

# CIVIL



# RIGHTS



Box 3807

Cape Town

News Letter

Vol. XVI No.10

Issued 4/12/69

## Professor Barnard's three questions

Into the growing tension of an election campaign has come, like a refreshing breeze, a speech made by Professor Chris Barnard recently to the annual dinner of the Afrikaanse Sakekamer in Cape Town. Professor Barnard put to his audience three questions which have gone round the country and, probably, the world - namely

\* "When a Chinese industrialist asked me why a Chinese woman and a White man who had been living together for 30 years were charged under the Immorality Act, I could not answer. Can you?"

\* "In Denmark a professor of surgery asked me why we allowed non-White servants to care for and even nurse our children, but refused the services of non-White doctors. I don't know why. Do you?"

\* "In India a leading citizen asked why the Indian population of South Africa were viewed as second-class citizens when their forefathers were wearing silks while ours were still living in caves. Again I could not answer."

Professor Barnard, who emphasised that he had no intention of entering politics, told his audience: "I love my country, but it is my personal opinion that there is no future for South Africa, for you or for me, or for our children, unless we adopt a progressive outlook".

The haste - and the unconvincingness - with which Afrikaans politicians, from Mr Blaar Coetzee downwards, proceeded to "play down" Professor Barnard's questions and to tell him, in effect, to stick to heart transplants showed once again how much the Nationalist hierarchy fears anything which might rouse the consciences of its supporters.

The "Cape Times" commented that the Professor was not "talking politics": "he was questioning a fundamental component of South Africa's socio-economic structure, in terms of which racial considerations dictate the level of an individual's earnings and opportunities, irrespective of ability or qualifications".

### Barnard's reply to critics

Professor Barnard replied to his government critics in a way that, were they willing to be convinced, should have convinced them. He quoted one of the many letters he said he had received, from a young man who had attempted suicide because his engagement had been broken off through race classification. "As a doctor," he said, "my duty is to alleviate suffering. Human suffering I consider to be far greater than the physical suffering of a man with a heart disease."

The Minister of Coloured Affairs had said that Professor Barnard's three questions gave "a distorted picture of South Africa", and that he must have noticed that every country he had visited had "its own peculiarities and contradictions ... true patriots of these countries did not ... seize upon such things to seek negative publicity for their own country".

Professor Barnard replied in a press interview that "the difference is that in these countries the peculiarities and contradictions are not forced on the people by law ... What right do we have in South Africa to say this person is a first-class citizen and that person is a second-class citizen? What right do we have to say a Japanese is White and a Chinese is Coloured? On what basis do we decide these things?"

Replying to another critic who had said that the Government believed that in nursing "each race should look after their own people", the Professor said this criterion was not applied, for instance, to an Irish or Australian nurse. "Is this discrimination made only on the colour of skin?"

More power - and more questions - to Professor Barnard! Opponents of the Government have pointed out that he could have been - and doubtless was - asked many more overseas that he found unanswerable. Such questions form the raw material of our news letter ...

### "Who cares?"

Under this heading recently the "Cape Times" commented on the monthly statistical record presented to the Cape Town City Council's Housing and Bantu Affairs Committee, which showed that in the Bantu Commission's Court at Observatory in the month of September, 967 Africans were charged

with not possessing a "reference book" , and 1,912 Africans - 1,384 men and 528 women - were charged with being in the "prescribed" area of the Cape Peninsula for more than 72 hours without permission. In addition, 32 Africans (20 men and 12 women) were charged with forging, altering, defacing, destroying or mutilating reference books; and two African men with having someone else's reference book.

Says the "Cape Times": "In other words, African men and women are being arrested in and around this city's African townships at a rate of almost 100 a day for technical offences against the maze of law and regulation which governs the lives and movements of Black South Africans. It should be recalled that this usually involves summary arrest in the streets, a trip by pick-up van to a police station and at least one night in detention before appearance in the Bantu Commissioner's courts. On conviction, and if no money is available to pay a fine, the offender serves a short sentence of imprisonment. If the offender is not able to comply with the law, it is only a matter of time before the whole process is repeated or the offender is "endorsed out". In human terms, it is difficult to assess the damage wrought by rigid enforcement of these regulations... Whatever the validity of the arguments for and against influx control, the state of affairs reflected in the Council's monthly returns should give rise to grave public concern.

"The fact that it does not, and is generally accepted as a matter of routine, is a disturbing commentary on South African society."

#### The "Prisoner's friend"

It is some small consolation to learn that during the six months from May to October, the prisoner's friend stationed at the Bantu Commissioner's court in Langa, employed by the Social Services Association, prevented 812 Africans arrested for pass offences from going to gaol. By contacting their relatives or employers he managed to have their fines paid and so to secure their release.

"In many cases, however," said the head of the Association in Cape Town, "there is nothing we can do to help those who have been arrested."

#### Equal pay ...

Recently the question of different pay scales for nurses of different racial classifications has been in the news. The

authorities say that the scales of pay are under consideration. Our own Chairman, in a personal letter to the "Cape Times", has urged that the gap between salaries of people with the same work and the same qualifications should be closed now. Similar letters have been written by the President of the Cape Town Branch of N.C.W. and of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations. We hope that the authorities will, once and for all, apply "the rate for the job", not only in nursing but to teachers and doctors as well.

The argument for differentiation has been used that the standard of living of non-Whites is lower. Says the Chairman of Race Relations, "This is a gross confusion of cause and effect. The standard of living of non-Whites, in general, is substantially lower than that of Whites, because their incomes are much lower."

#### Truth from youth ...

Who says children are not taught to think at school? We hail with appreciation the letter to the "Cape Times" in which twelve school children condemn the implementation of bus apartheid, which they said was "totally unnecessary and endangers the already delicate relations between the population groups".

#### Bottle stores and servants ...

Mr Pat O'Ryan, who runs an employment bureau for Coloured school leavers, says with regard to amenities in Sea Point for domestic servants: "The day Sea Point bottle stores close their doors to non-Whites (as suggested by some residents), housewives in the area will have to go down on their knees to do their own housework". Coloured domestic servants, he says, "resort heavily to such vices as drinking because it is a means of escapism from their surroundings where there is no recreational or spiritual outlet for them." It is absolutely essential, says Mr Ryan, for every flat complex to have a minor hall to act as recreation centre for domestics ...

#### Tragedy for Afrikaners

Says Mr Adam Small of the Coloured Representative Council: "The Afrikaner politician has proved himself to the Coloured people as one whose word they cannot go by. That is tragic, not for the Coloured people, but for the Afrikaner..."