

# FIGHTING

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# TALK

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## THE TREASON TRIALS

**THE BUS BOYCOTT**

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**BRITISH ACTORS AND  
THE COLOUR BAR**

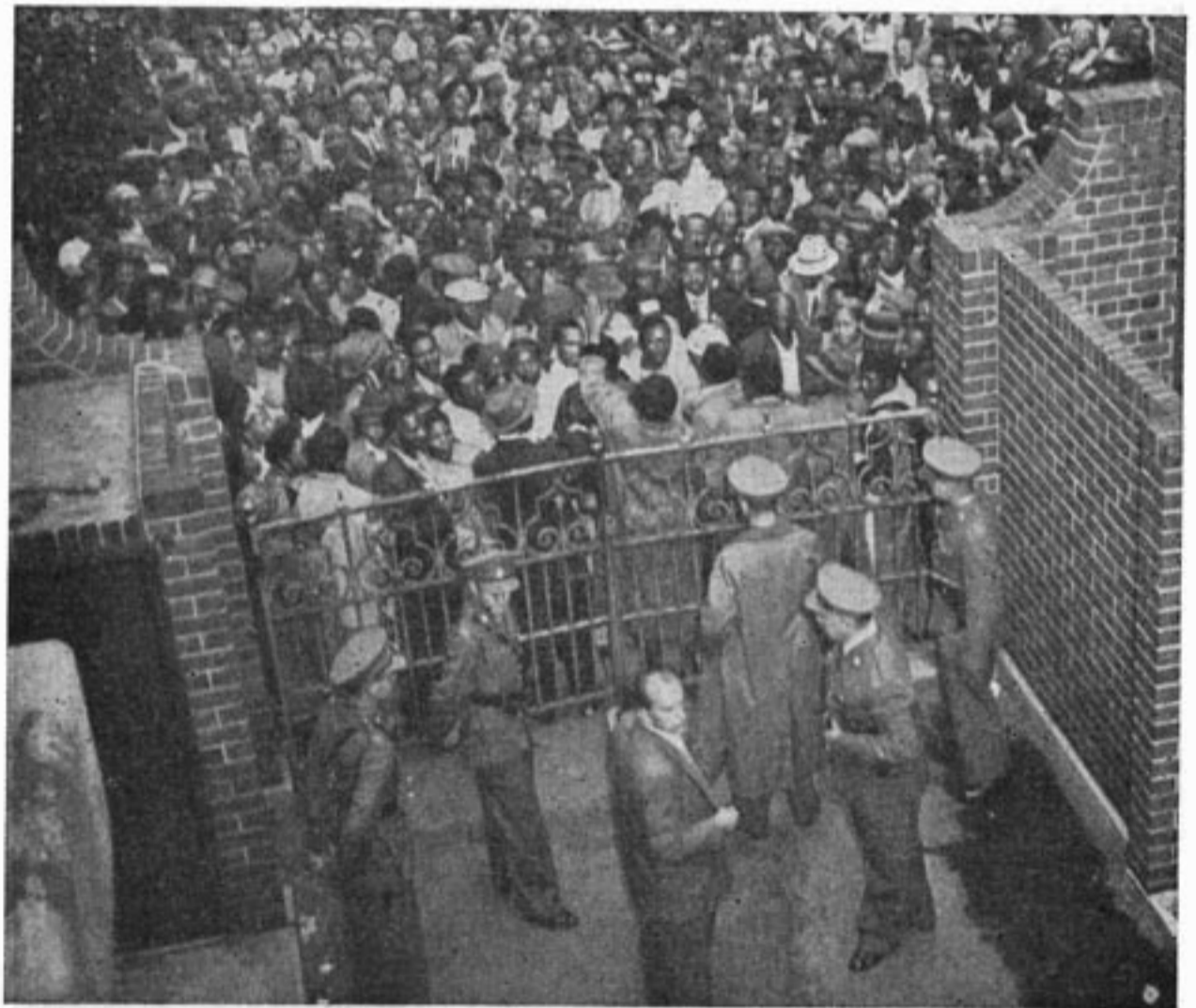
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**ARTICLES by**

**ALFRED HUTCHINSON**

**LIONEL FORMAN**

**C. W. M. GELL**



Huge crowds surge round the Drill Hall where the Treason Trial is taking place

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR DEMOCRATS

# "FIGHTING TALK"

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THE REV. DOUGLAS THOMPSON, Methodist Minister in Springs. Chairman of the South African Peace Council. On trial for treason.

## FROM THE SIDELINES

This month's writer:  
**FRED CARNESON**

LIKE MOST PEOPLE I had thought that Goebbels was dead. After reading the "Digest of South African Affairs," I'm no longer sure. If he isn't actually employed by the State Information Office, his spirit is certainly doing some very active ghost-writing for what looks like a very expensively produced magazine.

### TRUTH ON ITS HEAD

The "Digest" appears to have set itself a two-fold task. One is to give the Nationalist's ugly, naked apartheid lunacy some sort of decent appearance; the other is to smear the democratic movement and present the Non-White people of South Africa to the outside world as a lot of semi-barbarians. Almost every headline, almost every word in the "Digest" is a subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, distortion of the truth.

In the issue of the 4th January, which deals with the events surrounding the opening of the "Treason" trials, there are several variations on the Goebbels theme. The famous "Afrika!" salute, symbol of a burning desire for freedom, for racial harmony and democratic solidarity, is twisted into something sinister and hateful.

A caption to a picture in the "Digest" reads: "Members of the African National Congress, shouting and hurling insults at the police during the treason inquiry in Johannesburg, give the thumb sign *which is now used over a vast area of the African continent to denote hatred of the White man and sympathy with the Communist governments of Russia and China.*" (My italics). The picture, incidentally, shows a group of African spectators demonstrating their sympathy and solidarity with a *White* prisoner! To all of which we can only reply "Afrika!" which, for the benefit of the State Information Office, in this case means "May Truth come back to Africa!"

ANOTHER EXAMPLE of (let's be generous) "misinformation" is a description of an incident which took place in the Court room itself. The "Digest" version reads as follows: "One journalist acting on behalf of an American newspaper was questioned during an adjournment of the

### PROVOCATIVE ACT

Court by one of the detainees, who asked him what he 'as an American' thought of the whole matter. He gave an answer.

"The prisoner returned to the group of 150 and spoke to them, whereupon a number of prisoners started pelting the journalist with empty milk cartons, banana skins and peach stones. 'We hate you Americans,' they shouted . . ."

Those who witnessed or participated in the incident referred to will have no difficulty in recognising the above as a complete distortion of the truth. What actually happened was that a person, speaking with a strong German accent and claiming to represent a German newspaper, gratuitously offered the information to one group of prisoners that he hoped all of them would be convicted. He then moved to another group of prisoners and made sneering remarks about "Jews and foreigners."

Perhaps this "American journalist" thought that the accused, being prisoners at the time, would be powerless to do anything about his deliberately provocative action. They soon taught him otherwise, and the police eventually forbade him to come anywhere near the prisoners. And what the accused did in fact shout was: "We hate you Nazis."

MENTION OF AMERICANS reminds me of a report that the United States Information Service has presented 5000 beautifully bound and illustrated copies of a book entitled "What is Communism?" to the Department of Native

### U.S. AND N.A.D. PROPAGANDA

Affairs "to explain to the Natives the danger of Communism." Further copies have been presented to the S.A.A.F. Staff Course and also to the Police College in Pretoria.

Whatever the contents, the United States Information Service is missing the boat if it imagines propaganda distributed through the N.A.D. is going to have much effect. I doubt if it will serve much purpose at the Police College either. The S.A.P. already have their own peculiar ideas of what is and what isn't Communism.

All in all, I doubt if many South African democrats are prepared to march under this particular Star Spenglered banner.

## KEEP OUR PRESSES ROLLING . . .

**"FIGHTING TALK"** has never pulled its punches. At a time when so many critics of the Government have found their courage waning in the face of determined intimidation and threats, we have held to what we believe. We have spoken out for democratic rights and liberty; we have hit back at the encroachment of fascism; we have tried to rouse the conscience and spirit of South Africa to fight for the right to speak out.

**WE HAVE NO REGRETS.** Though the ideas for which we stood and many of the people who wrote consistently in support of them are now on trial in the treason case, we apologise for nothing in our past. If we had our time over, we would do the same things again, and would like to do them even more forcefully and effectively than we have. We have played a small part in a good cause; and we intend to go on doing so.

**BUT A POLICY** of pulling no punches has its difficulties. Our January issue never appeared; and this issue was written from the Johannesburg Fort, and in gaps between sessions of the Treason court. If it lies within our power, "Fighting Talk" will be back on the streets at the start of every month, striking out again with all its vigour. But it does not lie in our power alone. This paper cannot survive without continuous financial support from those who like its outspoken comment and its democratic bias.

**FRANKLY,** this issue has been made possible by scraping the bottom of the cash-box. Those who in the past have raised the money, month by month, to keep the "Fighting Talk" presses rolling are now, many of them, involved in a long-drawn out legal battle. They cannot carry the burden any longer without quick and active aid from others. **IT IS OVER TO YOU,** our readers. There may never be another "Fighting Talk" unless you rally round now to make it possible..

