

THE LONG VIEW

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I have been canvassing the voters of Pietermaritzburg District. Some are "kwaai nasionalis"; some are staunch U.P. Some point to head or heart and say, "I keep my vote here". In all these cases, in the absence of other hints, the canvasser gives polite thanks and goes.

But there is another kind of voter, the kind that understands clearly that the Anglo-Boer War and the Republic are not the real issues, that the real issue is the future relationship of black and white. These are the voters who know that ~~the~~ technological advance is now world-wide, and is no longer dependent on the West.

These latter voters fall into three classes. The first is sympathetic, but clings to the U.P. for security in a stormy age. The second votes Liberal. The third has no hope at all; these voters see all whites driven by ~~hate~~ fear to become white nationalists, all blacks driven by hate to become black nationalists, and the two clashing head-on, with the result - ultimately - that all whites will be thrown out of Africa. There might at some earlier time have been two solutions to this; one was total apartheid, which Tomlinson has now proved impossible; the other was a common society, which white fear and black hate have now made impossible.

Most of these melancholy voters in Pietermaritzburg District will vote U.P. Why should they swop horses in midstream, when they expect to be drowned anyway?

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I believe there are, besides others, purely subjective and

unreliable reasons for dreading a black revenge. One is of course the guilt that so many white people - all, perhaps - feel about their treatment of non-white South Africans. This guilt is of two kinds, the personal guilt, and the communal guilt they feel as members of a dominating class.

Within reason, we should be able to get rid of the personal guilt altogether. That is one of the first pre-requisites to a more creative and constructive attitude towards South African affairs.

It is a more difficult matter to get rid of the communal guilt. One lives in a colourbar world, and one cannot behave in all respects as though one did not. But one must begin by challenging the customs; there can be no relief from melancholy until we do.

I add one remark from the religious and psychological points of view. Guilt can be expiated. But guilt that continues, uselessly and destructively, is wrong and unhealthy, and one ought to see someone about it.

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I believe there are sound objective reasons why South Africa, though it will undoubtedly experience great and painful change, will not experience irreconcilable conflict.

Though there seems to the melancholy to be already an irreconcilable conflict between people of one colour and people of another, these people are much nearer to one another than appears. Assimilation has gone much further than we think.

There are many Africans who believe that their advancement as

human beings is bound up with the economic and industrial advance of the country, and that this advance depends on fruitful white-black collaboration. There are many Africans who cherish the same values as their white counterparts, and who dread the thought of violence and upheaval. There are no stouter defender of what is best in our civilisation.

Those of us who reject the colourbar in our private lives have experienced many times the community of interest across the colour line. White men do not all think alike, nor do black. They only appear to do so under the evil and divisive policies of apartheid.

In all this contemplated period of change, the urgent question will be the land. There must be an evolutionary re-distribution of land, by removal of race restrictions, by unprecedented aid to hitherto excluded buyers, and by taxation of large estates.

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This is of course essentially a calm view. In flame the country and the calm view doesn't prevail. But it is never too late to take the calm view or the long one. When the Nazis began to rain fire-bombs on London, the citizens took the calm view and saved their city from untold damage.

Duty demands that we take the calm and constructive view, or at least that we support those who do.