

Beginning a New Series

SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE NATIONALISTS

WITH this issue, *Liberation* launches a new series of discussion articles by writers of varying shades of democratic and progressive opinion.

The writers have been given an entirely free hand in dealing with the theme under discussion. But they have been requested in the course of their articles, to suggest answers to the following questions:

What political changes do you consider desirable in South Africa?

Do the social forces exist in our country to bring about such changes?

Is the accomplishment of a universal franchise feasible at the present time?

What immediate economic changes are likely to be found necessary?

Is racialism so deeply rooted that special measures would be needed to eliminate it? And, if so, what measures?

READERS are invited, in addition to the invited contributors, to submit their own views and comments on the subject, or on the contributions printed.

At the close of the series, the Editor will sum up the debate and put forward our own conclusions.

South Africa Afte

By PATRICK DUNCAN

Mr. Duncan is a leading member of the Liberal Party. Son of a former Governor-General, he was jailed as a volunteer in the Defiance Campaign.

What political changes do you consider desirable in S. Africa?

The elimination of all colour discrimination. A consequence of this is that all adults should have the vote.

Do the social forces exist in our country to accomplish such changes?

Emphatically. All the social forces in my view are working for an elimination of the colour bar, and for fair shares.

What basis for unity exists between the racial groups?

Firstly, the economic system, which brings all races together in partnership. It is today the best guarantee for the Africans that there will be no partition, no extrusion of Africans into Bantustan. Tomorrow it will be the best insurance for the White minority against their being pushed out of the country. Neither the Whites nor the Africans could make the economic system work alone. Secondly, the spirit of the times. This spirit, especially among young people, is in favour of greater friendship between peoples of differing origins. Thirdly the fact that all of us are South Africans, and that our country, which belongs to all of us, is big enough for all and to spare.

Is the accomplishment of universal franchise feasible at the present stage?

Most certainly. It works in places, such as the West Indies, where somewhat similar racial difficulties exist. Winston Churchill put it in a nutshell when he said: "Democracy is the worst form of government . . . with the exception of all the others." That seems to me correct. Human beings with power are not a pretty sight, anywhere in the world. But governments are necessary, and rather than look for utopia, let us settle for the least harmful.

It is sometimes said that a "primitive, uncivilised" person is irresponsible, and cannot be trusted with the vote in a modern society. I am afraid I do not know what the words "primitive" and "uncivilised" mean. They mean nothing to anthropologists. If they mean "brutal", then as I

The Nationalists

By WALTER SISULU

Mr. Sisulu was, until he was banned, Secretary-General of the African National Congress. A foundation member of the A.N.C. Youth League, he is at present among the Treason Trial accused.

South Africa urgently needs political changes of a far-reaching character. The strained relations between various racial groups; the sharp increase in crime and violence; the constant upheavals in every field, social, educational, political and economic — all these are the signs and proofs that things cannot continue as they are. The country's whole future happiness and prosperity depend upon a new deal being brought about.

The most important and essential change of all is that the present autocratic system of government should be replaced by a South African democracy. What I mean by this is that the people shall govern. All adult citizens, irrespective of race, colour, sex, income, property or educational level should have an equal share in government, exercised through their duly elected and accredited representatives meeting as a sovereign assembly of equals.

There can be no substitute for such a political arrangement, and nothing less will suffice if the aspirations of the oppressed majority of South Africans are to be realised, and our country to advance in peace, prosperity and harmony. Only thus will our people attain the goals they have expressed in the Freedom Charter; only thus can the rights of all national groups to equal opportunities, a fair share in the fruits of national wealth and labour, justice, language rights and national aspirations, be guaranteed.

Universal suffrage is not only the sole solution to the antagonisms, poverty and low cultural levels and other problems which face us today. It is also fully feasible and practical plan for South Africa. This is only doubted by people whose political perspective is bounded by the narrow confines of our present racially-confined electoral system.

