

CONTACT

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What's In Our Name ?

LIKE any other emerging political party, we have chosen a name for ourselves, and, since party-names are commonly a fair guide to the motives and ideals which brought the parties into being, we find ourselves now publicly committed to the cause of "liberalism." In the same way, "Labour" must be held to stand committed to the advancement and protection of the rights of *workers*; the "Nasionale" Party, to the fostering of South African *nationhood*; the "United" Party, to the principle of *unity*; and so on.

Remembering that our own group will one day have to face a similar test, we may find interest in comparing the current policies of some of the established parties with the ideals which inspired them at the outset. We shall note at once, in one sphere after another, the unhappy tendency of party-thinking to whittle down the originating concept, to narrow its political implications, to restrict its terms of reference and to convert ideals into inelastic formulae which, as time goes on, require increasing numbers of subsidiary formulae to buttress them and to disguise the increasing weakness and unrealism of the central "planks."

To take only a few examples, in which considerations of *colour* have been the narrowing and restricting factor—the sort of thing which happens when "Labour" virtually confines its attention to the protecting of *white* workers; when "Nationalism" limits "nationhood" to *white* men, preferably of the Afrikaner way of life; when the "United" Party decides that unity is synonymous with concord between the two *white* races of this land—out of such whittled-down, distorted versions of original concepts are born the unrealities of apartheid, white domination, the colour bar in industry, and so-called trusteeship which believes its wards will never come of age.

If the Liberal party is to escape this kind of pitfall—if it hopes to end up with a policy which faithfully interprets the ideals from which it sprang—we must be clear, right from the start, as to the nature of the liberal philosophy and the grounds on which it rests.

Liberalism, as an outlook, is based essentially on the idea of *freedom*. It calls for the practice of freedom, the recognition of freedom, the acknowledgement of other people's freedom, the fearless acceptance of freedom's responsibilities and rights and disciplines. In the language from which it derives, the word "liberal" meant "*that which befits a freeman*"—the opposite of all that marks the slave-mentality. The freeman (in contrast to the slave) was supposed to understand the full implications of freedom. He must receive a "liberal" education to implant and develop in him an appreciation of freedom—both his own and other people's. He must be "liberal" in his ways—generous, ungrudging, open-hearted, "free" (as we say) alike with his money and his service. He must abjure the slave-qualities of pettiness and cheap resentment, timidity and fear of freedom. And the fine flower of all his training would be his unfrightened movement in an element he felt to be his own and in which he equally recognised the freedom of other men to move around.

So much for the liberal of the old tradition—"freeman," by breeding, of the world in which he lived. The political liberal is the product of a much later age, but his political ideals are dictated to him by precisely the same conception of freedom as that which inspired his earlier social counterpart. He is, in fact, "freeman"—and not slave—in the sphere of

his political thinking. He is pledged by his own sense of freedom to respect and defend the freedoms of others. He will practise his freedom of thought, speech, action, and, at the same time, discipline himself in order that his freedom shall not cut across the rights and claims of other people. He will reject, alike, totalitarianism, the deification of the party-group, the tyranny of the abstract state. He will recognise himself with perfect assurance, a citizen among citizens, and equally, he will regard as a challenge to his creed the arbitrary denial of citizenship to any of his fellows.

These, briefly, are the traditions we are pledged to uphold, and the principles we bind ourselves to implement, when we name ourselves Liberals. They are no artificial imitation of an old-time outlook : we hold to them not because they were the pride of freemen of an older day but because they are *ours* : they represent the way we think, the way we feel, about the sanctity of human freedom.

It is for us to maintain them during the coming years of party political routine, as surely as we hold them now before we have been "tried."

THE BUDGET AND THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

by THELMA PHILIP

Mr Havenga's plan for the financing of what he and his colleagues call Bantu Education should be studied together with the Bantu Education Act, for they are not separable ; they are integral parts of a "Development Plan" conceived by the Eiselen Commission on Native Education. Before discussing this plan as a whole, however, I should like to examine Mr. Havenga's section of it.

The Minister proposes that in future the amount voted for Bantu Education from General revenue be pegged at six and a half million pounds, and that £2 million be added from Native revenue (leaving £500,000 for the Native Trust Fund). Any extra money required will have to be found 'by the Bantu taxpayers themselves.' I shall consider these items in turn.

Mr. Havenga states that his reason for wanting to limit the amount voted from general revenue is that "expenditure on Bantu Education has increased three-fold in the last ten years." It has ; but the public ought to know, too, that though State expenditure on most services has been rising at an increasing rate, the annual increase on this particular service has been dropping ever since Mr. Havenga's Government came into power. In 1947, the increase over the amount voted for the previous year was £1,054,938 ; in 1953 notwithstanding the decline in the value of the pound, it was a mere £325,000.

