

CONTACT

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An Old Seductive Tune

AS the General Election approaches so rise the incessant appeals to white opponents of Nationalism to close their ranks, to rally to the United Party. The theme of all these appeals is that if only South Africa can get rid of its Nationalist Government then everything will be fine. But will it? Within the last few weeks Dr. Louis Steenkamp has given us a timely reminder of just how competent his party is to deal with the demands of present-day South Africa.

Opening the United Party Youth Congress at Standerton Dr. Steenkamp "solemnly reaffirmed" that his party's policy was social and residential separation of European from Non-European. He was particularly careful to emphasise that the U.P. "condemned miscegenation and any attempt at social equality." And he went on to say how vital it was that Non-Whites should continue to play their part in the economic development of the Union. This was vintage stuff! Probably anyone who cared to thumb through the reports of speeches which political predecessors of the United Party were making at the time of Union would find exactly the same sort of things being said in almost exactly the same words. The valuable lesson to be learnt from this tedious research would be how little most white anti-Nationalist political figures and their supporters have learnt in nearly fifty years. They set off on the wrong foot those many years ago but ideas which were merely misplaced in 1910 are outright dangerous in 1957.

The United Party's calls for unity rest precariously on three false assumptions. Firstly, they assume that the United Party has a solution to offer to the problems of a modern multi-racial society. Secondly, they assume that South Africans of colour will accept something short of full citizenship rights in their own country. Their third, and most profound fallacy, assumes that the future of South Africa is still going to be decided by its white inhabitants alone.

What is United Party policy? Many observers are agreed that this is very difficult to discover, but it seems fair to say that the party believes in social and residential segregation, political "guardianship" with limited rights for Non-Whites in existing political institutions, and economic integration. Boiled down to its bare bones this policy means that the black man's labour is welcome but his rights as a human being must be strictly controlled and circumscribed. While he is working, white South Africa will be delighted to see him, when he is not he should go somewhere else. Black sweat is fine, black tears should be shed elsewhere. Nationalist policy is rightly described by its critics as immoral, short-sighted and unreal. What reason is there to describe United Party policy in any more attractive terms? By its own frequent admission it believes in using Non-Whites economically while denying them any effective influence politically and confining them within those areas of social activity where they will cause as little trouble to their beneficent guardians as possible. In so far as he is a worker the African is desirable. In so far as he is a human-being he is undesirable. This may be a ruthless assessment of U.P. policy but, stripped of high-sounding platform platitudes it is what party leaders have been saying for the last ten years. Many U.P. supporters may not realise it but this is what they vote for.

It is a measure of the United Party's remoteness from the realities of Non-White political thinking that it should imagine them willing to accept a separate second-class citizenship in their own land. All over the world erstwhile subject peoples have rejected any such suggestion in unmistakable terms and in South Africa their rejections have been no less definite. A further gauge of the U.P.'s unfitness for the task of government is surely the fact that it either does not dare, or does not care, to sound the views and hear the advice of accepted Non-White leadership. As we have said, the most profound fallacy underlying United Party appeals for white unity is the outmoded belief that the future of South Africa is going to be decided by its white citizens. Again and again it has been pointed out that any proposals for our future political arrangements which cannot command the support of the people of colour

in the country are built on sand. Again and again it has been stressed that proposals which Africans, Coloureds and Indians have not helped shape are so much, so very much less effective for the lack of such help.

The Liberal Party is committed to the elimination of the Colour Bar from South Africa at the earliest possible moment. It is committed to establishing social, economic and political conditions without trace of racial discrimination. It is its job to push that policy at all costs, whether there are elections in the offing or not. South African political parties have been silent on these issues for too long for there yet to be time to waste. South Africa will not be saved by a United Party victory at the next election. Ask any South African of colour and he will soon tell you that.

Travelogue (Black - and - White)

by R. F. R.

IT was not coming face to face with the famous sights of New York—so abundantly documented by innumerable films, post cards, magazine illustrations and 1,001 pictures known to everybody—that most impressed me during a recent rather brief visit to America. It was small things, inconspicuous little incidents that were noticed by nobody but which would make any South African blink.



This fine study of a conductor on the London Underground appears in Elizabeth Niggemayer's picture book London (Munich, 1957).

There was the evening when I was waiting for a friend in the entrance hall of the nurses' residence at New York hospital in York Avenue. The indicators on the bank of lifts showed one of them descending. The doors flew open, and a merry group of white-uniformed nurses poured from the lift, dispersing to their stations. One of these nurses was black. She just happened to be black. A fact of not the slightest interest—I saw—to anybody. As this girl got out of the lift, neither the first to do so nor the last, she gaily slapped the (white) lift-man's shoulder and exchanged some joke with him.

