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INDIAN OPINION

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CLASS WAR AND COMMUNISM

(Mahatma Gandhi)

These are times that try men's Souls. The Summer Soldier and the Sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the Service of if their Country but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives anything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as Freedom should not be highly rated.

—Paine.



He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven.

—Lord Herbert.



SOCIALISM and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it, for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man. That is the fundamental conception of Hinduism, which has years of penance and austerity at the back of discovery of this truth. That is why, whilst we have had saints who have worn out their bodies and laid down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have had none, as in the West, who laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or the highest regions of the earth. Our socialism or communism should, therefore, be based on non-violence and on harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant.

Ryots themselves have no greater ambition than to live in peace and freedom and they will never grudge your possession of property provided you use it for them.

All exploitation is based on co-operation, willing or forced, of the exploited. However much we may detest admitting it, the fact remains that there would be no exploitation if people refuse to obey the exploiter. But self comes in and we hug the chains that bind us. This must cease. What is needed is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer.

Let us not be obsessed with catchwords and seductive slogans imported from the West. Have we not our distinct Eastern tradition? Are we not capable of finding our own solution to the question of capital and labour? What is the system of *varnashrama* but a means of harmonizing the difference between high and low, as well as between capital and labour? All that comes from the West on this subject is tarred with the brush of violence. I object to it because I have seen the wreckage that lies at the end of this road. The more thinking set even in the West to-day stand aghast at the abyss for which their system is heading. And I owe whatever influence I have in the West to my ceaseless endeavour to find a solution which promises an escape from the vicious circle of violence and exploitation. I have been a sympathetic student of the Western social order and I have discovered that underlying the fever that fills the soul of the West there is a restless search for truth. I value that spirit. Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific enquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty.

INDIAN OPINION

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Another Immoral Act

A SECTION of the Indian community resident in the Union is greatly perturbed over the announcement made in Parliament by the Minister of the Interior, Dr. T. E. Donges, that the Government had decided to deprive Indian women married to South African Indians and their minor children of the right to enter the Union, which they have been enjoying under the Immigration Act of 1913 and which was vouchsafed to them, under the Indian Relief Act of 1914, which formed part of the Smuts Gandhi Agreement and again under the Capetown Agreement of 1927. The Minister is reported to have said:

"There had been some justification at the time for the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement allowing the entry of Indian women and children because of the discrepancy between the numbers of Indian men and women in South Africa.

"With the passage of time and the entry into the Union of Indian women and children, this discrepancy had been removed.

"Since the Agreement a total of 4,929 Indian women and children had entered South Africa.

"There had been some difficulty in administering this legislation, largely in connection with the identification of Indians.

"The Government had therefore decided to withdraw this concession and to apply the normal laws of the country to the entry of Indians.

"This decision would require legislation, which would be introduced after the general election."

The Minister said the proposed legislation would be made retrospective to today:

"There had been a certain amount of illegal immigration of Indians into the Union, but it was impossible to fix the number of illegal immigrants. His department had assured him that the number was not so large as it was sometimes supposed to be.

"It could only be controlled if there was effective national registration, and with this object in view, instructions had been given to his department that national registration in respect of Indians should be speeded up."

If the proposed legislation to effect this were passed, and it would certainly be passed if the Nationalist Government were to

decide that it should be passed, Indian women and children would be affected by such legislation from February 10, 1953, since the Minister has said that it would be made retrospective to the day he made the announcement.

If such a piece of legislation were passed it would be yet another atrocious act on the part of the Union Government. What would happen to all the Indian women who have already been married and their minor children who were at present out of the Union? Must their marriages be made null and void and what about their minor children without the protection of their fathers? It is true that a large percentage of Indians resident in the Union are now able to get their children married in this country but all cannot do so owing to their religious and social customs. For instance there would be no inter-marriages between Hindus and Muslims or between persons belonging to the Madras or Bengal Province and Bombay Province. So the scope for Indians getting married to their womenfolk within the Union is not as big as Dr. Donges imagines. And of course it should not be forgotten that Indians could not marry Afrikaner or English women even if they would, as that would be a criminal offence under the Union Statute.

Dr. Donges has established no case to justify such a harsh step on the part of the Government. According to his own statement 4929 Indian women and children had entered the Union in the last thirty-nine years which is by no means a considerable number. The difficulty in administering the legislation referred to by Dr. Donges seems ambiguous. The reference is, if we may be permitted to say so, to hoodwink the European public.

