



WHY A “COLOURED” NATIONAL CONVENTION

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Who are the Coloured People ?

MANY attempts have been made to define the Coloured people. Scientists have tried to do so by pointing to certain common physical characteristics, but this has failed. In law, we are defined as being what is left of the South African population after all other groups have been accounted for. This is not helpful either. When we look at the position today, we find that the one unifying factor, found to be common to all Coloured people, is the fact that we are discriminated against. We are a recognisable and significant group only in the sense that the people who have made laws for this country have singled us out as a separate group, differing from the Whites, the Africans and the Asians. We are not discriminated against exactly in the same way as Africans and Asians are discriminated against, we are subjected to that social type of discrimination reserved for "Coloured people", and it is in this sense that we are a separate "Coloured people".

We are organising to meet in a Convention of Coloured people, precisely in order to remove those factors which make us a separate group, to remove the discrimination. It is in discrimination, although of another kind and degree, that we share common ground with other South Africans. We therefore have much in common with the Africans and Asians, who are also discriminated against; but we also have something in common with fair-minded White persons, whose sense of justice is outraged because they have to live in a country in which colour discrimination is practised.

We would like to stress at the outset that we are not organising this Convention in order to "gang up" with persons of other race-groups against others. Some people say that we should have nothing to do with Africans, because we have nothing in common with them. This is utter folly. We could mention several important factors which we do have in common with them. There is our common humanity, there is our common South Africanism, there is a great deal of common discrimination under South African laws, and there is, in regard to a great and growing number of Africans, a common Western view of life.

But if we say that we are not anti-African, we also say that we are not anti-White. We are neither pro-White and anti-any other group, nor are we pro-African and anti-White. We believe that colour should be utterly irrelevant in the national life, certainly as regards its Constitution and laws. We believe that we are not to be anti- or pro- any group, but that we are to be for human dignity and decency, regardless of skin colour, and we are convening this Convention in the hope that we may be able to make some contribution towards making a reality of what all who wish to live

in this country have in common by their very humanity. We would like to see developed a wider South Africanism, capable of embracing all the peoples of this country, whatever their race, colour or creed.

Let nobody say that because we are organising a Convention as a Coloured group, we are recognising and accepting the fact that we are a separate group, or that we wish to be so regarded in the laws of the land. We repeat that we are a separate group by exclusion, by discrimination, by virtue of laws which we regard as wrong. And it is to destroy this false, separate identity that we are dedicating ourselves in this Convention.

THE POSITION TODAY

There are at present some 1,450,000 Coloured people in the Republic of South Africa, as follows:

Cape	....	....	....	1,282,000
Natal	....	....	....	47,000
Transvaal	....	....	....	106,000
O.F.S.	....	....	....	15,000

This represents great growth, as in 1910, when the Union was formed, there were only 510,000. But we have grown in other ways, too. We have grown in education, in income and in the extent to which we have entered into the professional, industrial, commercial and cultural life of this country.

In Education,* we had in 1958, 14 Training Institutions for teachers, 1,842 public schools with 381,190 pupils, and another 50 private schools containing 6,872 pupils. Of the total of 388,062 children in school, 36,995 were in Stds. VI—X. In 1957 there were 209 Coloured and 565 Asiatic students taking correspondence courses with the University of South Africa, whilst ???? attended as full-time or part-time students at the "open" universities.

In labour, the following table will show the main areas in which the Coloured people were employed in 1951, together with comparative figures for other race-groups:

	Coloured	Asiatic	Bantu	White
Agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing	97,674	12,928	1,282,616	142,424
Mining and Quarrying	3,800	542	448,790	56,959
Manufacturing	70,262	22,005	227,203	182,630

* Figures from Union Statistics for Fifty Years. Education figures for Coloured and Asiatics.

Construction	38,721	2,303	131,937	67,178
Electricity, gas, sanitary and water services	1,564	162	16,614	7,040
Commerce and Finance	24,993	23,107	100,700	178,839
Transport, Storage, Communication	14,194	2,461	73,029	113,182
Services	111,472	16,856	740,989	204,288

Of course, these figures have to be further analysed, or else they give a false impression. We must remember that each heading like "Mining" covers a wide range of employment in the mining industry, and the general pattern in each is that white people occupy the better-paid jobs, than the Coloured and Asiatic, and then the Bantu people. Under Agriculture, for instance, there were 142,424 Whites, but of these only 11,071 or 7.7 per cent were employees, whereas of the 97,674 Coloured persons, 96,566 or 98.8 per cent were employees. Again, most of the White employees would have been in the better-paid jobs such as foremen and managers, whereas most of the Coloured employees would have been labourers in low-paid jobs.

