

The minority report of the Commission is as interesting a document as the majority report. Signed by Messrs. Quinn and Whiteside, early leaders of the ardently pro-British labour movement, the minority fought consistently for the importation of British labourers, in preference to Chinese. In a hard-hitting attack on the Chamber of Mines, which they describe as ". . . composed of gentlemen who represent and, for the most part, act under the instructions of the large financial houses whose headquarters are in London or other European centres," Messrs. Quinn and Whiteside describe the great financial houses as bodies ". . . whose direct interest in the Colony (of the Transvaal) is confined to the value of their shareholdings . . . In our opinion, the policy of the Chamber of Mines is directed to the perpetuation of the Inferior Race Labour System by the importation of Asiatics, and is one of opposition to the growth of a large working population."

Though the minority report clearly supported the basic Chamber of Mines attitude that civilised working and living standards were not for Africans, there was much truth in their contention. The Chamber, in urging Asian labour, were consciously striving to prevent trade-unionism and working class unity amongst their labourers. There is on record a notorious letter from a mining magnate, Mr. Rudd, published in the London Times in 1903, in reply to one from a Mr. Kidd.

"As regards trade unionism in South Africa" wrote Mr. Rudd, "could Mr. Kidd replace the 200,000 native workers by 100,000 unskilled whites, they would simply hold the Government of the country in the hollow of their hands, and without any disparagement of the British labourer, I prefer to see the more intellectual section of the community at the helm. The native is at present, and I hope will long remain, a useful intermediary between white employer and employee."

The dictum of divide and rule, and the truth that class ties are stronger than national, have never been more clearly stated. They were echoed in another letter from Percy Tarbutt to the leader of the "white labour" agitation, Col. F. H. P. Cresswell.

(To be continued)

SOUTH AFRICA'S GREATEST DAUGHTER

Homage to Olive Schreiner

By HELEN JOSEPH

ONE hundred years ago on March 24th, 1855, on a remote mission station in the Karroo, Olive Schreiner was born; the woman, who throughout her life was fearlessly to champion the

cause of the oppressed, to oppose all forms of racial intolerance, to fight passionately for justice to women, to struggle unceasingly against all forms of violence and for peace in South Africa. And yet in this country of her birth, she is remembered only as the famous novelist, the author of "The Story of a South African Farm"; her undying contribution to the cause of freedom — her very personal life, her courage, her eloquence, her political writing — these are forgotten, lie buried in the past or in state libraries, unread, unhonoured.

Her youth was marked by poverty and ill health; for seven years she struggled as a governess — and wrote the "Story of a South African Farm." At twenty-eight she made her way to England and the Cinderella of the Karroo became the famous authoress. For her genius as a novelist, as the portrayer of the South African veld, of the beauty of the karroo and the character of its people, Olive Schreiner has received the acclamation of the civilised world. But in the fame of the novelist has been lost the realisation of the courageous woman, the heroine of real life who championed and loved all humanity and who fearlessly condemned all forms of oppression.

In 1889 Olive Schreiner returned to South Africa, to find the land she loved so well being destroyed by political and racial cancers. She flung herself into the struggle and wrote brilliantly, courageously, pleading for racial tolerance and understanding. Yet, while she wrote of the tensions between Boer and Briton, she never lost sight of the true racial composition of South Africa, or of its significance and its implications.

"We are not a collection of small and, though closely contiguous, yet distinct peoples; we are a more or less contiguous blend of heterogeneous social particles in different stages of development and of cohesion with one another, underlying and overlaying each other like the varying strata of confused geological formations."

To the postulation of what is today called "apartheid" she replied — "Apart from the physical impossibilities which render such a proposal ridiculous, if, by some almighty force, all our Natives could be gathered into one territory, our Boers in another, and our Englishmen into a third, no sooner would that force be removed than we should remingle in the old manner . . . A *natural want binds and blends our races*" . . . (to reseparate South Africa) would be "dividing a complex but homogeneous substance into parts which would repeat its complexity. South African unity is a condition the practical necessity for which is daily and hourly forced upon us by the common needs of life; it is *the one path open to us.*"

"We are asked sometimes: "Well, but what do you intend this country to be, a black man's country or a white?" We reply "We intend nothing. If the black man cannot labour or bear the strain and stress of complex civilised life, he will pass away. We need not degrade and injure ourselves by killing him; if we cannot work here, then in time, wholly or partly, the white man will pass

away; the one best fitted to the land will likely survive — but this we are determined to do, *we will make it a free man's country*. Whether the ultimate race of this country be black, white or brown, we intend it to be a race permeated with the doctrine of the equal right of each human to himself and the duty of all to defend the freedom of it." ("Thoughts on South Africa.")

