



LIBERATION

ONE SHILLING

No. 11, 1955.



L. Bernstein:
**SPOTLIGHT ON THE CHAMBER
OF MINES**

Paul Monaghan:
CALVINISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

R. K. Cope:
NATIVE, BANTU OR AFRICAN



A JOURNAL OF DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION

CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial: On the Eve	1
L. Bernstein: The Great Conspiracy	5
Helen Joseph: South Africa's Greatest Daughter	10
Paul Monaghan: Calvinism in South Africa	15
R. K. Cope: Native, Bantu and African	18

LIBERATION

A Journal of Democratic Discussion

No. 11, 1955

One Shilling

ON THE EVE

EIGHTEEN months after the Queenstown Conference of the African National Congress, which gave birth to the idea, the Congress of the People of South Africa to formulate and issue a Charter of Freedom has been summoned to meet in Johannesburg on June 25 and 26.

It would be hard to overestimate the historic importance of this event. Never before in South Africa, or elsewhere in this Continent, have the ordinary people thus been called to send their delegates together to discuss and decide the sort of laws and institutions under which they wish to live. The National Convention of 1909 was a sorry affair. The White minorities of the four colonies sent exclusively White delegates to formulate the Act of Union. Not surprisingly they decided that Whites alone were fit to govern.

Not long ago, the British Government held a "consultation" with the people of Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, who were asked to say whether or not they wanted to live in a Federation dominated by the White minority of Southern Rhodesia. They replied, overwhelmingly, that they did not want it. But that was the Federation they got.

The other day the National Council of Basutoland, which naturally has no legislative powers, was summoned together to hear proposals from British imperialism regarding the future government of the territory. Naturally these proposals were based on the idea that Basutoland should continue to be governed by Britain, with the Chiefs and local councils playing a minor part in administering the foreign domination of their people. The National Council rejected every clause of the proposals. They had not gone very far in their proceedings when the representative of the High Commissioner sent them home, telling them they were naughty.

Such has been the nature of "consultation of the people" until now in Africa.

It is clear that the Congress of the people will be a very different kind of consultation. For the first time, having discussed a thousand and one problems facing them at thousands of meetings, big and small, up and down the country, the ordinary workers and farmers, housewives, students, professional people, will send the men and women whom they have picked to speak for them. And they will say what they really think, and demand what they really want for the future. And those things sifted and summarised, arranged in a straightforward programme, will be the People's Freedom Charter.

What will that Charter contain? We cannot say, in detail, for of course the Congress of the People has yet to meet, to discuss and to vote. But already many of the demands that are flooding in have been made public, and it is not difficult, already, to foretell some of the foundations of the Freedom Charter. For some themes are common to all the demands that have appeared. The demands, every one, reject the hated principles of apartheid and the colour bar, and speak up for a conception of freedom and human rights broad enough to include everyone in South Africa, of whatever race, colour or creed. They speak out for the simple things that all men need: food and houses and land and jobs. And for the rights to secure these needs: votes, education, equality of opportunity.

"That is all very fine," we can imagine some readers saying. "But, after all, what will your Freedom Charter be worth? Won't it just be another piece of paper, which Strijdom and his Government will ignore, just as they ignore all the wishes of the people?"

It is true enough that in order for the people to win freedom, they must do more than write a charter of rights. Once the Charter is written it will yet have to be won; and to wrest freedom from the rulers of South Africa: greedy to preserve big profits and cheap labour, cruel and ruthless to submit the minds and bodies of the people to servitude, jealous to keep and concentrate power in their hands, inflamed with racial arrogance and contempt for all dark-skinned people — this will be no easy task, to be accomplished in a day.

But the true question to be answered is not whether the Charter will itself win the battle, for no one has any illusions about that. The real question is whether or not the Freedom Charter will help the people towards the fulfilment of their aspira-

tions. And to that question there can be only one answer: to gather together all the hopes, strivings and needs of the millions of toiling and suffering humans of our land, to give a voice to the voiceless — this in itself is a great and important step towards the achievement of those aims.

