

CIVIL



RIGHTS



Box 3807

Cape Town

Vol. XXI No. 1
17/1/74

News Letter

Subscriptions

With somewhat belated New Year good wishes to all our readers we send, also, our annual "sub.reminders". We greatly appreciate your loyal support over so many years, and trust that it will spread and increase during 1974.

Easy growth

The status and influence of the League would be greatly enhanced if we had, say, five or ten times or even twice as many members as we now have. To those of our readers who find themselves able to send us more than the minimum (unchanged over 25 years) of 50c per calendar year we would point out that any sub. from R1 upwards can cover two or more members. We would rather have two members in one house than one - but we're glad to have them anywhere! Please send us the names of any of your interested family or friends. If you are a member and your husband, wife, brother or sister is not - what about it? Do it now!

The Deed of Faith

The League has never aligned itself with any political party, and it welcomes the recent declaration by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and Mr Harry Schwarz as what it is stated to be, a statement by two individuals. It seems to us to set up a standard to which the wise and honest of all parties may repair. It is perhaps, unfortunately, only to be expected that the government-supporting press should try to discredit it: but we are disappointed that the leaders of the Opposition parties do not commend it to their rank and file as something deserving of serious thought and discussion. It is obviously not intended to be a blueprint or a detailed statement of policy. It is a statement of principles, and quite the most impressive one ever signed by men of the White and Black groups since the days of the Liberal Party. As such it is heartening to any who care about civil rights.

We think the statement is worth printing in its entirety:

The situation of South Africa in the world scene as well as internal community relations requires, in our view, an acceptance

of certain fundamental concepts for the economic, social and constitutional development of our country.

We respectively record five principles on the basis of which we believe all our people can co-operate.

1. Change in South Africa must be brought about by peaceful means.
2. Opportunity must be afforded to all our people for material and educational advancement. The economy must be available to serve the needs of all able and willing to contribute, and the wealth, labour and expertise of our country should be harnessed to provide job and entrepreneurial opportunity for all groups.
3. Constitutions, blueprints and plans for the future should not be made by only some of the people for all others; they must be made with people. Consultation and dialogue lead to government by consent; and with this in mind and as a first step a consultative council representative of all groups in South Africa should be constituted at the earliest opportunity.
4. The Federal Concept appears to provide the best framework on which to seek a constitutional solution for a South Africa free from domination by any group over others and ensuring the security of all its people.
5. Any constitutional proposals for South Africa's future must:
 - * Safeguard the identity and culture of the various groups constituting the people of South Africa;
 - * Include a Bill of Rights to safeguard the fundamental concepts of natural justice.

On the basis of these principles we declare our faith in a South Africa of equal opportunity, happiness, security and peace for all its people. (Sunday Times, 6/1/74; Cape Times 7/1/74 etc.)

And the election?

Some people obviously regard it as bad timing to issue such a declaration when an election seems likely within a few months. But it could give the Opposition parties a golden opportunity to challenge the Government on every election platform to say where it stands on these crucial issues. Provided, of course, that the Opposition parties have firmly made up their own minds, which we fervently hope they will do.

If, as seems likely, an election is to take place within the few months, several contentious issues will probably be put into storage during the coming session. But some of them could with advantage be raised at election meetings too.

African amenities (Cape Times 11/12/73 et al.)

Again we have to congratulate Mr Janson, Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, on cutting through red tape in order to provide the first essential amenities for Africans in Pretoria. We hope this will lead to similar action in every urban area. We look forward to learning the solution that Cape Town - which is seriously considering the problem - will produce.

Non-legal apartheid (Cape Times, 16/1/74)

We congratulate, also, the City Fathers of Pietermaritzburg, Johannesburg and Cape Town on taking steps to remove apartheid distinctions where these are not forced on them by law. We hope that this action, also, will spread to other centres. That is surely the first step towards getting the offending laws removed. If the sky does not fall when Black and White stand in the same queue to catch a bus, or in a municipal office, why should it do so in the Post Office? It is true that there is much that the local authorities are prevented by law from doing: but at least let them do what they can.

We hope that Mr Janson, having realised the need in Pretoria and Cape Town, will go on to apply the same principles all over South Africa.

New restrictions (Cape Times, 13/12/73)

It is disheartening, however, to learn of a new regulation which has come to the notice of the Athlone Advice Office recently, that when Africans apply for permission for their wives or relatives to visit them they must state that these people are in possession of return tickets, and must specify where the visitor will stay, in the Peninsula. The regulation also says that the visitor may not seek or take up employment and that the visit is not for medical treatment. The Advice Office comments:

"This ominous piece of paper would appear to have been devised to block the last tiny loophole for couples struggling to live together lawfully and within reach of their livelihood.

"It will no longer be possible for couples to establish the conditions laid down for "ordinary residence" together, unless both are already qualified residents of the area. It is a very serious innovation."

Doesn't this stir Mr Janson's conscience?

Trade Union intransigence

From time to time there are welcome signs that the trade

union movement in South Africa is coming to accept the need, even if partly in its own interests, for the recognition and effective recognition of Black unions. But when it comes to job reservation, trade unions can still be a deciding factor. The Cape Times (10/1/74) reports that in a survey in Cape Town last year it found that the white S.A. Association of Municipal Employees was blocking the appointment of Coloured workers to some posts, with the result that qualified Coloured workers were being kept subordinate to White workers with lower qualifications; and that the Department of Labour, at the request of the SAAME, was barring Coloured workers from posts previously held by Whites or which would give them authority over Whites. This, the Council cannot alter - and there is no sign that the Government has any intention of doing so. We can only hope for a change of heart among White trade unionists at this level.

Church and State

In two thoughtful articles in Argus recently (Dec. 18 and 19), Mr W.A. de Klerk, well-known Afrikaans author, discusses the rôle of the Church in regard to state policy, with special reference to the SPRO-CAS publications on the need for change and political action. Much of what he says is not new, but not necessarily untrue for that. Like most of us, Mr de Klerk can see the necessity for peaceful change but cannot provide a sure receipt for it. He does, however, seem to sum up his thesis in the statement that the true task of political thinkers in a situation like ours is "to discover the true limits of civil government and find a new clarity about the relationship between church and state". He puts the onus on the Church to challenge the State when the latter claims to proclaim "absolute truths". What he calls "radical, redemptive politics" inevitably, he says, produces its opposite extreme. "All radical politics which attempts to structure the future, which attempts to guarantee man an enduring order of human happiness, is by the same token trying to do the work of Providence ... We can deal with the matters of civil government only as far as we can see. And we can never see very far. History has taught us this again and again."

Tailpiece from Chief Gatsha (Cape Times 17/1/74)

"We are still willing to participate in meaningful dialogue even on the basis of separate development, which was conceived by Whites solely from all-White perspectives. What more can we do?"