

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: THE WHITE POPULATION GROUP

THE NATIONAL PARTY

During 1973 the National Party has been faced with increasing manifestations of black dissatisfaction and anger. The Black Consciousness movement appears to be gaining strength, despite the banning of most of its prominent members. Two of the more conservative of the homeland leaders have been voted out of office. The leaders are voicing the demands of their people with increasing forthrightness and to wider audiences. Serious unrest has continued at black universities. Guerilla activities in Rhodesia and Mozambique, aimed ultimately at the Republic itself, have been intensified. The "outward policy" is not succeeding: there is mounting international criticism of South Africa.

The Government has pressed ahead with plans for the partial consolidation of the homelands, but in almost every case these plans have not proved acceptable to the people concerned, who have claimed far more land and greater economic benefits than are offered.

So far as Africans in the towns are concerned, 22 Bantu Affairs Administration Boards are in the process of taking over administrative control from urban local authorities. Plans are being continued for large regional townships in the homelands to which African families will be moved from "white" towns in the regions concerned, the workers having to commute daily, weekly, or even less often to their places of employment. But the new Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, Mr. T. N. H. "Punt" Janson, has conceded that Africans in cities remote from the homelands will be there for generations to come, and that their numbers will grow. Already, he indicated,¹ about 77 per cent of those living on the Rand, including mine labourers, are settled there on a family basis. He stated that steps must be taken to make them as contented as possible, and has invited suggestions for easing the impact of the so-called pass laws. He is promoting consultation between administrators and urban Africans, and is raising funds for the provision of recreational and sports facilities in urban townships.

Coloured people are becoming increasingly alienated from the Whites, in particular the Afrikaners. The Government has

¹ Assembly, 29 May, Hansard 16 col. 941.

appointed a multi-racial Commission of Enquiry into matters relating to this population group.

The wide-spread strikes of African workers, who are awakening to their immense potential power, have been instrumental in bringing about amendments to labour legislation, providing improved channels through which certain categories of African employees can express their grievances, and legalising strikes in certain limited circumstances. Government departments, in particular the Railways and the Post Office, are continuing the process of allowing Africans to progress to work requiring some degree of skill, and the Prime Minister has said that the Government will not stand in the way of changes in South Africa's traditional work patterns in the private sector, allowing blacks to move into higher job categories if white workers in the fields of employment concerned agree to this. The necessity of a narrowing of the wage gap is being accepted. For the first time there are official plans for the pre-service and in-service training of African factory workers in "white" areas.

In an effort to lessen South Africa's isolation in the sporting world, the Government's policy in regard to mixed sporting events has been redefined, certain "multi-national" events having been actively encouraged. This policy remains complicated, however, and unacceptable to those people in the Republic and to overseas countries that press for multi-racial sport at all levels.

As described later, interim reports by the (Schlebusch) Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organizations have had significant repercussions.

Despite the difficulties it faces, the Nationalist Government remains very firmly in the saddle.

THE UNITED PARTY

Press attacks on the Party's leadership

During the early part of 1973 the *Sunday Times*, formerly a staunch supporter of Sir De Villiers Graaff's leadership of the United Party, published a series of editorials and articles demanding his resignation. It and other English-language newspapers voiced dissatisfaction with the Party's "lack of dynamism" and "political compromises".

It was reported² that during July the U.P.'s general secretary, Senator J. L. Horak, wrote to the *Sunday Express*, stating that he had been directed by a combined meeting of the Party's Central Head Committee and its Parliamentary Caucus to convey appreciation of this newspaper's consistent and responsible support. This was resented by the "reformist" members of the Transvaal provincial caucus, under the provincial Party leader, Mr. Harry Schwarz, M.P.C., who declared that the *Sunday Express* had been

² e.g. *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 July.

openly critical of them and had published reports containing mis-statements of fact. Sir De Villiers issued a statement supporting the allegations of "regrettable attacks" by this newspaper on Party leaders in the Transvaal.

Conflict within the Party

As mentioned on page 8 of last year's *Survey*, in August 1972 Mr. Harry Schwarz, M.P.C., defeated Mr. S. J. Marais Steyn, M.P., in the election of a Party leader for the Transvaal. Mr. Steyn had for long been one of the Party's most prominent members, but was regarded by the "reformists" or "young Turks" as being too conservative. It was widely reported that there was considerable disagreement between the supporters of these two men.