It is, of course, inconceivable that either the Nationalists, or even the United Party if it wins the next general election (which we all hope it will do) would dream of "granting" a democratic franchise to the Non-Europeans. But if the right to vote were only to be conceived as a gift from a ruling aristocracy, there would not be a nation in the world enjoying democratic government today. There are some people whose political thinking has entered a dead end. They cannot imagine Parliament, as at present

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look round the world I see that the worst brutality has happened among the most educated peoples. Just think of Himmler. If they mean "emotionally immature", then I would say that in South Africa some of the soundest people emotionally are those furthest from the cities and industries. Of course we have people who cannot read, and people who have no idea of the time. They are unfitted to play a part in a modern industrial system. But they are none the less people in the fullest sense of the term, better in some things, and worse in others, than their brothers in industry, but no less responsible, no less valuable. In my view they would use the vote in South Africa just as well as any other South Africans.

What immediate economic changes are likely to be found necessary?

The good things of life will have to be shared much more fairly. This will be more difficult, and slower, than the political changes mentioned above. The standard of living of a people depends on one thing only — the habits of that people. It is easy, and glib, to think that if the poor rob the rich they will be rich too. It is also superficial to think that industrialisation, by itself, will enrich the common people. Many peasants, such as the Danish, are more prosperous than most industrial wage earners in every country outside the United States.

For a population to be prosperous it is necessary that the people have most of the following habits. They must enjoy work, be interested in science, be thrifty and punctual, and be reliable. They must be intelligently able to cope with machines. They must favour mechanisation, and be reasonably obedient to those in control of industry. Those in control of industry must have available capital to constantly modernise that industry. There must be a thriving scientific education. There must be political security.

These habits are not to be switched on overnight. But they are the precondition of wealth. They were found in Europe a hundred years ago, and are still found there. They are found in the USSR today. They are found in the highest degree in the United States, and it is there that the common people enjoy the highest standard of living that human history has seen.

They are not to be switched on, but they can be nurtured, and the nurturing of them is, in my view, the highest duty ahead of our future non-racial government.

What should the relations be between the ownership of industry and the common people? Here is perhaps the thorniest problem for the future. We already have a rapidly developing industrial machine, that has given Union Africans the highest standard of living of Africans anywhere on the continent. At the same time, compared with the Whites who own the system today, they are politically weak, and therefore shockingly underpaid. Assuming that Africans achieve political power, which is inevitable and will happen soon, how is the problem of this poverty to be dealt with? What are to be their relations with the controllers of industry?

Nationalisation is an easy word to say. But nationalisation has helped the British working folk not one whit. Under nationalisation Russian industry has not expanded at the pace at which Japanese industry expanded under a private enterprise system. The British railways are far worse

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SISULU (continued)

elected, conceding democracy; nor can they imagine any other way in which democracy can be attained. Hence they resign themselves to hopelessness. They have forgotten the lesson of history: that behind every vote lies some past bitter struggle against jealous privilege. Nor can they understand the plain facts of the past ten years in which hundreds of millions of African and Asian peoples have wrested from their former European overlords the right to govern themselves.

All the social forces exist in our country which can bring about the changes we need so badly. They exist in the millions of working people of town and country, black and white, together with the middle and professional classes, who are finding the present despotic government increasingly savage, intolerable, ruinous and intellectually contemptible, and are finding the organisation, the determination and the courage to compel changes. Today the Non-European majority of our people, though voteless, have become a mighty and formidable force, which is making itself felt in many ways. There is also a powerfully growing section of Europeans, among the workers and in Church, commercial, industrial and professional sections, which is not only vigorously resisting the racial follies of the Nationalists, but is also increasingly tending to make a common cause with the Non-Europeans.

This trend towards a multi-racial democratic political front is based upon a common love for our country, which belongs to us all. In the growth of this front lies the best guarantee for a speedy and peaceful transition to democracy. It is also the best guarantee for racial harmony in the free South Africa of the future.

