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'MYTH TO SHIELD GOVT.'

(DISCREDIT OF SECURITY POLICE)

## MYTH TO SHIELD GOVT.

IT IS DEPRESSING TO FIND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, Dr. Connie Mulder, lending his authority to the theory that there is some sinister plot to discredit the Security Police. This myth has been industriously fostered by the Nationalist Press over the past few weeks in an effort to shield the Government from its critics and help it out of the mess in which its own actions have landed it. This Nationalist Press campaign is, in fact, a protective smokescreen, and the Minister of Information has no business to add his own little contribution to the fog.

Speaking at a Nationalist Party rally in Meyerton this week, Dr. Mulder said that "to make all sorts of suggestions about the actions of the Security Police was part of a purposeful plan to discredit them, so that they would be powerless". He then went on to link the Caprivi Strip landmine explosion with a debate in the United Nations and suggested that all these criticisms of the Security Police were part of a "finely woven plot" against South Africa. This is obvious nonsense and nobody in the position of a Minister of Information should help to spread this kind of fairy tale.

It is ridiculous to conjure up a plot to explain away the wave of protests that have followed recent police actions.

When the Security Police lose a detainee through what they say is suicide and have to put another one in hospital with some mysterious illness, when they ignore the requests of a Supreme Court judge, when they distort the purpose of a section of an

Act of Parliament to suit their own convenience and when they issue their own *ex parte* statements on matters which have still to come before the courts, is it not time that somebody protested? If there were no protests, then there would indeed be something to worry about in the state of the nation.

To make his "plot" theory convincing, Dr. Mulder has to presuppose the co-operation of a most unlikely team of plotters. He must persuade the public that Sir De Villiers Graaff, Mr. Mike Mitchell, Mrs. Helen Suzman, a large number of lawyers, the Natal Provincial Council and a host of religious and academic leaders are all in the conspiracy together. This is a persecution complex gone mad.

The truth is that the people and the newspapers who have protested have no wish to discredit the Security Police. On the contrary, they want to stop the Security Police from discrediting themselves. They want the Security Police to do their essential job in such a way that they can command the respect of all sections of the population.

These angry South Africans want to bring a State department under proper ministerial control and to make it subject to democratic scrutiny by Parliament. They want to restore the rule of law and to ensure that the Security Police are no longer allowed to make their own laws to suit themselves. And above all they want to protect South Africa from the charge that, in the name of fighting communism, it is resorting to the very methods which damn communism in the eyes of the Western world.