One source of dispute arose from the fact that a different emphasis could be placed on aspects of the Party's constitutional plan, described in the previous issue of this *Survey* (page 9), and again defined in a pamphlet issued by the Party's Division of Information in 1973, entitled *Federation: Your only way to security*. It was stated in this pamphlet that there must be no domination by one population group of any other, that power must be shared. However, the (white) parliament would act as regulator in the delegation of powers to the legislative assemblies for the various communities and to the proposed Federal Assembly, and no powers affecting the security of the State would be transferred without a special mandate of the white electorate given at a referendum.

A subsequent official statement was released to the effect that the United Party was committed "to white leadership in the interests of all our people and³ as an instrument to bring about a sharing of power and responsibility among all our population groups". The phrasing made it possible for conservative Party members to emphasize "white leadership" rather than the ultimate sharing of power, and vice versa.

A further cause of dissension arose from the United Party's participation in the (Schlebusch) Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organizations.⁴ This matter is described in a subsequent chapter, but it is relevant to mention here that the Commission consisted of six members of the National Party and four members of the United Party. During February it issued two interim reports, both of which had been approved unanimously. The first called for the establishment of a permanent, bi-party, statutory Parliamentary Commission on Internal Security, to continue the work of the Schlebusch Commission. The second report, dealing with the National Union of S.A. Students (Nusas), recommended that, while no action should be taken against this Union as a

³ According to the *Rand Daily Mail*, for 12 September, this word "and" was not included in the first issue of this statement.

⁴ See 1972 *Survey*, page 52.

body, the continued involvement in student politics of eight named members of Nusas was "extremely undesirable". Banning orders were thereupon served by the Government on the eight student leaders concerned.

There was wide-spread criticism of the rôle played by the United Party commissioners. They should, it was said, have submitted a minority report recommending that the evidence obtained be submitted to the Attorney-General for action, if warranted. The United Party was repeatedly urged to "get off the Commission". Among the outspoken critics were Party members on the Witwatersrand and Mrs. Catherine D. Taylor, M.P. for Wynberg, Cape. (The support given by the Parliamentary caucus for the commissioners is described below.)

Mrs. Taylor had specialized in educational matters and the affairs of Coloured people. She stated⁵ that, nevertheless, she had not been considered for membership of the Schlebusch Commission nor the Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Coloured population group. She was warned at a caucus meeting⁶ that if she made any further public statement that questioned the wisdom of Party tactics, or did not endorse the action and conclusions of the four United Party Schlebusch commissioners, this could result in her expulsion from the caucus. Mrs. Taylor thereupon resigned as the Party's shadow Minister of Education. Later, she announced⁷ that she would not seek re-election to Parliament. "In-fighting is consuming all our energies", she said.

Attitude to the Schlebusch Commission's reports

Early in May⁸ the chairman of the United Party's caucus, Mr. T. Gray Hughes, released a statement to the effect that the caucus had passed a vote of full confidence in its four members of the Schlebusch Commission, and had requested them to continue in office. Until the final report on Nusas was released, any attempt at assessment or criticism of the Commission's findings must be premature.

Failure by the United Party to have participated in the Commission, and with it, failure to have played a necessary part in ensuring a fair and just hearing for those whose actions were being investigated, would have been a grave dereliction of the Party's constitutional function as the Opposition, it was stated.

The caucus reaffirmed the United Party's total opposition to arbitrary banning as a form of administrative punishment, and its unshakable belief that, if such action was contemplated or taken against anyone, compliance with the rule of law demanded that the person concerned must have access to a judicial tribunal,

⁵ e.g. *Rand Daily Mail*, 7 March.

⁶ *Ibid.*, and issue of 19 June.

⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 July.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 May.

which would have power to examine the matter independently of Parliament and the executive.

It was emphasized that the United Party would not tolerate any attempts to achieve political change other than by democratic procedures within the law. It would continue to oppose any tendencies on the part of the Government, or of any other persons or agencies, to impose totalitarian methods in the maintenance of order.

Discussion of consensus

When the Commission's first interim report was under discussion, Mr. S. J. Marais Steyn spoke in support of the establishment of a bi-party Parliamentary Commission on Internal Security, and added that he believed consensus between the two parties would grow.⁹

In a Press statement,¹⁰ Sir De Villiers Graaff then firmly rejected suggestions of a move towards consensus on the major issues facing the country. The only object of consensus should be to remove discussion on inconsequential issues, allowing the nation to face the real ones. There were five basic principles on which the United Party would never compromise with the Nationalists, he said. These were:

- (a) its profound belief in the freedom and dignity of the individual;
- (b) its conviction that points of agreement between people should be stressed, and not points of difference;
- (c) its belief in a free enterprise system with a minimum of governmental interference;
- (d) its acceptance that people of different races, different standards of living, and different cultures could live in harmony in a single state;
- (e) its belief that all the people of South Africa had a common destiny and should have a common loyalty to one another and to the country.

