

// LIBERATION

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DISCUSSION.

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CHILDREN OF THE STORM

"Practice without theory is blind
Theory without practice is sterile".

The first issue of "Liberation" makes its appearance at a time of profound world crisis. The first half of the twentieth century has been marked by a dizzy acceleration in the rate of scientific discovery and technical advance. Man's stature has been raised, his horizons boundlessly expanded. Yet, for the most part, social and economic systems have not kept pace with man's over-increasing conquests over nature.

The overwhelming majority of mankind still lives in grinding poverty, ignorance and disease, subject to the blind and uncontrollable hazards of unplanned economy. Over Africa and large parts of Asia and America, the wanton ravages of imperialism lay waste vast human and material resources.

Our times are marked by continuous wars and revolutions; conflicts between labour and capital; between colonisers and their victims; between rival imperial powers claiming the "right" to empire; between imperialism itself and Socialism. All these upheavals are symptoms of the modern crisis - the contradiction between advanced science and antiquated forms of social organisation.

The greatest single danger that today faces humanity is that these tensions should be allowed to explode into a cataclysmic world conflict; a vast and ~~terrible~~ intercontinental war in which the secrets man has wrested from nature will be used to destroy him, to bury his proudest achievements and his glorious hopes. That is the blunt alternative which the development and use of atomic, chemical and bacteriological means of war places before the peoples of the world. We must win peace or perish.

These truths hold for all nations and all parts of the world, without exception. Humanity is one. Today this statement is no longer merely a moral or scientific thesis

to be preached in churches or debated in the lecture room. The integration and interdependence of mankind has become a central and vital fact of modern life.

Nowhere is this development more strikingly confirmed than in Africa, whose age-old semi-isolation is vanishing like the morning mist. The so-called "Council of Europe" finds its sole unifying bond in the elaboration of plans for the mutual retention of economic and strategical mastery over African territories, resources and people. The United States of America plans greater stockpiles of atom bombs to be manufactured with uranium from the Congo, the Rand, the Orange Free State. The "King's African Rifles" are sent from Kenya to hunt guerillas in the jungles of Malaya, and Malan sends young Europeans to drop napalm bombs on Korean villages. And in north-west Africa, vast air, naval and army bases are being constructed by America for the projected invasion of the socialist states of eastern Europe.

But the days are past when the fate of Africa could be decided in Europe or America without reference to the aims and aspirations of the people in Africa itself. The challenging ideas of freedom and national independence that have swept through Asia have taken deep root in this continent of ours. From Cairo to the Cape, from East to West, Africa is awakening, to demand that her peoples shall take their part in the world community not as dependents, inferiors, or pawns in the diplomatic game, but as equals and full partners. Huggins and Malan are living in the past when they seek to drive a bargain with Churchill for the sale of Nyasaland or Bechuanaland: they are reckoning without the people, not only of Nyasaland and the "Protectorates" but also of Rhodesia and the Union.

Never before has there been such a powerful and widespread demand for freedom and equality for Africa, as exists today, expressed in movements for national liberation, against "Federation", for self-government, and against colonial rule. In the Union, this movement has found its most important reflection in the alliance of the African and Indian Congresses for the defiance campaign.

It is, however, not sufficient to be determined upon change, to be aware of the impossibility of the old order, be brave and ready to sacrifice for the future of the people

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It is necessary also to achieve widespread clarity on the aims of the struggle, the goal to be sought and the path to achieve it. Hence the need for political theory, for full and frank discussion of all the problems which arise in the course of the struggle, for the free exchange and clash of ideas, for the steady achievement of a common theoretical basis and understanding within the movement for freedom.

It is to help supply this need that "Liberation" has been established.

We are not so presumptuous as to imagine that this little magazine can in itself solve all the many and grave problems which face our people. That is a task that can only be accomplished in the course of the practical struggle, by those leaders and rank-and-file who are participating in it. Our aim is to provide a medium and a vehicle for them to clarify their ideas and to make those generalisations from concrete experience which are vital if we are to learn and to go forward.

At the same time "Liberation" will not be a journal without a policy of its own: a formless and aimless debating forum.

We support the world-wide movement for peace and against imperialism.

