

# C O N T A C T

OCTOBER 1956

## SELF HELP

LAST month the Minister of Native Affairs announced to the Nationalist Party Congress in Bloemfontein his intention of raising direct taxation on Africans next year. Thus will be put into effect what has been declared Nationalist policy for some time. Dr. Verwoerd intends that the new tax system should operate on a sliding scale according to the income of the person concerned.

We have no doubt that these new proposals were acclaimed at Bloemfontein. It is persistently argued by those who cherish ideas of white supremacy, Nationalist or non-Nationalist, that Africans must be taught to help themselves. They must learn to stand on their own feet. They must cultivate a feeling of national pride. They cannot expect the White man to go on carrying them on his back for ever. Like so many other ideas that circulate in South Africa this one is nonsense. Let us glance briefly at some of the *facts* of the case.

When Dr. Verwoerd pegged the amount to be spent on African education from general revenue he estimated that some £2,500,000 would, each year, be added to this from "poll-tax". In his Bloemfontein speech he estimated that Africans payed some thirty to forty million pounds annually in indirect taxation. His guess at this last figure is no doubt as good as anyone else's. What is certain is that the amounts spent by various groups in indirect taxation can never be more than a guess. However, that is beside the point. What is important is the fact that figures such as these are used to bolster the case for increasing the African tax. What is the case *against* increasing it?

In the first place, it is an accepted principle of most democratically-governed states today that the rich should be taxed to pay for the poor. People earning below a certain minimum income are not directly taxed at all and are even assisted in one way or another to obtain services which they could not otherwise afford. In South Africa this principle applies to other groups but does not apply to Africans. When an African reaches a certain age he starts to pay poll-tax. It makes no difference how poor he is. He must pay. But the African's participation in this special system of taxation applicable only to himself does not mean that he escapes the normal provisions of Income Tax. If he earns enough he will pay income tax in exactly the same way as anyone else. The poll-tax is a special tax which applies to Africans who, if they were members of another group, would be regarded as too poor to pay any tax at all. It is now the intention to place an even heavier burden on those whose earnings approach but do not reach the minimum income tax level and who, in other groups, pay no tax. Dr. Verwoerd will extend a principle long-since rejected by most of the world. He will tax the poor to pay for their own services.

There is a second point which those who claim that Africans don't contribute enough towards their own welfare conveniently overlook. While it is quite true that much more is paid in direct taxation by Europeans than by any other group, how is this made possible? What profits would the mines make if there were no Africans to dig for them? What profits would the cane-growers make if there were no Africans to cut for them? Who would buy the sugar if the Africans did not? What factory, shop or farm would make the profits from which the taxes come if they were without African labour and African custom? The truth is—and anyone but a fool must know it—that the high standard of living enjoyed by most Europeans is directly due to the part played by Africans in our economy. The one thing is inseparable from the other. To suggest that Africans live like parasites on a benevolent tax-paying minority is specious nonsense. A better case could be made out to support the proposition that the Europeans live like kings on the backs of a sweating black majority.

There is a third, vital point. Africans have not the slightest objection to paying more in direct taxation. They would be only too willing to do so. All they ask is that they be allowed to exercise their talents to enable them to earn the money and they will pay taxes in exactly the same way as anyone else. What they rightly take bitter exception to is a policy which places innumerable obstacles in the way of their developing those talents, acquiring the skills they

desire and earning the incomes which would enable them not only to pay taxes but to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. The law of the land prohibits these things to Africans. When their failure to achieve an income-tax-paying status in any numbers is then used as basis for an argument that they are not contributing enough towards their own welfare and is extended to justify an increase in direct taxation on them, Africans are entitled to object in the strongest possible terms.

