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Malan[edit] Main article: The Herenigde Nasionale Party , with Hertzog its leader, pushed the issue into the background. After Hertzog left the party, however, it became republican. When the NP came to power in making it the first all-Afrikaner cabinet since , there were two uppermost priorities that it was determined to fulfill: Find a solution to the racial problem. Lead South Africa to independence and republican status. Between and , Prime Ministers D. Divided loyalty, they felt, was holding South Africa back. Unfortunately for its republicans, however, the NP was not in a strong parliamentary position. Although it held a majority only five of seats, a large number of these were in rural constituencies, which had far fewer voters than urban constituencies. The United Party held a ,vote lead. It did not, therefore, have the groundswell of public support that it needed to win a referendum, and only when it had that majority on its side could a referendum be held on the republican matter. However, with a small seating majority and a total vote-tally minority, it was impossible for now for Malan and his ardently republican nats to bring about a republic constitutionally. In the interim, the NP would have to consolidate itself and not antagonise the British. Many English-speakers did not want to break their ties with the United Kingdom. When this was granted the following year by the London Declaration , [5] it roused a great deal of debate in South Africa between the pro-republican NP and the anti-republican UP under Strauss. What it meant was that, even if South Africa did become a republic, it did not automatically have to sever all of its ties with the UK and the British Commonwealth. This gained the movement further support from the English-speaking populace, which was less worried about being isolated; and the republican ideal looked closer than ever to being fulfilled. Although he could not yet make South Africa a republic, Malan could prepare the country for this eventuality. In his term of office, from to , Malan took a number of steps to break ties with the UK: The South African Citizenship Act was passed in Before, South Africans had not been citizens but rather subjects of the British Crown, regardless of whether they were permanent residents or had only recently migrated. The Act established South African citizenship. Before, British citizens needed a mere two years in the country to qualify as South Africans; now, however, a British immigrant was just like any other immigrant: It was believed that this could well have an influence on a republican referendum. The Act ensured that the British immigrant population would not reduce the Afrikaner majority. In the right of appeal to the British Privy Council in London was revoked. Malan was a crucial player in the move to get the word "British" taken away from "British Commonwealth". This change was taken as affirmation of the fact that all member countries were voluntary and equal members. This endorsed the idea of Afrikaner leadership. This was meant to indicate that the South African upper house had bequeathed the title upon her. The ballot votes saw the NP fortify its position considerably, winning comfortably but still falling well short of the clear majority it sought: Strijdom[edit] Main article: Strijdom Malan retired in , at the age of eighty. The two succession contenders were J. Malan personally preferred the latter and, indeed, recommended him. Malan and Strijdom had clashed frequently over the years, particularly on the question of whether a republican South Africa should be inside or outside the Commonwealth. Strijdom, however, had the support of Verwoerd and Ben Schoeman , and he was eventually voted in as Prime Minister. Strijdom was a passionate and outspoken Afrikaner and republican, and he wholeheartedly supported apartheid. He was completely intolerant towards non-Afrikaners and liberal ideas, utterly determined to maintain white rule, with zero compromise. Known as the "Lion of the North", Strijdom made few changes to his cabinet and pursued with vigour the policy of apartheid. He also took several other steps to make South Africa less dependent on Britain: In , the South African parliament became recognised as the highest authority. In , the maritime base in Simonstown was reassigned from the command of the British Royal Navy to that of the South African government. The British had occupied Simonstown since Swart, another staunch Afrikaner republican, became the new Governor-General. Anti-republican South Africans recognised the shift and

distancing from Britain, and the UP grew increasingly anxious, doing all that it could to persuade Parliament to retain Commonwealth links. The latter, devoted to the cause of a republican South Africa, was the new Prime Minister. Verwoerd, a former Minister of Native Affairs, played a leading role in the institution of the apartheid system. Under his leadership, the NP solidified its control over South African apartheid-era politics. To gain support of the English-identified population of South Africa, Verwoerd appointed several English-speakers to his cabinet. He also cited the radical political movements elsewhere in the African continent as vindication of his belief that black and white nationalism could not work within the same system. Verwoerd also presented the NP as the party best equipped to deal with the widely perceived threat of communism. In the elections the party won out of the seats in Parliament. By , however, much of the South African electorate were calling for withdrawal from the Commonwealth and the establishment of South Africa as a republic. It was decided that a republican referendum was to be held in October. International circumstances made the referendum a growing necessity. In the aftermath of the World War II , former British colonies in Africa and Asia were gaining independence and publicising the ills of apartheid. Commonwealth members were determined to isolate South Africa. There were numerous internal factors that had paved the way for and may be viewed as influences on the result: The assertion that economic growth and a relaxation of racial tensions could be achieved only through a republic; The Sharpeville Massacre ; The attempted assassination of Verwoerd; and, most importantly, The census, which revealed that there were more Afrikaners in the country than English, thus almost guaranteeing the NP victory in a republican referendum. The opposition accused Verwoerd of trying to break from the Commonwealth and the west, thus losing South Africa all of its trade preferences. The NP, however, launched a vigorously enthusiastic political campaign, with widely advertised public meetings. The opposition found it very difficult to fight for the preservation of British links. There were numerous pro-republican arguments: It would link more closely the two European language groups. The monarchy was essentially a British one, with no roots in South Africa. South Africans desired a home-grown Head of State. A republic symbolised a sovereign-free and independent state. South Africa would be able to approach its internal problems more realistically, since they would be strictly "South African" problems to be solved by South Africans rather than foreign intervention. It would clear the misconception amongst many blacks in South Africa that foreigners had the final say in their affairs. There were also, of course, numerous arguments against the establishment of a republic: It could lead to a forced withdrawal from the Commonwealth. It could lead to isolation from allies. The NP had supposedly not given one good reason for the change. The ruling party already had twelve years to bring about national unity but had only driven the two white sects further apart. A republic could be established by a majority of just one vote. This did not entail unity nor, indeed, democracy. Countries did not generally change their form of government unless the present form was inefficient or unstable due to internal strife or hardship. Nothing like this had happened in white South Africa, where so many were so content. On 5 October , It was a narrow victory for the republicans. However, a considerable number of Afrikaners did vote against the measure. The few blacks, Indians and Coloureds allowed to vote were decidedly against the measure. English-speakers who voted for a republic had done so on condition that their cultural heritage be safeguarded. Many had associated a republic with the survival of the white South Africans. Nevertheless, the referendum was a significant victory for Afrikaner nationalism as British political and cultural influence waned in South Africa. However, one question remained after the referendum: Withdrawal from the Commonwealth would likely alienate English-speakers and damage relations with many other countries. Former British colonies such as India, Pakistan and Ghana were all republics within the Commonwealth, and Verwoerd announced that his would follow suit "if possible". The constitution was finished in April. The State President would have rather little political power, serving more as the ceremonial head of state. The political power was to lie with the Prime Minister head of government. The Republic of South Africa would also have its own monetary system, employing Rands and cents. Some member countries warned that, unless South Africa was expelled, they would themselves pull out of the organisation. Verwoerd discarded the censure, arguing that his Commonwealth cohorts had no right to question and criticise the domestic affairs of his country. On this issue, he even had the support of his parliamentary opposition. Thus, on 15 March , ostensibly to Britain an awkward

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decision and causing a split within the Commonwealth, but more likely to avoid further condemnation and embarrassment, Verwoerd withdrew his application and announced that South Africa would become a republic outside the Commonwealth. On his homecoming, he was met with a rapturous reception.

2: - National Party Platforms, Vol. I by Donald Johnson

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3: National Party (South Africa) - Wikipedia

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