

1. The South African elections of 1953, long awaited with a certain amount of concern both inside and outside a country whose affairs have attracted world-wide attention in recent years, have come and gone. All that remains to be done is the post-mortem. This is no mere figure of speech, for we are concerned here not with the pastime in which political analysts are wont to indulge in after every general election, but with the more serious business of attempting to discover, if we can, what has been responsible for the death of hopes entertained by many with regard to the future of the South African body politic, and to assess, in so far as that can be done by the light of past experience, what the results of this election are likely to be not only for the twelve and one-half million inhabitants of that 'mistaken land', as it has been described, but also for the rest of the African continent, if not the world as a whole.
2. Ironically enough, the first point that emerges is the fact that the Nationalist Party of Prime Minister Daniel P. Malan owes its victory among other things to be mentioned later, to the South African constitution which in recent years often been referred to by leading members of that Party as 'the dead hand of the past' which should not be permitted to stand in the way of the achievement of white supremacy as interpreted by the Nationalist Party. It is by virtue of that constitution that the rural vote on which the Nationalist Party has so largely depended for their success has a higher value placed upon it than the urban vote, with the result that 94 seats have gone to the Nationalists as against 61 to the Opposition parties, although the latter received over a 100,000 votes more than the former. Furthermore it is in terms of the South African constitution that the vast majority of the inhabitants of that country---the 10,000,000 non-whites, except for a negligible number of Colored voters---had no share in electing the legislators in whose hands their destiny will be for years to come. It is because the Supreme Court of South Africa has had the effrontery to remind the legislators of Nationalist persuasion that the South African constitution embodied solemn undertakings and fundamental principles of government no less worthy of respect by the Legislature in 1953 than in 1910 that it has incurred the wrath of the Nationalists and is likely in the not too distant future to be deprived of its rôle as the protector of the constitutional rights, such as they are, of South African nationals, both black and white. What-

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Whatever the fate in store for it in the years that lie ahead might be. Perhaps we might be permitted to say in passing that the stand which has been taken by the Supreme Court of South Africa in recent years in an atmosphere far from conducive to calm reflection and independent judgment will go down in history as in keeping with the highest traditions of ~~that bulwark of civil~~ ^{that bulwark of civil} liberties--the independent judiciary.

The Nationalist victory in South Africa is instructive for another reason. Serious students of the recent trends in South African politics realised ~~that~~ before and during the campaign that to all intents and purposes there was only one party in the race. The United Party led by J.G.N. Strauss, the only group which could have formed an alternative government forfeited its right to that position by its consistent and apparently preconceived plan of playing the sedulous ape to the Nationalists. Having no clear-cut policy of its own on the major issue before the electors as adumbrated by the Nationalists, ~~namely~~, ^{namely} the issue of white supremacy, it apparently ^{based} its hopes on persuading the electorate that the United Party should be put into power to carry out the policy of the Nationalist Party! Obviously there are limits to the gullibility of even the South African electorate, and the increased number of votes cast in favour of the Nationalists in this election as compared with 1948 --- a reported increase of 150,000 for the Nationalists as against an increase of 60,000 for the United Party and the Labor Party--was clearly a somewhat forcible reminder to the United Party that even in politics ~~putting all one's cards~~ ^{putting all one's cards} on the table is the best policy. As a result of its showing in this election and its record especially in the last Parliamentary session the future of the United Party appears to be in doubt. Already, a leading member of the Party, Senator G. Heaton Nicholls of Natal, a State which showed its strenuous opposition to the Nationalist by returning a full United Party slate, is reported to have resigned from the Party in disgust over the kid glove methods used in fighting the Malanites. Complaints about the leadership of J.G.N. Strauss who succeeded Field-Marshal Jan C. Smuts as head of the United Party are being voiced in many quarters. The search for scapegoats is however likely to be fruitless. The fact of the matter is that the coalition which took place in 1933 when the South African Party under General Jan C. Smuts joined together with the old Nationalist Party under General J.B.M. Hertzog to form the present United Party was a marriage of convenience which was bound to prove unsuccessful, based as it inevitably had to be upon compromises on matters ^{of principle, political and moral.}

