

# The Black Sash



# Die Swart Serp

By announcing expedient concessions in sport and by meeting African representatives from other countries the Prime Minister is attempting to project a new image of South Africa's "granite apartheid". South Africans should not be lulled into optimism by these concessions. There is only one way to improve South Africa's image and that is by renouncing its unacceptable racial policies.

Parliament is in session and we look in vain for any softening of the position within South Africa. The latest disgraceful legislation is the race classification bill (The Population Registration Amendment Bill) which lays down new and almost unbelievable conditions for determining whether a man is to be considered white, one of seven classes of coloured, or African. People outside South Africa must wonder why it could possibly matter but here it is vital. To be declared Coloured means loss of voting rights, loss of privilege, segregation into coloured housing areas, even inability to attend cinemas, theatres, sporting fixtures and to swim from beaches set aside for whites only. Employment opportunities are less, wages are lower, there is no general compulsory education and few hopes of higher education. There is, of course, to be compulsory employment training for coloured youths but this spurious measure we have already condemned in a memorandum. So the cry of government members in parliament that reclassification of white people to the coloured groups and of coloured people to the African group means no loss of status is indeed hollow.

Amongst other provisions the bill states that in determining a person's race "his habits, education, speech and deportment, and demeanour in general shall be taken into account." As one opposition member put it — "Can you determine a man's race by the way he walks or talks; is he less likely to be coloured if he has a university degree?"

In the past there were a number of people who, because of appearance or social acceptance, were able to join the privileged white group with all its attendant advantages. This is no longer the case. Descent is the determining factor. A coloured antecedent is enough to ensure that a man and his descendants are less privileged forever. Likewise a coloured person who marries an African finds that his children are classified as Africans, made subject to the pass laws and suffering even greater racial discrimination than do the Coloureds.

Some of the phrases used in the debate would appear to have been written by Edward Lear

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Deur die doelmatige aanwending van sport konsessies, en ontmoetings met verteenwoordigers van ander Afrika lande, probeer die Eerste Minister 'n nuwe beeld skep van Suid-Afrika se „graniet apartheid". Suid-Afrikaners moet egter waak teen enige valse optimisme oor die uitwerking van die konsessies. Daar is net een metode om Suid-Afrika se beeld te verbeter en dit is om afstand te doen van sy onaanneemlike rassebeleid.

Die parlement sit tans, en ons soek tevergeefs vir enige tekens van verandering in die posisie in Suid-Afrika. Die jongste skandelige wetsontwerp is die Populasie Registrasie Amendement, met sy ongelooflike voorstelle vir die vasstelling van 'n man as blanke, of een van sewe kleurling groepe, of as Bantoe. Mense buite Suid-Afrika wonder seker watter saak dit nou kan maak, maar hier is dit lewens belangrik.

Om as kleurling geklassifiseer te wees beteken verlies van stem regte, verlies van voorregte, segregasie na kleurling woonbuurtes, selfs verbod op bywoning van bioskope, teaters, sportgeleenthede, of om te swem van strande wat vir blankes afgesonder is. Werkgeleenthede is minder, lone laër, daar is geen algemene verpligte opvoeding nie, en skraal hoop vir 'n hoër skool opvoeding. Daar gaan wel verpligte opleiding vir kleurling seuns wees, maar hierdie maatregel bied geen egte oplossing nie, en is reeds deur ons in 'n memorandum ontleed en veroordeel. Dus die bewerings van Regerings lede in die parlement dat herklassifikasie van blanke persone na die kleurling groep, en van kleurling na die Bantoe groep geen verlies van status meebring nie, is totaal ongegrond.

Hierdie wetsontwerp bepaal o.a. dat in die beslissing van 'n persoon se ras, sy „gewoontes, opvoeding, spraak, voorkome en gedrag in die algemeen in ag geneem word." Soos 'n opposisie lid dit gestel het, „kan 'n persoon se ras vasgestel word volgens die manier waarop hy loop of praat — is dit minder waarskynlik dat hy kleurling is as hy 'n Universiteits graad het?"