In certain industries in the Cape, the Coloured people, due to their large numbers and their traditional skill, occupy a major part. In the furniture industry, the Coloured workers outnumber the Whites by about seven to one whereas, of a total of 5,845 furniture workers in the Union in 1959, no less than 3,635 were Coloured.

In the building industry, too, Coloured workers predominate, there being in 1959 some 1,943 Coloured tradesmen in the Cape Peninsula against 300 White tradesmen.

WAGES

In 1956, the wages earned by the different race groups in some of the major occupations were, in thousands of pounds, as follows:

	Coloured	Asiatic	Bantu	White
Mining	←	32,146	→	65,131
Private industries (wood, furniture, printing, paper, rubber, etc.)	26,117	7,741	64,638	157,577

These figures are given to show just where most of the Coloured

people are employed, as compared with the other peoples of this country. They are sufficient to prove, if proof be needed, that we play a vital part in running the affairs of this country. They could also be used to show that we do not get paid in proportion to our services.

WHY IS THIS SO?

Why is it that the Coloured people, together with other non-Whites, do not get paid what they should?

The reason is simply that there has always been in this country a policy of keeping the non-White person down by under-paying him. If people do not earn enough to buy and use the better things of life, they remain at a lower level. All kinds of devices have been used to do this. Right from the time that Van Riebeeck's men diddled the Hottentots by buying from them a sheep for a piece of fine copper wire measuring the sheep's length from nose to tail, to today when Coloured teachers are paid 65 per cent of the salaries of Europeans and Coloured typists are underpaid in offices, this has been going on.

Not only are we underpaid, but our general standard of living is kept down by keeping us out of many trades. So it is almost impossible to get a Coloured boy apprenticed in the motor or engineering or printing trade. Indeed, it is not too much to say today that, apart from the building trade, the only sure way for a Coloured boy to learn a trade is for him first to become a criminal and enter a reformatory! All this springs from the so-called "Civilized Labour Policy" of the 1920's which so controlled entry to the trades that it was really a "White Labour Policy". Of course, Africans were not allowed entry to the trades and the protection of the Industrial Conciliation Act at all!

By not enforcing Compulsory Education, many tens of thousands of our boys and girls never get a proper education at all. Of those who do enter school and get to Std. I, only about one-third reach Std. VI. Thus, of the 30,678 Coloured children in Std. I Cape schools in 1954, only 10,150 or 33 per cent reached Std. VI in 1959. This represents a wastage of children. And of the small amount of children reaching Std. VI, only about 10 per cent reach Std. X.

For Europeans, *all* the children starting school (and they start school one year earlier than us) will normally reach Std. VI and 35 per cent of these will in turn reach Std. X. Schooling is expensive. Children have to be dressed, fed, transported and provided with books. If the parents' incomes are low, many children have to leave school to help educate or look after the little ones. Thus their own education is low, their own income will one day be low, and so the whole cycle of poverty is continued.

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

But how is it possible that such a state of affairs can go on? It is because all of these matters are regulated by laws of Parliament, and the Parliament is a Parliament of White men.

In our present Parliament, the three major population-groups are represented as follows:

	Population*	Assembly	Senators	Total
Coloured and Asiatic	1,909,000	4	6 (nominated)	10
Bantu	9,896,000	0	0	0
White	3,123,000	156	48	204

Of course, all the M.P.'s and Senators are White persons, as the present Constitution or Act of Union says that only White persons may be Members of Parliament.

So, because the laws are made by White persons of whom all, except 5, are responsible to White people only, there is no need for them to consider the wishes of non-White persons, except insofar as they are necessary to serve the interests of Whites.

Even in the Provincial Councils, which control such matters as Primary and Secondary Education for Coloured and Asiatic pupils, Hospitals and Provincial libraries, there are only White persons, and non-Whites are given "special" representatives on this basis:

Coloured persons in Cape Province: Two representatives.

Coloured persons in other Provinces: No representatives.

Africans: No representation at all in Union.

ARE THE PEOPLE SATISFIED?

In former years, people probably did not think a great deal about these matters. A large number of Coloured people had little or no education, and were content to leave matters to the White man. They seemed to believe that they were getting good treatment, and even if they did not, there didn't seem to be any way out of it. Before Union, in 1910, it was possible for non-Whites to become Members of Parliament, and on two occasions non-Whites actually stood as candidates, but were defeated. But since 1910 it has not been possible.

