

CIVIL



RIGHTS



Box 3807

Vol. XXX No. 2
Cape Town 8000 Feb. 8, 1983

News Letter

MANY Thanks

We send warm thanks to all members who have sent their subscriptions so promptly and generously. To those who are still intending to do so we say - DO IT NOW - or as soon as you can. The League is greatly strengthened by your moral and financial support.

C A P - a beacon at Tugela Ferry

One of our members has sent us a most informative article on the work being done by this organisation, which deals with pension and legal aid applications for blacks in the area. It appears that the cattle of blacks stray on to white farms, are impounded there and have to be rescued by the payment of trespass fees on a large scale. There have also been a large number of allegations of assault by white persons on blacks. As a result of this, the Natal Provincial Council is to investigate the Pound. This, in an area where up to 1971 there had been no white farmers. Since 1979, white persons have taken over some of the empty farms and closed off some of Msinga's highways, thus preventing Africans from reaching stores and, more important, watering points for their cattle. CAP is now acting as a complaints office and two members of its staff are now permanently busy on legal aid. CAP has set up a Legal Resources Centre which now deals with cases from all over Natal. It receives help from the African Development/ OXFAM and other sources and would welcome any donation, large or small. Its proposed budget for the next six months is R5 500.

Further details from CAP at Mdu. , Box 26, Tugela Ferry 3504. (Mdukutshani)

Influx control (Cape Times, 2/2/83)

During 1981, 13 614 people were arrested under the influx control laws in Cape Town. This figure, says the Cape Times, excludes 3 666 Nyanga squatters arrested and deported to Transkei.

A new dispensation? (Cape Times, 2/2/83)

Mr P.W. Botha has announced in Parliament that a cabinet

committee is being set up to seek a new dispensation for urban blacks. But as this is to be "within the framework of National Party policy", the prospect is not very encouraging. Dr Koornhof, indeed, has said the committee will go out of its way to consult representatives elected by black communities for such consultation, and that the government attached "high priority" to the matter.

Mr Botha has admitted that it is clear that there will always be blacks living in metropolitan areas outside the "national statêa", and Dr Koornhof has said that "the government's aim of giving all a say in the political decision-making process" applied also (!) to blacks.

We await developments - as, certainly, the black people must do - with almost painful interest.

It works both ways (Cape Times, 1/1/83, 14/1/83; Argus, 4/1/83)

Two Anglican clergymen and their families were recently "arrested" (says the Cape Times) for being on the "so-called coloureds only" beach at Kalk Bay. However, no charge was laid against them, and there have apparently been no further developments.

Those blue overalls (Cape Times, 19/1/83; Argus, 4/1/83)

Twenty-five Jehovah's Witnesses at Pretoria were recently found guilty of refusing to undergo national (presumably military) service and sentenced to 36 months in detention barracks. Another at Durban was given a four months' civilian jail sentence, to be followed by dishonourable discharge from the army, for refusing to do a 30-day military camp. He had expressed his abhorrence of violence after serving eight months in SWA/ Namibia.

The Argus says that it is proposed that men objecting to military service for political reasons should be sent to prison for twice the period they would have served in the Defence Force, with no remission of sentence, and the paper comments that "people should not suffer unreasonably punitive sentences for genuinely held beliefs ..."

These proposals have been sent to the Churches for their comments, which we await with interest.

"Wholly indefensible" (Cape Times, 23/12/82)

The verdict of the Cape Times on the detention system, as exemplified in the inquest on Dr Neil Aggett's death, is unanswerable. Says the paper: "It is a frightful system and

wholly indefensible, and it is no use pretending otherwise. The answer would be to place judges of the Supreme Court in a position to check the actions of the executive in the use of its interrogation powers. Unhappily, that does not seem to be on the cards."

We hope pressure on the government, inside and outside Parliament, will intensify until this is achieved.

Restored group areas - and more evictions (Cape Times, 11, 27/1/83)

In September, 1981, the President's Council recommended that the whole of District Six in Cape Town be given back to the coloured people. It is now reported that almost a fifth of that area has been declared coloured - apparently as a result of representations made to the Group Areas Board, which, however, recommended that the whole of District Six be given back to the coloured community.

Half of the Bloemhof Flats in District Six are being demolished to make way for proposed parking bays and garages as part of an "upgrading" of remaining blocks. Some of those to be evicted have been living there for as long as 45 years. They are being moved to Mitchell's Plain, where there is no hospital - which some of them have to attend regularly.

Our Chairman, Mr Brian Bishop, has said:

"The area should be proclaimed open so that Capetonians can start learning to live with one another in this city where our destinies are so interwoven. To have two areas proclaimed for two defined race groups, with the technikon white elephant in between to keep them apart, merely perpetuates our problems.

"As Prime Minister, Mr Botha should face reality. He has a personal responsibility to restore sanity to the débacle of District Six. (It was while Mr Botha was Minister of Community Development that District Six was proclaimed a white area, almost 17 years ago."

"Institutionalised violence" (Cape Times, 31/1/83)

Speaking at the UCT Summer School recently, Dr Alan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, said, inter alia, that violence was "any act which infringes on the human freedom and dignity of another person". Injustice in the structures of a society, he said, was a form of "institutionalised violence". Law and order was necessary, but could only be maintained by a legitimate government. "To be legitimate, a government has to rule by the consent of its people." In this sense,

he said, South Africa was "not a legitimate government".

Dr Boesak asked what grounds he had to tell people to "continue applying non-violence" when "any peaceful demonstration ends up in a massacre".

Equality in industry (Cape Times, 29/1/83)

It is a pleasure to be able to congratulate the Minister of Manpower on a law he says he intends introducing in Parliament this session - the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill - which, it is understood, will do away with inequality in the work place and give women equality on the factory floor.

We await the details of this measure with interest, as we had not realised inequality was still maintained there. At least there should, for once, be no opposition to such a measure, either inside or outside Parliament!

A word from "Beeld" (Cape Times, 25/1/83)

The editor of "Beeld" has declared unequivocally that blacks will have to be given political rights outside the "homelands". They must have, he says, "representative institutions which must visibly work, bear fruit and satisfy". By denying political rights to millions of industrialised blacks in metropolitan environments, he says, tension is created that could lead to revolution ... A political solution remains our only way ... But he emphasises his view that the idea of black representation in a unitary state is "dead".

Unfortunately he apparently gave no indication of what his "political solution" should be. Can he suggest one that would be acceptable to both blacks and whites?

"Legal" squatters (Cape Times, 18/1/83)

One can understand, though not approve, the action of Trust, the authorities in demolishing the shacks of Crossroads squatters who are not "legally" in the area: but what justification is there for such treatment being applied to people who are legal here? And this, apparently, after such people had been told to approach owners of existing shacks for permission to "build on".

This is bad enough in the summer: but what of the winter months? We hope that the "attention" the Chief Commissioner claims to be giving to the situation will be prompt and humane as well as effective.