

IN SIGHT OF THE END

IN White South Africa, faith in the indivisibility of Freedom is the cardinal heresy, a blaspheming of the Colour Bar in whose image the State has been raised. For South Africans there has always existed an 'apartheid' in Freedom, and the Whites have condoned and encouraged the division persistently, in a desperate faith of their own that the more freedom they took away from others, the more they would have to themselves.

But inevitably, quite the opposite of what they have believed and planned has happened. Because Freedom *is*, finally, indivisible, the freedoms they would have safeguarded and increased by their denial of them to others—freedom of belief and its public expression, freedom of movement and association, freedom of government election, and, above all, freedom from fear—they have denied to themselves.

In 1936, we plundered the Africans of the right to vote on a common electoral roll with Whites in the Cape. By allowing for three special white representatives to sit in the House of Assembly, elected directly by Africans in the Cape on a segregated roll, we pretended to ourselves that we were securing white democracy against the anarchy of an illiterate black electorate. There were few of us who cried aloud against the slick injustice of the Act. There were even fewer who realised that by making the votes of the Africans meaningless, we were making all votes meaningless at the same time, that by plundering the Africans of real Parliamentary representation, we were plundering South Africa of Parliamentary Government altogether.

And white South Africa, by and large, still does not realise it. Tyranny in South Africa needs only to be bleached to be democratic. There was something grimly comic in the way the United Party debated the Bill this year to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll in the Cape. It rested its whole case so selfrighteously on the correct majority required by the Constitution for an assassination of the Franchise. Would the correct majority have made the assassination any less immoral? Oppression is never proper, whatever clothes it wears. The Government, of course, was quick to claim that the principle of the Bill was sanctified by precedent. And how could the United

Party, loyal still to the policies of Smuts, declare unjust a precedent they themselves had been guilty of creating twenty years before?

Democracy in South Africa, always sickly, turned its face to the wall in 1936. Since then the end has never been in doubt. The Coloured will be taken off the common roll in the Cape very soon. Basically it cannot matter how. The Government has promised it. The Government will accomplish it—somehow or other.

How long will we have a Parliament, however unrepresentative, at all? The three Native Representatives in the House of Assembly will be shuffled out of the pack very soon—the Government casually promised us that this Session. The Labour Party will almost certainly lose the five seats it now holds in the 1958 Elections. The four new white members of Parliament, to be elected by the Coloureds in the Cape on a segregated roll, will remain in the game only as long as the Government keeps patience with them. And we have learnt how short is the Government's patience with any real opposition. The United Party will be the only Opposition left, and the United Party is at best only an apology. Perhaps for a while we will be allowed to keep the stacked deck, shuffling it scrupulously every five years to produce the same Declarer and the same Dummy. But eventually—and it will not take long—even the Dummy will be dealt out of the pack, and the whole game of Parliamentary rule in South Africa stacked away in the Office of the President.

We must take stock in South Africa. We have watched Democracy dying now for years, and some of us have not yet realised it is ill. Only white South Africans who could think they were bringing Christianity to Africa by jailing tens of thousands of Africans a year for not having the right papers in their pockets, could go every five years to the Polls in the stiff conviction that they were carrying on the business of a real democracy. For the Africans who never had the vote or who lost it in 1936, Democracy since Union has meant the squalid shanty-towns of Johannesburg, the compound system on the mines and private prison labour on the farms, the great tyrannies of countless little laws which they never had a share in deciding.

We must take stock in South Africa. To three-quarters of the population, Parliament represents the reason why nearly half of all African children die before they reach the age of sixteen, and why, in order that the other half should not die also, men leave their families for months and sometimes years on end to work on the

farms or in the mines of the whites under the most degrading conditions. It is the reason why Africans need a special Government indulgence to work in the cities and live on the outskirts in poisonous tin and cardboard-box confusion, why an African may be expelled from a town he was born in and in which he has lived and worked all his life at the order of a mere local official, without regard to his family or job and, at the discretion of the Governor-General, without the ordinary right of appeal to the Courts for a stay in the execution of his sentence. To all non-white South Africans, Indians, Coloureds and Africans, Parliament is the reason why they may find themselves robbed of home and business overnight because a Government Board has decided to paint white the ghettos in which they live, and why any expression of opposition to persecution of this sort is labelled agitation and regarded as criminal in the eyes of the law.

