

Chapter Six

GOVERNMENT-CREATED PLATFORMS

COLOURED PEOPLES' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Establishment

THE C.R.C. was established in accordance with Section 1 of the Coloured Persons Representative Council Act (No. 49 of 1964). The State President determined by Proclamation 77 of 3 April, 1969, that the C.R.C. of the Republic of South Africa be established on 1 July, 1969. This new political development resulted in the dissolution of the former Department of Coloured Affairs on 1 July, 1969, and the establishment of the Administration of Coloured Affairs on the same date.

Constitution

Sections 1 and 2 of the Act laid down that the Council shall be constituted as follows:

	Elected	Nominated
Cape Province	28	12
Transvaal	6	2
Natal	3	1
Orange Free State	3	1
Members especially representing the following groups:		
Griquas	-	2
Malays	-	2
	40	20

The results of the 1969 elections were as follows:

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won
Labour	35	26
Federal	37	8
Republican	17	1
National	16	1
Conservative	10	-
Independent	8	1

The total percentage poll was 48,7%. The percentage ranged between 66,6 and 81% in the three northern provinces, but was below 30% in 7 urban constituencies of the Cape, the lowest figure, for a Cape Town seat, being 16,4%. The percentage was higher in the rural areas of the Cape. It would appear that large numbers of the urbanised Coloureds in that province boycotted the elections.

The Council

The term of office of members of the council is five years. The Chairman of the Council is nominated by the State President. His duties are to ensure that the correct procedure is observed during sessions of the Council; and also to take charge of financial management.

In interim periods, affairs of the CRC are in the hands of an executive of five. The chairman is nominated by the State President, the remaining 4 members are elected by members of the Council from among their own ranks.

The Council and the Executive operate within the Department of Coloured Affairs and have their powers and functions prescribed by the Act that set up the C.R.C.

Administration of Coloured Affairs

The Administrative machinery is known as the Administration of Coloured Affairs. In view of the fact that the Council and the Executive require administrative machinery for the performance of their functions, the Act provides that the Minister of Coloured Affairs may make officials and employees available to the Council for this purpose.

The Administration of Coloured Affairs is organised on the basis of four directorates who have direct contact with the member of the Executive designated to deal with the matter, i.e. either finance, education etc. The directorates are controlled by the Commissioner of Coloured Affairs, in order to co-ordinate their activities. He is assisted by a Deputy Commissioner who is in charge of the Directorate of Finance and Auxiliary Services.

The Commissioner for Coloured Affairs assists the Chairman of the Executive administratively in co-ordinating the activities of the Executive and in particular in so far as he has to deal with financial matters.

Activities of the C.R.C.

Speaking at the 2nd Research Workshop conducted by the Abe Bailey Institute of Inter-racial Studies at the University of Cape Town in January, 1972, Mr David Curry, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, charged the government with having a policy of 'political domination'

over C.R.C. He said: 'The members of the executive, to my way of thinking, are just mere administrative clerks. The white officials are the real decision makers'.

When the government proposed legislation to amend the C.R.C. Act to give the Minister of Coloured Affairs powers to approve the Council's budget even if the Council rejects it, there were different reactions from members. Sonny Leon, leader of the Labour Party, described the proposed legislation as 'public admission by the government that they lost faith in their own creation, the Council' On the other hand, Tom Swartz, leader of the Federal Party, says the reason for the proposed legislation was that he could not guarantee to muster a majority in the Council. He believed the legislation was 'necessary to ensure that essential services are maintained, such as payment of teachers' salaries, even if there is a possible breakdown on the political front'.

In February, members of the C.R.C. met Vorster to discuss the future of the Council. The main item on the agenda was a request by the C.R.C. for an amendment to the C.R.C. Act of 1964 so that all 60 members of the Council would be elected in future. This arose from the great resentment at the government's 'loading' of the C.R.C. with pro-apartheid members who had lost in elections in 1969, in spite of the fact that the anti-apartheid Labour Party won the majority of contested seats. In May, the Deputy Minister of Coloured Affairs said in the House of Assembly that the government accepted in principle the decision by the C.R.C. to become a fully-elected body. However, he said because of certain practical problems, it would be impossible to implement this decision at the next elections for the C.R.C.