Dr. Donges refers to a hard-earned "right" as a "concession." It is not a concession but an existing statutory right which the Government contemplates depriv-

ing the Indians of, which will amount to the breaking of a solemn pledge.

Dr. Donges referred to "a certain amount of illegal immigration of Indians into the Union" but we thank him for being good enough to admit that "the number was not so large as it was sometimes supposed to be." It is surely not the rule of law to penalise a whole community for the fault of a few individuals.

Apart from the practical difficulties and hardships such an act on the part of the Government would cause it is morally indefensible since it would be an attack on individual freedom and liberty—a flagrant breach of the basic principles of democracy. Dr. Donges has thus sounded a note of warning to those Indians who are still hesitant to join the present campaign against unjust and immoral laws to do so forthwith. For if they have to die in any case why not die like men rather than worms?

Port Elizabeth Riots In News

THE Minister of Justice must have drawn from a particularly rich repertoire of experiences to paint the gruesome picture he drew in his speech justifying his "Nuremberg" decrees in Parliament. He dwelt at length on the brutal murder of the Catholic sister at Port Elizabeth and on unconfirmed reports that some Africans had cut pieces off her dead body and eaten them. He showed how he had had discussions with the White clergymen of the Catholic church destroyed during the Port Elizabeth riots and then sinisterly hinted that there is a lot more in his bosom which he does not feel constrained to make public but which justifies him in asking Parliament to invest him with the powers of a dictator.

This speech must be seen against two important factors. Firstly, in another six weeks South Africa—that is, the Whites who have the vote—will go to the polls in an election about whose outcome the Malanites are not too sure. Secondly, the Malan Government is desperately in need of material by which to justify its brutal and pagan treatment of the non-Whites before the eyes of the world.

First, for the elections. It is a deeply entrenched political tradition among a large section of the Whites here that the voters' flesh should be made to creep with hideous pictures, real or imaginary and very often imaginary, of the African people's alleged intentions towards the Whitemen as a group. Quite a number of elections have been won, particularly by Afrikaans-speaking members of nationalistic persuasion, this way. The Minister knew full well that by telling the unreasoning and gullible White voter in this country the blood-curdling things about the White Catholic Sister's death, every Whiteman, barring a few intelligent and independent-minded, would swallow his story holus-bolus and see in every African a cannibal in Western clothes. That would pay handsome ballot-box dividends. He was not interested in the harm this would do both to the African and the White community. He was interested in preparing for the elections and creating a wave of racial hysteria which would sweep him and his party back to power.

For this reason, it is absolutely imperative that the true facts of the situation should be more widely known. Firstly, a few hours after the riots Dr. J. L. Z. Njongwe, President of the Cape branch of the African National Congress, called forth for a judicial inquiry to ascertain the real causes of the riots. There was information at his disposal which he wanted to place on record before such a tribunal.

Speaking, weeks later, at Odenaalsrus, Dr. Malan rejected Dr. Njongwe's demand on the score that a judicial inquiry would be used to put all the blame on the Police! This was a very shocking admission from the Prime Minister. It was shocking also because it was an unfair slur on the judiciary itself. The Prime Minister apparently did not trust a single judge in the Union of South Africa to sift fact from propaganda and arrive at a fair and impartial assessment of the real causes of the riots. After refusing to ascertain the facts publicly, the Minister of Justice comes forward with his horror stories. Who does he think he will fool with these, except the blind whom he and the Prime Minister lead?

But in demanding a judicial inquiry Dr. Njongwe and through him the African National Congress, wanted to be given the

opportunity to cross-examine some of the Government's agents-provocateurs who acted at Port Elizabeth to stir up trouble and furnish the Malan Government with exactly the type of "evidence" which Mr. Swart now bandies about as though it were proven fact! If he was as sure as he tells the country he is that all these things were true, why was he afraid of appointing a judicial commission to give his facts and evidence the substance they so visibly lack to-day?

A very significant passage in the Minister's catalogue of African "vices" is his reference to the discussion he says he had with the White Catholic Fathers outside their ruined church. According to the Minister, they told him that their church had been burnt down because it was the only one with White priests! But here again, the facts contradict the Minister's allegations. The church was burnt down long after the Police had publicly announced that they had the situation well in hand.

