

VIEWPOINT

True liberation

THERE is a message for the University of Durban-Westville in a speech by the rector-designate of the University of the Western Cape, Professor Jakes Gerwel.

Speaking on "the role of the university in liberation", Professor Gerwel said he would work towards making UWC an "intellectual home for the left" because history could force students into liberationist involvement.

While universities should not be institutions of ideology, they should provide the forum for debate. They are equipped and should have the freedom to investigate alternatives.

It is universities that should be questioning old ways and generating new ideas, debating and researching these through towards practical answers.

Education is not merely the gleaming of facts for an exam. It is a process which teaches people to think and to test their experiences against as wide a variety of thought as possible in an atmosphere of equality. That is true liberation.



Late Mr Anandah Padayachoo of 1 Diaspur Road, Morebank, Durban. Was called to Rest July 22nd 1974

Some may think you are forgotten,
For on earth you are no more;
But in mem'ry we shall treasure
Thoughts of you for evermore.
Sadly missed by his family.

Stealing the credit

High-ranking officials take glory for work they don't do

THE tendency by high-ranking officials to take credit for outstanding work by subordinates was a major factor affecting staff morale and productivity in the public sector.

Junior officials who provided vital input for significant policy decisions should be given the necessary recognition for their services, said a Durban administrator, Govindarajulu Naidoo.

In a thesis which earned him the Master of Public Administration Degree, Mr Naidoo investigated *Effective Communication in Public Personnel Administration*.

For any department to function effectively, it was necessary for the officials to operate harmoniously towards "goal realisation".

Mr Naidoo said distrust, threat and fear were the three factors which most often under-

mined and affected effective communication in government departments.

"Where there is a climate of distrust, threat and fear, there will always be scepticism in the channels of communication between officials.

"A subordinate may be victimised as a result of a message being unfavourably reported by his superior.

"Where a cloak of threat constantly prevails, people tend to tighten up, become defensive and consequently distort information."

Therefore, Mr Naidoo said, for effective communication, there should constantly prevail an atmosphere of trust which provides for open and honest communication.

He criticised the wastage of time in many government departments when directives were transmitted

from higher echelons.

While this was a pattern of protocol in the communication system, such delays could affect goal realisation.

Downward communication in a department or institution, Mr Naidoo said, was sometimes affected by psychological hinderances.

"High-ranking officials may, for example, view it below their dignity to communicate directly with their subordinates or feel that an original decision may be changed using their authority.

"There is also much distortion in the communication channel where officials are prone to disagree with

recommendations, proposals and other input."

Where communication — the flow of information — moved upwards, there appeared a tendency on the part of high-ranking officials to give the impression that they were responsible for certain work. In this way they steal credit from their subordinates.

"Apart from 'credit-thieving', this form of manoeuvring communication is done to hold down subordinates or to prevent them being highlighted by top management.

"Insecurity, bias and impartiality prevail predominantly in such situations only to the detriment of effective-



Naidoo

ness and objectivity."

Mr Naidoo also raised questions about honesty, integrity and sincerity in interpersonal communication channels to and from top management.

"Is there sufficient participation when warranted on management decision-making?"

"Does the phenomenon of racial difference bring about bias in communication?"

"Is effectiveness the key objective in communication or is this vital aspect affected by other discriminatory variables such as political differences, religious beliefs, language differences, educational qualifications and jealousy?"

In the light of the economic recession, there was an obligation on every public service official to ensure there was maximum use of human resources.

"In the field of public personnel administration, every official, in some way or another, deals with people.

"It is imperative that in doing so, the most effective levels of communication take place."

Mr Naidoo said it was important in the public

service that the right people occupied the right posts.

It was also important that officials were properly trained or received training and that he was at all times aware of everything affecting his job and the department in which he was employed.

"It is also imperative that each official is remunerated in accordance with his merit and that he receives full credit, recognition and appreciation for his qualifications, experience and contribution to his department."

