

6th Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture

We come of age

Edgar Brookes

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S. A. INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS
P.O. BOX 97

JOHANNESBURG

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HOERNLÉ MEMORIAL LECTURE

A lecture, entitled the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture (in memory of the late Professor R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, President of the Institute from 1934 to 1943), will be delivered once a year under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations. An invitation to deliver the lecture will be extended each year to some person having special knowledge and experience of racial problems in Africa or elsewhere.

It is hoped that the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture will provide a platform for constructive and helpful contributions to thought and action. While the lecturers will be entirely free to express their own views, which may not be those of the Institute as expressed in its formal decisions, it is hoped that lecturers will be guided by the Institute's declaration of policy that "scientific study and research must be allied with the fullest recognition of the human reactions to changing racial situations; that respectful regard must be paid to the traditions and usages of various national, racial and tribal groups which comprise the population; and that due account must be taken of opposing views earnestly held."

We Come of Age

“‘WATCHMAN, what of the night?’ It is all too obvious that the watchman must report, not the breaking of dawn, but an intensification of darkness. Yet it is as certain as anything can be in human life that the spirit of liberty is ineradicable and cannot in the end be denied.”

These two sentences from the closing chapter of Professor Hoernlé’s “South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit” serve aptly as a text for the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture. To both of them I would subscribe, eleven years later, with deep conviction—both the darkness of the night and the certainty of ultimate victory. To know the worst and to do the best we can with it has always been the Institute’s ideal. It is well that this should be stressed now, for in this year the Institute comes of age. It was in 1929 that Dr. C. T. Loram and Mr. Rheinalt Jones called seven of us with them, to launch the South African Institute of Race Relations, and that first meeting in the pleasant home of Dr. Ray Phillips in Johannesburg is still a very vivid memory to us who survive.

The Institute has come of age. But it has come of age in what the prophet describes as “a day of darkness and of gloominess; a day of clouds and of thick darkness”. As so many young men did during the years 1939-45, we have come of age upon the battle-field. The battle still rages, and we may be excused for wondering if the years behind us with all their adolescent strivings have passed only to bring us to this; if the inheritance of our mature years is not, after all, a *damnosa hereditas*, not worth the taking up. We can understand the mood which impelled Arthur Hugh Clough to cheer himself by writing:—

“Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.”

Is even this very sombre mood of consolation true? Are things really better or are they worse? Is it worth keeping on? These are the questions which I propose to face with you now.

I am not going to speak of the Institute as an organisation, nor do I, who am no longer President, speak for it: I am in this lecture expressing not its views, but my own. To review its growth statistically is a task rather for the Annual Report than for this lecture, though let me say that in this field at least there can be no room for doubt. In 1933 the Executive Committee, in a memorable debate, thought it barely possible that South African sources could contribute an amount equal to one-tenth of our present South African income. Our membership is many times greater than when Alfred Hoernlé in the same year became the Institute's third President. Our reputation is established all over southern Africa in a way which the most optimistic could hardly have hoped for in the year of our birth, twenty-one years ago. We are certainly a stronger, more experienced instrument than we were in 1929. But after all we are only an instrument, and one of many instruments, though (we believe and hope) a good one. It is not ourselves that we are thinking about, but the causes entrusted to us, and the beliefs which we hold dear. It is of these things that we want to speak, to make our assessment of the position from the battlefield.

Every age of darkness tends to have its Jeremiah. In our day Dr. Keppel-Jones has cast himself for that unenviable role. The opening phases of "When Smuts Goes" are so uncannily exact that many are consciously or subconsciously expecting the rest to follow. Dr. Keppel-Jones himself says in his Introduction: "Every one must hope that it will not work out that way. If there were no grounds for such hope it would have been a waste of time to write this book." There is a fatalism of depression as well as a fatalism of complacency. We often say "Alles sal reg kom" and forget to complete President Brand's quotation, "as elkeen sy plig doen". If our tendency is to say "alles sal verkeerd gaan" we must likewise add "tensy elkeen sy plig doen". One foremost lesson which we have to learn is the greatest of the many lessons of Gandhi's life—that no cause is lost while unconquerable spirits remain, that the final defeat is the acceptance of defeat, that in the spirit "the weakness of God is stronger than man".

Let us go on to assess our position.

Heightened Contrasts.

Since 1929 the lights have grown brighter and the shadows deeper on our South African scene. We have achieved much but at the cost of arousing fiercer and at the same time more calculated and calculating opposition. Pseudo-science has added its support to popular emotion. Nazism which has deadened men's hearts to horror has hardened their minds against reason, so that absurdities can now always find receptive intellects. The forces of reaction have massed against the forces of liberalism. There has been unexampled progress in education, accompanied by an unexampled denial of the rights of citizenship. South Africa has never been so closely in contact with the outside world, yet never so alien to it in spirit. South Africa has never been so free of external control, yet never less fit to exercise independent rights.

