

PC16/2115/21

CIVIL



RIGHTS



Box 3807

Cape Town

News Letter

September, 1961

What can we do?

We have now been able to obtain copies of the Recommendations of the Natal Convention held in April this year: and we feel these are worth publishing in full, because they do suggest a number of practical things every reader can do in order to break down the colour bar in our South African society. Study them and talk to your friends about them: they will provoke more thought about the whole question of civil rights.

Municipal Franchise

- 1) Letters from individuals and organisations to their municipal councils, urging direct representation of all racial groups on local Boards and Municipalities. (In the Municipality of Cape Town, such representation is already in existence: but occupants of properties who pay weekly rent are excluded.)
- 2) Take any opportunities to address meetings on this subject.
- 3) Letters to individual members of the Provincial Council could be written.

Discrimination

- 1) Organisations could be urged to approach Town Councils, requesting the removal of unnecessary colour bar signs - e.g. bus stops. The same request could be made to shops.
- 2) Municipalities could be urged to eliminate discrimination in transport.

Education

- 1) Use your influence to encourage schools to hold inter-racial school debates.
- 2) Work for the institution of an exchange plan between students of different racial groups.

Sports

- 1) Ask sporting bodies to which you belong to allow all races to join such bodies.

- 2) Inter-racial matches could be arranged.
- 3) People with private tennis courts could hold inter-racial tennis games.

Trade Unions and Employment

- 1) Campaign for higher wages, and influence local authorities to set an example by the wages they pay.

Entertainment

- 1) Invite members of other racial groups to be your guests at plays and concerts which are held in halls where there is no colour bar.

Courtesy

- 1) Try to organise a general Courtesy Campaign.

Churches

- 1) Make sure that your own church welcomes all equally.
- 2) Urge your Church to pay the same stipends to Non-European as to European clergy.

Group Areas

- 1) Local Authorities could be urged to ask for a suspension of Group Areas Proclamations or to refuse to assist in implementing the Group Areas Acts. (e.g. Keurboom Park playground)

Letters to Press

- 1) Letters could be written to the press emphasising the various points listed here.

Members of Parliament and of the Provincial Councils

- 1) Letters of congratulation could be written to any M.P. or M.P.C. who expresses or supports these principles.

Funds

- 1) Use your influence to persuade organisations to which you belong (e.g. church women's associations) to give support, or become affiliated, to such bodies as the Institute of Race Relations, the N.C.W., the Civil Rights League or Defence and Aid Fund.

Professional Bodies

- 1) Those professional bodies which are segregated could be influenced to open their ranks to all races (or, if prevented from doing this by law, to make representations to the Government for the repeal of the relevant legislation).

General

- 1) Use your influence to persuade organisations to which you belong to become integrated.
 - 2) Hold house meetings or social gatherings where all races can meet.
 - 3) Ask organisations to arrange addresses from speakers of other race groups.
 - 4) Refuse to be intimidated.
 - 5) Use the term "African".
 - 6) Pledge yourself to build bridges between the races.
- Inform all members of your organisations of the findings and feelings of such gatherings as the Natal Convention, the South African Coloured Convention movement and others.

* * * * *

(We wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the Secretariat of the Natal Convention Committee for this summary of the Convention's original resolutions, which we have altered here and there to make them more relevant to our own readers.)

The Elections

The League has never identified itself with any political party: but we would urge our readers to keep the above principles in mind when listening to political candidates or reading their manifestoes, and to put pertinent questions at their meetings. Even though the result of the election may be a foregone conclusion, it can have value if it makes people think about these fundamental issues. Think about your own Party's policy, and do what you can to move it in the direction of extended human and civil rights. Above all, let us be awake to the insidious "white unity" slogan which finds its logical conclusion in the Prime Minister's recent statement: "When I speak of the South African nation, I mean the white nation".

Our new Mayor and Mayoress

We extend our warm and sincere congratulations to two of our own members, Councillor and Mrs A. H. Honikman, on their election as Mayor and Mayoress of Cape Town for the ensuing year, and are assured that they will maintain the high traditions of the City.

Defence of Liberties

We commend to our readers the recent appeal for funds from the Cape Western Region of the Defence and Aid Fund, which has

been providing relief and legal advice to those who are arrested or detained on political charges. The Fund's office is at 312 Parliament Chambers, 47 Parliament Street, Cape Town, and those interested would find its periodical reports most revealing and valuable documents.

"Out of hand"?

Our new Minister of Justice, Mr B. J. Vorster, has lost no time in announcing that, as the "Cape Times" puts it, "he will allow us to have our rights if we exercise them as he sees fit. He will protect our rights - 'not without qualification' - even against ourselves. From henceforth free speech shall be exercised 'with control', meetings shall be 'in lawful places with lawful aims', and protests shall be 'proper' ... Of what is 'proper', Mr Vorster reserves to himself the right to be sole judge". He did, however, imply that the 'inalienable right' to protest should be exercised only in one's own group area. He believed in "close co-operation with all concerned with the exercise of justice", and "would listen to problems but with this understanding: that the decisions would be his and his only because it was his responsibility to make the decisions".

We would have said that the Minister already had powers under existing legislation to satisfy even himself: what is coming next? Will he be of opinion that 'the objects of communism may be furthered' by mixed processions in Adderley St or mixed meetings on the Grand Parade?

There is only one adequate protection of citizens' rights - the rule of law, which, says the "Cape Times", has in the last ten years or so "practically ceased to exist in many important spheres, and in its place we now have Mr Vorster".

Keurboom Park

We hope our City Council will be moved to reconsider its decision to put up "Whites only" notices in Keurboom Park, a valuable playing place for non-white children. This move has aroused widespread protests from white citizens in the neighbourhood of the Park, and seems to have no justification at all.

Tailpiece

When is a ban not a ban? According to the Minister of Coloured Affairs, when it's job reservation!

(Published for the Civil Rights League by Maggie Rodger,
527 C.T.C. Building, Plein Street, Cape Town)