

THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN - A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANIZATION,
LEADERSHIP, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND THE TRANSVAAL

by

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One noticeable absence in Leo Kuper's standard work on the 1952 defiance campaign (1) is a detailed regional examination. Although there are many features of the campaign, some of which will be referred to, that were common to all regions, there are also marked dissimilarities. In this paper, only the two principal areas of resistance, the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal, are considered. Within these confines, attention is focused initially on certain basic interacting factors which seem to influence the pattern of the campaign, then on the forms of resistance organization, the nature of the leadership and, finally, the range of rank and file participation.

Resistance in the Eastern Cape was far more widely distributed than in the Transvaal (2) and subject to less control from the provincial defiance headquarters. One of the variables accounting for this is the different pattern of urban settlement in the two provinces. (3) Within a thirty-five mile radius of Johannesburg are the ten most populous towns in the province, and these constituted the main centres of resistance activity there. (4) By contrast, the two principal urban complexes and places of defiance in the Eastern Cape, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and East London, are approximately one hundred and ninety miles apart by road; next to these in size are Queenstown, Grahamstown, and other centres, scattered from fifty to one hundred and fifty miles from either of the two major foci. The juxtaposition and ease of communication in the two provinces between the urban and reserve areas differ considerably. In general, interchange in the Eastern Cape was fairly easy and on a wide scale, which was of major importance to the spread of resistance to the rural parts of the Province in 1952.

Significant differences occur, too, in the nature of the urban African population of the two regions. The presence on the Rand of members of all the principal ethnic and linguistic groups living in South Africa, and many from outside its borders (5), contrasts sharply with the position in the Eastern Cape, where, in the main centres, Africans are almost entirely Xhosa speaking, coming from within the Eastern Cape, an area which has been their home for generations. (6) Certainly, within the Xhosa there was a fundamental division of life style between the so-called "Red" and "School" people, but this did not prevent resistance leaders in the

Eastern Cape making use of the common Xhosa identity and traditions of the majority of the African people in the region when encouraging involvement in the campaign. (7)

The varying pattern from one area of the country to another of African involvement in non-traditional political activities may help to account for different levels of participation in the campaign. Africans in the Eastern Cape, especially in the Ciskei, had a long history of association with the "modern" political sphere. (8) This is demonstrated by their involvement, notably from the 1870s, in the procedures for electing members of parliament. Interestingly, the Fingo, who comprised the first Cape African voters, form a major element of the population of the Peddie district, which was an important centre of resistance during the campaign and by far the most significant area of rural opposition. Other centres, too, in the Ciskei played a prominent defiance rôle. (9) To electoral experience may be added that acquired through participation, for example, in Vigilance Associations, the I.C.U., and the A.N.C. The extent and continuity of politicization from these and other sources should not be unduly stressed any more than the importance of these antecedents in acting as a catalyst to resistance in the Eastern Cape in 1952, but, certainly, in trying to assess why the campaign achieved the level of participation it did in that area, the factor of the deep rooted political culture of the Xhosa/Fingo peoples cannot be ignored. (10)

It is impossible to be more precise about the significance of African political experience in the Transvaal to levels of resistance participation in 1952. The contribution of bodies such as the I.C.U., the A.N.C., and the Communist Party to African political education and experience, particularly in the urban areas, was considerable though possibly on an even more intermittent basis than in the Eastern Cape. In the rural districts of the two provinces, the divergence in experience was most marked and the apparent lack of involvement in the "modern" political sphere of some rural African communities in the Transvaal may well have contributed to their non-participation in the campaign.

Finally, the organization and character of the campaign was affected by certain laws and regulations which did not apply equally in the two Provinces. In Port Elizabeth, at the beginning of the campaign, there was, for example, no influx control imposed on Africans wishing to enter urban areas, nor were they subject to curfew regulations. In general, there appears to have been less restriction on non-White political activity in the Eastern Cape than in the urban or rural districts of the Transvaal. At the same time, relative to Africans in the Transvaal, those in the Eastern Cape were threatened with a greater loss of rights and this may have acted as an additional spur to resistance. (11) The contrasting factors considered above were not so important as to prevent a common recognition amongst non-White leaders in these and the other provinces that joint action was required to demonstrate their intense opposition to the steadily more repressive set of rules by which the country was governed, but they may suggest why, in certain respects, the campaign displayed considerable regional differences.

Reading Feit (12), one has the impression that the A.N.C. was divided against itself, split horizontally and vertically into units which scarcely communicated with one another. But to what extent is this borne out by a study of the organizational network supporting the defiance campaign in the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal? (13) Any such examination must clearly not only take account of the formal structure of the Congresses - an aspect to which Feit perhaps gives undue attention - but also to the extensive web of ad hoc, personal contacts at and between all levels.

In both the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal, the organization (14) of the campaign was a combined operation, relying not only on the support of activists involved primarily with the "parent" Congresses but also those more heavily engaged with the Youth and Women's Leagues, and, to a limited extent, other associations outside the ambit of the Congresses.

The Youth Leagues (15), as distinct bodies, were particularly active in Johannesburg, where their organizations were mobilized to produce and circulate propaganda, to distribute welfare supplies, and to encourage people to volunteer as resisters. In the Eastern Cape, the assistance of the A.N.C. Youth League, per se, in contributing to the organization of the campaign was very limited except in East London. In Port Elizabeth, members of the League did contribute to the administration of the defiance movement, but as individuals. (16)

There is a dearth of detailed information about the activities, during the Defiance Campaign, of the A.N.C. Women's Leagues, parallel Indian Congress organizations, and other women's associations which may have played an important role in the mobilization of volunteers, finance, and welfare supplies for the campaign. The 1952 annual conference of the Transvaal A.N.C. Women's League resolved to recruit three thousand women volunteers which at least indicates an intended organizational function (17), and Congress activists, interviewed, have referred to women's fund raising and welfare activities both in the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal.

