South Africa:
The Early Years of Apartheid

South African Press Digests,
1949-1972

Introduction and finding list
to the microfiche collection

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## Index

### Preface

Colin Legum – Biographical Note

### Summary of Fiche Details

### Listing of Contents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Fiche 71</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Fiche 106</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>Fiche 72</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Fiche 107 (1967)</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>Fiche 111</td>
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<td>Fiche 78</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Fiche 113 (1968)</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>Fiche 81 (1962)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Fiche 116</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>Fiche 119</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>Fiche 120 (1969)</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>Fiche 86 (1963)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Fiche 121</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>Fiche 126 (1970)</td>
<td>96</td>
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Preface

This collection of *Press Digests* is a veritable goldmine of information since it summarizes all the principal developments and speeches of the first 24 years of apartheid, the formative years of one of the world’s most infamous experiments to achieve ethnic separation and, indeed, an attempt at ‘ethnic cleansing’ of the so-called ‘white cities’.

The election of the National Party in May 1949 marked the start of apartheid which was to last until 1993. The National Party’s policy was characterised not only by its obsession about ‘the threat of black domination’, but also by its virulent anti-semitism; during the Second World War, the Afrikaner nationalists had sided with Hitler’s Germany and had borrowed freely from its anti-Jewish and ‘racial purity’ propaganda.

It was for this reason that the South African Jewish Board of Deputies carried out a daily survey and analysis of the policies and practices of the new government. As part of this process, they read and summarized all of South Africa’s principal newspapers and magazines (both English-language and Afrikaans) and issued their summaries, in English, in the form of a weekly, typed Digest throughout the first twenty-four years of apartheid.

Short of examining each of the publications covered by this survey, there is no other source of readily available material than these *Press Digests*. This microfiche edition is therefore uniquely important for research work connected with South Africa in particular and with race relations as a whole.

This collection of *Press Digests* has come from the private library of Colin Legum, one of the world’s most eminent and highly regarded international press correspondents and writers on Africa and the Third World.
Colin Legum: Biographical Note

Colin Legum was born in Kestall, Orange Free State, South Africa, on 3 January 1919. He was educated up to matriculation standard at the local Afrikaans medium school, and had no further formal education. When he was 16, he entered journalism, starting as a copy boy and library assistant on the Johannesburg Sunday Express and subsequently the Daily Express. Over the next four years he rose to become a senior crime reporter and the papers' political correspondent. In 1959, he became editor of the Labour weekly The Forward, in Johannesburg, and the SA Mineworker, organ of the Mineworkers' Union. In 1842 he started his own publication, the Illustrated Labour Bulletin, a bilingual political fortnightly.

Colin Legum became active in politics as a member of the S.A. Labour Party in 1938 and in 1943 was elected as a Labour member to the Johannesburg City Council. In 1947 he became leader of the Labour Party’s temporary majority on the City Council, serving as chairman of the General Purposes Committee and the Special Housing Committee. Later that same year, he was elected general secretary of the Labour Party. He was active in the 1948 elections when the Labour Party was in coalition with General Smuts' United Party in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the election of the National Party which had fought the election on its new apartheid programme.

In 1949, because he saw no immediate future for his work or political views in an apartheid South Africa, Colin Legum decided to leave South Africa to pursue his journalistic career in London. Here he not only became a part-time journalist on The Observer, but also a staff member of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, engaging in research into communications in industry for three years. In 1953, he joined The Observer as a full-time staff member, becoming Fleet Street's first Africa Correspondent - a role later enlarged to that of Commonwealth Correspondent - but he never lost interest in humanity studies based on the application and extension of Freud's ideas. Five years later, in 1958, he was made an associate editor of the paper, specialising in Third World affairs.

As Commonwealth Correspondent, Colin Legum travelled widely, but chiefly in Africa and the Middle East. He helped to formulate the paper's notable anti-colonial policy and its militant stand against apartheid and racism. During his time on the paper, he developed friendships with many of the African independence leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah, Dr. Nnamde Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Joshua Nkomo, Milton Obote, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Tshekedi and Seretse Khama, Quett Masire and Dr. Kamuzu Banda.

In 1951, with the Rev. Michael Scott, Professor Arthur Lewis and Martin Wright, he co-authored Attitude to Africa which was acknowledged at the time as a seminal work in the anti-colonial struggle. The following year, Colin Legum worked closely with Michael Scott, Mary Benson, David Astor and others in founding the Africa Bureau and, subsequently, the Africa Publications Trust and the Africa Education Trust.

Because Colin Legum and David Astor saw a possible disadvantage as journalists in being too publicly associated with the Africa Bureau, they both elected to be ad
hoc members of its executive. Colin Legum was, nevertheless, actively involved with the Africa Bureau on a number of key issues in the anti-colonial movement, including the campaign to end the banning order on Tshekedi and Seretse Khama from Bechuanaland; to end the exile of the Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa II (which led to his writing Must we lose Africa); the campaign against the Central African Federation and later against Rhodesia’s UDI.

Colin Legum closely followed the decolonisation of the Belgian Congo, wrote Congo Disaster and, having got to know Patrice Lumumtu, later contributed the foreword and biography to his collected writings, Congo, my Country. He similarly wrote the preface and biography of Kenneth Kaunda for his first collected works.

He took an early interest in Pan-Africanism and wrote the first modern study of the movement, Pan-Africanism - a Short Political Guide (1962). He also followed closely the nascent politics of the Third World and wrote a short chronicle entitled Bandung, Cairo, Accra.

In 1964, Colin Legum wrote, with his wife, South Africa - Crisis for the West, the first serious attempt to deal with the question of sanctions, the publication of which resulted in the authors being banned from their home country for 20 years. With his wife, Colin Legum also co-authored The Bitter Choice and, in 1961, he edited The Africa Handbook. But his major contribution to the study of the continent is the Africa Contemporary Record which he edited for 20 years from 1968 to 1989. For 5 years he also co-edited a companion series, the Middle East Contemporary Survey for the Shiloah Centre at the University of Tel Aviv.

In addition to the books he has written himself or in partnership with his wife, he has contributed chapters to some 26 academic books, and has written a number of pamphlets, including The Fall of Haile Selassie, The Conflict in the Horn of Africa, and After Angola - the Coming War. Recently, he has co-authored Festschrift to Mwalimu Nyerere (James Currey, 1994). His works have been translated in to Swedish, Hebrew, Arabic, French, Spanish, Italian and Chinese.

Colin Legum has become well-known as broadcaster and for his television appearances in Britain, the United States, Canada, Holland, Scandinavia and Australia as well as in a dozen African countries. Not only has he lectured extensively at universities in Britain, on the European continent, in North America, India, China, Switzerland and in Africa, but he has also been a regular lecturer at military colleges, including Sandhurst, Camberley and Greenwich Naval College in England; the NATO Defence College in Rome (where he has been on a panel of regular lecturers for 15 years); the Portuguese Diplomatic and Military College; the Netherlands Diplomatic College; the Air Force College at the Maxwell Base in Montgomery, Alabama; and the US Naval College in Monterey.

Colin Legum resigned form The Observer in 1984 when the paper was sold to the Lonrho multi-national because he objected to control passing into the hands of Mr. 'Tiny' Rowland. He subsequently established his own syndicated weekly newsletter Third World Reports.

His closest interest, apart from the anti-colonial and anti-racist movements, has always been with South Africa and, more latterly, with the situation in the Horn of Africa.
Summary of Fiche Details

| Fiche 1 | 1949 Jan-Feb, Nos. 1-8 (part) |
| Fiche 2 | Feb-Apr, Nos 8-17 |
| Fiche 3 | May-June, Nos 18-26 (part) |
| Fiche 4 | June-Aug, Nos 26-34 |
| Fiche 5 | Sept-Oct, Nos 35-42 (part) |
| Fiche 6 | Oct-Dec, Nos 42-49 |
| Fiche 7 | Dec, Nos 50-51 |
| Fiche 8 | Jan-Feb, Nos 1-6 (part) |
| Fiche 9 | Feb-Mar, Nos 6-13 (part) |
| Fiche 10 | Mar-May, Nos 13-18 (part) |
| Fiche 11 | May-June, Nos 18-25 (part) |
| Fiche 12 | June-Aug, Nos 25-33 (part) |
| Fiche 13 | Aug-Oct, Nos 33-41 (part) |
| Fiche 14 | Oct-Nov, Nos 41-48 (part) |
| Fiche 15 | Nov-Dec, Nos 48-51 |
| Fiche 16 | 1951 Jan, Nos 1-3 |
| Fiche 17 | Jan-Mar, Nos 4-10 |
| Fiche 18 | Mar-April, Nos 11-17 |
| Fiche 19 | May-June, Nos 18-24 (part) |
| Fiche 20 | June-Aug, Nos 24-31 |
| Fiche 21 | Aug-Sept, Nos 32-39 (part) |
| Fiche 22 | Sept-Nov, Nos 39-47 |
| Fiche 23 | Nov-Dec, Nos 47-50 |
| Fiche 24 | 1952 Jan, Nos 1-4 (part) |
| Fiche 25 | Jan-Mar, Nos 4-12 |
| Fiche 26 | Mar-May, Nos 13-20 (part) |
| Fiche 27 | May-Jly, Nos 20-27 |
| Fiche 28 | Jly-Aug, Nos 28-35 |
| Fiche 29 | Aug-Sept, Nos 36-43 (part) |
| Fiche 30 | Sept-Nov, Nos 43-50 (part) |
| Fiche 31 | Oct-Dec, Nos 47-50 & Suppl. XVIII |
| Fiche 32 | 1953 Jan, Nos 1-4 (part) |
| Fiche 33 | Jan-Mar, Nos 4-11 |
| Fiche 34 | Mar-May, Nos 11-19 |
| Fiche 35 | May-Jly, Nos 20-27 |
| Fiche 36 | Jly-Aug, Nos 28-35 |
| Fiche 37 | Aug-Sept, Nos 36-43 (part) |
| Fiche 38 | Sept-Nov, Nos 43-50 (part) |
| Fiche 39 | Oct-Dec, Nos 47-50 & Suppl. XVII |
| Fiche 40 | 1954 Jan, Nos 1-3 (part) |
| Fiche 41 | Jan-Mar, Nos 3-11 (part) |
| Fiche 42 | Mar-June, Nos 11-22 (part) |
| Fiche 43 | June-Aug, Nos 22-31 |
| Fiche 44 | Aug-Oct, Nos 32-41 |
| Fiche 45 | Oct-Dec, Nos 41-50 & Suppl. XXVI |
| Fiche 46 | 1955 Jan-Mar, Nos 2-9 (No 1 missing) |
| Fiche 47 | Mar-May, Nos 9-18 |
| Fiche 48 | May-June, Nos 19-26 (part) |
| Fiche 49 | June-Sept, Nos 26-34 (part) |
| Fiche 50 | Sept-Oct, Nos 34-42 (part) |
| Fiche 51 | Oct-Dec, Nos 42-50 |
| Fiche 52 | 1956 Jan, No 1 |
| Fiche 53 | Jan-Mar, Nos 2-11 (part) |
| Fiche 54 | Mar-May, Nos 11-20 (part) |
| Fiche 55 | May-Aug, Nos 20-29 (part) |
| Fiche 56 | 1956 Aug-Sept, Nos 29-38 (part) |
| Fiche 57 | Sept-Nov, Nos 38-44 (part) |
| Fiche 58 | Nov-Dec, Nos 44-48 |
| Fiche 59 | 1957 Jan, Nos 1-2 (part) |
| Fiche 60 | Jan-Mar, Nos 2-9 |
| Fiche 61 | Mar-May, Nos 10-18 (part) |
| Fiche 62 | May-Jly, Nos 18-26 |
| Fiche 63 | Jly-Sept, Nos 27-37 |
| Fiche 64 | Sept-Dec, Nos 38-47 |
| Fiche 65 | Dec, Nos 48-49 |
| Fiche 66 | 1958 Jan-Feb, Nos 1-7 (part) |
| Fiche 67 | Feb-Apr, Nos 7-16 |
| Fiche 68 | May-June, Nos 17-25 |
| Fiche 69 | Jly-Sept, Nos 26-35 (part) |
| Fiche 70 | Sept-Nov, Nos 35-44 |
| Fiche 71 | Nov-Dec, Nos 45-50 |
| Fiche 72 | 1959 Jan, Nos 1-3 (part) |
| Fiche 73 | Jan-Mar, Nos 3-11 (part) |
| Fiche 74 | Mar-May, Nos 11-19 (part) |
| Fiche 75 | May-Jly, Nos 19-27 (part) |
| Fiche 76 | Jly-Aug, Nos 27-34 |
| Fiche 77 | Aug-Sept, Nos 29-37 (part) |
| Fiche 78 | Sept-Dec, Nos 37-48 |
| Fiche 79 | Dec, Nos 49-50 |
| Fiche 80 | 1960 Jan-Feb, Nos 1-5 (part) |
| Fiche 81 | Feb-Mar, Nos 5-13 (part) |
| Fiche 82 | Mar-May, Nos 13-20 (part) |
| Fiche 83 | May-Aug, Nos 20-29 (part) |
| Fiche 84 | Aug-Oct, Nos 29-37 (part) |
| Fiche 85 | Sept-Dec, Nos 37-48 |
| Fiche 86 | Dec, Nos 49-50 |
| Fiche 87 | 1961 Jan-Mar, Nos 1-8 (part) |
| Fiche 88 | Mar-Apr, Nos 8-15 (part) |
| Fiche 89 | Apr-Jly, Nos 15-27 (part) |
| Fiche 90 | Jly-Oct, Nos 27-40 (part) |
| Fiche 91 | Oct-Dec, Nos 40-49 |
| Fiche 92 | 1962 Jan-Mar, Nos 1-10 (part) |
| Fiche 93 | Mar-June, Nos 10-20 (part) |
| Fiche 94 | June-Aug, Nos 20-29 |
| Fiche 95 | Aug-Oct, Nos 30-39 (part) |
| Fiche 96 | Oct-Dec, Nos 39-48 |
| Fiche 97 | Dec, Nos 49-50 |
| Fiche 98 | 1963 Jan-Feb, Nos 1-8 (part) |
| Fiche 99 | Feb-May, Nos 8-17 |
| Fiche 100 | May-Aug, Nos 18-30 (part) |
| Fiche 101 | Aug-Oct, Nos 30-38 (part) |
| Fiche 102 | Oct-Nov, Nos 38-46 |
| Fiche 103 | Dec, Nos 47-49 |
| Fiche 104 | 1964 Jan, Nos 1-4 (part) |
| Fiche 105 | Jan-Mar, Nos 4-12 (part) |
| Fiche 106 | Mar-May, Nos 12-19 |
| Fiche 94 | May-Jly, Nos 20-26 |
| Fiche 95 | Jly-Aug, Nos 27-33 (part) |
| Fiche 96 | Aug-Oct, Nos 33-41 |
| Fiche 97 | Oct-Dec, Nos 42-49 (part) |
| Fiche 98 | Dec, No 49 |

**1966** Jan-Feb, Nos 1-8
| Fiche 99 | Mar-May, Nos 9-17 (part) |
| Fiche 100 | May-Jly, Nos 17-27 |
| Fiche 101 | Jly-Sept, Nos 28-35 |
| Fiche 102 | Sept-Nov, Nos 36-45 |
| Fiche 103 | Nov-Dec, Nos 46-49 |

**1966** Jan-Feb, Nos 1-8 (part)
| Fiche 104 | Feb-May, Nos 6-17 (part) |
| Fiche 105 | May-Jly, Nos 17-28 (part) |
| Fiche 106 | Jly-Oct, Nos 28-41 |
| Fiche 107 | Nov-Dec, Nos 42-49 |

**1967** Jan, Nos 1-3 (part)
| Fiche 108 | Jan-Mar, Nos 3-11 (part) |
| Fiche 109 | Mar-May, Nos 11-19 |
| Fiche 110 | May-Jly, Nos 20-27 (part) |
| Fiche 111 | Jly-Sept, Nos 27-35 (part) |
| Fiche 112 | Sept-Nov, Nos 35-43 |
| Fiche 113 | Nov-Dec, Nos 44-50 |

**1968** Jan, No 1
| Fiche 114 | Jan-Mar, Nos 2-10 (part) |
| Fiche 115 | Mar-May, Nos 10-18 |
| Fiche 116 | May-Jly, Nos 19-27 (part) |
| Fiche 117 | Jly-Sept, Nos 27-35 (part) |
| Fiche 118 | Sept-Oct, Nos 35-43 (part) |
| Fiche 119 | Oct-Dec, Nos 43-50 |

**1969** Jan-Mar, Nos 1-9 (part)
| Fiche 120 | Mar-May, Nos 9-17 (part) |
| Fiche 121 | May-Jly, Nos 17-26 (part) |
| Fiche 122 | Jly-Aug, Nos 25-33 (part) |
| Fiche 123 | Aug-Oct, Nos 33-41 (part) |
| Fiche 124 | Oct-Dec, Nos 41-49 (part) |
| Fiche 125 | Dec, No 49 |

**1970** Jan-Mar, Nos 1-9 (part)
| Fiche 126 | Mar-May, Nos 9-19 (part) |
| Fiche 127 | May-Aug, Nos 19-30 |
| Fiche 128 | Aug-Oct, Nos 31-41 (part) |
| Fiche 129 | Oct-Dec, Nos 41-49 |
| Fiche 130 | Nov-Dec, Nos 47-51 |

**1971** Jan-Mar, Nos 1-9 (part)
| Fiche 131 | Mar-May, Nos 9-19 (part) |
| Fiche 132 | May-Jly, Nos 19-28 |
| Fiche 133 | Jly-Sept, Nos 28-37 (part) |
| Fiche 134 | Sept-Nov, Nos 37-47 (part) |
| Fiche 135 | Nov-Dec, Nos 47-51 |

**1972** Jan-Feb, Nos 1-6
| Fiche 136 | Feb-May, Nos 7-19 (part) |
| Fiche 137 | May-Aug, Nos 19-30 (part) |
| Fiche 138 | Aug-Nov, Nos 30-41 (part) |
| Fiche 139 | Nov-Dec, Nos 41-47 |
| Fiche 140 | Nov-Dec, Nos 41-47 |
FICHE 1

1949

No. 1 6.1.49
1949 – A Year of Many Unexpected Developments 1
The Swing of the Pendulum: New Political Reorientations in the Future 3
The Provincial Elections 4
Economic Prospects 6
The Language Census – Its Meaning 7
Natives Representative Council may go 8
US Indians protest against SA Restrictions 9
Progress of Rifle Associations 9
Compulsory National Service for School-leaving Boys 10
Release of ‘The Man from Zeesen’ 10
Leibrandt acquitted 12

No. 2 13.1.49
3 Native Representatives as against 160 Other MPs 13
Battle is joined [re Provincial Elections] 14
The Rood ‘Bombshell’ 18
Natives’ Representative Council 20
Total Number of Voters in the Cape divided according to Race 22
Schoeiman: Communists must be eliminated from Trade Unions 23

No. 3 20.1.49
HNP-AP Breach healed 25
Provincial Elections 26
The UP has a Policy 29
The Durban Riots 30
Economic Vista, 1949 34
New Capital for Afrikaanse Pers Beperk 36
Consciance Clauses in Education must go, says Church 36
Protest against Commission of Enquiry into Trade Union Affairs 36
Jan Hofmeyer Memorial 37

No. 4 27.1.49
Parliament opens 38
Adjournment of Parliament Unconstitutional, says Smuts 42
Malan appoints Durban Riots Commission 42
Provincial Council Elections 43
Economics 45
Annual Council Meeting of the Institute of Race Relations 46
Nuwe Orde’s Views on the Colour Problem 48
Urbanisation of the Afrikaner 48
Indian Boycott 49
Trade Unions 50

No. 5 3.2.49
The Week in Parliament 52
The Union’s Economic Position 55
The Provincial Council Elections 58
Anti-South African News Overseas 61
Xosa Pamphlet 63

FICHE 2

Thirtieth Synod of the DRC 64
Mineworkers’ Union changes Affiliation 64
SA Jewish Board of Deputies approaches Prime Minister in regard to Loibrandt 65
Dr. Van Nierop writes to the SA Jewish Times 65

No. 6 10.2.49
The Union’s Economic and Financial Position 66
The Provincial Council Elections 68
News from Parliament 70
Colonel Rood resigns his Seat 71
‘Christian-National Education’ 72
Freedom of Speech – asks Die Burger 73
Establishment of a Finance Company in Rhodesia 74

No. 7 17.2.49
Crisis in Our Economic Affairs? 78
Santam 81
Provincial Council Elections 82
Incident at Newlands has Nation-Wide Repercussions 84
Government’s Immigration Policy 88
Education League attacked 89
Nearly 800 People attend Protest Meeting against Christian Nationalism 89

No. 8 24.2.49
Stern Measures against Communism foreshadowed by Minister of Justice 90
The South-West African Issue 92
Plan for a Central African Dominion 94
Said in Parliament This Week 95 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 3

Provincial Council Elections 96
Economics and Finance 98
The Blankewerkersbeskermingsbond 99
A New English Monthly arrives on the South African Political Scene 99

No. 9 3.3.49
Economics and Finance 101
Communism in South Africa 105
National Registration justified by Donges 107
All-Party Commission founders 108
Swart alleges: Soldiers Political Action Committee has Jewish and Communist Support 109
AP remains Passive: propagates Non-Participation by Followers 110
Christian National Education 111
Freedom of the Press 112
Proposed Incorporation by Union of High Commission Territories 112

No. 10 10.3.49
Economics and Finance 113
Soviet Consulate-General replies to Louw’s Attack 116
Sidelights on HNP’s Battle for AP and OB Votes 117
Post Office ‘Grievances’ Committee 118
Christian National Education 119
Malan and Smuts appeal to Electorate on Eve of Elections 120
Results of Provincial Elections 121
No. 11 17.3.49
What the Papers said 123
(Note: pp125-6 are missing with loss of text)
How Majorities rose and fell 128
The Future Role of the AP in South African Politics 129
The Coloured Vote 131
The Elections and the Senate 132
The Future of Education in the Transvaal 132
Mr Havenga’s Budget Speech 134
Bechuanaland-Rhodesia Federation? 136
Freedom of the Press 136
No. 12 24.3.49
The Budget evokes Strong Opposition Criticism 137
(Note: p138 is missing with loss of text)
Communist Meetings banned 139
Christian National Education 141
Defection of UP Senator gives Government Majority in Senate 142
Political Rights of Coloured Voters 142
Broederbond Allegations 143
Railway ‘Grievances’ Commission 145
South Africa and Bechuanaland 146
Industry attacks Government’s Native Housing Policy 146
‘Secondary Industry is Country’s Most Important Hope’ 147
Federe Volksbeleggings BPK extends its Interests 147
No. 13 31.3.49
Latest Manoeuvrings in the Political Arena 148
Re-alignment of Political Parties hinted at 149
Afrikaner Nationalism broadening out says South African News Review 151
OB will work for Non-Party Republic 152
Mr Brink explains His Resignation 152
Conference of Dominion Premiers 154
Dr Malan defends Louw: warn Communists 156
Christian National Education 157
The Railway Budget 160
Durban Riots Reports 160
Moseley Men arrive in the Union 161
Te Water elected Chancellor 161
(Note: Press Digest No. 14, 7.4.49, pp 162-173 is missing. Press Digest No. 15, 13.4.49 has been wrongly numbered as No. 14)
No. 15 13.4.49
Christian National Education 174
Afrikaner Circle formed in Natal 176
Politics and the Church 176
South Africa’s External Policy 177
Eric Louw Overseas 178
Criciticism of the Budget Debate 178
Loading of Votes in SWA 179
‘Toenaderings’ 179
Racialism in South Africa 181
No. 16 21.4.49
Report of the Durban Riots Commission 182
School Feeding for Natives 183
“Better” Racial Separation at Johannesburg Station 184
How Much will be accomplished This Year? 184
Wits. Students oppose Apartheid 186
Non-European Organisation condemns Apartheid 186
Christian National Education 186
Afrikaners Instruction in Technical Colleges 189
Dominion Premiers Conference and the Republican Issue 190
No. 17 28.4.49
Christian National Education 192
Education in South-West Africa 195
Native Education Commission 195
Medical Scholarships for Natives abolished 196
Party Politics in South Africa 196
Republican Independence 200
Students demonstrate against Dr Malan 201
Points from Havenga’s Reply to the Budget Debate 201
Trades and Labour Council will resist All Attacks on It 202
South African Bureau of Racial Affairs 202

FICHE 3

No. 18 5.5.49
Dominion Premiers reach Agreement 203
Christian National Education 207
The Liberals and the United Party 210
Extracts from HNP Congress 211
Civilised Labour 212
No. 19 12.5.49
In Parliament This Week 213
Durban Riots 219
The Battle of Christian-National Education 220
Investigation into Progress of Afrikanae Businessmen 223
‘The Nation’ – a New Quarterly 223
Weichardt joins HNP 224
‘Die Boerenasie and the HNP’ 224
No. 20 19.5.49
Repercussions of the Commonwealth Conference 225
South Africa’s Foreign Policy 228
Government’s Defence Policy 230
Convict Labour 231
Freedom of the Press 231
Immigration of Self-Professed Fascists 232
Ban on Importation of Books 232
HNP Victory in Vereeniging 233
Ban on Sunday Sports 233
Institute for Business Administration established 234
Nasionale Pers 234
African Homes Trust 234
Unemployment 234
No. 21 26.5.49
Christian-National Education 235
Increase in Number of Afrikaans School Children 238
‘We must carry the Torch of Christianity and
Civilisation...’ 238
Conference of Federated Dutch Reformed Churches 238
News from Parliament 239
Drastic Import Cuts 240
Post-Mortem on Vereeniging and P E North 241
Malan, Republicanism and Coalition 243
Mixed Marriages Bill 245
War History Chairman dismissed 245
Pirow’s Newsletter pleads for Re-organisation of Civil
Service 246
SW Africa: Germans Obstinate 246
Communist Press 246
Rhodesian DRC insists on No Sunday Sport 246
No. 22 2.6.49
Comment on Import Restrictions 247
The South African Citizenship Bill 250
Apartheid, Mixed Marriages 252
Christian National Education 254
After One Year of Nationalist Rule 256
Natal Head Committee Member of HNP repudiates
Battersby 258
Jewish Board will keep out of Politics – but fight Anti-
Semitism 258
No. 23 9.6.49
Union’s Economic Position 259
Strauss Temporary Leader of United Party 264
News from Parliament 265
Christian-National Education 267
Disagreement over Education Policy 268
Election of Schools Boards 268
New Public Servants not Bilingual 268
Passports 269
Nat.-UP Merger 269
‘New’ Nationalist Voters 269
Immigrants to the Union 270
No. 24 16.6.49
South African Citizenship Bill 271
Educational Matters 278
Afrikaner Nationalism in Southern Rhodesia 281
White Workers’ Party to be Disbanded 281
No. 25 23.6.49
Progress of Citizenship Bill during the Week 282
Addendum to Last Week’s Press Digest 288
One Year Ban on Communist MPs’ Meetings 290
Christian National Education 291
Language Draft Ordinance postponed until September 292
Production before Politics 292
‘Indians form Grave Threat to White South Africa’ 292
Deterioration in Native Housing 292
Nationalist Party – Afrikaner Party Merger in SW Africa
293
No. 26 30.6.49
Final Phase of Battle over Citizenship 294
Revocation of Passports 297
Economics and Finance 298 [continued on the next fiche]
FICHE 4
Unemployment Statistics 302
Christian National Education 302
The Serowe Decision 303
New Union Ambassador to Washington 304
Sen. Conroy leaves Politics 304
No. 27.7.49
Parliamentary Session – Post Mortem 305
Educational Matters 307
Christian National Education 310
Economics and Finance 311
Reddingsdaadbond Conference 312
Little Recognition for Afrikaans in Rhodesia 313
Apartheid 313
State Threat to Liberty and Democracy 314
No. 28 14.7.49
Dutch Reformed Church Congress 315
Christian Citizen and State Policy 319
Christian National Education 319
Education for Africans 321
Mr Havenga on Union’s Prospects 321
Implications of Bechuanaland Tribe’s Decision 322
NUSAS Conference 323
Apartheid 323
UP will fight Citizenship Act 324
Voortrekker Memorial Celebrations 324
No. 29 21.7.49
Golding threatens Government if Coloured removed from
Voters’ Roll 325
Six Conditions for Apartheid 326
Apartheid in Post Offices 327
Pirow advocates Separate European and Native States in
Africa 328
Finance, Trade and Industry 328
Defence and None-Europeans 332
Christian National Education 333
Press Attachés appointed for Overseas Service 334
UP Political Colleges 334
Club formed to smash UP Meetings 334
No. 30 29.7.49
Education Matters 335
Education and Citizenship 339
Students and Politics 339
Apartheid 341
The Voortrekker Celebrations 341
S.A.C.U.M. 342
Extracts from Die Volkshandel 343
Mr Havenga succeeds in Britain 344
Advocate Pirow’s News Letter 344
CNO School in Pietermaritzburg 458
Results of Mr Havenga’s Overseas Mission 459
Another Government Loan from Reserve Bank 461
Unions Economic Handicaps 461
Petrol Rationing 462
United Party Congresses and Meetings 462
Nationalist Party ‘Rallies’ 464
Immigration 465
Voortrekker Monument Celebrations 466
No. 42 20.10.49
Transvaal Education Ordinance 467
Christian National Education 470
Government appoints New Native Affairs Secretary 470
Natives ask for More Parliamentary Representation 473
African Regional Scientific Conference 473 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 6

Mr Erasmus explains Smut’s Dismissal as C-in-C 474
Battersby banned from Union 474
Havenga and Afrikaner Party 475
Higher Taxes predicted 476
Increase in Import Allocations 476
Slagtersnek Crossbars not to be taken on Tour 476
No. 43 27.10.49
Educational Matters 477
Voortrekker Monument Celebration 481
HNP Congress in Bloemfontein 483
Journalist answer Dr Malan 483
Cape United Party Congress 483
Nats lose Control of Pretoria City Council 484
An All-Africa Council 484
Friendship with England 484
Housing of Native Workers 485
Afrikaans Pers declares Higher Dividends 485
Appointments to the Scientific and Industrial Research Council 485
No. 44 2.11.49
Afrikaans only at Voortrekker Celebrations 486
South Africa and the Protectorates 492
Transvaal Draft Language Ordinance 495
Parents refused Hearing by School Board and Education Department 495
Die Burger’s Political Correspondent criticised ‘Official Jewry’ 496
Government and Mr Battersby 497
The Future of the Jewish State – Israel 497
No. 45 9.11.49
Comment on Voortrekker Celebrations continues Unabated 499
South Africa and the Protectorates 501
Naturalisation of Germans in SWA 505
Pre-war Nazis again Busy in South Africa 506
Coalition Rumours 506
Nationalist Workers Party being planned, says Schoeman 507
The DRC and Catholicism 507
Dadoo barred from attending Political Meetings 507
Smuts restates UP Policy 508
Prof Chris Coetzee again defends CNO 508
No. 46 17.11.49
Reaction to UP Statement of Policy 510
Coalitions – Rumoured and Suggested 514
Basuto Chiefs petition the King 514
Voortrekker Monument Celebrations 516
Second Reading of Transvaal Education Ordinance adopted 518
Two Pamphlets banned by Government 518
Group of Afrikaners form Organisation for ‘Benefit of Natives’ 518
Dutch Reformed Church discusses Membership of World Council of Churches 519
Dr A H Jonker discusses Die Broederbond and Other Organisations 519
No. 47 24.11.49
The Trend of Party Politics in the Union Today 521
Speculation about Larger Cabinet 526
SW African Germans and the HNP 526
Voortrekker Memorial Celebrations 528
South Africa’s Problems cannot be resolved by the Past 530
Debate on Language Ordinance in the Transvaal continues 530
Province’s Decision on Secondary Education 531
Evidence to Commission on Native Education 531
The Randfontein Location Riot 532
No. 48 1.12.49
‘A Bleak Weak’ 533
The Union’s Economic Position 533
UNO-South Africa-SWA 537
Transvaal Language Ordinance 540
Erasmus threatens News Censorship 541
General Smuts attends Dinner in Honour of Veizman 542
Blanke Werkers ask for Race Distinctions 543
Republican Fighting Fund dissolved 543
No. 49 8.12.49
South West Africa and UNO 544
Press Censorship: To be or Not to be? 549
Reactions to Transvaal Education Ordinance 552
Voortrekker Memorial Celebrations 553
Die Burger and Democracy 554
Mr Havenga’s Call for Unity favourably received 554
Die OB finds Smuts inexplicable 555

FICHE 7

No. 50 15.12.49
Malan and Havenga issue Statement on Apartheid 557
Transvaal and Orange Free State United Party Provincial Congresses 559
Nationalist Party retains Harrismith 560
Communist wins Cape Western Provincial Council Seat 581
Voortrekker Celebrations 562
South-West Africa and UN 565
Call for Convention on Coloured Question 565
Voortrekker Pers makes a Profit 566
Control of Building to be abolished 566
Another Union withdraws from Labour Council 566
No. 51 22.12.49
Voortrekker Monument inaugurated 567
African Conferences meet 572
Council for a White Rhodesia 576
Southern Rhodesia Minister taken to Task 577
Union, Pakistan and India to hold Preliminary Talks 577
Mr Sauer to attend Colombo Conference 578
Government acts on Railway Grievances Report 578
Miles Cadmon resigns from Senate 578
Natal Trade Union leaves Trades and Labour Council 578
1950
No. 52 5.1.50 (*see note at end of No. 52)
Expectations and Hopes for 1950 579
Expected Legislation during Forthcoming Parliamentary Session 581
Grievances of Public Servants to be investigated 582
Rising Surge of African Nationalism 584
United Party Memorandum on Communism 585
‘No Drastic Changes’ caused by Language Ordinance 585
UDF Jobs for Nat Newspaper Man 585
[Please note: This Press Digest should be numbered Digest No. 1 1950 and the pages should be numbered 1-7]
No. 2 12.1.50
Coloured Advisory Council resigns 8
Native Representative Council not to meet ‘for the Present’ 10
South Africa’s Voting System 11
Malan-Smuts Coalition Feeler 11
Havenga touring Country Districts 12
Colombo Talks 13
Communism in South Africa 14
OB planning to oppose HNP? 15
Revival of Anti-Semitic Libels 15
No. 3 19.1.50
What is Mr Havenga aiming at? 16
A New Year Message to Members of Die OB 19
No Limitation to CACs’s Powers, says Stals 19
The Convention of Coloured Organisations 20
Colombo Talks end; to be followed by Further Discussions 21
A Book Review; ‘Goering’s Last Letter’ 22
No. 4 26.1.50
The Speech-from-the-Throne 24
A Bill to combat Communism 26
National Registration Bill 27
Enquiry into the Press 28
Speculation on the Protectorates 29
‘No Confidence Motion moved by Smuts’ 29
Bill to amend Asiatic Act 30
Annual Meeting of the Council of Institute of Race Relations 30
The Future of the OB 32
National Conference of Communist Party of SA 33
Future of ‘The Forward’ 34
Apartheid at New Volkskas Building 34
No. 5 2.2.50
Points raised by Opposition Speakers in No Confidence Debate 35
In Defence of the Government and Its Policy 36
General Smuts’ Reply to Debate 39
Press Comment on Debate 39
Was Malan aiming at a Centralised Union Party? 40
Dr Van Rhyn (HNP) moves for Inquiry into SA Press 41
Potchefstroom University Bill 44
‘Rioting’ in Newclare Native Township 45
Stellenbosch Professor repudiates Apartheid 45
Dr H J Steyn New Leader of HNP in SW Africa 45
Certificates of Naturalisation granted in 1949 45
No. 6 9.2.50
Rising Cost-of-Living 47
Drought Relief for Natives in Ciskei and Transkei 49
Debate on Inquiry into the Press continues 49
Government’s News Service for Press Attachés Abroad 54
Dr Malan questioned on Te Water’s African Journey 54
SA Anti-Communist Bill drafted 54
National Registration 54
South Africa-India-Pakistani Discussions [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 8
Politics obscuring Non-European Issue -- says Harm Oost 56
Cape’s OB will not join Nats 56
Future Leader of Bamangwato Tribe 57
National Youth Service Council 58
A Correction 58
No. 7 16.2.50
The Proposed Press Inquiry Commission 59
British Journal warns Malan about Inquiry 62
Privy Council Bill passes Second Reading 62
Senator Ballinger’s Five-Point Plan for Natives 63
The Newclare Riots 65
Religion and Education 68
New Press for Nationally-Minded Workers 69
Dr Jansen opens Annual Meeting of the South African Bureau of Race Affairs (SABRA) 70
No. 8 23.2.50
The Newclare Riots 71
Ministry for Coloured to be formed 76
HNP disturbed by Increase in Number of Coloured Voters, says Cape Times 77
Population Registration Bill 77
Parliament discusses Cost-of-Living 80
Donges reports on Talks with Indians 81
Effect of Language Ordinance in Transvaal
Students retain Non-Segregation Policy at Universities
Passes for Native Women
‘Freedom of Speech’ Convention held in Johannesburg [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 9

An Explanation for the Resignation from the Union Defence Forces of Gen. Beyers
Recruiting for Platteland Army
British Government replies to Critics on Seretse Khama Issue
Church Deputation discusses Communism with Swart
OB urges Establishment of Republic in South Africa
No. 14 6.4.50
Recent Statements by Dr Malan
Dr DONGES criticises English Press
Minister of Agriculture warns against Communist Danger in Union
Press Reaction to Proposed Anti-Communist Legislation
General Smuts stresses Need for More Immigrants
Limitation of Industry Fatal, says Smuts
Dutch Reformed Church Congress
Teachers’ Conferences
No. 15 13.4.50
Proceedings of the Dutch Reformed Church Congress
Conference of Die Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie (SAOU)
A Protest against Conscience Clause in Potchefstroom University College Bill
Youth Congress
Sir Godfrey Huggins’ View on Native Problems
Van Riebeeck Day Celebrations
Dutch Immigration Necessary to strengthen Afrikaner Nation—Strydom
No. 16 20.4.50
Parliamentary Report
General Beyers gives Explanation of Resignation from UDF
Australian Professor’s Opinions regarding South African Affairs
Kruithoring calls for Support for the Government in fighting Communism
No. 17 27.4.50
Government’s Apartheid Plans detailed by Dr Jansen
Group Areas Bill
1st May (‘Freedom Day’) Demonstrations
Passports to have Validity for One Year Only
The Case of Gen. Beyers
Parliamentary Notes
Will the University of the Free State follow
Potchefstroom? 185
OB not reassured by Statement on HNP's Republican Aims... 185
No. 18 4.5.50
Report on May Day 186
The Anti-Communist Fight i the Union 189
Group Areas Bill 190
Delay in Approach to Britain on Protectorates 192
Passports to be issued on Condition they can be revoked 193 [continued on next fiche]