That was all. It was one of the greatest moments of my trip.

Then there was the time when I was travelling by train from New York to Boston. I was having tea (or what passes for tea in America) in the dining saloon when two well dressed women entered. They were shown to their table with a courtesy which could not have been pleasanter had they been white.

The many people of colour, Africans from Ghana or Nigeria, and West Indian immigrants, who work competently, confidentially and to everybody's satisfaction on London buses and on London's underground railways, proved

by their living example what we have all of us known for so long: when once you put colour in its proper place it simply ceases to register. The fact that the conductress exhorting them to "move up to the middle—come on now there's plenty of room . . ." happened to be black simply did not interest my fellow straphangers in the slightest, no more than any other of her personal data, such as height or the size shoe she wore. What mattered in this case, *all* that mattered was that she did her job properly.

While I was in London they had an exhibition there of some of the famous candid shots of the great and famous, taken in the 1920's by the late Dr. Erich Salomon. I could have wished for his skill and his tiny camera one morning in the Strand when an enormous grey Rolls Royce limousine swept by, driven by one of those uniformed super-chaffeurs which we see only in advertisements for expensive liquor, jewellery or other commodities enjoyed (we are told) only by V.I.P.'s, distinguished diplomats with sashes across their shirt fronts and star clusters on their chests.

What a car! What a chauffeur!

What a passenger!

The solitary passenger of the car was a black man.

However, there is no need to feel upset. Chauffeur and passenger were strictly segregated one from the other. There was a glass partition between them. Separate, but, of course, equal amenities!

When a (white) conductress helped a blind Indian passenger off her bus in Tottenham Court Road and asked me, who stood there waiting for a No. 74, to see that he caught the same bus, I asked the man where he wanted to go and, finding that his destination was close to where I was going—and by that time, I was already ten minutes late—I hailed a taxi, bundled my blind friend into it and, presently, found myself talking to him about South Africa. "I know only one person in South Africa," he said—"a Miss Crystal Rogers, the Secretary of the Liberal Party in Durban".

It's a small world, but certainly a colourful one.

Lied van die Verworpenes

deur ALAN PATON

„Kyk ma, daar kom die ossewaens,
Hoe trots waai daar die mooi vlae!”
„Gaan uit my kind en groet'nis sê
Vir helde van die vroeëre dae.”

Hy hardloop uit, my skat, my kind,
Ek hoor sy stem „hip hip hoera!”
Dierbare God, hy loop reg voor
Die osse van die ossewa.

Rustig die edel jukgediert
Stap aan, sy arme lyfie oor.
Onkeerb're wiele kraak en dreun
Dis al wat nou die skare hoor.

O drome van die toekoms skoon
Wat ek vir jou my kleintjie had,
O Pad van ons Suid-Afrika,
Was dit nie ook my kind se pad?

CORRESPONDENCE

7 Arndd Rd.,
Rosebank,
Johannesburg

The Editor,
Contact.

Dear Sir,

The Liberal Party must, like any other party, take stock of itself from time to time. Particularly so when we have a fast-growing membership and a potential growth greater, probably, than many of us realise. On the credit side we can claim to be the survivor of many new organisations and to provide a rallying point for those who believe in a just society. While others talk of supremacy, baasskap and apartheid, we put forward an opposite point of view. However, our point of view isn't put effectively and our organisation is not strong enough; I would therefore like to raise the following criticisms.

Firstly, to put forward our point of view, we need three things:

- (1) A press. *Contact* is primarily for Party members and should be produced cheaply—in duplicated form. But surely we need a regular journal to be subscribed for by members and non-members and supported by advertisers. The sale of subscriptions of single copies could be undertaken by members.
- (2) Other printed material is also required. At present we have the Handbook, of main value to those already wishing to join, but what about those who don't know about the Liberal Party or who oppose its views? For them we need pamphlets—e.g., "Why a Liberal Party?" or "We oppose Women's Passes"—the possibilities are, unfortunately, numerous.
- (3) Many of our members cannot hold their own in political argument. For those interested and in order to clarify our policy, we need study groups, for others we need interesting and instructive Branch meetings.

As regards organisation, I would like to suggest that there is no short cut to achieving our aims. Our means must be through an active, strong, educated Party. The following criticisms are, I think, valid:

- (1) Our Party organisation is too often placed at the disposal of others. Let those who agree with us join in and do their bit. Otherwise let them create their own organisation. Naturally there will be times when we will combine in campaigns with other organisations but individuals and independants have no call on us.
- (2) No political Party can exist without active branches, more especially a Party like ours. Members can only be drawn into activity through their branches and representative committees can only be elected by delegates from branches. Most important of all the ordinary member can only discuss and influence party policy and tactics by discussion in the branch.