The Prime Minister commented¹¹ that in a broad sense he wanted consensus on matters of common interest to South Africa, but it would have to be on his Party's terms. "I do not seek consensus with the United Party as such. What would I do with it?"

Debates on race relations

In the Assembly on 5 February,¹² Mr. Dave J. Marais maintained that urban Africans were and would remain a permanent part of "white" South Africa, and that the denial to them of basic human rights gave rise to a potentially explosive situation.

⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 9 and 13 June.

¹⁰ *Sunday Express*, 10 June, and *Star*, 12 June.

¹¹ Senate, 12 June, Hansard 12 cols. 4 000 *et seq.*

¹² Hansard 1 cols. 81-5.

Mr. Japie D. du P. Basson said,¹³ "We shall never find the right answers until we deliberately and openly adopt a course leading away from colour as the norm for all arrangements." After referring to the humiliations of petty apartheid in lifts, post offices, etc. he stated that these were fostering a spirit of discourtesy to non-whites. "Every white child who sees this situation must simply, from an early age, arrive at one conclusion, namely that in our eyes the non-white person is considered to be inferior."

Speaking shortly afterwards,¹⁴ Sir De Villiers Graaff condemned "hurtful and unnecessary invasions of human dignity which are often found in what is called petty apartheid", hardships under the pass laws, and evils of the migratory labour system. He referred to the dissatisfactions of Africans in urban areas, repeating a previous warning that "the urban Bantu is the flash-point for race conflict in South Africa".

In a subsequent debate,¹⁵ Mr. T. Gray Hughes said that relations between the Government and the country's Africans had never before been so strained. There was naught for the comfort of anyone in the confrontation that was building up. The Government's policy was rapidly approaching the point of no return. The economic needs of the homelands had been neglected in favour of their political development. The Government's homelands policy could not even begin to succeed unless these areas could absorb their own annual increase in workseekers, which they were very far from doing. But, Mr. Gray Hughes added, the Achilles heel of the Government's policy was its attitude to urban Africans.

Mr. David Marais repeated¹⁶ that it was in the urban African townships that the real racial tensions were compounding to an alarming degree. If the Government persisted in treating these people as temporary sojourners in so-called white South Africa, he said, it should at least, and as a matter of urgency, create a "migrant workers' charter".

Following an investigation of "petty apartheid" by a committee headed by Dr. G. F. Jacobs, M.P., the U.P. formulated its policy on social relationships in South Africa. This was released to the Press in October. On 29 October *The Star* quoted Dr. Jacobs as saying, "We are opposed to forced separation of the races, and also to forced integration. The basic idea is that in social affairs, we believe that you must have options."

Three principles were proposed. The first was that neither open (integrated) nor exclusive (separate) facilities should be enforced. It should be left to the proprietor of an institution or service to say who should use it. Secondly, where no separate

¹³ Hansard 3 cols. 1136-8.

¹⁴ Cols. 1281-9.

¹⁵ 17 May, Hansard 14 cols. 6842-53.

¹⁶ Cols. 6863-5.

facilities existed, as in state libraries, museums, or opera houses, these should be open to all races until equivalent ones could be provided. And thirdly, in transport, public lavatories, and residential areas, there should be both facilities open to all races and others that were exclusive, but a higher price would have to be paid for the latter.

Transvaal congress of the United Party

Black leaders had in the past addressed the United Party's parliamentary caucus, but during August, for a first time, three addressed a Party congress — that held in the Transvaal. They were Professor H. W. E. Ntsanwisi, Chief Executive Councillor of Gazankulu, Mr. Tom Swartz, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council, and Mr. J. N. Reddy, a member of the Executive of the S.A. Indian Council.

Mr. Harry Schwarz and Dr. Gideon Jacobs were unanimously re-elected leader and deputy-leader, respectively, of the U.P. in the Transvaal. Neither was opposed. Both men were given standing ovations.

An "Act of Dedication to our People" (described below), which had been formulated by the provincial caucus, was unanimously accepted.

