

Editorial

DON'T SPREAD MALAN'S LIE!

THE ruling classes in our country know that it is in their interests to keep the people confused about the meaning of certain words. The philosophy of our rulers is based on many falsehoods, and they have been very clever in managing to get the whole country echoing one of the most important of these lies.

The most important word the South African rulers use to spread their poisonous philosophy is "race." They say there are different races and some races are born inferior to others. They talk of a "Bantu race" and a "White race." Everybody except the supporters of apartheid knows that scientifically this is sheer rubbish.

But the rulers have an enormous power to spread their false ideas. They control the newspapers, the schools, most of the churches, the radio. Everywhere you hear this word "race."

Even we, the people against whom the whole idea behind this false word "race" is a powerful weapon of the destruction of liberty—we ourselves start using this word. By doing so we assist in spreading the philosophy which keeps us in slavery.

That is obviously something we should stop doing—and quickly.

For if, when we discuss our liberation, we use a meaningless word, our whole discussion is in danger of becoming meaningless.

When we call for "an end to race discrimination" or for "racial harmony" we are not using the best words. And because of this we make it possible for people who look deep into the meaning of what we say to become confused. And for those who do not look deeply we make it difficult to obtain a clear understanding of the truth.

"RACIAL HARMONY"

THE youth festival committees have as a slogan, "For Racial Harmony." That's very nice, and we wanted to write this editorial explaining what a good idea it is. That's where the trouble began.

If these different groups coming together at the festival aren't "races," then it's not racial harmony that's coming out of the festival. Don't think we're quibbling and that everyone knows what they mean when they talk about racial harmony. The fact is that this incorrect term obscures the meaning of the festival.

If the different groups aren't races what are they? They're national groups. And if you think of them that way your ideas flow easily into the right direction. No one is likely to think of developing their "racial" culture or their "racial" heritage.

But all of us are drawn by the thought of developing our national cultures, of building on our national heritage. All of us have a healthy national pride.

PEOPLE'S NATIONALISM

THE festivals are a wonderful opportunity for young South Africans of all national groups to come together in friendship and equality; to make known to others their own national cultures, and to see something of the national cultures of their fellows.

This spirit of healthy nationalism is a progressive force. It is a people's nationalism, proud of its own people's achievements, but respectful of the rights of other nationalities and eager to benefit from the best aspects of the cultures of others. It is completely different from the rich man's nationalism, which seeks to oppress the peoples of other nationalities for profit—the nationalism of the apartheidists.

Use of the correct terms helps us to get a better insight of what

should come out of these festivals.

Youth will have the opportunity of seeing something of the great cultural wealth of the African people. They should be given the opportunity of understanding how the oppressors have sought to destroy African culture and even the African languages.

The festivals will make it clear for the participants what terrible attacks are being launched against the national cultures of the people of our country.

It is clear, then, that the festivals will go further than an amorphous idea of "harmony." They will show how important it is that the different national groups should have the opportunity to study and speak their own tongue, write their own literature, develop their cultural heritages.

More, they will make sections of the youth who are unconscious of the deliberate assault on the cultures of our peoples aware of, and indignant at, this crime. The youth must leave the festival determined to abolish national oppression. If they do not the festivals will not have succeeded.

For some people there is a taint of suspicion about the word "nationalism." They associate it with the narrow-minded, greedy, rapaciousness of modern-day Afrikaner nationalism.

But that is not people's nationalism. That is the nationalism of the narrow-minded, greedy, rapacious capitalist class.

Why is it progressive to foster a spirit of people's nationalism? What is it that should be fostered?

The most important thing we must encourage is a thriving national culture.

Our Zulu poets must sing sagas of liberation in their mother tongue—the people must rock with laughter at Sotho satires on the Nats. Let our very folk dances exemplify a kick in the pants for Malan and our music the drumbeats of freedom.

The great exaltation which fills a man's body when he knows he is fighting for freedom must not be confined to the relatively small section of our people who are able to read the news of liberation in Advance. Great flowering national cultures must carry the ideas of freedom into every kraal, hessian shanty and pondokkie in terms the people can understand.

The need has been recognised by the Cape African National Congress, who, while calling on every African to read and support Advance, point with regret at the absence of a liberation paper in the African language.

