

'MORAL CRISIS'

'A MORAL crisis is raging within the heart of the Nationalist Afrikaner,' and there is 'strife and tension, remorse and deep self-examination taking place,' says Professor S. J. Terreblanche, a leading verligte thinker at Stellenbosch University.

In an address on The Academic and Politics delivered at Stellenbosch, Professor Terreblanche appealed for the party hierarchy not to reject unfeelingly well-intentioned and vitally necessary public criticism from loyal academics.

His call clearly stemmed from a growing feeling of alienation on the part of verligtes who sometimes consider themselves cast in the role of irresponsible, even malicious troublemakers by certain right-wing Nationalists as the verligte-verkramppte power struggle intensifies.

Verligte frustration is compounded by the fact that they feel most Nationalists are at least sympathetic toward them.

But the verkrampptes are far better organised. They have tight control of the institutional structure of the National Party and thus wield tremendous influence when major policy

RAGING FOR NATS

By Ewald Thal

shifts are debated in an atmosphere of eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation.

It frequently appears that the verkrampptes are winning.

'There is no doubt that a crisis — a moral crisis — is raging within the heart of the Nationalist Afrikaner,' said Professor Terreblanche.

'There is strife and tension, remorse and deep self-examination taking place.

PRIORITIES

'The crisis in the heart of the Nationalist Afrikaner concerns value judgments and political priorities. It can in all fairness not be expected of a politically involved and nationalist-orientated academic that in the midst of this strife he will stand on the sidelines as if the struggle does not concern him and as if on the grounds of his vocational background he does not have a contribution to make.'

Professor Terreblanche argued that it was essential for the nationalist-orientated Afrikaner academic to make a contribution toward a positive 'volkskritiek' if 'we want to establish a new civilisation for all South Africa's peoples in this great and afflicted land.'

SECURITY

To support his argument he traced developments surrounding the Afrikaner's rise to political security and prominence since 1948.

In the uncertain early days, when the National Party was in a vulnerable position, it was desirable for all those who were well disposed towards it to mute their criticisms and maintain tightly closed ranks.

But in the seventies the situation was radically different.

'The Afrikaners are fully emancipated and their identity is threatened only insofar as the survival of civilised standards in South Africa are threatened,' said Professor Terreblanche, adding that the position of power enjoyed by the National Party was similarly secure.

UNFORTUNATE

Changed circumstances called for changed attitudes and responses.

It was unfortunate that there remained both politicians and academics who felt the tightly closed relationships of the fifties were still desirable today.

The politicians concerned have apparently become so spoiled by the academic submission of the fifties that they simply cannot endure the critical attitude of various nationalist orientated academics, and would greatly like to see them



Professor S. J. Terreblanche

either effectively caged or driven out.

'On the other hand, there are apparently also academics who are still caught in the rut of the fifties and choose to remain academically immature.'

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