

WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONS:

A RELUCTANT ALLIANCE

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The interaction between Afrikaners- and English-speaking whites has played a decisive role in South African history since the Union came into being in 1910. To understand the shifting relationship of conflict and co-operation between these two dominant groups over the last eight years, it is necessary to give a brief overview of South African history since 1652.

The Dutch East India Company founded a 'refreshment station' at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Such a station was necessary to supply the large commercial fleet of the Company with fresh food on their long journeys to and from India and Batavia (Jakarta).

In contrast with the colonies or 'New Europe's' that were founded in North and South America during the same period, the Cape of Good Hope was not a colony of a country. It was a colony of a commercial company and was sustained and developed only for commercial purposes and for the purposes of short-term financial considerations.¹ During the Dutch period (1652-1795) the colony at the Cape of Good Hope developed very slowly as it was much neglected by the Dutch East India Company. By the end of the eighteenth century the White population (which later became the Afrikaners), numbered only 35,000. In contrast the White inhabitants of the colonies in North America were 300,000 in 1780.

The small number of European immigrants who settled at the Cape during this period may be ascribed to various factors. The fact that South Africa did not have navigable rivers and the difficulties encountered with penetrating the mountainous and drought-stricken country, made the colony unattractive for European immigrants. The slow development during the Dutch period must, however, to a very large extent be blamed on the benign neglect of the Dutch East India Company. The Company neglected the colony because its own financial position deteriorated quite considerably after it had reached its zenith shortly after 1650.²

The benign neglect of the company increased the isolation of the small White population. An important aspect of this neglect and isolation was that no university and not even a high school of merit was founded in this period. The situation of geographical, cultural and even educational isolation, especially in the eighteenth century, was conducive to the development of a new language, Afrikaans, and a new cultural group called the Boers or the Afrikaners. To survive in the harsh conditions as partly nomadic cattle farmers, the Afrikaners

¹ After the Cape became a British colony in 1795 it was handed 'back' to Holland for the short period 1802-6. Strictly speaking the Cape was a colony of Holland during this period, but was governed by Batavia.

² The Dutch East India Company was founded in 1602 and was one of the first successful joint stock companies. Its extraordinary success during its first fifty years was partly due to the Eighty Year War against Spain and the so-called 'profit on the enemy'. After the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the opportunity for war profits disappeared. In 1651 Britain enacted its Navigation Acts and expanded its colonial and commercial interests as well as its seapower, at Holland's expense.

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and later also in the neighbouring countries to keep wage rates as low as possible.⁷

⁷ This system was very beneficial for the gold mines. Annual Black wages declined from R225 in 1911 to R209 in 1971 (1970 prices). In 1911 white wages were eleven times higher and in 1971 twenty-one times higher than Black wages. M. Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid* (London: Gower, 1983), p. 410.

This compromise on Black labour prevented an open clash between agricultural and mining interests, but was very much to the disadvantage of the Blacks. When industrial development took off in the 1940s and '50s this compromise no longer met the demands of the industrialists. They were in favour of a permanently urbanised and semi-skilled (Black) workforce and were prepared to pay higher wages. The maintenance of the system of influx control in the sixties and seventies was strongly opposed by the (mainly English-speaking) industrial sector and was for many years a bone of contention between government and business. The system was (belatedly) abolished in 1986.

The tension between Afrikaners- and English-speakers turned into a typical class struggle in the 1930s. It was a struggle between the Afrikaner 'underdogs' and the English-speaking 'upperdogs'. The poor white Afrikaners suffered from a strong inferiority complex because of their poverty, lack of skills, inadequate education and fear of the so-called 'Black peril'. Many English-speakers, on the other hand, projected a strong superiority complex, as a result of their wealth, their skills, their better education and their typical Victorian cultural orientation. These underlying tensions between Afrikaners and English-speakers reached their apogee at the end of the thirties.⁸ The indifferent attitude of the Victorian and laissez-faire orientated English-speakers towards the problems arising from the emergence of an Afrikaner proletariat as a result of modernisation was an important aggravating factor in the deterioration of relations between the two groups.