There is no case for the increase of direct African taxation. Talk of self-help is pious nonsense. The African response to such talk could easily be "You talk of self-help? Meanwhile you use your dominant position to keep the best jobs to yourself, to earn the most money for yourself and to provide the best possible public services for yourself. What you are doing is making yourself comfortable at my expense. What you are doing is helping yourself to the good life at my expense." There is no doubt that a South African government could spend much more on all sorts of welfare services for all its people. But the first step is not to put the poll-tax up. It is to recognise that every person in this country is tied up inextricably in its economy, that our economy is one, not a number of separable components, and that within that economy the only sensible thing to do is to allow everyone the opportunity to play his part in the most fruitful manner of which he is capable. That is the path of good sense. That is the path of the Liberal Party.

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## NGO MBIKO WE TOMLINSON COMMISSION

**B**EKUHLANGENE umhlangano omkhulu ngendlela engandile wabaholi bezinhlanguaniso zabantu bomdabu eBloemfontein ngomhla ka 4 kuze kube oka 6 ku October, 1956. Lomhlangano omkhulu kangaka wabumenywe iBandla elihlanganisa imihlangano yama-Bandla abefundisi kulo lonke leNyonyana.

Udaba olubalulekile okwakuhlangenwe ngalo kwabe kungumbiko okhishwe iBandla lakwaHulumeni elabe likhethiwe ukuba lihlale udaba lokuthuthukiswa kwempilo nenhlalo yabantu ezabelweni. Lombiko waphuma usukhankase waze wangena yonke impilo yomuntu omnyama, ngoba iBandla leli kwakufuneka kube ilona eliphenya indlela yesizwe sakithi esingehlukaniswa ngayo nebulungu ngokwenhlalo, nempilo nangombuso. Kucishe akusekho muntu ongazi ukuthi loHulumeni uqambe igama lokuthi "Apartheid" ukuchaza inhloso yakhe yokwahlukanisa isizwe esimnyama kwesimhlophe. Ngaloko lelibandla wabefuna ukuba lihlale indlela okungenzeka ngayo lokwahlukaniswa kwezizwe. Ilokho iBandla labefundisi elabona kufanele abaholi bezinhlanguano zonke bahlangane bakhiphe izwi elihlangeneyo okoba izwi lesizwe esimnyama.

Kwathi ukuba baumemezele lomhlangano, abefundisa babanomqondo omuhle wokucela izifundiswa zakithi ngolwazi lesi naleso esinalo ngephuzu elithile elivuka kulombiko wakwaHulumeni, ukuba lesi sifundiswa sihlale ngobunono obukhulu iphuzu lelo, sichaze ukuthi kuthiwani ngalo, nokuthi ekuboneni kwaso kuyicebo elihle yini, uma kungelona icebo elihle, sisho ububi balo iphuzu lelo.

Ngemva kokuba lezifundiswa sezifunde ezikubonile kulombiko zabanisa nengozi umuntu omnyama afakwa kuyo, umhlangano izwi lawo libe elibonisa ukweneliswa kwawo ukuthi lomqondo wokwehlukana izizwe (apartheid) ungumqondo omubi ngempela ngoba onokudala ukungahlalisani kahle kwezizwe kuleli lakithi. Ukuze lelizwe lakithi libe nenhlalakahle umhlangano umema zonke izinhlanguano ezikhona ukuba zihlanganise abantu kwenziwe umfelandawonye ukulwa nalomqondo owehlukana izizwe.

Ekuboneni kwawo umhlangano uthola ukuthi uma lenqubo yokwahlukanisa izizwe unghambela-phambili kodaleka kulelizwe isimo esibi senzondano. Noma kambe weneliswa ukuthi konke okwenziwayo ukuthuthukisa inhloso yabantu ezabelweni, kodwa kauboni wona kukuthi uma kwenziwa ngecebo lokwehlukana izizwe koba yinto ethandekayo kubantu.

Icebo umbiko lo wakwaHulumeni ohlose ukuba kwakhiwe amakhaya abantu ngendlela yobandhlululo, umhlangano uthi wona kauzwani nalo, kauwafuni nje amakhaya obandhlululo.

