

THE BLACK SASH

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DIE LAASTE STAND

DIT behoort nou duidelik te wees vir almal wat 'n intelligente belang in ons landsake stel dat die moontlikheid dat Suid-Afrika se apartheidbeleid kan slaag, nou feitlik verdwyn het. Drukkragte van binne en van buite werk saam om 'n beleidsverandering onvermydelik te maak, en dit is slegs 'n saak van tyd voordat 'n verandering plaasvind.

In die eerste plek wek apartheidswetgewing toenemende weerstand by sakelui — selfs by dié wat nasionaalgesind is. Onsekerheid as gevolg van maatreëls soos die Wet op Groepsgebiede, en werkaftakening, en besorgdheid oor die uitwerking van ontwikkeling langs die grense van die Reservate, is besig om belegging af te skrik en ons ekonomiese vooruitgang te strem. Ons word deur ekonomiese boikotte gedreig, en ons staan in gevaar om uiteindelik die voordele te verloor wat ons tans as lid van die Statebond geniet. Huidige beleide raak gedurig meer onvoordelig, en alle onvoordelige ondernemings moet uiteindelik laat vaar word.

In die tweede plek is ons politieke afsondering tans feitlik voldaan. Afgesien van klein groepe Blankes in naburige gebiede, is die

THE LAST DITCH

IT should now be apparent to everyone who takes an intelligent interest in public affairs that the chances of success for South Africa's apartheid policy have receded to vanishing point. Internal and external pressures are combining to force a change of policy, and it is only a matter of time before a change takes place.

In the first place, apartheid legislation is generating increasing hostility among the business community, including that part of it that is nationalist in sentiment. Uncertainty created by measures such as the Group Areas Act and job reservation, and anxiety about the effects of development on the borders of the Reserves, are discouraging investment and holding back our economic progress. We are threatened by economic boycotts, and we stand in danger of eventually losing the benefits we now enjoy as a member of the Commonwealth. Present policies are becoming more and more unprofitable, and all unprofitable ventures must ultimately be abandoned.

In the second place, our political isolation is now almost complete. Apart from small groups

wêreld vas teen ons gekant. Ons beleid word verwerp deur 'n meerderheid van die mense in ons land; dit is afskuwelik vir die ontwikkelende volke van Afrika: en deur die Westerse wêreld in die algemeen word dit as 'n verleentheid beskou in die stryd teen die Kommunisme. Om ons te verbeel dat 'n beleid ten spyte van sulke weerstand kan slaag, is inderdaad uiters onrealisties.

In die derde plek word dit steeds moeiliker om die etiese redenering teen rassediskriminerings te weerstaan. Mense sal 'n feitlik hopelose stand verdedig as daar diep in hulle die wete is dat dit 'n regverdige stand is; maar dié troos is ons huidige regeerders ontsê. Daar is te veel in hul beleide wat, om die minste te sê, moreel betwisbaar is. Ons kan nie daarop aanspraak maak dat ons regering op toestemming gevestig is nie. Ons kan nie met oortuiging aanvoer dat die twyfelagtige voordele van afsonderlike ontwikkeling vir die Naturelle in die toekoms, die onbekwaamhede regverdige wat hulle tans moet ly nie. Ons kan nie sonder verontrusting ons apartheidswetgewing met die hoogste beginsels van die westerse beskawing versoen nie.

TEN spyte van alles, het baie van ons mense besluit om 'n wanhopige laaste stand te steun. Hulle is vasbeslote om met apartheid voort te gaan, omdat hulle glo dat die enigste alternatief 'n swart heerskappy is. Hulle vind dit skynbaar psigologies onmoontlik om 'n grondwet te beoog waaronder die regte en vryheid van almal beveilig word, of 'n veel-rassige samelewing waarin die status van die individu alleenlik volgens verdienste bepaal word.

Die Swart Serp begryp die diepe vrees vir die toekoms wat vandag onder die Blankes in Suid-Afrika heers. Die Serp kan nie voorgee dat 'n verandering van beleid maklik of gerieflik sal wees nie. Maar wetgewing wat op die

A word in earnest is better than a speech.
—Charles Dickens.

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When the state is most corrupt, then laws
are most multiplied.
—Tacitus.

of white people in neighbouring territories, the world is solidly against us. Our policy is rejected by a majority of the people within our borders: it is repugnant to the developing nations of Africa; and it is regarded by the Western world generally as an embarrassment in the struggle against Communism. To imagine that a policy can succeed in the face of such opposition is unrealistic in the extreme.

In the third place, the ethical argument against racial discrimination is proving increasingly difficult to resist. Men will rally behind a desperate cause if they know, deep down, that they are right; but this consolation is denied our present rulers. There is too much in their policies that is, to say the least, morally questionable. We cannot claim that our government is based on consent. We cannot argue with conviction that the problematical benefits of separate development for Africans in the future justify the disabilities they suffer here and now. We cannot reconcile, without misgivings, our apartheid legislation with the highest principles of Western civilisation.

DESPITE all this, many of our people have committed themselves to a desperate, last ditch stand. They are determined to persist with apartheid, believing that the only alternative is black domination. They appear to be psychologically incapable of envisaging a constitution under which the rights and liberties of all would be safeguarded, or a multi-racial society in which the status of the individual is determined by merit alone.

The Black Sash understands the deep fear of the future that exists among white people in South Africa today. It cannot pretend to

vrees gebaseer is, skep juis die euwels wat dit beoog is om te verhoed. Dit skyn buitendien asof blanke Suid-Afrika geen keuse het nie, en vroeër of later verplig sal word om sy beleid te wysig. Dit sou beter wees om nou 'n beleid te aanvaar wat moreel onberispelik is, en die gevolge tegemoet te gaan — wat hulle ook al mag wees — liewer as om deur eiebelang beweeg te word om met 'n beleid voort te gaan wat vir die gewete van die mensdom afskuwelik is.

believe that a change of policy would be easy or comfortable. But legislation based on fear creates the very evils it seeks to avoid. In any event, it seems that white South Africa has no choice in the matter and will have to change its policy sooner or later. It would be better to adopt a policy, now, that is morally irreproachable, and face the consequences, whatever they may be, than to persist with a policy, on grounds of self-interest, that is repugnant to the conscience of mankind.



"There must not only be justice to the Black man in Africa, but also to the White man."

—Cape Times.