We believe in a democratic South Africa which will implement the principle of the UNO Charter: for equality of rights, human dignity and full opportunity for all without distinction of race, sex, colour or creed.

We are opposed to all varieties of racialism or of hostility and contempt for any group based upon colour, or other biological distinctions.

We will give our unqualified support to all positive forward movements against oppression and injustice such as the Campaign of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress.

Within the framework of these broad principles, "Liberation" invites contributions from democrats of all shades of opinion upon matters of political, economic, cultural and scientific interest.

GERM WARFARE -- A Perversion of Science.

by AESCULAPIUS

An international team of scientists and lawyers who went recently to China and Korea found what they considered to be ample proof that the Americans had been engaging in germ warfare against the civilian population of those countries. The Americans have denied the accusation, but have refused to sign the undertaking already signed by all other nations except Japan, not to make use of this method of warfare. They have admitted that they are conducting research into germ warfare. Even if they have not yet actually used this method, therefore, they stand clearly identified with it in the eyes of the world.

The reason why germ warfare has been renounced by all nations except America is, firstly, that it is a completely indiscriminate, uncontrollable method of waging war. Germs cannot be trained to attack soldiers and leave civilians unharmed. On the contrary, a germ attack would most severely affect children, old people and those who are already in bad health. No more savage and cowardly method of attack could be imagined.

Another reason why germ warfare revolts the conscience of mankind is that it cynically abuses some of the most valued discoveries of science -- discoveries which have contributed perhaps more than any other to the well-being of mankind. In the past, each new step forward in the science of bacteriology has been a step towards human happiness. Now each of these discoveries is being monstrously perverted to a new form of barbarism.

The discovery by Pasteur and Lister of the role played by germs in causing disease and infection may be regarded as the beginning of modern medicine. It was this discovery which changed surgery from a desperate and perilous last resort to a safe, scientific process. This discovery, too, made it possible to tackle the causes of disease instead of merely the symptoms. Now this discovery has become the basis of a despicable form of warfare.

The discovery of the existence of germs was, of course,

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only the first step. The next stage was the discovery by Koch that germs could be cultivated in the laboratory. This was important for the study of germs and methods of combating them, and also for the production of vaccines. But today Koch's method is used to produce the germs required for the massacre of defenceless civilians.

The next important advance was the discovery of chemical substances which kill germs. Among the substances are the "sulfa" drugs, penicillin and all the other substances which have done so much for the relief of human suffering. One might think this discovery, at least, to be safe against misuse by the enemies of mankind. Unfortunately, it is not. One of the effects of the continual use of germ-killing drugs is to produce tougher germs -- germs which require larger doses of the drugs to kill them and even germs which are entirely immune. This presents a difficult problem to medical research. But the scientist's difficulty is the criminals' opportunity. By careful preparatory work with the life-saving drugs, the criminals are able to produce germs which will resist treatment with those drugs.

What is the explanation of this horrifying perversion of great scientific discoveries? Now and then we find conscience-stricken Americans or Englishmen suggesting that perhaps science is fundamentally a bad thing. Appalled by the crimes committed by scientists, they begin to wonder whether the remedy is not to call a halt to scientific development.

These people do not understand that science is merely a method, an instrument which society uses to pursue its chosen ends. In a society whose outlook and aims are perverted, a society which needs warfare and armaments to keep itself from collapse, science will become an instrument of terror and death. In a healthy and forward-looking society, science can do only good. The scientist is not free to choose what sort of work he will do. He must do the work which the community requires to be done, otherwise he will starve. The abolition of such savagery as germ warfare can, therefore, only come about through the abolition of the forces which are driving towards war. If the people of the world make it sufficiently clear that they have no use for this kind of barbarism, it will be within their power to put a stop to it.

REALITY AND FICTION IN SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE.

South African writers, like South African politicians and economists, may be divided into two classes: those who live in the world of reality and those who live in a dream of "White South Africa". A large number of white South Africans believe that there is in South Africa a nation consisting exclusively of white men. This nation is in no way connected with anyone of a different colour, save that there are some black men who form part of the hostile environment in which the nation has to live. This attitude of mind has produced the politicians who prate of "the native problem", the economists who divide by 2,000,000 when calculating South Africa's national income per head of population, and the writers for whom non-Europeans are not living characters but merely a background source of "local colour".