Umhlangano ukhuze wababaza uma uzwa kulombiko wakwaHulumeni ukuthi abantu kuzofuneka bathelise intela engaphezulu kwalena abayithelayo manje. Wathi wona lenkulumo uHulumeni uma engayi landela kobe kaqonde lutho oluhle ngomuntu, ngoba uHulumeni uyakwazi ukuthi abantu kabayiholi imali elingene ukuba baziphilise, futhi uHulumeni uyazi ukuthi inengi imali ayithola ngezinto abantu abazithengayo ezithwele intela, futhi umnotho abalungu abanawo bauthole ngesithukuthuku somuntu omnyama, okusobala ukuthi umuntu omnyama othwele umlungu emahlombe. Ngaloko kasenako umuntu ukwethwala omunye umthwalo.

Umhlangano uyenqabile indaba yokuba abantu banikezwe ithambo elingasenayo nen-yama okuthiwa uZibuse. Wona uveze izwi lokuthi ukuze kudaleke inhlalakahle kulelizwe kufuneka amasango enkululeko avulelwe wonke umuntu, kuphele ubandhlululo, ngoba nakhu phela yena uHulumeni usenqabile ukukuvuma okushiwo iBandla lakhe kokuthi abantu mabavunyelwe bazithengele umhlaba ezabelweni. Lokho kukhombisa ukuthi kaqonde lutho oluhle uHulumeni ngomuntu.

Usuhlolisile umhlangano sonke isimo uHulumeni afuna ukusingenisa ngalomqondo wokwehlukana izizwe, ubonakalise umoya onovalo songathi ezinye izizwe zothatheka kanti zona uqobo zizingenisa ophathe. Ngaloko umhlangano wenze isimemo kuzo zonke izinhlan-gano zazozonke izizwe ezikulelizwe ukuba zihlanganisa abantu bonke, kungakhethwe bala lamuntu, kwenziwe umfelandawonye wokulwa nalolubandlulo oluzotshala imbewu yenzondano nokweyisana.

Umhlangano ucele neSonto lamaBhunu iDutch Reformed Church ukuba nalo keliphinde liyihlolisise kahle lendaba yokubandhlululwa kwezizwe ngomqondo wokuthi uphambene nezimiso zenkolo yobuKrestu, ngako akufanele ikhuthazwe umuntu ongu Mkrestu.

Kuyathokozisa ukuphaula ukuthi nanxa lomhlangano ubuhlanganise abaholi bezin-hlangano, ezinye kuzo ezingezwani neze, kodwa uma kukhulunywa ngalombiko we Tomlinson Commission amaAfrika awazange abonise umoya wobunye njengoba benzile eBloemfontein nnyaka. Umhlangano ugcine ngezwi elithi akumenywe omkhulu omhlangano wazozonke izizwe ezikulelizwe lakithi, aBelungu, amaKhaladi, amaNdiya naBantu kuzoboshwa izwi elosekelwa umuntu wonke kungakhethwe bala, elizokulwa nobandhlululo ngebala lomuntu.

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*WE BUILD TOGETHER . . . . . by Jordan K. Ngubane*

## THE BLOEMFONTEIN CONFERENCE

**O**N MY way back from Bloemfontein I began to sort out some of the impressions I had gathered at that truly historic assembly. A difficulty arose after I had listed them clearly in my mind—how would I present them to readers of *Contact*, very many of whom had not the slightest idea related to an African political conference? Would I give a descriptive survey of what happened or analyse the decisions taken? In the end I decided on giving a little of each.

The conference had been called by the Interdenominational African Ministers' Federation to consider the Tomlinson Report. To it had been invited representatives of organisations and leaders of thought in every walk of African life. The overwhelming majority of those invited turned up at Bloemfontein. Against this background the conference can be regarded as the most authoritative possible for purposes of expressing an opinion on the Tomlinson Report.

Recognised authorities had been asked to discuss those aspects of the report they were best qualified to tackle, and this made possible a most searching study of the report. As the speeches have been reported in the Press there is no need to go into them here.

The conference opened on Thursday, the fourth of October. Most of the delegates had arrived by then. Reverend Z. R. Mahabane, president of IDAMF was in the chair. His was the first of the main addresses in the morning session and was followed by Mr. A. J. Luthuli's. Mr. P. Duma Nokwe was the first speaker on the report as it affected the urban African. He spoke after lunch. Mr. H. Selby Msimang, with whom I had come from Natal, rose after Mr. Nokwe and expressed deep appreciation of his paper.