Mr Naidoo said in the light of changing political developments, the necessary conditions must be created to enable officials to fulfil their own ideals.

In his recommendations for more effective communication in public administration, Mr Naidoo said a firm policy directive should be set, where representatives from the different race groups attached to personnel departments could communicate and participate in policy formulation.

Greater emphasis should be placed on introducing communication studies in government departments.

Mr Naidoo said communication seminars should be held under the Commission for Administration, where high-ranking officials, academics and competent public administrators would address officials on the importance of communication.

LETTERS

Write to the Editor, Box 1491, Durban

IS INTEREST HALAAL?

I would like to seek clarification on an issue affecting the Muslim community.

During his recent visit to Durban, the Holland-based learned priest, Moulana Goolam Sarwar, mentioned that interest on capital was halaal for the Muslims of South Africa. He based his opinion on the fact that South Africa was a non-Muslim country and therefore, interest could be used for halaal purposes as it represented profit.

Similar views are also shared by Mufti Ashrafi Habibi of Darul Uloom, Chatsworth. I am in a quandry because the Holy Koran strongly condemns the taking, giving and using of interest in clear terms. Can learned persons in the Muslim community enlighten me and the many thousands of Muslims as to the rights and wrongs of the above issue?

Durban

Siratul Mustikem

Let's learn respect

I like the way Monique says in her article (Herald, July 6) "Let's try to learn to love".

That's a wonderful thought.

She reminds me of Mahatma Gandhi who said: "I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any one of them. Mine is not a religion of the prison house. It has room for the least of God's Creations, but it is proof against insolent pride of race, religion or colour..."

Therefore, you are right "Monique" — whether you are a Christian or Hindu or Muslim, or whatever, there is no need to convert to another religion.

What really is important is for us not only to learn respect and love all religions but learn to practise our religions faithfully.

Kassiepersadh Ramduth
Minister of Education
and Culture

Get rid of it!

SINCE the Durban's Men's Home in Queen Street, Durban, was vacated some years ago, the premises have remained vacant.

This property is an eyesore in the heart of the Grey Street area.

I am sure such an eyesore would not have been allowed in West Street. The council should take an urgent decision to lease the building or dispose of it by auction.

Durban

E Mohamed

Disappointed

I AM disappointed with the poor quality of reception of Radio Lotus in most parts of the country.

Other FM stations are clear and crisp. The SABC has the monopoly on radio transmitters and I appeal to the corporation to do something about improving the quality of reception of Radio Lotus as it is the only station for the Indian community.

Stanger

Anand Chetty

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

A cosy club no longer

UNIMPEACHABLE sources close to the Queen have let it be known that Her Majesty is concerned at the dangers of a rift between Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth over Mrs Thatcher's South African policy. It is said that the Queen is conscious of her personal responsibilities as Head of the Commonwealth and that she is determined to use her influence to prevent the break-up of an institution to which she has devoted 40 years of her life. When she first pledged herself to its service, the Commonwealth was a small family club. Membership was confined to a still-powerful Britain and the old dominions. Black Africa was part of the empire. The breach with South Africa, which Mrs Thatcher openly regrets, came only with the winds of change which swept the imperial red off the African map.

Today's Commonwealth compendium of democracies, dictatorships and mini-states is a long way away in spirit and significance from its forerunner. Commonwealth unity matters for nothing in the United Nations. Malaysia is a lukewarm member. The Royal Navy is unable to sail its warships into New Zealand ports without declaring them nuclear-free. The Australian foreign minister warns of the Commonwealth unravelling. Yet the Queen remains a steadfast enthusiast. She believes in the Commonwealth's distinctive role in international affairs and its ability to build bridges between races, religions and cultures. She also takes a justifiable pride in her own role as the embodiment of the Commonwealth spirit.

