

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
AFRICAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

by

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Coloured men were active in constituency politics in the Cape from the introduction of a legislature to the Colony. There are reports of their involvement in such major issues as the opposition to responsible government and Carnarvon's Confederation proposals, but only in 1892 were attempts made to form a Coloured political organization. In that year the South African Coloured Peoples' Association came into being, with the object of preventing the proposed raising of the franchise qualifications. It failed in this attempt when the Act was given the Royal Assent, and nothing appears to have come of the Association. In 1893 an anonymous letter appeared in the Cape Argus proposing that Coloured men form a political organization of their own. The Cape Times, commenting on the correspondence of the rival papers, reported that it too had received a copy of the letter and believed it to be a forgery. Even were the letter genuine, the paper continued, it was harmful to the Coloured people whose interests were no different from those of the White population. Yet throughout 1893 a concerted effort was made in Cape Town by the Islamic Malay population to raise support for an independent Coloured candidate, Ahmed Effendi, who was invited to contest a Parliamentary seat by the Imams of the city. Effendi failed to be elected, partly because of the abolition of the plumping laws carried by a Parliamentary majority intent upon excluding him from the legislature. Party political activity reached a low ebb in the Colony by 1895, and there is nothing to suggest Coloured men were more indifferent to politics than the population in general; but indifference ceased in 1896 after the Jameson Raid. The heightening of tension among the White population made leaders of the White English-speaking population very conscious of the need to establish a political organization which would organize electoral support against the Afrikaner Bond and convince the British Government of widespread Cape support for British intervention in the South African Republic. The South African League was established for the purpose, and one of its earliest decisions was to establish "B" or non-White branches to ensure widespread registration and electoral turn out of anti-Bond voters. The attempt of the League's Secretary to form African branches provoked a storm of criticism, but Coloured branches came into being apparently without attracting attention. The South African League in the Cape became the constituency organization of the Progressive Party in Parliament and, since Rhodes was recognized as the dominant influence in the Progressive Party, it was not long before the Kimberley branch of the League expressed its dissatisfaction

with Rhodes' "equal rights for all White Men" and thus forged the first link in the chain of events which led to Rhodes' altering the slogan to all "civilised" men. Though B branches were formed in many towns, Coloured voters did not act collectively during the 1898 Elections and independent Coloured behaviour was still relatively unfamiliar: when a Cape Town Parliamentary candidate held a separate meeting for Malays, he was widely criticized for departing from Cape Town's political custom of not distinguishing White from Coloured voters. Within four years, however, the African Political Organization had come into being, and (in spite of its initial factiousness and the limitations placed upon its ultimate effectiveness by the political environment) became within a remarkably short time an impressive and widespread organization.

## I

Between 1891 and 1904 the urban Coloured population (excluding Malays) rose from 106,272 to 183,648 - an increase of 77,375. (1) At the same time the rural Coloured population increased only by 14,024. This very rapid increase was concurrent with an increase in political activity among the urban Coloured population. Increased political activity was not as marked as the population increase but was, to some extent, a reflection of it. It is probable that rural poverty alone would have led to an increase in the urban population, but the South African War, which affected the rural Coloured population more adversely than any other section of the Cape's inhabitants, hastened urbanization.

Most urban Coloured people were labourers, but other occupational groups existed which included skilled and semi-skilled workers in crafts and trades, small businessmen, shopkeepers, traders, commercial assistants and clerks. The status and incomes of these groups placed them at the top of the Coloured hierarchy. Frequently used terms like "better class", "respectable", and "educated" indicated both their status within the Coloured population and their own self image. (2) But Whites with the same occupations did not have an equally high status among the White population, although they ranked higher than their Coloured equivalents in the society as a whole. (3) Virtually no Coloured men were found in the professions, the administration, or among entrepreneurs and financiers. In part, the large, poverty-stricken base of the Coloured population explains this since entry into higher status occupations required relatively expensive education, or capital. It is also probable that colour was in itself a limiting factor in the recruitment of members to the upper reaches of the Cape hierarchy, but there was no explicit colour-bar which prevented Coloured men from joining the administration or becoming members of the professions.

There is another and paradoxical reason for the absence of Coloured men from the higher status groups in the Colony. Coloured men who prospered were able to gain readmission into the White population, and some became prominent in the Afrikaner middle class.

This phenomenon was believed to be widespread and was a source of considerable grievance which was voiced by the Coloured leadership, and caused Coloured hostility to the Afrikaner Bond. In 1909, a pamphlet entitled "Of European Descent" was published by four young Coloured men, which provoked an anonymous contributor, who used the pseudonym "Of European Descent", to write to the African Political Organization giving a list of White legislators, professional and commercial men, and artisans who had Coloured ancestors. The A.P.O. felt it imprudent to publish the list, but took every opportunity to assert the validity of the claim. In August 1909 it announced that among the Cape's delegates who presented the draft South African Act to the British Parliament were two who had Coloured ancestors, and the same was true, it claimed, for some Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentarians, "and one at least who bears a titular distinction". In 1910 the A.P.O., commenting in an editorial on the exclusion from the South African Parliament of those who were not of European descent, reported that "a considerable amount of space in one Church magazine has been devoted to the publication of the pedigrees of many would-be aristocratic families of the Peninsula. Kerk registers and graveyard tombstones have been searched and studied with microscopic closeness. The subtlest ingenuity has been resorted to in order to prove that the line of progenitors has been unblemished white: but somehow all the skill of the local antiquarians has failed to justify the claim of unsullied whiteness on the mother's side". The editorial made its point at some length, asserting that more than one Cabinet Minister in the first South African Government, as well as members of the new Parliament, were not entitled to seats in the Legislature if these were to be restricted to those of "European Descent". This editorial was followed by an apparently unconnected news item headed "Baron De Villiers", which read: "Baron De Villiers, the Chief Justice of United South Africa, is the first South African peer. He is of pure European descent, so the people say, being a Huguenot from both his father and his mother's side." (4)

#### Occupations of the People (5)

##### Proportion per 10,000

Occupation	White				Coloured			
	1891		1904		1891		1904	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional	515	230	733	291	39	35	39	32
Commercial	843	77	1370	119	322	15	663	15
Industrial	1365	245	1918	237	1147	139	2323	95