Both the Congress Youth and Women's associations, for the most part, appear to have followed Mandela's call to the A.N.C. Youth League to place themselves "entirely at the disposal of our national organizations". (18)

Outside the Congresses, very small scale assistance was received from non-White trade unions in the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape. (19) Although many unionists were active in the campaign in the two regions, it was almost always in their individual capacities. However, the Coloured Trade Union Political Action Committee, based in Johannesburg, under James Phillips, was apparently responsible for mobilizing the few Coloured resisters in the Transvaal. Another possible arena for securing support for the campaign, particularly in the Eastern Cape, was that of the

churches. The African Inter-Denominational Ministers' Federation gave a clear lead at a conference in August 1952, when it was agreed, unanimously, to link with the A.N.C. in "the struggle for African freedom". (20) It would be of interest to elicit detailed information about the function, if any, of the African separatist churches in the campaign: Kuper suggests that it was not significant (21), but this question and that of the rôle of non-Congress women's organizations require further study before arriving at definite conclusions.

With the exception of women's groups outside the Congresses, and the Churches, the defiance organization throughout South Africa was under the formal aegis of the National Action Council. (22) This comprised four Africans and three Indians nominated by and from their respective Congress Executives. (23) The majority of members were probably from Johannesburg, where the Council met monthly and sometimes at less frequent intervals. Between these meetings there will have been informal contacts, notably amongst Council members resident in, or near, the City. Effectively, they constituted a working committee. The functions of the Action Council seem to have been confined largely to approving occasional major policy decisions and to reviewing the progress of the campaign; it also provided a forum for contact between leaders operating in various parts of the country. Whether it was a source of much original thought is questionable; more likely, it was primarily a ratifying body for proposals evolved at A.N.C. National Executive meetings (24) or by key political leaders in Johannesburg.

The National Volunteers Co-ordinating Council appears never to have convened, although a national volunteer in chief and a deputy were appointed, similar posts also being created at the provincial level. (25)

The number of occasions requiring formal contact between the national and sub-national echelons of the defiance organization was limited; much of the interchange necessary could be conducted through activists operating both at the national and provincial or local levels (26) and from visits by leading national figures to the regions. (27) The extensive flow of written material was effectively precluded by the absence of a separate administrative machine at the national level and the limited manpower and financial resources available to provincial and local resistance organizations.

The driving force in the organization came from sub-national units responsible for the day to day management of the campaign. In the Transvaal this function was undertaken principally by the specially appointed Provincial Action Council, which comprised representatives of the African and Indian Congresses. (28) This body met daily during the most active periods of the struggle. It had at its disposal the limited administrative resources of the Congresses' provisional headquarters, it controlled the operations of the provincial volunteer in chief, and could call for the assistance of youth and women's groups as well as Congress branch organizations.

The latter did not have the authority to take independent resistance initiatives. (29) But, clearly, branch organizations could be of considerable assistance in securing and maintaining support for the campaign. This pattern contrasts strongly with that of the Cape, where there was no province-wide action council, the western and eastern regions functioning autonomously. (30) In the latter, at the outset of the Campaign, there was no prospect of significant Coloured or Asian participation, nor were these communities represented by associations which could co-operate with the A.N.C. in a joint regional council. No formal action council was created in the Eastern Cape, but members of the provincial A.N.C. Executive living in the region used to meet approximately weekly, and a secretariat, drawn from Executive members based in Port Elizabeth, daily, to plan and discuss resistance in the area with which they were actively concerned. The control these committees exercised over defiance in the region operated on a different basis and does not compare in degree with that of the joint Transvaal leadership. Effectively, the detailed planning and mounting of resistance offensives within the region appears to have been conducted by individual, semi-autonomous units. (31) In Port Elizabeth and East London, these comprised several branches, with a total membership in thousands; smaller units were active in at least ten provincial towns and many villages, particularly in the Ciskei. This latter group, locally run, often in a highly individualistic manner, would appear to provide an example par excellence of grass-roots political organizations. It seems reasonable that the existence of largely self-governing branches and the experience gained from them were factors relevant to the particular resilience of Eastern Cape resistance to the Government. Far from trying to establish a more centralized pattern, Dr. Njongwe (32), for example, apparently encouraged chosen rank and file A.N.C. members returning to their home areas to institute local Congress branches. (33) These activists were given basic instructions as to how the unit should be organized, but, thereafter, outside executive control would be very intermittent. The latter applied equally to existing branches outside Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage, but senior officials did visit centres throughout the Eastern Cape from time to time, partly in an endeavour to ensure a measure of uniformity in the A.N.C. organization in the region. Contacts could also be maintained through Congress members travelling between the main centres and the country districts. The decentralized pattern of the organization in the region, a product of a fortuitous combination of choice and necessity, though the subject of some criticism at the time in Congress circles, permitted a far higher level of participation and politicization than would have been possible if a more rigid system had existed.

An insight of the administration of certain specialist functions completes this brief examination of the campaign's organizational framework. The recruitment, training and welfare of resisters were the responsibility of the volunteers in chief and their deputies. In the Transvaal, both Marupeng Seperepere and A. E. Patel did actively seek support for the Congresses - on occasion with the assistance of Youth League members - and it is probable that the two men scrutinized at least some of the volunteer application forms. However, there is no indication that they personally supervised the training of resisters; welfare

matters were managed by the aged R. Naidoo, helped by youth activists. Seperepere's and Patel's authority may have been limited by the presence in Johannesburg of Nelson Mandela, the national volunteer in chief, and his deputy, I. A. Cachalia. (34) To a far greater extent than in the Transvaal, the intended functions of a provincial volunteer in chief could not be put into practice in the Cape. Alcott Gwentshe did occasionally address meetings in his rôle of Cape volunteer in chief, but he was far more heavily engaged in the task of directing resistance in East London. Whether Gwentshe met Nelson Mandela during the latter's visits to the Eastern Cape specially to discuss the volunteer position in the region or province is uncertain, but seems unlikely.