If, after they had restored order, the church was burnt down the obvious inference is that on second thoughts the agents-provocateurs decided, to burn the church down to make it possible for the Malanites to say the riot was an anti-White demonstration.

It is also very significant that the Minister was at pains to link the Catholic Church in this light with the riots. The Dutch Reformed Church, which supports the Malan Government, is at the moment and was before the riots, on a spirited campaign to discredit the Catholic Church. The Minister must have relished the idea of hearing Catholic priests confessing to him that atrocities had been committed against their church because they were White. If they did say that, the Minister must have looked on them with feelings of mingled pity and contempt for the Catholic Church is such a determined opponent of apartheid and an advocate of racial equality that it recently appointed a Basutoland African Bishop of Leribe while simultaneously elevating an Indian to the position of a Prince of the Church!

For men who have done these things to come to one of the high-priests of apartheid and tell him they had rough treatment because of their skin was only to invite him to say: "Dr. Malan and I have always told you so!"

Finally, if Dr. Malan was quite sure that no agents provocateurs

had been at large in Port Elizabeth during the riots, why was he so keen to shield the Police, even at the expense of suppressing the truth? The technique is too much in line with the burning-down of the Reichstag to pave the way for Nazism's brutal laws. And the present Government rarely deviates from the political and racial philosophies it imbibed from its Nazi mentors.

In this light the blood-curdling stories about the Africans having cut pieces off the corpse of a White woman have to be taken exactly for what they are—slanderous reports whose authenticity the Prime Minister refused to establish because he did not believe them himself on the evidence placed at his disposal by Minister Swart immediately after the riots. How dare Minister Swart come forward with such

FEROCIOUS POWERS

"The Cape Times" dated February 3 writes the following leading article on Mr. Swart's much discussed Bills:

WE wonder why it is that the Nationalist Party confesses itself unable to undertake the business of running this country without conferring on its Ministers the most extravagant personal powers. Most of the Western world has been able to deal with communism in terms of its ordinary law, its ordinary police and its ordinary apparatus of constitutional safeguards for the rights of the individual. Mr. Swart needs an anti-Communist Act to exclude the courts and to give him personally the most outrageous powers to outlaw individuals, to declare them communists, or, if "communists" is not sufficiently sweeping in its application, to declare them "statutory communists," the only adequate definition of which is a person whose political activities are displeasing to Mr. Swart. For generations the United Party and other governments have been able to maintain law and order without more than occasional difficulty. Mr. Ewart produces his Public Safety Bill, a ferocious measure which clothes the Minister with far more power than is asked for by a country at war, with more power than any country outside Hitler Germany and the Iron Curtain has ever needed to deal with the most trying of domestic situations. As the Communist Bill eliminates the courts, so the Public Safety Bill eliminates Parliament. Mr. Swart can declare his states of

information and bandy it about as though it were established fact?

Of course, all this shows up the desperate plight of the Malanites. They are so wrong in their advocacy of wicked political ideas that anything, no matter how unfounded, is good enough, if only it will paint their opponents black. There is absolutely no truth in these stories. The Government itself knows there is no truth in them and it was for this reason it refused to investigate them through a judicial commission of inquiry.

The tragedy in South Africa is that there are White people who will ignore all these facts and believe the Minister simply because he says something evil against a community which they hate. But thoughtful persons in the White camp will not have forgotten the behaviour of the Government during the riots.

of emergency as the spirit moves him. His regulations are not really subject to parliamentary approval and the employment of the powers which Mr. Swart will force Parliament to give him could give an unscrupulous politician police-state control of this country in much the same measure as was once enjoyed by Meesters, Hitler and Himmler. And now comes the Criminal Law Amendment Bill.

We have studied this misty example of inadequate parliamentary draughtsmanship with our utmost concentration but we still hesitate to assess its effect with any confidence. On the credit side is the fact that, within its extremely wide terms, the courts are still left to determine such facts as are necessary and to impose sentences. Even in this elementary requirement of modern government there are reservations. After a second offence the court, whether it agrees or not, is forced to impose a sentence of imprisonment or whipping; magistrates are given a jurisdiction of three years in goal or a fine of £300 although the wisdom of generations has hitherto limited this jurisdiction to six months or £50; and Mr. Swart takes the familiar right, at his own absolute discretion, to impose on a convicted person the most arbitrary restrictions on personal movement. On the more positive provisions of this enactment we are less confident. Two or more persons favouring the repeal or modification of any law seem to become a "protest" or a "support" or a "campaign."

