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Peter Brown protest meeting. Black Sash.

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August 8th. 1969

Not one of us ~~that~~ who have come here to protest against this second five-year ban on Mr. Peter Brown, knows the reasons why he has been banned. I myself do not know, yet I was more intimately associated with him in politics than anyone else. He was the National Chairman of the Labour Party, and was its National President. He never took any action that caused me any disquiet. He never concealed any action from me. He never lied. He never intrigued. Any kind of underground dealing was foreign - and is foreign - to his nature. Why then has he been banned again? is the question that we are asking. But before I try to answer it, let me say a few words about the ~~the~~ ^{meaning} ~~mechanism~~ of banning.

and he bans persons because unrestricted they are a danger to the security of the State.
It is the Minister who bans, ~~and the great~~
~~majority of the people he bans are not known to him.~~

They are known to the security police in the areas where they live. It is they who must recommend to the Minister. Mr. Peter Brown has been banned because in the view of the ~~security police~~ ^{Minister} ~~is~~ ~~Victor~~ ~~manly~~ ~~king~~ he is a danger to the security of the State. If that means that he would, if he were freed, ~~set about~~ make plans to overthrow the government by violence, or incite others to do so, or behave violently, then it is ~~the most~~ a ~~gross~~ nonsensical allegation. ~~These recommendations~~ ^{It cannot be challenged except} ~~in the way that we challenge it today. It cannot be challenged in a court of law, because~~ ~~the security police are secret & are made in secret.~~ ~~They have to be~~ ^{secret} ~~for at least two reasons, & one of them is that they would not stand up to scrutiny.~~ ~~I have no hesitation in saying that if a banned person accuses personal indignities in the minds of the security police, if he is not sufficiently polite to an officer who threatens people who are not polite~~

~~to him, then the chances of his being banned are thus made greater.~~

~~It is contrary to all the accepted principles~~

We have condemned before today this ^{Supra-legal process of} ~~that process~~ of banning, & we do it again today. Five years of a kind of imprisonment have been imposed on Mr. Peter Brown. Yet his offence is unknown. He has not been charged with any offence. He has not been brought before any court & found to be guilty. Yet a sentence of great severity has been imposed upon him.

^{most inhumane} ~~one~~ ^{requirements} ~~of~~ ^{of} this sentence is that he

~~shall abstain from any action that could be called political. People who are banned are often those who take a lively interest in politics.~~

shall not attend any gathering, & this has been interpreted by the courts to mean that he shall virtually abstain

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from social life. One of the consequences of this is that the friends of banned persons begin to avoid them lest they cause trouble for them. It so happens that Mr. Peter Brown likes people & their company, though I must admit that he likes some people & some company better than he likes others, a characteristic that he shares with most of us. Therefore when I heard that the ban had been renewed, I experienced — as many of you did too — a feeling of grief as well as of anger. One feels grief, ~~not only because the State is using its tremendous power to change~~ ^{to not only because} the whole pattern of a man's life, & his wife's life, & his children's lives, is being changed, but because the power that does it is a cruel power, seemingly inflexible, august in its majesty because it is the power of the State. Yet one feels anger also, because this ~~august~~ power is ~~also~~ ^{powerful} as well, in that it cannot abide opposition, it cannot abide those who criticize

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its policies, it reacts, not with gravity & dignity, but with a viciousness that ill befits so august an authority. The trouble is ~~ladies & gentlemen~~ that the august power of the State is in the custody of a human government, whose representatives are not gods, but humans, one of them has described the wives & families of African men as appendages. Another has threatened the ~~National~~ ^{South African} Council of Churches that their cloths will not save them from his wrath. Another described ~~or~~ retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Africa as a mischief-maker. ~~Every free man is required~~ ^{Every free man is required} ~~to respect authority~~

to respect the lawfully constituted authority. Every free man recognizes that there can be no freedom without order. But no free man gives a slavish obedience to authority, nor can he respect an order that does not respect the claims of justice. It is because Mr. Peter Brown does not give a slavish obedience to authority, & because he does not respect an

