

EUB-3 Springbok
Legion

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SPRINGBOK LEGION

PHONE 33-0975
TELE. "LEGION"
P. O. BOX 4088



5, SOMERSET HOUSE
110, FOX STREET
JOHANNESBURG

15th June, 1953.

Dear Friend,

Urgent and Important.

The Springbok Legion is faced with a difficult decision. It is for you, the members, to decide.

The process of fascism has reached a stage in our unhappy country where it is becoming increasingly difficult for an organisation of the limited character of the Legion i.e. an exclusively Ex-service organisation, to make any effective impact on the situation. Indeed, in the circumstances it is even uncertain if such an organisation can hope to survive.

It is now almost impossible for us to achieve anything worth while in respect of even the specifically ex-servicemen's demands. The aims and objects of the Legion, our aspirations for ex-soldiers, economic, political and social, are now inextricably tied up with the fate of democracy in South Africa. Increasingly over the last few years the emphasis of our efforts have had to be directed towards the struggle for democracy.

It is necessary now for us to recognise and accept the fact that the issue before our country and ourselves is that of total democracy or total fascism and to consider how to make the maximum contribution possible to a victory for total democracy. The strategic need in the struggle against fascism is to mobilise the people in active opposition to the fascists and their program and to prepare the people for decisive action to defeat the fascists. In the situation which obtains in South Africa, where the Non-white peoples are being effectively mobilised by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress, the need is for a national organisation among whites, capable of mobilising all who are prepared to wage a militant extra-parliamentary struggle for Democracy in South Africa, and who will accept the Non-white organisations and peoples as allies.

To meet this need at the moment there are the Springbok Legion, the Congress of Democrats and the Democratic League. None of these for various reasons is national in the sense that it has branches established throughout the country. All of them are acting independently. There is a duplication of effort. All of them are relatively weak.

It is obvious that it is in the interest of all that we should come together in one organisation.

In the realisation of this and conscious of the fact that there are groups and individuals in many towns and cities who subscribe to the principles and aims and objects of the three organisations who could be drawn in, the Legion's National Executive Committee has set in motion discussions with the object of establishing one National organisation.

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The N.E.C. and the Johannesburg Branch Committee have discussed this matter in numerous joint meetings. The members of these committees have tried to see the picture objectively, putting aside a very natural sentimental attachment to the organisation we know as the Springbok Legion. We have reminded ourselves that the Springbok Legion was brought into existence for specific purposes and we have always recognized that the time might come when we would voluntarily disband it. Today, however, we believe the time has come, not for us to disband, but for us to reform to meet a new and urgent situation.

We wish to make it clear that the action contemplated arises not from any sense of defeatism but from our understanding of the needs of the situation, our assessment of the progressive forces, our determination to continue the struggle for democracy in South Africa and our confidence in ultimate victory.

The final decision, of course, is yours. The National Executive Committee proposes to organise meetings in the immediate future of all the members in the major centres to enable the proposals to be discussed and voted on. A national conference will be convened in due course. In the meantime to enable us to make a preliminary survey we would welcome expressions of opinion from members individually. If you agree or disagree to the principle, please indicate so in the appropriate section of the tear-off provided below and post it back to us immediately.

Yours fraternally,

Jack Hodgson

National Secretary.

The National Secretary, P.O. Box 4088, Johannesburg.

(Delete whichever is not appropriate)

I agree to the principle of the action proposed.

I disagree with the principle of the action proposed.

Date :

Signature:.....Address:.....

Wynstuk No.
Gekry by *W. P. V. Falpe* *Office No. 2*
Deur *W. P. V. Falpe*
To *Table on western side of office. Mr. Molapo*
Datum *27-9-57*
Verwagings No. *P. 2 (K)* 6292

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P. O. Box 4088,
JOHANNESBURG.
16th July 1953.

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Dear

The past year has seen a political development which has overshadowed the bickerings of the Parliamentary parties and has demanded from every European a re-assessment of his political position. Through the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign the non-European peoples have stated in uncompromising form their demand to be treated as free citizens in the country of their birth. The time for evasion of this demand has passed: it requires an answer.

