

CONTACT

APRIL 1956

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

make donations towards this specific objective. As soon as the money is available *Contact* will be enlarged. New items will be introduced but the quality and the format of the paper will be maintained. It was generally accepted that it should be the Party's eventual aim to publish *Contact* as a weekly and then a daily paper.

General publicity was one of the main items on the Agenda and the Publicity Committee has been instructed to draft a number of different pamphlets which can be used for general propaganda purposes as well as during the next elections. Some excellent ideas for pamphlets were put forward and any additional ones from individual members will be most welcome. Just send them to your nearest office and they will be forwarded to the National Office.

Once these pamphlets are available they will make the task of disseminating information and recruiting members much easier. In the meantime a membership drive in all provinces is to be instituted. It will be based on house-meetings arranged at provincial level, and public meetings arranged at a national level. A programme of public meetings will be planned to be spread over the whole country and over the whole year. It is hoped that at least one such meeting will take place somewhere each month.

No final news is yet available about the National Congress. If it takes place this year it will be late in the year and not in July. It will either be in East London, Port Elizabeth or Durban depending on whether accommodation is available in either of the first two places.

Elections were discussed at some length and investigations into suitable constituencies and other important questions are being carried out in the various provinces.

A suggestion for a national emblem has been approved by the Committee and it is hoped that this will soon appear in *Contact*, on our note-paper and in the form of a badge. The emblem is a stylised version of the clasped black and white hands which has been used by the Society of Friends in recent years.

The next meeting of the National Executive Committee will take place in Johannesburg on June 23rd/24th.

CAPE

The main centre of activity in the Western Cape continues to be Parliament but the Party has also been active in other spheres. On April 15th Senator Ballinger appeared as the representative of the Party at the mass meeting organised on the Grand Parade, Cape Town, in protest against the introduction of bus apartheid in the city. During Lent Mrs. Ballinger and Mr. Stanford spoke in a series of lunch-hour talks organised by the Anglican Church in the Cathedral Hall, Cape Town. Mr. Stanford spoke on "The African's Position in Politics" and Mrs. Ballinger on "Integration and Segregation". Both addresses were very well attended. House meetings have been held and topics of a political and general nature have been discussed. The Ballingers and Leo Marquard have talked on their recent visits to the Gold Coast and the C.A.F. respectively.

During March a special performance of *La Traviata* was put on by the EOAN Group, the famous Coloured company, to which all Members of Parliament were invited. To cater for Nationalist sensibilities it was a Colour Bar performance strictly for Europeans only. The Liberal Party members declined the invitation as a matter of principle and wrote to the Director of Coloured Affairs giving their reasons for doing so.

The Eastern Cape Regional Association is handicapped by the fact that its branches are widely scattered, but it is an active and growing unit of the Party. In East London the Branch has shown a 40 per cent. increase in membership during the last year. The members of the Regional Association will be meeting in Grahamstown during May to compare notes and plan for the rest of the year.

TRANSVAAL

Two public meetings were arranged during April. The first of these, held on April 11th and addressed by Mr. Leslie Cooper and Dr. Deneys Schreiner was called to protest against the Johannesburg Municipality's plans to implement the Locations in the Sky Act. The municipality plans to out-Verwoerd Verwoerd in its application of the Act and the Party is attempting to organise resistance to its proposals. About sixty people attended the meeting, which was held in Hillbrow. The second meeting, to be addressed by Alan Paton was scheduled for April 20th and a full report will appear in the May *Contact*.

An informal meeting between leading Transvaal Party members and a number of non-member Africans is to take place at the end of April. During the month a number of small

house-meetings for non-members have also been held and several new members have been enrolled. Another successful function was a talk by Thelma Philip on E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*.

Fund-raising is still very much to the fore. Apart from a new drive to collect major donations, which has just been started, successful cake, jumble and book sales have just been held.

NATAL AND O.F.S.

During the month the Annual General Meetings of the Edendale, Pietermaritzburg and Stanger Branches of the Party have taken place and all have shown encouraging progress during the year. Both Edendale and Pietermaritzburg were fortunate enough to have Patrick Duncan to address their meetings. About 40 people attended the Edendale meeting and about 80 that in Pietermaritzburg. Each branch reported an increase of approximately 50 per cent. in membership over the last twelve months.

At Stanger the progress has been even more gratifying. The Branch has only been in existence for a year but it already boasts over 60 members. This success is largely due to the efforts of Mr. E. V. Mahomed and some of his assistants. The AGM of the Branch was addressed by Violaine Junod and Mlahleni Njisane and was attended by over 100 people.

Other meetings have been held at Greytown and Kokstad during the month. The Kokstad meeting, which was attended by Mlahleni Njisane and Peter Brown, was particularly successful and led to quite an increase in the membership of the local branch.

In Durban Mr. Ken Hill has taken over the organisation of house-meetings and three have been held in the last month. During May the Coastal Region will hold the second in its series of public meetings for the year, this time on "Indian Political Movements".

In the Free State members are coming in slowly.

LIBERAL PARTY BALANCE SHEET

DEBIT

1. The National Transport Board has forced bus companies operating in Cape Town to introduce segregation on their buses.
2. The Cape Town City Council's General Purposes Committee has asked the Amenities Committee to set aside separate beaches in the Peninsula for Europeans and Non-Europeans.
3. Speaking at the annual congress of the Afrikaanse Studentebond, Mr. T. Langley, Chairman of the S.R.C., Pretoria University, said that "the Liberals in South Africa were embittered beings who could not tolerate the idea of the Afrikaners' progress in every sphere of life in South Africa".
4. In South Carolina a law has been passed which bars members of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People from local government employment.

CREDIT

1. The British Musicians Union will forbid its members to accept engagements in South Africa or Rhodesia if racial discrimination prevents any group from attending.
2. Speaking in the last of a series of Lenten Lectures the Archbishop of Cape Town said that it was a counsel of despair and a denial of Christian principles to say that the only way the race groups could get on was by never meeting.
3. At a meeting of the Student Body of the Pietermaritzburg section of Natal University a resolution was passed requesting the Principal to use his powers to admit Non-European students to post-graduate courses.
4. At a meeting of the Convocation of the University of the Witwatersrand a motion was put which urged "the council of the University publicly to reaffirm the long-established principle of academic non-segregation at the university".

Liberal Party addresses in the larger centres are: 47 Parliament Street, Cape Town; 240 Church Street, Pietermaritzburg; 25 Plowright Buildings, Plowright Lane, Durban; c/o Mrs. S. Stakemire, 21 Princes Road, East London; c/o Mrs. P. Lange, 2b Lawrence Street, Port Elizabeth; 69 New Kempsey Buildings, Fox and Joubert Streets, Johannesburg.

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