

# LIBERATION

*A Journal of Democratic Discussion*

---

No. 17. March, 1956

One Shilling

---

## CONTENTS

Editorial—The Myth and the Reality	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Can the Congress of Democrats Win Mass Support?	.....	.....	.....	.....	6
The Social Basis of the European Political Groups	.....	.....	.....	.....	8
The Extension of the Pass Laws	.....	.....	.....	.....	12
Cape Society in the Eighteenth Century	.....	.....	.....	.....	15
A Communication	.....	.....	.....	.....	20

---

## Editorial

# THE MYTH AND THE REALITY

**“In order to suppress you need not only laws, police forces and weapons. You must also have a mental arsenal of conceptions justifying your actions and guaranteeing a good conscience.”**

—“The Problem of South Africa,”  
by Professor Herbert Tingsten.

**WHEN**, during the infamous joint session, Strauss attacked the Government’s “new cult of blatant, unashamed race discrimination,” he was attacking not the fact of race discrimination itself, but the fact that it is blatant and unashamed, not covered up decently with mawkish hypocrisy and fake concern for the welfare of its victims, the way the United Party prefers it. As usual, he left himself wide open to a devastating counterblow from the Prime Minister, who loves nothing better than to strip the Opposition naked of its pretensions. Strijdom affected to misunderstand Strauss’s meaning. “I say that if as an honourable man you are opposed to colour discrimination it can only mean that you would not apply any such discrimination,” he said, and went on

to accuse the United Party as having as its ultimate policy "absolute equality between black and white." "Nonsense!" Mr. Lawrence valiantly interjected, and of course it is nonsense, but Strijdom has succeeded in destroying one by one the U.P.'s claims to an independent policy: apartheid, white baasskap, the destruction of civil liberties—the "Opposition" has been forced to swallow them, one by one.

### **A TWO-EDGED WEAPON**

In accomplishing these easy victories over Mr. Strauss, however, the Prime Minister introduced a weapon—the terrible keen sword of logic—which he may well regret having unsheathed. For it is a two-edged weapon. Just as it has laid bare the myth of United Party "Christian trusteeship" in all its nakedness, so with the same merciless and shining blade it can destroy the hollow pretences of the Nationalist Party. "The justification of this Bill (South Africa Act Amendment)" says Strijdom, "is its assurance of the maintenance of the rule of the white man in South Africa." And then in the next breath he goes on to say that "Nothing should be done or said that would create the impression among non-whites that the whites were their enemies and that they were being oppressed." Come, come, Mr. Strijdom. You are the one who is creating that impression, all the time. You say the Coloured voters must be disfranchised to maintain white rule. Doesn't that mean that you regard the groups as hostile? If one group makes the rules and the other group has no say but just has to obey them, doesn't that mean oppression? Or don't you know the meaning of words?

### **LIVING IN DREAMLAND**

If ever there was a large group of people living in a dreamland of fantasy and unreality it is the majority of the white inhabitants of our country. They are wrapped in blankets of myth and illusion. The myth of race superiority. The myth of the benevolence of the white people: coming to Africa to bring the blessings of Christianity and civilisation, paying out good money in taxes to give the black people schools and hospitals. The myth that the purpose and justification of the monstrous structure of discrimination and unfairness we live in, is the preservation of the mythical purity of the mythical white race.

All around and about is the real world: but neither the awesome boom of the H-bomb nor the earth-shaking disintegration of international imperialism can stir them from their daydreams. They live in the midst of the real South Africa—the land of suffering, starvation, merciless exploitation, sickening violence: but they see it not.

Every now and again an ugly court case gets into the papers and reveals the brutal face and mind of the man who does the dirty work—the *Man with the Sjambok*.

Doesn't it jolt them, for a moment, this ugly glimpse behind the scenes? ("Don't hit me again, baas. I am dying now.") Who wields the sjambok? Who draws dividends on gold shares? Who profits from cheap labour on the farms? Could it be you?

### **DRAW THE CURTAIN**

Quick, quick! Draw the curtain! The bemused dreamers shut themselves away from these realities and these cruel questions. They pull

the fleecy blankets of illusion about their heads. They see not the naked mealie lands and pastures of the Transkei, the awful locations of the cities, the anguished eyes of starvation and suffering. They are blind and deaf.