And Parliament, inevitably, is becoming the reason why White South Africans also are being stripped bare of their rights. The Suppression of Communism Act has made any real opposition to the Government's racial policies punishable by heavy prison sentences and wholesale confiscation of property. The "bannings" that have issued in a steady black rain from the Minister of Justice since the Act was passed have fallen on White and Non-White opponents of Government policy indiscriminately. The infamous "treason" raids of September last year showed finally how colour-blind is political persecution in South Africa.

And so it is with most of the repressive legislation the Government has shovelled through Parliament recently. The amended Industrial Conciliation Act is an attack on all Trade Unionism, White and Black; by forcibly segregating the Unions, the Government has divided labour only the more easily to rule it. Under the Group Areas Act, even White South Africans are to be ordered to leave their homes and uproot their communities and live where the Government instructs them to. The astonishment of the Whites in Paarl when they realised this is suggestive of the complacency with which they have watched, and the suicidal blindness with which they have encouraged, the persecution of the Non-Whites for years. "When Dr. Dönges (Minister of the Interior) explained the Group Areas Act to us," their spokesman is reported to have said, "he did not tell us that we would be the ones to have to move."

It will go on, it must, it cannot stop of itself. If Liberty is indivisible, Tyranny is indivisible also. Neither can have any regard

for the Colour Bar. And so every Parliamentary Session is inundated with Bills conferring extraordinary powers on individual Ministers, every Session disbands with a Cabinet momentarily dazed by the authority it has voted to itself. But the next Session is a return only to fiercer demands more fiercely demanded. The more power the Government seizes, the more it reaches for, till no more will be asked because there will be nothing left to give.

We are being driven along towards the disaster of a total Police State, and while most White South Africans do not even notice it because the whips are as yet being used upon other people's backs, the rest are too afraid of the whips to say anything in protest. It is not easy to cry out your horror aloud when you may lose what you consider the right, and what the Government prefers to call the privilege, of a passport, not easy when you may have your house searched in the middle of the night for evidence of "treason", your movements limited to a particular district by Government order, your associations restricted to only those gatherings the Government permits you to attend because you have been banned from meeting with more than two other people at any one time for any common purpose. It is not easy to run the risk of five years in jail for propagating what the Government ludicrously calls Communism, to lose your job, your property and your liberty because you believe in and practise your right to political opposition.

All this is not easy. But it represents a risk we must all find the courage to take. For sooner or later the risk will be forced upon us. And it is better, surely, that we should take it now, among the last hesitations of the twilight, than later, in the dumb lonely agonies of the dark. Above all, we must realise that we cannot fight tyranny in fragments. The dissipation of our resistance to it through civil wars over trivial differences of approach can only lead to the collapse of all resistance in South Africa before the undivided, indivisible onslaught. If it is treason in South Africa for White democratic opinion to ally itself with Black, it is a judgment we must necessarily suffer and be proud to call down upon ourselves.

The world outside South Africa must also join in the struggle, for it cannot afford to do otherwise. There have been too many Spains in its history for it to allow itself to break apart again over another. The world can never be safe for democracy and peace if a part of it is allowed to totter into tyranny. Liberty is not only indivisible within a particular country, it is indivisible all over the world. To preserve it at all anywhere, the world must preserve it everywhere. If South Africa is allowed to become a Totalitarian

State, the citizens of England and America will find piled loose from under them one of the stones upon which their own vital liberties stand. The end of the road we started down in 1936 is before our eyes. All people everywhere, for their own good, must resist its being reached.

CHURCH AND STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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“THE State and the Churches do not form an antithesis in South Africa. On the contrary, the one is the team mate of the other.” This is the verdict of the authors of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa. If this were an accurate description of the relations between the churches and the state in this country, then something would have gone sadly wrong with the churches, for all through the Christian era the relation between church and state has been one of the most stubborn problems which has confronted the civil and ecclesiastical authorities alike. Moreover, since the Renaissance, the question of the relation between church and state has been an issue that any person who takes seriously his responsibilities in church and state cannot escape facing for long. This is inevitable, for since that time the various activities in which men engage have been regarded as autonomous. No longer have people viewed such activities as subordinated to the claims of religion. The result is that politics acknowledges no superior; business is regarded as an end in itself; and we hear a great deal of talk about “Art for Art’s sake”. Even in education, a field of activity in which the training of persons is recognised as being the primary function, there is frequently a strange reluctance among educationalists to accept the Christian view of the nature and destiny of the persons who are being educated. Indeed, the story of the church since the rise of the modern state has been very largely the record of the increasing loss of the moral and spiritual authority of the church over the everyday life of human beings.

At the same time the church has never ceased to claim that it