Or a hazily-indicated offence being committed, these two or more persons lay themselves open to the most savage penalties. We are open to correction by Mr. Swart but it seems to us that the following could be a hypothetical example of the application of his law: The United Party (which consists of two or more persons) holds a meeting at Krugersdorp to protest against the High Court of Parliament Act. Nationalist hoodlums break up the meeting. One or two members of the audience appear before the magistrate and are fined £2 or ten days for a breach of the peace. If the 'Cape Times,' without any reference to the goings-on at Krugersdorp, were to describe the High Court Act as a political fraud, we should have committed an offence under Mr. Swart's new Bill. If our reference to Dr. Donges's eccentric measure was construed as a "protest" we would be liable to a fine of £300, a ten-stroke whipping and three years in goal; or to combinations and permutations of these punishments. If our words were construed as an incitement, we could get for the original crime—a fine of £500, a 15 stroke whipping and five years in goal.

It is, of course, easy to understand what Mr. Swart is getting at, as it is easy to sympathize with him in his attempts to deal with communists and to keep the peace. What gives cause for anxiety is the clumsiness and incompetence with which Nationalist politicians can face no problem except in terms of giving extravagant powers to its Ministers. Once an incompetent regime is set on the road of keeping in office with bigger and bigger doses of personal power there is little that can be done to save it from the fate which awaited Hitler. We would, however, appeal to Mr. Swart and his friends to look for a moment at the wider picture. We have a handful of Whites in this country asserting political supremacy over a community of 10,000,000 Blacks in a continent of 150,000,000 Blacks. The Natives Representative Council has gone and the only organized channel for the expression of Black grievances is threatened with extinction with the expulsion of the Natives' representatives from Parliament. The Natives have been told by the Nationalists that any expression of grievances is communism, and then came the Communist Act. The Public Safety Bill and now this Bill of Mr. Swart's clamp down the lid ever more firmly. With great strength and great stupidity a lid can be clamped down on a boiling kettle for quite a long time. But when it eventually blows off there is a considerable explosion. Have the Nationalists not the wit to realize that they are not being strong in these essays in police-state crudities, that they are merely being incompetent?



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LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

AFRICANS AND INDIANS

By C. W. M. GELL

THE discussion of some sore points in the essential solidarity of the Indian and African communities in South Africa was recently so admirably handled in these columns by Mr. Ngubane and the editor, that I only wish to deal with two points where the possibility of misunderstanding remains and which it may be easier for one who is neither an African nor an Indian (though deeply sympathetic towards both) to discuss. Otherwise I agree entirely with what was written in the January 23rd issue.

My first point is Mr. Ngubane's statement that most Africans consider the Indian merchant to be typical of his community. My quarrel here is not with Mr. Ngubane who understands very well that this is not the true position and was only reporting what his fellow-Africans believed. But I want to try and show how very little factual basis there is for this belief which is shared by many Europeans.

In 1939 Indians held 19,000 licences to trade. Only 8,000 were general dealers or fresh produce dealers—the rest being hawkers, pedlars, patent-medicine sellers etc. whom we can disregard. Out of these 8,000, about 4,000 were in Natal, about 2,700 in the Transvaal and about 1,300 in the Cape. During the war the number of Indian licences increased somewhat. I do not have the latest figures by me; but we shall not be far wrong in setting off this increase against the number of families which hold two or more licences, and accepting the above figures as representing the number of Indian families which today derive their income from keeping shops, stores etc. (This excludes shop assistants and other salaried employees, both African and Indian. We are here concerned only with families owning shops).

