

SABOTAGE

LATE 1961 and early 1962 have seen the entry into the South African scene of an entirely new element—organised violence against property. As the Liberal Party's statements on these outbreaks of sabotage have not succeeded in getting into the press, its attitude must be stated here.

At its inception the Liberal Party was committed to the principle of bringing change to South Africa by non-violent means. Today, nine years later, it stands as firmly committed to that principle as it was in 1953. There are good reasons, practical, expedient and moral, for this stand.

In the first place, violence won't work in South Africa. It will not bring the Nationalists tumbling down. The Nationalists have the best-equipped, best trained and most determined military machine in Africa at their disposal. They could deal easily with any attempt at armed insurrection.

Skin becomes Uniform

Sabotage? What has been tried has not yet created a ripple on the placid surface of the South African economy—nor is anything short of a large and determined and widespread organisation committed to sabotage likely to do so. Is it possible that such a thing could survive for long the attentions of the South African police and their armies of informers? Is it in fact possible to run a sabotage campaign which is not supported by a reign of terror which ensures that nobody dares *be* an informer? Has sabotage, in isolation from terror, any chance of success in South Africa? And what would terror achieve? It would achieve a consolidation of white opinion and a determination to make separation complete and to define the physical racial frontiers, so that there would be some visible line to defend.

But from a Liberal point of view there would be far worse consequences to a descent into violence. Violence cannot discriminate. Algeria is there for all to see. There, violence and terror in a multi-racial society has reached its logical

conclusion. There, white kills Arab and Arab kills white blindly and an eye-for-an-eye is the order of the day.

In this situation the individual and his views count for nothing, a man's skin becomes his uniform and the ultimate absurdity of racialism is reached. As in Algeria, so also in South Africa racialism will thrive on violence and as it thrives, non-racialism will shrivel and die.

Chance to show Solution

Liberals support non-violence because they are anti-racialist and because racialism will thrive on violence. They support it because while non-violence will slowly sap the will of white South Africa to dominate, violence will drive it to defend itself to the last. They support it because non-violent change can be brought about by people of all groups working non-racially together. They support it because only change brought about by people of all groups together offers a reasonable prospect of there being a place for all in the new South Africa.

But there is also an over-riding moral question involved. Nuclear armaments face the world with complete destruction should there be war. The world is going to have to live without war and without violence. South Africa, with the most difficult and complex human relationships problems in the world, has the chance to show, on a small corner of the world stage, what can be achieved in the solution of men's problems without violence. If we can do that here, we will have done mankind an unrivalled service. If it is not our destiny to show that men of all races can live together in peace, we have no destiny worth talking about.

Sabotage requires courage. Non-violence requires perseverance. The present turn to violence in South Africa will not provide a shortcut to liberation. It may instead be the beginning of a long detour which will keep the end of apartheid out of sight for years and ensure that when it comes, one racialism will be succeeded by another. ★