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WE ARE NOT ALONE!

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"If the electorate of Hillbrow renews its confidence in me - and I am certain that it will - it will be the beginning of a new epoch in the political life of this country."

Dr. Bernard Friedman M.P. in Parliament. 16th June, 1955.
(Rand Daily Mail.)

If ever ~~a~~ new epoch were needed in our political life, it is needed now.

Not just because letters are opened by secret pryers and telephones tapped by silent ~~invisible~~ eavesdroppers. Not just because passports are withheld by anonymous officials and books are suppressed by unseen censors. Not just because senatorships are peddled for £20 contributions to the Strydfonds, ~~and racial classifications are being made by inspections of peoples' hair and investigation into the skin colour of their great-great-grandmothers.~~

These are ^{only} the symptoms of the creeping scourge ^{which} ~~that~~ has overtaken us, and ^{which} can only be eradicated with a new epoch.

But the disease is more dread than the surface ^psymptoms. It has been called "the police state." It has been called "dictatorship." It has been called ~~the~~ "fascism." Call it what you will - the name is not important. There is a ^{grave} ~~deep~~ disease in our political life. It has eaten ^d deep into the living tissue of our civil liberties; it has undermined the Act of Union, imperilled the honour of our courts; it has fertilised the growth of racial hates and poisons; it has made our country's name a swear word and an execration ^{on} the lips of the entire world.

It is ^{and it is} the disease of fascism ^{like} cancer - fatal, incurable unless it is surgically removed before ~~its~~ its growth has run too far.

It is time - and past time - for a new epoch. But even now the ^{surgical operation} ~~time~~ is far from easy. For the disease has sapped the vitality and spirit of the democratic resistance. It has weakened, split, divided and confused the opposition, and left us unprepared for a new surge forward. There is a chance that the ^{disease will} ~~patient~~ ^{to us} ~~will die~~, unless we find the way to ^{make} rally all our resistance to ^{the disease} ~~it~~. Somehow, before it is too late, a new surge forward must be made. But where? How? By whom?

prove fatal

There are many who believe, with Dr. Friedman, that his own revolt ^{against} what he calls "Mr. Strauss' retreat from principle.." marks the turning point. There are others who see the beginning of a new epoch ^{of} ~~for~~ democracy and liberty in South Africa in the determined courage of the Black Sash Women, the Womens' Defence of the Constitution League or the Covenanters. There are others who still pin their faith in the United Party to lead the way to a new recovery.

"The United Party" says Mr. Marais Steyn M.P. (Rand Daily Mail 28.7.55) "is the bastion against the Government's continued inroads on the freedoms and liberties of South African citizens."

Ten years ago, there would have been many who would have echoed that opinion, and believed in it. They are few who ^{will} ~~would~~ do so today. Everywhere amongst the ^{democrats} ~~democrats~~ of the opposition to fascism, people are beginning to look away from the United Party, bastion of years gone by. The defenders, supporters and members of the United Party grow fewer, split and hive off to strike out independently and separately for what they conceive to be the right. Somehow the bastion has been breached. It is time to look at facts before we are overrun by our enemies.

Dr. Friedman is right when he describes the United Party's recent actions as "retreat from principle." And his revolt against it has been widely welcomed. The support which Dr. Friedman has gathered in, from people of democratic conviction who belong to a dozen different parties and groups, proclaims that there is a strong feeling that the revolt was due - perhaps even overdue. For the United Party retreat had gone far too far.

In 1951 there was the United Party vote in favour of the Martial Law Act, which empowers the Nationalist Government to proclaim a state of "emergency", to suspend all laws, and to rule openly by decree. Earlier this year, there was the United Party amendment to Mr. Strydom's Senate Amendment Act, designed to make ~~this~~ ^{the} outrage of the Act of Union "workable." Retreat from principle has taken place all along the line. But let it be recorded that the retreat was not sounded by Mr. Strauss alone, but ~~was~~ by the whole United Party, all its members of Parliament, all its committees, all its members.