The Freedom Charter, then, will be no ordinary document. It will hold up before South Africa and before the world a picture of how the true will of the people desires to shape our country: a picture against which we can judge the reality of South Africa as she is under the Nationalist Party, a standard against we can measure the Nationalists' programme, conceived in fear and compounded of greed and racial insanity.

The Congress of the People must be seen not as the end, but as the beginning of a road.

For the people's freedom charter, once adopted, will cease to be an aim in itself; it will become the programme to which every patriot will be bound to dedicate his life; the banner which will rally every section and every organisation of democratic South Africans to it.

Before we can unite, we must know for what purpose we have come together. Before we can enrol our soldiers of emancipation and send them into political struggle for freedom's cause, we must tell them clearly the aims for which they are called to suffer, to sacrifice, perhaps to die.

The Freedom Charter, precisely because it will crystallise and sum up the views of thousands of anonymous co-authors, will serve as a basis for bringing together all the democratic forces and organisations in South Africa. It will not be the programme or the property of the African National Congress or the S.A.I.C. or the Liberal Party or the SACPO or the Congress of Democrats. It will be the common Charter of all who seek a democratic alternative to baasskap

It will also be the standard by which the people will judge the genuineness of the claims to democracy of any Party or individual seeking to lead the people: forcing them to take sides for or against the Charter.

But the Congress of the People should not limit itself to formulating the Freedom Charter, and then vanish from the face of the earth. It must, if it is serious, decide upon the broad main

lines of a campaign to make the terms of the charter known to every man and woman in the land; to rally the people around the Charter; to organise them to translate its aims into reality.

By this, we do not of course mean that the Congress of the People should set up a separate organisation of its own. What is needed to bring the Charter into effect is not a "brand-new" organisation, different from those tried and trusted bodies which originated the C.O.P. and called it into being, but a vast reinforcement, both in numbers and in efficient activity, of the A.N.C. and its allies

Nothing could better serve to strengthen and revitalise the organisations than the great rising and leavening of the spirit and political understanding of the people which must grow out of the Congress of the People and the popularisation of the Freedom Charter.

We are sure that the head-office organisers of the C.O.P. are hard at work, perfecting the final arrangements for this historic event. We wish we were as sure that, throughout the country, in every Province and locality, every member and friend of the Congress movement is treating this question with the urgency and concentration which is required.

The leaders of the people are, we know, intensely occupied with the struggle against Bantu "Education" and many other issues thrust upon the people by the Government. They have been busy with such issues ever since the Nationalists came into office and declared war on the non-white people. They will continue with this business until that Government is removed. What we must see and understand is that every one of these issues is intimately bound up with the Congress of the People, and that they cannot be treated as isolated matters of their own, but as closely connected with the wider question of winning freedom.

For the first time since 1948, the entire democratic movement has taken the initiative, not merely resisting the evil acts of the Government, and defending the people's rights against new offensives, but actively coming forward to shape the free South Africa of the future.

Once they have grasped the vital significance of this fact, there is no doubt that Congressmen and Congresswomen throughout the country, trade unionists, and freedom-loving individuals of all races will throw their full energies into making the Congress of the People an event which will fill a stirring chapter in the history books of the future.

THE GREAT CONSPIRACY — I

The Story of the Chamber of Mines

By L. BERNSTEIN

"In our schedule of wages, we, to a great extent, fix the standard of cost. The townspeople, the contractor and all the employers of labour in the smaller industries have to outbid us to attract the native to them; the farmer has to raise his rate of pay to ascertain what labour he requires, and the sense of this responsibility increases one's care and caution when it comes to the question of fixing wages or altering conditions."

—Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. In a Presidential address to the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, 1902.

IT is customary today for the Transvaal Chamber of Mines to surround itself with a mantle of benevolence and philanthropy. Public relations experts and hired-scribes shroud all the Chamber's real purposes in unending tributes to the hospitals, the charities and the universities that the Chamber endows.

