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# LIBERAL OPINION

## CONTENTS

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What Now?	1
The Convention Movement	3
South West Africa	4
Dr. Verwoerd and the Jews	4
Apartheid — only a Policy?	5
Dr. Verwoerd's Exaggerated Victory	8

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## L I B E R A L   O P I N I O N

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### W H A T   N O W ?

On the day after the general election, when results from all but the safest of safe Nationalist seats were in, somebody remarked that South Africa would now have the worst Parliament in the world. If this is not absolutely true it is very nearly so. For a long time we have had one of the worst governments in the world. Now we have one of the worst oppositions as well.

While there were still Labour, Liberal and Natives' Representative members, forthright and principled opposition to apartheid was common in Parliament. When the United Party eliminated the Labour members, the Liberals and other Natives' Representatives remained. By the time the Government had disposed of them, the Progressives had emerged. Now the United Party has virtually eliminated them and, in the new Parliament, only Mrs. Helen Suzman will bring some sanity into an increasingly unreal

institution. In a world which has rejected racialism, the South African Parliament will present the strange spectacle of a white racist government sitting down to confront a white racist opposition and to debate with it the merits of two impracticable racist policies.

### Point of no Return

In spite of this it would be ridiculous not to be encouraged by the number of votes polled in this election by Progressive and, to a lesser extent, Liberal candidates.

But against this gain must be weighed the fact that Dr. Verwoerd has more seats now than ever before and that he has committed himself, within the next five years, to take the application of apartheid to the point from which (he says) there will be no turning back. His cabinet inspires no confidence in anyone with any respect for democratic principles. His Minister of Justice continues to threaten "agitators", and there is every reason to believe that he will bring in legislation next session aimed at curbing still further the activities of his critics. Mr. Waring and Mr. Trollip have been drafted into the cabinet, in return for joining the Nationalist Party, but this does not indicate a softening Government attitude. All it means is that these two have now gone where they always belonged.

### Democratic Veneer

Wherever the real opposition to Dr. Verwoerd's threatened attempt to make apartheid work comes from in the immediate future, it is not going to come from Parliament. That

is certain. Parliament, over the years, has become more and more of a rubber stamp, useful to the Government only because it gives to its decisions a respectable democratic veneer. It is certainly not the place where Nationalists are persuaded to change their ideas, and it is certainly not Parliamentary debates which have made some white South Africans start thinking. They have started thinking, to the tune of 70,000 Progressive and Liberal votes, but the reasons for their doing so are to be found outside, not inside, Parliament -- in the Defiance Campaign, in the activities of the Liberal Party and the Black Sash, in the events leading up to last year's emergency and the emergency itself, and in South Africa's isolation from the Commonwealth and the world.

#### Main fight Outside

Where does the Liberal Party stand in the post-election picture? The success of the Progressive Party in terms of the votes in polled in the election will undoubtedly make it more difficult to recruit white Liberals for a time. But this should only be a temporary problem. The fact of the matter is that the main fight against apartheid in the future, as in the past, is going to be carried on outside Parliament. This is something most Progressives have still to learn. Liberals can help them to learn it.

Dr. Verwoerd is not going to stand quietly by while he is voted out of power, nor are his supporters going to desert him until they are convinced that his policies can't work. It is still important to face white South

Africans with Liberal policies in elections, but there is only one force which can challenge Dr. Verwoerd and shake the confidence of his supporters and that is the combined opposition of all those who oppose apartheid. This opposition must be soundly based on a complete acceptance of South Africa's non-racial destiny if it is to be an effective answer to racialism. Only the Liberal Party has so far faced the full implications of South Africa's non-racial future. Here, too, Liberals have something to teach not only Progressives, but most other opponents of apartheid.

#### Opposition at Every Level

We would make a serious mistake if we were to underestimate Dr. Verwoerd's threat to take apartheid to the point of no return in the next five years. Short of abandoning it, this is the only thing he can do to persuade the world that it is a policy which offers something to everybody. That he will fail is certain but that he will try is equally certain, and we can now expect a more ruthless application of apartheid measures outside the "reserves" and a consequent increase in frustration, bitterness and straight race hatred.

In this situation the first task of Liberals is to fight a "holding action" to oppose at every level every single attempt to impose apartheid, and to oppose these attempts non-racially. This is the only way to prevent a disastrous drift to race hatred.