Readers who may share Mr. Havenga's feeling that £6½ million is a lot of money to spend on the education of African children may be interested in the following comparative figures. In 1951/52, there were just under 500,000 European children at school, (roughly 98 per cent. of the school-age group). State expenditure on their education was nearly £22 million, or approximately £44 per pupil. In the same year, there were 803,537 African children at school (a third of those who should have been there). State expenditure on the education of these children was a bare £5½ million, or £7 per pupil. The fact is, of course, that for European children (and for Coloured children in the Cape Province), education is compulsory. This means that the State has to provide schools, and to train and pay teachers to staff them. No questions are ever asked as to what the children's parents contribute to the national income.

This brings me to my second point. Mr. Havenga calculates that this year Africans will contribute only £2½ million in taxes. This is perhaps an under-estimate and correct or not, it leaves out of account altogether the African's indirect contributions to the national revenue. For one thing, it ignores the indirect levy paid by all consumers of dutiable imported

goods ; for another, the indirect taxation involved in the State system of subsidies for protected domestic products. Above all, it says nothing of the African's largest contribution to our economy : the labour without which we could hardly produce any goods at all, either for the home market or for export. This source of national wealth has never been computed, since, as 'economists and others' told the Eiselen Commission, it is 'impossible to calculate the respective contributions of the several population groups.' (*Report*, para. 156). Though no one can estimate the actual figure, this contribution is very real, and a reality of such consequence as to make nonsense of the conclusions Mr. Havenga drew from the figures he quoted.

The question which naturally arises here is : why should Africans alone as a group have to pay directly for their children's education (or for any other service normally provided by the state) ? The answer will emerge from a consideration of Mr. Havenga's apparently innocuous remark that this plan of his will constitute a change. In actual fact, it will not mean much of a change for the individual European taxpayer ; for the African, it represents merely a cynical and callous decision to perpetuate an injustice.

In estimating that Africans will contribute only £2 million to their 'own' education, Mr. Havenga must be deliberately glossing over the truth that the vast majority of their schools are either mission schools (many of which charge various fees) or community schools supported entirely by Africans, and that Africans actually provide the bulk of the buildings even for the departmental schools. The Minister certainly knows that they have always had a direct share in the financing of their education—for his present proposals are part of a plan which was based on the discovery of that very fact.

Let us observe how this plan matured in the collective mind of the Eiselen Commission : "It is impossible to generalise, but it is certain that the Bantu have given generously in many areas for the erection of schools. It is a serious defect of the present system that this interest and willingness to contribute are not acknowledged and encouraged officially as a recognised part of the organisation of education" (*ibid* para. 612). This is delicate ; the Commission's later thoughts are not : "At present, many Bantu communities make considerable contributions but these are not enlisted as a regular and recognised part of the system of finance It is not feasible to introduce graduated taxation until the whole or a very large percentage of a community is at least literate Educational expenditure must be correlated with development plans, and attention must be given to the problem of using education in order to improve the economic situation." (*ibid* para. 1027—9.)

Here then, in so far as it affects education, is the plan called, ironically, the Development Plan : Africans are to become literate so that they can be more heavily taxed, and the rest of their schooling is to be geared to the needs of the labour market. Mr. Havenga will be responsible for the first part of this programme, the Minister of Native Affairs for the second. That Dr. Verwoerd is the right man for the job is clear from the remarks with which he defended the Bantu Education Bill in the House of Assembly : "What is the use of subjecting a Native child to a curriculum which in the first instance is traditionally European ? What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice ? This is quite absurd Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live." (*Hansard*. No. 10, 14—15, Sept., 1953, Col. 3583.)

This is a disgraceful plan. Moreover it is self-stultifying : on the one hand it requires Africans to contribute more to their own education, while, on the other, it proposes to give them an education so imperfect as to make it almost impossible for them to advance economically. For the country as a whole, too, this deliberate and artificial stunting of the African's capacity to contribute to its well-being means economic disaster.

PRESS COMMENTS

The Cape and Natal papers have kept the Party in the news by useful and at times lengthy reporting. The Transvaal, as usual, has been less fortunate. Mrs. Ballinger achieved Union-wide coverage through inadvertently being the target for Dr. Verwoerd's ill temper, when he told her in the House of Assembly that she had no right, as Leader of the Liberal party, to ask questions concerning the principle of apartheid. His unconvincing 'explanation' of what he meant deceived no one and was certainly no better than the original attack.

The entry of the Liberals into the Provincial Government field has been well reported in all the provinces. Natal's first public election meeting at Durban was well noticed in the local papers though not otherwise reported. Arising out of this meeting the 'Natal Mercury' published useful correspondence concerned with the difference between Liberals and Communists.

In the Cape and Free State prominence was given to the Liberal meeting at Paarl, a Nationalist seat, where Alan Paton was the chief speaker. There was an even distribution of emphasis, half the papers being concerned with our 'No colour bar policy,' and the other half with our backing of the U.P. 'integration' statement. Both these points received particular prominence in the Afrikaans Press, as did Dr. Donges' statement that Mr. Strauss' integration statement had wiped out the difference between the Liberals and the U.P. at one blow.

The Afrikaans press also reported fairly the Liberal attitude towards the Budget and our contention that the principle of racial financial independence is unsound.

