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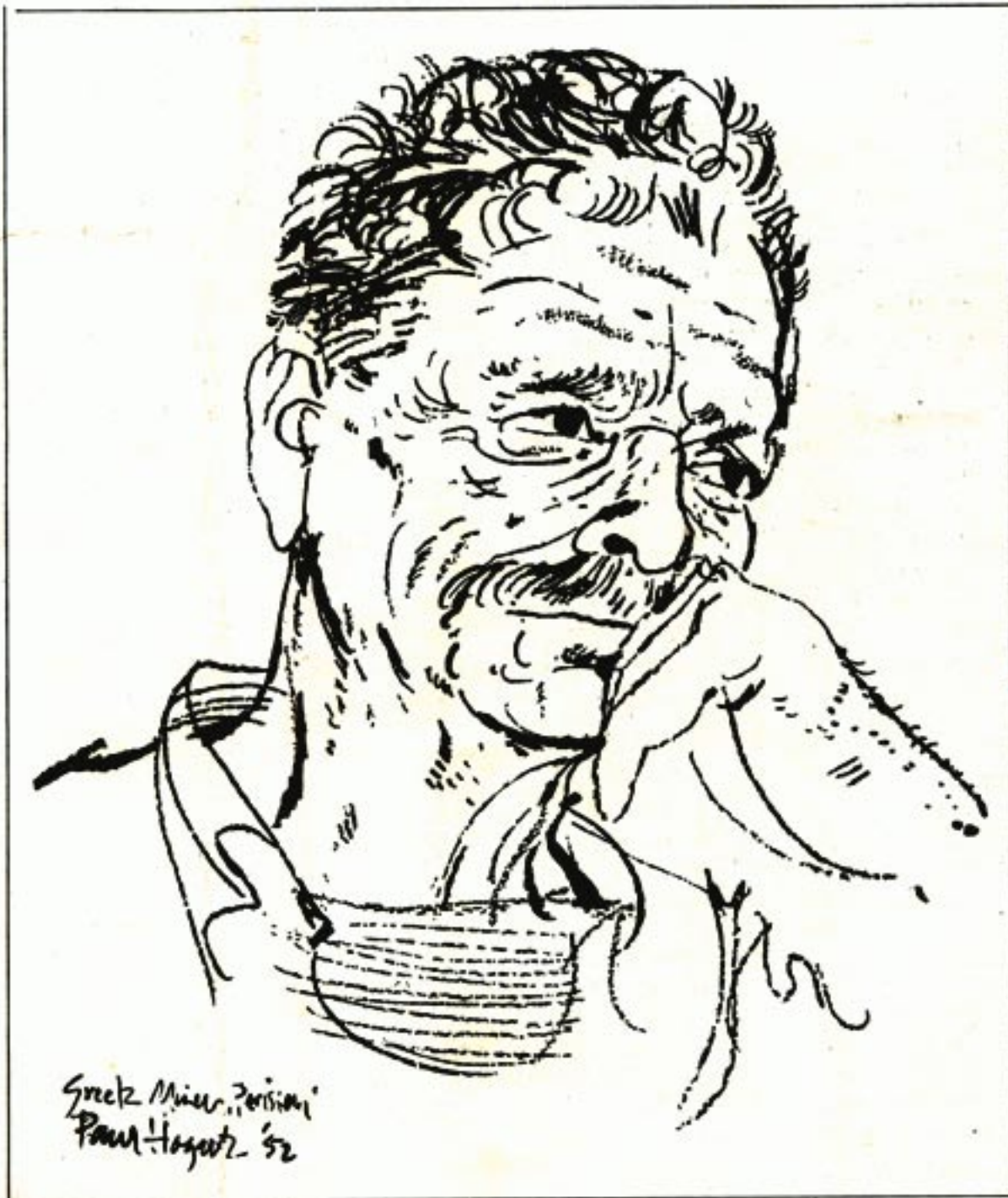
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JUNE/JULY, 1958

TALK

AFRICAN WAGES MUST GO UP!

— ALEX HEPPLER



The French Crisis

SHORT STORY

by

H. C. BOSMAN

'FUNERAL EARTH'

Paul Robeson

by

ESLANDA GOODE ROBESON

Articles by

Phyllis Altman, Zeke Mphahlele,

Joe Matthews

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR DEMOCRATS

This month's
writer: PHYLLIS
ALTMAN.

A group of us, both White and Non-White, listened to the Prime Minister's Union day message to the nation. Breathlessly, uneasily, as though English is a foreign tongue to him, he spoke of Holland and England, of English and Afrikaans speaking South Africans, of the Boer Republics and the creation of the Union of South Africa. Then he informed us that we were important to the Western world because of our geographic position and our minerals and base metals. He made no mention whatever of the Non-White peoples of our land, nor of their contribution to the South Africa of today and tomorrow. The message ended with an appeal to the Almighty and we were called upon to strive for greater unity. It was uninspired and dull. As he called upon God, my Non-White friends shrugged their shoulders and laughed. "Who is his God?" asked Mrs. R. We had been talking of Sekhukhuneland — of the war against the people, the shooting, the destruction of crops, the mass terror and starvation, the area 'sealed off' from the eyes of the world so that the spirit of the people might be the more easily broken. This is how Apartheid is implemented; by force and bloodshed. "Another Zeerust" we said. We could almost have said "another Lidice". But our Prime Minister spoke of God. There are many ways in which one can blaspheme.

I find that I react violently to the use of the phrase, "the Western world", for it implies that our world is irrevocably divided into two and that war is inevitable. This is the sense in which Mr. Strijdom used it, for he told us that we were important to the Western world, not because ours is a country of good and wise Government where all peoples flourish, but because we have the materials of war and our geographic position is of strategic importance. And when

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

the phrase "the Western world" is used interchangeably with "the free world"; my sense of outrage is even greater. Immediately prior to the Prime Minister's message we had listened to the latest news from France and had heard that President Coty had called up De Gaulle to form a Government; De Gaulle, the anti-Parliamentarian, brought to power by armed revolt. Now De Gaulle's name may be added to those of Franco, Salazar, Syngman Rhee, Chiang-Kai-Shek — and Strijdom — in whose countries there is a daily assault upon democracy, the four freedoms and the Charter of the United Nations. What strange bedfellows we find in this 'free' Western world. But this is 1958, not 1936 when Fascism was on the upsurge. Recently, students of the University of Madrid issued a clandestine call for unity, which began: "We, the sons of the victors and the vanquished in the Civil War, call for unity against Franco." Syngman Rhee is artificially bolstered up by the American Government and Chiang-Kai-Shek in Taiwan makes futile, senile gestures against the People's Republic of China. And Strijdom? He and his supporters are an anachronism in a rapidly changing world — they will build no thousand year Reich here.

Professor du Plessis of the Potchefstroom University has upset and dismayed Nationalist circles by telling them a few simple truths. He has pointed out that it is unchristian, unethical and immoral

to deny Non-White South Africans independence, democratic rights and the opportunity for the fullest development of their potentialities. Dr. Verwoerd has called him irresponsible and it is clear that his head will roll. But I am interested to read that re-

cently Professor du Plessis had lunch with Chief Lutuli and Professor Matthews; a luncheon which appears to have had a dramatic and startling impact upon him. *Lutuli* and *Matthews*, those agitators, turned out to be wise, calm and reasonable *human beings*, men like himself, with whom he must have found so many points of agreement, so much to discuss. I am sure that he found enjoyment and stimulation in their company. Were such luncheons, such contacts, a daily occurrence between all White and Non-White South Africans, so many of our problems would disappear. So long as we do not know each other as 'people', so long will our country be torn by strife and bloodshed. When we meet across the colour-line we shall find that it does not exist. "Africa needs a *human plan*", said Ritchie Calder. Our aspirations could not be expressed more simply or succinctly.

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The SCANDAL of STARVATION WAGES

Unskilled wages are at a disgracefully low level. African workers, especially, are paid starvation rates. Yet employers who are guilty of inhuman exploitation of their African employees are protected by the law. Not only is it legal to pay starvation wages but in many ways it is illegal for African workers to fight for improvements, for there are various laws which prevent them from campaigning for decent wages.

Africans are not allowed to strike, no matter how intolerable their conditions or unjust their employers. If they do, they are bundled into police pickup vans and carted to the

police station, to be charged under the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act. In terms of this law, African strikers can be punished to the extent of a fine of £500 or three years' imprisonment, or both fine and imprisonment.

The Government frowns upon African trade unions and regards them as subversive organisations and is constantly urging employers to have no dealings with organised Africans.

No wonder greedy and inhuman employers ignore all pleas for wage increases. No wonder unskilled wages for Africans are so low.

The Forgotten Promises

At the beginning of last year, African workers succeeded in drawing public attention to their poverty, when they refused to pay a penny increase in bus fares and boycotted the buses. The boycott revived the forgotten statistics of African poverty and stirred the public conscience. Employers and the Government were compelled to take notice of the plight of the nation's poorest workers.

In the general alarm which the boycott caused, many promises were made, both by employers and the government. The Minister of Labour, Senator Jan de Klerk, while defending the Government's neglect, promised that wrongs would be righted, and announced that he had drawn up a priority list of 45 trades and industries for immediate investigation by the Wage Board.

The Leader of the Opposition, Sir de Villiers Graaff, thereupon observed that the Minister was shirking the real issue and was hiding behind the slow moving machinery of the Wage Act. Obviously, he wanted swift action to raise the wages on unskilled African workers.