Since the 1920's the industry of the country expanded rapidly. Factories sprang up in the cities and in the bigger towns, and the

* Union Statistics for 50 years. Estimates for 1960.

population began to be centred more and more in these big areas. People drifted from the farms. Thus there are at present some 430,000 Coloured people in the Cape Peninsula. These people, in the towns and elsewhere, realized that in the modern world one has to be educated, and so the demand for education grew rapidly. People kept their children at school longer. More got to the higher standards and to the Universities.

Yet it seemed as if all of this education was not breaking the pattern of segregation in the outside world. Still the educated youths could only look forward to becoming teachers. Here and there an occasional medical doctor appeared, but this profession was expensive to enter, as the students had to go overseas to study. So people began to wonder and to think. They came to the conclusion that, as long as there was a policy of segregation keeping us from making laws, so long would the laws be generally unfavourable to us. And so people began to work for putting an end to this system of segregation. They ceased to be satisfied.

Today, the Coloured people say that this system of segregation must go. It must go in Parliament, then a fair Parliament will make fair laws.

THE APARTHEID LAWS

Since 1948, when the Nationalist Government came into power, the laws have been worse. This Government came in on a policy of *Apartheid*, and so it went all out to put its Apartheid laws into practice. The main law, however, was the Separate Representation of Voters Act of 1952, the purpose of which was to remove the Coloured people from the common roll of voters where they might influence the "White" elections, for the Coloured people had always voted more United Party than Nationalist. So this Act was passed, but not after the country had been subjected to a long process of tension and legal manoeuvring, including such tricks as the High Court of Parliament Act and the packing of the Senate in order to get a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament.

The Africans had already been removed from the Common Roll of Voters in 1936, and when the Coloured people saw the same thing happen to them in 1952, they realised how they had been tricked into silence in 1936, and how there was no point in believing that the government would deal any better or differently with them. We realised clearly that it is foolish to think "It won't happen to us" or "We're not Natives, so we'll be treated like Whites". In spite of all the arguments about the Coloured people sharing the same language, religion, education, customs, law and general civilization of the Whites, in spite of telling of our past

loyalty to the country, the government remained firm: We had to be removed from the roll, so we were removed. It suited government policy to disregard all its promises and the statements made by its members in previous years. All of this, the then Prime Minister dismissed as: *The dead hand of the past.*

Still, many Coloured people believed that things would change. But there were rude shocks waiting. The Group Areas Act came and began to operate. The threat of losing his home hung over the head of every Coloured person. Indeed, it hung over everyone, White or non-White. But again, as the law was made by Whites, it was mainly in favour of Whites. Thus in the Cape Peninsula, the effect of the proclamation is that about 80,000 Coloured people must move, and only 7,000 Whites.

But even if the figures were different, we would still oppose the Group Areas Act, as this Act strikes at the very root of a man's security and family life, namely his home. In Sea Point two Coloured men were driven to suicide because they saw the work of a lifetime undone by the Group Areas Act.

As a result of the Group Areas Act, Coloured people will have to sell their homes for a song, buy or build at great expense, travel greater distances to work and lose the security of home ownership, as one never knows when you will be required to move again. Schools, churches, mosques, playing-fields are all affected by this terrible Act.

Then there are other Acts which cut very deep into the lives of the Coloured people. The Job Reservation Act threatens our time-honoured occupations in the trades, factories and transport services. The Mixed Marriages Act interferes with the right to marry whom you will; the Immorality Act gives a perverted view of what is morally right or not; the Population Registration Act has broken up many families; the Separate Universities Act has removed our right to higher education in those few places to which we could go and be assured of good standards; the Public Amenities Act keeps the humiliation of going "to the back door" on us at every turn; the Suppression of Communism Act is used to rob us of the privacy of our homes, and the latest General Law Amendment Act deprives us for considerable periods of the protection of the courts of law.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

During these years, whilst all of these Acts have been passed by Parliament, the Coloured people do not seem to have had an effective way of meeting the attack on their rights.

Perhaps it was because of internal division. But then, why have

we been so divided? Surely one reason is that, since 1943 the people have been split into several camps. In 1943 the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) by the Smuts government caused bitter strife. Unfortunately, those who opposed the C.A.C. chose to launch a very strong personal attack on the men on the Council, as well as on the Council itself. As it was, many of these C.A.C. men were men of good standing in the community, and the community as a whole could not be persuaded to reject them altogether, as the younger leaders of the Anti-C.A.C. urged, through personal boycotts and such means.

So the "battle" was carried into various arenas, into education, sport, even the church, and hot feelings were aroused in areas where several of these C.A.C. men had never moved.