On the 20 June, the *Natal Mercury* reported that the C.R.C. would demand two 'revolutionary' changes in its relations with the government during its session in August. The first concerns a revision of the controversial liaison system between the Council and Cabinet, which Coloured leaders and many white politicians, particularly in the opposition, feel is inadequate. The second concerns complete filling of senior posts in the Department of Coloured Affairs by Coloureds.

Mr Tom Swartz said he fully supported a move to include all white parties in the liaison procedure, through a statutory standing body made up of select committees of both the C.R.C. and Parliament. At that time the liaison concerned only members of the government.

In August Tom Swartz said there were indications from Western countries to invest money to help develop Coloureds. In a motion, he called for representations to Mr Loots, Minister of Coloured Affairs, with a view to obtaining government approval. Mr David Curry supported the motion which he described as a motion of no-confidence

in the government's Coloured Development Corporation. He warned foreign investors that if they practise discrimination they should quit.

The C.R.C. made the following demands for parallel development:

The provision of travel facilities similar to those available to Whites, to Coloured people throughout the Republic and South West Africa.

Opportunities for Coloured men to qualify as pupil pilots and for other related jobs in civil and military aviation, and for Coloured women to be trained and employed in South African Airways without discrimination.

More land to be made available to the Coloured people to build their own houses.

The abolition of all forms of discrimination against black medical practitioners and surgeons in hospitals and operating theatres.

The abolition of ambulance apartheid.

Pressure on all municipalities in South Africa to provide the necessary amenities in all townships.

Bursaries for Coloured graduates for post-graduate study with a view to filling lecturers' post at the University of the Western Cape.

Latest Legislation

A government Bill published 24/5/72 will enable Loots to by-pass the C.R.C. if it refuses to adopt its R86 million budget. The main provision of the Bill lays down that if the C.R.C. fails to pass the annual budget, the necessary appropriation of funds can be made by the executive. If the executive fails to act 'for whatever reasons', the Minister can make the appropriations himself.

The Bill is a precaution against the possibility that anti-government Council members might have control of the Council and refuse to pass the budget in an attempt to damage the government's plans for the Council.

Parties

The C.R.C. has 7 parties, namely:

- (a) The Federal Coloured People's Party.
- (b) Labour Party.
- (c) National Coloured People's Party.
- (d) The Republican Party.
- (e) Coloured People's Party (Tvl.).
- (f) Independent Party for Coloureds.
- (g) The Social Democratic Party.

(a) Federal Coloured People's Party

1. Background

The Federal Party was formed on 30 August 1964 in Cape Town. The leader is Mr Tom Swartz. The party stands for parallel development, believing that the Coloured people are a nation with an identity of their own. This party accepts the policy of separate development but wants eventual equality with white people.

Since its launching, the party made its support for the policy of separate development very clear. According to the first manifesto at the launching of the party in 1964, the party committed itself to seek to make use of the opportunities offered by the government's policy of separate development and to make the Coloureds independent. This stand was subsequently demonstrated by the party's resolutions throughout the years.

The government also demonstrated support for the party after the 1969 elections, when it nominated 20 of the party's members who were defeated at the polls, to the C.R.C. This resulted in the party being in the majority in the C.R.C.

2. Activities during 1972

In March the Transvaal branch of the Federal Party drew a vast plan to consolidate White, Coloured and African areas to the South West of Johannesburg into an autonomous Coloured city. This caused vehement reactions from the Coloured and White communities. However this plan could not succeed because of strong opposition from politicians and government officials.

At their National Congress in Port Elizabeth the party passed the following resolution: 'The Congress puts forward the point of view that, in view of the fact that the possibility of a separate homeland for the Coloured people of South Africa has been totally rejected, the Coloured

people are part of the South African nation. As such the present policy of parallel development can only be seen as a means towards the achievement of full political, civil and social rights'.

The Federal Party denied a Labour Party accusation that it is working in league with SABRA. A statement by the provincial leader of the Federal Party, Mr J.A. Rabie, said: 'at no time did the Federal Party have any link with any white organisation, let alone carrying out their policy. The Federal Party is the only party born out of the Coloured people for the Coloured people. Ever since its inception it has busied itself with the liberation of the Coloured people. The latest of its demands was for an autonomous municipality. The Federal Party never asked for a Colouredstan'.

