

Stan Louie

THE ROAD FORWARD



A Policy Statement of the South African Coloured People's Congress,
for the consideration of the National Convention of Coloured People.

Being acutely aware of the poverty, suffering and humiliation that the policies of white domination have brought to our people, and knowing fully that government without consent and the forceful implementation of laws inimical to the true interest of our land is leading South Africa to the brink of racial conflict and disaster, we, of the Coloured People's Congress, sincerely welcome the assembly of people's representatives gathered at this National Convention, who will deliberate ~~on~~ an alternative course for our nation, namely the demand for the abolition of the Colour Bar and the granting of full citizenship rights to all citizens irrespective of race, colour or creed.

It is our belief that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the broad will of the people; that we are burdened with a government which is founded on injustice and inequality; and that the oppressed can never regain their birthright unless a truly democratic state comes into being.

For the consideration of delegates to this historic Convention, we enunciate ~~herein~~ our conception, our demands and desires, as the alternative to minority white rule in South Africa.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE

We totally reject separate racial representation in the parliament of our land as a principle of government.

All bodies of minority rule such as the Coloured Affairs Department, the Bantu Administration Department and the Asiatic Affairs Council, should be abolished.

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate on all law-making bodies; all persons, irrespective of race, shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country.

NATIONAL RIGHTS

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, the courts of law and in schools, for all national and race groups.

The rights of races and national groups to use their language and to develop their culture and customs, should be protected by law in order that they may all contribute towards a common South African nationhood.

The practice and preaching of race discrimination should constitute a grave criminal offence.

OUR ECONOMIC FREEDOM

Realising that the mere granting of political freedom will not lift our people out of the dire poverty and state of semi-starvation to which they have been subjected by hundreds of years of white exploitation, we propose -

- (1) that all restrictions to the right of the individual to enter skilled trades be abolished; that job reservation in any form be scrapped, and that the principle of equal pay for equal work be firmly entrenched in the statutes of the land;

2/ (2) that the,.....

- (2) that the land should belong to those who work it;
- (3) that mining, banks and all monopoly industry be transferred to public ownership, to be worked in the interest of the country as a whole;
- (4) there should be a minimum national wage which is consistent with the individual enjoying a contented life, together with paid annual leave, unemployment benefits, sick leave, and maternity leave on full pay for working mothers;
- (5) the tot system and contract labour, child labour and compound labour, must be abolished;
- (6) all workers should be free to form trade unions, to sell their labour to the highest bidder, or to withhold such labour in the event of a dispute between worker and employer.

OUR FREEDOMS AND THE LAW

Over a period of years, well-established rights of individuals which have been bitterly fought for and achieved in many civilised countries of the world, are being viciously assailed by the present rulers of South Africa. We reject the fascistic tendencies and practices of present-day laws such as the Suppression of Communism Act, the Criminal Laws Amendment Act, the Public Safety Act, the various Native Criminal Codes, and the Riotous Assemblies Act and the recent General Laws Amendment Act.

We believe -

- (1) in the right of the individual to equality before the courts of the land;
- (2) that no person should be imprisoned, restricted or banished, without a fair trial;
- (3) we deny the right of any government official to condemn an individual;
- (4) all persons must be restored their inalienable right to advocate changes in State policy, to worship, to preach and to organise;
- (5) there must be complete freedom of the press;
- (6) all laws which have been enacted for the purpose of discriminating on grounds of race or colour shall be repealed.

FREEDOM TO EDUCATION

The Coloured People's Congress emphatically rejects separate schools, training colleges, universities, and is implacably opposed to so-called Coloured Education, Bantu Education and "Christian National" Education.

There is no scientific foundation to any separate education for different race groups. The purpose of education is clearly the imbibing of knowledge which is the experience and heritage of the civilized world. The educational programme of the ruling class in South Africa must be seen as a blatant attempt to inculcate a sense of inferiority amongst the oppressed in order to facilitate our subjection to white baasskap.

We propose that -

- (1) education be made free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;
- (2) higher education should be open to all, and shall be assisted by state allowances and scholarships;

- (3) the colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education should be abolished;
- (4) adult illiteracy should be ended by mass state education plans.

THE HEALTH OF THE NATION

Malnutrition kills thousands of our babies yearly. Mothers weep in vain. Tuberculosis attacks adult breadwinners and the children go hungry. Half of the Coloured population of the Peninsula are living on the bread line - more aptly described as the death line. The plague of disease in the slums (where we are free to live) is frightening. Our 'old ones' look around pitifully for care and love.

We reiterate that all persons who labour in this land be paid a living wage.

Clinics and free hospitalisation should be established on a gigantic scale.

Slums should be demolished, and decent houses provided at low rents.

State-run homes should be established for the care of the aged, orphans and the disabled.

Recreation grounds and playing fields should be provided.

OUR FREEDOM AND THE WORLD.

Our country should be sovereign and independent.

Knowing full well the holocaust of war and the possible self-destruction of the world by nuclear weapons, we maintain that international disputes can be settled through peaceful negotiation.

We believe in living in peace and friendship with the nations of the world.

We acknowledge and vigorously support the right of all peoples of Africa and other colonial possessions, to self-government and independence.

CONCLUSION

We declare that we want no special status for the Coloured people, but rather that we wish to be regarded as full and equal citizens, with all the rights and privileges attendant thereto.

It is our sincere belief that the objectives stated in this memorandum can only be achieved through the building up of strong bonds of unity with our fellow oppressed African and Indian brothers and those Whites who support these objectives.

We call upon this Convention to co-operate with all people who subscribe to the basic demands of this gathering to set up the machinery for the calling of a National Convention of all the people of our land to bring about the realisation of these demands.

Let all who cherish liberty and freedom, who have vowed their opposition to the evils of apartheid and white domination, and who have proclaimed their resolve to live for the future of their children, take the ROAD FORWARD NOW.