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THE BLACK SASH

DIE SWART SERP

Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper.

Vol. 1. No. 4.

APRIL, 1956

Price 6d.

DIE BELANGRIJKSTE TAAK

EEN van die meer samehangende en goed beredeneerde toesprake wat gedurende die huidige sitting van die Parlement gelewer is, was die van mnr. S. F. Waterson, die V.P. lid vir Constantia gedurende die tweede lesing van die wetsontwerp vir die Afsonderlike Verteenwoordiging van Kiesers.

Sy tema was eenvoudig. Hy het verklaar dat die huidige Regering besig was, nie om Blanke beskawing te beskerm nie, maar in-teendeel om rasseseelfmoord te pleeg. „Dit is tragies om hulpeloos toe te kyk,” het mnr. Waterson gesê, „terwyl 'n grootse volk hulle voorberei om rasseseelfmoord te pleeg.” Later in sy toespraak, nadat hy die nuwe wetgewing bespreek het, wat die Kleurling mense hulle tradisionele regte sal ontnem, het hy gesê: „As Blanke beskawing bedreig word, word dit nie bedreig deur die Kleurlinge nie, maar deur die kortsigtigheid en eiesinnigheid van 'n handjievol Witmense, wat vandag die lot bestuur van hierdie land.”

Dit was hoognodig tyd dat dit gesê moes word en dit sal nog dikwels in die toekoms gesê moet word—die ware selfmoord party is die Nasionale Party.

Die stappe, wat tot so 'n gevolgtrekking lei, is eenvoudig genoeg om na te gaan. Daar is niks, en ons herhaal niks, wat ons kan doen omtrent die toekoms van ons land sonder die samewerking van lede van die twee groot blanke rasse nie. Dit is kern en grondslag van ons toekoms. As 'n groot aantal Suid-Afrikaners glo aan integrasie en meen dat die

FIRST THINGS FIRST

ONE of the more coherent and closely argued speeches of the present Session of Parliament was that delivered by Mr. S. F. Waterson, the United Party Member for Constantia, during the second reading of the Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Bill.

His theme was simple. He argued that, so far from preserving White civilisation, the present Government was really committing race suicide. “It is a tragic thing to have to sit helpless,” said Mr. Waterson, “while a grand people are preparing themselves to commit racial suicide.” Later in his speech, after discussing the new legislation which will deprive the Coloured people of their traditional rights, he said: “If White civilisation is in danger, it is not in danger from the Coloured people, but from the shortsightedness and obstinacy of the handful of White people who are to-day directing the destinies of this country.”

This needed saying, and it will need saying often in the future. The real suicide party in South Africa is the Nationalist Party.

The steps that lead to this conclusion are simple enough to follow. There is nothing, we repeat nothing, that we can do about the future of our country without the co-operation of members of the two main White races. That is a basic essential. If a large number of South Africans are integrationists and think that the Fagan Report holds the truth of the matter, then they can do little without persuading the majority that they are right. If

Fagan verslag die waarheid verkondig, dan kan hulle bitter min doen, tensy hulle die meerderheid oorhaal om saam te stem. As 'n groot aantal Suid-Afrikaners dink dat Tomlinson reg is, en dat ons behoort te werk in die rigting van aparte ontwikkeling, dan kan hulle ewe min uitvoer, tensy hulle die meerderheid oortuig dat hulle standpunt reg is.

Die poging van die huidige Regering om met opset van hierdie vraagstuk 'n geskilpunt te maak tussen blanke Suid-Afrikaners en dit nie te behandel as 'n praktiese saak nie, is om 'n kunsmatige newel te skep, waaragter die ware doel, soos agter 'n skerm verlore raak—namelik om eiemagtig die beheer oor te neem van 'n demokratiese volk.

Maar dit is presies wat die huidige skema van Nasionalistiese wetgewing beteken. Solank die eerbied vir die ware gees van ons Grondwet bestaan het, was daar hoop dat ons Suid-Afrikaners bymekaar kon kom om 'n praktiese beleid uit te werk, met regverdigheid jeens almal.

Daarom het die Swart Serp beweging 'n ernstig plig om te vervul. Dis reddingswerk wat uiters dringend is. Professor Tomlinson sê dat sy verslag voorrang moet geniet. Hy het dit beskrywe as 'n tydbom in die hande van Suid-Afrika. Ons beweer dat hy moet agterstaan totdat ons die Unie-gees kan herwin, wat dit moontlik gemaak het vir Suid-Afrikaners om probleme te bespreek en te beslis met gemoedere nie benewel deur haat en vooroordeel nie. As die volksgroepe van hierdie land onversoenbaar uitmekaar gedrywe word, dan is dit klaarpraat met Fagan en Tomlinson en al hul verslae—en met ons ook.