When addressing a meeting of the Federal Party in Durban on 30 April, Tom Swartz said the Coloured people were being oppressed by the Whites, Blacks and Indians in South Africa (1). The only way in which the Coloureds would achieve political recognition was to 'hold their heads high' and work within the present framework which the government offered them.

(b) *The Labour Party*

1. *Background*

The Labour Party was formed in 1968, and stands for one-man-one-vote, with direct Parliamentary representation for all South Africans, whatever their racial group. The party accepted the C.R.C. as a stepping stone to full democratic rights because it offered the 'only' means of political expression that was available in the interim to the Coloured people.

The party professes to be four-square against apartheid. This has been subsequently demonstrated in their resolutions since its inception. It won the majority of seats during the 1969 elections of the C.R.C.

The party has been running smoothly except for numerous forced and voluntary resignations of their national and regional leaders. A common reason for most resignations is that the party is becoming too 'radical'. The government is accused of having a hand in thwarting the party's efforts.

2. *Activities during 1972*

The Labour Party representatives refused to attend talks between the

Prime Minister and the C.R.C. in February. Explaining the reasons for their not attending the talks, Mr Don Mattera said no formal invitation was extended to the Labour Party leader and his executive. 'It was not upon the Prime Minister's invitation, but a stipulated procedure between the Federal Party's executive and the government', he said.

He further explained that the party was opposed to the composition of the liaison committee which has a majority of nominated pro-government members. Any resolutions made by the party to the Minister of Coloured Affairs could be out-voted, and the Labour Party would have to face public embarrassments at having been part and parcel of the outcome of such liaison.

'Liaison to us is a farce, in view of the latest move whereby the Minister of Coloured Affairs could veto the budget whether the C.R.C. accepted it or not' (2).

At the Transvaal Congress of the party held at Reiger Park, near Boksburg, which was attended by about 30 delegates from all over the Transvaal, a decision was taken to quit the C.R.C. as soon as possible and work independently of all apartheid institutions. The delegates said the Labour Party was working on a non-racial basis and there was no reason why it should have representation on an apartheid institution like the C.R.C.

Mr Don Mattera said: 'We want political involvement with all oppressed people. We cannot look at ourselves as better than any other racial group. When the C.R.C. was elected in 1969, we wanted to show, as the Labour Party, that the people reject apartheid. We have shown that by the overwhelming majority of seats that we got. Now is the time to show the government that apartheid doesn't work - by leaving the C.R.C. It's the only way' (3).

In reaction to this move, the national leader of the party, Mr S. Leon, said the Labour Party's presence in the C.R.C. was essential, as it provided the party with the legal instruments to express the desires of the people. However, he said the move reflected the general consensus that the C.R.C. was a meaningless institution.

In April, the Labour Party wrote an open letter to the President, the Prime Minister and the government of South Africa, asking for all political prisoners to be released. The letter was written because the party is concerned about the state of affairs in the country. It calls for the repeal of 'all statutes of arbitrary imposition and laws of detention without trial, which halt the free flow of political interaction, as defined in the Charter of Human Rights. The letter asks that all political prisoners' be released, all banning orders be lifted and that 'audience' be given to requests for clemency and reprieve for all exiles (4).

During May, the Labour Party planned a nation-wide boycott and

picketing campaign against petty apartheid. Tens of thousands of stickers 'This is Petty Apartheid' would that month be placed in the vicinity of government buildings, shops and offices which had separate entrances for the various racial groups or which did not have facilities for blacks, such as special toilets.

In pamphlets, whites as well as blacks would be asked not to support businesses - to be named - which do not provide amenities for all race groups or which have separate entrances.

Banning of Dempsey Noel

On 3 May, Mr Dempsey Noel, Natal Provincial Leader of the Labour Party, was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. The banning was a second one in the life of Mr Noel and followed a spate of activity during which Mr Noel demonstrated welcome leadership for Natal Labourites.

The Labour Party immediately planned to petition the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and other political leaders in protest at the banning.