Let us take these contrasts one by one. First, the growth of education coupled with restrictions on citizenship. Taking Dr. Cook's figures from our recently-issued "Race Relations Handbook" we have an increase of expenditure on African education from £584,058 in the year in which the Institute was started, to £2,582,016 in 1946. If all educational expenditure, including school feeding, is taken into account, the present Union expenditure is over £5,000,000. Dr. Cook gives the enrolment figures in the Cape in 1930, the year after the Institute started, as 139,807 and in 1946 as 253,189. In Natal the increase was from 48,397 to 123,251; in the Transvaal from 71,884 to 202,426; in the Orange Free State from 24,638 to 61,502. The increase over these sixteen years for the Union as a whole was from 284,726 to 640,368, a total increase of 355,642, more than doubling the original figures.

The expenditure on Coloured education in the Cape, during the same sixteen years, rose from £323,811 to £1,759,515, and on Indian education in Natal from £56,255 to £353,965. Nor has the improvement been quantitative alone. The percentage of African secondary pupils during the same period rose from 0.04% to 3.4%. The percentage of Indian secondary pupils rose from 0.7% to 2.9%. The qualifications required for the certification of teachers have risen markedly, as has the percentage of certificated teachers. University facilities for Non-Europeans have grown out of all recognition, and over 1,000 are now enrolled as university students.

It might have been expected that with the immense liberating forces of education would have gone an increase of

citizenship rights. Few more absurd policies can be imagined than to combine increased education with curtailed citizen rights. Education is in itself, and inevitably, a great force for freedom. Yet the political position of the Non-Europeans has deteriorated to a marked degree since the year of the Institute's birth, and is most seriously threatened to-day. Never have there been so many African matriculants and graduates, so many trained professional men, so many semi-skilled industrial workers, as at the moment when it is proposed to abolish the Parliamentary franchise for all Africans. Never has the educational standard of the Coloured people been so high, and never before—not even in the days of the Hertzog Bills—has it been practical politics to talk of removing them from the common voters' roll. Since the Cape Town Agreement of 1927, very much has been done to carry out the so-called "uplift clauses" for the benefit of the Indians, but all Indian political rights have disappeared except in the Cape Province, where they do not matter.

Take another contrast—the fact that South Africa has never been so closely in contact with the outside world, yet never so alien to it in spirit. The League of Nations never touched us in quite so intimate a way as does the United Nations to-day. We have increased our diplomatic representation abroad. We have thought it worth while to send out a capable and distinguished South African as roving ambassador to explain away the errors which we make. We are represented in all international gatherings. Our experiences with India have shown us that the outside world is full of high explosives, that our internal policy does affect our external relations and our external relations our internal policy. We are facing in the economic sphere our interdependence with the world—a world which can, by altering the function or the price of our main product, affect our whole internal economy. We can no longer shelter behind Great Britain in the face of a hostile world. We desire to be thought well of. We are acutely sensitive to international criticism. The great world has come to our doorstep. We are part of it as we never were before.

And yet we are utterly alien to it in spirit. While other countries are punishing "collaborators" and Nazism, we are looking coldly on men because they took part in the war effort against Hitler. While world organisations have become much more controlled by the Non-European countries than

ever before, we consider it a good time to reiterate the doctrine of white domination. We are completely alien to the spirit of the post-war world. Anyone who has shared my experience of representing South Africa at an international conference will agree with me that we find ourselves constantly on the defensive. The spirit of the age is against us. Any roving ambassador can only be an apologist-in-chief. Since 1948 we have repeatedly gone in the face of world opinion and met the situation by redoubling our arrangements for propaganda, apologetic or defiant, but never have we felt calm or at ease or in harmony with our fellow-humans. This is another paradox of our position as we enter 1950.

A third contrast is that between South Africa's complete independence of external control and her irresponsibility in the exercise of her freedom. The formal maturity which we have attained has not been accompanied by maturity of outlook and action. In spirit we are still adolescents. We, as an independent all-but-republic, take decisions and make pronouncements which the old Cape Colony as a mere colony would have felt lacking in a sense of responsibility.

“ Let Courage Rise with Danger.”

