became active outside the mainstream activities of the official church and formed organisations, such as the *Vrouesendingbond* (VSB – Women's Mission Society) and the *Afrikaanse Christen Vroue Vereniging* (ACVV – Afrikaans Christian Women's Society) which, according to Mouton, functioned as a church within a church as a way to guard themselves against the dominant masculine culture of the DRC.[69] Although De Wet approached women and their organisations to generate funding, the women regarded anticommunist mission work as an opportunity to join the battle against communism. This was illustrated by the women-led initiative to conduct mission work at the harbours. In 1970, GH Oosthuizen, wife of a DRC minister in Walvis Bay (South West Africa, now Namibia), started a local ministry distributing bibles and Christian literature amongst crewmembers from so-called 'red ships' – Russian and

[68] P.W. De Wet, 'N.G. Kerk se werk kom op dreef', *Die Sendingblad*, May 1975, 158-9.
[69] Mouton, 'Die verhaal van Afrikaanse Christenvroue: Uitnodigings tot morele vorming', *Scripura*, 63, 1997, 480-1. Scholars such Marijke du Toit also argue that women's organisations, such as the ACVV, enabled Afrikaner women to be active agents in constructing Afrikaner nationalism rather than passive beneficiaries thereof. See M. du Toit, 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: *Volksmoeder* and the ACVV, 1904-1929', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29 (1), March 2013.

Eastern European – that docked in the Walvis Bay port.[70] After four years, Oosthuizen and a team of local DRC volunteers had distributed 10,000 bibles at the docks, which convinced her to expand the operation by seeking financial help from SOK. In December 1974, the first DRC Ports Mission kiosk was unveiled next to the customs office at the Port of Walvis Bay which was largely funded by SOK. They also covered the salary of a full-time employee, Deidre Albertyn, a trained social worker from the area, in charge of distributing bibles and pamphlets from the kiosk.[71] Over the next few years, the Walvis Bay-model was replicated in port cities across South Africa. In 1976, kiosks were opened at the ports of Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. East London saw their port mission established in 1978.[72] These were all initiated by regional DRC women's groups and were managed by church councils or missionary bodies of the local church, with SOK providing the majority of the funding.

Figure 10: A representative of the DRC's harbour mission on a 'Red Ship' from China, in the Cape Town harbour, distributing anticommunist Christian literature. (Die Sendingblad, May 1980)

Despite the anticommunist fervour on the ground, the initiatives from women across the country, and De Wet's commitment, the missional endeavours of SOK struggled to find prominence on a synodical level. De Wet continually had to defend the existence and importance of SOK, while the feasibility of funding such an operation was questioned at every General Synod meeting from 1974 to 1986. This was not as much resistance toward anticommunism – the synod remained committed to anticommunism throughout this period – as it was scepticism toward missionary support to external organisations. Departing from its original intentions to focus on Africa, SOK had essentially became a local fundraising front for international anticommunist missionary bodies and not a missionary body focussed on

[70] South-West Africa is modern-day Namibia.
[71] 'Internasionale Poort vir Bybels', *Die Sendingblad*, April 1975, 134-5.
[72] P.W. De Wet, ''Biblia' Geopen: Hawewerk in Port Elizabeth', *Die Sendingblad*, October 1976, 326; PW De Wet, 'Hawewerk in Kaapstad', *Die Sendingblad*, December 1976, 411

evangelism. The General Synod ultimately maintained a tentative endorsement of SOK, but De Wet had to rely on funding from DRC members to keep it operating.

It was not only the missional wing of anticommunism that was not receiving overly enthusiastic backing from the broader DRC leadership. The communist threat was merely noted at synodical meetings, rather than being seriously discussed. The DRC's formal position, that international communists were targeting South Africa on a physical and spiritual level, and that the church had to fight every instance of communist subversion among its own people, remained unchanged. From the mid-1970s however, discussions about anticommunism on a synodical level were overshadowed by the DRC's reaction to the racial situation in South Africa. Historian David Welsh highlights the irony that years of political power and increased Afrikaner prosperity had sharpened the internal diversity of the Afrikaner nationalist movement.[73] The DRC, with its deep and historical association with this movement, had to do its best to fill some of these cracks. At the centre of this crisis stood the question of race and racial policy.

The DRC's struggle with race, reform, and relevance

The DRC's anticommunist missionary work was established and expanded while the church was in the midst of wider deliberations about its racial policy. This process, and its aftermath, became the dominant issue within the DRC until the 1990s and provided the larger context in which anticommunism within the church began to dwindle. In 1970, the General Synod of the DRC appointed a commission to research race and race relations in South Africa with the intention of formulating the church's racial policy.[74] This decision was a culmination of impulses within the DRC to deal with the simmering discontent of Cottesloe a decade earlier as discussed in chapter 3.[75] The composition of the commission indicated the DRC's intention that the report should be a compromise between the conservative and pragmatic factions. It was chaired by leading Cottesloe figure, WA Landman, who was joined by fellow pragmatists such as FE O'B Geldenhuys and PES Smith. Heavyweight conservative figures such as Koot Vorster

[73] D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: From Racial Domination to Majority Rule*, (Jonathan Ball: Cape Town, 2010), 74.
[74] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1970, 785.
[75] For the process leading to RVN, see chapter 1 in JM van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie" en "Kerk en Samelewing" as Beleigdstukke van die Ned. Geref. Kerk – 'n Kerk-historiese Studie', (PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 1990).

and JS Gericke also served on the commission. Four sub-commissions covered the church's relationship to race, ecumenism, society and the state, and missionary work.[76] In 1974, the commission's report 'Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge die Lig van die Skrif' (RVN – Race, *Volk* and *Volk*-relations in Light of the Scriptures) was accepted by the General Synod as its racial policy.[77] The report was also published for public consumption in 1975 as *Human Relations and the South African Scene in Light of the Scriptures*.[78]

The 'new' racial policy was intended to be a compromise between the pragmatists and the conservative Kuyperians in the church, but it turned out to be a triumph for the latter. According to Kinghorn, RVN exemplified the DRC's apartheid theology in a broad sense. It contained a piercing critique of ecumenical hegemony, maintained a Kuyperian biblical interpretation that justified apartheid, and emphasised *veelvolkigheid* – 'diversity of nations' or ethnic diversity – drawn from the tower of Babel parable as the guiding principle of social and political life in South Africa. Accordingly, the state's policy of separate development was argued to be just and fair, and within the norms of Christian conviction.[79] In essence, RVN was a refined and sophisticated scriptural justification of this policy. While it was a departure from the DRC's missiological justification for racial segregation set out in 1935 (see chapter 1), RVN was what Kinghorn considered to be the classic formulation of the church's apartheid theology. The document therefore merely encapsulated the DRC's racial attitude, which had been refined, expanded, rationalised, and dogmatised over the preceding four decades.[80]

Theologian Bernard Lategan argued that the DRC of the 1970s was still suffering from a loss of critical consciousness which dated back to the seminal Johannes Du Plessis case in the 1930s.[81] This created an instinctive response from the church, which Lategan believed to

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[76] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1974, 216-7.
[77] *Ras, volk en nasie en volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif: goedgekeur en aanvaar deur die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Oktober 1974*, (NG Kerk uitgewers: Cape Town, 1975).
[78] *Dutch Reformed Church, Human Relations and the South African Scene in Light of the Scriptures*, (NG Kerkuitgewers: Cape Town, 1975).
[79] See J. Kinghorn, 'Konsolidasie, Rasionalisasie en Dogmatisering', in J. Kinghorn (ed.), *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, (Macmillan: Johannesburg, 1986), 130-136.
[80] R. Botman, 'Belhar and the white Dutch Reformed Church: changes in the DRC: 1974-1990', *Scripture*, 76 (2001), 35; Kinghorn, 'Konsolidasie, Rasionalisasie en Dogmatisering', 128.
[81] Johannes du Plessis, professor of New Testament and Missiology at Stellenbosch from 1916, was a proponent of ideas linked with the Enlightenment, modern trends in theology, and argued for a mature reconciliation between science and theology. In 1923, he established a journal *Het Zoeklicht* (The Searchlight) to propagate his ideas, but it was met with great resistance from other theologians, such as DR Snyman, who founded a counter-journal *Die Ou Paaie* (The Old Ways) in 1926. The theological resistance to Du Plessis' ideas became so intense that he was relieved of his post in 1930, which was followed by numerous church hearings and two Supreme Court cases which Du Plessis ultimately won. He was, however, not reinstated and the Du Plessis-case ushered in a period of

be the dominant force in the DRC's decision-making, of maintaining the status quo. In this case, this meant a dogmatised, racist order.[82] The Kuyperian rationale became the uncritically accepted default position amongst the majority of DRC leaders, with only a minority of young voices, predominantly influenced by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968), challenging it. Barth argued that theology was essentially a response to worldly events and human needs, which made his theology distinctly contextual and political, while striving to stay subject to the gospel alone – this differed from the Kuyperian notion of 'sovereignty in each sphere'.[83] In the 1950s, his theology had been influential on lone voices within the DRC who were critical of the biblical justification of apartheid, like the prominent missiology professor Ben Marias and professor of dogmatics BB Keet.[84] From the generation of theologians trained by these two professors emerged a handful of young church leaders heavily influenced by Barth. Amongst them were Willie Jonker and Johan Heyns who were both further exposed to Barth's theology while studying in Europe.[85] They became central players in shifting the DRC away from apartheid in the 1980s, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

The church's adoption of RVN broadly reflected the sentiment of the *volk* and of the DRC's members: to maintain the status quo of racial segregation. Willem Nicol thus reflected on RVN that 'a theology critical of apartheid tried to break through, but the loyalty of the church towards the Afrikaners, the tendency to reflect and sanction their beliefs, was altogether too strong'.[86] At the time of the DRC's adoption of RVN, a team of German researchers gauging South African sentiments with regards to political change in the country concluded that Afrikaners were consistently more orientated to the status quo.[87] They found that in 1974 almost 80 percent of white Afrikaans speaking South Africans approved of all forms of social

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ultra-conservative theological training at Stellenbosch to guard the DRC against any modernists or 'foreign' influences. See J. Kinghorn, 'Vormende Faktore' in Kinghorn (ed), *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, 55-58.

[82] B.C. Lategan, 'Preparing and keeping the mind-set intact – Reasons and forms of a theology of the status quo', *Scriptura*, 76 (2001), 63-6.

[83] J.W. De Gruchy, 'The reception and relevance of Karl Barth in South Africa: reflections on 'doing theology' in South Africa after sixty years in conversation with Barth', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, 5, 1 (2019), 12.

[84] *Ibid.*, 14. For receptions of Barth in South Africa, see P. Naudé, 'The Reception of Karl Barth in South Africa 1960-1990 – Selected Perspectives' in P. Naudé & H. van der Westhuizen (ed.), *Pathways in Theology: Ecumenical, African and Reformed*, (SUN Media, Stellenbosch: 2015).

[85] Willie Jonker noted in a reflection on Barth that 'The generation to which I [and Johan Heyns] belong was, theologically speaking, dominated by Karl Barth'. See WD Jonker, 'Some remarks on the interpretation of Karl Barth', *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskryf*, 29, 1 (1988), 29.

[86] W Nicol, 'Accompanying the Flock – The Development of the Dutch reformed Church 1974-1990', *Scriptura*, 76 (2001), 133.

[87] T. Hanf, H. Weiland, & G. Vierdag, *South Africa: The Prospects of Peaceful Change: An Empirical Enquiry into the Possibility of Democratic Conflict Regulation*, (Indiana Universality Press: Bloomington, 1981), 227.

segregation between the races, while 90 percent supported the homeland policy as it was implemented at the time. About two thirds of Afrikaners opposed universal franchise and political integration.[88] Remnants of the DRC's *volkskerk* tradition could be detected here, as the church sought to reflect and reinforce the sentiment of its members when it adopted RVN. The main difference was that, historically, the *volkskerk* identity also implied that the church took on a role as the moral leader of the *volk*, guiding its people with a clear focus on a secure future. In the preceding two decades however, the DRC had gradually lost this position as a leader of the Afrikaners, surrendering material thinking to the state and, to a lesser extent, the Broederbond. RVN thus marked the DRC's continued acceptance of its role as the moraliser of apartheid, rather than reclaiming its historical role as a moral leader of Afrikaners.

The DRC's diminished position within Afrikanerdom became even clearer as the NP adopted a reformist position towards apartheid, albeit cautiously and incrementally. Prime Minister John Vorster was no *verligte*, but he had developed doubts about the workability of apartheid. Early in his term as prime minister, Vorster stated that the NP's main purpose of retaining, maintaining, and immortalising Afrikaner identity was not dependent on apartheid. Vorster told a group of NP MP's that 'if there are other better methods of achieving this end, then we must find those methods and get on with it,' implying that the party was not unconditionally wedded to the policy of apartheid.[89] That said, Vorster himself was not capable of envisioning a radical change to the policy. During the latter half of the 1960s, his assessment of apartheid was that it still served the NP in its core purpose of securing an Afrikaner future.[90] Nevertheless, under Vorster's leadership, apartheid was deconsecrated in a way that was never possible under his dogmatic predecessors. He managed his cabinet ministers and his party in such a way that ministers, and party officials had autonomy over their respective portfolios.[91] This left room for pragmatically inclined nationalists to implement reforms, specifically to petty apartheid, while keeping the programme of grand apartheid – the ideal of separate development through semi-autonomous homelands for blacks – intact. Concessions on the sports policy, immigration reform, and a willingness to re-evaluate policy towards black labour were all made in this context.[92] None of this was done out of a moral or ethical conviction,

[88] Hanf, et al., *South Africa: The Prospect of Peaceful Change*, 219, 221, & 223.
[89] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 557.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] Giliomee, *Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 92-4.
[92] DWelsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 62.

however. The unforeseen rate of population growth and consequent urbanisation of black South Africans, and international pressure, particularly in relation to the sports policy, forced the regime to tinker with apartheid in an attempt to steady the ship.[93] The state, although lacking in an alternative vision, realised that apartheid had run its course. In contrast to this, the DRC was confined by such a narrow theological imagination that the church dogmatised apartheid theology and accepted it as the only vision for South Africa with the adoption of RVN in 1974.[94] Furthermore, the NP could afford to lose some ultra-conservative Afrikaner voters because it had the option of expanding its electoral support among English-speakers, whilst the DRC was dependant on retaining all Afrikaners across the spectrum to fill its pews to remain a viable moral guardian of the *volk*. The *volkskerk* tradition and the dominance of the conservative clergy thus kept the DRC from adopting a programme of reform.

The Broederbond also embarked on a re-evaluation of the policy of apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor of the Rand Afrikaans University, Gerrit Viljoen, who succeeded the right-wing stalwart Andries Treurnicht in 1974.[95] There were dramatic differences between dogmatic clergy-turned-politician Treurnicht and the *verligte* academic Viljoen who shifted the Broederbond toward a programme of reform. Viljoen, like Vorster, understood apartheid as a means to an end – that is, the preservation of Afrikaner culture and identity. He made it clear, according to Giliomee, that the policy was subject to re-evaluation.[96] In his first AB executive meeting, Viljoen emphasised that there was a tension between the apartheid ideals of the past and the present reality facing South Africa. He argued that government policy, which was formulated decades ago, had to be updated to meet the needs of the time and that the AB was encouraged and energised to play a central role in this policy renewal. This was an opportunity for the AB to reclaim its position as the central platform for discussing the future of the Afrikaners.[97] Initially, the AB fell short in envisioning

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[93] Giliomee, *Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 91. For a discussion on the South African sports boycott, see D. Booth, 'Hitting Apartheid for Six? The Politics of the South African Sport Boycott', *Journal for Contemporary History*, 38, 3 (2003).

[94] Theologian Russel Botman argues that appropriation of Kuyperian thought to enhance apartheid theology created an extremely narrow *universe of theological discourse* which was impenetrable until the 1980s when internal and external pressure increased on the DRC (See chapter 5). Botman, 'Belhar and the white Dutch Reformed Church', 34-36.

[95] An official history of the AB, written by ELP Stals, judged Treurnicht's chairpersonship (1972-1974) as too short to be of any consequence to the AB's operation and vision. Stals also argued that Treurnicht was blinded by his own political ambition which restricted his views as chairperson. ELP Stals, *Die Broederbond: Die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner-Broederbond 1918-1994*, (Johannesburg: Die Afrikanerbond, 2021), 248.

[96] Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 293.

[97] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 248-249.

a future without some incarnation of apartheid policy. The Broederbond, whilst debating different political possibilities that did not rely on the oppression of black people, continued to support Vorster's homeland policy. Although support for this policy continued during the 1970s, the AB under Viljoen's leadership proactively looked for alternative political possibilities for the preservation of Afrikaner culture that did not depend on racial dominance.[98]

The Broederbond's transformation into a force for renewal within Afrikanerdom can be understood by closely examining its constitution. Throughout its history, the AB tied together most Afrikaner elites, particularly academics, businesspeople, and professionals. Research conducted in the mid-1970s indicated that educated Afrikaners were up to twice as likely to support reform to apartheid than those with lower levels of education. The political, business, and academic elite were even more supportive of reform.[99] Thus, when Viljoen, himself an academic, appealed to AB leaders to take an active role in reshaping Afrikanerdom's future, he was talking to an Afrikaner elite that was open to change, and among whom a pragmatic and reformist view was gaining traction. The AB and the NP thus engaged with the embryonic notions of reform because their membership was dominated by an educated middle-class that was willing to contemplate such ideas. Historian Danelle van Zyl-Hermann further illustrated how the NP had transformed into a middle-class organisation with a gradual disregard for its working-class Afrikaner constituents who in turn grew increasingly disgruntled with the ruling elite.[100] This might further explain why the DRC lagged behind the broader Afrikaner establishment with regards to apartheid. The DRC leadership, although part of the Afrikaner elite in terms of power and economic strength, had to tend to the aspirations and fears of its members, half of whom were working class and about 80 percent had no tertiary education.[101] In the mid-1970s, Afrikaners rarely questioned the decisions their leaders made, and the DRC had a moral grounding in the *volk* that made the church almost infallible.[102] The DRC would have risked losing this position if it took an about turn on something as central to Afrikaner nationalism as apartheid. Losing members to its sister churches was a long-feared possibility, which would have in turn impacted the DRC's proximity to the ruling elite. The

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[98] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 416.
[99] Hanf et al., *South Africa: The Prospect of Peaceful Change*, 210.
[100] See 'From sweetheart to Frankenstein: The National Party's changing stance towards white labour amid the crisis of the 1970s' in D. Van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat: White Workers and South Africa's Long Transition to Majority Rule*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 2021).
[101] Van der Watt, *Die Nederduits Gerormeerde Kerk*, 377-8.
[102] Hanf et al., *South Africa: The Prospect of Peaceful Change*, 401-5.

mid-1970s saw the Afrikaner establishment explore the possibilities of reform, although the leading institutions lacked the imagination and vision to broker a real path away from apartheid. That said, the DRC was the only Afrikaner institution still dogmatically committed to the policy of apartheid.

Soweto 1976

The eruption of the Soweto Uprising in 1976 forced the Afrikaner establishment to urgently reckon with the question of reform. On 16 June 1976, thousands of school children took to the streets of Soweto to protest the state's policy on Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in local schools. The protest turned violent and police intervention caused the deaths of hundreds of black youths. The uprising spread to different parts of the country, and within five months almost 700 people had been killed.[103] The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) had a significant influence on the uprising which led the state to ban all organisations associated with it.[104] Steve Biko, one of the leaders in the BCM, was arrested and suffered a violent death at the hands of security police officers while in custody. The Soweto uprising was a turning point in black resistance to the apartheid regime. As Dan O'Meara observed, the uprising 'entered South African political culture not as massacre [like Sharpeville in 1960] but as a proud and glorious rebellion'.[105] It brought home the realisation amongst both black and white South Africans that a significant number of the urban black population were not merely passive victims of apartheid and exposed the vulnerability of white power.

The effects of the Soweto uprising on Afrikaner nationalism were significant. The NP and its nationalist allies were forced into a period of soul searching. Julian Brown argued that the Soweto Uprising did not arise out of a period of political dormancy within the liberation

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[103] On the Soweto Uprising see SM, Ndlovu, N. Nieftagodien, and T. Moloi, 'The Soweto Uprising', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2 [1970-1980]*, (Unisa Press: Pretoria, 2006); E. Brink, S Lebelo, S Krige and D Ntshangase, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Personal Accounts of the Uprising*, (Cape Town, Kwela Books: 2006); B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash. The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution*, (London, Zed Press: 1979); H. Mashabela, *A People on the Boil: Reflections on June 16 1976, and Beyond*, (Johannesburg, Jacana Media: 2006); S. Mkhabela, *Open Earth and Black Roses: Remembering 16 June 1976*, (Johannesburg, Skotaville Press: 2001); SM Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising: Counter-Memories of June 1976*, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press: 1998). J. Brown, *Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976*, (James Currey: Suffolk, 2016).

