

LIBERAL OPINION

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FREEDOM TO OPPOSE APARTHEID

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On 10th June the South African Minister of Justice made the astonishing statement that "no person's movements have been restricted in any way under the powers which I have for being opposed to apartheid". Mr. Vorster said that he wanted to make this statement **emphatically for the record and for the benefit of the outside world.** The whole tenor of his statement was designed to suggest that there was full freedom to oppose apartheid in South Africa. We wish to state emphatically for the record and for the benefit of the outside world that a great many people have been restricted for being opposed to apartheid and that full freedom to oppose apartheid in South Africa does not exist. We will find all the examples we need to substantiate our case from our own experience in the Liberal Party.

In late 1962 Mr. Vorster himself initiated a smear campaign against the Liberal Party which implied that the Party was involved in violence in the Transkei and was no more than a Communist tool. Up to the end of 1962 only two members of the Liberal Party had been banned. But having set his smear campaign in motion, and softened up white South African opinion in advance, a systematic campaign of banning leading Liberal Party members was started by Mr. Vorster in early 1963. Peter Hjul, Cape Chairman of the Party was his first victim. Since then a dozen leading Party

members have been banned. A tribute to the effective non-racial character of the Liberal Party is the fact that the people who have been banned have come from every group which inhabits South Africa. And, whatever the Minister may say, they have been banned for one reason only, and that is because they have opposed apartheid outspokenly and effectively. Not one of them has been banned because he has been found guilty of an offence. Some have been charged with publishing anti-apartheid material, but this has only happened **after** they have been banned, never **before**. Most have never been charged with anything at all. All are restricted to their home areas, prevented from communicating with other banned persons, prevented from attending any gathering, forbidden to make a speech or publish anything at all in a newspaper or anywhere else. One, Elliot Mngadi, who is a preacher in his church, is prevented from attending a religious service unless it is held in his own home and attended by members of his family alone. The only "offence" of importance which Mr. Mngadi, and every other banned Liberal, has committed is to be vigorously opposed to apartheid.

Since early 1963 a large number of Liberals of all races have received magisterial "warnings" to abandon activities Mr. Vorster sees as "furthering the aims of Communism". The activities are, in fact, furthering the aims of the Liberal Party.

Bans are designed to silence active opponents of apartheid, but they are also intended to intimidate a much wider circle of people, those who might be organised and led by the banned ones. **Warnings** are aimed at frightening out of political activity actual and potential political leaders; they usually aren't effective, but sometimes they are. But bans and warnings are only part of the intimidatory system which Mr. Vorster and his Security Police bring to bear upon rank-and-file Liberals; the small, visible part of the ice-berg. Most intimidation goes on unseen, away from the eyes of the newspapers and the ordinary white public, known only to those immediately involved in it.

Any active Liberal in present-day South Africa must soon accustom himself to having his car followed when he goes to a meeting in a rural African area, to having a small army of Security Police present at any public meeting he attends and to having his own, and everyone else's, speeches and remarks recorded by an ostentatiously displayed police

tape-recorder. This has been the pattern for a long time now, but recent Liberal Party experience in Natal suggests a much more systematic and widespread campaign of intimidation.

In rural areas, where most party members are Africans, the police show themselves conspicuously at the scene of a meeting before it is due to start. They drive up and down in their jeeps and trucks, stop near the meeting-place, ask people where the meeting is going to be held, and do their best to create the impression that there is something illegal about the meeting and that anyone who goes to it will get into trouble. This was standard police practice at rural meetings before the Party's annual Natal Provincial Conference this year. One Party worker who was visiting outlying branches at this time was twice taken to the local police station and questioned at length. On the second occasion, and no doubt to make the whole operation more spectacular and so spread word of it more widely, the train on which the organiser was travelling was stopped between stations and he was taken off, with his luggage, and loaded on to a police vehicle.

The lorry carrying African delegates from Northern Natal to this conference was stopped. Names and addresses of delegates were taken and most have since been visited at their homes by Security Police. It was suggested to the lorry-driver that he would be prosecuted if he went farther. With this threat hanging over him he decided to turn back, and a last-minute, hundred-mile shuttle service had to be organised to rescue the stranded delegates.

