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## EDITORIAL

In May 1972 REALITY published an editorial entitled "What Hope from the U.P." The editorial contained this paragraph;

**There is only one creative choice that the United Party can make, but if self-interest and self-maintenance are its main concerns, it will not make it. That would be to revise radically its federation policy, to bring back hope to millions of people who have so little, to fix a minimum wage based on the estimates of what is required for a family to live a decent and law-abiding life, and to announce that it will repeal or amend those apartheid laws which weigh down so heavily on voiceless people.**

I do not suppose that the United Party was influenced by this editorial, nor that its policy-makers even saw it. But I do suppose that the United Party was influenced by the growing feeling that the race federation policy was totally inadequate for the times in which we live. This growing feeling is not spectacular but it is there. It is a feeling that the slogan "White leadership with justice" just won't do any more, that if you arrogate to yourself the right of leadership you are unlikely to be just. There is also the strong suspicion that you intend your leadership to last for ever.

I wish to examine the new policy fairly and objectively. One must say at once that only South Africa could have produced such a policy. Only white South Africa – with its deep fear of the future – could conceive of the idea of having two parliaments, a white parliament and a federal one, the functions and powers of the federal parliament being decided by the white parliament, until the day comes when the white parliament says to the federal parliament, *today we hand over power to you.*

In other words the fear will have gone. One assumes – one must assume – that South Africans will have discovered a common loyalty. Therefore one assumes that poverty – the gross disparity between white wealth and other wealth – will to a large extent have disappeared. One assumes that racial discrimination will to a large extent have disappeared. *And this must all have happened while an all-white parliament was in control.* It takes a lot of believing

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It would be easy to pooh-pooh the whole thing, but I cannot bring myself to do that. I know from experience how difficult – almost impossible – it is to move white South Africa one

inch nearer the goal of the common society. Therefore I am compelled to say, however fantastic the policy may seem to be, that it seems to indicate that *for the first time in conventional white politics*, a number of representative white politicians have begun to grant the possibility of a common society, and have begun to grant the possibility of the creation of a parliament representative — whether by universal franchise or not — of all the people of South Africa.

I would expect to incur heavy criticisms from some quarters for imagining that there is anything hopeful about this. I realise that this is a forward policy with a thousand built-in safeguards. But up till now conventional white policy has been all safeguards. I realise that in terms of the new U.P. policy the white parliament need never cede sovereignty. But having lived my political life on small mercies, I count this another.

I may say that I disclaim any right to speak for REALITY' I am writing over my own name because I doubt if any member of our editorial board could write on this subject the kind of anonymous editorial that it is our practice to publish.

This new policy can obviously be used in two diametrically opposed ways. It can be argued on the platteland that the sovereign white parliament need never cede sovereignty if it does not wish to. It can be argued in the cities — some cities — or some parts of some cities — that at last some hope is being held out to the voiceless people of our country. One is quite aware of this ambivalence.

Why then should a person like myself not condemn utterly and outright this new policy as a subterfuge, a fantasy, a fraud, a dodge to get back into power? The reason is that though the policy may be these things to some members of the U.P., it is not so to all. I repeat that some have at last got the message that the days of white domination are drawing to an end. I concede the possibility that violence may recommend itself to many as the only possible solution of the white-domination impasse. But I myself am morally and temperamentally unable to take part in violence nor can I believe that it holds the solution to our difficulties. My hope — very deep — for the greater part of my life has been that white South Africans should be converted to righteousness. I can't give it up now. If a respectably large section of the electorate — with whom I have had so little in common — should at last concede the possibility of a common society, that is for me a small mercy.

**Let me conclude by repeating that this common society demands a common loyalty, and there can never be a common loyalty until there is a more equitable distribution of wealth, and a removal of unjust discriminations. Let the United Party make it abundantly and unequivocally clear that its white parliament will set about doing these very things, and that it is doing them in preparation for the common society. □**

Alan Paton

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# ODE TO THE NEW REALITY

A Journal of Liberal and Radical Opinion

Dedicated to  
Edgar Brookes —  
old champion of the right  
New champion of the left.

Sometimes I was a glad lib  
Sometimes I was a sad lib  
No more I'll be a bad lib  
For now I am a rad lib.

I never was a mad rad  
I would have made a bad rad  
Although I hate the glib rad  
Myself am now a lib rad.

Lib now takes its sabbatical  
But I'll not be fanatical  
I shall remain pragmatical  
Though I am now a radical.

No more I'll lie and fiberal  
Nor talk a lot of gibberal  
Nor will I quake and quiberal  
I now am a rad liberal.

I really now have had lib  
Now that I am a rad lib  
I pledge to the new REALITY  
My firm and true fealty.

A.P.