

CIVIL RIGHTS



News Letter

(Box 3807, Cape Town)

October, 1958

Our Annual General Meeting

We know our members will share our disappointment that His Grace the Archbishop has not, after all, found it possible to address us this year. We are, however, very glad to announce that our old friend and ex-chairman, Mr Leo Marquard, recently returned from an overseas trip, has agreed to speak on "Civil Liberty at home and abroad". This will be a very worth-while evening - bring your friends! Note place and time - Metropolitan Methodist Hall, 8 p.m., October 9. A will be served!

Municipal Autonomy and Responsibility

We applaud the stand taken by Councillor Henikman at the protest meeting organised by the Black Sash on the proposed application of job reservation to the City's traffic, fire and ambulance services. "It is time", he said, "that we take a stand against this interference with the right of the municipality to provide as many avenues of employment for as many of its citizens as it can." Not even the Minister has alleged that the employment of non-whites in these departments endangers the employment of whites. We can understand the bitterness of Councillor Deane in speaking of the growing contempt of non-whites for whites who need protection in their jobs. "We feel", he said, "that this is simply meant to ensure that, if unemployment comes, the white men will have jobs and we will not." Whether or not this is the intention of such a proposal, there is no doubt that this would be its practical effect. We hope most sincerely that the Government will not adopt a proposal that would cause so much misery, frustration and resentment - one which Mr Henikman rightly called inhuman, undemocratic and unchristian.

Financial Authoritarianism

At a Council debate on the Boulevard East scheme recently Major Berman pointed out that the Administrator had refused to approve the City's 1959 capital estimates for road works until agreement about the Boulevard had been reached, and that this could mean hundreds of council employoes being thrown out of work. Councillors felt that the Provincial Executive should not be able to dictate to the City by holding up its expenditure. Councillor Kellner said: "I do not think (the Administrator's) decision is legally competent. Certainly it is morally indefensible, and I do not think the Council should be

intimidated by threats. It is clear that the duty devolves on the Council to ensure that those whose houses are threatened by the routing of Boulevard East should be protected."

Other Councillors declared that the purpose of the Boulevard scheme was to implement the Group Areas Act.

We recognise that other interests such as the Foreshore Board, the Railways and the National Road Transportation Board are involved and that there may be some weight in the argument that the Council should not draw back unilaterally from an agreement made eleven years ago with these bodies. But surely the Administrator could be asked to find a solution which will ensure that adequate alternative accommodation can be found for those citizens of Woodstock whose homes are affected by the Boulevard's proposed route.

Meanwhile we are pleased to note that the Administrator has said he does not want to "take drastic steps", and that he is "working for and toward co-operation with the City Council"!

Responsible to whom?

At the conference of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs recently held at Kuizenberg the retiring Chairman, Mr Viljoen, said that the vast majority of non-European residents in urban areas "submit to the multiplicity of laws and regulations and the many restrictions imposed on them only with rancour. Most of our well-intentioned efforts", he said, "are regarded with suspicion." He made a plea for Native Administrators to act in such a way as to win the co-operation of the people for whom they were responsible.

Policy regarding all Native Affairs, said Mr Viljoen, was laid down by the central government. Local authorities exercised control over Native affairs within the areas of their jurisdiction only in their capacity of agents, as it were, of the central executive (officials ours).

Of course it is not very long since Dr Verwoerd told us that local authorities were instruments for carrying out the policy of the Native Affairs Department! What are we coming to? We might well ask, "When is a citizen not a citizen?" Presumably the answer would be, "When he is an African" (although Dr Verwoerd would not call him that!). This is a pernicious and quite undemocratic doctrine. A local authority is elected by its citizens, not appointed by a government department; it is responsible to its citizens; it is understood to rule in accordance with their wishes - not with those of a government department a thousand miles away!

Urban Bantu Authorities?

It is certainly a sign of progress that the deputy-manager of Non-European Affairs in Johannesburg should suggest that urban Africans be given "a large measure of executive responsibility for the administration of their own affairs in their own areas". That is highly desirable where there are African townships. But we do not see why the Director of Non-European Affairs in Pretoria should "not see the European electorate tolerating" the integration of the African in municipal administration. Why not? Until the advent of intensive apartheid, such an idea would have been accepted as a matter of course.

One speaker at the conference did tentatively suggest, inter alia, the granting to Africans of indirect or direct representation on city councils; but he hastened to add that "the concession of wider powers did not accord with the broad national policy".

Not only the Nats ...

In June of this year the Natal Provincial Council placed a ban on the "Natal Witness" attending its sessions as a result of the publication by that paper of leading articles criticising the Council's attitude on the question of teachers' protests about their salary scales.

The ban was maintained for two months. When it was lifted the "Cape Argus" commented: "So ends a prohibition that should not have been imposed."

More recently the "Friend" was excluded from a conference of the Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurbond for reporting a speech by a Mr J. J. Broekman in which he virtually urged Afrikaners to withdraw their money from non-Afrikaner building societies and put it into Afrikaans ones so as to place "Afrikaans economy" on a sound footing". (In this instance the speaker did, during his speech, ask not to be reported.)

Surely such reticence suggests a guilty conscience!

"Coloured" Education

Writing recently in "Contact" about the proposal to transfer all coloured education to the Coloured Affairs Department, a teacher said: "The education of coloured children will be in the hands of people whose principal task will be the control and recruitment of labour, the application of the Group Areas Act and

the system of mission reserves, the special taxation of coloured persons, and the permit system in trading, marriage and travelling licences.

"Many regulations applying to coloured teachers do not apply to white teachers. For example, when an inquiry is held into alleged misconduct by a coloured teacher, the all-white Education Department may be legally represented by a pro forma prosecutor, but the teacher will be unrepresented. This is contrary to accepted legal procedure and makes a mockery of democratic principles."

Minority report on separate "universities"

We hope - although not very optimistically - that the postponing of the "Extension of University Education Bill" may lead to further consideration of the minority report of the Commission, which was ignored in drafting the Bill. The Institute of Race Relations has expressed its support of this report on the following points, which we heartily endorse:

- a) Its rejection of the financial framework (making the poorest section of the population responsible for financing its own higher education).
- b) Its emphatic recommendation that the new colleges come under the Minister of Education, Arts and Science and not that the African colleges be handed over to the Minister of Native Affairs.
- c) Its proposal that each college be associated with one or more of the existing universities with "their richly diverse traditions".
- d) Its retention of the conscience clause, included in the original, but deleted, for quite unconvincing reasons, in the new Bill.
- e) Its rejection of the principle of ethnic grouping as between non-white groups.

What it isn't ... but what is it?

Mr de Wet Nel, Minister of Education, wants "a more uniform and purposeful planning for education with a definite objective in view. Christian national education should be the basis of all planning and the objective should not merely be academical training."

The Chairman of the Home and School Council in Johannesburg says this policy is "neither Christian, national or educational", and urges that the community "should have the final say in educational matters".

Dr Verwoerd's Definition - "The democracy which we practised in the republics and which we are now practising - that the people who vote rule the country"!