

CONTACT

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THE TOMLINSON REPORT

WHILE we hope, in the near future, to deal with the Report of the Tomlinson Commission and to offer detailed criticism thereon, some immediate comment is necessary.

It would be both foolish and ungenerous to condemn the Tomlinson Report out of hand. There is much that is extremely valuable in it. It has collected a great deal of most useful material and has presented it well. Its suggestions for the development of backward areas and the rehabilitation of exhausted areas seem, at first glance, to be sound and far-sighted. Its ideas for revolutionary changes in the tribal system of land tenure deserve very careful consideration.

To these and other questions of detail the Liberal Party takes no exception. On other much more fundamental issues the Party finds itself entirely opposed to the Commission's Report. It finds the composition of the Commission unsatisfactory; it finds the conclusions reached by the Commission, and the recommendations which flow from them, largely unacceptable; it believes that, even if the conclusions reached by the Commission had been sound, the solution it offers on the basis of those conclusions would still have been impracticable.

The Liberal Party objects to the composition of the Commission because it contained no single African. Yet its function was, amongst other things, "to report on . . . the Native Areas with a view to developing within them a social structure in keeping with the culture of the Native . . .". While it is true that African witnesses were heard not one was present when the Commission took its decisions. Not only is it quite wrong to exclude Africans from an inquiry which affects them so deeply but it is a peculiar sort of madness which denies to an investigation of this kind the voice of any man who has lived as an inhabitant of a "Native Area" or who has grown up within the culture upon which the Commission had been asked to build.

This omission made it almost impossible for the Commission to be either impartial or scientific and led directly to the fundamental conclusion upon which its work was based and which we cannot accept. Very early in its work the Commission decided that there were only two possible solutions to South Africa's problems, total separation or assimilation. It rejected the second alternative on the grounds that the White people of South Africa would never be ready to accept the consequences of assimilation, because of their "unbreakable will to maintain their identity in the national and biological sense". It is on this assumption—because it is no more than that—that the Commission then went to work. Is it not at least possible that a Commission, differently composed but studying the same evidence, could have come to exactly the *opposite* conclusion, based on the African's unbreakable will to oppose a policy of total segregation? Is not the most remarkable thing about the Tomlinson Commission the fact that, while European intractability became its guiding star, African aspirations received much slighter consideration? Would not a scientific and realistic inquiry have given at least equal weight to each of these two elements in the situation?

Once the Commission had concluded that total apartheid was the solution to South Africa's problems its recommendations were, naturally, in line with this conclusion. We disagree with the conclusion and we must, therefore, disagree with the overall planning on which the recommendations were based, however much virtue there may be in some of the Commission's detailed suggestions.

A further point of difference with the Tomlinson Report is on the grounds of practicability. Quite apart from the doubts attached to any question of the transfer of the Protectorates, Professor Tomlinson has made it abundantly clear that if his solution is to be a solution at all to our difficulties it must be implemented at once. His recommendations must be accepted at once and work in effecting them must be started at once. It is over five years since his Commission was appointed and eighteen months since it reported. Already valuable time has been lost. Is there any sign that the Government is prepared to start immediately on the implementation of this vast scheme? There is none. There has been absolutely no sign o

welcome for the report from the Nationalists. In January, Mr. Strijdom said that while segregation would be the ideal solution the Government, in present circumstances, was unable to promulgate it as a policy or to apply it. There, from the horse's mouth, is the answer to the Tomlinson Report. The urgent action required will not be forthcoming and, if it is not to be, we must then, by the Commission's own admission, face up to the fact that the road which South Africa must follow is the road to assimilation.

The Liberal Party objects to plans for separating group from group on moral and practical grounds. It believes that the sort of solution offered by the Tomlinson Commission is dangerous because it provides White South Africans with an escapist dream and enables them to avoid facing the realities of our future. As long as these escapist dreams are on offer that European intractability of which the Commission took so much account will continue to be nourished by them. It is high time that people in positions of authority put such dreams behind them and confronted those who support policies of separation with the fact that these cannot be made to work and that it is the destiny of all South Africans to live together in a single, integrated society.

MANILAL GANDHI

By PATRICK DUNCAN

MANILAL Gandhi died on 5th April at Phoenix, Natal, at the *ashram* founded by his father Mohandas Gandhi. With his death has gone the family link between our country and the greatest man of this age of great men; the man of whom Einstein said: "Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon the earth".

One cannot write about Manilal without mentioning his father, for on his father's example he shaped both his private and his public life.

Like his father he knew prison life well. With him he marched at Volksrust and at Dandi when free salt was illegally taken. Throughout his life, like his father, he courted arrest and fasted. At his father's request he administered the trust, the settlement, and the newspaper *Indian Opinion* at Phoenix. In all this he was faithful to the end.

With him, as with his father, the spiritual world was pre-eminent. Although his insistence on strict gandhiism lost him, in South Africa, the chance of leadership of his community, he would not compromise, for personal aggrandisement meant nothing to him.

His highest values were simplicity, cheerfulness, humility, love, courage, and belief in God, and he actualised them in his own life through prayer. He was a member of the Liberal Party, and generously opened the columns of *Indian Opinion* to the Party's point of view.

Ever since I came to see that our country would have to follow the way of *satyagraha* if it wished to avoid a blood bath—and that was some five years ago—I have been in close touch with Manilal. He was one of the finest human beings I have ever known, and his death leaves me with an acute sense of bereavement.

One of the best South Africans has passed. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his widow and family.

PARTY NEWS

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The National Executive Committee of the Party met in East London over the week-end of April 14/15. Two car-loads of delegates from Natal attended, Mr. Walter Stanford, M.P., and Mr. Leslie Cooper came from the Western Province and Transvaal respectively and the Eastern Cape were represented by Mr. B. Curran, M.P.C., Professor Stuart of Alice and Mr. F. Stakemire of East London. In brief some of the more important points discussed and decisions taken were as follows.

An attempt will be made to double the size of *Contact* in the near future. The Party itself cannot afford to do this at present and a special appeal is to be made to all members to