Employers, too, were ready to make promises. The President of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce called for "an urgent official investigation into the economic position of the urban Native".

Amidst this wave of promises the bus boycott ended. That was early in April 1957. More than a year has passed and the promises remain unfulfilled. The public conscience has relapsed into its old indifference, the Government shields itself behind official delays, and

the employers dilly dally in smug contentment. In a few cases, employers have conceded small increases but on the whole wages have remained unchanged. Where increases have been made, they have been either too small or have failed to take into account the continued rise in living costs.

What has happened to the Minister's list of 45 priorities? What progress has the Wage Board made?

Wage Board Investigations

So far, the Wage Board has reported on only one of the 45 undertakings. This single recommendation, for unskilled labour in Port Elizabeth, proposed an increase of 40% on the previous determination, (dated 1941) raising the basic wage from 27/- to 37/6 per week. This new rate, together with the statutory cost-of-living allowance, barely meets the rise in living costs since 1941. A recommendation of this kind merely maintains the status quo of the poverty wages of 1941. It ignores all the factors of changed social and economic conditions.

If other recommendations follow this pattern, workers can expect little relief at the hands of the Wage Board.

Cost-of-Living Allowances

A great deal is made of the cost-of-living allowances paid to workers. It is alleged that these allowances make up for increased living costs. But that is not so.

The statutory c.o.l. allowances paid under War Measure 43 of 1942 do not make up even one-half of the increased costs, as measured by the retail price index. For example, the fixed COLA on 37/6 is 18/3. The purpose of the allowance is to enable the worker to buy the same volume of goods with his £ of today as he could with the £ of 1939. On that basis, the allowance on 37/6 should be 44/- and not 18/3, because it takes £4-1-6 to buy now what 37/6

could buy in 1939. As far as African workers are concerned, the shortfall is probably even greater, for the retail price index is not an adequate reflection of their increased living costs.

Now that c.o.l. allowances have been pegged at March 1953, it should be the duty of the Wage Board to recommend accordingly. The Government has made it quite plain that the allowances are permanently pegged, which makes it imperative for the Wage Board to make up the difference.

Since March 1953, when the allowances were pegged, the retail price index has risen from 188.9 to 217.6 (March 1958), which is an increase of approximately 13%.

If this increase cannot be recovered by workers through c.o.l. allowances, it should be provided in basic wages. The Wage Board cannot ignore this factor in making its recommendations.

A Minimum Wage

Unskilled labourers, our poorest paid workers in industry, commerce, agriculture and domestic employment, are not protected by a legal minimum wage, sufficient to provide the minimum standards of life. Too many workers are living below the breadline. The need is to legislate for a National minimum wage, related to the minimum needs to maintain a decent existence.

Expert surveys in 1953 and 1954 revealed that the essential minimum expenditure per month for an African family of five in Johannesburg was £23-10-4. Since then, the cost of living has gone up by more than 10%, which means that the poverty datum line is now nearly £26 per month. This, in itself, shows that the demand for £1 a day (i.e. £20 to £25 per month) is far from "reckless and irresponsible", as Mr. Lulofs, President of the Chamber of Industries described it.

On the contrary, the demand of £1 a day seems to be inadequate, not only

OUR COVER DRAWING

By PAUL HOGARTH:

"A GREEK MINER"

on the basis of the reliable surveys but also because living costs continue to rise.

Employers' Responsibility

It seems that employers are now trying to escape their responsibility in this scandal of starvation wages. In various ways they are attempting to shift the responsibility.

But they could remedy this unhappy state of affairs on their own. There is nothing to prevent them from tackling the matter independently of the Government and the Wage Board. Employers associations, if they had the desire, could agree now among themselves to increase wage rates, irrespective of Industrial Council agreements and Wage Board determinations. Thereafter, they could incorporate these increased wages in their Industrial Council agreements or advise the Wage Board that they desire such wages to be fixed by law.

As the matter stands, employers as a whole have not fulfilled the promises made at the time of the bus boycott. The S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, (the federation catering for African trade unions), submitted a carefully prepared memorandum on unskilled wages to the Chambers of Commerce, the Chamber of Industry, the Chamber of

Mines and the Transvaal Agricultural Union in July 1957. Only the Chamber of Commerce acknowledged the document, the rest ignoring it. The Chamber of Commerce replied that it would be more appropriate to deal with the wage question by way of "statutory machinery", presumably meaning the Wage Board or the Native Labour Board and its Regional Committees. This would merely leave things unchanged.

The Chamber of Industries subsequently adopted a hostile attitude to the idea of ending starvation wages. In its magazine, "The Manufacturer" of September 1957, it reported a meeting of its Non-European Affairs Committee as follows:-

"The meeting agreed that in many instances Native wage scales were in need of revision, but because the present protection given to South African industry was not as effective as it should be, the Committee decided that it would be against the interests of industry to propose any Unionwide investigation into unskilled Native wage rates until the Government introduced a positive policy for the protection of South African industry."

This decision is as cruel as it is illogical. It is based upon the old fallacy, long discredited, that low wages mean cheap production and high wages cause high prices. It ignores the fact that increased wages mean greater spending power and an increase in domestic sales. It would be interesting to know which manufacturers influenced the decision to take the narrower view, favouring a low wage policy and cruelly using poorly-paid unskilled African workers as a stick with which to beat the Government.

The failure of the Stay-at-home, in which the claim for £1 a day was linked with other demands, has encouraged the authorities and many employers to believe that the cry for a living wage no longer warrants their attention. They must be shown that the matter cannot be left there. The demand for a living wage must be pressed with increased vigour. The registered trade unions must be recruited to support the demand, employers must be persuaded to act in a humane and responsible manner and the Government must be continually pestered to take suitable action. The scandal of starvation wages cannot be endured.

CHRISTOPHER GELL

Christopher Gell was a rarity upon the South African scene and his death leaves an aching void.

Stricken with polio while serving in the Punjab with the Indian Civil Service, he came to live first in Rustenburg and then in Port Elizabeth for the warm climate, and all his 11 years in our country he lived out his days in an iron lung. His hours for writing and meeting people were strictly rationed but within them he compressed phenomenal effort, soon coming to be recognised as one of South Africa's most prolific writers. Who has not read Christopher Gell's incisive comment on political programmes and parties, his penetrating analyses of the Group Areas Act, his scathing indictment of apartheid in sport or the nursing profession, his passionate attacks on Nationalist policies and defence of peoples' freedom campaigns?

Christopher Gell's tenacity in fighting his disability, rallying time and again from bouts of more severe illness, was matched by the courage of his political convictions, and over the years those whom he could not join in the conference session or on the public platform came to his bedside to consult with him, ask his advice, keep him in touch, and draw inspiration from him. He was as much part of the Congress movement as any volunteer who went to prison during the defiance campaign, or branch official who participated in the hurly-burly of political activity in the townships.

For Christopher Gell was not one to express high-sounding phrases for liberty and universal rights, and to hold aloof from the harsh struggles about him.

Though he embarked upon journalism partly as therapy and partly to help his wife Norah earn their living, his writing was no hobby-horse. His pen came to be a doughty and invaluable weapon for the causes he espoused, and mercilessly and expertly he set about demolishing race prejudice and discrimination, exposing expediency and blasting false theories.

To Christopher Gell the principle, and not the personality, was the thing and he made common cause with those who fought for the principles he believed in. He was impatient and suspicious of those who temporised and pre-occupied themselves with half-way solutions long rejected by fighters in the thick of the battle for the franchise and equal rights. He was sternly critical of African politicians who voiced differences with the Congress movement to settle old scores or keep themselves out of the line of fire.

There were some who thought he went too far — but they were generally those who themselves never dared go far enough.

As those who visited Christopher Gell's bedside could barely credit that this indomitable and vital spirit was an invalid, so today it is hard to accept that he is no longer in the thick of the movement he enriched by his participation. The tens of thousands who were stirred by his example will go on fighting his fight.

FRANCE IN CRISIS

by L. BERNSTEIN

The crisis of France has reached its climax; the French Assembly, has voted itself into retirement, abdicated its power and transferred the authority of state to an ageing General, himself not even an elected representative of any section of the people, and the leader of a party discredited and utterly routed by popular vote some ten years ago. I write 'climax' deliberately, and not as some would have it 'conclusion.' These death-rites over the corpse of the Fourth Republic, are far from the end of the crisis.

The First Republic was born in revolution and civil war out of the ashes of feudal monarchy; the Second and Third Republics rose in blood from the wreckage of the empires of two Napoleons; the Fourth Republic grew out of the civil and international war of free Frenchmen against the twin dictatorship of Nazi Germany and puppet Petain. Who can doubt that the revolutionary democratic spirit of France will rise again, in a new Republic? But who can doubt either that the destruction of the Fourth Republic by the unholy conspiracy between French reaction and militarism destined the new Republic to rebirth out of new and bloody civil struggle?

Surface Parallels

Facile parallels have been drawn between De Gaulle's seizure of power and Hitler's; between De Gaulle and Franco. President Coty summoned De Gaulle to office as Hindenburg summoned Hitler; rebellious generals in the colonies paved the way for De Gaulle's coup, as they did for Franco's; right-wing Socialist leaders paralysed the working class, sabotaged the possibility of an anti-fascist united front and finally surrendered power to dictatorship in France, as they did in Germany; De Gaulle speaks in the same megalomaniac fashion — "I liberated France; I restored power to the French Assembly; I will lead the nation; I demand unrestricted power" — as did Hitler. But the parallels are all on the surface; the reality is different.