In his summing-up speech at the end, Sir De Villiers Graaff paid sincere tribute to Mr. Schwarz (thus implicitly giving notice that the campaign against him and his supporters by conservative members must cease).¹⁷

"Act of Dedication to our People"

The "Act of Dedication" stated¹⁸ that "all our people, irrespective of language, creed, race, or colour, shall be entitled:

1. to be free of humiliations impugning upon their dignity and not be subject to unjust discriminatory practices;
2. to the protection of the rule of law, which presumes a man's innocence until guilt is proven before an independent judiciary, which guarantees the liberty and security of the individual, which ensures freedom from restriction and detention by executive action, and which permits the suspension of such fundamentals only in times of war or other national emergency;
3. to live in a society where law and order is maintained to protect the individual and security of the State, and where the ballot box is recognized as the only means of bringing about changes of government and of the constitution;
4. to social and economic justice, with opportunity of progress

¹⁷ *Sunday Times*, 26 August.

¹⁸ *Race Relations News*, June.

and to obtain a share in the wealth of the land, with free education for all, with protection against exploitation of the working man so that all who do a fair day's work can own a home and enjoy a decent living standard, and with deserved care when aged or infirm;

5. to a participation in the determination of their own destiny so that no-one will be without voice in the constitutional machinery of the State whilst ensuring security for all groups, without domination by one over others and without danger to standards already attained;
6. to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, peaceful assembly and association, together with freedom of speech, including lawful dissent and protest;
7. to be proud citizens of South Africa, commanding respect in the community of nations, strong morally, economically, and militarily, able to resist terrorism and other aggression, while seeking to live in peaceful co-existence with neighbours in Africa."

Following its unanimous acceptance by the Transvaal congress, the Act of Dedication was submitted for consideration by the central congress of the U.P. in November.

Further statements on internal feuding in the U.P.

Following a meeting of the U.P.'s central executive committee held in Cape Town during July, Sir De Villiers Graaff announced¹⁹ that there had been a full and frank discussion on party unity. It had become abundantly clear that no real differences existed on fundamental policy. With the full support of his provincial chairmen and other members of his executive he wished to state, however, that he was not prepared to countenance feuding within the Party, indiscipline, or personality differences, which derogated from the U.P.'s first duty of attacking the National Party Government.

During the following month²⁰ Sir De Villiers repeated that he and his provincial chairmen were determined to root out the bickering and quarrelling which had done so much to tarnish the Party's image and impede its progress. He made it clear, however, that internal debates arising from the ferment of ideas in the country were accepted and welcomed.

Resignation of Mr. Marais Steyn

It was reported in various newspapers on 31 August that at a combined U.P. central head committee and parliamentary caucus meeting, Mr. Schwarz attacked Mr. Marais Steyn for emphasizing "white leadership" as being the Party's policy, rather than "shared power". Mr. Steyn then announced his resignation as chairman of

¹⁹ Various newspapers of 26 July.

²⁰ *Star*, 18 August.

the Party's Information Division, saying it had become clear to him that there were unbridgeable personality problems between himself and Mr. Schwarz, and that important matters of principle were involved, for example the attitude of Party members to the question of dynamic white leadership in South Africa.

Sir De Villiers was reported to have issued a statement endorsing Mr. Schwarz's interpretation, i.e. that white leadership was necessary only in order to establish a Federation in which power would be shared.

On 1 September Mr. Steyn resigned from the U.P. and announced that he would seek membership of the National Party. The Press speculated²¹ that he hoped to be supported by conservative Party members. If this was the case, the move was abortive, for a meeting of the public representatives of the U.P. in the Transvaal unanimously reaffirmed loyalty to the Party, its policies, its national leader, and its Transvaal provincial leader. Mr. Steyn was called upon to resign his Parliamentary seat forthwith: like other members, he had undertaken to do so if he ever ceased to be a Party member. The U.P. Divisional Committee of his constituency, Yeoville, met too, and also called upon Mr. Steyn to resign and fight a by-election as a Nationalist.²² He announced,²³ however, that he would meet the voters of Yeoville before deciding. Meanwhile, he had been accepted as a National Party member.

National Congress of the U.P.²⁴

In opening the national congress of the U.P., held in Bloemfontein during November, Sir De Villiers made it plain that the Party's policy was to use white leadership to bring about a federal political system in which power and responsibility would be shared fairly by all the communities of South Africa.