IFICHE 10

HNP Senator urges an Increase in Immigration 194
South West African Elections 194
Rhodesian MP appeals for More Tolerance 195
Afrikaners' Part in the Development of Rhodesia 195
Transvaal Language Ordinance dividing Europeans 195
Native Trade Unions 195
Is the End of OB's Influence Imminent? 196
Botha and Malherbe not re-appointed to Social Research Council 196

No. 19 11.5.50
Unlawful Organisations Bill 197
Population Registration Bill 203
Group Areas Bill 204
Round Table Talks on Native Problem 205
Cabinet Ministers address HNP Rallies 206
Smuts addresses UP Meetings in Transvaal 207
Greyshirt Leader to join Nationalists 207
Governor-General fives Assent to Potchefstroom University Bill 207
'Extremist Group of Afrikaners' attacked by Rhodesian Premier 207

No. 20 18.5.50
Further Reaction to Unlawful Organisations Bill 208
Population Registration Bill passes Third Reading 215
South West Africa Case before World Court 216
Natal Provincial Council to consider Amendment to Education Ordinance 217
Transvaal Language Ordinance – Its Effect in Practice 219
Broadcast Programme in Honour of General Smuts 219
'Poor Support by Afrikaans Businessmen for 'C' Programme' 220

No. 21 25.5.50
Explanatory Memorandum on Group Areas Bill 221
Unlawful Organisations Bill sent to Select Committee 223
General Smuts' 80th Birthday 225
Dissatisfaction over Paucity of Afrikaans Material on the 'C' Programme 228
People living in Flats to register in Future 230
SA News Review stops Publication 230
Imigration Statistics 230

No. 22 1.6.50
Further Developments in Progress of Group Areas Bill 231
Educational Matters 239
NUSAS defends Liberty of Conscience 241
Greyshirt Movement dissolved 241

No. 23 8.6.50
Unlawful Organisations Bill replaced by the Suppression of Communism Bill 242
Malan participates in Debate on Group Areas Bill 246
Native Cabinet suggested by Nicholls 252
'Non-Christians should not be supported in Elections' 252
Challenge to Home Language Ordinance 253
Afrikaans Body urges Boycott of Unilingual Advertisers 253
Germans in SWA organising Support for HNP 253

No. 24 15.6.50
General Smuts retires as Leader of UP in Parliament 254
Progress of Group Areas Bill through Parliament 254
Widespread Protests follow Publication of Bill to suppress Communism 258
National Day of Protest called by African National Congress and Other Organisations 265

No. 25 22.6.50
Suppression of Communism Bill 266
Communist Party of SA dissolved 274
Action announced for National Day of Protest 275
The OB's Case for a New System of Government in South Africa 275 [continued on next fiche]

IFICHE 11

Comment on Gen. Smuts' Resignation as Parliamentary Leader 276

No. 26 29.6.50
Anti-Communism Bill Debate in Senate 277
A Review of the Parliamentary Session 282
Possible Political Developments in the Near Future 285
Protest Day Unsuccessful in Most Centres 286
Rand Riots – Their Causes and Background 286
Educational Matters 287
Two Comments on the Group Areas Bill 288

No. 27 6.7.50
A Week of Conferences 289
Recent Ministerial Statements 292
Election Activity in South West Africa 295
Friends of SA Society in Germany 299
Action against Communism in the Union 300

No. 28 13.7.50
The Political Arena in the Future 300
World Court Decision on SWA 306
Election News from SWA 308
Is the Afrikaans-speaking UP on the Decline? 309
Sir Godfrey Huggins criticised by Pirow's News Letter 310
DRC to control Welfare Work in Johannesburg 310
Nationalism 'Saviour of Union' says Dr Van Rhyn 310
Die Transvaler advocates Appointment of New Planning Council 311
Educational News 311
No. 29 20.7.50
SWA – and the International Court's Decision 312
Mr Havenga, the UP and Coalitions 316
News of the Election Campaign in South-West 318
Mr Strydom on the UP and Communism 321
CNO banned in Natal Schools 323
NUSAS Resolution on Religious Freedom 323
Candidates in the Clerksdorp By-Election 323
Immigration Figures 323

(Please note: Press Digest No. 30, 27.7.50, is missing, with loss of text)

No. 31 3.8.50
Afrikaner Party Congress 334
Survey of Union's Economy 335
Christian National Education 338
The Elections in SWA 341
UP Spokesmen address Meetings throughout the Country 342
Mr Strydom discusses UP's 'Part' in causing Communist Danger 342
Question of Coloured Voters discussed by Mr Strydom 343
No. 32 10.8.50
The South-West African Election Campaign 344
Afrikaans Studentebond announces Support for CNO 346
Catholic Bishops to challenge Language Ordinance 347
Dual-Medium Education in Natal abolished 348
Communist Activity – Inside and Outside the Union 348
Van Riebeek Celebrations 349
Newspaper's Appeal in Cartoon Case upheld 349
Immigration and Emigration 350
African National Congress fears a 'Racial Explosion' 351
Churches to send Negro Delegates to Union 351
Economic Volkskongress to be held in October 352
Results of 1946 Census published 353
No. 33 17.8.50
Considerable Activity in SW Election Campaign 354
UP holds Congresses in Transvaal 358
Klerksdorp By-Elections 361
Judge likely to hear Commission of Inquiry into the Press 362
Immorality Act Sentences 363
Afrikaans Press criticises Rev Webb's Address to Natives 363
Christian National Education 364

No. 34 24.8.50
The Elections in South-West Africa 366
Klerksdorp By-Election 369
Resolutions to be submitted to the Transvaal HNP Congress in Pretoria 370
African Military Alliance to be discussed 372
School Magazine for Native Children 373
Scarcity of English-speaking Teachers 375
Call for Religious Education 375
Attempt being made to reconcile NUSAS and ASB 375
OB Members pay Homage to Their Leader 375
OB Attitude towards Africa 376
Split in Nat. Miners' Union 376
Nuwe Orde praises National Socialism 377
No. 35 31.8.50
Afrikaner Migration to the Rhodesias 378
The Affair of the Mineworkers' Union 382
Educational Matters 384
Registration of Flat Dwellers 385
UP defeated in Election Pamphlet Case 386
The Importance of The German Community in SWA 386
Application to unseat Senator dismissed 386
Nationalist Victory in SWA Elections 387
Nationalist hold Klerksdorp in By-Election 388
No. 36 7.9.50
Comments on the SWA Election Results 389
Recent Statements by Cabinet Ministers 393
Enforcement of Suppression of Communism Act 384
Afrikaner Penetration into Rhodesia denied 394
HNP Congress to be held in Durban 395
Language Fight in School Election 396
No. 37 14.9.50
Death of General Smuts 397
Transvaal Congress of Nationalist Party 399
New Political Party on Rand 403
Persons 'named' under Anti-Communist Act 403
Schoeman asks for Application of Group Areas Act 405
Mr Havenga's Future discussed by Pirow's News-Letter 406
No. 38 21.9.50
Memorial Services to Gen Smuts held Throughout the Country 407
Die Transvaler discusses Co-operation in South Africa 411
Speculation about Possible New Political Alignments 413
Transvaal Congress of UP 413
Dr Malan addresses Natal HNP Congress 414
Strydom to be Deputy Prime Minister? 416
Mr Weichardt appointed Organiser of HNP 416
African Leader calls for Freedom for All Races 416
TLC not to defend 'Avowed Communists' 417
Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia ask for 'Square Deal' 417
Apartheid in Parow 417
Apartheid Measures in Commerce 418
Insults to Afrikaners alleged 418
No. 39 28.9.50
Appointment of Dr E G Jansen as Governor-General

FICHE 12
No. 48 30.11.50
Union Congress of United Party 517
Strauss elected Leader of UP 518
Mr Strydom discusses UNO and South Africa 520
Mr S P Le Roux attacks the UP 521
Schoeman and Louw analyse UP Statement of Policy 521
Mr Schoeman on Union's Need for Artisans 522
Government adheres to UNO, says Erasmus 522
Dr N Diederichs discusses Position of Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia 522
Offices of 'Guardian' raided 522
Cape Bishop's Replies to Questions on Racial Policy 523
Anglican Synod protests against Mixed Marriage Law 534
Disturbances on Native Reserve 524
Foreign Native Students banned from Union 525
Nationalist MP wants Lower C.O.L. for Natives 526

[continued on next fiche]

FICHE 14

SA Industrialist deplores Overseas Attacks on Union 527
Workers' Paper advocates Death Sentence for Sachs 527
D.R.C. and School Elections 527
Upsurge of German Nationalism in South Africa 528

No. 49 7.12.50
Discussions on South African Question at UN 529
Dr Verwoord meets Native Representative Council 532
Brochure published by 'Sons of South Africa' 535
Erasmus discusses Possibility of War 536
Mr Strydom discusses 'Dangers' of Internationalism, Equality and Communism 537
Swart quotes Six Points of Nationalist Policy 537
'Guardian' Editor warns against Attacks on Freedom of Press 537
Anglican Bishop replies to Louw's Allegations 538
Pirow's Newsletter comments on Strauss 538
Possible Results of Amalgamation of Parties predicted by Die OB 539
Forecast of Future Political Trends by Prof. Du Plessis 539
List of Firms 'Favourably disposed to Afrikaners' to be compiled 540

No. 50 14.12.50
Native Representative Council adjourns sine die 541
Franchise Rights must remain with Europeans – Strydom 547
Non-European Problem Critical, says UP Speaker 547
DRC to confer with Native Leaders 547
Schoeman says Labour Inquiries are not Anti-Communist Probes 547
Sauer attacks UP's Four Securities 548
Mr Viljoen pleads for Unity among the People 548
Country needs 3000 Technicians, says Viljoen 549

South Africa a Good Country for Investors, says Du Toit 549
Union Citizens should not interfere with Afrikaners in Rhodesia 549
Progress made by Afrikaans Language in Rhodesia 550
Mr Schoeman on HNP's Republican Aims 551
Time for a Republic, says Cape OB Leader 551
Institute of Race Relations condemns Malan-Havenga Plan 551
Civil Rights League condemns Change in Coloured Voting Rights 552
Coloureds to contest Proposed Removal from Voters' Roll 552
Coloured Organisation asks for Residential Separation in Transvaal 552
Report of Activities of DAHA 552

No. 51 21.12.50
Results of Pretoria East, Wolmaransstad and Smithfield By-Elections 554
All-African Convention Meeting in Bloemfontein 556
Annual Conference of African National Congress 556
Dirgaans-Day Speeches by Cabinet Ministers 557
Nasionale Jugend sends 'Republican Greetings' to Transvaal Matric. Students 559
Overseas Criticisms of South Africa 561
Unilingual Units for Union Defence Force 562
Ban on Conference Delegates not of Pure European Descent 562
'British Africa Review' wants 'British South African Movement' 562

1951
No. 1 4.1.51
Overseas Opinion on South Africa 1
Rhodesia refuses Afrikaans as Optional School Subject 2
Religious Instruction in Government Schools 4
Immigration and Emigration 5
The UP and the Labour Party 6
Union to broadcast to African Territories 7
Republic? 8
Next Session will see Clear Majority for Nationalists 8
Bantu Intellectuals are Extremists – Die Burger 9
Partnership must replace 'Baasskap' 9
Resignation of Cape MPC 9
Scottish Home Rule Demand proves Difficulty of Afrikaans-English Co-operation 10

No. 2 11.1.51
HNP Stronger in Both Houses 12
Economic Prospects in the Union 14
Immigration 16
Population Trends in South Africa 17
Education 19
Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 19
Apartheid 21
Union Congress of Labour Party 22
English-Speaking Youth turning More and More Nationalist, says Strydom 269

No. 24 14.6.51

Suppression of Communism Amendment Bill 270

Coloured Franchise Issue 273

Open Criticism of and Revolt against Strauss’ Leadership of UP, says Burger Article 276

Afrikaans Leaders Always chosen by English-Speaking Element 277

Pro-Government Press reacts Adversely to Nicholls’ Civil War Speech 278 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 18

Immigration 280

Immigration and Apartheid Necessary to maintain White Civilisation in Union – Die Transvaler 280

Representation of Delegates at SA Jewish Board of Deputies Congress explained 281

Bilingualism in the Courts 281

No. 25 21.6.51

HNP Spokesmen discuss Republican Question 282

Central Africa Federation proposed 284

Educational Matters 290

Educated Africans are ‘Worst Agitators’ – Nat. MP 293

Provisions of the Bantu Authorities Bill 293

No. 26 28.6.51

Malan-Havenga Statement on Unification of HNP and AP 294

Havenga affirms Faith in SA Unity; Reply to Strauss 296

Post-Mortem on Fourth Session of Union’s Tenth Parliament 297

Appeal Court confirms Validity of Transvaal Language Ordinance 300

Havenga wards Afrikaans Businesses 305

No. 27 5.7.51

War Veterans’ Action Movement holds First Conference 306

Opposition to Central African Federation Proposal reported 310

DRC Concern over ‘Growing Danger of Roman Catholicism’ 312

Education and Bilingualism 313

Comment on Havenga’s Warning to Afrikaans Businessmen 315

OB Again pleads the Case for a Republic 316

No. 28 12.6.51

Economic Matters 317

NUSAS Annual Congress 321

Education of Roman Catholic Children 322

Christian-National Education 323

Native Policies 326

Jewish Community and Party Politics 327

No. 29 18.7.51

Further Developments in War Veterans’ Torch Commando Plans 329

Bilingualism in Union increasing 330

Criticism of Transvaal Language Ordinance 333

All Immigrants to Southern Rhodesia to be screened 336

Die Burger discusses the Possibility of an Early Election 338

Van Riebeeck Celebrations 339

Non-European View of DRC Conference on Apartheid 339

NUSAS to study Origin of Segregation 340

No. 30 26.7.51

Educational Affairs 341

Increase in Bilingualism 344

Appointment of Dr L C Steyn to the Bench 345

United South Africa Trust Fund 346

Van Riebeeck Celebrations 348

Government and the Trade Unions 349

The Afrikaner’s Role in Secondary Industry 350

No. 31 2.8.51

Appointment of Dr L C Steyn to the Bench 352

Amalgamation of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties 354

Government and the Next Election 356

War Veterans Action Committee 357

Educational Affairs 358

FICHE 19

No. 32 9.8.51

Merger of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties 361

War Veterans Action Committee 364

Johannesburg Bar Boycott of Dr L C Steyn 366

Nationalist Party Congresses 367

Review of Parliamentary Session by Prof. L J Du Plessis 368

United Party and Republicanism 370

No. 33 16.8.51

The OB and Merger of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties 371

Cabinet Ministers’ Speeches on Role of Capital in South Africa 373

War Veterans’ Torch Commando 376

Educational Affairs 376

Bilingualism in the Civil Service 378

Coloureds to hold Senior Posts in Civil Service 379

Union Policy and Central Africa 380

No. 34 23.8.51

Merger of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties 382

War Veterans’ Torch Commando 385

Publication of Census Figures for the Union 387

Dismissal of Judges by Government: Article in ‘Inspan’ 389

Union Policy and Central Africa 390

No. 35 30.8.51

Afrikaner Party Congress votes in Favour of Merger of Afrikaner and Nationalist Parties 393

Mr Havenga’s Statement on Amalgamation of the Two Parties 393

Programme of Principles for New National Party 396

Van Riebeeck Festival Programme: Statement by FAK 399

14
Separate Representation of Voters Act to be rested in Court 400
Government’s Plans for Natives in Industry: Interview with Dr H F Verwoerd 400
Federation in British Central Africa 402
No. 36 6.9.51
Cape Nationalist Congress accepts Amalgamation of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties 405
War Veterans’ Torch Commando 405
Future of British Protectorates to be made an Election Issue 406
OB and Amalgamation of Afrikaner and Nationalist Parties 408
Now National Party 410
First South Africans finally named as Communists 412
Application of Government’s Apartheid Policies 413
Afrikaners and the Roman Catholic Church 414
No. 37 13.9.51
Result of Groblersdal Provincial Council By-Election 415
Orange Free State Nationalist Party Congress 418
Rights of English-Speaking South Africans; Statement by President of Sons of England 419
Die OB continues Its Attack on Amalgamation of Parties 421
Publication of Pamphlet by Robey Leibrandt: Article in Adv. Pirow’s Newsletter 422
Future of British Protectorates 422
Formation of New Political Party in Southern Rhodesia 424
No. 38 20.9.51
War Veterans’ Torch Commando 427
Future of British Protectorates 428
Adv. Strauss will not ask Parliament for Broederbond Inquiry 430
Transvaal Nationalist Party agrees to Merger of Government Parties 430
Transvaal Nationalist Ban on Jewish Members falls away 431
Educational Affairs 432
Threats to Courts denounced by Judge 434
Union’s Native Policy 435
No. 39 27.9.51
War Veterans’ Torch Commando 437
Further Attacks on Amalgamation of Government parties by Die OB 438
UP Wrong to concentrate on Broederbond Issue – Letter in Rand Daily Mail 440
Mr Swart denies Interference with Courts 440 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 20

Conference on Central African Federation adjourned until June 1952 441
Afrikaners in Southern Africa 443
Mr Louw denounces Overseas ‘Meddling’ in South African Affairs 446
The Native in Industry 446
Rejection of Anti-Communist Bill in Australia – Comment in South African Press 448
No. 40 4.10.51
South Africa, Rhodesia and the Protectorate 449
Secession of Natal from Union: Warning by Mr Mitchell 451
Union’s Immigration Policy 451
Removal of ‘Black Spots’ i Johannesburg 453
Native Leader demands Franchise for All South Africans 454
‘The Economist’ analyses South African Political Scene 455
No. 41 11.10.51
Kruger Day Speeches 457
War Veterans’ Torch Commando 458
Removal of Johannesburg’s ‘Black Spots’ 459
Statement by Sir Godfrey Huggins on Federation Conference 461
Professor J Chr. Coetzee reviews the Report of the OFS Education Commission 463
‘The Catholic Times’ replies to Recent Attacks on the Roman Catholic Church 464
What the People expect of the OB: Editorial in Die OB 464
No. 42 18.10.51
Nationalist Party and Afrikaner Party to amalgamate on October 22nd 466
OB supports Amalgamation of Government Parties 466
Prime Minister on Deterioration of Race Relations in the Union 466
Incorporation of the Protectorates 470
Dr Malan may ask for Inquiry into ‘All Secret Societies’ 470
War Veterans’ Torch Commando and Non-European Membership 471
Protest Meeting in Bloemfontein against CNO Recommendations of OFS Education Commission 472
‘A Middle Course in Africa’: Article in the British Africa Review 473
No. 43 25.10.51
Formal Amalgamation of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties 474
War Veterans’ Torch Commando holds Alamein Day Demonstrations 475
Suppression of the ‘Guardian’ 475
Die Burger-Cape Times Controversy on Racialism in Nationalist Party 478
Statement by OB Grootaad on Future of Movement 480
United Party Cape Provincial Congress 480
Native Affairs 481
Principal of Rhodes confirms Segregation Policy at University 482
No. 44 1.11.51
Reaction in Union to British Election Results 485
Mr Havenga becomes Leader of Nationalist Party in Natal 487
Suppression of 'The Guardian' 487
Application of Group Areas Act 490
War Veterans' Torch Commando Protest against Changing of Names of Union Regiment 491
Die Kerkbode reviews the Work of SABRA 493
The Language of Instruction in Schools and the Rights of Parents: Discussion by Prof. J Chr. Coetzee 495
No. 45 8.11.51
Municipal Election Results in the Reef Towns 496
Donges denies 'Chaos' in Cape over Group Areas Act 497
Die Onderwysblad complains of Church Interference in School Affairs 498
Rhodesia and the Union 500
British Policy to remain Unchanged: Statement by New Colonial Minister 502
The Republican Bogey: Editorial in ‘Dagbreek en Sondagnuus’ 502
Transvaal United Party Congress 503
State Grants to Educational Subject to acceptance of Apartheid 503
Die Vaderland on the Treatment of Native Servants 504
No. 46 16.11.51
Union joins Middle East Defence Command 505
First Results in Transvaal School Board Elections 505
Apartheid and the Anglican Church 507
The Union and Southern Rhodesia 509
Northern Rhodesian Africans reject Partnership with Europeans 510
Police Watch on War Veterans' Torch Commando 512
The Crisis in Native Housing 513
No. 47 22.11.51
South Africa and UNO 515
Is There a Danger that Afrikaans Culture may disappear as a Result of Immigration? 517
The Need for Immigrants 518
Nationalist Press on the ‘Oppenheimer Octopus’ 519
United Party Government would have abolished Colour Bar in Industry: Mrs M Ballinger, MP 520
Die Burger calls for Co-operation between The Union and Southern Rhodesia 520 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 21

Union joins Middle East Defence Command: 'General Smuts' Greatest Victory' states Adv. Pirow's Newsletter 521
The End of 'The Forum' 522
Impressions of Overseas Countries by Prof. A I Malan, MP 522
Press Reaction to 'Cry The Beloved Country' 523
No. 48 29.11.51
South Africa and UNO 525
Government Investigation into 'The Guardian' 528
‘Calvinistic Totalitarianism': Article in Die Kerkblad 529
Nationalist Press on the End of 'The Forum' 530
Native Affairs 531

Institute of Race Relations to investigate Causes of European Disharmony in South Africa 534
No. 49 6.12.51
South Africa and UNO 535
The Attainment of a Republic: Statements by Cabinet Ministers 535
Speculation about Next General Election 538
Colour Policies in Africa 539
Prime Minister promises Coloureds Greater Measure of Responsibility 542
No. 50 13.12.51
South Africa and UNO 543
Educational Affairs 545
The Union and the Rhodesias 548
Native Affairs 549
Political Truce suggested for Duration of Van Riebeeck Festival 552
No. 51 20.12.51
South Africa and UNO 553
Report of Industrial Legislation Commission of Inquiry 558
African National Congress meets in Bloemfontein 560
Review of Economic Achievements of Afrikaners in 'Inspan' 561
Die OB demands Action against the Indian 'Threat' 562
Home and School Council Success in Central Rand School Board Elections 562
1952
No. 1 3.1.52
Indian Complaint against South Africa renewed at UNO 1
The Union and Southern Rhodesia 4
Die Burger appeals for New Immigrants to be absorbed by Afrikanerdom 6
Nationalist Press Reaction to Transvaal School Board Election Results 8
South African Government has Authority to keep Rev. Michael Scott Out of the Country – Dr Donges 8
Christmas Casualties and White Conscience 9
No. 2 10.1.52
Prime Minister opens Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebrations 10
Third Annual Conference of South African Bureau of Racial Affairs 11
Bantu Urban Authorities Act to be presented to Parliament 13
Sir Godfrey Huggins demands Early Decision on Central African Federation 14
Further Reactions to Transvaal School Board Election Results 15
Die Burger on English South African Culture 16
Roman Dutch Law to be translated for Students 17
No. 3 17.1.52
Speculation about Forthcoming Parliamentary Session 18
Renewed Anthem Struggle? 19
Committee formed to found New Christian University in the Orange Free State 20
Annual Council Meeting of South African Institute of Race Relations 21
Further Developments in Native Housing Muddle 22
The Union and the Rhodesias 24
Reaction to the Royal Visit 26
No. 4 24.1.52
Outline of Governor General’s Speech from the Throne 27
Government to establish New Economic Co-ordinating Body 27
Mr Swart moves Enquiry into Position of Mr Kahn and Mr Carneson 28
The Opposition moves Non Confidence Vote 29
Nationalist Press and the Trust Fund 30
South West African Issue before UNO 31
Die Kerkbode warns of Catholic Influences behind the Press 32 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 22

The British Africa Review discusses Extent of Nationalist ‘Infiltration’ into Rhodesia 33
‘A Fatal Shortage: Children’ – Die Volksblad 34
No. 5 31.1.52
South African and the Sterling Crisis 35
African National Congress Resistance to ‘Harsh and Oppressive Legislation’ 38
Government Bill to make Whipping Compulsory for Certain Offences 41
Die Transvaler asks for Action to prevent Ex-Judges taking Part in Politics 42
Big Changes in Native Education foreshadowed 42
Main Points from Cabinet Ministers’ Statements during ‘No Confidence’ Debate 43
No. 6 7.2.52
The Death of His Majesty King George VI 45
Government moves Native Laws Amendment Bill 46
Further Reactions to African National Congress Civil Disobedience Threat 49
Mr Swart delays ‘Whipping Bill’ 51
Federation in Central Africa: British Concessions to Sir Godfrey Huggins reported 53
Mr Swart warns against Rumours concerning Corruption in High Places 54
No. 7 13.2.52
Accession of Queen Elizabeth to the Throne: Reaction in Afrikaans Press 55
House of Assembly discusses Native Laws Amendment Bill 57
Recommendation of the Commission on Native Education 59
Dr J F J Van Rensburg resigns OB Leadership 61
‘The Forward’ announces Change of Editorial Policy 62
‘Die Kerkbode’ complains of Misrepresentation of South Africa in Overseas Religious Publications 62
No. 8 21.2.52
Dr Loock moves Motion condemning ‘Subsidisation of Political Parties’ 63
Further Discussion of Native Laws Amendment Bill 67
Publication of Anti-Cartels Bill 68
Mr Swart modifies ‘Whipping Bill’ 69
Nationalist Press on ‘Slander’ of South Africa Overseas 70
Two Views on Republicanism in South Africa 72
Official Organ of Reddingsdaadbond may close down Shortly 73
Advocate Pirow describes the Story of His Visit to Hitler in ‘Die Vaderland’ 74
Die Kruithoring on Apartheid in Southern Rhodesia 74
No. 9 28.2.52
Mr Havenga makes Statement to Parliament on Defence Funds 75
Further Reactions to Dr Loock’s Motion on the Subsidisation of Political Parties 76
United Party Attitude to Group Areas Act 77
The Elsies River Apartheid Case 79
Natives to be employed as Telegraph Boys in Bloemfontein 79
African National Congress reaffirms Intention to carry out Civil Disobedience Campaign 80
Developments Elsewhere in Africa 81
No. 10 6.3.52
Political Parties warn Public to be prepared for Next General Election 83
South Africa and the Rhodesias 84
Severe Labour Problems in South Africa 87
Statement by Mr Strauss on Civil Disobedience Threat 89
Renewed Allegations about Conditions on Bethal Farms 90
Willem Van Heerden on the Dissensions in the OB 91
Prof. J Chr. Coetzee on the Building of a South African Nation 92
No. 11 13.3.52
Statement by Dr Malan on Voting Case Verdict 93
Government Plan to remove ‘Black Spots’ 94
Debate in the House on Educational Policy 94
Nationalist Press on British Policy in Africa 97
Die Transvaler on the Treatment of Afrikaners in Rhodesia 98
Riots in Newclare Native Township 98
African National Congress rejects Mr Strauss’ Appeal to abandon Civil Disobedience Campaign 99
The Danger to South Africa of Miscegenation in Great Britain: Editorial in Die Oosterlig 100
Catholic ‘Infiltration’ on the Free State Goldfields 101
No. 12 20.3.52
Dr Donges promises Inquiry into Election Spending 102
Conditions in the Union Defence Forces 103
Aftermath of Newclare Riots 106
Moderator of Church of Scotland declines Invitation to Visit Van Riebeeck Festival 108
Die Volksblad on the Essential Attitudes Necessary for
Immigrants to hold 108
Government loses Coloured Vote Act Appeal 109

FICHE 23

No. 13 27.3.52
The Voters’ Act Crisis 113
African National Congress Civil Disobedience Campaign 121
Nationalist Party Organiser warns Afrikaner People against Extremist Movements 123

No. 14 3.4.52
The Voters’ Act Crisis 124
The Budget 133
Mr Strydom on ‘The Threat from the East’ 135

No. 15 10.4.52
Parliament and the Appeal Court 136
African National Congress Protest Meetings pass off Without Incident 140
Dissensions in Dutch Reformed Church 141

No. 16 17.4.52
Debate on Constitutional Crisis in House of Assembly 144
United Front formed to fight ‘For Restoration of Democratic Government in South Africa’ 149

No. 17 24.4.52
Terms of Bill to establish High Court of Parliament 152
Debate in House on First Reading of ‘High Court’ Bill 152
Conclusion of First Debate on Constitutional Crisis 155
Nationalist Press on ‘The Threat to Peace’ 157
Other Crisis Issues raised in Press 162

No. 18 1.5.52
Mr Strauss asks Speaker for Ruling on New Court Bill 164
Developments in Press on Constitutional Crisis 164
Police Reinforcements sent to Cape Town 168
Debate in the House on Torch Commando 170
Crisis Appeal to Dr Malan by Sons of England 171
Comment in Press on Disorders at Political Meetings 171
Dr Donges announces Compensation for War Internees 172
Recent Developments in Church Affairs 172
Replacement of Pass Laws announced by Dr Verwoerd 174
Talks on Federation in Central Africa held in London 174

No. 19 8.5.52
Debate in House of Assembly on Second Leading of High Court Bill 177
The Government and the Torch Commando 184
Natal Provincial Council to call for National Convention 186
Select Committee presents Report on Mr S Kahn, MP and Mr F Carneson, MPC 187

No. 20 15.5.52
High Court of Parliament Bill passes through Second Reading and Committee Stages 189
Dr Malan outlines Nationalist Party Attitude towards Native Representatives in Parliament 192 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 24

Reactions to Dr Malan’s Compromise Proposals 194
Mr Strydom on the Future of English in South Africa 196
Minister of Justice takes Action under Suppression of Communism Act 197

No. 21 21.5.52
The High Court of Parliament Bill 199
Mr Strauss outlines United Party Policy 200
Reactions to Dr Malan’s Statement on Protectorates and on Native Representation in Parliament 202
Government Moves against ‘Named’ Communists 203
‘The Weltanschauung of the Afrikaner’: Article in ‘Inspan’ by Dr N Diederichs 206

No. 22 29.5.52
Government Action against Mr E S Sachs 209
Rioting in Johannesburg follows Arrest of Mr Sachs 210
Developments in Trade Unions since Government Action against Named Communists 213
The Banning of the Guardian 216
Mr Kahn and Mr Carneson expelled from House of Assembly and Cape Provincial Council 218
The Nationalist Press on the United Party and Communism 218
The High Court of Parliament Bill 219
Educational Affairs 219

No. 23 5.6.52
High Court of Parliament Bill signed by Governor-General 221
United Kingdom Labour Party passes Resolution condemning South African Government 222
Developments within Trade Unions since Government Action Against ‘Named’ Communists 227
Date set for Commencement of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 229
Comment in British Press on Recent Events in the Union 230
The Shortage of English Teachers: Statement by President of Transvaal Teachers’ Association 232

No. 24 12.6.52
Coloured Voters seek Order against High Court Act 233
Natal Mass Meeting demands National Convention 234
Trade Union Conference calls for Government to grant Access to Courts for ‘Named’ Communists 236
Cabinet Ministers warn Employers against Closing Their Factories in the Event of a Strike 238
Torch Commando to send ‘Goodwill Mission’ to Wakkerstroom 239
Leaders of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign arrested 240
Editorial in ‘Inspan’ on the Powers of Afrikaans Purchasers 240

No. 25 19.6.52
Violent Fighting at Political Meeting in Johannesburg 243
United Party to boycott High Court of Parliament 247
Natal Call for National Convention rejected by Senate 248
Education Ordinance passed by Cape Provincial Council 249
House of Assembly debates Government Native Policy 250
The Growth of Volkskas: Report in Die Transvaler 253

No. 26 26.6.52
End of Parliamentary Session 254
Publication of Draft Scheme for Central African Federation 254
Natal and the Constitution 259
Violence at Political Meetings 261
Resolutions taken at Johannesburg Conference of Afrikaanse Stakelkomitee 263

No. 27 3.7.52
By-Elections in Wakkerstroom 264
Launching of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 269
Two Views on Relations between South Africa and The Rhodesias 271
Reviews of 1952 Parliamentary Session 272

FICHE 25

No. 28 10.7.52
The United Front and the Platteland 274
First National Congress of War Veterans’ Torch Commando 276
Analysis of 150,000 New Voters according to Language-Grouping 276
Secession Party formed in Natal 277
Trade Union Mass Meeting cancelled because of Apartheid Hitch 277
Continuation of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 278
Conference on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Native Education 279
The Teacher and the Constitutional Crisis: Article in Die Onderwysblad 280
The Attitude of the New Order towards the Government: Article in Adv. Pirow's Newsletter 281

No. 29 17.7.52
Big Increase in Union's Voters 282
Civil Disobedience 283
UP Youth Front hold First Congress 285
Prices are beginning to drop, states Dagbreek En Sondagnuus 288
Total Apartheid urged by SABRA 288
OB supports No Party 289
Donges states: 'I will have to obey High Court' 289
Central African Federation 289
Problems of South Africa in 1952 291

No. 30 24.7.52
Election News 292
Native Affairs 292
Civil Disobedience Campaign 298
High Court of Parliament 299

Calamities Ahead, warn Oudstryders 301
Anti-Communist Garment Workers ask for Protection 302
Afrikaans Publications double Their Circulation 302
Political Broadcasts 303

No. 31 31.7.52
Overseas Opinion on South Africa 304
Delimitation 306
Economic Council Threat to Commerce 308
Policy of the Torch Commando 308
Natal Secessionist Party dissolved 309
Running Controversy on Apartheid 309
UP Viewpoint on Colour 311
Civil Disobedience Campaign 311
New Nationalist Paper in English 312
Immigration to Union 313
Birth Rate increases 313
DRC Mission Work 313
Central African Federation 314

No. 32 7.8.52
Economic Prospects of the Union 315
Transvaal Consolidated Draft Ordinance 317
Delimitation 319
Civil Disobedience Campaign 321
Call for Cessation of Violence at Political Meetings 322
New Farm Prisons 323
Afrikaner need not continue to be Servile 324
DRC Spokesman urges: 'Back to the Land' 324

No. 33 14.8.52
High Court of Parliament Act challenged in Cape Court 325
Continuation of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 325
The Shortage of Capital and the Political Situation in the Union 327
Comment in Afrikaans Press on Recent Immigration Figures 329
Education Affairs 330
Allegations against Trade Union Leaders by Nationalist MP 331
Die Transvaler on the Common Voters Roll in Rhodesia 332

No. 34 21.8.52
Cape Court Temporarily bars Removal of Coloured Voters from Roll 333
Intensification of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 333
Nationalist Press on ‘Gaps’ in Suppression of Communism Act 337
Businessmen warn Natal: Secession mans Hardships 338
First Major Ruling of Delimitation Commission 341
Discussions on Future of Ossewa Brandwag 341

No. 35 28.8.52
High Court of Parliament reverses Verdict of Appeal Court 342
Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 342
Natal United Front Conference 342
Federation in Central Africa and the Protectorates Issue 349

FICHE 26

**No. 36 4.9.52**
Cape Supreme Court declares High Court of Parliament Act Invalid 352
Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 357
British Trades Union Congress condemns Union Government 360
Party-Less Republic remains OB Aim 360
Torch Commando not Permanent Feature of South Africa's Political Life – 'Sailor' Malan 361
South African Journalist on British Press – Attitude towards the Union 361

**No. 37 11.9.52**
Mr Strauss outlines United Party Policy 263
Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 367
Educational Affairs 370

**No. 38 18.9.52**
Party Politics and Non-European Affairs 374
'Madness' to think of Future White Domination – Sir Godfrey Huggins 381
Continuation of Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 381
Statements by Cabinet Ministers on Lowering of Voting Age 382
South Africa Willing to discuss South West Africa Dispute with UN 382
British Press Attitude towards Union: Explanation by South African Journalist 383

**No. 39 25.9.52**
Party Politics and Non-European Affairs 384
Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 389
Cabinet vetoes Cape Language Law 391
Minister of Labour announces Bill for settlement of Native Labour Disputes 393
Statements by Dr Malan on Protectorates 384
South Africa and UNO: Warning by Dr Malan 395

**No. 40 2.10.52**
Party Politics and Non-European Affairs 396
Mr Pirow's 'Plan for White and Black States' 399
Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 400
Press Censorship 402
Land Monopolies attacked 403
Afrikaners in Rhodesia: Editorial in Die Volksgenoot 404

**No. 41 9.10.52**
Party Politics and Non-European Affairs 405
Mr Havenga's Broadcasts 407
RDB Sixth Congress 408
Non-European Civil Disobedience Campaign 411
Press Censorship 412

**No. 42 16.10.52**
The Election Issues 413

Indian Interference 416
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 417
Students and Politics 420
Handelsinstituut Annual Congress 421
Professor Frankel's Address 422
Michael Scott Case 422

**No. 43 23.10.52**
Port Elizabeth Riots 424
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 427
Mr Pirow's Plan 429
Cape United Party Congress 430 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 27

Dr Malan appeals for More Exports 432
SA and America 433
DRC Pamphlet against RC Church 434
From the Bantu Press 435

**No. 44 30.10.52**
Port Elizabeth Riots 436
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 439
Churches on Native Policy 441
United Front Statements 444
Uranium and Independence 445
From the Bantu and Coloured Press 446
ACVV Congress 447
'Forward' to be Labour Party Organ 447

**No. 45 6.11.52**
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 448
Riots in Johannesburg and Kimberley 450
Port Elizabeth Riots 451
Nationalist Party Statements 452
United Party Statements 453
Torch Commando 453
Churches on Native Policy 454
'The Colour Crisis and the West' 455
Kenya Disturbances 457
Christian-National Education 458
Catholic Campaign among Afrikaners 458
From the Bantu Press 458
Censorship and Civil Liberties 459

