

THE NATAL SOCIETY  
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# LIBERATION

ONE SHILLING.

No. 32, AUGUST, 1958

**TLOOME: After the Stay-Away**



**SISULU: SABRA's Multi-Racial  
Conference**



**Editorial: Middle East Crisis**

A JOURNAL OF DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION



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### LATE AGAIN!

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## **Editorial**

# **ONCE MORE UNTO THE BRINK**

**A**S we write British and American troops are back in the Arab Middle East; North Africa, West Asia, indeed the world and all its peoples are poised on the brink of an atomic holocaust. The top leaders seem unable to cut the tangle of red tape and get together to solve the differences, halt the drift to war, and get foreign troops out of the Arab countries. Endless letters flow between Washington, London, Paris and Moscow about details of when and where; meanwhile British and American troops (and now — August 4 — tanks) pour into Jordan and Lebanon.

What's it all about?

Seldom has the ordinary man in the street (by which, we suppose, we mean the probably mythical person who believes everything he reads in the daily newspapers) been so utterly confused and uninformed in the midst of a major international crisis. The leaders of the Nationalist Party have told the country and the world that, come what may, they will "stand by the West." By which they mean that they will do what before and during the recent world war they so vigorously condemned the Smuts government for doing: follow Britain blindly into any war she might get into. And that, in turn, means that any day South Africans might be called upon to fight and die — or, more likely, to die without ever fighting, for that seems to be the pattern for any future war.

To fight or to die — for what? We South Africans, of all races, have shown many times in our history, that given a cause — even a mistaken one — in which we can believe, we know how to fight and, if need be, to die like men. But to be hit by a bomb fired thousands of miles away, in a quarrel that does not concern us and which we do not understand: that is to die not like a man but like a dog in a ditch, hit perhaps by a speeding car, not knowing what hit him or why.

## **UNRAVELLING THE TANGLE**

For this, if for no other reason, we must try to understand what is happening in the great world about us, suddenly become so small, to unravel the tangle of contradictions and half-truths and sheer propaganda that has been presented to us in the news. We are creatures endowed with reason. When danger threatens us, we must know: from where? and why?

For, knowing these things, we can take rational action to stop it, so that we and human beings like us, all over the world, can choose peace, not war; life, not death. And if we fail to seek these answers, even to try to save ourselves, shall we deserve to live?

What are British and American soldiers doing in the Middle East?

Eighteen months ago, when Egypt was invaded after the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, we wrote in this magazine: "History can afford few flimsier justifications than those offered by Sir Anthony Eden for this blatant aggression." But this time the excuses are even feebler.

## 1. The Lebanon.

Let us take, to begin with, the case of the Lebanon. It is well known that civil war has been raging in that small country for the past three months. The cause of the fighting was the determination of the bitterly unpopular President Chamoun to hang on to his office, while the great majority of the Lebanese people wanted an end to him and his hated policy, which was making the country a virtual colony and agency of the United States.

When the fighting began, the U.S. moved a powerful naval force towards Beirut, with the obvious intention of intervening in favour of Chamoun. Their excuse was that the revolutionaries were being supplied with arms and men from the United Arab Republic, across the Lebanese border. Urgent action in the United Nations, at that time prevented this American action. A group of U.N. observers, headed by secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld was sent to the country to find out if there was, in fact, any outside intervention from the U.A.R.

The report of the U.N. observer team and of the general secretary was clear and definite. There was no evidence of any outside intervention in the Lebanon.

Yet, after that report had been presented at the U.N., and after U.N. officers had been stationed to see that there was no future intervention, the American Sixth Fleet suddenly returned to Beirut and began pouring a steady stream of troops and military equipment into the country. Nothing had changed in the Lebanon. The only change that had taken place was in Iraq — but of that, more below.

In the meantime, under the noses of the American occupation forces, the Lebanese Parliament assembled to elect a new President. It elected, with an overwhelming majority, a political opponent of Chamoun.

Two months before, in Cairo, President Nasser of the United Arab Republic had discussed the Lebanese situation with the American ambassador. Nasser told the American that only one thing could bring an end to the trouble in the Lebanon: the withdrawal of Chamoun in favour of a President acceptable to the Opposition in that country. Such a man, he said, would be General Fuad Shehab.

Mr. Dulles did not like this solution. He preferred to land ten thousand armed men to back Chamoun. The Lebanese gave him their answer — they elected Shehab!

Where is Dulles's case now? His troops are there, he says, called in by Chamoun to protect the latter against "outside intervention." In the presence of this overwhelming military force, with not a vestige of Egyptian or Syrian influence to be seen, as witness the U.N. mission, the elected representatives of the Lebanese people decisively reject the Chamoun clique. But Dulles does not — as Anthony Eden properly did when subjected to a similar proof of his ineptitude and folly — resign. He does not even withdraw the obviously unwanted American intruders. Instead, more and more troops and equipment are poured into the country.

In that lies danger.

## 2. Jordan.

Two years ago the people of Jordan won a great victory. Under the stimulus of the wave of Arab liberationism sweeping the Middle East, the people of what was then virtually a British colony operated through the "indirect rule" of King Hussein, arose in a great wave of patriotic wrath and unity. The King was not deposed (an omission that was later to be regretted), but he was compelled to take a back seat as a constitutional monarch under a Parliamentary regime; the British occupation troops under General Glubb (who masqueraded as an Arab) were given their marching orders.

Then came the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine, under which American influence was to become dominant in the Middle East. Dollars flowed; strings were pulled. King Hussein, under the advice of his new American backers pulled off a spectacular coup d'etat. Parliament was suspended; most of its members were either arrested or forced to flee from their country. Martial law and a state of emergency was proclaimed, and all freedom of speech and the press prohibited — a state of affairs which exists to this day.

Today, Jordan is ruled by a vicious police regime, detested by the great majority of its people, whose puppet King dare not leave his palace, and which would collapse tomorrow but for the support of American dollars and now of British bayonets. The British say they were invited to send their paratroops in by King Hussein to protect him against an alleged uprising sponsored by President Nasser. There was no evidence whatever of any such uprising — and besides everybody knows that Hussein would never have issued such an "invitation" without orders from his British and American bosses. In fact by bringing back the highly unpopular British to Jordan, Hussein has forfeited his last hopes of ever gaining any support whatever among the people of Jordan.

These are not idle or irresponsible allegations. Nor are they based on information derived from listening in to Cairo Radio, Moscow or Peking. Each of these facts has been attested to by newspapers and journalists

who, the week before, were hailing Britain's "bold action" in coming to the rescue of Jordan. Once they landed in Jordan and actually had a look around, their enthusiasm for saving King Hussein vanished with remarkable rapidity. Here are a few of the things they had to say:

The Special Correspondent of the Johannesburg "Star" can hardly be suspected of over-friendliness to Nasser or Krushchov. Here is his view of the set-up in Jordan:

"Both American and British troops look like becoming long term fixtures in default of any way of preserving King Hussein's regime . . . So far nobody has dared to oppose the return of the British or to complain at Jordan's final humiliation at being allowed to exist only by courtesy of Israel . . . But there is no doubt about the depth of subterranean feeling against the Government.

