

PC16/2/1/47



CIVIL RIGHTS

News Letter

(Box 3807, Cape Town)

July, 1957

A correction and an apology

We regret that owing to a typing error our June News Letter stated that "almost every family" in African urban areas had one or more illegitimate children. This should have read "almost every other family ...".

We also apologise for inadvertently omitting our address from our sub. reminders last month, and would thank those sturdy members who, in spite of this omission, have since sent in their subs. For those who wish to call personally, our office is at 527 C.T.C. Bldg.

Help us to grow and serve

Our readers will recall that last month we welcomed to their ranks 500 members of the Black Sash. After the News Letter was circulated we also had a wire from Durban asking for 400 copies of the June issue for distribution there.

This has given us an idea which we pass on for your co-operation. Why not introduce our News Letter to any church organisation or other society to which you belong? We are prepared to supply copies (at its present size) in bulk at the following rates per month, post free:-

100 copies, 7/6; 50 copies, 4/6; 25 copies, 3/-.

We are also still prepared to add to our free mailing list any individual names and addresses our members send to us.

Please do something about this if you can! The conscience of South Africa is beginning to stir; help us to awaken it to a fuller knowledge of the task before it.

Too liberal?

Mrs Ruth Foley, National President of the Black Sash, is reported to have told the movement's second annual conference at Pietermaritzburg that one of the problems they had to overcome to emerge as a formidable force was "to prove that the movement's defence of rights and liberties was not too liberal"!

We would respectfully suggest that there is confused thinking here. Liberalism - true liberalism - does not go to extremes. The denial of "rights and liberties" is authoritarianism; the denial of law and order is anarchy. Liberalism is what Aristotle would have called the mean between these two extremes, and only under liberalism are "rights and liberties" secure. One cannot be "too liberal".

One might as well talk about being "too Christian".

The fear of being thought "too liberal" was fatal to the Torch Commando, and has done untold harm to the United Party. We hope it will not contaminate the Black Sash.

To quote Professor Keet: "When morality becomes a matter of calculation, we may be sure that it is near to extinction."

We hope all our readers will get Professor Keet's Hoernlé lecture, "The Ethics of Apartheid", from the Institute of Race Relations.

Group Areas and Association

During the last days of the parliamentary session Dr Dönges has slid through a measure which, with little opposition and no protest, empowers him to do the very things Dr Verwoerd wanted to do through the Native Laws Amendment Bill. The Minister, under the Group Areas Amendment Bill, takes powers, inter alia, (1) to shut down premises owned by non-whites in white areas to which members of the different racial groups have access; (2) to prevent social intermingling of the races in places of entertainment, at restaurants or at clubs.

As far as we know, he doesn't even need to prove a "nuisance" or to get the concurrence of the local authority! Obviously he has a far subtler and more dangerous technique than Dr Verwoerd.

Another clause of the Bill provided that where a person is alleged to belong to a particular race group, the onus of proving otherwise rests on himself (italics ours).

A beginning ...

Sir De Villiers Graaff, speaking in the Transvaal, has now committed the United Party, when returned to power, (1) to repeal the Population Registration Act; (2) to amend the Suppression of Communism Act so as to provide for proper and fair definitions of communism and communists, and for recourse to the Courts; (3) to repeal the Natives Prohibition of Interdicts Act; (4) to repeal the "church clause" of the Native Laws Amendment Act; (5) to restore the autonomy of the universities; (6) to remove the enlarged Senate; (7) to deal with the invasions of the freedom of trade unions; (8) to encourage immigration; (9) to provide for home ownership for Africans in "their own" areas.

The 'Star' gently suggests that more than this will be required, and mentions the Group Areas Act. We would add the franchise question, the Citizenship Act, the Public Safety Act, the Criminal Laws Amendment Act, the Nursing Amendment Act, the Bantu Education Act, and a host of other measures affecting mainly Africans. Ask your 1958 candidate what he thinks!

The rights of Nurses

Dr Z. J. de Beer introduced a motion in Parliament rejecting the Nursing Amendment Bill on the grounds that it opened the way to discrimination in training which would inevitably result in lowering professional standards, interfered with the autonomy of a professional association and deprived non-white nurses of an effective voice in the control of their profession. The "Friend", in supporting him, commented: "Such measures cannot but have the most baneful effect on a profession whose proud record it has always been to succour suffering humanity irrespective of race, colour or creed. Now the stupidity and bitterness of racial strife is to make a mockery of the nurses' code."

The right to protest

Last year, a Minister spoke of introducing legislation to prevent a repetition of the protest of African women at the Union Buildings. Now a procession of African women protesting against the pass system in Cape Town has been stopped by the municipal authorities for what seemed unconvincing reasons, and the names of the marchers were taken by the police. Nurses in both the Transvaal and the Cape were warned of disciplinary action if they took part in protest marches on the Nursing Amendment Bill; and the Administrator of the Cape has demanded the names of members of the Groote Schuur medical staff who took part in the University's protest march.

The "Cape Times" commented on this sort of action as "an instance of the petty tyranny to which we have become accustomed ... The interference with the protest march (of nurses) has no legal foundation. There are some laws about public servants taking part in 'political activities', but it would be ludicrous to call a protest against a Bill by the persons particularly and humiliatingly affected by that Bill a 'political activity' as contemplated by the law."

And it all goes to prove how even United Party legislation, which caused no particular concern at the time, has in it the seeds of authoritarian action. We are at least learning to be more vigilant about legislation!

Business world facing facts

In a leading article in its Golden Jubilee number, "South African Industry and Trade" says: "Economic growth is brought about by change and response to change. However much South African business men ... pretend that politics is 'no concern of theirs' and that

Native policy specially is the unholyest taboo", obviously "the greatest factor of change in these next ten years is the relationship between white and non-white in South Africa. The political and moral relationships between white and non-white will determine and be determined by their economic relationships. (Italics ours)

"It is common cause among our political parties that there is at present a degree of personal unfreedom, of lack of political and economic rights and opportunities, for our non-white population which cannot continue unaltered .. in our view, the next decade will compel industrialists to 'face the consequences' ... of the Government's political and social policies ... or to face the necessity of determining an organised political attitude towards the implications of economic integration ... The fundamental factors making the economy of 1967 will be as much political and moral as economic. And it will be for our industrialists to help to fashion the non-economic as well as the economic development of this decade of change and challenge."

The same journal in its June issue says that as a result of the Native Laws Amendment Act "nowhere outside the Communist-dominated world is there a class of industrial worker so unfree as the Native workers in industry in South Africa ... It is not possible for the South African manufacturing industry ever to become competitive ... unless our Native workers move along the path of increasing personal freedom and widening economic opportunities which industrial workers enjoy everywhere outside the Communist world." (italics ours)

Apartheid and Social Welfare

"Golden City Post" points out the danger of non-white social welfare organisations having to operate with less funds and curtailed their services if influential white members of their committees are forced to dissociate themselves from this work. The paper says that 75% of the running costs of the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg comes from white sources. "If the Government decides to take over the (Jan H. Hofmeyr) School, it will have to collect its own funds, and certain services might be curtailed", says the paper. Tailpiece ("Imvo" on the 'one anthem' claim)

"Members of Parliament, led by Mr Arthur Barlow, have been ... shouting 'Now we have one anthem'. And THE PEOPLE (Africans) only shake their heads with pity ... A handful of ill-informed men in Parliament choose to ignore a total number of 10,000,000 people..."