Hitler rose to power on the knuckle-dusters and black-jacks of a mass, armed following and a party polling millions of votes; Franco conquered power with the bayonets and bombs of Italian and German troops and Moorish mercenaries.

Not so De Gaulle. French fascism commands no legions of storm-troops or bully-boys. The calls for street demonstrations in France in support of De Gaulle during the weeks of the crisis ended in fiasco; miserable handfuls of fascists revealed their weakness beside the hundreds of thousands who demonstrated against De Gaulle and for the Republic. Nor, despite the bellicose threats from Generals of the Algerian army of an imminent paratroop drop on France, can French reaction call out its armies against the people of metropolitan France; those armies, riddled as they are by dissatisfaction and opposition to French imperial policy, are already committed to their limit in the war against Algeria; if the army is to hold France against the French people, it will not be able any longer to hold Algeria against the Algerians. Nor can French reaction recruit colonial mercenaries, for revolt and insurrection against French domination boils up everywhere in the French colonies, from Madagascar to Martinique. Nor can it call in the military support of reaction of other countries, for world reaction is already fighting a desperate rear-guard military

action to hold its last outposts in Kenya and Malaya, in Taiwan and Pakistan, in Guatemala and Portugal. There are no parallels, only differences; the world is not the world of the 1930's, of the rising tide of fascism and war; it is a period of a rising tide of national liberation and independence. In such a world there is no easy way to power for fascism.

Crisis of Empire

The depth of the crisis which has shaken France to her foundations and eroded the Fourth Republic is more deep-rooted than the daily press allows. It is, in the first place, a crisis of empire; since 1944, French imperialism has been forced, step by step, to abandon its hold over Lebanon and Syria, Indo-China, Tunis and Morocco. Algeria it holds only by the most strenuous military efforts. In the second place, it is a military crisis, which has grown out of the crisis of empire, out of the war against Indo-China (92,000 French dead, 114,000 wounded and \$5 billion expended), against Egypt at the time of Suez, and against Algeria. In the third place it is an economic crisis, born out of the terrible drain of resources and manpower which military adventurism has exacted, heightened by the American-sponsored revival of Germany as a trade competitor, and strained to the breaking point by the first impact of a developing world trade and industrial depression.

In the fourth place, it is a political crisis. That crisis does not arise from the multiplicity of parties, from the inability of any single party to gain a clear majority of seats in Parliament, or from the consequent unstable alliances of several small parties which come into being to form a government, and crack and fall at the first stress of disagreement. The political crisis arises from the determination of all French reaction — from the extreme right to the Socialist Party leadership on the left — that the largest political party, the Communist Party of France shall be barred from participating in the Government. That united anti-Communist determination has revealed itself in different ways; in the amending of the constitution to reduce the number of seats held by the Communists, despite the steady increase in the votes cast for them at the polls; in the repeated hasty scrambling together of temporary alliances to form short-lived Governments whenever critical conditions demanded the dread remedy of a coalition Government including the Communists; in the final resignation of Pflimlin after his refusal to recognise the 144 Communist votes cast for his Government, thus opening the road to De Gaulle's accession; in the revolt of the Algerian generals aided by the French naval officers, when it became apparent that only a coalition including the Communists could preserve the Republic after Pflimlin; and in the action of President Coty in calling on De Gaulle — not even a member of the assembly — to form a Government, while ignoring the leader of the largest Parliamentary party in the land; and finally in the unprecedented scene of an elected majority voting itself into what is politely called a "six months recess", and transferring personal powers to De Gaulle.

To their honour some of the members of the Socialist Party defied their leader Mollet, and refused to surrender France to De Gaulle. Some of the members of the Radical

Party, led by ex-premier Mendes-France stood out against the surrender. The people of Paris, Marseilles and other towns demonstrated in the streets against the great betrayal committed by the Assembly of the Fourth Republic. Throughout the crisis, the Communist Party of France has stood for the honour of France, for the democratic heritage and tradition of the French people, for the Fourth Republic against the grasping hand of fascism. This will not easily be forgotten by the French people, nor will it be forgiven by De Gaulle and his fellows who have plotted the downfall of the Republic. Anti-Communism has been the great corrupter. Beneath its banners have gathered all those who have sown the crisis — the militarists whose adventures in the East and in North Africa have been fought by the Communist Party of France; the colonialists, whose tenuous hold of the remnants of an empire in Algeria have been assailed by the Communists call for peace in Algeria and recognition of Algerian independence; by financiers and industrialists whose attempts to pass the burdens of colonial war and economic depression to the working people has been fought and resisted by those trade unions led by the Communists. In his programme De Gaulle proposes once again amending the French constitution to prevent "future government instability." Here no doubt it is intended to close off the last act of the drama of French anti-Communism, by the suppression of the majority opinion and political party of the people of France.

Well-laid Plot?

Is this the end result of a well-laid plot? Was De Gaulle's seeming retirement to a country villa part of a conspiracy hatched with General Salan? Was Pflimlin in league with the right-wing Gaullist Soustelle, who now heads the Algerian Committee for Public Safety? There is evidence to suggest that the final two weeks of the Fourth Republic were plotted and planned in advance. There is evidence (see Newsweek — June 2nd) that during Pflimlin's term of office, Radio France repeatedly interrupted programmes to broadcast announcements in code — "The tree is in the oasis" and "The chapel will be illuminated tonight" — reminiscent of the code signals used by the Resistance movement in time of war. There is evidence that the mysterious escape of henchman Soustelle from 'house arrest' in France to Algiers was connived at by Pflimlin. The truth will probably never be known. It is not very material. The generals in Algiers knew — plot or no plot — that anti-Communism had given them a fifth column inside France, a hidden band of supporters who proclaim their devotion to democratic government and the Republic, but who were ready and willing to destroy both in a moment of crisis which threatened to bring Communists to the Government.

Perhaps even the timing of the assault on the Republic was not of their choosing. They were desperate men, driven by events to move when they did. The war in Algeria had bogged down to stalemate, capable of resolution only by French acknowledgement of defeat and withdrawal or by a reckless military war of extermination against the whole people — a choice which no French Government was prepared to make. The results coming in from by-elections in Marseilles and elsewhere, followed by local council election results in France, showed a steady and significant growth in Communist strength. Non-Communist leaders of the French intelligentsia such as Jean Paul Sartre (See Fighting Talk, May '48) were beginning to call openly for a revision of military-colonial policy in Algeria, and negotiation with the Algerian people. From the newly formed Arab Federation increased military aid, and from the Afro-Asian Conference countries increasing political aid was beginning to

flow to the Algerian national movement. Economic depression was beginning to close in over the whole capitalist world. For the generals in Algeria, time was running out. This was the hour for them, whether their plot was complete or incomplete. Later could only have been too late.

Battles Ahead

French reaction struck from a position of weakness, not of strength. A strong dictator needs dynamic personality, a mastery of rabble-rousing demagoguery, a reckless and ruthless killer instinct. No such candidate presented himself to French reaction. Instead, as the only possible makeshift, they have selected the ageing General, remote, aloof from the people, but living still in a faint aura of heroism bestowed by his war-time military leadership of anti-Nazi France. A strong dictatorship needs an indoctrinated blindly unthinking strong-arm force. No such force presented itself, save the motley collection of hard-bitten mercenaries — mainly German — of the French Foreign Legion, and the unreliable, dissatisfied and unwilling army of conscripts. On this weak reed the Generals lean heavily. A militant fascist dictatorship needs slogans that will sway the masses and blind their reason. No such slogans presented themselves; open anti-Communism had been repeatedly rejected by the people of France in successive elections. French reaction has been forced to fall back on De Gaulle's feeble "order and unity."

These are the Achille's heels of French reaction. It reaches out for a full fledged Nazi-style military dictatorship; but it is a putsch without a Hitler, without a Brown-shirt army, without a 'blood-and-soil' ideology. De Gaulle, raised to power by the Algerian generals and colonial settlers, takes power as the puppet, not the fuehrer of the cause, not yet capable of open dictatorial rule, but restrained in a twilight land of compromise — allied with a semi-parliamentary cabinet of right-wing unity while attempting to rise above them, conforming to the distorted form of semi-parliamentary democracy while attempting to abolish it, deepening all the consequences of the military-economic-imperial crisis while attempting to cure them. A climax, but not a conclusion. The final battles lie ahead. For De Gaulle and his makers, the final goal of an unrestrained dictatorship based on force and terror. But for the people of France — as for the people of Algeria — the restoration and rejuvenation of the Republic through democratic reform and the liberation of the colonial empire. That united voice of the people of Algeria and of France has still to be heard and reckoned with before the crisis will have passed.

Who can doubt that the voice of revolutionary and democratic France will again ring out victorious with the battle cries of their proud tradition —

Vive la Republique!

Liberte! Egalite! Fraternite!

U.S. Snapshots

French film star Brigitte Bardot, known as the "sex kitten", became a national sensation when her film, "And God Created Woman", toured American theatres. It played at the Esquire Theatre for Whites in Dallas, Texas, to huge audiences. But when it moved cross-town to the Forest Theatre for Negroes, police stepped in and closed the show. They said: "It's too exciting for Coloured people".

