

I PERSONALLY AM NOT demoralized, bitter or dispirited—far from it . . . Adversity can strengthen one, and besides to belong to the bandiet brotherhood of the Resistance gets more exhilarating every day, bringing together people who would perhaps not otherwise have so much in common and at stake. Under this kind of persecution an *esprit de corps* begins to burn brightly in the cells. Surely this particular government has not forgotten so soon the theory that the spirit of resistance and of freedom thrives behind bolts and bars, under lashes and in the face of vicious displays of brute force where moral justification is absent.

Thoughts on the Immorality Act

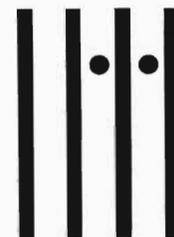
I have thought a lot about my crime. Most prisoners do. I shall continue to defy the spirit of this immoral Act—that goes without saying. Inter alia, it attacks the freedom of friendship, and that is a human entitlement which, though I believe thought to be getting “out of hand” by some, is one which I shall defend. To enjoy the company of whom one chooses is surely an eternal right? However, it may be some relief to the C.I.D. perhaps to know that White society’s accolade of banishment apparently awaits me . . .

Whatever the psychology was behind the Ontug Act (and this law should be known by its Afrikaans appellation, since it has nothing to do with the accepted meaning of the word ‘immorality’ in other languages), I, as a sufferer under it, have to congratulate the government on the effectiveness of the punishment upon those who are convicted of violating it. Firstly, unless the man gets lashes, there is equality of sentence for both concerned, a perplexing exception to the rule of apartheid laws. Secondly, the government as the arbiter of the people’s morals, a rather grotesque situation which seems to cause immense amusement around the world, succeeds in causing a satisfactory dose of anguish, despair and indignation in the hearts of those so imprisoned. I should have thought that while White reaction to offenders remains one of ribald repugnance, this did not augur too well for the rigours of integration now being boldly canvassed. The oddest thing politically about the Act seems to me to be that it is least defended by the average Afrikaner. Is it lest the lynchpin drop out of the apartheid contraption, that the government seem to lack the courage to act on this phenomenon, and humanise the law? Another observation which I think should be made is that it is beginning to earn the healthy disgust of Africans, who perceive in its workings yet another classic in the code of master-racialism. Previously they regarded it as a tragi-farce, now for what it is, the prevention of going native Act, rather insulting.

Finally, I think this—how we order our personal racial relationships is today’s biggest question, for on that depends the future. Presidential messages, Chairman’s speeches all exhort us. But this Act, I refer to the “attempt” sections, serves to bedevil Black-White relations. The most militant plans will not solve our difficulties unless the races are able by their hourly contact to earn the required minimum of respect and goodwill, and to overcome the resentment that swirls among us.

If I exaggerate the part that this Act plays in the country, overlooking the suicide business, it is because its significance is now clearer to me. While economic rights will probably not much longer be able to be denied, and I imagine even the principle of political rights, maybe without teeth for the present, is not far off acceptance, the final social barrier looms up as the most jealously guarded preserve. This helpful government has interpreted this as miscegenation “rights.” That the Afrikaner Volk should be profoundly proud of their history, and now have self-preservation nerves is understandable. But cannot some bolder spirit enlighten them this far—that they would stand a much better chance of survival as a *groep* if they did not affront the world, waving an F.N. rifle in one hand, and

Thoughts on my Crime



in the other the provisions of the Ontug Act, their moral masterpiece?

Thoughts on the political situation

To me the crux of the matter is that South Africa belongs to all its people, as much to Warden van Tonder and myself, as to Citizeness ***. We are a composite nation; jail gave me glimpses of this identification. Especially I remember early one morning finding myself peering at my Transkeian (black) opposite number through a massive iron grille gate. He was also on his hands and knees, engrossed in polishing the floor his side as I was on mine. Without the confusion caused by the barrier being constantly opened and shut the job could have been done twice as swiftly by one of us. My dull brain sensed that this experience had some bearing on separate development. Do we not depend on each other, and does not the whole country with its institutions belong to the people who inhabit it? Yet today the nation’s power is misused chiefly to protect and advance the dominant *groep*. Democracy—the most effective barrier yet devised by man against tyranny—is shelved, and there descends the pretentious practical joke of apartheid, falsely labelled self-determination. How grateful we would all be to the man who ultimately admits that governmental policy is simply “to hell with democracy” and entirely devoted to the self-preservation of the spiritually fogbound Volk.