[104] For the role of Black Consciousness in the Soweto Uprising, see J. Kane-Berman, *Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction* (Ravan: Johannesburg, 1978). The interaction between Black Consciousness and labour protests in the run up to the Uprising is also discussed in B. Hirson, *Year of fire, year of ash: The Soweto Schoolchildren's Revolt that Shook Apartheid*, (Zed Books: London, 2016)

[105] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 180, 182.

movement.[106] White South Africans were merely unaware of the developments in black politics and the growing actions against the apartheid state. To a highly insulated white South African society, the uprising came as a shock. The impression that the state was implementing a policy that protected the white populace and maintained order was now tainted. Black resistance and the police's violent response did not force ordinary Afrikaners into a period of ethical and moral introspection. Decades of anticommunist rhetoric instilled a ubiquitous sense of imminent threat amongst Afrikaners, which shaped their immediate response to the Soweto Uprising. It amplified these fears and triggered a greater willingness amongst Afrikaners to fight to secure their future.[107] The reality was that the Nationalist government could no longer suppress black opposition to apartheid as the Soweto Uprising had reignited the liberation struggle.[108] Moreover, the Uprising had also reignited international sentiment against the apartheid system. The UN Security Council instituted an arms embargo against South Africa and the international isolation of the country accelerated.[109] While the state scrambled to fend off international criticism and to control local dissent, the AB accelerated its transformation into an organisation committed to reform. [110] The AB's leader Gerrit Viljoen became a prominent *verligte* Afrikaner voice. In 1978, he bemoaned that the NP had imposed a racial policy developed by white people onto black people without consultation. The major problem going forward, he told a reporter, was to convince Afrikaners to 'give up measures that they have always been told were essential to ensure their survival and identity'.[111] For the leader of the Broederbond to move to a more moderate and *verligte* position was significant, especially at a time when the AB was positioning itself as a major influence in developing socio-political policy.[112] The Afrikaner establishment had thus broadly accepted the reality that the future of the country would not be primarily shaped according to Afrikaner ideals, and the established belief in the morality of grand apartheid faded quickly.[113]

The DRC establishment, focussed on the well-being of its insulated white members, was not directly moved by the protest and violence of 1976. Its leadership publicly lamented

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[106] J. Brown, *Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976*, (James Currey: Suffolk, 2016), 3. Brown's book examines the politics of the struggle against apartheid in the decade preceded the Uprising.
[107] Hanf et al., *South Africa: The Prospect of Peaceful Change*, 208; 420.
[108] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 189.
[109] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 580.
[110] Welsh, *Rise and* Fall, 136.
[111] I. Wilkins & H. Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond*, (Jonathan Ball: Cape Town, 2012), xxiii.
[112] Stals, *Die Broederbond*, 249
[113] Welsh, *Rise and* Fall, 135.

the uprising, which they described as a violent protest of black youth that 'unfortunately' forced local police officials to bring order to the situation by use of force.[114] The morality of grand apartheid might have begun to be questioned in some Afrikaner circles, but the DRC stood by its biblical justification of the policy as set out in 1974. Despite an overwhelming number of queries from individuals and churches abroad on the uprising in Soweto, which the church's publication targeting the international community *DRC News* described as a mere 'disturbance', and the death of Steve Biko, the DRC clung to its increasingly outdated endorsement of grand apartheid.[115] According to church officials, all questions were answered 'on the basis of the principles laid down in [RVN]'.[116] With this stance, the DRC continued its loyalty toward a fearful *volk* and a theological justification for apartheid that was becoming increasingly scrutinised.

The DRC's outdated stance on the question of apartheid reform did not mean that it lost its relevance to the Afrikaner establishment. Clergy still played an important role in the AB's operations as prominent leaders in communities across the country. In 1977, about 7 percent of AB members were DRC clergy, which meant that half of the church's 1 700 ministers were Broeders.[117] The discrepancy between the Broederbond's reform agenda, and the DRC's unwavering dogmatism was in part due to the conservative leadership of the church as discussed above. There were also significant organisational differences between the two bodies. The DRC leadership had to account for the conviction of the *volk* who filled their pews weekly. In contrast, the AB was an elite organisation that sought to elect like-minded individuals to its leadership. The NP was also aware that the majority of its constituents still filled DRC church benches on Sundays. In 1980, two thirds of Afrikaners, which equalled almost 40 percent of all white South Africans, were members of the DRC. The church's 1 694 000 members greatly overshadowed its much smaller sister churches, with the NHK amassing 246 000 members and the GK 128 000.[118] This meant that the NP and the AB could not move forward with reforms at a pace too rapid for the DRC's leadership and members. It is, however, clear that the DRC, which was at the forefront of social discourse during the first

[114] 'Die Onluste', *Die Sendingblad*, August 1976, 259.
[115] 'Soweto disturbances: attitude of the D.R. Church', *DRC Africa News*, March 1977, 3.
[116] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1978, 31.
[117] Clergy had the second largest percentage (7.12 percent) of AB membership, behind teachers who constituted 20.36 percent. J.H.P. Serfontein, *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, (Taurus: Emmerentia, 1982), 91.
[118] Serfontein, *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, 91; Van der Watt believed there were about an additional 300 000 unaccounted members of the DRC, which would bring the membership to almost 2 000 000. See Van der Watt, *Die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk*, 375.

half of the century, including on race relations, when Afrikaner nationalism was on the rise, quickly waned in influence after apartheid reached its zenith during the 1960s. Kuperus chronicled the shifting nature of DRC-state relations as follows:

> [U]nlike the 1930s and 1940s when the DRC leaders helped formulate Afrikaner values within an Afrikaner nationalist alliance (*volkskerk*) in contrast to the state leaders who represented general white interests, and unlike the 1950s when the DRC leader crafted the ideal of separate development that coincided with the interests of a particular segment of Afrikaner thought within Afrikanerdom … the DRC [during the 1960s and 1970s] carefully followed the NP-dominated state's lead on race policy.[119]

Whereas once the DRC had actively sought to promote its own agenda, it now struggled to keep pace with the NP and the rest of the Afrikaner establishment's increasingly reformist views on apartheid.

The DRC's difficulties during the 1960s and 1970s were reflected in the opinions of state and business elites who increasingly believed that the AB had the most influence on the state's race policy, while the DRC was believed to have greater impact on social policy.[120] Serfontein demonstrated that these social policies were small scale and puritanical in nature, with the DRC vocalising its opposition to the social 'evils' of dancing, pop music, gambling, modern art, and literature. For instance, one of the apexes of the DRC's influence in this period was the closure of cinemas on Sundays.[121] These 'evils' were triggers for a range of moral panics during the latter half of the 1970s, such as youth culture, promiscuity, Eastern religion, and mysticism. Earlier fissures within Afrikaner nationalism, political turmoil, and the perceived threat that modernisation posed to Afrikaner identity had created an atmosphere of social and moral uncertainty in white society. The DRC, with its Calvinist impulse to oppose modernity and its calling to protect Afrikaner identity, shifted its focus onto these moral panics, and left the greater socio-political issues to the state and the AB.[122] These moral panics would later become intertwined with the Satanic panic of the 1980s and 1990s.[123] In her book on this

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[119] Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid*, 115.
[120] A.Y. Sadie, 'Regerings- en Sake-elite se Persepsies oor die Invloed van die Suid-Afrikaanse Sakesektor op Openbare Beleidsformulering,' (PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, March 1990), 212-4.
[121] Serfontein, *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, 78.
[122] Although the DRC played a crucial role as an activist against these moral panics, it should be noted that it was not the only role player. The police, schools, and a growing Pentecostal movement all contributed. See 'Chapter 2: Anatomy of a Moral Panic' in N. Falkof, *Satanism and Family Murder in Late Apartheid South Africa: Imagining the End of Whiteness*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2015).
[123] There were some early instances of a Satanic panic in second half of the 1970s, however it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that it became a national phenomenon. See D. Dunbar & S. Swart, 'The Devil Rejoiced: Volk,

phenomenon, Nicky Falkof explained that the fear of a Satanic subversion of Afrikaner nationalism, culture, and statehood mirrored that of the longstanding fear of communism in that Satanism was also cast as an ubiquitous unseen force that subverted the *volk* from within. It did, however, not replace or overshadow each other.[124] Fear was instrumental in anticommunist actions (see Chapter 3) as a means to control and create uniformity amongst Afrikaners. In a time of political turmoil, secularisation, and deepening Afrikaner divisions, the DRC expanded this use of fear by broadening the so-called 'evils' facing the *volk*.

Though the DRC had effectively receded into a prudish lobby group petitioning the state to implement small scale moralistic policies such as restrictions on Sunday sport, it had not lost its anticommunist impulse, nor did it totally withdraw from anticommunist activity. This constituted a subdued brand of anticommunism compared to the vigorous activism and rhetoric of the 1960s. The DRC's institutional anticommunism historically had important leaders at its centre, such as Nico Diederichs, Piet Meyer, and Koot Vorster. This had given a certain level of public prestige to the church's anticommunist efforts. With the right-wing overplaying its hand during the 1960s and being outmanoeuvred by the mainstream nationalists however, Antikom had lost much of its fervour and human capital (chapter 3). Another important factor here was the death of Dan de Beer, who had been the organisational pillar of Antikom dating back to its founding congress in 1946, until his passing in 1972. Not only did Antikom lose critical institutional knowledge, but De Beer had been an important champion of Antikom within the DRC. As a moral leader in the church, he had given Antikom a level of respectability and credence on synods and amongst DRC members. This loss in prestige, institutional knowledge, and energy made it difficult for the DRC's institutional anticommunism to compete with the greater socio-political and moral issues of the 1970s. That said, a key feature of anticommunism was its versatility. The 1950s and 1960s was a period when white society was insulated by anticommunism to the point where any criticism of apartheid became near impossible. As the end of apartheid began to be envisioned, the deeply rooted disapproval and suspicion of communism was poised to be utilised by the Afrikaner establishment to cautiously steer South Africa past apartheid, whilst maintaining Afrikaner

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Devils and Moral Panic in White South Africa, 1978–1982', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 28 (2), June 2015 240.

[124] Falkof, *Satanism and Family Murder*, 77-80.

identity and white prosperity. From the mid-1970s onwards, the state became the central anticommunist actor in this regard, but not without the support and utilisation of the DRC.

Total Strategy: The Nationalisation of Anticommunism

The DRC's campaign, as discussed in chapter two, to outlaw any activity that was deemed communist during the earliest days of nationalist rule, had initiated a process of outsourcing forms of overt anticommunism to the state. Throughout the 1960s, the DRC had focussed on the moral onslaught of communism and used every public opportunity to thank the government for defending the republic against communists. The state expanded its anticommunist efforts during the 1970s, and by the middle of the decade, Vorster and his minister of defence, PW Botha, considered the idea of using anticommunism as a tool to gain support from African heads of state. This was aligned with the DRC's approach, which saw anticommunism as a vehicle to retain legitimacy amongst the 'young churches' in neighbouring African states. According to Giliomee, Vorster and Botha 'hoped that engaging heads of African states in a common venture would make it impossible for local black parties to reject cooperation with the South African government'.[125] Concerns over the expansion of communist efforts in sub-Saharan Africa had been growing amongst some African leaders. The likelihood of the success of any effort to create an anticommunist bloc of African states was discussed by South African, Zambian, and Angolan leaders in 1975. South African diplomacy failed in this instance however, and Vorster's unsuccessful military insurgence into Angola in September 1975 to assist local liberation movements against a Soviet and Cuban backed rival, ended the South African government's attempts at anticommunist collaboration in Africa.[126] Although it was kept in the dark about the '*ligte mistykie*' ('trifling little mistake') in Angola – this term was coined by Schalk Pienaar, by now retired editor of *Beeld* – the NP electorate was overwhelmingly in favour of the decision to fight communist-backed Angolan forces.[127] This support might have been rooted in the electorate's trust in the state at the time, which was undoubtable bolstered by years of anticommunist condition from the church. The SADF relied on young white conscripts to fight the war against communism, which drew Afrikaner families directly into the conflict on a deeply personal level as their sons left for the army. The war

[125] Giliomee, *Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 121.
[126] See J. Miller, 'Yes, Minister: Reassessing South Africa's Intervention in the Angolan Civil War, 1975-1976', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 15, 3 (2013), 4-33.
[127] Giliomee, *Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 123, 136: A Mouton, ''Reforming from within': Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid', *Historia*, 45, 1 (2000), 173.

dragged on for the next decade, making and maintaining the battle against communism as a reality for many Afrikaner families.[128]

The biggest political scandal to hit the apartheid regime, the Information Scandal of 1978, illustrated the DRC's new-found position as a pawn of the state, rather than an equal ally in the war against communism. As the DRC was finalising RVN, an opportunity presented itself to promote its refreshed brand of apartheid theology to the world. Top officials at the South African government's Department of Information approached a group of DRC leaders in secret to propose a partnership in gathering and distributing information on anti-apartheid lobbying in the West. Eschel Rhoodie, Secretary of the Department of Information, encouraged DRC leaders to intensify its local and international campaign against its old ecumenical foe, the WCC. To Rhoodie, the WCC's open opposition to apartheid could be detrimental to any state-sponsored efforts to clear the regimes name on the international stage.[129] The WCC had been a central target of the church's anticommunism during the 1960s, and Rhoodie's proposal gave the DRC an opportunity to build on its narrative that the WCC had been infiltrated by communists. Koot Vorster, who was a close friend of Rhoodie, was part of the small group of DRC leaders consulted by the Department of Information. In a long essay published in the *DRC News* in September 1973, a monthly propaganda newsletter distributed abroad, Vorster explained the DRC's traditional position on the WCC. In classic anticommunist vernacular, he wrote the following:

> Instigated by liberalism and communism, intent upon consummating the revolution, [the WCC] has become an instrument of left-wing aggression…The liberal churches were subtly infiltrated and manipulated, the churches behind the iron curtain were thrown into the struggle and what could have been a beautiful movement was turned into a propaganda machine of the extreme left.[130]

Here Vorster illustrated his belief that liberalism was fundamentally linked with communism, and he therefore expanded the parameters of anticommunism to include any position that was

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[128] J. Cock, 'Conscription in South Afrrica: A study in the Politics of Coercion', *South African Sociological Review*, 2, 1 (1989), 10; W. Verwoerd & T. Edlmann, '"Why Did I Die?": South African Defence Force Conscripts pre- and Post-1994', in J.D. Brewer & A. Wahidin (eds.), *Ex-Combatants' Voices: Transitioning from War to Peace in Northern Ireland, South Africa and Sri Lanka*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, 2021).
[129] F.E. O'Brien Geldenhuys, *In die Stroomversnellings*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1982), 72-3.
[130] J.D. Vorster, 'The World Council of Churches,' *DRC Newsletter*, September 1973, 1.

not Christian-Nationalist. Liberalism thus entered the anticommunist discourse as ideology that was viewed as communist-adjacent.

During the early 1970s, a new dynamic had entered anti-WCC rhetoric. In 1970, the WCC established the Special Fund to Combat Racism – part of its large-scale Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) that aimed at dismantling white supremacy in southern Africa. It was seen as the Christian extension of the international anti-apartheid movement. Over the next decade, the Special Fund donated money to liberation movements across southern Africa, including UNITA and the MPLA in Angola, FRELIMO in Mozambique, SWAPO in Namibia, the Patriot Front of Zimbabwe, and the ANC and PAC in South Africa.[131] Anticommunists within the DRC did not exploit these organisations' links with Soviet forces or Marxist intellectual ideas in order to delegitimise the WCC. Instead, it attacked the WCC's decision to support 'terrorist organisations' – 'terrorist' became a dog whistle for black communists. To the DRC's anticommunists, the WCC's financial support for so-called terrorist groups vindicated the church's denunciation of that ecumenical body. *Antikom Newsletter* had proudly commented that the DRC was ready to act against the 'left-leaning and liberalist direction of the WCC' in 1961 when it forfeited its membership.[132] According to Vorster, it should not have come as a surprise that an organisation whose roots lay in 'liberalism', and whose 'infiltrated' structure promoted the social gospel – snidely referred to as the 'socialist gospel' – would go on to

Figure 11: 'Charting a perilous course'. A cartoon from Die Transvaler (1973) depicting the WCC sailing in a communist direction. (Die Transvaler, 16 February 1973)

[131] C. E. Welch, Jr., 'Mobilizing Morality: The World Council of Churches and its Program to Combat Racism, 1969-1994,' *Human Rights Quarterly*, 23 (4), November 2001, 865-6. UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola; Portuguese: União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola); MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola); FRELIMO (Liberation Front of Mozambique; Portuguese: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique); SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation).
[132] 'Die Wêreldraad van Kerke Openbaar sy Ware Kleur,' *Antikom Nuusbrief*, November 1970, 1.

support violent terrorists.[133] Framing the WCC's support for liberation movements as financial aid to terrorists fed neatly into the DRC's long-established anticommunist narrative. This position made the DRC a natural Christian ally of the Department of Information in their attempts to defend South Africa against anti-apartheid lobbying abroad. From 1974 to 1978, the Department financially sustained the office of the DRC's Director of Information, whose aim was to counter the WCC and fend off anti-apartheid attacks abroad.[134] It also funded the revamped DRC propaganda newsletter, *DRC News* – a staple of the church's anti-anti-apartheid efforts.

The DRC leadership saw its collaboration with the Department of Information as a positive and equal partnership between church and state.[135] In 1978, the leadership not aware of the secret cooperation, were shocked by revelations of their unknowing complicity in what became known as the Information Scandal, or 'Muldergate'.[136] Without its knowledge, the DRC was amongst hundreds of front organisations used by a covert group of state officials in a clandestine campaign to engage in an unconventional propaganda crusade. News broke of covert initiatives to persuade key opinion makers in South Africa and abroad of the merits of apartheid. These operations, it was reported, aimed to control various mass media outlets in an attempt to pervert the way in which information about South Africa and apartheid was presented for domestic and international consumption.[137] It came to light that Rhoodie had convinced his boss, Minister of Information, Connie Mulder, and Prime Minister John Vorster, that the traditional diplomatic and information channels had to be bypassed to change the negative perceptions of South Africa abroad. Rhoodie, Mulder, and the head of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), and the personification of apartheid-era paranoia, Hendrik van den

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[133] J.D. Vorster, 'Wêreldraad se besluit – Waarom?,' *Die Kerkbode*, 16 September 1970, 387, 402. The social gospel was a twentieth century movement within the Protestant tradition which applied Christian ethics to society with a focus on issues of social justice. From the late twentieth century onwards, the social gospel was associated with liberal and progressive Protestant streams in the United States and the ecumenical movement. See S.H. Lindly, 'Deciding Who Counts: Toward a Revised Definition of the Social Gospel' and M.A. May, 'The Kingdom of God, the Church, and the World: The Social Gospel and the Making of Theology in the Twentieth-Century Ecumenical Movement' in C.H. Evans, *The Social Gospel Today*, (Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 2001).

[134] O'Brien Geldenhuys, *In die Stroomversnelling*, 73.; Langner, 'Teen die Hele Wêreld Vry', 188. The office of the Director of Information of the DRC was a new position established with the intention of polishing the DRC's image abroad and disseminating its views on state policy. The position was filled by Frans O'Brien Geldenhuys who claimed not to be aware of the state's intentions of 'selling' apartheid.

[135] O'Brien Geldenhuys, *In die Stroomversnelling*, 73-4.

[136] M. Rees & C. Day, *Muldergate: The Story of the Info Scandal*, (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1980). See also R Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war*, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media), 2015.

[137] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 213.

Bergh, were at the centre of this covert operation to alter global popular opinion about the country, with no rules or boundaries governing them. Financial approval came from anticommunist stalwart Nico Diederichs, who was now Vorster's minister of finance. Apart from these men, no one else in government reportedly knew about the campaign, which was characterised by corruption, bribery, self-enrichment, theft, the misleading of Parliament, and even implications of involvement in murder.[138] Rhoodie admitted that he had used the DRC in his network of propaganda fronts under the codename Operation *Manel* – a reference to the ecclesiastic garb worn by DRC ministers – to attack the WCC.[139] The DRC was thus an unwitting cog in the state's propaganda wheel. Rather than representing an equal partner, the Information Scandal suggested that the church was viewed by the state as a tool at its disposal.

The Information Scandal brought the government's reputation into disrepute amongst white South Africans, whose taxpayers' money – approximately R80 million – had been misused by the Department of Information.[140] In 1978, the Nationalist establishment suffered another blow to its reputation when two books were published that exposed the activities of the secretive Broederbond. One, written by political journalists Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom, included an almost complete members' list of this secretive organisation.[141] It removed the layer of secrecy and speculation that had historically surrounded the organisation. The disproportionate representation of AB members in leadership positions at prominent institutions, including the DRC, was opened for public scrutiny. The list of members was teeming with the names of DRC leaders, clergy, and church council members. Both the Information Scandal and the AB exposés were significant blows for the DRC's integrity as an institution of independent moral rectitude. Its proximity, and perceived submissive relationship to a secret organisation and an oppressive government, tainted the church's public image.

The political implications of the Information Scandal were immediate and deep; a disgraced John Vorster stepped down as Prime Minister to take up the ceremonial position of State President in October 1978. Connie Mulder, a *verkrampte*, had been considered the obvious successor to Vorster, but his central role in the scandal cost him dearly. He was narrowly defeated by the Minister of Defence and nationalist reformer, PW Botha, who

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[138] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 230.
[139] Rees & Day, *Muldergate*, 191.
[140] Welsh, *Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 76.
[141] I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978); J.H.P. Serfontein, *The Brotherhood of Power*, (London: Rex Collings, 1979).

subsequently became Prime Minister in 1978. To Botha, apartheid was no longer an unshakeable principle, and he became convinced that dogmatically clinging to a policy that was fast becoming defunct was, in itself, a threat to Afrikaner survival.[142] Botha was, however, also a longstanding anticommunist. At the 1937 NP congress, the 21-year-old Botha, who was then an organiser of the Cape NP, proposed a motion which warned against the dangers of communism.[143] This anticommunist thread ran throughout his political career, culminating in his appointment as Minister of Defence in 1966.

Botha's ascension to the position of Prime Minister completed the consolidation of anticommunism in the state's hands. He firmly subscribed to the ideas of French strategists André Beaufre and Raymond Aron who insisted that states had to defend themselves against communist subversion not only by military means, but also by combating political and ideological attacks.[144] As Prime Minister, Botha swiftly implemented a wide-ranging strategy based on a prior proposal submitted by his erstwhile Department of Defence. According to this framework, the Republic was believed to be under a 'Total Onslaught' from the Soviet Union and its allies, whose goal was to install a Marxist-orientated government in South Africa. This followed a commonly used anticommunist trope of Soviet imperialism and expansionism which, at its core, believed that the USSR used communism as a vehicle to gain global dominance. Botha and his strategists believed in South African exceptionalism, suggesting that it was only the South African state that stood in the way of the Soviets' drive to control southern African wealth. This was a deliberate exaggeration of South Africa's position in a bid to elicit support from Western powers.[145] In counteracting the alleged Total Onslaught, Botha's regime proposed the 'Total Strategy'. The scope of the Total Strategy was outlined in a white paper on defence and armaments supply in 1977:

> The resolution of the conflict in the times in which we now live demands inter-dependent and co-coordinated action in all fields: military, psychological, economic, political, sociological, technological, diplomatic, ideological, cultural, etcetera … It is therefore essential that a total national strategy (is) formulated at the highest level… [Total Strategy is] the comprehensive plan to utilize all the means available to the state according to an integrated pattern … A total national strategy is, therefore, not confined

[142] R. Schrire, *Adapt or Die: The End of White Politics in South Africa*, (London: Hurst and Co., 1991), 29-47.
[143] Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 145.
[144] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 587-8.
[145] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 225, 264-6; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 588.