Both English and Afrikaners writers are to be found in this category, though the approach of the two is slightly different. Lewis Sowden, writing in "Trek" (Sept. 1950), pleaded for South African writing entirely divorced from the colour issue, on the grounds that "people in South Africa, white people at any rate can and mostly do live lives not much different from those lived by people in Europe and America". Mr. Sowden apparently sees South Africa as an English country mysteriously transported to the Southern Hemisphere. Writing based on this assumption abounds in the columns of "The Outspan", but nothing worthy of serious discussion has been produced by this school.

Afrikaners writers do not generally go as far as Mr. Sowden in ignoring the existence of racial problems. They see their task as the description of the Afrikaner's struggles in an environment consisting of veld, animals, kaffirs and Englishmen. Non-European characters appear in their books in conventional, stereotyped forms. Sometimes these characters are sympathetic -- the faithful "good boys" who form part of the furniture in the idyllic rural setting in which Afrikaners writers are so fond of starting their stories. Thus C.H. van der Heever, in "Somer", introduces some comic coloured labourers to help create bucolic atmosphere. More often they are unsympathetic -- either bloodthirsty tribesmen or insolent, "spoiled" town dwellers. When van der Heever, in "Droogte", wants a symbol to epitomise the downfall of the Afrikaners family who are driven from their pastoral paradise to the alien cities, he finds it in the native taxi by which his hero

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is run over at the end of the book. With one or two exceptions, this sort of approach to the non-European is standard among Afrikaner writers. The protagonists of their stories are Afrikaners. All other kinds of men are part of the scenery.

No worthy South African literature can come from the authors whose starting point is a lie. White South Africa is a myth; the only reality is black-and-white South Africa. The need to face this reality is gradually becoming more widely recognised among writers, and books which try to deal with South African society as a whole are becoming more common.

Not all of these books are of equal value. It is not easy to write about the whole of South Africa's people, because there is a whole structure of racial-barriers calculated to prevent white men from getting to know black men and black men from getting to know white men. Thus the writer, be he white or black, inevitably finds himself at a disadvantage in dealing with one or other section of his fellow men. Many writers have sought the easy way out of this difficulty. The easy way is to write some violent and bizarre story, preferably in a historical setting, which enables the writer to dramatise the colour problem crudely without trying to probe the everyday realities of it. Miscegenation is the favourite topic of this kind of writer. It is a "daring" topic: the writer who tackles it can boast that he is facing reality unflinchingly. It is a topic loaded with ready made tension and tragedy: the merest novice should be able to produce a tear or two with it. Yet it can often become nothing but a mask behind which the reality of racial problems is evaded. Miscegenation is not a major phenomenon of South African Society. It is not a factor which enters into the life of the average South African. We do not necessarily feel ourselves involved in a story of miscegenation, and it may simply titivate our race-consciousness without seriously questioning the validity of racialist attitudes.

The real future of South African literature lies with those writers who have tried to treat South African society as a whole by writing of the everyday realities of South African life. There are not many of these as yet. Perhaps the two most prominent are Peter Abrahams and Alan Paton.

Peter Abrahams has been grappling with racial problems

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ever since he started writing. His early works, though praiseworthy in their intentions, failed to overcome the difficulties which beset the realistic South African writer. In "Song of the City", there were some excellent touches of realism in the presentation of the African characters, but the European characters were most unnatural and there was almost no attempt to fit the two sets of characters into a single plot.

"Mine Boy" was also a failure in its presentation of European characters and their relationships with non-Europeans. Mr. Abrahams' two latest works, "Wild Conquest" and "The Path of Thunder" achieve a larger measure of success. "Wild Conquest" is a historical novel, dealing with the period when white and black South Africa were still to some extent separate. The problems presented by this period are a great deal less intractable than those presented by contemporary South Africa. The clash of the two pastoral societies of the nineteenth century was a simple process compared with the complexities of our industrial society of today. Mr. Abrahams has made it appear even simpler than it really was, and his history is pretty shaky in places. Like all beginners in the field of historical fiction, he endows some of his characters with a completely incredible ability to foresee the future. Yet he has succeeded in capturing something of the barbaric tragedy of nineteenth-century South Africa.