The dangers of our present situation are very real. We shall do ourselves and the country no service by concealing them. And we have to speak about them without circumlocution. If they have become matters of party politics we have not made them so. The position is grimly clear. A Government holding office fortuitously and precariously by the smallest of majorities is prepared, within the letter though in defiance of the spirit of the Constitution, to entrench itself in power by manipulating the franchise laws to suit itself. It may succeed. It may manage to arrogate to itself permanent power—power which cannot be overthrown by constitutional means. Its success in this effort is not certain, but it is very possible. If it succeeds it proposes to place effective power in the hands of those only who believe in complete racial separation and the complete and permanent political dominance of the European group. At one and the same time it will use our flexible Constitution to create a rigid society and it will close the doors of hope against all the Non-Europeans. It will, in other words, leave revolution as the only method available to them.

And even if these fears are not fulfilled, the least that can happen as a result of the events of the past eighteen months is an inflaming and embittering of race relations, a set-back to all that we have worked for, so that we re-commence our task under far more unfavourable auspices than eighteen months ago. If such a second chance is given to us, we shall have to combat a rising tide of African nationalism, and a suspicion of white goodwill and integrity not unnatural after the public repudiation of so important a public obligation as that contained in the "Entrenched Clauses". We shall have to learn new techniques of mediating between governments who believe that the best is the enemy of the good, and Non-European leaders who believe that the good is the enemy of the best.

Suppose, however, that it is neither the good nor the best, but the worst that we have to face. Suppose the threats which have been made are translated into action. Suppose that African representation in the House of Assembly is abolished, that Coloured representation is reduced to a wretched shadow, which can be resolved into nothingness if the shadow is not meek and acquiescent enough. Suppose that a semi-totalitarian State is set up, with the definite object of establishing a particular orthodoxy in power for ever. All these, let us remind ourselves, are not far-off possibilities, but urgent practical dangers from which only a few months of bitter debates in the legislature may separate us. What do we do if it all comes true?

It is we ourselves, we Europeans, who are equally threatened. Our freedom and that of our children is at stake. There will be no real place in the body politic for people who think as we do when this happens. We stand facing the probability—thank God, not yet the certainty—that this will happen to South Africa. What are we to do as we face this very unexpected sequel to our participation in the World War against Nazism? I say there is but one thing that we must do or can do—fight on; fight on.

"How are we to fight on?" some may ask, and it is a most pertinent question. Yet it is less important than the spirit of fighting on against this yoke which a minority of a minority of the population seeks to rivet on us all within the forms of the Constitution.

Our real task is still within South Africa. Such help as Commonwealth or international opinion may give us will

almost certainly be indirect only. I have a strong repugnance to any attempt to bring about interference by the United Nations so long as there is the least glimmer of hope in our internal situation. Nevertheless the world is one, and the world will not patiently see South Africa continuing indefinitely on a course so completely repugnant to organised world opinion. Be that as it may, our own first and greatest task is within South Africa itself. So long as constitutional channels are open we must use them to the full. For this we need the spirit of faith, the spirit of unconquerability. We may not use Gandhi's methods, they may not be applicable in our South African conditions. But the spirit of Gandhi, the spirit by which the politically weak refuse to accept force or submission as the only alternatives, the spirit which is determined never to give up the fight—that spirit must be our spirit. If every constitutional channel is closed, have we then the strength and courage to follow the conquering path of the politically weak who will not give in to injustice? Along what strange paths may we be led—we who love South Africa and never thought to tread outside the King's Highway of Parliamentary institutions? The unknown future awaits us; and it is not a future determined by a blind fate. It is a future which we can create—if we will. It lies with us whether we are determined to fight it out *at whatever cost* or to give in. I could wish that we could draft a declaration of unconquerability, a declaration to which thousands of us could set our hands, some such declaration as this:—

“ We South Africans, facing a determined attempt to use the forms of the Constitution in order to destroy the spirit of the Constitution, and to impose forever a dictatorship of those Europeans who believe in the herrenvolk doctrine over all other sections of the population, European or Non-European, place on record our high determination never to give in to this evil thing, never to acquiesce in spirit with laws which hamper fundamental freedoms or with a political system which excludes any section of the population from Parliamentary representation. We pledge ourselves to resist and oppose all such policies to the best of our power, at whatever cost to ourselves, and not to rest until we have achieved victory, so that the elements of democracy and freedom in our land may be preserved and built up, instead of being destroyed. We believe that our cause is just, and we are ready to suffer for it,

in the faith that they who stand firmly for the right are ultimately unconquerable.”

Could we sign such a declaration, or one better worded? Whether we do so or not, we must in spirit accept such an attitude in a conflict where the time-serving and the timid, the compromisers and the sitters-on-the-fence no longer have a place.

Fundamental Paradoxes.

The path along which alone South Africa will find peace is defined by a series of paradoxes, which in essence are none other than the profound paradoxes of the New Testament. They will bear study.