"Among local people there is widespread dislike of the British presence . . . That this has not been translated into any serious action anywhere is certainly due to the existence of martial law and the harsh repression of any sign of opposition to the regime."

(The Star: July 25, 1958.)

Mr. Ward-Jackson is not progressive. He even admires the "courageous" King Hussein. But he writes sorrowfully that the King:

"rules his country by force and ingenuity and has no popular support except from the Bedouins . . . (a small minority group—Ed.)

"Honourable abdication seems the only future for this courageous young man whom no one in the West can now keep on his throne by force of arms."

(Sunday Times: July 27, 1958.)

Finally, we may cite the Jordan correspondent of the London "Times", the semi-official organ of the British Government:—

British troops and massive American aid are the regime's only means of survival. Take away the props and the structure must collapse."

(The Star: July 25, 1958.)

So much for the "democracy" which British paratroops have been sent to "preserve for the free world."

Men like Chamoun and Hussein belong to the yesterdays of the Arab and colonial world generally. They are agents and symbols of a type of colonial imperialism which is vanishing fast, never to return, in Africa, Asia and South America, in this era of emancipation. Western imperialist troops may serve to keep them in office a few days, weeks, or months longer: but they make even more certain the coming of their sudden and final exit from the picture.

It was not only to preserve the Chamoun and Hussein dictatorships that the Anglo-American partners-in-intervention sent their armies in such panicky haste to Western Asia. Nothing in particular had happened in the Lebanon or Jordan just at that time to account for the wildly buzzing telephone lines between Whitehall and Washington, the massively planned and co-ordinated simultaneous invasion.

3. Iraq.

Something had happened elsewhere — in Baghdad, headquarters of the infamous "Baghdad pact" and of the West's giant Oil Empire. On July 14 the corrupt Iraqi regime (a byword even in the Middle East for the insolent ostentation of the ruling clique, with their palaces and Cadillacs and their utter contempt for the poverty-stricken, illiterate masses) sank without leaving a trace, in one of the most sudden and dramatic uprisings in history. A new Iriqa Republic was proclaimed which was immediately recognised by the United Arab Republic, the Soviet Union, China and other countries outside the Western Bloc.

It was this event which led to the utter panic within the Western bloc, which set the transatlantic telephones humming, and culminated in the desperately adventurous landings in Beirut and Amman. The landings were partly intended to guard against the new wave of resurgent Arab nationalism and unity from spreading and sweeping away Hussein and Chamoun as it had swept away King Feisal of Iraq. But they had an even more mischievous purpose. That purpose was a joint invasion of Iraq, to overthrow the new Republican regime headed by Brigadier Cassim, to occupy the country, and to re-install the remnants of the Feisal regime.

In preparation for this plan, newspaper readers were asked to weep over the sad fate of the executed Feisal and his Dictator, Nuri es Said. We were told that "loyalist forces" were advancing on Baghdad in preparation for civil war against the new Republic. To satisfy those who might require some more substantial reasons for war, there were dark mutterings about the "threat to the free world" and in particular, to "the West's vital oil supplies." Everything pointed to a joint Anglo-American military operation: a "pincers movement" against Iraq begun simultaneously from Jordan and the Lebanon, with Israel (at that stage) as a willing bridgehead, base and partner.

But several things happened to avert this desperate and perilous adventure, and to force the hot-headed Mr. Dulles to have second thoughts.

Firstly, there were no "remnants" of the Feisal regime, which collapsed like a pack of cards, amidst universal rejoicing. There were no "loyalist forces" advancing on Baghdad or anywhere else in Iraq. There was no fighting anywhere in the country; visitors arrived to find the people dancing in the streets, and great crowds flocking to view the fabulous palaces of Feisal and Nuri, flaunting their luxury amidst nakedness and starvation.

Secondly, and even more tellingly, Iraq's neighbours showed no signs of remaining passive in the face of a Western invasion of Iraq. President Nasser flew to Moscow for discussions with Premier Krushchov. The latter said bluntly that the Soviet Union was vitally interested in these events on her borders. Joint Soviet-Bulgarian military exercises were commenced immediately on the Southern frontier. Krushchov called for immediate summit talks to resolve the crisis. Peking denounced the aggression and offered aid — including volunteers — if needed.

Thirdly, Krushchov's call met with an immediate and surprisingly favourable response from wide circles normally well-disposed towards "the West." The non-colony-owning members of NATO showed immediately

that they were not at all anxious to get involved in an atomic war in order to protect the profits of Standard Oil and other private American and British oil interests. The British Labour Party, after its customary period of dithering, came out firmly against the crazy adventure. And France's de Gaulle let it be known that he had enough trouble on his hands at home and in Algeria without new and dangerous commitments.

## **SPECTACULAR DEBACLE**

Thus the invasion of Iraq has been put into cold storage. The propaganda drive against the Iraqi Republic has been called off. With astounding speed the Republic has been recognised by Britain, the United States (which after more than ten years still does not recognise the People's Republic of China!) and their various satellite and client governments. Attempts are even being made to bully or buy Brigadier Cassim into joining the "Baghdad" Pact.

In effect the "Eisenhower Doctrine" proclaimed with so great a fanfare six months ago, and culminating in the invasion of Jordan and the Lebanon, has turned out to be the most spectacular debacle since Suez.

**Dulles has lost Feisal and Iraq for the United States. He has lost Chamoun and the Lebanon. Only British bayonets can now keep Hussein on his throne in Jordan. Dulles has driven Nasser into closer friendship and alliance with the Communist-led world. There seems little alternative for the United States but to swallow its pride and pull its troops and tanks out of Beirut.**

These may be defeats for Dulles — in fact, they are defeats so far-reaching that in almost any country but the United States the man responsible would not lose any time in resigning and retiring to private life. But they are victories for the cause of world peace, for national independence and freedom. And this new fiasco of imperialist policy in the Middle East has — just like the ill-advised Anglo-French-Israeli adventure of November, 1956 in Egypt — served another purpose not intended by its authors: it has opened the eyes of millions of people all over the world to the true source of the war danger, and it has made it a thousand times more difficult for the spokesmen and apologists of Washington and London to put across their line of a "free world" threatened by "Red aggression." Or at any rate to put it across with any appearance of conviction or rationality.

For example, the "New Age" of July 24, published an interview with Mr. Patrick Duncan, who said he found the Anglo-American landings "an understandable reaction to a subversive underground attack." We need not worry too much about Mr. Duncan's adjectives. "Subversive" is a word used by those in authority to describe those who want to get them out of authority. Only yesterday Mr. Nehru and Dr. Nkrumah were being called "subversive" by the British authorities, and so today, we fear, are Mr. Duncan and his Liberal Party comrades regarded by the South African authorities. As for "underground": movements only operate underground — i.e., secretly — when they are forced to do so because those in power do not allow them to operate publicly. The word has ceased to be a term of abuse: at any rate by all who remember the heroic underground resistance movements of Nazi-occupied Europe during the last war. So, leaving out those two silly and meaningless adjectives, we will find that Mr. Duncan regards the landings as "an understandable reaction" to . . . .