**ONE OF THE GREATEST** satisfactions we have had from publishing this paper has been the expressions of support we have received from so many. It is now time for tributes more tangible than words. Defending counsel at the treason trial has said that "A battle of ideas has started in this country." We have been in the thick of that battle and hope to remain there to the end. But whether we are able to, depends on you. We ask you urgently to donate whatever you can spare now to keep "Fighting Talk" in the thick of the battle. In doing so, you will be playing a part in the battle for the ideas of democracy and equal rights which is the kernel of the treason trial, and whose outcome, in the end of ends, depends on you and your readiness to act the right way at the time when your intervention is needed.

**IT IS NEEDED NOW AS NEVER BEFORE.**

**THE EDITORS.**

**ALFRED HUTCHINSON** on the "Treason" Trial Arrests, the Days in the Fort, the Drill Hall events.

## 'IT COULD NEVER BE IN VAIN'



**MRS. ANNIE SILINGA,** African National Congress Women's leader in Cape Town. Mother of three children. Deported from Cape Town under the Pass Laws. On trial for treason.

**SOMETIMES** it is the "sunset touch"—the splash of sunlight trembling on the wall—that brings intimations of the outside world. Another day sunk. The business of living goes on; must go on. At this hour the smoke of evening fires hangs thick in the location air, thick like the voices of the children at the end of their play. It is the hour of the tottering ride in the packed train, the bus crazily swaying. At the end of the journey is home.

But the cell is not desolate. A game of "Spoof," an argument, writing home, physical jerks—these bring forgetfulness of the days of waiting that lie ahead. The splash of sunlight dies on the wall and the day ripples to a close. Night sets in and memories come alive.

"Halt who goes there!" The challenge rings in the quiet night. The gasp, the surprise, and the words roll in the night. "Ah's well . . ." The words of assurance ring strangely unnecessary in the fastness of the Fort. You are alone. You think of Achie's little Zida who has asked him to bring bugs and lice home . . . "Halt . . ." Nothing but the night marching on, and one day less of waiting.

December 5th, 1956. The newspapers scream: "High Treason." Dawn swoop and country-wide arrests. It is the talk in the bus, in the train, at the street-corner . . . At school, it is a day of waiting; waiting for an unknown footfall and of silent preparation. Perhaps . . . The next day comes the footfall. The tremulous "Afrika" as the children say goodbye. I remember the unmarked examination scripts . . .

Marshall Square. The key rattles in the lock and the heavy door swings open. Blankets in hand I stumble into the dusk and foetid smell. A number of men are lying or sitting on the grey smelly blankets, waiting for the morrow. Pass, permit, curfew, theft . . . But mostly Pass. "Things will come right . . ." I marvel at the man whose fount of hope has not dried up. The cell is slowly filling, the

rattling door announces a new arrival. A group of boys noisily recount their adventures in Bethal and the potato fields. They are afraid, for all their big talk. Slowly the cell takes on the appearance of a club, a rendezvous. Friends meet: I am alone.

Henry Nxumalo and the nose-crinkling smile. Henry complaining of the difficulty of getting arrested. On the track of another story? The smile again. The natty bow tie and Henry as dapper as on the previous day. A few weeks later Henry is dead: He will not follow another story.

The cement floor is a huge vampire, sucking all warmth from the body. You squirm but there is no respite; no respite from the cement, no respite from the lice. The cell is a tortured symphony of scratching. Perhaps lice are as much a part of gaol as the harshness, the bewilderment, the jog-trotting, the stench, the banging ponderous doors, the perpetual lining up, the counting and recounting....

I am waiting in a cell at the Magistrate's Court. I used to think that pacing cells was theatrical stuff. Now I am doing the same. Will the waiting ever come to an end? It ends and I am among friends again. Is this another Congress of the people—drawing all South Africans together?

Now we are swinging in the huge *kwela-kwela* towards the Fort. They are singing, and I am singing too: *Izokunyathela i Afrika*... Afrika will trample you underfoot. Unrepentant. People seen through the mesh: surprise and dawning understanding. The thumb raised in reply. *Mayibuye i Afrika!*

The Fort is in Johannesburg, but it could be anywhere in the land. The high walls, the locks and keys, cut off Johannesburg: its sounds, its life. There is a patch of sky... but men have no wings. From the General Hospital it resembles a mound, a huge molehill, a subterranean lair. Impregnable, a fastness of retribution.

The Minister of Justice has placed the figure at two hundred. The Fort has room for many more. Who will be next? More come, singly and in groups. Walter, Moses, Ruth, Joe, Duma, Rusty, Jack, Ismail Meer... Children suddenly orphaned. The morning and evening papers bring drifts of the outside world. There is widespread agitation, a ferment. Things are happening, things are being done: a protest meeting in Sophiatown, a treason fund... At seven o'clock every morning Babla's gruff voice, announcing breakfast. We do not want...

Visiting day is an institution, a fraud, a form of lung exercise. Your visitor is three feet away, across a no-man's land. You stand in line and wait for the order to speak. Two dozen hearts are crying for expression, for news. It is Babel let loose. It is a question of the survival of the loudest voice, of talking your neighbour into submission.

A fortnight of waiting. The fraternity of strong men in the "lower house" building muscles... Joe Modise in his enthusiasm landing up in the prison hospital. Robert Resha taking longer rests than exercise spells. "General China" Chamile whittling at his wooden spoons. Mosie Moolla constantly posing in the hope that Alex la Guma will deign to sketch him. Dr. Naicker and his "small walks." The perennial youthfulness of Rev. Gawe, found where the song is thickest and the dancing most spirited... And Mini's glorious voice riding the sea of song like an unerring pilot homeward-bound.

The joint sessions of the "upper" and "lower" house are an inspiration... Rev. Calata speaking on music; Prof. Matthews on the American Negro; Dr. Letele on African medicine; Debi Singh outlining the history of the struggles of the Indian people... Chief Luthuli joining hands in dedication and rededication to the fight for freedom. And then the burst of song, beginning sometimes as a solitary voice and gathering strength until it is an irresistible torrent making the walls ring with sound.

But the jog-trotting, frightened youths stab the heart. Hounded, assaulted... It cannot be endured. We protest. For the prison is run by the prisoners and the strong-arm men are the bosses. After our protest things improve....

Tomorrow, December 19th, is "Treason Day." The days of waiting are drawing to an end. A tide of excitement is rising. Bail or no bail we will leave the Fort for a while. "Haltwhogoesthere!" Only the night marching to the morrow....

And now we are in the swinging *kwela-kwela* again. We have met our European comrades-in-arms after the days of separation. The world is lovely though seen through mesh... There are crowds, huge crowds, outside the Drill Hall and their warmth beats on you like strong sunlight after rain—planting life. And you know, as you never knew before, that you could never be lost: that if you fell another would take your place: that the struggle could never be lost. It could never have been in vain.



THE REV. JAMES CALATA. Anglican priest at Graddock. Veteran African National Congress leader. First president of the Inter-denominational Ministers' Association. On trial for treason.



PROF. Z. K. MATTHEWS, Acting Principal of Fort Hare University. Anthropologist, educationalist, noted scholar. Veteran African National Congress leader. On trial for treason.

# ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX FAMILIES TO FEED

By ALEX LA GUMA



MRS. LILIAN NGOYI, President of the Federation of South African Women and the African National Congress Women's League. On trial for treason.



MR. ELLIOTT MFAHA, Cape Volunteer-in-chief of the African National Congress. On trial for treason.

THE COP AT THE DOOR LOOKS BORED. He tilts his chair back and eases his gun harness, stares at the hessian ceiling as if he sees something hypnotic up there. In front of me a ladybird crawls carefully up the back of Achie Patel's chair, hesitates about six inches from the top and decides to turn back. You can cut the heat with a knife. A hundred and fifty-six bodies stir uncomfortably in the diamond-wire dock. Somewhere voices clack metallically.

Duplicated copy of a speech by Lilian Ngoyi.

Yes, your worship, I hand in this document.

. . . Peace Council . . .

. . . Worship . . . document . . .

Do you know a man named Stanley Lollan?

I am surrounded by South Africa. Damons, Nthite, Hoogendyk, Horvitch, Moonsamy, Shanley. Workers, housewives, clerks, lawyers, journalists, doctors, priests, trade unionists.

Pamphlet called "New Life In China," by Ruth First.

I hand in this document, your worship.

There is Dr. Motala who cannot find somebody to replace him, so many of the sick in Maritzburg must go unattended. And the Lion of the East whose home has been the country roads ever since he was deported from the area where he had lived and his house sold for ten pounds at a public auction.

The ladybird has reached a paling across the back of the chair and advances cautiously along it, waving its tiny antennae.

The court orderly is a youth in a khaki uniform, with a gun as big as a plough handle at his waist. He carries the exhibits from the prosecutor across about twenty yards of floor to the witness in the wooden frame box. Two and a half miles a day. Thirteen miles a week.

Is this an invitation to a dinner . . . ?

Yes, your worship. I hand it in.