The congress accepted revised aims and principles which embodied this principle and also (in a slightly revised form) those contained in the Transvaal congress's "Act of Dedication". The policy of continuing consultation with members of all racial groups was fully endorsed, as was the Transvaal decision to invite black leaders to address its congress. It was decided that whites ought not to have the right to veto the establishment of independent homelands if this was in accordance with the wishes of the blacks concerned.²⁵

At his request, Sir De Villiers was given a mandate to appoint a central disciplinary committee with wide powers. Its decisions would be subject only to appeal to the central head committee.

²¹ *Sunday Times*, 2 September.

²² *Star*, 4 September.

²³ *Ibid.*, 18 September.

²⁴ Account based on numerous Press reports between 9 and 12 November.

²⁵ In previous years, the U.P. had opposed the granting of ultimate sovereign independence to the homelands.

THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY

When opening the Transvaal congress of the Progressive Party, held in Johannesburg during June, the Party leader, Mr. Colin Eglin, appealed to verligtes in other parties who were frustrated by political deadlocks to help the Progressives to create a grand alliance of modern enlightened South Africans.

Two motions were debated behind closed doors, their terms being released to the Press later.¹ One matter discussed was that considerable numbers of voters found themselves unable to subscribe to National or United Party policies, yet were not attracted to Progressive Party policies. It was considered that one reason was that the Party's policy statements did not give adequate reassurance to whites in general, and Afrikaners in particular, that their identities were recognised and would be preserved within a framework of equal opportunities and rights for all.

Following discussion of the other motion, it was decided that the Party might be well advised to place more emphasis on pragmatic, short-term objectives rather than on long-term ideological philosophies. Immediate objectives might include pressing for the right of urban Africans to have their families with them, the freezing of group areas removals, massive economic development of the homelands, the control of black governmental bodies by elected rather than nominated members, non-interference by the Government in sport.

It was planned to submit these recommendations to the national congress in September; but in the event they were not discussed at the latter meeting owing to lack of time.

At this national congress, held in Durban, Mr. Colin Eglin was unanimously re-elected as Party leader, and Mr. Ray Swart was unanimously elected national chairman in succession to the late Mr. Harry Lawrence.

The congress made no policy changes, but focussed primarily on the way in which issues such as labour, education, and the cost of living should be tackled. Delegates gave full backing to Mr. Eglin's initiative in having held discussions with black leaders in the Republic and in other African states. It was decided to plan a national convention of all races to consider such matters as the franchise, federation, land distribution, and the rights of workers.²

Invitations to attend the congress had been sent to all the homeland leaders, three of whom were able to accept and addressed the delegates — Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of KwaZulu, Mr. Collins Ramusi of Lebowa, and Mr. T. M. Molathlawa of Bophutha-Tswana. Chief Buthelezi received a standing ovation after a speech in which he urged that blacks and whites should together draft

¹ e.g. *Sunday Times*, 24 June, *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 June.

² *Rand Daily Mail*, 5 September.

and work for the enactment of constitutional guarantees for the safeguarding of basic rights and freedoms for all, thus allaying the fears of minority groups, particularly the whites.³

ACTION SOUTH AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (ASASA) AND PLANS FOR A DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The establishment by Mr. Theo J. A. Gerdener of a movement called Action South and Southern Africa, and his initial plans, were described on pages 61-2 of last year's *Survey*.

Mr. Gerdener said during June⁴ that ASASA had been working for a closing of the wage gap, and for the elimination of petty apartheid. Discussions were in progress to identify the forms of discrimination that caused the greatest inter-racial friction. Two further projects would be given priority. One, called "Food and race relations", would concern itself with the fact that only 22 per cent of South Africa's work force of five million people enjoyed proper well-balanced feeding. Proper feeding would improve productivity and cut the accident, absenteeism, and sickness rates. The second project was to establish citizens' advice bureaux in the major cities to help newcomers, especially blacks, find their way through the welter of laws and regulations that affected them.

During the latter part of the year⁵ Mr. Gerdener announced his plans for the creation of a Democratic Party, initially all-White, but later to include people of other racial groups. Its policy would be a "twin stream" one. In the one stream would be the Whites, Coloured, and Indians. All basic rights at present enjoyed by the Whites would be extended gradually to the others. In the course of time, all public facilities would be shared, and a state would emerge in which all citizens had full equality. Petty discrimination based on colour would be eliminated.

The borders of the homelands would be redrawn to consolidate these areas into large blocks which could become viable, completely independent states. There would be no mass removals of people: Whites could remain in the new African areas if they so wished.