**No. 46 13.11.52**
The Riots 460
The New Brighton Strike 462
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 463
Dr Malan's Speech in Johannesburg 465
Resignations from Natal UP 467
Liberal Party After Election: Die Vaderland 468
'The Colour Crisis and the West' 468
Die Kerkblad on 'Catholic Danger' 469
DRC Plea for Censorship 469
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 470
Union a Colonial Power 470

**No. 47 20.11.52**
High Court of Parliament Act pronounced Invalid by
African Company to buy New Brighton Shops 49
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 49
No. 6 12.2.53
Public Safety Bill 52
African National Congress 56
Political Meetings 57
'The Colour Crisis and the West' 59
Alleged Racial Discrimination at Wits. Medical School 59
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 60
No. 7 19.2.53
Public Safety bill 62
The Election Campaign 67
DRC and Africans 68
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 70
No. 8 26.2.53
Criminal Law Amendment Bill 72
[Note: Pages 72-73 are missing with loss of text]
Church Protest against Bills 74
Election Campaign 75
Southern Africa in Perspective 76
'Church Imperialism' in the DRC 78
African National Congress 80
Alleged Race Discrimination at Wits. Medical School 81
First Compulsory Application of Group Areas Act 81
Economic Conditions of South African Indians 81
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 82
No. 9 5.3.53
Election Campaign opens 84
UP Election Speeches 85
Nationalist Party Election Speeches 86
Churches and Defiance 88
Liberal Groups drafting Programme 88
Election Statement by Torch Commando 89
Alleged Racial Discrimination at Wits. Medical School 90
Annual Conference of NIC 92
Verwoerd Apartheid Plan taking Shape 93
Group Areas Plan rejected by E.L. Indians 93
Depopulation of the Platteland 93
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 94
No. 10 12.3.53
Dr Malan's Election Appeal 96
Speeches by Mr Strauss 98
Nationalist Party Election Campaign 100
United Party Election Campaign 102
Mr Schoeman assures Labour Movement 104
Opposition to Transvaal Language Ordinance 105
Alleged Racial Discrimination at Wits. University 105
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 106
No. 11 19.3.53
The General Election 103
Dr Malan's Speeches 108
Mr Strauss on UP Colour Plan 109
United Party Election Meetings 110
Nationalist Party Election Campaign 111
Failure to nominate Ex-AP Members 112
Non-European View of Election 113
Republic within the Empire 114
Language Ordinance Controversy 114
Labour Party broadcast Appeal 116 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 30

Bantu National Congress: Telegram to India 117
'The Colour Crisis and the West' 117
Establishment of State Church 118
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 118
No. 12 26.3.53
The General Election Campaign 120
Sovereignty of Parliament 120
Railway Apartheid Appeal Decision 122
United Party Election Campaign 125
Nationalist Party Election Speeches 127
Rowdyism at Political Meetings 128
Language Ordinance Controversy 128
Nationalist Party and Trade Unions 129
The Roman Catholic Church in South Africa 130
Prayer for Government 131
No. 13 2.4.53
Railway Apartheid Judgment 132
Rowdyism at Political Meetings 134
Language ordinance Controversy 135
Fourth in Election Issue: Dr Malan 136
Nationalist Party trying for Incidents? 137
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 137
No. 14 9.4.53
Last Week of the Election 139
The Main Election Issues 139
Railway Apartheid Judgment 139
National Unity 142
UP accused of Protecting Communists 143
UP Cost of Living Plans; Communism; Trust Fund 145
UP European Co-operation Appeal 146
Labour Party Election Manifesto 147
Trade Unions condemn Government 148
Dr Dadoo appeals to Non-European Voters 149
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 149
No. 15 23.4.53
Nationalist Party wins Election with Increased Majority 151
Dr Malan's Invitation to United Party 153
Future of United Party 154
Sen. H. Nicholls' Statement on Resignation from United Party 155
NP founds Victory Fund 156
Before the Election 157
Garment Workers' Union and Election 159
Afrikaners must bridge Gulf among Themselves 160
'The Colour Crisis and the West' translated 160
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 161
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 161
No. 16 30.4.53
Nationalist Victory Meeting in Pretoria 163
Nationalist Party on the English-Speaking 164
Election Post Mortems 168
Natal Torch Commando Statement 169
Colour Separation in DRC 170
Anglican Opposition to Segregation 171
Segregation Controversy at Wits. University 172
ANC Civil Disobedience Campaign 172
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 173
[Note: Press Digest No. 17, 7.3.53 pages 175-183, is missing]
No. 18 14.5.53
Two New Parties formed 184
Republican Candidates in the Elections 188
NP and the English-Speaking 189
NP Policy; Salvation for Northern States 190
Future of the United Party 190
SABRA Chairman criticises Europeans 191
Afrikaans School in Kenya 192
Mr Luthuli on Progress of the Native 192
Colour Bar on the Copper Belt 193
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 193
No. 19 21.5.53
The New Parties 196
Future of the UP 198
The Federal Party 199
The Liberal Party 200
Controversy in Torch Commando 201
Labour Party and New Parties 202
Dr Nichdl: More Religion in Schools 202
Passport Bans 202
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 203
FICHE 31
No. 20 28.5.53
UP Caucus Meeting 205
Federal Party heading towards Violence: Burger 207
Liberal Party Plans 208
Decisions of Torch Commando Branches 209
Coronation Day Celebration 209
Transvaal objects to Queenshav 210
Republican Protest Meetings on Coronation Day 211
Mr Strydom on the Republic and English-Speaking 211
Die Kerkbode criticises Princess Margaret 212
Segregation at Universities 212
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 214
No. 21 4.6.53
Dr Malan’s Statement to the British People 216
Opposition to Republic 217
Coronation Protest Meetings 219
Queenshavon Coronation Foundation 220
United Party Policy 221
The Liberal Party and the Common Roll 222
Labour Party Policy 224
Banned from the Union 224
Mr Swart promises Protection to the People 224
Bans on Non-European Leaders 225
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 226
No. 22 11.6.53
The Coronation and Republicanism 228
The Republican Protest Meetings 229
Liberal Party’s First Meeting 231
UP Consultation with NP 233
Government to ban Natives form Flats 234
Namings under Suppression of Communism Act 235
Shortage of Non-European Labour 235
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 237
No. 23 18.6.53
UP Co-operation with Nationalists 238
UP Fight against NP Sham 241
Torch Commando to continue 242
Jeuhbond Symposium on Apartheid 242
No Compromise with UP: Mr Louw 243
The Liberal party 243
Language Medium Controversy 244
Mr Louw warns Natal 245
Afrikaans Mining Company formed 246
Churchmen request Censorship of Immoral Publications 248
Police Raids on Indian and African Congresses 247
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 247
No. 24 25.6.53
Witwatersrand UP Decision on Coloured Vote 249
Mr Louw’s Warning to Natal 250
The Liberal Party 252
Coloured Education Investigation 254
First Bantu Tribal Authorities established 255
Urgent Attention required for Afrikaans Literature 255
ANC calls for Demonstration 256
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 256
Die Burger on Dual Loyalty 257
No. 25 2.7.53
The New Parliament 259
Future of the United Party 259
The Liberal Party 261
Amendments to Group Areas Act 262
Teachers’ Conferences 263
Johannesburg By-Election Result 265
Torch Commando Resignations 266
Johannesburg Western Areas 266
ANC Economic Demands 267
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 268
No. 26 9.7.53
Government Plan to end Constitution Controversy 270
Dr Malan endorses Natal Warning 272
Ultimate Aims of Liberal Party 274
Republicans to hold Congress 274
NUSAS Alarm at CNE 275
Eiselen Commission Report condemned 275
Raids and Bans 277
Indian Funds for Defiance? 277
FICHE 32

Liberal Party National Conference 285
Dr Malan offers Australia Aid against India 285
NUSAS rejects Apartheid 288
Protests against Bans on Trade Unionists 288
ANC Breakaway Movement 289
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 288
No. 28 23.7.53
The South Africa Act Amendment Bill 290
Federal-UP Controversy 293
Liberal Party in Eastern Province 294
Growth of Jeugbond 295
Natal UP Youth Conference 296
Institute of Non-European Administrators Conference 297
Natal Indian Teachers' Conference 299
Trade Union Protests against Bans 299
Death of Dr Karl Bremer 299
Africa Institute urged 299
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 300
No. 29 30.7.53
The Budget 302
The South Africa Act Amendment Bill 304
Border Conference of UP 306
Federal Party criticises Compromise Proposals 307
Annual Meeting of the Akademie Vir Wetenskap En Kuns 307
Liberal Party criticised by Church Journal 308
Refusal of Passports 308
Protest against Native Labour Bill 309
Western Areas Removal Scheme 309
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 310
No. 30 6.8.53
Malan-Strauss Correspondence 312
Coloureds to interview Dr Malan 314
The Budget 316
State Lottery 317
Afrikaners in Commerce 318
Conference between African Leaders and Europeans 319
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 320
No. 31 13.8.53
The State of the United Party 322
Coloured Approach to Dr Malan 324
The Budget 325
Native Labour Bill 326
Lack of Serious Writers in SA 329
Newcastle Provincial By-Election 330
New Appointments 330
Federal Party to contest Durban By-Election 330
Principal of Lovedale on Defiance Campaign 331
Exclusion of Native Labour from White Economy 331
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 332
No. 32 20.8.53
Postponement of Joint Sitting 334
Coloured Deputations to the Government 335
Federal Party Congress 339
Afrikaans in Johannesburg 340
Native Labour Bill 342
DRC Plea for Censorship 342
Indians in Natal 343
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 343
No. 33 27.8.53
Dispute in the United Party 346
Separate Representation of the Coloured People 348
Three Apartheid Bills 351
Western Areas Removal Scheme 352
SWA United Party Congress 353
Europeans behind Glass Windows 353
SA Liberal Party 354
Suppression of Communism Act Ban 355
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 355
No. 34 3.9.53
Differences within the United Party 357
Criticism of the Courts 360
Bantu Education Bill 360
Future of Liberalism in South Africa 361
The Federal Party 362
The Coloured Franchise 363
Christian National Education at Free State University 364
Less Legislation urged 365
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 365
FICHE 33

No. 35 9.9.53
Vote of Confidence in Mr Strauss 367
Cabinet to consider Academic Apartheid 368
Suppression of Communism Act Criticisms 370
Depopulation of the Platteland 371
Restoration of the Farm School 372
Racial Differentiation justifies by Prof. Olivier 372
No. 36 17.9.53
Dispute in the United Party 373
Suppression of Communism Act 375
OFS Nasionale Jeugbond Congress 379
Republikeinse Bond established 379
Transvaal UP Youth Congress 380
Federal Party Motion on Provincial Powers 381
Coloured Organisation formed 382
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 382
No. 37 23.9.53
South Africa Act Amendment Bill 385
Government considering Inquiry into Censorship 388
Great Racial Experiment in South Africa 389
Academic Segregation 392
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 393
No. 38 30.9.53
Constitutional Court of Appeal 395
Transvaal Nationalist Party Congress 396
United Party Dispute 398
Handelsinstituut Congress 399
Bantu Education Bill 401
Suppression of Communism Act 403
Constitutional Court of Appeal 405
Durban Race Riot 405
No. 39 8.10.53
The New Vote Bill 407
United Party Internal Dispute 410
Progress of Nationalist Party 412
Afrikanerdom’s Biggest Disaster – Humanism 413
Suppression of Communism Act 415
Indian Immigration Bill 416
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 417
No. 40 15.10.53
Dispute in the United Party 419
Kruger Day Celebrations 422
Berea By-Election 424
Danger of Foreign Ideologies 424
Afrikaner Economically Independent 425
Bantu Education Bill 425
Group Areas Act 426
Suppression of Communism Act 427
Die Volksblad on Press Censorship 428
Depopulation of the Platteland 428
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 429
No. 41 22.10.53
Dispute in United Party 431
Dr Malan on Republic 436
Durban Berea By-Election 438
Mrs Ballinger on Apartheid 439
Cape DRC Synod 439
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 441
New Format for Die Kruthoring 442
No. 42 29.10.53
[Note: There are discrepancies in the pagination in this Digest, although no text is lost. The correct pagination is given in brackets in the following index.]
Division in the United Party 433 [443]
OFS Nationalist Party Congress 436 [446] [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 34

Cape DRC Synod 439 [449]
New Approach urged by Senator Nicholls 450
Anglican Bishops condemn Racial Policy 451
Changes in Dagbreak 452
The Liberal Party 452
From the Coloured and bantu press 453
No. 43 5.11.53
Transvaal United Party Congress 455
The Parliamentary By-Elections 457
Congress of the Nationalist Party of South West Africa 459
NP Warnings against Complacency 461
Cape DRC Synod 461
Anglican Bishops’ Statement 463
Dr Verwoerd addresses Bunga 464
ANC Economic Boycott Proposal 464
Trade Union Bans 465
Liberal Party Meeting 465
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 466
No. 44 12.11.53
United party Finances 467
The TWC Parliamentary By-Elections 469
Need for Whit Unity 471
Cape DRC Synod 472
Natal Congress of Liberal Party 473
Censorship 474
Natal ANC Conference 474
Changes in Active Citizen Force 475
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 476
No. 45 19.11.53
Natal Party Congresses 478
Natal Nationalist Party Congress 480
Exchanges between Sen. Nicholls and Mr Strauss 483
No Scriptural Basis for Apartheid 484
Dr Diederichs accuses Big Capitalists of Sabotage 486
ANC Economic Boycott Proposal 487
Suppression of Communism Act 487
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 488
No. 46 26.11.53
Nationalist Party Cape Congress 490
Future of the United Party 492
Federal-United Party 494
Inter-Church Conference 494
Suppression of Communism Act 497
ACF Changes 498
Book Bans 499
Non-Europeans in Industry 499
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 499
[Note: Press Digest No. 47, 3.12.53 pages 501-51 1, is missing]
No. 48 10.12.53
Suppression of Communism Act Appeal Judgment 512
Natal Congress of Nasionale Jeugbond 514
Comment on Mr Strauss’s Offer 516
Aims of the Liberal Party 517
Archbishop criticises Cabinet 517
Roman Catholic Church and Mixed Marriages 518
Growth of NG Churches 518
Coloured Franchise commission 519

25
Changes in UDF 519
Shortage of English Teachers 519
The Future of Afrikaans 520
The Coloured and Bantu Press 520
No. 49 17.12.53
Mr Blaar Coetzee on Future of UP 523
The Eighteen Year Old Vote 523
Apartheid at Universities 524
UDF Retirements 526
Banned Books 528
Loophole in Passport Laws 527
Die Burger on 'English-Speaking Leadership' 528
Afrikaner Exclusiveness? 528
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 530
No. 50 23.12.53
[Note: There is a pagination error, with page 534 omitted. No text is missing.]
Day of the Covenant 532
Central African Federation Election Results 537 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 35

African National Congress Conference 538
‘Books and Assegais’ 540
Youth leaving Platteland 540
[Note: There is a pagination error, with page 534 omitted. No text is missing.]
No. 51 30.12.53
Mr Strijdom’s Christmas Message 541
Censorship System changes 542
Apartheid at the Universities 544
Afrikaners afraid to speak Afrikaans 545
Re-Distribution of Native Labour 546
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 548
Supplement XVIX to Press Digest Index covering period 8.1.53 to 26.3.53 pages 1-19
Supplement XX to Press Digest Index covering period 2.4.53-25.6.53 pages 1-24

1954
No. 1 7.1.54
New Year Messages 1
Mr Strijdom on Republican Plans 2
Dr Colin Steyn urges Wide Concessions to Non-Europeans 4
‘Pulp’ Periodicals prohibited 5
Transvaal on Intellectual Deterioration 6
Anglican Church criticised 6
Rand UP rejects Mentz Report 7
Banning orders withdrawn 8
New Transvaal Nationalist Monthly 8
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 8
No. 2 14.1.54
The Mentz Report 10
The Future of the UP 13
Internal Censorship proposed 14
More Afrikaans than English-Speaking Pupils in Transvaal 16
Handelsinstituut urges Trading Apartheid 16
Coloured Conferences 17
Advisory Boards’ Conference 17
Need for Immigrants 18
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 18
No. 3 21.1.54
Race Relations Conferences 20 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 36

Speeches by Mr Strauss 23
Prison Conditions 25
Rights to be restored to Ex-Internees 25
First Liberal Candidate for Parliament 26
Federal Party Election Plans 26
Dagbreek challenges English Press 27
First Afrikaans Novel by Native 27
Private Talks between Dr Donges and Indians alleged 28
Industrialists and Politics 28
ANC Boycott Plan 29
No. 4 28.1.54
SABRA Conference 30
United Party and Coloured Franchise 34
New Colour Policy for Labour Party 35
Restoration of Civic Rights to War-Time Traitors 36
‘Censorship Absurdity’: Burger 36
Prison Conditions 37
Bureau for Western European Immigration 37
Franchise Policy of the Liberal Party 37
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 38
No. 5 4.2.54
The Parliamentary Session 40
Further Resignations from UP 41
Industrial Conciliation Amendment Bill 43
‘Third Force in Action’ 45
Republikein ends Publication 46
New Afrikaans Trade Journal 46
Die Burger urges Publication Fund 46
Further Reviews of ‘Johannie giet Die Beeld’ 47
ANC Boycott in Port Elizabeth 47
Distribution of Farming Land 48
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 48
No. 6 11.2.54
Influences in Union Politics 50
Trust Fund withdraws Support form Parties 51
The Independent United Party 53
Dr Jonker’s Statement 55
UP Colour Policy 55
Amendment to Suppression of Communism Act 57
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 58
No. 7 18.2.54
Suppression of Communism Amendment Bill 60
Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Bill 62
No Compromise by Government: Mr Louw 63
United South African Trust Fund 63
Union Federal Party 64

26
SA Liberal Party 64
Protest against University Apartheid 65
Natal Indian Congress 65
Cape Western Native Representative's By-Election 66
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 68
No. 8 25.2.54
Integration or Apartheid 69
UCT Summer School 73
Industrial Conciliation Amendment Bill 74
Book Bans and Errors 75
The Amnesty Bill 75
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 76
No. 9 4.3.54
The Integration Discussion 79
Flag and Anthem Motion 81
New Labour Legislation 81
Native Trust and Land Amendment Bill 83
Union Federal Party 84
SA Liberal Party 85
English-Speaking and Republic 85
ANC Boycott Campaign 85
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 86
No. 10 11.3.54
Integration-Apartheid Controversy 88
Future of Whites in South Africa 90
A Wider Federation 912
English Schools 91
New Labour Bill 93
Natives' Resettlement Bill 93
Group Areas Act 94
ANC Boycott Campaign 95
‘Woord en Daad’ 95
From the Coloured and bantu Press 95
No. 11 18.3.54
Apartheid or Integration 97
Western Areas Removal Plan 99 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 37

NH Kerk Conference 101
National Anthem in Cinemas 102
Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act 103
Kenya and South Africa 103
ANC Boycott 104
Coloured Businessmen 105
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 105
No. 12 25.3.54
Natives Resettlement Bill 107
Nationalist Party Statements 110
Independent United Party 112
Union Federal Party 112
Segregation at Universities 113
White Birthrate Too Low 113
Overseas Criticism of Union 114
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 115
[Note: Press Digest No. 13, 1.4.54 pages 117-125, is missing]
No. 14 8.4.54
The Apartheid Policy 126
Natives Resettlement Bill 129
Speeches by Nationalist Leaders 130
Afrikaners on the Rand 131
ANC Economic Boycott 132
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 133
No. 15 14.4.54
Incorporation of the Protectorates 135
Natives Resettlement Bill 136
Speeches by Nationalist Leaders 138
United Party and Integration 139
Dr Malan on Democracy in South Africa 140
Bantu Education Act 141
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 142
[Note: Press Digest No. 16, 21.4.54 pages 144-151, is missing]
No. 17 29.4.54
Speeches by Nationalist Leaders 152
Mr Schoeman on Labour Legislation 153
UP Split on Removal Bill 154
NH of G Kerk (Transvaal) Synod 156
SA Liberal Party 157
Academic Apartheid 158
Cape Western NR Election 158
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 160
No. 18 6.5.54
Industrial Conciliation Legislation 162
Transvaal DRC Synod 165
New Phase of Apartheid 167
US Reaction to Dr Malan's Letter 167
Bantu Education Act 168
Cape Western NR Election 169
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 170
[Note: Press Digest No. 19, 13.5.54 pages 172-181, is missing]
No. 20 20.5.54
Standerton By-Election Result 182
Coloured Franchise Bill Again 183
Statements by Nationalist Leaders 184
SA Liberal Party 185
Union Federal Party 185
Bantu Education Act 186
Pro’s and Con’s Censorship 187
NG Mission Work among Bantu 187
Catholic Immigration to Union 188
US Supreme Court Decision against Segregation 189
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 189
No. 21 26.5.54
The Coloured Franchise Bill 192
US Supreme Court Decision against Segregation 194
Dr Malan’s Eightieth Birthday 196
Industrial Conciliation Act Amendment Bill 196
Christian Council Meeting 197
‘Have the Afrikaans People a Future’? 198

27
Jewish MPs and the Nationalist Party 199
Fewer White than Coloured Pupils 199
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 199
No. 22 3.6.54
The Coloured Franchise Bill 202
Industrial Conciliation Bill 204 [continued on next fiche]

SA Liberal Party 206
Union Day 207
Imported Principals 208
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 208
No. 23 10.6.54
The Coloured Franchise Bill 210
Industrial Conciliation Bill 211
Apartheid and Integration 213
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 215
Independent United Party Newsletter 216
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 216
No. 24 17.6.54
The Coloured Franchise Bill 218
Provincial Council Elections 221
Dr Verwoerd on Removal Scheme 223
‘Anti-Semitic Utterances’ 225
Independent United Party 225
‘Undesirable Trends in Afrikaans Literature’ 225
Refusal of Passport to Professor Mathews 226
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 226
No. 25 24.6.54
Natal Provincial Election Result 228
Coloured Franchise Issue 230
Statements by Nationalist Leaders 232
Mr Oppenheimer criticises Dr Verwoerd’s Policy 233
The Conservative Party 233
Die Vaderland appeals for Increased Immigration 234
Appeal for Afrikaner Co-operation in Business 235
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 236
No. 26 1.7.54
Cape Provincial Elections Campaign 238
Vaderland’s Appeal for Immigrants 239
The Future of English and Afrikaans 240
Apartheid versus Integration 241
Colour Teachers Conferences 242
Senator Nicholls’s Resignation 243
Suppression of Communism Act 244
Afrikanerdom Richer but Laxer 245
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 246
No. 27 8.7.54
Provincial Council Elections 249
No New Resistance Movement 250
Repopulation of Platland 254
‘Good Citizenship’ 255
Degeneration in Afrikaans Literature 255
Suppression of Communism Act 256
Bantu Education Act 257
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 258
[Note: Press Digest No. 28, 15.7.54 pages 260-269 is missing]
No. 29 22.7.54
Provincial Council Elections 270
Dr Verwoerd’s Analysis of Integration 272
 Canon Collins’ Visit 274
Nationality and Loyalty 276
UP Youth Congress 276
Nasionale Jeugbond Conference 277
Indian Congress Annual Conference 277
Mother-Tongue Instruction in Free State 278
NUSAS Conference 279
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 280
[Note: Press Digest No. 30, 29.7.54 pages 282-289 is missing]
No. 31 5.8.54
Provincial Council Elections 293
The Apartheid Policy 295
Western Areas Removal Scheme 298
Questions on Apartheid 299
Canon Collins’ Visit 299
Suez Agreement 300
African National Congress 310
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 302

SA Liberal Party 206
Union Day 207
Imported Principals 208
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 208
No. 23 10.6.54
The Coloured Franchise Bill 210
Industrial Conciliation Bill 211
Apartheid and Integration 213
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 215
Independent United Party Newsletter 216
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 216
No. 24 17.6.54
The Coloured Franchise Bill 218
Provincial Council Elections 221
Dr Verwoerd on Removal Scheme 223
‘Anti-Semitic Utterances’ 225
Independent United Party 225
‘Undesirable Trends in Afrikaans Literature’ 225
Refusal of Passport to Professor Mathews 226
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 226
No. 25 24.6.54
Natal Provincial Election Result 228
Coloured Franchise Issue 230
Statements by Nationalist Leaders 232
Mr Oppenheimer criticises Dr Verwoerd’s Policy 233
The Conservative Party 233
Die Vaderland appeals for Increased Immigration 234
Appeal for Afrikaner Co-operation in Business 235
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 236
No. 26 1.7.54
Cape Provincial Elections Campaign 238
Vaderland’s Appeal for Immigrants 239
The Future of English and Afrikaans 240
Apartheid versus Integration 241
Colour Teachers Conferences 242
Senator Nicholls’s Resignation 243
Suppression of Communism Act 244
Afrikanerdom Richer but Laxer 245
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 246
No. 27 8.7.54
Provincial Council Elections 249
No New Resistance Movement 250
Repopulation of Platland 254
‘Good Citizenship’ 255
Degeneration in Afrikaans Literature 255
Suppression of Communism Act 256
Bantu Education Act 257
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 258
[Note: Press Digest No. 28, 15.7.54 pages 260-269, is missing]
No. 29 22.7.54
Provincial Council Elections 270
Dr Verwoerd’s Analysis of Integration 272
Canon Collins’ Visit 274
Nationality and Loyalty 276
UP Youth Congress 276
Nasionale Jeugbond Conference 277
Indian Congress Annual Conference 277
Mother-Tongue Instruction in Free State 278
NUSAS Conference 279
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 280
[Note: Press Digest No. 30, 29.7.54 pages 282-289, is missing]
No. 31 5.8.54
Provincial Council Elections 293
The Apartheid Policy 295
Western Areas Removal Scheme 298
Questions on Apartheid 299
Canon Collins’ Visit 299
Suez Agreement 300
African National Congress 310
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 302

FICHE 38

FICHE 39
Defiance Campaign finished 503
Bantu Education Act 503
Mr Havenega’s Last Message 504
Afrikaans Students seek Co-operation with English 504
Red Cross Chairman on Noodhulpliga 505
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 506
Supplement XXVI to Press Digest Index for period
1.10.54-15.12.54 1-24

FICHE 41

1955
[Note: Press Digest No. 1, 6.1.55 pages 1-11 is missing]
No. 2 13.1.55
Mr Louw appointed Minister of External Affairs 1
SA Labour Party Conference 1
United Party 2
Factories in the Reserves 3
Location Advisory Boards Congress 15
Western Areas Removal Scheme 15
Bantu Education Act 17
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 19
[Note: The pagination is erratic in Digest No. 2 Page 1
should read page 12, page 2 read 13, page 3 read 14 and
page 5 read 16]
No. 3 20.1.55
SABRA Conference 21
Transvaal on ‘The Episcopal Silhouette’ 25
The Visit of the Midway 26
The Africa Question 27
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 29
No. 4 27.1.55
The Opening of Parliament 31
SA Institute of Race Relations Conference 32
Removal of Natives from Western Province 36
Requests for Mr Havenga’s Return 36
Immigration 37
Dr Malan and the Golden Book 38
SA Trade Unions support N Rhodesian Miners 39
Western Areas Removal Scheme 40
Suppression of Communism Act 40
ASB Bursary for Non-European 41
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 41
No. 5 3.2.55
The Parliamentary Session 43
Removal of Natives from Western Province 45
Kroonstad Nationalist Party Nomination 46
Western Areas Removal Scheme 47
Gereformeerde Kerk Synodal Gathering 49
Race and Politics 50
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 51
No. 6 10.2.55
The Republic Approaching: Mr Strijdom 53
Mr Strauss’s Immigration Appeal 54
Mr Strauss on Republican Issue 56
Western Areas Removal Scheme 57
Mr Strijdom on Position of Jews in SA 60
New Afrikaans Newspaper 61
Gereformeerde Kerk Synod 61
University Apartheid Commission 62
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 63
No. 7 17.2.55
Western Areas Removal Scheme 64
Apartheid and Integration 69
Mr Strauss denies Rumour 71
Criminal Procedure and Evidence Amendment Bill 71
‘Bantu Education – Oppression of Opportunity?’ 72
The Republic and Democratic Rights 73
German Political Pressure Group in SWA 73
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 73
No. 8 24.2.55
Mr Strijdom on SA Democracy 75
Union’s Immigration Policy 76
Apartheid or Integration 77
San. De Klerk outlines Policy 80
Western Areas Removal 81
Teaching Evolution in Schools 82
Race Dilemma in Union 82
Depopulation of the Platteland 83
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 83
No. 9 3.3.55
Criminal Procedure and Evidence Amendment Bill 85
Departure from the Union Regulation Bill 86
Mr Oppenheimer on New Bills 87
Sovereignty of Parliament 88
United Party and Labour Party 88 [continued on next
FICHE 42

Western Areas Removal Scheme 89
Afrikaans Churches approach Government 92
Overseas Comment on SA Press 92
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 93
[Note: Press Digest No. 10, 10.3.55 pages 95-105, is
missing]
No. 11 17.3.55
Dr Verwoerd on Development of Natives 106
Freedom in South Africa 110
The Man-Power Crisis 111
Ban on Communist Teachers in Cape 112
Transfer of SWA Native Administration 113
Noodhulpliga Plans Non-European Branches 114
Federal Party’s Native Policy 114
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 114
No. 12 24.3.55
Mr Strauss warns against Dr Verwoerd’s Policy 116
Mr Strijdom attacks United Party 117
Dr Verwoerd and Industrial Development 118
Cape Education Ordinance Amendment 120
Bantu Education Act 121
Equality and Unification against God’s Ordinance 123

30
New Party in SWA 124
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 1245
No. 13 31.3.55
The Budget 127
Enlargement of Appeal Court 128
Departure from the Union Regulation Bill 130
Mr Strijdom on Republic and International Relations 1332
National Conservative Party 133
All Laws in Afrikaans 134
Urbanisation in the Union 134
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 135
No. 14 5.4.55
Mr D e Klerk on White Apprentices under Non-Whites 137
Immigration Debate in Parliament 139
Promotion of Christian National Education 14
Afrikaanse Studentebond Conference 142
No. 15 12.4.55
Afrikaanse Studentebond Congress 143
Transvaalse Onderwyserinie Meeting 145
Mr D e Klerk on purifying Industry 145
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 147
No. 16 21.4.55
Bantu Education Act 149
Influx of Natives on Rand 151
Integration a Process not Policy 153
Liberal Party Conference 153
DRC Educational Proposals 154
Afrikaans in Rhodesia 154
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 156
No. 17 28.4.55
Mr Strijdom’s Survey of World Affairs 158
Farewell for Mr Havenga 161
Appellate Division Quorum Bill 162
Bantu Education Act 165
Anti-Republican Rally in Durban 166
No. 18 5.5.55
Appellate Division Quorum Bill 167
Bantu Education Act 170
Mr Strijdom on Language Rights 171
Selective Immigration 172
Labour Camps for Native Agitators 174
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 174
African Progress in Rhodesia 176

FICHE 43

No. 19 12.5.55
Closing of Fort Hare 177
Mr Adlai Stevenson on Union Policy 179
Mr Strijdom on SA and West 180
UP Warnings against Appeal Court Bill 181
Removal of ‘White Spots’ 181
New Senate Bill 183
Opposition Divided: Mr Bekker 184
Afrikaner conquers the Cities 184
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 185
No. 20 18.5.55
Dissolution of the Senate Bill 187
The Nationalist Party and the English-Speaking 192
Closing of Fort Hare 193
Appeal against Kahn Conviction succeeds 194
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 195
No. 21 25.5.55
Dissolution of Senate Bill 197
Critical Period for Afrikaner 203
DRC Mission Celebration 203
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 204
No. 22 2.6.55
Senate Bill Controversy 207
British General Elections 213
Growth of NB Bantu Church 214
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 214
No. 23 9.6.55
The Senate Bill Controversy 216
DRC Statement on Race Differences 224
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 225
No. 24 16.6.55
The Senate Bill 237
Three-Party Debate in Stellenbosch 242
Opening of Private Correspondence alleged 243
Afrikaner’s Political Power Insecure 245
ASB will not co-operate with NUSAS 246
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 246
No. 25 23.6.55
Senate Act Protest 249
Future of the United Party 250
Non-Political Racial Unity Movement 252
Congress of the People Conference 253
Mr Strijdom on Need for Co-operation in Africa 254
Student refused Passport 255 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 44

UNSWA Party Congress 257
Johannesburg Bar Protest on Appeal Court Appointments 257
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 258
No. 27 14.7.55
The Simonstown Agreement 260
Hillbrow By-Election 261
SA Akademie Annual Conference 263
Nasionale Jeugbund Conference 265
NUSAS Congress 265
Teachers Conferences 266
SA Institute of Race Relations Symposium 268

31
White labour getting soft 390
The Republic 391
Future Political Divisions in SA 392
DRC Mission Church Synod 393
Mr De Klerk on Calvinist Basis of Republic 394
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 395
No. 40 13.10.55
Kruger Day Speeches 397
United Party Youth Congress 398
Dr Verwoerd's Visit to Zululand 399
DRC Mission Conference 399
CAF By-Election Result 401
Carols by Candle-Light 402
Methodist Conference 403
Bantu Education Act 403
Afrikaners and Bantu Press 403
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 404
No. 41 20.10.55
UN Report on SA Racial Policy 406
Mr Strauss appeals to Splinter Groups 408
Natal Liberal Party Congress 408
Free State Nasionale Jeugbond Congress 409
Immigration Policy 410
Group Areas Further Amendment Act 410
Employment Opportunities for Bantu: Mr Naude 411
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 412
No. 42 27.10.55
Governor-General appeals for White Cooperation 414
Ciskeian Bunga dissolves 415
United Party Cape Congress 417 [continued on next fiche]
FICHE 46

Provincial By-Elections 419
World Opinion on South Africa 420
Johannesburg Anglican Synod 422
Extracts form the Coloured and Bantu Press 423
No. 43 3.11.55
Cape Nationalist Party Congress 425
Strauss-Strijdom Exchanges 427
Political and Economic Future of SA 428
Father Huddleston's Departure from Union 429
Bantu Press attacked 431
Bantu Nationalist Party to be formed 432
Sale of Arms to Arab States 433
UP Senators for Natal 433
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 433
No. 44 10.11.55
Mr Strauss attacks National Registration 436
Women's Protest Demonstration in Pretoria 437
Mr Louw on Women in Politics 438
Industrial Conciliation Bill 438
Group Areas Act 440
Bantu Education Act 441
South West Africa 442
Middle East Situation 443
Appeal for Immigrants by Dr Donges 44
Politics in School Boards 444
Father Huddleston's Broadcast 444
Attacks on the Bantu Press 445
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 445
[Note: Press Digest No. 45, 17.11.55 pages 448-457, is missing]
No. 46 24.11.55
South-West Africa Election Results 458
Defence on Africa 460
Federal Party Congress 461
Senate Elections 461
Director of Immigration appointed 462
Provincial Anglican Synod 462
United Party and Senate Elections 463
Engineering Bursaries for Native Students 464
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 465
No. 47 1.12.55
Senate Elections 467
Immigration Plan 469
The English Language in South Africa 471
SA Labour Party Conference 472
Defence of Africa 473
Bantu Education Act 473
Progress of Afrikaners Press 474
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 475
[Note: Press Digest No. 48, 7.12.55 pages 477-485, is missing]
No. 49 14.12.55
Financial State of UP 486
Mr Swart on National Unity 487
Afrikaans Writers criticised 488
The Tomlinson Report 489
Liberal Party Developments 490
Population Register 490
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 491
No. 50 21.12.55
Day of the Covenant Celebration 493
The Defence of Africa 495
New Political Party formed 497
African National Congress National Conference 499
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 501
1956
No. 1 12.1.56
Marriage Regulations 1
UP to test Senate Act in Courts 3
SA Institute of Race Relations Meeting 3
African National Congress National Conference 6
Appeal for Practice of Apartheid 7
Visas for Catholic Mission Priests 7
Bantu World changes Name 8
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 8
1955 and the Coloureds 9
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 109
No. 12 29.3.56
Dr Donges on Eighteen Year Old Vote 111
SA Trade Union Council Conference 11
Mr De Wet Nel’s Apartheid Plan 112
Greater Prosperity of Afrikaners 114
Tomlinson Report published 115
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 117
No. 13 5.4.56
The Tomlinson Report 119
The Coming of a Republic: Prof. Verloren Van Themaat 122
Father Huddleston’s Book on SA 123
Immigration 125
‘Afrikaans gains Ground’: Transvaaler 126
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 127
No. 14 12.4.56
Tomlinson Commission Recommendations 129
Mr Strijdom states Nationalist Policy 130
Afrikaanse Studentebond Conference 135
Middle East Position 136
Central African Federation By-Election 136
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 137
No. 15 19.4.56
Father Huddleston criticised 139
Industrial Conciliation Bill passed 141
Defence of Africa 142
Breakdown of UP predicted 143
Free State DRC Synod 143
Attack on Catholic Church 144
Israel Day of Independence 144
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 145
No. 16 26.4.56
Separate Representation of Coloured Voters 147
Dr Jonker joins Nationalist Party 148
UP View of Tomlinson Report 149
Dr A Hertzog on Purpose of Union 149
Attitude of Immigrants 150
Garment Workers’ Union splits 151
Bus Apartheid in Cape Town 151
Free State DRC Synod 152
Vaderland on Street Dangers 153
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 154
No. 17 3.5.56
White Paper on Tomlinson Report 157
Black Sash accused of Boycott Campaign 160
Overseas Criticism of South Africa 161
Immigration 163
Tide turning for UP 164
New Native Legislation 164
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 165
No. 18 9.5.56
The 1958 General Election 167
The Tomlinson Report 168
Or Jonker asked to Resign 171
Afrikaans Buying Guide 172
Mother-Tongue Education 172
New Name for Transvaal DRC 174
Forward becomes Non-Political 174
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 174
[Note: Press Digest No. 19, 16.5.56 pages 176-185 is missing]
No. 20 24.5.56
Senate Case Judgment 186
The Tomlinson Report 188
Warning to English-Speaking 192
Apathy in NP Allegation 193
Federal Party and UP 194
Black Sash Movement 185
Indian Talks with Prime Minister 195
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 196 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 49