"The Path of Thunder" is the story of a coloured teacher in a platteland dorp. Isolated from the backward and uneducated coloured community, he falls in love with a white girl, and tragedy results. The story is, in parts, melodramatic and improbable and Mr. Abrahams has not altogether avoided the pitfalls of facile dramatisation. There is, nevertheless, much of value in the book, especially in its treatment of the difficult relationship between the sophisticated teacher and his uneducated family and friends.

Alan Paton's "Cry the Beloved Country" is a maturer work than any of Peter Abrahams'; it shows a judgement less clouded by emotion. Yet Mr. Paton has not entirely succeeded in portraying the realities of South African Society. He is too much concerned to draw a moral from his story, too pre-occupied with the justification of his own brand of Christian liberalism. The result is that his plot and characters are not entirely true to life.

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A third writer who deserves mention at this point is Phyllis Altman. In "Law of the Vultures", she shows a keen awareness, not only of existing racial problems, but also of the political consequences which arise from them. The ideas which she wishes to convey are valid and important. Unfortunately her technical skill as a writer is not yet equal to the tasks which she sets herself. Her characterisation is weak; the central character of the book, Thacle, seems to become a completely different person halfway through the book. While his experiences account for his changed attitude towards the Europeans, they do not explain how the self-effacing nonentity of the earlier chapters becomes the dynamic, successful demagogue of the later part. The remaining characters are flat and monochromatic. Most of the book lacks atmosphere and richness of detail. This leaves one with the impression that one has read a social worker's case book rather than a novel. Nevertheless, Mrs. Altman has undoubtedly won herself a place among our worthwhile writers and that place will become more important as she gains experience.

What South Africa still awaits, then, is a writer who will see our society clearly and whole, with feeling for its tragedy but without muddled emotion, with a positive philosophy of his own but without moralising. Though we have not yet produced such a writer, the best of our literature seems to be moving towards this ideal. South Africa has all the raw material for great literature. Perhaps it will not be long before a craftsman worthy of the material will appear.

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PROBLEMS OF TRADE UNIONISM IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Recently a prominent English Trade Union official visited this country. After a lengthy and apparently exhaustive investigation of the Trade Union Movement here, he came to the conclusion that there was no such thing in South Africa as a "real" trade union movement!

This devastating comment may cause offence to some South Africans, who have been members of and have spent many years in the work of the Trade Unions. But an objective comparison of the character of the South African Trade Union Movement with the basic precepts and motives of Trade Unionism must convince one of the correctness of the conclusions of our foreign visitor.

What are the basic motives, purposes and principles of Trade Unionism?

The Trade Union Movement is the organisation of the working class which in the circumstances of the existing social order serves as the means of furthering and protecting the interests of the workers. In as much as the social order of things conflicts with the interests of the workers, the purpose of the Trade Union Movement is to change this order of things so that it may be in conformity with the historic interests of the class it represents. Two vital principles follow from this. Firstly, it is imperative that the Trade Union Movement be consistent in its defence of workers' rights and interests. It must never cease to play the role of "advocate of the workers", and it must boldly and fearlessly proclaim the paramount importance of those who work and who produce the wealth of society. Secondly, in endeavouring to achieve its purpose the Movement must develop and maintain the maximum unity of all workers.

In South Africa these basic principles, essential to a successful Trade Union Movement, are lacking. This criticism applies to all sections of the Movement, both European and non-European.

The main and most obvious failing of the Trade Unions in South Africa is the disunity of the workers. This is reflected not only in the almost complete exclusion of the African workers from the major established trade unions, but in such equally tragic phenomena as "parallel" branches for

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coloured or Indian workers. With some rare exceptions there is no point of contact between European and non-European workers. Even the more "liberal" white workers' leaders and organisations will not go beyond advocating that the wages and conditions of non-European workers must be "uplifted". Very rare, indeed, is the case where European and non-European workers act and work together in the joint defence of their common rights and interests. The effect of this disunity on the living and working conditions of the people of South Africa is too obvious to need mentioning. Thus the South African Trade Union scene shows an almost complete negation of the basic principle of workers' unity.

