

## SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE NATIONALISTS<sup>1</sup>

{NOTE: The first page is poor in microfilm.}

elected, conceding democracy; nor can they imagine any other way in which democracy can be attained. Hence they resign themselves to hopelessness. They have forgotten the lesson of history: that behind every vote lies some past bitter struggle against jealous privilege. Nor can they understand the plain facts of the past ten years in which hundreds of millions of African and Asian peoples have wrested from their former European overlords the right to govern themselves.

All the social forces exist in our country which can bring about the change we need so badly. They exist in the millions of working people of town and country, black and white, together with the middle and professional classes, who are finding the present despotic government increasingly savage, intolerable, ruinous and intellectually contemptible, and are finding the organisation, the determination and the courage to compel changes. Today the Non-European majority of our people, though voteless, have become a mighty and formidable force, which is making itself felt in many ways. There is also a powerfully growing section of Europeans, among the workers and in Church, commercial, industrial and professional sections, which is not only vigorously resisting the racial follies of the Nationalists, but is also increasingly tending to make a common cause with the Non-Europeans.

This trend towards a multi-racial democratic political front is based upon a common love for our country, which belongs to us all. In the growth of this front lies the best guarantee for racial harmony in the free South Africa of the future.

Because of their privileges, and the inferior status of the Non-Europeans politically and economically, Europeans tend to look down upon the other races of our country with arrogance and contempt, as a master upon slaves. These attitudes of arrogance and contempt cause resentment and indignation among the Non-Europeans. The Europeans on their part, as a minority, are afraid of Non-European advancement.

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<sup>1</sup> *Liberation*, Johannesburg, November 1957.

In November 1957, *Liberation* launched a series of discussion articles "by writers of varying shades of democratic and progressive opinion" on "South Africa after the Nationalists". The writers were requested, in the course of their articles, to suggest answers to the following questions:

- What political changes do you consider desirable in South Africa?
- Do the social forces exist in our country to bring about such changes?
- Is the accomplishment of a universal franchise feasible at the present time?
- What immediate economic changes are likely to be found necessary?
- Is racialism so deeply rooted that special measures would be needed to eliminate it? And, if so, what measures?

This is the contribution by Mr. Sisulu to the discussion.

They fear that White domination will be replaced by Black domination, and that we will serve them as they have served us.

These racial attitudes of contempt, resentment and fear are rooted not so much in “the consciousness of the people” as in the present social, political and economic conditions in South Africa. By changing those conditions we shall eliminate the causes of racialism, and our people of various national origins will learn to look upon one another not as enemies and rivals, but as partners and allies in the glorious enterprise of building a nobler and happier South Africa.

No doubt, in a country with a background such as ours, we shall require some laws to prohibit racial discrimination and incitement, to protect minority and language rights, and education in common citizenship. But the fundamental measure to eliminate racialism is the replacement of the present distorted racial social structure with a new one founded upon justice, equality and respect for the dignity of man.

Democrats of various shades of opinion may differ as to the economic structure that will take shape in a free South Africa. Some are socialists, others are not.

But we should all be able to agree on certain essential questions.

The oligarchic and racial structure of South Africa, its poverty and oppression, are closely related to the monopoly control of certain key industries, their exploitation of cheap chattel labour, and to the landlessness resulting from the forced expropriation of the Africans.

Our greatest industry, mining, has under private monopoly control developed a vested interest in poverty and oppression. This great natural resource of our South African nation must come under public control if it is not to be a standing menace to all free institutions, and if its fruits are to be made available to all who have toiled and suffered to develop them.

The soil of South Africa must be restored to the people if emancipation is to have any real meaning to the masses. Equitable redistribution, involving giving land to the millions of landless peasants, must form part of any realistic programme of fundamental reform.

It goes without saying that all racial barriers to technical, commercial, industrial and other economic advancement would have to be removed. This is necessary not only in the interests of justice and equity, but also in order to raise the productivity and efficiency of our manpower.

Beyond sketching the broad main outlines, it would be fruitless to draw up a detailed blueprint for the free South Africa of tomorrow. Much will depend upon the course of the struggle between the forces seeking liberty and those which seek to oppress us

and drive us back to slavery. We shall become wiser and draw closer to one another during that struggle. In the end, the people will decide.

For the present, we have an overriding common task: to remove the reactionary, fascist Government that bars the road to all progress.