I rose up immediately after Mr. Msimang and analysed the real implications of the Tomlinson Report for the African people. At the close of my address, which was delivered *extempore*, the Chairman asked me to put it down on paper and present it to him for purposes of reproduction with the addresses by the main speakers.

In one sense, the conference was symbolic—there were Europeans in it. This made the conference symbolise in miniature the type of society we might see in the future. Apart from the Press and the Police, the Europeans present belonged to quite a number of interesting groups. Staunch supporters of the Dutch Reformed Church sat along the wall and seemed never to tire of taking notes. The Anglicans came in and out. So also did students. Then there were the three Liberal representatives of the Cape in the House of Assembly and Senate, together with Senator Ballinger. All these sat on benches lined against a wall, away from the main body of the conference.

But they were not the only Europeans present. Dr. A. W. Blaxall sat in the front row with a white lady. Mr. Jean van Riet, Liberal Party chairman in the O.F.S., looked extremely comfortable right in the centre of the conference—surrounded by a sea of black faces. Nobody ever even mentioned the fact that a white man, an Afrikaner at that, sat among the African people.

Towards the end of the first day the conference decided to elect a committee to draft the statement which would be issued after the conference. The chairman announced the names on it as follows: Dr. A. B. Xuma, Revs. J. A. Calata, W. Gawe, P. S. Mbete, A. H. Zulu, S. S. Tema, G. Setoloane; Professor Z. K. Matthews; Messrs. A. J. Luthuli, H. S. Msimang, W. B. Ngakane, P. R. Mosaka, G. A. Mbeki, P. D. Nokwe and J. K. Ngubane. The conference resolved later to include in this committee the men who read papers and that brought in Dr. Don G. S. Mtimkulu of Fort Hare and Mr. Selby D. Ngcobo, lecturer in Economics at Fort Hare.

The drafting committee sat on Thursday evening for a short session and on the following day it grappled with the statement until past midnight. Practically the whole of Saturday morning, up to well into the afternoon, the committee deliberated on the African people's reply to the Tomlinson Report. Shortly thereafter it was presented to the conference and was read in English and translated into Xhosa and Suto. The conference accepted it with acclamation.

Most Liberals will have seen the statement by the time this reaches them. This eliminates the need to go into details thereon but it included a number of noteworthy features. It started by rejecting the Tomlinson Report totally. This was not just a wholesale condemnation of the Report motivated by the desire to see nothing good in it. As a matter of fact Mr. Selby Ngcobo had painted a picture of life for the Africans in the Reserves (if the Tomlinson Report was implemented) which would have made the mouth water. After lengthy discussion the conference made it plain that it did not attach any value to the good Mr. Ngcobo had been at pains to dig up.

One consideration was that the apartheiders think in a total way. If apartheid came with a plan which was 99.9% wrong and .1% right you would be grossly misunderstood and misrepresented by the men of apartheid if you pointed out the virtues of the .1% of the report. The case of Advocate Nokwe came up over and over in the drafting committee where people pointed to the utter cynicism of the government which shouted itself hoarse in praise of its educational system which had made a Duma Nokwe possible but in the same breath concealed the fact that this same man was refused accommodation where he would be near the law courts. In this light the only language the government was capable of understanding was total rejection of the report.

There was another consideration—this time one of principle. The conference rejected the very principle of separate development because in order to produce maximum good for all concerned the development of the Reserves would have to be part of a bigger plan of regional development for the country as a whole.

The conference saw hope and salvation for South Africa in the direction of race co-operation and interdependence. Integration was rejected pointedly in the committee as having lost its meaning as a result of being used by the United Party and others to justify the *status quo*.

A number of steps were to be taken in the direction of swinging South African thinking towards the ideal of co-operation and interdependence. The most important of them was the creation of a broad united front of all groups and peoples opposed to apartheid. Conference did not say how such a front would have to function in practice. It merely threw out an idea for discussion and conversion into a reality.