> to a particular sphere, but is applicable at all levels and to all functions of the state structure.[146]

This incorporation of a wide range of 'fields' and 'spheres' signalled that concentrated anticommunism had become under Botha's government. Throughout the NP's rule, the DRC had enthusiastically endorsed the use of state power – through legislation and the security forces – to keep white society 'safe' from overt communist agitation and subversion.[147] As has been argued in the preceding chapters, the DRC positioned itself as the foremost counter to communism on abstract grounds – namely the spiritual and moral – throughout the first six decades of the twentieth century. While the state fended off external communist attacks on the *volk*, the DRC developed anticommunist resilience from within through its preaching, distributing anticommunist literature, and supporting anticommunist activities. Within this ecosystem, the DRC became gradually submissive to the state, and through the Total Strategy, the government officially took control of both covert and overt anticommunism to become the dominant force in this realm.

State-centric anticommunism focussed chiefly on ensuring white survival through expanding access to the spoils of a capitalist economy. The aim was to increase black participation in the economy in an attempt to convince all sections of South African society of the benefits of capitalism and to stave off the purported Marxist threat. The Total Strategy was ultimately about ensuring the continuation of the system of free enterprise in the battle against communism.[148] In this battle, the Botha administration saw the business sector as its biggest ally. The Total Strategy was in effect a cooperation between 'the generals and the captains of industry', but the state-sponsored and business-backed anticommunism of the late 1970s and 1980s could not have happened without years of anticommunist labour from Afrikaner institutions.[149] André van Deventer and Philip Nel have argued that the roots of the Total Onslaught doctrine could be traced back to the anticommunism of the Afrikaner cultural and political vanguards of the 1920s and 1930s, when a comprehensive plan had to be devised to protect the *volk* from disruptive outside influences.[150] Similarly, Total Strategy was also a comprehensive plan to protect the *volk*, but this time it was state-centric, militaristic, and

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[146] Republic of South Africa, Department of Defence, *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply*, 1977, 5-6.
[147] Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid*, 133.
[148] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 225.
[149] *Ibid.*, 258.
[150] Van Deventer & Nel, 'The state and "die volk" versus communism', 78.

material rather than abstract and spiritual. With the DRC's long history of creating a moral panic around anticommunism, it is not surprising that remnants of the church's brand of anticommunism – especially, the warlike dichotomy between Christianity and communism – were evident in the discourse of Total Strategy. For example, in a parliamentary address in 1978, Botha effectively weaved DRC anticommunism of the past into the vernacular of Total Strategy. According to Botha, South Africa was in a battle between 'the powers of chaos, Marxism and destruction on the one hand, and the powers of order, Christian civilization and the upliftment of the people on the other'.[151] By the onset of the 1980s then, anticommunism had become a largely state-sponsored phenomenon.

Right to the End: Antikom's decline, 1970-1985

In the shadow of state-sponsored anticommunism, Antikom lost a major part of its raison d'être and gradually drifted to the periphery of Afrikaner politics. Its standing was weakened early in the 1970s with the passing of key personnel, such as its long serving administrative assistant, and two main drivers of the Antikom's agenda, secretary Dan de Beer and vice-chair Andries (AB) du Preez.[152] The latter was professor of dogmatics at the University of Pretoria and served on Antikom for 20 years, where his particular bête noire were Beyers Naudé and the Christian Institute, as well as the WCC.[153] They were also members of the Hertzog-group of the 1960s, and as a result were crucial to the effort to utilise Antikom for the right-wing cause.[154] With their death in the early 1970s, Antikom lost public influence, institutional knowledge, an ideological compass, leadership, and two important connections with the DRC. De Beer's influence within the church had also secured sufficient funding for Antikom's operations. His successor, DRC minister Sarel Colÿn, clearly lacked the same clout as his term was short lived due to Antikom's inability to financially sustain this position. In October 1974, the position of secretary was terminated and the Antikom chair, PW Jordaan, was put in charge of all operations by the board. De Beer had also been the editor of *Antikom Newsletter* which, after his passing, appeared only sporadically. Jordaan probably took over the responsibility for the newsletter which suffered from his divided attention and the lack of funding. Despite that,

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[151] O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 265.
[152] *Acts of the North Transvaal Synod* 1975, 236.
[153] See C. Ryan, *Beyers Naudé: Pilgtimage of Faith*, (David Philips: Cape Town, 1990), 66; JHP van Rooyen, 'Die NG Kerk, Apartheid en die Christelike Insitutuut van Suidelike Afrika", (PhD thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1990), 214.
[154] J.H.P. Serfontein, *Die Verkrampte Aanslag*, (Human & Rousseau: Cape Town, 1970), 38.

sufficient funds were retained through effective management of the money raised during its heyday in the 1960s to continue some operations, such as small scale anticommunist lectures at local churches and schools.[155] By 1980 however, it was clear that Antikom was struggling to reinvent itself after losing its key agents and the right-wing fervour of the previous decade.

The emergence of a yet another proponent of anticommunist sentiment further accelerated Antikom's decline. The Institute for the Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS) was established in 1980 by history professor, Dirk Kotzé, who was, according to Wessel Visser, the most prolific South African historian on communism.[156] He was initially influenced in the 1950s to take up the study of communism after research visits to universities in West Germany and the Netherlands. There, Kotzé became convinced that the two major historical forces that shaped the modern world were nationalism and communism. He was appointed as head of the Department of History at Stellenbosch University in 1959, where research and teaching on these two historical forces became his main scholarly focus.[157] Between 1965 and 1979, Kotzé produced eight books on communism and nationalism.[158] These books were meant as informative Afrikaans texts for public consumption, but Kotzé's broad argument was that, while nationalism could be misused by communists to reach their own ends, it remained the best buffer against communism.[159] One of his colleagues described Kotzé as an 'Afrikaner nationalist, patriot, and republican', and he found himself on the *verligte* side of Afrikaner politics – he was not dogmatically loyal to apartheid policy, but believed that South Africa should be safeguarded from communist advances.[160] Kotzé believed communist expansion in Africa to be a great national threat to South Africa and supported strong state intervention in securing the country against its influence. He was no McCarthyite however, and argued that the government should seriously consider the demands made by black activists.

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[155] *Acts of the North Transvaal Synod*, 1975, 236.
[156] W. Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production in South African historiography', in H.E. Stolten (ed.), *History Making and the Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet: Uppsala, 2007), 326.
[157] D.J. van Zyl & G.S. Hofmeyr, 'D.J. Kotzé (1927-1992): Afrikanerhistorikus en Kultuur- en Bewaringsleier', *South African Historical Journal*, 31, 1 (1994), 211.
[158] D.J. Kotzé, *Die Kommunisme I: Die Klassieke Marxisme*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1965); DJ Kotzé, *Positiewe Nasionalisme*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1968); DJ Kotzé, Nasionalisme as Historiese Faktor: 'n Vergelykende Studie (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1969); DJ Kotzé, *Nasionalisme: Geskiedenis van Pan-Nasionalistiese Bewegings*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1970); DJ Kotzé, *Nasionalisme en Kommunisme*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1970); DJ Kotzé, *Soeklig op die Kommunisme*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1972); DJ Kotzé, *Kommunisme Vandag*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1977); and DJ Kotzé, *South Africa and Communism* (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1979).
[159] JS Bergh, 'P.J (Piet) van der Merwe en D.J. (Dirk) Kotzé aan die stuur by Stellenbosch, 1959-1977: Goue Jare of Verspeelde Geleenthede?', *Historia*, 53, 2 (2008), 220.
[160] Van Zyl & Hofmeyr, 'D.J. Kotzé', 212; Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production', 328.

This aligned with the emphasis of Botha's Total Strategy on winning the hearts and minds of black South Africans in an attempt to curb the influence of communism.[161] Kotzé was thus a reform-minded anticommunist academic by the time that he started ISMUS.

With ISMUS, Kotzé set out to bring scientific authority to the anticommunist cause. He was astonished 'that in South Africa … more has not been done to scientifically, systematically and thoroughly study [communism] and its application in practice'.[162] Kotzé considered this to be 'scientifically irresponsible'.[163] He acknowledged that organisations such as Antikom had disseminated information on communism to fight against its influence but argued that they had done little to reach a sober understanding of the ideology. According to Kotzé, Antikom was the worst offender in this regard, most likely because of its fearmongering and hyperbolic rhetoric.[164] ISMUS also promised to address what Kotzé asserted was a lack of reliable, non-partisan research on Marxism and its relevance to the South African situation.[165] Kotzé proposed that a systematic, interdisciplinary academic approach to communism was required. He wanted to counter populist anticommunism, like that propagated by Antikom, by utilising academia to achieve legitimacy for the anticommunist cause. In order to enhance its legitimacy, ISMUS's board consisted of delegates from the university's faculties of law, education, and theology, the political science and economics departments, and the Dean of Humanities.[166] Under Kotzé's directorship, the institute busied itself with the collection of sources on Marxism in general, in-depth research projects on communism in southern Africa, and supplying the state and approved institutions, such as the DRC, with findings and information on communist theory, strategy, and tactics.[167] ISMUS was thus intended to be the research hub within the broader Afrikaner anticommunist ecosystem.

To sustain ISMUS, its founders were required to secure outside financial support as such a research institute was only partly funded by the university. Kotzé found such a willing funder in the form of the DRC. There had been earlier advocacy within anticommunist circles

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[161] Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production', 328.
[162] ISMUS, 368.1, 7b, 'Memorandum oor die Skepping van 'n Instituut vir die Studie van die Marxisme aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch,' 3. Translated from Afrikaans: '…dat in Suid-Afrika…nie méér gedoen is om hierdie ideologie en sy toepassing in die praktyk wetenskaplik, sistematies en deeglik te bestudeer nie.'
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] D.J. Kotzé, 'Marxisme-instituut 5 jaar oud,' *Matieland*, March 1984, 15.
[165] ISMUS, 368.1, 7b, 'Memorandum oor die Skepping van 'n Instituut vir die Studie van die Marxisme aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch,' 5.
[166] ISMUS, 368.2 (27), PR Nel – Die Registrateur (Akademies), 12 March 1987, 1.
[167] Visser, '"Red Peril" and "Total Onslaught"', 121.

of the DRC, dating back to the *Volkskongres* of 1964, for an academic body 'to study world politics with a special reference to Communism'.[168] By the mid-1970s, Antikom had approached several universities to develop anticommunist academic publications and syllabi, but such initiatives did not materialise as it came from an organisation which had largely receded to the periphery of Afrikanerdom by this point.[169] Antikom had clearly lost its impetus and this had not gone unnoticed by the DRC. When its 1978 General Synod reaffirmed that the church should give urgent attention to the so-called communist threat, it tasked its commission for doctrine and current affairs (AKLAS – *Algemene Kommissie vir Leer en Aktuele Sake*) to play a more prominent role in guiding the church on this matter.[170] Antikom was thus not recognised as a major factor in the DRC's anticommunist arsenal, and the church decided to award another body the responsibility of leading the way in this regard. AKLAS stood at the centre of influencing the DRC's doctrine and played a pre-eminent role in formulating theological responses to public issues. With its emphasis on theology, this commission had an academic focus. Representatives from the theology faculties of the Universities of Pretoria, Stellenbosch, and the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, constituted the majority of AKLAS' membership.[171] When the General Synod decided that this body should take more responsibility for the DRC's anticommunist stance, it signalled the development of an increasingly scholarly engagement with communism. This did not represent a sudden departure from the traditional approach to anticommunism embodied by the DRC but was rather more subtle. Antikom was still recognised as its anticommunist partner.[172] Nonetheless, the church's gradual move away from its historical approach to anticommunism was further aided by the DRC's collaboration with ISMUS. Antikom was tainted by its right-wing agenda of the 1960s, which grew increasingly irrelevant within a new anticommunist atmosphere where communism as a form of state ideology, rather than a bogey, was being confronted.

Through a variety of ecclesiastical channels, the DRC became the largest funder of the ISMUS. When Kotzé enquired if the DRC, of which he was a member, would be willing to offer financial support to his institute, he received an enthusiastic response from the chair of AKLAS, WJ Botha. He assured Kotzé of the church's 'wholehearted moral support' and added

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[168] *Volkskongres oor Kommunism*, 217.
[169] *Acts of the North Transvaal Synod*, 1975, 236. The specific universities, and why Antikom failed, were not disclosed.
[170] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1978, 726.
[171] 'Reglement vir die Algemene Kommissie vir Leer en Aktuele Sake (AKLAS)', *Kerkorde 1978*, 63-64.
[172] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1978, 726.

that ‘it is to be trusted that church commissions that have funds will provide financial aid … [DRC representatives] are making plans to acquire funds for this important cause’.[173] The church, through AKLAS, used this opportunity to mobilise its anticommunist cluster – SOK, AKLAS, and to a lesser extent Antikom – and other ecclesiastical bodies to become by far the largest funder of ISMUS. For instance, the DRC Curatorium at the University of Stellenbosch’s Faculty of Theology, and the Western Cape Synod, committed between R2,000 and R5,000 (equivalent to R55,000 and R137,500 in 2021) per annum respectively for the first five years, while the Faculty of Theology donated R6,000 (equivalent to R165,000 in 2021) toward ISMUS’s start-up capital.[174] SOK added R1,000 (equivalent to R27,500 in 2021) to its founding capital, and from 1982 it paid R4,000 (equivalent to R104,500 in 2021) per annum to the institute.[175] Through these various bodies, the DRC accounted for about 75% of ISMUS’s annual income. Kotzé, aware of the importance of the church’s contribution, used the Christian anticommunist vernacular to indulge his DRC donors and impress upon them the importance of the matter at hand. In a letter sent to these donors, Kotzé, for example, wrote: ‘We believe with you that this issue [communism] should enjoy the greatest priority amongst everyone that takes the survival of Christianity in our country seriously’.[176]

Though the DRC’s significant financial contribution to ISMUS was welcomed by Kotzé, other board members, including the Dean of Humanities, Andries Nel, had reservations. At a board meeting in December 1981, Nel expressed his concern with the DRC’s substantial financial backing as it ‘could give the impression that the Institute is an appendage (*aanhangsel*) of the Church’.[177] Kotzé shared this concern, but pointed out that ‘the Institute’s hands are tied with regards to recruiting donors’ due to university regulations.[178] ISMUS was thus knowingly heavily dependent on the DRC’s contributions, yet cautious of any influence that came with it. The possibility existed that the DRC could use its influence as the largest funder to dictate the output of ISMUS. In fact, there was one instance where a regional synod

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[173] ISMUS, 368.1 (7g), WJ Botha – DJ Kotzé, 2 April 1979, 1. Translated from Afrikaans: ‘Dit word vertrou dat kerklike kommissies wat or fondse beskik, finansiële steun sal verleen… die dagbestuur planne beraam om deur sinodale besluite bydraes vir hierdie belangrike saak te bekom.’
[174] ISMUS, 368.1(4), ‘Memorandum insake die Stigting van ’n Instituut vir die Studie van Marxism,’ 2. The DRC Curatorium is the ecclesiastic body that supervises the theological training of DRC students.
[175] See ISMUS, 368.5.2, ‘NG Kerk: Sending onder Kommunisme: 1982-1990’..
[176] ISMUS, 368.5.2, 28/6, DJ Kotze-PW de Wet, 5 Jan 1981; 368.5.2, 53/6, DJ Kotze-OSW Raubenheimer, 5 Jan 1981; 368.5.2, 54/10, Kotze-Vorster, 11 Dec 1980.
[177] ISMUS, 368.3, ‘Notule van die Vierde Vergadering van die Beheerkomitee van die Instituut vir die Studie van Marxisme, 5 Desember 1980,’ 2.
[178] *Ibid.*

leader requested that the DRC's representation on the ISMUS board should be increased from one to two people – until 1983, Willie Jonker, an influential pragmatic theologian of the faculty of theology, had represented the DRC. Kotzé diplomatically rejected the request to expand the DRC's representation, assuring the petitioner that nearly all of the board members were 'DRC members, or, in religious terms, acceptable to the DRC'.[179] The DRC continued to be ISMUS's primary financial contributor throughout its existence, and there is no further evidence of the church's direct interference in the institute's operations. ISMUS subsequently became the DRC's main anticommunist project in the 1980s. AKLAS, now the organising force of the church's anticommunist efforts, saw in ISMUS an opportunity to support rather than necessarily drive the development of a more legitimate brand of anticommunism.

The relationship between the DRC and ISMUS put Antikom in a peculiar position. By 1980, its operations had been downscaled and its populist brand of anticommunism had gradually lost relevance in mainstream Afrikaner anticommunism. ISMUS grew increasingly wary of Antikom's affiliation as a minor donor with the institute fearing that it could lead to future embarrassment. In 1983, the board decided that if Antikom wanted to continue with its annual donation, it had to be made very clear, through official correspondence, that ISMUS was in no way, directly or indirectly, associated with Antikom's objectives.[180] It alluded to Antikom's Christian-Nationalist approach to anticommunism which was irreconcilable with the academic focus of ISMUS. Antikom's objectives did include 'scientific exposure to [communist] principles and foundations' as a way of combatting communism, however the 'continuous emphasis of the Christian doctrine … as the most powerful bulwark against the communist ideology' was still its overarching calling.[181] ISMUS did not align with this thinking, and by association neither did the DRC, or at least not in its official capacity. Antikom had effectively become an anticommunist pariah.

At the turn of the decade, Antikom was itself in a process of re-evaluating its approach to anticommunism. In 1982, the Antikom board decided that a broader focus on 'contemporary worldly ideologies' was needed. Communism, and what Antikom deemed to be its proxies –

[179] ISMUS, 368.13, 8, DJ Kotzé – Brunette, 18 Junie 1980, 2.
[180] ISMUS, 368.3, 'Notule van die Eerste Vergadering vir 1983 van die Beheerkomitee van die Instituut vir die Studie van Marxisme, 3 Maart 1983,' 3. The annual donation was noted, but not disclosed.
[181] ISMUS, 368.3, 'Notule van die Eerste Vergadering vir 1983 van die Beheerkomitee van die Instituut vir die Studie van Marxisme, 3 Maart 1983 – Antikom Konstitusie,' 2. Translated from Afrikaans: '…wetenskaplike blootlegging van sy beginsels en grondslae… voortdurende beklemtoning van die Christlike leer… as die magtigste bolwerk teen die kommunistiese lewensbeskouing.'

socialism, liberalism, and humanism – had always been a catch-all term for opponents and critics of Christian-Nationalism. Antikom's turn toward 'contemporary worldly ideologies', which one can deduce also incorporated all ideology that was not Christian-Nationalism, indicated that the right-wing use of 'communism' as an omnipotent anti-Afrikaner conspirer had become dated. This may have been because the mainstream dominance of rationalist and militarist anticommunism, as propagated by the PW Botha-government and Kotzé's ISMUS, had proved difficult for Afrikaner right-wingers to subvert. That said, shifts within broader Afrikaner politics are more likely to have had a greater influence on this shift. By the early 1980s, the majority of Afrikaner elites, including politicians, businesspeople, academics, and even some church leaders, subscribed to the *verligte*, or reformed-minded position. To right-wing and conservative Afrikaners, this *verligte* elite had become a threat to Afrikaner survival. It is within this context that the anticommunist stalwart Andries Treurnicht, whose hostility toward PW Botha's reforms led to his expulsion from the NP in February 1982, formed the ultra-conservative Conservative Party (CP) in the following month.[182] Antikom's ideological convictions were more aligned with the CP than with the direction of the NP, and it was clear that Antikom had become increasingly irrelevant to the DRC, which had found increasing alignment with ISMUS.

In this atmosphere, wherein there was a realignment and reorganisation of populist right-wing politics in the early 1980s, Antikom began to reinvent itself as a right-wing Christian-Nationalist thinktank with DRC minister PW Jordaan still the central figure. In 1985, Antikom registered as a private company and was renamed the *Sentrum vir Reformatoriese en Kontemporêre Studies* (Serkos – Centre for Reformatory and Contemporary Studies). This new body continued Antikom's anticommunist agenda, with a focus on attacking so-called 'liberal theology'. The *Antikom Nuusbrief* was renamed *Oktober `46*, a reference to the DRC's first anticommunist congress in October 1946, where Antikom was founded.[183] This was an overt display of Serkos's conservative appeal to an anticommunist past and its integral relationship with the DRC, when communism was considered the main enemy of the *volk*, in the hope of still appealing to grassroots funders. In this new incarnation, right-wing anticommunism broke away from the church, as Serkos loosened its institutional ties with the DRC. It was no longer

[182] For an analysis of Treurnicht's break from the NP and the CP's history, see FA Mouton, '"Dr No": A.P. Treurnicht and the Ultra-Conservative Quest to Maintain Afrikaner Supremacy, 1982-1993', *South African Historical Journal*, 65 (4), 2013, 577-595.
[183] *Acts of the Cape Synod*, 1987, 609-611.

required for Antikom/Serkos to have delegates from the Afrikaans churches on its board, while Serkos was still allowed to canvass congregants for funding. PW Jordaan, a member of Antikom from 1947, and its last serving chair, served on the Serkos board until 1987.[184] During this time, he ensured that the church continued to recognise his organisation as an anticommunist ally, but little, if any, collaboration or funding occurred.[185] By the mid-1980s, Antikom had reached its end. Its remnants remained on the margins of Afrikaner anticommunist endeavours, where Antikom had effectively always been. Antikom had been a key player throughout the history of the DRC's anticommunist efforts, firstly as a point of convergence for an array of Afrikaner nationalists in the 1940s (chapter 2), but then as a vehicle for right-wing opportunists. Even in its heyday during the 1960s Antikom only ever represented a fringe element of Afrikaner right-wing politics (chapter 3). It was only through its affiliation with the DRC that it maintained any legitimacy. Without that, Antikom, even in its reincarnated form, withered away into obscurity. It might have remained on the political fringe throughout its existence, but Antikom frequently drew the church's anticommunist discourse in this direction, as was the case with Koot Vorster's anti-Jewish episode, the *Antikom Newsletter's* continued hyperbolic 'reporting' on communist imperialism, and its conspiratorial 'analysis' of black dissent. Antikom's sustained effort to generate mainstream clout for its right-wing brand of anticommunism had a persistent influence on the fears and perceptions of communism amongst DRC members. As will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis, this perception was so deeply rooted that the DRC struggled to convince the *volk* otherwise during the final years of apartheid.