The Nationalist answer is clear: "The Government has no intention of repealing the long-existing laws differentiating between European and Bantu", wrote Dr. Malan to Dr. Moroka in 1952. The Nationalists intend to meet non-European demands with forcible repression, to close off the few channels of peaceful protest which still remain to the non-Europeans. Trusting recklessly in the strength of their army and police, they will build up an ever greater mass of bitter frustration and anti-white resentment until they drag South Africa down to destruction.

As for the United Party, they like to pretend that there is no problem. When pressed sufficiently hard for an answer, they will be found on the side of the Nationalists. People who believe that the United Party can be "liberalised" have been working hard in that direction for many years. The results are nil.

South African democrats must, then, seek a solution outside the present Parliamentary parties. The Liberal Party represents an attempt at such a solution. We suggest that this solution is fundamentally unsound, because it is still based on an attempt to reconcile white supremacy with democracy. The Liberals seek to appease the non-Europeans with a few concessions and, at the same time, not to run too far ahead of European opinion. The result is a policy acceptable to no substantial part of the population. For the implementation of their policy, the Liberals rely on conventional parliamentary methods and offer no part in their struggle to the disfranchised masses, who are mobilised behind the non-European Congresses.

We are convinced there is no future in this approach because there is only one force which is capable of achieving democracy for South Africa. That force is the non-European people. Movements in the past which have attempted to compromise with white supremacy have not only failed to extend democracy, but have failed to preserve the rights of the privileged Europeans from the attacks of the Nationalist Party.

Democratic rights are increasingly being whittled down and we can anticipate an intensification of this process. Because it is their declared policy and because they are a minority government, the Nationalists have no choice but to follow increasingly repressive and totalitarian policies. All anti-Nationalist South Africans must be affected, both white and non-white, in our political rights, our civil liberties and even in our economic freedom, since - like Hitler and Goering - the Nationalists' ultimate aim is to control the economic wealth of South Africa.

And this process will continue as long as European democrats are afraid to accept as a political ally the /force

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force that has the potential strength to bring about the total defeat of fascism. The non-European people, organised in their responsible and representative national congresses, are that force.

What is urgently needed today is a body of Europeans who will ally themselves with these organisations - a body which will not seek to bargain with or buy off the non-Europeans, but which will march with them to the attainment of their legitimate democratic demands. Only in such a body can Europeans make a real contribution to democracy and racial peace in South Africa.

There are at present bodies which are working to fulfil part or all of this function. On the Rand the Congress of Democrats has come into existence as a European ally of the non-white Congresses. Among ex-servicemen the Springbok Legion has adopted much the same standpoint.

We feel that the time has now come for these organisations, together with those who think like them but at present belong to no organisation, to devote their energies to founding one nation-wide body which will represent all those Europeans who believe uncompromisingly in democracy.

A national conference will shortly be held to constitute such a national body. The precise principles and structure of the organisation will, of course, be determined by the conference. As a basis for discussion, however, we suggest that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly, should be the new organisation's statement of principle.

The ranks of the organisation will, we suggest, be open to all races, but its aim will be to organise those people, principally but not exclusively Europeans, who are not catered for by the existing democratic Congresses.

Your town will shortly be visited by organisers for the conference, who will amplify the information contained in this letter. In the meantime, we ask you to organise discussions of the principles involved, to contact other people who might be interested, and to prepare to send a representative delegation to the forthcoming conference, which it is hoped to arrange for the end of September or beginning of October.

We shall be glad to receive your comments on this proposed new organisation and some indication from you of the possibilities of your being able to organise a group of supporters who will send a delegation to the Conference from your area.

Yours sincerely,

(A. Fischer, Chairman, Congress of Democrats)

(C. G. Williams, Chairman, Springbok Legion)

Bewysstuk No.....
Gekry by.....
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Datum.....
Verstuur No.....

Office No 2

N. N. O. L. A. P.

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