(i) The way determines the end.

This, I suggest, is really fundamental. So much of our political thought in South Africa consists of constructing in 1950 a picture of the ideal South Africa of 2050 or 2550, and justifying any unjust or unreasonable proceedings of the present day by that great future to which we believe that they will contribute. But who can so forecast the years? Who knows what Western civilisation itself will be like in 2550? Who knows what travail the sons of men will have gone through in those centuries—whether world war after world war, atomic conflict, bacteriological conflict, will have left civilisation as we know it in ruins; or whether a federal world state will have superseded national sovereignty. The least likely of all hypotheses is that which buttresses the Nationalist picture of South Africa in 2550—the hypothesis that national sovereignty will remain intact and sacrosanct in a world of peace, a world still built on the supremacy of the white races, and that that world will, six hundred years hence, look benevolently at the rule of “nationally-minded” white South Africa over a disfranchised majority. It is by this impossible picture that we are asked to defend to-day acts manifestly unjust, and demonstrably against the best interests of white South Africa.

But while no man can predict the shape of things to come in 2550, many men have a fairly clear idea of what is just and wise in 1950. The true wisdom for South Africa is to take the next steps and from the vantage-point to which they bring us see how to continue our journey. The very charge of not having a clear enough policy so often brought against those

who think like us is the highest commendation when one considers all the facts. We know clearly our next steps: let us go as far as we know, for to predict the end is beyond human wisdom.

“ Lord, we know not whither Thou goest and how can we know the way. . . . I am the Way.”

Are these things not also true of private life? Take the great act of faith involved in marriage. A man must take that step without any logical proof that his choice is the wisest one, without any absolute assurance of ultimate happiness. “ The gods may to their wedding come, and at their banquet all the muses sing,” but they may end “ a grey old man and woman ”. Now what should we think of the bridegroom who, without consulting his bride, is cocksure how he ought to handle her and exactly what their home is to be like in fifty years’ time, and who justifies present unilateral decisions by that ideal of which he is so certain? I think we should call him a conceited young jackanapes. I think we should advise the lady against him. I think we should predict divorce with a great deal more probability than might be found in any of *his* predictions.

Is the parable not just?

But better than predictions and policies would be the sane and kind and manly yet humble spirit which determined to do the right and loving thing so far as this could be seen, and learn by experience. This is the Christian ideal, and this is the ideal which we feel South Africa should apply to its problems of race. A true acceptance of the truth underlying this apparent paradox would mean maturity for South Africa instead of adolescence, wisdom instead of polysyllabic theory, statesmanship instead of brittle dogmatism, service instead of the urge for power, peace instead of division, and hope in the place of that despair which in fact underlies the doctrines so popular to-day.

(ii) The only way to save ourselves is to lose ourselves.

This is the heart of the Christian Gospel—the central truth of a religion whose symbol is the Cross. And yet many who use the term “ Christian ” lightly and superficially almost as a political slogan, many who are regular churchgoers, many who sincerely believe themselves to be Christian, claim, whenever the race question is raised, that “ self-preservation is the first law of life ”.

Standing aside a little from the conflict and looking at it dispassionately, one can see that nothing is more likely to wreck the position of the European in South Africa than the measures which are now being taken to safeguard it. We have become a nation which clamours for protection, which neither for political control nor economic welfare, neither for cultural autonomy nor racial purity is prepared to trust God or even our own ability and strength. At all turns we must be protected against someone, and in this process of clamouring for protection we are in danger of losing our manhood, and all that robust faith which is part of our heritage.

Have we ever at any time tried to speculate on the advantages of the other path—the path that involves taking a risk? To begin with, the liberal policy which puts righteousness before self-preservation would deliver us at once from world criticism, would at once put us on the international map as an adult and democratic people. Then it would turn our fellow-citizens of Non-European races from enemies into friends and co-operators. It would mean the proper use of all our man-power for production, and the proper development of our obvious market for industry. It would increase our cultural resources and founts of inspiration, and deliver us from the bonds of narrowness and insularity. And, unless we wished it to be so, it would not result in the mingling of racial stocks.

Admittedly there is something vulgar in this enumeration of the advantages of doing right, as there is something vulgar in a contemporary American writer's description of the Sermon on the Mount as "common sense to the nth degree". It is not this mood of calculation which will give us the spirit of faith, the spirit of doing right for its own sake. Yet as St. Paul would say, "bear with me a little in my folly" as, for the moment standing aside dispassionately, I put these perfectly valid arguments to you. And, having done this, let us yield joyfully to the spirit of faith and know in our innermost hearts that even if all these arguments were as unsound as they are assuredly sound and true, it would still be right to do right, just to be just, "in the scorn of consequence".