The small lower middle class, which enjoyed such high status among the Coloured people, created a large number of voluntary associations. There were cab-owners' and cab-drivers' associations, welfare, friendly, benefit and burial societies. There were a small number of co-operative stores, at least two Coloured diamond diggers' associations, and a fishermen's association. A large number of thriving sports clubs existed, and also a number of Coloured masonic lodges and Coloured branches of the Y.M.C.A. Voluntary associations provided, for Coloured people, the means of acquiring techniques of organization, and individuals who played leading roles in these associations often became prominent in Cape politics. Probably the most important among voluntary associations, for providing a network of political activity, were the temperance lodges. Alcoholism was a major social concern, responsible, the A.P.O. wrote in 1909, for "much of the visible degradation and demoralisation of our people in the Western Province". Temperance lodges were encouraged by White lay Christian organizations and by churches of most denominations. Possibly most significant in the social life of the Coloured people in the period between 1891 and 1904 were the English churches, whether episcopal or independent, which attracted ever increasing numbers of adherents. While the number of Coloured members of the Dutch Reformed Churches increased in urban areas from 27,088 in 1891 to 41,717 in 1904, membership of the Church of the Province of South Africa increased from 29,428 to 49,225, of the Methodist Church from 8,885 to 19,866, and of the Independent and Congregationalist Churches from 24,208 to 27,926. Excluding members of the smaller sects (almost all of whom were English speaking) there were 97,007 Coloured members of the three major English Churches, which meant that most Coloured Christians were adherents of churches committed to temperance. Since the Afrikaner Bond consistently rejected proposed legislation to make more difficult the procuring of alcohol by non-Whites, the commitment to temperance among Coloured people had political implications, and placed the temperance lodges in opposition to the Bond. The importance of temperance as a political issue is suggested by the Cape Town Temperance Hall's changing its name in 1910 to the A.P.O. Hall - a change which suggests also that membership of the two organizations overlapped. On many occasions there must have been uncertainty as to whether the temperance lodges were the A.P.O. in welfare guise or whether the A.P.O. was a temperance organization in political form.

The heterogeneous nature of the Cape's Coloured population, together with the constraints placed upon a section of it by the White population, made the formation of group consciousness and the initiating of political action difficult. Furthermore, Coloured people were anxious, on the whole, not to establish for themselves a political identity separate from the White population until after the South African War. Even after the war, electoral politics, which permitted participation in the White political system, undermined the tendency toward independent action. It must, all the same, be acknowledged that the A.P.O. managed to bring about, among Coloured people, a degree of unity hitherto unachieved, and to evolve an organization more advanced than that of any non-White body existing in South Africa before Union. The A.P.O. is conspicuous, therefore, in the examination of the development and nature of Coloured participation in Cape politics, which must now be undertaken.



## II

In the two years following the end of the South African War, Coloured leaders and the wider Coloured population reacted to events which had taken place during and after the war. Before and during the war it had been possible to believe that the civil liberties and material conditions of Coloured men in the Cape would improve with a British victory over the Afrikaner states. With the war over, it became apparent that the belief was illusory and Coloured people began to perceive their situation in a new way.

The war had brought many hardships to the Coloured people of the Cape. In areas which had been occupied by Republican forces many Coloured men were ill used. They were often forced to serve as levies, made to provide supplies, and, where they were thought to be working for the British forces, subjected to harsh and often brutal treatment which on occasion led to deaths. Such treatment was in striking contrast to that given to hostile colonial Whites; who were not ill treated, even when they were leading Coloured men against Boer forces. Not all the stories of atrocity which were prevalent in the Cape during the war, and which were exploited during the 1904 election, were necessarily accurate, but there was a valid basis for their existence. Reports of Boer atrocities passed into mythology, but the treatment of Coloured people by British and Colonial troops, particularly Australians, also caused resentment at the time. Many Imperial soldiers accepted the existing hierarchical structure as a basis for their behaviour, while Coloured men had mistakenly anticipated that White soldiers whose origins were not South African would ignore prevailing White Colonial attitudes. The assertiveness and aggression on the part of these White soldiers, which was made worse by the existence of martial law in the Colony in 1900 and 1901, were therefore much resented. The rapid increase in the number of Coloured people in urban areas, paralleled by the influx of White refugees from the Republics, aggravated sensitivities by bringing Coloured people into contact with civilian White officials in the railway administration, post office and police force, of whom there were reports of assertive and aggressive behaviour. It is unlikely that such behaviour was new in the colony, but there was an overriding factor which made for an increased sensitivity among Coloured men. Discriminatory legislation was continued and, in the field of industrial relations, extended. Moreover, where the former republic had been inefficient, in applying discriminatory legislation, the new regime was not. Coloured men in the Cape had hoped for social changes in the Transvaal to further the interests both of themselves and of their compatriots in this most economically advanced part of South Africa. Instead, they now feared that the republican policies prevailing under British administration would sooner or later be adopted in the Cape. It is not surprising, therefore, that attempts to create independent Coloured organizations date from this period.

There were references, in 1904, to a number of political organisations in Cape Town. Among these was the Coloured Men's Political Protection Association (whose Cape Town president was also the president of the Cape Town Coloured Y.M.C.A.), which urged the

Governor and the Prime Minister to allow Coloured men arms to help in resisting Boer guerillas. A less formally structured but more effective body was the Stone, which received its name because its gatherings were held on the slopes of Devil's Peak. The Stone cannot be described as an organization but rather as a continuous meeting with a corporate sense and identifiable leaders. Speakers used a large boulder as a platform and a rocky natural auditorium accommodated the meeting. Foremost among Stone leaders was John Tobin, a small businessman with a large personal following and with connections in the Coloured communities of Cape Town, the Western Province, and Kimberley. When the Stone was first reported in the South African Spectator (which, as we have noted on another occasion, was the paper edited by Z. F. Peregrino), it was said to have met in District Six for "the purpose of erecting an organisation". The Coloured Peoples' Vigilance Society was the next organization to gain attention, but this was the result of its being initiated by Z. F. Peregrino. The Vigilance Society sought the unity of all non-Whites, and promised to investigate all allegations of non-White ill treatment. Where it was possible, Peregrino promised to make representations to the proper authorities, or, where necessary, to instigate legal proceedings. The Society was to have officers throughout South Africa, and these were to provide its headquarters with reports of matters "affecting the well being of the race". But, apart from the establishment of a branch of the Society in Kimberley, the Coloured Peoples' Vigilance Society never succeeded in becoming anything more than a vehicle for Peregrino's activities. Far more effective in helping to change the political climate among non-Whites was Peregrino's newspaper. There is little doubt that he made an impression on some members of the South African Native Congress, and A. K. Soga published large extracts from the Spectator in Izwi. Although Peregrino was personally unpopular in Cape Town and in the rest of the Colony, he appears to have had a catalytic effect on Cape politics. "The Spectator", he announced in an early number, "is established exclusively in the interests of the Coloured people." "Race Pride", he proclaimed, was what was needed if the Coloured people of the Cape were to "improve their lot". In order to encourage and develop "race pride", Peregrino provided a record of African achievement, both on the African continent and in America. A series of articles on the history of Africans was promised to show "some of the grand and noble achievements of the race in times past, proving that for the production of talent, ability and wealth in the blackman there is no need of a caucasian reinforcement of blood". The articles, which Peregrino promised, would reveal "our true greatness and the ability of our people to make history", began with a survey of the history of Africans five hundred years before the birth of Christ, and continued into the 19th century with the achievements of "Dumas the elder" and the role of Negroes in the American Civil War. Peregrino announced, also, the publication of the Short History of the Native Tribes of South Africa. In the second year of its publication the Spectator provided the familiar chronicle of the American Negro's progress since emancipation. The paper was determined that Coloured men should improve their status, and was critical both of "white men who called adult Coloured men 'boy'" and of non-Whites deferring to Whites. When a Coloured deputation called upon the High Commissioner with a White spokesman, the Spectator admonished them with "Brethren learn to do something for yourselves". It urged Coloured men to stop classifying themselves into a number of sub-groups and instead to call themselves "Negroes". It recognized that the "false idea of servility"