But behind the carefully built facade, the Chamber remains what it always has been — an employers' association, where the mining magnates band together to keep labour cheap and plentiful, and to keep profits high. The wage standards set on the mines still determine the standards for wages—especially labourers wages — in agriculture and industry. Fifty years ago, the Chamber's spokesmen were frank enough to admit it, and openly proclaimed their twin aims — to drive the Africans from tribal, rural life to work on the Reef, and to keep wages down to barest minimums.

"Complaints from the various mines of the difficulties of securing and retaining a sufficient number of Kaffirs to carry on the works are constantly growing more numerous and urgent," states the Chamber's annual report for 1889. "It is to be feared that eager competition, between managers . . . will be inevitable. A manager finding himself short of labour . . . has, standing alone, scarcely any other remedy than that of raising his rates of pay."

In the following year, it is reported that the assistance of the Government had been asked for, but no satisfactory reply had been received; so a special committee had "received instructions to formulate a scheme for obtaining a supply of natives."

The precise nature of the scheme formulated is to be seen in the next report for the year 1891, which contains a letter sent by the Chamber to a Mr. J. Meyer, then a member of the First Transvaal Volksraad.

"The want of native labour is becoming urgently felt" the Chamber's Secretary writes. "I trust that the Volksraad will not allow this session to go by without making some legislative provision dealing with this most important question, whether by raising the hut tax to an appreciable amount and relieving working Kaffirs from its payment, or by some other means...."

The problem however remained unrelieved for several years, although crop failures some two years later helped to 'increase the supply' despite the indifference of a Volksraad composed of farmers. Though there were still insufficient workers to meet the expanding needs, the Chamber pursued its twin policy.

"The big increase which has again occurred in the demand for labour . . . has had the close attention of your Committee" states the 1894 report. Two main objects have been kept in view; the principal one the maintenance of supply; the second the reduction of wages."

Two years later, the Chamber of Mines Standing Committee met the Native Commissioner, Captain Schiel, *" . . . and the question of the supply from the Northern District of the Transvaal was discussed. In April (1896) an interview was held with another of the Native Commissioners, Captain Dahl, who referred to the disinclination of the natives to work, and stated that although the crops for the year would be 50% below the average, pressure would have to be brought to bear to induce the native to come to the (gold) fields. Meantime he and the other officials had received peremptory orders from the Government to render the Companies all possible assistance in getting labour."* Although it is thus clear that the Kruger Republic would use its authority to meet the mining magnates' needs for cheap African labour, there were apparently limits to their co-operation. The same report (1896) referring to further negotiations with the Native Commissioner for the Zoutpansberg District says that *".. .. Captain Schiel stated that he had met the Government Commission, and had advised them that the only way to secure labour was to empower the Native Commissioners to order the natives to proceed to the Rand to work With two members of the Commission he had called on the President at Pretoria, who would not, however, consent to the employment of coercion"* Captain Schiel, nothing daunted by the President's attitude suggested *" . . . that the Government should be petitioned (by the Chamber) to get a law passed to compel natives to work for 3 or 4 months in the year."*

What went on between 1896 and 1897 is not recorded in the Annual Reports, save for a self-congratulatory passage in the 1897 report, which records that *"Taking into consideration the increased demand . . . the supply must on the whole be regarded as very*

satisfactory, more especially as... a large reduction in the scale of native wages has been successfully carried through."

For the next few years, activities of the Chamber of Mines are somewhat hard to follow. On the Witwatersrand, the dominant group of mining magnates headed by Cecil Rhodes were conspiring with Dr. Jameson for an armed putsch, a conspiracy which ended in the dismal fiasco of the Jameson "Raid." Obviously the clouds of war between the Kruger Republic and British imperialism were banking up, threatening to submerge the whole country. The African labourers in large numbers returned from the Reef to their homes, leaving the white men to fight out their quarrels. Certain it is that at the turn of the century, the supply of labour for the Witwatersrand mines was at a low ebb.