The second task is to build an organization of all races throughout

South Africa which can present non-violent and disciplined opposition to apartheid in the extra-Parliamentary field. This will not come easily. Opposition of this kind requires self-discipline at the individual level and it requires the discipline, which only comes from confidence in an effective organization, if it is to be successful on a wider scale. And if such opposition is to mean anything at all for the future of South Africa it must be carried out by people

of all races together.

#### Giving the Lead

In building such an opposition the Liberal Party is better equipped to give the lead than any other organization. A difficult task? Of course it is. But time, the world and most South Africans are on the side of the non-racial ideal to which Liberals subscribe. What is needed is the resolution and energy to build the organizational framework to turn the ideal into reality.

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## T H E   C O N V E N T I O N   M O V E M E N T

A remarkable feature of the South African political scene during 1961 has been the growth of what has come to be known as the "Convention Movement". Two very successful conventions have been held, the Natal Convention in April and the Malmesbury Convention of Coloured leaders in early July.

#### Radical Changes

Although the scope of both these "conventions" was limited, they had two important characteristics in common. In the first place, they were supported by many people whose views might generally be regarded as conservative and who would certainly not have attended them a few years ago.

Secondly, in spite of this, they came out, almost without a dissenting voice, for radical changes towards a shared future for all South Africans. Universal franchise and an integrated educational system were to such radical changes contemplated. Neither convention discussed how this

new, shared future was to be achieved but both agreed that there should be a similar "convention" on a national scale as a first step.

#### Further Steps

Since the two Conventions met, the first steps towards such a national gathering have been taken. The Natal Convention Committee initiated a move which culminated in a widely representative meeting of South Africans of all groups, from all over the country, in July, in Johannesburg. A working committee to explore the ground for a national consultation was set up.

The follow-up to the Malmesbury Convention has been more spectacular. A Conference of Representatives from all races, mainly from the Cape, but including several from other provinces, took place in Claremont just before the election. A week later a regional conference was held in Port Elizabeth. Both meet-

ings called for a new National Convention.

The demand from the Claremont Conference was specifically for a "sovereign" National Convention, in other words for a law-making body. This is a completely sensible aim. How else are conflicting interests in South Africa to resolve their differences in peace in the long run if it is not by sitting down, Nationalists and all, at a new National Convention?

Nevertheless there is a large body of anti-Nationalist opinion which would recognize a new National Convention as a wonderful ideal, but which would not, at this moment, be prepared to attend something which could be regarded as a revolutionary challenge to the Government.

The Claremont Conference went some way to meet this view by proposing a preliminary national conference of all those interested in the Convention movement. This, surely, is the first practical, and urgent, step to be taken? To be effective this conference must be widely representative. To ensure this its terms of reference must not be such as to frighten off potential support.

From it may then come the beginnings of a pressure group and a movement whose demands for a new deal, thrashed out at a new National Convention, the authorities will eventually have to meet. Such a movement would be something behind which every non-racialist could throw his full weight.

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#### SOUTH WEST AFRICA

Liberal Opinion has criticized the United Nations Committee on South West Africa before, and it does so again, this time for the exaggerated picture of conditions in the territory contained in its report to the Trusteeship Committee of the General Assembly.

Its exaggeration gave Mr. Louw just the chance he needed to put up some defence against the Committee's indictment and to appear as the injured representative of a badly-done-by Government. Why did the Committee have to do this? Conditions in South West are bad enough not to need exaggeration. All one need do is quote facts, and apartheid is shown up for what it is.

We wish the South African Government's overseas critics would stick strictly to the facts. It would make our job in South Africa just that much easier.

#### DR. VERWOERD AND THE JEWS

South Africa has few friends in the world. Israel is no longer one of them. First apartheid forced her to turn her back on S.A. at UNO, now Dr. Verwoerd has done his best to see that she does not turn back again.

In a letter to a Mr. East in Cape Town, Dr. V. dropped a few dark hints about the Jews. Perhaps Mr. East should not have revealed the contents, but he has and its threatening undertones are now known. We object to them strongly.

Since then the Prime Minister has tried to reassure local Jews. We hope that he means what he says. His reaction to Israel's UNO vote was reminiscent of Mr. Louw's petulance in the face of criticism. Is this not a sign that he too is beginning to feel the strain under which the apostles of apartheid labour in their impossible attempt to sell an indefensible policy to a hostile world?