When a prominent Liberal died in Northern Natal Security Police arrived at the funeral and interrupted it to remove from it for questioning another leading local Party member. The next day would have been good enough for their questioning, but they took the opportunity to show their powers before a crowd.

African Liberals working in rural towns have been visited at their work and removed for questioning, the obvious intention being to plant in the employer's mind the idea that his employee is a dangerous man to have around.

A white Liberal farmer has been raided regularly, and his aged mother, with whom he lives alone, has been terrorised by police suggestions that they might take her son at any time for 90 days . . . if he doesn't give up his Liberal Party activities.

Security Police regularly attend private branch meetings intended only for members.

Sometimes they bring a warrant authorising them to attend the meeting, sometimes they don't bother.

The families of young Party members are visited and told that they should persuade their relatives to give up their political work before they get into trouble.

Rural African members are visited after meetings have been held and are asked questions. Latest device is for the policemen to masquerade as representatives of the Party who have been sent from Headquarters to collect local information.

This is the atmosphere in which a political organisation which actively opposes apartheid must work in South Africa today. Bannings and warnings come spasmodically, but the methodical campaign of police intimidation goes on every day. Mr. Vorster knows all about this campaign. He is its instigator. His object is to make that political opposition which challenges apartheid at its roots impossible. He is not succeeding, because most people refuse to be intimidated, but he is certainly making life difficult—and his indignant claims of June 10th are so much eyewash.

THE TRANSKEI LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

From May 5th to June 20th the first full session of the new Transkei Legislative Assembly took place. It revealed some very interesting facts.

Almost the first day the Assembly met it confirmed what everyone already knew, that the Transkei Constitution does not provide for representative government. Chief Poto's Democratic Party had the support of two-thirds of the elected members of the Assembly and claimed to have won some 1,297,440 votes against Kaiser Matanzima's 445,675, yet because the majority of members are Government-appointed Chiefs, Matanzima started the session off with 66 votes to the Democratic Party's 43.

It was soon obvious that the Democratic Party could call on far more ability, brain-power and debating skill than could Chief Matanzima's Transkei National Independence Party. While Matanzima and a handful of his supporters carried the full burden of arguing the apartheid case which his Party supports, the Democrats had a large number of skilful and outspoken debaters to call upon, and did

so very effectively.

The Democrats did not have enough votes to carry the motion of no-confidence with which they opened the session, but they achieved their purpose and made the Matanzima supporters reveal themselves publicly at the very outset of the Assembly meetings. This was a serious embarrassment to some of the Government-appointed Chiefs, who came from areas which had voted solidly for Poto and who now showed themselves to be quite unrepresentative of the views of their people. The effective arguments put up by the Democratic debaters and the high-handed manner in which the "government" handled some of the Assembly debates produced the first cracks in the fronts presented by the two Parties. Two Chiefs, Mzauteti Diko of Eastern Pondoland and Qamarana Zenzile of Gcalekaland left Matanzima and joined Poto. There were rumours of others who were trying to pluck up courage to do the same. Both these Chiefs came from areas in which, before their defection, every single Chief who sat in the Assembly supported Matanzima. In contrast, in Eastern Pondoland, 7 out of 8 elected members supported Poto, and in Gcalekaland the elected members are fairly evenly divided between the two parties. The first Transkei by-election is due to be held in Gcalekaland, and it will be interesting to see whether Chief Qamarana represents a move away from Matanzima in that area. Certainly Matanzima will be throwing everything he has into the election campaign in an effort to show that it does not—and with the resources available to him, and Big Brother Republic in the background, he will start off with a considerable advantage over the Democrats. However, the Democrats will have two important propaganda weapons in their hands for this and subsequent elections.

Last year the Republican Government appointed the Cingo Commission to study the question of mother-tongue instruction in the Transkei. The Commission did what the Nationalists wanted it to do and came out in favour of mother-tongue instruction. When education policy was discussed in the Transkei Assembly the Cingo Report was submitted to it. At the same time Chief Poto's supporters submitted a whole series of motions fiercely critical of Bantu Education. The Transkei Minister of Education proposed a Select Committee of both Parties, which would consider the Cingo Report and the Democrat Resolutions. The Select Committee, in its report, recommended that the Bantu Education syllabus be abandoned in the Primary and Second-