In the wire dock the accused spend five and a quarter hours each day. Five-and-a-quarter hours taken from one-hundred-and-fifty-six lives every day. Five-and-a-quarter hours wondering whether the folks at home are alright. Whether the baby will recognise his daddy when he gets back home. Whether the Defence Fund has collected enough money to support one-hundred-and-fifty-six-families.

One-hundred and fifty-six families to feed.

The ladybird has encountered an obstacle in a projecting fold in Achie Patel's coat. The antennae feel forward cautiously. The tiny oval body goes into reverse for a few minute paces.

Did you, on the 26th September, search . . .

That's correct, your worship.

The heat beats down in waves. Heads nod. Eyelids struggle to keep open. Ears strain to listen. In Nazi Germany the Gestapo used a deadly, vicious and ridiculously simple method of torture in order to force confessions. They didn't allow the prisoner to fall asleep. Night and day. Day and night.

Twelve million people to liberate, and one-hundred-and-fifty-six families to feed. What is the price of freedom? The thunder on the door in the early dawn? A ride in an aeroplane? The roaring, swaying drive in a steel truck? The roar of the crowds? Afrika Mayibuye! All these small instalments.

And one-hundred-and-fifty-six families to feed.

The ladybird advances again, carefully, heaves itself on to the crest of the fold in Achie Patel's coat, crosses gently, and descends the far slope.

A pamphlet called "Educating For Ignorance . . ."

I hand in this document.

In ordinary everyday life there is a variety of things which make life interesting. Here life has become a fixed pattern; a routine, a monotonous repetition like a machine turning out bottle-tops. The ladybird finds interest in its journey.

A copy of "New Youth."

Correct, your worship. I hand in this document.

Overhead the skies protest. Thunder mutters menacingly. The heat is thick as cotton-wool. The thunder growls louder, then rolls out with the sound of an artillery barrage. The ladybird has disappeared now, as if it had been frightened by the enormous sound and has hidden itself.

One-hundred-and-fifty-six people half-listening, wondering about homes and children and wives and hoping that they will be looked after. The price of freedom is great. Now it is the price of food for our families, and the rent, and the instalments on the furniture, electricity and food for the baby.

One-hundred-and-fifty-six families to feed.

Do you hand in this document?

Across the skies the thunder rolls as the angry gods engage in mighty battle.

# SACKING THE SUSPECTS

By C. W. M. Gell

PORT ELIZABETH has recently earned itself a reputation for illiberality over such matters as the banning of African meetings, participation in Nationalist *Volkskongres's* and mayoral requests to Dr. Verwoerd for the banishment of African residents. It comes, therefore, as no surprise that many of its accused in the "treason" trial should be dismissed from their jobs merely because they have been arrested and charged.

Indeed the only cause for astonishment is that, to the eternal credit of a minority of employers, a clean sweep was not made. For the others little matters like "no man is guilty until he is convicted" weighed not at all—even after a public appeal was made to them in the press to keep the jobs open until the outcome of this political trial and it became apparent whether the accused were guilty or innocent, or guilty merely of some technical transgression of our complicated repressive laws.

In this article I want to describe the position at the moment before any evidence was led, deploring the dismissals and cheering the stout-hearted, while in no way abandoning further action that is planned against recalcitrant employers in an attempt to change their minds.

## Six Out of Ten

In Port Elizabeth we have 17 accused, all Non-White, all working class people and nearly all Africans. There are four women and thirteen men. Two women and one man have trade union jobs which are not in jeopardy—at least, not from their unions. One man is unemployed because his firm dissolved shortly before the arrests. Another is a student at a famous educational establishment. Because it has now fallen under N.A.D. control, it is uncertain whether he will be able to continue his studies, whatever the outcome of the case. Two other men do not know what attitudes their factories will take, since they were closed down when the accused were at home for the Christmas adjournment. The likelihood of one of these two being retained is remote.

That leaves ten accused in vulnerable employment. Of these six have been sacked. The most glaring case is

of a man, aged nearly 50, who has been employed for 17 years by one of the city's largest wholesalers. He has a wife, three children and a mother-in-law dependant on his wages. On his return from Johannesburg he went back to work, but was summoned before an executive and curtly told that "we can't have criminals here." It is believed that some Afrikaans-speaking customers of the firm brought pressure to bear, but this is not yet established. If true, it of course raises the question of counter-pressures.

## "Bad Influence"

Another man has two and a half years service with a packaging company. He was dismissed while still in the Fort, his wife being told that he might be an "unsuitable influence" on the other staff. The third man has served one and a half years with a bookshop. It seems that his employer was thinking of dismissing him before the arrests occurred and took this convenient opportunity. One can only deplore his sense of timing and fitness. The second man has a wife and two children; the third a wife, four children and dependant parents.

A fourth man had only been two months with a firm of importers. He has a wife and three children. On his return from Johannesburg his firm refused to re-employ him until the manager returned. The manager took him on again but told him not to "broadcast" his status. Shortly before returning again to Johannesburg he was dismissed for not reporting for work on a certain day. It is not quite clear yet whether this was in fact the employees' own fault or whether it was a trumped up excuse to cover a change of managerial heart.

The fifth accused, a prominent member of the African National Congress, was warned earlier by the shoe factory for which he has worked for six months, that he would be dismissed if his political activities interfered with his work. It is not thought that the manager had the present sort of "involuntary interference" in mind and there is, therefore, a reasonable chance that his dismissal can be reversed in due course, if the outcome of the trial is favourable. The sixth, a woman accused, was dismissed by her bakery

while detained in the Fort and her post was advertised in the press.

## Beacons Stand Out

Turning to the more cheerful side of the picture—one that we hope will be more widely emulated elsewhere—a man who has worked ten years for a filling station has been promised his job back, as has a woman who has worked two years for a chemist. Two of the accused work for legal firms. One has been lent some money, is having maintenance paid to his family and his job is being held open for him. The other has all this and when in Fort, was visited by the sister of one of the partners who employ him.

In the prevailing temper of fear and Special Branch intimidation even such small actions as keeping jobs open stand out like beacons and are a sign that there are still those who have not succumbed to government tyranny, and who understand that justice is reinforced by self-interest as far as treating accused employees fairly is concerned.

## MINEWORKER

In winter when the land was bare  
When grass was dry and hills were brown  
When days were short and cold and hard  
I left my home and came to town.

I will not see the Spring arrive  
I will not dig or plough or sow  
When summer rains release the earth  
I will not see the mealies grow.

Nothing will wait for my return.  
My wife will age, my land will change  
The dog who knew me will be dead  
My children will grow big and strange.

The rock I work is not my own  
Nor mine the gold, and I must stand  
A servant in my father's home  
An alien in my native land.

The earth, the town, the wealth, the laws  
These are not mine, for I am black  
But yet my heart-beats seem to cry  
To Africa—my land—come back!

HILDA WATTS

# TREASON TRIALS IN S. AFRICA

By LIONEL FORMAN

**A** GOOD WAY of getting to know the details of almost every important stage in the modern history of South Africa would be by a study of the records of her treason trials.

The period of white colonisation and the seizure of the territory occupied by the Africans; the grievances of the Cape Dutch settlers which culminated in the Great Trek; the Boer War and the two world wars; the great 1922 clash between the White workers and the Chamber of Mines and Government—each of these historic landmarks is fully documented in the treason trials which have accompanied it. And in almost every case posterity has taken a different view of the guilt of the accused people than the view taken by the special court judges.

**T**HE BITTER, and often heroic, struggles of the African people against the invasion of their territory by the White settlers are illustrated by the treason trials of the Xosa leader Makana and the Zulu chief Dinizulu.

## R. v. MAKANA

In 1818, in spite of frequent solemn declarations by the British in the Cape Colony that the Fish River was the legal boundary of the colony, White settlers crossed the river in force and attacked the Xosas.

Aided by a renegade Xosa chief, Gaika, the British burned down all the villages near the river and seized 23,000 cattle. Then, after sharing the loot with Gaika and his followers, they returned across the river, leaving Gaika behind as a "good boy" chief.

Led by Makana and Ndlambe the Xosas rose against Gaika, decisively defeated him and his followers, and marched across the Fish River "following the tracks of our cattle."

Enraged by the burning of their homes and the theft of their wealth, the Xosa warriors chanted a song expressing their aim:

*"To chase the White men from the earth  
And drive them to the sea  
The sea that vomited them up at us."*

Makana's troops attacked Grahamstown.

This was treason.

Makana was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. A year later he was drowned leading a group of prisoners in a bold escape attempt.

## R. v. DINIZULU

**D**INIZULU, son of Cetewayo, descendant of Tshaka, has the distinction of being the only South African ever to have been convicted of treason *twice*.

In 1887 the British seized the best of the territory occupied by the Zulus and handed it over to the White farmers. Dinizulu resisted.

With three others Dinizulu was placed on trial. "During the trial very interesting variations of the famed laws of English justice were introduced," comments Oliver Walker in Proud Zulu. "Wholesale hearsay evidence was

admitted." Harry Escome, who was later to be prime minister of Natal described the trial as "a crowning act of persecution." Not satisfied with robbing Dinizulu of his land, the robbers put him in jail for defending his property.