Dr. Friedman has now revolted, and attempted to cry 'halt!' There had been a clear and unambiguous promise made by the United Party to the Coloured voters in 1951. ~~The coloured voters would~~ ^{They were to} be restored to the common voters roll by a future United Party government, if the Nationalists breached the spirit of the Act of Union and removed them from ~~it~~ ^{that roll}. But on June 13th of this year, under heavy Nationalist pressure, Mr. Strauss headed ~~yet another~~ ^a retreat.

"The question (of restoration to the common roll) is at the present time purely hypothetical... When the problem does arise, the United Party will not hesitate to decide its course of action in the light of the new situation that will then have arisen, and of the facts and circumstances then prevailing..."

(Rand Daily Mail. 14.6.55)

Only six of the United Party M.P.s protested at the retreat and dissociated themselves from it. Mr. Strauss answered the protesters with a new statement, amplifying the retreat, underlining its intentions.

"All we can promise is that, on our return to power, we will, in consultation with the Coloured people, set right the grave injustice done to them, in the best way open to us at that time, in a form which will serve the best interests of South Africa as a whole."

(Rand Daily Mail. 15.6.55)

Inside Parliament, only Dr. Friedman of the timorous six remained unsatisfied. He decided to resign his seat in Parliament, and called on "the electorate of Hillbrow to decide the issue." The United Party retaliated by expelling him from its ranks.

"In plain terms, the United Party has expelled me for standing by the principles of the party, and for insisting that Mr. Strauss should not retreat from the firm pledges he gave the Coloured voters in 1951."

(Rand Daily Mail. 9.7.55)

If this retreat of the United Party were the only incident of its kind, one could ascribe it perhaps to timidity, to confusion, or to cowardice. But coming as it does, at the end of a long series of such retreats from principle, the reason for it must be sought much deeper. The retreat from its pledges to the Coloured voters is the latest - but only the latest symptom of the mortal sickness which has developed in the vitals of the United Party. Mr. Strauss is not, as some people claim, the source of the sickness, but rather an expression of it.

There is a sickness. And those who would find the way to a new democratic

advance, to a new epoch in our political life, must diagnose that sickness and its causes, that they may guard against them in their own ranks.

"The leader of the Opposition has issued two lengthy statements, neither of which says 'yes' or 'no'. ~~It means that, if the United Party deems it expedient, it will acquiesce in the removal of Coloured voters from the common roll.~~ It means that, if the United Party deems it expedient, it will acquiesce in the removal of Coloured voters from the common roll."

Dr. Friedman: Speech in Parliament. (Rand Daily Mail 17.6.55)

"If the United Party deems it expedient."

This is the key phrase of Dr. Friedman's criticism. And rightly so. There can be no middle course for any political party. Either it stands by its principles, and upholds them in the face of every opposition, and every temporary loss of votes. Or it guides its actions by what it deems expedient, by what it thinks the voters will like to hear, by what it imagines will make it acceptable to those who would otherwise oppose it. There is no middle course between clear and firmly held principle, and the unprincipled search for quick, expedient support.

Sam Goldwyn, it is said, once hammered home the point to his fellow directors. "Those are my principles, gentlemen" he is reported to have said. "But if you don't agree with them, I've got others." The United Party, too, has principles. But too often in the past it has been afraid that the voters might not agree with them. And so it has, conveniently, found others.

It is argued by United Party supporters that the retreats from principle are unfortunately necessary; how else can elections be won? How else can the wavering, undecided voter be attracted away from the party in power? How else can the United Party win back a section of those who voted Nationalist in 1953?

That argument must be faced. If it is sound, can anyone hope to bring about "a new epoch in our political life" and yet not fall prey to expediency? Can Dr. Friedman sweep the Nationalists from power without Mr. Strauss' expedient appeal to the undecided or near-Nationalist voter? Can the Covenanters? Or the Liberal Party? The argument must be faced. And answered.

