

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE NEED FOR THEORY

The Editor, Liberation

Dear Sir,

We welcome **Liberation**, and would like to congratulate you on the high standard of the first issue.

The principle that 'there can be no democratic movement without democratic theory' has been repeated very often in South Africa, but in fact very little has been done about it.

A major source of difficulty has been a wrong idea of what is meant by "theory." Many people seem to think that a theoretical study consists of vague and unsubstantiated generalities. Others seem to think that a theoretical education can consist of a memorization of general principles based on overseas experience. How many of us have even set ourselves the task of making a concrete and detailed study of South African political economy, history or society? How many critical studies applying our well-known principles have been published? Is it not high time that critical histories of the conquest of Africa, the experience of the African and Indian Congresses from their foundations, the trade unions in South Africa, the industrialization of South Africa, etc., should be produced?

~~We call on all democrats to set about seriously increasing their knowledge and understanding of our own South African conditions and problems, as well as the general principles of history and politics. In our opinion it is the duty of the older and more experienced people to begin at once to summarise the experience of the struggles of the past and to carefully consider and formulate the lessons of this experience for the benefit of the large number of young militants coming forward in the battles of today.~~

With greetings for a democratic South Africa,

D. HOLT
A. R. LIPMAN
B. LIPMAN

Johannesburg.

To the Editor of "Liberation."

Dear Friend,

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on the publication of "Liberation." It appears at an appropriate time to articulate the thoughts and hopes of the voiceless millions of our country. I am glad to see that "Liberation" stands for the principles and objectives of the ANC and SAIC. But I hope that this will not blind you to the necessity sometimes to criticise particular decisions and tactics of the SAIC and ANC.

I have in the past been a critical supporter of the Congresses and have had reservations in my support for their present methods of struggle. Nevertheless I joined the first batch of Natal's volunteers and went to jail last September. I feel that as long as we remain loyal to the basic principles of the liberation movement, we should make full use of our right to criticise our leaders and the decisions which they make. Only in this way will we be able to avoid mistakes and set the people's forward march on the correct road to freedom. I hope that "Liberation" will be guided by this spirit of constructive and objective criticism.

For Afrika!

Yours for Democracy,

A. K. M. DOCRAT.

Durban.

["Liberation" is not controlled by any organisation and will always consider itself free to criticise the Congresses in a constructive and helpful manner where criticism is called for. —Editor.]