which the Coloured man had had "instilled in him by the Dutch" had "stamped him as a class below the ordinary human level and the ingenuity of the race is taxed in the attempts to get rid of the 'reproach' that is associated with the colour question". Peregrino reported the tribulations of Coloured men both in the United States and in South Africa. In his opinion, the lynching of Negroes and other forms of brutality by Whites in the United States, which he reported regularly, were political acts, rather than (as was commonly claimed) retribution for sexual offences. Ill treatment in the Cape, Peregrino said, except in areas occupied by the Boers during the War, did not take as extreme a form, and could be seen in social and economic terms. The "insults and annoyances" to which Coloured men were subjected was a constant theme in the Spectator's columns and Peregrino justified the paper's existence by its constant raising of such issues: "the only tangible apology for the existence of a paper is to seek a redress for wrongs." Readers were asked whether they had been ill treated, and if they had they were to inform the Spectator. Most public services were critically viewed by the paper. The railway, whether its employees were alleged to have assaulted Coloured passengers, or to have been discourteous, or to have failed to provide refreshments for Coloured travellers, or whether it had ignored overcrowding on suburban lines to preponderantly Coloured neighbourhoods, or had given employment to White workers in preference to Coloured workers with better claims, was critically scrutinized. When Peregrino led a deputation of his own Coloured People's Vigilance Society to see the Cabinet Minister responsible for the railway, it was the Spectator which made the occasion a public event.

Peregrino's paper was equally critical of the Post Office. "There is probably no department of the Government", it observed, "about which as many complaints reach this office." There were reports, also, of Coloured people being ill treated by the police. The Coloured People's Vigilance Society was called upon to note "a shocking and almost incredible crop of gratuitous uncalled for assault", and there were, it asserted, other reports of assault and provocation by the police. Further, the Spectator reported its impression - an impression which it maintained was widely held - that one law existed for White and another for Coloured people. The impression was soon reinforced when the paper reported the passing of sentences, in two identical cases, where the Coloured offender was the more severely dealt with. Peregrino complained of the treatment of Coloured people in trams, and also pointed to a number of specific and general economic grievances. These centred around the lower wages paid to Coloured men when both Coloured and White men were employed to do the same task, or on the preference given to White men when a limited amount of employment was available.

To all these problems, Peregrino had ultimately one answer: "race pride". Coloured men were called upon to support the economic endeavours of other Coloured men, in an attempt to elevate themselves, and, at the same time, they were advised to purge themselves of vices which were degrading and permitted Whites to denigrate them. "So long as a man or woman of your race is in business, offers you the same goods, or labours at the same price as anybody else", the paper invoked, "it is your bounden duty to



patronise him or her", and this was followed by the Spectator's repeatedly recommending a number of Coloured businessmen. To advance the race, Coloured men were urged to make use of the services of a certain named restaurateur, confectioner, importer of boots and shoes, and of named carriage and coach painters, french-polishers, general dealers, grocers and tailors, a veterinary surgeon and horseshoer, and a Scotch car hirer. Such calls to trade with Coloured men were in addition to advertisements, apparently not related to copy in the advertising columns and often included admonitions like the following: "I am glad to see that Mr. Elhope, a young coloured man, has opened a fine up to date looking tailor shop in Hanover Street. We expect to see the people around him showing their race pride by patronising for charity begins at home." The obverse side of this "self help" campaign is expressed in the proposal to boycott a White undertaker with a large Coloured clientele who refused to advertise in the Spectator, asserting that Coloured men did not need a newspaper but needed rather to learn to work. Peregrino indignantly asked: "Is there not a Coloured man conducting a dying business?" A more positive aspect of Peregrino's economic nationalism was the welcome he gave to the formation of co-operative stores. In reporting their activities, he hailed them as a manifestation of "race pride".

"Race Pride" was not, however, to be served by economic advancement alone, and, while he was fulsome in his praise for those who took their economic opportunities, there was no length to which Peregrino would not go to condemn social behaviour which resulted in "disgusting sights" which were, he said, "a delight to the enemies of the race". Drunkenness, hooliganism, prostitution, gambling, high-spiritedness in public vehicles, and dandyism were denounced with puritanical zeal. There were too many gin shops in District Six, he thought. Those who did not work should not eat, and "pimps" should be "flogged" and then drowned. There were too many well dressed vagabonds, he thought; there was too much "foul language". Often his allusions to what he deemed the improper activities of Coloured men made the accused easily identifiable, and he was no respecter of station in his self-appointed role as moral guardian of the Coloured people. Even had his allegations always been accurate (and this was not the case), he would have been unpopular among the "respectable" Coloured people for whom his exhortations seemed to confirm the White stereotype. In the same way he himself was offended when the Cape Times suggested that all improper language heard in public emanated from Coloured people. It was probably because he had given offence that Peregrino was excluded when William Collins invited twenty influential Coloured men to form a political movement. Nevertheless, an examination of the list of office-holders in the African Political Organisation - the South Africa-wide body which emerged from the meeting - suggests that Peregrino had made an impact on the Coloured political scene. Even if his own Coloured Peoples' Vigilance Society was limited in its effect, it brought a number of Coloured men into organized politics. Among these were William Collins, founder and first president of the African Political Organisation, and P. J. Ekstein, secretary of the Organisation. Leading Stone members also played a prominent part in the founding of the A.P.O., and John Tobin and Thomas Makriel were, respectively, the Organisation's first vice-president and treasurer.

The A.P.O. decided, either at its inaugural meeting or at its first conference in 1903, that it would avoid attaching itself to any White political party and would give its support to "measures not men". The five objectives of the organization were stated to be the promotion of unity between the Coloured people of South Africa, the attainment of "better and higher" education for their children, the defence of the social, political and civil rights of the Coloured people, the registration of all Coloured people who were qualified for the parliamentary and municipal franchise, and the general advancement of the Coloured people in South Africa. The A.P.O. had no doubt about the way in which "general advancement" was to be achieved. An increase in education and the eradication of social evils, particularly alcoholism, were required. The provision of additional education for the coloured population was discussed at each of the early annual conferences of the organization. Besides urging the colonial Government to provide free education, the 1904 annual conference established a "tickey (threepenny) fund" to collect money for Coloured education. The question of limiting the availability of alcohol to Coloured people became more and more a preoccupation of the organization, although there was often disagreement on how this could be achieved. The disagreement centred on whether it was desirable that special legislation be enacted applying to Coloured people, and opponents of such proposals argued that the "Good Templars" were admitting to Coloured inferiority in inviting further group legislation. The Organisation made satisfactory progress, and by its second conference in 1904 claimed 24 branches and a membership of 2,000. Twelve new Cape branches were reported in 1905, and in 1906 the total number of Cape branches listed was forty one. Only one branch was said to have become defunct in the previous year.