From a N.Y. Times Magazine article on Allen Dulles and the Central Intelligence Agency: "(The C.I.A.) is universally suspected of being a global mischief-maker. It has been established that the agency was behind Guatemala's 1954 revolution".

have been exposed to more progressive influences of the industrial centres, the ANC, as an organised body following a set policy, like the Freedom Charter, has not been established to any appreciable extent. Zululand has lived in a dream state of a heroic but dead past in which the people are encouraged to glory in a war dance that makes them look back on the past as an ideal rather than towards the future with its struggles and hopes for a free life in a free country. Witzieshoek, in the Free State, has not yet forgotten the brutal suppression of the 'forties when it resisted the culling of its stock. Until recently when the Nationalist Government imposed passes on the women in the reserves the Transvaal had known the ANC in only a haphazard and vague way.

Growing Peasant Resistance

The political organisation of the people had largely centred round the Chiefs, and such as were openly opposed to the Government policies were largely led by professional men like the teachers, and self-seekers to whom patronising City Councillors refer as "moderate natives". When the Native Affairs Department took over the control of African Education, and exercised firmer control on the Chiefs under the Bantu Authorities Act, it stepped up the sneaking activities of the Special Branch, and by intimidation compelled the teachers to withdraw from political life, while the "respectable, moderate Native" leadership was completely rejected by the people.

As the Nationalist Government eliminated the influence of the teacher on the rural African's public life; as it hastily clamped down on the chiefs and dragooned them into accepting the provisions of the Bantu Authorities Act, the simple peasant had no choice but to turn to his own class for leadership and face the Nationalist threat to his existence.

The peasant has resisted bitterly the "betterment schemes", the mass removals from homes which had long been occupied by their fathers, and from areas in which the bones of their forebearers lie; they have resisted the culling of their stock and the crowning ignominy which is tantamount to sacrilege -- the baring of women's heads in public as they are made to queue up for passes.

It takes a long time to arouse the peasant to any form of resistance against established authority. But as his conservatism may be a stumbling block to the growth of progressive ideas, so it too can also hold up the plans of a Government that must first destroy the established order of the peasant to carry out its plans of economic enslavement under the apartheid dream.

Nationalist Decrees

Faced with this growing resistance the Nationalist Government has promulgated a series of proclamations aimed at meeting a deteriorating situation in the areas in which the Nationalist planners have assured their supporters that they have built a dream world where the African would remain in primitive, childlike innocence, and readily available at the beck and call of the meanest member of the superior White race.

A clause in Proclamation 110/57 states that an appointed chief or headman: "*shall be entitled to the loyalty, respect and obedience of all Natives resident within his area and may — take such steps as may be necessary to secure from them such loyalty, respect and obedience.*"

As a softening up process the Nationalists have clothed the chiefs and headmen with authority:

- ★ To prohibit the gathering of men in groups, or the brewing of beer in kraals even at a wedding or any other ceremony.
- ★ To prohibit the shouting of war cries or the blowing of bugles and whistles.
- ★ To search without warrant any Native or kraal homestead or other place within his area occupied by a Native.

Unable to stem the tide of resistance the Nationalists promulgated Proclamation No. 236/57 which empowers Dr. Verwoerd to banish, "whenever he deems it expedient," any African who lives in the reserves. He has banished scores of people but resistance in the reserves has mounted.

In the preamble to Proclamation No. 52/58 prohibiting entry into and departure from the reserves the prohibition is justified because:

- ★ There are in Native areas in the Union organised and deliberate campaigns by certain organisations and agitation by certain individuals to subvert the authority of the state and of chiefs and headmen.
- ★ Those responsible for such states of unrest are persons who as individuals or as members of such organisations from time to time, either visit the Native areas from other centres or depart from these areas to visit other centres with the object of furthering agitation against constituted authority.

Heavy penalties for the contravention of these Nationalist decrees have been laid down (£300 or 3 years in jail). The Nationalists have thrown round the reserves what they regard as a foolproof fence to prevent any entry or departure of prohibited individuals. But, despite this isolation, the peasant has continued to oppose stubbornly the undermining of his peasant economy which gives him greater security than any Nationalist promises.

Rule by Truncheon

In this process the great humanitarian ideas for which the ANC stands have found their way amongst the peasants and fired their imagination. There is no barrier to ideas, and the only way to obliterate them is to create conditions that are not conducive to their taking root.

Like the flame of a magnesium ribbon which is dazzlingly bright before it dies out, this ban is a spectacular move before the Nationalist master mind reaches its own dead end and closes all channels of African association and free expression.

Regulation 5 under the banning Proclamation No. 67/58 states that any person shall be guilty of an offence if:

- ★ He carries or displays anything whatsoever or shouts or utters any slogan or makes any sign, indicating that he is or was an Office-bearer, Officer or member of or in anyway associated with the ANC or any other banned Organisation;
- ★ he, in any way, takes part in any activity of the banned organisation, or carries on any activity which the banned organisation could have carried on before it was banned.

Under these conditions the mention of the word "Afrika!", the raising of the thumb in the Afrika salute, may render one liable to a fine of £300 or 3 years in jail, or both fine and imprisonment. Further if the prosecution should allege on information from any shady source, that a person is or was a member of the banned Organisation, "he shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, to have been a member of such a banned organisation."

(Continued on page 15)

ZEKE MPHAHLELE introduces NIGERIA in his

LETTER FROM LAGOS

Since my first letter in *Fighting Talk* I have been trying to study Nigeria and her people, her politics, her hopes and fears. Needless to say, this is no easy task. I don't have the journalist's gift for summing up a situation with swift graphic generalisations — the kind that Brian Parkes of the *Star* would be able to make.

The point is clearly that he writes as a White South African who feeds well, has or need have no transport headaches in Johannesburg, carries no pass, does the things he loves to do, and, perhaps, dresses well. He has his freedom and so when he sees freedom outside his country he can't recognise it. I, on the other hand, write as an African who has just come out of a nightmare. I feel the freedom of West Africa, at any rate, such as does not exist in S. Africa. It isn't an intellectual abstraction. And I didn't come here as a journalist who wants to sell South Africa and its white supremacy, or to find out if the hell I come from is not, after all, a better hell.

Lagos has its slums, yes, ugly ones that always act on me the way in which a festering wound does. The British never bothered about town planning and the control of settlements. People just came and lived here and then the administration thought of bringing some order into the place. Now the town council and the Federal government — both completely African — are clearing the slums and directing the building of business premises in their place. This is not simply on paper! The process was long under way when Parkes came here, and already high business buildings can be seen where slum communities lived. He should also have told you more about Ikoyi, Apapa Estates, Suru Lere Estates, Palm Grove Estates, Ikeja, and Yaba, to which displaced people go and either put up their own buildings or rent Council and government houses. And there is no monotony about these Lagos suburbs: houses don't all face the same direction, and Europeans and Africans live together. Often a block of flats is occupied by both African and European or Arab or Syrian families.

There is no depression among the people still in the slums. Nothing like the spiritual misery that strikes you immediately you enter Shanty Town or any site-and-service community. Have you ever been to Edenvale location (near Germiston), which continuously exudes vapours that have the foul and suffocating stench of a thousand pigsties? They haven't got as far as that here. The Lagos M.O.H. who said his town was the slummiest in Africa has of course not been to the Golden City. He had to impress the authorities responsible for slum clearance, the Lagos Development Board. I'm told by those who know that Alexandria and Cairo boast an unparalleled slumminess.

Politics here are in a state of transition: from anti-colonialism which requires a strong uncompromising nationalism — Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's earliest brand — to politics based on fundamental differences in ideology. The intermediate stage in which Nigeria stands today is that of tribal politics. The Yorubas in the Western Region (Premier: Chief Obafemi Awolowo) are a very proud tribe, 4,800,000. They are proud of their origin and their past kings who once ruled as far as Togoland and French Dahomey. They are an exclusive people, and the same romance has been built around them by Europeans as has bedevilled the social attitudes of the Zulu for many decades. Awolowo, 49, is a product of London University with B.Com. and LL.B. degrees.

The Eastern Region (Premier: Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe) is dominated by Ibos — 5,400,000. The Ibos are the most pushful and go-ahead. They infiltrate everywhere and are prepared to do the most menial jobs e.g. as cooks and stewards, road-workers etc., which the Yorubas disdain. Dr. "Zik" obtained his doctorate (philosophy) in the USA, like Dr. Nkrumah.

The Hausas and Fulanis in the Northern Region (which does not yet have an independent parliament) form the majority, about 18,000,000. The greatest proportion of them are Moslems under Emirs and a Sultan. The north is the most backward and religiously exclu-

sive. The girls there have only just started going to secondary school. Their women have no vote. And ironically according to the constitution, they control a majority of seats in the Federal government. The Federal Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa is consequently a Moslem. It's the belief of the other regions that, but for this backwardness, the north would set up a Muslim bureaucracy over the whole of Nigeria, since Moslems outnumber Christians (Moslems: 13,600,000; Christians: 6,300,000; unattached: over 15,000,000).

The government party in the West is Action Group, which has a powerful daily paper of its own. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) — Zik's party — is in the Opposition. In the Eastern House of Assembly the position of the parties is reversed. Zik controls a string of daily papers which support him and his party.

Dreamy-eyed Dr. Zik, 53, is certainly a man of greater stature than Awolowo or even the ex-schoolmaster Balewa (who hasn't been to a university). He is generally considered the most experienced politician and best able to command international respect. When he came back from U.S.A. he became a rallying point of a virile Nigerian nationalism aimed at driving Colonial government out. He it was who set in motion the process of Nigerianisation, which secured thousands of Nigerians government posts formerly held by White expatriates. The Nigerianisation office is still functioning, training Africans in various fields of public service.

