

LIBERATION

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Editorial

A NEW ROUND OF OPPRESSION

A GRIM new round of oppression and persecution is foreshadowed by the latest proceedings in Parliament. Having robbed the Coloured man of his vote, begun the issuing of passes to African women, and made a violent assault on the rights of workers to form free, recognised and united trade unions, the Government is attempting to

APOLOGY

We hereby unreservedly withdraw the defamatory statements regarding "The World" Newspaper published in the article entitled "The Special Conference of the A.N.C." by Alan Doyle which was published in the February issue of "Liberation" and we express our sincere regret to "The World."

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stifle the voice of the people from protesting against these and innumerable other outrages. Minister Swart has announced the intention of arresting about 200 of the victims of last September's raids, and has asked Parliament for yet more dictatorial powers to "deal with" all who are bold enough to stand up against his Party on its disreputable and doomed path to fascism. Africans are to be prevented, by reason of their race alone, from seeking interdicts to obtain the protection of the Courts. Special Courts are to be established for the purpose of trying people accused of Communism. Why Special Courts? Many people are going to draw the conclusion that Minister Swart is getting tired of all the cases he keeps losing at the ordinary, independent Courts. He wants special ones to make sure that when he goes to law he will win.

A NATION OF OUTLAWS

Democrats will do well to ponder the meaning and deeper significance of these and similar measures. Already the Nationalists have endowed Swart with unheard-of powers. As policeman-prosecutor-judge-and-jury he has already condemned numerous citizens to political death and excommunication, involving them in loss of employment and in some cases banishment from their homes to areas where they are destitute of means of livelihood. In such cases the Minister is usually also the only Court of Appeal, and his unfortunate victims have no recourse to law at all. But in other cases they have sought and obtained access to the Courts, and a whole string of cases has proved him to be a Minister of Injustice. Naturally he does not like this. In the eyes of the Nationalists, a Minister is or should be above the law. What they, with their overweening racial arrogance, find particularly intolerable is that on a number of occasions Africans and other non-members of the master race have won cases against Cabinet Ministers. The reply of the Government is to deny Africans access to the Courts, to make the Africans a nation of outlaws. And this step itself will be but the prelude to placing all non-whites outside the law.

COMMUNISM, SEDITION AND TREASON

The same cowardly and servile spirit that has led the United Party and other non-Nationalist groups, especially the white trade unions, to refrain from opposition—and thus to become accomplices—to the Nationalists thus far, will lead many to close their eyes to these obvious outrages of democracy. They will tell themselves that after all they are White men and comfort themselves that they are at any rate safely within the law. But are they safe? Non-Europeans are not the only outlaws in the eyes of the Nationalists. There are the Communists too—and many of them are White. We must remember that in South Africa "Communist" does not only describe a person who believes in the principles of Marxism-Leninism. More and more it is coming to mean a person who challenges racial discrimination and white supremacy. Dr. Moroka is a capitalist, and rather conservative in his outlook.

But that did not prevent him from being convicted of Communism together with the rest of the Congress leadership. Mr. E. S. Sachs describes himself as a believer in progressive capitalism, but that did not save him from being forced out of the secretaryship of his trade union. Father Huddleston is an earnest and sincere Christian. He was raided in last year's anti-Communist raids all the same. Perhaps, but for his recall from South Africa, he would now be among Mr. Swart's list of 200. Communism and sedition and treason are acquiring new meanings in South Africa. They mean being opposed to the Government.

The United Party and trade union leaders who have thrown in the towel in the struggle for the people's rights may imagine that their acquiescence in the rape of freedom will save them in the future. They are wrong. The fanatical Nationalists, who inevitably are coming more and more to the top in the ruling Party, have long memories. In their eyes men like Strauss and Rutherford are little better than Communists. In vain they protest that the Government "misunderstands" their position, that they are really supporters of white supremacy, that they voted for the Public Safety Act, that they are prepared to co-operate in applying the industrial colour bar. The Nationalists are not interested in these protestations; they are not interested in making a compromise or doing a deal. Nothing will satisfy them but total surrender. They look upon the would-be compromisers of the Bekker-Barlow "Conservative Party" with ill-concealed contempt. When Rutherford offers to meet hem half way on the anti-Trade Union Law, they reject his offer but use the fact that he has made it to demoralise workers' resistance to the Bill. The lesson is plain to all who have eyes and ears and brains. There can be no compromise with the Nationalists. There can be no middle way of living together with them politically. Either you submit to their demand for utter surrender, you shout "Heil Strijdom!", you take the Jonker path, you apologise for your past sins in upholding democracy. Or else you stand up and fight.

A NEW SPIRIT ABROAD

There is a growing awareness of these striking realities among the ordinary people, of all races. The African workers, cutting through the mockery of the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act by taking direct action on the job; the Coloured people of Cape Town rallying against bus apartheid; the women organising against the pass laws; the democrats of Natal building a new unity against the Group Areas Act; the thousands of people of all races who have eagerly come forward to buy those forthright exposures of apartheid, Trevor Huddleston's "Naught For Your Comfort" and Harry Bloom's "Episode"—all these people, in different ways and on different levels, typify a new spirit that is abroad in South Africa. It is a spirit of uncompromising rejection of and resistance to the Government's policy, with its contempt for democracy and its degradation of the dignity of man. This new spirit, which is bound to spread and become deeper as the Nationalists increasingly demonstrate their inability to solve the pressing

social and economic problems facing the country, is a factor of incalculable importance for the future. It can and will set at naught all the repressive measures planned by the Government to stifle opposition. It can reverse the trend to dictatorship and compel the concession of civil liberties and free speech. Given organisational form and political direction by a united movement of the anti-fascist forces of the country—the national liberation and trade union movements, the liberal, labour and democratic political forces—the same spirit can end Nationalist domination. It can open the road for the achievement of that vision of a free, united, equal and happy South African society—the Freedom Charter.

IN OUR LIFETIME

By NELSON MANDELA

THE adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Congress of the People at Kliptown in June of last year was widely recognised both at home and abroad as an event of major political significance in the life of this country. In his message to the C.O.P. Chief A. J. Luthuli, the banned National President of the African National Congress, declared:

“Why will this assembly be significant and unique? Its size, I hope, will make it unique. But above all its multi-racial nature and its noble objectives will make it unique, because it will be the first time in the history of our multi-racial nation that its people from all walks of life will meet as equals, irrespective of race, colour and creed, to formulate a Freedom Charter for all people in the country.”

The editorial of *New Age* of June 30, 1955, characterised the C.O.P. as the most spectacular and moving demonstration this country had ever seen; and that through it the people had given proof that they had the ability and the power to triumph over every obstacle and win the future of their dreams. *Fighting Talk* of July, 1955, saw several signs at the C.O.P. that the liberation movement in South Africa had come of age and in the same issue Alfred Hutchinson, reporting on the C.O.P., coined for his article the magnificent title “A New World Unfolds . . .” which accurately summarised the political significance of that historic gathering.

The same theme was taken up by *Liberation* of September last year when, in its editorial comment, it predicted that the text books of the future would treat the Kliptown meeting as one of the most important landmarks in our history. John Hatch, the Public Relations Officer of the British Labour Party, in an article published in the *New States-*