

CIVIL

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RIGHTS

Cape Town



News Letter

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Annual General Meeting

Notice of this and our annual report are enclosed. Please bring your friends to what promises to be a very interesting and thought-provoking evening. Tea will be served.

The 29 and the 109

We welcome most heartily the statements recently issued by 29 academics in Pretoria and 109 in Cape Town and Stellenbosch, calling for full and equal citizenship for the Coloured people. The Civil Rights League came into being in order to protest against the removal of Coloured voters from the common parliamentary voters' roll, and has always stood for equal franchise rights for all South Africans.

Rapport, the Nationalist Sunday newspaper) has declared that it is not prepared to wait till the far future for an answer to the question of Coloured political development.

"We shall have to think again", says the paper, "about what we in fact want, not in the far future but in the seventies in which we now live; how we can satisfy the rightful political and other aspirations of the Coloured people in our existing set-up." The paper adds, "There are few people who want things to remain as they are ..."

Professor N.N.N. Olivier, of Stellenbosch, has said that many academics would be willing to work out a scheme if the Government was interested, but he pointed out that it was "absurd" for Mr P.W. Botha (Minister of Coloured Affairs) "to issue challenges to these people while the Government rejected their ideas in advance".

It is significant that responsible Coloured opinion in the Coloured Representative Council is increasingly adopting the standpoint voiced by Mr Sonny Leon, leader of the Labour Party, who commented that the "only form of liaison" of interest to the Coloured people was direct representation in Parliament, the only sovereign body in the country. They were prepared, he said, to accept group representation in Parliament by their own people to start with, but common roll representation had to follow. Mr

Leon added that he was in favour of these rights for all non-White groups.

It is significant, too, that more and more people on both sides of the colour line are pointing out that the day is past when one group can decide by itself the future of another, and that the real essential is not to talk about the Coloured people, but to talk with them.

We give, for interest and reference, a summary (with acknowledgments to the Argus) of the legislation that would have to be repealed to remove the discrimination of apartheid for the Coloured people.

* The Population Registration Act (30/1950) with its rigid system of race classification.

* The Group Areas Acts (41/1950 and 77/1957, as amended), under which it is calculated that about one million people (only 3,000 of them White) have been removed from their homes, usually to outlying and comparatively undeveloped areas.

* The Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act (50/1968) which ended representation for Coloured people in the House of Assembly and the Cape Provincial Council.

* The Coloured Persons Representative Council Act (52/1968), which established the C.R.C., which body, though empowered to draw laws regarding finance, local government, education, community welfare and pensions, rural areas and settlements for Coloured people, may not introduce any Bill without the approval of the Minister of Coloured Affairs.

* The Prohibition of Political Interference Act (51/1968), which prohibits multi-racial political parties.

* The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (49/1953), which provides for the reservation of public premises, vehicle counter, bench, seat, amenity of contrivance' for the exclusive use of people of a certain race.

* Proclamation R26 of 1965, which prohibits racially 'disqualified persons from attending places of public entertainment or taking refreshments while sitting in any licensed premises in the group area of another racial group.

* Industrial Conciliation Act (28/1956), which outlawed 'mixed' trade unions and introduced job reservation.

* The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (55/1949).

* The Immorality Act, which makes sexual intercourse between Whites and non-Whites a criminal offence, punishable with up to seven years' imprisonment.

Do they?

Dr Francis Wilson, saying that full representation was "the only logical possibility", commented: "This could lead to social intregation - but not necessarily, I don't think Whites should assume that everybody wants to integrate with them ..."

U.P. proposals

A nine-man parliamentary caucus committee of the United Party is reported to have prepared proposals for a "new deal" for the Coloured people which is likely to be discussed at the provincial and national congresses of the Party this year.

This has of course not yet been made public, but it is expected to include proposals for the abolition of all discriminatory practices in the trades and professions as between Coloured and White, the abolition of job reservation, a crash education programme for schooling, academic and technical education, and the complete suspension of the application of the Group Areas Act. Though the Party is still unwilling to abandon social separation, it is likely to urge that wherever practicable, all municipal ratepayers and provincial taxpayers should have equal opportunity to use municipal facilities and amenities.

These suggestions are at least practical steps in the right direction.

Education

We commend to our readers the bursary fund recently launched by the S.A. Institute of Race Relations. This is to have two objects - a fund for immediate use, and a trust for the investment of capital the interest on which will be available.

Our Chairman, Dr Oscar Wollheim, has told the press that there is "an alarming drop-out rate" among Coloured and African students. "For every 100 who enter school, barely 10 will reach Std 6 and only one will make matric in the Western Cape", he says. "This represents a fantastic waste of good potential.

"The reason is painfully obvious. Although the economic position of these communities has improved, they still earn far too little and are in no position to keep children at school beyond the age where they can start earning." One donor to the fund has described it as "the most important thing Whites can do for good race relations at this stage".

Donations (exempt from donations tax) may be sent to the Institute of Race Relations, 1 Dorp Street, Cape Town.

What is "jeugweerbaarheid"?

It has been reported in the press (Sunday Times, 1/8/71) that from the beginning of next year all White South African high school pupils will have to study a new subject to be known as "jeugweerbaarheid" (translated as "youth preparedness"). This is apparently to replace both cadet periods for boys, and the present "guidance" classes in high schools. In addition, boys' schools will have a "Guard of Honour" and a bugle band, to be called the "Prestige Platoon", which will be compulsory, whereas cadet corps were optional.

The atmosphere of secrecy surrounding this proposal does not make for confidence in its intentions. It has been pointed out that the Afrikaans term, which has no exact English equivalent, implies a moral arming of the people against an outside influence, and has "an undertone of a willingness to bear arms". Moreover, the scheme will include girls as well as boys. We hope that not only school principals, but parents will keep a very watchful eye on this new development.

Moment of truth for Dr Koornhof

Dr Piet Koornhof, Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, visited Sada, 27 miles from Queenstown, which is officially described as a transit camp, not a Bantu urban township like, for instance, Zwelitsha or Mdantsane. It has, apparently, not been decided whether it is to remain a transit camp - but in the meantime it is "home" for a population officially estimated at 12,000, most of whom are women (about two-thirds) and the remainder children, old men and cripples. These people have either been endorsed out of urban areas, or asked to remove from farms.

It would appear that the conditions have been improved over the past five years, but are still pitiful. The authorities are doing their best, but cannot find remunerative work for the people - they employ as many as they can on such minor work as weeding, planting and watering, and many of the people are unfit to work. Rations are given, but (says the senior superintendent) there are some who still go hungry.

Dr Koornhof - probably the first Minister to see the settlement - was deeply shocked. "Something must be done - and done soon," he said. "We must improve the situation here. How can we ease this misery? We are going to do everything we possibly can." (Will he stop "endorsement out"?)

Will he now believe Father Cosmas Desmond?

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