A Natal University survey in 1946 found that Indian families average about seven persons. On this basis we may estimate that the shop owning Indian families comprise about 28,000 persons in Natal (i.e. about 9 per cent of the Natal Indian population), about 19,000 persons in the Transvaal (i.e. 40 per cent of the Transvaal Indians) and about 9,000 in the Cape (i.e. 50 per cent of the Cape Indians). The total number of Indians dependant on the profits of shopkeeping, therefore, comes to about 56,000 persons or 16 per cent of the Union's Indian population. That leaves rather more than 300,000 Indians (270,000 of them in Natal) earning their

livelihood in other ways—and this figure may well be larger in fact, as I have assumed for the purpose of this article that all members of a shop owning family derive their income from the business. The sort of jobs the shopless have may be seen from pages 12-13 of Professor Burrows' 'Indian Life and Labour in Natal'; but his classification is not altogether satisfactory as the shop-owner and his assistants are lumped together under "Commerce," "Public Service and Professional" includes doctors, lawyers, clerks and municipal cleaners, and "Agriculture" covers large land owners, petty tenants and wage labourers

As Bad As Africans

The Natal University survey in 1946 found that Indians in Natal rural towns had an average annual income per head of £39; but that Durban Indian labourers, who comprise rather over half the Natal Indian population, had only about £21 per head (i.e. about the same as the Africans in the rural towns). And the fact that between 60 and 80 per cent of the Union's Indians live in conditions of poverty, undernourishment, disease and lack of housing equivalent to that of the Africans in the urban areas has been very clearly demonstrated in a series of booklets issued by the Institute of Race Relations.

My conclusions from these facts are that (1) the Indian merchants are a small, economically fortunate, unrepresentative minority of the Indian population; and (2) that the identity of interests and grievances between the large majority of both Africans and Indians in regard to economic conditions and opportunity, health, housing, political and municipal rights etc. is just about 100 per cent.

Nevertheless, I will be the first to agree with Mr. Ngubane that this does not dispose of the matter. If most Africans and Indians are companions in misfortune, is the small, more fortunate Indian minority pulling its weight in the common struggle of all non Europeans for a larger future in the land of their birth? And here, I think, the honest answer must be an almost unqualified "No". It may be that the tiny African minority that has lifted itself above the ruck is equally backward in coming forward, though there is some evidence to the contrary. But in any case nothing like 15 or even 10 per cent of the African population yet belongs to this better-off class. The Indian mercantile minority, however, is

a significant section of the Indian community and it is not participating in its people's fight in proportion either to its numbers or its wealth.

Now, whatever Africans may have against this self-centred apathy, the less fortunate Indian majority has a great deal more legitimate grievance. We are not here concerned with over greedy traders who cheat their clients, since in almost every case the remedy lies in the clients' hands to trade elsewhere. In any case, rapacity is not the monopoly of any one race group. But we are questioning the reluctance of an upper class, which should be responsible for the leadership of its people, to commit itself unequivocally in the common cause. I do not necessarily mean that every wealthy Indian should join the Defiance Campaign personally, for that is a decision that each man must make in his own conscience and no one has the right to taunt another for coming to some other decision. But there should be no room for doubt about unity of purpose in pursuit of common aims.

No New Phenomenon

This reluctance on the part of some to say where they stand is no new phenomenon. All through their history in South Africa there have been Indians who were prepared to acquiesce in oppressive or discriminatory legislation, provided that their own established interests were safeguarded. They sacrificed their fellow-Indians' future opportunities on the altar of their present profits, instead of taking their stand on principle. I imagine that Mr. Ngubane's anxiety about the Natal Indian Organisation is based upon his fear that it might be contemplating some such treachery in return for a few individual concessions. I cannot say how well founded his fear may be. But clearly the Group Areas Act is the sort of measure which lends itself to such devious negotiations.

For instance, a few months ago I had occasion to speak to some of the leading Indian merchants of a small Transvaal town. While stressing that it seemed to me important for Indians not to appear to claim anything for themselves which was not equally applicable to all non Europeans, I said that I thought they would be justified in organising themselves against the sort of Group Areas plans that are circulating in the Transvaal, because Indians have much to lose from these and Africans little or nothing (except in particular areas of the Rand.) I inquired whether they had given these matters any thought; but they replied that, though much worried, they had not

yet got down to any concrete thinking. I mentioned the example of Lydenburg where, but for their united front, the 146 Indians might by now be consigned to a site two miles out of the town on a hill adjoining the sewage farm with their trade licences cut from seven to one. But in spite of the obvious threat of similar Group plans in other towns, I have yet to see signs of a united effort to oppose them. Each merchant seems to be too fully pre-occupied with his business and the possibility of some loophole for himself, to face the comprehensive menace to the whole commercial existence of the Indian community in the Transvaal and the Cape, where nearly one half owns shops and most of the other half work in them. That such short sightedness will inevitably reap its own reward is no compensation to the great non-shop-owning majority of Indians who, with their African companions, are deprived of the full measure of leadership and support that this wealthier and better educated minority could and should provide.

