

The Saracen Republic

South Africa is about to become a Verwoerd Republic. What sort of a Republic is this likely to be, if its first President is to be escorted by a guard of Saracens on his inaugural drive through the streets of Pretoria?

The present Government has completely lost the confidence of the Non-European people of our country. In addition, more and more Europeans are realising how bankrupt the apartheid policies of Dr. Verwoerd are. Clergymen, teachers, businessmen, industrialists and many others have already urged a change of policy so that the symbol of the new Republic does not become a Saracen.

VERWOERD'S BLIND EYE

If ever there was a time for calm, sober thinking in South Africa, that time is NOW. For South Africa faces a crisis, and the Government's attitude of turning a blind eye to that crisis plunges us ever nearer disaster.

If Dr. Verwoerd and his Cabinet cannot — or refuse to — recognise the growing crisis, the rest of South Africa can, and it is simply no use pretending any longer that the situation is 'normal'.

Every South African, regardless of his political affiliation, must recognise that government in this country, as in every other, must be based on consent. The Non-White people of South Africa, 12 million of our total population of 15 million, will never accept Nationalist rule by force.

THE ALTERNATIVE TO FORCE

Is there any alternative? You may ask. Is there anything we can do about it?

Yes, there is! And we can!

A NATIONAL CONVENTION

The South African Constitution was decided upon at a National Convention in 1909. The Convention consisted of White representatives only. The Constitution it drew up was designed to create a Government for Whites and by Whites. The few liberal elements in the South Africa Act have been eliminated, one by one, down the years, especially since the Nationalist Party came to power.

It is that grave historical injustice which lies at the root of all our present evils and difficulties. The only way to remedy the desperate situation is the calling of a New National Convention to draw up a truly democratic Constitution.

But this time, the National Convention must not be sectional. It must represent and speak for all South Africa. The delegates must be freely-chosen representatives of all the fifteen-million strong population of this country, elected by the votes of all, irrespective of race, colour language,

sex or creed. And they must have the sovereign power to determine the future state of South Africa in accordance with the will of the majority.

NO DAYDREAM

Far-fetched? A dream?

On the contrary, it is the only sane and reasonable way to bring about the inevitable, necessary and progressive transition of our country to a proud and free democracy without bitter strife, suffering, bitterness and bloodshed.

The Convention idea has already been mooted by the leader of the Progressive Party, by many eminent thinkers in our Universities, by responsible newspapers, and many other individuals and organisations.

Add your voice now to this call before it is too late, before South Africa is finally set on the rigid and inflexible path that can only bring more Sharpevilles and Langas, as well as economic ruin for us all.

SHARE IN GOVERNMENT

The African people have already declared their determination to struggle for changes in our Constitution and our way of life.

They have reached a point under the present regime where they can no longer endure the frustrations and miseries that have accrued over the years as a result of the pass laws, job reservation, the Urban Areas Act, Bantu Authorities, and the resulting loss of all basic freedoms. *They demand today a share in government.*

Their call for a National Convention has been given full support by the Indian and Coloured communities.

It is in the vital interest of the Europeans too to join in this earnest endeavour to find a mutually acceptable solution. The Non-European people have said that they will take united action to back up their demands.

For Europeans this is no time for panic and resort to arms.

On the contrary, it is only in an atmosphere of calm that mutual discussion can take place for the establishment of a better South Africa, a South Africa no longer shunned and rejected by the rest of the world, a South Africa that can take her place proudly among other democratic nations.

The South African Congress of Democrats calls upon all Europeans

- TO MAKE IMMEDIATE DEMANDS FOR THE HOLDING OF A NATIONAL CONVENTION.
- TO TAKE A STRONG STAND FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND AN END TO RACIAL DISCRIMINATION!
- DON'T PREPARE FOR WAR — NEGOTIATE!

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