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CIVIL RIGHTS



News Letter

(Box 3807, Cape Town)

August, 1958

Put this in your diary!

We plan to hold our Annual General Meeting this year on Thursday, October 9 in the Metropolitan Methodist Hall at 8 p.m. The speaker is to be His Grace the Archbishop of Cape Town (subject to be announced later). We need hardly tell you to come and bring your friends!

Subscriptions

We thank those of our members who have responded to last month's sub. reminder, and apologise to those who may have had to wait for receipts. Our Treasurer is preparing our accounts for the Auditor and needs the receipt book: so excuse any delay!

Group Areas Act is unChristian

Alan Paton, writing in "Contact", points out that the Group Areas proposals in Durban mean the removal of 100,000 people to areas remote from the city - 60,000 of them Indians. "We white Christians," he says, "corrupted by the doctrines of race separation, are letting the great values of love and justice go by the board ... We... urge moderation in all things, even in justice. ... We Christian laymen have been conspicuously silent in our opposition to the Group Areas Act."

Mr Paton feels that Sabra (which he admires for its decision to make its voice heard and to meet non-white leaders) should "be more forthright and vocal in the defence of their fellow South Africans who suffer, daily and pitifully, under the apartheid laws. Is it nothing to them that 60,000 Indians will lose their homes?"

It is interesting to note that Professor Sadie, speaking in Cape Town recently on "The Economics of Separate Development", said in answer to a question that "no one really knew" what would happen to the Indians under the Sabra plan. He said that South Africans (white, presumably) did not regard Indians as "of the soil" - but added, significantly, that they would have to do eventually! If that is so, is it not making things more difficult to encourage the "total apartheid" idea?

And in Cape Town ...?

We would strongly urge all our readers to get and study the

invaluable pamphlet on "Group Areas in Cape Town" prepared for the Institute of Race Relations recently by Miss Muriel Horrall. It is well furnished with maps showing the proposals to date and their implications are most lucidly set forth. Space precludes our giving more than a few salient points, but we hope these will make our readers seek fuller information. For instance:-

- (1) The whole Table Mountain area from Three Anchor Bay to Bakoven and the mountain suburbs of Tamboers Kloof, Oranjezicht and Gardens has been declared "white". This means that by July, 1959 large numbers of Coloured and Malay people will have to move out.
- (2) The Schotsche Kloof area on Signal Hill has been declared "Malay". This affects mainly "Christian" Coloured people, but a few whites and a number of Indians also. The area is in any case already much overcrowded and cannot accommodate all its Malays.
- (3) Woodstock-Salt River has been proclaimed white. Miss Horrall says: "Relations between neighbours of different racial groups have, on the whole, been very friendly in the past in Woodstock... But the Group Areas Act is destroying all this... White speculators are hoping to make money out of the misfortunes of those who will be required to move... People who "pass" as whites are hoping to convince the authorities that their associates are entirely white, and are thus unwilling to acknowledge Coloured relatives or friends. Coloured people are extremely resentful and bitter." The same thing is happening in the Maitland area.
- (4) Windermere has been declared part of a Coloured area, but at present it is largely occupied by African squatters in unspeakably bad conditions. Miss Horrall calls it "perhaps the most evil slum in South Africa".
- (5) In the Goodwood-Parow area, proclaimed white as from 1963, there are nine large Coloured schools. Perhaps about 10,000 Coloured people will eventually have to move.
- (6) Cravenby, a proclaimed Indian area, is largely undeveloped, and if Indian traders from other areas have to move there they will not be able to survive on the available trade.
- (7) Rylands, a proclaimed Indian area, has Coloured and African people who will have to move. Here also there will be inadequate scope for the Indian traders from other areas.
- (8) Langa, which has about 20,000 Africans, is eventually planned as a Coloured area. No more family dwellings for Africans are allowed. Even now there are no houses to cater for the professional and middle-class type of African.

(9) Nyanga, the only place further building for Africans is allowed, is about seventeen miles out of town even by the most direct route. Miss Horrall calls it "an extraordinarily unprepossessing area". It is sandy in summer and swampy in winter. So far only very rudimentary site-and-service schemes have been provided in the emergency squatting area, though more permanent structures are planned for the future (but again with the idea of ultimate conversion for Coloured people). Transport to Cape Town via Langa costs £2.12s. a month. () No zones have yet been proclaimed in the Southern Suburbs, and it is difficult to see how this can be done satisfactorily.

Miss Horrall says: "Coloured people and Asians are seriously perturbed about the likely effects of the proclamations. Before they were gazetted there was already a shortage of about 12,000 dwellings for Coloured people in the Cape Town municipal area alone.

"Large numbers of the affected Coloured properties are on very small plots, and two or three of these may have to be amalgamated to form a plot large enough, in terms of municipal byelaws, for white family dwelling. The Coloured owners may, thus, receive very low offers for their properties.

"Coloured people now living at places like Woodstock, Maitland, Brooklyn and Goodwood are to be required to move further out of town. It is already a desperate struggle for many of them to make ends meet, but now their transport costs will rise.

"As is the case in practically every other town in the Union, though, it is the Indians who will be worst affected. Those in the Peninsula are mostly very small traders, dealing mainly with Coloured people. A very large proportion indeed of them will certainly be ruined if they are all forced to move to Rylands or Cravenby."

No wonder Alan Paton says: "Destiny has brought us all together, and confronted us with the tremendous problem of overcoming our racial fears and hates, and of building a new society where every man, woman and child can look forward to a life of purpose and freedom."

Special Criminal Courts Amendment Bill

The "Cape Times" points out that this is the third amendment to the law that the Minister of Justice has introduced during the proceedings connected with the treason trial. The first was to make it possible for the hearing to proceed in the absence of the accused; the second to relax the strict rules which formerly applied to the substantiation of documentary evidence produced in court. This latest

amendment is to permit the constitution of a special court not (as previously) because the Attorney-General considers that the ends of justice would not be secured if the accused were tried by jury, but simply because the Minister considers it "in the interests of justice". The Court was in fact set up before the amendment was even brought before Parliament. The "Natal Witness" comments: "Mr Swart and his colleagues might almost seem to be bent on establishing by their practice two dangerously anti-social propositions: one, that governments need not trouble to act righteously... the other that whatever a government does must be legal because it can always make legal retrospectively whatever may be illegal at the time when a government chooses to do it."

Should taxation be colour-blind?

In the recent budget, Mr Naudé increased the general tax on Africans by 75% (from £1 to £1.15s. p.a.), and also extended it to African women for the first time - this, allegedly, to pay for African education!

The Institute of Race Relations points out that for Africans in the lowest income groups this rate is higher than is the rate of personal taxation anywhere in the Union (except for unmarried persons in Natal). Nor will African women become exempt on marriage, as do other married women. African single and married men must pay the same. Moreover, the African must pay between the ages of 18 and 65, whereas others pay between 21 and 60!

The "Star" comments: "The only fair method would be to place the Native taxpayer exactly on the same footing as the European, making him pay no less and no more."

The Minister's airy contention that the Africans' standard living has risen steadily during the last twenty-five years and that he can therefore afford to pay more is contradicted by successive surveys by economists and sociologists which (says "Contact") have demonstrated conclusively that African wages have not kept pace with the increase in the cost of living, and that the real wages of the African people have fallen over the last fifteen years.

Tailpiece

"Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freedom of speech - a thing terrible to public traitors.

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."