A Betrayal

Secondly, while the deplorable housing conditions of most of the Transvaal and Natal Indians are primarily due to an increasing population being restricted to the old residential areas and buildings, it is aggravated by the unscrupulous manner in which some Indian property owners exploit the shortage of accommodation to fleece their Indian and African tenants. The Transvaal Indian Congress rightly opposes the Lenz housing scheme on principle; but it cannot get the full support of its own community while some unfortunate homeless are charged exorbitant sums for rent and "goodwill" by some of the owners of the inadequate accommodation available for Asiatic occupation. Profiteering from shortages is not peculiar to Indians—it is a world-wide malpractice. But in the present conditions of this country it is a betrayal of the non-European cause and an open invitation to the "divide and rule" mentality of white politicians.

If for no better reason than their own true self-interest, it is time for the wealthier Indians to realise that they have more to lose than anyone else by the application of Nationalist policies; that no one can help them unless they are determined to help themselves and their poorer fellows, and that no one will wish to help them unless they put their own affairs in order on a basis which earns them the affection and not (as sometimes today) the hostility of their less fortunate brethren, Indian and

African. The downfall of that minority of the commercial minority which profiteers out of others' poverty and homelessness will be mourned by no one in any race group—and it cannot be long postponed by any private pacts or temporary concessions.

I will make my second point much more shortly. Mr. Ngunane and the editorial of January 23rd shared a common error with the editor of the 'Hindustan Times.' They talked in group or race stereotypes—of the Indian or the African. The argument is not really whether Africans are "mercurial" or not; but whether we should allow ourselves to think of large bodies of people, who are composed of good, bad and indifferent individuals as all peoples are, as possessing group attributes. To make generalisations about voluntary allegiances—such as Roman Catholicism, liberalism etc.—is in order, for a man may renounce what he no longer believes; but no one can renounce his race group. The limits of racial generalisations must, therefore, be recognised. If I say "Africans are mercurial," I do not say "all Africans are mercurial" but that many Africans are. I have no doubt that the editor of the 'Hindustan Times' in using the phrase "mercurial Africans" in that context had in mind the past propensity for many Africans (especially in company) to become excited and violent under duress. This led him and many other sympathetic observers to wonder if Africans could achieve the restraint and self-discipline required by a campaign of civil disobedience. The non-violent success of the Defiance Campaign is a standing reproof not merely to these doubts, but to those who extended an inadequate knowledge of some Africans into generalisations about the conduct of all of them.

One further point arises out of this—that, as a people advances towards its full human status, it must also learn not to be over-sensitive about criticism. If in this instance Mr. Ngunane has possibly made rather much of a trivial remark, he is in the good company of Dr. Malan, Pandit Nehru, and many individual South Africans of all races and colours—and of other peoples the world over, not excluding Britons and Americans. I think the first rule for all sensible men of goodwill is to ascertain whether the apparently derogatory remark was in fact intended as such, or whether the speaker has merely chosen his words badly to express an unobjectionable sentiment. Secondly, after giving him the benefit of any doubt in this regard, to see whether the remark contains a truth, however

unpalatable, which we should do well to ponder and correct in ourselves. Thirdly, to refute what is unjust or unjustified without anger and with moderation and dignity—sometimes with laughter and good-humoured irony. Anger, vituperation and scorn belong to the childhood of our racial history, for none is above reproach and honest men admit it. Balanced judgment and reasoned refutation come with the maturity into which our African and Indian peoples are rapidly growing.

Since the above was in print we received the following from Mr. Gell:—

Sir,—The latest available figures of trade licences (1948/9) are tabulated below as the totals of General Dealers and Fresh Produce Dealers' licences held by Indians:—

	G.D.	F.P.D.	Total
Natal	2,601	1,491	4,092
Transvaal	4,027	798	4,825
Cape	1,072	524	1,596
	7,700	2,813	10,513

Only in the Transvaal, therefore, were my figures seriously inaccurate. But the addition of perhaps another 14,000 persons to my estimate of 56,000 Indians dependent on owning shops hardly affects my argument that only a very small minority of the Indian community is composed of merchants and their families.

