

"AFRICANS ENTICED TO FIGHT PASSES FOR WOMEN"

A.N.C. DECIDES TO LAUNCH SPECIAL CAMPAIGN

From GOVAN MBEKI

BLOEMFONTEIN.—"TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE POLITICAL EVENTS DURING THE PRESENT YEAR IS TO GIVE A SORRY CATALOGUE OF ASSAULTS UPON THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, BUT THE PEOPLE REMAIN UNDAUNTED BY SUCH EVENTS," DECLARED PROFESSOR Z. K. MATTHEWS, ACTING PRESIDENT-GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE 307 DELEGATES FROM 92 BRANCHES WHO ATTENDED THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE A.N.C. HERE LAST WEEK-END.

"The women have been galvanised into action by the Government threat to subject them to the humiliation of the pass laws.

"This is the most dangerous scheme the Government has ever embarked upon and they must accept responsibility for whatever may happen."

Conference resolved to set up an action committee to plan action by Congress against passes for women. In speeches delegates indicated the African people felt very strongly on this issue.

In his speech Professor Matthews said the life of the African is made up of one crisis after another. When the people are beginning to say that the situation could not get worse than this, fresh injustice is added to the already heavy burden.

"The policy of baasskap shows no sign of abating.

"Ten years ago who would have thought that the missions would be treated as they have been over the transfer of African schools to the Government?"

"Who would have thought that one day, in a country in which there is no compulsory education for African children, it would become a crime for parents to give their children, at no cost to the State, the kind of education they would like them to have?"

"Who would have thought that teachers of long standing would be dismissed from their posts on the pretext of being of some official? Who would have thought that people could by a stroke of the pen be deprived of their property which they had acquired legally?"

WILL FIGHT BACK

Professor Matthews emphasised that the African people were determined to fight back.

"The African National Congress was founded specifically for the purpose of fostering among the African people that love of freedom and determination to be inferior to none in the land for which their forefathers gave their lives on many a battlefield."

HUDDLESTON'S ADDRESS

Father Huddleston's opening address was read in his absence. He regretted that he had to leave South Africa at a time so vital for her future, when decisions of the utmost importance for that future had to be made.

"Nothing except obedience to my community would have drawn me out of this struggle at a time when I can honestly say that it is not my will or my desire ever to leave the African people. This is my home."

"In spite of dark days to come Africa is moving rapidly forward towards that goal which we all so long to see. It would be a fantastic betrayal of one's trust to believe otherwise. Unity, strong and intelligent leadership, integrity of purpose, the refusal to sacrifice principles—these are the qualities most desperately needed if Congress is to shape the destiny of young Africa."

MRS. LUTHULI

Conference was attended by Mrs. Nkokukanya Luthuli, the Chief's wife. In a special message to con-

ference she said: "The tragedy of our day is that the White man who boasts of centuries of civilisation now wishes that the Christian missions had never brought light to Africa for he now speaks of the Christian missions as having 'spoiled the Native' and in various ways his Government is using its political power to send back the African to the wilderness of past darkness.

"That is why in Bantu Education the Government tries to fit us into a policy based on fear and suspicion. No community or nation can grow into a strong and healthy group when it feels itself on these base passions of man."

Conference decided to intensify the campaign for the boycott of schools and resolved to call upon those areas that have not yet observed the national decision to boycott to do so.

The draft constitution was discussed and conference resolved to elect another to be presented at the next conference.

Amidst tumultuous applause, and Afrika salutes, Chief Luthuli was unanimously returned as President-General and Mr. Oliver Tambo as Secretary-General.

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OFFICIAL SECRETS BILL A THREAT TO FREEDOM

JOHANNESBURG.

A Bill, ostensibly to protect state secrets, is to be introduced in the 1956 session of Parliament which starts next month. Its provisions are, however, so wide that many forms of opposition to the Government will fall within its ambit.

Any person who, for a purpose prejudicial to the safety and interests of the Union, approaches or is in the neighbourhood of a "prohibited" place (which includes factories where munitions are made, airports, naval bases, or any other place designated by the Government as prohibited) or makes a note likely to be of direct or indirect use to "an enemy," is liable to 15 years imprisonment.

The Bill does not define the meaning of "any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the Union," but it is clear that the words embrace virtually every type of action which the Government would interpret as hostile to its regime.

