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# Divided We Stand

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*Three readers' opinions  
on the weaknesses of  
the radical opposition  
in South Africa and the  
idea of a united front*

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## A Progressive

IN YOUR MAY ISSUE Mr. David Evans, a member of the Liberal Party, wrote of the constant fratricidal quarrels inside the ranks of the opposition in South Africa. He then felt it his duty to engage in just such a mudslinging match with the Progressive Party. Mr. Evans's attack took no cognisance whatsoever of the clear and detailed outlines of Progressive policy, which need only be read for a refutation of the claim that the Progressive Party "seeks not social justice" but aims at "the maintenance of white supremacy". Let me rather try and define as the cause of Mr. Evans's attack, the basic misconception of what divides the forces of opposition in this country.

Too long have the various opposition groups quarrelled amongst themselves as to methods and aims. What *should* divide us, is *not present methods, nor long term aims*; but rather the realisation that *every* opposition group in this country *has its own particular sphere of operations for which it is responsible*. By this I mean:

1. The chiefs in the Transkei must grasp with courage and speed the sword that has been put in their hands. I long for the day when the writ of the Special Branch no longer runs in the Transkei; when Bantu Education is a forgotten menace; when out of the very machine to enslave and bluff the African people comes the engine of liberty for us all.

2. It is the function of the Progressive Party to educate the White people to accept changes (i.e. justice, equality, equal opportunities, a common society built on a common respect). It is their contribution to bring *sufficient* numbers of white people to a psychological position in which they can face the new society.

3. It is the function of the Liberal Party (which rejects the white electorate, and cannot compete against Congress for the Black) and of the churches to hold up communities of people who, in the pursuit of their common interests and aims, forget the divisive factor of race. From these little lumps of leaven (multi-racial friendships based on confidence—friendships just like any other), the new South Africa will spring.

4. It is the duty of the predominantly non-white organisations in co-operation with our friends overseas—to produce, *as peacefully as the Nationalist Government will let them*—the new South Africa.

Perhaps this new way of looking at opposition forces will enable those—who disagree on details of ultimate aim and present tactic—to pull together, not all the time, not on every occasion—but only when our assaults *on our respective sectors of the front* bring us together.

But let us not forget that the battle may well be long; let us not forget that it is being fought *here*. Leaders in London are of less use than a single martyred man. And pray God, too, that a prophet may arise amongst the white people to lead them out of the sterile land of totalitarianism. For, if the white people do not speedily and in large numbers turn their backs on this Government, the struggle for freedom will assume the nature of a White-Black struggle. Should that happen, then in the long run our society—like a rotten ship—will fall apart, and drown on the ocean of life. ●

R. V. Molteno

CAPE TOWN

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## An Africanist

THE PEOPLE WHO ARE looking for United Fronts are playing with precious time. One important thing they must realise is that the whites and other minorities have a common disease. Its two symptoms, hypocrisy and a life of double standards, must be dropped unconditionally before approaches from minorities can be received with less suspicion.

Nevertheless this question of Unity or a United Front is important to all Africans who are armed with a clear ideology and a programme. If Africans want to wreck their ship of freedom they can do so on the rock of United Fronts. But if they are serious about their objectives then Fronts are taboo and must be dismissed with the contempt they deserve.

For African unity cannot be built on United Fronts. The African personality cannot and shall not be hydra-headed, otherwise it will be a caricature of unity and make a mockery of sacrifices towards the ultimate goal.

The question of a United Front concerns those organisations committed to extra-parliamentary action. Rightly, as David Evans said in the *May New African*, the United Party, Nationalists and Progressives are felt by a great number of people to have essentially the same motives, if not techniques, namely the maintenance of white supremacy and economic privilege for all time. But among the extra-parliamentary opposition itself, advocates of United Fronts must not underestimate ideological differences.

All minorities for instance are opposed to the ideology of African nationalism. Communists too are opposed and their policy always is to undermine it. Who in his good senses can form a United Front with his enemy?

What do multi-racialists call the phrase "African nationalism" itself? They term it "progressive nationalism". The substitution of "progressive" for "African" is iniquitous.

Rather than use the term "Africanism" the Liberals speak of working for a "non-racial" society. This shyness to use apt terminology bedevils United Fronts. The Liberals are out-of-date and are living in a fantasy, a world of their own, completely mythical. If we were not in a hurry for sovereign rule they would serve as specimens for students of psychology.

THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES are working for the creation of the African personality. The achievement of such a personality shall bring about an Africanistic society of equals, where there shall be no moths of racialism and inequality to corrupt.

To achieve this African nationalists are committed to a policy of *unity in positive action*. They cannot waste their time and money on multi-racial conferences or conventions. Gone are the days of such "activity" and we are glad they are a thing of the past. The Pietermaritzburg Conference of 1961 was in the class of such activity and what was the result?—a resounding flop!

Afrika wants freedom, Afrika wants unity. *The New African*, if, in fact, it is to earn our respect, must change its present policy. Let it drop once and for all, editorials advocating Fronts. There can be no substitute for a purely African organisation spear-heading the liberatory struggle of the Africans. There can be no substitute for an African organisation led by Africans and committed to a purely African programme.

African nationalists are opposed to United Fronts because:

1. they are the laboratory of brainwashing and hypocrisy,
2. they are the surface techniques for sabotaging genuine national organisations,
3. they are trump cards of communists.

We have won the ideological battle. We cannot at this stage sacrifice it on the altar of United Fronts or Fronts of any kind. The so-called South African United Front was a misnomer. After all, the struggle is here in the Republic: directives must originate here and not at some fictitious headquarters.

THE MINORITIES CAN DO one of two things: (a) resign themselves unconditionally to an African outlook, or (b) permanently remain a reflection of African Life. If they adopt the first, as members of the human race they qualify to be Africans, and deserve all the human rights. If they adopt the latter, when we are free and independent, they shall be issued with single tickets gratis, marked "no return".

J. N. Pokela

HERSCHEL

## A Liberal

THERE ARE TWO WAYS by which reform can come, parliamentary or extra-parliamentary. As far as the former is concerned, the present set-up suits 90 per cent of the voters, so why should they want to reform? They are sitting pretty so why should they make any change? There are few if any historical precedents for electors voting themselves out of power, and there is little likelihood of South Africans doing so. In Britain the process of transferring power from the privileged to the non-privileged was so gradual that change was barely noticed by anyone.

As to extra-parliamentary methods of bringing about reforms, they may be divided into two kinds, violent and non-violent. The former are much the easier to organise since it is simpler to get the few to run great risks and suffer dire hardships than to induce the many to join mass movements involving little or no personal sacrifice.

At the time of Sharpeville, had the Africans in the mass, instead of burning their passes and making futile demonstrations, merely left the passes at home, there were no effective steps which the Government could have taken against such passive resistance, and it is safe to say that the system as we know would have been extinct to-day.

It is generally stated that the attempted three day strike announced for May 31, 1961, the inauguration day of the Republic, was a failure and a fiasco. It was nothing of the kind, since it caused the authorities to mobilise the whole of their armed forces, Army, Navy and Air Force, at huge expense to the taxpayers-cum-electors. It hit them where it hurts most and repeated, could be an effective weapon; or rather, one-day strikes could be alternated with strikes which do not come off.

Only the African has the power to carry out such schemes, but is he ready to do so? Messrs Blaxall and Evans would probably say no.

'Scrutator'

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