No specialist committees appear to have been established in the Eastern Cape or the Transvaal to cope with the campaign's financial affairs. This was in spite of the call of the Joint Planning Council for a "One million Shilling Drive". Inadequate organization, of any kind, was a reason for the failure of this fund. (35) The African and Indian Congresses retained their own accounts and there was no common financial pool (36) nor special fund for the campaign. Methods of raising funds varied, but donations were normally on an *ad hoc* rather than regular basis. In Port Elizabeth, Robert Matji (37) devised a scheme in which short-lived slogan carrying lapel badges were sold at mass meetings, apparently considerably augmenting Congress funds for some period. (38) Significant sums were also obtained in the main centres of the Eastern Cape from social events organized by women activists, and campaigns in housing areas and at factories. Additionally, Congress finances in Port Elizabeth were assisted by the fund raising activities of Dr. V. Moodaley (39) amongst Asian traders. Branches in the smaller centres were left to manage their own financial affairs during the campaign. In the Transvaal, although funds were obtained by canvassing African and Indian workers, and through women's organizations, the major source of revenue was Asian traders and merchants, living both in the urban and in the country areas. These people were visited periodically, usually by Indian Congress officials, sometimes accompanied by their African counterparts. Although the financial organization of the campaign was haphazard, whether it was a significant impediment to the progress of the struggle and whether feasible (more bureaucratic) alternatives would have achieved materially better results is doubtful. (40)

The Congresses established no co-ordinated specialist framework to exploit the propaganda weapon. Occasional pamphlets and statements were published under the imprint of the National Action Council, but it lacked its own apparatus for the production and distribution of written matter. By far the largest number of leaflets and broad-sheets were issued by the Transvaal Provincial Action Council, and these were probably produced mostly by volunteers from the youth organizations. (41) There is no indication that a formal publications committee existed in the Transvaal or the Eastern Cape. In the latter, very little written material was produced by the A.N.C. during the campaign and almost total reliance was placed on the transmission of information by word of mouth. (42)

The most significant, continuous and favourable source of printed information about the campaign came from outside the defiance organization in the independent Guardian newspaper, the editor of which was in close contact with Defiance leaders and its reporters, Congress activists or sympathizers. (43)

The campaign's organizational network, the very antithesis of a uniform, formally structured bureaucratic machine divided into clear cut hierarchies and characterized by specialist units, was surprisingly effective in mobilizing support for the struggle in the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal. Far from being isolated units, the numerous groups responsible for organizing the campaign's affairs in the two regions were linked - admittedly loosely in the Eastern Cape - by a complex and wide ranging web of formal and informal contacts, the focal point of which was Johannesburg. The particular pattern, which emerged largely spontaneously (44) in the Eastern Cape, though containing many weaknesses was the most informative in suggesting the future course of resistance organization in South Africa.

The defiance leaders (45) in the two regions displayed many common features - collectively each was influenced by similar political and ethical concepts; they derived from comparable social groupings, and, by the very nature of the campaign, adopted certain identical techniques of political action - but, nevertheless, regional differences are on occasions apparent.

At the most basic, the leaders in the Eastern Cape, with the sole exception of Dr. Moodaley, were Africans, in contrast to the dual leadership of the Transvaal in which the Indians, even if they eschewed the rôle of a co-equal partner, played a very significant part, materially affecting the nature of the campaign in the Province.

The common political denominator amongst all the leaders was the democratic ethic, the basis on which the campaign was legitimated. (46) The belief in this ideal was reflected in the leaders' apparent acceptance of the "liberal" form of African nationalism.

A natural corollary of the leaders' commitment to the democratic ideal was their rejection of race as a criterion central to the liberation struggle. The degree of attachment on their part to the concept of non-racialism may have varied, but leaders frequently reiterated that this notion was integral to the campaign. The participation of different races could be interpreted not only as a tactical move of some value but as an indication of a genuine belief amongst many leaders of the intrinsic benefit of a non-racial approach.

Walshe (47) suggests that the ideology and terminology of the class struggle was a factor of "some importance" in ensuring

that the A.N.C. continued its long established belief in a non-racial society. (48) This may be so; it also raises the wider question of the significance of Communist beliefs to the leadership and campaign. Communists were particularly prominent, though not in a majority, in the leadership of the African and Indian Congresses in the Transvaal. But in the period under examination this label must be qualified or amplified by the knowledge that they were, for example, also committed to African nationalism and, at least temporarily, to the technique of non-violent direct action. Their attachment to Communism did not necessarily justify analysing their actions solely in terms of this belief. Communist beliefs affected the language and emphasis of their speeches and writings, their interpretation of the potential of African nationalism and concepts of a future South African State under majority rule, but the Communists were not concerned, particularly during a campaign, to wage an internal ideological battle against other Congress leaders, to establish Communism as the sole or dominant doctrine shaping the liberation movement. (49) A rare but minor exception to this laissez faire policy which prevailed during the campaign occurred in the Eastern Cape where there were in fact very few Communists in the Congress hierarchy. Three former members of the Communist Party who held office in the A.N.C. during the campaign were in dispute, partly on ideological grounds, with Dr. Njongwe. But the Communists, perhaps because of the other influences shaping their political views and because they were pragmatists, usually showed themselves more anxious to promote radical unity than doctrinal orthodoxy.