(iii) The only realism in South Africa is the path of the idealist.

This follows very naturally on what has just been said. It is the so-called "realists" who can never quote facts, never produce maps with boundaries marked on them, never produce

policies that will in fact work. We who because we stand for justice and humanity are dubbed "idealists" have in fact the only policies that will work in our South African situation. Not only are we generally better equipped with facts—and it has been the glory of the Institute to be so equipped—but our policies have some chance of working. Quite apart from the fantastic defenders of "apartheid" who can never say in what latitude their Utopia exists, the fault of the "realists" is precisely that they do not face reality. So much South African thought is an escape from reality into a dream world—an escape from the conflict between conscience and apparent self-interest to a third way combining conscience and self-interest, with the single drawback that it is not practicable; an escape from the facts of human psychology; an escape from the reality that Non-Europeans will just not accept these theories and plans which do not quite take in their propounders and will hardly take in anyone else. The true realism is to recognise the limits within which alone we can work. One of these is

(iv) The choice between quantity and quality in our Non-European population.

We get afraid because of the great disparity of numbers between the European and the Non-European population, and as a people we refuse to face the fact that the only practicable ways to reduce this disparity of numbers are (i) immigration of Europeans; (ii) the raising of the standard of the Non-Europeans. The first is opposed, or at best damned with faint praise. The second is looked on as a danger to white supremacy. Yet all population studies show us that advancing civilisation with the education of women as one of its main factors is the surest way of checking population increase. We cannot have it both ways. Keep the African population poor and ignorant and it will increase rapidly. Raise its status and the increase will fall. **It is within these limits that we have to work, and to think otherwise is to show one's self a political adolescent, not a political adult.**

There is one more paradox straight from the New Testament which I will quote. No doubt it will hurt now as it hurt then.

(v) "The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you."

So much has been said during recent years of "Christian" principles, and it is noteworthy that many of the upholders of

the present policies are church-going men. But what are we to make of a Christianity which sets up in place of the Cross the principle of racial self-preservation, which restricts and denies liberty, which makes itself believe that a few practical concessions here or there can compensate for principles, condemning every Non-European, however cultured or Christian, to perpetual inferiority in the land of his birth, which closes the doors of hope not only to men themselves but to their children after them?

Let it not be supposed that these remarks refer to one section only. The acid test of Christian liberalism in my own Province of Natal is the question of relationships with the Indians. Durban is a Christian and a pro-British city. Yet the harm that anti-Indian attitudes in it have done both to the cause of Christian missions in India and to the British Commonwealth can hardly be exaggerated. There is a tendency among some sections in Durban to look away from South Africa as a whole, but if one does that in Durban the only view is the Indian Ocean. Let no self-righteousness blind any of us to the faults of our own province or our own race. And of the apathetic and materialistic no less than, perhaps more than, of those who work passionately and positively for racial domination the Word remains true, wounding but true, as over nineteen centuries ago: "The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you".

Fighting and Building.

In all that has been said in this address I hope that the fighting spirit has not been lacking. The trumpet has not, I trust, given an uncertain sound, and we shall not fail to make ourselves ready for battle. Yet this is only half and possibly the lesser half of the picture. In a little-read book of the Bible—Nehemiah—I was recently reading the story, which in some of its aspects has a very modern ring, of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

"We returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half held both the spears, the shields, and the bows. . . . They which builded on the wall and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side and so builded.

And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither with us: our God shall fight for us. So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. . . . So the wall was finished."

This is a remarkable passage, and in the accompanying text there is much that is helpful to us. Nehemiah, like ourselves, had to face the pessimists who said, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the walls." He had to face the alarmists and the spreaders of rumours and those who wanted him to negotiate instead of working. And his answers ring down the centuries like his own trumpet: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you?" And above all the incomparable "Shall such a man as I flee?"

It is this combination of fighting and building that attracts me and that is a call to every one of us. The work of building is ultimately the major task: the fighting is only ancillary to it, to be entered into bravely when it is necessary, but not the real job. Some have had, some still have, reservations about the Institute being a fighting body: all agree that it must be a building body. Militant or non-militant it must be constructive. So with the forces of liberalism as a whole, except that here there is no escape from the call to be militant, which I myself most gladly accept.