For within its framework, the argument is sound. If the starting point is to be that the future of our political life is the exclusive concern of the white electorate, the argument is sound, unanswerable. If the starting point is to be that politics is the white man's business, then those who seek to sweep the Nationalist Government from power must seek also to wean a section of the Nationalist voters over to the opposition. This is the breeding ground of expediency, of retreats from principle and the breaking of pledges. And all who accept the basic premise that politics is the white man's exclusive concern will fall victim to it, or become a tiny voice crying out in a wilderness.

"It is . . . important that South Africans should have the assurance that no major political party should follow a policy which would place South Africa as a home for white civilisation in general and Afrikaners in particular, in danger."

Mr. Strauss at Potchefstroom University. (Star. 11.8.55)

This is the United Party principle; and those who have been dismayed by United Party expediency should ponder over it. / ^{This is the principle that is father to expediency.} From this principle - and it is the Party's main principle - there has been no retreat. If the bastion has fallen, it has fallen not because it betrayed this principle, but because it upheld it too well, under the leadership of Mr. Strauss no less than under the leadership of General Smuts.

It is time to re-examine this principle. For though it has been steadfastly

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upheld and ^{though} white civilisation" has survived, democracy and liberty have perished; the United Party has compromised, followed the course of expediency and been defeated. It is time to look at our principles with the blinkers off.

"The principles of the United Party were the same today as those laid down by General Hertzog and General Smuts in 1934."

Mr. Strauss at Potchefstroom University. (Star 11.8.55)

"I abide by the principles by which Botha, Smuts and Jan Hofmeyr stood, and I believe them to be principles of honour."

Dr. Friedman in Johannesburg. (Rand Daily Mail 27.7.55)

What are these principles upheld so strongly by Botha and Smuts, and Hertzog and Hofmeyr, and Strauss and Friedman? Principles of honour? No doubt. But that is not the whole truth, nor even the important part of the truth. These are principles of policy - of white South African policy. They are principles which have arisen from the policy that white men must rule over black, come what may, for all foreseeable time. They are the principles - call them as you will - of white supremacy, of white trusteeship, of white domination. Or perhaps, stripped of their veneer of honour and benevolence, they are the principles stated more brutally by

Mr. Strydom:

"I say that there is only one way that the white man can maintain his leadership of the Non-European in this country, and that is by domination. Call it paramourty, ^{dominanskap} or what you will, it is still domination." (Star 20.4.55)
^{Speech in Parliament}
Temper the policy as you will with benevolence, with kindness, with justice or with honour, the essence is there. It is the most strongly cherished of all European South African principles, the most long-established, the most widely accepted. And yet it is not democracy, but its very opposite.

The principle of white supremacy, of perpetual white domination over black, has nothing in common with democracy as it is known and understood throughout the world. It has nothing in common with the meaning of democracy - government by all the people for all the people. It cannot uphold democracy and preserve ^{it} for its very basis is a subversion of democracy, and one which will and must destroy ~~the~~ democracy.

If this is to be the guiding principle of the democratic opposition to the scourge of fascism, then democracy in South Africa is doomed. If this is to be the basic principle of the "new epoch", then the new epoch can be no different from the old. This is the simple truth which needs to be understood by the supporters of Dr. Friedman no less than by the supporters of Mr. Strauss. And if it was not clear before, it has become as clear as pikestaff today.

"The principles of the United Party had enjoyed the support of the greatest majority a political party had had in the history of South Africa..."

Mr. Strauss at Potchefstroom University. (Star 12.8.55)

it had, ^{once} ~~was~~. But it does no longer. Nor can it, ever again. For times have changed, and people and politics have changed with them.