Yet once again, despite their difficulties, the Chamber could record in their report for 1900 and 1901 that "*... the question of native wages was dealt with, and a revised schedule was agreed upon, which will result in a material saving to the mines.*" Though wage rates are thus again reduced the Chamber of Mines salve their consciences with the thought that: "*At the same time the rates fixed are reasonable, and will not, in the opinion of your committee, in any way interfere with the inflow of native labour.*" The new, 'reasonable' wage scale laid down a minimum wage for all Africans, irrespective of the work they do, of 30/- per 30 working days (I.E. 5 weeks.), and a maximum of 35/-. The rate for what are politely called "picannies," child labourers, was set at 15/-.

The jovial tone of satisfaction is not maintained the following year. There is an air of gloom throughout the report. In his Presidential address to the Chamber, Sir Percy (Jock-of-the-Bushveld) Fitzpatrick, speaking of the 30/- to 35/- rate laments: "*The low rate of wages was introduced by the Boer military authorities, it was perpetuated by the British military authorities, and it was finally adopted by the mining companies when circumstances seemed to warrant the belief that it could be successfully maintained. Circumstances as you know changed considerably. The war was prolonged far beyond the time anticipated. Whether the change should ever have been made is a matter on which there are divided opinions; but the change having been made, I do not think there can be much difference of opinion as to the advisability of giving it a good trial.*"

Sir Percy was apparently misinformed. There was still considerable difference of opinion on giving the lower wage rates a further trial, after it had already heightened the labour shortage. A special committee of the Chamber, reporting in the same year (1902) on the labour shortage recommended: "*That the rate of native wages be increased, but so regulated that the average earnings of the native, on any mine shall not exceed 50/- per head, either*

from piece or day work, per month of 30 shifts." Here, for the first time, emerges the idea of a maximum average wage rate, a system still in operation in the mining industry. "This rate" says the committee, "would enable the native recruiters to safely state that it will be possible for natives to earn in future the same wage as before the war."

The Chamber did not see completely eye to eye with its sub-committee. In a circular to all mines in November 1902, the Chamber gives its opinion that ". . . it is not desirable to increase the natives' pay without obtaining corresponding extra work . . ." While accepting the average wage of 50/-, the Chamber states: "In order that there may be no misapprehensions . . . I am directed to emphasize that, except by means of legitimate piece and task work, the pay to natives shall not be raised above the rate at present ruling." (i.e 30/- to 35/-).

Not surprising that in 1903 the Report records that ". . . owing to failure of the crops, it was anticipated that some surplus labour would be available for the Rand, but this hope was not realised." Means had to be found. Africans would not come voluntarily to work; the Chamber would not voluntarily raise the wage rates. (In 1902, Rand Mines Ltd., paid a dividend of 80%.) To the rescue of the millionaires came the British Government, now ruling the Transvaal through its Lieutenant Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley.

In July, 1903, under strong pressure from the Chamber of Mines, there was appointed a Government Commission "To enquire what amount of labour is necessary for the requirements of Agriculture, mining and other industries of the Transvaal, and to ascertain how far it is possible to obtain an adequate supply of labour to meet such requirements from Central and Southern Africa." The Chamber of Mines was strongly represented on the Commission whose members included Sir George Farrar, J. Donaldson and G. H. Goch. Of the 53 witnesses before the Commission, 23 dealt "more or less exclusively" with mining in the Transvaal, twenty of these being directly appointed by the Chamber of Mines. Another 19 witnesses were labour agents and recruiters, 11 of them representing the WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.)

It is the report of this Commission that expresses, perhaps more clearly than any other document, the attitude of the Chamber of Mines and its agents to the African labourer.

"We have formed the opinion that the scarcity of native labour is due first and foremost to the fact that the African native tribes are, for the most part primitive pastoral or agricultural communities, who possess exceptional facilities for the regular and full supply of their animal

needs. The only pressing needs of a savage are those of food and sex, and the conditions of native life in Africa are such that these are, as a rule, easily supplied . . .”