Again a song was a feature of the trial. Like Detective-Sergeant von Papendorf reciting "Down by the Riverside" in the Drill Hall, one of his embarrassed fore-runners had the task of telling the court that the Zulus were singing a parody of the Natal national anthem "There is a Green Hill Far Away" to these words:

*"There is a big jail far away,  
Outside the city wall  
Where our dear chief is locked up  
Who is ready to die for us all."*

As the chief's ten-year sentence was pronounced a voice at the back of the court began to boom out a song of praise to Dinizulu:

*"You who are like the rays of the sun,  
You who anticipated the sun before it rose..."*

Swiftly the praisemaker was driven out at bayonet-point by a hated Nonqgai—a Zulu policeman.

## BAMBATA AND DINIZULU

Thirty years later, came the glorious Zulu poll tax rebellion of 1906 which held up for many years the government's plan to extract poll tax from the people. The rebellion, led by Chief Bambata, was bloodily crushed after a number of bitter battles. Bambata was killed. And Dinizulu was charged with high treason, public violence, sedition, rebellion and homicide.

The chief had not in actual fact played a very heroic part. He had publicly protested his loyalty to the government and declared that he was prepared to assist in suppressing the revolt.

But he had had the courage to hide Bambata's wife and children for a full year, and had actually hidden Bambata himself for a short time while the soldiers were looking for him.

This was treason.

After a campaign led by Bishop Colenso of Natal to save Dinizulu from certain death at the hands of a Natal Court, he was taken to the Cape and tried there. The Special Court sentenced him to four years, and a government blue book shows that after an anxious correspondence with Whitehall it was decided by the authorities to treat him as a White prisoner, with a cot, shoes and European diet.

## R. v. THE SLAGTER'S NEK REBELS

**T**HE grievances of the Dutch settlers at the Cape against the British policy aimed at wiping out their culture and language are fully revealed in the trial record of the participants of the rebellion of 1815.

This is the earliest treason trial of which I have been able to find the complete record—a huge 1,000 page volume.

The origin of the rebellion is to be found in the bitterness of the Cape Dutch settlers against the British government; all the reasons which twenty years later gave rise to the Great Trek are here revealed.

Because part of the grievances arose of opposition to a more enlightened policy towards the Non-Europeans, part of one's sympathies lie with the government. But in as much as the rebels were pitted against the arrogant imperialist policy aimed at crushing their language and culture, they too had right on their side.

Today the Slagter's Nek rebels are Afrikaner heroes, enshrined in Nationalist Party folklore and it is instructive therefore to notice that the rebels, in their hatred of the British, were *prepared to ally themselves with the Africans in the struggle.*

The evidence shows in the words of the prosecutor, that the rebels sent a message to the Xosa chief Gaika "in order to request help and support in the projected rebellion against His Majesty's troops, and to entice their assistance by promises, not only of such trifles as these barbarians are fond of, but also of the cattle both of the troops and peaceable inhabitants, and finally the District of the Zuurveld from which the Kaffirs have been driven now four years ago with so much trouble and expense."

This was treason.

Unfortunately for the Dutch rebels, Gaika, as we have already seen, was a government man. He declined to join in and told the rebels laconically, "You fight if you want to." Then he warned the government. (History might well have been a little different if the rebels had found a Makana and not a Gaika in power.)

Beaten in battle the Slagters Nek rebels were tried at a lengthy ceremony and their six leaders hanged. As a nice refinement the seventh was not hanged but the court ordered that he was "To be made fast around the neck to the gallows and exposed to the public view, and, together with the other prisoners, to witness the execution."

The gallows broke under the weight of the six men, so they were lifted up and hanged again, one by one.

### THE REFORM COMMITTEE

THE full background to the Boer War is to be found in the records of the trial for treason of Sir Lionel Phillips and other members of the Reform Committee which plotted on behalf of Britain and the Chamber of Mines the overthrow of the Transvaal Republic.

Together with Cecil Rhodes these men planned and organised the Jameson Raid, which, had it not proved a farce, would have saved the British the trouble of the far more expensive piece of imperialist aggression, the Boer War.

This was certainly treason.

But millionaires don't hang. Though sentenced to death, Sir Lionel and his friends were released on the payment of heavy fine.

### JOPIE FOURIE

JOPIE FOURIE was no millionaire, and he hanged—the only man to die for treason since Union.

Fourie had some small understanding, as did many Afrikaner nationalists at the time, that South Africa's troubles were caused by foreign capitalism. Pointing to the Pretoria Club, headquarters of the local mine magnates, he is reported by his official Nationalist biographer as saying: "There, yes there, the main laws of our country are cooked up in consultation with the capitalists."

Jopie Fourie still wanted to continue fighting the Boer War a full twelve years after his country's defeat. He saw the outbreak of the first world war as the opportunity to break free of Smuts' Government, which, he believed, was betraying his country to foreign imperialism by its alliance with Britain in the war against Germany. So he took up arms against Smuts.

This was treason.

And Fourie was tried, sentenced and hanged. Today, like the men of Slagter's Nek, he is a Nationalist hero.

### THE RAND STRIKE

THE story of the struggle of the White miners of the Rand against the Chamber of Mines and the whole power of the state can be found in the full records of the trial for treason of two of the workers' leaders, Erasmus and Viljoen.

The strike was an epic of class battle—between the Chamber of Mines and Smuts Government on the one side and the workers—betrayed by the right-wing trade union leadership on the other. But it was a battle in which admiration of the strikers' heroism is tempered a little by amazement at the incorrectness of the main slogan upon which the fight was based. "Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa."

The Appellate Division decisions in Erasmus' and Viljoen's cases, incidentally, are the main decision in our law defining treason, and if R. v. Luthuli goes to trial, we shall hear R. v. Erasmus and R. v. Viljoen 1923 A.D. quoted time and again.

### ROBEY LEIBRANDT

THIS man's history is too recent in our memory to need to be dealt with at length. A former member of the South African Police Force he went to Germany and liked what the Gestapo did. He joined the Nazi Army and was landed in South Africa by submarine. Here he embarked on a campaign of terror and anti-semitism—with the aim of bringing our country into the Nazi empire.

The Nats let Robey Leibrandt loose as soon as they got into power. This too was treason.

### R. v. LUTHULI AND 155 OTHERS

THIS is the largest trial for treason our country has ever known and the first time Black man and White man, Afrikaner and non-Afrikaner, have stood together as co-accused. And like the previous trials in our history it marks a new stage in South Africa's development.

History will judge whether the Slagter's Nek trial it involves freedom from tyranny; whether like the trial of Makana it involves the assertion of national independence; whether what Erasmus and Viljoen fought for has its parallels in the action of the SACTU leaders; and whether, like the Zulu Chief Dinizulu, Zulu Chief Luthuli will be found guilty of trying to overthrow the state.

There is an echo of the freed Robey Leibrandt in the trial too. For the defence has declared in court that the accused will aim to show that the trial is patterned on the Reichstag Fire Trial model—the trial which brought to Germany the Nazi rule Leibrandt wanted to see in our land.



# Walking to Victory

By TENNYSON MAKIWANE

ON Monday January 7, from the early hours of the morning groups of men and women were already up and were on their way to work. Pickets posted at the bus stops and termini to remind the people not to board the buses found themselves without any work to do. The people just went past—the men with their jackets over their arms, the women wearing flat shoes. It was clear that they were prepared for a long walk.

Most people gave the bus ranks wide berth. Straight from their homes they moved on—in two's in three's, in small groups. There were two other unusual features that morning: the scores of police drafted to patrol the townships, and of course, the empty buses!

## Phenomenal Success

The same thing was happening in all areas affected by the bus fare increases. At the end of the day official figures released by the bus company showed that at Alexandra Township and Lady Selborne only 20 per cent. of the usual passengers boarded the buses. In the Western Areas of Johannesburg only one in four boarded the buses. On the very first day the success of the bus boycott had been phenomenal.

★ ★ ★

Despite prophecies from official sources of an early collapse and dropping of morale of the people, the boycott has grown from strength to strength.

On the second day the press reported a 100 per cent. boycott at Alexandra and Sophiatown whilst at Mooiplaas in Pretoria the buses had been withdrawn altogether.

The mass response to the boycott exceeded all expectations. It underlines something more too—the seething political tension and unanimity of the people in their opposition to Government actions evident since the treason arrests. The protest by the people which has soared to such inspiring success these few weeks has been achieved with the minimum of fuss and bother, no central co-ordination of the boycott and wholly local direction of the protest movement. The Public Utility Transport Company announced the fare increases at one week's notice and from then events moved rapidly.

At Alexandra Township the African National Congress invited other local organisations to meet it and a Transport Action Committee was formed. In no time protest leaflets were distributed, processions and street corner meetings organised, to culminate in a mass demonstration outside the P.U.T.C. offices. A Sunday mammoth meeting decided on the boycott.

## In Sophiatown

In Sophiatown the youth took over the boycott under the slogan "Our leaders are arrested!"

At Pretoria boycott leaflets were distributed only the night before.

The memorandum submitted to the bus company by the boycott leaders pointed out that the people could not afford to pay any extra penny. They made three main demands:

1. The immediate restoration of the old fares.
2. An increase in the number of buses on the routes to eliminate the endless queues.
3. The building of shelters at bus stops to protect the people from bad weather.