Without debating the question of who was right and who was wrong, the fact is that the coming of the Nationalist Government in 1948 found the C.A.C. ready to resign, as it did in 1949 when it was told it could not discuss "politics", and could only discuss matters within the framework of Apartheid.

But still, the bitter feelings of cleavage remained between the Coloured groups. It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to discuss these groups, but merely to show why the Nationalist Government found a divided Coloured people, and not a united one. There has been a great deal of talk of unity, but unity has not been achieved.

IN DISUNITY—WEAKNESS

Because we have been divided, it has been possible to pass these laws which have rapidly and surely reduced our status and restricted our rights. We have reacted in disunity, in spurts. Each time there has been a new law or a new proclamation, we have come into action for a time with a protest. Then this protest has died down. The government has known that it had only to wait awhile, then the protest of the Coloured people would die down, because it had no depth of root.

Once again, it matters little to say now that the people should have rallied to this or to that call, or should have joined this or that organization, or should have followed this or that idea or leader. In history we learn that movements only succeed when the ground has been properly prepared for them. If the leaders blame the people for not following them, the people can just as well blame the leaders for not putting the case properly or not commanding the necessary respect. All factors must be ready, the people, the leaders, the idea and the whole setting in which the movement is to take place. If all the factors in the situation are ready, they will bring about sufficient unity for the movement to succeed.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

In South Africa today, a very broad layer of the people generally have come to recognise that the root of the trouble is the present Constitution, which makes it possible for any one section of the people to dominate the rest, as soon as it can get a bare majority in Parliament. Also, as pointed out above, the position in regard to the franchise is such that non-Whites have no hope of exercising any political power at any stage, let alone of getting a majority. This has led to a state of tension in the country, to a State of Emergency, to Emergency Powers and Laws, to Detentions without recourse to law, to mass raids and arrests and general insecurity. It has led to a massive deterioration in race relations. It has led to the fact that South Africa is out of the Commonwealth and the object of World scorn.

To remedy this, we need a new Constitution, and to this end a National Convention, truly representative of all the people of South Africa, should come together to draft a new Constitution.

THE "COLOURED" CONVENTION

Where do the Coloured people stand in regard to this call for a National Convention, now being made from many quarters? Surely we should have a place at the round table when a new South Africa is planned?

Actually, the Coloured people were well in the forefront of this call. Towards the end of 1960, several Coloured people who had been thinking about the events of the past 50 years, decided that this disunity and sporadic action must come to an end. They must have anticipated that a call for a National Convention would come and resolved to prepare for it.

In any case, National Convention or no National Convention, it was necessary for us, the Coloured people, to state clearly our point of view on the affairs of the nation. It was time for us to say just what we feel about the position we were being put into and which some people claimed is good for us.

In this spirit, the idea of a Coloured National Convention was born. The purpose of the Convention movement was:

- (1) To provide a time and place for the Coloured people to state clearly their views on the affairs of the nation.
- (2) To unify the main currents of thinking and put an end to the many small groups which from time to time claim to speak for the Coloured people without ever giving the people an opportunity publicly to accept or refute these ideas.

- (3) To reply to the statements of policy of the Prime Minister in regard to the Coloured people.
- (4) To assist with people of goodwill of all other groups in the formation of a New Constitution, and to that end to put the Coloured "house in order" before we claim the respect of the other groups.

This action was completely in line with the action in other groups. The Africans called an African Leaders' All-in Conference "to put their home in order", the Indians had no Conference but had a long-standing S.A. Indian Congress, and the Whites had their political parties. The correctness and good timing of our "Coloured Convention" was shown by the fact that on all sides our move was acclaimed as not only good, but *the* most vital step. By organising ourselves we were providing the final link in a chain of South African unity on a very broad basis.

But, better still, the correctness of this movement was shown by the spontaneous support from the Coloured people themselves. From all four provinces and South-West Africa there has been support and requests for information. People have shown themselves willing to listen and discuss, and once the matter has been explained, they have formed local Area Committees of the Convention. Many people who have formerly differed with men in the Movement, have come to see that it is time we dropped personal differences, and that this case must be seen on its merits, on the policy of the Convention, and not on the liking and disliking of persons. Broadly, the Convention has stated its one major aim:

"The Abolition of the Colour Bar in South Africa." And this says a great deal.

WHY "COLOURED"?

This is a question which many people ask, as they feel that if we wish to abolish the Colour Bar, we must stop talking of *Coloured, Indian, African* and *White* groups. We should just talk of *South Africans*.