In explaining why it found that there could be no *immediate* and radical increase in the numbers of labourers coming from South and Central Africa, and why it therefore proposed importing Chinese and other Asian labourers for the mines, the Commission follows its short dissertation on savages thus:

“The subject of food supplies is thus intimately bound up with the fact that African natives are in possession or occupation of large areas of land. This explains the attention which was paid by witnesses to suggested modifications of the system of land tenure. No considerable change can reasonably be anticipated in their industrial habits until a great modification of these conditions has been brought about.”

Concrete proposals were put to the Commission, for increasing the labour supply, most of them coming from the mining and recruiting interests.

“These suggestions generally fall under the heads of compulsion, either direct or indirect modifications of native tribal system, or changes in land tenure” the Commission records. “The imposition of higher taxes was generally advocated . . . The introduction of legislation modifying the Native Land Tenure System was generally approved. It will be seen that the more weighty proposals put forward to improve the supply recommended that the existing native social system should be attacked with the object of modifying or destroying it.”

The Commission however revealed that the mining magnates had not yet clearly decided their future policy. On the one hand, they had, in advance, pinned their faith on the importation of Asian labourers, as a solution capable of immediate and quick results. On the other hand, fearful perhaps of the possible failures of such a scheme — (which was, in fact, tried, and failed) — or perhaps with a long-term object in view, they pressed simultaneously for the destruction of the social system which kept many Africans on the land in preference to mining.

Subsequently, as history reveals, after the importation of Chinese labourers had been carried through and proved unsuccessful, the same interests had no further hesitation in pressing for and carrying through the very destruction of the whole basis of African tribal life, society and land tenure which it regarded in 1902 as too “grave and far-reaching.”

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

national groups and races white and black, privileged or otherwise.

In utilising various views to justify this claim they have borrowed other ideas variously from nazis, from the pseudo-scientific race theorists and from religion. It is of the last that this article will concern itself — by making a few observations which arise out of the teachings of the spiritual father of the Dutch Reformed Church John Calvin, (1506-1655) and the man whose ideas no doubt have exercised a weighty influence on the mind of Dr. Malan, himself a clergyman of Calvin's church.

Calvin believed that "Each man" must understand the duties of his position." To this must be added Calvin's idea of man's predestination, which was central to his whole system of theology. Man's life was predetermined by God and from that it followed that he must not feel rebellious against his status if he occupied an inferior position in society. All that was demanded of him was that he should make the best of whatever trade or occupation he held. It was man's duty to serve God with fanatical zeal and this meant to worship God and to obey the rulers of the State. "Even the individual of the worst character . . . if invested with public authority . . . is to be held in the same honour . . . as the best kings" Calvin believed that the only people who were entitled to remove unjust rulers from office were those who themselves by their life's calling were destined to govern, and in fact held positions in some existing organ of government. This presupposes that the vast majority of the people are properly debarred from the right of political action.

Calvin favoured an aristocratic form of government and had an abhorrence for anything democratic which gave political authority to the masses of the people.

He described the Anabaptists as "those who live like rats in the straw" because they advocated and practised an equalitarian form of life. Such harsh language recalls to mind many a platteland speech of the nationalist M.P.'s who describe the non-white peoples as "Kaffirs and Coolies."

The South African variety of Calvinism has favoured the most reactionary and intolerant survivals of the teachings of its master. Dr. Malan and his cohorts have accepted the view that the Afrikaner nation has been ordained by God to fulfill his will in the Southern part of the African continent. Calvin knew nothing of the problems which rise out of racial distinctions though he took for granted the stratification of society into classes in which some were suited to govern and would pursue that end, some to trade and some to labour. It would be quite consistent to disallow the non-European the right to participate in government if he were not suited to the purpose. The problem arises; are all non-Europeans unsuited to govern? The affirmation of this perhaps demands more than the mere

belief that because they are labourers they are unsuited to govern. What of those who may rise and who have actually risen above the level of labourers? Dutch Reformed Church theologians attempt to solve the problem by "discovering" that people of dark complexion were the descendants of the biblical figure Ham. Ham had a curse laid upon his head by God and his children have all been destined to do penance for the wicked deed of their ancestor. Thus the doctrine of predestination places a double disadvantage on the already overburdened shoulders of the non-Europeans; it justifies their oppression both as an unfavoured economic group and as a race. Conversely it justifies the claims of the European, particularly the Afrikaner, to the sole right to govern the country.