One of the ways would be to rope in the Churches, most of which had up to now fought very largely on the sidelines. They were asked to come out more openly in the fight to preserve values which were precious to them. At the same time a special appeal was addressed to the Dutch Reformed Church to reconsider its attitude to the race question.

The discussions in the committee were very revealing. The Africans sought a way whereby they could assure the Afrikaner that it was not his destruction they were planning. They wanted a new unity of the peoples of South Africa based on values cherished jointly. They believed that this was the only guarantee of peace and security for all concerned.

But the mere declaration of principles and the creation of fronts would be of limited use by themselves if they were not reduced to the level of having practical meaning in the life of the individual. With this in mind the conference made a powerful appeal to all South Africans, on both sides of the colour line, to break down the colour bar in their relations.

Apart from the truly representative character of the conference one noted the will to think independently on the country's problems. Neither the delegates nor the main speakers

bothered themselves much about confining themselves to criticising apartheid. They were all concerned to find a way out. A question almost every speaker asked in one form or another was: What are we going to do next? *One noted, also, the fact that not one speaker expressed a single anti-White view.* In political organisations with party "lines" this would not have been remarkable. But in a highly-mixed gathering of the type under discussion it was remarkable that although some very angry and even threatening things were said against White domination, a clear distinction was always made between the White oppressor and the White countryman, friend or ally.

In part this could be explained by the fact that those White South Africans opposed to race oppression were taking a stand on the race question which had begun to make an impression on African thought. One felt, however, that the avoidance of expressing anti-White views resulted also from a feeling of doubt and uncertainty in the minds of the majority of the delegates. They did not know whether or not the White democrat would stand by them to the bitter end in the fight against apartheid. If assured that this would be the case the new bonds being forged between Black and White would be strengthened. If not, the African did not want to be let down.

It was also remarkable that the conference devoted a good deal of attention to the Dutch Reformed Church and that delegates should have made a direct appeal to it. The two-fold character of the appeal, to the Christian Churches as a whole and specifically to the D.R.C. was designed to accelerate the process of clarifying the real issues at stake at present for the rank and file in the Afrikaans community—with a view to convincing the Afrikaans man-in-the-street that the most reliable guarantee of survival for him lies in joining hands with African, Indian, Coloured, Jewish and English South Africans in an alliance which would ensure that the values which would make it impossible for him to go under were given permanence by being upheld by the overwhelming majority in the nation.

But over and above all one was deeply impressed by the clearly expressed determination of the delegates to do all in their power to rid this country of the scourge of race oppression. The statement itself utters grave warnings by implication; it conveys, perhaps better than the speeches, the sense of catastrophe which apartheid has made the African people live under. In the final reckoning it seems, on reflection, that this was the sense the Africans had come to express in concrete forms and against which to devise effective strategy. One returned with the feeling that new and exciting challenges face the Liberal Party.

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## PARTY NEWS

### NATIONAL

At the National Executive Committee meeting held near Ladybrand, O.F.S., over the week-end of September 22/23 Mr. Alan Paton took the chair for the first time since his appointment to the National Chairmanship of the Party. The meeting was attended by the four Provincial Chairmen of the Party, Mr. Walter Stanford, M.P., and members of the Provincial Executives of the four provinces.

Considerable discussion took place over the question of elections and particularly the Party's plans for the 1958 General Election. Provincial Committees will be asked to send their comments and suggestions to the National Office in time for this matter to be discussed fully at the National Congress.

The *National Congress* itself was high on the meeting's agenda. It will definitely be held in Cape Town over the week-end of January 12/13th. On Friday 11th a meeting of the full National Committee will be held in the morning and, in the evening there will be a public meeting. An all-out drive will be made to get to the Congress as many delegates and observers as possible from the other provinces and it is anticipated that Cape members will be there in force for all sessions. A list of delegates from each province is to be with the National Office by October 31st and resolutions for submission to Congress must be in by November 15th. The text of resolutions will then be forwarded to all divisions well before Congress.

