

TRUTH IS OUR ALLY



Extracts
from an
address

—By—
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IN many of our hearts, below our indignation and enthusiasm, are deep undertones of hopelessness and frustration. We seem to stand helpless before overwhelming power. That power moves like a juggernaut, heedless of appeals and crushing all who fling themselves in its way.

But are we so helpless? Truth is a great ally. In this hour of South Africa's shame we are given the joy and privilege of standing for truth. That we fought evil without fear in the dark night of our history is something of which our children will be proud.

We are not helpless, since none who stand for right are helpless. We will not be silenced. Ultimately truth cannot be silenced. And we are not afraid. Let them do their worst; we can do no other than speak out. We should betray ourselves and our country if we did not.

We are here together in our country that we may enrich one another by the fellowship of free men. That we are of different speech, descent, tradition and physical appearance is not a thing to be mourned over but a thing to thank God for. In honour and freedom we enrich one another.

When you call a man a "problem" you make him a problem. When you see him as a fellow-man, you create not a problem but a mutual opportunity.

How much more fruitful it is to hear a White man and an African or an Indian discussing botany or philosophy, literature or history, as fellow-students, than to sit in a solemn and embarrassed conclave discussing "race relations"! Even that is suspect nowadays, and the only contact really desired is between politicians and picked officials of the right

school of thought, on the one hand, and intimidated chiefs and selected leaders on the other.

To the people of colour in this country and (if I may be allowed so to particularise) to the Africans especially, the policy is one of minds in chains. By the Bantu Education Act, all influences not likely to be in harmony with State policy have been eliminated—ruthlessly and unthankfully thrown on one side. The same Department which controls the schools is now to control the tribal university colleges. An allied Department has, and exercises, the power to refuse passports to men of colour wishing to study outside the Union.

The ivory tower of exclusive Whiteness may be a bit easier, superficially even a bit pleasanter, than life as it really is, but it is no preparation for the ardours of actual living in the mid-twentieth century.

University education—and this is what our opponents will not see—is not mere instruction followed by the passing of examinations. It is the unfolding of the human spirit. It is part of *life*. When instruction is given in an atmosphere of restriction, suspicion and suppression to students who are hating it all, it is not likely to be very successful even as instruction. In these new University Colleges the State is embarking on an adventure in the impossible.

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We stand in shame for our country. We have done our best to save her from this disgrace. We stand face to face with an arrogance drunk with power and with the lust for more power. In a measure it is able to break me, to break you, to break all of us who stand against it, but stand against it we will. Free speech is not yet a crime, and if it were we should still have to speak freely and bear the consequences. We are still able to warn our country.

The real crime would be silence. Truth is on our side, and we may say with hope and courage, *Magna est veritas et praevalabit*. "Great is the truth and it still prevails."

AFTER a visit of school children to the House of Assembly, a Free State girl wrote in an essay:

"When the session opens the Speaker comes in, bows to the Government, bows to the Opposition, and then prays for South Africa."

—Told by Mr. Paul Sauer
at a meeting in Stellenbosch.