Instead of 16 per cent., the figure should be about 19 per cent for the whole Union and the provincial proportions: Natal 9 per cent, Transvaal 70 per cent. (I think a number of families here hold more than one licence) and Cape 58 per cent.—Yours etc., G. W. M. GELL.

THE WIDER WORLD

By JOHN GILD

COALITION between the United Party and the Nationalists remains a distinct possibility in the near future. It has already been mentioned in the London press, but our daily newspapers prefer not to discuss it openly. The pressure for coalition comes from some of the big mining companies. They want to attract capital from overseas for new and further ventures, and they find investors reluctant to risk their money as long as the future in South Africa is dark with uncertainty.

Above all, business men are scared of Mr. Strydom. He could become Prime Minister at any time now. Dr. Malan is an old man, anxious to retire from politics. Mr. Havenga is not in good health and might leave the political scene at the same moment, or shortly afterwards. That would leave the way wide open for Mr. Strydom, unless the Nationalist Party could be split into two. On the other side, it is recognized that Mr. Strauss obviously lacks the qualities necessary for leadership. So coalition, if it comes, would occur under a new leader, either Mr. Pirow, whom the mine-owners like, or someone else. Coalition would "solve" the constitutional crisis by providing the Government with a two-thirds majority. Mr. Strydom and those Nationalists who support him would form the official Opposition. It is not a pleasant prospect. The world would be led to believe that all was now well in South Africa, but few, if any, of the recent laws would

be repealed, or even radically amended.

Are The Russians Racialists ?

I am sorry that Mr. Gell wrote as he did in this journal about Russia and the Jews. It seems to me that, like so many others, he has failed to distinguish Russian hostility to the state of Israel from anti-Semitism. These two attitudes are by no means the same thing. When the Russians and the Czechs helped to establish the new Jewish state in 1948, they no doubt hoped that it would be friendly to them. In fact, however, the dependence of Israel on American dollars has since ensured that it would side with the United States in its cold war against Russia. Today Russian policy is more interested in cultivating friendship with the various Arab states, none of whom have any fondness for their former masters, France and Britain. Now the Russians allege that some Jews, prominent in political life in Czechoslovakia, were secretly sympathetic to Israel and that, encouraged by American agents, these men were guilty of political crimes. The allegation may be untrue. Some of the evidence brought to support it looked absurd to those able to assess its value. It may well be that the Russian and Czech Communists are searching for scapegoats on whom to blame their internal difficulties. However that may be—and it is very hard at this distance to form an accurate picture of events—there are no

grounds for assuming that Russia is about to embark on an anti-Jewish crusade. One of the great achievements of the Soviet Union has been to abolish racial discrimination and to strive for racial freedom. During the second world war, when Russia was our ally, everyone admitted that fact, including the newspapers now so quick to deny it. No doubt popular prejudice, as distinct from legal discrimination, has persisted to some extent against the Jews. That is only to be expected, if one understands that law alone cannot abolish racialism. It would be as if all legal colour bars were suddenly abolished in this country. Africans and Indians would, for a very long time, continue to encounter White people who had failed to adjust their behaviour and their minds to the new situation. I do not argue that Soviet Russia is a perfect country. Far from it. Its shortcomings are considerable, especially in the field of civil liberties. But nothing is gained by deluding ourselves into the belief that the Russians have suddenly become racialists. Let us at least wait and see. I guess that, in a year's time, Mr. Gell will be able to view the whole affair much more calmly and to write about it in the style we normally expect from his persuasive pen.

Trade Unions

Even those with very little money to spare can improve their minds by buying an occasional book. But, on entering a bookshop, most men are bewildered by the variety and range of books facing them. Now and then I intend to recommend in this column books of moderate price that would really enlighten readers. By the way, when a useful book costs a pound, more or less, why should not two or three readers club together and buy it to share between themselves?

Trade Unions play such a vital part in political progress that we should all know something about their history and purpose. I recommend a recent small volume, "Trade Unions" by Allan Flanders (published by Hutchinson; price 11s. in South Africa.) It tells you about the British labour movement, how it is organised and what it does. It is a clearly written text-book, the first of its kind to be published for years. Public libraries tend to avoid this type of book, which is another reason for buying your own copy.

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