In days gone by, it was possible to believe, honourably, as no doubt Botha, Smuts and Hofmeyr believed, that the principles of white domination were compatible with the surface trappings of democracy, with personal and civil liberties, with legally safeguarded rights and inviolable traditions. It was possible to believe that white domination could walk hand in hand with democracy, at least for whites, and with justice and humanity for non-whites. Those were the days before the non-white people had claimed, powerfully and determinedly, an equal place in the sun.

it is no longer possible to believe so today. An era has come to an end. The non-white people stir, and begin to clamour for all the rights and obligations of citizenship, for human rights, for democracy. The Smuts-Botha coupled principles of democracy and white domination begin to split asunder. We are face to face with the decisive choice. Either white domination. Or democracy. Not both. Either the open rule of force to drown the non-white claim for an equal place in the sun. Or democracy without a colour bar, as all the world understands it. We are face to face with that choice; and blind faith in the stated principles of the past will not enable us to avoid the choosing.

White domination is under heavy challenge, not just by the non-white people, but by a growing band of forward-looking white South Africans who have chosen for themselves democracy. If white domination is to survive that challenge, beat it off and conquer it, it can do so only by force, by naked dictatorial rule, by rigid suppression as in time of war. The challenge cannot be bought off by talk of "honour", by equivocations about "setting right grave injustice", by prattle about ^{"bastions of rights and liberty!"} democracy. For this is a challenge grown out of a deep-seated, principled belief and faith in democracy and liberty, which ~~will not bow down~~ ^{will} not bow down to temporary expediency. The challenge ^{must either} ~~can~~ only be suppressed by force; or ^{be} answered and supported by the white citizens of South Africa.

The Nationalist leaders have understood this vital choice which is the kernel of all the politics of South Africa. And they have made their decision. They are for 'dictatorship', for 'the police state', for 'fascism.' They are for white domination, regardless of the costs. They are ready and willing to reject all concepts of humanity and justice, to destroy even the rights and liberties of white South Africans themselves, in order to uphold ~~the~~ white domination.

But what decision has been made by the democratically-mined opposition to the Nationalists - by the supporters of the United Party, of Dr. Friedman, of the Covenanters? The decision cannot now be long delayed. Their rights and their privileges are being trampled underfoot; their organisations temporise, and proceed steadily towards defeat and disintegration. The time has come for their choosing. The old principles that once led to "the greatest majority a party had had", now lead ^{only} to defeat. Between the main contenders, between the millstones of those who have decided for white domination and those who have decided for ~~democracy~~ democracy, the waverers and the undecided can only be ground slowly into dust.

Life is forcing all South Africans to the decisive choice; and those who cling to the old policies and refuse to face the choice can do nothing to bring about a "new epoch", nothing to preserve our democratic liberties and traditions.

"Do you believe in ^{white} civilisation?" asks a heckler at a Women's Defence of the Constitution League meeting.

"I believe in civilisation" says the speaker.

it is a neat verbal parry. But it is not good enough. For or against? That is the question that no serious opponent of the Nationalist scourge can sidestep or parry. If there is a fatal weakness in the United Party which will cause its sure defeat, it is that it tries to answer "yes" to both questions - to talk of upholding democracy, while acting to uphold its opposite, white domination.

The Labour and Liberal Parties have understood this real issue, and made their choice.

The South African Congress of Democrats has understood the real issue and made its choice.

"We are against all forms of inequality & domination, & repudiate as false the doctrines of racial inequality, of white supremacy, apartheid, trusteeship & segregation. We advocate... the principles of equality & the brotherhood of men..."
(Extract from the Constitution.)

Dr. Friedman ^{too} has perceived ~~the issue, and placed his finger squarely on~~ the real cancer that gnaws the vitals of the United Party.

"The United Party has not yet learnt the fundamental truth that you cannot have freedom if you deny it to others."

Speech in Johannesburg. 28.7.55. Rand Daily Mail.

True it has not. But who has? Has Dr. Friedman? Have any of the European opposition who support him, or who support Mr. Strauss? It is time for them all to decide, and to speak out.

For this "fundamental truth" does not square with the Botha, Smuts, Strauss policy of white supremacy and black suppression, no matter how honourable its upholders, no matter how agile their verbal parries. White South Africa cannot have freedom for itself, and deny that freedom to its non-white compatriots. That is fundamental truth. And no considerations of what is expedient, of how popular such a ~~part~~ truth will be amongst the voters can change it.