While the DRC's affiliation with Antikom faded, its relationship with ISMUS strengthened. The institute became the church's sole source for generating information on communism during the latter part of the 1980s.[186] Church bodies frequently requested specific assistance from ISMUS. SOK asked the institute in 1980 to provide a framework for engagement with black communities in their missional efforts against communism.[187] The DRC, in turn, donated a collection of written and archival material on communism gathered by

[184] No secondary or primary record of Serkos' operations after 1987 could be found.
[185] 'Jordaan, Pieter Willem', *Gemeentegeskiedenisargief*, https://www.gemeentegeskiedenis.co.za/jordaan-pieter-willem/.
[186] ISMUS, 368.14, 8, 'Verslag van die Vergadering van die subkommissie van Aklas oor die kommunisme en die samesprekinge ten opsigte van die instituut vir die studie van Marxisme, 12 Feb 1980,' 2.
[187] ISMUS, 368.3, 'Notule van die Tweede Vergadering van die Beheerkomitee van die Instituut vir die Studie van Marxisme, 1 Feb 1980,' 2.

the ecumenical office to ISMUS.[188] In 1986, Kotzé stepped down as ISMUS director, as his responsibilities as a member of PW Botha's presidential council, to which he was elected in 1982, became too demanding.[189] He was replaced as director by Phillip Nel, previously of the national intelligence service, who had been a senior researcher at ISMUS from its inception. Nel was a staunch critic of traditional anticommunism and blamed politicians, the media, Afrikaans academics, and cultural leaders for deliberately obscuring the image of the Soviet Union's priorities in Africa by overestimating its supposed threat. This had created the 'dangerous illusion', according to Nel, that all of South Africa's socio-political troubles were directly caused by the Soviet Union.[190]

Nel thus focussed ISMUS's attention on providing a balanced analysis of the contemporary aims, capabilities, and restrictions of the Soviets. This was a departure from Kotzé's emphasis on a historical analysis of Marxism. Subsequently, the institute's name changed in 1986 to the Institute for Soviet Studies at the University of Stellenbosch (ISSUS). Although Nel was concerned that the DRC donors would object to the changing nature of the institute, the church's loyal support for ISMUS/ISSUS continued.[191] In fact, in the same year, the General Synod meeting urged SOK chair PW de Wet to collaborate even more closely with the institute in an attempt to make him the DRC's central anticommunist contact point between the church and ISMUS.[192] The DRC and ISMUS/ISSUS thus had strong institutional ties, but it went further than that. Nel had forged close and collegial relationships with church officials. Willie Jonker, the DRC's representative on the ISMUS board, trusted Nel's advice on how the church should approach communism. For instance, Jonker once asked for Nel's input on an anonymous report that was flouted in church circles making claims of communist plotting against the DRC. Nel systematically debunked such suggestions, enabling Jonker to counter any conspiratorial anticommunism in the church's ranks.[193] Correspondence between De Wet and Nel also suggests a very close friendship.[194] This proximity, both institutional and personal, confirmed that key players in the DRC's anticommunist cluster had pivoted toward a more

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[188] ISMUS, 368.3, 'Notule van die Tweede Vergadering van die Beheerkomitee van die Instituut vir die Studie van Marxisme, 1 Feb 1980,' 2. These documents, as well as the ISMUS library and other sources, were dispersed throughout the Stellenbosch University Library after ISMUS was absorbed into the political science department. There is thus no complete and centralised collection of ISMUS's resources.
[189] Van Zyl & Hofmeyr, 'D.J. Kotzé', 218.
[190] Visser, 'Afrikaner anti-communist history production', 331
[191] Visser, ''Red Peril' and 'Total Onslaught',' 125.
[192] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 607.
[193] ISMUS, 368.16, 1/2, PR Nel-WD Jonker, 15 April 1986.
[194] 368.5.2, NG Kerk: Sending onder Kommunisme: 1982-1990.

rational, contemporary, and scientific approach to anticommunism. These key figures and their pragmatic faction became the dominant group within the DRC in the final years of apartheid as the church's discourse on race returned to the forefront.

CHAPTER 5: ANTICOMMUNISM AND THE END OF APARTHEID: THE NOT-SO-GRAND FINALE OF THE DRC'S BATTLE AGAINST COMMUNISM, 1986-1994.

This chapter will trace this final phase of the Dutch Reformed Church's (DRC) anticommunism amidst significant shifts in the South African political landscape in the run-up to the new democratic dispensation in 1994. From the mid-1980s, Afrikanerdom was forced to respond to increasing outside pressure and internal fissures demanding the abolition of white minority rule in South Africa. The DRC was, of course, not exempt from such pressures. Its racial policy, as adopted in 1974, became a concrete point of contention for its 'daughter churches'; the coloured, black, and Indian reformed churches which sprouted from the white DRC and led to immense pressure for the church to revisit its dogmatic apartheid theology. This was coupled with broader ecumenical pressure, and by 1985 the Christian community's criticism of apartheid shifted towards a call for the abolishment of the apartheid state. Within this context, critical voices within the DRC had slowly started to gain momentum under the leadership of the young theologian Johan Heyns. This chapter will illustrate how the DRC's responses toward both external and internal criticism shaped the final phase of the church's anticommunism. At the 1986 General Synod, the internal battle between the DRC's *verligtes* and *verkramptes* was won by the latter, which meant that the church abandoned the policy of apartheid and joined the state's reform agenda. At the same time, the DRC's *verligtes* had also initiated the final stage of the church's anticommunism, where the idea of communism as a bogey was replaced by a more rational and measured criticism of communism as state-ideology. This chapter argues that this form of anticommunism became the dominant feature of the DRC's vision for a 'new' post-apartheid South Africa.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the right-wing anticommunist populism of the 1960s had withered by this point. That said, a resurgent right-wing peaked in the 1980s as Afrikaner insecurities grew amidst growing black dissent and the Nationalist Party's (NP) reformist agenda. This chapter will highlight how the right-wing of the DRC attempted, and ultimately failed, to utilise populist anticommunism as a way to sway power toward the conservative faction of the church. This led to a schism within the church, which ultimately freed the DRC to continue with a reform agenda. Throughout this chapter, the church's *verligte* faction emerge as the defenders of the DRC against challenges from both right-wing Afrikaners and radical Christians from the outside. Within this tension, the church's anticommunism became a tool

for DRC leaders to promote democratic values in an attempt to fend off radical propositions for a 'new' South Africa, whilst protecting the future material security of its members. The end of the Cold War, and subsequent end of apartheid concluded the DRC's official relationship with anticommunism. The chapter does, however, reveal the disparity between the church leadership's attitude toward communism, and that of its members who remained steadfastly aligned to a populist brand of anticommunism. This, it is argued, was the product of decades of stanch anticommunist indoctrination led by the DRC.

The DRC's racial reckoning from its 'daughter churches'

Following the adoption of *Ras, Volk, en Nasie* (RVN) in 1974, the DRC became increasingly challenged from both within and outside of the church over its theological justification of apartheid and support for the historical status quo. As such, the DRC was forced to grapple with its racial policy, a process that intensified in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising in 1976. As discussed in the Chapter 4, this uprising of urban black youth increased the level of fear and anxiety amongst members of the DRC, whilst also being a moment of great disillusionment for church leaders who were safely tucked away in the confines of synod halls and vestries. The DRC leadership's wilful ignorance of the plight of black South Africans had been illustrated two years before the uprising. In 1974, the General Synod debated whether a report about the urban black population should be included in the final RVN document. Jaap Durand, a white minister and theologian of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA), the DRC's black 'daughter' church (see below), was asked to submit this report to the synod. Whilst a minister in a black township in Port Elizabeth, he wrote a revealing book on black urban life which formed the basis of his report.[1] Durand described a situation in which black people were victims of industrialisation and political exclusion, which had directly affected their social, material, and moral lives. He explained that the biblical notion of social justice called on the church to intervene in the plight of the downtrodden, which in this case meant urban black society. This analysis of an oppressed underclass, cautiously integrated into an appeal for (biblical) compassion, was a step too far for the largely conservative synod. The language of anticommunism was swiftly employed to discredit the report. Official synod documents do not reveal the nature and content of the debate, but Durand recalled that, 'one after the other

[1] J.J.F. Durand, Swartman, *Stad en Toekoms* (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1970); Port Elizabeth is now known as Gqeberha.

speakers stood up to make known their displeasure with this Marxist analysis'.[2] Synod members, of which Koot Vorster was the most vocal, dismissed claims of black hardship by charging Durand's 'sketch of the miserable situation in which black people found themselves in the cities [as] an insult to black people themselves'.[3] The synod unanimously voted to scrap the report from the final RVN document, with not even one *verligte* voice objecting. This reaffirmed that the *verligte/verkrampte* factions within Afrikanerdom were confined within the nationalist framework.

The Soweto uprising illustrated how far removed, and wilfully ignorant the DRC's leaders were as to the socio-political struggle of black South Africans. As discussed in chapter 4, the DRC's response to the uprising was to stubbornly persist in its support for the state and the actions of the police. Church leaders took the position that politics should be handled by the state. As a result, the DRC shied away from any real confrontation with the political situation in the country. That was until the DRC's own multiracial offspring, the 'daughter' churches in South Africa which had not gained independence, began to rebel against the DRC's commitment to a segregated church with a newfound energy and urgency to engage theologically with political matters. With RVN, the white DRC remained committed to a segregated church. The DRC, as the maternal body, oversaw the operations of its 'daughter' churches in South Africa: the Dutch Reformed Missionary Church (DRMC) for the coloured community, the DRCA for black congregants, and the smaller Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) for Indians.

The DRMC, whose membership of 678,000 constituted just over a quarter of the coloured community, became the central voice holding its 'mother' church theologically accountable in the wake of the Soweto Uprising.[4] In 1978, the DRMC gathered for its General Synod where it declared apartheid to be in conflict with the biblical gospel: 'The Church [DRMC] wishes to express it as its conviction *that apartheid policy as maintained by the government is in contradiction with the gospel* (original emphasis).'[5] It further requested that the DRC also repudiate apartheid. This was a landmark synod for the DRCM, which had long been gripped by a conservative leadership that avoided any criticism of its 'mother' church and

[2] Quoted from T.D. Moodie, 'Confessing Responsibility for the Evils of Apartheid: The Dutch Reformed Church in the 1980s', *South African Historical Journal*, 72 (4), 2020, 9.
[3] Quoted from Moodie, 'Confessing Responsibility for the Evils of Apartheid', 9.
[4] J.H.P. Serfontein, *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, (Taurus: Emmerentia, 1982), 59.
[5] *Acts of Synod, Dutch Reformed Mission Church*, 1978, 399.

the state. The synod decision initiated an entirely new direction for the DRMC.[6] This new direction was guided by a younger generation of clergy who identified with the newfound confidence and resurgence in black resistance against apartheid during the 1980s. Theologically, these clergy were shaped by liberation theology, with an underlying doctrine of reconciliation.[7] A central figure in this group was the young Allan Boesak, who was strongly influenced by Latin American liberation theology and black consciousness. For Boesak, this formed the basis of a distinctive black liberation theology.[8] Staying true to reformed theology, Boesak reclaimed the Calvinist tradition for the struggle against apartheid. This resulted in a theological framework in which God of the Bible was understood to be on the side of the oppressed, which in the case of South Africa meant the black population. In addition, God was understood to have called people to participate in the struggle for liberation and justice in the world.[9]

The DRC did not initially pay much attention to the 1978 decision of the DRMC. It was only five years later, when Boesak attended the general meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in Ottawa, that the DRC felt the brunt of this critique. The WARC was an influential ecumenical body, of which both the DRC and DRMC were members, which had grown cautiously critical of apartheid policy after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. It was only during the 1970s, when the composition of the WARC had shifted to include more post-colonial church leaders from across the world, that the ecumenical body started calling for the end of segregation in South Africa. The relationship between the WARC and the DRC grew increasingly tense, with the church showing no willingness to acknowledge or discuss the moral shortcomings of apartheid theology. By the end of the 1970s, the composition of the DRMC's leadership had shifted towards a majority of coloured clergy,

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[6] E. Fortein, 'Allan Boesak and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church between 1976-1990', in MA Plaatjies-Van Huffel & R. Vosloo (eds.), *Reformed Churches in South Africa and the Struggle for Justice: Remembering 1960-1990*, (SUN Press: Stellenbosch, 2013), 290.

[7] For Durand's influence on these early proponents of the doctrine of reconciliation, see Moodie, 'Confessing Responsibility for the Evils of Apartheid', 10-11.

[8] See A.A. Boesak, *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1984).

[9] Boesak, and fellow liberation theologians, used a broad understanding of the word 'black' which, in line with black consciousness, included all those who were under a state of oppression. This included the coloured community, of which the DRMC was a part of. See Fortein, 'Allan Boesak and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church', 291. Boesak's seminal works on black liberation theology include A.A. Boesak, *Farewell to innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1977), and Boesak, *Black and Reformed*. For a broader discussion of the influence of Black Consciousness in the church struggle, see 'Chapter 4: Black Resistance, Protest, and Challenge' in J. de Gruchy & S. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2005).

which in turn meant that the DRCM was no longer represented on the WARC by white delegates. This rejuvenated the ecumenical body's focus and energy on apartheid South Africa, and the DRC's support thereof.[10] By 1982, Boesak had gained international prominence as a theologian, and he was asked to prepare a discussion document on racism for the meeting. Based on black liberation theology, Boesak called on the ecumenical community to engage in a programme of action to openly reject apartheid. According to Boesak, declarations on the situation in South Africa were not sufficient anymore.[11] This call led to the WARC's decision to declare apartheid a sin and any theological justification thereof as heresy. The WARC hence declared *status confessionis* as they believed that the credibility of the biblical gospel was at stake. As the theological proponent of apartheid, the DRC had its membership summarily revoked.[12] This was a significant blow to the DRC after years of trying to convince the international community of the merits of separate development. This situation also significantly raised Boesak's profile as an opponent of the status quo.

At a local level, Boesak led efforts to force the DRC into a moral reckoning of its support for the apartheid state. In September 1982, shortly after the WARC general meeting, the DRMC held its General Synod, where the ecumenical body's decision to condemn apartheid and declare *status confessionis* was discussed. Boesak led an effort within the DRMC to confront the DRC about its apartheid theology. The synod, like the WARC general meeting, condemned apartheid theology and decided that since the 'secular gospel of apartheid threatens the confession of reconciliation in Jesus Christ and the unity of the church, the DRMC of South Africa declares that it constitutes a *status confessionis*'.[13] This called for a new confession of faith. A committee of DRMC leaders and theologians, which included Allan Boesak, was given a single day to draft a concept of such a confession.[14] The draft confession subsequently presented to the synod, which became known as the Belhar Confession, offered, as theologian Robert Vosloo writes, 'a strong theological articulation affirming the Lordship of Christ,

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[10] L. Henriksson, *A Journey with a Status Confessionis. Analysis of an apartheid related conflict between the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1982-1998*, (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 2010), 73-77.
[11] Fortein, 'Allan Boesak and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church', 295-6.
[12] *Status confessionis* is a theological term declared when it is considered that the very essence of Christianity is threatened, and a new confession of faith is called for. This meant that the apartheid theology, as supported by the DRC, posed an existential threat to Christianity in South Africa which was the most serious indictment against the church. See DJ Smit, 'A 'status confessionis' in South Africa?', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 47, 1984, 21-46.
[13] *Acts of Synod, Dutch Reformed Mission Church*, 1982, 702.
[14] The committee included two DRMC ministers, Isak Mentor and Allan Boesak, as well as three lecturers of theology at the University of the Western Cape, Professors Dirkie Smit, Jaap Durand and Gustav Bam.

focusing in the process on the notions of unity, reconciliation, and justice'.[15] The 1982 synod accepted this draft confession, and the Belhar Confession was ratified and adopted at the 1986 synod following a thorough church judicial process and consultation with local congregations.[16] It was the first reformed confession of faith borne from Africa, and joined the traditional protestant confessions – the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), the Belgic Confession (1561; 1619) and the Canons of Dort (1618-1619) – as the DRMC's theological basis. With the acceptance of the Belhar Confession, the DRMC declared itself in theological opposition to its mother church, a lone holdout still clinging to apartheid theology.

The acceptance of the Belhar Confession coincided with a broader ecumenical movement in South Africa in opposition to apartheid. In 1985, an interdenominational group of clergy gathered in Soweto under the auspices of the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) – a theological centre promoting liberation theology within the South African context - to discuss and formulate a Christian response to the apartheid regime. Under the leadership of Frank Chikane, a minister of the Apostolic Faith Mission who was rooted in the black consciousness tradition, and anti-apartheid Catholic priest Albert Nolan, the group of clergy formulated the Kairos Document (KD).[17] It specifically attacked the apartheid state as tyrannical and decried the use of violence by the police and military forces after a State of Emergency was declared in 1985 (see below). The only legitimate avenue of resistance, the KD argued, was through civil disobedience. It rejected both 'state theology' that supported the status quo, and what it called the 'church theology' of the 'liberal' English churches. The latter was criticised for their 'false view' on reconciliation between the races, in which the total transformation of the social and political structures, and the establishment of a just democratic order, were ignored.[18]

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[15] R. Vosloo, 'The Belhar Confession', in M. Allen & SR Scott (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020). It was called the Belhar Confession after the Cape Town suburb Belhar where the document originated. For the original Afrikaans version of the Belhar Confession, see 'Die Beleidenis van Belhar', https://urcsa.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/belhar-belydenis-afrikaans.pdf. For the official English version adopted in 2008, see 'The Belhar Confession', https://urcsa.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Belhar-Confession.pdf.

[16] M.A. Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 'Acceptance, adoption, advocacy, reception and protestation: A chronology of the Belhar Confession', in MA Plaatjies-Van Huffel & L. Modise (eds.), *Belhar Confession* The Embracing Confession of Faith for Church and Society, (SUN Press: Stellenbosch, 2017), 21-2.

[17] J.W. de Gruchy & S. De Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 195-200.

[18] J.W. De Gruchy, 'Grappling with a Colonial Heritage: The English-speaking Churches under Imperialism and Apartheid', in R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1997), 169.

In contrast to the Belhar Confession, which had adopted a nuanced tone that posed as a universal theological response to injustice, the content of KD directly responded to the political context of late-1980s South Africa. Both documents conveyed the same core message of justice, unity, and reconciliation, but KD did this primarily in a political vernacular. The KD framed the racial conflict in South Africa as a war between an oppressor and the oppressed, which were 'irreconcilable causes or interests in which one is just and the other is unjust'. Therefore, according to the KD's authors, the South African situation must be seen as a civil 'war or revolution' with 'two conflicting projects ... [where] no compromise is possible'.[19] KD called for Christians to proactively engage in civil disobedience against the state, while it also implied an openness to the use of violence as a means to respond to the state's use thereof. The document was supported by 150 signatories, most of whom were clergy, laity, and academic theologians from a variety of denominations. KD was also supported by the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and promoted by its president, Beyers Naudé.[20] He had just been released after seven years under state-sanctioned house arrest. Naudé was declared a banned person in 1977 and put under house arrest in the wake of state's crackdown on individuals and organisations linked with the black consciousness movement. Shortly after his ban was lifted in 1984, he was elected as president of the SACC. Naudé's banning was a clear sign to other Afrikaners not to rebel against the state, but the unbanned Naudé became a local and international icon of Christian dissent against the apartheid regime. Under his leadership, the SACC supported the KD document which shifted ecumenical criticism of apartheid from mere disapproval of the policy toward declaring the state a tyrannical regime and actively advocating resistance to it.[21]

'The Doors of the church are open to all': The DRC General Synod of 1986

In the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising, the liberation movement grew in strength, and the banned African Nationalist Congress (ANC) emerged as the leading challenger to NP power. It embarked on a campaign to render the black townships ungovernable, partly through targeted armed attacks by trained operatives of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the

[19] The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church, (Skotaville: Johannesburg, 1986), 38.
[20] C.F.B. Naudé, *My Land van Hoop: Die lewe van Beyers Naudé*, (Human & Rousseau: Cape Town, 1995), 127.
[21] De Gruchy & De Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 202.

ANC.[22] This coincided with campaigns of civil disobedience through mass mobilisation which was organised by the United Democratic Front (UDF) – a non-racial coalition of anti-apartheid civic organisations founded in 1983 which, it has been argued, acted as a front for the banned ANC.[23] The UDF had strong ties with ecumenical resistance against apartheid. Its founding president was Allan Boesak whose black liberation theology helped to inform the politics of the UDF, along with Archbishop Tutu and the Catholic Archbishop of Durban, Dennis Hurley. The SACC also became a key ally of the UDF, providing the organisation with funds and office space.[24] It should also be noted that by the late 1980s, the SACC had ties with the leadership of the ANC.[25] Resistance to the apartheid regime had gained momentum to such an extent that the Botha administration declared a State of Emergency in 1985, which was reinstated annually, until 1990. The Botha administration sought to control black resistance to apartheid in order for its gradual and granular approach to reform to be effective.[26] The movement of known members of the ANC, UDF, and their affiliates was controlled and political meetings, including the funerals of struggle leaders, were restricted. The state consequently detained scores of people. In 1986 alone, an estimated 16 000-20 000 people were detained and held in police custody for more than thirty days.[27] The state had once again acted to protect, not only what it regarded as law and order, but white society as well.

