

DURBAN DIARY

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BETWEEN every July Handicap and the following June when the sardines begin running again, Durban relapses into a comfortable contemplation of its balmy weather. Fortunately any ensuing boredom is relieved by the province's favourite game of tag, played with zest and without pause for breath by the United and Federal Parties.

At present the good clean fun between Feds and Saps has reached its jolliest, and even the press controversy about the noise dogs make has taken second place.

The excuse—or justification, depending on how you look at it—has been the 1956 Natal Congress of the United Party. For years the Federals have taunted the United Party into committing itself on the claim that Natal has the right to a separate referendum if a republic is proclaimed. The Congress decided to obtain legal opinion on the point. It seemed a clever move of “heads I win, tails you lose”. If the opinion upheld this right, the United Party would embrace the new cause and steal the Federal thunder; if not, it could accuse Federals of irresponsibly proposing an unconstitutional solution.

The Federal reaction claimed the referendum as a moral right, asked where the United Party stood on that, and discounted the sanctity of legal opinions in a country where the letter of the law bears little relation to its spirit. Deuce.

Of course it would be naughty to suggest that the republican controversy is a little irrelevant. No one can pretend our present constitution has been any kind of success. Not only was its original colour-bar basis thoroughly immoral, but it has proved ineffective in safeguarding even those paltry few rights some non-Whites possessed; and a U.S.-type constitution with rights for *all* irrevocably entrenched and power diffused among different authorities would be a great improvement. Nonetheless the Broederbond brand of republic can be relished by none but Afrikaner Nationalists, and a strong anti-Republican stand is therefore, as far as it goes, important.

But how one wishes the two largest White parties in Natal would face up to the the basis of the problem. Ultimately the important

alternatives are not a republic or a constitutional monarchy but a multi-racial democracy—in republican or monarchical dress matters less—or its present opposite. The fundamental choice is between the democratic and the authoritarian society. The choice of constitutional form is no more than a choice of means by which to attain the postulated ends. That is why the advantage is and must be with the Nationalists. They have decided on the authoritarian end and the republican means, while Federal and United Party leaders are opposing or pretending to oppose the means, but desperately avoiding any decision about the end.

The questions that liberals, radicals, progressives, African Nationalists, members of the Congresses—the most numerous, albeit unrepresented, group in Natal—must ask both Federals and the United Party are therefore these: When you talk of a referendum for Natal, do you intend that *all* the people of Natal should participate in it? And if you advocate secession from the Union as a last resort, do you intend to build a real democracy in Natal in which *all* Natalians may have a voice? If the answer is no—which we all know it is—it seems that the only essential difference between “liberated” Natal and Broederbond South Africa would be between worshipping the Crown and the Kruithoring*. In that case who, but the White supremacists on either side cares a damn?

Of course we in Natal know we are quaint and odd and have our feet all over the place except firmly in South Africa. We are, of course, also the traditional espousers of lost causes. But this is not the context in which one reports on the recent combined activities of the African National Congress, Natal Indian Congress and Liberal Party. Members of all three organizations have co-operated to form the Natal Vigilance Committee on Group Areas, and successful public meetings in Northern Natal have been addressed by joint platforms of Africans, Indians and Whites.

The view that the Group Areas or “Ghetto” Act is probably the most wicked of all the noxious legislation in our statute-book has been confirmed by the plans for its implementation. Organised resistance is therefore thoroughly worth while for its own sake. But in the long run even greater value may be derived from this joint activity.

Co-operation between the races—even among people who are at one in their loathing of the colour bar—is incredibly difficult in

* The ‘Kruithoring’ or ‘powder-horn’ is the official emblem of the Nationalist Party.

South Africa, more difficult than most well-wishers overseas realize. Not only does one face the barrier of legislation and convention which makes ordinary intellectual or personal contact with other races a matter of constant, intentional effort, rather than the result of normal intercourse. The White radical must also contend with a growing lack of enthusiasm among many non-Whites for co-operation with Whites. Many are suspicious of White motives, because of repeated betrayals throughout this century by Whites who called themselves liberals; others feel that the non-Whites, especially the Africans, can never attain political strength until they develop their own leadership on their own; still others have reacted to White sectional racialism by evolving their own sectional racialism. However understandable each of these reactions may be—as they certainly are—their result merely helps to achieve the Government purpose: an acceptance of the thesis that the different races have mutually antagonistic interests which can be resolved only by rigid racial separation.