The election campaign in 1903 and 1904 almost wrecked the organization before it had established itself, and the divisions which revealed themselves then probably continued until 1908. Division resulted from leading members ignoring the decision, taken at the inaugural meetings, that they were no longer to support White political parties without consulting each other. In September 1903, the General Executive called a conference of branches in the Western Circle to decide what role the Organisation should play in the forthcoming election. No agreement was reached and, after a lengthy discussion, it was decided to call a second conference to select candidates who would be given the Organisation's support. No arrangements were made to call such a meeting, and, although the Pniel branch wrote asking the General Executive why this urgent meeting was being delayed, the vice-president began canvassing all over the Colony for the Afrikaner Bond. In addition, the vice-president's own Cape Town branch, although divided on the decision, announced that it would support an independent candidate who was conspicuously hostile to the Progressive Party. Ultimately the long delayed second conference was called by the President of the A.P.O. and it was attended by the Pniel, Paarl, lower Paarl and Claremont (Cape Town) branches, which agreed to support Progressive candidates. The Cape Town branch, led by John Tobin, refused to attend the conference, claiming that it ought to have been called by the Secretary, and was therefore unconstitutional. Tobin added his own interpretation of the Constitution, which was that each branch of the organization was to use its own discretion in deciding which

candidates to support. In practice, the organization had been in existence for too short a period to make its writ run effectively.

John Tobin emerged as the most prominent Coloured leader during the campaign for the 1904 House of Assembly elections, and he travelled to most constituencies containing a sizable Coloured vote. He advised Coloured voters in Kimberley to support Independent candidates against the Progressives, in Caledon to oppose an Independent and support a Bondsman, and in Cape Town to vote Labour and oppose the Progressives. He visited Genadendal, where, by his own account, he was heckled by a local school-teacher but considered him an ineffectual adversary after some of the hecklers encountered at Stone meetings. Tobin urged the Stone to attack British policy in the Transvaal, and, by implication, the Progressive party, and he warned mission station audiences that they could not afford to vote against the Bond, since, with the exception of the situation in the large towns, Afrikaners provided the only source of employment. In Kimberley, where Tobin had successfully exploited the frustration created by British policy in the Transvaal, the "B" branch of the League had become defunct. Robert B. Pietersen, a former member, in attempting to revive the branch, acknowledged that many Coloured men had forsworn allegiance to the Progressives, because of the treatment they had received under martial law during the siege of Kimberley, because "disloyals" - Afrikaners - had been given preferential treatment over "loyals", and because of the unaltered status of Coloured people in the Transvaal. Tobin's propaganda, Pietersen claimed, had made Coloured people despair of the British, but his advice was for them to remember that they owed their emancipation to the British. If they must protest, they should do so in a constitutional way, he said, by voting Progressive. Many of the British in the Colony, he said, would put things right as they had done in the past when they thought wrong had been done. "Coloured men", he thought, "could still say: 'England, with all thy faults I love thee still.'"

Pietersen claimed that his "B" branch of the League was no longer in existence because the war had made political activities impossible, and in the unsettled conditions which followed the end of the war he had thought it advisable to remain silent. The branch, he said, had suffered the loss of its chairman, who had left Kimberley; and the prolonged illness and then death of its secretary had further delayed its revival. No such difficulty seems to have dogged the A.P.O. in Kimberley, where two branches (Kimberley and Beaconsfield) were active. Kimberley provided the General Secretary of the African Political Organisation, Matthew J. Fredericks, and the branch was led by D. Lender, who had broken with the League in 1898 and was made one of the vice-presidents of the A.P.O. at the 1904 Conference. The Beaconsfield branch played a prominent part in the anti-Chinese Labour Campaign.

The support given by John Tobin to the Bond and by William Collins to the Progressive Party rent the A.P.O. In Cape Town the branch was badly divided and a number of prominent members, including Roberts, Ekstein and Veldsman, resigned (although Veldsman became a member of the Pniel branch), and membership of other branches declined.



owing to the support given to white parties by the president and vice-president. The matter was discussed at the organization's 1904 Conference, where delegates finally agreed that the Constitution had not been violated, and an attempt was made to re-establish unity. D. Lenders proposed that "a friendly gathering should be called in the Western Province, and all the Branches there be present to help and solve the question of raising an amicable feeling amongst the aggrieved". But, in spite of the attempt at reconciliation, the rift which had been apparent in 1904 had widened considerably by 1905. In the intervening period Matthew Fredericks and Veldsman, leading one of the three factions within the A.P.O., contrived to depose the leaders of the two other rival factions. In recalling the episode in 1909, the A.P.O. made legitimate the coup, which, it admitted, might "under any other circumstances have been arbitrary, high-handed and perhaps altogether unjustifiable". Fredericks invited Dr. Abdurahman to become a member of the Organisation. Abdurahman, a medical practitioner, had considerable prestige because of his rare professional status. He had already made his mark in local politics (6) and had succeeded in becoming a Cape Town Councillor in 1904. Abdurahman agreed to join the A.P.O., was present at its 1905 Conference, and was elected President by acclamation. The conference expelled both Tobin and Collins from the Organisation. Tobin retreated to the Stone, where he was enthusiastically received and where he stated that, since he saw the continued need for unity among Coloured people, he would not ask his followers to leave the A.P.O. He denied that he had deserved the treatment he had received, but was willing to "bear obloquy for the time" in the belief that he would return to public life with greater success than in the past. Tobin had some support in branches of the A.P.O. other than Cape Town. The Somerset Strand branch passed a vote of no confidence in Dr. Abdurahman and affirmed its confidence in the deposed leader. In 1906 Izwi, commenting on the state of Coloured organizations, declared that, while the A.P.O. was the most representative of these, the Stone was the "legitimate opposition".

Hostility among Coloured men in the Cape to British policy toward non-Whites in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony did not decline with the 1904 election, but became instead more intense as it emerged that the franchise would not be extended to Coloured men in those Colonies with the introduction of representative institutions. In March 1905, before he became president of the African Political Organisation, Dr. Abdurahman had refused to sign a farewell address to Lord Milner from the Cape Town City Council. At a meeting of Coloured men in Cape Town Abdurahman condemned Milner for leaving South Africa with the rights of Coloured men at a lower ebb than when he had come. At the A.P.O.'s 1906 Conference, Dr. Abdurahman warned the White population of a growing feeling of discontent among Coloured men and said that the sooner this was recognized the better it would be for the country. Abdurahman's hostility to British policy took a new form in a generalized criticism of the British Empire. This was a considerable change, for Coloured leaders had previously referred to the Empire as a liberal and emancipating institution. Though Dr. Abdurahman did not maintain the position with any consistency, it signified much that he gave it public expression. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the British Empire (84%, Dr. Abdurahman told the Conference) were governed in "a more or less

despotical manner". The ritual obeisance to the emancipators was made, but added to it was the statement that "a powerful section of men in the north had returned to the days of slavery". Coloured people could be proud of the Empire, he said, but "race pride and a greed for gold" had made a wretched place of South Africa. Never in the history of the Empire had the flag covered such deeds. Conditions in the Cape were better than in the two new Colonies. In the Cape they had, at least, constitutional methods of expressing their grievances, but even in the Cape the maxim of equal rights for all civilized men was being forgotten.

