

South Africa which can present non-violent and disciplined opposition to apartheid in the extra-Parliamentary field. This will not come easily. Opposition of this kind requires self-discipline at the individual level and it requires the discipline, which only comes from confidence in an effective organization, if it is to be successful on a wider scale. And if such opposition is to mean anything at all for the future of South Africa it must be carried out by people

of all races together.

#### Giving the Lead

In building such an opposition the Liberal Party is better equipped to give the lead than any other organization. A difficult task? Of course it is. But time, the world and most South Africans are on the side of the non-racial ideal to which Liberals subscribe. What is needed is the resolution and energy to build the organizational framework to turn the ideal into reality.

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## T H E   C O N V E N T I O N   M O V E M E N T

A remarkable feature of the South African political scene during 1961 has been the growth of what has come to be known as the "Convention Movement". Two very successful conventions have been held, the Natal Convention in April and the Malmesbury Convention of Coloured leaders in early July.

#### Radical Changes

Although the scope of both these "conventions" was limited, they had two important characteristics in common. In the first place, they were supported by many people whose views might generally be regarded as conservative and who would certainly not have attended them a few years ago.

Secondly, in spite of this, they came out, almost without a dissenting voice, for radical changes towards a shared future for all South Africans. Universal franchise and an integrated educational system were to such radical changes contemplated. Neither convention discussed how this

new, shared future was to be achieved but both agreed that there should be a similar "convention" on a national scale as a first step.

#### Further Steps

Since the two Conventions met, the first steps towards such a national gathering have been taken. The Natal Convention Committee initiated a move which culminated in a widely representative meeting of South Africans of all groups, from all over the country, in July, in Johannesburg. A working committee to explore the ground for a national consultation was set up.

The follow-up to the Malmesbury Convention has been more spectacular. A Conference of Representatives from all races, mainly from the Cape, but including several from other provinces, took place in Claremont just before the election. A week later a regional conference was held in Port Elizabeth. Both meet-

ings called for a new National Convention.

The demand from the Claremont Conference was specifically for a "sovereign" National Convention, in other words for a law-making body. This is a completely sensible aim. How else are conflicting interests in South Africa to resolve their differences in peace in the long run if it is not by sitting down, Nationalists and all, at a new National Convention?

Nevertheless there is a large body of anti-Nationalist opinion which would recognize a new National Convention as a wonderful ideal, but which would not, at this moment, be prepared to attend something which could be regarded as a revolutionary challenge to the Government.

The Claremont Conference went some way to meet this view by proposing a preliminary national conference of all those interested in the Convention movement. This, surely, is the first practical, and urgent, step to be taken? To be effective this conference must be widely representative. To ensure this its terms of reference must not be such as to frighten off potential support.

From it may then come the beginnings of a pressure group and a movement whose demands for a new deal, thrashed out at a new National Convention, the authorities will eventually have to meet. Such a movement would be something behind which every non-racialist could throw his full weight.

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#### SOUTH WEST AFRICA

Liberal Opinion has criticized the United Nations Committee on South West Africa before, and it does so again, this time for the exaggerated picture of conditions in the territory contained in its report to the Trusteeship Committee of the General Assembly.

Its exaggeration gave Mr. Louw just the chance he needed to put up some defence against the Committee's indictment and to appear as the injured representative of a badly-done-by Government. Why did the Committee have to do this? Conditions in South West are bad enough not to need exaggeration. All one need do is quote facts, and apartheid is shown up for what it is.

We wish the South African Government's overseas critics would stick strictly to the facts. It would make our job in South Africa just that much easier.

#### DR. VERWOERD AND THE JEWS

South Africa has few friends in the world. Israel is no longer one of them. First apartheid forced her to turn her back on S.A. at UNO, now Dr. Verwoerd has done his best to see that she does not turn back again.

In a letter to a Mr. East in Cape Town, Dr. V. dropped a few dark hints about the Jews. Perhaps Mr. East should not have revealed the contents, but he has and its threatening undertones are now known. We object to them strongly.

Since then the Prime Minister has tried to reassure local Jews. We hope that he means what he says. His reaction to Israel's UNO vote was reminiscent of Mr. Louw's petulance in the face of criticism. Is this not a sign that he too is beginning to feel the strain under which the apostles of apartheid labour in their impossible attempt to sell an indefensible policy to a hostile world?