When Olive Schreiner was 39 she married Samuel Cronwright; at 40 she bore her only child; it was found dead the morning after it was born. And the asthma from which she had suffered all her life began to close in on her and never really left her again. But her indomitable spirit conquered her illhealth and her tragedy, and she devoted herself to the fight against Rhodes and the British imperialist policy, an endeavour to avert the coming tragedy of the Anglo-Boer war that was to split South Africa asunder. She wrote and published "Trooper Peter Halkett," a courageous and inspired attack on imperialism, on Rhodes himself and on what he stood for. A David against Goliath, but a David armed with a just quarrel. Olive Schreiner denounced imperialism with a bitter loathing as "the euphonous title of a deadly disease which under certain conditions tends to afflict the human race on earth. It increases in virulency in proportion as it is extended over more distant spaces and more diverse multitudes, till it becomes at last the death shroud of the nations."

Olive Schreiner could not stop the Anglo-Boer war, but she never ceased protesting against it. In 1899 she published "An English South African's view of the situation," a passionate plea for understanding and reconciliation, and a brilliant analysis of the existing situation. When the war came, both she and her husband endured hardship and suspicion for their unflinching opposition to the war. For all practical purposes, Olive was interned in Hanover because she had publicly championed the cause of the Boer and opposed the imperialist policy of Britain. Military authorities refused to allow her to return to Johannesburg and her personal possessions and her manuscripts were left unprotected and were burnt.

Against Colour Discrimination

During the decade which followed the war, the thoughts of the people of South Africa were turned towards Union and on what basis it should be achieved. Olive Schreiner was invited by the "Transvaal Leader" to express her views on Union. Her reply was the pamphlet "Closer Union." This pamphlet is hardly known today, yet much of what she wrote could well have been written today, could well be heeded today. It is here that is revealed her clearest vision of the future, her perception of the significance of the racial situation; here is the fearless champion of freedom for all, of racial harmony and justice. But today, nearly fifty years afterwards, the ears of White South Africa are still closed to her pleas. It is

difficult to believe that she wrote half a century ago, for the future she then foresaw has become the present. But she must speak for herself. That is her right.

"I am of the opinion that *where the franchise is concerned, no distinction of race or colour should be made between South Africans.* All persons born in the country or permanently resident here should be one in the eyes of the State I believe that an attempt to base our national life on distinction of race or colour as such, will, after the lapse of many years, prove fatal to us Unless the foundations be laid in justice and wisdom, they labour in vain who build the State."

"I hold this (the question of the Africans) to be the root question in South Africa and *as is our wisdom in dealing with it, so will be our future.*"

"It is out of this great heterogeneous mass of humans that the South African nation of the future will be built. For the dark man is here to stay If it be possible for us out of our great complex body of humanity (its parts possibly remaining racially distinct for centuries) to raise up a free intelligent harmonious nation, each part acting with and for the benefit of others, then we shall have played a part as great as that of any nation in the world's record.

". . . and if for the men of genius or capacity who are born among them, there be left open *a free path to take their share in the higher duties of life and citizenship,* their talents expended for the welfare of the community and not suppressed to become its subterraneous and disruptive force; if we can make our State as dear to them, as the matrix in which they find shelter for healthy life and development as it is to us then I think the future of South Africa promises greatness and strength. But if we fail in this? If, blinded by the gain of the moment, we see nothing in our dark man but a vast engine of labour; if to us he is not a man but only a tool; . . . if we reduce this vast mass to the condition of a great seething ignorant proletariat — then I would rather *draw a veil over the future of this land.*"

"Are we to spend all our national existence with a large dark shadow looming always in the background — *a shadow which we fear?* As long as nine-tenths of our community have no permanent state in the land and no right or share in our government, can we ever feel safe? *Can we ever know peace?*"

"One dissatisfied man or woman who feel themselves wronged is a point of weakness in a community; but when this condition animates the vast majority of the inhabitants of a state, there is a crack down the entire height of the social structure. But a far more subtle and inevitable form of evil must inevitably overtake us. It is ordained by the laws of human life that a Nemesis should follow

the subjection and use; purely for purposes of their own, of any race by another which lives among them. Spain fell before it in America, Rome felt it; it has dogged the feet of all conquering races. *In the end the subjected people will print their features on the face of the conquerors.*"

"The dark man is the child the Gods have given us in South Africa for our curse or our blessing; *we shall rise with him and we shall sink with him.*" (Union Now).