“attacks.” But — attacks against whom? Surely even Mr. Duncan will not venture to suggest that the Iraqi, Jordanian or Lebanese revolutionaries propose to “attack” Britain and America. They were attacking their own rulers: and if we concede for one moment that it is “permissible” or “understandable” for Britain or America to send troops into a country because its rulers are on the point of being kicked out by their own people, then we can say good bye to the United Nations Charter and any prospects of saving peace and humanity.

## OIL

Somewhat less naive is the statement of Dr. Wollheim, Cape Town chairman of the Liberal Party (same paper, same issue). He says: “As far as the West is concerned, the question of control over oil is a matter of vital concern.” We think that we may not unfairly paraphrase Dr. Wollheim’s meaning like this: “There is a possibility of revolutionary Arab governments nationalising British and American-owned oil wells, and in that case they may cut off the supplies upon which Britain’s economy depends.” And in the circumstances (for neither the Lebanon nor Jordan are substantial oil-producers) we must take these remarks as applying specifically to Iraq. Now, in the first place, the assumptions have proved to be wrong, for the Iraqi Republic has undertaken not to nationalise the oil-wells. (Perhaps this was part of the price for such prompt ‘recognition’). But even if this had not been the case, there is no justification whatever for the assumption that the nationalised oil-wells would refuse to supply oil to Britain and other Western countries. On the contrary, it would be in their obvious interests to continue selling the oil to the established present customers. It will be recalled that similar groundless fears were expressed at the time of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, and was made the pretext for the invasion in 1956. But since then the Canal has been used freely by all who were previously accustomed to use it, the only difference being that the fees paid will now go to the Treasury of the United Arab Republic instead of going into the pockets of the private shareholders of the Suez Canal Company in England and France.

In fact, therefore, if Arab oil were restored to the Arabs, the only losers would be not the British and American people but a handful of wealthy individuals who have already accumulated fabulous fortunes out of Arabian oil wells operated by Arab labour. And the time has gone past when public opinion is prepared to sanction the spilling of blood and perhaps the precipitation of a world war to protect the dubious “rights” of a handful of British and American oil millionaires, or the royal pensioners in the Middle East.

## CONTINUING DANGERS

Perhaps, however, the events of the past fortnight have shown our South African Liberal friends that they were mistaken in their judgment of events: they are, after all, intelligent men and capable of learning. We only wish we could say the same of the British Tories and American Republicans, who appear to have learnt nothing from Suez and all the other misfortunes which have dogged their footsteps since the ending of the World War and the opening of the Cold War. All these misfortunes spring from a single cause: their stubborn refusal to recognise that the world is not what it was; that the days of colonial empires have gone for good; that

they have to accept that the Soviet Union, China and other socialist states have come to stay: that military solutions are no longer possible in this nuclear age: and that therefore peaceful co-existence, disarmament and world-wide self-government have become categorical imperatives for mankind.

However blind certain "Western" leaders are to these truths, they are becoming more and more apparent to the great majority of the world's peoples. And they are taking increasingly vigorous steps to bring them home as unmistakably as they can. It may not be polite of the South Americans to spit at Mr. Nixon and Mr. Dulles, still less for Cypriots to throw hand-grenades at British occupation troops. Nevertheless these rude demonstrations may serve to bring home to the rulers of the Western nations that they would be far more popular if only they stayed at home. "Britain for the British!" "France for the French!" and "The U.S.A. for the Americans!" are slogans which express the feelings of most of the inhabitants of the five continents.

Yet — they do not get out. By repeated delaying tactics they made Summit Talks impossible. They show no signs of recalling their forces from the Middle East: on the contrary, they keep reinforcing them — with what object they do not reveal. Britain in Cyprus, France in Algeria, America in Cuba continue with the bloody repression which a score of events of the past decade have proved to be futile and disastrous: causing untold unnecessary suffering and death; imposing heavy burdens on the working people of the West who have to pay the cost; constantly menacing world peace; fruitless in preventing the onward march of the peoples towards freedom, independence and self-government. And day after day, week after week, in the newspapers and over the radio come yet more reports of the new and yet more frightful weapons the Americans are developing; the vast and yet more incredible billions of dollars they are spending on them.

These are deeply disturbing and frightening indications. They show that our world is still in danger; that we have not yet reached the turning point which will lead mankind to disarmament, relaxation and security. And until we reach and turn that point, mankind must continue poised precariously on the brink of unimaginable disaster; with the maddening possibility of some last desperate gambler's adventure from an aging, obsessed monomaniac like Dulles which could plunge us all over that fatal brink.

## **IT'S UP TO US**

What can I do about it? The question may be asked with a helpless, fatalistic shrug of the shoulders — or with an eager quickening of the intelligence and the will. Unfortunately, it is all too often asked the first way, especially in our country. We are so apparently remote from the storm centres of war, so absorbed in the internal struggle against an evil tyranny, that we tend to forget or to neglect our responsibilities as members of the human race.

The African National Congress, true to its tradition of solidarity with other victims of colonial and racial oppression, delivered a message of protest to the American Embassy; the South African Peace Council issued a warning that the military intervention in the Middle East threatened world peace. In Cape Town, the A.N.C. held a mass protest meeting at Langa; the Coloured Peoples' Organisation, as well as various trade unionists and Moslem leaders issued "Hands off the Middle East" statements — all of which activities were completely ignored by the daily press. While these steps indicate an awareness of the seriousness of the issues on the part of the most advanced leaders, it would be absurd to imagine that they were effective in bringing that awareness to the great mass of the people.

As for the rest of the political, religious and other public bodies and personalities of our country: we might have been living on another planet or in another century for all the interest they have shown. In Britain, at least Liberals are getting excited about H-Bombs and even marching in processions to have them banned, but their counterparts over here go on uttering ancient Tory imperialist nonsense — if they bother to say anything at all. Our Trade Union Council seems blissfully unaware of anything unusual going on up at the other end of this continent, or anywhere else in the world for that matter. We could, we fear, prolong this sad list indefinitely, except that we have gone beyond our allotted space already. They are all fast asleep.

They've got to be woken up. Everybody in all the wide world has to be woken up; and we all can and must do something about it — from Iceland to Cape Point and from Peking to London\* — if we don't all want to be fried alive or poisoned by radiation.

Who is to do the job in this country? The answer is clear: the Peace Council should take the lead. We are not criticising the few gallant souls who struggle on to maintain the Council in the face of severe Government repression and — the facts must be faced — absolutely demoralising disinterest on the part of those who should and do know better. In Johannesburg the Council maintains a tenuous existence; in the Cape and Natal, as far as we know, the local branches have faded away to nothing.