CONVOY INCIDENT

THE convoy to Cape Town is old history now, but those of us who were privileged to share in that wonderful experience can never stop talking about it, so I hope I may be forgiven for recounting a little incident that touched us all very deeply.

On the Wednesday, 15th February, we all drove, as you know, in convoy to Muizenburg. We were all very tired and in a somewhat emotional state after our all-night vigil on the Tuesday. We were greeted with great enthusiasm all along the route, and the final touch of sentiment was added when, as we stopped at a robot, an elderly, respectable-looking Coloured woman came up to the car, and said, with tears in her eyes, "God bless you, ladies! You break my heart!"

D. G.

a large number of South Africans think that Prof. Tomlinson is right and that the country should work for separate development, they still can do little without convincing the majority of the rightness of their views.

The deliberate attempt on the part of the present Government to make this a racial issue between White South Africans and not to treat it as a practical one, is to create an artificial fog under cover of which the main object is lost sight of—the seizing of dictatorial powers from a democratic people.

But that is exactly what the present pattern of Nationalist legislation means. As long as the respect for the spirit of the Constitution

DEDICATION

IN pride and humbleness we declare our devotion to the land of South Africa, we dedicate ourselves to the service of our country, we re-affirm our loyalty to the contract of Union which brought us together. We pledge ourselves to uphold the ideals by which our Union was inspired, of mutual trust and forbearance, of sanctity of word, of courage for the future, and of peace and justice for all persons and peoples. We pledge ourselves to resist any diminishment of these, confident that this duty is required of us, and that history and our children will defend us.

So help us God, in Whose strength we trust.

existed, there was some hope that we South Africans could get together and hammer out a practical policy, with justice to all.

That is why the Black Sash movement has a solemn duty to perform. It is a rescue job of the utmost urgency. Professor Tomlinson says that his report has first priority. He has described it as a time-bomb in the hands of South Africa. We say that he must take second place to the re-capturing of that spirit of Union in which South Africans discussed and settled problems with minds not fogged with hatred and prejudice. If the people of this country are driven irreconcilably apart, then Fagan and Tomlinson and all their reports are gone with the wind—and so are we.

POLITICAL MORALITY AND THE ABUSE OF POWER

WHAT do the words "political morality" mean? They sum up for us those values in public life which make civilised society possible.

Any short re-statement of the phrase "political morality" would probably be "short, simple and wrong." At the same time many people who are rooted in Western societies, and who have the necessary facts at their disposal, acquire what might almost be called a knack, more or less developed, of recognising the immoral features of political acts. We do not always feel impelled to call in a philosopher before diagnosing a legislative act as immoral on our own responsibility.

This does not mean that the services of the philosopher, lawyer and theologian are not invaluable. Far from it. Without their help concepts which go to make up what we mean by the blanket-term "political morality" would be more obscure and less familiar to us than they are now. We have behind us not years but centuries in which thinkers have endeavoured to clarify notions like the Rule of Law, moral obligation, and the Good Society. The residue of these thoughts has filtered down into the language we use to-day, and these notions form the vital background to our everyday talk and everyday judgments about right and wrong. For the purposes of the W.D.C.L. they have been re-capitulated in the phrase "political morality."

A society is made up of individual persons, and it is our view of what a "person" is which underlies all ideas of obligation and all the rules and conventions of political behaviour.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

IT cannot be too strongly emphasised that unless individuals exercise their right to criticise government acts, and so safeguard their own rights and the rights of others, they will wake one day to find those rights which they assumed were unquestionably theirs, and inalienable, are gone. In allowing a government to increase its power at the cost of individual liberty we allow corruption. Power corrupts; power is abused when it is used to abuse people, when human beings are treated as less than persons. In "The Rights of Man and Natural Law", Jacques Maritain maintains "the right of every human being to be treated as a person, not as a thing." He speaks of "rights linked to the very nature of man."

It is the "eternal vigilance" of individuals which makes a standard of political morality possible and prevents the abuse of power. And it is the acceptance of a standard of morality by people who are prepared to protest and to use their personal responsibility to the full that acts as a check on those in power. It checks those who would diminish the fundamental rights of persons, those who "have turned against these rights with an enslaver's fury."

In this country we have to face the problem not only of maintaining the fundamental rights of the

enfranchised but, if we are honest, of questioning the lack of fundamental rights of the disfranchised majority. Are we, the enfranchised and the disfranchised, all persons? Or do we subscribe to the following conversation? (From Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn"):

"'We blowed out a cylinder head.'

'Good gracious! Anybody hurt?'

'No'm. Killed a nigger.'

'Well it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt.'

In our context we have to test proposed legislation such as the (Natives) Prohibition of Interdicts Bill against the standard of political morality. Does this show respect for the fundamental right of persons? Should groups of persons be penalised in this way so that the Government may pursue its policy unhindered by the delay of the legal processes? It is surely not very difficult to see that legislation or proposed legislation of this kind is immoral. Once the Government and its supporters accept the fitness of imposing barriers between the people and the courts it is clear that the Rule of Law no longer has any real meaning for our society.