But somewhere along the line Zik attained personal economic and political power. He established his line of the so-called "Zik Newspapers" and the African Continental Bank. And today his followers, especially the youth who are still moving in the momentum Zik started off, are shaking their heads dolefully. They think Zik has lost his Vision Splendid — which was to harness most of the forces of Nigeria under the banner of the NCNC. They think he is too comfortable to care anymore. But he is still somewhat of

a myth to the people of Nigeria. Because he speaks Yoruba as well as Ibo (a rarity because the two languages are poles apart) Awolowo fears him. Awolowo, on the other hand, is a colourless leader who is moving on the crest of a wave which has something to do with tradition of the Yorubas and a lofty image of themselves; this tends to be conservative about leadership.

The Action Group, NCNC and the Northern People's Congress have no ideological orientation, except for the earlier type of nationalism in the NCNC. It might also be said that to the Northern People's Congress politics are part of the Islamic creed. But it has not produced a political philosophy, any more than AG or NCNC.

It seems, then, that when Nigeria does get independence in 1960 (if the British will honour their typically cautious promise) she will continue to be split into these tribal groups. It still remains a paradox that Britain, who must, for economic reasons, want to retain the goodwill of a united Nigeria, should have left her the legacy of regionalised government. Some people think that John Bull is content enough to know that the backward and poor North, still more dependent on him for material help than the other regions, commands a majority in the Federal government. Only two months ago the Moslem Federal Prime Minister startled his own country by announcing publicly that Nigeria would not tolerate the propagation of Communist ideology within her boundaries. There is of course no anti-communist law here, and it isn't likely there will be (he was booed by the Nigerian Press in general, representing NCNC and AG and independent opinion. The British Right Wing press applauded.)

His master's voice? — we know all too well what oppression in the South does to the political morals of subject peoples, don't we? We have our own "Bantu leaders", and "moderate leaders" who will bend head over backwards to pipe the master's tune. Why should Nigeria or Ghana be exceptions? There is a superstitious belief here in everything United Kingdomish and everything that has been "hallowed" by the Queen and other members of Royalty. There are over 5,000 Nigerians studying in Britain. Men who have graduated in the United States are literally if subtly discriminated against by the public service. The South African teachers who have come up so far are regarded as Commonwealth and all that, with all its appendages of respectability (hem!) and so we're more than welcome, apart from the fact that Nigeria is badly in need of graduate teachers.

There is a definite move now to Nigerianise the university college administration and prepare for an independent university (it is at present under the University of London for examination purposes). And I am sure that once Nigeria is independent she will outgrow the relics of her colonial past. This massive country of 40,000,000 people whose diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds is often frightening, is bound to be a power to reckon with in the near future.

Mention is often made of the great number of cases of corruption in which public servants are too often involved. This is not peculiar to Nigeria. At any rate, it comes out into the open and the judiciary is ruthless in its fines and sentences for fraud and so on. And the judiciary consists of African prosecutors, magistrates and judges, including two African chief justices. More sinister and corrosive is the job-for-pals fraud that percolates right through South African white society, generated by the Broederbond and its likes.

The most disturbing commentary on present-day Nigerian tribal politics came out during the Minorities Commission which has just ended its inquiry here. The Colonial Office, at the instigation of the Constitutional Conference in London which Nigerian premiers attended, instituted the inquiry in order to assess the fears of religious and tribal minorities who find themselves ignored or snubbed by predominant groups in any part of the country. The majority of individuals and groups who submitted their evidence expressly wanted separate states, each holding people with the same cultural and linguistic and tribal background; each of such states to be represented on the Federal Legislature. This naturally implies the perpetuating of the system of chieftainship after the style of Lugard's Indirect Rule. And these recommendations came from the Nigerian intelligentsia. It is particularly painful to me who come from a country where the tendency is towards the uprooting of tribal affiliations as against the government's Draconian ethnic grouping. Yet I hesitate to apply what the oppressed people of South Africa need to a Nigerian situation where there are no such stresses, and where the motive of divide-and-rule is totally absent. It will be found that on a broad basis freedom of action, conscience, and the freedom to determine one's destiny, releases tons of goodwill where people know they have a stake in the development of their country.

To many South Africans Nigeria and Ghana must look like twins. And yet, apart from the features of colonialism common to both, the two countries differ vastly. Ethnic dissimilarities inside Nigeria are about as wide as those between the two countries. Nigeria is clearly jealous of Ghana for having got her independence earlier and keeps telling herself that her bigger population as against Ghana's 4,500,000 is going to create a big rumble one day when the two countries meet on an equal footing. For reasons best known to Nkrumah and his men Nigeria was not invited to the Accra conference, not even as an observer. Even before the conference, Nigeria had been divided in its attitude towards Ghana's deportation of the first two Moslems back to their home in the Northern Region. The North was obviously thoroughly annoyed. The West was self-righteous in its condemnation of Nkrumah's act, saying that Britain would hesitate to give Nigeria complete self-rule if a new state behaved as wantonly as Ghana is considered to have done. Since then the Action Group organ has been slating Nkrumah and Krobo Edusei at every turn. Dr. Zik, on the other hand, an old colleague of Nkrumah's in the days of anti-colonial politics, has been adopting a calm attitude towards the deportation affair. His press plainly told Nkrumah's critics that what Ghana did was her own business; and in fact it urged the deportation of Shawcross from Iboland when the British lawyer told the Minorities Commission that Ibos were pushful and would tend to squeeze out the minority groups he was representing in the Eastern Region. Two weeks before the Solidarity Conference in Ghana Nkrumah sent a Cabinet Minister and his new adviser on African Affairs, Mr. George Patmore, to Dr. Zik after he cancelled a personal visit to Nigeria to talk conference affairs. Already the Western and Northern Regions had decided to snub Nkrumah on his projected visit.

South African papers do not reach West Africa except particular journals a personal friend sends us. There seems a mighty barrier between South, West, East and Central Africa. This makes one feel all the more the need for an information bureau which will collect information from correspondents among the oppressed peoples of Africa and inside independent states. The bureau would then disseminate such information among Africans. In this way we should know one another better and consolidate the ties between African states. The existing Africa Bureau in London is trying hard, but it doesn't reach a considerable audience in Africa.

● Funeral Earth ●

We had a difficult task, that time (Oom Schalk Lourens said), teaching Sijefu's tribe of Mtosas to become civilised. But they did not show any appreciation. Even after we had set fire to their huts in a long row round the slopes of Abjaterskop, so that you could see the smoke almost as far as Nietverdiend, the Mtosas remained just about as unenlightened as ever. They would retreat into the mountains, where it was almost impossible for our commando to follow them on horse-back. They remained hidden in the thick bush.

"I can sense these kafirs all around us," Veld-kornet Andries Joubert said to our seksie of about a dozen burghers when we had come to a halt in a clearing amid the tall withaaks. "I have been in so many kafir wars that I can almost smell when there are kafirs lying in wait for us with assegais. And yet all day long you never see a single Mtosa that you can put a lead bullet through.

He also said that if this war went on much longer we would forget altogether how to handle a gun. And what would we do then, when we again had to fight England?

Young Fanie Louw, who liked saying funny things, threw back his head and pretended to be sniffing the air with discrimination. "I can smell a whole row of assegais with broad blades and short handles," Fanie Louw said. "The stabbing assegai has got more of a selon's rose sort of smell about it than a throwing spear. The selon's rose that you come across in grave-yards."

The veld-kornet did not think Fanie Louw's remark very funny, however. And he said we all knew that this was the first time Fanie Louw had ever been on commando. He also said that if a crowd of Mtosas were to leap out of the bush on to us suddenly, then you wouldn't be able to smell Fanie Louw for dust. The veld-kornet also said another thing that was even better.

Our group of burghers laughed heartily. Maybe Veld-kornet Joubert could not think out a lot of nonsense to say just on the spur of the moment, in the way that Fanie Louw could, but give our veld-kornet a chance to reflect, first, and he would come out with the kind of remark that you just had to admire.

Indeed, from the very next thing Veld-kornet Joubert said, you could see how deep was his insight. And he did not have to think much, either, then.

"Let us get out of here as quick as hell, men," he said, speaking very distinctly. "Perhaps the kafirs are hiding out in the open turf lands, where there are no trees. And none of this long tamboekie grass, either."

When we emerged from that stretch of bush we were glad to discover that our veld-kornet had been right, like always.

For another group of Transvaal burghers had hit on the same strategy.

"We were in the middle of the bush," their leader, Combrinck, said to us, after we had exchanged greetings. "A very thick part of the bush, with withaaks standing up like skeletons. And we suddenly thought the Mtosas might have gone into hiding out here in the open."

You could see that Veld-kornet Joubert was pleased to think that he had, on his own, worked out the same tactics as Combrinck, who was known as a skilful kafir-fighter. All the same, it seemed as though this was going to be a long war.

It was then that, again speaking out of his turn, Fanie Louw said that all we needed now was for the commandant

himself to arrive there in the middle of the turf lands with the main body of burghers. "Maybe we should even go back to Pretoria to see if the Mtosas aren't perhaps hiding in the Volksraad," he said. "Passing laws and things. You know how cheeky a Mtosa is."

"It can't be worse than some of the laws that the Volksraad is already passing now," Combrinck said, gruffly. From that we could see that why he had not himself been appointed commandant was because he had voted against the President in the last elections.

By that time the sun was sitting not more than about two Cape feet above a tall koppie on the horizon. Accordingly, we started looking about for a place to camp. It was muddy in the turf lands, and there was no fire-wood there, but we all said that we did not mind. We would not pamper ourselves by going to sleep in the thick bush, we told one another. It was war time, and we were on commando, and the mud of the turf lands was good enough for us, we said.