In the midst of the State of Emergency, the DRC was readying itself for its 1986 General Synod. Ecumenical pressure, both globally and locally, on the apartheid state and on the DRC, had reached a pinnacle by the mid-1980s. The Belhar Confession, however, proved to be a personal attack on the DRC. It was accepted by its very own daughter church, was written by both white and coloured Christians from the same reformed tradition, and in the very language of Afrikaner nationalism: Afrikaans. The Belhar Confession was thus a more intimate criticism than other ecumenical critics who could be deemed as 'foreign' or ignorant to the DRC's inner workings. Such ecclesiastical criticism of the DRC, together with external critics such as the World Council of Churches and the SACC, amplified the growing pressure on the church to keep pace with the Afrikaner political and economic establishment, including the AB, the

[22] T. Simpson, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle*, (Penguin House: Cape Town, 2016), 348.
[23] J. Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991*, (David Philips: Cape Town, 2000), 288.
[24] Seekings, *The UDF*, 91; 174; 218.
[25] Naudé, *Land van Hoop*, 127-8.
[26] Seekings, *The UDF*, 198.
[27] *Ibid.*, 196.

business community, and the NP state, who were now envisioning a future without apartheid. At the same time, the DRC could not ignore that it now had voters of both the Conservative Party (CP) and the NP as church members. Church unity within the white DRC had always been a key priority for its leaders, and this became the backdrop to the 1986 General Synod which had to process both internal riffs and external pressures.

On 14 October 1986, about 400 delegates from across the country gathered in Cape Town for the seventh meeting of the General Synod of the DRC. External criticism on apartheid policy and theology had been mounting, but pressure to reform the church's racial policy had also started to gain momentum within the DRC. Conservatives in the DRC, such as Koot Vorster and Andries Treurnicht, had dominated the agenda of the church leadership after the adoption of RVN in 1974. Yet, as discussed in the previous chapter, there was a new generation of pragmatic theologians and clergy, influenced by the theology of Karl Barth, which developed a sense of urgency after the Soweto Uprising. This resulted in a series of responses, rather than a broad scale acceptance, of moving past apartheid theology.[28] Examples included the regional synod of the Western Cape's condemnation of racial discrimination in 1979, and in 1980, the public acknowledgement, known as the *Reformation Day Witness*, by eight leading DRC theologians, of the suffering caused by apartheid, and a call to the church to act .[29] These examples were consistent with the state's model of apartheid reform, and fell short of the ecumenical community's proposals or the Belhar Confession in that it still considered a reform agenda, rather than abolishing the apartheid regime. That said, it was a sign of the divisions opening up within the DRC's leadership over the question of apartheid.

By the time the 1982 General Synod convened, factional lines within the church leadership grew more elaborate than the general *verligte/verkrampte* split within Afrikanerdom. Journalist Hennie Serfontein, who closely followed the politics of the DRC in the early 1980s, provided a helpful outline of the different factions. The conservative right-wing within the DRC was in line with the thinking of the CP and its failed predecessors, the *Herstigte National Party* (HNP). These DRC leaders were wedded to Kuyperian theological thought and subscribed to the theology set out in RVN. They supported the Verwoerdian ideals

[28] W. Nicol, 'Accompanying the flock – the development of the Dutch Reformed Church 1974-1990', *Scriptura*, 76, (2001), 133-134.
[29] F. Du Toit, H. Hofmeyr, P. Strauss, & J. van der Merwe, *Moeisame pad na vernuwing: Die NG Kerk se pad van isolasie en die soeke na 'n nuwe relevansie*, (Barnabas: Bloemfontein, 2002), 71-7.

of apartheid, opposed any reform, and held onto overt racist notions. Andries Treurnicht was the main proponent of this group's thinking. This was the right-wing fringe of the ideological conservatives, the second group Serfontein identified, who dominated the DRC's thinking at the time. According to Serfontein, the DRC's leadership at the 1982 General Synod was made up of individuals from this group, such as Kobus Potgieter, who carried the support of most of the church's members. There were also the reformers, or the 'pragmatic conservatives' as Serfontein called them. This was a small group of theologians, such as Johan Heyns and Willie Jonker, who were open to the idea of reform to apartheid. The pragmatic conservatives constituted the *verligtes* within the Afrikaner political context. Serfontein added a fourth and even smaller group, the 'genuine' *verligtes*, such Nico Smith, David Bosch, and Piet Meiring, who believed in the total abolition of apartheid and who were closer to the position of the DRMC than to the leadership of their own church.[30] The genuine *verligtes'* position was represented in *Storm-kompas* (1981), a collection of essays by twelve DRC theologians and clergy examining racial reconciliation and church unity. The authors rejected the DRC's relationship with the AB and the NP, its 'Afrikaner-unity syndrome', its racial exclusion, and its paternal approach to mission work.[31] In 1982, forty-one genuine *verligtes* signed a letter entitled 'An Open Letter to the Dutch Reformed Church' (the *open letter*), published in the *Kerkbode*, that called for racial reconciliation and unity amongst the segregated reformed churches.[32]

These four groups' perspectives are important to note, but the dominant factional battle within the DRC was between the ideological conservatives and the pragmatic conservatives, with the power tilting toward the former. This power dynamic was reaffirmed at the 1982 General Synod as more ideological conservative leaders were voted into leadership positions. Calls to abandon apartheid theology in the *open letter* and *Storm-kompas* were deemed to be out of order, and any motions proposed to the synod to abolish the Immorality and Marriages Acts were quashed.[33] The pragmatic group were, however, able to pressurise the General Synod into revisiting its racial policy. A commission was established to revise RVN and to present the policy in a 'more concise, clearer, and understandable way'.[34] It was a mandate to revise

[30] Serfontein, *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, 191-2.
[31] N.J. Smith, F.E. O'Brien Geldenhuys & P. Meiring (ed.), Storm-kompas: Opstelle op soek na 'n suiwer koers in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks van die jare tagtig, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1981), 134-141.
[32] ''n Ope Brief aan die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk', *Kerkbode*, 9 June 1982, 1.
[33] Moodie, 'Confessing Responsibility for the Evils of Apartheid', 20.
[34] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1986, 87

the document in such a way that the core apartheid theology could be presented to the ecumenical world and DRC members in a more palatable way. By doing this, the ideological conservatives placated the pragmatists, whilst attempting to maintain the essence of their racial policy.

The commission consisted, however, of a combination of the conservative and pragmatic factions. Four members of the DRC's executive were joined by ten other clergy and theologians.[35] The pragmatic faction was led by Johan Heyns, professor of dogmatics at the University of Pretoria and moderator of the Northern Transvaal Synod. As a young DRC minister during the 1960s, Heyns was steadfastly loyal to the church, the *volk*, and state policy. Later, as he pursued an academic career as a lecturer in the theology faculty at Stellenbosch, he elicited the praise of conservatives like Andries Treurnicht, who described Heyns as astute and truly reformed.[36] Despite this, the young theologian constituted a pragmatist minority of the post-Cottesloe DRC as part of the Barthian generation of the DRC (chapter 4). He defended apartheid from a pragmatic consideration of maintaining the status quo, which differed from leading ideological purists such as Koot Vorster, who believed apartheid to be the will of God.[37] In the wake of the Soweto Uprising however, Heyns and a group of pragmatic DRC leaders were invited to consult with their reformed counterparts of the Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches on the church's racial policy. The theological critique and debates posed by the Swiss awakened Heyns to the urgency to reform apartheid theology. Moodie points to this moment as a turning point in Heyns's posture toward his church's theology and policy.[38] He consequently became one of the theologians who signed the *Reformation Day Witness* and supported the content of the *open letter*. This led to him being voted out of the DRC's moderature at the 1982 General Synod. The old conservative guard of the DRC labelled Heyns

[35] The DRC's executive, J.E. Potgieter (Moderator), G.S.J. Möller (Assessor), D.C.G. Fourie (Actuary), D.J. Viljoen (Scribe); the ten additional members, J.A. Heyns (Dogmatics), D.A. du Toit (Christian Ethics), C.W.H. Boshoff (Missiology), D S Snyman (Missiology), A.B. du Toit (New Testament), P.A. Verhoef (Old Testament), P.B. van der Watt (Church polity), P. Smit (Urbanisation), M.M. Nieuwoudt (Ecclesial Sociology), P. Rossouw (church official). See *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 87.
[36] H.H. Williams, 'JA Heyns en die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk en Apartheid,' PhD thesis, University of the Free State, January 2006, 161.
[37] Williams, 'JA Heyns en die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk en Apartheid', 61.
[38] Moodie, 'Confessing Responsibility for the Evils of Apartheid', 18.

a ‘liberal’, including Koot Vorster who displayed deep concern for what he deemed to be Heyns’s ‘disloyalty and disobedience’ to the DRC’s official decisions, such as RVN.[39]

Both conservatives and those identifying with the genuine *verligtes* saw in Heyns a church leader who had a keen sense of what the dominant direction of the DRC was at any time. Vorster, for instance, described Heyns as someone who considered political and social realities rather than trust in God when making decisions. To Vorster, this meant that Heyns was setting his sail to the wind, which in the case of the 1980s, was toward the state’s policy of reform.[40] Serfontein – a supporter of the genuine *verligtes*, although he was a secular journalist – approached Heyns with suspicion and judged him to be deliberately ambiguous.[41] This may have been an oversimplification of Heyns’ response to the context in which the DRC found itself, however there was an element of truth to Serfontein’s conclusion: Heyns was the barometer of reform inside the DRC.[42] The first order of the highly anticipated General Synod of 1986 was the election of the moderator. When the majority of the delegates voted for Heyns, as opposed to the conservative candidate Tappies Möller, who was the editor of the Kerkbode assessor of the General Synod, it was a sign that the DRC was taking a new direction towards reform. Heyns’s biographer viewed this election positively, as a break from the DRC’s tradition of rigid moderators to a person that had a ‘remarkable ability to change his point of view strategically when the majority of people were ready for the shift’.[43]

The commission that had been tasked with revising RVN also presented the synod with a new report, *Kerk en Samelewing: ’n Getuienis van die Ned Geref Kerk* (KS – Church and Society: A Witness of the DRC).[44] Heyns had successfully led the pragmatic group to play the decisive role in the report’s final formulation.[45] After two days of deliberation, the KS report was accepted as DRC policy. In accepting the report, the DRC rejected any Biblical justification for apartheid, opened its doors to members of all races, and emphasised church

[39] D.J. Langner, ‘Teen Die Hele Wêreld Vry: J.D. Vorster as ’n Neo-Calvinis in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1935-1980,’ (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2004), 195.
[40] Langner, ‘Teen die Hele Wêreld Vry’, 194.
[41] Serfontein, *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, 190-1. For discussions on the ambiguities in the theology of Johan Heyns, see E.M. Conradie, ‘The ambiguity of Johan Heyns: Sitting at Bavinck’s left or right hand?’, *Ned Geref Teologiese Tydskrif*, 54 ,3&4 (2013); Williams, ‘Johan Heyns’, 238-230.
[42] Serfontein, Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk, 202.
[43] Williams, ‘JA Heyns’, 210.
[44] *Kerk en Samelewing: ‘n Getuienis van die Ned Geref Kerk soos aanvaar deur die Algemene Sinode van die Ned Geref Kerk, Oktober 1986*, (NG Sendingpers: Bloemfontein, 1987).
[45] For the factional dynamics of this commission, see Williams, ‘Johan Heyns’, 191-6.

unity within the DRC-family. The DRC also discarded the notion that interracial marriages were unbiblical and declared racism as a sin. It was thus not a mere tweak to the existing policy, but a significant departure from the DRC's longstanding apartheid theology. The adoption of KS was therefore a momentous moment for the church which had now officially adopted a reform agenda which was committed to transitioning away from apartheid.

While the pragmatic group played a critical role in the formulation of the final KS-report, it was still a document based on compromise. This led to KS having some significant shortcomings, particularly for those outside of the DRC. For instance, apartheid was still not judged to be heresy, there was no confession of guilt for the DRC's complicity in apartheid, and the notion of church unity was rather ambiguously stated.[46] The adoption of KS thus remained a far cry from the demands made by the DRMC and the ecumenical community. Beyers Naudé, SACC president, embodied the outsiders' reception of KS:

> KS 1986 was an attempt to formulate the theology of apartheid in such a way that it was acceptable to the majority of the DRC … I think they know there is a possibility of a split in the DRC, and that's why the formulations in the documents are very, very guarded. They were a result of compromise. They were deliberately vague so as not to create a crisis situation in the DRC.[47]

The DRC, with its historically close relationship with apartheid, had made a significant decision to adopt the KS document, but, as Naudé emphasised, from the outside, the DRC was perceived to have remained confined within a limited Afrikaner paradigm.

Shortly after the synod, the DRMC approached the DRC to discuss its newly adopted policy. The DRMC made it clear in their official discussion with the DRC that, in their eyes, the KS document was far from sufficient on the subject of apartheid. What the DRCM had deemed to be a 'sin', which had forced them into the serious situation of *status confessionis*, the DRC merely called 'a mistake'.[48] This description confirmed to the DRCM that the DRC had not yet fully taken responsibility for the impact of its theological justification of apartheid on the members of their daughter churches and black South Africans at large. As a result, the DRMC maintained that there existed a theological deficit between the Belhar Confession and

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[46] Du Toit, et al., *Moeisame pad na Vernuwing*, 92.
[47] Quoted by T. Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid in South Africa: An Examination of Dutch Reformed Church-State Relations*, (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 1999), 138.
[48] Williams, 'Johan Heyns', 246; This was a reference to paragraph 305 of KS 1986 which stated that the biblical justification for racial segregation was a 'mistake' which the DRC now rejected.

the KS on the issue of apartheid.[49] Such criticism of the DRC's new policy was theologically and practically legitimate; however, the adoption of KS was nevertheless a significant historical moment for a church that had clung to apartheid theology. The broader reformist movement within the Afrikaner establishment could now rely on the DRC as a fellow reformer. To the ideological conservatives in the DRC however, the adoption of KS was a clear deviation, albeit marginal when viewed from the outside, from its old path. This, perhaps unsurprisingly, led to a right-wing attack on the new direction. Significantly, this attack was saturated with traditional anticommunist vernacular.

Right-wing backlash

During the discussion of the KS document at the General Synod in 1986, MC Adendorf, a minister from Germiston and founder of the far-right organisation, *Bybel en Volk* (Bible and *Volk*), claimed that parts of the document were copied from the ANC's Freedom Charter. He added that the Freedom Charter was written by the communist leader Joe Slovo – in fact, he merely contributed to the charter – and asked: 'How is it possible for a Communist and the Church to speak the same language?'[50] The fact that KS had the approval of a majority of synod delegates indicated that this only represented a fringe sentiment. Nonetheless, elements of the Afrikaner right-wing saw an opportunity to draw the DRC's new direction into its political discourse. The conservative newspaper *Die Afrikaner* described the synod meeting as dominated by 'hot-headed liberalists' who grabbed power to bring an end to the white church. It added that the adage that the DRC was the NP at prayer rang truer than ever as the church's new policy resembled the 'positions taken by left-wing politicians' in recent years, referring to PW Botha's cautious reforms. According to the newspaper, this alleged move to the left was a reprehensible decision.[51] It became clear that the right was intent on framing the DRC's shift in terms of its own ethnic politics to enhance their relevance amid the growing political drive for reform. On 24 October 1986, Andries Treurnicht addressed the CP conference. In a speech filled with hyperbole, he shared his outrage at the possibility of black and coloured ministers in the DRC. Treurnicht described a doom-laden future where the DRC could end up with 'its

[49] For a theological comparison between Belhar and KS, see P. Naudé, 'The 'Belhar Confession' and 'Church and Society': A comparative reading in five statements', *Acta Theologica*, 32 (2), 2012, 147-161.
[50] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 611. Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Hoe is dit moontlik dat 'n Kommunis en die Kerk dieselfde taal praat?'
[51] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 612.

own UDF-moderator', or even someone similar to Desmond Tutu, whom he described as a black racist.[52]

The political temperature had reached new highs within the DRC in 1986. Leading members of the right-wing *Afrikanervolkswag* (Afrikaner People's Guard), an organisation established in 1984 to defend Afrikaner culture and identity, began to mobilise within the DRC. A week after the 1986 General Synod meeting, a group of DRC members and clergy established a committee to rally church members who objected to KS. This committee, under the leadership of Prof WJG Lubbe, former editor of the *Kerkbode*, had strong links to right-wing organisations, with most of its members also serving on the executive of the *Afrikanervolkswag*. According to Lubbe, the majority of those who objected against KS cited the opening of DRC membership to all races and the 'overemphasis' on church unity at the expense of 'separated diversity'.[53] This was a peculiar claim, given that the KS document had not yet been distributed to members of the church, nor had it been discussed by the regional synods. Nevertheless, Lubbe and his committee led an effort to unite the conservative ideologues in the DRC against the KS.

On 27 June 1987, a meeting of 2 500 DRC members who objected to KS organised by Lubbe gathered in Pretoria and were asked to vote on a way forward: mobilise within the DRC and re-establish it as an Afrikaner *volkskerk*, or establish a new, exclusively Afrikaner church. Around 80 per cent voted for the latter. This led to the establishment of the *Afrikaanse Protestante Kerk* (APK – Afrikaans Protestant Church).[54] The APK identified itself with the Afrikaner *volk* and only allowed Afrikaners, or white South Africans who identified with the Afrikaner, as members.[55] More importantly, in its criticism of the DRC's new direction, the APK utilised the anticommunist approach of the 1960s, which as chapter 3 argued, represented the height of right-wing fearmongering through claiming communist subversion of the *volk*. The DRC was accused of choosing 'the course of liberalism' and for persevering 'uncompromising[ly] and relentlessly on this newly chosen course'.[56] In an ironic twist, the DRC was now on the receiving trope of liberalism as a gateway to communism, which was a

[52] 'Dr. Treurnicht val NGK skerp aan', *Die Burger*, 25 October 1986, 1-2.
[53] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 627
[54] Du Toit et al, *Moeisame pad na Vernuwing*, 95.
[55] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 670.
[56] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1990, 52.

staple of right-wing anticommunists and which DRC leaders such as Koot Vorster promoted, had now been turned against the church.

A further vehicle for the conservative ideologues in the DRC was the *NG Bond*, an internal pressure group established in 1987 in an attempt to reclaim the DRC as an exclusive Afrikaner church. Under the leadership of DRC missiologist and *Afrikanervolkswag* founder, Carel Boshoff, the *NG Bond* represented those who objected to KS, but who wanted to stay within the DRC and 'restore' it through internal church channels. It adopted the same anticommunist rhetoric as the APK, as seen in a media statement released in in July 1987 explaining its stance on the DRC:

> The *Bond* judges that we [the DRC] are currently experiencing a significant onslaught of liberalism, to make the DRC an agent for change and to make it subservient to modern political currents, whereby the distinctiveness of the Afrikaner people can also be destroyed. The *Bond* regards it as a *volk's* right to face this onslaught, even when launched along religious channels.[57]

This was identical to the language used by Antikom when it was under the influence of the right-wingers in the 1960s. Then, the Afrikaner right-wing saw the DRC as a vehicle for their anticommunist agenda. Now, those with the same convictions chose to further its agenda outside of the church. Engaging with right-wingers during the late 1980s, the church historian PB van der Watt observed that the right-wingers simply never raised ecclesiastic and theological arguments. He consequently concluded that 'political prejudices and group interests count[ed] the most amongst these people'.[58] Ironically, the APK criticised the KS document for its 'unsettling sounds and traces of party politics'.[59] The right's onslaught on the DRC was thus part of a wider reorganisation of right-wing politics in the 1980s that included both *volkspolitiek* (people's politics), in this case represented by the *Afrikanervolkswag*, and *partypolitiek* (party politics) of Treurnicht's CP.

The schism within the church did not numerically reflect the party-political split of 1982. When the CP was founded in 1982 it was estimated that the party had the support of

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[57] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 695; Translated from Afrikaans: 'Die Bond oordeel dat ons tans 'n wesenlike aanslag van die liberalisme beleef, om van die NGK 'n agent vir verandering te maak en hom diensbaar aan moderne politieke strominge te maak, waardeur ook die eiesoortigheid van die Afrikanervolk vernietig kan word. Die Bond beskou dit as 'n volk se reg om hierdie aanslag die hoof te bied, ook wanneer dit langs godsdienstige kanale geloods word.'
[58] '"Só 'n kerk het weinig kans …"', *Beeld*, 29 June 1987, 2.
[59] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 670.

about a third of Afrikaners. However, the DRC conceded only 8 000 members to the APK, mostly in rural areas in the north of the country, which amounted to a mere 0.44 per cent of the church's total membership.[60]F The *NG Bond* also failed to make inroads within the DRC's structures. In 1987, all the regional synods approved the adoption of KS which provided a clear indication of the widespread support for the DRC's new direction as advocated by its moderator, Johan Heyns. As Serfontein indicated, Heyns had indeed proved to be the barometer of change within the DRC. This was not only true for the church's stance on apartheid, but also for the DRC's official stance on communism.

Reform as anticommunist strategy: The DRC's Pragmatic Anticommunists

With the side-lining of Antikom in 1982 and the secession of the APK in 1987, the DRC had rid itself of the proponents of traditional right-wing Afrikaner anticommunism. Throughout the twentieth century however, opposition to communism had remained entrenched within white South African society – it was one of the few issues around which there was a general consensus. The irrelevance of right-wing anticommunism in the late 1980s therefore did not signal the end of the DRC's opposition to communism. A new phase, which was ultimately the final phase of the church's engagement with anticommunism in the twentieth century, was led by Heyns himself. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, a key feature of anticommunism was its versatility as a vehicle of projection, and Heyns reconceptualised the DRC's inherent opposition to communism in order to guide white society towards the end of apartheid.

