

PC 16/2/21/29



CIVIL



RIGHTS

Box 3807

Cape Town 8007 Vol. XXVI No. 6
July 15, 1979

News Letter

Full citizenship rights? (Cape Times, 6/7/79)

Dr Koornhof has assured the annual conference of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce that he believes in full citizenship rights for all races in South Africa. He believes, he told them, in equality before the law, chances for opportunities, full human rights and full participation in the decision-making process for all, regardless of race or colour.

But the sting is in the tail. He repeatedly stressed that this would be in a plural and not a unitary set up. (In his address to the National Press Club in Washington recently he referred to "our ten black nations"...)

True, he also emphasised common ground between the races, co-operation, love for South Africa.

But he gave no indication that there would be any consultation on these admirable aims. How does he expect to achieve his Utopia without it? Suppose the "ten black nations" (or most of them) continue to say "No!".

Good intentions and the law (Cape Times, 27-28-29-30/6/79; 3-5/7/79)

It is all very well to talk, no doubt sincerely, as Dr Koornhof has done in Washington about detesting the pass laws, but the case of Mrs Kohlakala shows what a gulf there can be between such laudable ministerial attitudes and the hard administrative facts. The case of Mrs Kohlakala, who was arrested for bringing her sick child to hospital in Cape Town without a permit, the fine of R50 on her husband for "harbouring" her, and the insensitive remarks of the magistrate who tried the case, must surely spur Dr Koornhof to take administrative action pending such time as he can introduce amending legislation. At the very least, his officials can be instructed to show leniency in such cases.

The "Burger", to its credit, on hearing of the case, sent a staff member to help Mrs Kohlakala obtain a three month residential permit (on condition, be it noted, that she does not stay with her husband) - but one cannot blame the "Burger" for that). But its good deed is somewhat tarnished by the venom it has dis-

played towards Cape Town's "English press", whose reporting of the case brought it to the notice of the public, the authorities and the "Burger" itself!

A deathbed scene (Cape Times, 19/6/79)

Says the Cape Times, "In spite of the world's idea of apartheid dying of starvation, black and white still cannot vote together, debate together, sit in trade unions together, live in the same area, go to school together, marry one another, travel by train together, dance together or even attend the cinema together..."

The snags (Cape Times, 5/7/79)

Dr Francis Wilson, speaking at the 50th anniversary conference of the Institute of Race Relations recently, has pointed out that while the position of urban blacks is being eased, the number of such urban blacks is being reduced by such measures as the fine of R500 on employers taking on an "illegal" black worker, which will increase unemployment and tighten influx control.

That permit system (Cape Times, 5/7/79)

The congress of the Association of (coloured) management committees has condemned unreservedly the system under which permits have to be obtained for entertainment in halls and other centres not specifically "non-racial". This is still under the Group Areas Act of 1966, and coloured delegates, understandably, enough, regard the system as a "monstrosity" and as insulting to "our people, our integrity and our person".

We agree wholeheartedly that the repeal of the Group Areas Act is long overdue.

About time ... (Argus, 21/6/79)

The Argus, referring to the decision, in principle, of the Western Province Rugby Union to do away with spectator apartheid comments trenchantly, "If the liquor laws prevent an integrated Newlands, the solution is obvious. Close the bars."

Suppressing students (Cape Times, 10/7/79)

One of the really unhealthy manifestations of authoritarianism is the persistent and increasing banning of student newspapers in the English-language universities - "Varsity" at Cape Town, "Wits Student" in Johannesburg and, most recently, "National Student", the official journal of NUSAS. Whether one agrees or disagrees with particular expressions of student opinion does not matter. The Directorate of Publications might well take to

heart the famous saying of Voltaire, "I disagree with every word you say, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it"

Self-defeating (Cape Times, 12/6/79)

Commenting on the banning of "Varsity", the Cape Times said earlier, "... The more they get banned, the greater the importance they will attach to their views simply because the publications directorate thinks they are important enough to ban. Banning confers a status that may, ironically, be entirely undeserved..."

Over the past two years, well over 100 student newspapers have been banned.

Retrospective action (Cape Times, 20/6/79)

From time to time we have found occasion to condemn legislation which has made illegal actions which were in fact legal when performed. This is bad enough. If anything, the legalisation of irregular activities retrospectively seems to us even more deplorable. This has happened with the passing of the Information Service Special Account Bill which "deems" illegal transactions to have been legally performed. It is an easy way out of embarrassment, but there is no moral justification for it.

Probing security laws (Argus, 21/6/79)

The new Minister of Justice, Mr A.L. Schlebusch, is to examine security legislation with a view to possible improvements.

That is a laudable and overdue decision. It should lead to the restoration of the authority of the courts and of the rule of law. Far from risking the country's security, these reforms should contribute towards it. We wish the Minister well in his efforts.

Re-opening the Universities? (Cape Times, 10/7/79)

One tends to regard "verligte" views from government supporters with a certain amount of caution. But it is to be hoped that when (as reported by the Cape Times) the Chairman of the Broederbond comes out in favour of universities again being open to all races, he is expressing an emerging government view. For twenty years our universities have been limited as to whom they may teach. Few changes could have a better effect on race relations in South Africa.

More permits? (Cape Times, 6/6/79, Sunday Times, 1-8/7/79)

The Sunday Times reports that a number of coloured teachers in the Cape are sending their children to "exclusive private schools" where, they say, they will receive a better education

than in the schools where their parents teach. This, in spite of the extra heavy costs involved.

Mr Franklin Sonn, President of the Cape Teachers' Professional Association, is reported as saying that "segregation is inextricably linked to the problem of race in South Africa, and education is the ideal area where the institutionalized inequality of race in this country should be reduced. "Separate education", he said, "is unequal education... This nation's stability and security will increasingly be in jeopardy until all South Africans fundamentally accept the notion of racial equality. I believe that this must be enforced by law and I confidently believe that whites will obey the law if it is vigorously enforced..."

Presumably permits must have been issued in all such cases - and the sky has not fallen. Is it not time that education was desegregated? It will no doubt take time - but the sooner we start, the better.

The fact that coloured teachers have decided to link up with an African teachers' association and to break their links with their white colleagues is a depressing view of the other side of the educational coin - and, certainly, a challenge to white teachers.

Where do we start? (Cape Times, 12/6/79)

The Minister of Education and Training has pointed out in Parliament that it would be "unrealistic and dishonest" to promise blacks immediate educational parity with whites. "The fact is", he said, "that black teachers are not at the same level as white teachers. They did not have the privilege of the same training as white teachers."

Well, we've got to start somewhere. Why not start by opening the training colleges (and, of course, university faculties of Education) to all race groups?

Unity at Crossroads - an invitation

The Priests and Ministers of Crossroads invite all interested to join the Crossroads community in a Unity Service on Sunday, July 29, 1979 at Noxolo School, Crossroads at 2.30 p.m.

This marks the anniversary of a similar and very moving service held last year on July 30.

Come - and bring your concerned friends.