

Jan smiled wanly. "Yes, if you're White."

"But surely—I didn't think there were any restrictions . . ."

"Oh, there's no colour clause in the Medical Council regulations. But you see, the first essential is to get a registrar's job in a teaching hospital, or something with similar scope. And those jobs involve giving orders to White nurses, so they're not for the likes of me."

"I see. Well, as I said earlier, I've got an offer of a thousand. I'm afraid you'll have to take it or leave it."

Jan took the offer. It would mean coming back with nothing, but his wife was a qualified teacher and they could always manage somehow. He completed his arrangements, booked his passage, and applied for a passport. A month went by without any word from the passport office. His sailing date was coming near. He went in to the office to make enquiries.

"Your application has been referred to Pretoria," said the young woman in the office. No, she could not say how soon there would be a decision.

Jan postponed his booking. What could it possibly be? There was the time he had addressed that student meeting, and there had been a detective sitting at the back. His wife was a member of a rather left-wing teachers association. He could not think of anything else. He went to see his former Professor, and the Professor wrote a testimonial for him, which he sent with a letter to the Minister.

Another month went by, and he postponed his booking again. Finally, a letter arrived, on Her Majesty's Service. It read:

"Jan Swart,
Cape Town.

Greetings,

In reply to your letter of the 10th ultimo, I am directed by the Honourable the Minister to inform you that the granting of passport facilities to you is not deemed to be in the public interest. With regard to your request to be informed of any information against you which may be in the Minister's possession, I am directed to inform you that this request cannot be acceded to.

Greetings,

A. van der Merwe,
Private Secretary.

"Oh, to be in England now . . ."

THE OFFICIAL South African technique of walking out of or boycotting any discussion of our affairs which is likely to be unfavourable to those currently responsible for their conduct might well have wrecked the debate organised in London on 2nd November, 1957, by the Committee on Science and Freedom together with the Association of University Teachers.

The Union's High Commissioner in Britain, Dr. J. E. Holloway, would have nothing to do with it. The subject of the proposed debate being the Universities Apartheid Bill, Dr. Holloway not unreasonably suspected that criticism of this piece of draft legislation would be loud and strong. Lacking, one can only assume, any logical or ethically sound debating points with which to counter such criticism Dr. Holloway declined to play or to send any member of his staff to do the job for him.

It was then that Professor L. J. du Plessis of Potchefstroom University volunteered to go to London and put the Government's case for the Bill. Well done, Professor! The organisers of the debate were delighted and gladly found the money for the Professor's return air fare and his London hotel accommodation.

According to Press reports which readers of *Contact* will have seen at the time, the Professor confined himself largely to quoting his illustrious master, the Minister of Education. He would

not answer a number of questions put to him "by hon. members opposite", but he did—at the very end—voice opinions which may safely be presumed to be his own. It is these which merit a second look.

"If I were in England," the Professor is reported to have told this critical audience, "or in America, I would be an integrationist, too."

"We do not," he said, "believe in the inferiority of any race."

"The Bantu, Indians and Coloured," he said, "would destroy our national character."

Here are three significant pronouncements which reveal, probably in all innocence, that not only the particular piece of draft legislation under discussion that evening, i.e. the Universities Apartheid Bill, but the Government's entire policy is one based on *fear*, stark and naked—though not unadorned.

If he were in England, this sporting champion of a lost cause proclaimed (surely to the astonishment of his own friends), he wouldn't mind integration in the least. In South Africa he cannot contemplate it without cold shivers. What is it that makes the concept of integration one thing when the integrating is to happen in Britain and quite another when it is to take place (as eventually it will) in this country? The answer is "numbers". Overseas, the Professor and those who think like him would—they reckon—feel safe. At home they would be afraid.

They would be afraid of having their national character destroyed.

One is tempted to ask here "*whose* national character?" or "*which* national character?", but rather than complicate the issue with awkward and provocative (though quite pertinent) questions of this calibre let us point out that these greatly feared and fiercely resisted changes are in reality processes of evolution affecting human societies in many parts of the world at this very moment.

Professor du Plessis knows this. The Government which he went to Britain to defend knows it. It is an established fact. "National character", the term used by Professor du Plessis when he spoke in London, is not—or perhaps we should say is *no longer*—a mathematical constant. It could be argued, of course, that it never was, and that the universities in Britain and America which the Professor claimed "suit the national character" (of these countries) would, in fact, be horrified to find themselves so impossibly restricted. What may be of greater importance is that our debater's insistence on *this* motive for Mr. Viljoen's Bill strips that Bill of its dummy trappings of sympathy, benevolence and nobility of purpose. There is no longer any need to dwell on the academic aspect of the Bill. All that could possibly be said or written about that has been given the widest publicity by the ablest and most competent of advocates. It has been left to the Professor from Potchefstroom, batting on an "away" ground, to admit that it is not academic considerations at all that we should look for. It is quite simply fear for the safety of "the national character".

When Professor du Plessis astonished his audience by stating that those he spoke for "do not believe in the inferiority of any race", he said nothing that observers close to the South African scene have not known for a long time. It all fits in. A government that *did* believe in the inferiority of any race would not consider it necessary to have a University Apartheid Bill, nor—for that matter—any of the other legislation designed to "develop the Coloured people to self-determination in all respects . . . successfully and democratically" (to quote Professor du Plessis).

PARTY NEWS

NATIONAL AND TRANSVAAL

Arrangements for Congress are going ahead slowly. No final count of delegates is yet available but it does seem that there will be good representation of all divisions. Delegates are expected to start arriving in Durban on the 12th or 13th December, in time for the National Committee meeting on the Friday morning and the public meeting on the Friday night. Final agendas for the Congress and for the National Committee meeting will have reached members by the end of November.

Patrick Duncan will have spent a week late in November in Kimberley trying to establish