No. 21 30.5.56
Call for More Vigorous Immigration Policy 198
Appeals for White Unity 200
Progress toward Apartheid 202
Natives (Prohibition of Interdicts) Bill 203
West accepting Separation Policy 205
UP again in Power: Mr Strauss 205
Mother-Tongue Education Ordinance 205
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 206
No. 22 7.6.56
Worcester By-Election Result 208
Dr Jonker on Afrikaners and UP 210
United Party on Apartheid Policy 211
Allowances for MPs 212
Union Day 213
Mr Erasmus on Need for Knowledge of Africa 215
Abolition of Native Representatives envisaged 216
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 217
[Note: Press Digest No. 23 14.6.56 pages 220-230, is missing]
No. 24 21.6.56
The End of The Parliamentary Session 231
United Party Election Hopes 232
UP Supporters in Banks 232
Mr Strauss condemns Apartheid 233
English in Danger 235
Afrikaners and Netherlanders 237
Transvaal on 'Episode' 238
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 239
No. 25 28.6.56
Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference 241
Ceremony for New Citizens of Union 245
Referendum on Republic 246
Capricorn Africa Society 247
Transvaal on Stirrings in Africa 249
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 249
No. 26 12.7.56
Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference 251
Volkskongres on Tomlinson Report 253
Leaders to decide Time of Republic 259
Afrikaner Liberals 260
Students and Teachers Conferences 260
No. 27 19.7.56
BBC Broadcast by Prime Minister 263
Literary Conference 254
Mr Strauss on Republic 267
African Teachers' Congresses 269
SA Bond First Public Meeting in Johannesburg 270
Colour Bar in Sport 270
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 271
No. 28 26.7.56
English Nationalism in South Africa 274
Nasionale Party and National Party 276
Race Relations in the Union 277
United Party Election Plans? 279
Concern about Immigrants 280
Gold Coast Election Results 281
Middle East Situation 282
Concentration Camps alleged in Union 282
Arming of Non-European Police 283
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 282
No. 29 2.8.56
Changes in Cabinet 285
Mr Strijdom's Return to the Union 286 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 50

Nationalisation of the Suez Canal 287
Concentration Camp Accusation 289
Afrikaners and Immigrants 291
Industry and Race Problems in SA 291
Dr Verwoerd's Visit to South-West Africa 292
OFS Administrator criticises 'Neutral Education 293
SABRA disclaims Native Assistance Scheme 294
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 294
No. 30 9.8.56
Changes in the Cabinet 296
Critics of Johannesburg 423
From the Coloured and Bantu Press 423
No. 42 8.11.56
The Middle East Situation 426
United Party Statements 431
Mr De Klerk urges More Interest in Trade Unions 431
American Elections 432
School Board Elections 432
Central African Federation 433
Afrikaners in East Africa 433
Development of Reserves 434
Eighteen-Year-Old to get Franchise 434
From the Bantu Press 434
No. 43 15.11.56
Senate Act Appeal 436
18-Year.Old Vote 440
Aid for Hungary 442
The Middle East Situation 444
Federated Chamber of Industries Conference 445
From the Bantu Press 447
No. 44 22.11.56
United Party Union Congress 448 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 52

South Africa and the United Nations 452
South African Aid to Hungary 454
Immigration to the Union 455
Academic Apartheid to be introduced 457
The Economic Position of the Afrikaner: Mr A Rupert 458
The Afrikaner will master the City: Or Ross 458
Records of All Native Farm Workers 459
Indians becoming Anglicised 459
No. 45 29.11.56
The New Leadership of the United Party 460
Mr Strijdom challenges UP 467
Union withdraws from UNO 468
The Middle East Situation 469
New Chief Justice of Union 470
From the Bantu Press 471
No. 46 6.12.56
United Party under New Leadership 472
Mr Strijdom on Constitutional Settlement 475
Union's Withdrawal from UNO 476
The Middle East Situation 478
Anti-White Prejudice 479
The Political Future of the Coloureds 480
Promotion of Judges 481
Head of Africa Division Appointment 481
From the Bantu Press 481
No. 47 13.12.56
Union-Wide Raids 484
Academic Apartheid Protests 485
Sir De Villiers Graaff's First Johannesburg Meeting 488

Immigration Policy 488
Apartheid condemned by Anglican Synod 490
Uitenhage By-Election 492
Race Mingling against God's Revealed Will 493
Vanderbijl Park School Dispute 494
Extracts from the Bantu Press 495
No. 48 20.12.56
Day of the Covenant Celebrations 496
Arrival of First Hungarian Refugees 499
United Party Plan for Afrikaans Newspaper 501
The Case of Dr Ungar 502
The Union's Role in Africa 503
Extracts from the Bantu Press 504

1957
No. 1 17.1.57
The Treason Inquiry 1
Hendrik Van Der Bijl School Dispute 7
Native Bus Boycott on Rand and in Pretoria 8
British Cabinet Changes 10
From the Bantu Press 10
No. 2 24.1.57
Opening of Parliament 13
Tasks of the United Party 14
SA Institute of Race Relations Conference 17
The Bus Boycott 20
University Apartheid Protests 22 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 53

Friction between the Churches 23
Liberal Party Conference 23
Coloured Teachers' Conference 23
From the Bantu Press 24
No. 3 31 1 57
The Bus Boycott 25
Police and the Press 29
Dissolution of Conservative Party 31
Burger on Black Imperialism 32
From the Bantu Press 34
No. 4 7.2.57
Flag Debate 35
Bus Boycott 40
Separate Schools for All Groups 444
Israel and UNO 44
Anti-Colonialism and Africa 45
SA Representative at Ghana 45
From the Bantu Press 46
No. 5 14.2.57
Bus Boycott Negotiations 47
The Flag Bill 52
Natal University to lose Medical School 53
Union and Suel 55
Freedom of the Press in SA 56
From the Bantu Press 57
No. 6 21.7.57
Developments in Bus Boycott Situation 59

37
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.2.57</td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar resigns NP Provincial Council Leadership</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Rand Bus Boycott</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UNO Sanctions Threat to Israel</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Defence Bill</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police Amendment Bill</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.3.57</td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar – Local Incident or Symptom?</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Bus Boycott</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>University Apartheid</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA and Ghana</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free State Farmers’ Conference</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Progress of Sakekamers</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Need for Fear: Dr P J Meyer</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.3.57</td>
<td>Church and State</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar’s Public Meeting</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tenth Week of the Bus Boycott</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flag Bill passes Through Assembly</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Death of Mr Havenga</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nederduits Hervormde Kerk General Assembly</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Racism in Rugby Charge</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-White Table Tennis Team</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghana Independence</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.3.57</td>
<td>Separate University Education Bill</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Wassenaar ‘Revolt’</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Apartheid Policy</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nederduits Hervormde Kerk Assembly</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Havenga</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rand Bus Boycott</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28.3.57</td>
<td>Mr Naude’s Budget</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Separate University Education Bill</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United Party Policy</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist Party Statements</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transvaal criticises Immigration Apparatus</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Synod urged for DRC</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Van Rensburg on Red Danger</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.4.57</td>
<td>Mr Louw on Role of Union in Africa</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Strijdom on the Republic</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar in Cape Town</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United Party Attitude to Republic</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Separate Universities Bill</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rand Bus Boycott</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.4.57</td>
<td>American ‘Move into Africa’</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Strijdom on Role of Universities</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-European Minister preaches in DR Church</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rand Bus Boycott</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Immigration Policy</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Union Envoy in Eastern Europe</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.4.57</td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Donges on White Man’s Title in SA</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Light shining for United Party</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom Promise Now for Non-Europeans</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of Symbols of Conqueror: ATKV</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Native Taxes</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar attacks ‘Church’ Bill</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer of Simonstown</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.4.57</td>
<td>SABRA Annual Conference</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Separate University Education Bill</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sir De Villiers Graaff warns against ‘Church Clause’</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Afrikaanse Studentsbond Conference</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DRC Ban on Freemasons</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar to form New Party</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Verwoerd appeals to Professional Afrikaners</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.5.57</td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transvaal DRC Synod</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United Party Meetings</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist Strydlae</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gereformeerde Sustersorganisasies Congress</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Wassenaar form New Party</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Union declines Ghana Invitation</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.5.57</td>
<td>‘Die Stem’ as Official Anthem</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native Laws Amendment Bill</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist Leaders on ‘Church Clause’</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United Party Meetings</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government and Public</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From the Bantu Press</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.5.57</td>
<td>The 1958 General Election</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>United Party Statements</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[continued on next fiche]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No. 24 27.6.57
End of the Parliamentary Session 228
The Future of Dr Verwoerd 229
The Election Campaign 230
The Nursing Bill 231
Free State Ban on Sunday Dancing 232
Drop in SA Jewish Population 233
Co-operation between Jews and Afrikaners 233
Afrikaans Publishing Progress 233
'Industry and Trade' criticises Native Laws Bill 234
'Afrikaner Weak in Industry and Trade' 234
Native Stay-Away Demonstration 235
Bantu Studies urged in Schools 235
Discrimination in DRC 236
Censorship System criticised 237
From the Bantu Press 237
No. 25 4.7.57
BBC Television Programme on SA 239
Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference 241
The Election Campaign 241
Teachers' Conferences 242
Angola Afrikaners 244
Future of SA Jewish Population 245
Israel's Example of Hard Work 245
Apartheid opposed by Capitalists 245
Government authorises Decreased Native Bus Fares 246
Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie Annual Meeting 246
Vaderland's Twenty-First Birthday 246
From the Bantu Press 247
No. 26 11.7.57
Prof Keet condemns Apartheid 249
Union's Relation with Africa 252
The Election Campaign 253
Nasionale Jeugbond Union Congress 253
NUSAS Conference 254
Transvaal Editor on Shortcomings of Afrikaans Writers 255
Support for Afrikaans Businesses 256
Death of Prof C M Van Den Heever 257
'Interests of the Language Groups': Volksblad 257
UNESSA Manifesto 258
Non-European Teachers' Conferences 258
Native Wholesale Firm 258
From the Bantu Press 259

FICHE 56

No. 27 18.7.57
Church Opposition to Apartheid Legislation 260
'Great Trek' by English-Speaking from Union 261
Jews leaving Platteland 262
Transvaal Education Ordinance 262
Negro Ambassador for Union 263
Apartheid not the Final Answer 263
Role of German-Speaking People of SWA 264
The Middle East Situation 264
Aid for Angola Boers 264
'South African Observer' commended 265
First Afrikans Book translated into Hebrew 265
From the Bantu Press 265
No. 28 25.7.57
Immigration Position is Tragic, says Transvaler 267
An Oppenheimer Election? 268
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 268
'New Hope from Old Deserts' 269
Afrikaners must play Greater Role in Defence Force 269
German Heritage in SA 270
Church Opposition to Apartheid Legislation 270
Prof L J Du Plessis on Prof Keet 272
Plea for 'Selective, Necessary Contact' between Races 272
Jews and Afrikaners on the Platteland 273
Editor of Transvaler on Free Expression 273
From the Bantu Press 273
No. 29 1.8.57
Transvaal Provincial Draft Ordinance 275
The Ambassador from Ghana 277
Social Contacts with Educated Natives 277
Immigration Policy 278
The Churches and Apartheid 279
Use of Flag and Anthem 280
SABRA on Prof Keet 280
The Middle East Situation 281
First White Building Workers' Union 281
Dr Friedman and United Party 281
From the Bantu Press 281
[Note: Press Digest No. 30, 8.8.57 pages 283-288, is missing]
No. 31 15.8.57
Many Reactions to the Statue Controversy 289
Relaxation of Colour Bar 290
SA Refugee Organisation formed 291
Langenhoven Birthday Celebrations 291
The UP's 'Rich Young Men' 292
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 292
Academic Immigrants 293
The Union and Africa 293
Adv. Pirow Se Nuusbrief 294
From the Bantu Press 294
No. 32 22.8.57
United Party Union Congress 295
Mr Strijdom on Second World War 297
Die Burger Article on Exceptions from Apartheid 298
White Building Workers' Union 298
Union Censorship System 298
Gen. Maritz and the Nazis 299
Articles on Die Stem in Die Burger 300
From the Bantu Press 300
No. 33 29.8.57
Nationalist Attack on UP Senate Proposals 301
Plea for Christian Norms in Education 304
'Thinking with the Blood' in Education 305
Diplomat from Ghana 305
SA Immigration Policy 306
Censorship System 307
Many Afrikaners turning from Apartheid: Prof Keet 307
The Afrikaner and the Coloured: Mr Botha, MP 307
Russian Influence in Syria 308
From the Bantu Press 308
No. 34 5.9.57
UP Senate Plan as NP Election Plank 310
Education Draft Amendment Ordinance 310
Animosities between English and Afrikaans 312
Krugersdorp 70th Birthday Celebrations 312
Historic Genootskap Conference 314
Visit of Israeli Leaders to the Union 314
Angola Boers 314
Prime Minister congratulates Malaya 315
Gen. Maritz and OB 315
Extracts from the Bantu Press 316
No. 35 12.9.57
UP Senate Plan in Free State 317
Settlers' Day 318
Free State Nationalist Congress 320
South-West Africa NP Congress 321
Prof. Du Plessis on Self-Governing Bantu States 321
Sons of England 322
Transvaal Education and CNO 322
SABRA proposes Conference with Bantu Leaders 323
Gen. Dayan's Visit to the Union 324
From the Bantu Press 324
No. 36 19.9.57
OFS Nationalist Congress 325
United Party Transvaal Congress 327
Economic Boycott Charges 328
The English and Afrikaans 'Attitude to Life' 329
Press blamed for Law-Breaking among Non-Europeans 330
'Dilemma in the Middle East': Burger 330
Israeli Visitors to the Union 331
Statements on Immigration 331
From the Bantu Press 331
No. 37 25.9.57
The Election Campaign 333
Nationalist Party Transvaal Congress 333
Ethnic Grouping and Native Riots 335
Afrikaners must seek Contact with England: Dr Nicol 336
Relations with Ghana 336
Isolation Fatal for Afrikanerdom 336
New Political Divisions Forecast: Prof. Du Plessis 337
Dr Ben Marais on Church Problem in Africa 337
Individualism a Danger to Afrikaners: Die Weste 337
German Language in SWA 338
Refusal of Passport to Mr Patrick Ouncan 338
'Espionage' at Universities 338
Story with Jewish 'Stereotype' criticised 339
Mr Begin on Importance of Israel to the Free World 339
From the Bantu Press 339

40
FICHE 57

No. 38 3.10.57
Commission into Undesirable Publications 341
New Scheme for Increased Immigration 344
Afrikaans Handelsinstituut Congress 345
Little Rock in the SA Press 345
The Jewish New Year 346
From the Bantu Press 346

No. 39 9.10.57
State-Aided Immigration Scheme 348
Union Jack at Benoni 348
Removal of Conscience Clause advocated 349
Natal Teachers’ Society 350
Relations between Israel and SA 350
Ku Klux Klan in Union? 351
Commission into Undesirable Publications 351
ATKV Congress 352
Ned. Herv. Kerk Gathering 352
The Political Scene 353
UP Afrikaans Newspapers 354
Die Burger on National Unity 354
From the Bantu Press 355

No. 40 16.10.57
Kruger Day Celebrations 356
Subsidised Immigration from Netherlands 358
Bantu Nationalism growing: Volksblad 359
Ghana Minister in America 359
Early School-Leaving 360
English-Speaking and Afrikaans-Speaking 360
From the Bantu Press 361

No. 41 24.10.57
Presbyterians’ Support for ‘Church Clause’ 362
Immigration from Netherlands 363
Kruger Day Only for Afrikaners?: Burger 363
The Russian Satellite 363
Afrikaans Trade Unions 364
Langenhoven Statue 365
Afrikaans Writers criticise Undesirable Publications Report 365
Appeal for National Unity by Sir De V Graaff 366
Mr Serfontein on ‘Money-Power’ 366
Extracts from the Bantu Press 366

No. 42 31.10.57
Cape Nationalist Congress 369
United Party Policy 370
The Flag and Trafalgar Day 371
DRC and Immigrants 374
Presbyterian Church and ‘Church Clause’ 374
Kerkbode on Transvaal ‘Church Imperialism’ 375
‘The White Man in Africa’: Transvaler 376
Job Reservations in Garment Industry 376
Extracts from the Bantu Press 376

No. 43 7.11.57
Johannesburg Municipal Election Results 378
Job Reservations in the Garment Industry 378
Cape DRC Synod 381

FICHE 58

No. 48 12.12.57
Multi-Racial Conference in Johannesburg 415
Prime Minister’s Health 417
The Political Scene 417
Invitation to Indonesian Refugees 418
Mr Oppenheimer’s Retirement from Politics 420
Mr Viljoen 420
DRC English Newsletter 421
From the Bantu Press 421

No. 49 19.12.57
Day of the Covenant 423
‘Declaration of Conscience’ 425
The Political Scene 426
Treason Preparatory Examination 426
References to Non-Europeans in Afrikaans Books 426
‘Broederbond and the DRC’ 427
From the Bantu Press 427
1958
No. 1 9.1.58
The Afro-Asian Conference 1
New Year Messages 2
Freemasonry and DRC 3
New English Magazine by Immigrants 4
Indonesian Immigrants 5
Treason Inquiry 5
Job Reservation 5
Die Volksgenoot ceases Publication 5
‘In Search of Goodwill’ 6
Non-Europeans and Sport 6
Extracts from the Bantu Press 7
No. 2 16.1.58
The Political Scene 9
University Apartheid Bill 11
Afro-Asian Conference 13
Coloured People’s National Union Conference 13
‘Bilingual Happiness’ 14
Mr Louw on Relations with Non-White States 14
‘The German Bulwark’ 14
From the Bantu Press 15
No. 3 23.1.58
The Parliamentary Session 17
Mr Strijdom’s Health 18
Institute of Race Relations Conference 19
Race Problems: Party Attitudes 21
Immigration 22
Conflicting Political and Economic Ideals 22
Race Relations in the Bible 22
From the Bantu Press 23
No. 4 30.1.58
The Parliamentary Session 24
Archbishop of Cape Town condemns Apartheid 26
Gereformeerde Synod 27
South Africa’s Racial Policies and the Jews 28
NG Kerk and Immigration 28
SA Parliamentary Delegation to India 29
From the Bantu Press 30
No. 5 6.2.58
The Parliamentary Session 31
The Election Campaign 32
Archbishop of Cape Town and Apartheid 34
Gereformeerde Kerk Synod 37
Christian National Schools Plea by MP 37
Immigration 37
Boy Scouts adopt One Flag and Anthem 38
Vanderbijl discontinue English Page 39
Treason Trial 39
From the Bantu Press 39
No. 6 13.2.58
Anglican Church and Mixed Schools 41
The Election Campaign 46
Gref. Synod on Race Question 47
Afrikaner’s Concept of History Outmoded 48
Afrikaners in Business 48
Attack on Press by Mr Louw 48
From the Bantu Press 49
No. 7 20.2.58
Election Campaign 50
Archbishop De Blank Controversy 52
Catholic Bishops of Northern Rhodesia 54
New Book on Apartheid by Nationalist Senator 55
‘Mass Action’ during Election 55
Politics and History 55 [continued on next fiche]
FICHE 59
Bilingualism in Transvaal 56
From the Bantu Press 56
No. 8 27.2.58
The Elections Campaign Under Way 58
Population Registration Act in Cape Town 60
Non-European Nationalism 61
Immigration Policy criticised at UP Meetings 62
Archbishop De Blank on Church and Politics 62
From the Bantu Press 63
No. 9 6.3.58
The Election Campaign in Full Swing 65
Religion of Church and State 68
‘Multi-Racial or Indigenous Church?’ 68
Dr De Blank replies to Dr Donges 69
Van Der Bijl School Medium Judgment 69
People’s Movement: Pirow’s Newsletter 70
From the Bantu Press 70
No. 10 13.3.58
The Election Campaign 72
Internal Conflict in African National Congress 77
Afrikaners and Africans: Huisgenoot 78
Kerkbode on Coloured Representatives 79
From the Bantu Press 79
No. 11 20.3.58
Election Nominations 81
Action against ANC 85
SA Trade Union Council Congress 86
Prof. Du Plessis on After the Election 86
From the Bantu Press 87
No. 12 27.3.58
The Election Campaign 89
ANC and Election: Press Comment 93
Coloured Elections 94
Strangement of Coloureds: Afrikaans Writer 95
Prof. Du Plessis on Separate Universities 95
Survival of Afrikaners: Evening Post 95
Catholic Times to cease Publication 95
From the Bantu Press 96
No. 13 2.4.58
The Election Campaign 97
Concessions to German in South-West Africa 101
Coloured Parliamentary Elections 102
Krugersdorp Ban on Mixed Meetings 102
Religious Instruction in Bantu Schools 102
Dr Verwoerd appoints Committee for Johannesburg 199
Bantu Publications Co. 199
From the Bantu Press 199

No. 25 26.6.58
Republic ‘Referendums’ in Newspapers 201
Abolition of Oath of Loyalty: Transvaler 202
Mr De Klerk criticises ‘Armchair Critics’ 202
Senate to be changed? 203
Archbishop De Blank and DRC 203
Religion in Schools 205
Separation Temporary: SABRA Leader 205
Ecumenical Synod of Geref. Churches 206
ASB rejected by Wits. Students 206
From the Bantu Press 207

FICHE 61

No. 26 3.7.58
The Republic 209
Mr De Klerk’s Armchair Intellectuals Criticism 210
End Baasskap Call by Prof. Du Plessis 211
Ghana Warning to Union 211
Kerkbode alleges Planned Anglican Campaign 212
SA’s Role in World Conflict 214
Pretoria Students against Censorship 214
Teachers’ Conferences 215
Indian Protest against Group Areas 216
Extracts from the Bantu Press 216

No. 27 10.7.58
Opening of Parliament 218
N G Kerk’s Attitude on Apartheid 219
Geref. Kerk World Synod 220
Result of Burger Republic Poll 220
SABRA’s Aims 221
Prof. Du Plessis’ Call to end Baasskap 221
The Eighteen-Year Vote 221
NUSAS Conference 222
Johannesburg City Council and Flag 223
Correction From the Bantu Press 225

No. 28 17.7.58
The Parliamentary Session 226
German Settlers’ Centenary 228
reports for Reformed Churches Synod 230
Titles of Bantu Preachers 230
attack on Anglican Leaders in Kerkbode Article 230
SA Outlook and Church Controversy 231
Group Areas Act 231
Middle East Events 232
From the Bantu Press 233

No. 29 24.7.58
The 1958 Budget 234
SA’s Return to UNO 236
The Middle Eastern Crisis 236
‘Dark Clouds over Africa’ 238
Transvaler on ‘Prohibited Immigrants’ 238
Native Delegates to World Institute of Christian Educa-
tion 239
German Evangelical Church Synod 239
Afrikaner Lack of Interest in Reading 239
From the Bantu Press 240

No. 30 31.7.58
Mr Strijdom’s Health 242
Cultural Readiness for Republic 242
Apartheid and Middle East 244
Native Taxation 246
Basuto Self-Rule Proposals 247
Bantu Education 248
Criticism of NG Propaganda Fund 248
Kerkbode Article causes Controversy 250
From the Bantu Press 250

No. 31 7.8.58
Treason Trial 252
Mr Strijdom’s Health 254
Dr Louw on Afrikaner Savings 254
Natal Methodist Leader’s Warning 255
Apartheid Indispensable for Race Peace: Prof. Oliver 256
OHMS to go 257
Middle East Situation 257
Afrikaner’s Power of Assimilation 257
Basuto Self-Government 258
From the Bantu Press 259

No. 32 14.8.58
Mr Strijdom’s Health 260
Natives will co-operate in Separate Development 260
Reformed Ecumenical Synod 261
Dr De Blank defended by ‘South African Outlook’ 262
Anglican Minister on Acceptance of Apartheid 262
Christian National Republic: Woord en Daad 263
Titles of Black Ministers 263
The Treason Trial 264
Group Areas Act 264
Votes for 18-Year-Olds 264
From the Bantu Press 265

No. 33 21.8.58
Eighteen-Year-Old Vote 267
The Prime Minister’s State of Health 269
The Treason Trial 269
New Division of Africa 269
Apartheid Symposium 270
University Apartheid Bill 270
Reformed World Synod 272
The Middle East 274
State Aid for Immigrants? 274
From the Bantu Press 274

No. 34 28.8.58
Death of Mr Strijdom 275
Mr Swart as Acting Premier 277
US establishes Africa Bureau 278
New Outlook for SA on Arabs 278
‘New Look’ in Union Education 279
Teenage Vote Bill passed by Assembly 279
University Apartheid Protests 280
Brawl at Meeting of Pretoria Study Group 280
Federal Party Congress 282
From the Bantu Press 282
No. 35 4.9.58
Dr Verwoerd elected Leader of NP 283
The Leadership Contest 284 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 62

Mt Strijdom's Funeral 287
Union's 50th Anniversary Celebrations 288
Silver Jubilee of Afrikaans Bible 288
Twenty First Anniversary of Oosterlig 288
Pretoria Study Group Incident 289
Race Riots in Britain 290
From the Bantu Press 290
No. 36 11.9.58
New Prime Minister's Policy 291
Comment on Premier's Statements 294
University Apartheid Bill to be dropped 295
British Race Riots 295
SWA Partition Plan 297
New Education Policy for Union 298
Settlers Day Celebrations 298
Voorligter on welcoming Immigrants 299
No People chosen: Netherlands Professor 299
Pirow's Newsletter terminates 299
New Administrator of Transvaal 299
From the Bantu Press 300
No. 37 18.9.58
Dr Verwoerd to plan National Policy 301
Waterberg Parliamentary By-Election 303
Christian National Education condemned 303
Evolution and the DRC 303
Kerkbode on Ecumenical Synod 304
'New Culture Struggle for Afrikaner – Against Bantu' 305
From the Bantu Press 306
No. 38 25.9.58
Dr Verwoerd outlines Government Policy 307
Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurbond Congress 310
AYKV Congress 311
SABRA Leaders on Contact between Races 312
Bantu Support for Apartheid 312
Congress of the Afrikaans Calvinist Movement 312
Extracts from the Bantu Press 313
No. 39 2.10.58
The Parliamentary Session 315
Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut Conference 316
Youth in Politics: Burger 318
Natal Provincial By-Election 318
Union Immigration Policy 318
Population Figures at End of Century 318
Christian National Education Warning 319
Transvaler comes of Age 319
Cape Administrator praises SA Press 320
From the Bantu Press 321
No. 40 8.10.58
Dr Verwoerd on Republic 322
CNO – Reply to Mr Alexander 323
Love of Ease or Sacrifice: Dr G D Scholtz 324
Race Peace on a Christian Basis 324
Bantu Leadership 325
SA's Opportunity in Africa: Burger Foreign Editor 325
Angola Afrikaners enter SWA 325
New Format for Vaderland 326
From the Bantu Press 326
No. 41 16.10.58
Kruger Day Celebrations 328
Burger on the Republic 329
Treason Trail 330
Press as a Mirror: Kerkblad 330
Dr Verwoerd and Industry 330
Nationalist Congress in SWA 331
Israel as Kruger Day Example 332
Church and Politics 333
Mr De Wet Nel calls Attention to Bantu Market 333
From the Bantu Press 334
No. 42 23.10.58
Dr Verwoerd's New Cabinet 336
English-Speaking and the Republic 337
Broadcast on Republic 338
Nasionale Jeugbond Congresses 338
SA at UN 339
Israel and SA at UN 339
Christian National Education Congress 339
South-West NP and Dr Van Rhijn 340
The Last Trek: Huisgenoot 340
Nationalist Reporting of Assault Cases 341
SA and World Leadership: Transvaler 341
The Treason Case 342
Dagbreek on Unnecessary Apartheid 342
Mosleyite Group in Union 342
Israel's Vote at UN 343
From the Bantu Press 343
No. 43 30.10.58
Party Congresses 344
NP Free State Congress 344
Rand Executive Council of NP Conference 345
New Cabinet – Further Comment 346
Policy of Co-operation with Non-Whites 346
Cape NP Congress 346
United Party Congresses 347
South Africans are a Nation: Dr Holloway 348
Aswan Dam Loan 349
Immigration and Genetics: Dr Eloff 349
'Menace of State Religion': Church News 350
From the Bantu Press 350
No. 44 6.11.58
The Republican Issue at Party Congresses 352
Mr Lawrence urges Firm UP Stand 354
45
FICHE 64

Treason Trial resumes 22
Ekonomiese Instituut Congress 22
Institute of Race Relations Meeting 23
United States in Africa 25
New Policy in Congo 25
Ghana Envoy to Union Rumour 25
The Nature of National Education 26
Transvaaler on Absorption of English-Speaking 27
From the Bantu Press 27
No. 4 29.1.59
Opening of Parliamentary Session 29
Abolition of Native Representatives 30
Prof. L J Du Plessis proposes a Coalition 31
The Republic and Immigration 32
Voorligter on Unadaptable Immigrants 33
Group Areas Act Application criticised 33
FAK Economic Institute 34
‘Christian Education’ analysed 34
Day of the Covenant Criticism in Kerkbode 35
Sir Oswald Mosley visits the Union 35
English-Speaking and Civil Service 35
From the Bantu Press 35
No. 5 5.2.59
The Parliamentary Debate 37
The Republic 40
Abolition of Senate Move 41
Rift between US and SA reported 41
Mosley’s Visit to Union 43
Geref. Kerk Centenary 44
The New Bantu Market 44
Resumption of Treason Trial 44
Afrikaans Medical Journal 44
Immigration Policy 44
Negotiations with Nasser
No. 6 12.2.59
Death of Dr Malan 45
Sir Oswald Mosley’s Visit 47
The Republic 50
Bantu Investment Corporation Bill 51
New Chief Justice 51
Sen. De Klerk on the Calvinist Answer 52
Badges for Black Envoys 52
Bilingualism in Roman Catholic Church 53
From the Bantu Press 53
No. 7 19.2.59
Development of the Reserves 55
Bantustan and United Party 56
Republic accepted by UP says Mr Schoeman 57
Dr Malan 58
Dagbreekpers Board of Directors 59
The New Chief Justice 59
White National Congress 60
Sir Oswald Mosley’s Visit 60
Union must develop Military Power: Dr A J Visser 61
Espionage at Universities 62
King Kong in Pretoria 62
Liquor for Natives 62
From the Bantu Press 63
No. 8 26.2.59
Nyasaland Rioting 64
The ‘Bantustan’ Policy 65
United Party under Scrutiny 66
Dr Malan 68
Spy at University 69
Immigrant Teachers in Transvaal 71
N G Kerk and Group Areas Act 71
Third Great Trek: Free State Administrator 71
From the Bantu Press 72
No. 9 5.3.59
Nyasaland Situation 74
United Party Native Policy 76
Colonialism and SA 77
Dr Verwoerd on Task of Universities 79
Transvaal Ruling on Teachers 81
Attacks on Group Areas Act 82
Treason Trial Ruling to go to Appeal 83
University Spy 83
From the Bantu Press 83
No. 10 12.3.59
Troubles in Nyasaland 85
Academic Equality Appeal 86
Differences in NP alleged 7
Prof L J Du Plessis resigns from NP Post 88
Conflict between SABRA and Government alleged 88
Denies Connection with Mosley 89
Afrikaans Language Celebrations 89
Advantages of English over Afrikaans Press 90
Abuses and Freedom of the Press: Burger 91
Johannesburg Community Chest and Afrikaans Organisations 91
Archbishop de Blank on Treason Trial 92
University Spy Incident 92
Decimalisation of Union Coinage 92
From the Bantu Press 93
No. 11 19.3.59
Developments in Federation 95
Events in Africa to Union’s Advantage: Dr Donges 97
Prof. Du Toit on Prof. Du Plessis’s Coalition Proposals 97
US interest in Africa: Mr Basson 98
Prof Pistorius on Change in White Attitudes 99
Black Nationalism not Anti-White: DRC Missionaries 99
Ex-Chief Justice criticised by Government Leaders 100
(continued on next fiche)
FICHE 65

University Apartheid 101
Afrikaans University for Rand 101
Group Areas Act in Pretoria 102
English-Speaking Participation in Language Festival 102
Centenary of Indian Settlement 102
Bantu Earning Power 103
Ghana recruiting Bantu Teachers from SA 103
From the Bantu Press 103
No. 12 26.3.59
Dr Eiselen states Bantustan Perspective 105
New Draft Constitution for Republic 106
Cabinet Ministers on University Apartheid 107
The Overcoming of Isolationism: Transvaler 109
Immigrants from Africa: Transvaler 110
Ex-Judges in Politics 110
Internationalism Precursor of Anti-Christ: Prof. Strauss 111
The Situation in the Federation 111
Afrikaans Press Hamstrung, claims Writer 112
From the Bantu Press 112
No. 13 2.4.59
SABRA Conference 114
The Budget 114
Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill 116
Afrikaans Student Congress 118
Dr Verwoerd on Church and State 119
‘The Afrikaner without a People’ 121
Christian Conference in Ghana 122
‘Challenge of Africa’: Dr Ben Marais 123
Transvaal Afrikaans Teachers’ Congress 124
From the Bantu Press 125
No. 14 9.4.59
SABRA Conference 126
‘Bantustan’ Policy under Fire 130
Protests against University Apartheid 131
Africanist Movement Congress 132
Afrikaans Language Celebrations 133
Secession Threat by Sir Roy Welensky 134
Union System of Education advocated by Minister 135
English in Danger: Volksblad 135
Liberal Party Congress 136
From the Bantu Press 136
No. 15 16.4.59
University Apartheid Debate 138
‘Conscience Clause’ and University Bill 142
Up Colour Policy 143
N G Kerk Northern Regional Synod 144
Central Finance Institution for Afrikaans Capital 145
Afrikaans Language Celebrations 146
An English Academy? 146
Prof L J Du Plessis expelled from NP 146
From the Bantu Press 147
No. 16 21.4.59
The Guillotine Motion 148
University Apartheid Legislation 148
Windhoek By-Election 149
Smaller Senate predicted 150
Africa Week 150
Africanists and Indians 151
Principles of National Education 151
Kerkbode on Taaffe: 152
Immigration Task of Whole Population: Vanderland 152
Prof. Du Plessis warns NP 153
Liberal and Liberalist 153
Ban on Bertrand Russell Work 154
Government Steps to counter Platteland Depopulation 154
No. 17 1.5.59
Fort Hare Bill 155
Apartheid Issue at Stellenbosch 157
Smaller Senate 159
Mr De Klerk addresses Germiston Garment Workers 158
ANC Boycott Call 159
DRC Synod criticised by Other Churches 161
Afrikaans Only Language in SA?: Prof. Terblanche 161
Dr Colin Steyn 162
Bertrand Russell Book Ban 162
N G Kerk on Election Nominations 163
Partition Proposal at Race Relations Meeting 163
Conscience Clause Motion for University Bill rejected 164
From the Bantu Press 164
No. 18 8.5.59
Dr Verwoerd on Republic and Senate 166
Stryd dag Speeches 167
United Party Meetings 168
Republican Out of Commonwealth 169
University Apartheid Bill 169
ANC Boycott 170
Whites will lose Power in SA?: Prof Uys 170
Synod criticised in Press 171
Freedom of Conscience 171
Conscience Clause 172
Ku Klux Klan in SA 172
Volkshandel on the Union and Black Africa 173
Sport and the Colour Bar 173
From the Bantu Press 173
No. 19 14.5.59
Nationalist Intellectuals in ‘Revolt’ 175
Mr Louw on visiting Black States 178
UP Critical Meeting 179
Florida By-Election 180
Mr J Basson, MP and NP Caucus 180
Majority needed for Republic 180
[continued on next ficha]