In die verlede kon 'n aantal persone op grond van voorkome en die sosiale kring wat hy in beweeg, aansluit by die blanke groep met sy menigvuldige voordele. Dit kan nou nie meer geskied nie. Afkoms is nou die beslissende faktor. Eën kleurling voorouer sal verseker dat al sy afstammelinge vir ewig minder bevoorreg sal wees. 'n Kleurling wat met 'n Bantoe trou sal dus ook vind dat al sy kinders as Bantoe geklassifiseer word, en moet ly onder die paswette, en nog meer diskriminasie dan selfs die kleurlinge ondervind.

Dit lyk amper asof sommige van die argumente in die debat deur Edward Lear geskryf was, en

● Vervolg op bladsy 18

tras in the way of clothing, etc. but her cash income is R4.00 per month. Of this she has been contributing 10c. per week (43c. per month) to church funds on a purely voluntary basis. She could contribute one cent if she wished and remain a member. At the end of last year a single sentence in our monthly news-letter conveyed the suggestion that as costs were rising (sometimes salaries too!), and this rise in costs affected the church also, members might consider a slight increase in their giving. In response she put hers up to 15c. per week (65c. per month) ie. 18 per cent of her miserable cash income. Now I receive a free house and R128 per month. (I could have R158 if I wanted it) and this gets printed every quarter in our news-letter. It makes me think that I might be a more generous giver, but it also makes me think hard what Christians can do now to start closing the gap of their ridiculous disparity in wages before waiting until the whole wage structure throughout the country is changed.

In the realm of politics, a preoccupation for every South African, we have found ourselves, if anything, much less concerned to discuss political matters than we expected, though we have never tried to dodge or suppress political discussion. *While none of us is quite happy with apartheid* I think we all realise that our congregation's existence is not intended as a protest against a political system. It is in obedience to Christ's command that we love one another that we gather, and as we put that love into effect we believe that out of it will grow a better understanding of how to act in the political as well as other fields where the races find themselves in tension, mutually estranged or unjustly treated.

As far as I know this is the only congregation of its specific kind in the country though I would be very glad to learn of the existence of others.

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and it seems incredible that they were meant to be taken seriously. A Minister of State spoke of "full-blooded non-whites"; this bill would put an end to "creeping integration"; "It has become evident" he said "that there are people who are evidently satisfied to make no distinction between white and non-white."

The Minister stated that this bill was introduced to "close the loopholes in the law" which had resulted in successful applications for re-classification. Here is another blatant example of how, when the demands of justice do not accord with the policies of the Nationalist government, then the remedy is easy — change the law.



One must not forget that in numerous churches, particularly in the Cape, the races worship and take communion together, as they have done for centuries, in what is in fact the *more traditional* South African way of life, and they do so in far greater numbers than in our case. However I understand that their meeting is not nearly so frequent or definite when it comes to the organisation of congregational life or social activities together.

Our services are held at 10 Park Street at 7 p.m. on Sundays and any interested persons in East London, or passing through, are welcome to join us.

● Vervolg van bladsy 1

dis ongelooflik dat mens veronderstel word om hulle ernstig op te neem. 'n Kabinets Minister het gepraat van „volbloed nie-blankes”; en die wetsontwerp sal 'n ent maak aan „sluipende integrasie.” Hy het bygevoeg dat „daar mense is wat tevrede is om geen verskil te maak tussen blank en nie-blank nie.”

Die Minister het gesê die wetsontwerp word ingedien met die doel om skuiwergate in die wet, wat tot suksesvolle herklassifikasie gelei het, toe te stop. Hier is nog 'n flagrante voorbeeld van hoe, as regmagtige versoeke nie strook met Nasionale Party beleid nie, die oplossing so maklik is — verander net die wette!