ADVANCE WILL MAKE A START

Advance is written in English because that is the language that can be understood by elements of all national groups. But what a great day it will be when Advance appears also in African language editions!

This is up to our readers. It is only Advance which could possibly carry out such an undertaking at present. And if the people want it enough to be prepared to make it possible, it will be done.

Meanwhile, we remind readers that if they wish to express their views through our columns and are unable to do so adequately in English they may write in their own language and we will ensure translation.

It is necessary for us to pay more attention to this factor, of so great importance to the future development of the libera-

ADVANCE POST

RECRUIT FOR C.I.D.?

From K. P. Noboza, Limerick Road, Crawford.

The chairman of the Athlone Vigilance Association, Mr. D. Nonkonyana, has recently published in the Cape Times an article saying that the Vigilance bodies should be "non-political."

Mr. Nonkonyana says these associations should do away with politics precisely because the members support Ray Alexander. They support her because she fights for full democratic rights.

Members of the Nyanga Vigilance Association expelled their chairman because he said the same as Mr. Nonkonyana. The same may happen to him. Before this happens I wish to advise him to resign from any civic group and become a member of the C.I.D.

IN OUR LIFE-TIME

From Z. Z. Malindi, Umzimkulu, Thornton Road, Athlone.

I would like to tell my learned journalists of the Cape Times and Mr. Nonkonyana that it is not the Vigilance Associations that want to force the Africans to vote one way or the other but the Minister of Justice, Mr. Swart.

According to a statement by Mr. Alan Paton, a Liberal Party Government would not want to wipe out all the differences between people, but it would help them to think less about them. Poor Mr. Paton is trying to appease the White electorate in preparation for the coming provincial elections. No, Mr. Paton, we, the Africans, want all the differences between people wiped out and freedom for all in our life-time, not in the next 300 years.

ARE THEY NOT AFRICANS?

From A. M. Khalifa, Rondebosch, Cape.

I was terribly shocked by the faction fight at Retreat.

Comrades, what is wrong with these people? Are they not Africans? Why do they divide and fight each other? Our A.N.C. leaders are standing on the mountain calling upon Africans to join in the African people's struggle. Why do these people defy the policy of the A.N.C.?

tory movement. We must study and understand fully the forces of progressive nationalism and utilise them in the struggle for freedom.

And obviously we must begin by taking care not to spread the false "race" ideas by careless use of words. From this issue Advance will make a start by paying particular care to avoiding the terminology of the oppressors. Our readers are asked to keep a sharp watch and to write us their criticisms every time we slip.

But, of course, there is still far more to it than that.

It would be simple if all that was required was to change the word "racial" to "national." We have to grasp the whole vitally important difference between the concepts.

Would you believe it?—in spite of the fact that every one of us talks of a "national liberation struggle," of "nationalism," of "nation" and of "national group," if a number of us were to come together in public to-day to say what exactly we understand by the term "national group" there would probably be as many opinions as people.

The urgent problem that is spotlighted is this. Our national liberation movement will stumble and falter unless we have a clear understanding of the national question.

It is an urgent political task to open the widest discussion. The columns of our newspaper will play an important part in this.

"HAD I foreseen later developments possibly I would not have resigned," declares progressive trade unionist Morris Kagan in a frank reply to a critic. This exchange of letters through Advance Post will be of absorbing interest to everyone concerned with the trade union movement.

MORRIS KAGAN'S RESIGNATION

From Anonymous, Johannesburg (Name and address supplied).

I note from your issue of March 11 that Mr. Morris Kagan has resigned from the National Executive Committee of the South African Trades and Labour Council.

The reasons given by him, namely, that the majority of the N.E.C. are preparing to abandon the non-colour bar policy pursued by the T.L.C. during the last 30 years and that he would therefore have "nothing to do with it" strike me as a little curious, to say the least. He also mentions that "he would fight this move with all his might."