Not only in relation to the Vigilance Committee but in other ways too—for example, a recent African National Congress Conference on the Tomlinson Report, to which Liberal Party speakers were invited—Natal has made encouraging progress in persuading White and non-White to make common cause. Nothing spectacular has yet been achieved, but in comparison with Natal's past and also with the present situation in most other parts of the country, a very worth-while beginning has been made. For the sake of us all, this had better not become just another lost cause.

“The final cynical touch in the hypocritical war of words over the Suez crisis”, the *Natal Sunday Tribune* told us recently, “is that while Mr. Nehru in world affairs indulges in high-flown condemnation of ‘colonialist suppression’, at home and hidden from foreign eyes he is carrying out his own bloody war of colonial suppression against the rebellious Naga tribesmen.” These words are quoted not from an editorial, but from a news report accredited to the paper's London correspondent.

One finds it increasingly difficult to reconcile the reporting by many South African newspapers of events in, for example, India, West Africa or the southern states of the U.S.A. on the one hand, and on the other their indignant protestations against alleged prejudiced and ill-informed articles on South African affairs by overseas journalists.

In particular, one must be forgiven for regarding complaints

about a vendetta against South Africa with a degree of cynicism, when one takes note of the persistent and virulent vendetta a large proportion of the South African Press, English and Afrikaans, has waged for years now against India and the person of Jawaharlal Nehru. When we are not being titillated by horror stories of the impending invasion of Africa by Nehru's vast armada of aircraft-carriers and jet bombers, we are being invited to lick our lips about riots in Bombay, disputes over Kashmir, and of course that evergreen, the caste system.

Yet White South Africans who seize on Nehru as the scapegoat for their self-inflicted troubles, and who gloat lovingly over the colossal problems his new country is facing, may live to thank the man who had done more than any other since the death of Gandhi to prevent Asians from being forced into a solid, bitterly anti-Western bloc.

But until that time we must expect to continue being told that India's efforts to free Goa from Portuguese domination are "imperialist", while the greedy eye of South Africa on the Protectorates lacks that gleam; and that journalists in London can know nothing about South Africa without coming here, while they can simultaneously become authorities on the Naga troubles without ever visiting the remote mountain regions of Assam. Perhaps it all goes to show that whether reporting is prejudiced or not is simply a matter of bias.

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When in London recently, I was searching for accommodation with friends, two South Africans studying at Cambridge. A homely and gay club in Earl's Court, run by South Africans mainly for South Africans, was recommended to us. Certainly, we were told there, accommodation could be found for us. "We guarantee good digs," the man said. "Sound plumbing and no Coloureds". In South Africa we should have been conditioned to this. But in London it was somehow too much. We declined.

Of course most White South Africans take their prejudices overseas with them, keep them warm in cotton wool, and return with them intact. What does, however, surprise me is that so many who would indignantly deny any Nationalist sympathies when at home, fall over themselves to become apologists for the Nationalists once they leave the country. They are doubtless flattered by the pep-talks the State Information Office gratuitously gives on their role as "ambassadors", while a plentiful supply of glossy propaganda ensures that no cues will be missed or awkward questions unanswered. But a more alarming possibility is that the

insidious lie is gaining acceptance that criticism of the party overseas equals treason to the State.

The truth, of course, is that nothing so "blackens the name" of White South Africa in the eyes of the world as for White South Africans abroad to justify apartheid. Fortunately there is a small but significant group of young White South Africans in London and at Oxford and Cambridge who are rendering their country magnificent service and enhancing its prestige by making unequivocal their total repudiation of the monstrous evil and sterile injustice of the colour bar.