Thus, for instance, the purpose of a trade union organiser, who approaches a factory in order to organise the workers for a strike or some other type of action, might fall within the provisions of the Bill.

WHO IS ENEMY?

As South Africa is not at present

at war with any other State, it is also not clear what "an enemy" is.

Any person who uses information in his possession relating to a prohibited place, in a manner prejudicial to the Union's safety and interests, or forges, alters or tampers with a passport or official document to gain admission to a prohibited place, or for any other purpose prejudicial to the state, is liable to a maximum punishment of £500 and 3 years imprisonment.

FOREIGN AGENTS

The Bill introduces a new, sinister personality into South African legal terminology—the "foreign agent." He is a person who, in the employ of another State, is reasonably suspected of having committed, or attempting to commit, acts prejudicial to the interests of the Union in the interests of a foreign State.

Anyone who knows that a foreign agent (or a person in contact with one) is in the Union commits an offence, if he does not report this to the police.

The Bill also states that anyone who has at any time associated with a foreign agent, or in whose possession the name and address of one is found, is presumed to be guilty of "communicating with a foreign agent," and the onus is on him to prove the contrary.

... AND WIN A GREAT VICTORY

DURBAN.—THE MILITANCY OF AFRICAN WOMEN UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMEN'S LEAGUE, HAS FORCED THE CITY COUNCIL TO ABANDON ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE PASSES FOR AFRICAN WOMEN.

As a result of a protest meeting of African women outside the City Hall and Native Administration offices last week, the Native Administration Committee decided to "drop" its scheme for the carrying of "letters of privilege" by African women.

While a small deputation of African men and women were meeting officials inside the building and demanding the withdrawal of the decision to impose passes on women, nearly 200 women outside shouted that they would not carry passes.

Officials asked the deputation to send the women away while the matter was being discussed but the simplicity of the deputation replied that they "dare not" because the women would accuse them of "selling out."

After the deputation left the building the Native Administration Committee announced that the decision to give passes to women had been withdrawn.

Donges' Latest Banning List

Philosophy books, student publications, a sports festival badge, and four works by Emile Zola and Damon Runyon are among the latest publications declared taboo by Minister of the Interior Donges in a bumper Christmas banning list. People run the risk of heavy punishments if they are found in possession of Damon Runyon's, "Laugh your head off," Lewis' "A philosophy for modern man" or Palme Dutts' "The Crisis in Britain and the British Empire."

FREE ALWYN FOR CHRISTMAS!

—SAY LEE-WARDEN AND GIBSON

CAPE TOWN.—Mr. L. B. Lee-Warden, M.P., of the Congress of Democrats, and Mr. J. T. R. Gibson, twice Liberal Party candidate in the parliamentary elections for the Cape Western Circle, have joined in sending a telegram to the Minister of Justice asking for a Christmas amnesty for John Alwyn, the Worcester leader who is serving an eighteen months' prison sentence after a conviction under the Suppression of Communism Act.

"In keeping with the Christmas spirit of goodwill we strongly urge you to grant an amnesty to John Alwyn to permit him to rejoin his family and children for the festive season," says the telegram.



LILIAN NGOYI

"We Will Not Carry Passes"

—A.N.C. Women

BLOEMFONTEIN.

The African National Congress Women's League, attended by 133 delegates from four provinces, protested vehemently last week against the Government's decision to impose passes on African women.

The women resolved that they will not under any circumstances carry the humiliating passes, and pledged to throw the League's entire weight into the organization of African mothers to withhold their children from Verwoerd's poisoned wells—the Bantu schools.

Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi, the newly elected National President of the Women's League, appealed to all women to discard all fear in the struggle against injustices. She declared, "If the Government deports women in the impending struggle against passes, they will bring new hope to those in whose midst they are thrown in their deportation; if they are sent to jail they will convert the jails into institutions for universal education."

New Age wishes all readers the Compliments of the Season

MARRIAGE EDICT ROUSES ANGER

Indian Delegates Arrested

BLOEMFONTEIN. Dr. I. Mosele led the fraternal delegation from the South African Indian Congress to the ANC conference here, was arrested by special branch police immediately on entering Bloemfontein on December 17, together with his delegates. Up till the time conference ended on Sunday evening, they were still in jail. Appearing in court last Monday, they were remanded on bail until January 1.