OBLIGATION TO RESIST

WE can appreciate the fundamental nature of these ideas by seeing what an important and indeed decisive part, they have played in the lives of other people—some of whose names we know. The last letters of Count Helmuth James von Moltke, who was executed by the Nazis in 1945 for what he **thought** and not for any overt action, light up the significance of the moral crisis in which we ourselves live. Von Moltke's letters were collected and prefaced by Lionel Curtis, who was, as a young man, the first town clerk of Johannesburg. The letters have a special significance for us as Von Moltke's mother was a South African, the daughter of Sir James Rose Innes, first Chief Justice of the Transvaal after Union, and later Chief Justice of the Union for many years.

The letters of Von Moltke are clearly stamped with the belief that any valid opposition to the abuse of power must ultimately be based on the acceptance of the inherent dignity and worth of persons.

Von Moltke himself accepted the full measure of personal responsibility; it was his view that individuals are obliged to behave responsibly, to attack what is abhorrent to them in the political life of their country rather than to lie low.

The preface to the letters says, "These letters were written as the only service the writer could make to his country and the world at large. He clearly meant them to be read as such." It is in the belief that both Von Moltke and Lionel Curtis (who died last year) hoped that these letters would afford encouragement, and help to clarify issues for people

opposing the abuse of power by governments and peoples, that I quote from them.

In a letter written to a friend in England in 1942 he says:

"But to-day it is beginning to dawn on a not too numerous but active part of the population not that they have been misled, not that they are in for a hard time, not that they might lose the war, but that what is done is sinful, and that they are personally responsible for every savage act that has been done, not of course in a mortal way, but as Christians. Perhaps you will remember that in discussions before the war, I maintained that belief in God was not essential for coming to the results you arrive at. To-day I know, I was wrong, completely wrong. You know that I have fought the Nazis from the first day, but the amount of risk and readiness for sacrifice which is asked from us now, and that which may be asked from us to-morrow require more than right ethical principles, especially as we know that the success of our fight will probably mean a total collapse as a national unit. But we are ready to face this."

And in the same letter he says:

"For us Europe after the war is less a problem of frontiers and soldiers, of top-heavy organisa-

tions or grand plans, but Europe after the war is a question of how the picture of man can be re-established in the breasts of our fellow-citizens. This is a question of religion and education, of ties to work and family, of the proper relation of responsibility and rights."

On 10th January, 1945, after his trial in the People's Court, Von Moltke wrote to his wife of himself and other members of the Kreisau circle:

"Our case-histories provide documentary proof that it is neither plots nor plans but the very spirit of man that is to be hunted down."

The degree of immorality, of the fundamental disrespect for the person, which is shown by recent legislation in this country, accomplished or proposed, is sufficiently striking to justify the use of the Von Moltke letters quoted above. While the totalitarian claims of National Socialism in Germany were more far reaching than claims hitherto made by our present Government it is apparent that the difference is one of degree and not of kind.

To-day we oppose certain legislation, certain political acts. If we are to measure up to the demands of our time, and if our political criticism is to be firmly based we must recognise the fundamental nature of the issues confronting us.

ANNE WELSH

ARME KLEIN BOERTJIES!

AT a recent meeting in Pretoria of the Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging, certain teachers aired their views on the teaching of history in the high schools of the Province. The "wonderful British Empire" and the British democratic system, they said, should not be thrust down the throats of "klein Boertjies". Could it be that the "klein Boertjies", having learnt about democracy from the textbooks, might one day dare to criticise undemocratic procedures?

History in South Africa, one of the teachers felt, should be a much more localised affair. Towns and places in the Transvaal should have more emphasis. One can appreciate this point of view. After all, why learn about Waterloo when the Waterberg is so close at hand? Why worry about the Battle of the Nile when all the great and glorious history of Nylstroom is yours for the asking?

PATCHWORK HISTORY

LEVITY apart, this point of view is peculiar, both in relation to the future of the "klein Boertjies" who are going to have this patchwork history taught to them, and also because of the involuntary revelation these pedagogues make of their own rather pathetic psychology. They don't like Livingstone, so out of the history books he goes! What a strange moral code this is, that refuses not only to look an unpleasant fact in the face, but even to acknowledge its existence.

It brings to mind, of course, the story of a sailor who put his telescope to his blind eye to avoid seeing a signal with which he did not agree. But as his name was Nelson, maybe he won't appear in the new history syllabus of the Transvaal.

