

# CIVIL RIGHTS

## CIVIL RIGHTS LEAGUE

PC 16/2/114/39



News Letter

December, 1959

P.O. BOX 3807

### Our Finances

CAPE TOWN

We want to express our sincere thanks to all who have responded to the special circulars sent out last month - some by paying up overdue subscriptions, some by paying in advance for 1960, some by increasing their subscriptions or sending special donations. We know that money is tighter these days, and we do greatly appreciate the loyal and generous support of our members and friends. We hope each of them will take this word of thanks as personal.

Those members who do not manage to attend our annual general meeting may sometimes wonder what we do with the money they send us, and - possibly - why we find our income inadequate to cover running expenses. Our minimum subscription has remained unchanged since 1948, though it is supplemented by those members who can afford to give more. Were it not for them - and for the fact that the League has a small and (alas!) diminishing nest-egg, - we would be hard put to it to carry on at all. The basis of our secretarial expenditure has also remained unchanged: but of course such things as phone calls and postage have increased, and as our mailing list has increased we have found it necessary to "farm out" (also at a cheap rate) the addressing of our envelopes. We have not the organisation to run such fund-raising ventures as book, cake and jumble sales (but if anyone would like to do this for us we shall not refuse). That is why we are completely dependent on our members - and why we thank those who have already helped us, and would remind those who have meant to, but haven't yet got around to it. DO IT NOW IF YOU CAN.

### Justice in Lady Selborne

Our members may remember that in February, 1959 the police in Pretoria broke up a meeting convened by the Women's League of the A.N.C., using considerable violence and injuring a number of women and children. This was done without warning. Five men and four women were arrested, and at their trials all were acquitted. The cost of their defence was considerable. Summonses have now been issued against the Minister of Justice for £21,000 on behalf of 29 of the more seriously affected people. The Lady Selborne Defence and Appeal Fund is now appealing for help to pursue these claims for damages and to pay legal expenses already incurred.

The appeal, which is sponsored by the Bishop of Pretoria and other leading churchmen, says inter alia:

"...dare we allow women to be treated like this anywhere and under any circumstances? If we do, are we not tacitly denying human values and condoning injustice?"

"The tremendous harm and bitterness caused by this one episode can never be repaired. White people who frequently visit Lady Selborne and are accustomed to friendly smiles and waves of welcome were appalled at the silent hostility they found, especially from the children, when they entered the Township after this incident. At least an attempt can be made to gain some compensation for some of those who have been physically and mentally injured.

"The following are typical examples of injuries received:

- (a) A young woman with a six-months-old baby on her back was in the Hall. She was hit on the head by the police, and crushed in the panic. She sustained a fractured ankle among other injuries.
- (b) An elderly blind woman was beaten upon the shoulder, back and buttocks. Her companion who succeeded with difficulty in getting her out of the hall was also hit.
- (c) A grandmother aged 62 who was in the audience was hit on the head and raised her left arm to defend herself. She was hit on this arm and a subsequent X-ray examination showed a fracture.

"... We appreciate the difficulties under which the police often have to work, but this kind of thing cannot be tolerated.

"Remember, by doing nothing, even by sympathising only, we will be thought to be consenting to these evil actions which are being done in the name of the citizens of South Africa."

This appeal needs no strengthening from us. Any who can give should send their donations direct to the Lady Selborne Defence and Appeal Fund, c/o 529 Jacobs Street, Gezina, Pretoria.

#### Mrs Mafekeng

Even the "Burger" has suggested to Mr De Wet Nel that it would be better to make known his reasons for such actions as the banishment of Mrs Mafekeng. We agree wholeheartedly with this view, although, unlike the "Burger", we are not concerned with the effect on the reputation of the Government.