More than once during these past months in speaking to Non-European audiences I have urged the necessity of building as well as fighting. There are, to change the metaphor, open doors in spite of all the doors that are being shut and barred. Nothing can keep the Non-Europeans from achievement in art and music and literature except themselves. There is especially the tremendous field of science, of which I shall speak later, as I shall also enlarge on other points summarily mentioned here. There is the field of sport and recreation, the field of agriculture, the immense field of health. Above all there is the field of family and personal living where victories are to be won in the face of most adverse circumstances and a most unpropitious environment. This work of building must be done. This part of it must be done by Non-Europeans

themselves. No Europeans can do it for them, and no amount of eloquent talking about the rights of man, the evils of Fascism, or the claims of humanity can ever be a substitute for it.

But I want to address myself to a still wider theme, namely the building of a new South Africa, in which we all have a share. And in this work of reconstruction we can join in removing some of those barriers and hindrances which make it harder than it should be for the Non-European groups to do their own personal work of building. For in all our planning let us not forget that the only ultimate wealth of a State is free personalities. I shall come back to this vital point, but I want to mention it at this stage so that it may be in all our minds as we look at material plans.

First let me deal with the Reserves. They seem to me to be an element of any realistic policy for South Africa, and though their *relative* importance may diminish as the years go by they will always remain important. Here the Department of Native Affairs has waged a very gallant fight to preserve the land—the inheritance of the African people—from denudation, erosion and wastage. Because this programme has meant stock reduction, and because to most of the African people cattle have a greater emotional appeal than land, the Department has met with stubborn and continued passive resistance, in efforts for which it can have no other motive than the good of the people. It is right here to record our appreciation of the Department's earnest efforts at betterment and our gratification at those cases—unfortunately in a minority—where the co-operation of the people has made them successful.

Yet in all fairness the blame for failure must not be attributed solely to Bantu conservatism. "You cannot civilise a people in cattle alone", and stock reduction must be part of a general scheme of betterment, not merely agricultural in its scope. There is need for a better practical application of modern psychology to the Department's propaganda methods. In the life of the Reserves generally, the pattern is still that of a bureaucracy, generally paternal and benevolent, but always a bureaucracy. In its own smaller way our Native Affairs Department has had at its frequent best the integrity and efficiency of the Indian Civil Service, but not all that integrity and efficiency could replace in India the need for self-government, and so it is in our Reserves. Even the best *sahib*

is influenced by the fact that he is a *sahib*, and that in the last resort he has the whole weighty machinery of the law behind his decisions, even up to a point—for it is “not done” to throw a *sahib* to the wolves—behind his whims.

I say even so much with reluctance, for I am an admirer of the honest and capable and often very selfless work of our officials, and I feel that the Native Affairs Department is often unfairly attacked. But the history of both Europe and Asia carries for Africa the lesson that benevolent despotism can never ultimately satisfy men, that it can only be the forerunner and educator of democracy and that like the most famous of all Forerunners it must learn to say, “He that cometh after me is preferred before me. He must increase, and I must decrease.”

The fact of the matter is that the Native Affairs Department has to work within narrow bounds set by the political system, and is thus often blamed by Africans for the politicians' sins. The native commissioner imposes a heavy penalty for grass-burning. From his court-house the flames can be seen of fires kindled across the boundary-line by the neighbouring European farmers. Yet, if this point is raised, the native commissioner, unless he dismisses it as impertinence, can only say that it is a matter for the Department of Agriculture, not for the Department of Native Affairs. The native commissioner advocates stock reduction. His hearers—I speak from experience—argue that the fault is not too many cattle, but too little land. This is only a half-truth, but when they point to the apparently empty spaces across the border, where a single man owns 1,000 morgen against a tribalist's 5 morgen, the native commissioner can only say that he is bound by Parliament's decision in the matter—the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936. The native commissioner, in good faith and in pursuance of instructions, gives the word of the Government that a certain thing will be done. A political change takes place, the pledge is unfulfilled, and the officer who is the local and personal embodiment of Government must bear on his shoulders the shame and ignominy of a broken promise, a pledge unfulfilled. The Native Affairs Department is therefore too often blamed for the sins of the country as a whole. Yet in its insistence on bureaucracy and “control” and its reluctance to let the people choose their own leadership and make their own mistakes, it must bear its share of the blame.

Not yet has South Africa decided whether the Reserves are to be the homes of farmers making a real living from the land or dormitory areas for migrant labourers. This is a crucial decision. Much has been done to develop education, a little—more recently than ever before—to provide health services, almost nothing to improve the amenities of life, to encourage recreation, to ameliorate the position of women. The test of all good government is the production of free personalities. Are the Reserves succeeding?