It might be argued that the failure to secure workers unity in the Trade Unions is the result of imperialist conditions, the consequence of deliberate and persistent racialist propaganda by the ruling class and the influence of apartheid policies of the Government. But that is at best only a lame excuse. The real cause of the disunity is the lack of a clear-sighted policy designed to protect the interests of all workers first and foremost. This lack of a clear policy leads white trade union leaders even to ignore and to sacrifice the basic interests of their own white members.

A clear example of this is the manner in which European Trade Union leaders fence themselves off from the realities of the worker's life under the slogan of "no politics". Step by step this slogan has led them to sacrifice basic rights and liberties of their members. In fact, many of them have now reached the stage where any criticism of the Government is regarded as "politics" and in consequence they now limp along in the wake of the political parties. It is the political parties of the ruling class who now dictate the policies of many of the European trade unions. It is not a very far cry from this to the position where the trade unions become an adjunct of the State. The slogan of "no politics" means the refusal of independence to the Trade Union Movement.

South African trade union leaders have gone a long way in sacrificing the independence of the Movement. This was revealed in the support given by a great many trade union leaders to the incentive bonus ideas of Labour Minister Schoeman. An outstanding and the most disgusting example

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was the readiness with which some trade union leaders connived at the proposal to establish some form of "Craftsmen's Committee" for the purpose of screening alleged communists under the Suppression of Communism Act. A large group of trade unions took part in discussions for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the Nationalist Industrial Legislation Commission, a body whose undisguised object was to carry into effect the anti-trade union labour programme of the Nationalist Party. Of equal significance is the readiness with which trade union leaders are inclined to support the Korea war adventure and the preparations for another world war. All these things are dangerous pointers to the path taken by South African Trade Union leaders, a path which must lead the Movement to destructions if the members of the trade unions are not awakened to the fatal consequences of these policies.

The above criticisms apply mainly to the so-called European Trade Unions. In their case, these weaknesses arise from the white workers' temporary privilege of sharing in the exploitation of the non-European workers and their lack of clear vision of their own fundamental and ultimate interests.

But the African or non-European Trade Unions also display failings in elementary policies. This does not refer to the "racketeering" of some African trade union leaders, a phenomenon caused by ignorance of the workers, lack of experience in administrative work and the abject poverty and insecurity of African trade union leaders. Of far greater significance is the dangerous trend of isolation of the African trade unions from the national liberation movement, the emphasis on the futile slogan of "no politics" and the almost exclusive concentration on so-called economic issues. Many African trade unionists have as yet not realised that there can be no economic advance for their members and no protection for the standards achieved through the present very limited methods of negotiation without political and civil rights. The main weakness of the African trade unions, indeed, is the immense lack of freedom and rights of their members and of their organisations.

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What then -- to quote the title of a book of no mean tonical significance for South Africa -- is to be done?

In the first place it becomes necessary to raise fearlessly and without hesitation the vital issues facing the workers of South Africa today. It is necessary -- even in the face of opposition, insults and abuse -- to start discussions at trade union conferences, general meetings, executive meetings on all aspects of the workers' struggle. It is necessary to put forward in these discussions, clearly and unequivocally, the view that no section of workers can expect ~~any~~ progress unless all workers enjoy the fullest democratic rights. It is necessary to liberate the trade union movement from subservience to Government and employers' policies. It is necessary to bring the Trade Union Movement actively into the struggle of the people for full democracy.

All constitutional avenues open in the trade unions must be utilised for this purpose. Study Classes should be organised, wherever possible. Articles in trade union journals, analyses of the day to day issues from the angle of the real workers' interests, should be written. The columns of the press, even the reactionary dailies, should be utilised through letters to the Editor, press statements, interviews.

A free, independent and vigorous Trade Union Movement, fighting uncompromisingly for the workers' interests, will be an invaluable weapon in the struggle for liberation.

THE NON-EUROPEANS ON THE LAND.

By Z. SANDERS.

In 1946 there were about six million non-European people engaged in agricultural pursuits. Of these three and a quarter million lived in the Reserves and two and a quarter million on European farms.