Mrs Mafekeng's husband has summed up the essentials of the situation - and we hope the Prime Minister has noted his entirely justified reaction to the singularly gauche suggestion that "the British Government can have all the Mafekengs":

"People", said Mr Mditane, "are not to be moved around like

cattle. If I am told that I can have a house like this one, and a job which earns me the same money as now, then I would be satisfied. But I must be able to bring up my children...

"What I want is my wife back. We were legally married in church - yet the Government removes her from me and the children without law. ... Why was she not allowed to defend herself before a magistrate or a judge? It is because the Government will not listen to the people that a man was killed last week (in Paarl) and 60 are in gaol."

#### Break-up of African family life

Officials and welfare workers, though unable to give exact figures, estimate that at least 5,000 of the 27,000 African women in the Peninsula have been removed. There are (says the "Argus") 105,000 African men in the Peninsula.

Space does not permit of our giving here the detailed instances of the hardships caused by this policy, which are brought out in a memorandum recently compiled by the Institute of Race Relations. The Institute occasionally succeeds in obtaining permission for such women to remain here, but in most cases they are sent back to the Reserves - whether they have any stable home there or not.

At the same time the Department of Bantu Administration and Development in Pretoria, in reply to a request from the National Council of Women there that a hostel be built for single African women, has stated that "such single females are expected to reside with their parents or relatives", and that the provision of hostels for them would not even be considered.

It has been pointed out that such women include domestic servants, single women with no families in the location, unmarried women who have no one to support them, widows supporting children with grandparents in the country, girls making their way in the world, women seeking work, hospital outpatients and visitors and professional women. Can any of these "reside with their parents or relatives"?

#### More Evictions

The "Graphic" reports that more than 800 Indian families residing in Alexandra Township are expecting to be forced out at any time, as this township is now to be reserved solely for Africans. They must leave by next year, and will receive from the Peri-urban Areas Health Board (to which they must sell) far less compensation for their properties than they deserve. Already many Indian traders have had to close their businesses because their former African customers have been moved to Meadowlands or Diepkloof. Indians must move to Lenasia.

### Indian "Tribal" University

Mr B. J. Vorster, Deputy Minister of Education, made an announcement recently (which seems to have been missed by our local press) that under the Separate Universities Act no Indian student will be admitted to the University of Natal as from 1960 unless he has already attended a university, or has obtained permission to attend from the Department of Education, Arts and Science. The Minister stated that a university for Indians would definitely be established in Durban for 1961. "The University will be staffed entirely by Government-appointed European lecturers, but if we receive applications from Indians with suitable qualifications, then there is no reason why they should not be considered." Examinations will be conducted by the University of South Africa. There will be an all-white Council directing policy, and an Advisory Council consisting of Indians.

A writer in the "Graphic" comments: "All the planning for the Indian University on the pretext that what will be offered there will be of the best makes the altruism of the motive questionable. It cannot be argued that what will be offered there will in no way be inferior to that which is offered to the European. The very establishment of a University on ethnic grounds is a negative of the spirit of the University and a blatant affront to the dignity of a people whose mental and spiritual qualities the world has acknowledged to be of the highest calibre."

### Franchise and Group Areas

It is regrettable that the Durban City Council has now apparently decided to instruct the Natal Municipal Association to take no action "at this stage" on the question of non-white municipal representation, for which there is an increasing demand in Natal.

The General Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress has written to the Mayor of Durban: "The denial of the franchise to all non-white people has meant the imposition of measures such as Group Areas Act which threatens our homes and our very existence, the unequal educational facilities with thousands of our children still without accommodation and the lack of adequate housing and proper civil amenities. It is only natural that we will demand the franchise for all the voteless.."

We congratulate one Nationalist M.E.C. in the Cape, Mr J. N. Malan, on taking a stand at the Cape Nationalist Congress against the proposal to remove Cape municipal voters from the common roll before they have been "given the right of local self-government" in "separate local areas", and are glad that the Administrator and at least some of the Cabinet are cautious about introducing the parliamentary voters' roll for municipal elections as "creating a further constitutional crisis".