The representative constitution proposed for the Transvaal by the Conservative Colonial Secretary, Alfred Lyttleton, in 1905, provided the A.P.O. with a focus for its energies. A petition was drafted, to be sent to the King, protesting against the denial of franchise rights to his Coloured subjects in the Transvaal. The A.P.O. was aware, the petition stated, that one of the provisions of the Peace of Vereeniging of 1902 laid down that "the question of granting the franchise to natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government", but, it submitted, this referred "only to aboriginal natives, and not to such Coloured subjects of our Majesty as your petitioners claim to represent". John Tobin refused to co-operate with the A.P.O. in collecting signatures for this petition because it made this distinction between African and Coloured men. It is probable, however, that Dr. Abdurahman chose to limit the Organisation's attention to the Coloured franchise for tactical reasons only. As early as 1903 Imvo had congratulated Dr. Abdurahman for his defence of African rights, and he was to show that he could bring his organization to collaborate with Africans. Africans were, in fact, invited to send representatives to accompany the deputation, but the state of African organizations appears to have been such that they were unable to make the necessary arrangements. The political relationship between Coloured and African groups was considered at the fifth annual conference of the A.P.O. early in January 1907, and it became apparent that the issue could be divisive. A resolution, placed before the conference on its second day, stated that it was "in the interests of South Africa in general, that a better understanding be arrived at between the various races of South Africa", though the mover of the resolution, W. J. Foster of East London, stated explicitly that he did not intend that "European Whites" should be included in the scope of his motion. From the abbreviated minutes it is clear that the resolution was met with some hostility. There were those who thought that if co-operation was required Africans should approach the A.P.O. One delegate argued that, since an African organization existed, co-operation would not be necessary until a specific issue might arise. Another delegate saw the need to "keep the line" between "the coloured man and the native", while the delegate who objected to "muddling with Kaffirs" was more explicit still. Those supporting the resolution gave different reasons for doing so. One delegate proposed that they throw a rope to "help up the native", while another felt that the superior efforts of Africans in the educational field meant that "the kaffir is a vital force" and thought that their organization ought to "be careful not to force a combination of the kaffir with the white man to crush the coloured man". Abdurahman closed the discussion in a way which suggested that he was attempting to evade the issue. The motion before the conference, he stated, was "virtually embodied" in the first

article of their constitution, which sought "the promotion of unity between the Coloured races of British South Africa". The issue was not easily put aside, however, and the Kimberley branch raised the question in another form. It was in the organization's interests, the branch insisted, that a "definite and clear policy should be adopted by the organization with regard to its attitude towards the aboriginal natives of South Africa". The Kimberley branch permitted Africans to become members, the mover stated, but he believed that other branches were opposed to this, and he sought the conference's opinion. (7) Abdurahman would not allow discussion, stating that no more was involved than an interpretation of the constitution, and that the executive would provide a ruling. If such a ruling were to prove unacceptable, than it would be possible for the constitution to be amended. It is not clear from minutes of conferences before 1910 how the matter was settled. (8), but the opportunity to co-operate with Africans came late in 1907 when A. K. Soga issued an invitation to African and Coloured leaders of all political persuasions to attend an electoral convention. Among the Coloured men invited were Abdurahman and John Tobin. The conference was intended to increase the influence of non-White voters in the 1908 General Election, and its organizer had announced in advance that the conference would not pledge its support to any of the political parties. Abdurahman accepted the invitation, but Tobin did not; the convention ended with the endorsing of the Progressive Party. Abdurahman was widely criticized for inconsistency (by the South African Party and its newspapers, at least) but the A.P.O., at its 1908 congress, showed itself willing to follow its president, and the organization pledged itself to the Progressive, now Unionist, Party. The accusation levelled against Dr. Abdurahman was largely the result of his having supported Professor Freemantle, the South African Party candidate, in a Uitenhage by-election in 1906. Uitenhage had a large Coloured electorate and Abdurahman's assistance must have been important, if not crucial, in his return. But Freemantle's liberal credentials were well established and Abdurahman could argue with conviction that he was, in that instance, supporting a candidate rather than a party. Abdurahman's decision to support the Progressive Party at the Queenstown Convention might be seen as no different from the similar actions taken by Collins and Tobin in 1903. The difference, however, lay in Abdurahman's ability to command support within his organization for almost any decision he took. It should be noted that Tobin, having refused to attend Soga's conference, joined forces with Jabavu at Debe Nek in January 1908 and agreed to support the South African Party.

The main issue for the Coloured electorate in 1908 was Federation. At the 1907 A.P.O. Conferences Abdurahman had noted that Coloured people "looked with suspicion on Federation, for they did not know how they would come out of the mill". Dr. Jameson, he said, had "somewhat dispoiled" their fear by the statement that there would be no tampering with their rights of franchise, but they did not know, he said, what the position would be for Coloured men in the North, and he feared that the Northern colonies would try to remove franchise rights from Coloured men in the Cape. "Our Government", he said, "will have to see to it that no change is made in our rights by the Federal Parliament".



Jameson was not alone in his assurances to the Coloured voters. All the major politicians of both White parties, as we have seen, insisted that they would not sacrifice the Cape's franchise qualifications in attempting to create an association with the other South African territories. For the Coloured voters, therefore, the 1908 election seemed to reveal a consensus among the leaders of the White parties about non-White political rights. The non-White vote was far less important at this election than it had been in 1898 and 1904, and yet White parties pledged themselves to its maintenance. During the 1908 election campaign, Dr. Abdurahman seemed to recognize that a form of closer association was inevitable, and he justified his support for the Progressive Party in part because it favoured federation rather than the union which he believed was sought by the South African Party. If Federation were adopted, Abdurahman predicted, each of the Colonies would maintain its existing policies towards non-Whites and, while the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony could continue their policy of "persecution", the Cape could maintain its policy of "justice and fair-play". In this way the people in the northern Colonies would be shown "which was the right policy and which was the wrong one". Abdurahman then went on to stress the need for more education for the Coloured population, and opposed making alcohol easily available. He argued that the South African Party, dominated as it was by the Bond, which in its turn was "ruled by the brandy farmer", would make more liquor available to the Coloured population.

The 1908 election brought the South African Party to office in the Cape, which hastened the negotiations for closer association between the South African States. The Convention which drafted the South African constitution agreed to union in preference to federation, and maintained the Cape non-Whites on the voters' roll but without giving them the right to seek election to the South African Parliament. The A.P.O., in response to these decisions, organized a mass petition and sent a deputation to Britain, in the hope of persuading the British Parliament to amend the offending clauses in the draft Constitution. Although the deputation failed in its purpose, the activity in the A.P.O. which preceded and followed its going was sufficient to make apparent that the organization had gained a mass following quite beyond that of any other non-White body prior to 1910. That such a following existed is apparent from its achievements. Its ability to raise money for many varied activities was most impressive. Between April 1909 and April 1910 it undertook two major and several minor projects requiring the collection of considerable sums of money. Most important among these were the launching of a twice-monthly newspaper, the A.P.O., and the sending of the deputation to England. The Organisation not only raised the necessary £661 to finance the voyage of three delegates, but found its fund for the purpose oversubscribed by £22. It had been decided, at the 1909 conference of the organization, to distribute a thousand collection cards, each collection card having twenty-four places for contributors' names. The papers, in attempting to estimate the number of contributors, suggested that, had each card been only half filled, there would have been 12,000 contributors. Its estimate does not seem over-optimistic, but were it reduced by half, the return would yet suggest remarkable effort among a very poor population in a time of economic depression.