It was then that an unusual thing happened.

For we suddenly did see Mtosas. We saw them from a long way off. They came out of the bush and marched right out into the open. They made no attempt to hide. We saw in amazement that they were coming straight in our direction, advancing in single file. And we observed, even from that distance, that they were unarmed. Instead of assegais and shields they carried burdens on their heads. And almost in that same moment we realised, from the heavy look of those burdens, that the carriers must be women.

For that reason we took our guns in our hands and stood waiting. Since it was women, we were naturally prepared for the lowest form of treachery.

As the column drew nearer we saw that at the head of it was Ndambe, an old Native whom we knew well. For years he had been Sijefu's chief counsellor. Ndambe held up his hand. The line of women halted. Ndambe spoke. He declared that we white men were kings among kings and elephants among elephants. He also said that we were ringhals snakes more poisonous and generally disgusting than any ringhals snakes in the country.

We knew, of course, that Ndambe was only paying us compliments in his ignorant Mtosa fashion. And so we naturally felt highly gratified. I can still remember the way Jurie Bekker nudged me in the ribs and said, "Did you hear that?"

When Ndambe went on, however, to say that we were filthier than the spittle of a green tree-toad, several burghers grew restive. They felt that there was perhaps such a thing as carrying these tribal courtesies a bit too far.

It was then that Veld-kornet Joubert, slipping his finger inside the trigger guard of his gun, requested Ndambe to come to the point. By the expression on our veld-kornet's face, you could see that he had enough of compliments for one day.

They had come to offer peace, Ndambe told us then.

What the women carried on their heads were presents.

At a sign from Ndambe the column knelt in the mud of the turf land. They brought lion and zebra skins and elephant tusks, and beads and brass bangles and, on a long grass mat, the whole haunch of a red Afrikaner ox, hide and hoof and all. And several pigs cut in half. And clay pots filled to the brim with white beer, and also — and this we prized most — witch-doctor medicines that protected you against goëi spirits at night and the evil eye.

Ndambe gave another signal. A woman with a clay pot on her head rose up from the kneeling column and advanced towards us. We saw then that what she had in the pot was black earth. It was wet and almost like turf soil. We couldn't understand what they wanted to bring us that for. As though we didn't have enough of it, right there where we were standing, and sticking to our veldskoens, and all. And yet Ndambe acted as though that was the most precious part of the peace offerings that his chief, Sijefu, had sent us.

It was when Ndambe spoke again that we saw how ignorant he and his chief and the whole Mtosa tribe were, really.

He took a handful of soil out of the pot and pressed it together between his fingers. Then he told us how honoured the Mtosa tribe was because we were waging war against them. In the past they had only had flat-faced Mshangaans with spiked knobkerries to fight against, he said, but now it was different. Our veld-kornet took half a step forward, then, in case Ndambe was going to start flattering us again. So Ndambe said, simply, that the Mtosas would be glad if we came and made war against them later on, when the harvests had been gathered in. But in the meantime the tribe did not wish to continue fighting.

It was the time for sowing.

Ndambe let the soil run through his fingers, to show us how good it was. He also invited us to taste it. We declined.

We accepted the presents and peace was made. And I can still remember how Veld-kornet Joubert shook his head and said, "Can you beat the Mtosas for ignorance?"

And I can still remember what Jurie Bekker said, also. That was when something made him examine the haunch of beef more closely, and he found his own brand mark on it.

It was not long afterwards that the war came against England.

By the end of the second year of the war the Boer forces were in a very bad way. But we would not make peace. Veld-kornet Joubert was now promoted to commandant. Combrinck fell in the battle before Dalmanutha. Jurie Bekker was still with us. And so was Fanie Louw. And it was strange how attached we had grown to Fanie Louw during the years of hardship that we went through together in the field. But up to the end we had to admit that, while we had got used to his jokes, and we knew there was no harm in them, we would have preferred it that he should stop making them.

He did stop, and for ever, in a skirmish near a blockhouse. We buried him in the shade of a thorn-tree. We got ready to fill in his grave, after which the Commandant would say a few words and we would bare our heads and sing a psalm. As you know, it was customary at a funeral for each mourner to take up a handful of earth and fling it in the grave.

When Commandant Joubert stooped down and picked up his handful of earth, a strange thing happened. And I remembered that other war, against the Mtosas. And we knew — although we would not say it — what was now that longing in the hearts of each of us. For Commandant Joubert did not straightway drop the soil into Fanie Louw's grave. Instead, he kneaded the damp ground between his fingers. It was as though he had forgotten that it was funeral earth. He seemed to be thinking not of death then, but of life.

We patterned after him, picking up handfuls of soil and pressing it together. We felt the deep loam in it, and saw how springy it was, and we let it trickle through our fingers. And we could remember only that it was the time for sowing.

I understood then how, in an earlier war, the Mtosas had felt, they who were also farmers.

Old Words — New Meanings

The publication of the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress, "Chapupu", explains its proposed glossary of political terms, drawn up "By an Honourable Agitator" in the following words:

"Immigrants from Europe into the Central African Federation will find that certain words and phrases which have a fixed meaning in their home countries have an equally fixed but quite different meaning in Central Africa. The following concise list has therefore been drawn up for the guidance of all new Rhodesians:

WORDS & PHRASES	MEANING
Democracy	Government of a Black majority by a White minority.
Franchise	A device for ensuring that democracy, as defined above, shall remain the system of Government in Central Africa for the foreseeable future.
Partnership	A political system existing in a multi-racial society where the blacks are kept permanently subservient to the whites but are persuaded that this is not the case.
Responsible African	Any African who consistently supports the European point of view.
Irresponsible African	Any African who works for the interests of his own people.
Racialist	Any African who thinks that Africans ought to be the dominant group in Central Africa.
Non-racialist	Any European who thinks that Europeans ought to be the dominant group in Central Africa.
Inter-racialist	A kind of European who believes that Africans will be content to accept European domination in Central Africa if the cleaner Africans are occasionally invited to take tea in European homes.

The SABRA Multi-Racial Talks

Guest Writer PATRICK VAN RENSBURG gives his views on the SABRA proposal for multi-racial talks on Apartheid. Next month's FIGHTING TALK will analyse the SABRA proposals in greater detail.

In my opening address to the 13th Annual Conference of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress I said that I believed that in the history of mankind there had been a process at work of Challenge-and-Response, driving towards the progress of all human thought and towards progress in the behaviour of society. In South Africa it had taken a particular form; here we have seen the decline and the distortion of the values of that compound of cultural influences known as Western European civilisation, which in its totality, and properly interpreted, proclaims the brotherhood of man. Indeed, in South Africa, so much of that culture — and that much ripped from its context — as can be rationalised and misuse be made to sustain a doctrine of white supremacy, has been equated with the whole. Because the underlying philosophy of domination in this country has consisted in these particular false elements, they have brought forth challenging pressures that we are familiar with at home and abroad.

The only possible Response, from within, can be the re-assessment of the values of the whole and their re-affirmation. Response is not always immediate, nor always readily apparent; there is sometimes a more obtrusive and demonstrative sequel to Challenge, in the nature of reaction. It is manifested in the hardening of the debased values, and is, therefore, a suspension of history. In the context of this article I am concerned with analysing the Sabra decisions in the light of these established historical principles; I am not concerned with applying the lessons of history in determining or suggesting what will happen if there is no Response or if it is insufficient.

First Reactions?

In an article in these columns a month ago, a writer suggested that total apartheid as advocated by the Sabra intellectuals and the current practical oppressive policy implemented by the politicians, were "the two sides of the same bad policy." He implied that the Sabra

intellectuals provide a facade for the politicians — a facade of sincerity and justice.

To those of us who believe in a common, integrated society this might well be our first reaction; to some of us it might be our final as well as our first reaction. Personally, as a Christian, I believe in the brotherhood of man and I condemn all differentiation and all discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed at the very least. Therefore I oppose apartheid in any form. And those who from their different standpoints, in accordance with their different beliefs, believe in a common society, do likewise oppose apartheid in all its forms.

Second Thoughts

That is why I suggest that the writer of last month's article expressed our first reactions. Some of us may well have second thoughts on the matter, and the purpose of this article is mainly to stimulate thinking and discussion.

In the article which appeared last month, as I read it, the writer has already classified the decisions as reaction. He does not seem to be of the view that they manifest Response.

Let us first look at the motivation of total apartheid. Its advocates subscribe to the doctrine of differentiation. They believe in the group consciousness, in stressing the occidental and incidental differences that divide men, and in exclusive loyalties: these things breed more evil than good. In a multi-racial society they breed fear and prejudice. But these people accept all these things as basic to our society and indestructible. Therefore policy must take account of them. But how to reconcile these things with justice and sincerity? The answer is, for them, a total separation in terms of differentiation, and within this framework, plurality of power. The precise form of it all has never been exactly prescribed.

The acceptance of discrimination is very definitely not Response for it is not a re-affirmation of the cardinal values of "Western European Civilisation." But, yet, if all men affected were to consent, then, at least, the Challenge would have produced something new. I do not, however, for one minute think that all concerned are likely to accept.

It is not mine, but SABRA's job to propagate their ideal. And when they declare that apartheid is only possible when all agree to it, they declare also that if all do not agree, then some other solution must be found. That is

implicit. Professor du Plessis, in a recent address in Johannesburg went so far as to state it explicitly, and to state explicitly that the only other solution was integration.