Calvinism however is not satisfied to stop at the mere justification of the rule of a privileged group: it goes further, it claims that as it is man's duty to serve God, it is necessary that the Church and State see to it that their members live in accordance with God's will. To live in accordance with God's will for Calvin meant that every detail of a person's life must be subject to the scrutiny of the State and that no group of people or association within the State shall be permitted to exercise its freedom of will in connection with its own affairs. Calvin, who settled in Geneva after having been exiled from France for his efforts to establish his Christian State in France, was more successful in Geneva where his consistory (the Governing body of the Calvinist Church) eventually established virtual control over the government of the City. Every type of crime, and many new ones added, were subject to the severest of punishment. In sixty years one hundred and fifty people were burned to death for heresy. As the historian Tawny puts it: "Geneva" became "a city of glass, in which every household lived a life under the supervision of a spiritual police." There was no such thing as freedom of thought, speech and association nor was the individual's home his castle. The type of authoritarian state which Calvinism favoured resembles in many details the modern fascist state. The Nationalist Government seeks to establish a Christian National Republic in South Africa. The idea of the Republic has perhaps more to do with their bitterness against the English than Calvin's verdict that to acknowledge an earthly monarch is to commit treason against the heavenly one. Nevertheless it is in the Christian National side, in its Calvinistic form, that perhaps, in the ideological sense, the most pernicious aspects make their appearance. For it is in this that we see the whole moral justification of the violently oppressive measures being taken against the lives and liberties of the peoples of this country, the constant invasions by sleuths of the homes of private people, the restrictions of freedom of speech and movement, the banning of newspapers, and literature.

The restriction of people's right to enter certain trades and occupations because of their colour, and the threatened introduction of a

spurious Christian National education which will be different for each race, the reduction of the trade union movement to a mere appendage of the state, all go to prove the direction of events in this country. To be sure, Calvinism is not the cause of this unfortunate state of affairs. Calvinism is rather the ideology which, modified by the rulers to suit South African conditions, gives them that spiritual vigour and tranquility of conscience which disguises the basest of motives under the name of morality.

NATIVE, BANTU & AFRICAN

By R. K. COPE

DISCUSSION with African friends and a study of opinion among them long ago convinced me of the great importance attached to correct forms of politeness, the use of names and terms of address and of respect. This, of course, goes direct to the cultural background of the Africans where such customs as *hlonipha* in tribal life are elaborately developed and govern an intricate system of respect and reverence between related people. Strong traces of the old order are carried into urbanised life and an outsider will always be struck by the dignity or poise of our fellow African citizens, without perhaps being able to explain it.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that with people who have so acute a sense of correctness in speech an insult or a slight, even if it is not deliberately intended, is deeply and bitterly resented. There are many fine shades of conveying a rebuke or a snub in the African languages, but these are verbal weapons for use among equals and a man can give as good as he takes if he has the wit. When it comes to the use of insults, curses and terms of abuse between ruler and oppressed we have an altogether different situation. Here one finds an evil reflection of the swarming passions that beset our country, the anger and hatred and fear and uncertainty all round.

It is an old saying that politeness costs nothing. In fact a polite and correct bearing is the only way by which a man can truly express his civilisation and culture in his relations with others. With this thought in mind, I recently wrote to one of our national daily papers with a plea for ordinary courtesy towards the African people. The result was quite surprising and proved that I had touched on a point that is exercising people's minds.