A policy for urban Africans in white areas had still to be determined. Consideration was being given to the conversion of large urban African townships into autonomous city states, dual states, or integrated parts of homelands.

The White, Coloured, and Indian areas, the independent African states, the autonomous city states, and, possibly, neighbouring states would be linked in a commonwealth of Southern African states, economically inter-dependent but politically independent, and anti-communist. Richer member-states would con-

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Sunday Express*, 3 June.

⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 July, 4 August, 30 August; *Sunday Times*, 5 August and 23 September.

tribute to the dynamic economic advancement of the less fortunate ones. A commonwealth was preferable to a federal form of government, since in a federation one group might be able to dominate the others.

VERLIGTE ACTION

During the past two years a series of informal meetings were held throughout the country between verligte⁶ white people of various political parties who are disillusioned by the political log-jam and anxious to see bold action taken to remedy legitimate grievances of blacks. These culminated in a meeting held in Pretoria on 20 May, organized by Professor Willem A. Joubert of the University of South Africa, and attended by prominent academics, politicians, businessmen, and others from various political parties, including General R. C. Hiemstra (the former Commandant-General), Professor Frans Maritz and Dr. Connie Alant of the University of South Africa, Mr. Japie Basson, M.P., and Mr. Colin Eglin.

With financial assistance from two businessmen whose names were not revealed, this group planned a function which was held in Johannesburg on 29 June, and attended by about 450 invited guests. Professor Joubert, who was in the chair, said that the object was to form a verligte action group on an across-the-party basis in order to mobilise enlightened political opinion to facilitate change. He stated that there were three points of departure on which it was essential to agree:

- (a) that South Africa was one nation whose people had a common destiny, their mutual commitment making joint planning for the future essential;
- (b) that the country had a "multi-form" nature consisting of different population groups;
- (c) that all people in South Africa, notwithstanding their status, group loyalties, or colour, were entitled to a life, consonant with human dignity.⁷

An interim steering committee consisting of 21 persons was appointed, and a full-time office opened in Pretoria.

During the following month,⁸ a special committee was set up to discuss with black leaders the question of the involvement of their peoples in the new movement. A series of action groups was formed to discuss, with people of all racial groups, current questions such as citizenship and political rights, education, city and community planning, economic affairs and labour, censorship, student affairs, and welfare services.

It was announced on 25 July that the interim national Com-

⁶ "Enlightened".

⁷ *Star*, 25 June, and *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 June.

⁸ *Star*, 13 July.

mittee had decided to open the membership of Verligte Action to all South Africans, irrespective of language or colour. Multi-racial meetings, with speakers drawn from the different racial groups, were held in Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, and other centres.

A pamphlet was issued, amplifying the "points of departure". Verligte Action, it was stated, was concerned about the future of South Africa and its people, and about the humiliations and injustices to which many South African citizens were subjected. It was concerned about the growing feeling of frustration and bitterness among many people, the increasing antagonism between language and colour groups and the danger of open confrontation. It called for a fundamental reappraisal of attitudes, policies, and actions, and asked all South Africans to assist in the eradication of prejudice and the removal of injustice. Verligte Action committed itself to principles of non-discrimination and the full participation of all groups in the country's social, economic, and political structure.⁹

Plans were discussed for a national convention to consider the political future of South Africa.

CONSTITUTION AND ELECTIONS AMENDMENT ACT

NO. 79 OF 1973

A Constitution and Elections Amendment Bill was introduced by the Minister of the Interior during April, and was referred to a Select Committee before its Second Reading. After hearing evidence, this committee drafted an amended Bill, which was adopted by Parliament.

It contained a large number of provisions relating to the registration of voters (continuous registration will take place), and the conduct of elections. Many of these provisions are to apply, too, to the election of members of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council and the Coloured Council for South West Africa.

At present, the House of Assembly consists of 166 members, 160 of them elected by white voters in the Republic, and 6 by white voters in South West Africa. The quota per electoral division in the Republic is obtained by dividing the total number of registered voters by 160. However, if an electoral division has an area of 10 000 square miles (approximately 26 000 square kilometres) or more, the delimitation commission may reduce the number of voters in this division to 8 000 or a number equal to 70 per cent of the quota, whichever is the greater. The number of seats per province has, thus, altered from time to time according to the distribution of the population. In 1973 it was:

⁹ *Star*, 14 August.