Its second major financial and organizational undertaking, the bi-monthly newspaper, was started in June 1909. Members were called upon to sell the paper and raise contributions to make up the difference between the paper's costs and its income. At the end of its first year the newspaper fund showed receipts of £465 and an expenditure of £451. It is probable that the greater part of the money received was not from sales but from contributions collected by the A.P.O.'s branches, for the paper's income exceeded its expenditure by £13. in its first year, and that this income did not come from sales is clear from the fact that its marketing agents owed the paper £200. There was constant call from the A.P.O. executive for financial support for the paper, and, as brief reports from branch minutes show, the response was lively.

Between June 1909 and June 1910 the A.P.O. published summarized minutes of meetings which were provided by 96 branches or sub-branches. The A.P.O. executive reported to the 1910 conference that 32 branches either had been started for the first time or had been revived. There were 42 branches represented at the 1910 conference in Port Elizabeth, including 12 of the newly established or re-established branches. Since Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape, was a long way from the main areas of Coloured settlement in the Western and North-Western districts of the colony, it was not possible for all branches to finance delegates to the conference. In addition, finding suitably qualified delegates, who could take time off from work, presented difficulties of representation. The limited number of branch reports published, together with incomplete branch representation, might appear to suggest neither enthusiasm nor activity at branch level, yet branches were extremely active. The Beaufort West branch, for example, though it could not afford to send a delegate to the Conference and sent only five reports to the A.P.O. during the paper's first year of publication, held 42 meetings in that year, sold 60 copies of each issue of the A.P.O., and could claim an income of £17.14s.3d. against an expenditure of £14.10s.3d.

Five types of activity may then be distinguished among A.P.O. branches. There was the maintaining of interest and support among existing members, and the recruiting of new members; related to this was the effort of established branches to start new branches in nearby towns, villages and rural areas. There were, thirdly, the variety of efforts made to raise the political awareness of members and to extend such awareness to the Coloured population in general. Related to this, in its turn, was the fourth type of branch activity, which involved the discussion of local grievances, the provision of spokesmen for the aggrieved, and the consideration of ways in which to deal with grievances. Fifthly, there was fund raising. Although fund raising might be seen as part of all other activities, it is apparent that during 1909 and 1910 it became an end in itself, and was seen as a way of coping with all political problems.

To maintain their existing membership and to recruit new members to their branches, the A.P.O. employed a variety of techniques. There were few branches which did not report that their

chairmen had urged regular attendance at branch meetings and assert that this attendance was an essential duty if the Coloured peoples' political position was to be improved. When attendances were high, a self-congratulatory note is apparent in branch reports, and when they were low reports reveal a considerable indulgence in self-criticism. "Here in Piquetberg", the chairman of the local branch is reported to have observed with satisfaction, "the Organisation was making great strides because the people saw that their salvation lay in unity at all times." The Graaf Reinet branch, it was reported, hoped "that Coloured people will do their duty", while the Dordrecht branch was urged on with the reminder that "organisation has overwhelmed an omnipotent oligarch before today". In Claremont, members were reminded of the dates of regular meetings, and in Indwe the chairman considered that "members had in the past failed to do their duty". The need for every Coloured man to be a member of the organisation was urged in Somerset East and, in Wellington, God "willed" their unity. Cardock, on the other hand, felt "a want of spirit and unity" and branch members were scolded, not for lack of attendance but for ignoring resolutions. After discussing "momentous topics", important resolutions were "easily made, but not observed. We say much and do little". The Murraysburg branch chairman complained that "in the case of a few" "negligence" had "taken the place of activity", and Port Elizabeth members debated "ways and means of improving the work of this branch". In Goodwood, it was the chairman's lack of diligence which was condemned for having weakened the branch, and after he had failed to attend four consecutive meetings he was declared to have vacated his office. The chairman of the Bellville branch urged members to take an interest in the working of the Organisation as a whole and of their branch in particular, and the Riversdale chairman, having noted with "sorrow" that the number of those in attendance at branch meetings was very small, suggested a "house-to-house visitation with a view of getting more people to join the Organisation". Two weeks later, he again had "occasion to remark on the very meagre attendance of members". They were urged to "keep together and attend the meetings of the branch regularly", so that when it became necessary for them to decide on any question they would, from their "knowledge gained by attending the meeting be able to form a right opinion". To cope with the problem of poor attendance, the Maitland branch proposed the imposition of a fine of three pence on every member who absented himself from three consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse. The Klipdam branch made a similar proposal, but without giving its members so much as three meetings grace, and it was suggested, though not agreed, that the fine should be five shillings.

Obviously, branches found it easier to offer inducements for regular attendance than to impose fines or sanctions upon the negligent, for their activities included a wide range of entertainments, which were often occasion for fund-raising, and which brought both members and non-members to branch meetings. Debates and discussions were popular, and it was the practice of many branches to intersperse their business with poetry recitals and singing. In addition, most branches held regular "tea-meetings", concerts and bazaars, which attracted new members. (9)



The larger branches undertook more specialized forms of recruiting and sent their members to the surrounding districts with the purpose of establishing branches or sub-branches. Usually a leading member of a branch called a meeting of interested persons and outlined the aims and objects of the A.P.O. Initiators supplied techniques or organization in areas where the only local association was the church, where leadership was in White hands. Thus, Barkly West helped to form branches at Gong-Gong and Longlands, Wellington to form a branch at Riebeck West, and Paarl to form branches at Southern Paarl and Groot Drakenstein; Riversdale sent emissaries to "spread the work of the organisation" to Melkherdfontein, Mossel Bay, Herbertsdale and Vogel Vlei. Graaf Reinet started a branch in Petersburg and Worcester a branch in de Doorns. Knysna, Outshoorn, Port Elizabeth and Zoar began branches in Plettenburg Bay, Matjies Rivier, Armoed, Humansdorp and Calitzdorp. Cape Town started branches in Princess Montague within its own first year. A Barkly West member, having toured Griqualand West, found "The people were all heart and soul with the Organisation but they always complain of lack of leaders locally to establish a branch".