And yet it will be asked: Is it possible for any white South Africans to proclaim this truth with all its implications, and yet be able to rouse South Africa against the Nationalists? Will the proclamation of this truth not split the anti-Nationalist opposition and drive away the more reasonable undecided voters and the more responsible, moderate Nationalists?

~~Perhaps it depends~~ Where we are looking for our forces and our allies?

"I address a word to the men and women of the Nationalist Party, to whom I take off my hat.... I ask them to come forward and express themselves clearly and unambiguously... to tell their own leaders: 'You are going too far. We can't accept it.' In this way they can bring their Government to the right road, and strike a blow for democracy."

Mr. Strauss at the Johannesburg City Hall. (Star 16.5.55.)

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Mr. Strauss cries for the moon. The 'men and women of the Nationalist Party' strike no blows for democracy. They have made their choice. They strike their blows for white domination; and whether they understand ~~that~~ ^{the} fact or not, they therefore strike their blows for the creeping scourge of fascism. What is the purpose of the flattery - 'I take off my hat to them.'? We are back at the roots and sources of United Party retreats and expediency. We are back at the old process of trying to wean the men and women of the Nationalist Party from their allegiance to Mr. Strydom.

It can be done. But not by flattery. Only by retreats from principle; only by expedient back-peddaling on the democratic content of ~~our~~ ^{our} policy; only by moving closer and closer to the fanatical, white-supremacist racialism and reaction of the Nationalist Party. We are back to the sources of the vital sickness that has overtaken the United Party.

But where else is there to look for allies, supporters and friends than in the ranks of the Nationalist Party? This is the dilemma of the European opposition to fascism today. And there is no way out, so long as all our thinking is, to be confined in the cast-iron fetters of ^a prejudice, which ~~says that~~ ^{declares} politics ~~is~~ ^{to be} the exclusive business of white South Africans.

~~Rejoices~~ It is time to break those fetters of prejudice. The cancer of fascism gathers pace, and there is not a long time yet to make the surgical operation ^{which can} eradicate it. It is time to understand that the political future of South Africa is the vital concern of everyone who calls this country "home."

Let us look away from 'the men and women of the Nationalist Party.' Let us look another way.

Let me tell you a story.

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To the South West of Johannesburg city, amidst a waste-land of slimes dams and abandoned surface workings, lies the township of Kliptown. Usually there are some few thousand people here, a cross section of the country's races, Africans, Indians, Coloureds, a few Europeans.

But on the weekend of June 2⁵th of this year, it is different. From all parts of the country, people flock to Kliptown. There is an empty site on the outskirts, where boys play football after school. By midday of this Saturday, there are some ten thousand people here, speaking all the tongues, and representing all the races, colours and creeds that make up South Africa. Three thousand of the ten have been sent to speak here for groups of men and women scattered through the four provinces. The rest are spectators, drawn here to watch an assembly which has been several months in the organising. Three thousand elected representatives are here to draw a Freedom Charter. This is the Congress of the People.

There are faces here that are known throughout the land, and names that are as familiar as old friends. There are trade union leaders and clergymen, doctors and farm labourers, mechanics and school teachers, students and social workers, domestic servants and politicians. There are people - if anyone asked their affiliation - who would reply "Liberal", Labour, Torch Commando, Congress, Christian, Muslim, democrat. They are here to speak for others, for ordinary people of a hundred different slum towns and garden suburbs, of factories and farms and villages, for perhaps half-a-million people who have elected them.

As they pass into the delegates enclosure they are handed a draft Freedom Charter. They have not seen it before, but yet it rings familiar. For the Charter has been drawn from hundreds upon hundreds of ^{suggestions} ~~debates~~ which have been made by meetings large and small throughout the land. At these meetings, there has been talk of the life ~~the~~ people would like to live, of the changes they would seek in their way of life. There has been talk of freedom; and the talk has been recorded, gathered and summarised here in the Freedom Charter.