We come back to the question: What can I do about it? And, dear reader, if your question is genuine, if you are really interested in preserving human life, including your own, there is a lot you can do. You can talk and go on talking to everybody about you until they understand what is at stake. You can see that whatever organisation you belong to, political, trade union, church or cultural, discusses the menace to humanity and takes a public stand for peace. You can bombard the daily press with letters. You can get into the Peace Council, or revive or start a local branch in your area.

That is the Road to Life.

August 4, 1958.

FORWARD FROM APRIL 14.

## LESSONS OF THE "STAY-AWAY"

**I**T is characteristic of a certain type of people, usually middle-class, in and around any progressive movement, that they suffer violent swings of mood, up and down, like a child on a see-saw. When something successful happens, like a victorious bus-boycott, demonstration or strike, their optimism knows no bounds. They then become ardent revolutionaries, criticise the leaders for being too conservative and imagine that final victory is just around the corner. On the other hand, if something goes wrong these people are plunged into the deepest despair. The leadership is criticised for being adventuristic. All faith in the people is abandoned. Every sort of wild story or malicious gossip put about by government agents is eagerly swallowed. These people then become quite useless to the movement for a while, or even get out of it altogether.

More mature and well-balanced people will not behave in this way. They do not get carried away by minor successes. And when some plan fails to come off, or some battle is lost, they do not despair. They have implicit faith in the people, and their final victory over oppression and injustice. They know that each setback can be turned into a victory if we analyse its lessons properly and turn them to account.

It is in this light that we should look back upon the events of National Protest Week and the three-day "Stay at Home" that had to be called off after the first day because of the disappointing response. What went wrong? How shall we put it right? These are the questions that really matter. But first we should be clear in our minds what actually happened

### "TOTAL FAILURE?"

Enemies of the Congress movement are gloating over what they call the "total failure" of the stay-at-home protest. They try to exaggerate the failure, to make capital out of it in attempts to break Congress, or to divide the movement, or to confuse members and make a bid to take over. The response was poor and disappointing. But it definitely was not a total failure.

Thousands of workers responded loyally to the call. Many in the Transvaal, Natal and the Eastern Cape did not present themselves at work on Monday, 14th April. In Johannesburg, particularly in the Western Areas

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by DAN TLOOME

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and even in remote parts of the Transvaal like Louis Trichardt and Pietersburg, in small towns like Balfour, and even on some farms, workers downed tools and demanded £1 a day. Indian and other shopkeepers closed down.

Quite apart from the response, the Protest Week campaign had another important effect. From the day of the National Workers' Conference on March 16 up to election day on April 16, it was not Strijdom and Graaff who captured the attention of the people of this country and the outside world, or the "election issues" which have nothing to do with the real issues facing the country, but merely which Party is the best one to preserve White minority rule. Instead, in the newspapers, in the ordinary talk of the people, and even on the political platform, the Congress movement held the centre of the stage, and the demands of the masses of the people for human rights, equality and decent wages.

Yet the response was poor, we must face it. Otherwise the leadership would not have found it necessary to call a halt after the first day — and let it be said that the calling off was a wise and courageous step which averted grave consequences including the isolation of the most advanced workers and bitter, perhaps violent, splits among the people themselves, which would have played into the hands of the Government.

#### **POOR RESPONSE**

What every progressive must be asking himself is: Why did the people not respond to the call of the National Workers' Conference, as they have responded to previous calls, especially during 1957? Why was the Stay-at-home not a success? Did the Congress movement wrongly assess the situation and the mood of the people — and why? Or is it possible that the leadership misjudged the feeling of the people and their possible deep intention in the outcome of the election and the victory of the United Party?

It is certain that the failure was NOT because people do not support the demands for increased wages, against passes and apartheid. Those demands are still there — and the people will continue to struggle to win them. Nor was it because people had decided to listen to the Nationalist Party or the United Party, both of whom had advised that the people should take no notice of their leaders. The plain facts which should be conceded are that people were to some extent confused and discouraged by the tremendous barrage of intimidation and propaganda from politicians, both Nat and U.P., from policemen and bosses, from press and radio, from

every sort of stooge of the ruling classes, ranging from sell-outs within the A.N.C. itself and the trade union movement, as well as from the full-time-paid provocateurs.

What of the duration? It is possible that the three days duration of the stay-at-home weighed heavily in the minds of the working people, who must have thought of the three days loss of pay and possible victimisations resulting in endorsements out of their areas through the Influx control system. What of the timing? Much as every clear thinking politician thought it was an appropriate time to focus the attention of the country and the world on the lot of our voteless South Africans, to the ordinary layman, who has carried the burden of the oppressive apartheid measures of the Nationalist Government since their inception into power, the propaganda afloat at the time that, to stay away from work during the election period would in effect enhance the chances of the Nationalist party winning the election, had much meaning and captured his imagination.

Above all, there is the question of **ORGANISATION** to be taken into account. It is quite obvious that the type of machinery created to conduct the campaign did not conform to the usual closely knit, disciplined mass-organisation, which is an essential factor in conducting any political campaign. In this connection, it has to be observed that, immediately a blanket ban on meetings of more than ten persons was imposed by the Government, most of the branches of the movement lost contact with the people, as the majority of them had always relied on mass meetings to convey any message to the people, and had never given serious consideration to the M. Plan form of organisation. Moreover, one cannot discount the fact that, right up to the eve of the campaign, the A.N.C. was weakened and distracted by its troubles and splits in the two strongest Provinces: Transvaal and Cape. The crises took up an enormous amount of time and energy, and hampered proper mass work.

Moreover, for mass industrial action to succeed it is important that trade union and factory organisation should exist. When the "£--a-Day" campaign was launched by the Congress movement, one of its main aims was to recruit 20,000 new members for trade unions. But this task was never seriously tackled. A.N.C. branches still do not fully understand the importance of trade unions and factory committees as vitally necessary for the freedom struggle.

## **THE WRONG SLOGAN**

It must be conceded that the slogan: **DEFEAT THE NATS** was wrong and misleading. It is highly probable that, taken on its face value, the slogan led a considerable section of the people to believe that the Congresses were in favour of the United Party coming into power, as a party capable of solving our problems in South Africa. Yet, taken more profoundly, it is clear that the use of the slogan was intended to place emphasis on the ruthlessness of the present ruling party, and to focus attention of the country to the impoverishment and the relentless and incessant persecution imposed upon the vast majority of South Africans in the name of Apartheid.

In essence, there is no fundamental difference between the United Party and the Nats. Both stand for a rigid policy of white domination and racial segregation. Both are pledged to perpetuate the exploitation of Non-European cheap labour, by means of the hated pass laws.

Not unmindful of these factors, Chief Lutuli and other Congress leaders, in their various statements of policy made it clear that the main purpose of the protest was NOT to influence the white electorate into voting for either the Nationalist Party or the United Party, but to show South Africa and the world the real aspirations of the majority of the people, who are excluded from the right to vote, and to express their DEMANDS FOR:

- increased wages and a national minimum wage of £1 a day
- the ending of the pass laws for men and women
- the ending of the apartheid measures.

## THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

Let us have no illusions but that the enemies of the united front of oppressed nationalities, which has been built up over so many years with so much effort and sacrifice, will join together now in a concerted attempt to smash Congress and the Congress movement. But, notwithstanding these attempts, the struggle will go on. Indeed, it has just begun afresh, and with the issues sharper than before. The police repression of April 14th and 15th, the new mass arrests, the bans on meetings now three months old — none of these things have solved or could solve any single one of our problems.

The poverty remains, the unendurable oppression of the pass laws and apartheid continues to harass the people. Life has become more miserable than ever before.

It must be recognised that the struggle of an oppressed people has its victories and its setbacks. And if we are really to turn defeat into victory — as we can and must do, then we must not only know how to make calls go forward to victory. We should also know when we have suffered a temporary defeat, and should have the wisdom and the steadfastness of faith in our people and our cause to analyse and master the reasons, correct our mistakes and shortcomings, regroup and consolidate our forces and go on to fresh advances and victories.

Provided we master the political and organisational lessons of April, of the events which led up to and culminated in National Protest Week, it will go down in history not as a defeat but as a great turning point in our work, leading to greater determination, sounder organisation and a deepened understanding in the movement as a whole.

One thing is certain: the people may suffer temporary disappointments and setbacks, but the future belongs to their movement and what it stands for. The trend of world, African and home events makes us confident that white domination is but a passing stage of madness, and that we shall indeed see freedom in our lifetime.



by

WALTER SISULU

**A**T SABRA's annual conference this year at Stellenbosch, it was decided to convene a meeting at which Non-European leaders will be invited. This decision has aroused great interest — far more than it merits. There is hardly a newspaper that has not commented on it, and each week there is something in the papers. Almost all have applauded the decision, speaking of it with excitement and hope.

Why has this plan aroused such interest and claimed so much attention?

#### THE PURPOSE OF SABRA

First, we must know a little more of the character and role of SABRA in the life of our country. We do not intend to deal in any detail with its policy and programme, but rather to touch only on the important points that will throw light on their 'mixed meeting' proposal and its reception.

SABRA was founded in 1948 by leading Afrikaner Nationalist intellectuals. Foundation members included not only the leading Cabinet Ministers, Nationalist M.P.'s, Senators, D.R.C. leaders, and members of the former O.B., but also leading members of the Broederbond, the secret organisation known as the real ruling-circle within the party and government.

Under these circumstances it is natural that SABRA should wield considerable influence on both the Nationalist Party and the government, bound together by the fundamental principles of apartheid. Dr. Verwoerd, one of the party's leading theoreticians and a member of SABRA until his recent resignation, puts it this way:

"Firstly, mention should be made of the fundamental principle on which everything is based. This is that the policy of separate development is the policy of the country today. The quintessence of the matter is that while the European enjoys all his rights and privileges in one part of the country, namely in what we call white South Africa, the native has similar rights and privileges, but can in turn only exercise them within the native areas, i.e. in the reserves — whether tribal territory or areas subsequently purchased. That is what he must look on as his home — and at least the home of his rights."



# **“SABRA’S” PROPOSED “MULTI-RACIAL” CONFERENCE**

One of the main functions of SABRA has been to explain and justify the policy of apartheid as enunciated by the Nationalist Party, stressing the point that there is no alternative to apartheid. They believe that the only way of avoiding a clash between black and white is by separate development. Exactly how the danger is to be avoided is left to future generations to solve.

Mr. Paul Sauer, the Minister of Lands, addressed the SABRA Conference at its opening with these words: “Government and SABRA were 100% on the traditional policy of apartheid, which amounts to the white man trying to maintain his position, socially and politically. We are the politicians; we must make scientific solutions acceptable to the ordinary man.” The ‘scientific’ solution in this case, of course, is the policy of apartheid.

The second point is that SABRA’s conference was timed to take place after the general elections, in which the Nationalists emerged even more victorious than before. It was a fitting moment, when there was disillusionment and distress among the opponents of the government. It was natural that those who believe our problems may be settled by the ballot box were relieved to accept SABRA’s decision as though clutching at a straw of moderation in Nationalist policies.

The third point is that the idea of a multi-racial conference has become important in South African politics. It has taken shape since 1952 as a result of the impact of the Defiance Campaign on the country. Organisations of a multi-racial character came into being, and the great multi-racial gathering of the Congress of the People followed by multi-racial conferences sponsored by the church (some by the D.R.C.) gave new impetus to this idea.

Then at the end of 1957 a multi-racial conference took place, which was sponsored and attended by outstanding leaders of both Europeans and Non-Europeans. It was a result of discussion on the Tomlinson Report (the blueprint of apartheid) which had been rejected by the African people in toto. The success of this conference was far-reaching, its decisions were bound to have a profound influence on political trends in the country, and these could not be ignored even by those who refuse to accept the fact of our multi-racial society.

The last, and most important point of all is that the changes taking place throughout the world, the winning of freedom by those formerly oppressed in colonial countries, the growth of the liberation movement generally, the Bandung Conference and its decisions, have all marked a definite turning-point in world affairs and force re-thinking even among South Africa’s most reactionary nationalists. At the SABRA Conference of 1956, after the Bandung conference, the Editor of ‘Dagbreek’ stated that white authority in Africa is disappearing, and our approach must consequently be remodelled. “Unless we do this in time,” he said, “we are closer to tragedy than we think.”

From then on the Nationalist government changed its attitude towards emergent African states. This new line of thought was followed by Prof. du Plessis in relation to the South African situation, when he stated that the era of white domination and oppression are of a passing phase, and that freedom must be granted to the Non-Europeans, so as to prevent the danger of the Non-European people taking it themselves. His conception of equality and freedom is based on 'separate development — apartheid.' Together with others, he visualises a time when the Non-European will be convinced of the justice of apartheid, and thus give co-operation. This contradiction of apartheid and freedom need not necessarily imply dishonesty on the part of those who believe in it. To some it may be a real dilemma, due to the blindly incorrect attitude in which they persist.

It is not the purpose of this article to show where SABRA's policy is bad or wrong, but rather to explain what factors must be taken into account to assess correctly SABRA's decision.

The idea of a multi-racial conference is always welcome. But we must understand its scope and purpose. Non-European leaders have always stood for co-operation between black and white; this is, we know, what the A.N.C. has preached since its inception to this very day. In 1957 Chief Luthuli's letter to the Prime Minister stated among other things that "no time must be lost in making contact with the leadership of the organisations and bodies, among them the A.N.C., to solve the pressing problems before the African people and the country. My Congress is convinced that it is today urgently necessary that this present impasse be broken, and the danger of future tensions in the country recognised and averted before it is too late."

So the point about this particular conference is: Who is to be invited, and what is the basis for discussion?