FICHE 66

Senate Changes 181
University Apartheid 181
First Bantustan 182
Mr Swart on Union and South-West 182
Dispute in AA in Cape 182
Conscience Clause and New Colleges: N. Witness 183
The Board of Censors 183
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 20 21.5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Bantu Self-Government Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>United Party Colour Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>'Revolt of the Intellectuals'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Stellenbosch Students Council Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Liberal Group at Pretoria University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Union Education System for Whites urged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Mr Japie Basson and Native Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 21 28.5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195</td>
<td>Dr Verwoerd on Coming of Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>Promotion of Bantu's Self-Government Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>The Case of Mr Japie Basson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Mr Schoeman attacks English Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Multi-Race Church Council Move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Unified DRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Conflict between N G Kerk and Geref Kerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church and Apartheid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 22 4.6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>Union Day Celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>Ban on Luthuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209</td>
<td>ANC Economic Boycott Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>Native Farm Labour Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>First Bantu Territorial Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>Wonder of Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>Mr Japie Basson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>UP Youth Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>Front against Christian National Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213</td>
<td>Protection of Semi-Skilled Whites: Mr Viljoen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 23 10.6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>Warning to White SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>United Party Policy: Sir De Villiers Graaff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>More Intense Struggle with Approach of Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218</td>
<td>ANC Boycott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>Need for Contact: Prof. Oliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>Anglican-DRC Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>Afrikaans Language Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
<td>Basis of Sakekamers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>The Coloureds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 24 18.6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>'Bantustan Bill' through Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>Apartheid and Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>Future of United Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227</td>
<td>Coloured MPs proposed by Prof. Oliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>English-Speaking Person in Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>UP wants to destroy Afrikaner: Dr Hertzog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>Mr Basson asked to Resign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>Natal Teachers oppose Centralisation of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>N G Kerk and Geref Kerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Wits SRC and Afrikaanse Studentebond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Treason Trial Appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>ANC Deputy Leader banned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>Colour Bar in Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>Jeugbond Anniversary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>Race Relations Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 25 25.6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>Durban Riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>ANC Boycott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>NP favours Natural Division of SA: Mr Maree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>Bantustan Plan Dangerous Nonsense: Dr De Beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>Development of the Reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>Platteland becoming Black: Dr Neethling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>Farm Labour Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241</td>
<td>Immigration Organisation dissolves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>Kerkblad Appeal to N G Kerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>Afrikaans and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>Bantu Self-Government Symposium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>SABRA and Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>Mr Garfield Todd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 26 2.7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>'New Vision' in NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>Potchefstroom University Council on Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>The Coming of the Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>Senate Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>ANC Boycott starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248</td>
<td>Bilingualism in SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249</td>
<td>Immigrants and Dr Verwoerd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>Allegations in Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>Transfer of Fort Hare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>Passport Refusal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>Afrikaner Secret Society reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 27 9.7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>End of Parliamentary Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257</td>
<td>West Indian Boycott of SA Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259</td>
<td>Ruiterwag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>Dr Verwoerd on Indian Unemployed [continued on next fiche]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FICHE 67**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>261</td>
<td>Transfer of Fort Hare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263</td>
<td>Police Traps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263</td>
<td>Sir Roy Welensky's Visit to London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263</td>
<td>Light Skin Not Enough: Vaderland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>White Building Workers Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>Conscience Clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265</td>
<td>From the Bantu Press No. 28 16.7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265</td>
<td>Boycott of South African Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>Provincial Election Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269</td>
<td>SWA Nationalists against Expelling Mr Basson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>Natal Teachers on Bilingualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>Refusal of Passports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>Calvin Anniversary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>Bantu Author's Conference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Calling a Man “Mister”: Evening Post 274
Strange Complaint: Burger 274
From the Bantu Press 275
No. 29 23.7.59
Boycott of South African Trade extends 276
The Case of Mr Basson 276
Natal Provincial Council defies Government 280
UP and Apartheid 281
Mr Low on Refusal of Passports 282
Democracy in Africa 283
Dr Malan’s Book published 283
Freedom Rallies 284
Russian Relations with Ethiopia 284
From the Bantu Press 285
No. 30 30.7.59
Boycott of SA Commerce 286
Mr Louw’s Attacks on English Press 288
Central African Federation 288
Provincial Elections 291
Akademie Vir Wetensakp en Kuns 293
Mariental By-Election 294
Natal Defiance of Government 294
From the Bantu Press 295
No. 31 6.8.59
Provincial Election Campaign Under Way 297
United Party Clash reported 297
UP means Death to Whites: Dr Hertzog 298
Senate will be reformed and reduced 299
Natal Protest 299
‘Free Christian Education’ 301
Voolkshandel deplores Boycotts 301
The Beukes Case 301
Reports in the Press 302
Ministry of Immigration urged by Mr Rupert 303
De Blank Conference 304
Akademie Celebrations 305
South-West and Union 305
No Support for Racialism: DRC Moderator 305
Treason Trial resumes 306
Die Unie 306
Die Landgenoot 306
From the Bantu Press 306
No. 32 13.8.59
Prime Minister on National Education Policy 308
The Provincial Elections 311
UP Congress 311
NP Attacks on English Press 311
UP Congress opens 313
Natal Protest 314
Senate Reform welcomed 315
Immigration Policy 315
Bantu Authorities 316
Police Traps Controversy 317
From the Bantu Press 318
No. 33 20.8.59
United Party Crisis 319
United Party Congress 324
Natal Troubles 325
Centralisation of Education 325
Pleas for Immigration 327
From the Bantu Press 328
No. 34 27.8.59
United Party Split 330
Provincial Elections and Republic 336
Natal Trouble 336
The Education Issue 337
ATKB Meeting in Port Elizabeth 337
Christian Unity and Apartheid 338
From the Bantu Press 338
FICHE 68
No. 35 3.9.59
No Coalition, says Prime Minister 340
Future of Progressive Group 341
Mr Strauss leaves up 343
Support for United Party 343
Mr Oppenheimer leaves UP 345
Natal NP Congress 345
Christian National Education 346
Stander Issue 348
Steps against Slanderous Reports 348
Forum’s 21st Anniversary 348
DRC objects to Migratory Labour 349
Church Attitudes on Race Relations 349
From the Bantu Press 349
No. 36 10.9.59
Dr Verwoerd in Natal 351
Christian National Education 353
Free State NP Congress 355
Mr Oppenheimer’s Resignation from UP 355
United Party Meetings 357
Jeugbond Congresses 358
Settler’s Day 359
Sons of England 359
Jews and NP 360
World War II Anniversary 360
Boeranasi Revival 361
DRC Minister on Moral Rearmament 361
Extradition Treaty with Israel 361
From the Bantu Press 362
No. 37 17.9.59
Provincial Elections Nominations 363
Nationalist Meetings 364
Republican Issue 365
Dr Verwoerd announces Senate Reform 365
Speeches by Sir De Villiers Graaff 366
The Education Controversy 367
Mr Lawrence to leave UP 370
Deportation of TV Man 370
Beukes Case 371
United Party and Coalition 371
Churches and Refugees 372
Coloureds admitted to ATKV 372
'The Misery of Afrikaans' 372
Dr Holloway on Unilingualism Danger 373
Transvaal on Moon Rocket 373
From the Bantu Press 373
No. 38 24.9.59
Provincial Election Campaign Under Way 375
Transvaal Nationalist Congress 377
Senate Change 378
A Progressive Party after Election 379
State Education Policy 380
Israel Diplomatic Representation in SA 381
The English Language in SA 381
Moral Rearmament 382
The White Worker 382
From the Bantu Press 382
No. 39 1.10.59
Mr Louw explains Race Policy at UNO 384
Provincial Election Campaign 384
The 'Progressives' and the UP 388
The Education Issue 389
Stander Case 391
Afrikaans Handelsinstituut Congress 391
Censorship Plan 393
Barzilay Deportation 393
From the Bantu Press 393
No. 40 8.10.59
Provincial Election Campaign 395
The Bantustan Map 396
Eight Black States, One Mixed: Graaff 399
Mr Lawrence on Battle for Africa 400
DRC Appeal for Abolition of Conscience Clause 400
Non-Whites and White Universities 402
British Elections 403
Minister gives Instructions on Immorality Act 403
From the Bantu Press 403
No. 41 15.10.59
Eve-of-the-Election Appeals 405
The 'Bantustan' Policy 407
Republic's Imminence 409
Early Provincial Election Results 410
The Education Issue 410
'The Heroes of the Cold War': Woord en Ilaad 411
Kruger Day Celebrations 411
Coalition Appeal by United Party MP 411
Death of Mr Pirow 412
Mr Louw to visit Ghana 412
Indian Congress 412
Kerkbode Editor 412
Mr Anton Rupert 412
From the Bantu Press 413
No. 42 22.10.59
After the Elections 414
Election Results 414
Mr Louw to visit Ghana 418
Boycott dropped in Ghana 418
Mr Louw at UNO 419
Warning against 'Predikant Supremacy' in SA 419
[continued on next fiche]

FICHE 69

Immigration Plea 420
Immorality Act 420
Indian Rights 421
Afrikaner Economic Development 421
'The Hope of South Africa 422
Judaism and Colour Discrimination 422
From the Bantu Press 423
No. 43 29.10.59
[Note: Pages 420-425 in Press Digest No. 43 have been wrongly numbered. The correct page numbers are given in brackets.]
Mr Lawrence joins Progressive Group 420 [424]
Mr Basson expelled from NP 422 [426]
Uniform Education Policy 422 [426]
Bantu Homes can succeed: Mr Nel 425 [429]
South-West Africa NP Congress 425 [429]
Students protest at Fort Hare 430
Mosleyite Party in SA 431
Lionel Forman 431
Immorality Act 431
Dining Facilities at Rand Airport 432
Afrikaans Talent 432
Smaller Afrikaans Families 433
Afrikaans Club for Johannesburg 433
From the Bantu Press 433
No. 44 5.11.59
Minister shouted Down at School Opening 435
The Political Scene 436
Anti-Republic League dissolves 437
Union Celebrations 438
Fort Hare 439
Bantu Traders 440
Stander Issue 441
Mr Oppenheimer on SA Situation 452
Banishment Case 443
Immorality Act Amendment 444
Television in the Union 445
From the Bantu Press 445
No. 45 12.11.59
Foundation Congress of Progressives 447
The Stander Case 449
More Rapid Pace to Republic Now 451
Mr Oppenheimer on SA Situation 452
Boycotts of South Africa 454
Mr Gordener on 'The 'English' Problem' 456
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 19.11.59 | 46 | First Coloured College 457
| 26.11.59 | 47 | Progressive Party holds First Congress 459
| | | Cape Nationalist Congress 463
| | | More Rapid Pace to Republic 464
| | | Christian National Education 465
| | | The Banishment Case 466
| | | Government Immigration Aid 467
| | | From the Bantu Press 468
| 26.11.59 | 47 | No.
| 3.12.59 | 48 | No.
| 10.12.59 | 49 | No.
| 17.12.59 | 50 | No.
| 7.1.60 | 1 | 1960
| | | No. 1 7.1.60
| | | New Year Messages 1
| | | Mr Macmillan’s Visit 3
| | | South African Foundation 4
| | | Commonwealth Ministers’ Conference 5
| | | World-Wide Anti-Semitic Outburst – South African Incidents 6
| | | The Boycott Movement against SA 7
| | | Day of the Covenant 9
| | | Development in Africa 10
| | | Bannings 11
| | | Council for Coloured Affairs 11
| | | Progress of Afrikaans 11
| | | From the Bantu Press 12
| | | No. 2 14.1.60
| | | Parliamentary Session 14
| | | The Labour Party Boycott of SA Goods 15
| | | Mr Macmillan’s Visit 16
| | | Mr Louw on United Nations 18
| | | Mr Basson organising Group 18
| | | Mr Swart’s Visit Overseas 19
| | | Depopulation of the Platteland 19
| | | United States of Africa 19
| | | Anti-Semitic Incidents 20
| | | From the Bantu Press 25
| | | No. 3 21.1.60
| | | Parliamentary Session opens 27
| | | Republic Election after Festival? 28
| | | Ex-Chief Justice Fagan criticises Apartheid 30
| | | Macmillan’s Visit to Africa 31
| | | Basutoland Election 32
| | | The Boycott of SA 32
| | | Meaning of Christian National Education 33
| | | Race Relations Conference 34
| | | Anti-Semitic Manifestations 35
| | | Stop Press: Dr Verwoerd announces Republic Referendum 38
| | | From the Bantu Press 39
| | | No. 4 28.1.60
| | | The Republic Referendum 41
| | | Mr Macmillan arrives in Union 47
| | | Union Festival 47
| | | Cato Manor 48
| | | Basutoland Elections 49
| | | The Boycott of SA Goods 49
| | | SABC Appointment for Transvaler Editor 50
| | | From the Bantu Press 50
| | | No. 5 4.2.60
| | | The Republic Referendum 52
| | | Mr Macmillan’s Visit to South Africa 56
| | | Mr Macmillan addresses MPs and Senators 58 [continued on next fiche]

**FICHE 70**

- Sentiment and Business 501
- Impression of Ghana by Dr De Wet 501
- From the Bantu Press 501
- No. 50 17.12.59
- South African Foundation 503
- Windhoek Location Riots 504
- New Governor-General 505
- Advent of the Republic: Burger 506
- Ecumenical Conference 507
- Day of the Covenant 509
- Mr Boydell and the Press 510
- Estrangement of Coloured from Whites 511
- From the Bantu Press 511

**1960**

**FICHE 71**

- Cato Manor 59
No. 17 5.5.60
Two Lines of Government Policy? 181
The Emergency 185
The Republic Referendum 186
Commonwealth Conference 187
Screening of Lawyers 188
Union Education Advisory Council Bill 188
Progress of Dr Verwoerd 188
New Party launched by Mr Basson 189
Dr O Du Plessis 189
From the Bantu Press 189
No. 18 12.5.60
The Commonwealth Conference 191
The State of Emergency 194
The Republic Referendum 195
Education Bill postponed 197
Government and Universities 197
Mr Louw addresses SA Club in London 197
Prof. Ben Marais on Crisis 198
DRC and the State 198
Depopulation of the Platteland 198
Sobukwe’s Sentences 200
DRC and Coloureds 200
From the Bantu Press 200
No. 19 19.5.60
Commonwealth Conference Outcome 202
The Republic Referendum 203
Dr Verwoerd returns from Hospital 204
Unity of NP 205
The Emergency Regulations 206
Bantu Policy 208
Business Approach to Prime Minister 209
Practical Immigration Policy 209
Coloureds in Parliament 210
Vereeniging Vir Christelike Onderwys 210
Totius on Unification 211
From the Bantu Press 211
No. 20 24.5.60
Dr Verwoerd returns to Active Life 213
The Emergency 215
The Commonwealth Conference interpreted 216
White Immigrants from Africa Welcome: Mr Naude 218
Union Festival 219
Press Control 219
SABC ‘South African Scene’ 220
Mrs Ballinger 220
SABRA criticised 220
Political Statements 220 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 73
From the Bantu Press 221
Editorial Note 222

No. 21 19.6.60
Union Festival Celebrations 223
Dr Verwoerd’s Union Day Address 226
Industrial Decentralisation and Border Development 229
Business and SA Race Policy 231
Afrikaners in East Africa 232
From the Bantu Press 233
No. 22 16.6.60
Referendum Campaign reaches Crucial Stage 235
NP holds First Union Congress in 15 Years 239
Parow By-Election 239
Bantustan Commissioners appointed 240
Mr Scheeman on Union’s Tight Spot 240
Dr M S Louw’s Plan for Raising Capital 241
Handelsinstituut supports Border Industries 241
Immigration Speed UP 242
Congo and the Union 243
The Emergency 243
Africa Military Organisation 244
Christian Realism and the Race Situation 244
Challenge of New Africa: Dr Ben Marais 244
From the Bantu Press 245
No. 23 23.6.60
The Republic Referendum 247
Mr Fouche warns against Isolationism 249
Mr Basson and SA Bond 250
Business and Politics 250
Dr Donges on Stability of Economy 251
Boycott Effects 251
The State of Emergency 251
Immigration 252
South Africa and the Congo 253
The Decline of English 254
Woord and Daad becomes Bi-Weekly 255
West Too Sure of SA: Administrator 255
Criticism of SABC 255
From the Bantu Press 255
No. 24 30.6.60
Relaxation of Emergency announced 257
The Republic Referendum 258
Business and National Policy 260
Mr Odendaal and Neutrality 262
Union’s Place in the New Africa 262
Unrest in Pondoland 263
Return of Bishop Reeves 264
Liberal Party Conference 264
Bilingualism Plan 266
Consultation with Coloureds 265
From the Bantu Press 265
No. 25 7.7.60
Dr Verwoerd at Groblersdal 267
Republican Fund reaches £300,000 Mark 271
State of Emergency 271
Congo Independence 272
Union’s Influence in Africa 274
Malay’s Economic War on SA 274
New Policy regarding Coloureds 275
From the Bantu Press 275
No. 26 14.7.60
The Congo 277
The Republican Campaign 280
Emergency Regulations Further relaxed 282
Union Aid for Congo Refugees 283
Africa's Coming of Age 284
Little Sympathy for Union: Mr Louw 285
From the Bantu Press 285
No. 27 21.7.60
The Congo Situation 287
Belgian Refugees and Immigration 290
The Referendum Campaign 292
National Conference on Education 293
Contact with Coloureds 295
From the Bantu Press 295
[Note: Press Digest No. 28, 28.7.60 pages 297-308, is missing]
No. 29 4.8.60
Mr Hammarskjöld's Visit to SA 309
Ghana's Boycott of SA Goods 310 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 74

The Rhodesian Riots 312
The Congo 314
The Republic Referendum 314
Referendum Date announced 316
Afrikaans Private Schools 316
Coloureds in Parliament 316
From the Bantu Press 317
No. 30 11.8.60
The Republic Referendum 319
Mr Hammarskjöld's Visit 324
The Boycott against SA 325
Ghana's Anti-Apartheid Oath 325
Kerkblad Immigration Investigation 326
Burger and Cape Times Exchange 327
From the Bantu Press 327
No. 31 18.8.60
The Republic Referendum 329
Ghana's Anti-Apartheid Declaration 334
Free State Provincial Congress of UP 335
Reserve Bank Annual Review 336
Paid Advertisements in Overseas Papers 337
Trade in the Reserves 337
Churches opposed to Afrikaans 'Eton' 338
From the Bantu Press 338
No. 32 25.8.60
The Republic Referendum Campaign 339
Ghana and South Africa 344
Overseas Opposition to Apartheid 345
Directions for Education 346
The Boycott ending? 346
Forms of Address 347
From the Bantu Press 347
No. 33 1.9.60
Union Congress of Nationalist Party 349
The Republic Referendum Campaign 350
Mr Louw on Commonwealth Membership 355
Emergency lifted 355
Afrikaner in the Economy 356
Dr Diederichs on Border Development 356
From the Bantu Press 358
No. 34 8.9.60
The Republic Referendum Campaign 360
Mr Louw at UNO 365
Co-operation in Africa 365
Settlers Day 366
End of the Emergency 366
Afrikaans Culture and Values 367
Volksblad on Distorted Attitude to Labour 368
From the Bantu Press 368
No. 35 15.9.60
The Deportation of Bishop Reeves 370
Plans to improve Economic Climate 372
Dr Donges on Plan for Africans 373
Republic Campaign 373
Handelsinstituut Congress 378
Little Time for SA: SABRA Chairman 379
No Political Re-Grouping in Republic: Mr Erasmus 379
Alliance with Coloureds and Indians 380
From the Bantu Press 380
No. 36 22.9.60
Prime Minister on Republic Constitution 382
Bishop Reeves's Deportation 385
NP Attitude to Coloureds 386
Apartheid and Discrimination 387
Immigration Policy 387
No. 37 29.9.60
Referendum Campaign approaching Peak 388 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 75

Bishop Reeves 394
The Union and Western Europe 395
Nigeria's Independence 395
Future of Coloureds and Indians 396
From the Bantu Press 396
No. 38 6.10.60
The Referendum Campaign 399
Dr Verwoerd on the Timing of the Republic 399
FAK Congress 400
Christian National Education 400
ACB Congress – New Executive 401
'The Church in the Maelstrom' 401
Calvinist Reactions to World Condemnation of South Africa 402
Economic Policy 403
No. 39 13.10.60
The Referendum Result 405
From the Bantu Press 410
[Note: Press Digest Nos. 40 & 41, 20.10.60 & 27.10.60 pages 412-433, are missing]
No. 42 3.11.60
United Party Eight Point Programme 434
Natal Basic Rights Resolution 435
The Afrikaans Identity and National Unity 438
New Senate elected 439
Big Immigration Plan predicted 439
Plea for Integration of Coloureds 440
Dr Moolman's Dismissal from Wool Board 440
Dr Hertzog on Press Censorship 441
No. 43 10.11.60
Republic and White Unity 443
Referendum: Dr Verwoerd's Decision 444
United Party Natal Congress 444
Natal and the Republic 445
Mr Mentz resigns 446
Dr Verwoerd on Fight for White Survival 446
Calvinist Approach to Race Problem 447
Lessons of the Congo: Kerkblad 448
Consolidating Legislation for Urban Bantu 448
Trouble in Pondoland 449
Afrikaans Matriculants Too Few: Transvaler 449
Indian University College 450
South-West Party 450
SWA Nationalist Congress 450
SW Africa Issue to be taken to World Court 450
From the Bantu Press 450
Dead at Words 452
No. 44 17.11.60
Progressive Party Conference 453
White Unity 454
The Republic 454
Dangerous Lapse: Kerkhode 457
Interchange of White and Black Preachers 457
DRC Ministers to start Paper? 458
Catholic Campaign against Colour Prejudice 458
Immigration and Emigration 459
US Presidential Elections 459
Freedom of the Press 459
Natal Rally 460
From the Bantu Press 460
No. 45 24.11.60
Commonwealth Premiers' Conference and Republic 462
Sir De Villiers Graaff in London 462
Date of Republic 463
The English-Speaking in the Republic 464
Progressive Party Conference 464
Centenary of Indian Settlement in SA 468
SA Foundation 468
Mr Louw on UNO 470
Vertraagde Aksie 470
From the Bantu Press 471
[Note: Press Digest No. 46, 1.12.60 pages 472-481, is missing]
No. 47 8.12.60
Prime Minister asks for Trust in Cabinet 482
Draft Constitution of Republic 486
FAK Economic Institute Meeting 487
Pondoland Situation 487
Withdrawal of Alan Paton's Passport 488
Advertising Campaign on Britain 488
Burger on Censorship 488
Prime Minister announces New Deal for Coloureds 489
Education Policy 489
From the Bantu Press 490
No. 48 15.12.60
New Constitution 492
The Pondoland Situation 494
Faster Expansion of Bantu Homelands: Mr Nel 495
The Development of the Coloureds 496
Natal Delegation to Prime Minister 498
From the Bantu Press 499

FICHE 76

No. 49 22.12.60
Day of the Covenant 500
Church Conference Decision on Race Relations 504
Woord en Daad on 'Delayed Action' 506
Census Figures 507
SA's Bonds with Africa 508
Boycott of Indian College 508
Border Industries and the Reserves 508
From the Bantu Press 509

1961
No. 1 12.1.61
Mr Hammarskjold's Visit 1
Die Burger on Controversy in Afrikaner Ranks 3
New Year Messages 3
Controversy in DRC 6
Pondoland 8
From the Bantu Press 9

1961?
No. 2 19.1.61
Mr Hammarskjold departs 12
DRC and Apartheid 15
High Commissioner in London 18
Parliamentary Session 19
South-West Africa 20
From the Bantu Press 20

No. 3 26.1.61
Reports on Sharpeville and Langa 22
Parliamentary Session 24
Mr Hammarskjold's Visit 26
Council of Churches of Reformed Faiths 27
Attack on Coloureds by DRC Minister 29
NP Official Statement on Coloured Representation 29
Institute of Race Relations Conference 30
From the Bantu Press 31
No. 4 2.2.61
The Parliamentary Session 33
Gereformeerde Kerk Synod 37
The Native Problem: Prof. H Du Plessis 39
Election Rumours 39
Republic Debate 40
'Conscience Clause' and Free State University Bill 40
Greatest Victory of Communism: Dr Meyer 41
From the Bantu Press 41
No. 5 9.2.61
The Republic Debate 43
Mr Mitchell on Natal Attitude 45
The Church Controversy 48
DRC Minister on Changes among Whites 49
Opening of New Stock Exchange Building 50
Immigration 51
Passport Bans 51
SABRA Talks abandoned 52
Recruiting for Katanga 52
From the Bantu Press 52
[Note: Press Digest No. 6, 16.2.61 pages 54-64, is missing]
No. 7 23.2.61
The Republic 65
Republican Citizenship 65
Future of the English Section 66
Big Bantu Expansion Programme expected 67
Church and People 69
No Refutation of NG Race Policy 69
The Congo 69
Defence Bill 70
Censorship Laws 71
Free State University Bill 72
State Aid for Immigration 73
No. 8 23.6.61
Crisis in the Federation 74
South Africa and the Commonwealth 77
National Convention of Coloured People planned 78
[continued on next fiche]

FICHE 77

Green Point By-Election 80
University of the Free State Bill 81
American Policy in Africa 82
White Co-operation in Africa 83
From the Bantu Press 83
No. 9 9.3.61
The Commonwealth Conference 88
Five Year Plan for Bantu Areas 89
South-West Africa Elections 92
Progressives and UP 92
Transvaal Administrator on Education Policy 93
Conscience Clause at Free State University 93
Archbishop's Plea on Commonwealth 94
NG Synodal Commission Statement 94
Police Reorganisation 94
Republic Celebrations in Johannesburg 95
From the Bantu Press 95
No. 10 18.3.61
SA's Membership of the Commonwealth 97
General Assembly of NH Kerk 100
South-West Africa Election Results 102
Woord en Daad on the Republic 102
Volkshandel on Separate Development 103
Censorship Bill may be revived 103
Western Province the Test: Transvaal 104
Africa for the Africans attacked 104
No Concessions: Dr Hertzog 105
Bantu Literature - Corporation formed 105
Genetics and Apartheid 105
Union leaves the Commonwealth 106
From the Bantu Press 106
No. 11 23.3.61
South Africa's Withdrawal from the Commonwealth 109
Ned. Herv. Kerk Synod 118
Free State University Bill 119
No Anti-White Doctrines 119
From the Bantu Press 119
No. 12 30.3.61
South Africa's Withdrawal from Commonwealth 121
NG Chairman on Divine Protection 128
NH Kerk and Censorship 129
Transvaal on Freedom of Conscience 129
From the Bantu Press 129
No. 13 13.4.61
Attacks on Union at UNO 131
The Withdrawal from the Commonwealth 134
Dr Verwoerd urges Faith and Confidence 135
'Dawie' on Political Leadership 137
Dr Donges on Government's Adaptability 138
The Treason Trial ends 139
Conscience Clause: Second Reading postponed 140
From the Bantu Press 141
No. 14 20.4.61
The UP Federation Plan 144
The 'Adaptation' Debate 146
Bantu Areas Too Small Criticism 149
Republic Day Preparations 150
The Security Position 151
Freedom of the Press 151
The SABC 151
Witwatersrand School Board Appointments 152
Liberal Party Congress 152
Africa Day Meeting 153
SABRA Split 153
From the Bantu Press 153
No. 15 27.4.61
Bethal-Middelburg By-Election Result 155
Republic for All: Dr Verwoerd 157
From the Bantu Press 256

No. 27 20.7.61
National Union and UP Co-operation 265
Significant UP Congress 266 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 79

UNO and South West 267
Coloured Convention Ban 268
Implications of Pan-Africanism 269
Afrikaanse Studentbond Congress 269
Jeugbond Congress 270
The Economic Situation 270
Liquor for Non-Whites 271
From the Bantu Press 272
No. 28 27.7.61
Mr Erasmus to become Ambassador in Rome 273
Pact between United Party and National Union 274
The Future of English in South Africa 275
Rhodesia’s Hour of Decision 277
Mr Fouche returns from Europe 278
Need to increase White Population in Cape 278
Kerkbode replies to Accusations against ORC 278
The Economic Situation 279
ASB supports Republic 279
From the Bantu Press 280
No. 29 3.8.61
Referendum in Southern Rhodesia 281
Cabinet Changes and Election 283
Progressive Party and the Elections 285
Pressure from the North: Voorligter 286
General Election Announcement 286
Treason Trial – No Further Steps 287
From the Bantu Press 287
No. 30 10.8.61
The General Election 289
Cabinet Changes 293
Mr Vorster 295
Indian Affairs 295
Freedom of the Press 295
From the Bantu Press 296
No. 31 17.8.61
Austerity General Election 297
Dr Verwoerd attacks Mr Fagan 298
Unity in the Election Campaign 299
Dr Vorster warns Agitators 301
Government Policy for Indians 302
UP-National Union Electoral Arrangement 303
From the Bantu Press 304
[Note: Press Digest No. 32, 24.8.61 pages 305-312, is missing]
No. 33 31.8.61
The Election Campaign 313
The Party Congresses 315
Right Approach to Africa: Kerkblad 316
The Republic and World War 317
Press Code being discussed 317
Foreign Capital for Bantustans 318
Elimination of Foreign Bantu 318
Education in the Republic 319
Future of Indians 319
From the Bantu Press 319
No. 34 7.9.61
Cape Nationalist Congress 321
The Election Campaign 322
Stronger Defences for SA 325
State Immigration Plans 325
Coloureds No Problem 326
Settlers Day 326
Plans for Bantu Cities 326
From the Bantu Press 327
No. 35 14.9.61
Election Campaign livens up 329
OFS Nationalist Congress 332
Dr Eiselen on Attitudes to Bantu 333
From the Bantu Press 333
No. 36 21.9.61
Nominations for the Election 335
Election Speeches 335
UN in Katanga 338
Dr Verwoerd opens Handelsinstituut Congress 340
‘White Front’ attacked by Nationalists 340
From the Bantu Press 341
No. 37 28.9.61
The Election Campaign 342
SABRA Congress 346
No. 38 5.10.61
Election Campaign enters Last Weeks 348
The SABRA Conference 352
Unemployment in South Africa 352
Sea Treaty with Britain 353
Sports Boycott 353
Mr Vorster on CNE 353
From the Bantu Press 354
No. 39 12.10.61
Towards the Final Phase 356
Churches and Election 359
After the Election: The Prime Minister 360
Kruger Day Celebrations 360
Woord en Daad Immigration Policy 361
Defence against Whom? 361
Unemployment: Mr De Klerk 361
Afrikaans Sunday Paper 362
Prof. Strauss attacked 362
From the Bantu Press 362
No. 40 19.10.61
Eve of the Election 364
Election Messages 364
Press Comment on the Election Campaign 367 [continued on next fiche]
FICHE 80

UNO Vote of Censure against SA 368
Election Results 370
From the Bantu Press 370
No. 41 26.10.61
The Election Results 372
UNO Motion of Censure against SA 378
Nobel Prize for Ex-Chief Luthuli 379
From the Bantu Press 380
No. 42 2.11.61
UNO Offensive against South Africa 382
Mr Luthuli's Nobel Prize 384
Voorligter Article on Tolerance 387
Election Aftermath 388
NG Kerk Cape Synod 390
The Geyser Heresy Case 390
Appointment of Two English Ministers to the Cabinet 391
From the Bantu Press 391
No. 43 9.11.61
Appointment of English-Speaking Cabinet Ministers 392
Dr Verwoerd at Queenstown 396
The Attack on SA at UNO 397
Ned. Geref. Kerk Call for Scrapping of ‘Conscience Clause’ 398
Mr Luthuli granted Passport 399
Cape DRC leaves World Council of Churches 400
From the Bantu Press 400
No. 44 16.11.61
UNO and South Africa: Sanctions Vote 402
English-Speaking Cabinet Ministers 403
Bantu Homelands 405
Bantu Wages and Productivity 407
The Significance of SABRA 407
NG Kerk Conscience Clause Resolution 408
Defence Policy 409
1963 and External Intervention 409
From the Bantu Press 409
No. 45 23.11.61
Prime Minister on 'Tunnels' to Friendship 411
UNO Sanctions Vote against South Africa 412
Mr Louw and SABC 414
The New Minister of Information 414
Heap Burning Coals on Their Head: Kerkblad 415
Freedom of the Press 415
UP Policy Not 'Middle of the Road' 416
New Communist Party Drive claimed 416
Colour Policy endangered, says SABRA Chairman 416
Dr Verwoerd Statement on Jews in SA 417
‘Conscience Clause’ at UOFS 420
From the Bantu Press 420
No. 46 30.11.61
Dr Verwoerd's 'Jewish Letter' 422
South Africa at UN 428
Apartheid in the Cape 429
Immigration of Intellectuals 430
From the Bantu Press 430
No. 47 7.12.61
Failure of UN Sanctions Motion against SA 432
The Sowden Incident 435
Apartheid in Western Province 436
Opposition to Conscience Clause Move 438
United Party head Committee Meeting 439
Japanese as Whites 440
From the Bantu Press 440
No. 48 14.12.61
Separate Development must be Implemented Rapidly 442
Bantu Homeland Plans 444
Coloured Parliament envisaged by Prime Minister 445
Racial Federation Policy of UP 446
UN and Katanga 447
Separate State for Indians 447
Move to abolish UOFS Conscience Clause 448
Chief Luthuli's Nobel Prize Speech 449
From the Bantu Press 449
No. 49 21.12.61
The Day of the Covenant 451
Bomb Explosions 454
The Luthuli Award 454
UNO and South-West Africa 455
Year of Ordeal 457
The Plan for the Coloureds 457
From the Bantu Press 459

FICHE 81

1962

No. 1 11.162
Vista for 1962 4
Independence for Transkei 6
Freedom of the Press 8
Conscience Clause at UOFS 10
From the Bantu Press 11
No. 2 18.1.62
Mr S E O Brown and Board of Censors 11
The United Nationals 4
Independence for Transkei 6
Bomb Explosions 7
From the Bantu Press 13
No. 3 25.1.62
Optimism about Immigration to SA 17
Exodus of University Lecturers 19
From the Bantu Press 19
[Note: Press Digest No. 3, 25.1.62 pages 21-30, is missing]
No. 4 1.2.62
Self-Government for the Transkei 31
Point of No Return 32
United Party and Transkei Plan 35
Democracy vs Fascism in SA 37
The Political Scene 37
UNO and the Power of the Lie 38
The Bantu White Collar Worker 39
From the Bantu Press 39
No. 5 8.2.62
The Transkeian Constitution 40
Pretoria Ban on Japanese Swimmers 44
Free State University withdraws Conscience Clause Decision 46
Coloured Development Corporation Bill 47
SA and Commission for Technical Co-operation South of Sahara 47
From the Bantu Press 48
No. 6 15.2.62
The Transkei Plan 50
Immigration and Separation associated 53
By-Elections an Important Indication 53
Development Plan for Indians 55
Mr Louw urges Contact with English-Speaking 56
Support for South-West Africa 56
Conscience Clause to be retained at Free State University 56
South Africa Bill 56
Industrial Partnership 59
Results of By-Elections 59
From the Bantu Press 60
No. 7 22.2.62
Press Commission Report 62
The Transvaal Provincial By-Election Results 64
Call for Unity 66
South Africa and UK 67
Importance of Race Discrimination 68
Transkei Self-Rule 68
More Religion needed in Education: Sen. De Klerk 69
Christian National Education Pressure 69
South Africa in World Sport 69
From the Bantu Press 70
No. 8 1.3.62
Press Commission Report 72
Aliwal By-Election 75
Tswana Self-Rule predicted 76
Immorality Act Motion 77
The Political Scene 78
Race Discrimination and Science 79
Authoritarianism in Afrikaans Churches 79
Black Middle Class needed 80
From the Bantu Press 80
No. 9 8.3.62
Crisis in the Federation 82
The Future of the Transkei 85
The Need for Immigrants 87
Municipal Elections 87
Wits. University 40th Anniversary 88
Group Areas Amendment Bill 89
Die Oosterlig becomes Daily 90
Training Bantu Engineers 90
From the Bantu Press 91
No. 10 15.3.62
SA to prepare Militarily 92
The Crisis in the Federation 94
Municipal Elections in Transvaal 98
Plea for Dual Medium Education 99
Unity and Confidence 100
Censorship Procedure 101
The Republic and South-West Africa 101
From the Bantu Press 102 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 82

No. 11 22.3.62
South Africa’s Defences 104
Code of Conduct for South African Press 109
Christian National Education 111
Faith in Economic Future 11
Race Discrimination and Science 112
TUC to admit African Members 112
South African Foundation 112
From the Bantu Press 113
No. 12 29.3.62
Security Budget 114
Orange River Project 117
Greatest Opportunity for UP 118
SA’s Defence Programme 119
Transkei Independence Date 121
Job Reservation Necessary for Race Harmony 121
Trade Union Congress 122
Immigrants from Kenya 123
The White Man in Africa 123
From the Bantu Press 123
No. 13 5.4.62
The Defence Debate 125
The Budget Debate 128
The Transkei Constitution 129
Basson and Fagan to join UP? 132
Government’s Days Numbered: Graaff 132
Subversive Activities and Lawyers 132
Kerkbode welcomes Press Code 133
Government against Inter-Racial Sport 133
Immigrants from Kenya 134
From the Bantu Press 134
No. 14 12.4.62
Undivided Loyalty and Patriotism 136
Race Policy and Sport 137
Sunday Sport Legislation 139
Publicity in Court Cases 139
Dr Donges on Transkei Challenge 140
Future Already decided: Steytler 141
University Apartheid condemned 142
Afrikaanse Calvinistiese Beweging Annual Congress 144

61
Leibbrandt plans 'Anti-Communist Front' 144
From the Bantu Press 144

[Note: Press Digest No. 15, 19.4.62 pages 146-153, is missing]

No. 16 3.5.62
New Race Classification Bill 154
Dr Verwoerd on Merging of Whites 156
Transkei Constitution 156
Apartheid in Sport under Discussion 159
Race Relations condemned by Prime Minister 161
Undesirable Publications Bill 163
From the Bantu Press 163

No. 17 10.5.62
UN Visitors welcomed in South Africa 165
Race Classification under Discussion 165
Publications Bill and Censorship 168
South African Broadcasting Corporation 169
Race Relations Conference 170
The Transkei Constitution 170
Time Not Unlimited, says Graaff 172
ATKV Congress 173
Prof Geyser found Guilty of Heresy 174
Aims of the Calviniste Beweging 174
From the Bantu Press 175

No. 18 17.5.62
Sabotage Bill 177
Publications Bill 182
Afrikaans Press Merger 183
The Geyser Case 184
The Transkei Constitution 185
United Party Federation Plan 186
From the Bantu Press 187

No. 19 24.5.62
Protests against Sabotage Bill 189
National Union to merge with United Party? 196
Education Policy 196
Exports to Advanced Countries urged 197
Afrikaans Press Merger 197
Coloured Man as ILO Delegate 198
Loyalty of South African Indians 198
From the Bantu Press 198
Apathy at Fort Hare 199

No. 20 1.6.62
Statement by UN Delegates and Prime Minister 200
The 'Sabotage Bill' 201
Pro Veritate: New Christian Monthly 204
SA Foundation attacked and defended 205 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 83

From the Bantu Press 208

No. 21 8.6.62
Dr Verwoerd sees Improved Economic Prospects 208
The UNO Visit and Its Aftermath 210
The Sabotage Bill 211

SA Citizenship 212
The Execution of Eichmann 212
Prof Geyser on Freedom of Thought 213
Publications Bill shelved 214
Tendencies Among the Youth 214
Official Circulation of Non-White Paper 214
From the Bantu Press 214

No. 22 14.6.62
UNO and the Republic 216
The Sabotage Bill 219
South Africa and Olympic Games 223
National Education Council Bill 224
The SABC and Politics 225
Immigration Flow expected to increase 226
From the Bantu Press 226

No. 23 21.6.62
Sabotage Bill passes through Senate 228
South Africa's Military Strength 231
Dr Verwoerd for UN? 233
National Union Leaders join UP 234
Sir De Villiers Graaff on South Africa's International Relations 235
National Education Council Bill 235
Kerkblad criticises Pro Veritate 236
South Africa and International Sport 236
Afrikaans Press Merger 237
Department of Information 237
Prof Geyser on Nationalism 238
From the Bantu Press 238

No. 24 28.6.62
Review of Parliamentary Session 240
Sabotage Bill 242
The Leibbrandt Telegram Affair 244
Bitterness Among English-Speaking 246
Pro Veritate 247
Lack of Contact between Language Groups 248
Education Bill 248
From the Bantu Press 249

No. 25 5.7.62
South Africa and the UN 250
Algerian Independence 252
The Parliamentary Session 253
Afrikaans Only Future National Language 254
Teachers' Conferences 255
Why Bantu States? 258
Afrikaans Press Merger 258
From the Bantu Press 258