Conference registered its strong protest against the unjust denial of the right of free movement.

Attempt To Bully People Into Having Photographs Taken

JOHANNESBURG.—Great indignation has been roused by the latest official attempt to bully people into having their photographs taken for the population register—the announcement by the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths that no marriages would be registered after January 1 unless the couple produce their identification numbers and those of their parents.

In a statement condemning the measure, the Congress of Democrats said that it "is closely linked with the anxiety felt in official quarters at the slow progress made in photographing people for the Population Register and is intended to exercise an indirect form of coercion on people, to have their photographs taken."

The statement describes the measure as unnecessary and undesirable.

The Anglican Church has asked the Government to withdraw the stipulation that couples have to give the identity numbers of their parents as well as their own.

"We do not like this new regulation and this new law laying down that the identity numbers of the parents have to be given," said Archbishop R. P. Y. Rouse, of Johannesburg.

Although no date has been fixed for when people in Johannesburg must have their identity cards, many people have been confused by the semi-official statements which are put out and have allowed themselves to be photographed.

A recent announcement in the Government Gazette setting November 30th as deadline for "all Europeans, Coloureds, Cape Malays and Asiatics" did not apply to Johannesburg, but many mistakenly had their photographs taken.

Despite official pressure, however, and despite the unscrupulous activities of certain photographers in Indian areas, who are spreading rumours that as soon as Indian people are photographed they will be given liquor and political rights, the card-indexing of the nation is proceeding at snail's pace.

SUPPORT FROM OVERSEAS

Readers and supporters in England show a commendable consistency in raising funds for New Age. A few weeks back they sent us £16 and a letter which arrived this morning advises us that a further £100 is on the way. In addition, the London New Age committee has published an attractive Xmas Card which is being sold on our behalf.

The committee's correspondent writes that "it would do you heart good if you could see how the papers are eagerly grabbed when we sell them at meetings. Even papers that are four or five months old are sold with difficulty." A fine compliment to New Age—and to those South African democrats in England who in spite of being separated from their homeland, continue to play their part in our struggle.

It is no accident that they have rallied around New Age in order to do so. Our paper is an indispensable weapon in our struggle for freedom whether here or abroad. It is the most important medium through which the South African workers and oppressed people make known their demands—a bright banner



People signing the Freedom Charter at one of the three tables set up for the purpose at the P.E. meeting.

3,000 VOW TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM CHARTER

PORT ELIZABETH.—Three thousand people, three thousand lovers of freedom, declared at a meeting at Malansky Square on December 11:

"We, the people of South Africa, gathered here this day, resolve as equals, countrymen and brothers, that we pledge ourselves to strive together until the changes set out in the Freedom Charter have been won. We call upon all who love their people, freedom and country to resolve, as we do, that for these freedoms we will fight, side by side, throughout our lives until we have won our liberty."

The meeting was held under the auspices of the sponsoring organisations for the purpose of collecting signatures for the Freedom Charter.

"There will come a time," stressed Mr. Fletcher, "when a man has to choose between his money and his conscience."

Mr. M. Fletcher, representing the Congress of Democrats, said the Liberation movement must realise that the struggle for liberation was not a struggle between Black and White. Had it been so he would not have been at that meeting. He felt that in due course the whites in South Africa would realise that if they were not prepared to share freedom with others they themselves were not free. As they made this discovery more and more of them would be present at meetings such as those that took place that afternoon. Even in P.E. there are a number of Europeans who are in agreement with the basic people's demands expressed in the Freedom Charter. They did not come to these meetings because they were afraid that they would lose their jobs.

"Who are the secessionists?" The Nationalists and many other members of the COD as secessionists because they dare claim the sharing of rights and freedom with Non-Whites. But who are the secessionists? asked Mr. Fletcher. A secessionist is the one who withholds freedom from others.

The Government and the owners of wealth were afraid of the day when White workers would join hands with the Black to fight for a better future. White workers have been bribed but a lie has short legs, concluded Mr. Fletcher.

As Mr. Fletcher started to speak

Trade Unions And Politics Inseparable

CAPE TOWN.

"The South African Congress of Trade Unions says that trade unions and politics are inseparable, and the fight against the Industrial Conciliation Bill is part of the fight for freedom in South Africa," SACU secretary, Mr. A. Sibeko, told a special conference of trade union executives in Cape Town recently.

