

CIVIL



RIGHTS



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News Letter

Academic Freedom (Cape Times, 16/9/82; Argus, 16/9/82)

Dr S.J. Saunders, Principal of our University, in a thoughtful and challenging address to our annual meeting in September, declared unequivocally that "nothing short of a complete removal of any restrictions on the University's right to decide whom to admit to its student body will be acceptable to us or to any other of the English-speaking universities in this country".

Said Dr Saunders: "... the laws which restrict human liberty, and which clearly infringe civil rights, banning without trial and detention without trial, have a serious effect on the quality of teaching and must have an effect on the quality of research... The ability of the authorities to ban or detain people without trial will inhibit the freedom of discussion, especially when there is a distinct possibility that a police agent may be sitting amongst those attending a seminar and misreporting what is said..."

The League is most grateful to Dr Saunders for his thoughtful and courageous address, which we hope to publish as a pamphlet in the not too distant future.

Justice for the banned

An ecumenical vigil is to be held in remembrance of all banned persons on Monday, October 18, 1982 from 1 to 2 p.m. at the Congregational Church, Belmont Road, Rondebosch. All are welcome, and we hope many of our local members will be able to attend.

Rethink on the "Genocide Bill"? (Cape Times, 1,20,21,23/9/82)

It is noteworthy that the report of the Grosskopf Committee, appointed by Dr Koornhof last year, has apparently not made recommendations which tally with the more recent proposed Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill, introduced during this year's session of Parliament and thereafter referred to a select committee. While the Committee endorsed the imposition of higher fines for employers of "illegal" black labour, says the Cape Times, it suggested that blacks who had lived in urban areas for five years be allowed permanent rights and be allowed to bring their families with them. The commission further recommended

that these rights should apply equally to citizens of "independent" homelands.

The League has made representations about this Bill, as have churches and trade union bodies. The Anglican Church has made such representations and has condemned the proposed laws as "unchristian". The Bill has also been condemned by the Roman Catholic Church and the Ned. Geref. Sendingkerk, and by the South African Council of Churches.

The Cape Times says it is estimated that 42 per cent of Cape Town's black population is "illegal".

A particularly sinister power given to the Minister by the proposed bill is that of altering by regulation, nullifying or applying the law as he sees fit.

An interesting point arises. If the proposed high fines on employers of "illegal" labour are enforced, how will any further blacks be able to achieve "legal" status?

The whole question of squatters is tied up with this proposed legislation. We agree with Mrs Di Bishop, Progressive Party candidate in the forthcoming parliamentary bye-election at Stellenbosch, that the only answer to the squatter problem is to accept and plan for the inevitability of urbanisation, while also spending the necessary money on large-scale rural development which would, presumably, help to reduce the drift to the cities.

Permanent residence? (Cape Times, 29/9/82)

In the meantime, it is reported that thousands of black workers in the Western Cape have applied for permanent residence (known as Section 10(i)(b) rights) on the basis of having worked continuously for one employer for ten years in terms of a Cape Supreme Court decision granting such rights to Mr Stanford Booij in May, 1982.

The other side of the coin? (Cape Times, 20/9/82)

Dr Willem de Klerk, former editor of the Transvaler, has called for black people to be given "a meaningful say" in the "four decisive years" before the next election, and has urged the government to "adopt an unashamedly reformist attitude" towards their representation in the proposed confederation of South Africa and the independent homelands. "The path of homeland representation and local government as the only solution," he said, "is doomed to failure". During these four years the

government must "make demonstrable progress" not only towards a settlement between white, coloured and Indian people, but also towards a settlement offer towards black people.

"Improper political interference"? (Cape Times, 16/9/82)

Commenting on her experiences in the early stages of the current Stellenbosch bye-election, Mrs Di Bishop said recently that Stellenbosch people had asked her about the attitudes of black people, but she should not have been the one to answer their questions. There were "thousands" of black people with enough goodwill and longing for peace to be willing to talk to white people. But in terms of the Prohibition of Improper Political Interference Act, it would have been an offence for blacks to accompany her to Stellenbosch to discuss their viewpoints. "Many people do not realise that they are being oppressed by being denied access to black opinion," said Mrs Bishop.

It might be added that, prior to the advent of the present government in 1948, coloured people at least might have expressed their opinion in the only really effective way - at the polling booth.

Will they be rebanned? (Cape Times, 23,25/9/82)

On October 19, 1977, says the Cape Times, the government declared eighteen organisations, including the Christian Institute, unlawful; detained about 50 individuals and served banning orders on seven people. (Two of the banning orders have been lifted in June of this year.) None of the people concerned have been brought to trial.

The Minister can of course renew any bannings without giving reasons.

Is it too much to hope that he will see fit to lift them?

Detention (Cape Times, 25/9/82)

The general synod of the Ned. Geref. Sendingkerk recently called for the release of all detainees and the lifting of all banning orders, and in particular called on the government not to renew the banning order on its former minister, Rev. Beyers Naudé. The Synod has called for the repeal of certain "unchristian" measures relating to security legislation.

The right to vote (Cape Times, 22/9/82)

In line with its traditions, the Council of the City of Cape Town has flatly rejected proposals by the President's Council for

local government reform based on colour or ethnicity. It has instead recommended a return to the common roll municipal franchise taken away in 1972. Says the Council's committee:

"In regard to the municipal franchise, there must be no discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour or sex. It is the right of all persons contributing to the welfare and progress of the city to have equal opportunity to participate in the government of the city". The committee rejected the concept of different local authorities for different race groups where separation was on the basis of race only, and the creation of new local authorities based on race or colour. This view was accepted by the Council.

We agree wholeheartedly with our City Council and hope the government will not try to force an ethnic franchise on the City.

Under the pass laws (Cape Times, 26/9/82)

The Athlone Advice Office in a recent report (August) has said that "during 1981 175 000 days or 684 years of imprisonment were imposed for pass law offences in the Western Cape". It quotes from Hansard to show that "during 1981, 13 694 people were arrested in the Peninsula for influx control offences (excluding the 3666 Nyanga site deportations in August and September, 1981).

The report quotes Dr Koornhof as saying that 42 per cent of Cape Town's black population is here "illegally", and quotes figures to show that 40% of the daily prison population in South Africa is made up of influx control offenders.

Says the report: "If this is the level of suffering caused by current influx control, what can we expect under the increased penalties of the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill?"

A ray of light (Cape Times, 21,29/9/82)

It is a pleasure to be able to record that the Cape Divisional Council has pledged to help a number of squatters to be evicted from farms in the Sunnydale area, by rehousing as many as possible of them in the coloured township of Ocean/and doing "all it /View could" to help the rest.

But nearly 5000 squatters at Nyanga whose temporary residence permits expired last month have been told that they must reapply for residence and that their cases will be "reconsidered on merit".