

30th August, 1961.

Preliminary Convention Committee,
c/o The Secretary,
S. A. National Convention Movement,
P. O. Box 2864,
CAPE TOWN.

SUGGESTIONS:

For consideration at Meeting of Preliminary Convention Committee,
Cape Town: Monday 11th September, 1961.

(These suggestions were placed before the Council of the South African National Convention Movement on 27th August, and it was agreed that they would be circulated among members of the Council who serve on the Preliminary Convention Committee).

1. The first task of the PCC is to ensure that there is the widest representation at the meeting of the 12th: to this end, notices and invitations should be issued at the earliest possible moment to ensure that invitations can be accepted. The form of the invitations/ Notices must be decided on the 11th so that the Secretary can act immediately thereafter.
2. It is not only essential that there be the widest representation at the meeting, but that it should be possible to demonstrate the wide measure of support which exists for the call for a National Convention: for this reason, the PCC should itself initiate at once the Campaign for PLEDGES. (This has already received the full backing of the Council of the South African National Coloured Movement. The form used by the P. E. Area Committee might serve as a basis for discussion - the secretary has been provided with 25 copies to make available to the members of the PCC for consideration.)
3. The PCC can use the machinery of the South African National Convention Movement and of the other sympathetic organisations (if they are willing) to set the campaign for pledges in motion and some report on the measure of support gained can be tabled at the meeting on the 12th October. (Evidence of support for the demand for a National Convention must be gathered AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE) since the work may be hampered at a later stage.
4. To support evidence collected, a list must be compiled and circulated immediately of those who have to date signified support in some form or other for a National Convention - i.e. the Natal Continuation Committee, Cape Town, Wits and Rhodes Universities, the Maritzburg and Malmesbury Conventions, the Liberal and Progressive Parties and prominent individuals etc.
5. The co-operation of the daily and weekly and fortnightly papers can be sought in the pledge campaign: if they are carried in the papers, thousands are likely to respond to the call for pledges.
6. The Committee could ask the meeting of the 12th October to call on the people to dedicate themselves solemnly, with due awareness of their task, to the task of the achieving a National Convention. This could be done at church-service, public services and in their own homes on a special day of dedication - the Day of the Covenant might be considered a suitable day to dedicate ourselves to a new Covenant of Service to our Country.
7. The Committee elected on the 12th can be asked to call its next meeting immediately after the day of Dedication and then to issue a call for REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS as a prelude to the National Convention.

30TH AUGUST, 1961.

8. If it proves impossible or unfeasible to hold a National Convention on a specified date, a National Consultation should be held instead and the NATIONAL CONVENTION simply deferred - but our ultimate objective, the National Convention, must never be lost sight of. A suggested date for the National Convention is 31st May, 1962. All Regional Consultations must be held by a specified date - 6th April, perhaps, so that the agenda of the National Convention can be determined on the basis of regional findings submitted to the Convention Committee which might be fully and formally constituted after the December meeting.
9. All supporting organisations to be asked to contribute towards the cost of the work of the Committee.
10. It is important that many-church-leaders should be invited: their help will be especially valuable in organising the Dedication.
11. The meeting of the 12th could usefully consider most of these points on the basis of advance information circulated to them: On the 11th it can be decided how many of the above points be included in the Notice for the 12th or an amplifying circular which could accompany the invitations. It is suggested that some reference to (a) Regional Consultations, (b) The pledge Campaign, (c) A Dedication and (d) Considerations of the basis for representation at the National Convention be included on the Notice or the accompanying circular. (The opinion has already been expressed that representation at Convention should not be by the racial groups or established organisations, but by merit and by region.)
12. Since the meeting of the 12th will be a formality and will be followed by a Plenary Session at the weekend, it might be useful on the 12th to finalise the Agenda for the Plenary Session and to assess the extent of the response to invitations - this will make it possible for proceedings to be speeded up, to some extent, and to give the plenary session an immediate picture of the nation's response to the call for a Convention.
- FURTHER SUGGESTIONS (Not submitted to the Council of the S.A.N.C. M).
13. That Miss Maggie Rodger of the NCW be co-opted on the Committee at this stage.
14. That the Secretariat of the PCC, because of the burden of work should be independent of the South African National Convention Movement Secretariat, but there be the closest liaison.
15. Among the most difficult problems to decide will be those of regions (provincial etc.) and representation (number per region) etc. It is suggested that opinions be invited as soon as possible and that all such suggestions be reviewed and transmitted to various centres and bodies for comment.
16. The PCC will have to decide early on the measure of security it must observe in its deliberations and communications with bodies throughout the country.
17. A definite perspective for the future must be worked out, not excluding the contingency of a ban.

