

VICTIMISATION BY POLICE

IN THE THREE MONTH PERIOD since the last issue of Liberal Opinion was published the Liberal Party has suffered considerably from action taken against its members under the Suppression of Communism Act.

Jordan Ngubane, National Vice-President of the Party, one of South Africa's most distinguished critics of authoritarianism and staunchest opponents of all racialism, has been served with a series of banning orders, each effective for five years. Mr. Ngubane was away on a writing assignment in Swaziland at the time and his wife returned from work to find the notices pinned to the door of the house.

The effect of the bans is to confine Mr. Ngubane to the Inanda Magistracy, some miles from Durban; to prevent him from attending any kind of gathering for a period of five years; and to prevent him from publishing anything in South Africa. As Mr. Ngubane is a journalist and writer by profession, the effect of the ban would be to take away from him his means of earning a livelihood. Faced with this prospect he has decided to stay in Swaziland, where he can write and publish freely.

TERENCE BEARD

Terence Beard, Vice-Chairman of the Cape Division of the Party, has also received a 5-year banning order. Mr. Beard is a lecturer at Rhodes University, in Grahamstown. He was at Fort Hare as a lecturer at the time the Government took over that institution. He was sacked by the Government on the grounds that he was "sabotaging" the implementation of apartheid there. It was then that he obtained an appointment at Rhodes, where he has been since.

Although Mr. Beard is ostensibly banned for "furthering the aims of Communism" it is a

BLACKSPOTS

A "BLACKSPOT" is an African freehold area in "white" South Africa, an offence against apartheid and something which it is Government policy to remove ELSEWHERE. That this policy will cause great insecurity, heartbreak, and the uprooting of between a quarter and half a million people, seems to be a matter of complete indifference to the powers-that-be.

The Blackspot "problem" is centered on Natal, where there are some 250 of these condemned communities. An organisation called the Northern Natal African Landowners' Association has been established for some years and its object is to oppose the removals. On Sunday, September 1, 1,200 Blackspot residents attended a mass prayer meeting at Roosboom, one of the threatened areas. At this prayer meeting the following appeal was adopted:

We people of Natal, faced with the threat of losing our land and property which we have owned honourably and legally for more than half a century, are assembled here to pray to God to help us and give us courage, and to ask Him that we should be left in peace in our lands. We make this appeal to our White fellow Christians and fellow citizens:

- *Pray for us that we may be given courage and be left in peace on our lands.*
- *Speak for us who have no voice to speak for ourselves. Intercede for us with the Government and the Authorities.*
- *Work for us so that this terrible plan of removal may be abandoned.*

The Landowners' Association intends to go ahead with its plans to oppose and publicise the removals, some of which are imminent.

reflection on the abuses to which this Act is put that, at the time of the introduction of Mr. Vorster's original "sabotage" Bill, Mr. Beard produced a document drawing the most telling comparisons between the methods of Mr. Vorster and those of Joseph Stalin. This document was quoted extensively by the Parliamentary Opposition in the debate on the Bill.

Mr. Beard was detained in Umtata earlier this year when, with three other Liberals, he was investigating allegations of police brutality in the Transkei.

With him at that time were Dr. C. F. Goodfellow, Mr. Cromwell Nododile and Mr. Hammington Majija. In the period under review both Dr. Goodfellow, another Rhodes University lecturer, and Mr. Nododile, have been summoned before a magistrate and warned to desist from activities "calculated to further the aims of Communism". Mr. Nododile is the Liberal Party Organiser in the Cape. His work is exclusively calculated to further the aims of Liberalism. Is this what he must now stop doing?

An attempt was made to arrest Mr. Majija after he had spoken at a meeting at Bumbane, the home of Paramount Chief Sabata of Tembuland. Tribesmen attending the meeting were so incensed that the police decided to let Mr. Majija go—for the moment.

"WARNINGS"

Magisterial "warnings" have also been delivered to Mr. Peter Rodda, Chairman of the Port Elizabeth Branch of the Party, and to Mr. Norman Bromberger, a Port Elizabeth member of the National Committee. As in all cases of "warnings" the Magistrate has been quite unable to tell the people concerned what it is they must stop doing. The usual answer is "You should know!"