The draft Union constitution caused very widespread dismay among Coloured people, and when it became certain that it would not be altered a new interest was shown in the A.P.O. Its many branches took advantage of the new mood to advocate unity among Coloured people and an improvement in the efficiency of the A.P.O. - a task in which branches were aided by the organisation's own newspaper. Branches read extracts from the A.P.O. and other newspapers at branch meetings, to help those who were illiterate or who could not read English. The paper had the most important effect of making branches mutually aware, so that those interacted not with the centre only but with each other also. "Our Newspaper is taking on very well", the Murraysburg branch reported, "as it brings us in touch with our fellow men and other Branches. We are now able to voice our own feelings through the medium of our own paper", while the Cala branch observed that, as a result of the A.P.O. they "heard of one another and knew one another as a nation". The paper was thought to be of paramount political importance - conference after conference had urged its inception - and one of the major tasks of branches came to be the sustaining of the newspaper. The Uitenhage branch reported in its minutes: "The 'A.P.O.' is a paper that has come to stay." At present it was their "coloured babe" but, used properly, the report commented, Coloured people would "live to bless the day it was born". The central leadership in Cape Town constantly urged members to sell the paper and collect money to enable the paper to survive, and the branches responded by making the selling and financing of the A.P.O. one of their major tasks. While some branches reported that they found it difficult to sell the papers because so many Coloured people were illiterate, others reported that they were able to sell all those which they received, or that they had enrolled new subscribers. Some branches asked for their quota of papers to be increased, while many spent a good deal of time discussing how they could increase its circulation or raise funds for the A.P.O.

All branches organized lectures and debates, and typical subjects were the history of Coloured education in the Cape, the

history of the Coloured people in the Cape, the Englishman as a "barbarian" at the time of the Roman invasion, and the status and political rights of Coloured men in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal. All debates were intended to raise the political awareness of branch members. Civil liberties of Coloured men in the Cape and their fitness for political privileges, the dangers of alcoholism and the value of education for improving their claim to participation in the political life of the country, were also regular subjects for debate. Many branches held public meetings at which the implications of the coming unification of South Africa were discussed. There was widespread support for the movement to boycott the celebrations which most town councils had planned to mark the creation of the new state, on the 31st May, 1910. Prayer meetings were held by many branches where members prepared themselves for the difficult task of working for increased political rights in the forthcoming Union of South Africa. The esteem in which Dr. Abdurahman was held was constantly exploited by chairmen and other local leaders as a means of increasing political awareness. Members were urged to emulate Dr. Abdurahman and to give him the support which the sacrifices he made on their behalf required of them. The Barkly West delegate was reported to have said that "the crowning work of the Conference" was the presidential address of "their trusty leader", Dr. Abdurahman. He had never listened to "a more eloquent address nor to sounder advice". He trusted that "every man and woman, whether a member of the A.P.O. or not, would get the address and study it carefully". The address showed, he said, that their President was "a leader". If they followed his advice, he had "no anxiety as to the future of the people". (10)

Branches did not limit their activities to national issues. A great deal of attention was paid to local grievances, and attempts were made to make provision for those facilities not provided by local authorities or churches. Branches discussed the ways in which Coloured men were harassed by local regulations such as curfew laws. Some branches attempted to intervene with employers on behalf of their members, as in the case of the Port Elizabeth branch, which complained about White foremen in many firms who ill treated the non-Whites who worked under them. The Knysna branch petitioned the government for land to establish a settlement, and complained that its wood-cutting members had to buy wood from one department - the Department of Agriculture - cut sleepers, and send them at their own expense to a second government department - the Department of Railways - which then often rejected the sleepers as unsuitable. The Kimberley branches helped Coloured diamond prospectors to form their own association to protect themselves against White prospectors. The Uniondale branch publicized the fact that one of its members had been refused a licence to trade as a general dealer, and the Piquetburg branch complained to the authorities about the ill treatment of Coloured prisoners in the local gaol; the Mount Frere branch pointed out that land promised to Coloured men in the district by the Cape Government before 1880 had not yet been provided. The recurrent local complaint, however, concerned education. Branches complained either that local teachers were not sufficiently qualified to prepare pupils for public examinations or that missionaries refused to provide more than elementary schooling, or that no schools existed in certain districts. In some cases branches proposed the purchasing of land and the establishment of schools, or the creation of funds for sending children abroad to be educated. (11)

Fund raising was a major activity of the A.P.O. branches, and it was widely believed that if the organization were wealthy this would somehow change the nature of the political situation. A statement made by a member of the Lower Paarl branch, on the eve of Union, expressed regret that the A.P.O. had been formed so late in the day, because, had it been started earlier and had every member "contributed sixpence monthly", it "would today have had many thousands of pounds that could have been devoted to the interests of the Coloured people". (12) The very considerable sum collected to send the delegation to Britain and the fund which contributed to the maintenance of the newspaper have been noted, but there were other funds. Each branch was required to send a "capitation tax" to the central organization. In addition, all branches had internal funds. Lower Paarl, after the first eight months of its existence, could boast an internal fund amounting to £26, and others collected between £8 and £25 for their own use. There were other standing or ad hoc funds: there was the "tickey fund" to welcome the delegation returning from Britain, and the funds established by most branches for the financing of delegates to annual conferences; the 1910 A.P.O. conference agreed to establish a Coloured Peoples' Protection Fund, and individual branches established their own funds for education; in addition, some branches gave their secretaries, or other officials, small honorariums which made necessary the collection of additional money. It is difficult to avoid the impression that fund raising displaced political activity for much of the time. It is paradoxical that the activity which created an impression of widespread support for the organization should have weakened its political functions, but a political movement, no matter how well organized, could do little to implement its radical programme when its members were not themselves radical, and when the society in which they lived was extremely stable. Although the social structure created frustration, which the content of political debate constantly revealed, the forms which opposition took were limited by the Cape's Parliamentary institutions and by the participation which these permitted. Nothing symbolizes the weakness of the A.P.O. as much as the discussions held in many of its branches just before the establishment of Union, where it was agreed that W. P. Schreiner ought to be nominated for one of the Senate seats set aside for White members who were acquainted with the needs of the non-White population.



Notes

[I have omitted most references in an attempt to reduce the bulk of an overlong paper. For those who are interested in my sources, these can be found in my White Conflict & non-White Participation in the Politics of the Cape of Good Hope 1853-1910.]

- (1) C. of G.H. G6-1892 pp. 124-5 and G19-1905 p. 161. Census returns 1891 and 1904. Because different criteria were used to enumerate Khoi-Khoi and other Coloured people in the two censuses, the two categories have been combined. The separate figures read:

	<u>1891</u>	<u>1904</u>
Khoi-Khoi	8,299	23,313
Other Coloured Groups	<u>97,973</u>	<u>160,335</u>
	<u>106,272</u>	<u>183,648</u>

- (2) The South African Spectator's obsession with the activities of those who were not "respectable" was part of its attempt to create a national pride among Coloured people who were indiscriminately placed by most Whites among an undifferentiated mass. The report, in the A.P.O. (the newspaper of the African Political Organisation) of the funeral of a Coloured man is typical of the tone of the period: "The Branch lost in the death of Mr. Carl Sampson, one of its most unselfish and indefatigable workers, who for the last seven years was Superintendent of Maitland Municipal Sanitary Station. He was buried on Tuesday afternoon, and the fact that white as well as coloured attended the funeral is proof of the high respect he had gained among the people." A.P.O., November 20 1909. The 1937 Commission on the Cape Coloured population of the Union, U.G. 54/37, which included the Coloured leader Dr. Abdurahman among its members, was careful in its Report to exclude the "better class", and the "better artisan class", from many of its strictures (p. 22, para. 82).
- (3) South African Spectator complained of advertisements which read: "Wanted, a Coloured Carpenter" or "Wanted, a Coloured Bricklayer". The paper thought the advertisement should read "wanted a carpenter; competence indispensable, no objection to colour". Implied in the advertisement for Coloured craftsmen were lower rates of pay. In general, Coloured tradesmen were paid lower wages than their white equivalents. Spectator, June 29 1901. This practice was resented by White workers, and while some saw the need to organize Coloured workers into Trade Unions, others sought to exclude Coloured men from their trades. The Plasterers Union of Cape Town forbade its members to work "on a scaffold with a Coloured man or Malay under pain of fine". South African Spectator, March 23 1901.