The people on the Reserves cannot make a living by farming alone. In the 1913 Land Act a principle was laid down fundamental to South African economy ever since. Non-Europeans may buy land in certain areas known as Native Reserves. They may not buy land elsewhere in the Union. Certain areas were set aside (ten and a half million morgen altogether - i.e. 7.3 per cent. of the total land of the Union). In the individual provinces the percentage distribution was: Natal, 28 per cent. of the total area of the Province; Cape, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; Transvaal, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; Orange-Free State, 5 per cent. The lands were practically all of extremely poor fertility, except for the Western Transkei and Pondoland. Some parts in the Northern Cape and Northern Transvaal are permanently drought-stricken. According to the 1911 census, non-Europeans numbered 78 per cent. of the total population. They were given the privilege of acquiring land in 7.3 per cent. of the country. In 1936 a further Land Act earmarked seven and a quarter million morgen more to be purchased over ten years by the Native Trust and to be added to Reserve land. By 1948, four million morgen of these lands had been bought. When the total extra morgen have been bought there will be seventeen and three quarter million morgen available for non-European ownership - 12.4 per cent. of the total area of the Union.

In unsurveyed areas (the greater percentage of the land), land tenure rights stem from Governor-General to the chief to the individual tribesman. The latter will cultivate his plot with his family for many generations. Although tenure is only terminated under exceptional circumstances, unless the family immigrates it forfeits its holdings. Thus the ownership is incomplete. Many reserve men do not feel that they own their land, and that it is still Crown land. Land belongs to the white man, they say.

In surveyed areas (originally applied to the Glen Grey Area) - the principle of one man one lot is applied - the dweller holds his land in perpetual quitrent from the Government. The holdings are inheritable. They may be sold only to/.....

to another tribesman. Individual Smallholdings are the practice only in a few areas - the Ciskei and parts of the Transkei.

All grazing lands in the Reserves are communal.

In the Reserves, then, the Africans may buy and own land, but the picture of individual holdings and small farmers - on the lines of the countryside of Europe - needs considerable modification. In very rare cases do the conditions of Reserve farmers correspond with those of a peasant in Europe.

In 1946, a Government agriculturist described the Glen Grey area in the Ciskei as follows: of eighteen thousand families, ten thousand possessed no arable land, but merely a residential plot and access to the communal grazing land. The average family income was four shillings a month, derived from seven sheep, three goats, one ox and one calf. Eight thousand families owned arable land, but their average income from produce was an additional three shillings a month (giving a total of seven shillings). "We conclude then that the income of the group of families with arable allotments is seven shillings per month, and the income of a larger group without land is four shillings per month".

I quote from the Gillmans' book - "Perspectives in Malnutrition". "It is erroneous to regard a Native Reserve as an agricultural area. It would be more accurate to speak of it as a well-spread out residential area where the average family unit makes no more out of his land than the average city dweller pottering around in backyard gardens.

"Obviously no family can live on four shillings or seven shillings a month for it needs food, building materials, blankets and clothes, fuel and light, school books, church dues, medicines, etc. Hence we find seventy per cent. of the men are absent from the district working on the mines or in other labour centres, remitting to their hard-pressed families in the Reserves such share of their small wages as they can spare. Even boys are sent out to work in the towns. Three-quarters of the children of school-going age never attend school and most of those who do attend are girls."

Thus more than half the people have no land, and even of those who have, there is insufficient for subsistence. Very

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rarely are there any surplus commodities to exchange for cash. The migrant labourer is no mere accidental occurrence in a peasant family; he is an essential part of the social and economic structure of the Reserves. Without his wages the people cannot live. So even in this group, when a form apparently amounting to land ownership exists, the family cannot live by agriculture alone. This is an important difference between the rural African and the European peasant.

Let us now examine the conditions of the two and a half million non-Europeans living on European-owned farms.

In each district and in each Province there are certain local differences, some of which we will mention.

In the Cape Province there are Coloured and African people on the farms; there are none who own land outside of the Reserves. A few individuals are tenants on European farms - a situation which is legal in the Cape, as long as the rent is more than thirty six pounds per annum; a few labour tenants are found near Bathurst, renting their land and paying with their part-time labour. However, the great majority of non-Europeans living in the Cape rural areas outside the Reserves are full-time wage labourers. The head of the family works for the farmer and in return for his services receives:

1. a cash wage of ten shillings to fifteen shillings per month per adult male.
2. rations -- mealies, coffee, sugar and skimmed milk;
3. a small plot of land whereon to build his home, also limited grazing rights and a small garden.

Families regularly live with the wage-earner and the wife and children often serve the same master.