Furthermore, in my view, district, provincial and even National Committee members should be chosen in the first place on their record of work in and for the Party rather than for personal qualities or their record in other organisations—where are they to start if not in the branch?

A strong, active, educated party doesn't grow—it must be built. The answer to criticism often is—"It can't be done." Have we *really* and *persistently* tried?

Yours faithfully,

H. GORDON.

CONGRATULATIONS . . .

Congratulations to the Senior Medical Officers of Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town, who have refused to accede to the request of the Administrator of the Cape Province that they should hand him the names of members of the hospital staff who took part in the University of Cape Town's great protest march against the Separate Universities Bill.

Groote Schuur is the teaching hospital for Cape Town University's Medical School. Many of its Senior Medical Personnel are members of the University's Faculty of Medicine. The classes they teach are not pure white classes.

At the same time Groote Schuur Hospital is also a provincial establishment. No doubt the Cape's Nationalist Administrator hoped to throw opponents of academic segregation on the hospital's staff into confusion by his demand and to frighten any future demonstrators into silence. The method adopted, with true Nationalist finesse, could not have been better calculated to produce a result exactly the opposite of the one which was wanted. A directive was issued to some of South Africa's most eminent medical men which might more appropriately have been applied to a Clerk (Grade III) in the Provincial Roads Department. It was accorded exactly the reception it deserved.

Congratulations also to N.U.S.A.S. whose President, Mr. E. M. Wentzel, announced at its Annual Conference in Cape Town that his Union would not be prepared to accept any ban placed on it under the Native Laws Amendment Act. If any such ban was gazetted, N.U.S.A.S. would be forced to disregard it and take the consequences.

These two manifestations of a spirit of determined opposition to the Government come at a time when they are badly needed. They are welcome and they are stimulating. If we read the signs aright the Native Laws Amendment Act and the Separate Universities Bill will, as time goes by, provoke more frequent and more determined counter-action than the Nats had ever dreamed of.

PARTY NEWS

CAPE

Branch activity has increased and a number of house meetings have been held. A lunch gathering was held recently in a room of the City Hall—about 30 attended this gathering. It is hoped to make this a monthly event at which members and their friends can attend. A 15-minute address will be given at each gathering.

TRANSVAAL

The Party has decided to contest the general Municipal Election which will take place in October. This will be the largest scale election campaign the Party has yet fought in the Transvaal. It is hoped to be able to contest five or six seats.

A deputation of African and European Party members recently interviewed Councillor H. Miller, Chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee of the Johannesburg City Council, and submitted a memorandum on the intolerable conditions which have been created in the Western Areas of Johannesburg by the activities of the Native Resettlement Board. The main issue involved was the mass permit raids and the refusal of the Resettlement Board to recognise the rights of many old-established permanent residents of the area. Mr. Miller promised that the City Council would try to find a way to improve the situation.

Student members at Wits. University have recently formed a students' Branch of the Party.

Several prominent Party members in Johannesburg are serving on the Committee which has been set up to make arrangements for a nation-wide multi-racial conference in November.

NATAL

A most successful meeting protesting against recent discriminatory legislation was held in Pietermaritzburg. This Meeting was sponsored by the Party, the African National Congress and the Natal Indian Congress. A series of house meetings and fund raising activities has been planned—also two public meetings to be held in Durban and Pietermaritzburg in the near future.

STOP PRESS

Mr. Peter Brown, National Deputy Chairman, met with an accident while playing polo—at the time of going to press he is still in hospital suffering with concussion. We all wish him a speedy recovery and I am sure there is no need to say that he is being missed very much indeed.

APOLOGIES

If *Contact* is not up to its usual standard—the Stop Press is the reason why.

LIBERAL BALANCE SHEET

The embarrassing position this month is that there are many CREDITS to record, with no offsetting DEBITS worthy of mention. Anti-liberalism must be on holiday, or merely about to pass out.

Liberal Party addresses in some of the larger centres are: 47 Parliament Street, Cape Town; 268 Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg; 25 Plowright Buildings, Plowright Lane, Durban; 48 Highcourt Buildings cor. Fox and Joubert Streets, Johannesburg; c/o Mr. Frank Green, 5 Ridgevale, Perridgevale, Port Elizabeth; c/o Mrs. S. Stakemire, 21 Princess Road, East London; P.O. Box 77, Maseru, Basutoland.

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