Present at the conference were delegates from the S.A. Railways and Harbours Workers' Union (Non-European), Textile Workers' Industrial Union, Food and Canning Workers' and African Food and Canning Workers' Unions. Also present were representatives from the ANC and SACP.

"We must ally ourselves with the Congress movement in fighting against all unjust laws," Mr. Sibeko went on. "We must organise all the workers into trade unions. The future of South Africa lies in the hands of the workers. Let us go forward to freedom!"

A special appeal to delegates to obtain signatures to the Freedom Charter was made by the chairman, Mr. J. Heeger.

Special Branch detectives photographed him, and when he left before the meeting was over they followed him in their car.

Among other speakers that afternoon were Miss Stella Damons, M. Kepe and S. Fischer.

HOLLOW VICTORY

When the Government decided to delay the enactment of the same Bill before Parliament last year and agreed to send the measure to a Select Committee, certain "responsible" trade union leaders hailed this manoeuvre as a great

ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO APARTHEID

DURBAN.—The only alternative to the Government's programme of apartheid is the Freedom Charter, declared Mr. N. T. Naicker, General Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress, at a mass meeting to protest against the Group Areas Act held last week.

The meeting was organised jointly by the African and Indian Congresses and the Congress of Democrats.

Mr. Naicker said that the Charter contained the true aspirations of the millions in South Africa and enshrined the basic principles of human freedom, justice and equality which transcended all forms of racialism. For this reason the Government feared the Charter and the people who created it.

POLICE ACTION

Mr. Naicker criticised the Government's police action against the people. "The people's presence here is symbolic of the feeling of resentment that runs against the Government's police state activities, it is symbolic of our abhorrence of racialism, and it is symbolic of the Congress spirit which preaches a high sense of friendship and goodwill to all people in South Africa." For this reason, he continued, "accused the Congress movement of treason and sedition and on that score the country has been subjected to police raids and intimidation. Our loyalties to South Africa were questioned. But let it be known that as loyal South Africans we have inherent right to criticise the unjust policy of the Nationalist Government."

"The Nationalist Government represents a minority of a minority and when it made laws which subjugated and degraded the majority of the people we were justified in protesting against these laws which are opposed to all principles of justice and democracy."

I.C. BILL DESTROY FREE TRADE UNIONISM

The new draft Bill which has come out of the Parliamentary Select Committee is worse than the old one, says trade unionist **KARL ENGELS** in this stimulating article.

victory. What a victory! For these self-same leaders have since been compelled to admit publicly that the new draft which has emerged is "more vicious" than even the first Bill.

For the trade union movement the new Bill can be compared to the Group Areas Act in the sphere of occupation of areas of land by groups of people kept apart on racial and colour lines, and in the paving the way for the removal of the Cape Coloured Voters from the voters' roll. It will be a sorry and black day for the workers of South Africa when that Bill becomes law, for it will do tremendous harm to the working-class movement in South Africa.

Even this piece of appeasement did not satisfy the insatiable appetite of the Nationalist Government, and it is proceeding to carry out its policy in the programme of the Nationalist Party, which is nothing less than the complete destruction of the democratic trade union movement in South Africa.

What are the main features of the new Industrial Conciliation Bill? In order to appreciate this it would be useful to find out what the present Act is and where the new Act will differ from it.

The Industrial Conciliation Act was also introduced by a Nationalist Government in alliance with the Labour Party (in the "Pact" Government) in 1924. It was the capitalists' method of checking the rising tide of militancy of the S.A. workers exemplified in the great 1922 strike which shook the country to its foundations in spite of the fact that it did not mobilise the African workers.

To prevent the workers taking the next logical step, which would have meant learning the lesson of the defeat in 1922 and the organisation of the African and European workers in a common front and in one organisation, the Government introduced its panacea for "industrial diseases"—the Industrial Conciliation Act for the White, Coloured and Indian workers, and the Wage Act, in the main, for the African workers. But to make doubly sure that the development of a mighty trade union movement wherein unscientific and unnatural racial and colour barriers will be swept away and white and black workers in true brotherhood between the working people of South Africa.

And not only Government fears that but also the most powerful and influential employers' organisations, the mine owners (mainly British capital), the rich farmers, the industrialists and, to be frank, many "respectable" trade union leaders.