Because of their privileges, and the inferior status of the Non-Europeans politically and economically, Europeans tend to look down upon the other races of our country with arrogance and contempt, as a master upon slaves. These attitudes of arrogance and contempt cause resentment and indignation among the Non-Europeans. The Europeans on their part, as a minority, are afraid of Non-European advancement. They fear that White domination will be replaced by Black domination, and that we will serve them as they have served us.

These racial attitudes of contempt, resentment and fear are rooted not so much in "the consciousness of the people" as in the present social, political and economic conditions in South Africa. By changing those conditions we shall eliminate the causes of racialism, and our people of various national origin will learn to look upon one another not as enemies and rivals, but as partners and allies in the glorious enterprise of building a nobler and a happier South Africa.

No doubt, in a country with a background such as ours, we shall require some laws to prohibit racial discrimination and incitement, to protect

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DUNCAN (continued)

now they are nationalised than they were in the old private-enterprise days. The South African nationalised telephones are a disgrace: the Bell Telephone System of North America is a marvel. No, I do not think that nationalisation will help our industry to produce more, and more production is what we need. What is needed is, in my view (a) a wholesale raising of wages by wage determinations, and (b) much heavier taxation on profits, to finance welfare and education schemes. Subject to these burdens, I would like to see industry free to develop in a manner not controlled by civil servants or doctrinaires.

The human race is growing in power faster today than ever before. Daily new techniques are invented. Do not let us tie ourselves down to outmoded theories, many of them dating back one and two hundred years. Let us be imaginative, and determine to free the man with vision and enterprise from all unnecessary shackles.

Is racialism so deeply rooted in the consciousness of the people that special measures would be required to eliminate it — if so what measures would you suggest?

Beyond encouragement in school I do not think that any such measures would be necessary. In the United States the Fair Employment and School Integration programmes are necessary because there it is the politically dominant Whites who suffer from racialism. They have to be curbed. But here, when the colour-bar goes, the political power of the Africans and other races will be such that the Whites will not even consider the possibility of race discrimination. Those that have the disease so deeply ingrained in them will leave, but they will not try to practise colour discrimination in South Africa.

SPEEDING LIBERATION

Readers have commented favourably on the larger LIBERATION — in fact, they tell us that there can never be too much LIBERATION for them.

We feel much the same way, except that our continual financial struggle imposes strict limits on the extent to which we can expand.

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minority and language rights, and education in common citizenship. But the fundamental measure to eliminate racialism is the replacement of the present distorted racial social structure with a new one founded upon justice, equality and respect for the dignity of man.

Democrats of various shades of opinion may differ as to the economic structure that will take shape in a free South Africa. Some are socialists, other are not.

But we should all be able to agree on certain essential questions.

The oligarchic and racial structure of South Africa, its poverty and oppression, are closely related to the monopoly control of certain key industries, their exploitation of cheap chattel labour, and to the landlessness resulting from the forced expropriation of the Africans.

Our greatest industry, mining, has under private monopoly control developed a vested interest in poverty and oppression. This great natural resource of our South African nation must come under public control if it is not to be a standing menace to all free institutions, and if its fruits are to be made available to all who have toiled and suffered to develop them.

The soil of South Africa must be restored to the people if emancipation is to have any real meaning to the masses. Equitable redistribution, involving giving land to the millions of landless peasants, must form part of any realistic programme of fundamental reform.

It goes without saying that all racial barriers to technical, commercial, industrial and other economic advancement would have to be removed. This is necessary not only in the interests of justice and equity, but also in order to raise the productivity and efficiency of our manpower.

Beyond sketching the broad main outlines, it would be fruitless to draw up a detailed blueprint for the free South Africa of tomorrow. Much will depend upon the course of the struggle between the forces seeking liberty and those which seek to oppress us and drive us back to slavery. We shall become wiser and draw closer to one another during that struggle. In the end, the people will decide.

For the present, we have an overriding common task: to remove the reactionary, fascist Government that bars the road to all progress.

MULTI-RACIAL CONFERENCE: Continuing Brian Buting's article from page 10.