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The White citizens of Natal, the most pro-British group in South Africa, face an agonizing dilemma whenever they are forced to take notice of the British Labour Party. They dare not adopt too hostile an attitude towards a party which is likely to become Britain's next Government and the umbilical cord of the "British connection" they value so highly. On the other hand, they are intractably anti-Labour. Labour's race relations policy is anathema to this doughty band which invented its own ghetto policy as long ago as the days of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, before the Nationalists were ever heard of; mainly an affluent group, their views on socialism are pure High Toryism; most of the Englishmen they know personally are either fugitives from taxation or the leisured gentlefolk who avoid the English winter on our beaches, and whose railings against the Welfare State in either case are as melancholy as they are incessant; and their judgement of British politics is conditioned by a press largely controlled by the mining groups, of whose attitude towards any Labour Party little need be said.

The local reaction to the excellent resolution passed by the British Labour Party Conference on racial discrimination in South Africa has reflected the triumph of annoyance over discretion. "South Africans are becoming increasingly irritated by the sanctimonious moral judgements passed on their homeland by doctrinaire politicians and theorists," the *Natal Daily News* proclaimed in sonorous tones.

But when it talks of "South Africans", the *Daily News* of course refers only to a minority. Non-White South Africans are anything but irritated by these "moral judgements". White liberals and radicals draw tremendous encouragement from them too, for they are refreshing evidence that if the White liberal is something of a curiosity in South Africa, the "traditional" White South African is even more of a curiosity in the world.

The time has come, however, when we White liberals or radicals must cease merely to draw quiet personal satisfaction from world opinion. Too often the argument that "loyal" South Africans must resent international criticism gets across by default. It is high time we seized the initiative: by announcing our loyalty not to racist bigotry but to all South Africans by recognizing the tremendous menace to peace and source of international tension White South Africa represents; by supporting the right this fact gives other nations to take cognizance of what our Government does; and by openly and proudly associating ourselves with the British Labour Party, the United Nations, the Government of India, the Rev. Michael Scott and anyone else who fights our fight.

At Blackpool Mr. James Griffiths paid generous tribute to White liberals and radicals in South Africa. It is time for us to repay the compliment, even if the price of our doing so is the fury of the Free State isolationists and the "Little Englanders" of Natal.

Nearly 1,000 people—Africans, Indians, Europeans and Coloureds—squeezed into a packed Indian cinema in Durban on a recent Sunday night to hear four hours of jazz performed by leading local White and non-White musicians, in a concert arranged by the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Standing in the crowded foyer before the show began, I overheard a young European woman ask the lady selling programmes whether seating would be segregated. She was told it would not be. "In that case", she said to her escort, "I don't think I can go in".

Her inhibitions were shared by few. The audience, overflowing into the aisles, were too preoccupied with pumping their knees and shouting encouragement to the musicians, as they swung from hot Dixieland to the cool, intellectual modern music, to care two hoots who was in the next seat as long as he was not a "square". Applause reached its climax in a thrilling "battle" between a young Coloured and a young White guitarist, each striving to create the more exciting and expressive solo.

I could not help recalling the point made by Yehudi Menuhin to Father Huddleston that it was jazz which forced some of the early cracks in the colour bar in the United States. But then the F.A.K. (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) can always decide that jazz—like Carols by Candlelight—is a foreign influence requiring eradication.

Adams College, the famous 105-year-old African mission school in

Natal, has been refused registration as a private school by the omnipotent Dr. Verwoerd, and will cease operating at the end of this year.

Writing in *Indian Opinion*, African journalist Jordan Ngubane says: "Quite clearly the closure was, in the final reckoning, not a triumph for apartheid. On the face of it, it seemed to be that. What it was, was an open confession of inability to lead a multi-racial nation. Adams had produced men and women who were a credit to their country and whose names were known right round the world. They were incontrovertible proof of how absurd apartheid's pontifications were. Apartheid could not explain away the phenomenon of Black men distinguishing themselves in fields which it regarded as the exclusive preserves of peoples with a White skin. The only answer was to close down Adams.