And what of the work of building personalities in the towns? There is indeed the practical task of material building facing us. A house is not a home, but the most "spiritually"-minded will agree that a home is difficult without a house. There are some 250,000 houses needed for Non-Europeans to-day. Goodwill is not enough. The delay in building may be due to differences about the type of house to be built, above all to heartless and frustrating quarrels as to where to place the financial responsibilities for the building, but whatever the explanation given, the years pass and the houses are not built. In other directions the Government is not hesitant to show that (in the words of St. Paul) "it beareth not the sword in vain". The whole weight of State authority can fall on the miserable man who has left his pass in the pocket of his other coat: why can it not fall on the miserable municipalities who fail to do their duty? Or if the responsibility is rightly the State's let the State shoulder it. Ultimately it is for the State to allocate financial responsibility as fairly as it knows how, and then see with every bit of firmness at its disposal that the houses are built.

In urban locations there is much progress in good works of real value, but "control", over-regulation, bureaucracy are again real factors causing revolt in the hearts of the people. What makes it hard is that so much of this control is well-meant and that there is only too much argument in favour of a great deal of it. But if there is anything in the analogy drawn too frequently and too unthinkingly between the African people and children or adolescents, surely all modern thought about young people must repudiate the ideas that the mere avoiding of evil is the greatest ideal, and that severe control is the best way of achieving it. The urban Africans ought surely to be encouraged along the path of

self-government, and helped to take responsibility. Even the existence of some evils partly avoidable by strict control may not be too high a price to pay for freedom.

Family life needs rebuilding in our urban areas. Those walls indeed have broken down, and there are great heaps of rubble in the breaches. This is a thing which the Non-Europeans must do for themselves. Many of them have left the old canons of sexual morality, the rules of tribal life, behind them, and are half sunk in the morass that interposes itself between these and the family ideals of the Christian Gospel. They cannot stay in that bog. There is no salvation in going back or even in deploring the firm ground behind. Salvation lies ahead. Europeans can help in using their political and social power to improve environmental conditions, and in so living that their example cannot be quoted as an excuse for moral laxity, but the real decision must be taken by, the real victory won by, the Non-Europeans themselves.

Sexual morality, like all morality, is an affair of personality, and we gain strength in our fight for it when we recognise it as part of an indivisible whole. It is the winning of freedom, self-respect and joy for the whole personality that is our real goal. When employment is easier for women than for men, as is to some extent the case among the non-professional classes of the Cape Coloured community, when unemployment is prolonged and ambition thwarted, a man suffers in the very inner citadel of his manhood. When prostitution is easier and better-paid than honest work, the very springs of womanhood are defiled. Far from wanting to condemn the lapses from sexual morality of Non-European town-dwellers, I am struck with admiration and almost with awe at the men and women who have built a decent family life for themselves and their children under such terribly adverse conditions. I do not justify evil. I want to see it fought and conquered. I want no words of mine to be used as a condonation of it. But I do say that if we are to win this battle, we must ourselves be hurt with the immense hurt to human personality involved in our present system. When a sense of inferiority is deeply branded on men's very souls—and that undeservedly—when discourtesy and exclusion are life's daily bread, when one's very education and advancement is a spur to a certain type of European to keep one "in one's place", when there is no security, when one lives in an atmosphere of decreasing privilege or escapes from one's caste group into a life-long

fear of being found out, human personality is maimed and hurt and the hurt is felt in every sphere of life. When I think of legislation like the Mixed Marriages Bill, of the proposals for disfranchisement, of the enforcement of separation in spheres where tolerance has reigned for years, I do not care with what professions of Christianity the men come who are doing these things: I say they are doing the devil's work, I say that to them apply those stern words of the Lord whom they profess to follow: "It were better that a millstone were hung about their necks and they were cast into the depth of the sea than that they should cause one of these little ones to stumble."

I ought to say a word about the task of education in all this. Education, even at its worst and poorest, does something to free the bound personality: at its best it is a tremendous liberation of the human spirit. To substitute one ideology for another, one bitterness for another, one nationalism for another, is not education. It is merely an endeavour to cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub. Education must be carried out with respect for the human personalities involved, on whom we have no right to imprint our own ready-made ideas, even good ideas. A child has the right to a sort of Dominion status. There are open doors through which African and Coloured and Indian can go, even though so many are locked and barred against them. In a sense it rests on the Non-Europeans themselves, despite environmental limitations, whether they will achieve in literature and drama and music and all the many forms of art. Much has been done. Work like that of the Eoan Group in Cape Town* is of national value. But I prefer rather to dwell in this lecture on the unconquered territory of science. At long last science teaching is becoming available to Non-Europeans on a scale which makes progress possible. I want to plead for the establishment and endowment of facilities for scientific research in pure and applied science. I long to see Non-European scientists and research workers of national, perhaps even of international repute. They can do it if the opportunities are provided. Such a victory would be building indeed, building by its restoration of personal and racial confidence and self-respect the ruined walls of personality. It would be a contribution to South Africa as a whole, and it would be also that noble work, the service of truth for truth's sake.