Congressmen will be able to mix with men and women belonging to other groups, many of whom have in the past been their political opponents, but all of whom are now brought together because they face a common danger.

"But", it is objected by some, "the Congresses share a common programme, the Freedom Charter. Those who will be attending the multi-racial conference with them do not accept the Charter, cannot be expected to accept the Charter as the basis for unity. Many of them have not even abandoned the last traces of white chauvinism, and speak of giving us rights 'when the time is ripe'. Many of them are our class enemies, whose

real motive is to perpetuate the power of the ruling class by buying us off with a few concessions. We should go to the conference only if others accept our programme, otherwise we will have betrayed our cause."

Others ask: "How can you expect the lion to lie down with the lamb? The Liberal Party is merely the new face which is being presented to the people by the more enlightened wing of the industrial and finance capitalists. If we co-operate with them, do we not merely help to strengthen our enemies, lend them our mass backing to strengthen the institutions of the ruling class? Should we not rather concentrate our attention on destroying the whole capitalist system which is the root of all the evils from which we suffer? At what point can it be said that our interests coincide with theirs?"

There are several points to be made here. First of all, there is no ideological unity in the Liberal Party, there are only Liberals and Liberals. One wing of the Liberal Party can almost be described as reactionary; but another wing is moving ever-closer to the Congress point of view, and already works closely with the Congresses in some centres.

Secondly, may not co-operation with others also help to strengthen us? Given a correct approach, there is no reason to fear that we must necessarily get the worst of the bargain. Thirdly, it is not true to say that we and they have no interests in common. Granted, the time may come in future when our policies and interests may conflict with theirs; and of course our long-term perspective is quite different from theirs. But meanwhile, now, if the industrialists and finance capitalists are against the pass laws, should we not welcome their co-operation in a campaign to abolish them?

It may be true that their motives in wanting the pass laws to go are different from ours, but let us ask: would we rather have them with us or against us on this issue? If there is division in the ranks of the ruling class over things like these, why should we not take advantage of such divisions? Is it good tactics to help unite the ruling class, and bring about a united front against us?

SECTARIANISM

To adopt such an attitude is to misread the possibilities of the present situation in South Africa, and to betray sectarianism of the worst order at a time when the needs of the struggle demand the creation of the broadest unity amongst anti-Nationalists. Granted many people cannot accept the Freedom Charter. We don't ask them to. Did Stalin insist that Churchill and Roosevelt accept Communism before he accepted their help during the last war? Did he refuse their co-operation because he was afraid of what they would do to him after the war? Of course not. The first principle of the unity of the Allies in the war was united struggle against the monster of Hitler Germany, which threatened equally capitalist Britain and America and Communist Russia, and indeed the whole world. In the same way, the first principle which should be put forward and accepted at the multi-racial conference is condemnation of the apartheid policy of the present Government, and the need to forge some sort of unity in action against it. Not all who are present at the conference may even accept this, but it is likely the majority will.

However, it would be unwise to hope for too much. The conference is a first attempt. Many of the participants will be meeting one another, hearing one another's point of view for the first time. It is even a triumph in itself that, in the year of the law designed to end all contact between Black and White except on the basis of master and servant, such a conference is being held at all. We shouldn't risk ruining the conference by demanding a fully-fledged united front at the end of it. Many more meetings and many more shared political experiences will be required before that becomes a possibility.

Yet great opportunities will still exist and must be fought for at the conference. During the last year we have already seen both Congressmen and others shedding their prejudices to work together for a common objective. Congressmen, Liberals, Labourites, Black Sash and others have taken part in joint demonstrations against the Group Areas Act in Johannesburg. Congressmen (including COD, against whom many liberals seem to have a particularly violent and unreasonable prejudice), Liberals and others have appeared on united platforms in many centres in Natal in protest against the Group Areas Act and the pass laws. The CATAPAW demonstration against passes for women in Cape Town also succeeded in bringing together for the first time a wide range of opinion, from the A.N.C. to the Mothers' Union. Did the Congresses suffer by securing the co-operation of others in these protests? They didn't ask us to give up the Freedom Charter. We didn't ask them to give up their principles. Yet both sides found they could work together and thereby mobilise wider mass support for the struggle against Nationalist policies.