In Natal the people concerned are Indians and Africans. The majority, unlike those in the Cape, are part-time labour tenants working usually for about six months, and receiving in turn a plot of land (say five acres), rations (variable) and cash wages varying from nothing to about ten shillings per month. The full-time agricultural labourer is gaining ground in Natal, however. He is found particularly on sugar plantations on the coastal belt, but is appearing more and more

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in other parts of the Province. He will usually live in a compound and be supplied with rations and paid wages. His family he has left in the Reserves, and he will help them out with part of his earnings.

At the present, full-time labour is practically universal in the Orange Free State too. Living with his family on a corner of the European farm, the labourer works all year for the farmer. He has a herd and limited grazing rights for his family. Rations may help him to subsist but usually these are for working members of the family only. Wages are extremely low, the maximum being one pound per month for adult males. Sometimes the employer pays the polltax, or he may give his labourer leave to earn cash in town.

In the Transvaal labour tenants are probably still in the majority, working ninety to one hundred and eighty days in the year for the farmer. They will usually receive no wages but earn the right to live with their families in a kraal on the main farm. A few squatters are still found in some parts helping the farmer with his harvest, but often with no fixed contracts and working their small piece of land for themselves. The full-time wage labourer, as in Natal, is a group that is growing in numbers more and more in the Transvaal, and the compound is becoming the rule in some areas.

In the Cape and the Orange Free State the full-time agricultural labourer is thus the largest group, living on the farm with his family with only a token wage. In Natal and the Transvaal, part-time labour tenants are still common, but are giving way to the full-time labourer; there is still the further development - the man who lives in a compound, works for wages and subsidizes his family in the Reserves.

The trend in all Provinces is thus towards the disappearance of the labour tenant and to the emergence of a rural proletariat on the farms.

The African is driven out of the Reserves by poverty and the necessity to pay his taxes; he is prevented from going to the town by legislation. He has no choice but to offer his labour to the European farmer or go to the mines. His plight is such that he must take what he can get, his bargaining power being slight. Being unorganised, he can offer no resistance to the demands of the farmer, and he is accordingly used in the way most suited to the needs of his employer, and to the

advancing needs of capitalist agriculture.

We find among rural Africans an overall picture of poverty, malnutrition and disease that is difficult to imagine without direct experience. A countryman is traditionally healthy, robust, with a diet full of fresh fruit, meat and dairy produce. The African on the farm lives on mealmeal, often bought from the store, because he can not grow enough on his land. He eats practically nothing else besides a few shrubs and an occasional potato. The babies get malnutrition diseases in the most severe forms; adults die of Tuberculosis; the infant mortality rate (an excellent index of standard of living and hygiene) is one of the highest in the world.

It is a serious mistake to consider the African on the farm loosely as happy in his state and better off than in the towns. He is not this; he belongs to one of the most depressed populations in the world.

Education is minimal and inferior. Clothes he cannot afford. Medical attention he does without. Cultural advancement is practically impossible. Small wonder he escapes to the towns whenever he can.

The rural labourer is an impoverished group; but more than that, he is prevented from improving himself. As has been said, there is no escape for him - either back to the Reserves, where poverty is even more profound, or to the towns where he is forbidden to go. The rural labourer is truly in chains.

In South Africa, one of the starting points of Native policy is that farmers will not and or cannot pay their labourers a wage that will compete with that paid in industries, since in many cases European farming methods are uneconomic. So while there is a natural movement to the towns, legislation, regulations and restrictions are imposed to prevent this flow. The numerous Acts and Amendments demonstrate clearly that these laws have not been found easy to apply. They are designed to maintain a static framework in a dynamic social and economic situation - an impossible task. The African evades the net-work of regulation and policy wherever he can; he leaves the farm and finds his way to the towns somehow to seek higher wages.

There can be no solution for the intolerable difficulties of the non-European rural population - the majority of the population - within the framework of the existing colour-caste structure of South African Society. For this reason, the content of the national liberation of the non-white peoples of South Africa must very largely be one of land reform. The discussion of the shape that reform must take is an urgent task of the liberation movement - not as an academic exercise, but as a vitally necessary means of evolving a programme which will mobilise the rural population for their own emancipation.

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■ L I B E R A T I O N ■

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