What are the main features of the new Industrial Conciliation Bill and how they will affect the existence of the S.A. Trade Union movement? The main aim of the new Act is to break up what are termed "mixed unions" i.e. unions

with a membership of White, Coloured and Indian workers in industries where they are organised, and to prevent such unions from coming into being in the future.

And once again, running true to form, the opportunity will be taken to "tighten up" on the trade unions, to make strikes still more difficult, to make trade union machinery so cumbersome and involved, and so subject to state interference that they will become akin to the organisations in the Hitler Labour Front.

The Bill will also encourage breakaway unions to be set up and give them the legal right to break up the existing trade union organisations and trade union funds built up in many cases over a long period of years by the humble contributions of the workers.

All in all, it is a most vicious piece of legislation, as has been recognised even by many of the apparatus in the trade union movement.

Because of the wording of the I.C. Act, which defined African employees as "pass-bearing Natives", African women were not debarrated from being regarded as "employees" under the I.C. Act. As African women came into secondary industry they were organised and became legal members of recognised trade unions whilst the hundreds of thousands of male Africans were still excluded from the trade union point of view.

When the Nats came into power in 1948, they made good this "anomaly" by putting African men and women in the same category of "non-employees" in so far as the I.C. Act is concerned.

The City Council must know that we are not prepared to submit to any increase in rentals since we are the section hardest hit by the increase in cost of living," says a statement issued by the Langa ANC.

When the "great day" arrived and the Nationalists were voted in to power in 1948 by a minority vote of the minority of the population, it was in a demand by the trade union movement that labour legislation be amended and duly appointed the Industrial Legislation Commission. In due course the Commission produced a voluminous report which made recommendations in most cases the very opposite of what had been proposed by the leading trade unions and employers' organisations in South Africa.

In the main the Commission proposed "Apartheid" and more "Apartheid," and the Government has accepted these lines because it deems more than anything else the creation of unity among the working people of South Africa. The development of a mighty trade union movement wherein unscientific and unnatural racial and colour barriers will be swept away and white and black workers in true brotherhood between the working people of South Africa.

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(Continued next week)

Langa Meeting To Fight Rent Increases

CAPE TOWN.

A protest meeting against the proposed increases of rents at Langa will be held by the Langa branch of the African National Congress on Thursday, December 22, at the Langa Market Hall at 7.30 p.m.

"The City Council must know that we are not prepared to submit to any increase in rentals since we are the section hardest hit by the increase in cost of living," says a statement issued by the Langa ANC.

Bursaries For Non-European Students

CAPE TOWN.

Two bursaries of £12 10s. each, sponsored by the Oriens Sports Club, are available to Non-European students at high schools in the Cape Peninsula next year.

Applications should be submitted to the Secretary, P.O. Box 4368, Cape Town, not later than December 31, 1955.

The scholarships have been established in honour of Mr. Gulbar Kahn, a member of the Club who has gone overseas. The Club also contemplates the establishment of a bursary for African university students.

La Passionaria's 60th Birthday

CAPE TOWN.

"South African women celebrate your birthday with you. May you live long in humanity's cause," reads a cable sent last week to Madam Dolores, the Club vice-president of the Women's International Democratic Federation, on her sixtieth birthday.

Known to all the anti-fascist world as "La Passionaria," Madama Ibaruri is one of the foremost fighters for freedom of our era.



NEW AGE

ATTITUDE BOX

Catholics Not Opposed To Bantu Education

S. Xamashe (New Age, December 8) called upon Africans and all South African citizens to support Catholic schools in their stand against leasing their schools for Bantu Education.

In my opinion Xamashe does not understand the policy of the Roman Catholic Church against Bantu Education. We Africans are opposed to the Act as such, especially the syllabus which is designed to keep the African under European domination forever. On the other hand the bishops are not campaigning against the syllabus but against leasing the schools to the Government, a fact that will not benefit the African who is called upon to help those who are campaigning for the control of schools. In addition to the surrender to the Government the Church has reduced salaries of African teachers by 25 per cent. It should be noted that though the salaries are cut down, the mission schools still offer Bantu Education.