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order that permits injustice, that he has again been silenced & restricted. We are not allowed by law to tell you what he has said, or to repeat or publish his words. But luckily we do not need to. What we are saying here tonight are the things he would have said. And he would say here unequivocally that he helped to found the liberal party because to him Apartheid was a cruel & repressive policy, because Separate Development was to him only a new name for an old authoritarianism, because the existing order was unjust, because ^{working in our towns and cities (where their work was indispensable),} husbands ^{were} separated by law from ^{their} wives & children, ~~and wives & children from husbands,~~ because profits counted more than persons, because the working people of South Africa were denied a fair share of the wealth they helped to create. ~~Separate Development~~ ^{Mr. Gwynn sees clearly} ~~was to him a fantasy, a fantasy devised by~~ ^{white South Africa} ~~men so~~ that it could keep both its

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that the essence of separate development is not that it provides separate freedoms — that is the dream. In essence it is something done by people who have power to people who have none — that is the reality.

It is not easy to criticise the lawfully constituted authority, nor to reject its policies. [Archbishop Clayton]. It is even less easy if one is law-abiding, if one has been brought up to be obedient, & to have respect for authority. It may be easy for an anarchist, who does not believe in authority anyway. But it is not easy for a liberal, I mean a liberal spell with a small "l". [QUOTE Dr. Hoopes]. And especially is it not easy, if for the first time in one's life one is kept under surveillance, and one's telephone is tapped, and one's mail is opened, and one's name is taken. ~~If one persists in what one feels^e is a right course taken. One is accused (or one's party is accused, which is safer, but is really the same thing) of furthering the~~

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there is the threat of a day of reckoning, aims of Communism. And then perhaps ~~one day~~, and perhaps one can see that day coming, and one has to decide whether to stop protesting & criticising, & to stop making common cause with those of one's fellow-countrymen who are of different race & colour from oneself, & to be good and be quiet & be nothing at all, so that the coming of the day may be staved off — but perhaps one decides that one must not stop protesting & criticising, perhaps one decides it would ^{be} better to lie down & die than to yield one's meaning as a man, perhaps one decides that to be good & be quiet & be nothing is to betray those of one's fellow-countrymen who had made this common cause, very often in the face of threats & loss & intimidation, perhaps one decides that that is what life is, not a time in which to be good & be quiet & be nothing, but a time in which to be true to ~~the things~~ ^{the things} one believes & to be true to those who

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(also believe in ~~me~~ ^{them}, even though it is going to change one's life,
& the life of one's wife & children.

So if we grieve for Peter Brown & his wife
& children, let us not grieve ~~over~~ ^{inordinately} ~~much~~. There is no other
way in which he could have lived his life. We may
grieve for him, but would we have had him be something
else? If he had been something else, then we would all
have been impoverished. There are those who ~~say~~ ^{ask}, what
good has it done? ~~Well I tell you~~ ^{It} has done a lot of
good. It enables us to say, South Africa is a land
of fear, but it's a land of courage also. ~~I know that it~~
~~doesn't make money, it doesn't bring votes, it certainly doesn't~~
~~bring a peace~~ ^{bring a peace}. Yet nevertheless, whatever ~~evil~~, whatever
good, has come of this, we are here to make our protest
against this act of tyranny & inhumanity. Why can't
the Government say to a person whose life is about to

expire, your ban is not to be renewed, but we can impose a new one on the day we believe that your words and actions are a danger to the security of the State?

Why can't they say that? Is there any reason, can there be any reason, for them not to say that? It at least allows some measure of freedom to the person whose ban is about to expire, to decide how he will live his life in the future. Who is the ~~greater~~ danger to racial peace, Mr. Brown or Dr. Ras Beyers? ~~That one~~ ^{And which one} walks free.

Let me say in conclusion that the onus for making South Africa a land of courage does not rest on Peter Brown alone. It rests on all of us, on those who ^{know and} respect him, on those of us who followed him when he was National Chairman of the National Party. It rests on any one of us who loves South Africa, & wants to see her right not wrong, just not cruel, so confident in her cause that she need not deprive one of her best citizens of his freedom to make herself secure.

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