Poor little Boertjies! It is quite conceivable that one day in this modern world of radio, planes, television and atom bombs, some of them may escape from the great Transvaal fortress and come into contact with a normal world where facts are facts, even if you don't like them. Are they not going to feel resentful when they realise the gaps in their knowledge? Are they not going to feel lost, handicapped, inferior? Or are they merely going to feel bewildered and confused and fit only, like so many little ostriches, to put their heads back into the nice comfortable sand of Nationalist doctrine?

And, dreadful thought, one or two may even grow up to become officials at South Africa House, and find Trafalgar Square more the hub of the universe than Louis Trichardt. And won't they begin to wonder when they see democracy at work in Britain, when they are quite sure that only the Netherlands has a democratic system?

Arme klein boertjies, indeed.

M. E. FISHER

REMOVAL OF THE COLOURED VOTE — THE FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIONS

By DR. ELLEN HELLMANN

WITH the constitutional issue waiting the verdict of the Courts, it is now time to restate the fundamental objections to the removal of the Coloured voters of the Cape from the common roll and to the consequent diminution of their rights. For that there has been the gravest diminution is beyond doubt. By giving the Coloured people four Members of Parliament, the Government is ensuring that no matter what economic, educational and cultural advance the Coloured people make, their political representation shall remain fixed in the ratio of 4 to 150: four members for over one million Coloured, 150 members for less than three million Whites.

Instead of the candidates in 55 different constituencies paying some attention to the Coloured voters at least at election time, and 55 successful candidates carrying some measure of responsibility for the welfare of their Coloured constituents, there will be four, the four "Coloureds' Representatives", who will undoubtedly be regarded as the protectors of Coloured interests. This is what happened after the Africans of the Cape were put on a separate roll. The great majority of Parliamentarians felt absolved from responsibility and left the job to the three Natives' Representatives who, despite their great ability and sincere endeavours, have been able to achieve nothing of real significance for the people they represent.

PRECIOUS RIGHT

WHATEVER the arguments of those who deny that the removal of the Coloured voters constitutes a diminution of rights, the Coloureds themselves are not in any doubt. To them it is oppressive legislation, depriving them of a right held precious. The very representative deputation which Mr. G. J. Golding led to Pretoria as early as 1950 expressed emphatic opposition to the separate representation of the Coloured people. Earlier that year the majority of members of the Coloured Advisory Council had resigned in protest against the Government's policy of apartheid and the threatened removal of the Coloured voters from the common roll.

The removal of the Coloured voters from the common roll abolishes a right exercised for more than one hundred years. When the first elected bodies, the Municipal Boards, were set up in the Cape in 1836, the franchise was colour blind. All who had the necessary qualifications could vote and stand for election. In 1853 the Cape obtained representative government. There were property and educational qualifications for the franchise, but no discrimination on grounds of colour.

"The common roll franchise is a vested right of the Cape Coloured people, dating from 1853," says

Professor L. Thompson. The qualifications were subsequently raised somewhat to lay down, as they do now, that to become a voter a man had either to earn £50 a year or occupy a house and land worth £75 and to be able to sign his name and write his address and occupation. At Union, this Cape tradition of "equal rights for every civilised man" came up headlong against the Northern tradition that "the people desire no equality between Coloured people and the White inhabitants either in Church or State." The result, as is well known, was compromise: the existing franchise laws would be maintained in the four provinces of the new Union. The North gave way by agreeing that the Non-European vote in the Cape should be safeguarded by a two-thirds majority: the Cape made the important concession that only Europeans could be eligible for membership of Parliament. The right of Non-Europeans to become members of the Cape Provincial Council was, however, retained. Now this too—the last vestige of the Cape liberal tradition—is to go: for the Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Bill, introduced this Session, provides that the two representatives of the Coloured voters in the Cape Provincial Council must be Europeans.

Since Union the value of the Coloured vote has been progressively lessened. In 1930 European but not Coloured women were enfranchised: in 1931 adult suffrage without property or educational qualifications was introduced for Europeans but not for the Coloured. Later there was compulsory registration of Europeans.

Now what was left to the Coloured people is to be abolished. Why? The important charge is that Europeans were being swamped by Coloured voters. This charge is untrue. There were, in all, 47,804 Coloured voters as against 529,404 European voters in the Cape in 1949, when the Government announced its plans. The percentage of Coloured voters dropped from 20.8 per cent. in 1921 to 8.3 per cent. in 1949, and since then both absolute numbers and percentage of the total Cape vote have dropped further. In only 4 of the 55 constituencies in the Cape did the Coloured vote amount to more than 20 per cent. (the highest being 26.7 per cent.) and in 37 constituencies it was below 10 per cent. of the total number of registered voters.

According to Professor L. Thompson, "In the extreme case, if every Coloured man was a registered voter, the Coloured proportion of the Cape total would only be about 30 per cent." One could, of course, in discussing the "threat" to the European vote, point out that in the unlikely but possible event of a very narrow majority, the Coloured representatives would hold the balance of power in Parliament. But I do not believe that