Before examining this final phase of the DRC's anticommunism, it is important to briefly outline Heyns' views on communism. Heyns' early academic work in the 1960s illustrated his conviction that communism was a dangerous and anti-Christian ideology. In traditional DRC anticommunist fashion, Heyns propagated the belief that the only power strong enough to fend off communism was Christianity itself. He also described communism as more than just an economic and political system, but an ideology that targeted the heart of the Christian gospel with a 'subtle attack' – an echo of the omnipotent unseen subversive force

[60] Van der Merwe, '"Ras, Volk en Nasie"', 670; H. Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers: 'n Opperste toets van mag*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 224.

that previous anticommunists such as Vorster had talked about.[61] Heyns seldom linked 'liberalism' to communism, but he deeply disapproved of what he viewed as a 'foreign' ideology.[62] Nonetheless, to Heyns, 'liberalism' was indeed a great threat to the indigenous peoples of South Africa, as foreign missionaries used it primarily to Westernise, rather than evangelise.

By the late-1970s, Heyns remained convinced that communist thinking was 'untruthful', and that it 'stood in service of the wicked'.[63] During this period, he spent time as a DRC chaplain in the South African Defence Force (SADF), which convinced him that the communist threat to South Africa – and the 'Christian civilisation' in southern Africa – was a reality. Following this experience, he endorsed Botha's Total Strategy and militarised response to what was, at the time, deemed a communist incursion into Southwest Africa (now Namibia). To Heyns, it was obvious that the DRC had to play its part in fending off the 'Total Onslaught' – he personally did this by enthusiastically encouraging young DRC men to join the army.[64] It is important to point out that this form of anticommunism was also common among reformists in the church. State security was central to them, largely because they feared that if the state fell to the communist powers, it would be the end of Christianity. They did not, however, view criticism of the state, or any action against it, as part of an international communist plot.[65] Heyns, for example, warned Koot Vorster in personal correspondence that 'everything should not look red to us'.[66]

The 1986 General Synod had witnessed the pragmatic faction of the DRC, with Heyns leading this effort, take control and steer the church in a new direction. With this, the pragmatic factions' approach to anticommunism also gained the upper hand. This firstly implied continued support for the government to defend the country against 'communist attacks'. There was however a subtle shift. For the majority of the twentieth century, black dissent was delegitimised by Afrikaner anticommunists as a product of European communist influence. As Falkoff explained: 'The struggle was blamed on the agency of whites rather than blacks who,

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[61] J.A. Heyns, *Die Evangelie in Krisis*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1966), 123-137.
[62] J.A. Heyns, Die Mens: Bybelse en Buite-Bybelse Mensebeskouinge, (Sacum: Bloemfontein, 1974), 45.
[63] Williams, 'Johan Heyns', 150. See also JA Heyns, *Teologie van die Revolusie*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1975), 17-20; *Die Mens*, 66.
[64] Williams, 'Johan Heyns', 172.
[65] Kuperus, *State, Civil Society and Apartheid*, 134.
[66] Langner, 'Teen die Hele Wêreld Vry', 195.

in the logic of apartheid, were thought of as the easily corrupted followers of white agitators.'[67] Chapter's 2 and 3 of this thesis have demonstrated how the DRC played an important role in entrenching this notion within white Afrikaner society.

By the 1980s, with the struggle against apartheid intensifying, and as the DRC grappled with the morality of the policy, church leaders began to accept that black dissent was a manifestation of an unjust system.[68] The church was, however, clear about the boundaries of the manifestation of dissent as violence and disorder were deemed unacceptable. In this paradigm, communism was no longer seen as an invisible force that aimed to subvert Afrikaner society. Communism was now rather perceived as a local revolutionary force, which aimed to topple the existing order – communists were now black homegrown dissenters rather external forces. Consequently, the DRC was able to justify its enthusiastic support for the state's Total Strategy. The adoption of KS signified huge shifts in the DRC's racial policy, but it continued to support the apartheid state because it was seen as the guardian of 'law and order', which the church held dear. Anticommunism, which informed this position, had thus created a paradigm in which the church could hold contradictory positions on race, apartheid and communism.

The DRC's response to the State of Emergency between 1986 and 1990 illustrated the church's new focus on the communist threat. As had been the case throughout the century, the state's intervention came as a relief to the DRC. *Kerkbode* editor, Tappies Möller, who at the time also held the second highest rank in the DRC, noted in his editorial that the first State of Emergency in 1985 was not a desirable situation to be in, but 'as things have developed it [was] clear that the authorities was left with no choice but to turn to drastic means'.[69] The reader's attention was shifted away from black grievances as manifested in the protests that gave rise to the State of Emergency, to blaming so-called black agitators for the violence and reaffirming the necessity of the state's actions. In subsequent *Kerkbode* articles, Möller cast these 'agitators' as on the side of evil.[70] This was the first instance where the probability of a violent communist revolution was touted by the church as something homegrown, and not the efforts of outside forces manipulating black dissent.

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[67] N. Falkof, *Satanism and Family Murder in Late Apartheid South Africa: Imagining the End of Whiteness*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2015), 74.
[68] D. Welsh, *Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011), 141.
[69] T. Möller, 'Noodtoestand', 31 July 1985, 2.
[70] A. Rosenfeld, 'Reporting on the State of Emergency (1985-1990) in Die Kerkbode', *Scriptura*, 75 (2001), 109.

In 1986, the new *Kerkbode* editor, the pragmatic leaning Frits Gaum, conceded that the widespread unrest was caused by the way in which the existing political system excluded black people. However, it became clear, as Annette Rosenfeld argues, that Gaum was stuck in an anticommunist paradigm when he described black opposition to the oppressive apartheid regime. Her analysis of the *Kerkbode's* reporting on the State of Emergency indicated that readers were consistently given the impression that this opposition was led by revolutionary forces who used violence in their attempt to establish a communist state.[71] In the eyes of the DRC's mouthpiece, the state was therefore exempt from any moral critique of its use of force, because it was, in the eyes of the church, responding to violent communist attacks on a Christian state. In an editorial on 17 December 1986, Gaum expressed the commonly accepted belief of *Kerkbode* readers, and that of DRC members in general, that the ANC was the driving force behind revolutionary, communist violence: 'Every informed person in this country knows by now that the ANC thinks he [sic] has smelled blood and that he [sic] will now try, with all [his] might, to take over South Africa.'[72] The image of the violent communist was again employed to offer moral legitimacy for the state's action – a state that was, unbeknownst to the DRC, in the process of secret talks with the ANC on a new dispensation.

The pragmatic leaders of the DRC therefore supported the state's reforms to apartheid as a way to curb communist advances in South Africa. Some of the DRC's genuine *verligtes*, such as David Bosch, were wary of, what they perceived to be, growing support for communism among the black population.[73] In the preface of what amounted to the most critical evaluation of apartheid theology to come from a DRC theologian in the 1980s, Johann Kinghorn articulated the DRC's pragmatic faction's view on communism. According to Kinghorn, if the DRC did not face its complicity and 'ideological enslavement' to apartheid, 'the knot of history in South Africa could easily unravel in such a way that the future will be determined by an atheistic Marxism, while the Christian gospel goes down with apartheid'.[74] Christianity, according to Kinghorn's premise, was tarnished by apartheid in such a way that it could destroy the religion. Anticommunism was now, somewhat ironically, used by both

[71] Rosenfeld, 'Reporting on the State of Emergency', 113-4.
[72] F. Gaum, 'Verantwoordelike kerkpers nie geraak deur media-beheer', *Kerkbode*, 17 December 1986, 6. Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Elke ingeligte persoon in die land weet teen die tyd dat die ANC dink hy het bloed geruik end at hy Suid-Afrika nou met alle mag wil prober oorneem.'
[73] D. Bosch, 'Kerk en politiek in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks'; W. Cilliers, 'In die Werkplek,' in Smith, O'Brien Geldenhuys & Meiring, *Storm-kompas*, 32, 38, 117.
[74] J. Kinghorn (ed.), *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, (Macmillan: Johannesburg, 1986), preface.

pragmatics and conservatives in the DRC to defend Christianity. On the one hand, conservatives believed Christianity could be defended against communism through apartheid, and on the other, progressives were concerned that Christianity could succumb to communism because of apartheid.

The Challenge of Black Liberation Theology

It would be incorrect to state that in the ecumenical community the threat that apartheid posed to the Christian gospel had not already been recognised. The KD and the Belhar Confession were markers of this. The KD was supported by a cluster in the ecumenical community who believed that a tyrannical regime should be met with radical opposition. That said, the KD made a political rather than theological impact in the broader South African ecumenical scene.[75] The DRC had initially not given the KD any substantial attention, although it was compelled to formulate a statement on the document as a way to show its members and the world that there was in fact a communist-inspired plot against the church.[76] The statement, published in the *Kerkbode* and in the DRC's international mouthpiece *DRC News*, discredited the KD on the basis that it allegedly misappropriated theology for political purposes. It did this specifically, the DRC's executive argued, through a Marxist social analysis which concluded that the world's struggle was not between the faithful and the faithless, but the oppressed against the oppressors. Therefore, the DRC emphasised that KD embraced any entity or idea that contributed to the struggle of the oppressed. 'In this way,' according to the DRC's statement, 'the demonic danger of an ideology such as Communism is dismissed as irrelevant' as long as it assists in the struggle of the oppressed.[77] Here, visions of communism as the utmost evil force were still readily available for the church to discredit criticism. The DRC's anticommunist response to KD was not surprising, but neither totally off the mark when the political tone and content of the KD are taken into account. As DRC moderator, Heyns opined that the KD did not aim for reconciliation, but for confrontation.[78] This claim was not without foundation, as the Kairos signatories deemed both violent and non-violent confrontation with

[75] The Kairos Document (KD) became an important part of the discussion between the SACC and the ANC. The ANC's religious office endorsed and adopted the KD as a theological justification for the struggle against apartheid. P. Welshe, 'Christianity and the Anti-apartheid Struggle: The Prophetic Voice within Divided Churches', in Elphick & Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa*, 391.
[76] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1986, 61.
[77] *Ibid.*, 62.
[78] William, 'Johan Heyns', 205.

the state and its supporters as an appropriate response to the regime's use of violence. Heyns, and the rest of the DRC's leadership, conceded that the black experience of apartheid, as described in KD, was a reality. The radical calls for an anti-apartheid revolution posed by the KD authors was, however, unacceptable to the staunchly anticommunist DRC.[79]

For the DRC, the KD was a political document that misappropriated theology. Liberation theology, which was the theological foundation of KD, was framed as an illegitimate theological claim that rested on a Marxist social analysis.[80] This was an easy statement to make on a document that the DRC had judged to be political in nature. Even more so of a document that was not tied to the reformed tradition. The Belhar Confession, which arose from a reformed tradition and was written in the 'idiom of the church', as Heyns expressed it, posed a greater theological challenge to the DRC.[81] While Belhar had roots in liberation theology, it intentionally refrained from using context specific language, such as references to apartheid, as a way of demonstrating the universality of its calls to justice, unity, and reconciliation.[82] The DRC's response to Belhar indicated that the church's innate anticommunism had created an oversensitivity toward any critique, however nuanced and legitimate, which had any hints of progressive theological reasoning. Even after the adoption of KS then, the church had a limited theological framework. The DRC initially expressed its 'sadness and dismay … over the unfair accusations of theological heresy and idolatry' that Belhar made against the church.[83] In 1984, the DRC's executive engaged with the leadership of the DRMC to discuss the content of the Confession. The DRC's executive argued that the envisaged confession 'does not do justice to the legitimate pluriformity ['regmatige pluriformiteit'] of the church' which was a staple of apartheid theology as formulated in RVN.[84] However, it was particularly section 4 of the Belhar Confession that crossed a line for the DRC leadership, and specifically the passage:

> … God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that God calls the church to follow in this; that God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry … [and] that the church belonging

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[79] *Ibid.*, 205-206, *Acts of the General Synod*, 1986, 65.
[80] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 63.
[81] Williams, 'Johan Heyns', 206.
[82] This not to overlook the context in which the Belhar Confession was written. In fact, the Confession was a response to the context in which the Christian community, and here specifically the DRMC, found itself in the 1980s. See MA Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 'Reading the *Belhar Confession* as a Historical Text', in MA Plaatjies-Van Huffel & R. Vosloo (eds.), *Reformed Church in South Africa and the Struggle for Justice: Remembering 1960-1990*, (SUN Press: Stellenbosch, 2013).
[83] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 21.
[84] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 26.

> to God, should stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged.[85]

The DRC's executive acknowledged that such statements contained some elements of truth about the special relationship between God and the poor. That God was on the side of the wronged was, however, not acceptable to the DRC's leaders. According to the DRC's understanding of the bible, God was on the side of the righteous, including those that had not been wronged.[86]

The DRC executive did not develop its theological response to the notion of God as God of the poor. Rather, it fell back on a classic anticommunist logic which suggested that anything that could be described as serving the world rather than God, was illegitimate. This logic usually appeared in the guise of a variety of -isms, such as socialism, liberalism, or humanism, which were traditionally framed as the tools or gateways to communism by the DRC's traditional anticommunists. The DRC executive's 1984 response to this contested section of the Belhar Confession used the theological -ism of 'horizontalism' – that is, the intra-human, or so-called worldly paradigm, rather than the God-humanity paradigm, which was referred to as 'verticalism'.[87] It did not hereby claim that the Belhar Confession was, in fact, what it considered a 'communist document', but its response demonstrated that there still existed an anticommunist impulse that restricted the DRC's theological engagement with notions of justice. This was even more evident when the DRC's executive claimed: 'Your [the DRMC's] point of departure is, however, different from ours, since you seemingly reach this conclusion [in section 4] based on an unacceptable horizontal exegesis typical of liberation theology.'[88]

Belhar was influenced by liberation theology, which the DRC deemed Marxist-inspired following its evaluation of KD, but it did not stray from a reformed understanding of the bible. The DRMC was quick to point this out to the DRC, quoting Abraham Kuyper: 'When the rich and the poor stand opposite each other, Jesus Christ never stands by the rich but always by the poor … [He] always choose[s] the side against the powerful … and for the sufferers and the

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[85] 'The Belhar Confession and The Accompanying Letter', URCSA, http://urcsa.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Belhar-Confession.pdf, 5. [accessed 10 July 2021].
[86] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 26.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] *Ibid.*

oppressed.'[89] The DRC's adoption of KS in 1986 ensured that there were some limited shifts in its thinking to accommodate the perspective of Belhar. Theologian Piet Naudé explained that the KS document and Belhar Confession exhibited some strong convergences with regards to language and content. However, it was in the nuances and theological assumptions of the two documents that the divergence between KS and Belhar came to light.[90] KS moved closer to Belhar in the notion of God as God of the wronged. It emphasised that 'Christian neighbourly love includes deep concern for a neighbour's spiritual and material needs'.[91] The bible, the authors of KS explained, showed 'specific sensitivity concerning those who are oppressed and exploited', which meant that the church must be 'sensitive to the upholding of the rights of the defenceless, the poor, and those [who] are wronged'.[92] The authors claimed this as a universal biblical truth which applied to all societies and at all times. This part of KS was almost identical to the previously contested section four of Belhar Confession. It was a deviation from the DRC executive's responses to the Belhar Confession before the 1986 General Synod and indicated that the DRC had since made a significant internal theological shift with the adoption of KS.

KS expanded the notion of biblical justice that now explicitly included the material well-being of all people, and not merely the spiritual well-being of the righteous. This was a fundamental departure from the DRC's theological antagonism towards communism, and its associated isms. According to the DRC's historic rationale, as discussed in previous chapters, communism was deemed materialistically atheistic in that it promoted indiscriminate equality through material means and not through faith. This had been the DRC's unchallenged theological argument against communism throughout the twentieth century. It was used by Dekker and Malan in the 1910s and became the assumed position of the DRC from the 1940s. During the 1960s, the DRC's anticommunist heavyweights Koot Vorster and Andries Treurnicht further propagated this notion. The adoption of RVN in 1974 indicated that the DRC held onto the theological idea that the church spiritually served the righteous rather than the oppressed. With the adoption of KS however, the DRC had let go of one of its central theological pillars that deemed communism as anti-Christian. In 1986, the DRC had thus

[89] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 26.
[90] Naudé, 'The "Belhar Confession" and "Church and Society"', 148.
[91] *Church and Society: A Testimony of the Dutch Reformed* Church, October 1986, (Pro Christo Publishing: Bloemfontein, 1987), 24.
[92] *Church and Society*, 26.

shifted its attitude on race and consequently communism, ushering in the final stage of the DRC's anticommunism.

The Challenge of Christian-Nationalist theology

It should be stressed that despite the DRC's acceptance of KS, it did not signal a sharp turn to the political left. The DRC did not automatically accept the Belhar Confession as a confession of faith, nor did it suddenly embrace liberation theology. In fact, the 1986 synod meeting demonstrated that the DRC retained deep anticommunist-inspired reservations about liberation theology. A conservative lobby dominated the discussion on communism from the synod floor: Serkos, Antikom's successor constituted in 1985, distributed brochures to delegates propagating a Christian-Nationalist response to communism.[93] The synod passed motions in which the DRC officially 'warn[ed] that Marxism, hidden under the cloak of Christianity, is also entering the ecclesiastical realm through liberation theology'.[94] A following motion rejecting 'liberation theology and its practices on the basis of Scripture' was passed without providing any theological reasoning or detail behind the dismissal.[95] It was an anticommunist conviction, rather than theological reasoning, that held sway here, especially when taking the following paragraphs into account:

> The General Synod confirms with conviction the biblical truth against the Marxist lie: sin resides in the fallen nature of man and not in the structures of society. Salvation therefore comes only through the blood of Jesus Christ and not through revolution or social reforms.
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> …The General Synod calls on members [of the DRC] to recognize the cunning attacks of Satan in all ideologies (in Marxism and Humanism) that affect, shift, or in any way dilute the purity of the Gospel.[96]

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[93] 'Kommunsime nie geringgeskat' *Kerkbode*, 22 October 1986, 3.
[94] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 607. Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Die Algemene Sinode waarsku dat die Marxisme, verskuild onder die kleed van Christelikheid, deur die bevrydingsteologie ook die kerklike terrein betree.'
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] *Ibid.* Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Die Algemene Sinode bevestig met oortuiging die Bybelse waarheid teenoor die Marxistiese leuen: sonde setel in die gevahle natuur van die mens en nie in die strukture van die maatskappy nie. Verlossing kom dus ahleen deur die bloed van Jesus Christus en nie deur revolusie of sosiale hervormings nie.
… Die Algemene Sinode roep hidmate op om die listige aanslae van Satan te herken in alle ideologiee (by die Marxisme en die Humanisme) wat die suiwer heid van die Evangehieboodskap aantas, verskuif, of op enige manier verwater.'

This language harkened back to a traditional formulation of the DRC's anticommunist approach and the right-wing rhetoric of Antikom in the 1960s. The motion was in fact formulated and proposed by an arch-conservative minister from Johannesburg, Jannie Malan. He was known for his staunch moral views, which occasionally led to the provocation of Satanism as a moral panic – Malan, for instance, believed that rock and roll music contained hidden satanic messages when played backwards.[97] Even though this motion was supported by the conservative clergy, it passed synod through a majority vote, thus highlighting how traditional anticommunism remained influential within the DRC during the mid-late 1980s.

It is significant that this motion was accepted at the same meeting that voted to adopt KS, which marked a sharp departure from the church's traditional theological justification for anticommunism. This was a sign of the theological gap between those who had written KS and the general clergy of the DRC. Theologians affiliated with the DRMC, including Botman, Durand, and Smit, illustrated that in the 1980s, after decades of apartheid theology and loyalty to the Afrikaner *volk*, the DRC as a whole, lacked the capacity to grasp any theological proposition outside of its traditional modes of thinking.[98] Botman, for instance, explained that through decades of apartheid–and *volks*theology – the DRC suffered a tragic 'loss of a universe of theological discourse that should have directed the churches doctrine and life'.[99] Piet Naudé also emphasised that the DRC's insulation, both socially and politically, from the wronged – that is, black South Africans – further limited the church's theological imagination.[100] The theological universe of the authors of KS, specifically Johan Heyns, functioned in a broader theological framework than that of the average DRC minister and laity. This was why KS's theological departure from the traditional theological justification of anticommunism bypassed the majority of synod delegates, and why a traditional populist motion on anticommunism was passed at the same synod.

Populist anticommunism, as contained in the above-mentioned DRC motion, was also displaced within the context of Afrikaner anticommunism during the late-1980s. Far-right

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[97] A. Küsel, 'Aasvoëlkop se ds. Jannie Malan (90) sterf', Netwerk24, 22 September 2017, https://www.netwerk24.com/Nuus/Algemeen/aasvoelkop-se-ds-jannie-malan-90-sterf-20170922 [accessed 1 July 2021].
[98] Botman, 'Belhar and the White Dutch Reformed Church', 34-8; JJF Durand, 'Afrikaner Piety and Dissent' in C. Villa-Vicencio, JW de Gruchy, *Resistance and Hope: South African Essays in Honour of Beyers Naudé*, (David Philips: Cape Town, 1985); Smit, 'Has there been any change? On the role of the Dutch Reformed Church 1974-1990', *Scriptura*, 76 (2001), 119-126.
[99] Botman, 'Belhar and the White Dutch Reformed Church', 41.
[100] Naudé, 'The "Belhar Confession" and "Church and Society"', 154.

organisations such as the CP and APK captured the support of Afrikaners who feared that a future of majority rule would mean the end of Afrikaner identity and culture. To this bloc, anticommunism represented the preservation of the *volk*. The tone of the synod's motion was closer to this rhetoric than to the shifting Afrikaner anticommunist sentiment of the time. A growing section of Afrikaners began to view communism as a threat to their material security, rather than a danger to the idea of a united Afrikaner *volk* and cultural purity. Survey data captured by Kate Manzo and Pat McGowan in 1988 revealed that almost 40% of prominent Afrikaners perceived the SACP to be a serious domestic threat to South African security.[101] The bulk of this group were also convinced that black majority rule in South Africa would increase communist influence in the country. This was also the sentiment amongst many ordinary Afrikaners, of which 88% believed that communist policies would be implemented under black majority rule.[102] It was unclear what the conceptual understanding of communism was amongst those who took the survey, but the data indicated that Afrikaners primarily saw communism as a threat to their material security rather than to the survival of the *volk*. Secondly, Afrikaners equated a future under black majority rule with a communist inclined dispensation. While the General Synod passed populist anticommunist motions, the DRC leadership also took on the task of guiding the majority of Afrikaners who were unsure about their material safety and well-being toward a 'new' South Africa, which Heyns and his fellow pragmatists in the DRC had promoted. Church leaders attempted to appease the material concerns of Afrikaners by actively promoting a new political order free of communistic tendencies. This position determined the last phase of the DRC's mainstream anticommunism in the twentieth century.