Mr Mattera said he and Sonny Leon were drawing up representation to Mr Vorster, Mr Pelsler, Sir de Villiers Graaff and Mrs Helen Suzman. He confirmed that Mr Noel had been planning the party's campaign against 'petty apartheid' when he was banned for 5 years.

'We view the banning of Dempsey Noel as a direct hit at the party. This is a direct vendetta against us and makes a farce of the C.R.C.', Mr Mattera said. Two protest meetings against Mr Noel's banning were held in Durban.

Plans for National Convention

The Labour Party took the initiative in calling for a summit conference of various parties in South Africa with a view to 'negotiating an agreement whereby to confront the powers-that-be from a basis of unity'.

The invitation to attend the conference in Kimberley on 3 June, was signed by Labour Party leader, Mr Sonny Leon. The invitation called for delegates with a maximum of 10 members per Party, and made it clear that a neutral chairman would be elected at the first sitting of the meeting, which would also draw up the agenda.

In a memorandum attached to the invitation, the Labour Party said it presupposed 'that all parties attending the inaugural talks, do so with the intention of forging a basis of political unity'.

That political summit laid the foundation of a coalition in the C.R.C. - a step which could unite the major coloured parties for a confrontation with the Nationalist Government. Delegates of the 4 main parties -

Labour, Federal, Social Democratic and National - approved the plan.

They also approved a resolution which said: 'This summit meeting recommends that during the sitting of the C.R.C. the caucus meet to formulate its discussions without resorting to measures that reflect division among representatives, and that by common agreement all motions submitted will be supported without divisions and amendments'.

At the meeting the parties rejected calls to scrap the council and decided to use it as a 'short term' weapon for gaining full franchise for the Coloured people in the central Parliament (5).

(c) The National Coloured People's Party (NCPP)

1. Background

The NCPP was founded in October 1966. The Party is four-square in support of the policy of separate development. Their first leader, Dr C.L. Smith, 'resigned' from the party after being attacked for attending a Labour Party Youth Organisation. The present leader is Mr Clarence September.

During the 1969 elections, the party won only 1 seat in the C.R.C. It sees the Coloureds as a separate racial group and also supports the Immorality Act. Through its activities and subsequent resolutions, the NCPP has shown its support for the policy of separate development.

2. Activities during 1972

Very little has been reported by newspapers about this party's activities.

In March, six members of the executive held discussions with the Commissioner of Police, General G.J. Joubert, and other police officials in Pretoria. The talks were on crime in the Coloured townships in and around Johannesburg. The six members were the party's leader, Mr Clarence September, Mr McBain-Charles, Mr J.E. Fredericks, Mr M. Roper and Mr A. Roux. On the 28 March, Mr McBain-Charles was quoted by the *Rand Daily Mail* as having said that the discussions were 'very fruitful' and that crime and various other grievances of the Coloured community were discussed.

The party also took part in the discussions called by the Labour Party in May. According to a statement issued by the secretary of the Party before the discussions, 'the NCPP representatives will attend the talks with an open mind. We do not agree with the spirit of the talks ... We hope all interested individuals and political parties, irrespective of beliefs will attend ... We hope, too, that a Coloured political party will emerge that will put bread and butter issues first and politics later'.

(d) Social Democratic Party

1. Background

This Party was formed at a Conference on 16-18 December, 1971 in Cape Town. The present leader is Mr Edward G. Rooks (former Labour Party Natal leader). The convenor of the first National Conference, the late Abe Domingo, said he had launched the party because he felt the time had come for him to work for his people.

The leadership is mainly composed of former Labour Party leaders who have been kicked out or resigned. They include Mr E. Rooks of Durban, Mr M.D. Arendse and the late Mr Abe Domingo, all C.R.C. members. Other members of the C.R.C. who had joined the party were Mr L.C. du Preez, Mr Solly Essop, Mr Allie Pop and Dr Clifford Smith.

The objects of the party are:

- to unite the Coloureds into a formidable political force;
- to strive for the effective utilisation of the Coloureds' labour potential;
- to bring about a closer and more effective liaison between the intelligentsia, the trade union movement and the masses;
- to prepare youth for future responsibilities and leadership;
- to attain equal educational facilities at all levels;
- to strive for direct representation at all levels of government - local, provincial and central;
- to foster dialogue between all inhabitants of the country.