The new, aggressive attitude of Afrikaner nationalism since the thirties is shown in a comparison of Hertzog's idea of nationalism with that of Dr Malan:

The focus of Hertzog's nationalism was the legal status of the Afrikaners... His definition was not narrowly exclusive, and embraced not only Afrikaners-speaking, but also English-speaking whites who were truly loyal to south Africa. A powerful sense of 'South Africa first' distinguished his nationalism, and this helped to shape his foreign and economic policies. [But] in association with the new [Purified National] Party a far more aggressive nationalist ideology was formulated [in the thirties]. Strongly republican and ethnically exclusive, it stressed the distinctiveness of Afrikaner 'culture', and saw as a priority not merely the legal parity of Afrikaners but their social and material predicament. These objectives were given institutional form in a range of political, cultural and economic agencies...⁹

Afrikaner nationalism was effectively institutionalised during the thirties in the form of the Purified National Party, the Afrikaner Broederbond (Brotherhood), the Afrikanse Handelsinstituut (Commercial Institute), the Dutch

⁸ A series of events during the thirties contributed to the awakening of a more aggressive form of Afrikaner nationalism. The Bible was first published in Afrikaans in 1933. The thirties also experienced an Afrikaner cultural revival through publications by Afrikaner authors. The developments in Germany and the upsurge of Hitler also stimulated Afrikaner nationalism.

⁹ B. K. Murray, 'The Period 1924 to 1939' in *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, T. Cameron (ed.) (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1986), p. 259.

Reformed Church and several other cultural organisations. Strongly supported by the Dutch Reformed Church, Afrikaner leaders like Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd used the poverty and underdog mentality of Afrikaners, the folklore about the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaner animosity towards English-speakers and their perception of economic deprivation, to mobilise a strong political movement with a strong ideological mission. The centenary celebration of the Great Trek in 1938 was turned into a country-wide *volksfees* (national festival). The explicit purpose of Afrikaner nationalism, in its new aggressive and overheated form, was to regain for the Afrikaners – as the true pioneers of Western civilization in South Africa – their alleged rightful political, economic and cultural position. Afrikaner nationalism grew in the thirties and forges into an ideology that the Afrikaner nation had a right to use political and other measures (not necessarily parliamentary) to eradicate the real and imagined injustices they had suffered as a result of English capitalism and British colonialism and because the Smuts and Fusion governments had not protected them effectively against the Black peril.

When Hertzog was defeated by Smuts in 1939 on the question of South Africa's participation in the War many of his Afrikaner supporters joined Malan's National Party. Given that roughly 70 per cent of the Afrikaners supported Malan's NP during the War, this implied that 70 per cent of the Afrikaners were against South Africa's involvement in the war. The majority of Afrikaners found themselves in a kind of 'political wilderness' during the War years and experienced it as a new form of cultural and political deprivation. Consequently, the already feverish Afrikaner nationalism was further strengthened during the war in spite of the fact that many 'poor white' Afrikaners joined the armed forces.

Almost immediately after taking office in 1948, the National Party (NP) put a three-pronged programme into operation to promote the interests of Afrikaner nationalism. New discriminatory laws were added to the existing arsenal and also extended to Coloureds and Indians; the bureaucracy was systematically enlarged and additional parastatals developed to create lucrative employment, mainly for Afrikaners; while a variety of welfare programmes were launched to redistribute wealth and uplift poor-whites, who were mainly Afrikaners.

For many English-speakers the advent of the Malan government was more than a cultural shock. They genuinely feared that the new government might nationalise the goldmining industry and turn the country into a quasi-socialist republic. At first the English-speakers hoped that the new government would only be temporary. The larger majority attained by the NP at the 1953 Election served as proof that the apartheid government was destined to remain permanent. English-speakers found this very hard to swallow.

The battle lines between the Afrikaner and English establishments were clearly drawn during the 1950s. The Afrikaner establishment controlled South Africa politically for the first time, but was convinced that they deserved to own and to control a much greater share of the economy. The English establishment still owned and controlled South Africa economically, but could not accept the idea that they had to relinquish their political control. The English-speakers experienced the loss of political control as a threefold blow: as Victorians they believed that they were called to govern other people; they had become accustomed to and were even spoilt by the practice of governing South Africa (as they were part of the government for twenty-nine of the first thirty-eight years

after Union); and they had also become accustomed to (mis)using their political power to enhance their vast economic interests. For all these reasons it was extremely hard for them to accept that they were now on the losing end.

