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THE LONG VIEW

Hooliganism & Apartheid -
The Nature of

No 17 Letter to the PM

Hats off to the Pretoria Political Studies Group for inviting Chief Luthuli to present to the group the views and aspirations of the African people. It is a courageous thing to do this in Pretoria, much more courageous than it would be in Capetown, Johannesburg, or Durban.

Hats off to Chief Luthuli, who after being subjected to so many indignities, is still willing to put his views to a largely white audience. Luthuli is a noble South African, and history will say he was.

Hats off to Professor P.V. Pistorius, who stated unequivocally that the hooliganism of white voters discredited South Africa in the eyes of the world. I suppose that Professor Pistorius is feeling his isolation from the dominant white group in the country. Then let him know that tens of thousands of South Africans admire him, depend on him, pray for him, and hope that he will not be deflected from the brave course that he has set himself.

I have had experience of these Pretoria hooligans. They tried to break up a meeting of the Liberal Party in Pretoria, when Mrs. Margaret Brink stood as a candidate in the Provincial elections. They subsided when the police arrived, and came to life again when the police departed.

I have just received a letter from a great fellow-Liberal, who told me that my speech angered these hooligans, because it was clear that I wished to "plough the Afrikaners under".

I was astonished to hear this. Not only had I not mentioned "ploughing the Afrikaners under", but even if I had, no one could have heard me. These hooligans shouted and screamed from the very beginning of the meeting, and treated our woman candidate with abominable rudeness.

The only quiet period of the meeting was when they wanted to ask questions. The main question was, "do you want your son to marry a coloured girl?" This was because I have no daughters.

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There is one clear conclusion that should not be evaded. The Nationalist politicians and newspapers must bear their share of responsibility for this hooliganism. So must all those orators who talk of baasskap and domination. Their racialist speeches encourage the opinion that it is an unspeakable insult to Afrikaners to ask an African fellow-countryman to address them.

Let us face another unpalatable fact. The whole programme of apartheid depends largely for its support on those who find it degrading to associate with non-white people, even to listen to their views. They have no idealistic doctrine of "separate development". They only want to see the "kaffir in his place".

The English-speaking Press is one of the whipping-boys of the Nationalists, and long may it be so. But the TRANSVAALER once delighted - and may still delight for all I know - in publishing photographs of liberalistic "piebald" platforms and audiences. What an influence this must have had on impressionable youth! No wonder

many of them grew up to regard such meetings as degenerate and obscene. No wonder they feel it a duty to break up such meetings. They are like the hooligans of Arkansas and Mississippi, who do not care what damage they do abroad to the reputation of the United States.

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There were many distinguished "foreigners" at the Pretoria meeting. Was not the true nature of apartheid revealed to them, not as an idealistic separation of races for the common good, but as a tyranny over everyone except one's own?

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There are apartheiders, and Professor Pistorius is one, who, faced by incidents such as that in Pretoria, may become confirmed in their belief that harmony can only be achieved by total separation.

Their spiritual pilgrimage they must make alone. But may they ever remain determined to hear the other man's point of view.

The one main issue may be apartheid. But the other is totalitarianism, the threat by an all-powerful government to human freedom, to freedom of opinion and speech and assembly.

Long may Professor Pistorius go his gallant way. On the first issue we may differ, on the second we are at one.

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But these two issues are not really two. They are one. Apartheid, whether separate development or baasskap, can only be brought about by totalitarian government. If Professor Pistorius

wants separate development, he must be prepared to accept totalitarian government. He is kicking against the pricks.

And you, Chief Luthuli, may you not be dismayed. When you say you want freedom for all, I believe what you say. And many believe as I do. May you not weary of making known your views to any enquiring mind.