Three thousand delegates are here, sent by those meetings, to see that the Charter speaks of freedom as the ordinary citizens of South Africa understand it, and long for it. There is a spirit of unity and amity here which could not be found anywhere else in the whole area of South Africa. The delegates meet together, speak together as equals, with respect for each other despite their ~~various~~ race and social differences, treating each other simply as citizens.

In its way, this is the most truly national convention in all South African history. No group has been debarred; no citizen has been refused the right to vote, or to be a delegate. True, only one adult in every five ^{or six} has voted; but the election ^{by} ~~on~~ a common vote has ^{been carried by} ~~followed~~ the inadequate machinery of four allied organisations - the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the South African Coloured People's Organisation. The elections have been held without a state budget allocation, without state assistance, indeed in the face of heavy opposition and harassment by the authority of state. And yet the elections have been widespread, perhaps more successful than any ~~one~~ who started it off had dared hope.

The delegates bear a heavy responsibility. For great sacrifices have been made by those they represent to send them here. It has taken £12, collected painstakingly from the voters in threepences and sixpences, to send a delegate here from the ^{Cape} ~~South~~ Peninsula. And there are 150 of them. There are over a hundred from the Eastern Province, several hundred from Natal. They have made their ways, difficulty, by lorry, car, train and many on foot. This is a serious, an historic occasion. And everyone who is here treats it so.

This is the Congress of the People. And from it has come a statement of democratic faith worthy of the occasion and ~~worthy~~ of the good citizens, black and white, who together wrote it.

Quote Charter in Full.

Here in ringing terms is proclaimed the "fundamental truth" that there can be no freedom for any section of South Africans unless that freedom is shared in equally by all. Here, for those who have grown weary of the unprincipled, expedient retreats of the past, is ^{the} democratic programme ^{of} ~~for~~ a new advance, shorn of the sickness of compromise and ~~the~~ white supremacy which has been the undoing of all European opposition parties.

But the Freedom Charter is more than that. It is a clarion call, to all who call this country theirs, that here are allies for democracy; ^{here are} men and women ready to strike a blow for ~~democracy~~ and liberty, men and women who need not be won to our side by flattery or retreat from principle, but who are on our side if - and only if - we choose decisively for democracy, decisively against white supremacy ~~the~~ "domination, paramountcy, baasskap or what you will."

Here are allies, perhaps half a million of them; and they are only fore-runners of the millions more who have yet to hear the Freedom Charter to join with us. We are not alone. We are not a small, disintegrating band. We ^{can be} ~~are~~ an army of millions of South Africans who together can strike the decisive blow for democracy, ^{and root} ~~who can tear~~ out the fascist cancer from our political life. We have no need to retreat from principle, to find expedient appeals to the 'men and women of the Nationalist Party.' ~~the~~ We have need ^{rather} ~~only~~ to proclaim, courageously, the truth that is in the Freedom Charter, the truth that democracy is not divisible by bars of colour.

Here is no party programme, but a statement of basic democratic faith to which all who uphold liberty and freedom can adhere. Here is a ~~programme~~ statement of principles for the United Party and for Dr. Friedman, for the Covenanters and the Womens' Defence of the Constitution League, for the Congress movement and the Labour Party, for the Torchmen and the Liberal Party. Here is a statement of principles to replace the outworn principles of Smuts, Botha and Hertzog which have paved the way to present disaster.

It will take courage for European South Africans to break with the principles of white supremacy which they have clung to for so long. It will take courage to speak up for the Freedom Charter, and to seek alliance with those democrats of different colours who believe in it.

But fighting fascism has always taken courage. None should know that better than the people whose sons and brothers fell at Alamein and Cassino that we, the survivors, should preserve our freedom.

~~It is~~

The time to act with courage has now come, for all of us. And with it, the time to proclaim aloud the principles of the Freedom Charter.

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RECORDS RELATING TO THE 'TREASON TRIAL' (REGINA vs F. ADAMS AND OTHERS ON CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON, ETC.), 1956 1961

TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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