In the relentless battle for political supremacy during the 1950s the ~~1950s~~ the Coloured community became trapped in the cross-fire. Fearing that the Coloured voters on the common voters' role might support the mainly English-speaking United Party and deprive the National Party of their political power, the Malan government introduced legislation in 1951 to remove the Coloureds from the common voters' role. This legislation was to herald the beginning of the most serious constitutional crisis in South Africa's history. In 1952 the Appeal Court gave judgment against the government because the legislation infringed the provisions of the South Africa Act of 1909. In 1953 the Senate was enlarged from 44 to 89 members to supply the government with the required two-third majority in a joint sitting of the House of Assembly and the Senate. In 1956 the Coloureds were removed from the common voters' role. The unethical passing of this legislation not only heightened the tension between Afrikaner and English establishments, but also served to alienate the (mainly Afrikaans-speaking) Coloureds from the Afrikaners. The events surrounding the Coloured vote must be regarded as one of the most lamentable episodes in Afrikaner history.

The National Party government's three-pronged policy for the advancement of the Afrikaners – i.e. discriminatory measures, employment opportunities in the public sector and redistribution and favouritism – was remarkably successful. Towards the middle of the 1960s the poor white problem was for all practical purposes solved. Almost all Afrikaners – even those who had been desperately poor twenty years earlier – had acquired middle-class status. Even if the policy of improving the lot of the poor white Afrikaners had some justification in the 1950s (especially if one takes all the parameters of the complex South African situation into account), it had lost its justification by the end of the sixties. Instead of broadening the welfare state policy to include the Coloureds and at least the urban Blacks, the Afrikaner government continued with its policy of White (and especially Afrikaner) patronage and protection. Even today the government spends six times more in *per capita* terms on welfare services (broadly defined) for Whites than on similar services for Blacks. The spending on Coloureds and Indians lies between these two extremes.

Over the years it has been (and still is) mainly English-speaking taxpayers who have filled the public coffers. As one might expect, this has caused much resentment in English-speaking circles. Perhaps their objection should not have been against the fact that they have to support a welfare budget. It ought rather to have been directed against the welfare spending priorities as far as the different population groups were concerned.

The improvement in the relative economic position of the Afrikaners over the last forty years has been quite dramatic. In 1946 the per capita income of Afrikaners was less than half that of English-speakers. It is now three quarters of the (now much higher) *per capita* income of the English-speakers. This rapid embourgeoisement of the Afrikaners has had unfortunate side-effects. Not only have the Afrikaners become as materialistic as their English-speaking counterparts, but they have also become spoiled and in some cases even corrupted by the continuing government patronage. They have also become very demanding. After being pampered for forty years by the apartheid government, many Afrikaners today act like typical *nouveau riches*, and often have a very unfortunate

pejorative attitude towards Coloureds and Blacks who have not been as successful as they have been. The advent of the extreme Right-wing in Afrikaner circles over the last ten years can, to a large extent, be ascribed to the fiscal inability of the government to maintain the high level of patronage. It is, however, argued below that the English-speaking business community have also largely become dependent on many forms of government favours and protection.

During the first ten or fifteen years of NP government (after 1948) it was relatively easy to justify the government's three-pronged policy for the uplift of the Afrikaners. It was justified as a temporary and necessary measure to alleviate the undeserved poverty and deprivation of the Afrikaners. But the apartheid and discriminatory measures were (unfortunately) part and parcel of the policy for the upliftment and protection of the Afrikaners. Consequently the NP policy became the object of relentless moral criticism by the English-speakers and especially the English language press. This criticism was strongly resented by Afrikaners. One of the reasons for their resentment was that the English-speakers also benefited from unethical apartheid and were, in fact, the creators of the system. By the end of the fifties, however, the Afrikaners could no longer ignore, nor try to justify the policy of crude apartheid. This situation created an excellent opportunity for Dr Verwoerd, the ideologue. With his policy of Grand Apartheid he assuaged almost all the moral discomfort of the Afrikaners concerning the apartheid policy.