They have never been into a location. They don't know the most obvious and simplest facts about, for example, police raids for liquor, passes and tax receipts. They have never, in their whole lives, met or spoken to a single African, Indian or Coloured person as a human being, as anything except a servant.

## **REAL EUROPEANS**

Real Europeans, people from Europe, come here to have a look at our country. They are shocked and amazed, and they say so. **Then they must be Communists.** No, look, here is Canon Collins from St. Paul's Cathedral. He says South Africa is a madhouse. Here is Professor Tingsten from Sweden, the editor of the Conservative newspaper "Dagens Nyheter." He says:

"Nowhere so much as in South Africa have I met prejudice as a way of life . . . Nowhere have I found prejudice fortified by such strong walls of self-confidence, ignorance and aversion to discussion."

**Well, what a piece of impudence on the part of these visitors! They spend a month or two in South Africa, and they claim to know more about the country than we do, who have spent all our lives here, and whose parents and grandparents were born here! Yes, not only do they claim to know more, but they do know more. They have read some books, they have studied the statistics of population, they have studied some of the laws, they have been to visit the non-white living areas which you avoid like the plague, and they have taken the trouble to meet some leading people and some ordinary people among the non-white majority and talk to them on even terms, which you would never dream of doing.**

Again, to quote the admirable Professor Tingsten: "The really fantastic thing is that these people know nothing about the racial groups the characteristics of which they describe with great emphasis and unanimity." They know nothing and they do not want to know. They do not want to hear the Swedish Professor, with his sharp vision and his sharp logic, or the English Canon with his warm heart and his bluff common sense.

## **OBLOMOVS**

In his brilliant novel "Oblomov," the famous nineteenth-century Russian novelist Goncharov paints a picture of an idle landowner who hides away from the world. He never leaves his flat. When he is not sleeping he lolls about in his dressing-gown, eating or daydreaming or making plans which he never carries out. When visitors enter, he cries: "Don't come near me; you're straight from the cold street!"

Precisely thus do our South African Oblomovs react to all who come from outside, bringing with them the cold air of reason and reality.

But it is becoming more and more difficult to ignore the crescendo

of angry criticism of the Union's racial laws and the psychotic colour-phobia of its Government. It is not just a matter of an occasional visitor who could be dismissed as an eccentric crank and busybody.

## **UNITED NATIONS**

Our politicians and newspapers can denounce the U.N. General Assembly. Many of them are not white. And some are Communists. But that is what the world is like. The West European countries are in the U.N. as well, and nearly every one condemned colour discrimination in South Africa. They didn't agree that it's "purely our domestic affair." They say it relates to the fundamental human rights of the Charter, and to the issues of peace and war.

So we marched out of the General Assembly and dashed home to get our head under the blankets. But we cannot ignore the United Nations, or forget about it—it represents the overwhelming majority of mankind.

## **VIOLINISTS AND FOOTBALLERS**

It is not only the General Assembly. There is no end to it. The famous American violinist Stern says he won't come to South Africa, because of the colour bar. Says he refused to play in Germany before the war, won't play here for the same sort of reason. Menuhin is prepared to tour provided he is allowed to give free concerts for non-whites. Oistrakh can't come because the Government doesn't want any Russians here.

The International Soccer Football Federation has just sent out a commission of enquiry to consider whether it should not disaffiliate the all-white S.A. Football Association. The international rules do not allow colour bars. (The SAFA's reply is a lovely piece of daydreaming—they say they are prepared to take over the administration of non-white soccer, on an apartheid basis!)

Our All-Whites have already been excommunicated from international Table Tennis. The whole question of future South African participation in the Olympic Games is in the balance, because the rules exclude race discrimination.

South Africa has been excluded from the International Youth Hostel Federation, which facilitates cheap world-wide tours for young people. Reason:— South African colour bar.

## **BREAKING THE LINKS**

One by one South Africa's links with the outside world are being broken.

We have no relations with India, because they object to the way South Africans of Indian origin are treated here, and our Government refuses even to discuss the matter with them under United Nations auspices.

We have no relations with China: for one cannot really imagine that the gentleman with the Chinese name who occupies the Chinese Consulate is anything but an additional American representative.