Surely it is obvious that this way a débâcle is coming of which the Sharpeville extermination was a minor tremor. It would *not* come if white South Africans took

a deep breath and plunged into competition with all comers upon an equal footing in all fields of human endeavour. By that I mean stand on our own feet as individual characters, not as State-vassalized stooges and underlings sighing about the good way of life, and groaning if it wasn't for the bloody kaffir. This is in reality what my generation is called upon to do. That such a decision is unlikely to result from the next session of blindman's bluff being played in Parliament is, alas, obvious. For political success still only attends those who equivocate and evade, the latest prize after fourteen years' groping is to be fenced-in granules of black people forming not a Fifth Province, but a Bantustan; with the Indian Ocean for its rear, this should provide some interesting exercises for the white military

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served a jail sentence
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minds of the Republic. But anyhow hats off to the government, we're getting action, they are on the experiment and trying something new. That is splendid, and who knows, in Africa, it could lead somewhere quite unexpected.

I no longer trust the sincerity of this government. That more and more brute thinking and force is being used to cement up the ominous cracks in its moral foundation is something I respect physically, but detest in my heart. To repair the damage even better, it is ironic but possible that this government now desire to be attacked so that self defence, hardly an unattractive policy, may rally their doomed fortress. Much as this government may exasperate and unite the West, East and the Neutrals as the "common enemy", I hope policies will be resisted that could lead to South Africa finding itself at war, for that is all that would be needed to dominate the country still further by martial law. Alas, a military situation is developing fast without external action. To the government, sabotage is another mighty rend to its foundations. It represents a further step that began years ago with racial prejudice, sat it out though growing disrespect to outright distrust and even hatred, then at last violence was adopted, as a final and justifiable gesture, by souls maddened by wrong. Remember, the second stage of professional terrorism is often martyrdom followed by almost open rebellion, and then the fun really begins. This in spite of all the symptoms and warnings.

Is there a solution?

Yes. Let us act and experiment ourselves. Let the younger generation break with foolish traditions, and

blaze its trail of black/white friendships, platonic. This will stand us all in much better stead. We're sick to death of banal theories and bloated promises. It is not romantically over-enthusiastic or nebulously idealistic to believe in fraternity, justice and equality. Let us show we have the spirit to build bridges across this sea of hypocrisy and intimidation. We sense our country has a massive potential for a throbbing future, the driving force of the continent. And make no mistake we admire what Afrikanerdom has achieved for itself. But now that the moment has arrived when we are all about to be dragooned into commandos to ward off angry Urdus, Irish and Ethiopian troops so that this government may indulge its sudden craving for heroics, all in order that a native shall not operate a European lift, surely a reappraisal of our vaunted values is urgently called for? Let the younger generation take this initiative, before it is too late. We are of this Age, and have great faith in ourselves. We do not represent the ancient regime, nor the dying order. We are the heralds of the future.

We do not think the sky is to be bluer, nor the profits bigger in our idea of progress, but only that by more openheartedness and less greed, will our relations with our fellow human beings be happier. During my trial the State expressed scepticism that Europeans went unarmed into the townships. The official mind bifurcated and leapt to the inference—"agitators". Call us what you like, but the fairer possibilities of life and manners have always agitated societies and will continue to do so, be they white, black or polka-dotted ones. I am convinced that only by more contact with each other will we have the character, culture and inspiration necessary for a better future for all. Immediately we would get some new ideas. Summoning a few tribal dignitaries to Pretoria to admire the Minister's new office panelling—is that contact?, though it is courtesy.

We need action, for there are now present too many abuses in our society. And fear, the herald of every revolution, is present, as ever indicating rottenness and great wrongs which must be redressed, before the mixture, with a few more ingredients to be added, becomes inflammable.

My own future, if any

As a convicted criminal I am disqualified from exercising the right to vote, on the wholly possible assumption that one is incapable of organising one's own affairs. Thus I find myself in the debatable company of lunatics, minors and twelve million non-white South Africans. So I shall continue by waging my own personal war against this regime and much of what it stands for. Round One in these hostilities, a protest on the social front, was a reverse—position, home and earnings all gone. I do not feel any reason to creep away forever in shame, nor do I relish the idea of arousing possibly half a dozen more consciences out of three million egotists by further jail sentences.

As a result of this experience I feel I have learned to have more sympathy with my opponents, however hard and smug I think you are, because now I perceive how many of you are in the prison uniform of warders. You are at the same time prisoners of your own past indifference that has led to present infantilism. ●