Visions of a 'new' South Africa: Anticommunism as democracy

The adaptive nature of anticommunism meant that it was also a feature of the DRC's future vision of democracy. In the foreword of KS, Johan Heyns framed the document as, amongst other things, the DRC's programme for a post-apartheid future.[103] This was, however, an ambiguous statement. When the DRC accepted KS as its policy, the church officially denounced any ties with *volkspolitiek* and *partypolitiek*. KS also tied the DRC to political

[101] K. Manzo & P. McGowan, 'Afrikaner Fears and the Politics of Despair: Understanding Change in South Africa,' International Studies Quarterly, 36 (1), March 1992, 11, 14-15. According to the study's research design, this was the top decision makers in politics, the civil service, public and private sector business, the two major Dutch Reformed Churches, universities, and the print and electronic media.
[102] Manzo & McGowan, 'Afrikaner Fears and the Politics of Despair', 11, 14-15.
[103] *Kerk en Samelewing*, Voorwoord.

neutrality during the transition away from apartheid.[104] Thus, when Heyns told the *Kerkbode* after the 1986 General Synod that the DRC 'has a calling to help build a new South Africa', there was still no clear political conception of what this new dispensation would be.[105] There were also certain limitations to what the DRC envisioned for this new order. In its critique of the KD, the DRC had revealed its binary political imagination. When the KD criticised capitalism as an oppressive economic system for the underclasses, the DRC viewed this as an endorsement of a socialist or communist future.[106] The KD relied on a Marxist analysis of capitalism, however it never proposed a future communist order for South Africa. The DRC's response revealed that it remained locked within a Cold War paradigm of communism versus capitalism. This was reinforced by its inherent anticommunist position. To the church, there were thus two opposing political options for a new South Africa, and it was clear which one it would not endorse.

Two reports which had been commissioned by the 1986 General Synod were presented at its 1990 gathering. These provide a clear insight into the DRC's political vision for a new dispensation. Following the request of the conservative-leaning Prof Mias de Klerk, the University of the Free State's dean of theology, a report was commissioned to give a theological framework whereby DRC members could evaluate Marxism and its theological spin-off, liberation theology.[107] The report, under the title 'Teken van die Tye en die Marxisme' (Sign of the Times and Marxism), represented a conservative theological engagement with the ideological propositions of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and the authors of KD.[108] It reaffirmed the motions on communism accepted by the previous General Synod, and further reinforced the church's traditional position that the biblical God was a God of the righteous, and not on the side of the poor or wronged.[109] This was an unmistakable disregard for KS' departure from the traditional justification for anticommunism. At the same time however, the General Synod of 1990 had also accepted a revised version of KS, which had softened this particular theological shift. The 1986 version explicitly stated that the church must be 'sensitive to the upholding of the rights of the defenceless, the poor, and those [who] are wronged'.[110] As

[104] *Kerk en Samelewing*, 46-8.
[105] 'Sinode moet bou aan nuwe SA,' *Kerkbode*, 22 October 1986, 5.
[106] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1986, 64.
[107] 'Kommunsime nie geringgeskat', Kerkbode, 22 October 1986, 3.
[108] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 119-123.
[109] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 122.
[110] *Church and Society*, 26.

discussed earlier, this was a direct echo of the Belhar Confession. The revised KS document adjusted this language in what seemed be an attempt to appease those in the DRC who remained strongly opposed to liberation theology. 'The defenceless, the poor, and those [who] are wronged' was replaced by the nondescriptive term 'needy'.[111] These nuanced shifts at a synodical level indicate that a traditional anticommunist impulse remained influential within the DRC's leadership, although it was not dictating the agenda. Despite that, there was a consensus within the church that communism in any shape or form had no place in any new dispensation in South Africa.

The DRC's vision for a post-apartheid South Africa was further revealed in a second report discussed at the 1990 General Synod, which offered a biblical assessment of the free-market system. This report, entitled ''n Bybelse Beoordeling van die Vrye Markstelsel in die Suid-Afrikaanse Konteks' (A Biblical Evaluation of the Free Market system in the South African Context), as opposed to 'Teken van die Tye en die Marxisme', used the 1986 KS document as a framework and represented the perspective of pragmatic DRC leaders – the authors of both reports are unknown but the differing approaches show that it was defined by factional lines. It aimed to give an ethical and moral response to proposals by business leaders and NP reformers to liberalise the economy. The authors did not find what they saw as the main pillars of a free market economy, including deregulation and privatisation, at odds with biblical teachings. The report blamed the bloated state bureaucracy, overregulation of the economy, and the monopoly of state-owned enterprises for obstructing economic prosperity for the black majority in South Africa. It concluded that the prospect of black, coloured, and Indian people participating in a liberalised economy would increase their freedom and alleviate poverty.[112]

While the basic tenets of a free-market economy were not considered to be 'unbiblical', the report, in an echo of the 1920s and 1930s (chapter 1), found that unbridled capitalism could have dire consequences. It warned that an unregulated free-market economy that was implemented too hastily could result in weak worker protection, inequitable service delivery, the state's neglect of the needy, the creation of anticompetitive monopolies, and a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor.[113] To prevent these dangers, the report recommended

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[111] *Kerk en Samelewing 1990: 'n Getuienes van die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk*, (NG Sendingpers, Bloemfontein, 1990), 23.
[112] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 74-76.
[113] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 76-78

that the state should exercise a degree of control over the economy, with intervention designed to correct the large-scale inequality in the country.[114] The 1990 General Synod accepted this report and its recommendations as a way forward from the apartheid order. The synod did, however, add an important reassurance to DRC members in the final report when it insisted that striving for financial prosperity was not something to feel guilty about.[115] The material concerns of DRC members thus influenced the direction of the church's views on the structure of the post-apartheid economy. There was a realisation within the DRC that historical economic injustices had to be dealt with through state intervention, whilst not compromising the economic prosperity of its members.

'The days when we wanted to kick a communist out from under every bush is over': The end of the Cold War and the final days of apartheid

The two reports submitted to the 1990 General Synod were formulated at a time when the global political landscape was shifting. Communist rule in eastern Europe had started to crumble in the latter part of the 1980s. Large-scale labour resistance against the communist regimes in Poland and Hungary and anti-government protests in China signalled rising civil discontent at communist rule. Economic pressures on the Soviet Union also forced its reform-minded leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, who assumed leadership in 1985, to introduce the policy of *perestroika* - a liberalisation of the economy. This was supplemented with greater openness and transparency within Soviet politics through the implementation of *glasnost*.[116]

To make sense of these developments, the *Kerkbode* asked a range of experts and a selection of DRC clergy if this, in their opinion, represented the end of communism. Phillip Nel, the head of Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS), told the *Kerkbode* that the resistance in Poland and China should not be seen as anticommunist per se,

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[114] *Ibid.*, 78.
[115] *Ibid.*, 630.
[116] See J Mark & T Rupprecht, 'Europe's '1989' in Global Context' & VM Zubok, 'The Collapse of the Soviet Union', in J Fürst, S Pons, & M Selden (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Communism, Volume III: Endgames? Late Communism in Global Perscpectives,, 1968 to the Present*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambriddge, 2017); R. Service, *The End of the Cold War: 1985-1991*, (Macmillan: London, 2015); G F Domber, *Empowering Revolution: America, Poland, and the End of the Cold War*, (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2014); S Pons & F Romero (eds.), *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, interpretations, periodizations*, (Routledge: New York, 2005). For the effects of the end of the Cold War on Africa and Southern Africa, see F Gasbarri, *US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War in Africa: A Bridge between Global Conflict and the New World Order, 1988-1994*, (Routledge: New York, 2020); S Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in South Africa: White power, black liberation*, (Routledge, New York, 2009).

but rather an uprising against the extreme forms of socialist bureaucracies in these countries. He did, however, reassure *Kerkbode* readers that communist regimes were gradually being forced into a more pragmatic position with economic pressures mounting.[117] Nel's cautious approach to the developments in eastern Europe and China were reiterated by Stellenbosch theologian, Jannie du Preez, who viewed it as a crisis within communist ranks, but not necessarily an end to communist rule.[118] Piet Meiring, a leading DRC missiologist at the University of Pretoria, was more hopeful and believed the face of communism had forever been changed. He told the *Kerkbode* that, 'I think most people accept that staunch Marxism did not succeed. I think the communists accept that they do not have all the answers and because of political and economic reasons must reach out to the West.'[119] Ironically, the crisis-ridden South African state identified with the Soviet situation. Deputy minister of international affairs, Kobus Meiring, argued that South Africa's economic struggles, due in large part to international sanctions, could be alleviated by cooperating with the reformist Soviet state. In June 1989, he told the *Kerkbode* that 'The days when we wanted to kick a communist out from under every bush is over'.[120] The various opinions expressed in the *Kerkbode* had nuanced differences, but all were certain that the threat of international communism in the form of communist imperialism was a thing of the past.

By the end of the decade, the Berlin Wall had fallen, symbolising the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War. This development had an immense impact on the world, and the DRC was no exception. The fall of communism in eastern Europe was widely celebrated in the DRC as divine intervention. An editorial in the *Kerkbode* from December 1989 declared that 'God is at work in history, and on His own time and in His own way He answers the prayers of his children'.[121] The General Synod of 1990 also explained that 'the collapse of Communism is a sign that God is still at work in our world'.[122] To the DRC, this historic event vindicated the church's decades long opposition to communism. Communism's legitimacy had disintegrated, and its global power had diminished, but the question for the DRC was how this translated into the South African context. The General Synod's 1990 report on communism concluded that although Marxism had failed in eastern Europe, 'there still are

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[117] A. Van Renen, 'Kommunisme?', *Kerkbode*, 23 Junie 1989, 8.
[118] *Ibid.*
[119] *Ibid.*
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] 'God verhoor gebede', *Kerkbode*, 8 December 1989, 4.
[122] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 123.

many adherents of this line of thinking in South Africa. Many of them are found in the ranks of organisations such as the ANC, the SACP and the PAC.'[123] The *Kerkbode* also appealed to DRC members to continuously pray that these local Marxists 'come to their senses … and find their salvation in Jesus Christ'.[124] Those who promoted communism were no longer viewed as the enemy, but they were now to be pitied as the ideology lost ground.

This position became even more apparent as the DRC responded to local political reaction to the fall of communism. In September 1989, the new leader of the NP, FW de Klerk, succeeded PW Botha as president of South Africa.[125] Botha, aware of his Afrikaner support base, had remained a cautious and gradual reformer. His administration did eliminate two important pillars of apartheid by permitting the formation of black trade unions and the abolishment of influx control.[126] That said, Botha failed to move South Africa toward a process of a negotiated settlement and an end of apartheid. In 1985, an opportunity presented itself when the international community was convinced by government officials that Botha intended to announce initiatives at the NP's party conference that would move toward abolishing white minority rule. Botha, irritated by the international expectation and local media pressure, departed from his script, and denounced such reforms in a speech that would become known as the Rubicon-speech.[127] Yet, in his final years as president, Botha allowed a handful of government operatives to initiate discussions with the ANC, including Nelson Mandela – Botha even personally met with Mandela on 5 July 1989 to cautiously discuss a way forward. One of these operatives, National Intelligence Service head Niël Barnard, commented that Botha laid the groundwork for the negotiations that De Klerk would finish.[128]

From his first day in office on 15 August 1989, De Klerk committed his administration to negotiating a new constitution that would ensure a workable and acceptable future for all South Africans.[129] The fall of the Berlin Wall two months later provided De Klerk with a further opportunity to convince his constituents to support his administration's path forward. The ANC had lost a crucial international ally after the Soviet powers crumbled, and the perceived threat

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[123] *Acts of the General Synod* ,1990, 123.
[124] 'God verhoor gebede', *Kerkbode*, 8 December 1989, 4.
[125] For a detailed account of the transition from PW Botha to FW de Klerk, see A Ries & E. Dommisse, *Leierstryd: Die dramas rondom die uitrede van pres. P.W. Botha*, (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1990).
[126] Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 263.
[127] See ''n Oortog word gestuit: PW Botha se Rubikon' in Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 180-213.
[128] Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 287.
[129] *Ibid.*, 309.

of communism had receded.[130] Furthermore, the end of the Cold War had undermined the white minority government's ability to use anticommunism as a justification for its oppressive policies. Scholars such as Graham Evans, Sue Onslow, and Adrian Guelke have cautioned that the chronological coincidence of the end of the Cold War and the final days of apartheid should not be overinterpreted.[131] To these scholars, the leading factors that led to the end of apartheid came from local developments: fissures in Afrikaner nationalism, a reform minded NP, intensifying local resistance against the government, and the emergent negotiation process between the ANC and the government that had predated the end of the Cold War. What the fall of communism did do, however, was provide De Klerk and the ANC leadership with an opportunity to convince their constituencies to enter into a formal negotiation process to end apartheid.

For formal negotiations to commence, the government was forced to unban its political adversaries. In December 1989, De Klerk met with his cabinet, deputy ministers, and provincial administrators to discuss the possible release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC, the SACP and the ANC's military wing MK. De Klerk considered the internal NP discussions on the unbanning of the SACP to be the most difficult.[132] Despite that, the NP leadership agreed that it would be advantageous to unban the SACP after considering the political value this would bring to the negotiations with the ANC. On 2 February 1990, De Klerk announced the unbanning of the ANC, PAC, and SACP in parliament. He further confirmed the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, the end of the State of Emergency, and a commitment to negotiations in order to create a constitutional democracy. In 1994, Roelf Meyer, then Minister of Constitutional Development, told a researcher that the internal discussions that led to this decision were emotionally charged. He recalled that the antagonism towards the SACP within the NP ran deeper than formal politics. According to Meyer, the overarching response to the idea of unbanning the SACP was to say: 'But we even fought a religious battle against the SACP, through the Church.'[133] The DRC's influence on

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[130] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 629.
[131] See G. Evans, 'The Great Simplifier: The Cold War and South Africa, 1948-1994', in A.P. Dobson (ed.), *Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Cold War*, (Routledge: Abingdon, 2018); S. Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa: White power, black liberation*, (Routledge: Abingdon, 2009), 243-4; A. Guelke, 'The impact of the end of the Cold War on the South African transition', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 14 (1), 1996, 87-100.
[132] Giliomee, *Die Laaste Afrikanerleiers*, 312-315.
[133] Roelf Meyer Private Collection, 'Onderhoud met Mnr. Roelf Meyer, Minister van Staatkundige Ontwikkeling, op 6 Oktober 1994, in sy kantoor in Pretoria,' 16. I would like to thank Lindie Koorts for bringing this interview to my attention.

anticommunism may have dwindled during the 1970s and 1980s, but the historical image of the church as a significant stakeholder in this regard remained powerful enough to inform political sentiment in the early 1990s. When NP leaders raised their concerns in this regard, it is likely that they had Koot Vorster, Antikom, and a particular brand of highly emotive and contrived anticommunism in mind.[134]

The responses of DRC officials to De Klerk's announcement of the unbanning of the SACP confirmed that the church no longer embraced the emotive anticommunism of the past. As discussed in the previous chapter, through its commitment to ISMUS, the DRC leadership, which was by then dominated by pragmatic clergy, approached communism and its tenets in a more scholarly manner. Scare mongering, which had governed the kinds of moral panic that gave rise to anticommunism, had receded. In response to the SACP's unbanning, the DRC missiologist affiliated with the University of Pretoria, prof Piet Meiring, told the *Kerkbode* that the church had nothing to fear. He argued that communism had proven to be weak and its claims to truth fleeting as it crumbled within less than a century.[135] Suddenly, there was apparently nothing more to fear from communism. A key feature of anticommunism was that it relied upon perceptions of a communist threat to exist, but this had abated by the end of the 1980s. Lafras Moolman, the DRC's director of information, emphasised that the end of the Cold War had also placed communism 'in a different light and one now foresees fewer problems with the SACP in South Africa than was previously the case'.[136] The collapse of communism had created a climate in which the DRC believed the SACP could co-exist with Christians, and where communism as an ideology was no longer to be feared.

The DRC did not consider the co-existence of the SACP, which was the main overt vehicle for communism in South Africa, and Christians to be unconditional. Its embrace in 1986 of a path towards a 'new' South Africa made the church more receptive to democratic values by 1990. Accordingly, Meiring and Moolman, along with other leaders in the DRC, such as the chair of the Free State synod, Pieter Potgieter, and the assessor of the Western Cape synod, Kobus van der Westhuizen, conceded that the SACP's participation should be allowed in a democratic dispensation. This would be permitted, according to Potgieter and Van der

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[134] Roelf Meyer Private Collection, 'Onderhoud met Mnr. Roelf Meyer', 16.
[135] 'Kerk hoef Kommunisme nie te vrees nie', *Kerkbode*, 9 February 1990, 1.
[136] *Ibid.* Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Die feit dat Kommunisme oënskynlik wêreldwyd aan die verbrokkel is, plaas dié in ander lig en 'n mens voorsien nou minder probleme met die SAKP in Suid-Afrika as wat voorheen die geval was.'

Westhuizen, as long as the SACP did not threaten the rights of others or resort to any form of violence.[137] The embrace of democratic values as a justification for tolerance of South African communists was the DRC's accepted position by 1990. When the Northern Transvaal synod asked the General Synod in 1990 if the unbanning of the SACP had changed the DRC's position on communism, the meeting officially answered that it did not.[138] A point of contention was that the unbanning of what the Northern Transvaal synod called 'unchristian organisations' contradicted, in their opinion, the Belgic Confession – one of the DRC's doctrinal standards.[139] It referred to article 36 of this confession, which stated that government, which received its authority from God, was called to 'remove and destroy all idolatry and false worship … and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere'.[140] As a result of this, article 36 denounced 'all those who want … to subvert justice by introducing common ownership of goods'.[141] The Northern Transvaal synod insinuated that any vehicle for atheistic communism, such as the SACP, could obstruct a future government in its efforts to fulfil its calling. According to the General Synod however, article 36 should not be interpreted as a way to dictate how a government should be run, but as a reassurance that the church had sufficient freedom to fulfil its own calling.[142] The DRC's tolerance of communists by the 1990s, thus rested on the protection of religious freedom. Democratic values, including religious freedom, had now become part of the DRC's vernacular in their vision of a 'new' South Africa. It is important to state that while the DRC might have become more tolerant to communists, it remained anticommunist in that it opposed any communist propositions for a post-apartheid South Africa.

'More than just a wall fell in Berlin': the anticlimactic end to DRC anticommunism

Due to its new embrace of the democratic value of tolerance, the DRC no longer had any need for organised anticommunist endeavours. Anton Pienaar, who would later become editor of the

[137] 'Kerk hoef Kommunisme nie te vrees nie', *Kerkbode*, 9 February 1990, 1-2.
[138] *Acts of the General Synod* 1990, 430, 680.
[139] *Ibid.*, 430.
[140] Article 36, *The Belgic Confession*, *NG Kerkargief*, https://kerkargief.co.za/doks/bely/CF_Belgic.pdf, [accessed 18 Augustus 2021].
[141] *Ibid.*
[142] *Acts of the General Synod*, 1990, 680.