No. 26 12.7.62
Increased Interest in Immigration to SA 260
No Hope from Either Side in Cold War 262
Afrikaanse Studentbond Congress 263
Old Commonwealth Idea finished 266
NP Fiftieth Anniversary 267
Consultation with Non-Whites 267
Plan for White Western Province 268
Dr Verwoerd and UN 269
The Farming Problem 372
Coloured Marchers Incident 373
ACB Reorganisation 373
Neo-Nazi Activities in South Africa 374
The Afrikaner’s View of Life 374
NUSAS against Sports Apartheid 376
Role of the SABC 376
From the Bantu Press 376

[Note: Press Digest No. 37, 27.9.62, pages 378-389, is missing]

No. 38 4.10.62
South Africa and World Trends 390
South Africa at the United Nations 391
The US Integration Struggle and South Africa 393
The Crisis in Southern Rhodesia 394
Human Relations Conference 395
Twenty-Five Years of Die Transvaler 396
Dr Verwoerd as Sentimental Liberal 397
The Bantu Homelands 398
Religious Instruction must be School Subject 399
Pro Veritate on Unity and Diversity 400
From the Bantu Press 400

No. 39 11.10.62
Sabotage Attempts on Rand 402
UN and South Africa 402
South Africa on Mississippi 403
Nationalist Decline has started 403
Re-directing Bantu to Homelands 405
The approach of Christian National Education 406

[continued on next fiche]

FICHE 85

Kruger Day 407
From the Bantu Press 408

No. 40 18.10.62
First House Arrest ordered 410
Kruger Day Speeches 411
Liberalism the Greatest Danger 414
Malnutrition in South Africa 415
Education Advisory Council appointed 416
Progress of the Bantu Homeland 417
Western Cape Removals 418
The Press 419
NG Kerk Unity Move 419
From the Bantu Press 420

No. 41 25.10.62
Stronger Measures against Agitators 422
No Mercy for Saboteurs 424
House Arrest of Mrs Joseph 425
Rand Daily Mail replies to Mr Vorster 427
Limitation of Freedom 428
UN and Sanctions against South Africa 429
National Advisory Education Council criticised 430
NG Kerk appeals for Goodwill 431
NG Kerk and Pro Veritate 431

From the Bantu Press 432
[Note: There is an error in pagination, with pages 432-433 being repeated, with different text]

No. 42 1.11.62
The Cuba Crisis 432
Mr Vorster warns Communist Adherents 436
Liberalism and Communism 438
SABC Talks on Sabotage 439
Banning Communist Lawyers 439
New Bishop on Role in Politics 439
Sobukwe interviewed 441
From the Bantu Press 441

[Note: Press Digest No. 43, 8.11.62 pages 442-453, is missing]

No. 44 15.11.62
Sanctions against South Africa 454
Need for National Unity 461
Food and Agricultural Organisation 462
Further House Arrest Orders 463
From the Bantu Press 463
No. 45 22.11.62
Further House Arrests 464
UN Presence in South-West Africa 466
The Sanctions Decision 467
Bechuanaland as Escape Route from South Africa 470
Rewards for Information on Sabotage 470
Education Advisory Council 471
SA and the Common Market 471
Image of Sharpeville 472
UP Policy will have same Result as Liberals 472
From the Bantu Press 473

No. 46 29.11.62
The Paarl Riot 474
House Arrests 479
The Transkei 481
Dr Jan Steyler in Johannesburg 481
SABC Policy 482
SA’s exclusion from Empire Games 482
From the Bantu Press 483

No. 47 6.12.62
Police Moves against Sabotage 484
Paarl Aftermath 485
House Arrest 488
New Age banned 489
‘Subtle Changes in SA Politics’ 490
Sir De Villiers Graaff in Natal 491
Bantu Homelands 492
Education Advisory Council Protest 493
Mother-Tongue Education in Transkei 494
From the Bantu Press 494

No. 48 13.12.62
The Florida By-Election 496
House Arrests 498
Error in Naming 499
Cold War Part of South Africa: Mr Vorster 499
Spark appears in Larger Edition 500

64
‘Self-Rule’ Move for Transkei 501
Western Cape Removal Scheme 502
South Africa attracts Foreign Bantu: Mr Nel 503
The Future of English and Afrikaans 504
Senator Ellender’s Views on Africa 505
Woord En Daad on Beer and Briton 506
Group Areas Act 507
From the Bantu Press 507

FICHE 86

No. 49 20.12.62
The Southern Rhodesian Election Results 509
Implications of Florida By-Election 511
National Unity emphasised on Day of Covenant 513
Transkei Territorial Authority agrees to Constitution 514
Concern about Terrorism 516
From the Bantu Press 517

1963
No. 1 10.1.63
South Africa faces the New Year 1
New Year Messages 4
International Court and SWA 6
Rhodesia and South Africa 7
UN Katanga Action 8
New Banning Order 8
Court Order on House Arrests 8
Misconceptions about Liberalism 9
From the Bantu Press 9
‘First House Arrest in Transkei’ 9
Police and Gangsters 10
Election Results in Rhodesia 10
No. 2 17.1.63
Busy Parliamentary Session expected 12
Katanga Action & SA 13
Transkei Development 15
NG Kerk and Politics 17
Hon O D Schreiner on Political Power 18
Education 19
Politics in Sport 20
From the Bantu Press 20
No. 3 23.1.63
Opening of Parliamentary Session 22
Nataler Office Explosion 25
Transkei Independence 26
Consolidation of Bantu Legislation 27
Pressure towards White Unity 27
The Calvinist Foundation 28
Non-White Calvinist University 29
Race Relations Conference 29
From the Bantu Press 30
No. 4 30.1.63
Parliamentary Session 33
Communist Danger 37
Censorship Bill Criticism 39

Nataler Office Explosion 39
South Africa and the United Nations 40
‘Race and Reality’ 41
NG Kerk & Broederbond 42
From the Bantu Press 43
No. 5 7.2.63
Government Policy on Mixed Sport 44
Publications and Entertainments Bill 48
Future of Tribal Authorities 51
Transkei Self-Government 51
Sunday Sport Bill 52
From the Bantu Press 52
No. 6 14.2.63
Transkei Murders 54
Bantu Law Amendment Bill 56
The Transkei Bill 58
Sunday Sport Ban 59
Sport and Politics 59
Publications and Entertainments Bill 60
Sabotage Prediction 62
From the Bantu Press 62
No. 7 21.2.63
Transkei Bill challenged on Language Clause 64
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill 68
Publications Bill 69
Ban on Cape Liberal Leader 70
New University for Port Elizabeth 72
Church and State 72
Too Much Complacency about Afrikaans 73
Mixed Sport 73
Virginia By-Election 74
From the Bantu Press 74
No. 8 28.2.63
Constitution Amendment Bill 76
Opposition in Nationalist Circles 78
Bantu Homelands and Race Relationships 79
The Hjul Ban 79
Port Elizabeth University Controversy 82 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 87

Bantu Newspaper criticised 83
No Freemasons as NG Kerk Members 83
Race and Intelligence 83
Publications Bill 84
Pogo - Bogy or Reality? 84
From the Bantu Press 85
No. 9 7.3.63
Constitution Bill - Second Reading passed 86
The Bans on Liberals 88
South Africa will not surrender: Dr Verwoerd 91
White Spots in the Transkei 92
Publication Bill 93
Confederation as Ultimate End of Separate Development 93
Port Elizabeth University Controversy 94
Elethu Controversy  
Criticism of America  
South African Whites and Jews in Nazi Germany  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 10 14.3.63  
Transkei Constitution Debate  
The Liberal Party Under Fire  
Afrikaners Group in Economic Development  
South Africa Foundation Criticism of Bantu Education  
Sabotage  
Elethu Decision  
South African Boxers in USA  
Sunday Observance Measures  
Maxims for Employment of Bantu  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 11 21.3.63  
Mr Wilson on Ban of Arms to South Africa  
Chief Matanzima attacks Opposition  
Writers preparing Circular on Censorship  
Bantu Boxer’s Success in USA  
Flexibility in Professional Apartheid  
Death of Mr Justice Kuper  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 12 28.3.63  
Judge’s Report on Pogo Revolt Plan  
Guns and Butter Budget  
SABC versus BBC  
UP attacked for ‘Total War Against Transkei Bill’  
Publications Bill  
The Late Mr Justice Kuper  
Artist on Blasphemy Charge acquitted  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 13 4.4.63  
Pogo Debate  
Basutoland and the Republic  
Mr Vorster on Greater Powers  
Break-Up of Federation  
africanism and Afrikaner Nationalism  
Transvaaler attacks ‘Back to Strijdom’ Slogan  
Mr Fouche on Defence Policy  
Blasphemy Trial Verdict  
Spark discontinued  
The BBC and South Africa  
House Arrests: Court Verdict  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 14 18.4.63  
Raids on Pogo in SA  
End of the Federation  
United Party Plan for Race Federation  
Southern Transvaal NG Synod  
Rudeness to South Africans Sabotage  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 15 25.4.63  
Drastic Legislation against Subversion  
Patrick Duncan and the PAC  
Nationalist attack on Die Burger  
The Future of Southern Rhodesia  
First Positive Steps to Separate Development  
DRC Synod Decision on Criticism  
The Greatest Struggle  
Psychosis on Violence  
Farewell to British Ambassador  
Reaction to Mr Vorster’s New Bill  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 16 2.5.63  
General Law Amendment Bill  
NP ‘invade’ Natal  
NP might become Only Party  
World will become Convinced  
Publication Act  
Kerkblad on Good Race Relations  
Labour Shortage Warning  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 17 9.5.63  
General Law Amendment Act gazetted  
The Future of the United Party  
Mr Hamilton Russell’s Resignation  
Sobukwe moved to Robben Island  
New Trek: Dr Verwoerd  
Two Cultures and Languages  
NG Kerk Northern Transvaal Synod  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 18 16.5.63  
First Arrests under ‘90-Day’ clause  
The Future of the United Party  
First Sentence for Sabotage in Transvaal  
First to hang for Pogo Terror  
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill  
Starvation in Vendaland  
Transkei Constitutional Bill passes Third Reading  
Education in the Transkei  
The Afrikaner as Industrialist  
Discriminatory Imports  
Chairman of Publications Board  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 19 24.5.63  
Transkei Bill passes Senate  
Rhodesia and the Republic  
Publications Board and Prof Dekker  
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill  
Geyser Heresy Case  
DRC Synodial Decision on Criticism  
Mr Mennen Williams and United Party  
From the Bantu Press  
No. 20 28.5.63  
South Africa and the Outside World  
Future of the Transkei  
Addis Ababa Conference  
Indians in the Republic  

FICHE 88
Dr Verwoerd on Press 201
Censorship Act 202
No. 21 6.6.63
Republic Day 203
Addis Ababa Conference 207
Defence Training for School-Leavers 209
Removal of Pageview Indians 209
Kenya and South Africa 210
Liberalists at Stellenbosch University 210
Independence must come soon for Bantu 211
From the Bantu Press 211
[Note: Press Digest No. 22 13.6.63 pages 213-222, is missing]
No. 23 20.6.63
South Africa's Foreign Relations 223
Defences prepared: Mr Fouche 225
German Military Aid for Africa 225
Attack on South Africa at ILO demanded 226
Pogo beaten, ANC now the Danger 227
Transkei-Counter to Pan-Africanism 229
Bantu in the Towns 230
Group Areas and Morality 230
New Type of Immigrant: Transvaler 231
Unrest in Swaziland 231
From the Bantu Press 232
No. 24 27.6.63
SA's International Position 233
Bantu in the Cities 234
Transkei Elections 235
White Resistance under Hypothetical Black Rule 237
Criticism of DRC Synod Decisions 238
Report on Paarl Riots 238
Sabotage Sentences 239
Second University on Rand 240
Greater Unity since Republic: UP Spokesman 240
The Case of Mrs Suzman 241
From the Bantu Press 241
[Note: Press Digest No. 25, 4.7.63 pages 243-252, is missing]
No. 26 11.6.63
The Political Scene 253
Multi-Racial Diplomatic Receptions 254
Against Black Imperialism 256
Violence in Nyasaland 257
Overseas Pressure on SA 250
Greater Self-Sufficiency to meet Boycotts 259
SA doomed unless Attitudes change 259
From the Bantu Press 260
No. 27 18.7.63
Police Swoop on Rand ‘Major Breakthrough’ 262
SA facing UN Expulsion? 263
SA’s Attitude to International Organisations 265
Afrikaanse Studentebond Conference 266
Non-Whites prefer Own Newspapers 267
The Political Scene 267
The Snyman Report 268
From the Bantu Press 269
No. 28  25.7.63
Outside Pressures on South Africa 270
Expulsion from the UN or Sanctions? 270
Withdrawal form the ECA 273
Recall of US Envoy 274
Mr Justice Snyman 275
Better Relations: Pro Veritate 275
Subversive Organisations 276
From the Bantu Press 277
No. 29 1.8.63
The Week in Brief 278
Security Council Debate 278
Arms and Defence 281
The Protectorate 282
Convictions against Africans 283
Non-Whites at Rugby Match 284
Improved Race Relations 285
Wynberg By-Election Result 286
From the Bantu Press 286
No. 30 8.8.63
The Week in Brief 288
Security Council Debate 288 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 89

View of Visiting American Rabbi 293
Kenya bans SA Delegations 293
The Wynberg By-Election 294
Mrs Mapheele 296
African Wages 296
Military Training for African States 297
The Conscience Clause 297
From the Bantu Press 297
No. 31 15.8.63
The Week in Brief 299
Security Council Resolution 299
Upward Trend in South Africa’s Economy 305
Ninety Day Detention 307
Transkei Elections 308
Egypt’s Designs in Africa 309
From the Bantu Press 310
No. 32 22.8.63
Speculation on Dr Verwoerd’s Silence 312
Reply to Attacks on South Africa 312
Government has no Answers; Graaff 316
Transfer of Civil Administration in Transkei 317
Formation of Christian Institute 319
Treatment of 90-Day Detainees 320
Dr Kenneth Abrahams 321
From the Bantu Press 322
No. 33 29.8.63
Banning of Airspace to South African Aircraft 324
United Party Congress 325
Natal Congress of the Nationalist Party 329
Trials for 90-Day Detainees 330

67
South Africa and Bechuanaland 331
Christian Institute of Southern Africa 332
First Urban African Councils 333
From the Bantu Press 334
No. 34 5.9.63
South Africa and the Protectorates 336
Political Refugees 340
Dr Verwoerd at Nationalist Party Congress 343
Prime Minister’s Call to Indians 345
World Congress on Tourism 345
Settlers Day 346
From the Bantu Press 347
No. 35 12.9.63
South Africa and the Protectorates 348
Forthcoming Session of the UN 352
Mr Louw attacks Britain and USA 354
Defence of South Africa 355
African in Urban Areas 356
Disturbances at Rugby Test 357
Sons of England and Loyalty to South Africa 358
Progressive Party not to be contested in Transkei Elections 359
From the Bantu Press 359
No. 36 18.9.63
Mr Louw on Relations with Britain and United States 360
US Warning to African States 362
Visit by Australian Evangelist 363
Mr Vorster and NUSAS 365
Latest Population Statistics 366
Dagbreek Critical of SABC 367
From the Bantu Press 367
No. 37 26.9.63
United Nations and South Africa 368
Calls to South African Jews 371
Party Congress 373
Mr Oppenheimer and US Policy 377
Rev Naude leaves Pulpit 378
Radio South Africa and Politics 379
Israel not to appoint New Envoy 380
From the Bantu Press 380
No. 38 2.10.63
South Africa and the Scandinavian Countries 382
South Africa and Israel 384
Mr Vorster and NUSAS 387 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 90

From the Bantu Press 389
No. 39 9.10.63
South Africa and the UN-Scandinavian Plans 390
SABRA Conference 392
Criticism of SA at Labour Party Conference 392
Resignation of Archbishop De Blank 396
The Use of Manpower 396
Appointment of Publications Board 397
Israel and South Africa 398
From the Bantu Press 399
No. 40 17.10.63
South Africa and the United Nations 400
Partition of South Africa 403
Meeting of International Olympic Congress 404
Kruger Day 405
Group Areas Act in Natal 407
Transkei Election 409
Groups and Individuals 410
From the Bantu Press 411
No. 41 24.10.63
South Africa’s Participation in Olympic Games 412
South Africa and the United Nations 414
Appointment of New Administrator for SWA 418
Resignations from United Party 419
The Coloureds 423
From the Bantu Press 424
No. 42 31.10.63
South Africa and the United Nations 426
African Head of Methodist Church 427
Sir De Villiers Graaff & Policy of the UP 432
The Image of Apartheid 434
Wage Increase for Africans 435
Orange River Scheme 438
Economic Growth 439
From the Bantu Press 440
No. 43 7.11.63
The United Nations and South-West Africa 442
Churches and Race Relations 444
Difference between Political Parties 447
Manifestos by Rival Transkeian Chiefs 451
From the Bantu Press 453
[Note: Press Digest No. 44, 14.11.63 pages 456-468, is missing]
No. 45 21.11.63
The Week in Brief 469
Transkei General Election 469
Oil Embargo: UN: General Assembly’s Decision 472
Mr Eric Louw’s Resignation 473
Economic Labour Conditions 474
Detention of Detainees 475
Joint Remembrance Services 476
Race Policies 478
From the Bantu Press 479
No. 46 28.11.63
The Week in Brief 481
President Kennedy 481
Resignation of Beyers Naude from Broederbond 482
Threats to Afrikaans Churches 487
United Party Congress 490
New Foreign Minister 491
90-Day Detainees 493
From the Bantu Press 494
FICHE 91

No. 47 5.12.63
The Week in Brief 495
Proposed People’s Congress on Communism 495
The Broederbond Convention 497
West wants Change of Direction 500
Policies of President Johnson 501
Wages and Productivity 502
Transkei General Elections 503
Security Council Resolution on SA 505
From the Bantu Press 505
No. 48 12.12.63
The Week in Brief 507
Security Council Resolution 507
Chief Minister of Transkei 508
New Policy in Education 511
Proposed Congress on Communism 512
Immigration 513
Job Reservation 514
Death of Sen Fagan 515
From the Bantu Press 516
No. 49 19.12.63
The Week in Brief 517
People’s Congress on Communism 517
National Indian Council 519
Visit by Chinese Premier to Africa 521
End of Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland 522
Voters’ Registration Figures 523
Youth emphasised on Day of Covenant 523
Exchange of Articles 524
Dismissal of Ghana’s Chief Justice 525
From the Bantu Press 526

1964

No. 1 9.1.64
Main Items in Brief 1
The Old Year and the New 1
New Year Messages 2
Withdrawal from FAO 5
Dr De Wet Ambassador to United Kingdom 6
Recent Population Figures 8
Dissolution of Central African Federation 10
From the Bantu Press 11
No. 2 16.1.64
The Week in Brief 15
Forthcoming Parliamentary Session 15
New Minister of Foreign Affairs 17
50th Anniversary of Nationalist Party 17
Events in Africa 19
Opposition Party in Transkei 22
NUSAS and International Seminar 23
Census Figures 24
Manpower Shortage 25
From the Bantu Press 26
No. 3 23.1.64
The Week in Brief 28
Parliament opened – State President’s Speech 28
SA Institute of Race Relations Conference 32
Appointment of UN Committee 36
Kaunda on Exchange of Representatives 38
Events in Africa 39
From the Bantu Press 40
No. 4 30.1.64
The Week in Brief 42
No-Confidence Debate 42
Events in East Africa 48
Northern Rhodesia 50
Odendaal Commission Report on SWA 52
South Africa’s Position in Olympic Games 53
Sir Oswald Mosely’s Visit 53
From the Bantu Press 54 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 92

No. 5 6.2.64
The Week in Brief 56
Odendaal Commission Report on SWA 56
SABC debated in Parliament 59
Investigation into Broederbond 61
Economic and Financial Problems 62
Future of Southern Rhodesia 64
Proposed Council for Indians 65
From the Bantu Press 66
No. 6 13.2.64
The Week in Brief 68
South Africa says ‘No’ to UN 68
Plans for South West Africa 70
Future of Southern Rhodesia 71
New Archbishop of Cape Town 73
Economic Position of South Africa 75
‘Volkskongres’ on Communism 77
From the Bantu Press 79
No. 7 20.2.64
The Week in Brief 81
Future of South West Africa 81
Events in Africa 85
Economic Situation and Rent Control 86
Fight against Racial Prejudice 87
Non-Racial Sport 88
New Bantu Laws Legislation 89
‘Volkskongres’ on Communism 90
From the Bantu Press 90
No. 8 27.2.64
The Week in Brief 92
Catholic Views on Apartheid 92
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill 98
For and Against the Odendaal Report 100
Anti-Communist Congress 102
From the Bantu Press 103
No. 9 5.3.64
The Week in Brief 104
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill 104

69
Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference 107
Southern Rhodesia and Independence 110
Aberdeen Boycott 112
Mr G Mennen Williams on Africa 113
An African views United Party Policy 114
State Silence on Mr Sobukwe 115
Seretse for Premier 116
No. 10 12.3.64
The Week in Brief 116
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill 116
Current Economic Situation 118
Economic Boycott 122
South African Air Routes threatened 123
Transkei 124
Congress on Communism 126
From the Bantu Press 127
The New Law is Very ‘Hot’ 128
Steyler and Poto have Meeting 127
Interview with Dr Verwoerd and Mr Vorster requested 127
Road Shock for Kei Government 128
No. 11 19.3.64
The Week in Brief 129
South Africa leaves ILO 129
Budget 132
90-Day Detainees – Inquiry 135
Orendaal Report criticised at UN 137
Warning to Press 138
From the Bantu Press 140
No. 12 26.3.64
The Week in Brief 141
Budget 141
South African Walkout from WHO 142
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill 145
Anti-Jewish Remarks in Parliament 146
Who Belongs to SA Volk? 150 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 93

From the Bantu Press 151
No. 13 9.4.64
Main Items in Brief 153
South Africa to remain in WHO 153
National Congress on Communism 154
Appeal by U Thant 160
South West Africa 162
Future of the United Party 164
From the Bantu Press 166
No. 14 16.4.64
The week in Brief 169
The Economy 169
Bantu Laws Amendment Bill 173
Conference to combat Communism 174
Implications of Multi-Racialism 176
Coloured Representative Council Bill 177
The Bultfontein Case 179
Role of the United Party 180

S. Rhodesian Premier resigns 181
From the Bantu Press 183
No. 15 23.4.64
The Week in Brief 185
Sanctions against South Africa 185
Report by United Nations Study Group 189
Bill for Coloureds 190
Control of the Press 192
Situation in Southern Rhodesia 193
South-West Africa 194
From the Bantu Press 196
No. 16 30.4.64
The Week in Brief 197
No Concessions 197
Bultfontein Trial 204
Inquiry into Broederbond 206
White Paper on South West Africa 208
From the Bantu Press 208
No. 17 8.5.64
The Week in Brief 211
White Paper on South West Africa 211
Freedom of the Press 214
Border Industries 218
First Transkei Legislative Assembly 219
From the Bantu Press 220
No. 18 14.5.64
The Week in Brief 223
Findings of the Press Commission 223
The Transkei Legislative Assembly 226
Policy on South West Africa 227
Ninety Day’s Detention Appeal 229
N H Kerk General Assembly 230
People’s Congress on Communism 230
Dagbreek pleads for more Afrikaner Self-Criticism 231
Mr Kruschev in Egypt 231
From the Bantu Press 232
No. 19 21.5.64
The Week in Brief 235
Press Commission Inquiry 235
Transkei Budget 240
Reply to U Thant 241
Basutoland 242
Attacks on NUSAS 243
No Mixed Scientific Societies 244
From the Bantu Press 244

FICHE 94

No. 20 28.5.64
The Week in Brief 247
90-Day Clause 247
The Press 250
NUSAS 251
Scientific Societies 252
Differences within National Party 253
Discussion on Apartheid 254
Sanctions against South Africa 256
The Coloured People 257
From the Bantu Press 258

No. 21 4.6.64
The Week in Brief 259
Republic Day 259
Only White Culture 262
Reply to UN 263
No Absolute Right 264
Sir Roy Welensky 264
A Middle Way 265
Death of Nehru 266
English Church and Politics 267
From the Bantu Press 267

No. 22 11.6.64
The Week in Brief 269
South Africa’s Defences 269
Bantu Education 270
Bridges rather than Boycotts 272
Address to Senate 273
Developments in Transkei 274
Indians and Group Areas Act 275
South Africa expelled from UPU 275
Invitation to Netherlands 276
Inquiry into Secret Societies 277
Senator Goldwater 278
Call for Amnesty 279
From the Bantu Press 279

No. 23 18.6.64
The Week in Brief 281
The Rivonia Trial 281
New Judicial Measures 285
Non-White Athletes included 289
Inquiry into Secret Societies 290
South Africa and the UN 291
From the Bantu Press 293

No. 24 25.6.64
The Week in Brief 295
United Nations Resolution 295
End of Parliamentary Session 298
Rivonia Trial 300
Sabotage 301
South Africa and the Olympic Games 303
Immigration to South Africa 304
Southern Rhodesia 306
Senator Goldwater 307
From the Bantu Press 308

No. 25 25.7.64
The Week in Brief 309
South Africa and World Sport 309
Transkei 313
Manpower 315
Visit by Mr Smith 318
Dr De Blank Criticised 319
NUSAS Congress 321
Role of Coloureds 321

Swaziland Elections 322
From the Bantu Press 322
No. 26 9.7.64
The Week in Brief 325
Police Raids 325
Sports Tours 329
Visit by Mr Smith 331
Commonwealth Conference 332
NUSAS Congress 334
International Trade Conference 334
Swaziland Elections 335
Nyasaland Independent 336
The Congo 337
Civil Rights Bill 338
Five before Midnight 339
From the Bantu Press 339

FICHE 95

No. 27 16.7.64
The Week in Brief 341
Police Raids 341
Commonwealth Conference 345
Must stand Together 348
Cairo Conference 348
Rivonia No Solution 249
International Conferences 349
From the Bantu Press 350

No. 28 23.7.64
The Week in Brief 252
Senator Goldwater 252
Commonwealth Conference 255
Cairo Conference 258
Much to unlearn 260
Social Justice 261
Coloured Postmen Employed 261
NUSAS 261
Higher Pay for Non-Whites 263
From the Bantu Press 264

No. 29 30.7.64
The Week in Brief 266
Explosion at Johannesburg Station 266
Cairo Conference 273
Afrikaanse Studentebond Congress 274
Negro Riots 276
Prime Minister on Clemency Plea 278
From the Bantu Press 279

No. 30 6.8.64
The Week in Brief 282
Prime Minister’s Address 282
Statements by Minister of Justice 285
New Look at Bantustans 289
Explosion at Johannesburg Station 291
Guard Family 292
Changes in Education Necessary 292
From the Bantu Press 293

71
Dangers for Nation 433
Zambia becomes Independent 436
Britain and Southern Rhodesia 438
Anticom and Jews 439
From the Bantu Press 441
No. 43 5.11.64
The Week in Brief 442
Rhodesia 442
National Party Celebrations 447
Differences in National Party 449
Speculation on US Presidential Elections 450
From the Bantu Press 451
No. 44 12.11.64
The Week in Brief 453
US Presidential Elections 453
Rhodesian Referendum 455
Harris Case 457
Skilled Manpower Shortage 459
Progressive Party 461
Ninety Day Clause 462
UN Committee Attacks 463
Jews and Anticom 464
From the Bantu Press 466
No. 45 26.11.64
The Week in Brief 468
Simonstown Ultimatum to UK 468
Ships to be arrested 471
Books embargoed 472
Proposal on South West Africa rejected 473
NUSAS Leaders and Sabotage 474
No Anti-Jewish Feeling 475
From the Bantu Press 476
No. 46 28.11.64
The Week in Brief 479
UK Embargo on Arms to Republic 487
No Compromise, says Dr Verwoerd 484
Rule of Law and Sabotage 285
NUSAS and Sabotage 286
The Universities 487
Liberal Party Expulsions 487
Natal United Party Congress 488
Edenvale By-Elections 489
Canal Necessary for Youthful Energies: Dr Vorster 489
From the Bantu Press 490
No. 47 3.12.64
The Week in Brief 492
Buccaneers for South Africa 492
Atrocities in Congo 494
Edenvale By-Election 499
Transkei By-Election 501
90-Day Clause to be suspended 502
SA-Rhodesia Trade Agreement 504
From the Bantu Press 505
No. 48 10.12.64
The Week in Brief 506
No Oil Sanctions 506
Banda to keep Ties 508
Gandar awarded Gold Medal 509
Manpower Shortage 511
Will not crush Free Speech 512
Refused entry 513
Role of English-Speaking in Politics 514
From the Bantu Press 515
No. 49 18.12.64
The Week in Brief 517
Labour Position 517
UCT unfairly criticised 521
Dr De Blank on Christian Churches 523
Day of Covenant 524 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 98

From the Bantu Press 526
Editor's Note 527
1965
No. 1 7.1.65
Main Items in Brief 1
The Year Ahead 1
Prime Minister's Message 3
Overseas Artists 5
University Lecturers banned 8
Dr Muller at UN 9
From the Bantu Press 10
No. 2 14.1.65
The Week in Brief 13
90-Day Clause suspended 13
White Unity 15
Overseas Artists 18
From the Bantu Press 20
No. 3 21.1.65
The Week in Brief 21
Manpower Shortage 21
Forthcoming Parliamentary Session 24
Multi-Racial Audiences 26
‘Forum’ ceases Publication 26
Britain and Black Nationalism 27
Catholic Archbishop on Separate Development 28
Christianity and Africa 29
From the Bantu Press 29
No. 4 28.1.65
The Week in Brief 31
Parliament opened – State President's Speech 31
Labour Party Setback 33
Death of Churchill 35
Archbishop Hurley 36
Manpower Shortage can stunt Growth 38
Chief Communism Trialist goes into Hiding 39
From the Bantu Press 40
No. 5 4.2.65
The Week in Brief 41
The No-Confidence Debate 41
Mixed Audiences 46

73
No. 20 28.5.65
The Week in Brief 200
Must increase Exports 200
US Carrier Incident deepened 202
Attempt to expel SA from WHO 204
Tolerates Progressives in Parliament 204
Danger to Afrikaner Survival 205
From the Bantu Press 205
No. 21 3.6.65
The Week in Brief 207
Republic Day 207
Refusal of Visa to Afrikaans Author's Wife 209
Tenth Anniversary of Black Sash 211
Force must be considered 213
From the Bantu Press 214
No. 22 10.6.65
The Week in Brief 216
New Powers for Minister of Justice 216
Chinese Premier visits Tanzania 219
Breytenbach 220
Development Fund for Bantustan 222
Immigration 222
Kaunda accuses South Africa 224
From the Bantu Press 224
No. 23 17.6.65
The Week in Brief 226
Gift to Basutoland 226
New Legislative Measures 229
Netherlands Donation angels South Africa 231
Co-operation with Other African States Possible 232
Decline of the West 233
From the Bantu Press 234
No. 24 24.6.65
The Week in Brief 236
SA Government and Netherland's Donation 236
End of Parliamentary Session 238
Commonwealth Conference 242
World Quarrel with SA not over Apartheid 234
Peace among the Tembus 243
"Sobukwe – an 'Eternity' of Shame" 244
Anxious End to Parliament 244
No. 25 1.7.65
The Week in Brief 245
Prime Minister at De Aar 245
Commonwealth Conference and Rhodesia 246
South Africa's Economy 'levelling off' 248
Boycotts 249
NG Church Minister joins Christian Institute 249
The Algerian Court 251
From the Bantu Press 252
No. 26 8.7.65
The Week in Brief 254
Prison Conditions 254
Decline awaits Afrikaans Language 256
Miners threaten to strike 258
NUSAS Conference 259
White Population decreasing 261
From the Bantu Press 261
No. 27 15.7.65
The Week in Brief 264
NUSAS Congress 264
Indian Baby refused entry 266
Communists treasonable and West on retreat 268
South Africa should leave UN 269
Colour Problem in Britain 270
From the Bantu Press 270

FICHE 101

No. 28 22.7.65
The Week in Brief 272
SWA Case 272
Recent Bannings 273
US vetoes Plan for SA 275
Labour Front 277
Death of Adlai Stevenson 278
From the Bantu Press 279
No. 29 29.7.65
The Week in Brief 281
South Africa-USA Relations 281
Prison Conditions 284
Politicians as Diplomats 285
Republic and Nazi Germany compared 287
Die Burger's Half-Century 289
From the Bantu Press 289
No. 30 5.8.65
The Week in Brief 291
Demand Freehold Rights – Matanzima 291
Conditions in Prisons 295
Indian Baby 298
105 Nations against SA 299
Equality – Confused Concept 300
Nazi Germany and the Afrikaans Church 301
From the Bantu Press 302
No. 31 12.8.65
The Week in Brief 304
Mine Experiment stopped 304
United Party Policy – Sir De Villiers Graaff 308
Rhodesia closer to Independence 311
South Africa enters Atomic Age 312
SAUSA Relations 313
SA enters Last Phase – Vorster 314
English Press – Nationalist View 315
From the Bantu Press 316
No. 32 19.8.65
The Week in Brief 318
Ten Basutos refused Visas 318
Negro Riots in USA 321
National Party Congresses 323
Warder sentenced in Prison Case 327
From the Bantu Press 329
No. 33 26.8.65
The Week in Brief 331
Prisons Issue 331
SABC 334
Freedom of the Press 336
Economy slowing down 337
Los Angeles Riots 339
The Republics Defence 341
Dr Verwoerd – Great Afrikaner 342
From the Bantu Press 343
No. 34 2.9.65
The Week in Brief 345
English Support for Nationalist Party 345
Prison Issue – Inquiry offered 348
Judgement on Banned Book upheld 349
Kaunda accuses South Africa 351
Scathing attack on Dr Verwoerd 352
Immigrants no Threat to Afrikaner 353
SWA Vital to South Africa 354
From the Bantu Press 355
No. 35 9.9.65
The Week in Brief 357
Coloured Teachers banned from Politics 360
Basutoland wants Talks with South Africa 361
Enslaved Black Labour 363
From the Bantu Press 364
FICHE 102
No. 36 16.9.65
The Week in Brief 337
No Maoris 337
Habeas Corpus not complied with 340
India and Pakistan 342
Anti-Inflatory Measures 342
Economic Pressure must not be underestimated 344
Matanzima tells Whites ‘pack your Bags’ 345
From the Bantu Press 346
No. 37 23.9.65
The Week in Brief 379
Controversy about naming of Christian Institute members 379
Rule of law Subordinate to Nation 382
Warning about Coloured Representatives 383
Immigrants and Afrikaners 384
Miners return to Work 386
Prime Minister & US Diplomats 387
From the Bantu Press 388
No. 38 30.9.65
The Week in Brief 391
SA and US Diplomats 391
SA barred from ITU 393
The Christian Institute 395
From the Bantu Press 396
No. 39 7.10.65
The Week in Brief 397
Rhodesia 397
Dr Muller at UN 399
Comparative Population Figures 401
General Election 402
From the Bantu Press 404
No. 40 14.10.65
The Week in Brief 406
Failure of negotiations between Rhodesia and Britain 406
South Africa’s Attitude 407
Comment 407
Salary Increases for Civil Servants and Teachers 409
Kruger Day 412
From the Bantu Press 413
No. 41 21.10.65
The Week in Brief 415
UDI – South Africa’s Attitude 415
Delimitation Changes 418
Bechuanaland to become Independent 417
From the Bantu Press 419
No. 42 28.10.65
The Week in Brief 421
British Premier for Rhodesia 421
Tercentenary of DRC 423
1966 General Election 426
From the Bantu Press 427
No. 43 4.11.65
The Week in Brief 429
Royal Commission for Rhodesia 429
Uitenhage By-Election 432
New SABC Service 434
Multi-Race Church Service 436
Conscience Clause – New Afrikaans University 436
From the Bantu Press 438
No. 44 11.11.65
The Week in Brief 440
Dr Diederichs warns Foreign Investors 440
Progressives and next General Election 442
Back to UDI? 444
Religious Freedom at New Rand Afrikaans University 445
From the Bantu Press 447
No. 45 18.11.65
The Week in Brief 450
UDI: The Step 450
South African and Rhodesian Crises 452
Bram Fischer recaptured 457
Party Congresses and Elections 457
From the Bantu Press 459
FICHE 103
No. 46 25.11.65
The Week in Brief 461
Sanctions and Rhodesia 461
Boycott of South African Universities 464
No Racialism in Anglican Schools 465
SA has no Aggressive Intentions 466
Light Sentence for Rapists 467

From the Bantu Press 468

No. 47 2.12.65
The Week in Brief 470
A British Force for Rhodesia? 470
National Party Nominations 472
World Court rejects SA Proposal 473
From the Bantu Press 474
No. 48 9.12.65
The Week in Brief 476
Rhodesia 476
SABC and Argus Company 478
SA and UN 479
Give Baby as Gift 480
Britain agrees to Basutoland’s Independence 481
From the Bantu Press 482
No. 49 17.12.65
The Week in Brief 484
Rhodesia 484
The Republic’s Defence 486
The Elections 488
Day of the Covenant 489
From the Bantu Press 490

1966

No. 1 6.1.66
Main Items in Brief 1
Oil Embargo imposed on Rhodesia 1
SA may leave UN – Dr Verwoerd 4
Prospects for 1966 8
From the Bantu Press 8
No. 2 13.1.66
The Week in Brief 11
New Zoning in Transkei 11
Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference 15
Oxbow Water Scheme 17
From the Bantu Press 18
No. 3 20.1.66
The Week in Brief 21
General Election 21
Parliamentary Session 23
Economy – Five Year Plan 24
Lagos Conference – No Force for Rhodesia yet 25
Military Revolt in Nigeria 27
From the Bantu Press 29
No. 4 27.1.66
The Week in Brief 31
New Parliamentary Session 31
General Elections – Atmosphere of Resignation 35
Apartheid a Failure – Archbishop Hurley 35
From the Bantu Press 38
No. 5 3.2.66
The Week in Brief 39
No-Confidence Debate and Rhodesia 39
Comment 40
Uproar in Parliament over Alleged Exchange of Land 42
Refusal for Visas and Passports 43