Last week's abuse of that spirit by India, Bangladesh and Commonwealth countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific — all quitting the Commonwealth games in protest at the policy of just one Commonwealth country — points to the harder realities of Britain's position. Constitutionally, the Queen's Commonwealth title, like the Commonwealth itself, matters little so long as its role is informal and undefined. It becomes a burden only when efforts are made to give it cohesion and substance in the face of overriding national interest. The Queen's ability to oil the wheels in such a situation is undisputed. Her prime role, however, must be to remain above the political hurly-burly and on no account must she appear to take sides against her principal adviser, the British prime minister.

British governments of different hues have only themselves to blame for the current predicament. The Commonwealth connection fosters a false impression of British power that accords ill with our real position as a middle-ranking power whose future is inextricably linked with the European Community and its development as a superpower bloc on a par with the United States. The traditional photographs of the Queen and Commonwealth leaders seek to revive an intimate atmosphere that is no longer there. If the club's members cannot bring themselves to join in friendly games because of a tiff, how can they address more serious issues with any hope of success? The omens are, to say the least, unpropitious.

Special responsibility

The demise of the Commonwealth, if that is what this signals, is regrettable but should not detract the British government from its special responsibility in finding a way out of the South African quagmire. In this, Britain's importance is not delusory. We are South Africa's biggest foreign investor, many thousands of jobs depend on our trade links, and we occupy a pivotal position in the EEC, the Anglo-American Alliance, the nations who attend the Western economic summit — and the Commonwealth. Mrs Thatcher's case against punitive comprehensive sanctions remains, for all the invective against it, entirely respectable.

The House of Commons foreign affairs committee last week received a remarkable message of support from Chief Buthelezi, the South African Zulu leader, which not only supported the Thatcher line but gave eloquent testimony to the need to persevere with it. "The imposition of mandatory sanctions, which are comprehensive and successfully imposed, will drive white South Africa into a laager from which they will conduct the kind of scorched earth policies which will make negotiation impossible", he cabled. Warning of the African National Congress's strategy of armed struggle against the Pretoria regime, the chief said: "There are no prospects of the politics of negotiation surviving a clash between white scorched earth policies and black scorched earth policies. The South African government must not be driven to that insanity. Widely applied mandatory sanctions which are comprehensive enough to damage the South African economy will do just that."

Prospects for change

On what basis and with what authority does Mr Neil Kinnock condemn such an argument out of hand? What knowledge can he claim of the Afrikaaner mentality to predict an outcome of "speedy and certain change" as a result of comprehensive sanctions? The West and people of goodwill who do not take the dangers of conflagration lightly may be excused for feeling that Chief Buthelezi has a greater right to be heard than Mr Kinnock and ANC leaders who seek to overthrow South Africa by external force as well as internal struggle. The chief is not alone in his advice. The Mozambique marxist leadership has as much cause as the ANC to loathe President Botha's government but takes a more calculated view of the prospects for change. It knows the awesome military power at the disposal of white South Africa. It appreciates, too, the determination of Botha and those he speaks for to take whatever action is needed to prevent South Africa becoming a black dictatorship.

Buthelezi has no doubts that this is precisely what the exiled wing of the ANC leadership intends. He told the Commons committee last week: "The struggle that is now being waged by them is designed to produce a one-party, socialist or even marxist state. If the Western world is interested in the future of South Africa, and if they really do intend doing something to bring about a multi-party democratic future in the country, then the full weight of international diplomacy should be directed at the release of Dr Nelson Mandela." Is this not the whole thrust of Sir Geoffrey Howe's mission to Pretoria? He knows that there can be no meaningful dialogue with the ANC without Mandela. The imprisoned leader's release is essential if the negotiation deadlock is to be broken and the exiled ANC leadership brought to the table. There is patently no point in the Commonwealth or the United Nations pushing South Africa to the point where a whole society, divided as it is, destroys itself in bloodshed and civil war, only to be replaced by a white fascist or a black marxist regime. The Thatcher-Howe strategy is based on the belief that the South African government can be persuaded to move its position. It is a strategy that has not yet run its course. It should be given the chance it deserves. Chief Buthelezi and his people have the right to expect no less.