Two valuable memoranda were laid before the National Executive. The first, submitted by Mr. Molteno, amplified his proposals for constitutional safeguards to protect the rights of individuals and minorities under a Liberal government. The second, submitted by Mr. J. K. Ngubane, discussed the question of improved contact with the African people. Neither memorandum was fully discussed and both will return to the next meeting of the committee.

The National Organiser, Patrick Duncan, will spend a week in Johannesburg during October, with Alan Paton. They will be concerned mainly to raise funds but will also attend

a number of recruiting meetings. At the end of October Patrick Duncan will attend the Natal Provincial Congress and he and Alan Paton will return to the Transvaal for its Congress in the first week-end in November. In the middle of November Messrs. Paton, Duncan and Peter Brown will spend a week in Cape Town.

The Party sent a message of good wishes to the Inter-denominational African Ministers' Conference in Bloemfontein. In addition, members of the Party who attended this Conference included Senator and Mrs. Ballinger, Senator Leslie Rubin, Rev. John Skomolo and Mr. J. K. Ngubane.

### NATAL AND O.F.S.

With the annual Provincial Congress due to take place in Maritzburg on October 27th the last month has been one of great activity in Natal. Since the middle of September a series of branch meetings has been held at Greytown, Edendale, Winterton, Charlestown, Nottingham Road, Kokstad and Pentrich. All these meetings have been well-attended and delegates from all branches will attend the Provincial Congress.

In Stanger and Pietermaritzburg the Branch meetings were made into something more ambitious than a simple meeting for members. At Pietermaritzburg, Mr. Jordan Ngubane gave a public address on "African Political Movements". His grasp of his subject and the manner in which he dealt with it were remarkable and it was certainly one of the best addresses delivered at any Party meeting in Natal during the three years of the Party's existence. At Stanger Alan Paton spoke on de-segregation in American schools. Well over a hundred people attended the meeting and gave Mr. Paton a most attentive hearing. Quite a number joined the Party at the end of his address.

During his visit to Natal Senator Leslie Rubin was not given much time for relaxation. With Jordan Ngubane and Pat Poovalingam, he spoke at a house-meeting in Kloof, and the following night went to a similar meeting at Verulam. Whether it is entirely due to his influence or not we are not quite certain, but the fact is that Branches of the Party have been formed, or are in process of formation, in both these places now! Both Branches will be represented for the first time at the Provincial Congress.

In Durban itself there has been considerable activity and, on October 11th, another new branch of the Party was formed in the Red Hill area. Membership is such that Red Hill will send two delegates to Congress.

The Party and its individual members have also been active in other fields. Two members of the Natal Division attended the African Ministers' Conference in Bloemfontein and served on the drafting committee responsible for the detailed statement issued at the conclusion of the Conference. At an A.N.C. study conference held in Durban to discuss the Tomlinson Report four of the eight speakers were members of the Party. They were Leslie Rubin, Alan Paton, Leo Kuper and Violaine Junod. In addition Alan Paton was one of the main speakers at a Group Areas Protest Meeting organised by the Natal Vigilance Committee in Pietermaritzburg on October 14th.

### CAPE AND TRANSVAAL

We regret that news from the Cape and Transvaal did not reach us in time to be included in this issue.

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Christmas Card:* The Party Christmas Card will be ready by the time this issue reaches you. It is hoped to produce something of better quality than last year's card and again expressing a liberal theme. It is also hoped that the price will not exceed sixpence a card. Please get in touch with your local office and place your order with the Secretary as soon as you can so that we know how many to order.

*Appeal:* Have you done anything about last month's appeal yet. The response has been very good from some quarters but much more money is needed. Please send us what you can spare.

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Liberal Party addresses in the larger centres are: 47 Parliament Street, Cape Town; 240 Church Street, Pietermaritzburg; 25 Plowright Buildings, Plowright Lane, Durban: c/o Mrs. S. Stakemire, 21 Princess Road, East London; 69 New Kempsey Buildings, Fox and Joubert Streets, Johannesburg.

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