## A P A R T H E I D -- O N L Y A P O L I C Y ?

It was the late Mr. Strijdom, former South African prime minister, who summed up the policy of his government as "obtaining the greatest possible degree of separation between the races".

If Deputy-minister M.C. Botha, in a recent speech in Pretoria, said that "total apartheid is not at this stage practicable", there would seem to be a contradiction.

There is not. No nation can afford to cut off an integral part of its own population. Mr. Botha said so in Pretoria: "For a foreseeable time, South Africa's economic structure and its material welfare will be very dependent upon non-white labour." Mr. Strijdom, in referring to the greatest possible degree of separation, must have realized this. He, too, never mentioned total separation.

What the Nationalist leaders are in fact telling us, is that "White South Africa" will remain multi-racial. And that it is in this multi-racial society that they are trying to bring about the "greatest possible degree of separation".

### Apartheid Possible?

How well have they succeeded in this task since their advent in 1948? To what extent does apartheid dominate our society? Is complete segregation in a multi-racial society at all possible? And what can be done to ensure that it will not be possible?

A certain tradition does exist in

South Africa for race groups to form their own communities. Whether this is a result of race or colour only, or of the class differences that for long coincided with the colour-groupings, it can be said that these colour groupings are being turned into a veritable colour-bar, which is being enforced by one section, in order to entrench for that section the privileges that it obtained when race was still largely synonymous with class.

The ruling party in this country musters the necessary (white) electoral support by playing on the feeling of racial superiority that is a natural offspring of the contact between groups of people with different levels of development, and by instilling a fear for anything not belonging to the own group, or in short for the "black bogey".

### Vicious Circle

These feelings of fear and superiority, in their turn, can only be kept alive by preventing any opportunity to "disprove the pudding by eating", by means of social contact between the whites and the other sections, thus completing the vicious circle that makes this government so difficult to get a grip on.

At the same time it is in this sphere of social contact that this vicious circle can be broken by people to whom the idea of artificial separation of and discrimination between people that have to share the same country and the

same towns is repulsive.

In this connection along and well-illustrated article about "shocking race fraternization", in the Afrikaners weekly Die Huisgenoot of 17.11.61, makes heartening reading. I quote:

#### "Un-South African"

"Although South Africa is undoubtedly the country where most care is taken against fraternization between white and non-white, . . . social intermingling is increasing alarmingly. . . . When liquor will soon be freely available to non-whites, the Police can no longer use this loophole (sic) to prevent this un-South-African fraternization. . . . White ladies employed by a catering firm served the black men and women. . . . After the failure (sic) of the treason trial several multi-racial parties were held. One can imagine the way in which the interests of the fatherland were tampered with."

Die Huisgenoot concluded: "If this tendency is to continue, it is possible that generations to come will inherit a situation where thousands of white South Africans practise integration in their private lives, although the official policy of the country will be segregation."

There we have it. Thirteen years of attempts to bring about the "greatest possible degree of separation" have resulted in more conscious ignoring the colour-bar than ever.

Although the Government has succeeded in closing several channels of contact, those that remain open

are numerous and will be much harder to close.

#### Remaining Channels

Our "open" universities, in spite of much unnecessary discrimination, still present opportunities for inter-racial contact, and those fortunate enough to be there, should be determined to make the best of these last opportunities, and to build up friendships that will last after leaving the campus.

In spite of difficulties presented by group areas legislation, dozens of non-racial restaurants and night-clubs have sprung up in the big cities, nearly all of them since the advent of the Nats. In Cape Town alone there are said to be seven -- in fact hardly any "non-white" establishment does not welcome all sections -- and there is no need for any opponent of apartheid to patronize racially exclusive restaurants.

#### Friendly Sport

In sport only a beginning has been made in breaking down the colour bar between white and non-white, although divisions between the non-white sections in sport are on their way out. Organized sport, particularly, has been too dependent on Government support and that of the subs.-paying public for any large-scale attempts to be made to break the colour bar, with the possible exception of boxing, which in order to retain international recognition, has organized inter-racial tournaments just outside our borders.