The first Party member in the Cape Province to receive a 5-year banning order was Peter Hjul, Chairman of the Cape Division. On July 31, Mr. Hjul was arrested and has now been charged with having contravened his banning order. It seems that the case against him is that he had refreshments with friends at his private club. Mr. Hjul was released on R800 bail and appeared in court on August 19. His case was remanded to the middle of September, the magistrate refusing to reduce bail.

On the same day, August 19, 18 Cape Liberals appeared in court charged under the Criminal Laws Amendment Act for having staged a poster demonstration on February 16 in protest against the original ban on Peter Hjul. They were found guilty and fined R50 (or 25 days). Neil Ross, the "organiser" of the protest, was fined R75 (or 30 days). The matter has been taken on appeal. If the appeal is dismissed the whole future of poster protests may be in jeopardy.

VAUGHAN STONE

Vaughan Stone, Johannesburg schoolmaster and long-standing member of the Liberal Party, was detained for several weeks under the 90-days detention Act and was then taken straight from his cell to Jan Smuts airport and deported to Britain. Mr. Stone was a British subject and the police alleged that he had organised an escape route to Bechuanaland for political refugees.

Maritz van den Berg of Pretoria won his appeal against a conviction, and sentence of 30 days imprisonment, without the option of a fine, for allegedly entering a "proclaimed native area" without a permit. Peter Brown, National Chairman, appeared in the Mtunzini Magistrates Court in Zululand in July, charged with having held a meeting in the nearby Mangethe Reserve without the Bantu Commissioner's permission. He pleaded guilty and was fined R20 (or 20 days imprisonment).

To these examples of their free use of their powers under the law the police have added continuing attempts to intimidate Party members. This intimidation takes the form of visiting, and questioning members and by trying to persuade their employers to sack them. Unfortunately this last technique is too often successful, especially where employers are dependent on Government permits to remain in business.

The Abuse of Power

(Address by ALAN PATON at the Public Opening of the National Congress of the Liberal Party, Cape Town, 1963)

THE LAST TIME I was here was when we held a meeting to protest against the banning of Peter Hjul. On that same evening Randolph Vigne received his banning order. This National Congress of the Liberal Party sends them both, their wives and their families, our warm and affectionate greetings. We also send our affectionate greetings to our National Vice-President, Jordan Ngubane, who has since been banned, and to his wife and family.

Smears

We also had another anxiety on our minds—for the first time a newspaper of repute, reporting the hearings of the Paarl Commission, came out and reported, by means of a headline, the identification of liberals with the murders at Bashee River. The name of the Liberal Party was also mentioned, in an oblique way, so that while no direct accusation was made, the smear was left. We reacted so strongly that Mr. Justice Snyman protested that Mr. Advocate Steyn (representing the S.A. Police and others before the Commission) had been wounded at the very root of his honour.

The Judge was not in the least concerned that we had been wounded at the very root of our honour, and in a much graver way.

Mr. Justice Snyman has now made a kind of retraction. He says the Liberal Party was not implicated "as such" in the Bashee River murders. As far as we are concerned he can keep his retraction.

Unfounded Charges

Judge Snyman ought to answer an important question in the public interest. He says that white persons were concerned with the violence in the Transkei. He says—I quote—"Some of them have been described by witnesses as members of the Liberal Party. Some were described merely as liberals". **BUT WHO WERE THEY?** I am astonished at this. The Judge tells us what witnesses say—but not one scrap of evidence has been adduced to show that these witnesses spoke a word of truth. This is what I can only call astonishing behaviour.

Mr. de Wet Nel has acted similarly. He also has evidence but it is not in the "public interest" to say what it is. One can hardly credit such a situation. A leading Minister has evidence relating to murder, but he cannot reveal it. Many people conclude—and many say that they conclude—that whatever evidence the Minister has, it would not bear testing in a Court of Law.

We, as Liberals, must defend ourselves. The days have passed when the civil liberties of all are defended by all.

A leading newspaper can smear us in a bold headline, and yet give little prominence to any reply. A judge can say there was evidence, and never test that evidence to see if it was true or false. A Minister can say there is evidence relating to murder, and regret that he cannot reveal it. A Member of Parliament can make charges against the Liberal Party "as such", and take good care not to repeat these charges outside the House.

Power Abused

These are signs of the times. You can say pretty hot things about the Black Sash, Nusas, the Progressives, the Universities of Cape Town and Wits, and get away with it. You can say