



CIVIL RIGHTS

News Letter

(Box 3807, CAPE TOWN)

November, 1958

This is NEWS!

We are pleased to announce that Professor P. V. Pistorius, Professor of Classics in the University of Pretoria, has done us the honour of agreeing to address our meeting in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the acceptance, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, of the Declaration of Human Rights.

The meeting will be held in the City Hall on the evening of Tuesday, December 9 (the eve of the actual anniversary) at 8.15 p.m.

Those who know of the fearless stand taken by Professor Pistorius, first against the Senate Act and more recently against the proposed application of the Group Areas Act to Indians in Pretoria, will welcome this opportunity of hearing him. Please come - and bring all your interested friends with you. Watch the press for further details.

Freedom of Association

At the request of the Cape Town Committee for Freedom of Association (set up by the Conference on the Native Laws Amendment Act) the League has agreed to take over that Committee's responsibilities in this regard. A special vigilance committee on freedom of association is being set up, to which the bodies which supported the continuation committee will be asked to send representatives.

Autocracy and Press Freedom

The Executive Committee of South West Africa has withdrawn all its advertising from the Territory's only English-speaking newspaper, and also some reporting facilities, because it has allegedly published "incorrect allegations on official activities", on the ground that "it is in the interests of sound administration that officials are not placed under suspicion without founded reasons, or that discipline is not undermined, or that unrest is not caused among officials".

The Editor of the "Advertiser" says he has had no official notification of the publication of incorrect statements or of an intended boycott. He attributes the decision to his "incessant and embarrassing questions to the Administration", and to the fact that he has "not been satisfied to accept the Administration's censored press statements without probing deeper".

We are glad that other Windhoek newspapers are standing by

the "Advertiser", undertaking to pass on to it any news from the Administration, and that the "Allemeine Zeitung" has condemned the Administration's boycott as "an attack on the freedom of the press". The Editor has had "hundreds of messages of encouragement" from people in the Territory, including many from supporters of the Nationalist Party.

Ethical or Political?

Mr de Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, said recently that "the freedom of the Press is one of the cornerstones of our democratic way of life, and he who tampers with this freedom undermines the very foundation of our free existence". At the same time, however, "we are entitled to demand the observance of certain ethical standards by the Press."

We note with pleasure that our own Administrator considers that "the South African Press in general compares very well with the best overseas newspapers", and would suggest that the Press is itself the best guardian of its own ethical standards.

Dr Verwoerd and the Republic

The United Party in the Cape has done South Africa a service by its "uncompromising stand" against a republic imposed by the Nationalists on South Africa - not only because this will clarify the thinking of its own supporters, but because it has elicited an enlightening statement from the Prime Minister. Dr Verwoerd now says that the United Party (and by implication all citizens of South Africa) will "have to be made to experience a republic" if they continue to oppose it.

The Prime Minister is convinced that the clash between "Afrikaner nationalism, based on South Africa first, and English nationalism, based on British imperialism", will fall away if a republic is brought about.

The Prime Minister's analysis of "English nationalism" is of course a completely false one as regards most English-speaking South Africans; but that is of less importance than the question: Are our eleven million non-white citizens also to be "made to experience" a republic against their wills? Or is the republic to await the achievement of complete territorial apartheid?

The Prime Minister takes no account of the increasing number of South Africans who oppose the republic, not on account of "English nationalism", but on two more cogent grounds: first, that we do not

believe a Nationalist-controlled republic would be democratic; and secondly, because we believe that a republic forced on nine-tenths of the population (however admirable it might be in itself) would be both wrong and impracticable. As the "Cape Times" says, Dr Verwoerd's first task is to demonstrate his democracy before he "hurries us into a new kind of Utopia".

Democracy ...?

Dr Verwoerd is rapidly setting up a new record for being mis-
orted (even by his own Press); but so far he does not seem to have denied or amended his statement about the "adequate" majority for proclaiming a republic. He said;

"We have always held that the republic must be founded on the basis of sufficient numbers. But if the false propaganda goes on about the Nationalist Party establishing a dictatorial, totalitarian republic and so misleads people who would otherwise vote for a republic then we shall have to consider fixing how big the numerical majority will have to be to accord with the requirements of our (Nationalist Party) constitution which says that a republic can be established only on the 'broad basis of the people's will'."

The size of the majority would depend on how honourably the battle over the republic was fought.

"If people who would otherwise support a republic are going to vote against it because of false propaganda then the Nationalists would, naturally, assess what majority would be sufficient to represent the true will of the people, realising that there was great hidden support which would re-emerge when it learnt by experience that the republic was a just and democratic one and no threat to public as the false propaganda had made out."

In other words, as the "Cape Times" points out, Dr Verwoerd could ignore even the expression of "the people's will" and set up a republic whether he had a majority (adequate or otherwise) or not!

The Church and Politics

"Die Vaderland" recently quoted Professor Ben Marais as saying that the members of a church had as Christians a duty to participate in politics, but the church itself could never be the henchman of a political party. It could only attack a political ideology when the latter threatened Christian principles.

But at a Jeugbond Congress in the Free State a few days later Rev. P. S. Z. Coetzee, Moderator of the N.G. Kerk Synod in the Free State, urged the Congress to "build" and "not to rest in complacency".

Before an election, general or provincial, he said, he told his congregation from the pulpit which candidates were the right ones to vote for!

Where are they now?

Senator Cowley, representative in the Senate of the Africans in Natal and Zululand, told the Senate of the plight of Africans rendered homeless by legislation which forced them to leave farms. They are not allowed in the cities because of influx control, and under present laws cannot even go to the Reserves. The law insists that if they move from one farm it must be to another farm, and there are not enough farms for them to go to. In desperation, some drift into the towns, where they are raided and arrested.

The Senator mentioned twenty families, turned off a farm near Estcourt, whose people had been living there for eighty years. The Native Commissioner, although sympathetic, could do nothing to help them.

"Ilanga" sees clearly

Referring to the fear of intermarriage between white and black, "Ilanga lase Natal" says that the African people are "dead against it. What our people want", it says, "is partnership with their white fellow men in contributing to the future progress and prosperity of the country. This partnership cannot be achieved while there are still laws aimed at discriminating against Africans purely because they are black ... If a lasting partnership between whites and non-whites in this country is to be built, its foundation must be on a basis of equality so far as human rights and privileges are concerned ..."

What do they mean?

"The future of South Africa lies in the co-operation of whites and non-whites. Legislation for the strengthening of the police force will not help in this regard. Something better than that is necessary" (Mr. A. Mase, Minister of Bantu Education).

Africa is to-day the home of 220,000,000 non-whites. Every day they become more nationally conscious. Account must now be taken of this irrefutable fact... In these circumstances only co-operation between white and non-white can be striven for..."
("Die Transvaler")