

# CIVIL



# RIGHTS



Box 3807

Cape Town

Vol. XVI No.3  
Issued 3/4/69

## News Letter

### District Six - who loses?

We are privileged to announce that Mr Neville Dubow has consented to deliver, under the auspices of the League, a lecture, with slides, on District Six entitled "The City and its Soul" in Electricity House on Wednesday, April 9 at 8.15 p.m. This will be followed by a session for questions and thereafter tea will be served. All are welcome - bring your friends! It will be remembered that Mr Dubow's lecture on a similar topic at the U.C. Summer School this year created great interest.

### Thanks

Our grateful appreciation to those who have paid their subscriptions and our apologies that some have had to wait for their receipts. This is because, owing to our five-weekly appearance, there was no issue of the news letter in March - and for reasons of economy we do not send receipts out separately.

### Afrikaner realism

We are sorry that space forbids us quoting at length from a thoughtful and challenging article by Mr W.A. de Klerk which appeared in the "Cape Argus" (March 22) on "The Afrikaner's Escape into Nihilism", in which he issues a salutary warning to politicians to stick to the practical and not "tell us what life is about". "Politics usurping the functions of philosophy and theology", he says, "is ultimately nihilism in its most virulent form.. The outcome of it is nearly always tragedy." He instances the details of apartheid which have become so familiar to us that we almost cease to notice them, especially group areas and the reservation of beaches, and says, "The Grand Design is not working out ... because (this) support is bound to fall away catastrophically as soon as real 'sacrifices' are called for" (from the Whites). It is, he says, a "flight from reality". But he adds that "we are not dealing here with a fault peculiar to the Afrikaner", and that indeed "the leaders of groups questioning what is being done by the establishment are mostly Afrikaners ..."

The remedy, he says, is "accepting a truly human task. This means rediscovering one's neighbour, not in terms of the Idea



(Beleid) - i.e. not in terms of an object - but in terms of our common humanness".

### Membership Secretary

We are grateful to one of our Committee who has undertaken the task of writing to people who send letters to the press in support of civil rights, and hope that this will bring in many such people as members.

We would, however, urge our present members to do all they can to interest their friends (specimen news letters and membership forms gladly sent on request), and also to write to the press themselves when such issues arise. It is heartening that a number of such letters have appeared in the press lately.

### African livelihood

In particular we are grateful for the forthright condemnation in the press of the new Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, drawing attention to the powers it confers on the Minister: for instance (Section 20(a)):

(1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any law, the Minister may by notice in the Gazette prohibit the performance of work by or the employment of a Bantu

(a) in a specified area

(b) in a specified class of employment

(c) in a specified trade

(d) in the service of specified employer or class of employer.

(2) A prohibition referred to in subsection (1), (b) (c) or

(d) may be applied either in a specified area or generally...

One writer says that it is not clear whether such drastic provisions (which entail loss of residential rights as well as of employment) apply to those "qualified" Africans who may be entitled to have their families living with them.

The Black Sash has described the Bill as "concerned with power, naked and unashamed". That is no overstatement.

### Doing without servants

Recently a Minister declared that it was the policy of the Government to remove from urban areas all "surplus appendages" of African men - i.e. their wives and families. The sheer inhumanity of such an attitude is frightening. Now we are urged to do without domestic servants, described as "the least productive form of labour" by (we think) the same Minister.



Humanity apart, we wonder what the Minister's answer would be to these questions:

\* How many working (White) women could go out to work if they had no domestic help?

\* How 'productive' will African domestic servants be if they are removed to the 'homelands' where, in most cases, they cannot find employment at all?

(The Minister does concede that 'there are single Bantu women who can provide useful labour, and there are White families which cannot forego domestic help'; we hope he will continue to think realistically along these lines.)

The crowning inconsistency in all this is of course the fact that the Government itself has replaced between 8,000 and 9,000 (male) White railway workers with Africans. (Said Mr Schoeman: "I don't want a White man doing pick and shovel work if it can in any way be prevented; I let the Bantu do it. I want to give the White man a better position!")

#### Bus realities

"Total" bus apartheid has begun. One route in the Peninsula now has "White" buses and "Non-White" buses, and we are told that the "snags" encountered in the first few days are being "ironed out".

But a spokesman of the Tramway Company which runs the service has stated that "mixed" buses (which run with one race on each deck) are "a necessity" and "a good link in the service".

This would seem to confirm the view that, economically, it is just about impossible to run a "total" apartheid service. We may be grateful for so much sanity.

#### "A dangerous anachronism"

Mr F.D. Conradie, M.E.C., is reported to have said that the Cape Province will have to consider legislation to end the "dangerous anachronism" of Coloured Councillors being elected to "White" City Councils. What, we wonder, is the danger? Says the "Cape Times", "Ratepayers who happen to be classified Coloured by the Nationalist Government are nevertheless entitled to representation on, and proper services from, the local authority which derives an income from their rates ... the least the authorities could do would be to delay (this) move until the alternative offered (i.e. complete residential separation) is a practical reality ..."



No doubt it is this "obsession with ideological tidiness" that is behind the reported legislation to give the central Government almost complete control over the affairs of municipalities ...

#### Criminals' right to life

A letter written to the press recently on behalf of the League expressing opposition to capital punishment (as infringing the fundamental human right to life) has drawn some vigorous correspondence in response. We are, of course, familiar with the arguments (no longer considered valid in some civilised countries at least) in favour of capital punishment. But it is interesting to note that as we go to press a senior government psychiatrist has expressed approval of the modern trend in South Africa in the treatment of criminals. "We should recognise", he said, "that some criminals need a hospital rather than a gaol." Surely, then, our argument is legitimate - that criminals should be (if possible) rehabilitated rather than given the irremediable punishment of death. Such, anyway, is the trend in other parts of the world which claim to be civilised.

#### The Biter Bit

It is ironical that an Afrikaans Sunday newspaper, which has no doubt listened complacently for years to the "slanted" outpourings of the South African Broadcasting Corporation on its political opponents, should now find itself moved to protest when that organisation launches an attack on the Afrikaans Sunday press. The paper comments: "Because it is so often superficial, biased and distasteful, the Broadcasting Corporation's 'Current Affairs' has for a long time had minimum respect from people who valued a little discrimination ..."

This is a healthy attitude and we hope that it will be carried further. Particularly as the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs has informed us that the number of people listening "regularly" to "Current Affairs" has grown from 340,000 in 1963 to more than 700,000 this year (we wonder where he gets his figures).

#### These "advisory" bodies

Whatever may be the merits of the promotion of the "ethnic" colleges to university status, it seems deplorable that Non-White staff members may not be members of their Senates until an entirely Non-White Senate is possible.

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