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It would probably clear the political ^{air} in South Africa if the Nationalist-minded members of the United Party were to return to the ideological fold to which they have never ceased to belong and the remaining members, if any, were to constitute a kind of purified United Party with a policy and a platform radically different from that of the Nationalists. Such a party would almost certainly have to battle against fearful odds in a country which some want to dedicate to the proposition that 'all men are created unequal', but properly led and with a broadly based programme resting upon principle rather than expediency, taking into account the legitimate interests of all sections of the population such a genuinely South African party might in time provide a rallying ground for all those who are sick and tired of the sectional and racist policies which have already brought the country to the brink of disaster. The fact that even in this election more votes were cast against than for the Nationalists, the reported intention of Alan Paton and others to form a Liberal Party, the increasing concern shown by certain sections of the Christian church leaders---all these are signs which point to the fact that there is a real basis for the emergence of a Party which might set ^{the ship of state} ~~the ship of state~~ of this fair land upon a different course. But the sands of time are running out and those who believe in peaceful and harmonious relations between the peoples of South Africa will have to bear in mind the saying of Burke that 'evil will continue to triumph in the world until good men decide to do something about it.'

The most serious question arising from this election relates to the fate of the ten million non-white inhabitants of South Africa. One could hardly be termed an alarmist for suggesting that the prospects for them are full of foreboding. No less a person than Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan said in opening his campaign that there was only one issue in it--the color question. In other words, although the non-whites took no part in the election, they represented the only real opposition against whom the campaign was conducted. However paradoxical it might appear, the Nationalists have recognised throughout that the only effective opposition confronting them is provided by the voteless and defenceless non-whites whose ~~relentless~~ ^{relentless} opposition to the policy of apartheid has found its most determined expression in the peaceful non-violent resistance campaign launched by the African National Congress supported by the ~~Indian National Congress~~ South African Indian Congress last year and with which so far a few white South Africans have identified themselves. The Union Government has done the campaign the honour of making

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it the pretext for asking the Legislature to vest it with virtually dictatorial powers to be ~~exercised~~ ^{exercised} whenever and against whomsoever it pleases. As the Bishop of Johannesburg has observed, ^{by} the recent legislation relating to Public Safety and the amendment to the Criminal Law, "the state ~~is~~ assuming powers that belong properly to God alone". He went on to say

"We find it difficult to avoid the conclusion that the state is in process of becoming a king of god before which the citizen will eventually stand stripped and helpless".

If that is the feeling of leading white 'citizens', what are the prospects for the non-whites who are not 'citizens' in the next five years? Does this mean the triumph of the mailed fist and the jack-boot? Does this mean the go-ahead signal for trigger-happy policemen or the return of the good old days once nostalgically referred to by someone as a time when the boss could give the servant '25 of the best' every time he did wrong without being called upon to count them or to account for his actions to any higher authority than his own ^{somewhat ~~reverted~~} sense of justice? Only the future will tell, but let no one be under any illusions. The Nationalists are in a serious mood, and they will not hesitate to clamp down on any resistance to their apartheid policy. Does this mean that resistance to the racial discrimination which they have elevated to the level of a divine injunction is going to collapse? The history of the struggle for liberation by other peoples, including the Afrikaners themselves, seems to suggest that the submission of a populace to subjection by force depends upon the extent to which the advantages of submission appear to be greater than the disadvantages of opposition. There is nothing to suggest that apartheid can be made any more attractive in the future than it has been in the past. On the contrary, the recent reaction of the Union Government to the Supreme Court decision on the question of "separate but equal" railroad facilities, to mention only one instance, has served to remove the last vestiges of any fig-leaf with which the nakedness of the policy might have been hidden. The 'something better' to come with which ~~its~~ ^{all} advocates have tried to coat the apartheid has dissolved into nothing. By no stretch of even Nationalist imagination can 'separate and unequal', the doctrine which the laws are to be amended to guarantee, be described as 'something better'. It can be expected therefore that non-white opposition to the racist policies will continue unabated, since as the TIMES has put it "human beings will not endure injustice and the loss of freedom interminably". The rest of the continent and indeed of the world will watch the unfolding of future events in South Africa in the certain knowledge that nothing is ever settled until it is settled right.