

The Editor,  
NEW AGE,  
Capetown.

Dear Sir,

The African people cannot help being interested in the recent announcement in your columns of a new "African Horizon Insurance Co." sponsored by some well-known liberal leaders, and which is "to insure Africans in the industrial field", and ~~which is~~ to "employ Africans at all levels of the Company's business, where possible."

The policy of opening employment to Africans at all levels on the basis of equal pay for equal work is naturally to be welcomed. However, no assurances have been forthcoming to date that Africans will be paid on the same scales as Europeans in similar jobs. Even if this principle is enforced, it should be realised that the adoption of such a policy "where possible" (?) by a single, not very large concern within the present cheap labour structure of South Africa does not offer any real solution to the people. The aim of the owners of the new Insurance House is to make profits, not to galvanise the people for the Freedom Charter, and accordingly they will persevere with an "open employment" policy only so long as it ensures them added profits.

More important though, is Senator Ballinger's pronouncement that the Company "is a direct answer to apartheid ... the first attempt at partnership in the Union." (!) This is not the first time we have heard plain simple profit-grabbing given a political disguise --- but coming from a prominent liberal politician it is all the more harmful. That the company's main aim is making profits out of the workers is shown by the nature of the Holding Company, African Properties and Industries Ltd., which will absorb the profits made.

The Holding Company has an authorised capital of £410,000 and on its issued capital of £275,000 declared a total profit of £58,274 in 1954 (compared with £32,849 in 1953). Trading profits in 1953 were £104,510. The total property-holdings and assets of this company amounted to £1,172,994 in 1954. ALL ITS Directors are WHITE. The Chairman of the Board is G.E. Williamson, who is a director of 28 other companies. Among its other directors are W & S Heller, each of whom is a Director of about 70 companies. (see S.A. Financial Year Book 1956).



The Board of Directors of the new subsidiary, "African Horizon Insurance Co." we are told will receive no dividends ---only Director's fees. This illustrates clearly that the Board is being used as an "advertising front" by the big capitalists running the scheme in order to "sell" their product i.e. insurance, to the Africans.

The Africans will certainly derive no economic benefit from the new Company. Very few of the existing 187 insurance co's operating in the Union offer advantageous policies to the Africans -- and there is little likelihood of the new concern being in a position to do so. The use of well-known Congress names to "sell" products is at once novel and equally harmful to the political reputation of the liberatory movement.

The Insurance companies, like the mines, Banks and monopoly industry are part and parcel of the whole system of exploitation, colour bars and cheap labour in South Africa. Together these insurance companies hold assets of over £250 millions in the Union; premiums on personal accident and <sup>miscellaneous</sup> life policies <sup>(i.e. all the Fire + Marine insurance)</sup> in 1952 were £3,855,000 while claims against the companies on these policies were only £2,425,000 in the same year. This gives <sup>some</sup> ~~an~~ indication of the enormous profits reaped by their capitalist owners. (See Official Year Book of ~~South~~ the Union of South Africa No 28 1954-55. p. 449/50)

These companies have but one aim -- profit making; ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> together with all large capitalists and imperialists, have a vested interest in retaining the status quo of oppression.

The new Company will still make profits for WHITE directors, for the big capitalists. In this, however liberal or progressive its employment policy, it will be part and parcel of finance capital which seeks not to free the people, but to exploit them further. †

Rather than "sell" such insurance under a political, liberal disguise to the people, let us steadfastly work to organise the people for the noble aims of the Freedom Charter which says: "The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole."

Yours faithfully,

INYINISO.

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