From the Bantu Press 44
No. 6 10.2.66
The Week in Brief 46
General Election 46
Comment 46
Vitality of National Economy 48
Sobukwe’s Detention extended 50
Some Job Reservation Barriers Down 51
Flaw in Uhuru Theory 52
From the Bantu Press 53 [continued on next fiche]
No. 13 31.3.66
The Week in Brief 109
Election Results predicted 109
Premier on High Commission Territories 110
Helen Suzman 111
Senator Kennedy’s Visit 114
Election Results – landslide to NP 114
From the Bantu Press 115
No. 14 14.4.66
Main Items in Brief 117
SA Election Result 117
Britain and Rhodesia – Oil Crisis 122
From the Bantu Press 126
No. 15 21.4.66
The Week in Brief 128
The Rhodesian Crisis 128
The Future of the Republic 134
Labour Position in SA 134
From the Bantu Press 136
No. 16 28.4.66
The Week in Brief 138
Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa 138
Future of the United Party 141
SA & UN Membership 142
Banning and Expulsion of Pressman 143
From the Bantu Press 144
[Note: Page 145 appears twice with different text]
No. 17 5.5.66
The Week in Brief 145
Rhodesia: Talks resumed 145
U Thant attacks South Africa 147 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 105

The Republic’s Oil Supplies 149
SA still Member of Olympic Committee 151
From the Bantu Press 152
No. 18 12.5.66
The Week in Brief 154
Exploratory Talks between Britain and Rhodesia 154
Trouble in Basutoland 155
SABC and Press 157
Separate Development – Pace must increase 159
Transkei Budget 160
Fischer sentenced to Life Imprisonment 160
From the Bantu Press 162
No. 19 20.5.66
The Week in Brief 164
NUSAS Leaders banned 164
Suggestions for Republican Flag 169
From the Bantu Press 170
No. 20 2.6.66
The Week in Brief 172
Republic Festivities 172
US Pressmen refused Visas 175
South Africa’s Economy – Inflatory Trends 177
From the Bantu Press 179
No. 21 9.6.66
The Week in Brief 180
Senator Kennedy in the Republic 180
Comment on Premier’s Republic Day Address 186
The Congo Hangings 187
From the Bantu Press 189
No. 22 16.6.66
The Week in Brief 192
Impact of Senator Kennedy’s South African Tour 192
Basutoland Independence Talks 198
Freedom of Artistic Expression 199
From the Bantu Press 199
No. 23 23.6.66
The Week in Brief 201
Deputy Minister predicts Halting of African Influx 201
Wilson, the United Nations and Rhodesia 202
New Ministry of Sport 203
Judge against Capital Punishment 204
Political Rights of Coloureds 206
From the Bantu Press 207
No. 24 30.6.66
The Week in Brief 209
Basutoland’s Impending Independence 209
Continued Discussion on Separate Development 212
Communists and Seaman’s Strike 213
An Ideology for Young Afrikaners 214
From the Bantu Press 215
No. 25 7.7.66
The Week in Brief 217
UP By-Election Gain 217
The Search for Oil 218
Premier calls for Fight against Inflation 220
Separate Development – Dream World 221
Contacts with Africa 222
From the Bantu Press 223
No. 26 14.7.66
The Week in Brief 225
Awaiting SWA judgement 225
New Curb on Inflation 226
Afrikaans Students vs American Field Service 226
Rhodesian Talks adjourn 228
Malawi becomes Republic 229
From the Bantu Press 230
[Note: page 231 appears twice with different text]
No. 27 21.7.66
The Week in Brief 231
South West Africa Judgement 231
NUSAS and SA Flag 235
From the Bantu Press 237
No. 28 28.7.66
The Week in Brief 238
The Judgement on SWA 238
Britain’s Economic Crisis 241 [continued on next fiche]
The Rhodesian Budget 243
Afrikaans Students - Differences of Opinion 244
From the Bantu Press 246
No. 29 4.8.66
The Week in Brief 248
The Opening of Parliament 248
From the Bantu Press 253
No. 30 11.8.66
The Week in Brief 255
The Censure Debate 255
The Ian Robertson Banning 257
Legislation on the Universities 259
New Afrikaans University and Conscience Clause 260
Nationalists attack Right-wing Journal 261
From the Bantu Press 263
No. 31 16.8.66
The Week in Brief 265
Students attack Right-wing Journal 265
The Suppression of Communism Amendment Bill 267
Co-existence with Africa 269
Rand Afrikaans University - Conscience Clause 270
From the Bantu Press 271
No. 32 25.8.66
The Week in Brief 273
The Budget 273
Verwoerd-Jonathon Meeting 276
SA protest Note to USA 277
Repudiation of S E D Brown 280
From the Bantu Press 282
No. 33 1.9.66
The Week in Brief 283
Terrorists invade SWA 283
Symposium on Partition 285
Anglo-Rhodesian talks halted 287
Indoctrination in Schools 289
From the Bantu Press 290
No. 34 8.9.66
The Week in Brief 293
Prime Minister assassinated 293
The Verwoerd-Jonathon Meeting 294
Premier's Assassination 296
Secretary-General of UN 298
From the Bantu Press 299
No. 35 14.9.66
The Week in Brief 301
The Late Prime Minister 301
New Prime Minister 305
From the Bantu Press 305
[Note: Press Digests Nos. 36, 37 & 38, 219.66, 28.9.66 & 5.10.66, pages 307-336, are missing]
No. 39 13.10.66
The Week in Brief 337
The Kingdom of Lesotho 337
The UN Debate on SWA 340
‘Enlightened and Narrow or Conservative Afrikaners’ 342
From the Bantu Press 344
No. 40 20.10.66
The Week in Brief 347
Dr Muller’s Address in UN General Assembly 347
Continued Controversy over SA Observer 351
UP and NP drawing closer together 354
Fourteen-Day Detention Clause 355
From the Bantu Press 356
No. 41 27.10.66
The Week in Brief 358
‘Toenadering’ between NP and UP 358
Verwoerd's Assassin found Unfit to plead 361
The N G Kerk and the Christian Institute 363
From the Bantu Press 364
No. 42 3.11.66
The Week in Brief 366
South Africa and the UN 366
Premier warns Liberals and Progressives 369
Dr Rupert on Under-developed Countries 372
From the Bantu Press 373
No. 43 10.11.66
The Week in Brief 376
Rhodesia’s First Year of UDI 376
Defence Forces and Anti-Communism 377
New Cape Nationalist Leader 379
Van Wyk Louw on Afrikaans Culture 380
From the Bantu Press 381
No. 44 17.11.66
The Week in Brief 383
Rhodesia’s First Anniversary 383
Transvaal Administrator and Rotary 386
The American Elections 387
From the Bantu Press 388
No. 45 24.11.66
The Week in Brief 391
Mr Vorster suggests Information Campaign 391
Rhodesia’s Future 393
UP Policy changes 394
Conservatism in SA Politics 396
From the Bantu Press 397
No. 46 1.12.66
The Week in Brief 399
New Anglo-Rhodesian Talks 399
Dissension in Mineworkers’ Union 401
The UN Committee on SWA 403
Danger of ‘Overheating’ in NP 404
From the Bantu Press 404
No. 47 8.12.66
The Week in Brief 407
Smith-Wilson Talks on Rhodesia break down 407
Tighter Influx Control for Africans 409
From the Bantu Press 412
No. 48 15.12.66
The Week in Brief 413
Rhodesia, Britain and South Africa 413
From the Bantu Press 416
No. 49 22.12.66
The Week in Brief 418
Mr Vorster on SA's Attitude 418
Day of the Covenant 422
Mineworkers' Union 424
'Alien Elements' on NG Kerk 425
From the Bantu Press 425

1967

No. 1 12.1.67
Main Items in Brief 1
Prime Minister's New Year Message 1
Meeting with Prime Minister Jonathan 3
Rhodesia and South Africa 4
Immigration 'Shock' 7
Mineworkers' Union 9
Lesotho Troubles 9
From the Bantu Press 10
No. 2 19.1.67
The Week in Brief 13
Vorster meets Jonathan 13
Immigration Controversy 16
Call for Doubling the Price of Gold 19
Forthcoming Parliamentary Session 20
Search for Oil - Government Determined 21
From the Bantu Press 22
No. 3 26.1.67
The Week in Brief 24
The New Parliamentary Session 24
The New State President 26 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 108

The Cabinet Changes 28
Extended Military Service 29
Economic Growth and Manpower 30
Immigration Controversy 31
Need for Dialogue 32
From the Bantu Press 33
No. 4 2.2.67
The Week in Brief 35
The Van Wyk Report 35
No Confidence Debate 37
Cabinet Changes 38
Disappointment with the Republic 39
Coloured Cricketer Controversy 40
Immigration 42
US Aircraft Carrier 42
From the Bantu Press 43
No. 5 9.2.67
The Week in Brief 45
The Roosevelt Setback 45
Relations with Africa 48
South Africa and Sanctions 50
International Sports Relations 51
Immigration Policy re-affirmed 52
Cultural Controversy 53
Afrikaans Press Merger 55
White Capital in Bantustans 55
From the Bantu Press 56
No. 6 16.2.67
The Week in Brief 57
Planned Reduction of Black Labour in Cities 57
Roosevelt Incident 60
Sport and Apartheid 61
Cultural Controversy 62
Church Symposium 63
The Christian and Art 64
Potchefstroom University - Training for Cultural Leaders 64
Dr Verwoerd's Cultural lead 64
Genetics of the Afrikaner 65
Africans Press Amalgamation 66
Johannesburg Municipal Election 66
Kerkblad on Immigration 67
From the Bantu Press 67
No. 7 23.2.67
The Week in Brief 69
Out of Isolation 69
Relations with USA 71
White Capital in Reserves 72
National Education Bill 74
Future of Coloureds 78
Rights of Indians 79
Intellectual Level of the Afrikaner 79
From the Bantu Press 79
No. 8 2.3.67
The Week in Brief 81
The Riddle of Mr Vorster 81
Sports Formula 81
National Education Policy Bill 83
Ambassadors in SWA 85
Diplomatic Appointments 86
Dr P J Meyer on Self-Development 87
Afrikaans Press Conflict Allegations 88
Afrikaans becoming National Language 89
Municipal Elections 89
Rhodesian Republic 90
Immigration harmed by Attacks 91
National Unity 92
Mineworkers' Union 92
State President 92
From the Bantu Press 92
No. 9 9.3.67
The Week in Brief 94
Orientated towards Outside World: Prime Minister 94
Mr Vorster on Sports Links 95
National Education Policy Bill 97
Population Register Amendment Bill 100
Coloureds accepting Apartheid 101

80
New Phase in Separate Development 214
From the Bantu Press 215

FICHE 110

No. 20 25.5.67
The Week in Brief 217
Bantu Homelands Development 217
The Middle East Crisis 222
UN and South West Africa 225
British Naval Visit 225
Apartheid contrary to Scripture 226
Unrest in DRC Congregations 227
From the Bantu Press 227

No. 21 1.6.67
The Week in Brief 229
Crisis in the Middle East 229
Retirement of Mr Swart 233
United Nations and South-West Africa 233
Control of Industries Bill 234
Immigration Policy 235
Afrikaner in Business Life 236
From the Bantu Press 237

No. 22 8.6.67
The Week in Brief 239
The Middle East 239
Republic and the Nations 246
Black Diplomats in Republic 246
Republic Day: Elimination of Friction 246
Currents among the Afrikaners 247
Mr Vorster’s Image 248
Authorities and Press 249
From the Bantu Press 249

No. 23 16.6.67
The Week in Brief 251
The Middle East War 251
Terrorism Bill 257
Pont Case Verdict 257
Location of Industries Bill 258
Christian Cultural Action Congress 259
Don’t fight like That for Afrikaans 261
From the Bantu Press 261

No. 24 22.6.67
The Week in Brief 263
The Middle East – Peace Problems 263
South Africa and the United Nations 267
End of Parliamentary Session 268
Afrikaner Organisations 269
Dr Terblanche reinstated 273
Prof Weiss on SABC Board 273
Death of Patrick Duncan 273
Sobukwe 273
SABRA Conference 274
The Conscience Clause 274
Christian Character of Schools 275
From the Bantu Press 275

No. 25 29.6.67
The Week in Brief 277
The Middle East Crisis – UN Debate 277
At Glassboro 277
Challenge to NP leadership? Culture Controversy 284
Controversy in DRC 287
Immigration – Criticism 288
Passport Ban 289
Mass Contact 289
From the Bantu Press 289

No. 26 6.7.67
The Week in Brief 291
SA Akademie Meeting 291
Real Danger for Afrikaans 296
Dr Meyer on Liberalistic Influences 296
The Middle East 297
South Africa’s ‘Outward’ Policy 299
Turning Tide 300
NP and Press 300
From the Bantu Press 301

No. 27 13.7.67
The Week in Brief 303
Dr Piet Meyer and the Afrikaans Press 303
The Middle East 308
Mr Tshombe 311
The Afrikaner and the Immigrant 311
Leftism at English Universities 312 (continued on next fiche)

FICHE 111

Unwelcome Guest 313
From the Bantu Press 314

No. 28 20.7.67
The Week in Brief 316
Right-Wing vs Left-Wing? 316
Congress on Liberalism 321
Second Stream 322
New Education Policy 323
The Middle East 324
Black-Labour policy – the Test 326
Obsession against Immigration 327
From the Bantu Press 328

No. 29 27.7.67
The Week in Brief 329
The Verkrampte-Verligte Issue 329
Mr Vorster’s Visit to SWA 336
Ex-Chief Albert Luthuli 337
Maj Gen Van Der Bergh attacks Liberals 338
Mutual Respect: Mr Botha 339
USA Race Riots 339
From the Bantu Press 339

No. 30 3.8.67
The Week in Brief 341
Mr Vorster on Quarrel 341
New Daily Afrikaans Paper 346
Right Wing not NP Enemy  542
Afrikaans Liberals Victorious: SED Brown  545
From the Bantu Press  545
No. 48  7.12.67
The Week in Brief  547
The Heart Transplantation Operation  547
'Deviationism' Within NP  547
American Field Service Clash  550
Cabinet Changes discussed  551
New Spirit: Prime Minister  552
Jopie Fourie and Sunday Papers  552
Afrikaans Press Aims  552
Johannesburg City Council and Bilingualism  553
Akademie Elections  554
Kerkbode criticises Presbyterians  554
From the Bantu Press  555
No. 49  14.12.67
The Week in Brief  557
The Heart Operation  557
State President  558
Mr Goldwater's Visit  560
Nemesis of NP Troublemakers  560
Jeugbond Branch Names after Dr Hertzog  563
Apartheid Warning by UP Leader  563
Skilled Labour Bottleneck  563
Immigration & Calvinists  563
Family Planning for Bantu  565
Malawian Representation  565
Speedier Consolidation of Homelands  566
From the Bantu Press  567
No. 50  21.12.67
The Week in Brief  569
The Arms Ban  569
UN and South Africa  570
Day of the Covenant  571
State Presidency  575
Malawian Envoy  575
Goldwater Visit  576
TUSCA and Colour  576
Survey of 1967
South Africa's International Relations  577
From the Bantu Press  579

1968
No. 1 11.1.68
In Brief  1
The Heart Transplants  1
Surveys and Predictions  3
The Dollar and South Africa  6
America and Africa  6
Zambian Incident  7
British Arms Ban  7
New Year Messages  8
Warning against Eclipse of NP  9
State and Church  10
From the Bantu Press  11

FICHE 114

No. 2 18.1.68
The Week in Brief  13
The Passing of Dr Donges  13
Heart Transplant and South African Research  15
USA and Whites in Africa  17
South African Police in Zambia  19
Mr Botha's Appeal for Cape Rehabilitation  19
New Kerkbode Editor  20
NP Caucus and Verkramptes  20
Calvinists on Conservatism and Liberalism  20
War on Conservatism  20
From the Non-European Press  21
No. 3  25.1.68
The Week in Brief  23
Cracks within the NP  23
Mr Botha attacks Petty Games  26
Failures of Afrikaans Press  27
Afrikaans Press Conflict  28
Heart Transplantation and Research  28
Dr Terblanche resigns from Akademie  30
British Arms Ban  30
Britain's Economic Crisis  31
Matriculation Results and Afrikaner  31
Transvaler on the Afrikaner's New World  32
From the Non-European Press  33
No. 4  1.2.68
The Week in Brief  35
The Parliamentary Session  35
Pretoria NP Council  37
Brakpan Municipal Election  38
Terrorist Trial  38
Pueblo Incident  39
Terblanche Resignation  39
Re-location of Industry  40
Separate Development in Natal  40
Plan for Coloureds  41
Heart Operation and Apartheid  41
Press and Party  42
Press Competition  42
Immigration and National Composition  42
'Life Book' for all Citizens  43
From the Non-European Press  43
No. 5  8.2.68
The Week in Brief  45
The 1968 Parliament  45
The New State President  49
First African Diplomat in Republic  50
Coloured Parliament  51
South Africa and Olympic Games  51
Removals in Natal condemned  52
Oppositions stifling Effect on Afrikaans Press Discussion  53
Dr Terblanche vs Prime Minister  54
'Detribalised' Afrikaner  54
From the Non-European Press  55
No. 6 15.2.68
The Week in Brief 57
No Confidence Debate 57
NP is United 60
Cabinet Changes 61
Dr Hertzog attacks Editors 62
SABC Television? 63
Neutrality Policy urged 64
Sabbath Laws confused 65
From the Non-European Press 66

No. 7 22.2.68
The Week in Brief 69
South Africa in Olympic Games 69
Improper Political Interference 73
Mr Fouche State President 74
Immigration Policy and UP 74
Friendship in Africa not Force 74
The New Liberalism 75
Right-Wing on the Run 76
Bantu Homelands 76
Bantu Standard of Living 77
Alienation of Africans 77
From the Non-European Press 78

No. 8 29.2.68
The Week in Brief 80
The Olympic Games 80
Olympic Success for Outward Policy 83
Coloured Rights 84
Last Chance for Britain 86
Flight of Asians from Kenya 86
Rand Afrikaans University 87
Junior Rapportyer Support 88
Twenty Years of NP Rule 88
New Technique 88
Afrikaans Cultural Organisations’ Role 89
Urban African 89
From the Non-European Press 90

No. 9 7.3.68
The Week in Brief 92
The Future of the Coloured People 92
Rhodesian Crisis 97
Olympic Games and South Africa 97
Kenya Asian Migrants 98
GHA and Prime Minister 99
Master Diplomat 100
The Only Choice 101
From the Non-European Press 101

No. 10 14.3.68
The Week in Brief 103
The Rhodesian Executions 103
Olympic Games 107
Coloured Homelands 107 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 115
Liberal Chasers attacked 109

Dr Terblanche under Fire 109
Afrikanerisation of Immigrants 110
Failure of the Afrikaans Press 111
From the Non-European Press 112

No. 11 21.3.68
The Week in Brief 114
The Gold Crisis 114
Rhodesia – What Next? 115
South Africa’s Defences 117
Coloured Homelands 120
Unity of the NP 120
SA Observer rejected? 122
Mr Vorster’s Strength 122
Too Many Races and Prejudices 123
Afrikaner and South African 123
Calvinist, Conservative, Liberal 124
From the Non-European Press 125

No. 12 28.3.68
The Week in Brief 127
Conflict with NP 127
The Menace of Liberalism: Mr Jaap Marais 128
SA Observer on ‘Liberal’ Breakthrough 129
Jeugbond rebuked 130
Still Strijdom Road: MC Botha 131
Bantu Homelands Policy 131
Rhodesian Breakaway 134
The Middle East 135
Afrikaners less Bilingual 136
From the Non-European Press 137

No. 13 4.4.68
The Week in Brief 139
President Johnson’s Announcement 139
No Escape for SA: Prime Minister 139
The Budget 140
Republic and the UN 141
Pretoria West By-Election 144
NP Bulwark against Liberalism 145
Crisis for Mr Jaap Marais 146
Dr Hoffenberg 146
Future of the Progressive Party 147
Bantu Homelands a Denial 147
Hoofstad 147
Pretoria By-Election Results 148
From the Non-European Press 148

No. 14 11.4.68
The Week in Brief 149
Assassination of Dr King 149
South Africa will decide Own Future 151
Terrorists warned 152
Pretoria West By-Election 153
Improper Interference Bill 154
Cabinet and Sabbath Observance 156
From the Non-European Press 156

No. 15 18.4.68
The Week in Brief 159
Mr Drundage’s Visit 159
No. 25 27.6.68
The Week in Brief 268
Anonymous Smear on NP Leadership 268
Parliamentary Session ends 273
Education Crisis 273
Dr Eric Louw 274
Back to Old Values: Hoofstad Editor 274
Power Now in America 275
Fewer Catholics wanted 275
Separate Development 276
Sobukwe 276
Zambian Bridge 277
Immigrants from Holland 277
Too Few 277
New Transvaler Editor 278
From the Non-European Press 278
No. 26 4.7.68
The Week in Brief 280
Mr Vorster condemns Backstabbers 280
Akademie Meeting 283
One Nation not Feasible: Prof Thom 286
Warning against 'Withered' NP 299
Rapportryers and NP 289
No Verligtes: Mrs Suzman 290
Outwards Policy 290
From the Non-European Press 290
No. 27 11.7.68
The Week in Brief 292
One People: Mr Vorster 292
Afrikaner Identity: FAK Congress 292
Afrikaanse Studentbond Congress 295
Anonymous Letter 296 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 117
Rhodesia Split 299
Time for Conservatives to stand up 300
Coloured Homelands: False Hopes 300
A Calvinist Culture 301
New Phase in Outward Movement 302
Southern Hemisphere Naval Pact 303
From the Non-European Press 303
No. 28 18.7.68
The Week in Brief 304
Afrikaner Identity and National Unity 304
National Union SA Students 306
No Future for Verkramptes 310
Right-Wingers combining? 312
Jeugbond Investigation 312
Tributes to Sarah Gertrude Millin 313
Rhodesian Situation 314
From the Non-European Press 315
No. 29 25.7.68
The Week in Brief 317
South African Policeman killed by Terrorists 317
Mr Botha on Terrorism 318
SABC compared to Press 320
Rhodesian Republic? 322
DRC Reply to CNE Queries 322
Spirit of Tolerance Warning 324
Teachers' Need 325
Yes or No to NP: Dirk Richard 325
UP-EP Regional Congress 326
Not prepared to be Half South African 326
Separate Development and Sacrifice 326
From the Non-European Press 327
No. 30 1.8.68
The Week in Brief 329
Mr Smith's Visit 329
Terrorism - New Phase 330
Hi-jacking of El Al Plane 332
Dr Muller on Unity 333
Half South African 334
Afrikaners in Professions 334
Non-White Doctors Salaries 336
Ons Land 337
Van Schoor back in Akademie 337
Afrikaners becoming Too Rich? 337
Dr Beyers Naude and World Council of Churches 338
Conscience Clause Threat 338
From the Non-European Press 339
No. 31 8.8.68
The Week in Brief 341
American Field Service under Attack 341
Anonymous Letter - Booklet published 345
SA Observer on Smear Letter 347
UP Leader on Aid for Portuguese 348
United Party's Four Points 348
Rhodesia - An Embarrassment 349
Manpower Shortage 349
The Ossewa-Brandwag surveyed 350
Catholic Church and Afrikaners 351
From the Non-European Press 352
No. 32 15.8.68
The Week in Brief 353
Cabinet Changes 353
Big NP clean up Ahead 358
Jeugbond Action 359
Verligtes losing: Mr Jaap Marais 359
Nixon's Candidacy 361
Immigration favours English 361
Mr Vorster and American Field Service 362
From the Non-European Press 363
No. 33 22.8.68
The Week in Brief 365
Mr Vorster delivers an Ultimatum 365
Dr Hertzog's Challenge 369
Smear Letter Expulsions 373
Student Sit-in 374
UCM 376
South Africa and Sea Routes: Dr Muller 376
From the Non-European Press 377
No. 34 29.8.68  
The Week in Brief 378  
Vorster Supreme in NP 378  
Advice to Zambia and Tanzania: Mr Vorster 381  
Invasion of Chechoslovakia 382  
SA Rocket Defence 384  
Student Protest 385  
Apartheid and Scriptures 386  
Evolution Debate 386  
From the Non-European Press 387  
No. 35 5.9.68  
The Week in Brief 389  
Appeal to Jews 389  
English Universities under Fire 394 [continued on the next fiche]  
FICHE 118  
Dr Muller’s Visit to Malawi 396  
Nasionale Jeugbond Congress 397  
Communist Agitation at Universities 398  
National Unity: United Party Congress 398  
MCC Cricket Team 399  
From the Non-European Press 400  
No. 36 12.9.68  
The Week in Brief 401  
Cape NP Congress 401  
Swaziland Independence 403  
Mr Vorster on Youth 404  
Trouble at Fort Hare 405  
Criticism needed 405  
Prof Geyser resigns from NH Kerk 408  
South Africa and Dutch Synod 408  
Prof Pont on Catholicism and Liberalism 409  
Unproductive Bantu must go 409  
SA Observer on NP Divisions 410  
From the Non-European Press 411  
No. 37 19.9.68  
The Week in Brief 413  
Transvaal NP Congress 413  
New Flag 416  
University Inquiry 418  
Student Unrest 419  
United Party Congress 420  
Politics and Police 420  
Sports Warning: Mr Vorster 421  
SA Police in Rhodesia 421  
Trade Union Council Resignations 421  
Limit Bantu Labour 422  
Mr Vorster and Coloureds Representation 422  
Plans for Homelands 422  
From the Non-European Press 423  
No. 38 26.9.68  
The Week in Brief 425  
D’Oliveira Issue 425  
NP Free State Congress 428  
Rhodesia: Gatooma By-Election 431  
Gen Hertzog 432  
Natal NP Conference 433  
Aid to Biafra 434  
NG Kerk and Bantu Workers 435  
Whither Coloureds? 435  
From the Non-European Press 436  
No. 39 3.10.68  
The Week in Brief 438  
Maoris Welcome, says Mr Vorster 438  
Natal NP Leadership 440  
After Salazar 443  
Apartheid and Christianity 444  
Fight against Communism 445  
Muller and the Jews 446  
Increased White Population 447  
Inward and Outward in the NP 447  
A Lance for the English Press 448  
Anonymous Letters from the South 449  
More Say for Indians 449  
From the Non-European Press 449  
No. 40 11.10.68  
The Week in Brief 451  
NP in for 20 Years More 451  
Pretoria West By-Election 451  
South Africa’s Policy in Africa 451  
Church and State 452  
Mr Vorster and the All Blacks 453  
Olympics: Just as well SA Out 454  
Students to be investigated 454  
Security Advisor to Prime Minister 454  
Letter Writers in the Cape 454  
Pvambo Self-Government 455  
Fewer Farmers 455  
After Salazar 455  
From the Non-European Press 456  
No. 41 17.10.68  
The Week in Brief 458  
Rhodesia Discussions 458  
Kruger Day 460  
Anti-Communist Congress 460  
Dr Hertzog and Outward Policy 462  
Defeat in Natal: Graaff 463  
English Press and NP 464  
Mr Muller and Jews 466  
Speedier or No Apartheid 466  
Church as Watchdog 467  
Terrorists approach SA 468  
No Mixed Audiences 468  
From the Non-European Press 468  
No. 42 24.10.68  
The Week in Brief 470  
Rhodesia Talks 470  
Petty Apartheid 473  
UP Natal Congress 477  
Freedom of Choice and Indians 479
Callous Society 479
From the Non-European Press 480
No. 43 31.10.68
The Week in Brief 482
Mr Vorster and Churches 482
Political Manifesto 484
Rhodesian Situation 485
South African Embassies Overseas 486
Afrikaner Identity 486
Christian Cultural Action Conference 487
Transvaler replies to Jaap Marais 489
New Afrikaans Newspaper? 490
United Party Congress 490 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 119

Expansion into Natal 491
Ovambo Autonomy 491
Isolation, then Aggression 492
From the Non-European Press 492
No. 44 7.11.68
The Week in Brief 494
Leadership in Africa 494
The Afrikaans Press and the Afrikaner 494
Mr Jaap Marais and Die Transvaler 496
Precursor of New Group? 497
American Elections 498
Transkei Elections 499
South Africa and Rhodesia 500
NUSAS 501
More Homelands 501
Border Industries 503
SED Brown: Open Letter to Prime Minister 504
State and Church 504
From the Non-European Press 505
No. 45 14.11.68
The Week in Brief 507
The New American President 507
New Press Legislation 509
No New Afrikaans Newspaper 513
Support Die Nataller 513
Veg 513
Information on Government Policy 515
New Phase of NP 515
Lesson of UP 515
South-West UP Congress 515
Government and Church Protest 516
Role of Colour will diminish 516
‘Unblackening’ in 30 Years 518
From the Non-European Press 518
No. 46 21.11.68
The Week in Brief 521
Press Merger Move 521
SA Associated Newspapers Comment 522
Press Control 526
Rhodesia and South Africa 528

Transkei – Not Enough Development 528
Congress on Separate Development 529
UP Plans 530
Big Small Country 530
From the Non-European Press 530
No. 47 28.11.68
The Week in Brief 532
Press Merger – Government Action 532
Oppenheimer Interests 539
Financial Crisis 539
Lift Arms Ban 539
Removal Plea 540
NP Crisis of Conscience 540
Kerkbode attacks Volksblad 541
Government and Potchefstroom 541
From the Non-European Press 542
No. 48 5.12.68
The Week in Brief 544
No Merger – Argus justifies Itself 544
South Africa’s Mission in Africa 547
Replacement of White Ministers 548
New Transvaler Editor 549
Colour Not Only Difference 549
Mr Vorster and Rhodesia 550
Portuguese Withdrawal in Africa urged 550
Dining with Dark People 550
Woord En Daad vs Hoofstad 551
Die Afrikaanse Student 551
From the Non-European Press 552
No. 49 12.12.68
The Week in Brief 554
Apartheid Crisis 554
Randburg and Basic Issues 557
Press Merger Aftermath 558
South Africa and MCC 560
Students in Collision with Government 561
More Money for Smear Writers? 562
South African Defence 562
The Vorster Era 563
From the Non-European Press 563
No. 50 19.12.68
The Week in Brief 565
Day of the Covenant 565
Afro-Asians and UNCTAD 567
Right Wing Publishing Move 567
Timidity of Verligtes 569
Limehill Removal 570
Separate Non-Development 571
Tide turning to UP 571
Immigrants will leave Impress 572
Rhodesian Situation 572
United States Policy unchanged 572
From the Non-European Press 573
FICHE 120

1969

No. 1 9.1.69
The Week in Brief 1
Prime Minister's New Year Message 1
Israeli Raid on Beirut 3
Settlement in Rhodesia? 6
Much Blacker than expected 8
Opposition Leaders on New Year 9
Limehill 9
Transvaler Editor retires 10
From the Non-European Press 10

No. 2 16.1.69
The Week in Brief 12
The Commonwealth Conference 12
Leadership Fight in NP alleged 14
Non-White Growth Rate and Apartheid Policy 16
Prof Pont attacks Woord En Daad 18
Indians in Africa and in South Africa 19
Forecasts for 1969 21
From the Non-European Press 21

No. 3 23.1.69
The Week in Brief 23
Inauguration of President Nixon 23
Commonwealth Conference 24
Development of the Bantu Homelands 25
Limehill 30
Asians in Africa 31
Afrikaner Achievements 32
Senior Nationalists supporting Veg? 33
From the Non-European Press 33

No. 4 30.1.69
The Week in Brief 35
Sparks will fly at Parliamentary Session 35
Waiting for a Lead 36
Afrikaners and Money Power 38
Separate Development under the Searchlight 38
White Capital in Homelands 40
President Nixon's Inaugural Speech 40
Expulsion of Mr Worrall 41
UP Changes 41
Federalism for South Africa 42
Catholic and Protestant 43
Spotlight on Political Priests 43
From the Non-European Press 44

No. 5 6.2.69
The Week in Brief 46
The Parliamentary Session 46
No Confidence Debate 47
Student Reconciliation Move 48
Homeland Citizenship Move 50
Iraqi Hangings 52
The New Sin 53
Afrikaans Investment Corporation vs Oppenheimer 54
Population Planning Study 54

From the Non-European Press 55
No. 6 13.2.69
The Week in Brief 57
The No Confidence Debate 57
Future of the Coloured People 60
Limehill 62
Smear Attack in NP 62
No Complaints against NP Press 64
British Immigration Policy 65
Veg missing 66
Dr Koornhof's Integrationalist Thesis 66
From the Non-European Press 67

No. 7 20.2.69
The Week in Brief 69
Mr Lewis' Defection 69
Afrikaners seething 75
Afrikaner Identity and South Africa 75
Junior Rapportryers take Action 77
NUSAS Interview with Minister 77
From the Non-European Press 78

No. 8 27.2.69
The Week in Brief 80
The Lewis Episode 80
Changes in Political Structure 81
Warning to Rebels 81
Mr Blaar Coetzee on Fear of English 82
South African Games 84
TUSCA opts for Whites Only Membership 86
Calvinism and Pragmatism 88
Future of Coloureds 88
Government must lead on Apartheid: Rhodie 89
Is an Opposition Party Necessary 89
From the Non-European Press 90

No. 9 6.3.69
The Week in Brief 92
The Newcastle Result 92
Government and NUSAS 94
Afrikaner and South Africa 95 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 121

Afrikaans Press Controversy on Coloureds 96
No Joy for Integrationalist: Word En Daad 98
Big and Small Apartheid 99
Need for Black Labour 100
SED Brown on Prime Minister and Security Chief 100
Veg abandoned by Publishers 101
From the Non-European Press 102

No. 10 13.3.69
The Week in Brief 104
The NP White Unity Policy 104
Afrikaner Identity 106
Ds Cruywagen Attack on Government 107
What makes an Afrikaner 108
A Nation already: Prof Rhodie 108
Total Separation not in our Time 109
Denouement in NP? 206
No New Party: Dr Meyer 210
Dr Treurnicht in Port Elizabeth 211
Sobukwe 212
From the Non-European Press 212
No. 20 29.9.69
The Week in Brief 214
Peace restored in NP 214
Un-Nationalist Spirit in Pretoria 220
Rhodesian Constitution 220
Friends of Rhodesia 221
New Censorship Legislation 222
Non-White Doctors’ Salaries 222
Education Advisory Council 223
Christian National Education undermined 224
No. 21 5.6.69
The Week in Brief 226
NP Forward Looking 226
New Nation objects 227
Scope Interview with Dr Hertzog 227
Hertzog Book on Sale 228
Mr Vorster’s Credibility Gap 228
Progression NP Dissension 228
Mr Van Den Berg and ‘Verkramptes’ 229
Republic Day 229
Mr Naude 230
Mr De Klerk in New Post 230
NP 21 Years of Power 230
Kerkbode on Calvinism 232
Anti-Anti-Communism: Dr Vorster 233
English-Speaking Indifference attacked 233
Freemasonry attacked 234
Immorality Act 234
Student Protest 235
What the White Man thinks 235
From the Non-European Press 236
No. 22 12.6.69
The Week in Brief 238
Dr Hertzog at Ermelo 238
De Klerk President of Senate 242
Boss 242
Muller-Suzman Clash on Students 243
Progressive Party Congress 245
The Case of Mrs Lefefe 245
South Africa and Olympics 246
Rhodesia Constitution 246
Prejudice against Immigrants 247
Immorality Act 247
From the Non-European Press 248
No. 23 19.6.69
The Week in Brief 250
Dr Hertzog: Reconciliation or Not? 250
Fracas at Porgietersrus - Veg Group Meeting 252
Bureau of State Security 255
Rhodesia and South Africa 257
Homeland Independence in 30 Years 258
From the Non-European Press 260
No. 24 26.6.69
The Week in Brief 262
Rhodesian Referendum 262
Bureau for State Security 265
1969 Parliamentary Session 267
Hertzog Key to NP Peace 268
More speed with Homelands 268
Numbers Problem 269
Dr Ras Beyers 270
Liberalists and Freedom 270
Race Classification Law 271
From the Non-European Press 271
No. 25 3.7.69
The Week in Brief 274
BOSS (General Law Amendment Bill) 274
Rhodesia’s Future 280
The Sports Front 283
The Spectre of Numbers 285
From the Non-European Press 285 (continued on next fiche)

FICHE 123

No. 26 10.7.69
The Week in Brief 288
General Law Amendment Act 288
SA Friendship Policy succeeding: PM 291
Differences between Language Groups will remain 291
Studentbond Congress 292
NUSAS Conference 294
Passport Case 295
English Book Menace 295
Changes in Race Attitudes 296
Keep Dirt Out 296
Outwards or Not? 298
Veg on Stofberg Episode 298
From the Non-European Press 299
No. 27 17.7.69
The Week in Brief 301
Prisons Trial 301
Trade Union Disaffection alleged 303
Mboya Assassination 305
NUSAS Conference 306
Twin Cities but Separate 308
Vorster – Thorn in Nationalists Flesh 309
View of ASB Students 310
From the Non-European Press 311
No. 313 24.7.69
The Week in Brief 313
The Moon Expedition 313
Prisons Act 314
National Education Council 316
Zambia 317
The Political Scene 319
Role of the English-speaking Community 321
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 322
Equality the End 323
From the Non-European Press 323
No. 29 31.7.69
The Week in Brief 325
The Meaning of the Moon Adventure 325
Population Gap widening 328
Zambian Situation 329
Stellenbosch Students against Contact with Coloureds 330
Mr Vorster to speak on BOSS 332
Methodists against Immorality Act 333
Afrikaner Youth and the People 333
South Africa and the ‘Unattached’ Africa 334
Immigration Arguments 334
Volksblad and Professor Pont 335
From the Non-European Press 336
No. 30 7.8.69
The Week in Brief 337
Prof Horwood 337
Stellenbosch Students and Contact 341
Television – Political Issue? 343
Overseas Lawyers’ Visit 344
Assurance on Security Legislation 344
Sick Western World 344
Bleak Outlook 345
Veg Editor leaving? 345
Nationalists Angry with Dr Bayers 345
Dr Albert Hertzog in Durban 346
High Quality Press 346
Education Council 346
From the Non-European Press 347
No. 31 14.8.69
The Week in Brief 349
Mr Vorster at Nylstroom 349
Visas for Congressmen 351
Bureau for State Security 353
Stellenbosch Students and Contact with Coloureds 353
Devaluation 357
South Africa’s Foreign Relations 357
Coloured Elections 358
Brown Ban 358
The Don’t Outlook 359
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 359
From the Non-European Press 359
No. 32 21.8.69
The Week in Brief 361
Dr Philip Blaiberg 361
Contact Conflict Within NP 361
Zambia – Nationalisation of Copper Mines 367
United Party in Trouble 367
Mrs Suzman on State Violence 368
External Pressure will be resisted 368
NUSAS must reform or go 369
Immigrant Children in Afrikaans Schools 369
How Long? 370
Golding Case 370
From the Non-European Press 371
No. 33 28.8.69
The Week in Brief 373
Political Conflict resumes in NP 373 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 124