Champion of Women

And what of Olive Schreiner, the champion of women, the writer of "Woman and Labour," the protagonist of the Women's Movement? She was no militant suffragette, but a fighter for the spiritual as well as the political and social freedom of women. She saw the Women's Movement as a part of social evolution, not a sporadic struggle for political rights; she saw woman always as a fully functioning integral part of society, complementary to, not competitive with the development of man. "The women of no race or class will ever rise in revolt or attempt to bring about a revolutionary readjustment of their relation to their Society, however intense their suffering, and however clear their perception of it, while the welfare and persistence of their society requires their submission; wherever there is a general attempt on the part of the women of any society to readjust their position in it, a close analysis will always show that the changed or changing conditions of that society have made women's acquiescence no longer necessary or desirable.

"The males and females of each human society resemble two oxen tethered to one yoke; for a moment one may move slightly forward and the other remain stationary; but they can never move farther away from each other than the length of the yoke that binds them; and they must ultimately remain stationary or move forward together." (Woman and Labour).

Olive Schreiner maintained that the Woman's Movement could only arise when society was ready for it, demanded it "when the great wave of human necessity bears humanity onward." In her conception of the universality of the Women's Movement probably lies the answer to the question "Why did Olive Schreiner not lead the women's movement in South Africa?" For we know that she was one of the pioneers; intensely interested in the movement in London, she was invited on behalf of the women of South Africa to attend a meeting of the International Council of Women. After her return to South Africa she interested herself in the birth of the movement here; she wrote with pride and joy that she had been appointed Vice President of the newly established Women's Enfranchisement League in Cape Town. And Then? Nothing further. But indeed our present has its roots in the past. For the white women in South Africa were not prepared to include coloured

women in their demand for the vote for women. And Olive Schreiner lost interest in the women's movement in South Africa. "We have here in our little movement, only slaves, clanking their little chains as they go along, asking for their little franchise." Nor was it likely that Olive Schreiner could identify herself with a woman's movement, functioning on racial lines, with a colour bar demand for the enfranchisement of women, she who wrote so unequivocally on the adult franchise, with no discrimination of race, sex, creed or colour. And so the women's movement lost its most gallant fighter. Indeed it is probable that the later development of women's organisations in South Africa might have been on truly national instead of the present racial lines, had the movement followed the lead of the clear sighted champion of women.

Throughout the first world war, as during the Anglo Boer war, Olive Schreiner strove passionately for peace, for non-violence. But her life was nearly over; her physical suffering had become intense and she had become bodily weak although her spiritual strength remained invincible. In 1918 she wrote to a women's meeting in London — "The freedom of all human creatures is essential to the full development of human life on earth. We shall have to labour, not merely for a larger freedom for ourselves, but for every subject race and class, and for all suppressed individuals."

Two years later she died in Cape Town, alone in a boarding house, her body finally broken by age and sickness. But her spirit still lives in the struggle for freedom, for peace and racial harmony. Hers was a voice crying in the wilderness, crying for the freedom of the oppressed, for the end of racial hatred. Today it is the voice of South Africa that cries. And as the cry swells to a mighty chorus, let the voice of Olive Schreiner be heard again.

"Where I lie down worn out other men will stand young and fresh. By the steps that I have cut they will climb, by the stairs that I have built they will mount At the clumsy work they will laugh, when the stones roll they will curse me. But they will mount, and on my work, they will climb and by my stair. And no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." (Story of a South African Farm).

CALVINISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

By PAUL MONOGHAN

IN SOUTH AFRICA, the ruling Nationalist section of the white people have advanced many arguments in support of their claim to govern. So far has this claim gone, that to-day they are demanding that the whole of the country be subject to the complete dictatorship of the nationally minded Afrikaners. This dictatorship they say is in the interests of the country with all its