D. A. BRUTUS.Form for Dedication:

I solemnly dedicate myself on this day to the service of justice and freedom in our country and to the calling of a national convention to establish a democratic South Africa.

I further solemnly promise to renew this dedication each year on this day until a National Convention has been called.

THE MEMBERS OF THE PRELIMINARY CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MR. D. BRUTUS

MR. E. BYDELL

MR. H. J. CARELSE

MR. J. C. A. DANIELS

MR. N. DANIELS

MR. F. DAVIDS

MR. B. DESAI

MR. E. F. DOMAN

MR. M. A. GIERDIEN

THE RT. REV. BISHOP DR. FRANCIS GOW.

MRS. GRANT

MR. P. HJUL

DR. T. JAMIE

MR. R. JOWELL

REV. R. JOORST

MR. N. S. H. KEARNS

MRS. M. KOOY

MR. A. LEFTWICH

MR. S. LEON

MR. S. LOLLAN

MR. C. MARNEY

MR. NGWENYA T.

CLLR. H. E. PARKER

DR. M. A. PATHER

MISS. M. RODGER

MR. D. B. SMITH (SNR.)

MR. L. STONE

CLLR. MRS. E. STOTT

MR. L. STONE

MR. D. VAN DER ROSS

DR. R. E. VAN DER ROSS

MR. H. A. WRIGHT.

S.A. INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS.

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Dear Sir/Madam,

We have no doubt that you are aware of the urgent and widespread demand throughout the country for the holding of a National Convention.

The demand arises in the main from the firm and determined opposition to the official policies that have been followed in South Africa for many years and from the realisation that the oppressive and discriminatory measures that have for long been directed against the disfranchised majority can no longer remain. All over the country, not to speak of the new world which has emerged since the second World War, there has been born in the minds of people a conviction that peace and harmony can never reign in South Africa unless, and until, there is a complete change in governmental policy and a recognition of the rights of all people, irrespective of colour or creed, within a democratic state. Indeed, there is also widely prevalent the belated fear that, if immediate steps are not taken, the future of South Africa remains not only uncertain but filled with grave and disastrous.

Everyone is agreed that the nefarious policies to which we have referred have been made possible by the Constitution of the Union Of South Africa, framed in the Act of Union of 1910. That Act was based on premises and principles which are rejected by the majority of the people of South Africa to-day, and the first and immediate task of a new National Convention will be to re-formulate the principles and practices upon which a new South African Constitution, acceptable to all the people will be based. And, in addition, it will have to devise the means to create in South Africa the social and economic conditions within which those basic principles and practices can be implemented and can be made to operate successfully and effectively.

We do not believe that any new Constitution for South Africa can hope to succeed unless it ensures to all the people of the land the fundamental and basic human rights in accordance with democratic tenets; and, in our view, the only permanent solution is the creation of a non-racial society in which colour and so-called racial origin, will not be an index of the right to participate in the government of the country.

At the same time, of course, we are aware that the social and economic circumstances which have prevailed in the country over the last 300 years have created conditions of the widest inequality among the various groups into which the South African nation has been divided; but we are equally convinced that, as these conditions have been created and maintained by legislative means so also can they be altered and changed by the ordinary machinery of good government. And it will accordingly be one of the major tasks of the National Convention to devise the machinery of government, which will assure the social conditions under which all the people of the land will be able to participate in the government on the basis of complete and unfettered equality.

We feel sure that in these historic tasks you will be only too willing and anxious to play your part. Accordingly, we have the honour to invite your Organisation to a Provincial Consultative Conference which will be held on Sunday 15th October 1961 in the Claremont Civic Centre, Main Road, Claremont at 10 a.m. Your presence will be appreciated, and we look forward to seeing you.

Yours very truly,

J. C. A. DANIELS,
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION MOVEMENT, COUNCIL.