This sounds very well. But is it possible? For so long have we talked in these terms that we shall have to use them awhile yet in order to understand one another. It is no good evading the issue. In order to say: *All South Africans must have the vote*, we must argue that the *Africans, Indians* and *Coloured* people must have the vote on the same basis as the *White* people.

Doctors who wish to cure cancer must speak about cancer, and the fact that they speak about cancer does not mean that they approve of the disease or wish to perpetuate it.

FEARS OF MINORITIES

Behind the use of group names lie certain fears that each group has of the others. Let's not be starry-eyed about it and say that people shouldn't be afraid. The fact is that they are afraid. As soon as they get talking they talk of *we* Coloured people, *we* Africans, *we* White people, and so on. We understand these fears though we do not condone them. Moreover, we are not against the voluntary preservation of legitimate group identities, provided that the keeping of any one group's identity does not interfere with the rights of other groups. For example, we do not object to some people speaking of *we* Methodists, as long as this does not interfere with the religious rights of Catholics or Moslems. What is needed is some overall protection to ensure the basic rights of all. It is because the Whites attach false value to skin-colour, and also because they fear they will lose their rights because others may also attach false value to skin-colour, that they stand so strongly against any change. Just so (let's not deny it!) many Coloured people who don't want to change, fear that they will be swamped by other groups. We must work constructively to eradicate racial fear and prejudice.

A BILL OF RIGHTS

Now, it is possible to give all people this overall protection of their basic rights. This can be done by writing into the new South African Constitution a Bill of Rights such as is found in the Constitutions of the U.S. of America, Nigeria and many other countries.

This Bill of Rights *guarantees to all people* certain basic, fundamental rights. It says that these rights *cannot be taken away* from the people by any parliament, simply because the government of the day has a majority. It therefore prevents any group of M.P.'s from "ganging up" on one section to take away the rights of that section.

In the U.S.A. there are people from all over the world, and in its cities there are communities with Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, French and other national backgrounds. They retain many of their customs, and their language. But because of a general, overall Bill of Rights giving basic protection, no community need fear an anti-Italian or anti-Chinese law. So they have been able to develop a common American loyalty and their diversity is not a threat to them, but adds colour and zest to life.

This could happen in South Africa. We should have a Bill of Rights guaranteeing such things as:

Freedom of worship, of Association, of the Press.

The right to own property and occupy it wherever one wishes, and can afford.

The right to full education at any public-supported institution.

The right to sell one's labour in the open market, or to withhold it if one so wishes.

The right to travel about freely in the country and to leave and return to the country freely.

These and other basic rights should be guaranteed to *all people* in this country. If this is done, we need not fear one another as members of different groups. People will be able to live, love, learn as they please, subject only to Common law. We can be a great and glorious country, exploiting all our natural and *human* resources to the full.

The Constitution will not and need not mention *Coloured* people, *African* people or any other groups racially. Under the law all people will be South African citizens. The Convention does not wish to have the Coloured people given special mention, special legal-identity, special representation. Nor does it want this for any other groups.

But it *is* necessary for the Coloured people to meet in a Convention *to say so*. For this reason, the Convention must be held and needs your support.

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Human Rights

The principles and policies of the S.A.C.N.C. are based on concepts of civilization which have been too easily forgotten in our country. They were drafted in the belief that every human being, irrespective of race, colour or creed, is entitled to participate in the democratic processes of a so-called democratic country. Such terms as "democratic processes" or "fundamental human rights and freedoms" are easily said or written but are not easy to define in a few words. Perhaps, in recent years, they have been most clearly expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. South Africa, which has too long maintained a facade but not the structure of "Western Civilization", has not as a nation accepted that Declaration. We as a group of loyal South Africans do accept that Declaration and the policies set out in this point are closely akin to the principles it outlines. We feel, therefore, that an introduction to our policies should repeat some of the points made in the Declaration of Human Rights.

The preamble to the Declaration assumes that the laws of a civilized community should be based on certain fundamental rights and freedoms which should be enjoyed by every human being within that community. "It is essential if man is not to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the Rule of Law.

"All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

"Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by constitution or by law.

"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

"Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

"Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

"No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute an offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was

applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

"No one shall be subject to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own, and to return to his own country.

"Men and woman of full age, without any limitations due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and its dissolution.

"Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

"No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes the freedom to change one's religion or belief either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and regardless of frontiers.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to any association.

"Everyone has the right to work and free choice of employment.

"A full life for all the people of multi-racial South Africa can only become possible when these unchallengeable precepts are accepted by the majority of the people. The S.A.C.N.C. is determined to work towards them with religious devotion."

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