Although some have displayed enthusiasm at the idea of wider contact with Non-European leaders, the sponsors themselves have made no official statement yet about who they propose to invite; whether Chiefs and hand-picked leaders; or true representatives of the people. The difference between previous conferences and this one would rest on whether SABRA would invite elected leaders of the Non-Europeans, or would carry on as the government has done before, by meeting chiefs and then claiming to have consulted the African people.

There are other important aspects about this conference which would have to be thoroughly examined by the peoples' leaders; both positive and negative aspects. We must divorce our minds from excitement whipped up by the press, so that we are not diverted at all from the real issues confronting us — growing oppression and fascism in our land.

Political tricksters of the Nationalist party will try to give the impression that the protagonists of apartheid have become moderate, so as to win over the English-speaking section, and also to woo those among the Non-Europeans who are ready to betray their own people — self-appointed leaders or reactionary chiefs, referred to by Dr. Verwoerd as "the real leaders." Verwoerd's conception is no doubt along the lines of his notorious "indabas" where his "Chiefs" together with some hand-picked "moderate" Africans such as made press statements opposing the strike just before April 14, would be summoned to express their support for apartheid.

Some Nationalists, however, have a more realistic conception. These, among them Professor I. D. du Plessis of Potchefstroom, appear to be realising that any conference which excluded such genuine leaders of the African people as the senior leaders of the African National Congress would be of little value, even as a propaganda stunt. While the debate goes on among the Nationalists over these rival conceptions SABRA does not appear to be making any practical preparations for the Conference.

No compromise is really possible between these points of view. If SABRA wants to run some sort of stunt "indaba", stage-managed by the Native Affairs Department and composed, on the African side, of its paid employees and agents, no one can stop it. But no one in South Africa or abroad, whatever the endeavours of the State Information Service, will be persuaded for one moment that this is a genuine consultation with African representatives.

It is possible, of course, that SABRA will try some sort of compromise. They might decide to invite, in addition to NAD employees, certain African leaders, even including some A.N.C. members whom they regard as more "moderate" and "reasonable", in order to make a show of "representativeness," but excluding the senior elected leaders. If they try that, the conference is sure to fail. Africans will see in any such move a deliberate attempt to destroy the unity which has been achieved and to divide the people away from their chosen leaders. No Congress representatives and no African leaders with the slightest self-respect could attend such a conference.

Finally, one must consider the possibility of SABRA inviting the genuine and acknowledged leaders of the African people to its projected conference. Would they come? It might be thought that they would not, in view of the numerous wrongs done by the Nationalists to the African people, and their persecution of our leaders. Nevertheless, it is likely that the Africans would accept. It is not Congress policy to refuse discussions with anyone, provided such discussions are meant as a genuine exchange of views and not merely as a propaganda trick or a device to divide our ranks.

But the conference will serve little purpose if it is to be restricted merely to a debate on the doubtful merits of apartheid.

Race relations are a serious matter, not a mere debating point. We do not need a conference for the purpose of attempting to convince the Non-European of the justice and goodness of apartheid. The problems that a multi-racial conference must discuss are those that are constantly widening the gap between black and white in a fundamental way — the evils of Bantu Authorities, the Pass Laws, Bantu Education, the effects of such legislation on race relations. Let us, in other words, consider first things first. An academic approach on abstract issues cannot bring any solution.

No amount of dodging, no amount of tricks, can obscure the basic fact that the future of our country depends on what the mass of the people want. Wishful thinking will not help solve our problems. The human race as a whole is progressing, and progress cannot be stopped by wishes or illusions that changes will not take place, or can be prevented, or postponed during our lifetime. SABRA leaders too must face facts, and any attempt to ignore them, and ignore the existence of the people and their organisations will only create greater gaps in our relations, not bridge them.



by  
**PIETER BEYLEVELD**

(President of  
the S.A. Congress of  
Democrats)

*(This is a slightly abbreviated version of the Presidential Address to a recent Conference of the Congress of Democrats. We believe our readers will agree with us that so thoughtful and stimulating an address merits wider circulation and discussion.)*

**C**LEARLY election week marked something of a turning point in the political life of South Africa. The decline which has been steadily overtaking the United Party for many years has now reached the stage at which the return of the United Party to power by a parliamentary election is so remote as to be virtually unthinkable. As yet, however, there has been no significant growth of illiberal outlook and of Nationalist thinking.

What then does the future hold for us? Clearly our position has not grown easier. We can expect a continuation of the harassing and persecution by the Special Branch. We can look forward also to a continuation of Nationalist Apartheid legislation, erecting further barriers against contact and co-operation between the racial groups; already the cumulative effect of such legislation, coupled with intimidation and racial propaganda has corrupted the conscience and the democratic ideas of a large section of the population, and has purchased the allegiance of many by direct economic advantage; the corruption will, no doubt, continue, and the isolation of White from Black become more difficult to penetrate.

But this is only one side of the picture. Equally as clear is the other side, that a section of the European population will be looking for new solutions to the problems of their own future. Already there are many who see that as long as the future of South Africa is contained within a strait-jacket of our parliamentary system — with its minority voting rights, its loading of countryside against town, its packed Senate and its gerrymandering delimitation system, — there is no future for South Africa save in steady retrogression towards backwardness, anti-democratic authoritarianism, and a return to the patterns of mediaevalism. Already people begin to cast around for new solutions and new ways forward; there is talk of new voting systems (proportional representation etc.); there is the beginning of a tranquil process of reconsideration everywhere both for good and bad, in the United Party where the beginnings of a surrender to the Nationalists begin to show themselves; in the Labour Party where the whole problem of its continued existence and the basis therefore is under consideration; in the Liberal party, the Black Sash Movement and the Congresses.

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We in the Congress of Democrats have always posed the problem of South Africa as lying ultimately, when all the dressings and disguises have been removed, between our way — the way of full democratic rights for all; and the Nat way — the way of white supremacy through open dictatorship relying on force.

Discouraging as the election results may have been, disheartening as is the heavy defeat of the United Party, the complete elimination of the Labour Party representatives and the poor public response to the Liberal Party candidates, there can be no doubt but that the results have served to strip the dressings from the realities, and to reveal more clearly than before that the alternative ways for South Africa which we have always posed are, in fact, the only real alternatives. Between these two ways lies the only real choice for South Africa. That choice now confronts all thinking people more sharply and more directly than before.

It must be plain to all of us, however, that our present state of organisation, of membership and activity amongst the European population lags far behind what is needed if we are to be able to go forward in this new situation, to win people over to choosing our way forward as against the Nationalist way, and to gain new supporters and new strength for our cause.

## CAN WE PUT OUR HOUSE IN ORDER?

The answer to this question lies in two parts — firstly, in clarifying and in unifying our own political ideas and our perspectives, and in clearing up once and for all the differences and unclear views that exist amongst us about what we are trying to do, what we can do and how we can do it. Then and then only, can we adopt the correct organisational steps to carry us on.

