

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Why should Liberals throw in their lot with the A.N.C.?

WHY should Allister Sparks expect white Liberals to throw in their lot with the ANC? In the days when the Liberal Party was fighting valiantly for a common society, and demonstrating its belief in a non-racial democracy by the composition of its membership and the way it operated, we used to co-operate with the Congress movement in opposing unjust laws such as the Group Areas and Pass Laws.

But the relationship was never an easy one. Apartheid was the common enemy, but there were many differences in our methods and our ultimate aims.

Apartheid is now on its way out, and the question now is, what kind of society is to replace it.

Liberals have an important contribution to make, in the realm of ideas rather than numbers. In a democratic society, every adult should have the right and the responsibility of voting. But this does not mean that the majority will always be right.

Liberals are used to being in the minority, but as long as there is freedom of thought and open debate, those ideas which are based on justice and common sense have a chance to exert their influence.

What South Africa needs now is not "solidarity" but an earnest and honest exploration of all possible ways to solve our many practical problems and build a better life for all our people.

MRS J.F. HILL 27 Meyrick Avenue  
Durban

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ALLISTER SPARKS'S strictures on liberals for not being at the ANC conference do not leave me feeling particularly guilty.

I went to Nelson Mandela's Durban rally, to the ANC's public launch in Pietermaritzburg, and I took part in a

"peace" march through that city, organised by its supporters, at which the Zulu refrain to which we marched proclaimed what the singers had done, and still hoped to do, to Inkatha in the local township of Imbali. I was by no means the only "Alan Paton Liberal" present on each of these occasions.

I did not go to the ANC conference because there was, as far as I was aware, no general invitation to outsiders to do so.

Mr Sparks does not think this was a good enough reason. Perhaps it was not, but nevertheless it was the reason.

Having said all this, Mr Sparks is probably right to say that liberals should become more closely involved with the African style of politics. It would be easier to do so if one did not have serious reservations about some of the policies on offer and some of the actions with which they are supported, or did not live in an area where the leadership of all factions is openly hostile to many of the things in which one believes.

PETER BROWN

Hilton

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I AM writing to request permission to reprint extracts from the article by Allister Sparks.

I think the questions he raises are relevant to many in the Black Sash and believe that a reprint in our monthly newsletter would elicit some response from our recently retiring members.

I have been on the Reality mailing list for some time and must compliment you on the new format which is both more interesting to read and excitingly up-to-date.

S.A. NILSEN  
Newsletter Editor

The Black Sash  
Durban

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REGARDING Allister Sparks's article in the July issue, 'Whatever happened to the white Liberals': maybe he should ask, "Whatever happened to all the World's Liberals not just the S.A. species?"

Those moral watchdogs attacking the Nats' terrible actions are now silent or gloss over the ANC's excesses.

Perhaps genuine Liberals would be more comfortable with Mandela's ANC if he put more action into his fine words — like using his influence publicly to free a man from Zambian detention (without trial) whose crime appears to be agreeing to testify in an open court.

Words for all politicians are easy. Let's see some action — especially at grassroots. All are responsible for ending violence; not just one's opponents.

Maybe if the ANC's leadership was more committed to 'laying down their political lives' to defend others' rights to contrary political opinions they might be surprised at the positive support from the old white Liberals.

Whether they want this support is open to question as how many Liberals were invited to the ANC's July congress?

D.B. MCKEON

Morningside  
Durban

## Reality's new look

CONGRATULATIONS on Reality's new look. May it prosper in the next twenty-two years.

GAIL M. GERHART

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New York, N.Y.

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MY WIFE and I have read the new Reality with interest and pleasure . . . and we wish it every success.

PETER WALKER

Buxton  
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England

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I READ it in one sitting, I was so engrossed. Excellent articles.

CAROLINE WHITE

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