A contrasting, and more significant force, especially in the Eastern Cape, was Christian doctrine. (50) The majority of senior African defiance leaders probably held Christian beliefs, and priests were well represented in their ranks. (51) Congress leaders made frequent use of biblical references (52), and the senior chaplain of the A.N.C., Rev. J. Skomolo, even conceived of the struggle as a holy war, in which all Christians had a duty to participate, in opposition to the injustices of the oppressor. (53) Christian beliefs played an important rôle in the campaign as a source of restraint, both on the A.N.C. leaders and their supporters. It may, for example, have been one of the factors contributing to the African National Congress' continued adherence to non-racial and non-violent ideals and practices.

The adoption of non-violent means was necessary tactically, but clearly it was also consistent with the beliefs of resistance leaders and with the tradition of the African and Indian Congresses. Gandhi remained a figure of some influence. (54) Dr. Njongwe remarked: "with the historical example of Gandhi before us, we turned to Passive Resistance largely because it secured results without creating bitterness between the contenders." (55) But no African and very few Indian leaders acknowledged a doctrinal attachment to Satyagraha, and most, instead, accepted a more flexible relationship with non-violence, akin to that of Nehru and the Indian National Congress. (56)

Certain African leaders (particularly in the Eastern Cape) made use of their knowledge of tribal history and mythology as a

means of raising morale and encouraging participation in the campaign. The history of the struggles and achievements of other groups, including the Asians and Afrikaners (57) in South Africa, the people of India (58), and Negroes in the United States (59) offered additional sources of inspiration, but with the exception of the first of these, and possibly the example of the Indian independence movement, these issues were of marginal importance in affecting the character of the campaign.

The diversity of beliefs within and between defiance leaders ensured that the campaign did not become narrowly doctrinaire; this encouraged flexibility in approach and an objective assessment of progress and achievements. Nevertheless, there were certain tenets accepted by all resistance leaders which gave the campaign purpose and direction. Admittedly, the presence of conflicting beliefs may have prevented the formulation of a single, all embracing ideological model or framework, but this omission, in 1952, was not of momentous importance.

Amongst the African leadership in both the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal, in relation to the African population, there was a proportionately large number of highly educated and professional men. In the Eastern Cape, prominent examples include Drs. Bokwe and Njongwe, Professor Matthews and his eldest son, and the Rev. Calata. (60) Marks and W. Bopape were former teachers, Mandela a lawyer, W. Nkomo a doctor, and D. Mji, the youth leader, a university student, all of whom were active in the Transvaal during the campaign. Certainly there were organizers who had had very little formal education - for example, Matji, the Eastern Cape activist, and Moses Kotane - but, at least to the provincial level, almost if not all the leaders were literate. Even at the branch level, particularly in the urban areas, it is probable that leaders with some education predominated.

At the risk of digression, it is presumably from a recognition of the disproportionate representation of educated people, many of whom enjoyed a high occupational status, that Feit argues "It is the African bourgeois, usually the intellectual, who seeks to provide leadership in African organisations such as the A.N.C. But whatever his sincerity and his capacity for leadership he is separated from the African masses by the very achievement that gives him elite status". (61) The derogatory term "bourgeois" provides a thoroughly unsatisfactory image (62) of the majority of the A.N.C. leadership in either province, or elsewhere in the country. Mandela, though a lawyer, was also a member of the Tembu aristocracy and a sometime herd and ploughboy. Sisulu was similarly occupied in his youth and, although most recently a property agent, had been both a factory and a mine worker. J. B. Marks, though once a teacher, had been an active trade union militant for twenty years. Can it be argued, in the light of the 1946 mine workers' strike, that he was "separated from the African masses"? Equally, could this charge be levelled at Njongwe, who played a crucial rôle in mobilizing the support of uneducated or little educated urban and rural inhabitants in the Eastern Cape? Feit's generalization would appear to misinterpret the significance

of the occupational status and education of many of the A.N.C. leaders. It is hardly unusual for a political leadership to contain a higher proportion of well educated people, some with senior appointments, than is characteristic of the population as a whole, but in South Africa the prevailing economic and social regulations, the earlier life of many of the African Congress leaders and the very platform on which they had risen to power, encouraged close contact with the African workers in urban and often in rural areas.

The Transvaal Indian Congress leadership reflected more nearly the economic and social groups present in their community although, again, those at the lower end of the scale may have been under-represented. In addition, the wealthiest merchants no longer participated directly in Congress affairs, and hence were not amongst the defiance leaders.

In many respects detailed information about the great majority of people active in the campaign either in the Eastern Cape and Transvaal or elsewhere is lacking. How many were involved? (63) Who were they? What proportion, for example, were migrant workers? How many were literate? What percentage were new recruits to Congress? What was the age structure and ratio of the sexes? How did these factors vary between different regions? What individual reasons encouraged resisters to take part in the campaign? How did they conceive this struggle, and, as Kuper asks, what was their attitude to non-violence? (64)

Regional differences are immediately apparent in terms of race. In the Eastern Cape scarcely any Coloureds or Indians, and no Whites, defied, although Chinese and Indian traders and a few Whites provided funds for the campaign, and some Coloured workers did observe the strike organized by the A.N.C. in Port Elizabeth, during November 1952. (65) In addition, although there was never any prospect or encouragement of White defiance in the Province, there were amicable and productive contacts between Congress leaders and certain leading members of the White community. But in the Transvaal, the minority races occupied a far more important rôle, although the number of non-African defiers was fairly small. Approximately one hundred Asians (66), eight Coloureds and a further eight Whites resisted. (67) In particular, more Indian participation might have been expected, but there are several reasons for this reticence. The Indian leadership were keenly aware that neither they nor their followers should eclipse the dominant role assigned to the A.N.C. in the liberation movement, and African leaders, for tactical reasons, would probably have been very unwilling to accept even an approximately equal level of participation from Indians and Africans. This apart, Indians in the Transvaal were in a particularly insecure economic position, and open defiance of the Government threatened their status still further. Traders were liable to be ruined by the revocation of their licences and the imposition of restrictions, which authorities were very willing to employ. A specific and recent deterrent to further resistance for Indians employed by Whites was the outcome of the June 1950 general strike in which they had suffered more severely than the Africans from dismissals. Some may

