

# The Knock on the Door in the Night

**A**T the time of writing over 140 people have been arrested on charges of treason. By now the number may be considerably more. Many of these people were known to members of the Party, many of them belonged to organisations with which the Party has worked closely during the last year. The manner of the arrests was familiar.

The matter is before the courts and discussion about what has happened must be limited. But while we may not be able to say all that we would like to about what is happening at the moment that is no reason why we should not be doing a great deal of thinking and talking about what has to be done in the future.

With the removal from public life, even if only temporarily, of a large part of the leadership of non-white political organisations and of many people who have been outspoken opponents of the Government, the responsibility which devolves upon the Liberal Party is tremendous. More and more will the Party be called upon to be active and outspoken in order to fill the gap left by those who can no longer act and who may no longer speak. More and more will the Party have to call upon its members to work harder and longer in order to ensure that the ideas in which we believe are consistently and effectively advocated. More and more does it become of the greatest importance that we should stand uncompromisingly and steadfastly where we have decided to take up our stand. There can be no retreat. All there can be is more and more hard work.

We do not believe that members of the Liberal Party will shy away from the work or from the risks involved. For let no one deceive himself that there are no risks involved in membership of the Party. There are, and they will increase as time goes by. It is futile to pretend that the road to the Common Society involves an easy placid stroll. Nothing could be more wrong. The road which lies ahead is hard, rough and extremely dangerous. Let us hope that we are all ready for it.

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*WE BUILD TOGETHER . . .*

## WAR ON THE COLOUR BAR

*by Jordan K. Ngubane*

**I**N a recent issue of *Drum* somebody described Dr. Wilson Conco, a senior Congress leader in Natal, as reserving for the Liberal Party's pacifism the same degree of venom which he has for the advocates of violence. I was surprised by the reference to pacifism because I do not know that we are a pacifist party. But there was an important moral here. The fact that a responsible magazine like *Drum* could publish a statement of such obvious inaccuracy against a responsible political party merely showed that people have very wrong notions of what the Party stands for.

To call a man a Liberal, in the African community, is certainly not to pay him a compliment. This is very largely because the record of people who called themselves liberals in the past tends to confirm African suspicions that very many of them were conscious or unconscious agents of the race oppressor.

We, who call ourselves Liberals today, are heirs to this unfortunate reputation. To live it down we need to publicise what we really are—uncompromising enemies of the Colour Bar. To do that successfully we need, first, to state our ideals in the clearest manner possible. After that we need to give to Liberalism a meaning which will have practical validity in the day-to-day life of the humblest non-European. I cannot think of a more effective or more convincing way to start doing this than by declaring open warfare against the Colour Bar in every walk of the nation's life and carrying on this fight with a single-mindedness of purpose which South Africa has yet to see from the anti-apartheid side.

Such a campaign, sponsored by the Party, would also be an important contribution towards the creation of the atmosphere in which the united front proposed by the Bloemfontein conference of African leaders would be set in motion with the minimum of difficulty. It would

have another advantage. It would throw into convincingly bold relief the real difference between our philosophy of life and that of apartheid.

A careful study of the Afrikaans and English press, among other media, leads one to the conclusion that very many people on the White side of the colour line are vaguely aware of the real injustices of race discrimination. Now and then a race riot shocks them into realising that something has gone wrong somewhere—precisely where, very many of them cannot tell.

Most of these people are excellent human material and wonderful men and women to know. They must be persuaded to think critically and then constructively on the evils of our time. To challenge the Colour Bar in a concerted, national campaign would sharpen the contrast between Liberalism and Apartheid and in that way force some of the people to answer a few of the questions which now and then enter their minds in a vague way and which they dismiss equally vaguely.

One of the most important functions of the Liberal Party is to get people to think constructively on and to infuse realism into national discussions of the race problem.

One point must be made clear: It must not be assumed from the above that race prejudice is something to which only the White skin is susceptible. You find it in greater or lesser degrees among the African, Indian and Coloured communities. In waging war against it we would have to fight it with equal determination on both sides of the colour line.

Talk of a campaign in this country immediately conjures up pictures of masses of men marching in processions, police squadrons and the Suppression of Communism Act. These do not enter the picture here. Race prejudice has its roots deep in the minds of men. We should direct our attacks there. The real fight then, is not for the way men do things; it is for their minds. We have set ourselves the goal of changing the way men think on the race problem.

We can do that by adopting slogans which attack the Colour Bar or discredit it or ridicule it in the minds of reasonable people. We can do other things. We can put up notices on our gates saying *There is no Colour Bar Here*. We can even persuade storekeepers to put up signboards saying there is no Colour Bar in their establishments and we could tell all people discriminated against for their race or colour to go to stores with the sign, *There is no Colour Bar Here*.

This opens up tremendous possibilities. You could start with one store in one town and go on to the next until, perhaps, half the stores were against the Colour Bar. Turnover has the same meaning to a businessman whether he is for the Colour Bar or against it. With people beginning to boycott the Colour Bar stores, South Africa would realise that Liberalism means business when it says it wants a common society.

I said that the idea opens up tremendous possibilities. Indeed, it does. Without breaking any law; without inconveniencing anybody, to start with, we would soon find ourselves well on the way towards launching one of the most effective boycott movements this country has seen. Without exposing the under-privileged to additional police pressure we would get the *No Colour Bar* stores to indicate their moral support for the victims of race prejudice.

Race prejudice remains entrenched in our national life and injustice is perpetrated against millions because the Colour Bar is not challenged openly with enough determination. Can we not set ourselves the goal of launching the campaign against the Colour Bar as one of our targets for the coming year?

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## THE DRUMMERS

**A** "DRUMMER"—in North American parlance—is a travelling salesman. Someone who goes from place to place trying to "sell" something to as many people as possible. There are many drummers on the road, everywhere, all the time, and unless the wares they offer are new, attractive, well-made, reliable and not too expensive the drummer doesn't do well. Competition is keen.

Two members of the species, political drummers, have lately been "doing" Natal. Both offered "the latest", "something new" and "the only answer". Both addressed themselves exclusively to the European section, speaking—as one African journalist puts it—only to White men. The two travelling salesmen did not call on Indian or African customers because there is no political purchasing power there—or so the drummers thought.