It is quite clear that oppression is so much in South Africa that some of the people are ready even with enemies as long as they oppose the main enemy. The policy of the Roman Catholic Church is well known. It has tended to be a "watch-dog" of the Government. Its policy is best illustrated in "Against the Stream" by Father Schimleli when the C.A.U. was established as opposed to the A.N.C. which was described as Communist. As a result, Catholic members were debarred and are still prohibited from joining the A.N.C. or any association that is fighting for African liberation from the European domination.

NO CHARGE

That the Catholic policy has not changed was revealed in an article in "Southern Cross," Wednesday, November 16, 1955, headed "Danger of extreme nationalism in community schools"—by Archbishop Denis H. E. Hurley, O.M.I., when he interviewed in an interview to the "Natal Mercury" that African nationalism could not be suppressed and that it is always fed on imaginary grievances. According to him Africans should always be under European supervision and African nationalism should be tempered or balanced with Christian conviction and practice. He further said that our leaders are propagating extreme

African nationalism cloaked in the jargon of Marxist dialectics.

The Archbishop closed his article by expressing the Catholic record of opposition to Communism. In other words he is in favour of capitalism—the exploitation of man by man, which is a cause of all the international wars accompanied by millions of deaths.

Every day in these Catholic Mission Colleges we are informed that socialism is the worst of the economic systems and that capitalism is the only system. We are told terrible things about Russia and China—all of course propaganda.

How many times have we been told by these Catholics that we should not support African "political agitators." At school we are not allowed to read any progressive papers—not to speak of criticising Bantu Education and all the racist laws. We are always informed that we have no right to expose a Government that was instituted by God.

These are the bishops that we are called upon to support in their exploitation of Africans. If the bishops are fighting for universal education for all, irrespective of colour, let them stand and support the C.O.P. accept the ANC and endorse the Freedom Charter.

Yours in the struggle
A. A. ZWANE,
Johannesburg.

Kenilworth Racing

Three-year-old Stakes: 1. CYPHER, danger: Ney.
Maiden Plate: 1. NUMABLAST, danger: Ra.
Kenilworth Stakes: 1. ON FIRE, danger: McDeva.
Wyneb Stakes: 1. ROYAL PIPIT, danger: Voltiqueur.
Wyneb Christmas Handicap: 1. REIVOLI, danger: Plant.
Wyneb Handicap: 1. FILARIX, danger: Royal Wood.
Kenilworth Handicap (2nd Div.): 1. NAKTONG, danger: Bois Noir.
Kenilworth Handicap (1st Div.): 1. DE KLERK'S SELECTION, danger: Greengrass.
Juvenile Handicap: 1. EXAGGERATE, danger: Congenial.

**BEFORE ALL HONESTY—
—ABOVE ALL JUSTICE**

JOHNNY'S PARCELS

Due to a shortage of hands because of circumstances outside my control, I regret to inform some Bantu customers that I have had to put other things of equal value in their parcels.

Sorry to disappoint, but wishing all the compliments of the season, Sincerely,
JOHNNY.

"Peace, Friendship and Racial Harmony"

Cape Youth Festival Committee announces—

GRAND NEW YEAR'S PICNIC
Sunday, January 1, 1956. Tickets 7s. 6d. including food and transport. Children half price. Swimming, Sports, Sing-songs. Transport leaves Grand Parade, Cape Town from 8 a.m.

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WORLD STAGE

METRO AND BAGDAD

WITH the North Atlantic Treaty linking the countries of Europe in a war pact, and the South-East Asia Treaty linking the puppet governments of that region, the West needed a new chain to join the two. Last month it succeeded in closing the circle when the permanent council of the Baghdad pact, linking Britain for military purposes with Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan, was set up.

For a week the limelight was focussed on Mr. Harold Macmillan, the British Foreign Secretary, who, accompanied by a British general and an American admiral, superintended the formation of the council.

From the first, Mr. Macmillan's task was no happy one. His reception ranged from violent hostility to amused contempt. The Egyptian press baited him mercilessly.

"Not even my closest friends can claim that Mr. Macmillan is really an Arab, or even a Turk," commented one paper. "Nor has anyone so far commented either on these distinctions for General Sir Gerald Templer or Admiral Cassidy. What then are they doing so far from home?"

JUNIOR BIG BROTHER

The Middle East countries did not fail to note that while the western press was putting up an immense smokescreen of indignant comment on "Soviet interference," all the interfering was being done by the forces behind Macmillan and Cassidy.