The Congress of Democrats is not, never was intended to be, and never has been a political party in the commonly accepted sense of the term. That is to say that it has not got an all-embracing programme and policy on everything that happened here and abroad, to which every member must owe allegiance publicly, or resign; Nor has it got as an aim the attainment of Government power for itself, which is the common *raison d'être* for all political parties.

It is, basically, a loose association of like-minded people, bound together by a common belief in the necessity for and the desirability of a democratic society based on the equality of all citizens regardless of race or colour. Clearly such an association can comprise within its ranks people of such diverse political allegiances as, for example, Black Sashes, Liberal Party members, Labour Party members, Communists, Non-party radicals and democrats of a dozen different ideologies and creeds, people who have fundamentally and often violently opposed points of view on many matters

— such as which party should govern the country, what economic system should prevail, what form of state, what flag, what anthems, what constitutional set-up should prevail — but people who, despite these differences, aim at achieving, perhaps in different ways, the single objective of a democratic society based on an equality of rights.

Admittedly, this is Congress of Democrats as it should be, as it was intended to be, even if it is not unfortunately the Congress of Democrats as it is right now. But if that is the ideal for which we are striving, what can one say of the criticism that the concentration of our work should be amongst the European working class, and that our ideologies should be strengthened with socialist ideas? One can and must conclude that such criticism is ill-founded and wrong. It results from the attempt to turn Congress of Democrats from what it is — a loose association of like-minded people — into what it is not, a political party striving for state power; and bound by an ideology and discipline. Such attempts are, in fact, subversive of all the Congress of Democrats is and has always attempted to be. The Congress of Democrats should not and does not, as a body, take sides for or against socialism. As a body we welcome the development of every democratic and progressive political group in this country, and, again, as a body, are at all times ready to co-operate, work with and assist such groups. But we do not believe that the Congress of Democrats can be, or should attempt to be, anything other than what it is now. If there are Congress of Democrat members who hold socialist or other views or feel the need for new organisations to express those views, they are at all times at liberty to propagate their views to the population and to form or join such groups. Nothing of this would be incompatible with their membership of Congress of Democrats. But to attempt to propagate such views as being the views of Congress of Democrats itself, or to turn the Congress of Democrats into such an organisation itself, can only destroy our organisation as it should be, as we visualised it as at its beginnings, and as we still want to make it today. Such attempts are as harmful to us as would be, say, an attempt to turn Congress of Democrats into a wing of the United Party, or of the Liberal Party. There is room in our political life for all these bodies. But our role is something special — it is the knitting together on a single platform of all those in every party, who have our belief in democracy based on equality of rights.

This is one part of our role. But such an outlook as we in Congress of Democrats have leads us to another special feature, which is ours and ours alone. We have always recognised that we are not alone in our beliefs. Before ever Congress of Democrats was formed, there were in existence the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C., each of which stood for much the same point of view. Since the formation of Congress of Democrats, there has come into existence both S.A.C.P.O. and S.A.C.T.U. to propagate the same point of view amongst special sections of the population. We do not, nor have we ever considered it desirable or correct, to start competing with these other Congresses for the allegiance of their members. We have, instead taken what we considered to be the correct and statesmanlike approach to the problem. We have entered into close working alliance with these bodies on all matters of common interest. We have respected their abilities and their desire to work amongst and organise special sections of the population only — Africans, Indians, trade unionists etc. We, for our part, have taken upon ourselves the burden of directing our work mainly to that section of the population otherwise untouched by Congress — the Europeans — and to concentrate our organisational attempts amongst them. We do not, nor have we ever been asked to operate a racial or colour bar

against persons of other groups who wish to join Congress of Democrats. To do so would be opposed to all we stand for. But at all times our concentration of work has been amongst the European population. But we have never lost sight of our real purpose: and so the working alliance between us and the other Congresses has always been our first concern, the most closely guarded of our assets: for through this alliance, which has grown real and strong during our five years of work, we really go far to achieving our aim of knitting together all South Africans who think as we do.

Sincere, radically-minded people often remain outside our ranks, even critical of us, because they believe that opponents of the colour bar must of necessity organise themselves in multi-racial organisation, which work equally amongst all sections of the population and draw their members from all sections. Congress of Democrats it is said is not satisfactory, not good enough, because it practices some sort of "apartheid" in its own existence. It is significant that this criticism, which could with equal force be made against the A.N.C. or the S.A.I.C., is not, in fact, made against them; for these organisations, it would appear, separate fields of work and separate groupings for political purposes is acceptable; but not for us, working amongst the Europeans. This curious double-standard reveals clearly that there is something wrong with the criticism.

Our answer is quite clear. We have nothing to apologise for. We are not doctrinaire and rigid people who demand that life and conditions in South Africa conform to our likes and dislikes. We, too, would like to see the day when multi-racial organisations in all fields of life is capable of uniting all South Africans.

But we do not believe that that stage has yet been reached.<sup>5</sup> Our aim is to unite all people — the mass of the people and not just the advanced, enlightened and emancipated few. We believe honestly that the present alliance of separate organisations which exists in the Congress movement is the only possible organisational form at this time for doing this. It provides for all that we require — for the easy organisation of the whole population, advanced and backward, emancipated and prejudiced, and for familiar and congenial surroundings into which people will freely enter and make their greatest personal contribution of which they are capable; it provides for a close fraternal relationship between the racial groups on the basis of mutual respect and full equality. We believe that the scale and extent of Congress influence in the country today is proof of the fact that the present level of development in South Africa calls for, and is best met with organisations such as ours.

Some critics say that the Congress of Democrats should become a small but closely-knit, more or less undercover organisation.

It must be assumed that such an attitude results from an incorrect understanding of our aims and outlook. An undercover organisation cannot possibly be accepted and understood by the other Congresses as a genuine ally, representing an otherwise unrepresented section of the population in the Congress front; nor can it do what Congress of Democrats has attempted to do and succeeded in doing — namely, in enabling the Congress Movement to speak to all South Africans as a truly national, non-racial and all inclusive trend in our political life. A small, semi-concealed group of Europeans could only — and probably correctly — be understood as an attempt to guide and influence the Non-European Congresses by concealed pressure politics from within, a form of continuation of old European superiority ideas which would correctly and rightly be deeply resented and

opposed by them. And secondly, such an attempt would give rise to the belief — and probably in fact reflect the belief amongst its supporters — that the achievement of a multi-racial democracy in South Africa can only be achieved without any real support or participation of European South Africans, an idea and outlook which is diametrically opposed to the very basis for the existence of Congress of Democrats and which is foreign to the views of all the Non-European Congresses themselves.