We no longer have any relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, since their Consulate—having invited some non-white guests

to its annual official reception and there served them with drinks—was found by Mr. Louw to be a danger to the country.

Soon, it would appear, we shall have no contacts at all with other countries—diplomatic, sporting, cultural or any other—unless perhaps we can arrange some special relationship with the State of Alabama.

### **JUST ANOTHER FANTASY**

But of course the conception that the South African ruling class can live in splendid isolation and tell the rest of the world to go to the devil, is just another fantasy, as unoreal and absurd as all the others. "White South Africa" could not stand for a day without the backing of the British and American financiers who have sunk investments in this country and whose sole concern with it is to extract the maximum dividends therefrom.

Although the Nationalist Party still pretends every five years, at election time, to be anti-imperialist and republican, we have never had a Government more servilely and loyally devoted to the Empire. They have never had a word of sympathy for the people of Malaya or Kenya, suffering at the hands of the British forces barbarities infinitely worse than those endured by the Boer homesteaders of half a century ago.

The Union's economy remains so dependent on that of Britain that every time one of the Governors of the Bank of England sneezes in London, Mr. Eric Louw says "God bless you!" in Cape Town.

### **FIFTH COLUMN**

In his recent speech on his return from London, the Minister of Defence, Mr. Erasmus, told the House of Assembly that Africa was the greatest prize for the West, and that the Union was committed to defend it for the West. But, we are not "in the West," Mr. Erasmus, we are in the South. As a matter of fact, we are in Africa itself, and one would think that Mr. Erasmus would understand that Africa is a "prize" for no-one but the people of Africa—after all, he calls himself an Afrikaner. Instead, so besotted and bemused are he and his Cabinet with Mr. Dulles's "global strategy" and "brink of war" policy, that he forgets where he is and quite openly announces himself and his Party (and one feels he speaks for the United Party as well) as nothing else but the Fifth Column for "Western" imperialism here on the Continent of Africa.

How tragic and ignoble a role they have cast themselves for! How infinitely perilous—and not for the ruling caste alone, but for all South Africans!

### **THE WAY OUT**

Ever more and more insistently the non-white people of our country are knocking at the door, demanding the rights and liberties that have been proclaimed in the Freedom Charter. They are united and determined as never before, and if the door is not opened they will break it down.

And they are not alone. With them march the millions of people of the rest of the continent, advancing towards the goals that have already been reached by hundreds of millions in China and India and elsewhere in Asia: national liberation, independence, self-government.

All of Asia and all of Africa, with the exception of an utterly insignificant smattering of European settlers, regards the claims of the non-white South Africans with the warmest sympathy, and indignantly rejects the arrogant racial theories of the Nationalist and United Parties. Russia and East Europe adhere to principles of proletarian internationalism which are incompatible with any theory or practice of white supremacy. And all the best people of West Europe and of North and South America find the whole conception of autocratic rule by representatives of a "master race" disgusting.

Those are the realities of the world in 1956: a world in which the minority rule of a self-chosen group in South Africa cannot for long survive. The political leaders in this country who close their eyes to these realities, who preach in the name of "the survival of the White man," are false prophets, false saviours. The dangerous road they travel leads to destruction, not survival.

The true road to survival and to a happy future for South Africans of European descent, as for all the groups of our population, lies in renouncing all claims to a special status, in joining in fraternal co-operation to build a society of equals, where the measure of the worth of the individual is not in his pedigree, but in the value of his contribution to the common welfare.

To awaken them to this robust reality is the urgent and honourable task of that enlightened minority, within and outside the Congress of Democrats, who have the vision and character to break out of the mental prison of racial ideology.

---

# CAN THE CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS WIN MASS SUPPORT?

By C. GOLDBERG

**"I am a newcomer to the Congress of Democrats," says the writer of the following letter; and he therefore expresses his views with a certain amount of diffidence. LIBERATION is pleased to publish this further short comment.**

**BOTH** Johnson— ". . . (C. O.D.) must act in European affairs as an independent organisation . . ." and Press— "We must . . . proclaim our organisation and our aims fearlessly and independently" agree, that C.O.D. must present "an independent policy and programme" (Johnson). Their analysis of the class forces reveals however, that at the moment