The party says it will seek close liaison with government departments to attain its objects, and 'all legal platforms will be utilised to the full.

The party accepts the C.R.C. and is prepared to work in it.

2. Activities during 1972

Speaking at the inaugural conference of the Party at the Bosmont Hotel on 7.4.72, Mr Rooks paid tribute to the founder and leader-elect of

the party, Mr Abe Domingo, who died a week before, after a heart attack.

He told the 200 delegates from the Transvaal and Natal that the South African Government had the things Coloureds wanted, which had been taken away from them; 'with your support, I will strive to get them back. This cannot be done if we do not speak. Dialogue with all races in the country is a very important weapon'.

The other main activity of the Social Democratic Party was the forming of branches. By March the party had formed branches in Bosmont, Riverlea, Newclare and Coronationville. On the 9 March, a branch was formed in Potchefstroom and another in Randfontein on the 14. In Natal the party had already formed 4 branches.

'We have more than 200 members in the Transvaal and this, I think, is phenomenal because, since the formation of the party, we have not run an extensive campaign', said Mr Domingo (6).

3. *Opposition to the S.D.P.*

On the 22 March, 1972, Mr Sonny Leon, National leader of the Labour Party, said the S.D.P. was racialistic and bent on uniting the Coloured people to the exclusion of other black races. He said: 'It is outlined in their constitution to unite the Coloured people. The oppression of other blacks is of no concern to them. The Coloured group only should receive preference. Dr Clifford Smith's alliance with the party is sufficient proof that the S.D.P. is racialistic and members of the Indian and African community should take note that a new witch-hunt could be instituted to safeguard the interests of the S.D.P. members' (7).

He said members of the S.D.P. should bear in mind that the Coloureds were offspring of all the nations that inhabit the country.

(e) *The Conservative Party*

The Conservative Party also advocates parallel development, aiming at unifying the Coloured people, making them politically conscious, and gaining political experience through the machinery of the C.R.C. It aims at equal opportunities with those of whites, and equal pay.

During the 1969 C.R.C. elections, the Party was the only one which did not win any seat in the C.R.C. This party has not been very active.

(f) *The Republican Party*

The Republican Party, led by Mr Tom le Fleur, also advocates parallel

development and describes itself as a moderate group working for Coloured unity, which it believes can be sought apart from the whites. It advocates an Immorality Act to prohibit intermarriage between Coloureds and other blacks (Indians and Africans).

During the 1969 C.R.C. elections, the party won only one seat.

(g) Independent Party

This party also advocates parallel development. During the 1969 elections, the party won one seat in the C.R.C. No intensive press coverage was given to this party.

Groups and Individuals against the C.R.C.

There have been vehement black reactions to the creation and acceptance by some Coloured 'leaders' of the C.R.C. These have been expressed both by organisations and individuals.

Objection to the creation of and participation in the C.R.C. is that the C.R.C., like other government-created platforms, is, as it has often been described in the past, a 'toy telephone' designed for 'window dressing' for the international scene and to divide blacks.

SASO has consistently rejected the C.R.C. as an institution that is created by the government for the Coloureds to work against them (Coloureds). Consequently those who participate in the C.R.C. also suffer rejection.

The BPC constitution spells out very clearly that it will function outside the government-created institutions. The BPC called for the unification of all black people and a complete rejection of all government-created platforms (C.R.C. included).

The Labour Party professes to be against the C.R.C. 'because it is a farce' whilst it also participates in it. Their reason for participation in the C.R.C. is that it gives them a legal ground for registering the sentiments of the people.

Individuals have expressed a fair amount of resentment towards the C.R.C. This has been manifest particularly in the boycotting of elections and joining hands with organisations working outside the C.R.C.

Opinion in the Western Cape, where the percentage poll was lowest, is fairly strong against participation by the Coloured people in C.R.C. politics.

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4. *Rand Daily Mail*, 4.4.72.
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6. *Rand Daily Mail*, 8.3.72.
7. *Rand Daily Mail*, 23.3.72.