## BUS BOYCOTT

By JEAN L.

There are no matters of ethics to decide  
Not here in the pouring rain  
Not here in the march of wet shoes  
Not here against the stone wall

There are no questions of hardship to consider  
Not here in the slack of short breath  
Not here in the hard press of women  
Not here against the stone wall

There are no cross purposes to rift the conscience  
Not here in the pawn of hard hours  
Not here in the stretch of ten miles  
Not here against the stone wall

There are no bargains to be contracted  
Not here in the dark ungiving hour  
Not here in the divvying of the raw purse  
Not here against the stone wall

There are no prudently compacted answers  
Not here in the raping taxes  
Not here in the cost of the shilling  
Not here against the stone wall

There are no vouching bills of clearance  
Not here in the ends that never meet  
Not here in the unwise penny  
Not here against the stone wall.

The memorandum further reminded PUTCO of its 1944 undertaking.

That year the people of Alexandra put up stubborn resistance to increased fares and after six weeks of solid boycott they forced the bus companies to climb down.

The resulting settlement had the effect of eliminating the numerous bus companies and replacing them by a single corporation (the present PUTCO) which held a monopoly of the transport service.

The new company made far-reaching promises to the people. According to those who participated in the '44 bus boycott the agreement was to this effect:

That PUTCO *undertook not to raise the bus fares*, and that after two years the fares would be *reduced by a penny*. That the residents of Alexandra would in due course be allowed to buy shares in the company. By using the slogan "We are not after profit" PUTCO set out to gain the confidence of the people.

Recent events have shown, however, that PUTCO was not to stand by its promises.

## 1956 Warning

Early in 1956 the Company increased weekend fares by a penny but was quick to point out that this would only affect casual travellers and not the workers who do not work on Saturdays and Sundays.

Although the peoples' leaders warned the people that this was only a stunt on the part of the bus company calculated to pave the way for further increases, the people were divided and there was no effective resistance.

With the recent increases PUTCO has finally scrapped its previous undertakings. The people are giving their reply.

**A**N examination of wage rates in South Africa reveals a startling disparity between European and Non-European earnings, or, expressed in other terms, between skilled and unskilled rates. Most economists, including those who are in agreement with the colour bar, are inclined to deplore this disparity as being harmful in terms of purchasing power, markets and incentives. Official and other observers have, in recent years, gone out of their way to welcome any sign that this gap is being closed, that Non-European wages are increasing at a faster rate than European, and that the standard of living of the Non-Europeans is rising.

## The Widening Gap

The purpose of this article is to show that while this gap narrowed during the war and early post war years, it has, since 1945/46 reverted to its pre-war trend of widening and the position is now no longer favourable to the Non-European.

Professor van Waasdijk, writing in 1949, alleged that this substantial rise in the Non-European wage rate was responsible for increasing production costs.<sup>1</sup> The Industrial Legislation Commission, whose report was completed in December 1951, made a very careful examination of the position, and pointed out that the wages of African, Asian and Coloured workers in 1940/41 were 20.3%, 31.1% and 37.2% of the European earnings, while in 1945/46 these percentages had advanced to 26.8, 43.4 and 44.4 respectively.<sup>2</sup>

The Wage Board, in its report for 1953, claimed that "since the outbreak of the Second World War the gap in the wages between skilled and unskilled labour has

## Wage Study

In her recent, comprehensive survey of the Non-European worker in industry, Miss Horrell<sup>5</sup> noted, in passing that in recent years the incomes of Europeans and Non-Europeans had again begun to diverge. Just how much divergence has taken place since 1945/46 when the gap was at its narrowest, is shown by the following table:

*Non-European wages as a percentage of European wages<sup>6</sup>*

	African	Asian	Coloured
1937/38	19.8	28.6	37.8
1940/41	20.1	31.0	37.5
1945/46	26.6	43.2	44.3
1952/53	21.4	37.5	37.5

In comparison with the *White worker, the Coloured worker seems now to be just where he was fifteen years ago, and the African worker rapidly reaching the same stage.* When the African wage was nearest to the European, it was only one quarter and the Asian and Coloured rates have never reached even half.

The Industrial Legislation Commission offered an explanation of the lessening of the difference between European and Non-European wage levels. There were more Non-Europeans, it said, moving into the more skilled and therefore more highly paid jobs.

They substantiated their argument by reference to the Wage Board's annual reports in which there are tables showing a) the number of workers of each racial group falling into the category of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled classes, and b) the number of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers falling into each racial group. Comparative figures are shown in the following tables:

(a) *Distribution per cent. of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers according to race.<sup>7</sup>*

	European		African		Asian		Coloured	
	1937/45	1937/53	1937/45	1937/53	1937/45	1937/53	1953/45	1937/53
Skilled	85.0	84.1	5.1	5.4	5.3	5.4	4.2	5.1
Semi-skilled	37.3	29.9	30.9	40.2	11.4	9.8	20.6	20.1
Unskilled	1.7	1.0	79.2	52.3	5.3	4.0	13.5	12.7

*Distribution per cent. of European, African, Asian and Coloured workers according to skill.*

	Skilled		Semi-skilled		Unskilled	
	1937/45	1937/53	1937/45	1937/53	1937/45	1937/53
European	80.0	85.5	17.0	13.2	2.0	1.3
African	4.5	4.5	12.9	14.5	82.7	81.0
Asian	30.6	37.5	32.0	29.7	37.2	32.8
Coloured	13.8	17.8	32.6	30.3	53.5	51.9

tended to decrease in almost all secondary industries," and that "the wages of Non-Europeans semi-skilled and unskilled workers increased more rapidly than those of European workers."<sup>3</sup>

The Wage Board claimed that this was a reversal of the trend before 1938 when skilled (or European) wage incomes were increasing faster than unskilled (or Non-European).<sup>4</sup> Yet the Wage Board had at its disposal figures up to 1950, and must have noted the comment of the Industrial Legislation Commission that the proportion of Non-European to European wages had fallen during 1946/47 to 1947/48. The Commission suggested that this might indicate either a "temporary phenomenon" or a "new downward trend." The conclusion of the Wage Board appears to be based on a comparison of the terminal points of 1937/38 and 1949/50 without considering the variations in between.

The first table shows that of all semi-skilled workers, there are now fewer Europeans than previously; evidently they are moving into white collar jobs. There is an increase of Non-European workers into the skilled and semi-skilled categories.

Table b) shows a movement of Europeans from semi-skilled to skilled jobs, and the same, though slighter, movement among Asians and Coloured. The position of the Africans remains unaltered.

### Living Standards

It seems therefore that a comparatively small proportion of Non-Europeans have moved into the more skilled and higher paid jobs. Yet this trend has not brought about a narrowing of the gap between European and Non-European wages.

1) T. van Waasdijk, Some Notes on Price Inflation in South Africa, S.A.J. Econ. Vol. 17, 1949, pp. 382-415.  
2) Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission of Enquiry U.G. 62-'51, para. 252.  
3) Report of the Wage Board for the year 1953, U.G. 20-'55, p. 25.

4) Report of the Wage Board for the year ending 31/12/53, U.G. 20 1955. This assertion is not altogether borne out by available statistics—see Report of Industrial Legislation Commission, p. 44, Table 37.  
5) South Africa's Non-White workers—Muriel Horrell, published by the Institute of Race Relations, p. 26 (1956).  
6) Average amount of wages paid to European, African, Asian and Coloured workers in all industries—Census of Industrial Establishments Reports, 1935/36 onwards.  
7) The returns on which this table is based include industries and trades subjected to Wage Determinations, other than unskilled wage determinations in the principal towns. The statistics are not a satisfactory guide but none else is available.

# AFRICAN LITERATURE

By JOE MATTHEWS

**T**HE history of African literature, that is of works written in one or other of the African languages, is a comparatively short one. It is in fact associated in its birth with the upheavals which led to the colonisation of South Africa by European invaders in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Part of the great task of drawing the African people into the orbit of capitalist economy consisted in converting them ideologically—in christianising them. This led naturally to the need for missionaries to learn the languages of the people and subsequently to the translation of the Bible and hymnaries into the African languages. It was to answer this need in the first place that the reduction of African languages to writing became necessary.

The beginnings of a written African literature are therefore inextricably interwoven with the story of Christian missionary enterprise in this country. This was to have a powerful influence on the future development of African literature.

## Mission Centres

It must be remembered that there were a number of missionary organisations operating in the country. Their efforts, in literature at any rate, were not co-ordinated. They were also not primarily concerned with the long-term interests of the African literature but with the extension of their influence among the people. Thus the history of Xhosa literature—its beginnings and development—was closely associated with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland centred around Lovedale Mission. Southern-Sutho on the other hand developed around the Paris Evangelical Mission centred on Morija; Zulu around Marianhill Catholic Mission.

The first works in the different languages were actually initiated by European missionaries who were assisted in their work by African converts. They worked out the orthographies and grammatical analyses of the African languages. Southern-Sutho affords us with excellent examples of what happened when Frenchmen had to find the proper way of spelling various sounds in the African languages. Thus we find the sound which English missionaries would render as "wi" becoming "oi" under French missionary influence; the sound "ye" be-

comes "ee" and so it goes on. This influence and monopoly of literature in African languages by various missionary bodies has continued by and large to the present day.