also have been reluctant because of the failure of both the 1946-8 resistance campaign and the strikes of 1950-1 to exact concessions from the Government. Finally, the knowledge that the campaign was not primarily or solely an Indian affair may have reduced their willingness to participate. Nevertheless, a wide cross-section of Indians did defy, including factory workers, housewives, shop assistants, small traders, university students and professionals. (68) The only significant economic group almost entirely absent was that of the wealthiest members of the community, although these people contributed to the campaign's finances (69), as did Indians living in the smaller centres, away from the Rand, who otherwise were politically inactive at this time. There was very little opposition voiced by Indians in the Province, but members of the accommodationist Transvaal Indian Organisation did not associate themselves with the campaign.

Of the very few resisters from the Coloured communities in the Transvaal, three were trade unionists and factory employees and this was probably true of the remainder. In the months preceding the campaign the Coloured population had been very vociferous in defence of their threatened right to the common roll franchise, but the momentum of this movement, led by the Franchise Action Council, diminished rapidly in the second quarter of 1952. Possessing what one Coloured activist termed "second class immunities", the majority of Coloured people were still unwilling to accept that their status was inexorably coming to resemble that of the other non-White groups, nor did they accept that the only hope of alleviating their position was through participation in the African led liberation movement. At the same time, with the exception of members of groups affiliated to the Non-European Unity Movement, and the very few followers of the Transvaaler Kleurling Volksbond, Coloureds voiced little opposition to the campaign.

The White activists in the Transvaal comprised four university members, two trade union officials and a writer. They were diverse, politically, and their decision to resist was essentially personal and not dependent on membership of any particular organization. This group comprised almost the total number of Whites in the Province who were prepared to resist. But others voiced opposition to the deteriorating predicament of the non-Whites. This was demonstrated in the appeal during the defiance campaign by twenty-two Europeans for the revival of the Cape liberal ideal. (70) It was also revealed at a meeting of two hundred Whites invited by the A.N.C. to discuss the role of their race in the campaign. (71) Clearly though, the vast majority of Whites were hostile and would not contemplate any association with the campaign or even with "liberal" groups.

The differences in participation between the two provinces extended to the African sector. In the Eastern Cape approximately 650 Africans are known to have defied in the rural Peddie district (72) and a further 730 in small country towns. (73) Apparently these participants comprised both people who generally lacked formal education and whom Mayer would refer to as (pagan) Red People, and others who had been influenced by non-traditional values and who had

often attended missionary schools. They will have comprised subsistence farmers and farm labourers, their wives and other women resident in the rural areas, as well as commercial workers and their families living in the provincial towns. Matthews suggested that the number of youths participating may have been relatively few. What has proved impossible so far is to secure more precise and telling information about the rural activists of the Eastern Cape - who undoubtedly comprise one of the most intriguing aspects of the 1952 campaign. There was no parallel rural activity in the Transvaal except at Bethal, where a group of farm workers defied. In the urban centres of both regions there were small but influential groups of Africans drawn from higher socio-economic groups who were active in support of the campaign, but commercial and industrial employees constituted the largest occupational group amongst the defiers, as they did in the total urban African working population. On the whole, Rand mine workers were noticeably absent amongst the participants, and at least in Johannesburg, proportionate to the total African population, very few of the poorest manual labourers appear to have been politically active. It is possible that in this respect, in terms of literacy, in the proportion of migrants and new recruits and in the religious beliefs of the majority of the volunteers, there was a marked variation in the male resisters of the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal. (74) African women took part in the campaign in the urban centres of both regions. The majority were almost certainly housewives (75) and single women, probably with little education, although a few of those who were active, notably the wives of certain Congress leaders, were employed, for example, as nurses or social workers.

Very little African opposition was voiced in either Province to the campaign, but the principal sources of dissent were Seloape Thema's anti-Communist and anti-Indian, National Minded Bloc, which existed only in the Transvaal, certain African teachers' associations, and the virtually non-existent, but vociferous, Supreme Council for the Federation of Bantu Organizations. Certain chiefs and headmen may have expressed opposition to the campaign, but there is no specific evidence of this. In spite of opposition from these and other non-White splinter groups (76) the movement achieved a very wide range of support, not being dependent on a single cultural, economic, generational, political, or racial base.

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Notes

- (1) L. Kuper, Passive Resistance in South Africa (Yale, 1957).
- (2) See map at appendix I.

- (3) The plan for the campaign envisaged the struggle confined to cities and towns in the first two of its three stages. Report of the Joint Planning Council (November 1952), para. 8.
- (4) For the 1951 population figures for the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal, see appendix II.
- (5) In 1946 there were 534,233 alien Africans registered in South Africa and the majority of these were employed in the urban areas of the Transvaal. Report of the United Nations Commission on the racial situation in the Union of South Africa (1953), p. 43.
- (6) Admittedly, the Fingo had only entered the Eastern Cape after the 1820s.
- (7) This latter point was stressed by Joe Matthews in an interview. Similar tactics might have been adopted with effect in Natal but clearly there are other factors which can, and did, restrict the value of a common culture and identity as a mobilizing force for the defiance campaign.
- (8) See "African Divisional Politics in the Cape Colony, 1884 to 1910" in Journal of African History, Vol. 9 (1), 1968, and "African Participation in Cape Politics, 1901-8", unpublished seminar paper, ICS, RHC/67/8.
- (9) See appendix III.
- (10) In this context it would be of interest to discover the extent to which Eastern Cape African political activists in 1952 were following a family tradition of participation in non-traditional political affairs.
- (11) The few privileges accorded to Eastern Cape Africans were being eroded regardless of whether they were law abiding or not. Participation in the campaign did accelerate the process, but it was not a root cause.
- (12) E. Feit, African Opposition in South Africa: the failure of passive resistance, particularly Chapter 3.
- (13) Virtually no reference is made in this paper to the considerable organizational effort involved in planning the campaign.
- (14) For the purposes of this paper the term "organization" is widely interpreted to include formal and informal aspects.
- (15) Technically, the African National Congress Youth League and the (Transvaal) Indian Youth Congress.
- (16) An Indian Youth Congress Branch was established in Port Elizabeth during 1952 but it does not appear to have contributed to the resistance effort.