Britain's Macmillan was the man in the public eye at the Baghdad talks. "But Britain, as each of the writers realised, was still the Junior Big Brother," said Time (Dec. 5) with brutal frankness. "Major reasons for the success of the treaty, depended chiefly on the support and benevolence of the U.S., and the new METO allies were frankly courted either more or both as a price for daring the wrath and possible economic reprisals of Russia."

The governments which Macmillan was able to pressure into his pact are a sorry lot.

PAKISTAN, which has never had a general election, is no new acquisition, for it was already a member of Seato. This is a country where, according to the "Righting" Pakistan, 70 per cent of the central budget in the past four years has been spent on police and military expenditure, which is as only one per cent. has been spent on education."

TURKEY is also an old hand, being a member of NATO. Her government is totally unable to overcome economic crisis resulting from incredible corruption. The army is unable to go out on manoeuvres because the U.S. oil companies have refused to supply fuel until there is cash to pay for them. Strikes are forbidden. Any criticism of the government leads to arrest.

IRAN and IRAQ are the two new acquisitions. In the former country, where opposition to the Pact is intense, people's leader Dr. M. Yazdi is under sentence of death at the hand of the ruling fascist dictatorship. After a visit to Iran recently the correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph wrote: "A thousand wealthy families rule the country.

They own up to 200 villages apiece, but their peasants are without land or homes, and sometimes do not even own the clothes they wear."

The only elected government which Iran has had in recent history—that of Mousadek—was forcibly overthrown with U.S. and British help when it angered those powers by nationalising its oil.

In Iraq too, it is illegal to strike. When the oil workers came out recently, demanding trade union recognition and better pay, they were fired on by the police. One worker was killed, at least 15 injured. Martial law was declared and troops sent to suppress the strike.

"FREEDOM'S" ALLIES

These are the so-called allies of freedom in the Middle East.

And even these puppet governments had their qualms about joining the pact. "Adherence to the treaty, linking Iran more closely than ever to the western political structure, without providing any immediate strengthening of defences, was certainly a risky decision for the Iranian Government to take," the London Times noted. "Russia is very near and very touchy on the subject of about influence in Iran, and it is only a few months since the banned Tudeh (Communist) Party came near to a successful military coup." The Tudeh Party, though proscribed is still active in Iran—and even has the audacity to print its own newspaper, which is regularly delivered to embassies and other interested parties through the mail.

On the eve of Prime Minister Hussein Ala's departure from Baghdad for the pact meeting, there was an attempt on his life in a Tehran mobster. The would-be assassin was a member of the fanatical religious group, Fadaiyen Islam, which stands for the elimination of all foreign influences from Iran.

The popular opposition to the signing of the pact had been great. But the final foundation of the Council last month brought the revolution to a peak.

"The pact is deplorable from the point of view of peace and security," said Nehru bluntly in an address to Parliament. "The pact was the indignation in India that there were moves to withdraw from the Commonwealth as a result of Britain's part in the Baghdad meeting."

GOVERNMENT FALLS

Egypt and Syria added their protests, and in Jordan, most acquiescent of Britain's puppets, a government has fallen and the people have come out in revolt against the moves to bring Jordan into the war alliance.

Linked with all this, Cyprus, which was to have been the nucleus of western military strength in the Mediterranean, has flared

up as its valiant people fight for their independence.

As they watched the opposition mounting, the Western powers were having difficulty in seeing what they had got for their trouble. "The pact's military strength may for some time be small. Its political stability remains in doubt," the London Times observed in an editorial.

"DON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH"

And Time asked: "How strong a bastion will METO prove in the Middle-East's shifting sands? Truth is that METO is more a geographic than a military entity, more a psychological pact than a strategic stronghold... To the Middle-East's defences, METO adds only the forces of Iraq and Iran—and a defence position. The forces do not amount to much."

All the same it would be unwise to underestimate the power for evil which is the Baghdad Pact. While the main ostensible purpose of the pact is to close the military ring around the Soviet Union, the real aim is to wage war on what the western governments call "Communism"—that is, the national liberatory struggle of all colonial peoples for independence and freedom from foreign rule.

The Baghdad Pact is intended as a barrier which will dam the inexorable march to freedom of the people of the Middle East. But it is a puny structure and it has no foundations. Under pressure it will collapse and crush those who are trying to hold it up.

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