Kerkbode, was a young DRC minister in the early 1990s. In his reflections on this period, Pienaar claimed 'more than just a wall fell in Berlin':[143]

> [DRC ministers] had to warn the *volk* against the communists who popped up in all sorts of camouflage … Therefore, it was more than a wall that was pushed over in Berlin. The *boere* [Afrikaners] of the south were deprived of a formidable enemy. How ironic, for many people, and preachers, their life's purpose was taken away on that day. They were called to fight communism. To do missionary work among the communists.[144]

By the early 1990s, the DRC had abandoned all of its formal and informal links with Serkos. The rebranded Antikom had continued to exist until the mid-1990s as a fringe pseudo-thinktank and thus had little to offer the DRC, which was committed to a future democratic order. In 1993, Serkos was involved in the founding of the *Afrikaner Volksfront* (AVF), an umbrella organisation for fringe right-wing Afrikaner groups with strong military credentials, but little mainstream clout.[145] The academic pillar of the DRC's anticommunism during the 1980s, ISMUS/ISSUS also faded from view in this period. Its largest funder, the DRC, lost interest in funding such an endeavour after the fall of communism. Government subsidies to tertiary institutions were also cut towards the end of the 1980s, leading to a restructuring at Stellenbosch University. ISSUS's work was no longer as sought after in the post-Cold War era. In 1990, the university relegated ISSUS to the Unit of Soviet Studies within the Centre for International and Comparative Politics, which fell under the Department of Political Science.[146] Moreover, and in the same year, the General Synod accepted a proposal made by its mission commission to restructure and decentralise its missionary work.[147] Consequently, it was decided that *Sending onder Kommuniste* (SOK) could not be part of the restructured missionary work of the General Synod. To secure SOK secretary PW de Wet an appropriate pension fund, it was decided to terminate his position only after he had reached retirement age – this came in 1996.[148] During this time, SOK gradually entrusted some of its activities, such as harbour missions, to

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[143] A. Pienaar, 'In Berlyn het meer as net 'n muur geval', *Kerkbode*, 20 November 2009, 8.
[144] Pienaar, 'In Berlyn het meer as net 'n muur geval', 8. Translated from the original Afrikaans: 'Ons moes die volk waarsku teen die kommuniste wat in allerhande kamoeflerings uitgepop het … Daarom was dit meer as 'n muur wat 20 jaar gelede in Berlyn omgestoot is..Vir die boere van die suidland is 'n gedugte vyand van hulle ontneem. Hoe ironies, vir baie mense, en predikers, is die doel van hulle lewe op daardie dag weg gevat. Hulle was geroep om kommunisme te beveg. Om sendingwerk onder die kommuniste te doen.'
[145] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive (Online), AG2543 – Independent Board of Inquiry, 'Right-Wing Directory, IBI March 1996,' 35.
[146] Visser, '"Red Peril" and "Total Onslaught"', 126.
[147] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 291
[148] *Ibid.*, 642.

a handful of local congregations and presbyteries. Other activities were terminated, including support for missionaries in communist countries. At his final General Synod meeting in 1994, PW de Wet was thanked with acclaim from the synod delegates for his years of 'great and unselfish service … [and] his capable and enthusiastic guidance' on the anticommunist missionary front.[149]

The DRC's departure from apartheid and its embrace of a pluralistic democratic future meant that all its institutional anticommunist initiatives were abandoned. This demonstrated the extent that anticommunism depended on the existence of apartheid. Throughout the twentieth century, and especially during the apartheid years, anticommunism had served as a malleable tool in the hands Afrikaner nationalists to unify and homogenise the *volk* by creating an elusive and omnipresent bogeyman. Without apartheid and the nationalist cause, anticommunism had no role to play at the end of the century. In 1990, the DRC missiologist Piet Meiring, who later served as a commissioner on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), conceded that the church's anticommunist position might have led to the misuse of power and confusion about what constituted a legitimate moral threat. Despite this admission, he still considered this position to be justified given that the DRC and the *volk* were operating within a 'revolutionary climate' at the time.[150] Meiring's analysis implied that the DRC considered anticommunism to have been essential within a certain context. Any past injustices or wrongdoing that had been committed under the guise of anticommunism, to which the church had provided moral legitimacy, was considered collateral damage in the broader fight to maintain Afrikaner survival. With its focus on a democratic future, the DRC sought to move beyond the injustices of the past. *Kerkbode* editor Frits Gaum expressed this best in a 1990 editorial:

> [The DRC] will now have to pray for grace to stop looking back and constantly recall mistakes and sins of the past. We as believers will need to be willing to move forward together and work toward a more just dispensation in our country and a church that faithfully fulfils its calling.[151]

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[149] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1990, 471.
[150] 'Kerk hoef Kommunisme nie te vrees nie', *Kerkbode*, 9 February 1990, 1.
[151] 'Gelowig vorentoe', *Kerkbode*, 9 February 1990, 7. Translated from the original Afrikaans: '[Die kerk] sal nou vir die genade moet bid om op te hou om terug te kyk en gedurig foute en sondes uit die verlede op te haal. Ons sal as gelowiges bereid moet wees om saam vorentoe te gaan en te werk aan 'n regverdiger bedeling in ons land en aan 'n kerk wat sy roeping getrou vervul.'

In the eyes of the moderate and pragmatic leaders of the DRC, apartheid was in the past, and therefore anticommunism was now also something of the past. The dominance of this faction within the church leadership was confirmed when a small group of church leaders such as CWH Boshoff aligned with right-wing Afrikaner politics, under the auspices of the *Afrikaanse Gerformeerde Bond* (Afrikaans Reformed Bond) and failed to force the DRC to return to dogmatic apartheid theology at the 1994 General Synod.[152]

The DRC retained members from across the political spectrum, and after decades of anticommunist indoctrination, they remained, unsurprisingly, deeply weary of communism. This was demonstrated in the outrage caused by an incident in which a SACP flag was displayed in a DRC congregation during a memorial service for the assassinated Communist Party leader Chris Hani. The DRC Student Church congregation in Stellenbosch decided to host this service, held on 14 April 1993, as a gesture of reconciliation.[153] It was organised by the Hani-family in cooperation with a local ecumenical body, which included a DRC minister, Tinus van Zyl. The gathering, which would have been unimaginable only a few years earlier, saw speeches delivered from a DRC pulpit by anti-apartheid stalwarts such as Allan Boesak and former SACP leader, Joe Slovo. This display of reconciliation was short lived after footage of the service was broadcast on the national news showing a SACP flag being displayed at the back of the church. DRC members across the country, including parents whose children attended the Student Church, were outraged. Many even suspended their financial support for the congregation. Braam Hanekom, the student minister, reported that he was inundated by calls from students and members of the public who accused him, his colleagues, and even members of the congregation, of being communists.[154] This widespread reaction indicated that many DRC members remained sensitive to communism as the old bogeyman. Church leaders, such as the moderator Pieter Potgieter, viewed the incident as 'unfortunate', but did not share the outrage.[155] While in 1986 the DRC's leadership had shifted towards pragmatic clergy and theologians who had gradually guided the church away from apartheid, the DRC had failed to take its members along in its new, rational engagement with communism by the end of the

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[152] *Acts of the General Synod,* 1994, 52.
[153] J.D. van Zyl, 'Van vasgelopenheid na hoop – 'n Deskriptiewe studie van die samesmelting tussen die NG Studentekerk en Moederkerk op Stellenbosch', MTh thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2007, 39.
[154] V. Brand, 'Wye ontsteltenis oor Rooi vlag in NG kerk', *Die Burger*, 16 April 1993, 2. Thank you to Cobus van Wyngaard for bringing this article to my attention.
[155] *Ibid.*

century. Perhaps this was not necessarily a failure of the new leadership, but a product of DRC's anticommunist successes of the past.

CONCLUSION

The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRC), with its long history as the Afrikaners' *volkskerk*, created an insulated anticommunist *volk*. This was manifested in the disillusionment of its members in a post-apartheid South Africa, as laid bare in Afrikaner reactions to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Even in more recent times, Afrikaners continue to cite it in their memories of apartheid. Veteran journalist Max du Preez, for instance, recalled that, as a teenager in the 1960s, 'I was bombarded at home, in school and in the church with messages that communism was hell-bent on destroying Christianity'.[1] In a recent *Kerkbode* article, DRC minister Rudi Swanepoel remembered the 'white world' that the church had created for its members. Those who did not conform, according to Swanepoel, 'were heretics and terrorists. And Communists, leftists and humanists, who are not part of the Afrikaner *volk* and the true church'.[2] Danie Mouton, director of the Eastern Cape Synod of the DRC, in a 2016 *Kerkbode* article pointed to how difficult it had been for the church to find its sense of identity and calling in a post-apartheid society after decades 'when the devil and the communists were still enemy number one'.[3] From these, and other anecdotal evidence, it becomes clear that the DRC played a significant role in perpetuating an anticommunist imagination amongst Afrikaners for most of the twentieth century.[4] This thesis sought to explain why and how this occurred.

It did so by examining the Dutch Reformed Church's (DRC) role in creating, shaping, and maintaining an anticommunism platform in twentieth-century South Africa. The existing literature on South African anticommunism largely framed opposition to communism as a product of the Cold War context. Typically, this literature was also restricted to a state-centric

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[1] M. du Preez, *Pale Native: Memories of a Renegade Reported*, (Zebra Press: Cape Town, 2003), 58.

[2] R. Swanepoel, 'Kerk in SA: Het ons 'n plek en roeping?', *Kerkbode*, 24 February 2021, [https://kerkbode.christians.co.za/2021/02/24/kerk-in-sa-het-ons-n-plek-en-roeping/]. Tranlated from Afrikaans: 'Dit was 'n wit wêreld. Die handjievol, klein handjievol wit Afrikaanses wat nie in hierdie wit wêreld wou bly woon nie was ketters en terroriste. En Kommuniste, linkses en humaniste wat nie deel is van die Afrikanervolk en die ware kerk nie.'

[3] D. Mouton, 'Wat sal ons van die Algemene Sinode onthou?', *Kerkbode*, 29 November 2016, [https://kerkbode.christians.co.za/2016/11/29/wat-sal-ons-van-die-algemene-sinode-onthou/].

[4] See for example the following articles and letters written on *Netwerk24*, the consolidated online platform for mainstream Afrikaans publications: M.R. Meiring, 'Links of regs? Dis voorwaarts mars vir ons!', 4 March 2021. [https://www.netwerk24.com/Stemme/Menings/links-of-regs-dis-voorwaarts-mars-vir-ons-20210303]; M.L. Coetzee, 'Agter die Ystergordyn…', 19 January 2020, [https://www.netwerk24.com/Ontspan/Reis/agter-die-ystergordyn-20200118]; Stefaans, 'Bosoorlog: Werklikheid en fantasie', 18 November 2019, [https://www.netwerk24.com/Stemme/MyStem/bosoorlog-werklikheid-en-fantasie-20191117]; See also K. Kombuis, 'Was PW Botha dalk reg oor die Rooi Gevaar?', *Vryeweekblad*, 25 Junie 2021, [https://www.vryeweekblad.com/menings-en-debat/2021-06-24-was-pw-botha-dalk-reg-oor-die-rooi-gevaar/].

paradigm where little attention was paid to the anticommunist conditioning of Afrikaner society by stakeholders and institutions other than the state. For the most part, the state was the key defender against overt communism – that is, protecting the *volk* against the physical and material communist threat from the outside. What the literature negated was the abstract 'battle' against communism, whereby the ideology was cast as an omnipresent and fluid force that threatened the status quo, and that required an equally ubiquitous response. The DRC, as an enduring organisation that defended the *volk* against communism, became a site for Afrikaner anticommunism's ebbs and flows. A variety of individuals and organisations, each with their own agendas and motivations, also relied on the DRC to provide both moral and material support for the anticommunist movement. For this reason, the DRC is a useful lens into Afrikaner anticommunism in its wider sense.

This lens was sharpened by the excavation of often underutilised archival sources, such as Antikom's documents, missionary collections, and the personal correspondence between Afrikaner anticommunists, which led to new insights into the complex network at play. On a theoretical level, this thesis utilised the rich international literature on anticommunism to explain the phenomenon in South Africa. The American literature in this regard provided an essential framework to illuminate anticommunism in all its complexities. However, this thesis illustrated that anticommunism in the context of apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism tended to serve an even larger purpose, in particular the maintenance of a racial order. South African anticommunism, other than its American, British, or European counterparts, was driven by an ethnic white minority who ruled of over a black majority. This thesis showed how the threat of communism was used a way to morally legalise this racial dominance, and to create a heightened sense of self-importance of a white minority: Afrikaners were cast by the anticommunist elites as both the greatest victims of communist subversion *and* as the crucial force to take up the 'battle' against it. This thesis then adds to our understanding of anticommunism as a tool for ethnic mobilisation, and how its malleability enables the adaptability of white minorities.

This thesis further argued that the DRC was the only consistent agent of anticommunist dissemination throughout the twentieth century, although its function and influence within Afrikanerdom fluctuated as the context and the role-players changed. Additionally, it also argued that the fluid nature of anticommunism made it a flexible tool in the hands of Afrikaner elites. This explains why anticommunism became such a prominent and enduring feature of

Afrikanerdom throughout the twentieth century. The DRC's anticommunism developed in conjunction with the rise of the Afrikaner nationalist movement and remained a prominent feature during the heyday of apartheid but came to an unceremonious end as both apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism met their demise in the final decade of the century.

Underlying the main arguments of this thesis are three overarching characteristics of DRC anticommunism in the twentieth century. Firstly, anticommunism, in all its guises, played a major role in unifying Afrikanerdom. This was especially true of the 1930s and 1940s, which was a period of revitalised Afrikaner nationalist organisation and mobilisation. Opposition to communism became an early unifier of Afrikanerdom during this time. The DRC, for its part, became an institutional site for this unity when Antikom was founded in 1946. Not only did Antikom serve as a focal point for disparate Afrikaner organisations to mobilise and coordinate anticommunist activities, but it also placed the DRC in close proximity to organised Afrikaner political power.

The nationalist machinery pulled together to unify most Afrikaner voters behind the NP in 1948, in an election where anticommunist sentiment played a major role. Individuals who were involved with Antikom in the early years, such as Piet Meyer and Nico Diederichs, became prominent actors within the Afrikaner nationalist regime. This came at the expense of Antikom, as the organisation's support for the regime's implementation of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 meant that the state could successfully intervene to combat the overt communist 'threat'. Antikom therefore struggled to mobilise support for its own anticommunist endeavours during the 1950s. Right-wingers, however, identified it as a vehicle to gain mainstream clout for their agenda. Antikom was subsequently captured by these right-wing opportunists, who sought to gain traction against mainstream NP-politicians. The case of Andries Treurnicht highlighted its limits. As editor of the *Kerkbode,* he became a prominent anticommunist during the 1960s, where after he joined the NP government. Yet, in 1982 he led a conservative break-away from the mainstream – the last Afrikaner leader to remain true to a traditional brand of anticommunism.

Anticommunism's success as a unifying force was even more evidenced at a grassroots level, where ordinary Afrikaners, the majority of whom were DRC members, were drawn into the so-called battle against communism. This could be seen in the 1930s, as Afrikaner workers on the Rand who joined nationalist labour unions were lauded by the church for defying 'foreign' socialist unions to unite the *volk*. In the 1950s and 1960s, the DRC combined fears of

moral decay with the alleged communist subversion of the *volk*, thereby ensuring that Afrikaner communities were hyper-vigilant towards 'communism'. Its effect was demonstrated in the financial support provided by women, children, and the elderly for the DRC's anticommunist missionary work (*Sending onder Kommuniste* – SOK) in the early 1970s. The abstract battle against communism subsequently became real, as young white male conscripts were called to fight against a so-called communist insurgence in neighbouring countries. This may have been a state-driven endeavour, but local DRC congregations had to simultaneously motivate young conscripts to enter a war on the border, which the church deemed moral and patriotic, while assisting the conscripts' families, who had been drawn into the government's overt anticommunist crusade on a deeply personal level.

The way in which Afrikaners were personally involved in the battle against communism made it difficult for pragmatic leaders of the DRC in the 1980s to guide its members away from the fearful and reactionary anticommunism that had been engrained in them since the 1920s. The intense right-wing brand of anticommunism driven by Antikom and its allies during the 1960s became entrenched within Afrikaner society. The centralisation of anticommunism to the state in the 1970s through its doctrine of 'Total Strategy' meant that Antikom's influence was waning. This process was accelerated by the DRC's shift toward a more pragmatic and academic approach to communism in the 1980s through its new partnership with the Institute for the Study of Marxism at the University of Stellenbosch (ISMUS). Antikom drifted to the periphery of mainstream Afrikanerdom after it severed ties with the church in 1985. This was further confirmation of the church's legitimising power.

As institutional anticommunism came to an end, it revealed a disparity between the DRC leadership, who moved beyond a traditional brand of anticommunism, and a conservative church membership, for whom the transition was more difficult. While the right-wing operatives had not gained direct political power, they did shape the narrative by latching onto the DRC's moral anticommunist identity. This disparity between the leadership and its members, which in some respects remains unresolved, suggests that the legacies of traditional anticommunism, albeit in different guises, live on in a post-apartheid Afrikaner community, and even within the DRC itself.

While anticommunism created an opportunity for nationalist unity, it was also important in shaping Afrikaner uniformity. This was achieved by casting the Afrikaner *volk* as the antithesis to communism. In effect, this meant that anything that was not deemed to be

Christian-Nationalist was judged by the guardians of Afrikanerdom, especially the DRC, as 'communist'. Anticommunism thus became a key feature of elite attempts to generate a sense of Afrikaner identity. This was demonstrated at the beginning of the twentieth century when the DRC and the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB) instructed working-class Afrikaners on the Rand to see themselves first and foremost as Afrikaners and insisted that their identity was not determined by class. In doing so, the DRC and AB attempted to win the Afrikaner working-class over to the nationalist cause and demonised the so-called *volksvreemde* (foreign) labour unions as socialist-dominated. The DRC's initial critique of socialism in the 1920s and 1930s focussed on its preoccupation with the material well-being of the working class. In its stead, the DRC contended that Afrikaners ought to be focussed on their personal salvation, not a worldly or material one. However, the AB's labour reformers in the 1940s drove a shift in its position as they, with the church's endorsement, convinced many Afrikaner workers that the only way to better their material well-being was through joining Afrikaner nationalist labour unions.

A second characteristic of DRC anticommunism was the manner in which it became a conceptual framework for Afrikaner identity. The anticommunist paradigm became the framework in which Afrikaners conceived of themselves and their role in the wider world. Here, the constant focus on protecting Western civilisation and Christianity was a central theme. Communism was portrayed as the antithesis to these identities, and therefore Afrikaners had to fight against the ideology. Yet, the battle was not physical, but abstract – even spiritual. Under this guise, a racial order had to be protected in which Afrikaners, as the paternalistic messengers of the Gospel in an 'uncivilised' Africa, had to take the top position. The 'red peril' and 'black peril' therefore both played a role in convincing Afrikaners to support the NP's policy of apartheid in 1948. Afrikaner fears of social levelling with black South Africans were at the core of the symbiotic relationship between anticommunism and apartheid from the 1940s.

Shortly after the NP came to power in 1948, the Cold War began to shape a binary world in which Afrikaners sided with the West in an attempt legitimise a white minority state. This heightened the Afrikaner sentiment that they were the chosen defenders of Western civilisation in a hostile Africa. It also gave them an exaggerated sense of their position in world politics, in which they believed that they were tasked with defending Western Christian civilisation against communism in Africa. This was driven to such heights that during the 1960s, DRC anticommunists such as Koot Vorster and Antikom aligned with fringe right-wing

anticommunists in the United States, pushed the church to its anticommunist limits. This eventually aided the demise of right-wing anticommunism within the DRC sphere by the end of the decade. International links, however, carried into the 1970s and 1980s, and into the church's mainstream activities, as the DRC's SOK plugged into existing transnational anticommunist missionary efforts. In addition, the DRC gave its moral support to the state's military operations, which were aimed at preventing communist insurgence in neighbouring parts of Southern Africa. This created a sense that Afrikaners were on the front line in the global battle against communism and that anticommunism was a patriotic and Christian value.

Anticommunism further shaped Afrikaner identity by creating a framework of what Afrikaners were and were not supposed to be. Under the guise of anticommunism, Afrikaner dissidents and critics were stigmatised, censored, and ostracised by Afrikaner society and its guardians. This was especially prevalent in the DRC during the 1960s, following the Cottesloe Consultations, where some church delegates had cautiously moved away from a traditional justification of apartheid. The backlash to this deepened the DRC's isolation and solidified the church's conservative anticommunist identity. An era of uniformity within the DRC followed, and the supposed threat of 'communism' was expanded by framing liberalism, humanism, and even democracy, as gateways to communism. In the church's eyes, Afrikaner identity could not exist outside the bounds of Christian-Nationalism. Afrikaner dissidents, such as Beyers Naudé, were framed as colluding with 'communists', and Afrikaners who hinted at the immoral nature of apartheid were decried as under the influence of liberalism.

During the 1980s, there was a significant shift within the DRC, as a new and more pragmatic leadership led efforts to move the church away from apartheid. International and local pressure forced the DRC to abandon its apartheid theology, which it did in 1986, but theological challenges to the church's support for the white minority state were still viewed through an anticommunist lens. For example, they blatantly sought to dismiss liberation theology as Marxist. By implication, even though the DRC's pragmatic leaders had initiated important shifts in the church, they still used the communist label to delegitimise criticism. The pragmatic DRC leadership furthermore sought to cast anticommunism in a new light after it abandoned apartheid theology. With the assistance of ISMUS, the DRC leadership dismissed the ideology on its intellectual qualities rather continue with fearmongering. The 'threat' dissipated after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the DRC was ready to utilise anticommunism toward envisioning a 'new' South Africa.

This thesis argued that the policy of apartheid and anticommunism were intricately linked from its inception in the 1940s. As apartheid came to a fall in the 1990s, the church transformed anticommunism into a tool to support a democratic future that would safeguard its Afrikaner members. In this vision, DRC members were expected to rescind their nationalist identity for a democratic one. Afrikaners were now cast, in contrast to communists, as non-violent democrats who believed in free speech, freedom of association, and religious freedom – values that had to be protected in an attempt to ward off a feared communist future. This attempted shift failed because of the widening theological gap between the church's leaders and its members. The populist conservative anticommunism of the 1960s remained deeply entrenched within the minds of the DRC's grassroots membership, who remained largely unswayed.

The final, and most prominent thread in the DRC's relationship with anticommunism, was its identity and function as a moral legitimiser. After its failed attempts to lead labour reforms on its own in the 1920s and 1930s, the DRC shifted its attention and efforts to positioning itself as Afrikanerdom's 'moral' anticommunist. Its identity as the *volkskerk*, and the oldest Afrikaner institution, gave it legitimacy with both the Afrikaner people and with the powerful nationalist network of which it became a part. The church's role as a moral anticommunist became especially prominent after the NP's victory in the 1948 election. Its moral endorsement of outlawing communism in the run-up to the election gave the NP government the legitimacy, in the eyes of the *volk*, to pass the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. All subsequent suppressive measures taken by the state under the guise of anticommunism were thus viewed by the *volk* as just and moral because of the DRC's initial and continued support for the legislation. In this regard, the DRC and the state acted interdependently. The state needed the church's moral endorsement, while the DRC fulfilled its role as *volkskerk* by petitioning the state to protect Afrikaner society. By the 1970s, the PW Botha regime implemented its Total Strategy, which centralised all South African anticommunist activities in the hands of the state. The DRC was thereby relegated – sometimes unknowingly, as in the case of the Information Scandal – to a follower of the state.

The DRC, as this thesis argued, formed the backbone of Afrikaner anticommunism throughout the twentieth century. It was not always the main driver, nor was its influence consistent. However, as a vessel of moral anticommunist propaganda, the DRC fulfilled a critical role in legitimising overt opposition to and suppression of 'communism' in all its

perceived manifestations, whilst also creating an Afrikaner imagination – even at times a moral panic – in which the *volk* remained convinced of the ever-present communist threat, and of its own role as a bulwark against communism. Anticommunism, as this thesis argued, functioned as a vehicle for nationalist unity, a paradigm for Afrikaner identity, and a legitimiser of the *volk's* moral high ground.

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