I challenge Mr. Kagan to prove his assertion that he is, in fact, fighting this move with all his might by following tactics of the kind he has used. Does he honestly believe that he is strengthening the fight for the retention of the 30-year-old principle of allowing all bona fide trade unions affiliation to the T.L.C. by abandoning a position on a body of the importance of the N.E.C.? Has he not strengthened the tendencies he alleges exist among the majority of its members? Does he not consider that moves of this sort must be fought on all platforms, both inside and outside official committees? What influence will he have on the N.E.C. now? Has he not, in fact, left the field clear to those who would undo something that has worked for 30 years and is, in fact, more essential now than ever? There can be no doubt that he has deserted his post at an important hour in the labour history of South Africa.

Further, will Mr. Kagan tell your readers whether he consulted with the union or unions who delegated him to the last annual conference of the T.L.C.? Did he receive their approval for his action and, if so, what body or bodies of this union (or these unions) expressed their approval, and when? Did he consult the recently held national conference of the National Union of Distributive workers? Was a vote taken on this matter there?

I must express my amazement that you could publish this type of news without adding any comment or the comments of other trade unionists.

WHY I RESIGNED

From M. Kagan, P.O. Box 7135, Johannesburg.

There is a lot in your regrettable anonymous correspondent's arguments, and I wish I could have had the value of his advice before I resigned. I am not saying that I would not have resigned in that event, but perhaps, who knows?

I admit that on principle it is wrong to resign, and events since my resignation have shown up the disadvantages of having done so, but these developments could not have been foreseen. I am referring to the move by the S.A. Federation of Trade Unions to revive the Council of Trade Union Federations. This move was obviously designed to save the S.A. Federation from a serious split and to counter the other move among certain trade unions, namely, that of forming an entirely new co-ordinating body, consisting of the right wing unions of the T.L.C. and the (former) dissidents of the S.A. Federation, but excluding the African unions.

As a result, the split in the S.A. Federation has been healed (for the time being, at any rate), and

the T.L.C. right wingers are obliged to abandon their scheme for starting a new colour co-ordinating body until such time as they can rally new support from unions outside T.L.C. This is not likely to happen very soon. Had I anticipated this development I doubt very much if I would have resigned.

I realise that had I still been member of the National Executive Committee of the T.L.C. to-day would have been able to do some progressive part. At time of my resignation, however, I did not consider that this was any longer possible, and felt that in the light of the circumstances prevailing at that time, I could serve a better purpose outside N.E.C. My main reasons were as follows:—

1. Since the beginning of year I found myself in a minority of one on the N.E.C., that is so far as the major issues policy were concerned. Under prevailing conditions I saw hope of ever making an impression on the other members of committee. The attitude of majority towards any criticism whether from inside or outside N.E.C., became more and more hostile and uncompromising.

2. I have had some trouble in the manner in which I was reported in the minutes of N.E.C. meetings, which on occasions could have been interpreted to mean that I was agreeing with the views of the majority, while policies, however, I opposed. Although I succeeded in getting corrections made to all the minutes, somehow the incorrections were receiving publicity among trade unionists outside N.E.C., and I found that I was being misquoted and misrepresented in progressive trade union circles. Objectionable majority decisions of the N.E.C. were held against me. It is difficult, if not impossible, to insist on every occasion that one's particular manner of voting be recorded in the minutes. The position was even worse when I was obliged to miss certain meetings of the N.E.C. owing to pressure of other work. In absence of any other member, I might advocate my point of view on the N.E.C. unanimous decisions were sometimes taken which not meet with the approval of progressive trade unionists, which, because they were unanimous, were held against me. I was in an awkward defence to have pleaded that you had missed particular meeting or meetings.

3. As a member of the N.E.C. I was not entitled to ventilate opposition to the N.E.C.'s policy through the medium of the Press. Only the president and general secretary of the T.L.C. are allowed to give Press statements concerning the work of the N.E.C. N.E.C. member who disregards this fact may find himself being disciplined by the N.E.C. Even speech at the recent conference of the N.U.D.W. came under a copy of the Press report of critical speech was circulated to all members of the N.E.C. I am clear to me that the intention was to "deal with me." I resigned before the meeting at which the question concerning my speech was discussed. I felt, therefore, that I had no right to criticise the N.E.C. in progressive Press and at trade union meetings would be of greater value in fighting for retention of the T.L.C.'s traditional non-colour-bar policy, than by remaining a frustrated member of the N.E.C.