

No doubt those, who in their fear of what she might say and do, kept Mrs. MacPherson at home, will clamp down more and more harshly on the issue of passports to their critics. Where and when will it all end? It can only end when the last critic of Nationalist apartheid has been silenced and when only those who will either say nothing or who will sing apartheid's praises, will be free to leave our shores. Until there is conformity there will have to be restriction. And what chance can there be of conformity when the world itself will not conform? There can be none, and the Nationalists know it and won't admit it. Their terrible fear of the ideas of the twentieth century and their pathetic attempts to keep them at bay would be laughable if they did not mean so much in terms of individual suffering today and promise so much of general suffering tomorrow.

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## Now is the Chance for the Liberal

*by Jordan K. Ngubane*

**T**HE apparent invincibility and the singlemindedness of purpose of the Nationalist Government are driving the most powerful groups opposed to apartheid to the extreme of relying more and more on expediency instead of principle in the fight against authoritarianism.

In 1951 the United Party, the biggest opposition group on the White side, found no difficulty in making it clear that it would restore the Coloured vote on the Common Roll if it were returned to power after the Nationalists had set up a separate roll. In 1955 the United Party finds it expedient to retreat from its 1951 stand and to conceal its real intentions on this issue behind a maze of reservations which can cheer only the Nationalists.

The biggest opposition group on the African side, the African National Congress, committed itself to a fight to the bitter end against the removal of the African people from the Western Areas of Johannesburg. On the actual day of removal the anticipated resistance did not materialise. There has been extremely muddled thinking on the type of resistance to put up against Bantu education. To crown all this, the African National Congress, as co-sponsor of the Congress of the People, which met at Kliptown last month, is now morally, if not officially, pledged to a Charter of Freedom some of whose provisions would find a place of honour in any orthodox Communist programme.

Two important factors are responsible for this state of affairs. On the one hand opposition to authoritarianism is not united in sentiment and is confused on the real issues at stake in the Union today. On the other, the process of coming to terms—with Nationalist Party authoritarianism in the case of the United Party and Communist authoritarianism in the case of the African National Congress—is a confession of impotency by the two biggest opposition groups in the face of Nationalist strength, unity of purpose and determination.

The inevitable outcome of all this is that both the United Party and the African National Congress will progressively become paralysed for effective opposition to the march to a Police State.

The paralysis is so advanced in the United Party that disintegration has been allowed to set in and develop to spectacular dimensions. If the fissions in the African National Congress are not yet as spectacular, they are deep enough to confuse the movement's thinking and immobilise it for effective action on a national scale.

There are two ways out. The U.P. and the A.N.C. might recast their outlooks in the direction of a liberal democratic South Africanism which will regard merit and not colour as the criterion by which to assess human worth. If they did that, the way would be open to a new spirit of solidarity among the peoples of South Africa; to an alignment of anti-apartheid forces which would bring apartheid to its knees in our lifetime.

Or, they might allow the fissions in their ranks to go on unchecked. In that event either movement would gradually discard its liberal wing. (This process has already started.) This in turn would strengthen the forces of extreme nationalism on either side of the colour line. Before many years were out this is the pattern events would take in this country: at the extremes we would have two powerful

and implacably opposed nationalisms. To maintain its ascendancy, White nationalism would resort more and more to rule by terror. To survive, African nationalism would insist that all White men should quit this part of Africa. Between them would be a mixed group of liberals, either maintaining a precarious existence between the two giants or wielding a decisive influence in the direction of reconciliation. Whatever rôle Liberalism played then would depend on the extent to which it lived up to the demands of being a positive alternative to Apartheid.

To be such an alternative Liberalism would need to do two things: firstly, to define its goals and ideals in such a way that they could not be interpreted as attempts to compromise with the racialism of the Nationalists and the United Party. If we believe that the human personality is capable of full development only in a society with a universal adult franchise, let us say this in terms nobody can misunderstand.

Secondly, we would need to build, in the ranks of the Liberal Party, a tradition of martyrdom as the principal guarantee that the ideals we uphold shall not perish in the welter of race hatred and narrow nationalisms. For South Africa will not survive in the long run without Liberalism.

If we do these two things our opportunity will be as much in the future as in the present. Millions in all groups yearn for a workable method whereby the races could be made to live in mutual trust and security. If Liberalism will have the courage to sponsor and promote such a method its opportunity will assuredly be in the confused present.

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## SOME THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

*by Realist*

**I**N the last issue of "Contact" it was pointed out that the passing of the Senate Act, disastrous as it was, need not dismay us. It was urged on Liberals to remember that social and political changes must not be expected to come about speedily and suddenly. Social progress is inevitable, hence "Only the future belongs to us". However, it is the purpose of political parties to attempt to speed up social changes and to be ready to act once a situation has arisen in which progress can be made. The following considerations should help the Party to prepare for this task.

From the events of the last Parliamentary session two conclusions must be drawn:—

In the first place a change of government will not be brought about solely by the right to vote. Only some event which would change the political affiliations of a substantial proportion of the present Nationalist voters could now bring about a workable non-Nationalist Government. Such a change of political affiliations is most unlikely.

The second conclusion to be drawn concerns the rôle of the United Party. It has been difficult in the past to sustain any faith in the effectiveness of the United Party as an opposition to the Nationalists, but until the end of the last session many voters were inclined to consider the weaknesses of the U.P. as signs of a general policy of muddling through. This can no longer be accepted; the United Party has "sold out", lock, stock and barrel. It even went so far as deliberately to undermine effective opposition to the then Senate Bill by torpedoing all attempts to form a united opposition to the Bill. From now on its rôle in the political life of the country will be to lend respectability to an autocratic and undemocratic government by acting the part of an official opposition which will play the Parliamentary game.

With these conclusions in mind the question must be answered "What of the Liberal Party?". A searching and self-critical inspection should be made. While a boycott of both the House and the Senate by **all** opposition would have been a telling and possibly effective protest action, which would have exposed the Nationalist Parliament as the sham it will be, a boycott by Liberal members alone would be politically silly. As long as there is no general boycott it remains the duty of our members to state our views clearly and unafraid in the highest councils of the land. The more members we can get into Parliament to perform this duty the better it will be. **BUT**—let us be realistic. The possibilities of sending more members to Cape Town are limited. Apart from this the vote, as has been said earlier, will in future be ineffective in bringing about a change of government. The