- (17) The Women's League president in the Transvaal in 1952 was Ida Mtwana. Out of a sample group in the Eastern Cape of 2529 registers, 1067 were females (1462 males). Of 488 Transvaal registers 173 were female (315 male).
- (18) Spark, 20 June 1952, p. 4. Co-ordination was facilitated by the absence of a generation gap between many of the Youth and Congress activists and , particularly in the case of A.N.C. leaders, their recent or continuing membership of the Youth League.
- (19) The unions gained more from the Congresses during 1952 through increased membership than the latter benefited from trade union assistance in mobilizing support for the campaign.
- (20) People's World, 4 September 1952, p. 2.
- (21) Kuper, op. cit., p. 149.
- (22) Plans for both the National Action Council and National Volunteers Co-ordinating Council were presented at a meeting of the working committee of the A.N.C. National Executive on 2 May 1952. The committee's recommendations were accepted at a joint meeting of the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C. Executives on 31 May.
- (23) Membership included J. Moroka (nominal), W. Sisulu, N. Mandela, Y. Cachalia. I. A. Cachalia and D. Tloome may have also been appointed to the N.A.C. It is possible that leading activists were co-opted. M. B. Yengwa, for example, said in an interview that he had attended N.A.C. meetings during the campaign.
- (24) This body, unlike its Indian counterpart, met fairly frequently during the campaign, discussing resistance affairs and issuing occasional statements about defiance matters. See, for example, Advance, 13 November 1952, pp. 1 and 5.
- (25) See below.
- (26) In the Transvaal two distinct though not necessarily exclusive lines of contact could be maintained through the African and Indian Congress structures. The dual or multiple roles of some Congress officials was a feature of importance in the campaign's communication network.
- (27) J. Matthews stressed the significance of visits by Mandela and Sisulu to the Eastern Cape for the maintenance of close relations between that region and Johannesburg.
- (28) Membership is as yet undetermined but it is likely to have included the respective Congress provincial presidents and secretaries, Youth League representatives and the provincial volunteer-in-chief and his deputy.
- (29) The Bethal branch of the A.N.C., under Gert Sibande, may have enjoyed greater autonomy than most others in the Transvaal.

- (30) Technically, there were eight A.N.C. regions in the Cape, but the use of the terms "Eastern" and "Western" Cape in this paper are not intended to coincide with those.
- (31) Could this pattern have influenced Mandela in formulating the "M" plan?
- (32) Acting President of the Cape A.N.C., treasurer for the provincial organization and for the New Brighton Congress branch.
- (33) Whether they were initially successful or not apparently sometimes depended on the attitude of traditional local leaders. J. Matthews, op. cit.
- (34) Duma Nokwe, youth leader in Orlando, for example, was in direct contact with Nelson Mandela about volunteer matters. In this instance, personal relations and Mandela's former leadership of the A.N.C. Youth League were clearly relevant factors in the liaison.
- (35) In Port Elizabeth Africans were apparently deterred by the "oriental" appearance of the stamps offered as a receipt.
- (36) There was, however, considerable co-operation between the Congresses in the Transvaal in financial matters during the campaign.
- (37) Provincial secretary of the Cape A.N.C. and secretary of the Korsten branch.
- (38) It is not known whether these sums were held in a local or a regional fund.
- (39) Senior vice-president of the Cape Indian Congress.
- (40) Groups outside the country organized or promised to organize funds for the campaign, but it is not clear these were ever available to the Congresses.
- (41) The bulletin Flash (successor to Newsletter?) appeared regularly. Youth members also produced their own publications - African Lodestar and Spark. The latter was an unofficial newspaper, edited by R. Desai and taken over by the National Action Council at the very end of the campaign.
- (42) See the brief reference to the issue of literacy, pp. 84-5 above.
- (43) The Guardian was banned in May 1952 and was succeeded during the year by the Clarion, People's World, and Advance. These papers had a circulation of 30,000 to 35,000, primarily in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Approximately 80% of the readership was African.
- (44) This factor of spontaneity was central to the spread of resistance in the Eastern Cape.