This suggests to me that the elements of justice which motivate the thinking of at least some of the SABRA intellectuals are strong and real. If total apartheid finds no takers amongst the Africans or if it is found to be impracticable, these elements of justice will oblige these people to look to the alternative solution.

That is not reaction; it is a limited Response. When Mr. Basson from Namib speaks as he does he challenges Verwoerd and de Klerk and that plain and unadulterated prejudice that motivates their thinking. That is advance and Response.

The meeting that SABRA has called for does not depend on acceptance of the principle of total apartheid. Professor du Plessis has stated in a letter to the "Golden City Post" that at the meeting both apartheid and integration should be discussed. In the same letter he said that the leaders of the African National Congress should be present. He repeated this in his recent Johannesburg address.

Two Sides of the Case

Both sides will have the opportunity to state their respective cases; both will have the opportunity to persuade each other. The African people have the better case, by far, and they should put it.

The idea of the meeting challenges the principles of the Native Laws Amendment Act; it recognises that our own country's future must be determined and decided by all our peoples. These things represent Response, although the continued devotion of the SABRA intellectuals to differentiation does not. The one thing should be seen against the other.

If the SABRA intellectuals have not condemned the political oppression under the practical policy of apartheid, they can be asked at the meeting what they think of it.

If they are indeed providing a facade of justice and sincerity for the politicians then it will be made clear at the meeting; more clearly than if no meeting took place, for there would always be uncertainty about what might have been said.

I can see no objection to the meeting for there is surely more to be gained from it than lost.

The Coloureds Were Among the Pioneers of the Congress Movement

LIONEL FORMAN writes on some little-known episodes in our history.

Congress is strong today. But perhaps its greatest strength is the fact that there are still, among the South African people such huge reserves of mass support for the liberation movement which have not yet been brought into the struggle but which will inevitably be brought into it. As they come to reinforce our ranks our strength will be doubled and redoubled.

Perhaps the greatest reservoir which is as yet almost untapped is the million-strong, highly industrialised, highly literate, Coloured population, among whom SACPO is now beginning its great task of militant, purposeful, political organisation.

There has been a lull in militant political organisation among the Coloureds during the past years. Many of those who will yet be fine Congress leaders have in the past diverted into the futile talk-a-lot shout-a-lot, do-nothing politics of the Unity Movement.

This lull among the Coloured—which has been the most important factor explaining the weakness of the entire Congress movement in the Western Cape — is all the more remarkable because the Coloureds have such a remarkable tradition of pioneering militancy.

The fact is that the first political organisation of the Coloureds — the African Political Organisation — which is the direct forerunner of SACPO were the pioneers of the Congress movement. They were the first political organisation of Non-Europeans on a national level, functioning years before the ANC was formed. (Sol Plaatje, one of the ANC's founders, was an active member of the Kimberley branch of the A.P.O. before the ANC was conceived.) And they were the first nation-wide political organisation to demand full equality for all South Africans.

Independent Coloured political activity goes back to a period as early as the 1870's. At that time the Coloured people enjoyed full political rights in the Cape, but Britain was already considering forcing confederation on the various South African communities. The

Coloureds were alert to the possibility that Britain would be happy to sell their rights as the price of unity, and therefore, as an anonymous Coloured historian put it in the A.P.O.'s newspapers in 1909, "The more intelligent of the Coloured people saw that in such an event it would be necessary to safeguard their interests, or there soon would be no interests to safeguard."

The confederation movement died and "the temporarily awakened activity of the few intelligent coloured people . . . became extinct also. Matters went on in happy-go-lucky fashion year after year, until it really seemed that political thought was not only dead, but had been buried so deeply that resurrection was practically impossible. But that was not so."

The end of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 brought new ideas of federation and new threats. As a result, in the opening months of 1902 a group of Coloured leaders formed the African Political Organisation in Cape Town. The president was W. Collins, the secretary P. Eckstein.

Soon there were branches in Johannesburg, Graaf Reinet, Cradock, Paarl and several other towns in the Western Province. A conference was called, and it elected Matt. J. Fredericks as Secretary. Frederick's name is the first to stand out as a Coloured political leader of importance. He seems today to be forgotten, as too many others in South African history whose lives might inspire us, are forgotten.

The APO's second conference was in Graaf-Reinet in April 1904. It had 30-40 delegates from branches all over what is now the Union.

Then there was dissension in the A.P.O. The disputes were largely personal, and the issues are today forgotten, but to save the organisation Fredericks effected a coup d'etat and assumed complete control. As a result the APO came out of its crisis stronger than before.

Fredericks and others now asked Dr. A. Abdurahman, a member of the Cape Town Municipal Council to assume the presidency, and at a conference at Somerset East at Easter 1905 Dr. Abdurahman was elected president.

Abdurahman — for all his faults — is undoubtedly one of the giants in the history of the liberation movement. After Gandhi, he stands out among the men of the early years of this country. It is utterly shameful that no one has yet written his biography.

With the doctor at the helm "the whole organisation seemed to throb with new energy and vitality infused into it by the President. Branches were formed, often in quite unexpected places, and the membership roll showed a most gratifyingly large increase," to use the words of the writer of the APO history in 1909.

In 1906 when the British handed power back to the Transvaal Whites, leaving the Non-Europeans without any political rights, the APO put forward the demand for the vote for Africans and Coloureds. When this was rejected as "ridiculous" the APO called, at least for the vote for the Coloureds, and adopting the method pioneered by Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress, sent Dr. Abdurahman, Fredericks and its vice-president P. J. Daniels, to England to present their case to the British public.

All the Non-European organisations persevered with the deputation type of struggle until as late as 1920. It is not correct to sneer at these deputations. In the circumstances of the times they marked a stage of development of a militant approach, they were supported by the most advanced political leaders and strongly opposed by the government and its stooges.

In 1907 the APO accepted an invitation to attend a joint conference of Africans and Coloureds at Queenstown in November to agree to a common attitude to the Cape elections of 1908. This was of great importance as the first serious attempt to fuse the Africans and Coloureds into one political whole. Those in SACPO today who are trying to win the Coloured people to this very policy may find it useful to remind the Coloureds that over fifty years ago their organisation the APO was an unqualified supporter of this project.

There were about 120 delegates to the Conference. The African delegates favoured support for the Unionists in the elections. The APO reserved its decision until its next conference at Indwe in January 1908 and then decided to adopt the same election policy, but

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ON PAUL ROBESON

"The Walls Are Tumbling Down"

Last month Paul Robeson's 60th birthday was celebrated around the world and almost from pole to pole.

In 27 countries 'birthday committees' listened to Robeson's voice from tape-recordings specially made by him, or to the record of a trans-Atlantic telephone concert to a London audience last year. There were Robeson hall concerts in Tokyo, Sydney and Melbourne, Zurich, Georgetown (British Guiana) and Quito (Ecuador). A Swedish literary magazine published a "Robeson" issue.

In London a new Robeson biography by Marie Seton, (the biographer of Eisenstein) was announced, and Robeson's own book "Here I Stand" appeared in the U.S.A.

In America, wrote a Negro writer "The walls are tumbling down. Not all at once, but slowly and surely, the barricade of prejudice and hysteria which has hemmed in Paul Robeson for the last decade is giving way to reason and to shame."

A meeting of Actors Equity was the latest body to pass a resolution urging that the U.S. State Department give Robeson a passport to travel to England to appear in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre production of Pericles.

For Robeson has been silenced and shunned, boycotted and prevented from giving concerts in the United States or abroad for the last nine years and Robeson charges that his stand for Negro equality lies at the heart of his struggle with the State Department for a passport. More than any living man Robeson has spread the Negro folk song over the world. Of a recent concert, a reviewer wrote he still possesses "one of the greatest voices of the century."

The campaign to win Robeson his passport so that his voice may be heard again in the concert halls of the world seems close to success.

We print here a 60th birthday tribute to Robeson written by his wife, the writer ESLANDA GOODE ROBESON.

"His Voice Is Better Now Than Ever"

"There is something about Paul Robeson that inspires enthusiasm which can only be expressed in superlatives. People who knew him or have heard him invariably use terms such as wonderful, marvelous, great artist, great man. He has a quality of greatness that comes through whatever he does. From his high schools days, people have said and written that he was a remarkable student, one of the greatest athletes of his time, a magnificent actor. In America, in England, on the Continent, people feel and appreciate that quality of greatness. He is always glad and proud when he wins new laurels, but he remains modest, simple, lovable.

The above was written by me sometime during 1928, and form the closing paragraphs of the book *Paul Robeson, Negro*, which was published by Harpers in 1930. In the intervening 30 years, Paul Robeson has not changed, he has just become "more so."

When I first met Paul Robeson, nearly 40 years ago in Harlem, he was a very big young man. Six feet three

"And now, when he strolls down the main streets of the large cities of the world, people recognise him. His handsome, almost Grecian figure and his dark brown African face cannot easily be mistaken. People stare and whisper excitedly, "That's Paul Robeson." If they know him they rush up to greet him, sure of the wide, welcoming grin. He has friends everywhere. He leaves a trail of friendliness wherever he goes, this Paul Robeson, Negro, who, with his typically Negro qualities — his voice, his genial smile — is carving his place as a citizen of the world, a place which would most certainly have made his slave father proud."

inches tall, with his 200 pounds well distributed over a magnificent frame, he was handsome, and BIG. He had a fine mind (Phi Beta Kappa), and an engaging friendliness and interest in people.