The Verwoerdian approach gave rise to a new dimension in the tension between the ideological and religious orientated Afrikaners on the one hand and the much more pragmatic and liberal minded English-speakers on the other hand. In retrospect the ideological arguments between Afrikaners and English-speakers in the sixties and early seventies about separate 'freedom' and economically viable Black states constituted a rather ludicrous chapter in Afrikaner history. Unfortunately the extreme Right-wing is still busy fighting this 'hilarious' battle to the amusement of the rest of the world. The ideological detour caused by Verwoerd's concept of Grand Apartheid undoubtedly widened the conceptual gap between the two white population groups. The extent to which Verwoerd succeeded in indoctrinating almost all the Afrikaners is to be deplored. . . . and a cause of shame for the Afrikaners. In the early 1960s Dr Verwoerd announced the government's intention to call a referendum on the issue of a republic. This gave rise to another sharp confrontation between the two white population groups. During this battle the conceptual and ideological gaps between the two groups were again very visible. The Afrikaners regarded the republic as an opportunity to restore the constitutional 'sovereignty' unjustifiably taken from the two Boer republics during the Anglo-Boer War. The NP claimed that many English-speakers had a divided loyalty and that they would only become true South Africans when the constitutional link with Britain had been brought to an end. Verwoerd declared unequivocally that only in a republic would there eventually be unity between the two white groups. The English-speakers (and especially the United Party) fought a courageous battle against the formation of a republic. They stressed the economic dependence of South Africa on Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth.

On 5 October 1960 no less than 90.5 per cent of the white voters cast their votes in the Referendum. The government attained a majority of 74,580. In retrospect Verwoerd might have been correct when he stated that unity between the two groups could only be attained in a republic. Since South Africa

attained the characteristics of individualism, stubbornness and a mistrust of all other groups, whether Black or White. It also developed a somewhat sceptical and even hostile attitude towards the outside world.

An important feature of the Dutch period was the continuing friction and conflict between the White farmers and indigenous groups such as the San (Bushmen) and the Khoi-Khoi (Hottentots). During this period it was considered perfectly acceptable for one group (or nation) to enrich itself by plundering other groups (nations). This was in accordance with the prevailing economic wisdom in which economic relations between countries were still regarded as a zero-sum game. In the situation of geographical and cultural isolation this view of intergroup (or inter-nation) relations as a zero-sum game was deeply ingrained, especially in Afrikaner thinking. Even today some Afrikaners are still of the opinion that it is appropriate for one group (ethnic or national) to improve its own economic situation at the expense of others. It is therefore not surprising that South Africa's history is a sad tale of continuing group conflict.

Shortly after the Cape became a permanent British colony in 1814, tension developed between the colonial power and the White Afrikaans-speaking farmers or Boers. The mainly nomadic farmers in the Eastern Cape were dissatisfied with the lack of protection the colonial authorities provided against the Blacks or Xhosas. This controversy was an important cause of the Great Trek of 15,000 Afrikaners (or Voortrekkers) to the northern parts of the country from 1834 to 1838. The Voortrekkers formed two Boer republics in Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and prolonged their relative cultural and educational isolation up till the twentieth century.

During the second part of the nineteenth century the British colonial authorities in both the Cape and Natal were involved in bloody battles with the Xhosas and Zulus before the latter's resistance was broken. Although the Afrikaners won a memorable battle against Dingaan in 1838, it was not the Afrikaners, but the English-speakers (with the support of the British government) who succeeded in forcing the Blacks into submission. The original modern structure of an apartheid South Africa was created by the colonial power as part and parcel of the process of modernisation after the discovery of diamonds and gold in the second half of the nineteenth century.³

After the discovery of diamonds and gold, all kinds of conflicts developed between the two white groups, especially in the northern part of the country. These conflicts reached a climax during the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902. During this war almost 400,000 British troops were sent to South Africa and the casualties on both sides totalled almost 100,000. This war and the animosities it created set the stage for the future pattern of interaction between the two white groups during the twentieth century.

In 1900 the White population of South Africa totalled only one million - 600,000 Afrikaners and 400,000 English-speakers. The ratio of 6:4 is still maintained. The number of British immigrants who settled in South Africa

³ During the first half of this century the English-speaking establishment governed South Africa almost uninterrupted. During that period the governments of Botha and Smuts enacted all the essential aspects of an apartheid system. The British historian Paul Johnson is correct in his statement that 'all the structural essentials of white supremacy and physical segregation existed before the United Party (of Jan Christian Smuts) lost power to the Boer Nationalists in May 1948'. Paul Johnson, *A History of the Modern World - from 1917 to the 1980s*, London: (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983) pp. 521-2.

during the nineteenth century was also surprisingly small if compared with migration to other New Europes. In 1820 a relatively large group of 4,000 British settlers arrived at the Cape. The discovery of diamonds (1867), gold (1886) and the Anglo-Boer War gave rise to the settlement of larger groups, but the total number was relatively small.⁴