- (45) The term is interpreted widely to include those of whatever official rank who were prominent organizers in the campaign in either region.
- (46) This is shown clearly in the Report of the Joint Planning Council of the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C., paragraph 7. Support for democratic principles provided a basis for liaison with other liberatory movements.
- (47) A. Walshe, "The African National Congress of South Africa: Aspects of Ideology and Organisation 1912-1951", unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1967, p. 631.
- (48) See also the influence of Christian teachings in this respect, p. 83.
- (49) There were added grounds for caution following the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act.
- (50) J. Ngwevela, the Western Cape A.N.C. leader, accepted both Christian and Communist beliefs; there may have been other examples of this.
- (51) There were, for instance, two priests on the Cape A.N.C. Executive: Rev. J. Calata and Rev. W. Tshume. Others were active at the branch level: Rev. L. S. Soga, the president of the A.N.C. in Queenstown.
- (52) "If we were Israelites we would have trekked out of Egypt ..."
M. Seperepere, 22 June 1952. Regina v. Sisulu and 19 others, Case L134/52, p. 131.
- (53) Daily Representative (Queenstown) 29 July 1952, p. 2.
- (54) Although it is not clear whether his works or those of any other exponent of non-violence were read widely amongst the leadership.
- (55) Speech to the Supreme Court. Advance, 9 April 1953. Some Indian leaders may also have been influenced towards non-violent practices by Hindu and other non-Christian creeds.
- (56) For a statement of Nehru's attitude, see Jawaharlal Nehru: Autobiography, p. 84, taken in the context of the rest of the work. A parallel between the stance of the S.A.I.C. and the I.N.C. is offered by I. A. Cachalia, Treason Trial Record, p. 15057.
- (57) Bantu World, 11 October 1952, p. 3, and 18 October 1952, p. 4. Dr. S. Molema, A Historical Parallel and Warning.
- (58) Mandela's testimony, Treason Trial, op. cit., p. 15847.
- (59) Walshe, op. cit., pp. 574-6. See also letter of W. Sisulu to Dr. B. Raymond of Florida, Trial of Sisulu and 19 others, op. cit., p. 170.

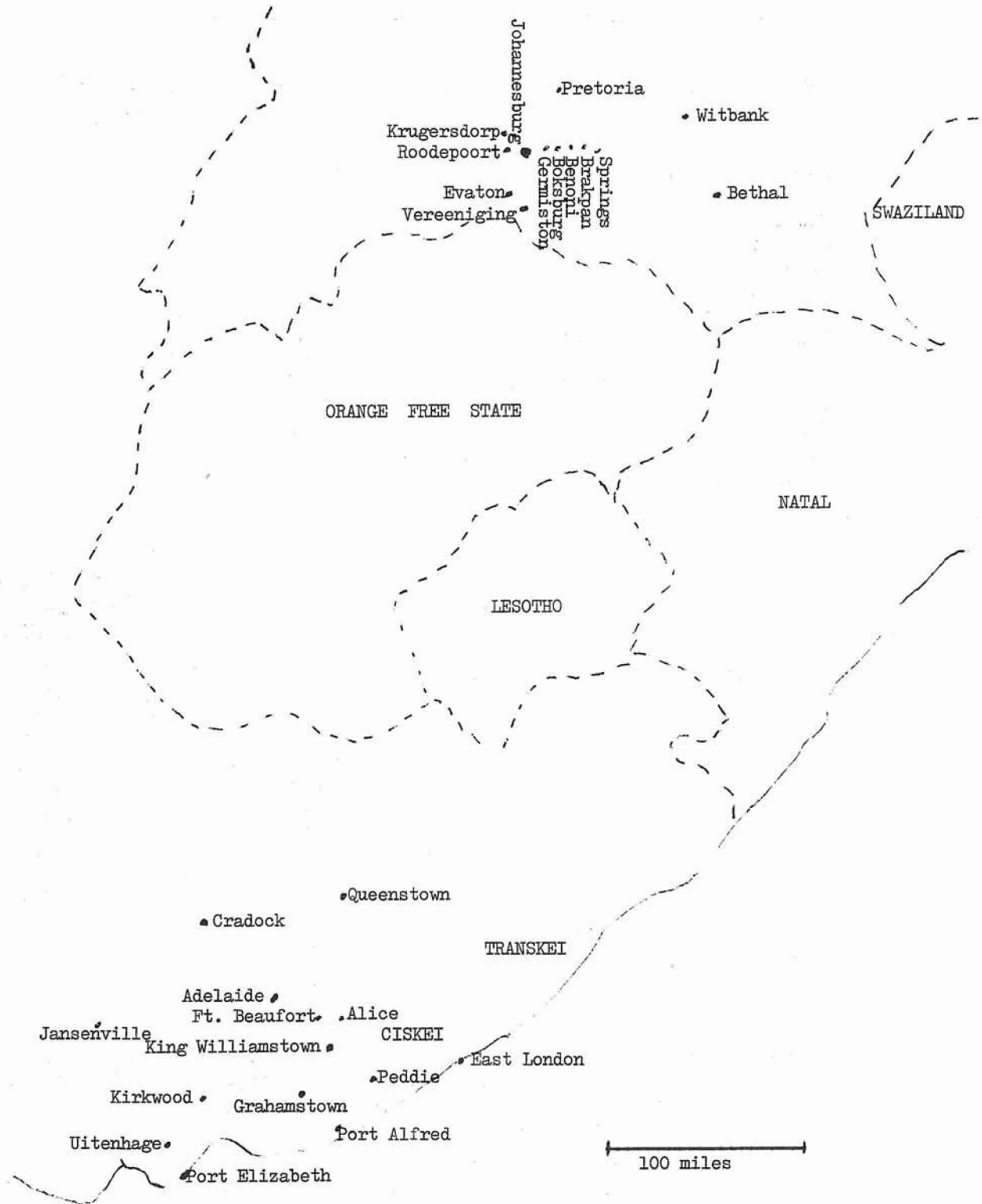
- (60) The Bokwes, Calatas and Matthews were leading Eastern Cape families and their commitment to the campaign may have influenced other people to participate.
- (61) Feit, op. cit., p. 26.
- (62) Inter alia the Oxford dictionary applies the term to those "addicted to comfort and respectability, humdrum".
- (63) See appendices II and III.
- (64) Kuper, op. cit., p. 24.
- (65) Kuper, ibid., p. 143, denies this. The controversy was suggested in Advance, 13 November 1952, p. 5, and by J. Matthews. The latter believed the example of the defiance campaign in Port Elizabeth reduced Coloured support there for the Non-European Unity Movement.
- (66) The term Asian not Indian is used because there is a record of one Chinese participating.
- (67) In addition approximately 1350 Africans defied in the Transvaal.
- (68) There is insufficient available information to quantify these groups.
- (69) However, I. Dinaat believed that this group often donated lesser amounts than the smaller traders.
- (70) These included the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Chief Rabbi, Fr. Huddleston, and the Native Representatives. Advance, 2 October 1952, p. 1.
- (71) It was from people who attended this meeting and partly as a result of it that both the Transvaal and later South African Congress of Democrats and the Liberal Party emerged. Advance, 27 November 1952, pp. 1 and 7. The Springbok Legion also welcomed the Defiance Campaign, Guardian, 1 May 1952, p. 1.
- (72) The greatest number were arrested for defying curfew regulations rather than for offences against dipping and culling requirements.
- (73) To this number must be added 4250 volunteers who resisted in the main centres of the Eastern Cape.
- (74) The differences were accentuated by the participation of the "Red" people in the Eastern Cape. Mayer suggests that the joint involvement of both "Red" and "School" people in a single association, as occurred with the A.N.C. in 1952, was highly unusual. Townsmen or Tribesmen, p. 81. The relative size of their contribution is unknown, as is the precise nature of co-operation between the two "groups".
- (75) They might be self-employed, for instance, as laundry women or possibly in domestic service.