The 'Natal Daily News' reported at length Alan Paton's article in the 'Liberal News' stressing the numbers of non-voters that would be enfranchised if our policy were to become effective immediately; whilst the 'Natal Witness' gave prominence to the leading article in last month's 'Contact'.

An article by C. W. M. Gell in 'Indian Opinion', on the new franchise policy of the Labour Party raises an important point. He reminds us that Labour is the first European party to declare publicly 'that as a matter of principle it accepts universal adult suffrage.' He then takes the Liberal party to task for not having made this 'historic affirmation of human faith' although he agrees that adult suffrage is implicit in the 'twin policies of a common qualified franchise and universal compulsory education.' He hopes we will take courage from Labour's public stand.

At the end of March the Transvaal Division issued a Press Statement protesting against the Natives' Resettlement Bill. The statement admitted that there was nothing new in the notion of condemning derelict or insanitary dwellings and compelling their owners to maintain properties in a safe and healthy condition. 'But,' it continued, 'to persons accustomed to the principles of democratic society it is a strange and very disquieting law that disregards human dignity in permitting the forcible expulsion of persons from an area, whether or not their homes are habitable; that deprives them of their freehold title and does not restore freehold title elsewhere; that prescribes the area of residence . . . ; and that is known as the law of the land although there is no vestige of consent by or consultation with the persons affected.'

In conclusion the Bill was condemned outright, the statement ending with these words :—
'The simplest way to test the adequacy of the proposed law is to apply its provisions to a group of Europeans in a slum area and to ask what the reaction of their fellow Europeans would be if they knew that the inhabitants of that area could be thrown out of their homes summarily, whether the homes be good or bad, and dumped elsewhere. There would be only one answer to such a test and that is the rejection of the law. And on that basis the Liberal Party rejects the Bill.'

PARTY NEWS

NATIONAL AND CAPE

All energies continue to be concentrated on the Cape Western By-election. A large number of public meetings, both impromptu and by invitation, have been held. In all but a very few cases the meetings have been orderly and successful. At several meetings votes of confidence in our candidate have been passed. A remarkable feature of these meetings is that many apparently staunch Alexander supporters appear to be converted to the Liberal point of view. How effective this conversion is can only be judged after the results of the poll are announced. An encouraging fact is that the Party is receiving considerable publicity amongst the Africans in the Western Province, and several applications for membership have been received. The 'Liberal News' has been very well received in the constituency and is selling well.

On the Parliamentary front, Mrs. Ballinger, speaking on the Second reading of the Natives' Resettlement Bill, said :—

“ I am entirely opposed to all of this. It cuts right across the whole of my policy. All its implications are entirely contrary to what I believe is in the best interests of the African and European population of this country. The implication of this policy is that the Africans shall be moved to satisfy the prejudices and the social interests of the European population, and that they shall continue to be movable . . . that they shall have no roots in the towns and that they shall put down no roots I believe that it can only lead to the greatest trouble in all our urban areas and in our social life . . . Unless we turn back now, all that is going to happen to us is that we are going to build up in the towns an increasingly unstable population with no stake in the community and no loyalty to the community and nothing could be more dangerous.”

Senator Ballinger's motion in the Senate, calling for a revision of our racial policies, served to clarify the policies of the various parties.

The Press carried a comment by Mrs. Ballinger on the Budget. She expressed her strong disapproval of the staggering proposal with regard to 'Native' education.

The first Cape Provincial Congress of the Liberal Party will take place in Cape Town on Monday, 31st May. To this Congress will come delegates from all the Cape branches to plan the future work of the Party in the Province, to discuss draft policies and make recommendations to the National Congress of the Party, and to elect a new Provincial Committee.

TRANSVAAL

Mr. Leslie Cooper is busy addressing meetings on Provincial Council policy, and canvassing has commenced in Hillbrow (not Hospital Hill). It must be admitted, however, that the Committee Room has a depressingly sepulchral appearance from time to time. But canvassers are increasing in number daily, so that before long the election campaign will be in full swing.

Opposition to the Natives' Resettlement Bill is being maintained by letters and articles in the Press, and by co-operation with other organisations. On 31st March, a deputation from the Citizens' Joint Action Committee presented a petition signed by about 150 citizens of Johannesburg to the Mayor, Mr. Patmore, M.P.C., asking him to call a public meeting on April 7th to protest against the Bill.

The petition asked that the meeting should consider two resolutions :—

- (i) That Dr. Verwoerd be called upon to withdraw the Bill.
- (ii) That the City Council refrain from any form of co-operation with the Minister in the mass removal of Natives.

NATAL

At a combined meeting of the Edendale and Pietermaritzburg Branches of the Party, held in Pietermaritzburg on March 29th, it was decided to nominate Mr. Peter Brown to contest the Pietermaritzburg South constituency in the Provincial elections. He will oppose Mr. P. W. J. Groenewald (U.P.), and Major-General Selby of the Federal Party.

In the Durban Gardens constituency canvassing is well advanced and in the other two constituencies steady progress is being made. Public meetings have been held in both Durban constituencies. It is interesting to note that, after the first of these meetings, not a single word said by our Non-European members was reported in the 'European' press. Since then, however, their statements have been more fairly treated.