After the Boer War the British government made a concerted attempt to heal the wounds and to reconstruct the war-torn country. Its attempts were relatively successful and played an important role in the unification of the four small colonies into the Union of South Africa in 1910. The first two prime ministers - Generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts - implemented a policy of conciliation in an attempt to bridge the gap between the Afrikaans- and English-speakers. A first major setback occurred in 1912 when General Hertzog was sacked from the Botha cabinet. It happened after he referred to some English-speaking leaders as 'foreign fortune seekers', and advocated two separate streams for the development of the two white groups. He also stated that 'South Africa was for the Afrikaner' and made a plea that South Africa's interests should get preference above those of Great Britain.

For many years Hertzog's stand represented Afrikaner resistance against three things that were closely connected from an Afrikaner point of view and which were often regarded by them as a single issue: the political dominance of the English-speakers; the economic wealth and power of the English-speakers as institutionalised in a capitalistic system and mainly controlled by the Chamber of Mines; and the colonial power of Great Britain and its policy of imperialism.⁵

For the greater part of this century Afrikaner nationalism was mobilised to counteract these political, economic and colonial 'powers' of the English-speakers and their real and alleged exploitative effect on Afrikaner interests. In the years after the Anglo-Boer War, the idea that the Afrikaners were deprived of their political and economic 'independence' by Great Britain in a morally unjust war was systematically nurtured and became part of the Afrikaner folklore. The internal 'struggle' against the English-speakers was, in the minds of many Afrikaners, nothing but an extension of the unequal international war between Great Britain and the two Boer republics. Afrikaner nationalism was strongly stimulated during the First World War when a rebellion by 11,000 Afrikaners - led by highly regarded Anglo-Boer War generals - protested with arms against South Africa's participation in the war against Germany. The uprising had the makings of a civil war and was severely quashed by Botha and Smuts. After the War Afrikaner nationalists used Botha and Smuts's actions against the rebels to portray them as traitors of Afrikaner interests and as handy instruments of English capitalism and British colonialism.

In a completely different set of circumstances in 1922, General Smuts was not only accused of being the protector of English capitalism and British colonialism, but also attached as an opponent of Afrikaner interests. The decline in the price of gold in 1921 forced the Chamber of Mines to alter employment

⁴ In the fifty years before the First World War, 50 million Europeans left Europe for the New Europes. Thirty-five million went to the United States. During that period less than a quarter of a million - mainly English-speakers - came to South Africa.

⁵ In the eyes of many Afrikaners, Great Britain unjustifiably maintained and expanded its dominance over South Africa after Union by increased investment and trade and by expecting South Africa's involvement in the First World War. General Smuts was a member of the British War Cabinet. This was very much resented in Afrikaner circles.

conditions in the mines to give more jobs and opportunities to the much lower-paid Black mineworkers. The uprising of English-speaking and Afrikaner white mineworkers in 1922 was harshly suppressed by Smuts, after a short but bloody armed conflict and a death toll of more than two hundred.

The strike of 1922 led to a strange coalition or 'pact' between the mainly English-speaking Labour Party (led by Cresswell) and the National Party of Hertzog. The 'pact' won the 1924 Election and formed a 'small man's' government against the 'big guys' or Hoggensheimers of Colonial Capitalism. The Labour Party was socially orientated and hostile towards the Chamber of Mines. The National Party was 'nationalistically' and 'patriotically' orientated in their opposition to the economic and colonial 'power' of the English-speakers. The Pact government posed the first serious challenge to colonial capitalism in South Africa.

The Pact government started with what can be regarded as a welfare state policy to compensate the poorer half of the white population (of which more than 80 per cent was Afrikaans-speaking) for the impoverishment and disruptions caused by the process of economic modernisation and urbanisation. An important part of the Pact government's 'welfare' policy was to give financial support to impoverished farmers, to supply them with adequate Black labour and to protect Whites against blacks in the labour market. The Pact government's intentions may have been good, as far as the White Community was concerned, but it lacked the experience and competence to succeed with a welfare policy. Before it could solve its teething problems, Hertzog was forced to enter into a coalition with Smuts in 1933 as a result of the Great Depression (1929-33) and exchange rate instability.