- (76) And, of course, very considerable white hostility manifest, for example, in interference by local and central authorities. Information about the campaign in the Eastern Cape and Transvaal has been obtained from interviews with Y. Dadoo, A. Hutchinson, P. Joseph, J. Matthews, J. Phillips, S. Shall and M. Yengwa.

Appendix I

CENTRES OF RESISTANCE IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND THE TRANSVAAL: DEFIANCE

CAMPAIGN, 1952



Appendix IINumbers of Resisters in Relation to the Total Population

<u>Eastern Cape</u>	<u>Total Resisters</u> (African)	<u>Total African Population</u>		
		<u>Town</u>	<u>District</u>	(incl. Town)
Port Elizabeth	2007	65075	79087	
East London	1322	39776	76121	
Peddie	644	533	25827	
Uitenhage*	600	16918	39337	
Grahamstown (Albany Dist.)	361	11792	30081	
Queenstown	133	14761	39131	
Ft. Beaufort	132	5242	14910	
Kirkwood (Uitenhage Dist.*)	110	3430		
Kingwilliamstown	98	4315	59298	
Port Alfred (Bathurst Dist.)	84	3741	19747	
Adelaide	64	2404	7616	
Cradock	53	6715	16240	
Alice (Victoria E. Dist.)	37	2408	17089	
Jansenville	22	767	3454	
<u>Total</u>	5667			

<u>Transvaal</u>	(African and Indian)			<u>Total Asian Population</u> <u>District</u>
Johannesburg	521	461832	490716	22308
Germiston	245	90395	99946	1915
Boksburg	132	36879	37552	1161
Brakpan	127	54877	54939	45
Pretoria	92	120563	211730	6196
Springs	74	85859	111645	1121
Vereeniging**	70	41103	107594	1172
Krugersdorp	64	46315	52909	806
Benoni	39	66650	70908	1692
Rodepoort	33	46429	57719	781
Bethal	31	5544	44359	466
Evaton (Vereeniging Dist.)	20	24904		121
Witbank	11	7456	59822	569
<u>Total</u>	1459			

NOTE: (1) The Secretarial Report to the 21st Conference of the S.A.I.C., July 1954, suggested there were 5719 resisters in the Eastern Cape and 1911 in the Transvaal. The latter figure is surprisingly high.

(2) Assuming, tentatively, that the majority of resisters in the Transvaal and in the main defiance centres in the Eastern Cape (except Peddie) lived in the towns and suburbs rather than in the districts surrounding them, it would seem that between .07% and .4% of the African population in Transvaal resistance centres defied, compared to approx. 3% in centres under reference in the Eastern Cape.

- (3) In 1946 the approdimate African population of the Ciskei and Transkei reserves was 1,573,221. About 708,300 Africans were living in the Transvaal reserves and trust lands at this time. Population densities were at least three and a half times greater in the Eastern Cape tribal areas than in the corresponding areas of the Transvaal.
- (4) Sources for Appendix II: Volume 1, Union Population Census, May 1951. U.G. 42/1955. Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa, 1952-1953.

Appendix IIIResisters* in the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal during
the Defiance Campaign - by centre and period

	TOTAL	26.6.52- 24.7.52	25.7.52- 22.8.52	23.8.52- 20.9.52	21.9.52- 19.10.52	20.10.52- 17.11.52	18.11.52-
Port Elizabeth	2007	389	666	738	125	84	5
East London	1322	124	879	133	150	36	
Uitenhage	600	50	100	350	100		
Peddie	644				644		
Grahamstown	361		266	95			
Fort Beaufort	132			77	55		
Queenstown	133			78	36	16	3
Kirkwood	110				110		
Kingwilliamstown	98			44		53	1
Port Alfred	84			84			
Adelaide	64					18	46
Cradock	53					40	13
Alice	37			37			
Jansenville	22				22		
TOTAL	5667	563	1911	1636	1242	247	68
Johannesburg	521	84	190	57	55		155
Germiston	245			72	31	84	58
Boksburg	132	53		67	12		
Brakpan	127		65	11	51		
Pretoria	92		17	42	24	8	1
Springs	74			49	9		16
Vereeniging	70	6			53	11	
Krugersdorp	64	14		50			
Benoni	39			28	11		
Rodepoort	33			33			
Bethal	31					31	
Witbank	11				11		
Evaton	20				20		
TOTAL	1459	157	252	409	277	134	230

*The figures refer to the number of recorded instances of defiance by individuals. A few people will have resisted more than once. All totals are provisional.