

TO ALL REGIONS.

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28th September, 1959.

LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF BANTU ADMINISTRATION
TO REGIONS FOR APPROVAL
BEFORE RELEASE AS PRESS STATEMENT.

We have learnt that a circular has gone from the Department of Bantu Administration to Municipal non-European Department Managers to say that no one should be allowed to enter an African area except on "legitimate business", and that even such permission is to be refused if there is "the least suspicion that propaganda of a racial or political nature may be spread". We should like to know whether this applies to Government information officers and to opposition propagandists or to neither.

The Urban Areas Act nowhere defines the circumstances in which permission for visits to locations may be granted and as this directive does not define "legitimate business", we fear that the phrase "legitimate business" will be defined in the most limited terms.

The finding of the Tomlinson Commission that, even if Bantustans are achieved, there will still be about 6,000,000 Africans left in the white areas, is now accepted by all the political parties.

There is already very little contact between white and non-white except on a strictly master-servant basis and this new order will limit it still further.

We believe that we cannot hope to have harmonious relations with Africans, at this critical time, if visits made for the exchange of ideas and political discussion are not permitted. Without such contact there is little opportunity for arriving at first hand knowledge and mutual understanding. Furthermore, to refuse legitimate political parties or groups their right to expound their policies and canvas for African support is to deny to both political parties and to the Africans a fundamental democratic right, i.e. the right not only to have their views heard, but of trying to modify or change the Government by legitimate political persuasion.

The extra parliamentary activities by which the disenfranchised seek to make their opposition known are persistently ignored by the Government who also clearly resent non-Whites using even legal pressures such as economic boycotts (which incidentally we do not support), yet if you refuse to allow the free exchange of opinions between Africans (in their residential areas) and legitimate political parties and groups, the Government is closing one of the last remaining safety valves.

We draw this matter to your attention in the hope that you will endeavour to see that this thoroughly undemocratic instruction will be withdrawn.

N. B. Should this letter be issued as a statement the last paragraph will be deleted and the following substituted

"We appeal to all freedom loving South Africans and especially to those Nationalists who really value democracy to bring pressure to bear for the repeal of these instructions."