Hertzog and Smuts formed the United Party or the so-called Fusion government in 1934 as part of a new attempt to reconcile Afrikaners and English-speakers and to solve the country's serious economic problems. The coalition led to Dr Malan's resignation from the cabinet. He broke away with a large group of hardline Afrikaners, and in 1934 they founded the so-called Purified National Party and started to mobilise an aggressive form of Afrikaner nationalism. Hertzog and Smuts's attempt to reconcile the two white groups in the political arena was a praiseworthy attempt. The Fusion government (1934-9) was in many aspects (and especially from an economic point of view) perhaps the best government in the modern history of South Africa. Unfortunately the reconciliation attempt failed dismally and even proved to be counter-productive. Although several international events - such as the economic instability of the 1930s, and the outbreak of the Second World War - contributed to its failure, several internal factors also made a contribution.

Hertzog and Smuts must bear some of the blame for the failure of the Fusion government. Both entered into the Fusion with hidden agendas. Smuts's hidden agenda was to stop Hertzog from increasing taxation on the gold mine companies.⁶ Hertzog's hidden agenda was to attain Smuts's support for the removal of Blacks from the common voters role in the Cape and Natal. Both succeeded

⁶ When South Africa stepped down from the gold standard in December 1932, the price of gold increased from 85/- to 120/- per fine ounce - a 'premium' 35/- per fine ounce. Early in 1933 the government announced proposals to tax most of the gold premium. 'From this moment, the Chamber of Mines began to prod the SAP (of Smuts) towards coalition with . . . the nationalists', D. Omeria, *Volkskapitalisme*, (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1983), p. 43.

with their hidden agendas. When war broke out, Hertzog lost his neutrality motion and was succeeded by Smuts. Many of his Afrikaner supporters joined Malan's Purified National Party. After only five years the attempt at reconciliation was replaced by greater animosity. During the war years old scores from earlier struggles between Afrikaners and English-speakers were reopened. Economic considerations played an important role in the intensification of the tensions between English-speakers and the majority of the Afrikaners in the 1930s. The Anglo-Boer War had been a severe economic setback for many Afrikaners, from some which never recovered. Instability in the prices of agricultural products after the First World War ruined many of the Afrikaner farmers, and the Great Depression of 1929-33 exacerbated the problems. The farms were on average too small, financial support lacking and many farmers were much too traditionally orientated to be able to adapt to changing economic conditions, and to exploit new opportunities. Marketing boards to stabilise the prices of agricultural products were only established after the Marketing Act of 1937. Since the beginning of the 1920s until the end of the 1930s, no less than 10,000 small farmers left their farms annually and migrated to the cities.

The proletarianisation of (Afrikaner) small farmers played a decisive role in turning Afrikaner nationalism during the thirties into an aggressive force with a commanding political ideology. In their search for a scapegoat for their economic predicament, it was easy for them to blame it on English capitalism and British colonialism. At the same time the fear of being overrun by Blacks was always present.

The bankruptcy of many small farmers during the 1920s and '30s, created a severe poverty problem. According to the Carnegie Rapport (1932) on the 'poor white' problem, one-third of the Afrikaners (or 350,000 out of an Afrikaner population of one million) was desperately poor, while another third was classified as very poor. Those who were compelled to migrate to the cities found it very difficult to adapt to the rather unfriendly English-speaking cities. They also lacked the necessary skills and for the first time encountered direct competition from Blacks and Coloureds for scarce job opportunities. For almost all the 'poor white' arrivals in the cities the process of urbanisation was a traumatic experience. This provided fertile soil for the growth of a strong and overheated Afrikaner nationalism.

In the first sixty years after Union every government had the difficult task of reconciling the conflicting economic interests which the (mainly Afrikaner) agricultural sector and the (mainly English-speaking) mining and industrial sectors had in the availability and price of Black labour. The farmers were strongly in favour of an abundance of cheap Black labour in rural areas and demanded restrictions to stop the flow of Blacks towards the cities. Those Afrikaners who migrated to the cities as 'poor whites' were also in favour of influx control, because they feared the competition and the presence of Blacks in the cities. The (mainly English-speaking) mining and industrial sectors were, however, strongly in favour of a large supply of cheap Black labour in urban areas. A compromise to reconcile these conflicting economic interests had to be found. On the one hand strict influx control was enacted to keep as many Blacks as possible in the (White) rural areas. On the other hand a system of migratory labour was introduced for the gold mining industry. The majority of the migrant labourers were recruited in the Black reserves (or Homelands)