"But if the closure was a challenge, it was also a criticism of what we, who oppose evaluating human worth in terms of race, had done over the decades and centuries to keep South Africa on the path of truth as preached at Adams. What we had done was wholly inadequate; how inadequate was shown by the fact that a famous school like Adams could go down at the stroke of the pen of a bureaucrat in Pretoria whose name will not last a quarter of the time Adams College has been in existence. True, we protested; and those who went before us protested. But in the light of what has happened neither we nor they fought hard enough and to-day Adams is paying the price. The ideals it stood for are being crushed underfoot by a tyrant. Again we protest mildly and feebly. As I thought things over, it seemed to me that we have reached the point where it is no longer enough to protest; we must be ready now to go to jail and perish there if necessary in defence of the values of life we believe to be true and desirable."

He was no older than 16, though he looked a great deal older. A face tortured with suffering and pain gave him a premature maturity, as did the broad, powerful shoulders, strong from dragging the weight of his dead, withered hips and legs.

They were trying him for murder. It was nothing much as murders go—just another of those ordinary stabbings that, like shebeen queens, police raids and pass laws, are always with the shanty-town people, just as the shanty-town people and the Problem are always with the White cities.

After they had lifted him into the witness-box, he told the judge that until two years ago he had lived in Cato Manor with his father and the woman. He was studying hard, hoping to pass the matric-

ulation examination which would open a new world to him, a world which, although still bounded by the dreary desolation of the shanty-town, would somehow be above it. Then the disease ended it all, and the laughter and eagerness went out of his eyes, and life and ambition became existence and acquiescence.

When he came out of hospital a year later, his father was dead and the woman reigned in his father's house. Many men came and went, and at night he would hear the carousing from the shack at the back where she had left him. She would not cook for him, nor later even buy him food. And so he would drag his dead legs into Durban every day to buy a little meat and bread, which he would sell at a small profit to the shanty-town people, and so be able to keep staying alive.

Then one night the woman, aflame with isishimayane, ordered him to leave his father's house. And so he stabbed her and killed her.

After they had arrested him the disease returned and he nearly died. But in the prison hospital they kept him alive and made him well enough to stand trial.

The advocate that the State paid to defend him pleaded eloquently that he should be acquitted, and that if he was to be convicted he should not be sentenced to death because of the extenuating circumstances.

"If he is to live, he must be sent to gaol for a long time," the White doctor who had tended to him in the hospital said when the court had retired. "He will never get better, but with proper care and attention he may never get worse," he explained.

"If he is convicted, he will be able to go to a prison hospital, and will be given work like basket-weaving. Outside of prison there are no hospital beds for him. All the beds are needed for patients who may recover, and we have no hospital here for non-European incurables. He will go back to Cato Manor and will have to find work and look after himself. He will not live six months."

The judge returned. And they sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment.

The correspondence columns of the *Natal Mercury* contain a novel suggestion. Stung by the report that the Blood Transfusion Services are to segregate European and non-European blood by marking bottles of the former with a white spot, a correspondent suggests a further extension of this principle.

What would happen, the correspondent asks, if a good Nationalist, through no fault of his own, was to be contaminated with the

blood of a Communist? To safeguard the purity of each political group, European bottles should be labelled thus: red for Communists, pink for Liberals, mauve for Federals, pale blue for the United Party and deep blue for the Nationalists.

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And from *Indian Opinion*: An African boarding a Durban bus was told by the conductor that it was full and he should "go to hell". Whereupon the African promptly replied: "I went there, but I saw a board saying: FOR EUROPEANS ONLY."

BATTLE HYMN FOR THE REPUBLIC

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the President-to-be;
 He is trampling out resistance to the pigmentocracy
 For he's sworn that Whites for ever shall maintain supremacy;
 His challenge marches on.

He has summoned us to answer him before his judgment place;
 He is sorting out the souls of men according to their race;
 And only Whites are human and the rest must know their place;
 This challenge marches on.

The rest, a lower order, shall forever servile be;
 But men can not be less than men, though reared to slavery
 And legislation can't destroy a man's will to be free—
 The future marches on.

Yet he casts a mighty shadow; fear and silence are abroad,
 And the soul is slow to answer him, the spirit overawed;
 But the future holds the lightning of a terrible swift sword
 And the future marches on.

MARION,