

"THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN"Parliament to-day

1. In South Africa today only Europeans can become members of Parliament and take part in making the laws which govern all our people. And of the 153 European members of Parliament 150 are elected by European voters and three by African men voters in the Cape Province.

Up til 1936 African men in the Cape Province had the same voting right as the Europeans. The Representation of Natives Act transferred their names to a separate roll and gave them power only to elect 3 members of Parliament and 2 Provincial Councillors. The Africans in the other Provinces have no representation at all in Parliament. There are however four Senators elected indirectly by the Africans in the 4 Provinces. (The Senate in the "upper house" - it does not make the laws but all Acts passed by Parliament have to be agreed to by the Senate before they become laws)

2. Until this year Coloured men in the Cape Province could register as voters and cast their votes together with the Europeans in election for Members of Parliament. But whereas all Europeans over the age of 21, men and women, have the right to vote, without having to comply with any wage, property or education qualifications, only Coloured men could register as voters and then only if they could write their name and address and either owned immovable property valued at £75 or earned not less than £50 a year.

Now however the Government has passed the Separate Representation of Voters Act which removes Coloured voters from the common roll and puts them on a separate roll, like the African voters roll. Under this Act four Europeans will be elected to Parliament by the Coloured voters, one in each Province - as the Native Representatives are elected by the African voters in the Cape Province.

3. So we find that first the Africans and then the Coloureds have lost their political rights in South Africa. We know too well how the Government treats the African people because they have no political power. The Urban Areas Act forces Africans to carry passes, and to live in locations, the Bantu Education Act trains their children to be servants for the white man, the Native Labour Act wants to prevent them from fighting for higher wages - to keep the African people as a cheap labour force for the factories, mines and farms.

Now that the Coloured people have lost their voting rights the Government will waste no time in trying to force them into the same position as the Africans. Already the Group Areas Act is forcing them to live only in certain areas and the Population Registration Act is making them carry passes. The Industrial Conciliation Amendment Bill, when it becomes law, will split up the trade unions and enable the bosses to lower the wages of Coloured workers. The Coloured people are certainly faced with a gloomy future unless they organise themselves to resist this attack on their rights, and in their struggle join hands with the African people.

Tribal Authorities, Advisory Boards and Councils

4. In an attempt to bluff the African people into thinking that they have some form of self-government and some say in making the laws which they have to obey, the Government, in terms of the Bantu Authorities Act, provided for the setting up of tribal authorities or councils consisting of chiefs and headmen in the Reserves. The function of these councils is to carry out Government policy in the Reserves and to give the Government advice when it is asked for. As nearly all of these council members are paid by the Government it is not likely that they will oppose its policy. The people who live in the Reserves and who suffer from overcrowding, poverty and lack of hospitals, and schools have no say in the tribal authorities nor in electing those who sit on them.

5. Advisory Boards...../

5. Advisory Boards, consisting of African members under a European chairman (often the location superintendent) have been set up in the locations in many towns in order to give the Town Councils advice on matters affecting Africans. Some of the Advisory Board members are appointed by the Council but usually the majority are elected by the location residents. These Boards have no power to carry out their decisions or to force the Council to listen to their advice. As a rule the Councils go their own way regardless of the Advisory Board's advice.

6. Similarly, under the Separate Representation of Voters Act the Government has attempted to bluff the Coloured people with a Union Council of Coloured Affairs which will advise the Government on matters affecting the Coloured, Malay and Griqua people. Of the 27 Council members 15, a majority, are to be appointed by the Government. The other Council members are elected by Coloured voters in each of the Provinces.

Different treatment

7. Three quarters of the South African people have no direct representation in Parliament, how does this affect them? The Africans who have least political power get least from the Government, the Europeans who have most political power get most and the Coloured people who until recently had more political power than the Africans get more from the Government than the Africans but less than the Europeans
For example, Old Age Pensions in 1951

Europeans	-	£8 per month
Coloureds	-	£3.15.0 per month
Africans		
-in the reserves	-	15/- per month
-in large towns	-	£1 per month
-in other towns	-	£1.5.0 per month.

Amount spent by the Government on education in 1951

for each European child	-	about £41
for each Coloured child	-	about £18
for each African child	-	about £7

Laws to divide and rule

8. Our Parliament does not represent the South African people - it is controlled by the white farmers, mine owners and factory bosses. The laws which are passed by Parliament are aimed at keeping political power in the hands of these people and preventing the Non-Europeans from gaining democratic rights and a decent life. These white bosses have bought off the white workers by giving them the vote, paying them higher wages and making them believe false theories that they are better than the Non-Europeans, because their skins are white.

9. In its efforts to keep the Non-Europeans from uniting in a common struggle for rights the Government passed the Group Areas Act, to force the various sections of the Non-European people into separate locations, and the Bantu Authorities Act, to break up the unity of the African people, to split them up on tribal lines and place them under strict police control. To force the people to carry out the laws it makes the Government employ thousands of police, warders, superintendents, commissioners and inspectors. Any attempts by the Non-Europeans to oppose the Government and demand their rights are suppressed by the army and the police. In 1946 unarmed African miners who were striking for a living wage were fired on by the police and some of them killed.

The People shall govern

10. By this we mean not only that every man and woman of all races and colours shall have a vote and have the right to become a member of Parliament. In order that the people, you and other ordinary working people,...../

people, have a direct say in the Government they must have the right to consultations with the Government on matters which affect them, Ministers will not be allowed to refuse to meet deputations and to listen to them as so often happens to-day, even to Europeans. Also the people must have the power to recall the representative they elected to Parliament if he acts against their wishes. This right is even denied to Europeans in South Africa to-day.

As regards local government in the different regions of South Africa, the governing bodies which we will set up will not be dummies, they will have the power to make laws and carry them out for the good of the people living in that region.

Europeans rights also threatened

11. Since the Nationalist Government came to power the rights and liberties of the Europeans have also been attacked by the Government. People are now prevented from travelling overseas, parents can no longer decide about their childrens' education, trade unions have been interfered with by the Government and their elected officials removed, the freedom of the press has been restricted. Under the Senate Act, passed last year, The Government has backed the Senate with its own supporters so that when Parliament and the Senate come together for a 'joint-sitting' the Nationalists can be sure of having an overwhelming majority. That is how the Separate Representation of Voters Act was passed for as it meant changing the constitution of South Africa it needed a two-thirds majority of a joint sitting before it could become law.. The Senate Act makes it almost impossible for the European voters to remove the Nationalists from power in an election .

12. Faced with these denials of their rights and freedoms the Europeans will have to choose between joining hands with the Non-Europeans in the struggle for equal rights for all people or submitting to the system of white supremacy of the Nationalists, under which even the Europeans are no longer free.

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13. The issue in South Africa is not a racial one - it is not a struggle between white and non-white but it is a struggle for rights for all people, irrespective of race and colour, it is a struggle against the inhuman, unbearable system of apartheid and white supremacy. Everyone who accepts the Freedom Charter is welcome in the struggle.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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