The letter was prominently displayed and, from the response, was obviously widely read and studied. People wrote to me from distant places. Others whom I chanced to meet in the ordinary way of life made a point of mentioning the letter, thanking me and

urging me to carry on the good work. One of the African weekly papers reproduced the letter while the chief Nationalist organ, *Die Burger*, devoted its first leading article to a whining and snapping attempt at refuting the contentions made in it.

The main gist of the letter was to show how terms of insult or patronage come into being and especially to draw attention to the recent evolution of the word "Bantu." It has been noticeable that in only a few years "Bantu" has come to acquire a bad smell, an evil reputation. To Africans it recalls more and more the far-reaching plans of the Nationalists to push them back into an ignorant and perpetual serfdom. On the other hand the people themselves prefer to be called Africans, a term of dignity and pride and also of strength and promise in the future.

The paper to which I wrote is not given to hurting people's feelings wilfully. If it still uses the term "native" that is because it is behind the times or out of contact with current opinion. Maybe that accounts for the prominence given to my letter. It came as a new idea! Here are the main points I made:

"Words have their own life cycle, acquiring character, reputation, or odium. The abusive term is, like a baby, usually born in innocence; it may have a hectic youth, degenerates until it becomes foul, almost unmentionable. Then it dies.

"In English, such terms as Kafir, nigger and coolie are in their decrepitude, and their odour is unpleasant. We have no equivalent of "Hotnot," but one can think of other abusive terms applied to the Coloured peoples which are also on the way out. The word Native, once respectable, is also on the downgrade and has acquired the features of patronage and insult; to the ears of millions it has become objectionable.

"Next on the line of retreat (or progress?) is the term Bantu, which has a peculiar and significant complexion since it was sanctified by Dr. Verwoerd. In only a few years it has sprung to life as the badge of bondage, much like the yellow-star badge forced upon the Jews by the Nazis.

"The word itself is worth examining. Its justification in official eyes is the purist argument that it describes a people in their own term and therefore cannot possibly be objectionable. But there is actually no such word as Bantu. It is a Europeanized derivation from the root *-Ntu*: Singular, *umuNtu*; Plural, *abaNtu*. It does not mean dark people, or Africans, or aborigines, or any other such ethnic distinction, but simply: Sing., a person. Plu., people.

"If a Zulu or a Xhosa wishes to make a distinction he may say *abantu abantsundu*—dark people. To use Bantu as an adjective as in "Bantu Education Act" is unthinkable to African ears. Another blow to the purist argument is that Bantu does not even resemble, phonetically the term for "people" in the Sotho languages.

"Bantu" is thus an etymological bastard. But, more than that, it implies a back-to-the-wall stand by officials who refuse the common

courtesy of addressing others as they wish to be addressed. The Government departments cannot bring themselves to open a letter to a non-European with the otherwise meaninglessly courtesy phrase "Dear Sir" or "Waarde Heer" but start with "Greetings", which is both ridiculous and offensive.

"In Southern Rhodesia, I believe, officialdom has descended to the absurdity of "Bantu Kumalo" to avoid writing "Mr. Kumalo"

The walls of Jericho will not fall if the Africans are called Africans, and no battle will be lost by a word of courtesy and a gesture of goodwill."

Die Burger scented all kinds of dangers in this appeal and immediately turned it into a political question. Most political questions when once touched by the Nationalists become a mass of prejudices, contradictions and mere nonsense. This was no exception. The paper rightly pointed out that the word Bantu was first utilised for ethnical purposes and was intended to convey a general category of peoples linked by certain linguistic characteristics.

Every student knows of the heavy tomes by German, British, French and other authorities in which the word Bantu is employed as a convenient term with varying definitions. Bantu has also been accepted under European influence and of course there was no objection to it as long as it was free from unwanted associations.