It is often alleged by both White and Non-White opponents of the Congress alliance, that the A.N.C., for example, is being dominated and led by the nose by Congress of Democrats. There is no truth in such allegations. If there were any basis for them, we who believe in the equality of all men, would be the first to change that position, for we are at all times conscious that such a small organisation as ours, with such tiny support amongst the European population generally, is very much of a small brother beside the numerically strong and tremendously influential A.N.C. On the level of leadership discussions, of debate and policy discussions, each of the organisations in the Congress alliance is at all times an equal partner; each is as fully entitled as the other to put its views and voice its opinions; and all who have participated in such discussions will know that each organisation accords to the other the consideration and respect for its views that are fitting for equal partners. But when it comes to assessing the feelings of the people, to taking the pulse of events, it is and always has been clear to us that the A.N.C. speaks for the many and we for the few, that their understanding of the people and of their needs, of their desires and their abilities carries weight far beyond our own. It is perhaps difficult for Europeans in South Africa to accustom themselves to such humility; life conditions us the other way. But in matters such as these, Congress of Democrats needs to be humble, to shed illusions of European superiority and to see itself for what it is, a small and strictly secondary wing of the Congress movement. Those Non-Europeans who parrot the allegation that Congress of Democrats leads the A.N.C. need also shed their illusions of White superiority; for their disease is the opposite side of the coin; it is the belief that Africans are inferior, incapable of leading themselves or the Congress alliance as a whole, and must, therefore, be led by someone else. They lack the conviction of their own equal ability which is necessary for all who belong to the Congress Movement, Congress of Democrats members no less than others.

**Is it possible in the circumstances that exist today for us to expect that we will find new recruits, newcomers to our ranks?**

Certainly if we look only at the political problems of today, at the searching around going on amongst Europeans for a new way out of Nationalist darkness, that the growing awareness amongst Europeans that the future lies not in mastery but in partnership with Non-Europeans — if we look only at these facts, we must conclude that our ranks cannot fail to grow, that we must attract and expect to attract constant new reinforcements. But it would be unreal to look only at these facts. We must look also at the other side of the picture. The fact is that we have drawn heavy reprisals on our heads from the Government and the Special Branch. We have become the victims of persistent persecution. The impression has been successfully created amongst the population that Congress of Democrats is regarded by the Government as a Communist or near-Communist group on the borderline of legality; that membership of Congress of Democrats lays one open to persecution and victimisation. One cannot in truth argue that it is not so, that membership of Congress of Democrats is no different from membership of say the Black Sash, or the Labour Party.



It is different. It has been made different, more difficult, more dangerous, not because we are cranks who like trouble, not because we seek martyrdom, not because we follow the ideology of communism, but because the Government has good reason to fear us, and to attack us by every foul and underhand device it can muster. We have become in this country the symbol, both in the eyes of the Government and in the eyes of the European population, of what is taboo in South African life, a symbol of an uncompromising belief that Non-Europeans are, here and now, capable of exercising complete equality with Europeans in all fields of life. We are the symbol of heresy against the accepted creed of White Supremacy, and, like heretics everywhere, we are persecuted.

Now although this makes membership of Congress of Democrats different and more difficult than membership of other bodies, it does not and cannot be allowed to prevent our reaching out for and finding new recruits and new members. Perhaps here it is necessary for us to reconsider our approach. In the past we have tended to try and minimise the repercussions of being a member of Congress of Democrats, to pooh-pooh the dangers and reprisals. Perhaps we should revise this attitude which is unconvincing to our potential recruits because it does not appear to square up to the truth. Perhaps we need to revise our approach. It is true that the Special Branch is trying to snuff Congress of Democrats out of existence by raids, by petty interrogations, by passport refusals, and so on. Every person who says, "I agree with you, but I am not prepared to stick my neck out," is assisting them in that process.

#### **WHERE CAN THIS LEAD?**

It would be the gravest illusion to imagine that if they succeed in terrorising the public away from Congress of Democrats, they will stop there and be satisfied. There is no more legal barrier to Special Branch harrasing of the Liberal Party than there is of harrasing Congress of Democrats; nor is there any reason for believing that political considerations will prevent them doing so. Once the population surrenders one fortress and acquiesces in blackmail by the Special Branch, the process of rot will have set into our political life. Today it shows itself in its beginnings, in a withdrawal and retreat from Congress of Democrats by people who, in other circumstances, would support it; tomorrow, it will show itself equally in withdrawal and retreat from the Liberal Party and so on down the line. Those people who can understand this, who can see that there is no end to the role of surrender to blackmail, must face the issue squarely; the issue is not whether they dare join Congress of Democrats, but whether they dare let themselves be terrorised out of it. Perhaps this, the positive, courageous and crusading approach is what we need. Challenging the courage of the people who agree with us cannot be expected, everywhere and invariably, to bring forth the courageous answer, but somewhere amongst the people there are surely some who can be won to join us, knowingly accepting the facts and the consequences. It is these few that we must aim to win in the first place — those who will be the first to stand up against the tide of surrender, and perhaps begin to turn it the other way towards defiance and resistance.

This does not mean that we in Congress of Democrats should be reckless of the safety of our members, that we should recklessly and heedlessly throw them to the wolves. Where we can and when we can, we must treasure people who are our most valuable assets. But we must also face

(CONTINUED INSIDE BACK COVER)

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reality. We must protect our members from persecution as best we can, but not by turning aside from the tremendous task we have, not by failing to challenge the stream of European reaction openly and boldly, and not by allowing the persecution to eliminate us from the public arena where alone our battles can be fought.

It is said by some that in openly defying the blackmail of the Special Branch and in encouraging others to join us, we are dealing recklessly with people's liberty, recklessly inviting reprisals.

What are the true facts? Let us look at our history. It is true that we have lost many of our members, banned, proscribed or even persecuted. But what have we to show for this? It is time for us to assess what has been achieved by that sacrifice and to decide whether it is worth while. Our achievements, for all our smallness and for all the obstacles placed in our way, are substantial, almost remarkable.

In the short space of five years we have helped to break down the past tradition of South Africa — that for Europeans to accept and propose equal rights for all is a sort of lunatic aberration. We have helped to make equal rights, if not the accepted policy of White South Africa, at least an accepted and recognised creed, and one which seriously demands the consideration of every European who calls himself a democrat.

In putting forward our advanced and radical point of view without compromise we have not only awakened new thinking amongst the population generally, but we have moved every existing European organisation — Black Sash, Liberal Party, Labour Party and even sections of the U.P. — to revise their former outlook and programmes and to move closer to the Congress concepts of equality. (Note for example the development of the Liberal Party policy on the question of the franchise, which has taken place against a background of our creating).

In doing these things we have broken down, probably for all time, the exclusive and accepted Black and White camps of South African political life; we have built a real inter-racial political grouping which has compelled all other democratic groups to start thinking on new lines, towards inter-racial concepts; that multi-racial grouping has shattered the previous White chauvinistic contempt for and ignoring of Black political opinion, and has also shaken the basis for the development of Black Nationalist chauvinism amongst the Non-European people themselves.

This record of achievement for such a small body as ours, in the teeth of all the difficulties we have met, is the vindication of the correctness of our views and of our policies. The Congress alliance of which we have been a vital and effective part has proved itself by results. We have no grounds or reasons to seek now to revise the foundations on which we have built, and which have stood the test.

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