

PROTEST AGAINST BUS APARTHEID

Bus apartheid has come to Cape Town. Apart from being foreign to the travelling public here and an insult to the feelings of every self-respecting citizen of Cape Town and the Peninsula: apart from insulting "Natives Only" notices on buses painted in a specially insulting drab grey colour — apart from all this — there is a far more alarming side to the thing; the danger and horror of race riots is staring the people of the Peninsula in the face. From what is happening, almost daily now, along the Lansdowne route, where special buses for the people of Nyanga have been introduced, it is clear that race-hatred is being stirred up. In no time now, the least amount of friction among the people may let loose the kind of terror that shocked Durban not so long ago. This is the kind of thing that results from the insane policy of apartheid.

We are not taken in by the deceitful propaganda which tries to make people believe that through apartheid, occupations are being opened up, which were closed to the majority of the people because of colour. The "non-whites" are not being done a favour when they are employed as bus drivers and conductors. We are fully aware that our growing transport system has reached a serious labour crisis, which is forcing the companies to employ so-called non-whites in ever increasing numbers as skilled and semi-skilled workers. Bus apartheid is no answer to the labour shortage: it is playing up to the racialism that the authorities themselves have created among the "whites". The employment of "non-white" drivers and conductors on all routes will be a matter of a week or so when the whole population will naturally accept them, as is already happening to some extent throughout the country. The nation's crying labour needs, in all spheres, should be met directly and sanely by drawing upon the whole people and not sacrificed on the altar of apartheid madness, which leads to race-hatred and clashes and solves nothing. The development of the country now taking place demands that the old Colour Bar goes, whether the racialists like it or not.

We are not deceived by the sly method of starting with special buses for people who are insultingly called "Natives", while still permitting them to use other buses as well. The authorities hope that soon the residents of Nyanga will accept the idea of having special buses, so that they can be later excluded from the other buses. The aim is clear; to have separate buses in the area for so-called Whites and Coloureds as well. They have also used the old familiar trick of getting on their side a small section of the oppressed people with a little money to invest to accept bus apartheid. We are not surprised, therefore, that these people are being used as a catspaw and were given a chance to cash in on the degradation of the people.

We see that the usual arrogant and insulting method of simply excluding the so-called non-whites from most of the buses was not used here. In allowing the residents of Nyanga to use the other buses as well, the authorities are paying a compliment to their self-respect and level of consciousness. They did not act in this case with their usual contempt for the people. On the other hand again, the introduction of "Natives Only" buses is an insult to the consciousness of the so-called "Coloureds" and "Whites", whom the authorities believe are so soaked with racial prejudice, that they will accept this expensive inconvenience of bus apartheid in order to show how "superior" they are.

The separate bus services on the Lansdowne route is causing unnecessary inconvenience to most of the people at present. Soon all will have to be put up with long periods of waiting at stops for their "own" buses, while other buses which they may not enter pass by. On top of this inconvenience there will be increased fares that must follow to pay for bus apartheid. All this the people are expected to welcome in order to satisfy the stupid, insane racialism of the authorities.

Apartheid bus/.....

Apartheid bus services, further, are part and parcel of the existing location system, by means of which the rulers have cut off the cities the vast majority of the nation and forced them down into a state of helpless poverty. Extending the location system means more and more extensive apartheid bus services for the thousands of poverty-stricken workers, who will have been driven out into the distant, undeveloped areas outside the towns. The location system which goes together with segregated transport impoverishes, exhausts and degrades vast masses of the South African nation in the cities.

In the Peninsula, the location system is seen at its worst in Nyanga. Here, as the result of the carrying out of the lunatic policy of residential segregation, the most poorly paid section of the workers are forced to carry the heaviest share of transport costs and other burdens. What the people of Nyanga are forced to pay in bus-fares is out of all proportion to the miserable wages they earn. No one is deceived into believing that those who want apartheid bus services are the ones who pay for it. It is partly paid for by skinning the poorest workers, partly by increased taxes on the whole people and partly by forcing poorer services on bus users.

On behalf of all the people affected:

- a. We demand the removal of the insulting "Natives Only" notices from all buses in our area and an end to the use of special colours.
- b. We demand the abolition of all racial segregation in public transport.
- c. We demand that the crying needs of our transport system for skilled and semi-skilled labour be met at once by opening up all occupations to all the people, irrespective of so-called race or colour.
- d. And we call upon the people to behave like fellow South Africans to one another and to set their faces against all attempts to stir up race-hatred and race clashes bred by the policy of apartheid and segregation.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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