

PATHWAYS TO ILL-WILL.

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In democratic countries all members of the State expect to be and ought to be governed under and by the same laws.

Government is "by the people and for the people" meaning all the people irrespective of race, creed or colour. The function of any Government except under a dictatorship or fascism is to guard and protect the interests as well as to provide for the welfare of all its members especially the weaker and poorer sections who for the time being and for one reason or another are unable to provide the essential services for themselves. The powers of the democratic state should be used to promote the welfare of the community as a whole and not to show preferential treatment for one section at the expense of the interests of other sections.

However, here in Sunny South Africa we find a strong white minority holding the reins of government, and, because they fancy it to be necessary for the maintenance of their dominant position legislating to the disadvantage of the other sections, especially the African section. For the latter section they have passed a series of restrictive and discriminating laws, framed strict and harassing regulations under them and from time to time, as out of a blue sky, proclaim in gazettes extraordinaire new restrictions and limitations under which the "native must live and which he must obey. The fundamental spirit and philosophy of this legislation is that the "native" must not roam about seeking salvation and improvement of his lot through channels that are not approved by the government specially for him. The native must be controlled without regard to how the measures of control affect his well-being and future. Controlled and kept in his place, he must be.

Under these Acts, regulations, and proclamations the "native's" activities are prescribed and proscribed and for him to do anything to the contrary like other sections of the community is to commit an offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment. Hence the African has more crimes and offences to commit than Europeans, Indians and Coloureds. No wonder the finest, the most expensive and the largest government buildings where there are large 'native' populations are police stations, Magistrates Courts, and gaols. There is a harvest to be reaped and the police need only make little effort to gather this harvest. With the fast pick-up vans he nets his victims in haste and sorts them out at police stations at leisure.

It will no doubt interest my readers to know how actually these laws play an important role in the criminalization of the Native. Here are some of the statistics extracted from the "Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa 1939 and 1940" respectively. In 1938 the predominant offences based on the total number of Europeans and Non-Europeans convicted in that year were 114,870 Europeans and 588,329 Non-Europeans respectively. Of the total convictions among Non-Europeans 328,638 were Africans convicted under special offences for natives only. In 1939, under the same heading we find the convictions to have been 108,631 Europeans and 663,079 Non-Europeans. Of the latter we find that 358,643 were Africans convicted for these special offences not crimes as the following table gives an analysis of the offences committed and the number convicted during the years under review as follows:-

2. CONVICTIONS/.....

The wealth of the few is considered by the many to be produced by them. This is keenly resented. Invention has cheapened manufacture of goods. Means of distribution have been improved. The result is the manufacturer has steadily increased in wealth. A class of society claims that this wealth has been wrung out of the sweat of the face of many. Whether this is so or not the belief that it is so aggravates the condition. Frederick Harrison says the actual producers of wealth have no home they can call their own beyond the end of the week: nothing of value except as much furniture as will go on a car. They are separated by a narrow margin from destitution. A month of bad trade or sickness would bring them face to face with hunger. Another cause for this unrest is that the race has eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. They look upon society with different eyes. Their state is not one of lordship but discontent. The desires have been qualitatively developed. It is vain to train in art, develop good taste, promote high ideals, and then expect people to be satisfied with slum life. New ethical ideas growing out of education must not be forgotten. Migration from the rural district has been temporarily stopped by the use of the telephone, automobile, rural mail, good roads and graded schools. The present demands of life must have more ease, more comfort, better security. The industrial world is in a seething pot and no amount of stirring keeps it from boiling over. These ethical ideas must be satisfied. The hour of birth is at hand. What the new child will be ~~given~~ gives us anxiety. Will he be named democracy, or autocracy? When he is finally named will he live up to the name or will we find he is named in vain?

III. Present day form of our problem.

1. The relation of wealth to poverty. Getting, keeping, spending with their effect on the poor and rich. Is it to be expected that the rich will reluctantly give up any power which wealth gives them. On the other hand the poor will likely go to extremes and make unwarranted demands. (58¢ per hour for a nine-hour day is not as inviting as 62¢ an hour for an eight hour day with time and half time and double time for Sunday.)

2. The duty of the rich toward the poor.

There is a duty, what is the measure of it? Are they brothers or are they enemies? Will the principles of stewardship or will the principles of ownership control? How will the 1% which control 150% of the wealth accept the task of feeding 12,000,000 unemployed in the winter of 1931-32?

3. The causes and remedy for poverty.

Are men poor because they do not have a chance, or are they poor because they ~~tax~~ are unwilling to use the chance when it is given? Would the poor properly use wealth if it was provided for them? Do they know value? Would they conserve wealth if the income was much larger than their needs? If this question is to be answered by the way soldiers spent their bonus we would have to say No.

4. Lessen demands. More liberty, more leisure. Relief from anxiety. These are what men clamor for. These are problems growing out of getting, spending, keeping and distributing wealth. Capital and labor, this is the contest and not wealth and poverty. A proper adjustment

between wealth and poverty is desired, but the contest is not on this point. The contest is made on behalf of the workmen and not on behalf of the poor. The claim is not based on need, but justice. The rivalry between nation and nation is aggregate of this claim. The supply of material, land tenure, these are but skirmishes of a real battle which demands larger territory and a greater share in raw materials.

5. Work and a status of the worker.

Women have revolted, why? Because of changes in the social order, modern help in housekeeping, bakeries, school facilities, these have given our mothers and sisters time for thought. New ethical standards, sex barriers in both law and custom have been broken down. Woman has outgrown the smallness of the home. She demands larger things, business reform. The care of children is believed to belong to the state and not the mother. If the state is to claim the men the state ought to rear the child, or at least adequately remunerate the mother who acts as an agent for the state.

IV. The weakness of modern life which creates a sympathetic atmosphere.

1. A moral passion of pity. In no age of the world's history has there been such a demonstration of pity for the poor. Especially the suffering. Is this an advantage or a disadvantage? The sufferings of men and not the sins of men have the eye and the ear of the world. We have learned to shrink from pain rather than shame. Individual traffic in the purity of character with no idea of being lashed. Mean homes, meager wage, exhausting toil, these things have the attention of society and statesman. The man who is admired most is the moral philanthropist. The poor, let me repeat, has the eye of the world. His waste, idleness, indolence is forgotten in his poverty. Those who act from the emotional nature excited through pity often fail in wisdom.

2. A second feature is the demand for franchise. The discontented have votes. They are now armed with power. Labor leaders dare not oppose the demand of labor. Political parties have no more courage than labor leaders. The power and not the privilege of the franchise is the reason the untrained want to vote. Voices are only voices until they are armed with a franchise, and then they are magnetic because they are power.

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