Over the years he has grown larger. Larger in size: he now weighs 265 pounds, distributed a little too generously (alas) over his still magnificent

frame. Larger in mind: he has learned new languages, new music, new literature, new techniques in many fields — in theatre, concert, films, recording, radio; he has learned new values, new ways of life, new ways of thought. Larger in friendliness: he has made friends with many different peoples all over the world, and he has also maintained and extended his friendship with his family and his neighbours.

Paul Robeson began his concert career by singing Negro music only. Then, as he travelled and studied, he added the folk music of other peoples. Now he sings the music of many peoples, in many languages, and is able to demonstrate what he believes to be the universality of folk music.

Paul Robeson began his political career with his immediate interest in attaining first-class citizenship for the American Negro. This interest was very soon extended to an abiding interest in achieving freedom for our African brothers and sisters, and later for the Asian people; his interest now extends to the attainment of freedom for everyone everywhere, and he does what he can, wherever he is, to hasten this goal.

Paul Robeson began his friendliness career as a very small boy in Princeton,

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COLOURED PIONEERS

(Continued from page 13)

only after every candidate of Unionists had given the pledge to oppose any tampering with the political rights of the Non-European.

How well-organised was the APO? Everything indicates that it reached a level of organisational stability and efficiency which has never again been reached by any of the liberatory organisations which followed, with the possible exception of the Communist Party.

The APO's official organ — unimaginatively titled "A.P.O." — which was published fortnightly from May 24th, 1909 had 16 glossy well-printed pages, containing well-written articles, well-argued discussion, and comprehensive coverage of branch activities.

It is the news from the branches which is most impressive. Everywhere — Kimberley, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bulawayo, Worcester, Rondebosch, Goodwood, Uitenhage, Murraysburg, Knysna, Carnarvon, Stellenbosch, . . . A.P.O. branches were meeting and, what is more, sending in full reports to the newspaper. Perhaps this is partly a sign of a more leisurely age, but that cannot be the whole explanation. It is also a sign that the APO was functioning amazingly well and had stable, nation-wide support.

I will discuss some of the APO's campaigns in other articles. Here there is room for only one or two highlights.

First of all. How militant was the APO? Was it a left-wing organisation?

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N.J., where he was born. As a minister's son, he was friendly with the parashioners, with the neighbours, with his school-mates, with the townspeople. As he grew up, this friendliness assumed a clear pattern which has not changed over the years. He was, and is, friendly with people who treat other people — all people — as human beings of equal dignity. He disliked, and later fought — physically, socially, intellectually and politically — all those who sought to deny human beings their fundamental human rights. His friendliness has expanded over the years, and now includes whole nations of peoples.

Paul Robeson is now at his best. He knows what he wants to do with his voice, and how to do it; his voice is more beautiful now than ever. He knows what he wants to do with his life, and how to do it: he wants to be friends with peaceful people everywhere, so that he can sing for them, and they

The answer is that the APO was — at least in its earlier years — decidedly sympathetic to socialism. Its 1908 conference met in the Socialist Hall in Buitenkant Street, Cape Town. It supported A. W. Noon, a Cape Town Municipal councillor "a true friend of all workers of every class and creed and colour . . . with declared socialistic views". And in Kimberley the APO played a conspicuous part in the return of militant White socialist J. F. Trembath to the municipal council.

This APO-socialist friendship came to an abrupt end in 1910 when the Labour Party betrayed socialism by adopting the white labour policy, and as a result the socialist movement and the Non-European organisations moved from friendship into a period of active hostility. Trembath stood for parliament as a member of the Labour Party. He refused to dissociate himself from the Labour Party's colour-bar policy and the APO, which had backed him for so many years, threw its weight behind the Unionist candidate (roughly equivalent to the modern Liberal) who was pledged to resist any attacks on the rights of the Coloureds. Trembath was defeated, largely as a result of the APO opposition.

The fault lay squarely with the Labour Party. This is the unbelievably vile stuff "The Worker", organ of the Labour Party was writing about the APO. "APO, the mouth-piece of black, brown, snuff and butter," (should have) "the seat of its pants kicked through the top of its pepper-corned head . . . After a nigger has absorbed the poison

can sing with him; he wants to do all he can to help make a peaceful, secure, prosperous, healthy, happy world for our children and grandchildren to live in, and contribute to.

Paul Robeson, at 60, is a very big man, inside and outside, in the larger sense of the word. He has been down in the valley. He was very ill recently for the first time in his life. He met, faced and coped with illness (with consistent, expert and practical help on many levels from loyal, devoted friends) and overcame it, and is now back in good health. He has been subjected to organised persecution for seven years, and has shown rare courage and endurance in withstanding the physical, psychological and political assault. These experiences have made him grow, and have made him realistically evaluate and appreciate the very fine friends he has made all over the world.

At 60 years of age, Paul Robeson is ready, willing and able to continue his contribution as a citizen of the world.

into his head he will reckon that the white woman is his game . . . The APO's editor . . . should get 25 of the best (lashes)".

The APO leadership had a relatively advanced attitude to the class struggle. During the 1909 strike of White railway workers the APO said of those who scabbed: "It is impossible to conceive a more reprehensible and disreputable manner of obtaining work than by that which is called blacklegism . . . Let it be hoped that in seeking work men will never forget their moral obligations to their fellow-men, be they white or black."

An extract from an APO editorial written on the approval by Britain in 1909 of the Colour Bar Act of Union will give an idea of how far advanced the APO in fact was.

"The struggle has not ended. It has just begun. We, the Coloured and Native peoples of South Africa, have a tremendous fight before us. We have the war of wars to wage . . . No longer must we look to our flabby friends of Great Britain.

"Our political destiny is in our own hands; and we must be prepared to face the fight with grim determination to succeed . . .

"How are we to set about it? In our opinion there is but one way and that is the economic method. Undoubtedly the Coloured and Native races of South Africa hold the strongest weapon ever placed in the hands of any class. The very stability, the prosperity, even the continuance for but a few days of the economic existence of South Africa depends on the labour market; and we are the labour market.

"It may ere long come about that the necessity will be imposed on us, not in any isolated sphere of labour or in any particular district, but in every sphere and throughout the whole sub-continent, to refuse to bolster up the economic fabric of the people who refuse us political freedom. That would bring the selfish White politicians to their knees.

"It would even go far to show the White manual workers the value of combination which is the only weapon whereby they will free themselves from the shackles of that cursed wage system, which is sapping the independence of the people, weakening the national love of honour, and increasing the severity and extent of poverty for the production of a few sordid millionaires."

These words, written almost certainly by Dr. Abdurahman, are as true today as they were then, and show how far ahead of his time was this Coloured leader in his early years.

CRACKS IN THE EMPIRE?

(Continued from page 7)

have been taken in by the blandishments of Apartheid. The acceptance of Bantu Authorities by the Transkeian Bunga and by Cyprian, Paramount Chief of the Zulus, is not evidence of surrender to Apartheid. It is merely the beginning of the struggle against Apartheid. Every schoolboy knows that there is not a single scheme which any Union government seriously intended to implement which the Transkeian Bunga has not accepted in the past fifty years of its existence. It is always the people who have resisted these schemes after their acceptance by the Bunga. The same may be said of those chiefs who have "accepted" Bantu Authorities in the name of their people. The real test is the attitude of the people when they finally learn the meaning of these schemes in practice.

The picture we have today is one of an empire in the process of cracking up. Zeerust, heroically and with desperate courage, resists attempted genocide by the government. The rest of the Transvaal seethes with discontent. In Natal the government is loath to call an "indaba" of all the chiefs and people to discuss Bantu Authorities, as it was firmly rejected at the last indaba. Instead they resort to the brow-beating of each individual chief to compel him to accept. Similarly Verwoerd hesitates to call the people of the Transkei and Ciskei to the indabas which he loves so much. Even the chiefs are beginning to be "unreliable" as they slowly begin to see through the attempts to sow division between the different tribes and sections of tribes. Now we have the ridiculous and fantastic charge made that the Bapedi desire to regain the supremacy they enjoyed over other tribes 80 years ago!

Meantime the lists of deportees from tribal areas grows longer. In Zululand alone it is estimated that there are approximately 50 deportees languishing in remote areas, as a living symbol of resistance to Apartheid tyranny and a guarantee of its failure to seduce the people into supporting it. Although meetings of more than 10 Africans have been banned since 1952 the cry of "Afrika" will meet with a response anywhere even in the reserves.

All these promises of "development of the reserves", formulated as they are within the framework of the apartheid policy of one or more Bantustans, are for the betterment of Verwoerd nationalism, and not for the betterment of the people. That understanding is beginning to seep through to the rural people; it is beginning to show itself in

the mass spirit of struggle and resistance which is developing in the countryside. But always there is the influence, growing too, of the conservative and compromising elements who are being bought over to support the "betterment" schemes and its Nationalist inventors. It is the sacred duty of the liberatory movement which has its main bases in the urban areas to forge strong links with the rural people — to expose the tricks and propaganda of the Nationalists and to bring the people firmly within the general fight going on throughout our country for land, democracy, equality and peace.

PLEA

*This country shaped like the head
of a mare
Comming full gallop from far off
Asia
To stretch into the Mediterranean
This country is ours.*

*Bloody wrists, clenched teeth
bare feet,
Land like a precious silk carpet
This hell, this paradise is ours.
Let the doors be shut that belong
to others,
Let them never open again
Do away with the enslaving of man
by man*

*This plea is ours
To live! Like a tree alone and free
Like a forest in brotherhood
This yearning is ours!*

By NAZIM HIKMET.
Turkish poet.

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