The great possibilities opened up by this sort of co-operation must be placed before the conference. Others may dither and philosophise, but Congress should indicate, at least, that it hopes to see some sort of action flow from the multi-racial conference. It is time to talk, yes, because we must understand one another; but it is also a time to act, before we are all destroyed by the common enemy.

Mao Tse-Tung once remarked that "the tactic of the united front and the tactic of closed door sectarianism are tactics diametrically opposed to one another.

"The one is to accumulate large forces so as to surround our enemies and annihilate them. The other is to rely on a single horseman to wage a desperate fight with a formidable enemy."

The purpose of a united front, he said, is to mobilise millions and millions of people and all potential friendly forces to advance and attack the centre-most objective. Failure to build a united front, insistence on keeping our principles pure and not defiling them by contact with others, means that we shall set up diverse objectives and consequently our bullets would hit the lesser enemies or even our allies rather than the principal enemy. This means that we shall be unable to pick out the right enemy and shall waste our ammunition. In this manner we shall be unable to drive the enemy into a narrow isolated position. In this manner we shall be unable to draw over from the enemy's camp and his front all those who have joined them under compulsion, those who were our enemies yesterday but may become our friends today. In this way we shall be actually helping the enemy, retarding and isolating our own movement, causing it to dwindle and decline, and even to take the road to defeat.

THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

The other would say: all such arguments are erroneous. Our forces must be pure and absolutely pure and our road must be straight and absolutely straight. Only what is recorded in the "Bible" is correct. The national bourgeoisie is destined to be entirely and eternally counter-revolutionary. Not a single inch must be yielded to the rich peasants. As regards the yellow trade unions, we should fight them tooth and nail. Has there ever been a cat that does not love meat or a war-lord who is not counter-revolutionary? The intellectuals can remain revolutionary only for a day or two, and it is dangerous to recruit them. Hence the conclusion: closed-door sectarianism is the only magic wand, and the united front is the tactic of opportunism."

Mao concluded by re-emphasising his preference for the tactic of the united front. "Three-year-old tots may have many correct ideas", he said, "but cannot be entrusted with serious affairs of state and the world, because they do not yet understand them . . . Those who insist upon the tactic of closed-door sectarianism are merely spreading a series of such infantile disorders"

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that all political movements, while in the course of their development, are in the process of changing. As they grow stronger, their character alters, their power of attraction increases, their responsibilities become more heavy. Only those do not change who are isolated from the main stream of political development, like the Trotskyites and our own Unity Movement, who are being left behind by history. As we enter the doors of the multi-racial conference, let us be prepared to discuss with those who think differently from us, let us try to win them to our point of view, let us by all means canvass the virtues of the Freedom Charter and never betray a single clause of it; but let us not be rigid and unbending, or unwilling to meet others half-way if by doing so we can advance our cause. Without losing sight of our goal, let us realise it may not be possible to reach it at the first attempt. Let us be determined to register some progress, rather than retire empty-handed and frustrated. Let us, above all, recognise that if we are true to our principles, we cannot fail to make an impact on those who meet with us. Out of the war-time co-operation of the great powers emerged the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations Charter and the Charter of Human Rights, which are the foundations of our own Freedom Charter, and the goal of millions of people throughout the world fighting for their freedom. We too live in a period of history in which the minds of men are open to new influences on a scale that was never before possible.

Already new political currents are flowing in South Africa whose direction and ultimate destination we can only guess at. Within the last year great cracks have appeared in the Nationalist facade, while strong new bonds of friendship have grown up between some sections of the opposition. By taking part in the multi-racial conference with goodwill and good faith, we can help to usher in a new era in South African politics, break down the barriers which divide our peoples, win new recruits to our own army, and bring closer the reality which is embodied in the slogan "Freedom in our lifetime."