## Self-Censorship

Any Xhosa author will, for instance, find that he is forced to turn to Lovedale for the publication of his work as they have all the facilities for the printing of a Xhosa work. Naturally if the work conveys a message which does not accord with the interests of the publishers it will not see the light of day. This imposes on the writer the necessity to censor himself beforehand. Every African language group has had to reckon with this difficulty.

Quite apart, therefore, from other difficulties arising out of the status of the Africans as an oppressed people which militate against any flowering of culture, we have this mission—printing press monopoly working against the rise of a progressive literature.

Despite these handicaps numerous African writers have emerged who, in one way or another, have had a great impact on the development of literature in the different African languages. Many of these were also closely associated with the early struggles of the African people. Two that immediately spring to mind are Dube, the Zulu writer, and also first president of the African National Congress; and Sol. T. Plaatje, the prolific Chuanan writer, who was first secretary-general of the A.N.C. There were many others.

## The Themes

Young as it is African literature is too vast to enable us to examine in detail the themes with which it deals. Nevertheless we can distinguish a number.

There are the works which in poetic or novel form extol or portray life under the traditional tribal system. Among the most notable of these is "Ityala LamaWele," by the famous Xhosa writer S. E. K. Mqhayi.

Then there is the historical romance-novel like the famous "Chaka," by Mofolo, the great Sutho writer; and the impressive series by R. R. Dlomo dealing with the Zulu kings from Tshaka to Cetywayo. These latter are Zulu works. The historical romances mostly treat of African Chiefs and heroes of the past in a manner rather different from the accepted "official" version. There is naturally much of

this theme in the praise-poetry of all African languages.

Many writers are notable for their attempt to translate famous English plays into African languages. Sol. T. Plaatje, for instance, rendered some plays of Shakespeare including "Julius Caesar" into Sechuana. Masinga has done the same in Zulu. On the same plane is the adoption of poetic techniques involving an escape from the African praise form, e.g. sonnets. This is noticeable in the works of J. J. R. Jolobe (in Xhosa) and those of Vilakazi (in Zulu). The poetic works of both these writers make some heavy reading.

## Escape from Life

Of works dealing with modern African life there are many. Few are notable and even those are marked by a tendency to escape from the realities of African life which is that of a racially oppressed majority struggling for equality and freedom.

Indeed one is struck throughout the whole of African literature by the absence of realism. Any attempts to deal with themes that reflect the political, social and economic position of the African people are very tentative indeed and usually heavily disguised in satirical language. This is so both in poetic and essay writing.

Even in recent times when the whole of the old world of colonialism is crumbling you can find nothing of that reflected in African literature. The tendency is romantic.

But the absence of a progressive protest literature is not to be explained solely by the domination of the publishing houses and their largely unseen censorship of works, but can be ascribed also to the disadvantage of having many different languages where national unity is the great aim. A great novel in Sesutho based on the freedom struggle would have a narrower audience than the author would desire. In other words, English willy-nilly becomes the language of African nationalism.

The need for progressive works in the different African languages remains. This applies to original works as well as to translations from English of important works with a socio-political message. This is so in spite of the widely prevalent notion that the African languages are not suitable as vehicles of modern political thought.

Realistic writings have become a necessity if African literature is to be rescued from the romantic rut into which it has got itself today. In the renaissance, if it ever comes, the progressive movement will have a great part to play.

# EQUITY AND THE COLOUR-BAR

By VIC EDDY

**A**T A RECENT meeting of "Equity," the actors' trade union in Britain, a resolution was moved calling on "Equity" to restrain its members from visiting South Africa or any other country practising a social colour bar unless they were permitted to perform before mixed audiences.

**THIS MOTION** was subsequently amended and members were instead urged to insist that any artist visiting such country shall insist that the company sponsoring his tour or visit shall place every facility

in his way to enable him to give at least one performance before a Non-European audience.

**SINCE WE FEEL** that this resolution is of great importance to South Africa, and represents a marked swing in the weight of popular overseas pressure on the humiliating apartheid policy of the Government, "Fighting Talk" sent a representative to interview two distinguished men of the English stage and screen presently in this country, who are also members of "Equity." The following interviews reflect their own points of view on the subject:

## Emlyn Williams

**I** BUTTONHOLED Emlyn Williams as he was entering his dressing-room at the Brooke Theatre, where he appeared in the delightful *A Boy Growing Up* by Dylan Thomas.

Careful with my diction, I said: "Good evening." I'm from the magazine *Fighting Talk*.

"Dear me, how belligerent that sounds!"

When I explained that it used to be an ex-servicemen's publication, he smiled and invited me in.

"As the only performer of the evening, I often feel lonely in the dressing-room by myself, so I don't mind seeing people here at all. Please talk to me while I get on with my make-up."

I explained the purpose of my interview. I wanted, I told him, firstly the actual resolution adopted by "Equity" and secondly, his own reactions to it.

"Yes," he said, "I know what took place at the meeting because it occurred just before my coming out here. Brian Brooke was so worried about it that he got in touch with me and asked me to find out exactly how my intended visit stood in relation to the new policy of "Equity" vis-a-vis South Africa. I phoned Felix Aylmer, the Chairman of "Equity" and he explained the situation to me."

"There is no question of compulsion, of course. All that our organisation insists on is that any of its members who intend visiting South Africa professionally shall insist on a clause in his contract whereby facilities will be placed in his way to enable him to give at least one performance before a Non-White audience."

"Well, I said, "as far as we are concerned, that certainly represents a move in the right direction. How do you yourself feel about it? Do you think it goes far enough?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Williams.

"Quite obviously the Government of this country isn't going to change its policy just for the benefit of English actors."

"Or Welsh ones either?" I put in.

"Or Welsh ones either," he laughed.

"On the whole, I think the resolution is a realistic one. However abhorrent the colour bar may be to us, it will serve no useful purpose to refuse to allow us to come here. The colour bar won't be abolished and it will simply mean that a lot of people, White and Black, will be deprived of overseas cultural contact altogether."

As I listened to him, I watched fascinated while he deftly spread the make-up over his face. It seemed as natural to him as washing his face.

"Do you think," I asked, "that your attitude on this question is in line with the opinion of English actors generally?"

"I think so," he answered. "I for one should hate to be deprived of the opportunity of coming out to this lovely country and to all my good friends here. As a matter of fact I am giving a special performance of the Dylan Thomas readings before a Non-White audience next Sunday afternoon, and I am looking forward to it immensely. I did it with the Dickens too, you know."

At this stage bells began to ring and theatrical lackeys appeared. I couldn't keep the great man any longer. I thanked him, we shook hands and I left.

## David Kossoff

**T**RACKING down David Kossoff was easier than tracking down other celebrities. I simply phoned Cecil Williams and he invited me to a rehearsal. I even got a cup of coffee!

David Kossoff is a young man, prematurely grey. On the films and on the stage, he specialises in traditional Jewish character roles, but this in itself represents a versatility that few

can embrace. He is currently appearing in Cecil Williams' production of "The World of Sholom Aleichem" at the Reps Theatre.

I sat open-mouthed during part of the rehearsal, and was almost sorry when Cecil beckoned me over and introduced me.

"Is yours a left wing publication?" asked Kossoff cautiously.

But he didn't seem to mind very much when I said it was.

"The point about "Equity's" resolution," he said, "is that it is really the only realistic one they could have adopted. As a liberal, it would grieve me a lot if I were deprived of the chance of performing before any section of the population. Audiences fascinate me and I'm not the least bit concerned whether they are Black, White, Red or Yellow. As a matter of fact, when Cecil Williams wrote to me in London and told me he was sure I wouldn't object to giving some performances before Non-Europeans, it was one of the things that decided me finally to come. Incidentally that was the first time I had ever come across the phrase 'Non-Europeans' in that context."

I told him what Emlyn Williams had said, and he nodded.

"Yes," he said, "I think you'll find that most actors will welcome the resolution as the only practical one to be adopted in the circumstances."

I told him that the majority of Non-Europeans, I was sure, would sooner see him and other celebrities under the difficult conditions of the moment than not see them at all.

We chatted for a while further, and then he nodded his head towards the stage where actors and stage technicians were scurrying to and fro.

"I have a hundred things to attend to, so you'll have to release me now."

"I wouldn't dream," I said, "of holding up 'The World of Sholom Aleichem,' even for a moment."

# The Defiance Campaign

**T**HE Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws conducted jointly by the African and Indian Congresses in 1952 marked an important phase in the development of the Congress movement. It greatly raised the prestige of Congress, brought new standards of discipline and sacrifice into the movement, and brought about a big advance in Congress membership, both in quality and numbers. The defiance campaign laid the basis for big advances; it led to the emergence, in partnership with the older organisations, of the Congress of Democrats and the Coloured People's Organisation; it formed an essential background to the establishment of the Congress of Trade Unions. It is difficult to conceive that the Freedom Charter could ever have been adopted or the Congress of the People held had it not been for the heroic pioneering work and sacrifices of the defiance volunteers.