It is, however, improbable that

exclusion from international sports bodies will make white South African sport abandon its racialism. But much can be done from within, particularly in friendly sport. Here the lead has been taken by cricket; friendly matches between white and non-white teams are frequently being held and have, without exception, proved successful. Better still would be not to play against but with each other, as is done by a Pietermaritzburg multi-racial professional soccer team.

#### Apartheid-conditioned

It must be stressed here that, contrary to what apartheid-conditioned South Africans may think, there is little to prevent contact between sections in friendly sport. If most white clubs are closed to non-white people, nearly all "non-white" clubs are in fact open to all races, including whites, and often welcome their joining and taking part in their games.

As yet no law has been invented to make social contact in private homes an offence as such, and according to Die Huisgenoot, "loopholes" have had but little success

Most leaders of the English and several of the Dutch Reformed Churches (the latter in spite of their official church policies) have pronounced themselves against church apartheid and often against apartheid in general, although certainly more could be done to implement these pronouncements.

It is only in the field of the arts that apartheid never got a foothold, in spite of bodies like the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings

(which banned "King Kong" ... in the "interests of Western culture") and the Alliance Francaise (which closed its ranks to non-white people).

It is particularly among jazz-musicians and their serious-minded entourage that colour is strictly taboo. Although on the whole non-political, this group probably does more than any other to sabotage the attempts to impose apartheid.

#### Only a Policy

As things stand at present, apartheid is still very much only a policy and not a state of affairs. South Africans of all sections, even those not deliberately ignoring the colour bar, are in daily contact with one another in kitchens, shops, buses, factories and streets.

So long as this every-day incidental contact lasts (and Mr. Botha assures us it will be very long), there will be the possibility, and indeed the probability, of intentional social contact.

We agree with Die Huisgenoot that future generations may see thousands of South Africans practise integration in their daily lives, in spite of the official policy of segregation.

If all those who are opposed to that policy, would do their best to make Die Huisgenoot's nightmare come true (the majority of South Africans are, and would suffer little or no ill effects if they would do more about it), apartheid as a way of life will die a natural death. That official policy will be taken care of in time.



## DR. VERWOERD'S EXAGGERATED VICTORY

(Revised from an article by Dr. R.R. Farquharson in the Financial Mail, October 27, 1961: the Editor has granted permission for the article to be reproduced in whole or in part with acknowledgment.)

Superficially, the 1961 election result was a triumph for both ends against the middle. The National Party gained two seats and achieved a substantial swing; the Progressives won Houghton and a degree of support which surprised even their friends; the Liberal Party saved a deposit and secured four-figure votes in two constituencies. These victories were all at the expense of the United Party which, assailed on two fronts, lost votes heavily and suffered a massive defeat.

### Real Opposition

But the National Party's triumph has been exaggerated. Two factors must be considered. One has already been stressed by commentators: it is now faced by the rising strength of a real opposition, with a genuinely alternative policy, which in the long run will be far more effective in countering apartheid than the United Party ever could have been. The second, which seems to have been overlooked by the Press is that in spite of the increase in N.P. majorities, there has been a substantial fall in N.P. votes.

Headlines like "Nats gain many more votes" and comments like "How did the N.P., in an almost unique way, grow stronger -- and impressively stronger in terms of votes -- after having ruled S.A. for more than 13

years?" simply ignore the statistics. The National Party gained seats, increased majorities, increased its percentage of votes; but in absolute terms lost voting support.

Arguments about the total number of votes obtained by each party have been bedevilled by uncertainty regarding the votes to be imputed to uncontested seats. But the referendum has given a reasonable reliable indication of how such constituencies would have behaved. All one needs to do is to assume that the swing in uncontested constituencies would have been the same as in contested ones. On this simple and not very controversial assumption, the nation-wide totals of votes for each party can be calculated.

Take, then, the constituencies in which there were straight fights in 1961 between the National Party and the United Party or the National Union. Exclude all U.P.-Progressive or U.P.-Liberal fights.

### N.P. lost Voters

The swing in these constituencies, as calculated by the South African Press Association, is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. since the referendum. Therefore, since the "Yes" vote in the referendum was 52.3 per cent., the N.P. vote in the country is now about 55.8 per cent. of voters. But what

number of actual votes can be imputed to the N.P. in this election? It is a matter of simple arithmetic:

1960: 52.3% of 90.3% of 1,800,848 electors = 850,458

1961: 55.8% of 77.75% of 1,823,000 electors = 790,899.