But what Die Burger does not recognise or refuses to accept is that the Nationalists themselves have struck the death-blow at the term by the very act of adopting it. There is all the difference in the world between "Bantu" when used by the language expert Meinhof and "Bantoe" in the mouth of Dr. Verwoerd. The paper suggests that "certain whites" are responsible for killing terms like "Kafir" and "Native" and that the Africans are today "being taken by the nose" by liberalistic influences and taught to suspect that Bantu contains the mark of bondage.

In a series of childish arguments the contradictions tumble over one another, proving that the Nationalists are severely rattled to find that the Africans will not be branded like a lot of sheep as "Bantoe." It is completely nonsensical, says Die Burger, for the name of a whole continent to be applied to only one of its many peoples. But of course it is even more nonsensical, on this argument, for the words Afrikaner and Afrikaans to be applied to the smallest, newest and least secure group on the Continent. Yet nobody has ever objected to these words, least of all the Africans. The Afrikaners can call themselves what they like and it is no more than everyday sense to recognise their right.

It turns out that the Nationalists are like the manufacturers of some brand of kidney and bladder pills who feel their trade mark has been sneaked. How can one distinguish between "Afrikane and Afrikaners," wails Die Burger.

Another argument is that people who find a mark of inferiority in each new name applied to them are merely stamping themselves

as inferior. One might ask why Afrikaners object to being called Dutchmen. The reason is that Dutchmen was a term of patronage, inferiority and even contempt when used by the colonial English. In the same way Asians object to being called Asiatics because the latter word has picked up a derogatory meaning. The point is that all the names applied to the Africans in the past — Kafir, Native etc. — came from the outside. Now the people have adopted their own term and it is a sign of their rapidly growing political maturity. Afrika, amaAfrika — yes, it has a rather pleasant sound, there's no denying.

Finally, the Nationalist organ has the amazing perverseness to say that the Beggars of Holland turned a term of opprobrium into one of the most honoured names in history. In a way this is true. The Spanish oppressors, dismayed at the stubborn resistance of the Dutch liberation forces, slandered them as a ragged band of beggars. The Dutch wrote the name on their banners and, by driving out the oppressor, the Beggars of Holland returned the insult with interest. In the same way the Kaiser described the British army in Flanders as "contemptible," and for the rest of the war to the day of final victory the British delighted in the name, the Old Contemptibles.

Is it possible Die Burger has a suspicion that the Africans will emulate both the Beggars of Holland and the Old Contemptibles? One has no doubt they will and it is amusing to find a secret friend of African liberation writing leaders for Die Burger. There are some historical differences between the Duke of Alva and Dr. Verwoerd. The Spanish Duke did not introduce a "Beggars Education Act" to turn the Dutch into hewers of wood and drawers of water in perpetuity for Spain. He wanted the Dutch to become good Catholics rendering loyalty and tribute to Philip of Spain. The Dutch thought it better to fight for their own kind of freedom than to die in bondage to Spain. They wrote the word Beggars on their flag. Here the word is different but it is the choice of the people themselves. And what was right for the Beggars of Holland is surely right for the Africans of Afrika.

HELP LIBERATION

Clear thinking leads to effective action. That is why every one who believes in a Free South Africa should support this journal in every way possible. You can help by spreading the magazine among your friends, by subscribing to "Liberation," by contributing to our printing fund. With your help we shall greatly improve the quality of the magazine, extend its influence, and ensure its regular appearance. Without it we shall not be able to survive!

Subscription Form

The Manager,
"Liberation,"
P.O. Box 10120,
JOHANNESBURG.

Send me the next ten/five issues post free.
I enclose ten/five shillings.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

HELP LIBERATION

Clear thinking leads to effective action. That is why every one who believes in a Free South Africa should support this journal in every way possible. You can help by spreading the magazine among your friends, by subscribing to "Liberation," by contributing to our printing fund. With your help we shall greatly improve the quality of the magazine, extend its influence, and ensure its regular appearance. Without it we shall not be able to survive!

Subscription Form

The Manager,
"Liberation,"
P.O. Box 10120,
JOHANNESBURG.

Send me the next ten/five issues post free.
I enclose ten/five shillings.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....