Dr Mulder on SA’s Fight against Isolation 378
Loginov Exchange 379
Stellenbosch Students and Contact 379
Bilingualism Legislation 380
Mixed Soccer Legislation 380
Labour Shortage 381
Coloured Elections 381
From the Non-European Press 382
No. 34 4.9.69
The Week in Brief 384
Tensions ahead for NP 384
Recalcitrants attacked at Cape Congress 386
More Contact in Africa – SWA Congress 386
Transvaal Jeugbond Congress 386
Confusion on Apartheid 387
Distrust can make NP Leaders Fall 387
Hoofstad vs Burger 388
Natal Mercury on Prof Horwood’s Role 389
Liberal, says Veg 390
Views on Katrina 391
Prof Pont on Students and Anti-Christian Movement 392
BOSS in Perspective 392
From the Non-European Press 393
No. 35 11.9.69
The Week in Brief 395
Cape NP Congress 395
Dawie vs Hoofstad 400
Commission on Security Bureau 401
STER Attack 402
Publications Board Appeal to be scrapped? 402
Veg and STER Finances 403
Whither Zambia? 403
From the Non-European Press 404
No. 36 18.9.69
The Week in Brief 406
Hertzog and Son 424
Or Verwoerd Never against Maoris 424

94
Leakage of Secrets to Sunday Times 543
Zululand Group Areas 544
Demographic National Party 544
Nominations 544
SED Brown's Religious Affiliations 545
From the Non-European Press 545
No. 48 11.12.69
The Week in Brief 547
Television Commission 547
Mr Vorster retiring soon? 550
Would end Abuse of Power: Graaff 550
Progressives not to fight Marginal Seats 551
HNP Election Campaign 552
Role of Non-Afrikaners 553
Ministerial Tactlessness 553
Springbok Rugby Tour 555
Mr Vorster and the Right 555
SED Brown attacks Conservatives 556
Dr Hertzog summoned 557
South Africa: Nazi Target 557
From the Non-European Press 558
No. 49 18.12.69
The Week in Brief 560
Onslaught on Republic's Sports Relations 560
Arthur Ashe 563
The General Election 564
Division in HNP 565
Dr Meyer and Dr Hertzog 565
Nasionale Pers and NP Division 566
Mr Vorster sees Trouble Ahead 567
Gerief Visitor foresees Urban Integration 567
Sport and the National Conscience 569
'Behind the News' 569 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 126

New Polarisation in South African Politics 570
Day of the Covenant 570
From the Non-European Press 571
1970
No. 1 15.1.70
The Week in Brief 1
Prime Minister's Message 1
Opposition Leaders look Ahead 2
United Party Election Policy 2
Challenge to Britain on Simonstown 3
Dr Hertzog fined 3
Into the Seventies 3
Eliminate HNP, calls Schoeman 4
Kerkbode Editor for HNP Journal 5
Sports Policy comes to a Head 6
Veg on BOSS 7
Anti-Vorster Conservative Front wanted 8
Censorship 8
Zambia Sabotage 9
Gold Price 9
From the Non-European Press 10
No. 2 22.1.70
The Week in Brief 12
Die Afrikaner 12
HNP Candidates in Election 13
White-Anting Methods 14
Future is HNP's: Hertzog 14
Voters' Registration Appeal 15
Swastikas in Windhoek 15
Nigeria 16
No Mixed Sport: Dr De Wet 16
Colour Disproportion increasing Rapidly 17
The Force of the Conscience Clause 18
Afrikaans in Rhodesia 19
No Honorary Degree for Prof Horwood 19
SABC Purge 19
From the Non-European Press 20
No. 3 29.1.70
The Week in Brief 21
Parliamentary Session 21
The Election Campaign 22
English Duties in Election 24
Statement on Sports coming: Coetzee 24
Rapportryers not Party Political 24
Fifth Column in NP 25
Hervormde Kerk and Politics 26
Showdown on Sport 27
Voortrekkers New Directors 27
Simonstown Agreement and Arms from Britain 27
Ster under HNP Auspices 28
From the Non-European Press 29
No. 4 5.2.70
The Week in Brief 31
Lesotho Emergency 31
The Parliamentary Session 33
Horwood made Senator 35
The Ashe Decision & Sport 35
Treurnicht vs Lubbe 36
Nationalist Dispute viewed from Outside 37
Christian Election Manifesto 38
From the Non-European Press 40
No. 5 12.2.70
The Week in Brief 41
The No-Confidence Debate 41
Military Secrets and HNP 43
Apartheid and Numbers 44
Lesotho 44
NP Power Struggle alleged 45
Immigration Basic to Separate Development 46
Dr Treurnicht on Dr Lubbe 47
Price of Apartheid 47
From the Non-European Press 48
No. 6 19.2.70
The Week in Brief 50
Jaap Marais searched 50
The Election Campaign 52
Mr Vorster at Ermelo 99
Davis Cup Ban 100
Rhodesia Vote at United Nations 100
The Election Campaign 101
Government Action on Non-White Servants 105
Minister of Interior and Press 105
Death of Detainee 106
From the Non-European Press 106
No. 12 2.4.70
The Week in Brief 108
Land Bank Loans 108
At the Hustings 109
South African Exclusion from Davis Cup 111
Calvinism and Politics 113
History of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk 114
From the Non-European Press 114
No. 13 9.4.70
The Week in Brief 116
The Election Campaign 116
Mr Vorster in the Cape 116
Land Bank Loans 117
Sports Policy 118
Rowdiness at Meetings 119
United Party Race Policy 119
Points from Speeches 120
Dr Hertzog and Jews 122
Coetzee and Treurnicht on Differences 122
Office and Shop Integration Ban 123
Afrikaner replies to Woord en Daad 124
No. 14 16.4.70
The Week in Brief 125
Mr Vorster’s Meetings 125
A New Start: UP Leader 126
HNP Election Manifesto 127
Church and Politics 128
African Employment Ban 129
Dr Piet Meyer 131
Christian Education for All 132
SA Observer calls for Anti-Vorster Vote 133
‘Book of Life’ and Police State 133
From the Non-European Press 134
No. 15 23.4.70
The Week in Brief 136
State of the Parties at Dissolution 136
Cross Roads 136
Mr Vorster’s Campaign 136
Points from Speeches 137
Sir De Villiers Graaff 138
Dr Steytler 138
Jewish Press and Election 138
Dr De Wet demands Assurance from Oppenheimer 140
HNP Organ Ban 140
African Employment Ban 141
NP Leadership discredited 142
Afrikaanse Pers in Rhodesia 142
Press and Party 143
Election Results 143
From the Non-European Press 143
No. 16 30.4.70
The Week in Brief 145
The General Election 145
Surprise Results 146
Interpretations 146
Breakthrough: UP Leader 147
First Big Progressive Boost 148
Future of HNP 148
Changes in NP 148
Prime Minister's Broadcast to the Nation 151
Press Comment 151
From the Non-European Press 154
No. 17 8.5.70
The Week in Brief 156
Provincial Elections 156
Implications of the Election Result 156
HNP continue 159
Television Soon 160
Prime Minister warns on Sport 160
Afrikaner Too Negative 161
NH Kerk wants Conscience Clause 161
Better Use of African Labour urged 162
No. 18 14.5.70
The Week in Brief 164
Cabinet Changes 164
The Growth Rate 164
Acceleration of Homeland Development 165
Job Reservation stands 165
Sports Relations 166
Student Riots in America 167
Controversy over Afrikaner Editor 168
Mr Vorster and Broederbond 169
Dr Hertzog's Funds 170
Dr Care1 De Wet under Fire 170
Jeugbond at Crossroads 171
United Party's Weakness 171
English welcome in NP with Reservations 171
NP forced to Left 171
From the Non-European Press 172
No. 19 21.5.70
The Week in Brief 174
South Africa expelled from Olympics 174
The Cricket Tour 176
More Cabinet Changes 176 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 128

Mr Vorster visits Malawi 179
Student Protest against Detentions 179
The Dr Lubbe Controversy 180
HNP calls for Freedom of Speech at Universities 180
HNP Low on Funds 181
Press Censorship Warning 181

[Note: Press Digest No. 20, 28.5.70 pages 182-193, is missing]

No. 21 4.6.70
The Week in Brief 194
State President in Changing World 194
No Mixed Sport 194
Decision on Detainees 196
Boycott discouraged 199
Lubbe Controversy 199
Dr Meyer for the Axe 199
HNP Congress 200
Cabinet Reshuffle and Cape Nationalists 200
Student Politics 201
Sestigers under Attack 201
Lessons of Election: SED Brown 202
From the Non-European Press 202

No. 23 18.6.70
The Week in Brief 211
Mr Vorster Abroad 211
Mr Vorster not opening Church Congress 213
Employment of Coloureds – Labour Policy 213
Zululand Territorial Authority 215
Langaagte By-Election 217
Jaap Marais fined 218
Kerkblad warns against Sport Idolatry 218
Public Servants and Politics 218
UP Leader warns on Labour 219
Contempt of Court Case 219
Censorship attacked 220
From the Non-European Press 220

No. 24 25.6.70
The Week in Brief 221
The British General Election: Result welcomed 221
Mr Vorster Back 223
Langaagte and After 224
NP Van Wyk Louw 228
Athol Fugard Ban 228
Public Servants in Politics 228
From the Non-European Press 228

No. 25 2.7.70
The Week in Brief 230
The Arms Embargo 230
Petty Apartheid under Fire 230
The Labour Shortage 231
All Blacks Rugby Incident 232
Chinese in South Africa 233
TV Decisive: Dr Meyer 234
Detention without Trial 235
Broederbond Changes? 236
Die Afrikaner, Land Bank & Dr Craven 238
From the Non-European Press 237

No. 26 9.7.70
The Week in Brief 239
Anglo-South Africa Relations 239
DRC Morals Congress 241
Big Leap 328
Immigrants and Bilingualism 328
Gerdener Natal NP Leader 329
‘Current Affairs’ attacked by Volksblad 329
NP Public Relations Man 329
Concessions in Sport 330
Transvaal Religious Education 330
From the Non-European Press 330
No. 35 10.9.70
The Week in Brief 332
World Council of Churches Aid to Guerillas 332
Autonomy for the Homelands 335
Broederbond Crisis 336
Mr Viljoen on Labour Policy 337
Verkrampte War 339
Vorster on Way Out? 340
From the Non-European Press 341
No. 36 17.9.70
The Week in Brief 342
Government Opposed to Uncontrolled Growth 342
SA Churches and World Council of Churches 342
[Note: Page 345 is blank and text is missing]
Die Nataller again on Broederbond 347
Broederbond Congress 348
Leadership Struggle in National Party 348
Homeland Independence 349
Non-Aligned Conference in Zambia 350
Provincial Election 351
No Restriction for Bantu Ministers in Homelands 351
United Party Policy 351
From the Non-European Press 352
No. 37 24.9.70
The Week in Brief 353
Great Performance of Evasion 353
Mr Vorster warns on Terrorism 354
Non-Aggression Pact 356
Homeland Independence Now 356
SA Churches warned by Prime Minister 358
Klip River By-Election 360
Provincial Elections 361
Area of Agreement 362
Steytler retiring 362
Terrorism Trials Acquittals 362
Census Shocks 362
Paton Passport 362
Youth Dilemma 363
Changes in Petty Apartheid 363
From the Non-European Press 364
No. 38 30.9.70
The Week in Brief 365
Klip River Election 365
Census Figures 367
Government acts against Clergymen 369
Government Press Relations 370
Values of Civilisation destroyed: PM 370
Future of Coloureds 370
Dr Treurnicht on Human Rights 371
Skin Colour will Always separate 371
From the Non-European Press 371
No. 39 8.10.70
The Week in Brief 373
Provincial Election 373
Call for Party Co-operation on Colour 374
Strength in Unity 376
Labour Party and Arms for SA 376
Vorster warns Churchmen 378
Terrorism Act Bans 379
Mineworkers against African Miners in Homelands 379
From the Non-European Press 380
[Note: Press Digest No. 40, 15.10.70 pages 381-389, is missing]
No. 40 21.10.70
The Week in Brief 390
Right Wing Advances 390
NP Reputation at Stake 390
Mineworkers and Homelands 393 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 130

DRC Synod 397
Apartheid – Big and Small 397
From the Non-European Press 398
No. 41 29.10.70
The Week in Brief 400
Provincial Elections 400
NG Synod 405
Mineworkers’ Union 406
President Kaunda 406
Canada’s Lesson 406
No Prohibition of Mixed Marriages in Bible 407
Conscience Clause 407
Oppenheimer & Government vs Miners 407
Bigger Threat to NP than HNP 408
From the Non-European Press 408
No. 42 5.11.70
The Week in Brief 410
Provincial Election Results 410
NP Leadership Struggle? 413
Prime Minister states Policy 417
Afrikaans Sunday Press Merger 417
From the Non-European Press 419
No. 43 12.11.70
The Week in Brief 421
Transvaal Nationalist Congress 421
Provincial Elections Retrospect 424
NP on Way Out? 425
Diplomatic Breakthrough for SA 426
Dr Vorster on DRC Policy 428
Hire-Purchase Curbs 428
Job Reservation queried 430
New Newspaper 431
Commonwealth Conference 35
Censorship 36
National Service and Conscience 37
Morals Aggression 37
Afrikaans Press Merger 38
Coloureds cannot be ignored 38
Big and Small Apartheid 38
Die Afrikaner 39
From the Non-European Press 40
No. 5 4.2.71
The Week in Brief 41
South West Africa Plebiscite Offer 44
The Immorality Act 46
Dean of Johannesburg 48
Sunday Observance 49
Blacks on their Own 50
From the Non-European Press 50
No. 6 11.2.71
The Week in Brief 52
Right Swing claimed 52
Immorality Act Debate 55
New Censorship Powers 56
Reservation in Building Industry 59
Erosion of Parliament 59
Moderate Growth Rate defended 60
SWA One Man One Vote 60
Case of Dr Oppenheimer 61
More Bantu in Cities 61
From the Non-European Press 61
No. 7 18.2.71
The Week in Brief 63
In Parliament ... 63
[Note: Pages 65 and 66 are missing with loss of text]
Whites must not be too protected 68
Population Changes 69
Censorship 70
Queen Juliana’s Gift 71
Church-State Collision 72
Message of Excelsior 72
Division among HNP rebels 73
From the Non-European Press 73
No. 8 25.2.71
The Week in Brief 75
The Direction of the Government 75
Arms for South Africa 75
Building Workers Protest 76
NG Kerk Censorship Support 77
Mr Gerdner – Question Mark 79
Progressive Party Conference 79
Queen Juliana 82
UP Leader attacks NUSAS 83
Afrikaans Press Merger 84
Warning against High Growth Rate 84
Political Christianity or Christian Politics 85
From the Non-European Press 85
No. 9 4.3.71
The Week in Brief 87
For or Against Change 87
Police Raids 88
Mr Vorster on Apartheid 91
Development of Homelands 93
Arms for South Africa 94
Ashé Visa Refusal 95
Immorality 96
Censorship Criticism 96
From the Non-European Press 96 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 132

No. 10 11.3.71
The Week in Brief 98
Bantu Homelands Legislation 98
Necessary Evil of White Assistance 100
WCC may be admitted 101
Non-White Labour 103
Student Outlook at Stellenbosch 105
Oldest Newspaper 105
Publications Board 105
Immorality Act 106
More Patience with Emigrants 106
From the Non-European Press 107
No. 11 18.3.71
The Week in Brief 109
First Round lost 109
Railway Budget 109
Port Elizabeth Riot 110
Bishop’s Arrest on Pass Offence 112
Censorship Legislation 114
Sobukwe Exit Permit 114
No Change in UP Policy 115
NP Leaders fear of BOSS Allegiance 115
Evasion no Use: Job Reservation 116
Dr Treurnicht 116
Confusion on Coloureds 117
Sunday Observance 118
Arch-Racialist 118
From the Non-European Press 119
No. 12 25.3.71
The Week in Brief 120
The Rising Price Spiral 120
Workers in Rebellion 121
African View of Whites 122
More on Bishop Zulu 123
Dialogue with Africa 124
BOSS Key Issue 125
Heading for Clash on Coloureds 126
Challenge on BOSS 126
Intimidation Pattern 126
Decisive Year 126
Ante-Government Campaign 127
Green Light for Coloureds 127
Censorship Bill and SWA 128
Menace of Pop Music 128
The Bantu and Afrikaans 128
From the Non-European Press 129
No. 13 1.4.71
The Week in Brief 131
Prime Minister's Press Conference 131
Avoid Catastrophe 131
SA Foundation Congress 132
Challenge Race Policies 135
Back to 1933? 136
English-Afrikaans Co-operation 136
Dialogue with Africa 137
Outward and Internal Policy 138
Coloureds: NP Debate 138
From the Non-European Press 140
No. 14 8.4.71
The Week in Brief 141
The Budget 141
Non-Whites in Springbok Cricket Team 142
Dialogue with Africa 144
NP dissension on Coloureds? 145
Prime Minister's Press Conference 145
Best Hope of Stability 146
Apartheid and the Bible 146
From the Non-European Press 146
No. 15 15.4.71
The Week in Brief 148
Sport in Dispute Again 148
Apartheid Survey 150
SABRA and Coloureds 151
Bantu Homelands, Coloured Citizenship 152
Security Attack on NUSAS 152
Coloured Homeland 153
Mineworkers under Scrutiny 153
White Artisans and Adaptation 154
State against Churches 154
From the Non-European Press 154
No. 16 22.4.71
The Week in Brief 156
United Party to allow Multi-Racial Teams 156
Bantustan Demands 159
Die Vanderland New Format 162
By-Elections 162
The Future of the Coloureds 163
Petty Apartheid Correspondence 164
From the Non-European Press 165
No. 17 29.4.71
The Week in Brief 166
Negotiations with President Kaunda 166
Multi-National Sport Plan 169
Witbank Result 171
New Security arrangements 172
Coloured Policy 173
From the Non-European Press 175
No. 18 6.5.71
The Week in Brief 177
Television for South Africa 177
Sport and Colour 181
Houphouet-Boigny Visit 182
Dr Treurnicht nominated 183
Coloureds: Middle Way 184
UP Trouble alleged 185
DRC for Special Censorship Court 185
From the Non-European Press 186
No. 19 13.5.71
The Week in Brief 187
Drug Legislation 187
Waterberg and Dr Treurnicht 188
The Future of the Coloured People 192 [continued on next fiche]
FICHE 133
Students disturbed 193
Handelsinstitute Congress 194
Alleged United Party split 194
TV and Afrikaans Newspapers 195
Attack on English Press 195
From the Non-European Press 196
No. 20 19.5.71
The Week in Brief 198
Waterberg By-Election 198
Woord En Daad and Government Policy 201
Pressure on United Party 202
Anti-Drug Legislation 203
US and SA 203
Black Power at Bantu Colleges 204
New Party 204
Free State Blacker 204
From the Non-European Press 205
No. 21 27.5.71
The Week in Brief 206
Labour Party Aid for Terrorists 206
President Nixon on isolating SA 207
Visits from African Leaders, etc. 208
OAU Member 209
Republic Day 209
Development of Homelands 209
United Party on Coloureds 210
Coloured Labour Party Policy 211
Nationalist Pro Resignation 211
Loss of NP Votes – Over-Optimism 212
HNP Candidate attacks Mr Vorster 212
Abuse of Justice 213
Debate on Censorship 213
Protestant Christian Education 214
From the Non-European Press 214
No. 22 3.6.71
The Week in Brief 216
Prime Minister warns on Red Brigade 216

103
No. 27 8.7.71
The Week in Brief 270
Coloured Homelands 270
Rugby Tour 276
Father Cosmos Desmond 277
SA Mirages Breakthrough 277
NUSAS Congress 278
From the Non-European Press 279

No. 28 15.7.71
The Week in Brief 280
Coloureds in the Senate 280
Coloured Homelands Debate 281
A Lost Leader 284
Tennis Breakthrough 285
Rugby in Australia 285
Sport Policy and Peace 286
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 286
FAK Congress 286
Indian Business Men 287
Akademie Congress 288 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 134

English Academy 289
From the Non-European Press 289

No. 29 22.7.71
The Week in Brief 291
Multiracial Dialogue in South Africa 291
The Future of the Coloureds 294
Springbok Team in Australia 297
Young Progressives Conference 298
Little Time, warns Gerdner 298
Commonwealth of Homelands 299
South Africa compared to Nazi Germany 299
From the Non-European Press 300

No. 30 29.7.71
The Week in Brief 302
Rethinking on Race Politics 302
Homeland Tour 302
The Time Factor & Gerdner’s Statement 302
Dissension in the NP 304
UP Coloured Policy 306
Equal Rights: De Villiers 307
Protest in Pretoria 307
On the Sport Front 308
Nixon Visit to China 309
Trade with Africa 309
Chief Buthelezi and Transvaal 310
From the Non-European Press 311

No. 31 5.8.71
The Week in Brief 312
Meeting of the Homeland Leaders 312
Political Rights for Coloureds 314
Mr Vorster on Coloureds and Homelands 318
Mr Kachingwe’s Policy 319
United Party Merger in SWA 321
From the Non-European Press 321
No. 32 12.8.71
The Week in Brief 323
Integration, Homelands, Parallel Development 323
Mr P W Botha on Coloureds 327
Trial of Dean of Johannesburg 329
Gerdener warns Churches 329
Equality for Indians 330
SA own Victim: Prog Leader 330
Police Monument 331
Hostile Visitors 332
Overseas Funds for Homelands Plea 332
From the Non-European Press 332
No. 33 19.8.71
The Week in Brief 334
United States Gold Freeze 334
Dr Banda arrives 334
Diggs Visit 336
Non-White Labour 338
Adjustments 342
NP Statement on Coloureds 342
United Party and Homelands 344
From the Non-European Press 345
No. 34 26.8.71
The Week in Brief 347
Banda: New Era 347
Congressman Diggs 351
United Party Policy 351
South West Africa NP Congress 355
No Integration: Dr Mulder 356
Mr Vorster and SWA Religious Leaders 356
No Mixed Cricket 357
From the Non-European Press 357
No. 35 2.9.71
The Week in Brief 359
United Party and the Homelands 359
[Note: Page 364 is missing, with loss of text]
National Convention of All Races 365
Overriding Government Bankrupt: Mr Vorster 366
Rapporttryer Chief against Vorster Policy 366
Dialogue Elsewhere 367
State Banquets 367
Something Wrong: Dr Hertzog 367
New Periodical 368
The Urban African 368
From the Non-European Press 368
No. 36 9.9.71
The Week in Brief 370
The Urban African 370
South Africa must choose: Mr Vorster 374
Jeugbond Congresses 375
Accept Coloured Policy 376
Progressive Breakthrough Claim 376
Opportunities for Coloureds 376
Funds for Israel: Ban lifted 377
Challenge to Whites 377
Banks and Equal Pay 378
Moslems and Religious Instruction 378
Council Against Communism dies 378
Pro Veritate Editor 378
Contact Necessary 379
From the Non-European Press 379
No. 37 16.9.71
The Week in Brief 381
Cricket Tour cancellation 381
Mr Vorster’s Five Years 384 [continued on next fiche]
FICHE 135
United Party and Bantustans 385
Soweto Race Attitude Survey 388
UP and NP must co-operate – Gerdener 388
Bigger Non-White Contribution 399
From the Non-European Press 390
No. 38 23.9.71
The Week in Brief 391
United Party Transvaal Congress 391
Free State National Party Congress 393
Sport Separation 395
Urban Bantu 395
African Attitudes 396
Coloured Issues flares up Again 396
University of Port Elizabeth 396
From the Non-European Press 398
No. 39 30.9.71
The Week in Brief 399
United Party: Policy Change or Re-emphasis? 399
Springbok Captain against Racism in Sport 404
Nude Statues in Pretoria 404
Choice 405
From the Non-European Press 405
No. 40 7.10.71
The Week in Brief 407
Conflict in United Party denied 407
Transvaal NP Congress 409
Ivory Coast Visit 409
Young South Africans Conference 410
Homelands for Coloureds 410
Municipal Rights 411
Appeal to Entrepreneurs on Homelands 412
Atheist Immigrants 412
Imam Haroun 412
From the Non-European Press 413
No. 41 14.10.71
The Week in Brief 415
Border Episode 415
Transvaal National Party Congress 418
African Advancement on Mines 419
Afrikaners and Immigrants: Dr Mulder 419
No Great Change needed in UP 419
Iman Affair 420
Dialogue with Africa 420
105
Afrikanerstan 510
Coloured Businessmen 510
From the Non-European Press 511
No. 51 23.12.71
The Week in Brief 512
Day of the Covenant 512
Ovambo Strike 515
The Press under Criticism 516
Dr Hertzog’s New Year Message 526
Devaluation 517
Dr Piet Meyer 517
Non-Whites in White Railway Jobs 517
Worthwhile Suggestions 518
From the Non-European Press 518

1972
No. 1 13.1.72
The Week in Brief 1
New Year Messages 1
Devaluation 2
Sport 3
Ovambo Strike in South West Africa 4
Non-Whites on Railways 5
Bantu Labour (Contributors) Bill 5
Book on Dr Verwoerd 6
Treatment of Servants 6
Buurman 6
More Land for Homelands 6
Challenge at Brakpan 7
Death at the Frontier 7
Education and Conscience Clause 7
From the Non-European Press 8
No. 2 20.1.72
The Week in Brief 10
Zulus and Oath of Allegiance 10
Ovambo Strike 11
The Sports Scene 12
Rhodesia: Incidents 13
Mr Diggs Unwelcome 13
Setback in Ghana 14
The Wage Gap 14
African Shunters 15
Brakpan By-Election 15
Black Police at Border 15
Woord En Daad: Principles 15
To the Point 16
Appreciation to Mr M C Botha 16
From the Non-European Press 16
No. 3 27.1.72
The Week in Brief 18
Dark Clouds over Rhodesia 18
Urban Bantu 20
Tensions building up 21
Ovambo Agreement Precedent 22
Brakpan 23
Government Policy for Coloureds 23
Black Police at Border 24
Pamphlets at Schools 24
From the Non-European Press 25
No. 4 3.2.72
The Week in Brief 27
Opening of Parliament 27
No Confidence Debate 27
Coalition Talk 28
Situation of Rhodesia 29
Ovamboland 30
SABC, Rapport & Urban African 32
Multinational 33
Workers bleeding South Africa 33
Group Areas and Homes for Indians 33
From the Non-European Press 34
No. 5 10.2.72
The Week in Brief 35
No Confidence Debate 35
Bureau of State Security Commission 36
Concession to Urban Africans 37
Investigation into Organisations 38
Coalition Rumours 39
Japanese in South Africa 42
From the Non-European Press 42
No. 6 17.2.72
The Week in Brief 44
Nationalist MPC joins up 44
Security Chief Interviews 44
Probe into Race Relations, Christian Institute etc. 45
Land for Homelands 46
Dr Waldheim’s Visit 47
Coalition Rumours 47
Immigrants not needed 49
Mr Smith castigated 49
Letter on Timol 50
Urban Bantu 50
Catholic Bishops on Apartheid 50
Concerned about Woord En Daad 50
Van Blerk rejoin National Party 51
From the Non-European Press 51
FICHE 137

No. 7 24.2.72
The Week in Brief 53
The Brakpan and Gezina By-Elections 53
The Van Blerk Episode 55
Coalition Reports 57
Hervormde Kerk on Education Legislation 58
Progressive Platteland Tour 59
Complaint against Calvinists 59
Future of Rhodesia 59
Uncertainty in Afrikaner 59
Woord En Daad on Stereotyped Terms 60
From the Non-European Press 61

107
No. 8 2.3.72
The Week in Brief 62
By-Election Results 62
Van Blerk: Further Repercussions 65
New Government not Enough: Prog Leader 66
What the UP is saying 67
UP and Communism 67
Immigration Policy 68
The New Afrikaner 69
State Security and HNP 69
No. 9 9.3.72
The Week in Brief 70
Municipal Elections: Significance 70
Outshoorn By-Election 73
Coalition will accelerate: HNP 74
Dr Waldheim's Visit 75
How Sincere? 76
From the Non-European Press 77
No. 10 16.3.72
The Week in Brief 78
Dr Waldheim's Visit 78
Political Post-Mortems 79
Outshoorn By-Election 80
The 70 Decade 81
State and Church 81
The Railway Budget 82
Non-Whites in Banks 83
Ster sold Again 84
Prosperity and Snobbism 84
From the Non-European Press 85
No. 11 23.3.72
The Week in Brief 87
Outshoorn By-Election 87
UP hate Afrikaner Claim 88
Brakpan Municipal Election 89
Danish Grant to Terrorists 89
President Fouche in Malawi 90
Detainees Flight over Border 90
Non-White Blood 90
Farmers being eliminated 91
NP must drop Load 91
Youth Preparedness 92
NP and Youth 93
Rapportryers and NP 93
From the Non-European Press 94
No. 12 28.3.72
The Week in Brief 95
Tennis Integration 95
The Oudshoorn By-Election 95
Growing Dissatisfaction 97
Labour and Colour 97
More Criticism of NP urged 97
Origin of Afrikaner 98
Coloureds and Afrikaners 98
South African and Afrikaner 98
Probe deplored 98
Lessons of Rhodesia 99
Death of Dr Nkomo 99
Sharpville Commemoration at Wits University 99
From the Non-European Press 99
No. 13 13.4.72
The Week in Brief 101
The Budget 101
Potgietersrus Rail Disaster 102
Non-White Police to Border 104
Nationhood Challenge: Mr Gerdener 104
Minister of Economics 104
Aspersions on Prime Minister? 105
Queries about Nationalism 106
Trap: English Press 106
Progressive Conference 107
Faster Growth 107
Profit Motive 107
From the Non-European Press 108
No. 14 20.4.72
The Week in Brief 109
Afrikaner Hate Campaign 109
Deeds not Words: Mr Vorster 112
New Afrikaanse Studentbond 113
Oudshoorn 113
Dean of Johannesburg acquitted 114
Conscience Clause at the University of OFS 115
Afrikaner and Race Mixture 115
From the Non-European Press 115
No. 15 27.4.72
The Week in Brief 117
Oudshoorn 117
Eyes on Brakpan 121
Accept Homelands: Sunday Times 121
New Nasionale Pers Daily in Transvaal 121
Jacobsen Trial 121
Land for Homelands 122
Dr Treurnicht Broederbond Chairman? 123
Difficulty in Progressives 123
1972 Political Scene: Woord En Daad 123
From the Non-European Press 124
No. 16 4.5.72
The Week in Brief 125
The Fight for Brakpan 125
After Oudtshoorn 127
Hate out of Hand 127
Wits University under Attack 128
Dr Treurnicht 130
Broederbond attacked 130
Gerdener-Viljoen 131
Mr Vorster: Chairman, Persfonds 131
DRC Synods 131
From the Non-European Press 132
No. 17 10.5.72
The Week in Brief 133
Modification of Federal Plan alleged 133
Wits University 135

108
Trouble at Turffloop 136
Christian Education 136
Oudtshoorn – Bridge between Parties 137
Mr Gerdener on White Unity 137
Hate not the Recipe 138
Die Brug 138
From the Non-European Press 138
No. 18 18.5.72
The Week in Brief 140
Brakpan By-Election 140
Hate Campaign moderated 141
Indoctrination Allegations 142
Verligtes – Where? 142
Deportation of Student Editor 142
Trouble at Turffloop 143
Scope and Publications Board 143
Nationalism and Communism 144
UP Government: What Hope? 144
Worst Immigrants 144
Super Czar 144
Coalition Link 144
From the Non-European Press 145
No. 19 25.5.72
The Week in Brief 146
Brakpan Election 146 [continued on next fiche]

FICHE 138

Hate Campaign 149
Publications Board Enquiry 149
Broederbond Membership 150
Seek Agreement: Rapportryers Ex-Chief 151
Afrikaners in Rhodesia 151
HNP Policy 151
Urban Bantu 151
Alexandria Hostels Petition 152
Up-NP Strategy: Japie Basson 152
From the Non-European Press 152
No. 20 1.6.72
The Week in Brief 154
Hijacking Episode 154
Rhodesian Proposals: no 154
Land Purchases in Ciskei 156
Mrs Suzman attacked 156
Mulder vs Treurnicht 157
Urgent Problems 157
Withdraw from Schools 157
Dear Payment 158
Publication Board: HNP 158
Young Afrikaners 158
Multiracialism and Multinationalism 158
Liberalism and Reds 159
From the Non-European Press 160
No. 21 8.6.72
The Week in Brief 161
Student Demonstrations 161

Carnage at Tel Aviv 164
Republic Day 165
UP Non-White Policy 166
Tswana Homeland 167
Afrikaners Less because of Immigration 167
The Afrikaner’s Burden 167
Coalition New Phase 167
Military Magazine Article 168
Cape Nationalists and Transvaal Paper 168
Road to Disunity 168
From the Non-European Press 168
No. 22 15.6.72
The Week in Brief 170
Student Demonstrations 170
Investigate Broederbond 176
Youth and Synod 176
Youth Preparedness 177
Nazism 178
From the Non-European Press 178
No. 23 2.6.72
The Week in Brief 180
Mr Gerdener’s Resignation 180
Abuse no Use: Prime Minister 183
Stronger Crosswinds 183
Afrikaner Hate 181
Intolerance 184
Police and Students: HNP 184
Kwazulu Consolidation 185
Indoctrination 186
Television Plans 187
Sunday Transactions 187
From the Non-European Press 188
No. 24 29.6.72
The Week in Brief 190
Challenge to Youth: Premier 190
Madagascar breaks Relations with South Africa 190
Timol Inquest Finding 191
Mr Gerdener 192
Rev Malan’s warning 194
Ovambo Self-Rule 194
Call for Afrikaans 194
Student Protests 195
History Textbook 196
Over-Full Prisons 196
Fairer Wage Structure 197
Afrikaners stand Together 197
From the Non-European Press 198
No. 25 8.7.72
The Week in Brief 199
Rand floats 199
Mr Vorster on Student Protest 199
Afrikaanse Studentbond Congress 200
Pre 203
Mr Gerdener 203
United Party Shake-up urged 205
Mr Mitchell and Police  206
Language, Nation, Land  206
From the Non-European Press  207
No. 26  13.7.72
The Week in Brief  209
Change in the United Party  209
Young Progressives Conference  211
Broederbond Changes  212
Secret English Onslaught  212
Church and the Youth  213
Pretoria Students and Secret Bodies  213
NUSAS Survival at Stake  214
A Vicious War  214
New Red Tactics  214
SASO Conference  215
Censorship  215
Yes-Men  215
From the Non-European Press  216
No. 27  20.7.72
The Week in Brief  217
Verligte Power  217
Democratic Nominations for US Presidency  219
SA in Davis Cup  219
NUSAS Conference  220
No Whites  220
Black, not Non-Whitie  220
New Black Movement  221
UCM dissolves  222
Black and White Student Exchange  222
Multiracial Conference  222
New Cabinet  222
Student Unrest – One-Sided Reaction  222
Wage Gap and Equality  223
From the Non-European Press  223
No. 28  27.7.72
The Week in Brief  225
Stirrings within the United Party  225
Student Debate  227
Liberal Hypocrisy  227
Administrator and Neighbourly Love  228
Study Outside South Africa  229
Violence in Church & State  229
Rich Afrikaners  230
Not Concerned  230
Coloured Council By-Election  230
Christian Education Association of SA  230
Banning and Deportation  231
Students and Cathedrals  232
From the Non-European Press  233
No. 29  3.8.72
The Week in Brief  234
Cabinet Changes  234
Verligte Take-Over Plan in UP Claim  235
Race Relations Resettlement Camps: Bantustans – Graaff  237
Minister and Universities  237
Economic Shift  239
Losing in City  239
Estrangement of Bantu from Afrikaner  239
From the Non-European Press  240
No. 30  10.8.72
The Week in Brief  241
Cape NP Congress  241
Progressive Party Symposium  241
Cabinet Changes  242
Mr Muller and UCT  244
United Party Dispute  244 [continued on next fiche]
FICHE 139
NP Strong but Support decreasing  246
Afrikaans Studentbonde (ASB) criticised  246
English Churches attacked for Racism  247
Progs to contest By-Elections  247
Contradictions in Policy  247
Pay Bantu Higher Wages; Minister  248
From the Non-European Press  248
No. 31  17.8.72
The Week in Brief  249
By-Elections  249
Cape NP Congress  249
United Party Free State Congress  251
No Solutions Yet  252
Bantustan Demands  253
Homelands and Party Strategies  255
Freedom and Limitations: Dr Mulder  255
Security Chiefs reproved  255
Afrikaans Morning Paper for Pretoria  255
Progs Independent  256
Dream World  256
From the Non-European Press  256
No. 32  24.8.72
The Week in Brief  258
Transvaal United Party Leadership  258
Progressive Congress  259
Progressives and United Party  262
National Party and Academics  262
Mr Vorster on Land Demands  263
South Africa's Defence  264
HNP Setbacks  264
Attitude to Immigrants  265
Indoctrination, Neutralisation or Differentiation?  265
From the Non-European Press  265
No. 33  31.8.72
The Week in Brief  267
Transvaal UP Congress  267
The Mini-Election  270
UP Federation Plan  270
Olympic Expulsion  272
Double Standards  273
Buthelezi Appeal to Jews  273
Motions on Universities  273
110