Thus the National Party, though its percentage has increased, has lost nearly 60,000 voters. The only reason this has not been apparent is that the U.P. has lost even more:

1960: 47.7% of 90.3% of 1,800,848 electors = 774,775

1961: 44.2% of 77.75% of 1,823,000 electors = 626,483.

#### U.P. Abstentions

Thus, where the Nationalists have lost nearly 60,000 voters, the U.P. has lost more than 150,000. The N.P.'s victories over the U.P., as well as the overall swing in percentage votes, appear to have been due not to any significant number of voters changing their minds, but rather to a vast number deciding to abstain. Few former U.P. supporters voted for the N.P. -- large numbers abstained.

Likewise, many former N.P. supporters could not face voting U.P. -- they, too, expressed their dissatisfaction by abstaining. In 1960, only 9.7 per cent. of the electorate abstained; in 1961 the percentage was more than double: 22.25 per cent.

So great a number of abstentions is unprecedented -- in 1958, abstentions were only 8.4 per cent. Exhaustion at voting three times in four years is not enough to explain so

great a change. Rather it indicates a great hesitancy among those who, till now, have reliably voted U.P. They have lost confidence in the U.P. The last thing they want to do is vote N.P., or even National Union. In most constituencies they have no opportunity to vote Progressive, so they abstain.

Paradoxically, the effect of these abstentions has been to increase Nationalist majorities. But these increased majorities are in no way indicative of increased support for the National Party. They can be completely explained as abstentions by former U.P. voters; and thus, very paradoxically indeed, it is the Progressives who can take most comfort from these increased majorities.

#### Moral Triumph

The moral triumph of the Progressives needs no emphasising. Their total vote, plus that of the Liberals, was more than 70,000 -- close enough to the 73,000 "Yes" majority at the referendum to make it clear that Liberal and Progressive sentiments now inspire enough electors to give the Progressive Party pivotal importance. In the Johannesburg area, no U.P. majority over a Progressive exceeded three figures. Only a very slight change in opinion could give the Progressives half-a-dozen MPs.

Furthermore, the election has achieved something just as important -- it has made progressive opinion respectable for the first time in South Africa. The support of the Rand Daily Mail throughout

the campaign and of the Star in its final stages, the results in all Johannesburg's wealthiest and socially most desirable areas have made voting Progressive what Nancy Mitford would call a "U-indicator". Upper-class usage has been vindicated by upper-class practice; the opinion-leaders have voted Progressive, and the spread of their sentiments to the U.P.'s main roots of strength, the middle-income English-speaking voters, will follow.

#### Radical Platform

The last time the Liberals fought Hillbrow (Leslie Cooper, 1954) they got 669 votes; in 1958 their vote reached four figures in only one seat out of the three they contested. Since then their policy has become much more advanced. That, fighting on a platform of "One man, one vote", Mary Walker could get 1,300 votes in Hillbrow, and Randolph Vigne 1,100 in so difficult a constituency as Constantia, indicates that the Liberals, whose policy in 1953 was about what the Progressive policy is now, have gained rather than lost support in spite of adopting an uncompromising policy of universal suffrage. The Progressives have their feet on the same road -- and it seems plausible that as they follow the Liberals along it, their support will grow greater, not less.

#### Sieg zum Tode

The National Party is celebrating its victory. In 1942, when the German Army was celebrating its Russian triumphs, a catchphrase in Germany

was "Wir siegen uns zum Tode" (We are winning ourselves to death).

This election has, in large measure, killed the United Party (though it may be a long time dying). But, if having held an election eighteen months early to ensure the most favourable result, the National Party can do no better than lose nearly 60,000 voters -- then, perhaps, another "victory" would kill it as well.

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#### L I B E R A L O P I N I O N :

At its 1961 National Congress, the Liberal Party of South Africa decided to produce a regular commentary on South African and African affairs.

It is being sent to South African and oversea newspapers, to the representatives of foreign governments, to the United Nations, to members of the Liberal Party itself, and to any individuals or organizations, in South Africa or oversea, who would like to receive it.

The venture is being modestly launched, but it is the editors' hope that they may be able to improve the quality of the production shortly, as well as to increase the frequency with which the journal is to appear.

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