Some Concluding Thoughts.

I began with Arthur Hugh Clough: I return to him now. In the same poem which I quoted earlier he writes: "If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars." I ask you to ponder that word. The battle is an unequal one, but we have not lost it. We must not give way to defeatism.

"If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars,"

Let us go on with the quotation:—

"It may be, in your smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers
And, but for you, possess the field."

"But for you." That is the call to each of us. We cannot know how or when we shall succeed, but we can and do know that we must do our best, with a will to succeed, with a refusal to know when we are beaten, with an unconquerable spirit. If indeed we have come of age let us acquit ourselves like men. In so doing we serve all South Africa, even those who regard us as public dangers, for it is only through our loyalty to the best we know that white South Africa has any ultimate chance of holding its own at all.

The sadness of the fight lies not in the possibility of defeat—who ever minded losing in a good cause?—but in the certainty of estrangement and misunderstanding. So skilfully have the defenders of the rigid colour-bar, of separatism for separatism's sake, of exclusion and subordination and the caste system, tied up their cause with emotional loyalty to the best in the old Afrikaner tradition, that it seems when we oppose the one that we are opposing the other. They deceive many by this unfair identification. It is not impossible that they may deceive themselves. They may even attain the masterpiece of victory—temporarily deceiving us about ourselves. But we know that it is not so, that we cherish those things of beauty and heroism in our past even when they are tied to the body of death of caste domination. To many of us, and most certainly to me personally, the estrangements which come through a clear and strong stand for right because that stand is misunderstood as a repudiation of common loyalties, are a great pain and grief. And yet in those circumstances there is but one thing to do. Let me quote Arthur Hugh Clough once more on the inevitable parting and the hope of reunion:—

“ To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
 Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides, one compass guides—
 To that, and your own selves, be true.

“ But O blithe breeze, and O great seas,
 Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
 Together lead them home at last.

“ One port, methought, alike they sought,
 One purpose hold where'er they fare—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas,
 At last, at last, unite them there! ”

So much for our hearts' sorrows and hopes. But here is no place for permanent wistfulness, nor for anything that would weaken arms or hearts for the mortal conflict. As in the old days the Chaldean King set up his golden image and commanded all men to bow down to it, so, under the aegis of an apparent Christian orthodoxy, a golden image is set up once more. It is race that we are commanded to fall down and worship, colour discrimination which is to be our god that brought us up out of the land of Egypt. It is a hotch-potch of fear and despair and ruthless strength and a love of power and false science and unproven theories that we are asked to accept as the supreme guide to life. And those of us who will not bow down to this golden image are threatened in our positions and our fields of service. We may never, if the worshippers of the image have their way, never, never, never hold public office in South Africa, never speak for our beloved country in the outside world, never be reckoned as one of the real family in our own country. As far as may be our freedom must be curtailed, our voices stilled, our pens struck from our hands. Old traditions of tolerance, reverence for the letter of the law, preserve us from the worst interferences: we are thankful for that. But the call to worship the golden image if we would escape the burning fiery furnace of ostracism, misrepresentation, frustration and failure, is sounding none the less. Can we answer better than the three Princes of Israel so many centuries ago?: “ If it be so,

our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Liberal Thoughts on Race Relations

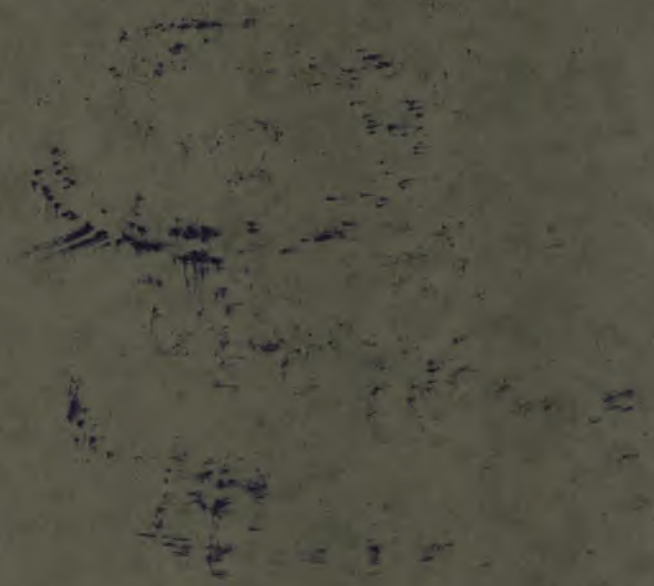
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