## Not For All Time

At the same time, it should be remembered that the defiance campaign was, in fact, the specific answer found by the Congress leaders to the specific situation which existed in 1952. It was a method of struggle, a means of awakening the masses, which, after prolonged discussion, they chose at that time. History has brilliantly vindicated the correctness of that decision. But that does not mean that they therefore laid down that method of struggle for all time and in all circumstances. Still less did it mean that Congress was adopting the ideology of passive resistance or "satyagraha" as evolved by Mahatma Gandhi. It is wrong to classify the defiance campaign as a traditional passive resistance movement, or to identify the Congress movement in this country with the philosophy evolved, in very different conditions and from a very different cultural background, in India.

Because he makes this fundamental error the value of Professor Leo Kuper's book is very much less than it could have been. Both in his title, and repeatedly throughout the book Professor Kuper refers to the campaign as one of "passive resistance," though the careful avoidance of this term by the leaders of the movement at all stages must have been apparent to him.

And it is hard to believe that, in the light of all his careful researches, he could have been unaware of the significance of this careful avoidance.

It is true that among the leaders, especially among some of the Indian Congressmen, there were those who did in fact embrace the traditional Gandhian conception. But they did not attempt to impose this concept upon their colleagues. The campaign was something unique and new in concept and in execution. It must be studied in itself and with the background of our own history and conditions. It will not fit into the academic pigeon-hole labelled "passive resistance."

## Solid Merits

I do not wish to give the impression that Professor Kuper's book is lacking in its own solid merits. The section dealing with the actual factual record of events leading up to the campaign, the campaign itself, and its immediate repercussions, is admirably fair, scholarly and faithful. It is well-documented with statements by the Congress leaders, extracts from statements made by volunteers in Court, and from the democratic press. It contains, as appendices, the exchange of correspondence between the A.N.C. and Dr. Malan, and the full report of the Joint A.N.C.—S.A.I.C. Planning Council. It is illustrated by a number of photographs of much historical interest.

Unfortunately the bulk of the book does not consist of this useful and important material, which fills a long-felt need for a permanent record of the campaign. About two-thirds of the 250 pages consist of Professor Kuper's own theoretical generalisations and conclusions. One has the feeling, time and again, of remoteness from reality; of the setting-forth of an academic thesis of what the movement ought to have been like in order to satisfy some preconceived theory—often with little relationship to what the movement actually was in real life, and in its setting of contemporary South Africa.

"The rationale underlying the dignified acceptance of punishment is that the noble sacrifice of self-interest for an ideal would stir the 'higher orders' of the mind, the moral conscience of the rulers."

That may have been the outlook of the satyagrahis in India, whose distance from

their rulers in London might have conduced to illusions about their moral conscience. It certainly was not and is not the outlook of the leaders of the national liberation movement in South Africa who live cheek by jowl with their oppressors and are only too well aware of the futility of appealing to their non-existent moral conscience or better feelings.

In order the better to bring out what he alleges to be the "ideology" of the Congress movement, Professor Kuper repeatedly contrasts it with that of the "Bantu National Congress" and the "Non-European Unity Movement." To be sure, he recognises that "the effective influence of the Bantu National Congress is certainly small," yet he keeps referring to this utterly insignificant grouplet (now happily deceased) as if it were a factor of some importance in the country. He writes solemnly that it was "no accident" that it was established at a meeting of African herbalists, and talks learnedly about its "ideology" as if it had any, or as if it were anything but a gramophone for the Nationalist Party.

Similarly, though the citations in the book bring out well the sterile dogmatism and demagogy of the "Unity Movement," Professor Kuper not only gives an exaggerated impression of the significance of this movement, but also falsely contrasts the allegedly "revolutionary" character of the NEUM with what he suggests is a "middle road" of Congress. He suggests that Congress, unlike the NEUM, relies on a change of heart of the ruling class and acts of individual self-purification by the "passive resisters."

How far from the truth these suggestions are will be obvious to anyone who is not looking at the struggle from an academic cloister but from within the hurly-burly of the political struggle. The basic Congress criticism of the NEUM lies not in its wordy denunciations of "Herrenvolkism" but in its total ineffectiveness and inactivity in every important struggle of the people over the past decade.

Congress does not believe in melting the stony hearts of the oppressors, but in effective mass action to assert the people's rights to freedom and equality. The defiance campaign was a means towards developing mass action and the will to win freedom. Therein lay its great historical service.

ALAN DOYLE.  
"PASSIVE RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA"  
(Cape), by L. Kuper, London. South African  
Price 26s.

# CECIL RHODES

THE Colossus of Rhodes—a huge statue bestriding the mouth of the harbour to the Mediterranean island of Rhodes was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Admirers of Rhodes nick-named him "The Colossus," a reference, no doubt, to the symbol of his figure casting its dominating shadow over Africa—with one foot at the Cape, the other in Cairo. "This is my dream," Rhodes would say pointing to a map of Africa, "to paint that all red." and paint it red he did—with the blood of thousands: black warriors mown down by machine gun fire in Matabeleland and Mashonaland; Boer commandoes who lost their lives defending the tiny Transvaal Republic against the massive armed might of Britain; innocent British soldiers sent to fight for "Flag and Queen" in a foreign country.

## Painting Africa Red

If Rhodes failed to paint the *whols* of Africa red, it was not through lack of trying. Rhodes used every possible device—murder, fraud, treachery, blackmail, lies and bribes—to secure Southern Africa for the Union Jack. Lobengula, the great king of the Matabele, he tricked shamelessly into signing away a vast kingdom to the British South Africa Company; to gain control of Southern Africa's gold, Rhodes was prepared to rob the Transvaal Republic of its political independence; to keep his corrupt Rhodesian companies going, he deceived thousands of pensioners and widows into investing their savings of a lifetime in his abortive enterprises; he once went so far as to suggest that the Pope be "squared" when Parnell, the Irish leader complained that the priests were against him.

Money was the goddess that Rhodes worshipped; not for its own sake but because "Money is power . . . and I like power." But Rhodes was more than a mere financier. True, he speedily captured control of the fabulous Kimberley diamond fields, and by shrewd manoeuvring, was soon their undisputed master. But diamonds—which he always spelt with a capital "D"—were the shining pebbles with which he would pave his way to the North. Diamonds would provide the wealth for him to build an Empire.

Rhodes was a "class-conscious" protagonist of British imperialism. "I see that expansion, imperialism, is everything. The world's surface is limited therefore the great object should be to take as much of it as we can." Unlike the economic interests he represented, Rhodes did not believe in imperialism simply because it meant dividends. Besides raking in the profits for Britain's industrialists and financiers, im-

perialism also served as the weapon by which the racially superior British people would become masters of the world. "I contend that we are the first race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. I contend that every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence . . ."

## God on his Side

This belief in the mystical destiny of a particular human race, and the need for it to confer the blessings of its exalted rule on other races—a startling anticipation of the racial doctrines of Fascism—was buttressed with the idea, also not unfamiliar to us, that God was on the side of the superior race. "God is manifestly fashioning the English speaking race as the chosen instrument by which he will bring in a state of society based on justice, liberty and peace."

Of course God would require a prophet to reveal the gospel to the racial elite, and who else could be God's agent but Rhodes himself? "...if there be a God, I think that what he would like me to do is to paint as much of the map of Africa British red as possible and to do what I can elsewhere to promote the unity and extend the influence of the English speaking race," said Rhodes modestly. But there was none of the humble missionary spirit about him. He saw himself as Leader and displayed the vices of autocratic leadership, megalomania, capriciousness, authoritarianism, disregard for human beings.

## Chessboard Pawn

Mr. Gross's treatment of Rhodes often errs on the side of being too personalist. The conquest of the Union and Rhodesias for the British Empire was not the personal achievement of Rhodes. Man both acts and reacts; he makes his world and is made by it. Rhodes was steeped in the influences and animated by the pressures of his historical environment—the dominant keynote of which was the uninhibited interest displayed by British industrial and financial circles to which Rhodes materially and spiritually belonged, in pocketing the riches of Southern Africa for exploitation.

Cecil Rhodes was welcomed by British imperialism; he was a vigilant guardian of its interests. Had he ever deviated from the pattern they would surely have stopped him. As it was, Cecil Rhodes, for all the extravagant achievements that are attributed to his personality, was, when all was said and done, no more than a pawn on the chessboard of British imperialism.

Gross, like many other biographers of Rhodes, seems to forget just how it was that diamonds could make Rhodes wealthy. He ignores the fact that the colossal

wealth of Rhodes was based on the exploitation of Black labour. The infamous Glen-Gray Act of 1887—the first piece of capitalist legislation—receives no more than fourteen lines. The blatant purpose of this Act was to squeeze Africans out of the reserves and to draw them into industry as a cheap labour force. By piloting this legislation through the Parliament, Rhodes, the great Empire builder, struck the first blow for the enslavement of the African people into a class of impoverished hewers of wood and drawers of water. As he so elegantly put it, "we must adopt a system of despotism, such as works so well in India, in our relations with the barbarians of South Africa."

