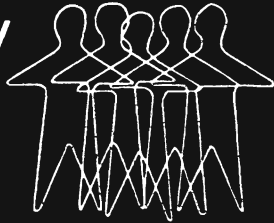


The New African



THE RADICAL REVIEW

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MBURUMBA KERINA

Namib Freedom

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THE NEW AFRICAN P.O. BOX 2068 CAPE TOWN

The Big Smear

THE BANNING OF PETER HJUL has led to a witch-hunt for Liberals. It was a chain reaction rather than a carefully planned hunt.

The ban made Sir de Villiers Graaff challenge Vorster to prove Hjul's "communism" in court. Vorster showed how much importance he attached to the leader of the opposition; after a few verbal exchanges he ignored the challenge. But *Die Burger* and other Nationalists seemed to think that it was worthwhile discrediting Graaff by showing what sort of people he was supporting. It helped to build up anti-Liberal hysteria.

The Paarl Riot Commission of Inquiry's sessions in Umtata then linked members of the Liberal Party with Poqo and the Bashee Bridge atrocity. In Parliament Greyling took Matanzima's assertions as proven. The arrest of four Liberals in Umtata further gave the impression that the police had found a link with Bashee Bridge; though they were later released without charges. The atmosphere of that week reminded an observer of the South African scene of "the feeling in America at the height of the reign of Joe McCarthy." In the interim report of the Commission of Inquiry, Commissioner Synman has again mentioned this nefarious connection. But he has not released the evidence which enabled him, he maintains, to link members of the non-racial Liberal Party with Transkei terrorism.

At the time of the Hjul ban the Liberal Party seemed threatened with a slow death while its effective members were banned as they proved themselves dangerous; Vorster banned Vigne and Hjul because their work was effectively disrupting Bantustan window-dressing. But in the McCarthyite atmosphere, ten days later, it looked as though there might be a total ban, even though the Party had not yet proved itself dangerous enough to warrant the anti-government propaganda which would follow. This now looks as though it was a false alarm.

It is gratifying to see the Liberal Party taken as seriously as it has been in the last month. But it is no good for people of the radical opposition to join the leader of the official opposition in throwing up their hands and running to their text-books of political philosophy to prove that Vorster does not know what a communist is. Anybody who is effective in their opposition to Afrikaner Nationalism and the white laager will be forced underground to continue the struggle for a non-racial South Africa.

In such a situation it is going to be increasingly difficult to advance non-racialism but it the only force which can temper violence in the coming change.