- (4) A.P.O., June 18 1910. The A.P.O. had made a more direct reference to de Villiers' ancestry the previous year, in a satirical column called "Straatpraatjes" (Street Small-Talk). "Straatpraatjes", though less subtle, owed something to Peter Finlay Dunne's Mr. Dooley. The accents and dialect of the characters were conveyed phonetically, in a mixture of English and anglicised Afrikaans, while the paper itself was written in correct English and Dutch. Pointing to the Chief Justice, Piet Uithalder and his friend Stoffel discuss de Villiers: "Wie's darie bruine eu vraa ik ve Stoffel. O hij is de Chief Justice. Ma hoor hij is geve brand. As hij kan pas veer en of European descent da is Stoffel e volle Scotsman, maskie is sij ma e bruine vrou. Moenie so hart praat nie kerel. Aans hoor sij vriende en sij families vat jij se." ("Who is that brown bloke I ask Stoffel. O he is the Chief Justice. But listen here he is altogether tanned. If he can pass as one of European descent then Stoffel is a pure Scotsman, maybe his mother is a brown woman. Don't talk so loud, man. Otherwise his friends and his family will hear what you say.")
- (5) C. of G.H. G9-1905. p. cxi, op. cit.
- (6) He had spoken (in "refined accent") during Effendi's 1894 election meetings. Cape Argus, January 24 1894.
- (7) When an attempt was made in 1901 to form a branch of Peregrino's Coloured People's Vigilance Society in Kimberley, it was decided to restrict membership to Coloured people. The Spectator reported that the initiators of the branch, M. F. Krull and J. La Vite, had stated that in "all past societies" it had been noticed that where the Cape Coloured man and the native came into contact in a meeting, the colour question was always preached and the business of the evening took a very secondary place. It was therefore decided that although "they worked for the same object" it was "expedient and to the interests of the coloured people generally that the coloured Afrikander people hold their meeting separate to the native".
- (8) The A.P.O. reported on May 7, 1910, that members of the Port Elizabeth branch of the A.P.O. had held a public meeting of "Natives and Coloured people" at Vee Plaats in an attempt to start a branch; several of those present asked if the A.P.O. worked in "conjunction with the South African Native Convention". In reply, one of the Port Elizabeth branch stated that their aims and objects were identical.
- (9) A far from complete list of these activities might include: a concert, a public meeting and entertainments in Stellenbosch, a bazaar in Oudtshoorn, a debate on education in Middleburgh and another in Tulbach (A.P.O., June 19 1909); a debate on alcohol in Wellington, debates on sport in Maitland and Carnarvon, and on education for girls in Aliwal North (A.P.O., July 17); "socials" in Aliwal North and Somerset West, and a debate on alcohol in Pniel (A.P.O., July 31); concerts in Paarl and Claremont and a tea-meeting in Maitland (A.P.O., September 11); debates on education in Middleburgh and Maitland, and a debate in Maitland

on tobacco (A.P.O., September 25); a tea-meeting in Claremont, a reception in Kimberley for delegates returned from England, and a lecture and choruses in Oudtshoorn (A.P.O., October 9); a ball in Mossel Bay to celebrate the anniversary of the branch, tea-meetings in Graaf Reinet and Herbertsdale (the former to commemorate the emancipation of slaves) (A.P.O., January 15 1910); a debate on temperance in Saron (A.P.O., January 29); a dance in Winterton (A.P.O., March 26); a tea-meeting in Parow (A.P.O., April 9); a dance in Mossel Bay and a concert in Riversdale (A.P.O., April 23); a tea-meeting and concert in Knysna and, in Tulbach, a tea-meeting, a debate, recitations and singing. Most branches organized sports meetings also, but the Wellington branch, in its single-minded dedication to games, appears to have left time for little else. An extract from its very sustained deliberations on the establishment of a Coloured Sports Ground indicates this concern: "Since our last report matters have been proceeding very briskly. Our local executive worked with might and main to get the new Coloured Sports Ground enclosed and planted all round with trees. This is now an accomplished fact, and cost us over £20, roughly speaking, though the fencing (wire) is only temporary, as a more substantial one will be substituted later on by a kei apple hedge. Many thanks are due to our generous town councillors! The ground is under the central [committee?] and vested in the power of the trustees of the local branch. A special Sports Committee (A.P.O. members) has been appointed for the purpose of general supervision and arranging fixtures with the Sporting clubs and reporting such matters to the executive of the branch." A.P.O., October 9 1909.

- (10) A.P.O., July 3 1909. The chairman of the Goodwood branch "reminded our people to look upon Dr. Abdurahman as our great leader (A.P.O., July 17 1909). In Salt River "the speaker went on to make mention of Dr. Abdurahman in terms of great praise, styling him as their great leader". Similar statements were made in Uitenhage and Swellendam (A.P.O., July 31); in Wellington (A.P.O., January 1910); in Claremont, Paarl and Riversdale (A.P.O., April 23, 1910); and in Indwe (A.P.O., June 5 1910). In Elliot, the Chairman told the branch "we must also thank Almighty God that he has sent Dr. Abdurahman as leader of the coloured races in South Africa" (A.P.O., April 23, 1910); in Tulbagh, it was reported that members were told "They should thank God that he had given them a man like the Doctor to lead them in their political life" (A.P.O., May 7 1910); and in Graaf Reinet it was said that, "with a man like Dr. Abdurahman at the head of affairs, there is nothing to fear". The extent of the support which members of the organization gave Dr. Abdurahman is indicated by an incident which occurred during the 1910 Conference, when nominations for president were called for. According to the A.P.O., "At least a dozen delegates jumped up simultaneously and proposed the President, Dr. Abdurahman. Great confusion arose, and it was impossible to decide who was first on his feet". A.P.O., May 21 1910.

- (11) The Ceres Road branch members debated whether to buy the land for the school and build later when they could afford it, or to pay for the ground in instalments and build the school immediately. It decided upon the latter.



- (12) A.P.O., May 21 1910. The Lower Paarl branch, which refused to celebrate Union day, was, as a result, refused permission to use the school-room in which it had always held its meetings. It responded by building a meeting house of its own for £325.  
A.P.O., July 2 1910.