This side of Rhodes emerges none too clearly from the pages of Mr. Gross' biography. By glossing over Rhodes' role as an oppressor of the Africans and exploiter of workers, and by ignoring the disastrous effects of this policy on the people whose sweat provided his profits, the African labourers, Gross's historical assessment of Rhodes is so much the poorer. To understand the significance of Rhodes and all that he represented it is not sufficient to tell the reader of financial intrigues, his relations with other European politicians or his antagonism towards Kruger. Rhodes' involvement with the Afrikaner Bond is something that belong largely to the limbo of the forgotten past, of interest to scholars only. But nobody today can escape the influence of the economic system whose instrument he was and in whose establishment he played such an important part. The Bond is dead but imperialism, racial discrimination and economic exploitation is very much with us.

On the credit side must be mentioned Gross's account of how Rhodes succeeded in destroying the Matabele Empire, how Lobengula was tricked into granting Rhodes a foothold in Rhodesia and how Jameson, Rhodes' specialist at trouble-brewing, engineered the trigger incident which enabled him to set the final seal on his domination of Rhodesia by wiping out the military power of the Matabele. Gross's account of how Rhodes removed the other stumbling block to his expansionist schemes—the Transvaal—is also illuminating. His attempts to provoke Kruger into war, to incite racial hatred between the Uitlanders and the Boers and finally the desperate military adventure of the Jameson Raid, all of which paved the way for Britain's eventual conquest and annexation of the Transvaal are well told.

"Cecil Rhodes" is neither a great nor an original biography; in time it will gather dust on library shelves along with the many hundreds of other biographies of Rhodes. It is however, eminently readable and contains much useful information.

C.B.  
CECIL RHODES, by Felix Gross. Cassels, Price 25/-

# THE GREAT ROAD

WHEN you see photographs of the broad-nosed, black-browed, smiling Chu Teh, the military commander and one of the great leaders of the Chinese Revolution, you don't think of him as an old man. In fact, there is something ageless about him, and it is surprising to learn that he is over 70. Into those 70 years he has packed enough intense living to fill the lives of many men.

As with all great men, the story of his life is not a simple personal chronicle. It is a vital portion of history, inextricably bound up with the events of the period through which he lived, and with the struggles of the people. It is also a biography of the Red Army of China. It is an exciting, fascinating, inspiring story of one of the guiding spirits of the Chinese revolution.

Agnes Smedley, the American correspondent who went to China in 1929 and later joined the Chinese Red Army at the front, set out to write the story of Chu Teh's life in 1937. Her work was interrupted, and she died in 1950 without an opportunity of finishing it, leaving only her notebooks and a first draft. Even incomplete, the book, "The Great Road—the Life and Times of Chu Teh" is a tremendous work, fascinating reading, and an important social and historical document.

Out of it emerges a tough, lovable, incorruptible leader, who identified himself completely with the struggle for China's liberation, and with the men he led in battle after battle over the long years. He was a commander-in-chief who, during his years of service, "spun, wove, set type, grew and cooked his own food, wrote poetry and lectured not only to his troops on military strategy and tactics, but to women's classes on how to preserve vegetables." There also emerges a picture of how the Chinese people lifted themselves from bitter oppression and misery, from extreme poverty and feudalism, to set themselves on the great road to progress and freedom. In addition, the book supplies valuable historical material much of which has never before been recorded.

## Peasant Family

Chu Teh, born in 1886, came from a poor peasant family in the remote province of Szechwan. His mother was the daughter of an outcast wandering theatrical family,

a woman so humble that she did not even have a name, a peasant woman who bore thirteen children, the last five of whom were drowned at birth because the family was too poor to feed them.

To escape from this endless and degrading poverty, Chu Teh was chosen by his family to receive an education and become an official, the only way they could see of breaking the harsh pattern of their lives. With money saved and scraped together by the combined families of three generations, Chu Teh was sent to school with the sons of small landlords.

In such schools the pupils began their studies with a compendium of rhymed couplets of Confucian ethics and ancient history, the meaning of which was never explained. Boys were expected to practice perfect pronunciation until the characters or words, with their various tones, were engraved on the memory. The meaning would come with the years. All day they chanted texts aloud, over and over again. These schools taught no modern subject—no mathematics, geography, natural science or modern history.

## First Textbook

But Chu Teh's appetite for education over-stepped the limitations of such schooling. Later he came under the influence of a teacher who urged his students to travel and study Western learning, because he had heard that science had made Western countries strong and prosperous. When a traveller gave this teacher a booklet which he said was a textbook of Western science, the students memorised it, as they had the classics. Actually it was a pamphlet on a new soap factory, with drawings of machinery. But later they obtained a real textbook on mathematics, and studied it nightly by candlelight. Only when he was nineteen did Chu Teh finally enrol in a new school that taught modern subjects.

After two years at this school, away from home, he describes his homecoming, with the whole family lined up in two rows, bowing respectfully before him. He was treated as an honoured guest, served special food, and the family were horrified when he wished to help in the fields. Their poverty had deepened. Now they expected the investment, for which they had scraped and deprived themselves of so much, to rescue them.

But Chu Teh was already fired with the broader vision of helping his country out of its poverty and subjection to foreign imperialism, and he joined a Military Academy with the object of dedicating his

life to the liberation of China from the Manchu and foreign rule. His family thought he was insane. To them the army was the scum of the earth. He left his home an outcast, with all doors and hearts closed against him.

There is bitter sadness in the story of this family whose son failed them so badly, yet played such a vital role in uplifting not one, but millions of such peasant families.

Vivid pictures of the young Chu Teh (who rose to the rank of Brigadier-General in the Republican Army) stand out in this chronicle.

There is the time when, after personal tragedies, he began taking opium and found himself sinking into the morass of the war-lordism that he had pledged to fight; how he cured himself and decided to go to Europe to study and find a new way of life; how he went to Professor Chen Tu-hsui, then secretary of the infant Chinese Communist Party and applied to join.

"Cool and reserved, Chen looked at his visitors, and in particular at Chu, the general with a none too savoury reputation. A whole decade of militarism, with all that militarism meant in China, must have flashed through his mind. Why should a general from a far western warlord province wish to join the party of the Chinese poor? A man could join the Communist Party, Chen Tu-hsui told him, provided he adopted the workers' cause as his own and was prepared to give his life to it. For a man like Chu Teh this required long study and sincere application."

## In Berlin

Chu Teh had knocked on the door of the future, and it had refused to open to him. Later, however, in Berlin, he joined the Chinese Communist Party group headed by Chou En-Lai, and studied night and day. Since he had come to Europe to study, not only books, but also European civilisation, he set about it as methodically as he had once studied the classics. First he bought a map of Berlin, and translated every street and institution marked on it into Chinese. He visited every museum, school, art gallery, beer hall, restaurant and factory that would admit him. He walked through parks, went to private homes to see how people lived. He went to churches, concerts, the opera.

"The concerts and the opera at first sounded like just one big noise to Chu Teh, but he caught first melodies and motives and then the patterns of creative imagination that ran through the whole."

(Continued on back page)

"After I knew Berlin like the palm of my hand," he said, "and after I began visiting other cities and industrial establishments, I began to lose my old belief that capitalism could save China. It seemed to me that if a highly organised industrial country like Germany, with a skilled, disciplined, literate and organised working class, could be defeated in war as Germany had been, then it would be foolish for China to follow in its footsteps."

### Study As You Plough

This intense capacity for study was carried to the people. When the Red Army, of which Chu became commander-in-chief, had control of various provinces in China, a great study movement began. Temples became schools for children, and at night when the children moved out, adult illiterates came in. Slogans were painted on walls, cliffs, even on the trunks of trees: "Learn, learn and learn again! . . . Study until the light fails! . . . Study as you plough! . . . Study by the reflected light of snow!"

### The Long March

The book contains a description of the Long March of the Red Army, that tremendous epic of courage, endurance and heroism, when one hundred thousand men marched 8000 miles across great plains, wild rivers, mountains of eternal snow and the lethal grass lands, to set up a new base for their army after Chiang Kai-Shek's "Extermination" campaigns had been waged against them. During the march Chu Teh was virtually kidnapped by Chang Kuo-tao, who was in charge of the Fourth Front Red Army, but had transformed the army into his own personal instrument. It was a year before Chu Teh was able to re-join the main forces under Mao Tse-Tung.

These are only a very few of the many memorable incidents recorded in this book. Crowded into its 450 pages is a great panorama of China, and the tremendous struggles, from the 1898 Reform move-

ment onwards, of the Chinese people to free themselves from the double bondage of feudalism and foreign rule.

There are gaps in the book—notably between the years 1931 to 1934, preceding the Long March; and the account of the years after 1937 (to 1946) are in the nature of a preliminary sketch. If Agnes Smedley had lived to complete and revise the book, undoubtedly these gaps would have been filled in, and perhaps some of the accounts of battles shortened.

Even with these faults, *The Great Road* is a valuable and absorbing book, a book such as one rarely encounters. It finished with Chu Teh's sixtieth birthday — when he said to Mao Tse-Tung, then 53, who walked by his side: "I have lived sixty years. From now on, every year of my life is just so much gain!" "So he went forward," Agnes Smedley writes, "on the great road of human liberation, this time to lead his country and people to victory . . ." We who can re-trace the past ten years, since this was written, know just how much gain to the world as a whole has come from the peasant boy from Szechwan.

HILDA WATTS

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